



**THE "GREEN HISTORY" OF THE
GEORGIAN-GERMAN DIALOGUE
IDEAS AND
INDIVIDUALS**

THE “GREEN HISTORY”
OF THE GEORGIAN-GERMAN DIALOGUE:
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TBILISI 2021

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IDEAS AND INDIVIDUALS

CONTENTS:

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5	FOREWORD
		Lela Gaprindashvili
10	Women’s Space and Women’s Culture
		Levan Bregadze
40	Georgian Nature through European Eyes
		Tsisana Goderdzishvili & Liana Osishvili
66	Tbilisi’s Botanical Garden and the Germans who Worked There
		Nona Kupreishvili
92	The Culture of Gardening and its Practitioners in Georgia during the Late 19 th and Early 20 th
		Melano Gogoladze
116	The Achievements of the Georgian Educator Ilia Alkhazishvili in the Study of Georgian Nature and the Spread of Natural Education in Georgia
		Nino Satkoeva
136	The Green Policies of Local Self-Government in Tbilisi between 1875 and 1917



CARTE DE LA GÉORGIE

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Kilomètres

— Route suivie par l'auteur dans son premier voyage.



FOREWORD

Even though “green ideas” are gaining increasing popularity in Georgia, research and academic enquiry into the history of these ideas is almost non-existent. This is a shame, given that research into nature, the development of the natural sciences and the creation of national parks and recreational spaces is an integral part, not only of the work of Georgian scientists and public figures, but also of the ongoing dialogue between Georgia and Europe.

Throughout history, Georgian public figures have endeavored to draw closer to progressive European ideas, and to adapt them to conditions in their own country. Several factors played a key role in this process, including Georgians themselves travelling to Europe in order to receive an education there; the arrival of European travelers and researchers in Georgia; academic and socio-political news publications and local educational movements.

The 18th century Georgian scientist and political figure Vakhushti Bagrationi (Prince Vakhushti) played an important role in acquainting European audiences with Georgia, and his seminal work, *A Description of the Kingdom of Georgia* – complete with maps – was used by a number of European researchers. Vakhushti’s works encouraged European scientists to come to Georgia, to study Georgian culture and nature, and to acquaint Georgians with the achievements of the natural sciences in the West.

In 19th century Georgia, there were very few schools, and the few that existed were only open to the children of high-ranking members of society. In addition to this, the Russian Empire’s assimilationist policy had driven the Georgian language out of these places of study. For this reason, Georgians started an educational movement and in 1879, the Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians was founded. One of the declarations of its founding charter was to legalize the teaching of Georgian in schools. This movement was the first step towards opening Georgian-language schools and creating textbooks in the Georgian language.

The Georgian educator, Iakob Gogebashvili, prepared and published *The Door to Nature* (1868-1918), which gave young people an introductory knowledge of both nature and Georgian literature. He later went on to publish a textbook for the study of the Georgian language – *Mother Tongue* (1876-1925).

In preparing *The Door to Nature*, Gogebashvili used writings on the natural sciences by the German scholars Alfred Edmund Brehm, Karl Christopher Vogt and Moritz Wagner.

A significant role in this research into the natural sciences was played by Rafiel Eristavi, who wrote and published two dictionaries: the *Short Latin, Russian and Georgian Dictionary of Plants* in 1873 and the *Georgian-Russian-Latin Dictionary of the Plant, Animal and Mineral Kingdoms* in 1884. In the introduction to this second dictionary, the author notes that in working on this book, he made use of research by the German scientist Eduard Regoh.

As well as the natural environment, a healthy diet is also important for individual development, and apart from this, in the impoverished Georgia of the 19th century, finding food and preparing it was also an economic issue. For this reason, the female writer, Barbare Jojadzze wrote a book *Georgian Cuisine and Well-Tested Housekeeping Advice*, which was printed in 1874. In 1914, however, Barbare's daughter Manana Jorjadze-Gechtmann re-published this same book in a slightly altered form. During the research for this book I also discovered other writers working in the culinary sphere.

Scientific and literary journals and newspapers, some aimed at young people, edited and published by women, also made a significant contribution to spreading knowledge of the natural world. These include "Tsiskari" ('Dawn'), "Nobati" ('Gift'), "Jejili" ('Green Wheat'), "Nakaduli" ('Stream'), "Kvali" ('Imprint') and others.

Also of unique value are the writings left to us by European women who lived or traveled in Georgia (including Frederika von Freygang, Ana Lister, Bertha von Suttner, Carla Serena, Marjory Wardrop, Odette Keun and Anna Drancey), which tell us about their lives and experiences in the country.

The most prominent among the number of German scientists who worked on the natural sciences, the study of Georgia's nature and the creation and care of green spaces include Gustav Ferdinand Richard Radde, Georg Gechtman, Otto Wilhelm Herman von Abach, Adolf von Kuppfer, Nikolai Busch, Paul Heinrich Arnold Moritz, Johann Milberg, Gleb von Lemlein, Albert Hintzenberg, Adolf Christian Roloff, Heinrich Karl Werner Scharrer, Johann Anton Güldenschadt, Evgeny G. König and others.

The foundation of the first Georgian university in 1918 and the period of the First Georgian Republic from 1918 to 1921 greatly encouraged - and laid the foundation for - the further development of the natural sciences and the academic study of Georgia's natural and cultural heritage.

In both the Russian Imperial period and the Soviet Era, we find interesting historical material on the creation of forest parks, recreational areas, protected areas and botanical gardens. During the 19th century, Georgian nature enjoyed the advocacy and support of both Georgian and European scientists, public figures and political leaders.

Whilst working on this project, the most important thing to me was to study the influence of ideas and individuals connected to "green history" in Georgia, as well as to demonstrate the important role played by German researchers and scientists in this story. Obviously, a complete study of this history would require far more time than we had at our disposal, but the project team has spared no effort in telling this story in a way which is interesting and engaging for readers.

Particular thanks go to the researchers: Nino Satkoeva, Levan Bregadze, Nona Kupreishvili, Tsisana Goderdzishvili, Liana Osishvili and Melano Gogoladze. They put in an incredible amount of work to ensure that the project *The Green History of the Georgian-German Dialogue: Ideas and Individuals* came to successful completion.

Apart from this publication, on the basis of a study of archive and written documents, we have prepared more than 100 photographs for exhibition and sixty-five informational plaques. The result of our work ultimately brought us closer to our goal: to introduce this history to a Georgian audience by distributing this publication, organizing exhibitions and integrating these materials into school and university syllabuses.

I'd like to offer sincere thanks to the Integrated Biodiversity Management in the South Caucasus (IBIS) program of the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), without whose financial assistance, our project work would have been significantly delayed. I'd like to express my respect for the project's manager, Christian Gönner and his colleague Mariam Urdia. Their advice and support provided the inspiration we needed to carry out our work.

Lela Gaprindashvili

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WOMEN'S SPACE AND WOMEN'S CULTURE

LELA GAPRINDASHVILI

Who wove the carpet and who wrote the spell?

The place of women in any given culture is defined by the space in which they move, as well as the space to which they are confined. A woman's thought and creativity-activity starts and develops according to the arena of her mental endeavors, her own efforts, and how far she is able to step beyond the limited reality that fate assigns her.

Women's liberation is a process of recognizing new space, acquiring new knowledge and constructing the self. However, this means finding one's own place within society, the state and the world. If we look closely at the history of humanity - "devoid of women" - we frequently encounter women's artefacts that are unknown or unnamed, which often have no known author, but which are universally recognized as pointing to women's culture. An example of this is ecclesiastical or secular weaving, embroidery, and sewing on clothing and other items, carpets, rugs, sheets and tablecloths, which are preserved in historical or ethnographical museums. Apart from this, there are examples of oral tradition (poems, fairytales, folk stories, songs etc), where a female author can be surmised from the text and context. In the history of many peoples, lullabies, spells, love poems, ritual verses and songs are passed down from generation to generation, to be learnt, performed and used only by women and girls.

The enlightenment period did more than any other to restore the memory of women's culture: when women acquired the skills of literacy, they started to read and write. This put an end to the fateful epoch of forgetting and the public emergence and development of women's physical and spiritual bodies began. From then on, women thought, spoke, created and acted in their own right, and the possibility of them remaining "unseen" significantly diminished.

My experience of women's culture began in childhood, when, still clinging to the hem of my grandmother's dress, I greedily devoured everything that she knew. For hours on end she would recite and teach me folk poems, songs, spells, folk tales, details of plants that could heal diseases in cattle and humans, the essential flavorings and spices for traditional dishes. Thanks to this tireless teacher, by the age of ten I was already a well-versed apprentice and assistant: I would pick, dry and place the necessary herbs and plants in their proper containers with great enthusiasm.

Above our fireplace, an unimaginably beautiful carpet was hung, and in the middle of it – sparkling – a small *khanjali* ('dagger'). These two items were brought from my grandmother's parents' house and she continued to care for both of them as if they were her own children. She showed the *khanjali* to every guest to the house, and would say ardently several times over "My father made it, my father made it, my father made it!" To prove the veracity of this claim, she would run her fingers along the sheath, where the name "Luka Babluani" was imprinted in large letters.

I always wondered why my grandmother said nothing about the carpet or the person who had made it. So one time, once she had finished her performance and said the words "my father made it", I surprised everyone by asking: who wove the carpet? She stopped speaking with a jolt, a look of concern spread across her face, her knitted brow turned white with the effort of deep thought, but still, with the same confidence, she replied – "I don't know who wove the carpet, but I do know that my father bought this carpet for my mother when I was born. He bought it on the Khoni market from a local peasant."

Throughout my entire childhood, I was tortured by the mystery of the carpet and not because I wanted to learn how to weave, but rather because I wanted to enrich my grandmother's narrative. I would imagine how Gogutsa would stand before his guests and lick his lips at the thought of the origin of the things that were precious to him; the adventures and the craftsmanship of their creator, how he would pull listeners into the labyrinth of the story and how he could move from being a mere story-teller to being a chronicler, an actor and a writer. Once I dreamt it: my grandmother was standing at the fireplace, speaking enthusiastically, while I waited, pen-in-hand, ready to write down every word in my notebook, so that later I could take it back to the city and read it to my friends.

My second "odd question" was about the cattle spell, which the women of the village used for pregnant cows. My grandmother would prepare meticulously for the performance of this spell: she would put three gowns over her body and put two headscarves on her head. In silence, we would enter the barn, and we would sit on small wooden stools and the ritual would begin. We would put our heads onto the stomachs of the pregnant cows and start whispering quietly. For me this was the most mystical text from a period before poetry or prose, which made me feel, upon saying it, that I had become a daughter and a friend to the universe. When the calf was born, I would proudly tell my peers the news, since I was convinced that I too had played a big role in bringing about this new life.

The text of the spell was also part of a children's game. We girls used to compete with each other in saying it properly and impressively and we all

liked it a lot. So I went to see all the women in the village and to ask them each who had written the text. Feeling deflated at not being able to find out, I finally went to my grandmother, but in vain. She acquired the same expression as she did at the mention of the carpet weaver and with the same confidence, told me that "this spell is very old – my grandmother's grandmother taught it to her, her grandmother before that, and now you've learnt it from me. It seems that the first grandmother of the Svans had written it for her descendants. Probably no one knew how to read and write back then and so things were passed on by word of mouth." I liked this answer, but for a long time I was still troubled by the desire to learn the identity of the person behind this, my first "magical poem".

As I grew older, so the number of story-tellers around me increased: my grandfather, my aunt and my mother's aunt, Mariam, were unchanging favorites in this task and each of their lives could be the subject of a long novel. For now, though, I'll stick to my aunt, a woman writer, who had the biggest influence on my intellectual and personal development.

The gustav radde, rafiel eristavi and barbare jorjadze of my family

I first heard about the German scientist Gustav Radde from my mother's sister, Sira Gabiani. At the time, my aunt was researching the biography of our ancestor, Priest Svimon, and discovered in the ethnographical research of Besarion Nizharadze, that Svimon actually knew Gustav Radde:

"...Priest Svimon is now an old man of 108, but he's so lively, so healthy, that no one would believe his age to be more than 60. He is slight of frame with white hair and beard, a distinctive way of dressing himself and is very much in love with life. This "little elder" ('kotool bap' in the Svan language) draws your attention as soon as you look at him. Apparently, he studied the Holy Books at Tsageri Monastery and was ordained priest in Martvili. His knowledge of Church books is somewhat lacking, especially his knowledge of the Typicon, but this has in nowise hindered him in the love of Almighty God, nor in winning for Him the hearts of others. Today, the people of Ushguli see this elder as a saint. Priest Svimon remembers many things from the distant past. He knew Isidore, the former Exarch of Georgia. He remembers Mukhranbatoni and Rafiel Eristavi from when they worked in Kutaisi. Ivane Bartolomei (archaeologist and numismatist, Lieutenant-General, Member-Correspondent of the Petersburg Scientific Academy), Dimitri Bakradze, Uslar and Gustav Radde – they had all been in Svaneti during his time.

To a great number of people he tells many interesting stories about the people he has known...”¹

I know from my aunt, who had been told by her forebears, that during an expedition to Svaneti, Gustav (Ferdinand Richard) Radde visited the Lapuri Glacier, located in Lower Svaneti, on the advice of Priest Svimon and he captured its beauty in one of his drawings, “Lapuri Glacier and the Tskhenistskali Headwaters” (1866).

The acquaintance between Rafiel Eristavi and Svimon is also confirmed by two books in our family library: Rafiel Eristavi’s “Georgian-Russian-Latin Lexicon of the Plant, Animal and Mineral Kingdoms”, which was published in 1884 in Tbilisi and Barbare Eristavi-Jorjadze’s “Georgian Cuisine and Well-Tested Housekeeping Advice”, which was published by Ekvtime Kheladze’s printing house in 1874.

I first opened Rafiel Eristavi’s book as a student and discovered that the author, while working on it, used a variety of sources, including the works of the German botanist, dendrologist and pharmacologist, Eduard Regoh.

Eduard Regoh (1816-1888) was born in Latvia into the family of Georg Ferdinand Regoh and Ana-Louise Smittchen. After graduating from Tartu University, he continued his studies in Tarandt, at the Saxonian Forestry Academy (Königliche-Sächsische Forstakademie) and on 15 August 1840, he opened the first school for the study of agricultural sciences in the Russian Empire.² By 1843, there were already Georgian students at the school. In 1847, in the same region he laid out a botanical and dendrological park. The architect for the dendrological park was the Italian Angelo Campioni, while Regoh took charge of the collections and landscaping.³

No less interesting is the fact that Rafiel Eristavi, in preparing his Lexicon, made use of knowledge “preserved” in various villages by female traditional healers:

“...while preparing this lexicon, I have made use of the following sources: the dictionary of plants prepared by A. N. Annenkov, the dictionary of plants by B. N. Sitovsky and A. Overin, the writings of the Caucasus Agricultural Society, the natural history of birds and animals, Saba-Sulkhan Orbeliani and David Chubinov’s dictionaries, several editions of the Karabadin and E.

1. Gabiani, Sira. *I Spoke from Need*. Kutaisi, 2003 pp. 3-4.

2. In Goretsky District, Belorussia.

3. Eduard Regoh’s faithful assistant was his wife, Emilia Schmidt. His children also (Lidia, Robert, Eduard and Julia) also proudly kept the history of his work, but the Soviet regime destroyed his memory. Eduard Regoh’s grandson, the agro-chemist George Regoh, was charged with espionage in 1937 and shot.

Regoh’s description of plants and information provided by village healers- both men and women- on this topic ...”⁴

It’s probably thanks to Rafiel Eristavi that his sister Barbare Eristavi-Jorjadze’s (1833-1895) cookbook ended up in our family. Apart from recipes for certain dishes, my grandmother used the book’s methods for distilling spirits from different fruits, such as elderberry, yarrow and sour cherry. From this same book, she had learnt how to boil and dye thread, make soap and to dry plums and pears.

I also had a special affection for Barbare’s book. For me, she filled the void which I had experienced when searching for the women behind the family carpet and the spell. The failings of women’s “orally-transmitted culture” had been corrected by an example of “written culture”. For this reason, I would read the preface of the book, in which Barbare addresses her readers, to all my friends. My interest in this text was further heightened by the ancientness of the language and expressions used in it, which I saw as a museum exhibit, and which I read and listened to with great enthusiasm:

“...When one looks at the changes of our times, the reform of the peasantry and our current situation, I felt it necessary to put together this culinary book, since I didn’t know of such a book in the Georgian language. It could be, that such a book was of little use to those who have cooks and books of Russian cuisine, but for those who might not have the means to hire a good cook and who don’t know Russian that they might have him or her prepare dishes described in that language, this book ought to be of use.

I should also add, that even if you have the means, a decent cook is sometimes so difficult to find. Often they either can’t prepare food according to your taste, or else go completely against your wishes. Since almost every woman is obliged to take care of the family, this book has been prepared for her, so that it may be a guide in the kitchen, in order to help prepare dishes that are common in Georgia and to help also with tried and tested advice on other domestic matters. That is to say: the proper storage of foodstuffs and materials, fermenting wine, distilling spirits, dying thread, making soap, making jams and pickles, and many other things, which are absolutely essential- not least of all in villages- and as such, I have added in passing a few recipes for European dishes too.

In any case, if with this work I manage to bring even the smallest benefit to my fellow countryfolk, I will be satisfied, whereas, should any omissions or

4. Rafiel Eristavi, *Georgian-Russian-Latin Dictionary of the Plant, Animal and Mineral Kingdoms*. Tbilisi, 1884 p. 3. The forerunner to this book was called “A Short Latin, Russian and Georgian Dictionary of Plants”, which Rafiel published in 1873.

mistakes be noted in this work, I hope readers will let me know and correct them, so that in future, a more complete and error-free book of recipes and home management might be produced.”⁵

Whilst working on Barbare’s biography, I discovered that she continued to work on the recipe book and with the help of Mikheil Akhpatelov in the 1880s, “The Complete Kitchen”, a renewed version of the first book was published. I discovered from correspondence between Barbare and Rafiel that the publisher had for some reason forgotten to note the author, which earned him Barbare’s indignation.

Barbare Jorjadze’s *Complete Kitchen* was published for a third time in a slightly altered form, enriched with new recipes, by her daughter Manana Jorjadze-Gechtman in 1914 and in the foreword Manana mentions that Barbare had finished work on this version, but did not live to see it published:

“... my late mother was not satisfied with words alone and with her writing she sought to ‘propagandize’ among housewives. Among other things, she intended to create Georgian cooking – because she felt that health and wellbeing was fundamental to the success and life of the nation – and this is of course dependent on a good and healthy diet, on the other hand the proper preparation of food has great importance for family finances. An inexperienced housewife always uses up more ingredients, and isn’t even able to produce nutritious and wholesome food with them...”⁶

This is what my late mother had in mind when she set about establishing Georgian cooking. Every dish which is included in this book has been written down after being tried and tested personally.

.... My late mother intended to publish a third edition, but her death cruelly prevented her from doing so. The material she had prepared was left to me. Some of the material that had little importance for today, I left out, and added some European and Georgian dishes. In this way, I believe that a full and rounded cuisine will bring great benefit to housewives in our country.”

It’s important to note the fact that the first cookery book in the Georgian language was published in Saint Petersburg in 1818, and was written by Bagrat Bagrationi (or Batonishvili, meaning ‘Prince’). In the introduction to this publication, we read:

“In this book, the very best savoury dishes, sweets and drinks are presented, translated from the Russian for the children of my homeland, Georgia, since no such book existed hitherto in the Georgian tongue – I,

5. Barbare Jorjadze, *Georgian Cuisine and Well-Tested Housekeeping Advice*. Tbilisi, 1874, pp. 3-4

6. The Complete Kitchen, Compiled by Princess Barbare Jorjadze. Tbilisi, 1914 pp. 6-7

son of Giorgi, King of Georgia, Chamberlain of the Glorious Imperial Palace, First Class of the Order of Saint Anna and Second Class of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, the Cavalryman Bagrat. In the year 1818, City of Saint-Petersburg....”⁷

In the Russian Empire, a Russian-language cookery book called *Gift to the Young Housewife, or a Helping Guide in Reducing Household Expenditure* was published in 1861 by its author, Elena Burman-Molokhovets (1831-1918).

In Europe at the time, Elza Acton’s *Modern Cookery for Private Families* (1845) and Isabella Beeton’s *Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management* (1861), were already published and enjoyed great popularity.

Supposedly, Barbare Jorjadze would have been familiar with the books of Bagrat Batonishvili and Elena Burman, but we can’t say that their influence is of great importance, since in Barbare’s book, the focus is very much on Georgian dishes and condiments and the customs of home management important to women at the time. The cakes and sweets section is one small similarity to other books – of the 300 recipes offered here only about 20 belonged to Barbare.

In the 20th century, another female author emerged, Iulia Otskheli, who published her cookery book in Baku first in the Russian language, and later in Georgian in 1914.

Barbare’s *Georgian Cuisine and Well-Tested Advice on Housekeeping* is a valuable source of material for linguists, ethnographers, culinary specialists, botanists, sociologists and writers. In terms of the book’s composition, the language used reveals the intellectual interests of a creative individual as well as the desire to help other women. Many of the recipes found in the book have since been forgotten, and their promotion is a task of great urgency. It’s also important to compare contemporary Georgian culinary culture with that of Barbare’s time and to analyse the specifics of this 200 year-old history.⁸

Barbare’s epoch and georgian women

barbare was a young girl when her mother, Ana Amilakhvari, passed away and she was sent to be raised by a nurse – Dilavardisa – who had been entrusted to the Amilakhvari family by dowry. Thanks to her, Barbare learned reading and writing, embroidery, weaving, prayers, historical legends and

7. Bagrat Batonishvili. Book of Recipes. Saint-Petersburg, 1818 p. 1

8. Of particular interest in this regard is Rusudan Gorgiladze’s book *Food-worship, a Culinary Journey through Time and Space*, Tbilisi, 2012.

folk tales. When she was twelve years old, Barbare was married off to Zakaria Jorjadze. Barbare later told her friend, Mariam Demuria, about the church wedding ceremony:

“It was the custom at that time for women to be married off very early, and I was also so young when I got married, that I thought it was a game. Once the priest had finished the wedding ceremony, a bat flew into the church, and as soon as I saw the bat, I said to the priest ‘Father, Father, I beg you to be quiet. I think my canary just flew into church and I want to catch it!’ ”⁹

Her husband, Zakaria Jorjadze, was unable to adapt to the new times – the beginning of capitalist production after the fall of the feudal system of subsistence farming - and his land holdings went entirely to paying off his debts. Barbare was more or less alone with her three children (Mikheil, Noshrevan and Manana) since Zakaria was almost always off looking for a job and was working in different regions. With her insatiable desire for knowledge and education, Barbare consumed the extensive library that the Jorjadzes had at home. This tireless self-education brought about its own results, and her poems, plays, editorial articles, memoirs and stories appeared abundantly in the newspapers and magazines of the time. With the money she earned from this work and from the staging of her plays, Babare had enough money to feed her family.

During the 1870s Barbare worked for a while as a teacher. Her husband Zakaria Jorjadze worked in the village of Kakhi¹⁰ and took his wife and children there with him. This region, Saingilo, earned the special attention of Georgian educators, since the local Georgian population was at risk of cultural assimilation. During the 19th century, the region faced the additional threat of Russification, and so the opening of schools and the teaching of Georgian language was taken care of by both secular and religious figures. Barbare worked at the school in Kakhi for four years and wrote the following farewell letter to the local nature and women:

“Farewell, my beautiful and unforgettable Kaki! While it’s true, that I’m far away from your adorable face, your hills cloaked with green forests and your muddy – but sometimes mirror-like - Kurmukhi, your stream, your roaring watermills, your Church of Saint George and your immaculate school and you – Kakelo – brother of Kakheti! I’m telling you, I’m far away from everything that’s yours, Kaki, but my heart is still there with you! ... I’ve seen many comforting and discomfoting things, during these four years, and many of your sufferings....

9. Mariam Demuria, *Memoirs*, “Iveria” Newspaper, 1895, N91, p. 3

10. Now the territory of Azerbaijan, inhabited by ethnic Georgian Muslims

Our forebears say that learnedness is light, and unlearnedness is darkness. I think you’ve heard this many times. Therefore, strive after learnedness while there is still time! Don’t you see now how necessary it is? Don’t deny your children the simplest knowledge of literacy in Georgian! You remember well how Qasima, Kosta, Murada, Haji-Kauza, Agha Shirina, Alaverda, Rushina and others came to me in order to learn how to read and write? By day they would exhaust themselves with work, and by night they would assemble in the school! If your Mesta can send four of his children for schooling, why can’t you send just one of your children to school? While there’s still time and conditions are favorable, study and especially send your children to school. Haven’t you heard the expression: “live a hundred years, study a hundred years?”¹¹

In the 1870s, the “Society for the Restoration of Orthodox Christianity in the Caucasus” opened a two-grade school in Saingilo too, but they were better at facilitating ineducation rather than education.¹²

From 1889, a two-grade school for laity already existed in the village of Kakhi. In 1893, however, at the initiative of Father Leonide, a school for women was opened, where the female educator Sophio Konchoshvili-Kuloshvili worked from 1896. The Ingilo women called Sophio “chon deda” (‘Our mother’ in the Ingilo dialect of Georgian), since it was thanks to her that they studied beekeeping, the manufacture of silk, fruit and vegetable gardening and the care of children and bed-ridden and infirm women. The “Women’s Circle” that Sophio founded was a place of knowledge and freedom for women: thanks to Sophio’s example and friendships, the custom of child marriage and the betrothal of children, as well as the custom of the husband’s parents not speaking to their daughters-in-law were all ended, and the way was opened for an attitude of equal rights and equality for women in the family and in society at large.

The Imperial Russian policy of assimilationism became steadily stronger. Georgians were forced to oppose the Russian pincer movement, and this task was carried out clandestinely. In 1879, with the foundation of the “Society for Spreading Literacy Amongst the Georgians” and its founding charter, Georgian educators achieved permission for Georgian to be taught in schools and they began the work of creating Georgian language textbooks and their integration into the school system.

The role of the Georgian educator Iakob Gogebashvili was immensely

11. Korneli Kekelidze Georgian Manuscript Center, Barbare Jorjadze’s personal archive, Manuscript N 9974.

12. This Society functioned from 1860 to 1917 and was a buttress for Russian Imperial policy. It opened schools for ‘noble’ reasons, but banned the teaching of Georgian in them.

important in this regard. Firstly, he created the first school textbook of the Georgian language *Mother Tongue* and later wrote *A Door to Nature*, which gave children an introductory knowledge of the natural world.

Iakob Gogebashvili's *Door to Nature* (published from 1868 to 1918) was composed of natural science and literary parts. In composing the part on natural sciences, he used the works of the German scientists Alfred Edmund Brehm, Karl Christopher Vogt and Moritz Wagner. In the introduction to this book, Gogebashvili writes:

"The progressive and educated in the world are well aware, that knowledge of nature and submitting to its powers is one of the most central pillars of any nation's happiness, and of mankind as a whole. For this very reason, they give it a privileged position in the development of children - both in school, and in the home...

Until now, there has reigned a fantasy about the upbringing of the young generation. Subjects that stimulated the development and awakening of intelligence, and realistic exercises in healthy judgement, animals and nature have been totally forgotten by parents in our country during the upbringing and education of their own children.

Georgia's nature is so rich and diverse, that the nature of Europe does not even represent one half of it, but we know nothing of this rich natural world, thanks to the backward way in which we educate our children..."¹³

Barbare Jorjadze shared intensely in the learning process. In working on the creations that defined her life's work, I discovered that she had prepared a textbook, which would have been used to teach children the Georgian language.

Unfortunately, however, I could find no surviving trace of this textbook. I did, however, find a letter Barbare wrote to Rafiel, in which it is revealed that someone had published Barbare's work and the author was not specified.

"My dearest brother Rafiel,

I offer you many kisses, and I ask God to grant you and your family many years.

As they say, "it's better to work badly than sit doing nothing". I have also worked so much and put together a children's book. I ask you and beg you, my darling, first - of course - to put the finishing touches to the book and whatever you don't like, take it out ... when you've perfected it, then pass it on to Misha and if they'll like it, we'll have it printed..."

13. Iakob Gogebashvili, *The Mountains and Winds of Georgia*. Tbilisi, 1912 p. 3

Unfortunately, no trace of the textbook can be found. It's not in Barbare's or Rafiel Eristavi's archives, and it can't be found either in the Manuscript Institute or in any library.¹⁴

In the 1890s, a group of academics began work on an authoritative edition of the 12th century literary masterpiece, Shota Rustaveli's "The Knight in the Panther's Skin". As we discover in this correspondence between the two siblings, Raphiel was a member of this group, while Barbare wasn't. This situation is unusual, since Raphiel often sent Barbare parts of the poem for correction. Barbare was an eminent figure among those educated women who knew old Georgian manuscripts and literature, as was her mother, grandmother and many relatives. For precisely this reason she commented on the arguments that had arisen around Arthur Leist's German translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"¹⁵:

"...For Georgians it's quite unfortunate that our most famous poet Rustaveli's composition 'cherished from generation to generation', has been translated into another language as a mere fairy tale ... Our preeminent poet, whatever treasures he touches, pierces the heart and soul of the reader with feeling: on divinity, wisdom, munificence, on heroism and romantic love, on treachery, on the brilliance and customs of the time, on self-sacrifice for unity and brotherhood all demonstrated philosophically. Its content is not merely mythical heroes and monsters.

Anyone who looks into Rustaveli's poem must be a philosopher of the same standard as Rustaveli himself, otherwise how can a simple man get a feel for it? The commission was made up of translators whose role was to correct these errors, and yet it seems they've been unable to do so."¹⁶

But Barbare, exhausted by life, always had two confidants: nature and her brother Rafiel. This triune group is clearly evident in her poem 'Rafiel, My Brother' "

"I see the weather and the season turn into a prison:
They've buried me, tied me down, shackled me with a heavy chain,
My heart, light and joyful, has been filled with doubt,
Why have I become like an ignorant person trapped in a dream? ...
In the morning I arise and the azure sky greets me,
The burning sun, shimmering like gold, a winged creature,

14. Korneli Kekelidze Georgian Manuscript Center, Barbare Jorjadze's personal archive, Manuscript N 9971

15. Schota Rustaveli. *Der Mann im Tigerfelle*, E. Pierson, Dresden 1889.

16. Korneli Kekelidze Georgian Manuscript Center, Barbare Jorjadze's personal archive, Manuscript N 9971.

I seem to flee my lot in life and rise to the heavens,
I shall enter the cloud, and cover myself with this worry ...”¹⁷

Barbare’s feelings about the oppression of women and her sense of solidarity with them were strengthened by the vicissitudes and injustices of her own life. For this reason her plays (“What I Sought and What I Found”, “The Deceitful Mirror”, “Envy”, and “The Soothsayer”) deal extensively with the fate of women. Her short stories too are dedicated to this theme: “Tazo the Singer”, “Mariam”, and “Some Thoughts on the Current Situation”. For this reason she didn’t hesitate to criticize the views and opinions of famous and eminent contemporary public figures. She is the first female polemicist who dared to write a critical response to Ilia Chavchavadze, the prominent intellectual, who in 1860 brought up the topic of modernizing the Georgian language with the aim of bringing it closer to the people and who conducted a relentless battle against those who wrote in an archaic language that was difficult for people to understand. Many viewed Barbare’s letters as the campaign of a conservative, but this is not an accurate assessment. Barbare was simply saying that to completely destroy the “old” was damaging for culture and undermined the historical cultural fabric of the nation.

Barbare’s letter “A Few Words for the Attention of Young Men” is a manifesto against the oppression of women and was published in 1893, and called for men to stand in solidarity with their sisters, mothers and wives, since in the new age, society was in need of women’s work and creative activity:

“Certainly women’s nature has not been given much space, and when a woman becomes a mother, family duty falls on her shoulders. Before she is married, a woman should have an equal education and upbringing, allowing her to live her own life and also support her husband. Men in the family often see women’s work as having little value – they claim superiority and speak to her roughly. You have no intelligence, you have no heart or feeling, you don’t understand, you’re abandoned and ruined, you don’t have eyes to see. You’re ruthless, treacherous and if you are to be called a man, you must adore this creature in your midst: your mother, sister, wife and daughter....

But the talent and intelligence of these pitiful women still can’t be suppressed: even if she was not educated, in her town mother tongue she is still capable of insightful and clear deliberation and work. Who is the source of literacy and the spreader of reading and writing among us if not

17. Tsiskari’ (‘Dawn’) Magazine, 1861 (1) pp.126-127

the woman, while men are propped up on their weapons in defence of the homeland? If the rich Georgian language has achieved anything, it is only thanks to women...

But today, a new period of education and flourishing has entered our country from abroad. At least now our menfolk can turn away from arrogance and envy and give their own sisters an equal education and upbringing, so that modern women can make their own mark and render their own account. Though women of the past have no future but the grave, the achievements and work of the new generation of women will not flinch, if they set their minds to something.”¹⁸

Barbare Jorjadze’s life and work was an example to the women and young girls of her generation, encouraging them to take courageous steps in society and to fight for their own rights and creative freedom and to claim space for their own development. For this very reason all of her own friends, of her own age or younger, who saw her even once, celebrated her courage, attainment of knowledge and her indomitable aspiration for spreading knowledge and learning in society. Her example gave encouragement to countless women in future generations by encouraging them to claim their place in public life, and by fanning the flames of struggle and creativity within them.

Among the women of Barbare’s generation, a significant contribution was also made by Ekaterine Tarkhnishvili-Gabashvili, who sought to raise the educational level of women by opening a “Women’s Trade School” in 1895, which functioned until 1925. She was supported in this endeavor by Olga Guramishvili-Chavchavadze, Mariam Tukhareli, Olga Agladze and Ekaterine Melikishvili-Meskh. Apart from tailoring and sewing, girls at this school also studied painting, dance and the natural sciences. Girls who had mastered these professions went on to open similar schools in other cities, including Kutaisi, Gori, Akhaltsikhe and Poti. Ekaterine initiated the founding of Women’s Circles in Tbilisi, Gori, Telavi, Khoni and Kutaisi, where they held meetings with the aim of spreading the idea of women’s emancipation and shared information and knowledge with each other.

Within this educational movement, a significant role was played in spreading scientific knowledge about nature by youth magazines, which had female editors, publishers and staff:

The Georgian literary magazine “Tsiskari” (‘Dawn’) (1852 – 1875), edited

18. Barbare Jorjadze, “A Few Words for the Attention of Young Men”, ‘Kvali’ Magazine, 1893, N16, pp. 1-2

by Ivane Kereselidze; The magazine “Nobati” (‘Gift’) (1883-1885), edited by Andria Ghuladze; The youth magazine “Jejili” (‘Green Wheat’) (1890-1923), edited by Anastasia Tumanishvili-Tsereteli; The youth magazine aimed at young adults “Nakadula” (‘The Brook’) (1904-1927), which was edited by Elisabed Eristavi, Nino Zurabishvili, Mariam Demuria and Nino Nakashidze; The scientific and literary magazine “Kvali” (‘Trace’) (1893-1904), edited and published by Anastasia Tumanishvili-Tsereteli.

Women published their own short stories, poems, translations and editorial articles in these magazines and newspapers, which facilitated their creative development and the furthering of their social endeavors.

At the beginning of the 20th century, women were more courageous in founding educational and charitable organizations, of which several are worthy of our attention:

The “Georgian Women’s Society” founded at the initiative of Domenika Eristavi; Mariam Jambakuri-Orbeliani’s “Georgian Women’s Committee”; Anastasia Eristavi-Khoshtaria’s “Ganatleba” (‘Education’) and Nino Kipiani’s “Imedi” (‘Hope’).

These organizations collected money to fund the education of young people abroad and to assist poor pupils. Nino Kipiani soon founded the social and political magazine “Akhali Droeba” (‘New Era’), where many authors published correspondences and articles without receiving payment.

In 1917, Kato Mikeladze founded the “Kutaisi Women’s Inter-Party League” and published the newspaper “The Voice of Georgian Women”, which encouraged women to become more politically active. Kato was supported in this endeavor by her Georgian female forerunners, who contributed material for this publication, organized the publication of correspondence from the regions of Georgia, distributed the newspaper in their own towns and villages, and helped organize informational and educational meetings and lectures.

After the Bolshevik regime came to power in 1922, Ekaterine Gabashvili’s school was closed down, and every private educational and social initiative was banned. All those who were associated with the educational movement and spreading educational ideas were declared “undesireable elements” within the new “Soviet Motherland” and many of them were liquidated. Barbare Jorjadze’s grandson, Gabriel Gechtman and Ekaterine Gabashvili’s granddaughter Mariam (Maro) Makashvili, fell victim to the 1921 occupation.

Travel as a new form of knowledge and creativity/activity

The 18th century Georgian scientist and statesman Vakhushti Bagrationi’s work, *A Description of the Kingdom of Georgia*, which he completed in 1745, played a huge role in introducing Europeans to Georgia.¹⁹

This book is the earliest and most complete encyclopedic work of Georgian geographical science. Its uniqueness is based on the information the author gives on Georgia’s history, nature, people, customs and landscapes and the maps its author produced.

Trends in the development of cartography which started in 18th century Europe, also reached Russia. Vakhushti Bagrationi, who lived and worked in St Petersburg, conducted a thorough study of this topic and created a number of unique maps.

Thanks to the research of Marie Brosset, Georgian academics know that the German journal “Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift” was writing about these maps by a “Tbilisian Prince” as early as 1747:

“Many of these maps have already been translated from Georgian and Mr. J. Delisle is promising to publish them, which will introduce the mountains of Georgia, hitherto shrouded in mystery, to a European audience.”²⁰

The French astronomer and cartographer Joseph-Nicolas Delisle (1688-1768) published Vakhushti’s map of Kartli and plan of Tbilisi in 1745 in Paris, while in 1747; he published a map of Georgia and the countries between the Black and Caspian Seas.

It’s absolutely important to note, that one of the copiers of Prince Vakhushti’s maps is Mariam (Maia) Chikovani, a Georgian woman of letters and cartographer. Mariam copied the maps at the request of Ana, Queen of Imereti (the wife of King Davit). From 1809, Queen Ana lived in the Georgian colony in Peterburg where she worked on copying and distributing Georgian manuscripts.

Mariam Chikovani, it seems, followed Queen Ana to Peterburg and studied cartography. Marie Brosset considered that Mariam’s versions of Vakhushti’s maps hardly differed from the originals and were “a real treasure”.

Sadly, nothing is known about Mariam’s biography and further research is needed. Apart from that, further study is needed of Vakhushti’s maps, in

19. This work by Vakhushti Bagrationi was first published by Marie Brosset in 1845 in both French and Georgian, in 1854 by Davit Chubinashvili, in 1885 by Dimitri Bakradze, 1904 by Mose Janashvili, 1913 by Zakaria Chichinadze and in 1941 and 1977 by the Georgian Geographical Society.

20. Vakhushti Bagrationi, *The Geography of Georgia*, 1997, p. 36.

order to establish which ones are Mariam's copies and how they differ or stand out from the handiwork of other cartographers or from other maps published in Europe at the time.²¹

From the 1810s, many European travelers and researchers became interested in coming to Georgia in order to make enquiries into the country's nature and culture. They heaped particular praise on the country's nature. However, it must be said that women travelers went closer to daily life and 'women's culture' than men did and they observed every-day, traditional life with interest. For precisely this reason every female traveler describes customs relating to the position of women within the family, marriage, the raising of children and relationships with relatives, as well as the role of women within secular and religious rituals.

In 1811-1812, Frederika Freygang²² travelled through Georgia and Persia and in 1816 in Hamburg she published her book *Lettres sur le Caucase et la Géorgie. Suivies d'une relation d'un voyage en Perse en 1812*, which was translated into English in 1823 and published in London.²³ Frederika described the nature that she encountered on the journey between Vladikavkaz and Tbilisi, as well as the peculiarities of the Georgian language, literature, history, churches, Tbilisi's gardens, markets, climate, waters and cuisine. The author writes with enthusiasm about mineral, botanical and ornithological materials collected by the Russian statesman, historian and archaeologist, Alexei Musin-Pushkin.

Of particular note are Frederika Freygang's descriptions of marriage and mourning rituals, in which we find an intonation of clear sympathy towards the women involved, and a critical attitude towards the laws of custom and tradition:

"...The Georgians start families extremely early. As a rule, girls are usually married at the age of twelve and the boys at fifteen. It's not especially rare for girls to be betrothed while still in the cradle, but the young couples spend their childhoods apart. There's a rule that the future spouses should not know one another. The marriage takes place in the Church, according to the Greek rituals, the only difference being that the bride's face is covered by a

21. We have Marie Brosset to thank for the information we have on Mariam (Maia) Chikovani, but researchers have only recently begun to show interest in the female cartographer: Ruben Orbeli, Ivane Matureli and Grigol Zardalishvili.

22. Frederika Freygang (Frederika Afanasyevna von Freygang, née Kudryavskaya) 1790—1863 was the daughter of Afanasy Kudryavsky and Katarina Kryunes. Her husband was the famous scientist Wilhelm von Freygang.

23. *Letters from the Caucasus and Georgia: To Which Are Added The Account of a Journey into Persia in 1812 and an Abridged History of Persia Since the Time of Nadir Shah*, Translated from the French and Illustrated with Maps and Engravings, London, John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1823.

cloth. The groom doesn't even have the right to see her face. Marriages here are arranged, and do not occur according to the heart's desire...

Despite the fact that generally, a widow's mourning is considered an expression of love and closeness to her husband, in the case of Georgian women, much is incomprehensible. Today I attended the burial of a man. The wife, exhausted from wailing, sat for several hours by the coffin of her husband, not drying the tears that fell from her eyes, wailing and crying loudly, endlessly repeating the name of her husband, beating her chest with her hands and pulling out her hair. Her every action expressed grief and despair ... when they bury the deceased, the wife returns home and sits in the place where the coffin stood until the burial. Other women sit around her in mourning. No one speaks. This continues for a period of six weeks. To describe it in our terms, this is a kind of mourning quarantine. Perhaps you'll agree with me, this is an excessively long time and, of course, a genuine sense of mourning is lacking..."²⁴

Frederika was accompanied on her travels by her children: two year old Andreas and her baby daughter Katarina, who died in September 1812 in Stavropol region in the city of Georgievsk. Probably at that time many rebuked her and even now she deserves a lot of criticism for taking such young children on so long a journey to far away lands and, in so doing, displayed a shocking degree of recklessness. Frederika fell into agony and it was at that point that she returned to Moscow, when Napoleon conquered the city. In 1815, when Frederika and Wilhelm had a son, Karl, they moved to Saint Petersburg, where Frederika died in 1863.

The next of the female travelers to visit Georgia, chronologically speaking, was another Englishwoman, Ana Lister (1791-1840), whose journal is a unique artifact and - due to its use of codified language - is a frustrating source for many researchers even today. Ana kept a diary throughout her life, in which she described her everyday experiences, economic problems, lesbian relationships and impressions of her travels. She devoted four hundred pages of her diaries to her travels in Georgia.

The researcher Vivien Ingham considers that, in terms of her descriptions of Georgia, Ana's diary is an incomparable treasure, and is second in importance only to Oliver and Marjory Wardrop's writings and books.

According to the historian David M. Lang, Ana and her travel companion, Ann Walker, entered Georgia through the Dariali Gorge. In Tbilisi, thanks to the wife of the Governor Golovin, they were put into contact with people who would be able to help them with their travels. In her diaries, Ana men-

24. *Letters from the Caucasus and Georgia: To Which Are Added The Account of a Journey into Persia in 1812 and an Abridged History of Persia Since the Time of Nadir Shah*, London, 1823 pp.187-190.

tions Alexandre, Nino and Ekaterine Chavchavadze and the people of various status and social background whom she met and became close to. She also talks about daily life and the peculiarities of relationships, the prices of various goods and products and many other trifling details.

Researchers believe that her impressions from her six months of travel (February-September 1840) are interesting from a number of perspectives. Here we find research into travel and topography, architecture and archaeology, culture and religion and discussions about social, economic and military topics. Ana contracted malaria during her travels and died on 22 September 1840 in Kutaisi.

The works of Oliver and Marjory Wardrop on Georgia²⁵, and indeed, their entire life's work in popularizing Georgian culture, are an example of incomparable effort. For many years they worked for the return of Georgia to the bosom of Europe and for the renewal of dialogue between Europe and Georgia, which had been halted in the early 19th century by Russian Imperial policy. Oliver Wardrop was the highest representative of Great Britain in the first Georgian Republic in the years 1919-1921.

In 1888, Oliver published the work *The Kingdom of Georgia: Travels in a Land of Women, Wine and Song*. In addition to describing Georgia's history and political development, he observes the peculiarities of Georgia's nature, people, culture and language:

"...We left Vaziani, and soon passed through the prosperous German colony of Marienfeld, with its neat, homely cottages, shaded by fine poplar-trees. The vicinity of the river Iora makes this a very fertile spot, cool and inviting even in the middle of summer. A little before reaching Marienfeld we saw, on the left, the road to Telav, and the Kakhetian hills now seem to slope down very quickly to meet our road...

"...Our new home turned out to be a very delightful place, - large, lofty rooms, two balconies; at the back, vineyards and gardens stretching far down the hillside. The view was more beautiful than any I had ever seen or imagined. The house was built on the edge of a deep, narrow ravine, the steep sides of which were covered with vines and mulberry-trees..."²⁶

25. Wardrop Collection. Marjory Scott Wardrop. Mss. Oxford: Oxford Bodleian Library; Wardrop, Marjory Scott. *Georgian Folk Tales*. 1894; *The Life of St. Nino*, Oxford, 1900; Wardrop, Marjory Scott. *The Man in the Panther's Skin: A Close Rendering from the Georgian Attempted by Marjory Scott Wardrop*. London: *The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1912; Oliver Wardrop, *The Kingdom of Georgia. Travel in a Land of Women, Wine and Song*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, & Searle Rivingston, 1888.

26. Oliver Wardrop, *The Kingdom of Georgia. Travel in a Land of Women, Wine and Song*, London, Sampson Low, Marston, & Searle Rivingston, 1888 p. 73

In her own work, *Notes of a Journey in Georgia, 1894-95*, which is kept in Oxford's Bodleian Library, Marjory introduces Europeans to Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Mtskheta and Batumi and the situation of writing and literature there. She was very taken with Georgian hospitality, Georgian song and dance, the erudition of Bishop Gabriel of Imereti and his sermons, the poems of Ilia Chavchavadze, Akaki Tsereteli and Mamia Gurieli, and by the clothing and comportment of Georgian women. Marjory was also particularly fascinated by the ideas of the national epic, *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*- which she first encountered first thanks to her brother- and while still in London, she decided to translate it into English. The idea she most appreciated in this poem was the notion of equality, which is expressed in the phrase "The lion's whelps are equal, be they male or female". Marjory speaks of Queen Tamar and the period of her reign, to which Rustaveli's poem is dedicated. For this precise reason, Marjory believed that Georgia's closer approximation to Europe was absolutely necessary:

"...As is generally the case with people who live in mountainous terrain, the Georgians too have a talent for vivid imagination and they love poetry immensely. Here it's impossible for us to mention all the poets and poetesses who have become famous in Georgia, but we hope that English society will soon come to know the ancient and contemporary literature of this people, which is almost completely unknown to Western audiences, despite the fact that Georgia always strived more towards the West than towards the East. Already in the 11th and 12th centuries, their young princes went to receive their education in Greece and to this day Georgians try to receive their education in the West.

Apart from "Iveria", there are several journals and newspapers published in the Georgian language. There is the monthly literary and scientific journal *Kvali*, and *Meurne* is devoted to agrarian issues, there is also the children's journal *Jejili*, and religious journal *Mtskemi* and so on..."²⁷

Marjory had Georgian friends until the end of her life, to whom she sent books and newspapers and in return received material of interest to her. She also assisted young Georgians with their education in Europe. She had an unceasing correspondence with Dominika Eristavi, Elisabed Saginashvili, Olga Guramishvili, Taso Machabeli, Elene Tsereteli as well as Iakob Gogebashvili and Alexandre Khakhanashvili. Because of this tireless and exceptional love, Marjory's early death was marked with general national mourning in Georgia, where her memory, along with that of Oliver, is still very much alive. This is evidenced by the unveiling of a monument to them outside the Georgian parliament in 2015²⁸ and the pieces of research which relate to their work both in and for Georgia, which are widely disseminated in publications and public lectures by historians.

27. Taktakishvili-Urushadze, Leila. *Marjory Wardrop, Literature and Art*, Tbilisi, 1965, p.49

28. Created by the sculptor Jumber Jikia

The Belgian Carla Serena (Caroline Hartog Morgenstein – Serena, 1824-1884) travelled in Georgia in 1876-1878 and 1881. Not only did she describe nature and daily life in words, but she also included wonderful illustrations in her book which was published in Paris in 1881.²⁹ After her first journey, she regularly published articles in the French journal “Le Tour du Monde”, but being so enthusiastic about Georgia’s nature and people, she wanted Europeans to “see” it for themselves. Her Georgian friends promised to send her the necessary photographs, but they were unable to fulfill their promise. For this reason, Carla quickly studied photography in Vienna and in 1881 she returned to Georgia, and again visited those places she found interesting, taking photos along the way. Based on Carla’s photos, several painters produced illustrations.³⁰ Among them was the French female sculptor, Marcelle Lancelot’s drawing “A Restaurant in Gori”. Finally this excellent book was published. Georgians were pleased to act as Carla’s guides and they were always happy when she told her fellow countrymen about her travels in the country:

“In the last few days we received a visit from the eminent woman traveler Carla Serena, who came here three or four years ago in order to discover the Caucasus and write about it ... Mrs Carla Serena is travelling to visit Abkhazia in the coming days and after returning, she’ll go to Kakheti. Of course, our hospitable people will provide this indomitable woman, who confidently travels by herself in our country, with all the assistance she needs and in doing so, will be assisting their own country, since in any case it’s good that Europe gets to hear about our country and its people.”³¹

Carla Serena’s language, her range of interests and her attitude towards Georgians and Georgia is deeply impressive, and can be clearly seen in the sincerity of her writing, as well as the variety of her photographs. Carla is interested in, and introduces her reader to, the nature and farmlands of Imereti, Abkhazia, Samurzakano, Megrelia and Samtskhe-Javakheti, the architecture of religious and secular buildings, the houses of peasants and their daily life, the village schools and courts, churches and monasteries, dancing and mourning women; and the national dresses of Imeretians, Megrelians, Daghestanis, Svans, Armenians in Akhaltsikhe and the Dukhobors.

When reading Carla’s book, I found it very pleasant that she even went to Gremi and met the Jorjadze family. This is the family of the woman writer Barbare Eristavi and Zakaria Jorjadze. Apparently, these two indomitable women were unable to meet each other, since Barbare was in Saingilo

29. Serena, Carla, *Mon Voyage: souvenirs, Vol. I: De la Baltique a la Mer Caspienne*, Paris, 1881.

30. The illustrators were: R. Langlois, E. Ronjat, A. Sorouy, Taylor, H. Clerget, Y. Pranishnikoff, A. Ferdinandus, P. Fritel, E. Burnand, Marcelle Lancelot.

31. ‘Droeba’ Newspaper, 1881, N 220, p.1

during this period. Nonetheless, Barbare’s relatives received Carla with boundless hospitality:

“...One of this region’s most expansive princely estates belongs to one of the oldest noble families in the country – the Jorjadzes. Eniseli is distinguished by the fact that the region’s Chief lives there, not in a two or three storey house, as is the custom here, but in a large brick building, which is surrounded by a well-kept garden buried in flowers... One of the places that we visited was Gremi. Whatever time of year you see this old city (which they also refer to as the city ruins), it is always extremely impressive. Clearly before there were several markets here, and as for the ruins of the large building, they say that at one time an academy functioned here (currently in terms of education, the situation here is unequivocally alarming).”³²

From 1876 to 1885, Bertha Suttner, the Austrian writer and Nobel peace prize laureate and her husband Arthur Gundaccar von Suttner lived in Georgia.³³

Arthur Suttner is the author of several novels and stories about Georgia and the Caucasus. He also wrote articles about *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, which he published in 1884 in Georgian magazines and newspapers.³⁴

In her memoirs, published in 1909, Bertha devoted a considerable amount of space to Georgia. Here we find her impressions of travelling in Gordi, Kutaisi, Tbilisi and Zugdidi, of everyday life there and of the Georgian people. In Zugdidi, their host was Ekaterine Chavchavadze-Dadiani,³⁵ who met the couple and fell in love with them instantly. It’s worth pointing out the fact that in her memoirs, Bertha and Arthur talk about translating *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*, a task to which they devoted four hours every day. They were unable to hide their amazement at the greatness of Rustaveli’s epoch and of his pen:

“Translating this Georgian poem fills us with satisfaction. Before us was spread the world of the 13th century in this faraway land. This was a period which still makes Georgians proud, since this was the country’s Golden Age – the period when Great Queen Tamar ruled Georgia while Shota Rustaveli sang hymns before her, praising her greatness, her strength and her beauty...

Our translation of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin* was never printed, but we don’t regret the time that we spent working on it. Thanks to all of this and this history, with which we were enriched by our Georgian patriot (meaning their host, the writer Iona Meunargia – L.G.), we have entered into

32. *Excursions In The Caucasus From The Black Sea To The Caspian Sea: 1875 – 1881*, by Mme Carla Serena, Narikala Publications, 2016 pp. 151-152

33. Bertha Felicitas Sophie Freifrau von Suttner, maiden name Kinsky, 1843-1914.

34. *Rustaveli in World Literature: Book 1*, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, 1976, pp. 154-173

35. Ekaterine hosted and knew Ana Lister too, as well as Carla Serena. Carla devotes a special chapter of her book to this family and their history. Bertha also met Ekaterine’s brother Davit’s daughter Tamar, whom Bertha and Arthur also visited in Tbilisi.

the soul and essence of the Georgian people and their enchanting country, its history and literature, on which we spent so long.”³⁶

Bertha and Arthur met members of royal and noble families: the Orbelianis, the Tseretelis, the Bagrationis and the Chavchavadzes. They were also satisfied at having gotten to know the specifics of the Georgian people’s nature, customs and traditions, since they often attended weddings, funerals and baptisms with great interest.

At the end of her memoirs, Bertha mentions that, despite having spent some unforgettable years in Georgia, the couple looked forward to returning to their homeland.

Among the many travelers, researchers and alpinists who burned with passion for Georgia, the visit of Austrian alpinist, Cenzi von Ficker (Creszentia von Ficker-Sild, 1878-1956) stands out. Together with her brother Heinrich von Ficker, she took part in the 1903 expedition organized by Wilhelm Rickmer-Rickmers, which ended with them conquering Mount Ushba’s southern peak. After this event, Cenzi Ficker was nicknamed “Ushba Girl” (Ushba-Mädel), while Tatarkhan Dadeshkeliani symbolically presented Ushba to her as a gift. This is the text with which this gift was formalized:

“I, Nobleman Tatarkhan Dadeshkeliani, today present as a gift to the Innsbruck Fräulein Cenzi von Ficker, Mount Ushba, which is to be her property. This is an astronomical point 160 19’ 25“89/430 7’ 34“ 62 and the North, West and Southern aspects of this individual mountain belong to her. Ets-eri, Svaneti. 12/25 July 1903.

The certificate of presentation, according to which the Nobleman Tatarkhan Dadeshkeliani from Etseri hands Mount Ushba into the possession of the Tyrolian young woman Cenzi von Ficker, was prepared in the presence of the undersigned witnesses, [as well as] the Nobleman Tatarkhan Dadeshkeliani and is signed and confirmed by his stamp. Etseri, 12/25 July 1903.

Willy Rickmer Rickmers

Hubert Wagner

John Harrison Vigner

Frantz Scheck

Dementi Gerliani

Zurab Gurchiani

Tatarkhan Dadeshkeliani”³⁷

Who knows how many girls in Svaneti and the rest of Georgia have been

36. Bertha von Suttner, *Memoiren*, Carl Schunemann Verlag, Bremen, 1965 pp. 117-120.

37. The text of the presentation document is translated by Levan Bregadze from the archive version held by Deutsche Alpenverein.

inspired by Cenzi conquering the summit of Mount Ushba. The founder of the Georgian Mountaineering School, the female alpinist Alexandra Japaridze, would have been 7 years old at the time and, supposedly, she would have heard the news. Alexandra climbed Ushba in 1934 at the age of 39, while her forerunner Cenzi von Ficker was only 25 years old in 1903.

In 1923, Alexandra’s brother Simon died while climbing Mount Tetnuli. Alexandra dedicated her climb on Ushba to his memory. Alexandra was accompanied by the alpinists Alyosha Japaridze, Iagora Kazalakashvili and Gio Niguriani. There was only a short distance left to the summit when night fell and there was only enough space for one person to spend the night. Alexandra spent the night wrapped in a felt cloak and suspended from a rope, while the men turned back and went further down the mountain, returning the next morning. Alexandra’s recollections of this expedition would have been a great gift to Cenzi and all mountaineers who had wrestled with Mount Ushba:

“...The entire summit was visible, as if I could almost catch it in my hand and I could almost touch Elbrus. By night, they shone in a totally different light, like crystal towers on an icy ridge. Ushba was above and I already knew that tomorrow we would all be climbing to the summit and Simon’s dream would come true. This climb would be devoted to his memory. Here, in this abyss, one feels a real sense of respect for those who first set foot on Ushba, who climbed it or thought of doing so.”³⁸

In 1940, Alexandra participated in the most difficult traverse of the Central Caucasus, which involved climbing 22 peaks (including 12 of the hardest category). Alexandra was the first female alpinist in the world to complete this type of expedition successfully.

In 1945, Ushba “claimed” her beloved second brother Alyosha. But her soul continued searching. In 1948, she oversaw an expedition to the Betlemi Cave on the slopes of Mount Kazbegi and she left there for history unique items from the 13th century.

Together with her like-minded friend Mzia Eristavi, Alexandra spent many years devoting herself to educating young people and interesting them in alpinism. She worked tirelessly to introduce them to her own experiences and involved them in expeditions to various parts of the country.

Alexandra passed away in 1974. She is buried in Tbilisi in Vera Park next to her brother.

Captain Grigol Tsereteli met the Dutch female writer Odette Keun while he

38. Eka Aghdgomelashvili, Alexandra Japaridze, Heinrich Boell Stiftung’s (HBS) project “50 Women from Georgia”, see: <http://www.feminism-boell.org/ka/2014/06/13/alexandra-japaridze>

was in France.³⁹ This meeting over time grew into the closest friendship and mutual love, which awoke in Odette's heart a deep interest in Georgia.

Odette came to Georgia in 1920. She met the professors Akaki Shanidze, Ekvtime Takaishvili and others, and used their advice to plan a travel itinerary. Odette's guides were Davit Chavchavadze and Grigol Tsereteli.

Odette visited Kakheti, Guria, Pshavi, Khevsureti, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Lower and Upper Svaneti and Akhaltsikhe. Her interested eye and love-stricken heart fell readily upon the history of Georgia's cultural monuments (Alaverdi, Zarzma, Nikortsminda, Bagrati Cathedral, Erekle II's Palace). She was fascinated by the busy gardens and markets of Tbilisi, Telavi, and Kutaisi, and the reforms which she noticed in the regions of the young democratic republic:

"...One can already feel a certain progress in Lower Svaneti. The Menshevik government is already sending doctors to certain places and they are enlightening the village settlements. They distribute medicines and newspapers. However, finding teachers who would come to settle here is no easy task..."⁴⁰

Odette, for whom the idea of women's political participation was well-known and very dear, fatefully points out that in elections to Georgia's administrative units – the "Erobedi" ('local self-government')- and Parliament, women and men participated on an equal basis and both genders were guaranteed the right to vote.

When talking about Davit Chavchavadze (whom Odette called "Dodi"), she says the following:

"...Dodi, Lieutenant Nobleman Davit Chavchavadze...grandson of the last King of Georgia, Giorgi XIII and descendent of that famous Princess who was taken hostage during that epic battle against Russia..."⁴¹

It's clear that Odette was familiar with Anna Drancey's book *Les Otages de l'Imâm*⁴², which was published in Paris in 1857, in which the story of the 1854 Lezghian attack on Kakheti is described: Davit Chavchavadze's family's imprisonment, the hostages' life in Imam Shamil's serail and later their ransom. Anna too was taken hostage, since at that time she was governess to Davit's children.

39. Odette Zoé Keun, 1888-1978.

40. Keun, Odette. *Au Pays de la Toison D'or (En Georgie mencheviste independante)*, 1923, Paris, Ernest Flamarion, p. 266

41. Keun, Odette. *Au Pays de la Toison D'or (En Georgie mencheviste independante)*, 1923, Paris, Ernest Flamarion, p. 10

42. Anna Drancey's book (1832-1964) was published in 1978 in Georgia with the title "Shamil's Women Prisoners", translated by Murkhan Tavdishvili. The book was published in Russian in 1858 and 1859. A Georgian translation of the 1859 edition by Ivane Kereshidze was completed but never printed.

Anna Drancey describes the kidnapping in vivid detail, mentioning the attacker's cruelty, the difficult road to the mountain village where they were kept, daily life there and the process of being freed.

It seems the Frenchwoman had a particular interest in the relationship of Shamil's wives to their husband and to each other, and she felt a special sympathy for Shamil's third wife, the Kist Aminet:

"...Shamil tried hard to enforce equality between his wives and yet Aminet is the least happy among them – she must deal with a lot of hardship. Whenever the Imam is not at home, Ziadet treats her with greater cruelty: she constantly nags her, gets on her nerves and gives her the roughest tasks to perform. Aminet kneads and bakes bread in the shared kitchen, and this, when neither Ziadet nor Shuanet perform this work. Luckily, the Kist woman is helped in her work by her mother, Nanani, who is head chef and manages the kitchen."⁴³

Davit also took Odette to Tsinandali, to the very estate from which the Lezghians had kidnapped his parents and Anna Drancey.

Loaded with impressions, Odette said goodbye to her Georgian friends, and her intention was clear: to publish a book about Georgia in Paris and until then, she decided to gather the additional knowledge she needed for this work. Three years later, in 1923, Ernest Flamarion published Odette Keun's book *In the Country of the Golden Fleece: Travels in Independent Menshevik Georgia*, which was translated into English in 1924.

By this point, the Red Terror was already raging in Georgia. The Bolsheviks viciously punished everyone who didn't welcome their regime fervently, and in 1938, Odette's friend Grigol Tsereteli was shot.

Now, as I finish my article and read the foreword to Odette's book, her words almost reveal an odd premonition - one that suggests that future battles would be fought in order to regain that freedom that had been lost:

"...In February 1921, about two weeks after the international conference in Paris decided to recognize Georgia's *de jure* independence, under the command of Russian communists, the Red Army burst into Georgia. The Menshevik government managed to hold out for several days in the capital Tbilisi, on the outskirts of which, the entire Georgian military school contingent was killed in fighting.

After that the government headed towards Batumi through various cities, towards the Black Sea, and towards the end of March they left this port and went to Constantinople. The Georgian army, which was very short on commanders and weapons, was demoralized by the flight of the govern-

43. Drancey, Anna. *Shamil's Women Prisoners*, Publisher "Soviet Georgia", Tbilisi 1978 p. 79

ment after military operations near Tbilisi, and practically gave up fighting their numerically much-larger enemy. Georgia too was declared a Soviet Republic under Moscow’s control.

“...Russian Bolshevism is being entrenched in this glorious, liberal, enchanting and most chivalrous of countries, the people of which are blameless and deserve happiness more than anyone else. They are very deep in my heart”⁴⁴

It’s very odd that Odette never met Kato Mikeladze! This Georgian feminist, who in 1914 graduated from the Faculty of Social Sciences in Brussels and fought for the right of women to vote in Georgian elections, also lived for several years in Paris.⁴⁵

Kato Mikeladze’s greatest contribution is the fact that in the first parliament of democratic Georgia, in 1919, of our 130 deputies, five (3.8%) were women: Minadora Orjonikidze-Toroshelidze, Kristine Sharashidze, Eleonora Ter-Parsegova-Makhviladze, Elisabed Nakashidze-Bolkvadze, and Ana Sologhashvili. Of these women, only Kristine survived the repressions and then only because she hid herself in the library and- afraid of recalling the recent past- quietly studied Georgian historical documents and manuscripts.

Kato Mikeladze died in 1942 in extreme poverty, while her burial was attended by a mere handful of friends. Kato’s tombstone has been lost to us.

Women educated in Europe have played a huge role in realizing the idea of equal rights in Georgia, among them Ekaterine Melikishvili, Ekaterine and Olimpiada Nikoladze, Anastasia Tumanishvili and others, who realized the benefit this idea would bring to society and the state. Each one of them, with their special example and tireless work, served this idea and helped to implant it in wider society.

The ideas of emancipation, liberation, democracy and development were served no less by those European women whom we have spoken about above. By introducing Georgia and Georgians to European audiences, they gave stimulus to, and deepened, the process of bringing Europeans and Georgians together.

For women in contemporary Georgia, the ‘HER-story’ of this Georgian-European dialogue is a source of pride and inspiration, since it transcends physical and spiritual boundaries and gives us an example of how new spaces for learning and knowledge were discovered. This example inspires us to not shut ourselves into one space, to only listen to, share and understand each other’s voices, but to gradually move closer to a period of cultural polyphony both for us, and for all.

44. Keun, Odette. *Au Pays de la Toison D’or (En Georgie mencheviste independante)*, 1923, Paris, Ernest Flammarion, p. 7.

45. Kato Mikeladze’s education in Europe was funded by the Georgian philanthropists Petre Zubalashvili, Alexandre Khakhanashvili and the German Ekaterina Reiser.

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GEORGIAN NATURE THROUGH EUROPEAN EYES

LEVAN BREGADZE

Introduction

Ms. Natalia Orlovskaya, a researcher of Western European Literature, wrote in her book “Georgia in Western European Literature of the 17th and 18th Centuries”:

“The nature of Georgia and the beauty of its landscapes are rarely depicted in European literature in the 17th and 18th centuries. People arriving in Georgia were too busy with their own affairs, and were unable to find time to appreciate the beauty of nature (...). Travelers were more interested in the daily lives of local people: their dwellings, clothing and appearance.”¹

In our opinion, when speculating about why European visitors to Georgia during the 17th and 18th centuries - and before - showed little interest in the country’s nature, one must remember that the era in which nature was viewed from an aesthetic point of view had not yet arrived. The first thinker to draw the attention of Europeans to nature was Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and the Romanticists, inspired by Rousseau, started to assimilate the aesthetics of nature into their works. According to Giorgi Nadiradze (1902-1960), an eminent expert on European literature, “In the history of art and literature, the feeling for nature has perhaps never been so rich and intense as it was among the Romanticists In his notes, Novalis writes that ‘a landscape should be felt as if it were one’s own body.’ ”²

By the 19th century, this situation had changed dramatically. Europeans who arrived in Georgia paid a great deal of attention to nature, describing the country’s unique scenery and comparing it to the landscapes of other countries which were distinguished by their natural beauty. They looked for similarities and differences between the nature of Georgia and that of other places, and tried to communicate their delight in Georgia’s nature to others.

In this work, we will examine our country’s scenery through the eyes of European travelers, who recorded their detailed impressions in the books they wrote about their travels in Georgia. We will use materials published during the first quarter of the previous century in the German newspaper ‘Kaukasische Post’, in order to create a clear picture of how Europeans who visited or lived in Georgia perceived the country’s nature, and what influence it had on them.

1. Orlovskaya, Natalia. *Georgia in Eastern European Literature in the 17th to 18th Centuries*. TSU Publishing House, Tbilisi, 1965 p.40
2. Nadiradze, Giorgi. *Nikoloz Baratashvili’s Life and Aesthetic Universe*. Tbilisi: ‘Saari’ Publishing, 2010, p. 108.

Heaven on earth... a fairytale land the magical impression

“Our little land, blessed by God” (“...unser gottgesegnetes Ländchen...”): This is how Georgia was described in an unsigned editorial entitled ‘The Black Sea’ and printed in the 13 May 1920 issue of the Caucasus German newspaper, the Caucasus Post (“Kaukasische Post”. 1920, 4).³ This newspaper served a community of Germans whose forebears had settled in the Caucasus region from 1818 onwards, whose original destination had been Palestine, where they had hoped to reside close to the Tomb of the Savior. For various reasons, this original plan could not be carried out, although as we can see above, their descendants never had any regrets about their forebears’ decision to settle in Georgia.

This should not surprise us. One of the first words which European travelers mention when describing Georgia’s nature is the word “paradise”. For instance, the German author Arthur Leist, who made Georgia his second homeland (he settled in Tbilisi in 1885, died and was buried here), in the very first pages of his book “Georgia: Nature, Customs and Inhabitants” (1885) talks about the ‘natural paradise of Batumi’ („Batums paradiesischer Umgegend“)⁴, and while travelling by train through the mountains of Surami, he makes the following comment on his surroundings: “Those that have eyes must see, and those that have hearts must feel, the wonder of this natural glory. For an incomparable paradise is presented before you!”⁵ In a short story entitled “Varo”, the same author, describes Chiatura for his German readers: “All of Imereti is like a garden, but here in Upper Imereti, it feels like Paradise. Greenery erupts from every piece of land surrounded by mountains, seething brooks noisily find their way to the lowlands, and this magnificent scenery is illuminated by a cerulean sky.”⁶

Eduard Juon (1874-1959), a scholarly metallurgist and military officer who resided in Guria for about a year at the beginning of the 20th century (we will return to him later), wrote:

“Guria, located on the south-eastern slopes of the Caucasian mountains, sliding down into the Black Sea, is a paradise-like country. [...] This is a sunny country, where not only valleys and forests seem to be soaked in the sunlight, but also the lightly-built houses and gardens of the idyllic villages - and the inhabitants of this country more than anything else.”⁷

3. „Das schwarze Meer“. Kaukasische Post, 1920. 13. 05, #38, S. 4.

4. Leist, Arthur. *Georgien. Natur, Sitten und Bewohner*. Leipzig: Verlag Friedrich, 1885 p. 2.

5. Leist, Arthur. *Georgien. Natur, Sitten und Bewohner*. Leipzig: Verlag Friedrich, 1885 p. 7.

6. Leist, Arthur. „Varo“. Kaukasische Post, 1908. 25.03 (07. 04), #41a: S. 5.

7. Juon, Eduard. „Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“. Kaukasische Post, 1907.16 (29). 09, #14. S. 12.

The French scholar, archaeologist and traveler Amour-Auguste-Louis-Joseph Berthelot, baron de Baye (1853-1931), a great lover of Georgia, acquaints foreign readers with the Abkhazia region in his 1904 book:

“Once you travel to Abkhazia, where no comfort is available, and in the evening, arrive in Gagra, the land of fairies (au pays des fées), you will feel as if you’re in an oriental paradise (en paradis oriental). The new, original buildings shed an electric light onto the sea shimmering under the moonlight. The shadows glisten on the palms and exotic trees, the warm atmosphere is filled with the seductive scent of flowers.”⁸

Foreigners frequently use the epithet ‘fairytale’ to describe the nature of Georgia. Here is the scenery between Batumi and Tbilisi, seen at night from a moving train, as depicted by Arthur Leist:

“The train continues to steam through the plain, which is still beautiful, even though night is already falling and not slowly as it does in the North, but with haste [...]. Then the moon rises far behind the mountains and its silver shimmer pours onto this fairy-tale world (Märchenwelt) and again the mountains and meadows are seen in this magic sparkle.”⁹

The English writer Marjory Wardrop (1869-1909), together with her brother, the diplomat and man of letters Oliver Wardrop (1864-1948) contributed greatly to the translation and editing of Georgian literature (including “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin” and Sulkhan Saba Orbeliani’s “The Wisdom of Lies”) and, more generally, to the popularization of our country all over the world. This same epithet – fairytale- comes to Marjory’s mind as she describes the train journey from Batumi to Tbilisi:

“The train dawdled slowly from Batumi to Tiflis. However, for the tourist, this is more welcome than irritating, as it allows one the chance to see the most beautiful nature gradually opening up before one’s sight. The sky cleared gradually and a fairytale picture of this magnificent country was painted for us.”¹⁰

Only in fairy tales could one really see such enchanting gardens as one sees here, where all the seasons of the year are present in one space: trees blooming (spring), some heavy with ripe fruit (summer), and some ripe fruit falling (autumn). This is how Marjory Wardrop describes more scenery during the above-mentioned journey:

8. de Baye, Joseph. *In Georgia*. Translated from the French with introduction and commentary by Leila Maghradze. Tbilisi: Publishing House „Artanuji“, 2011, p. 134. cd. Baron de Baye. *En Abkhasie*. Paris, 1904 p. 44.

9. Leist, Arthur. *Georgien. Natur, Sitten und Bewohner*. Leipzig: Verlag Friedrich, 1885 p. 8-9.

10. Wardrop, Marjory. *Notes from Travels in Georgia*. Translation, notes and comments by Medea Abashidze and Gia Jokhadze. Tbilisi, 2012 p. 24.

“It seems like nature has forgotten winter here: plants are blooming in abundance. All of the seasons are merged together, creating a redolent scene: spring represented by violets, summer portrayed by the brilliant green leaves that embellish the trees, trying to compete with colorful Autumn, while in the far distance one could see icy mountain peaks somehow creating discordance among all this beauty”¹¹

Georgian nature also produced a sense of religious ecstasy among foreigners. The person whose impression we would like to present now, a German scholar, can’t exactly be described as a foreigner, since he, just like Arthur Leist, made Georgia his second home. His name is Karl Von Hahn and we will talk about this extraordinary person in more detail below.

Meanwhile we would like to present one fragment of Karl Hahn’s essay “Traveling by Foot from Tbilisi to Tusheti and Pshavi (Summer of 1890)”, which is the seventh chapter of a book entitled “From the Caucasus” („Aus dem Kaukasus“) published in 1892 in Leipzig. Magnificent scenery glimpsed during night and dawn was observed by Karl Hahn on the edge of Tusheti - a sight which filled this experienced man with a sense of religious veneration:

“Just above the village, we pitched our camp on a green lawn. In competition with our bonfire, the moon lit up the camp-yard, and from the neighboring forest the sweet rhythm of numerous nightingales was heard, a light breeze moved the tops of the tall beech trees, whose leaves mysteriously whispered to one another. A somewhat fresh night was followed by a glorious morning, starting with the singing of a thousand songbirds; the first rays of the sun broke through the millions of clear, large drops of dew. In such surroundings every day is a celebration of nature, a day of the Lord (ein Tag des Herrn), filling the soul with veneration (der die Seele zur Andacht erhebt).”¹²

Oliver Wardrop had a similar feeling when traveling to Kakheti by horse, using the oriental religious term ‘Nirvana’ to describe it:

“The fierce summer sun stood high in the blue arc of heaven; on my left were vine-clad crags; to the right, beyond the river, the white peaks of the mountain wall between me and Europe arose. But I thought not of Europe. I forgot kindred, country, humanity—everything. My horse and I were one, and we were merged in that great, living ocean of life—our Mother earth. My pulse beat in harmony with the heart of Nature her-

11. Wardrop, Marjory. *Notes from Travels in Georgia*. Translation, notes and comments by Medea Abashidze and Gia Jokhadze. Tbilisi, 2012 pp. 24-25.

12. von Hahn, Karl. „Aus dem Kaukasus“. Leipzig, Verlag Ducker & Humbolt, 1892 p. 245.

self, keeping time with the rippling rills, the whisper of the wandering airs to the leaves of the trembling trees. I had entered a blissful Nirvana, in which all consciousness of self was swallowed up in the soul of the world.”¹³

Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt (1819-1892), a German writer who resided in Georgia over the course of two years (1843-1845) in his renowned book *A Thousand and One Days in the East* (Berlin, 1859) presents magnificent images of Georgian scenery. He describes the magical effect that Georgian nature had on him with adjectives containing the theme of enchantment. Charmed by Abkhazian nature, he wrote:

“Favored too by the glorious weather we had to rejoice again during the first two days in all the enchanting (bezaubernden) views and magnificent spectacles of Nature which the coast of Abkhazia affords in rich abundance”¹⁴

While comparing the views of David’s mount (Mamadaviti) and Sololaki Ridge, the author notes:

“From the heights of Sololaki the eye rejoices in a prospect surpassing even that of David’s Mountain in magnificence. Thence one looks over the great plain of Didubeh and between the Mtkvari and the mountain ridge of Soghanlugh the most beautiful gardens of Tiflis and spread out below. But above all the Crown Garden itself (Kronsgarten: now the Botanical Garden. – L. B.) with its luxuriant vegetation and terrace-like slopes commanded by high walls produces a magical (zauberhaften) effect.”¹⁵

Georgian winter in dumas’ “adventures in the caucasus”

the most celebrated European who visited Georgia in the middle of the 19th century and then published his impressions of the country was the renowned French writer Alexandre Dumas (père). He traveled in the Caucasus and visited Georgia between 23 November 1858 and 11 January 1859. In 1859 he published his book *The Caucasus* in three volumes in Paris, in which he offered several magnificent depictions of Georgian nature.

13. Wardrop, Oliver. *The Kingdom of Georgia*. Translated from English by Merab Urushadze. Tbilisi, 2001 pp. 101-102., Oliver Wardrop. *The Kingdom of Georgia*. London, 1888, p. 85.

14. Bodenstedt, Friedrich. *Tausend und Ein Tag im Orient*. Berlin: Verlag der Deckerschen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei., 1850 p. 362.

15. Ibid. pp. 196-197.

The French writer wanted to travel from Tbilisi to Vladikavkaz and to stay there for a week – ‘I wanted to go through Dariali’. If we take into consideration that he wished for this in December, it is not surprising that he did not reach his goal. Heavy snow only allowed him to travel as far as Kaishauri. Snowstorms and landslides prevented him from moving forward and the author of ‘The Three Musketeers’ returned to Tbilisi, but not entirely empty handed: he brought with him the beautiful landscapes of mountainous Eastern Georgia. Listen to this, for example:

“If you come to Kaishauri, you have to stop and observe the surroundings, and you should definitely look behind you. Permanent snow lies on the ground, with the valleys of Georgia lying behind. I cannot tell you how the scenery looks in summer, but in winter it is sad and glorious. Everything shines white; the clouds, the sky, the earth. All of this is one giant space, an endless monotony, one tomb-like silence.”¹⁶

‘Sad and glorious’ (triste et grandiose) is an exquisite description of the snowy mountains of Georgia!

These words of a great writer are even more precious for us, as there are not many descriptions of winter scenes from mountainous Georgia in the 19th century written by foreigners. It is easy to guess why: foreigners tended not to visit mountainous areas of Georgia in winter due to the hardships of daily life there.

While in Poti, at the Phazisi (Rioni) estuary, the writer appeared to greet spring in the middle of winter, where he could only see snowy mountains from a distance:

“To the left there was the breath-taking spectacle of high snowy mountains painted in pink by the first rays of the sun - as if on the first day of creation. In addition, the forests on both sides of the river Phazisi became abundant and turned into thicket, where all kinds of birds and animals could be found.”¹⁷

Alexandre Dumas sailed into the channel uniting both estuaries of the Phazisi. This trip left an indelible impression on him, which he expressed in the following words:

“I have not seen anything more beautiful than this channel, even in winter.

16. Dumas Alexandre. *The Caucasus*. Translated from the French by Tinatin Kikodze, Ia Berse-
nadze and Giorgi Ekizashvili. Tbilisi. Published by Agora, 2009, p. 242. Compare Al-
exandre Dumas. *Le Caucase*. Montréal, 2006 p. 533.

17. Dumas, Alexandre. *The Caucasus*. Translated from French by Tinatin Kikodze, Ia Berse-
nadze and Giorgi Ekizashvili. Tbilisi. Published by Agora, 2009 p. 292

A path follows it on both sides. The beautifully-shaped trees are entangled into each other creating shade over the boats sailing through.”¹⁸

Georgian nature in an international context

after such impressions, European travellers tended to want to consider the aesthetics of Georgian nature, so to speak, in an international context, to internationalize it (to use a trendy modern term).

In Oliver Wardrop’s book *The Kingdom of Georgia* we read:

“There is no reason why Georgia should not become as popular a resort as Norway and Switzerland. [...] Georgia is as beautiful as both of these countries.”¹⁹

Now let’s listen to some earlier visitors to Georgia:

“The whole valley, where the Western and Eastern estuaries of the Rioni are joined, is one of the most beautiful places in the Caucasus, and I cannot recall seeing anything like it in Switzerland which would compete with its magnificence” - writes the German botanist and traveller Karl Koch (1809-1879) on the natural beauty of Racha.²⁰

Karl von Hahn is of the same opinion:

“In places, this landscape resembles Saxon Switzerland, but here, in the Rioni region, everything is more splendid (alles viel großartiger).”²¹

Max Von Thielmann, 1846-1929, the diplomat and traveller from Berlin, whose travel journal is considered one of the best literary texts of this genre, when viewing a ravine in Svaneti above Lentekhi, compared it to the beauty of the area around the famed River Ilse located in the mountains of Harz: “Both here and there, a roaring torrent rushes on-wards over jutting cliffs hemmed in by steep rocks, and through primeval forests of fir-trees; but the proportions here are five times greater than in the Harz mountains, whilst here and there a stray laurel bush calls to mind more southerly latitudes.”²²

18. Ibid.

19. Wardrop, Oliver. *The Kingdom of Georgia*. Translated from English by Merab Urushadze. Tbilisi, 2001 p. 25

20. Koch, Carl. „Reise durch Radscha“. From the book: *Reisen im Kaukasus. Berichte aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*. Herausgegeben und mit einem Vorwort versehen von Jürgen-Breuste und Burkhard Malich, 61-71. Leipzig: Koehler & Ameling, 1987 p. 67.

21. von Hahn, Karl. „Aus dem Kaukasus“. Leipzig: Verlag Ducker & Humbolt, 1892 p. 87.

22. Thielmann, Max. „Durch Svanetien“. In the book: *Reisen im Kaukasus. Berichte aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*. Herausgegeben und mit einem Vorwort versehen von Jürgen Breuste und Burkhard Malich, 146-155. Leipzig: Koehler & Ameling, 1987 p. 147.

A local guide took Thielmann and his companions to a mountain pass:

“Then suddenly, without any transition, (i.e. without any “introduction” – L.B.) a panorama (Schauspiel. – L. B.) revealed itself to our admiring gaze, the likes of which I have never witnessed in the Alps, notwithstanding all my expeditions amongst the glaciers. Before us lay the entire snow- and ice-bound range of the Caucasus—a gigantic wall some 140 miles in length, extending from the Tsebelda to the Terek—the peaks rising up like towers out of the chain, or like advanced bastions standing forth to protect it to the North and South. So enraptured were we with the grandeur of the whole scene, that at first we never thought of searching for the principal mountains, or of consulting our maps for that purpose.”

“[...] Free Swanethia, spread out like a relief-map, lay below us; on only one other occasion, from the Gimib Mountain in Daghestan, did I obtain an equally clear bird’s-eye view of a country lying beneath me.”²³

Thielmann considered Tetnaldi to be the most beautiful of all the mountains in the Caucasus, with its dazzling whiteness and graceful shape that reminded him of a mountain in the Alps called Jungfrau – “The Virgin”.

He mentions the Alps again, when writing about the view from the eastern side of the mountains of Svaneti (“it seems we could even see Kazbegi from there!”), saying that “such a view could be compared to any view in the Alps!”²⁴

And finally let’s look at the observations of Friedrich Bodenstedt, who approached the Caucasus from the North, at Stephantsminda, and expressed his admiration in an oxymoron:

“No European mountain chain presents in its entirety so overpoweringly beautiful a spectacle (so überwältigend schönen Anblick), as the Caucasus when it first reveals itself to the wanderer approaching from the steppe.”²⁵

Friedrich Bodenstedt uses a similar oxymoron when speaking of Kazbegi:

“Before me, gigantic Kazbek arose in awful beauty (in schauerlicher Schöne), that mountain sanctified by tradition and celebrated in song.”²⁶

23. Thielmann, Max. „Durch Svanetien“. In the book: *Reisen im Kaukasus. Berichte aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*. Herausgegeben und mit einem Vorwort versehen von Jürgen Breuste und Burkhard Malich, 146-155. Leipzig: Koehler & Ameling, 1987 pp. 151-152.

24. Ibid. p. 154.

25. Bodenstedt, Friedrich. *Tausend und Ein Tag im Orient*. Berlin: Verlag der Deckerschen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei., 1850 p. 41.

26. Ibid. p. 43.

The sport of the bravest and the sweetest verse of autumn

It’s quite natural for mountains to arouse a heroic mood in the human heart (remember the lines by Titsian Tabidze: “What shall I do with these gigantic mountains, / that light up even a dwarf as if an ogre?” - Tabidze 1985, 155)²⁷, but aesthetically enhanced hearing and vision can distinguish lyrical strokes or tones in the surroundings of these stone giants. This is confirmed by an article published in 1898 by Willy Rickmer-Rickmers, (1873-1965) a German alpinist, researcher and traveller, which was entitled “Ushba in the Caucasus” („Der Uschba im Kaukasus”).

But first of all, let’s say a few words about the author, who was ecstatically in love with the mountains of Svaneti, especially Ushba. He belonged to a group of German scientists and alpinists who, together with their sporting achievements, distinguished themselves in the field of Caucasian studies. Willy Rickmer-Rickmers tried several times to conquer Ushba. In 1895, his three attempts were unsuccessful, but in 1903, with four alpinists, he was able to conquer the southern peak of Ushba, which was a sporting achievement of global importance (the expedition was led by Adolf Schulze, later known as ‘Ushba-Schulze’ thanks to his achievement).

Let’s look at the lyrical landscape described by this alpinist, as seen from the slopes of Ushba:

“Summer is over. The forests on the slopes of Svaneti have become multi-colored. A rowan is lit up as if in purple flames. It’s a cloudy day. Light barely squeezes from the moving clouds. The grey towers of Becho glimmer in the mist [...]”.²⁸

And here, feeling powerless to depict the whole beauty of nature in words, the author addresses an imaginary artist for help:

„Oh, artist, if you can access my heart’s desire, then paint this picture of simplicity and defiance (das Bild von Einfachheit und Trotz), accompanied by the whistle of an October wind, as if a tender melody full of pain of separation, a wind covering mossy rocks with dank mist; and the silent rustle of the leaves quietly covering the forest ground.”²⁹

In this article, Rickmer-Rickmers tells the story of one of his unsuccessful attempts to summit the mountain - how he retreated back in the afternoon, realizing that he didn’t have enough strength to continue his way to

27. Tabidze, Titsian. *Verses, Poems, Prose, Letters*. Publishing house Merani, Tbilisi, 1985 p. 155

28. Rickmer-Rickmers, Willy. “Der Uschba im Kaukasus”. In the book: *Reisen im Kaukasus. Berichte aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*. Herausgegeben und mit einem Vorwort versehen von Jürgen Breuste und Burkhard Malich, 205-216. Leipzig: Koehler & Ameling, 1987 p. 206.

29. Ibid. pp. 206-207.

the peak... Climbing down is also very dangerous: "The ear listens to every sound with fear in this white, icy solitude. What if a rock falls down upon me now?"³⁰

But everything ends well, the proof being this poetic passage depicting the alpine idyll, which follows the words quoted above directly, in a new paragraph:

"The murmur of the spring in the evening near the tent on the green meadow sounds like dulcet music; how gentle is the calmness to which a tiny bird sings a vesperal song."³¹

The alternation between heroic and lyrical passages illustrates the rich spiritual world of the author of this excellent text.

Karl von hahn - a tbilisian researcher and aestete

this extraordinary person, as mentioned above, deserves a little more of our attention, especially considering the fact that his personality and work in the field of Caucasology have not been a subject of focus for some time.

The Tbilisi resident and German researcher Karl von Hahn was born in 1848 in the German town of Friedrichstal, not far from the city of Freudenstadt near Württemberg. He was educated in Germany, at the University of Tübingen, where he studied theology and philology. From 1872 he tutored the children of Grand Duke Mikheil Nikolaevich in Naples. In the same year, together with the family of the Grand Duke, he travelled to Tbilisi and stayed there for the rest of his life, making Georgia his second homeland.

From 1874, he began work in Tbilisi's gymnasiums (teaching ancient Greek and German languages). He acted as a principle of the First Tbilisi Women's Gymnasium (1906-1909). This deeply educated person was fluent in several ancient and modern languages; the scope of his scholarly interests was broad and covered the history of the Caucasus (particularly Georgia), geography, ethnography, linguistics and folklore.

Among his numerous works, we can name a book in two volumes entitled *Information about the Caucasus Found in the Works of Ancient Greek and Roman Authors*. He is the author of the research *A First Attempt to Explain Caucasian Geographic Names Using Tatar, Georgian, Armenian, Ossetian and Other Texts*. He translated into Russian a book by the Italian missionary

30. Ibid. p. 212.

31. Ibid.

Arcangelo Lamberti about Samegrelo. From 1879, he regularly organized expeditions to various parts of Georgia and then published the materials he obtained in scientific journals and even books. These include: 'From the Caucasus' ("Aus dem Kaukasus", Leipzig, 1892), 'Caucasian Travels and Studies' ("Kaukasische Reisen und Studien", Leipzig, 1896), 'Pictures from the Caucasus' („Bilder aus dem Kaukasus“, Leipzig, 1900) and 'New Caucasian Travels and Studies' ("Neue kaukasische Reisen und Studien, Leipzig, 1911).

He translated into German several Svan and Ossetian fairy tales and narratives and included them in the first book mentioned above.

He died in Tbilisi in 1925.

Karl von Hahn was a great lover of Georgian nature, and a great admirer of our landscapes. In describing Georgian nature, he used epithets such as herrlich ('Godly'), großartig ('great'), majestätisch ('majestic'), erhaben ('sublime') and unbeschreiblich [schön] (unspeakably [beautiful]).

But he is not happy only with exclamations of admiration! As an aesthete he observes nature, compares it to what he has seen before, tries to depicting the beauty of the scenery in words (and succeeds!)

In 1888, charmed by Gverishi Gorge in summer, he writes:

"Where the Rioni turns South, 40 versts from Kutaisi, there lies the Gverishi Gorge, unfortunately little-known even in the Caucasus, the most beautiful and splendid place I have ever seen in my life. Here, nature combines charm (Liebliches) and terrifying grandiosity (Schrecklich-großartiges) in one impressive (effektivoll) image"³²

A year later, he visited this place once again and elaborated upon his previous impression:

"We travelled to this magnificent area still delighting in and enjoying [...] the Gverishi gorge that I thought (last summer, from the first sight - L. B) was the most sublime (das Erhabenste) and beautiful sight that I have ever seen before. But now I have to admit that the Lajanuri Gorge is as splendid, if not more so."³³

The works of Karl Hahn are distinguished by the fact that, in addition to the general assessment of landscapes, they contain more detailed description of landscapes that make up different parts of Georgia's nature, specifically descriptions of plants, their shapes and colors.

32. von Hahn, Karl. „Aus dem Kaukasus“. Leipzig: Verlag Ducker & Humbolt, 1892 pp. 87-88.

33. von Hahn, Karl. „Aus dem Kaukasus“. Leipzig: Verlag Ducker & Humbolt, 1892, pp. 87-88.

“The closer we get to Kutaisi, the more the valley turns into a garden,” he writes, when descending into the lowlands and viewing the floodplains of the Rioni. He describes chestnut forests, blooming pomegranate groves, sprouting vines on ash trees- masterfully comparing them to green fountains:

“Wine even grows on trees here, so to speak, especially on ash. The vines entwine around the trunk, climb high up to the top and from there, their pliable slender runners fall, richly laden with grapes, like a fountain of green descending on all sides”

This detailed narrative about the scenery continues with a general acclamation of joy: “It is a great place (literally: ‘a great piece of land’)-This Rioni Land!” („Ein herrliches Stück Erde- dieses Rion-Thal“).³⁴

Karl Hahn was also attracted by the extraordinary power of the mountains. He begins an essay entitled “Walking from Tbilisi to Tusheti and Pshavi (Summer 1890)” in the following manner:

“From the balcony of my apartment in Tbilisi, located on the right bank of the Mtkvari on a slight elevation, in clear weather, a magnificent view of a part of the snowy ridge of the great Caucasus opens up, from which the two-humped Kazbegi protrudes as the undisputed ruler.”³⁵

It will come as no surprise, then, that this man was greatly fascinated with the landscape of Svaneti. Extended passages are dedicated to descriptions of Tetnuldi, Ushba, and Shkhara during the day and night and during clear or cloudy weather. In particular, in the essay entitled „Walking from Tbilisi to Svaneti Alps (Summer 1899),“ Hahn writes:

“An impressively beautiful sight now appeared before our eyes: the great ridge of the mighty Caucasus lying in a mighty semicircle about 80 or 100 versts. Just beyond it, one could see the mighty pyramids of Tetnuldi and Adishi with their huge glaciers, and nearby, the multi-peaked, irregularly-shaped Shkhara and then to the right and left an abundance of snow-capped peaks and crests. Far away to the left, the grotesquely-formed, broad Ushba raises its mighty horns to the sky, a mighty massif of mountains, and behind them, almost entirely covered by Ushba, there lies the still mightier Ialbez. [...]”

“Then the pyramids opposite us are enveloped in mist, while Ushba alone remains visible throughout the evening and presents itself to us in all pha-

34. Ibid p. 89.

35. Ibid p. 235.

ses of its colourful evening illumination. At the bottom right, deep in the valley of the Inguri gorge, there lies the multi-towered Uschgul.”³⁶

It’s worth appreciating that Karl von Hahn, unlike many foreigners in our country, knows the country he lives in. In every phrase of his works one can feel a genuine respect and love for this long-suffering country and its inhabitants, who – given the geopolitical peculiarities of their homeland- have rarely lived a peaceful life. In a very interesting piece entitled “From the Past of Tbilisi: From the Very Beginning to the Entry of the Russians” (published in the newspaper “Kaukasische Post” in issues 10-14 of 1909) he wrote:

“The location of the country is one in which two large military and trade routes crossed each other - one from East to West, from rich India to the Black Sea and to Europe [...] and the other, from South to North, [...] across the Caspian Sea, from Persia and Armenia to barbarian Scythians. This location is the reason why [Georgia’s] peaceful inhabitants have often been forced to raise swords instead of the plough to protect their property and households against foreign aggressors. This land, flooded by a stream of uninvited guests of all nationalities - Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Huns, Mongols, Turks – has become an arena of bloody and long-lasting battles.”³⁷

In 1912, the 40th anniversary of Karl von Hahn’s public activity was celebrated in the capital city. The newspaper “Kaukasische Post” covered the story in issue #4 of the same year, informing readers about the jubilee events:

“The anniversary celebrations started on 21 March at the First Gymnasium for Boys and finished with a banquet held at the Hotel Wetzel on 27 March. All of the teaching staff attended the celebration. There were a lot of welcoming and heart-warming speeches, as the highly-esteemed hero of the day was praised as a great teacher, an excellent scholar and a deeply religious, humane person for whom nothing human is strange.”³⁸

Professor Leon Melikset-Bek (1890-1963) starts a farewell speech dedicated to the passing of Karl von Hahn with the following words:

“Karl Hahn was one of the last representatives of old school of Caucasology, one of those veteran Caucasologists, who did not belong to any local ethnicity, but, having lived for a such a long time here and having travelled

36. Ibid p. 161.

37. von Hahn, Karl. „Aus der Vergangenheit der Stadt Tiflis, von deren Anfängen bis zur Ankunft der Russen“. Kaukasische Post, 1909. 25.10 (7.11), #10, S. 8.

38. „Zum 40-jährigen Amtsjubiläum Sr. Exzellenz des Wirkl. Staatsrats Karl v. Hahn“. Kaukasische Post. 1912.15/28. 04, #4, S. 10.

all over the Caucasus, it may be the case that they knew, appreciated and loved Caucasian nature even more than those of local origin.”³⁹

It hard not to agree with such a description of this brilliant man if one is well-acquainted with the scholarly and practical work of this great Tbilisi-an-German scholar.

Nature and politics

We have mentioned Eduard Juon, who compared Guria to Paradise in his memoirs “One year in Rebellious Guria” („Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“), published in Germany in 1907 in the magazine “Westermanns Monatshefte” and reprinted a few months later in three issues (## 14, 15 and 16) of the Tbilisian German newspaper “Kaukasische Post”.

Eduard Juon was a reserve officer and was summoned to military service in the Russian army, at a location on the Turkish border, on Mount Ararat, at an altitude of about two thousand meters above sea level. When the revolt started in Guria, the garrison units were deployed to the “Rioni Corps” of General Alikhanov, and immediately rushed to deal with the rebellion. This enabled Juon to see Georgia.

Then something amazing happened: the enemy became a friend and Georgian nature also played its part in this transformation, together with his origins, education and delight in the local population.

Let’s read:

“It was February of 1905 and the contrast between the local weather and what we had left behind had a magical effect. Although our garrison was deployed far South, a fierce winter was still raging there [...]. Yet here, in the beautiful Natanebi Valley, all the charm of spring revealed itself: the fields bloomed green, the philodendron was in flower, the acacia and magnolia were also putting forth gentle sprouts. The warm, humid air was laden with the scent of violets. This brilliant atmosphere made us forget all the hardships that are always present when moving major military units. The soldiers behaved like children: they were joyful, they sang and decorated the tents with blooming branches.”⁴⁰

Obviously, the people of Guria were well aware of the misfortune that they would encounter with the entrance of a punitive unit in Ozurgeti. As such,

39. Melikset-Bekov, Leon, K.P. *Chronicles of the Caucasus Historical and Archaeological Institute*, Vol. IV, 1926 p. 144

40. Juon, Eduard. „Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“. *Kaukasische Post*, 1907.16 (29). 09, #14 pp. 12-13

their aim was to negotiate peacefully with the military in order to convince them not to enter the territory of Guria and that it would be enough for them to camp at Natanebi.

And if they were able to achieve this goal, it was due to the merit of Georgian nature as well, which can clearly be seen from the above-quoted fragment.

In short, after Georgian nature fulfilled its “diplomatic mission”, the Gurians managed to persuade the army to stop at the border of Guria and not to move on to Ozurgeti.

“We arranged camps outside Natanebi, and for fourteen days we felt like gods in France”, wrote Juon. (The idiom “To live like God(s) in France” (Wie Gott/Götter in Frankreich leben) means to lead a carefree, comfortable life).

This two-week idyll was ended by the rebels’ murder of the conciliating judge, the nobleman Tipo Nakashidze, who was loyal to the government. Neither nature nor anything else could stand against the entry of the punitive military mission into Ozurgeti. Its arrival was followed by severe consequences for the population...

Eduard Juon won the favor and trust of the rebellious Gurians with his selfless labors for the benefit of the people; He proudly writes: ‘The author of these lines was one of the few who managed to establish contact with the intellectual circles of the town (Ozurgeti – L.B.) and I will always remember the time I spent with them with pleasure.’⁴¹

Again and again, Eduard Juon returns to descriptions of the beauty of Georgian nature. The sea also influenced him greatly:

“The sea was one kilometer away from our camp and I spent hours on its shores with pleasure, gazing at the water with admiration: this truly black, roaring element; troubled by frequent hurricanes, covered in dark storm-clouds on the horizon, it looked gloomy and frightful. Yet in summer, it’s absolutely different! The resort of Kobuleti is not far from here, where you can enjoy the colorful sunset known for its green and yellow tones.”⁴²

He tells of his pleasure at strolling around the romantic ruins of an old palace:

“How can I forget walking to the ruins at Likhauri cloaked in ancient, wild

41. Juon, Eduard. „Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“. *Kaukasische Post*, 1907.30.09 (13.11), #16 p. 11

42. Juon, Eduard. „Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“. *Kaukasische Post*, 1907.16 (29). 09, #14 p. 13.

romance, the history of which goes back to the beginning of Christianity? There were terrible stories told about these ruins in our camp: as if there were cellars full of arms nearby; in a yard near these ruins, the leaders of the movement took an oath, and a revolutionary secret tribunal gathered here, which delivered the death sentence to Nakashidze. [...] I didn't see anything but the grand, ancient ruins of a settlement surrounded by beautiful ivy, with thousands of bats dwelling there; while a magnificent view opened from its battlements onto the sea."⁴³

Let's look at one more paragraph in which politics and nature are entangled together.

At the fervent request of Vladimir Staroselski, the army withdrew from Guria. After that, the Republic of Guria was soon announced, which later was bloodily suppressed by the government. Eduard Juon learned from other officers that all of Chokhatauri and half of Ozurgeti had been burnt down. He wrote with sadness:

"The Russians brought cannons to a hill near the city where an old wooden chapel stood and from there destroyed half of Ozurgeti. I had spent many weeks on this sunny hill, laying on the grass and enjoying the beautiful views, gazing at the bright roofs blazing green. Some of my friends were executed by the military tribunal's verdict and many escaped to the mountains."⁴⁴

Now let's see how nature supported those who conspired against the government in the process of political agitation:

"Before 1905, Ozurgeti had not even seen the military", wrote Juon. "but Ozurgeti's solitary position, separated from the hustle of urban life, was used by the revolutionaries to turn this quiet town, buried in fruitful gardens and vineyards, into a citadel of revolution. The houses are located in the middle of the domestic land plots, with exotic gardens in between them. In summer, when the ivy, lianas and branches of roses cover the trees, the houses are no longer visible, especially since most of these houses are small in size and lightly built. This circumstance, incidentally, helped the agitators a lot. They quickly moved around the town and villages, going into houses to agitate for their ideas unnoticed. Since these houses hidden by green cover stood at some distance from each other, their actions did not attract the attention of the town's small police force. This is how the revolt was prepared."⁴⁵

43. Juon, Eduard. „Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“. Kaukasische Post, 1907.30.09 (13.11), #16 p. 11.

44. Ibid. p. 12.

45. Juon, Eduard. „Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“. Kaukasische Post, 1907.23.09 (06.10), #15 p. 11.

Here are a few words about the author:

Eduard Juon's grandfather- Simon Juon- migrated from Switzerland (Graubünden) to the Baltic lands under Russian control in 1830, while his father Theodor (Fiodor) Friedrich Juon settled in Moscow and founded a Russian insurance company. The author of these memoirs, Eduard Juon studied metallurgy and chemistry in Zürich and Munich. Just before the First World War, he was in charge of reorganizing metallurgy in the Urals. After the victory of the Bolsheviks, he lost everything and in 1919 he barely managed to escape to Sweden. In 1921, he returned to Russia, though soon left the country and acquired Swiss citizenship.

Eduard Juon was born in Moscow on 27 January 1874. His parents had nine children, of which he was the third. He was 31 or 32 years old at the time of his visit to Guria. He died on 16 June 1959 in Muri bei Bern, Switzerland.

The decision of the Kaukasische Post's editorial office in Tbilisi to publish Eduard Juon's memoirs, with its expressions of sympathy towards the rebels of Guria, was a brave step indeed for the time.

Nature and the economy

As paradoxical as it may sound, Europeans who made observations about Georgia often explained the economic backwardness of the country as being at least partially due to the fecundity of its natural environment.

In a description of the environs of Kutaisi, Karl von Hahn notes that nature provides everything in abundance and people don't have to add much to what is already given.⁴⁶ When travelling in the Alazani Valley, he pondered the logical results that follow on from this natural generosity.

According to this theory, the country's enormously fertile earth leads to the physical inertia of the population and, as a result, also leads to spiritual inertia, which is the cause of the economic backwardness of the country. However, he was also aware of other, more important reasons for this backwardness.

He writes that over the centuries, the Georgians have been in constant danger of physical extermination and were forced to protect both their faith and their property with the weapons in their hands against occupying enemies. He notes "It's in the very blood of these people to live like warriors, and incidentally, this is proven by their greeting "Gamarjoba!"

46. von Hahn, Karl. „Aus dem Kaukasus“. Leipzig: Verlag Ducker & Humbolt, 1892 p. 89

which is translated into German as “dein Sieg!” which means “I wish you victory!” („Ich wünsche dir zu siegen!). Also, note their greeting in the morning: “Morgen des Friedens!” (‘a peaceful morning!’) And in the evening: “Abend des Friedens!” (‘a peaceful evening!’). And if we [Germans] ask one another: “How are you? How is it going?” („Wie geht’s?, wie steht’s?“), a Georgian asks [another Georgian]: „Mit welchem Frieden lebst du?“ (‘Are you at peace?’)”⁴⁷

Eduard Juon also touches on this topic. As we have already mentioned he stayed in Guria for over a year; and he too draws attention to the paradoxical relationship between the fertility of nature and economic underdevelopment:

“Guria is an historical region, part of ancient Iberia, and the centre of Christian culture from the first years of the millennium. As an independent principality, it played an important role in trading with the people of the East, but as might be the case for the majority of countries so abundantly gifted by nature and fate, after the medieval period Guria could not maintain its important position. After numerous Mongol invasions (the author’s words! – L.B.) in the late 18th century, the country decided to seek Russian protection and became a province of Russia beginning in the 19th century.”⁴⁸

Eduard Juon considers this topic in even more detail:

“The wide, splendid dells are covered with fern. Nobody thinks of taking from the land more than they require for daily life; God will take care of tomorrow. Nothing is poorer than the daily meal of the Gurian: corn meal – the main dish – is tasty only when hot and is hard to digest even then; the wine, made from wild grapes, is sour. Abundant and versatile fruits are hardened and eaten by worms due to a lack of care and absence of gardening culture.”⁴⁹

Nothing is written about the more pressing reasons for the country’s poverty – such as national and social suppression – in the traveler’s notes.

47. von Hahn, Karl. „Aus dem Kaukasus“. Leipzig: Verlag Ducker & Humbolt, 1892 pp. 239-240

48. Juon, Eduard. „Ein Jahr im aufständischen Gurien“. Kaukasische Post, 1907.16 (29). 09, #14 p. 12.

49. Ibid.

Ecology – protecting the homeland

in 1912, a correspondence sent from Stuttgart to the editor of the Kaukasische Post was published in issue 17 of the newspaper, signed in “Yours Faithfully Dr. R.Z.” and dated 30 June 1912.

The writer speaks about an international ecological congress held in Stuttgart during this period, pointing to the beginnings of the ecological movement in Europe. The term ‘ecology’ was not used with the same meaning in that period, and instead, the correspondent uses the compound term „Heimatschutz“ – “the protection of homeland”. The Union for the Protection of the Homeland („Bund Heimatschutz“) was established in 1904 and it is one of the oldest organizations that works on environmental protection in Germany (in 1998 its name was changed to “Homeland and Nature in Germany” – „Der Bund Heimat und Umwelt in Deutschland“ e. V.).

In the correspondence from Stuttgart, we read that:

“In the idyllic Caucasus, you might be fortunate enough not to have heard of “Protection of the Homeland”. You might not even need it, since- as far as I know - industry has not developed there yet. The movement for the protection of the homeland is a direct result of industrial development, which destroys everything and for which nothing sacred: neither forest, nor lake, nor mountain, nor city wall. This industry builds factories and plants and residential barracks. We, the Western Europeans, have numerous examples of how the recklessness of man destroys our beautiful nature and the creations of our forebears. However, there are strong protest movements going on everywhere...”⁵⁰

These words sound like a warning even more than a century after they were published. Today, Georgia too is no longer an idyllic place from an ecologic perspective. Those times have passed, when Marjory Wardrop could barely conceal her admiration – on seeing the area around Motsameta Monastery- that “one could not imagine a more pristine and untouched image of nature.”⁵¹

Industry and human greed have suppressed nature. In order to avert ecological threats in the Caucasus region of today, it is absolutely essential to bear in mind- and learn from – the bitter experience of Europeans in this regard.

50. „Brief aus Stuttgart“. Kaukasische Post. 1912. 15/28.07, #17, p. 14.

51. Wardrop, Marjory Marjory. Notes from Travels in Georgia. Translation, notes and comments by Medea Abashidze and Gia Jokhadze. Tbilisi, 2012 p. 35.

In place of a conclusion

moritz Wagner (1813-1887), the German researcher and traveler (biology and geography were the main fields of his interest and he is famous for his fine descriptions of natural landscapes) offers the following description of the fields and valleys of Kazbegi:

“... I’m walking through these eye-catching fields and alpine valleys [...] decorated by a world of flowers (Blumenwelt) – so multicolored, so stunningly beautiful, so sweet-scented that I can honestly say, I have never seen mountainous flora like this anywhere before.”⁵²

We still have to discover the true value of the nature of our homeland.

Here as well, unfortunately, we rely on foreigners...

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TBILISI’S BOTANICAL GARDEN AND THE GERMANS WHO WORKED THERE

TSISANA GODERDZISHVILI & LIANA OSISHVILI

If we consider Tbilisi’s Botanical Garden as a unit, including all its territory and infrastructure, its flora and the scientific research facilities that were found there, and if we take even a cursory glance at its history, we can see clearly that, from its very founding, the Botanical Garden was an integral, living part of the city. and that it has been affected by all those historical events which have occurred in Tbilisi during the last few centuries of the city’s existence. The Botanical Garden too, has undergone periods of decay and periods of revival, just like the city and country in which it is located. The socio-political and economic trends of the times were keenly felt by the Botanical Garden too. There were times when the Botanical Garden and its unique collection of flora was literally razed to the ground, and its infrastructure destroyed, while later on, in the last century, its scientific activities were severely undermined or even halted entirely. At other times, things went very well indeed. This is precisely how it was in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries - a period when management of the Botanical Garden fell to its German caretakers. These Germans expanded its territory, developed its infrastructure and enriched the plant collection, while, in terms of scientific research, they laid the foundation for several fundamental innovations.

The river flowing through Tbilisi’s Botanical Garden in the Tsavkistskali Valley was already here during the period of Arab Rule in Georgia, and the presence of this river is the reason for the Garden’s unique microclimate. This is attested even by the existence of a channel built by the Arabs with the purpose of irrigating crops here, which was known in Arabic as ‘Sulu-Lakh’ and, in the opinion of several historians, it was this channel that gave the district of Sololaki its name. The Tsavkistskali Gorge was also known as Leghvta Khevi (‘Ravine of Figs’), while its lower part was called Seidabad. According to oral tradition, the area was usually covered by vegetation, among which fig trees apparently dominated, which gave rise to the ravine’s alternative appellation. From the late middle ages, this ‘outer part’ of the city formed part of the estate of the Georgian kings where the Palace Garden, full of beautiful and exotic plants, was laid out and called the “Royal”, “Castle” or Seidabad Gardens. The first reports of this Garden are to be found in the writings of French travelers and scientists, the oldest of which belongs to Jean Chardin, who, in his ten-volume narrative of his “Travels in Persia and

Other Countries of the East”, dedicates a considerable amount of space to descriptions of the beautiful gardens of Georgia and Tbilisi. He identifies the Governor’s garden as the largest. Writings such as Chardin’s are used by researchers as primary sources and, due to the fact that Chardin visited Tbilisi between 1672 and 1673, and the fact that trees and plants generally need around 35-40 years to mature, historians date the foundation of the garden to around the first half of the 17th century, specifically 1636. This is also attested by such important scientists such as the academic Niko Ketskaveli and the researcher of natural history Mikheil Shengelia. Of course, this date can’t be exact and this too is acknowledged, however, to this day the anniversary of the founding of the Botanical Garden is calculated from this date and as a result it’s also openly stated that Tbilisi’s Botanical Garden is the oldest garden to have this function in the South Caucasus.

After Chardin, the French botanist and physician Joseph Tournefort was the next to offer a description of Tbilisi, which is considered one of the best contemporary reports. At the same time, he was the first European scientist to begin the study of Georgian botany. Tournefort travelled to Tbilisi during 1701 and among other buildings, he visited the King’s Palace: “This palace is in that outer part of the city through which the road towards the Ottoman lands passes. The palace is interesting in the sense that around it are splendid gardens, which are much better tended than gardens in the Ottoman Empire. In this garden we were fascinated by one plant (patchouli), which has the same sort of leaves as the tobacco plant.”¹

However, a little later one, in 1768, Abbé de La Porte arrived in Tbilisi, and he was quite taken by the beauty of Georgian women and the “houses rising from naked cliffs”, as well as being fascinated by the city’s sulphur baths ² and the beauty of the palace gardens: “They showed us the King’s palace in Seidabad, which is constructed in an elevated place and it appears as if the palace’s surroundings are as beautiful as its interior ornamentation. One must also point out that large hillocks shut the gardens off downhill, while streams rush down above.”

However, this is already the Tbilisi of King Erekle’s time, “which is utterly distinguished in its spirit and appearance. Tbilisi used half a century of peace for those plans which it likely had in its own soul, but which misfortune prevented it from carrying out.”³ It was due to this misfortune and the

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1. Poliektov, Mikheil & Natadze, Grigol. *Tournefort in Tbilisi at the Beginning of the 18th Century* Tbilisi, 1930 p.29
 2. Gvatua, Nino. From the History of Old Tbilisi’s Sulphur Baths. Works of Tbilisi State Historical and Ethnographic Museum. Publisher “Soviet Georgia”, Tbilisi, 1966 p. 95.
 3. Morchiladze, Aka. “Tbilisi”. “Chemi Samkaro” (‘My Universe’) Magazine, (18), 2017. p. 46

difficult social and political situation in the city that the distinguished Georgian geographer, historian and cartographer, the illegitimate child of the King of Kartli Vakhushti Batonishvili (Prince Vakhushti), followed his father, Vakhtang VI to Russia and continued his scientific activities in Moscow. In addition to many other scientific achievements, a singular contribution to cartographical art during this period is Vakhushti’s plan of Tbilisi, which is chronologically the first of such plans (being dated to 1735). It shows Tbilisi’s location “before the Ottoman period” and is accompanied by nine columns of explanation which contain notes using Arabic numerals and Georgian writing. The Fortress gardens are labeled No. 51 on the map, giving unambiguous and clear proof of their existence. Before it stopped functioning in anticipation of the rehabilitation of its building just a few years ago, a copy of Vakhushti’s plan of Tbilisi was one of the most eye-catching exhibits in the Museum of the Botanical Garden, and it was from this point that museum staff would start telling the history of the gardens. Apart from the plan, Vakhushti Batonishvili also mentions the garden in his book, “The Geography of Georgia”, and he recounts a very short (but for researchers extremely important) episode, about how King Vakhtang VI had hyacinths transplanted from the mountainous valleys of Kechuti and Bolnisi, which ultimately did not thrive and which failed to seed. Subsequently, the discovery and research of several such reports allowed scientists such as N. Ketskaveli to surmise that, out of the three hundred or so gardens of the city, the King’s Garden was the main one to which plants were brought, even from faraway lands, and from which plants were subsequently distributed with the aim of their further proliferation in the country. This indicates that from the very earliest times, this garden had the function of a botanical collection.

After half a century of peaceful living, the city and its environs experienced disaster in the form of Agha Mahmad-Khan, who stormed into Tbilisi in 1795, plundering the city and slaughtering its population, razing it to the ground, burning and destroying everything standing and sparing no mercy, obviously, for the Royal Gardens. “Agha-Mahmad-Khan couldn’t kill Tbilisi, but he left the city writhing in agony.”⁴ As it turned out, the King’s Garden too was left writhing in agony, since there, after a short time, scarcely a few old plants and rare items could be seen.⁵ If we date the foundation of the garden to the 17th century, then this was the first and the longest period of misfortune in its whole history. The country which had been decimated by Agha Mahmad Khan’s cruelty was not brought much greater kindness by the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 19th century: the Georgian

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4. Morchiladze, Aka. “Tbilisi”. “Chemi Samkaro” (‘My Universe’) Magazine, #18, 2017. p. 35.
 5. “The Botanical Antiquities of Tbilisi”. Kavkaz Newspaper, #25, 1851 p. 2

monarchy was abolished, the country was declared a *guberniya* (province) of Russia and a Viceroy for the Caucasus was installed in Tbilisi. The Russian military command that had entered Tbilisi in peace was now charged with the suppression of the Georgian royal dynasty. The last Queen of Kartli-Kakheti, Mariam, in order to escape exile, first tried to flee to Khevsureti before murdering General Lazarev, who had come to take her away, with a dagger. However, she was unable to survive exile. Until then, however, in 1801 the Queen's distant relative, the supreme commander Pavle Tsitsianov, turned the Royal Garden, which had been in the possession of the Royal Court, into a state-owned garden and leased it to private individuals.

Very soon, from 1808, also at Tsitsianov's command, a pharmaceutical garden was planted here in order to grow medicinal plants, which were planted together with fruit trees. But against the background of dreary and harsh living conditions in Tbilisi at this time, the garden was never in a particularly good condition.

However, the year 1844 came around and the life of the city changed significantly; Count Vorontsov was appointed Caucasus Viceroy, born in Britain and raised there, he enjoyed an excellent education and possessed the rare flexibility to consider that respecting local traditions, and reviving cultural and social life was a more reliable method of pacifying the region than the whip and threats of a Siberian exile. These innovations also affected the former Royal Gardens. First of all, within a year of his appointment, in 1845, Vorontsov brought the garden into the possession of the Viceroy's Chancellery and officially gave it the designation of "Botanical Garden". His idea that the garden's territory should be filled with Caucasian plants outstanding in their beauty and medicinal properties, which would facilitate the development of horticulture in the entire region, proved hard to implement in the early years, which should come as no surprise given the fact that the garden was defended by only six crippled soldiers, and had only one gardener...

From 1864, Major Shemiota was appointed as Head of the Garden's administration, during whose period in office a greenhouse for coniferous plants was set up, and saplings were raised and distributed to various organizations across the Caucasus region. At the same time, the very best breeds of fruit tree were ordered from Crimea, while seven species of potato were imported from Hamburg. Things moved forward such that from 1849, the garden started distributing grapevine saplings to the local population too, free of charge. This was already the time, when the Russian Empire had European migrants brought over in order to spread western culture and develop agriculture and the economy. They arrived in Georgia

too, this being one of Russia's composite guberniyas. These migrants included Southern German colonists, whose compact settlements, "the German colonies of Georgia", were also quite economically powerful. It's well known that in these settlements, established in the environs of Tbilisi and in nearby regions, diligent Germans planted fruit trees and vineyards, which, until the 1860s, were intended only for their own use. Later on however, so large were their harvests that they expanded their production and were able to break into the export market for wine, cognac, vodka and liquors.⁶ It is only conjecture, but not outside the realm of possibility, that a significant role in this success was played by vine saplings obtained from Tbilisi's Botanical Garden. Moreover, during this period, the faithful practitioners of Russian Imperial policy, Major Shemiota, Lieutenant-Colonel Demonkal and the agronomist Deutschmann were managing the Botanical Garden. At the same time, the authorities were assisting the German colonies, building the settlers' homes for free, giving out sowing equipment and seeds, distributing garden and vineyard landplots and equipment etc. This supposition is also supported by the fact that during the period of Deutschmann's management (1856 and 1860) the Botanical Garden came under the purview of the Agriculture and Foreign Colonies administration, which further strengthens the likelihood of the Botanical Garden offering assistance to the colonists.

Despite a certain level of progress, the condition of the Botanical Garden during this period was still not a happy one. After Vorontsov stepped down from the Viceroyalty, the garden went through a "transition period", as it was later called by its managers.⁷ In reality, however, this turned out to be an altogether difficult time for the garden, when even its existence was called into question. On the one hand, the main problem was probably the fact that the garden was managed by non-specialists, while on the other, bad weather played an important part. If even the city's Yerevanskiy Square, despite being the main square of the city, could be absolutely inundated by run-off from spring rains that flowed from the slope of the Sololaki Ridge, it's easy to imagine what conditions must have been like on the Ridge's Southern slope where the Garden was located on the even tighter territory of the Tsavkistskali Valley. Within a period of around ten years (1846-1856) the garden was literally inundated several times by the swollen Tsavkistskali river, while in 1848, along with bad weather, the explosion of a military ordnance store in Narikala Fortress inflicted significant damage on the garden, which is detailed in a report written by Major Shemiota to the

6. Manjgaladze, Guram. *Germans. Ethnic Groups in Georgia*. Tbilisi, 2008 p. 260.

7. Works of the Botanical Garden. Vol. I. Tbilisi, 1895 p. 5

Viceroy in that year.⁸ The raging mountain flood of 1857 in the “Dabakhani Valley” (as the Tsavkisistskali Valley was also known) once again swept away the walls of the terraces, destroyed the greenhouse and carried away plants. The question was raised as to whether the authorities should be entirely rid of the Botanical Garden, as an unprofitable state institution and – along with Mushtaid Park – hand it over to the city authorities. This is what the newly-appointed viceroy Alexander Baryatinsky wanted, and in the same year he designated the Botanical Garden a recreational (гульбищный) park.⁹ By this time, the name “Botanical” had become inappropriate. On the background of life at the time in Tbilisi, when entertainers gave the city’s parks an air of gaiety and pleasure boats sailed on the Mtkvari River, the Botanical Garden, along with the famous gardens of Ortachala, quickly become a mere entertainment venue (principally for feasting). Truly unbridled carousing took place here: precious plant varieties were damaged and the remaining garden, already weakened by bad weather and left unattended, was dealt an even harsher blow.

Within a few years, the garden was renamed as the ‘Horticultural Studies Garden’,¹⁰ while in 1860, the institute was moved back to Kakheti and the garden’s former designation – ‘Botanical’ – was restored. Returning botanical status to the garden could have been helped also by the fact that, at the time, the recreational Alexander Park was already being designed and improvement works were also underway on Mushtaid Park. The time came when the Garden – so long neglected and passed between different designations and owners – was to experience the hand of seasoned specialists and decent caretakers.

During this period, in addition to German colonists, there were also a number of invited German specialists in Tbilisi who had already achieved significant success in a number of different spheres of activity. One of these invited specialists was Heinrich Karl Werner Scharrer (1828-1906), a learned horticulturalist, gardener and landscape architect, who was charged with overseeing the Botanical Garden from 1861.

In the same year that he was appointed at the Botanical Garden, serfdom was abolished in Russia, and three years later, in Georgia too and the workers who flocked to the city in search of their daily bread brought about the construction and expansion of the New Tbilisi. The Botanical Garden too should have followed the rhythm of a city on the move with

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. The Treasury Horticultural School was opened on the territory of the Garden in 1859 and was headed by Deutschmann.

the introduction of capitalism. This did eventually happen, but at the beginning of Scharrer’s administration, the development of the Garden proceeded sluggishly. This was due in large part to the limited financial resources available¹¹ and, principally, the fact that Scharrer didn’t have a lot of free time: at the same time he was occupied with managing the landscaping of the first European-style park – Alexander Park – and designing the Viceroy’s palace gardens from scratch. During the same period, he was also involved in setting out Borjomi Park and what is now Tetrtskaro Park and he had practically no time left to concern himself with the Botanical Garden. Soon, however, Alexander Park was opened (in 1865), the other gardens mentioned above were also finished and Scharrer himself could focus his attentions exclusively on the Botanical Garden. From 1869 onwards, financing for the garden increased noticeably and work got into full swing. Work was begun on propagating and acclimatizing some technical and industrial plants. Work was started on planting the Northern slope of the Sololoki Ridge with coniferous species. Despite the fact that 10 000 saplings were damaged by drought, this was the first attempt to carry out measures to increase the plant cover of the garden. During Heinrich Scharrer’s period in office, from 1872 to 1873, two small round-arched glasshouses were constructed, for which materials were bought from France. The glasshouses were given over to a collection of houseplants and Victoria water lilies¹², which delighted visitors. During this period too, the first attempts were made to study how plants adapt to new climates. They brought in both local and foreign scientists, as a result of which the garden’s collection of species was broadened and enriched. It’s worth noting, that Scharrer cooperated with 70 of the largest botanical gardens in the world and coordinated the work of other botanical gardens in the Caucasus region. By the end of 1875, there were 1 238 species of open ground and greenhouse plants in the Botanical Garden’s collection, and one could even see pineapple there. In addition, there were 134 varieties of rose. The first catalog of the Botanical Garden was created, which was published in 1887. At this time, the collections included 342 species of outdoor trees and shrubs, 2 205 species of perennial grasses and 3 406 species of greenhouse plants in total. The total number of species of

11. The total amount of funding for the park, including everyday expenses, the salaries of the gardener and guards and the cost of construction works, was never more than 700 manats per year.

12. A tropical plant which is found in the Amazon Basin, South America, the Victoria regias has leaves of two meters in length which float on the surface of the water and can support weights of up to 50kg. The flowers are up to 35 cm wide. In a greenhouse or specially-constructed pool, the plant can bloom in its very first year.

the Garden as a whole, however, was five times this number. All of this was arranged in flower beds on both large and small-stepped terraces and parterres - a layout which created an extremely beautiful view. Perhaps because of this attractive visual aspect, the garden became a favourite spot for Tbilisians and guests of the city to relax. The garden opened at 8 o'clock in the morning, and in the evening a bell was rung to alert guests that it was closing. Walking on the paths or in the outer parts of the garden was free of charge, while those wishing to enter the garden itself could buy a one-off or season ticket. In the same way, people used personal season tickets to enter the inner garden, which was separated from the outer territory by means of a circle of trees and a gate at the lower entrance from Botanical Street, the main entrance. The area was bordered to the north by Narikala Fortress, to the south by the Tsavkistskali River, and the West, by the territory between the museum and tunnels. Entry was not permitted to absolutely everyone: According to reports, inebriated or inappropriately-dressed people were refused entry, as were those who treated public property recklessly, or behaved rudely or tactlessly.

By carrying out his horticultural and construction oversight according to a strict German work ethic, Scharrer was truly able to lay the ground for the garden's future development.

In 1889, Heinrich Scharrer was replaced by Albert Hintzberg, who worked in the garden until 1898, and who diligently continued Scharrer's work in getting the development of the garden underway. During the period of Hintzberg's management, several new collections were created, such as the pine, spruce, lime, juniper and other trees laid out in the area between the museum and the waterfall in 1892. According to the 1893 report, the garden included 1444 species of plant from 124 different families. Moreover, while trees had been planted without proper order or consideration for geographical grouping during Scharrer's tenure, they were now planted together in individual plots in specialized sections, some arranged according to family and some according to climatic zone, which gave visitors a better opportunity to get to know the growing collections and to study them. Between 1891 and 1893, the following sections were established:¹³

1. The Caucasian Plant Section.
2. The Southern Plant Section, where plants from warmer climatic zones were planted in an attempt to study the process of plant

acclimatization. Researchers suppose¹⁴ that the exotic plant collection in this section formed the base on which the current historical arboretum was created.

3. The Bulbous plant section, where a collection of 300 local and foreign species of bulbs and tubers was displayed.
4. The alpine hill, for the display of plants from high mountain zones, where 70 plant species were planted in 1895.
5. The Evergreen Plant Section.
6. The Economic Plant Section (including medicinal plants, cereals, dye-producing plants, crops, vegetables and others).

However, these sections were in reality small plots of land that did not allow the growing collection of plant groups to be fully presented. For this reason, it was necessary to add new land plots to the southern display base in 1896. As a result, in this same year, three more sections were added to existing collections that were brought to a bigger area:

1. Water Plants of Foreign Origin Section
2. Saline Earth Plants Section
3. Saxaul Display Section.

Together with the inclusion of new areas of the southern display area, the first iron-pipe irrigation system was installed, which extended for half a kilometer. However, the weaker and shallower soil of the southern exposure turned out to be not quite suitable for the ecological demands of laying out and enriching the collections and it was for this reason, that once the work was hindered, the purchase of land plots from private individuals and the acquisition of pieces of land with better relief was started, on the other side of the Tsavkistskali river. In this way, the territory of the garden grew to up to 63 hectares. The network of paths through it was expanded and up to 5 km of iron irrigation pipes were laid in these new territories. For staff of the greenhouse and school, a brick house was erected. A brick house was built also on the Sololaki ridge, to house administration staff and specialists.

Alongside this horticultural work, during the period of Hintzberg's management, work began on some of the Garden's most important scientific research.

14. Gogolishvili, Mamia & Skhiereli, Victor. *A Short History of the Central Botanical Garden of the Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR*. Tbilisi, 1986 p. 16.

13. From the Botanical Garden's 1893-1895 annual reports.

Between 1889 and 1891, two more catalogs of open ground plant seeds and bulbs were published. At the same time, well-known botanists were invited to work in the garden and to study the flora of various regions of Georgia. Expeditions were carried out, mainly in western Georgia, and interesting works were created as a result of this research. One such work was Nikolai Albov's "Materials for the Study of the Flora of Colchis", which was published in the first volume of "Works of the Tbilisi Botanical Garden", along with other interesting articles by Scharrer, Timofeev and Speshnev. In 1895, the first steps were made towards establishing the first printing house at the Botanical Garden, which was an interesting start to the academic part of the Garden's history. It is no less interesting that specialists who worked with the Botanical Garden, in addition to purely scientific work, also spread their knowledge on issues of benefit to wider society. For example, one of these scientists, Nikolai Speshnev, who was the first researcher of phytopathology in Georgia, brought vine saplings from America to Europe, and from Europe to Georgia along with phloxera, vine mildew and ash. In order to dispense his advice and knowledge in this area, he set aside special days and hours to receive inquiries. Later on, he started giving lectures on this topic to those who were interest in it, at the Horticultural Society Meeting House. The March 28, 1899 edition of the newspaper "Iveria" reads:

"Today, 28 March, at the Meeting House of the Russian Horticultural Society's Caucasian Section (Golovin Ave, No. 45), from 1 in the afternoon, N. I. Speshnev will read his first lecture on harmful diseases in grapevines. There also, A. E. Klausen will read his third lecture on vegetable cultivation."

Such announcements are commonly found in issues of "Iveria" and "Tsnobis Purtseli" during subsequent years.

At the end of the 19th century, cooperation intensified between scientists and botanists working in Georgia and beyond. Their research was entered into the Botanical Garden printing house's third and fourth volumes of Collected Works in 1899. These published volumes of the garden's works were sent to individual scientists and specialists, as well as various botanical institutions in Russia and Europe. In return, the garden received their works and issues of their periodical publications. In this way, the foundations were laid for a collection of books which later became the Botanical Garden's Library.

During this period, despite many important steps forward, given that the leadership of the garden was sometimes assigned to one specialist, and then to another, the garden's organizational aspect was not yet optimally organized. Nor were there sufficient members of staff or a permanently-

engaged botanist who could lead both the practical and scientific activities of the Garden. Also, visiting specialists often had to combine their work at the Botanical Garden with responsibilities at other institutions.

So, in 1902, the leading botanist, gardener and conservatory staffer Adolf Christian Roloff was appointed as Director in a move that was aimed at improving the organizational side of the garden's management.

Adolf Roloff was born in Tbilisi on 25 June 1870, into a German family. It was also in Tbilisi that he graduated from the Realschule (Secondary School) that had opened only a few years ealier.¹⁵ Incidentally, the history of the Realschule system in Europe, was also closely linked to Germans: first Zemmmler in 1706, in the city of Haale (Germany), and then in 1753, the German clergyman Johann Hecker founded the Economic and Mathematical Realschule in Berlin. From the 1830s, thanks to private individuals, the network of these educational institutions expanded in order to enhance industrial knowledge. According to a decree issued in 1888, graduates of such secondary schools were able to enter institutions of higher education. Perhaps Roloff made use of this new opportunity, because it is known that he graduated from Petrovski Agricultural Academy in 1891, where the period of study lasted for four years.

In 1892, after completing his military service, Roloff returned to Georgia and worked as a teacher at the Kutaisi Agricultural School before being employed as an expert in the Caucasus Phloxera Committee. Over seven years from 1899, he became a leading specialist in the Department of Agriculture and at the same time was appointed head of the Botanical Garden of Tbilisi. From then on, over the course of twenty years, his work was directly connected to the development of the Garden. First of all, he traveled to different European countries to acquaint himself with the management of similar institutions, while from 1902, by this time having become the first Director of Tbilisi's Botanical Garden, he started work on improving the garden's organization. In order to achieve this, a number of fundamentally important measures were implemented.

In order to conserve local vegetation and to allow for botanical-geographical and ecological observations, reserve territories were set aside in the upper parts of the garden, which initially covered up to 30 hectares, and which was later increased to 60 hectares with the addition of newly-acquired land. About 800 species of plants were kept in these reserves, representing about half of all flora species found in Tbilisi.

15. In 1870, the first Realschule opened in Tbilisi, on the basis of which a Chemical Technicum was founded in 1922 and named after Petre Melikishvili.

In the upper part of these areas newly acquired by the garden, a new plant-nursery was set up, which was accessible via wide paths, capable of use by horse-carts, which were built through the pine forests there. By 1905, the plant nursery already covered 1.5 hectares and it contained both seedlings of economic importance (medical, dye-producing, essential oil-producing, etc.) and fruit trees, as well as decorative plants and other species essential for the Garden's collections. The Garden's plant nursery is still functioning in this area today.

Cooperation with various botanical gardens around the world continued to intensify, which meant that seeds and plant bulbs were being systematically sent to the garden. The number of new acquisitions for the collection through donations reached 78 by 1900. In addition, plant seeds were sent to schools, forestries and private individuals as gifts.

In 1899, a 27 metre-long decorative wooden bridge was built above the waterfall to connect the main garden to the newer territories on the other side of the river. In 1903, the construction of an iron-girded bridge over the Tsavkisitskali River was completed in the upper part of the Garden, which connected the Botanical Garden to the Kojori road. Even more important was the construction of a curved-arch bridge over the top of the waterfall (1914). With its distinctive, dramatic shape, it was one of the first reinforced concrete bridges of the early XX century. The bridge, together with the waterfall beneath it, came to symbolize the Garden. Two additional aqueducts were constructed and a network of footpaths was completed through the various collection beds.

A six-room workers' and gardeners' school building was constructed on the top of the Sololaki Ridge, while later on, close to the Administration building, a physiological laboratory and experimental greenhouse, accommodation for visiting scholars and scientists, a five-room residential building for workers and others buildings were added, such that during the period of Roloff's management, a total of 14 residential buildings, a laboratory, museum, herbarium and other structures were built, along with 4 greenhouses.

Before the appointment of Roloff as Director of the Botanical Garden (that is, until 1899) the collection of plants arranged on the southern slope of the Sololaki Ridge covered only 2.5 hectares and was arranged according to the so-called geographic method. By 1900, however, they started arranging new collections on the right-hand slopes of the Tsavkisistskali River. This required the construction of two new water-supply systems. The first was constructed before the arrival of Roloff in 1899-1900 and was supplied from the Tsavkisistskali River below Shindisi. It brought water to

the right-hand side of the valley, partly through an open ditch and partly through clay pipes, all the way to the plant nursery, where it was gathered in two small pools. Later on, however, a second system was constructed using reinforced concrete pipes. In this way, these new areas were arranged such that the collections could be laid out here according to the new method, which remains the dominant method in use in the Botanical Garden today. Roloff brought in two general principles for arranging plants - the floristic and the specialised. A Caucasian Flora (living flora of the Caucasus) section and a Turkestan Flora section was created at this time, as was the Eastern Transcaucasus Deciduous Forest, the Trees and Shrub collection, a cedar forest, pine forest, mediterranean sclerophyll trees and shrubs garden. Coniferous trees were planted, Iranian and Central Asian desert and semi-desert saline-earth plants collections were created, as was a pomological garden and more besides.

One of the first of these was the Caucasian Plant Collection, which was first planted in 1899 and by 1916 comprised more than 2000 species of plant (almost half the total number of Caucasian flora). Next was the Eastern Transcaucasian broad-leaf tree and shrub collection, for which 7500 holes were dug and filled with forest soil. Fully-grown plants were brought from the forests of Kojori, Betania, Mtskheta and Lagodekhi. At the same time, in 1900-1901, the Central Asian and Iranian saline earth plant collection was being laid out on the Narikala Fortress Plateau, around the ruins of St Nicholas Church, the aim of which was to introduce plants from the deserts and semi-deserts of Iran and Central Asia to the climatic conditions of the Transcaucasus and to study their potential for adaptation. Special attention was paid to studying the biology and ecology of sand-stabilizing desert plants. In addition to this, there were expository plots where up to 50 species of desert, semi-desert and saline-earth plants were cultivated.

On the right-hand slope of the Tsavkisistskali River, close to the waterfall bridge, from 1900 onwards, the Mediterranean ever-green sclerophyllic and tree and shrub collection and the coniferous trees collection was planted, while in the central part of this latter collection, a decorative pool was built with flower beds, surrounded by spruce, fir, cedars calocedrus, cypress and juniper trees.

A little later on, in 1911, up to 200 species of live plants were brought from Turkestan and planted above the plant nursery, laying the foundations of the Turkestan Plant Section.

During the Period of Roloff's management, the first ever pomological garden in the Caucasus was created, the main part of which was laid out on a one hectare plot on the territory of the plant nursery between 1900

and 1914. Some of the fruit trees, however (almond, mulberry, walnut and others) were planted along the paths and around collection beds, such that the fruit tree grafting garden contained as many as 500 varieties by 1916, which in the very same period were described in the fruit tree catalogue published by the Garden. In order to test and spread these new varieties, fruit plant collections were brought together in various regional-geographical sections and experimental stations outside of the Botanical Garden: in Bakuriani, Sevan, Qarayaz, Bobokvati, Sakara and elsewhere. The establishment of these geographical sections and test stations was one of Roloff's most important initiatives, and as a result of this development, the Garden's applied scientific research was significantly enriched. However this was a later development, and before this, the establishment of several scientific sections, a laboratory and offices was already well underway, which made Tbilisi's Botanical Garden one of the largest scientific institutions in the country. This, perhaps, should be considered one of the greatest achievements of Adolf Roloff.

Later on, one of the first mycological offices was created. After the abolition of the Caucasian Phyloxera Committee in 1909, the fact that Adolf Roloff himself had been a successful expert on this committee could well have been the reason for the transfer of the mycological laboratory to the Botanical Garden and the continuation there of the study of mycoflora on cultivated plants. As for the Garden, this served as a basis for the creation of scientific offices and led to the invitation of several scientific researchers. Soon after, in 1911, an Entomological office was created too, and a Cultivated Plants Defence Section was added to the Mycological office, where research was carried out to identify fungal diseases and insect infections in cultivated plants; to study the biology of harmful fungi and insect fauna in both natural and laboratory conditions; to establish the damage done to agriculture by fungal and insect infections and to develop and spread effective solutions to combat them. Valuable collections were gathered here from across the Transcaucasus, on the basis of which hitherto unknown families and species of fungi and insects were identified and described.

During the same period, in 1911, in order to raise new varieties of plants, improve existing ones and develop methods and technology for hybridization, the Plant Selection Section was created in a specially-constructed greenhouse. Its first objects of study comprised fruit cultivars, cereals and other agricultural plants, while later on, this section's interests expanded to include the identification and study of important plants for agricultural use from among the natural flora of the Transcaucasus. The position of Botanist-Flora specialist was set up especially for this reason while the section itself was later named the "Selection-Florist" Section and

collection plots, fruit and forest cultivar grafted plants, plant nurseries and plantations were added to it. Later on, within the same section, an Arable Farming Office was opened, which was a pioneer not only in the Russian Transcaucasus, but also in the entire Caucasus region, in establishing a new area of the botanical sciences - the research methods of geobotany. The natural composition of meadows was studied here, as was their agricultural significance, something which allowed for the identification of concrete methods to improve pasturelands and hay meadows.

Apart from the activities mentioned above, in 1912 another greenhouse was constructed in the garden for physiological experimentation, which only a short period before (in 1911), was led by the established plant physiology laboratory. Among other general interests, one of the laboratory's priority areas of scientific research was the study of plant resistance to frost and drought.

During the next two to three years, several scientific sections and laboratories were added to the existing ones, including:

- Spore-producing Plants Section (1914) which studied the spore producing flora of the Caucasus and published its research in "Mycotheca Caucasica";
- Medicinal Plants Section (1916), which was in the first instance made necessary by the outbreak of World War One and which studied local medicinal herbs and the methods of collecting them.
- Meteorological Section, which functioned as a weather station until 1915 and which later became a scientific department and studied the climate of the Caucasus, worked on agricultural meteorological issues and also cooperated with Tbilisi's Physical Observatory, which printed the Botanical Garden's scientific materials of a meteorological nature in its own reports.

Scientific work was expanded even further in the garden's Caucasian Flora Herbarium, where, by 1904, samples of 7 662 different species of plant were kept. The main research areas of the herbarium's scientific staff included the various families and genres of Caucasus flora, study of the various botanical and geographic regions of the Caucasus, as well as research on the Garden's live collections.

In addition to the Herbarium, another factor which facilitated the Botanical Garden's scientific work was its library and museum, for which the foundations were laid during Scharrer and Hintzenberg's periods managing the garden, and which had previously been housed in one of the historical

towers of Narikala fortress and in modest rooms in a brick building in the central part of the garden. During the period of Adolf Roloff's management, however, these facilities changed location several times, and each time they occupied more and more space. Finally in 1914, the herbarium, museum and library were housed in a specially constructed two-storey building on the Kojori road. By 1915, the library's collection included 4 753 titles in 11 000 volumes on systematic floristics, plant geography, dendrology, physiology, agriculture and other topics. The museum, meanwhile, contained up to 10 000 items and often took part in exhibitions abroad. The exhibits here included items from both the Caucasus and various countries of the world, and they were often the subject of scientific study and research.

As mentioned above, the academic side of the Botanical Garden's work was further strengthened by the foundation of its geographical sections and experimental stations and the applied scientific research which was carried out there.

At Roloff's initiative, the first geographical section, the Bakuriani Botanical Garden, was founded thanks to historical happenstance. During this period, the mineral waters of Borjomi were at the center of attention and there was significant interest in the Borjomi Gorge area. In this gorge (gifted to, and governed by, Mikhail Romanov, the brother of Emperor Alexander II), several important changes had taken place. Among other developments, a narrow-gauge railway had been laid between Borjomi and Bakuriani. This railway, known as the "Kukushka Train", facilitated the development of the high-mountain botanical garden on the slopes of Kokhtagora Mountain in 1910. In the first place, however, the initiative had a scientific basis, because there had long existed a need for such a facility in order to study the growth and development of plant life in the climatic and soil conditions of high mountain areas – this alpine and high mountain botanical garden at Bakuriani, 1 750-2 000 metres above sea level, was the first such botanical garden created in the Russian Empire. Although the section initially covered 12 hectares, around three years later it had grown to cover up to 98 hectares. In the very first year, a four-room house was built here for the specialists and they immediately set to work on creating scientific and experimental collections to study the flora of the Northern High Mountainous parts of the Lesser Caucasus as well as the introduction of exotic trees and shrubs into the Caucasus high mountain regions with a view to distributing them further.

Apart from scientific work, which could have brought significant benefits to the local population of the mountain regions, the Botanical Garden was involved in other important events in Bakuriani. Apparently the Botanical

Garden and its manager Kozlovsky hosted amateur skiers who arrived at the settlement. The first Georgian skiers were brought here by the newly-arrived Giorgi Nikoladze,¹⁶ who quickly set about popularizing winter sports and the development of Bakuriani's ski slopes.

Within a year of the foundation of the Bakuriani Geographical Section, in 1911, close to the Transcaucasus Railway's Qarayaz station, the Qarayaz (Gardabani) Section was founded, where methods of planting vegetable and technical cultivars were developed, fruit varieties were tested and early-ripening varieties of fruits and berries were spread. For this purpose, several trial plots, plant nurseries and vegetable plots were set up, as well as a "Caucasus Pomological Garden", which was transferred to Tbilisi Botanical Garden in 1914. A short while before, the workers' and gardeners' school had been transferred from Tbilisi to Qarayaz. Within just one year of the establishment of the Qarayaz Section, the Gogcha (Sevan) High Mountain Section was opened in Armenia, on the north-west shore of Sevan Lake (near Sevan Village), 2000 metres above sea-level. Apart from the study of the flora of the South Caucasus, significant attention was paid to applied scientific research and to studying the acclimatization of medicinal plants, local varieties of cereals and exotic trees and shrubs, as well as the selection of vegetable cultivars for the high mountainous regions of Armenia and phytophenological observation.

In addition to the Gogcha Section, a Colchian Section was established near Kobuleti (Bobokvati Village) and, just as the flora of the South Caucasus was the object of research in Gogcha, in Bobokvati, the aim was to study the flora of the Western Caucasus. A colchic forest reserve was also maintained here.

Along with geographical sections, during 1911-1916, Roloff oversaw the creation of several experimental stations. In the Aghstafa Experimental Station (1911), in Azerbaijan's Aghstafa Region, plants used for feeding cattle were studied. In the Mughanlo Experimental Station on the Mughanlo Plains (Azerbaijan, near Sabirabad), there was a coniferous plant nursery. In Ozurgeti (1914), Ajameti (1915) and Zugdidi (1916) Experimental Stations, research was conducted on grapevine, fruit and cereal cultivars.

Within a few years of the arrival of Adolf Roloff at the Botanical Garden, the institution's scientific achievements, which stretched across the entire length and breadth of the Transcaucasus and involved not only a large geographical area but also a wide range of scientific interests, was comprehensively united in the Botanical Garden's academic publications.

16. Son of the Georgian public figure Niko Nikoladze, mathematician, metallurgist, co-founder of the Georgian Geographical Society and sportsman.

The “Scientific Works of the Tbilisi Botanical Garden”, which was started during Hintzenberg’s time at the Garden and which ran to 42 volumes before the Sovietization of Georgia, was actively published during Roloff’s period in office. A significant part of it- 38 volumes- was published at this time and generally consisted of monographs and long articles. In 1905-1918, another printed publication came out, the “Bulletin of the Tbilisi Botanical Garden” (48 issues), in which, among other materials, shorter articles were published, along with annual reports on the work of the Garden and primary descriptions of plant species. Before leaving the Garden, in 1919, Roloffs founded, at his own initiative, another periodical publication of scientific works “Records of the Applied Scientific Sections of Tbilisi Botanical Garden”.

During his time as director of the Botanical Garden, Adolf Roloff always had far too many organizational and administrative issues to deal with. During this same period, he was also involved in the development of Batumi Botanical Garden, the Sochi Station, Nikitsky’s Garden (Crimea) and Baku Botanical Garden, however, despite this, he himself never stopped carrying out his own scientific work and he authored several works during this period. As a researcher, he was interested in issues of acclimatization, horticulture and vegetable farming, but he was especially fascinated by the wild flora of the Caucasus. This fascination, in addition to his great works and effort, was demonstrated most clearly in his important monograph “The Wild Plants of the Caucasus, their Distribution, Characteristics and Uses”, which was published in 1908. This publication is interesting for a number of reasons, and together with its purely scientific approach, the author also gives it a pragmatic importance. In the introduction, Roloff, as a huge supporter of the local population, expresses concern about the fact that people had too little knowledge about the use of wild plants, while the little knowledge that did exist was slowly being lost. In his opinion, this knowledge could be of immense use and benefit to them. On the other hand, he expressed concern that minor traders, who had enriched themselves by selling important plants, didn’t appreciate local collectors and were guilty of falsifying plants on the market. On this topic he gave a particular recommendation: “As well as getting to know the appropriate time and rules for gathering wild plants which are of use to the general population, the authorities should be using their specialists to directly assist in correctly passing on products to interested farmers and at the same time, should be implementing measures to eliminate falsification on the part of middlemen, who often not only don’t help the development of this or that area, but actually hinder it.” It’s easy

to see just how colossal the task was of bringing this book together, especially considering that it describes hundreds of wild plants, gives their purposes and rules of use and at the same time, in addition to the latin designation of the plant species, names are given in every possible language and dialect, which had been gleaned from literature or else gathered from locals during countless expeditions. For this reason, the book is not only an invaluable work of botany, but is also of immense value for other areas of scientific inquiry. For example, while the names of plants given here are useful material for linguistics, they are also cited by others in order to define the origins of ethnic groups,¹⁷ to say nothing of the importance of this data for pharmacology and medicine.

The famous scientist, Roloff’s contemporary and colleague, Professor Dimitry Sosnovsky, wrote of him that: “He is always lively and busy, and he knows how to select staff and to appreciate their work. Everyone with whom he comes into contact is unknowingly infected by his brimming and boundless energy. To those specialists and workers who have the right attitude, he comes forward with every initiative to assist them. He is capable of winning hearts and making people love that institution to which he has devoted two thirds of his entire scientific and organizational career”¹⁸. It is thanks to these human qualities and organizational skills, that during his period as director, the garden attracted some genuinely outstanding scientific staff, many of whom remained there until the end of his period as manager. Among them were two Germans, Evgeni (Georg) König and Alexander (Son of Alfons) Grossheim.

While he was still head of the Garden, before being appointed as Director, Adolf Roloff invited Evgeni König from the Caucasus Museum. The Caucasus Museum, which had been founded for the second time by another German scientist, Gustav Radde, by this time (in addition to four other departments) also had a Botanical Department in which Pastor Hohenacker’s large herbarium of Caucasian plants could be found, along with the naturalist Christian von Steven’s collection of Georgian oaks and Friedrich Bayer’s collection from Armenia, Daghestan and almost all of Georgia, including some species of plants hitherto unknown to science. Evgeni König worked here as a conservator. At the same time, however, the collections of live plants in the Botanical Garden’s scientific floristic departments became so developed that it was necessary for this department to be supervised by a

17. Tavadze, Bidzina. “VIVAT HISTORIA: Or What the Names of Plants Tell Us About the Aboriginality of the Apsua-Abkhaz People in Georgia.” *Georgia Newspaper*, 2003, #10-11, p. 3.

18. Loria, Maia & Kereselidze, Jimsher. *Adolf Christian Roloff and the Tbilisi Botanical Garden*. Tbilisi, 2001 p. 10

professional and specifically phenological observations of the crops grown at the Garden also became a priority. In order to fulfill these important functions, König moved over to the Botanical Garden, which meant that he substituted work with one German scientist, Gustav Radde, with cooperation with another, Adolf Roloff.

Apart from phenological observations at the Garden, König soon began expeditions in the Kars district in 1903, an area previously unstudied by floristics. The reason for this was, that by 1902, the Garden had in its Caucasian plant collection herbarium specimens from the Western, Eastern and Northern Caucasus, from the Yerevan and Elizabetpol *mazras* (districts), from Lenkoran, Qarabakh and Daghestan, but they had not managed to find any specimens from the region bordering Asia Minor, which would have been of great importance for scientific research. König's travels to Kars added many new and extremely interesting herbarium specimens to the floristic department, creating a wealth of material for study. The Herbarium collection, gathered by several staff members and filled as a result of König's travels, could no longer fit into its original single room. For this reason it was moved, together with the library and museum, several times, as has been described above.

In the following years, between 1905 and 1906, by this time already in the role of Assistant Conservator, König made several more trips to the Kars District. Kars at that time was a boundless treasure trove for botanists due to its location at the meeting point between the Caucasus and Asia Minor regions. After each expedition, the scientist brought back new and invaluable botanical treasures. As a result of these excursions undertaken by König and other staff members to different parts of the Caucasus, when the assembled specimens were processed and examined, so much new data was collected for scientific articles and writings that it was decided to start publishing the "Bulletin of the Botanical Garden", which has been spoken about above.

The results of Evgeni König's phenological observations were also published in the pages of the "Bulletin of the Botanical Garden", which he edited in parallel with the study of the garden's wild and cultivated plant flowering and fruit-producing processes. Even if we take one of his articles, "The Effect of the 1905-1906 Winter on the Cultivate Plants of Tbilisi's Botanical Garden",¹⁹ it's easy to get an idea of how diligently König approached his activities and how scrupulously he undertook his work in the Garden every

single day. This, of course, didn't escape the attention of the observant Adolf Roloff, who in 1914 appointed König to the position of Conservator.

During the same period, Alexander Grossheim also joined the Garden's staff. He was born in 1888 in the Ekaterinoslav Governate (now the Dnepropetrovsk District) in the village of Likhovka, into the family of a veterinarian. Like Roloff, Grossheim also received his education in a Realschule. While still at school, he became interested in the natural world and, thanks to a botanist teacher, he became involved in excursions and the collection of a herbarium of plants, which he continued after finishing school. These same specimens later became the foundation of his scientific work.

In 1907, Alexander Grossheim enrolled in university first in Kharkov, then later in Moscow, and upon graduating in 1913, since, as a student, he had become interested in the flora of the Caucasus, he decided to start working as a trainee at Tbilisi's Botanical Garden. During this period, thanks to Roloff, scientific work was already well underway across the whole of the Transcaucasus meaning conditions were perfect for Alexander Grossheim's interests to be fully awakened. In 1914, he was appointed as a botanist-floriculturist, and he dedicated the rest of his life to the study of the plants of the Caucasus. Grossheim travelled around Georgia and every region of the Caucasus, and brought back live specimens of coniferous plants, grasses, bulbs and seeds filling the already-established (by that time) Caucasus Section with unique specimens, making Tbilisi's Botanical Garden popular throughout Europe. The scientific work that Grossheim started in Tbilisi's Botanical Garden was reflected in the foundational works he published later: "The Flora of the Caucasus" (Vol. 1-4, 1928-1934), "An Analysis of the Flora of the Caucasus" (1936), "The Plant Resources of the Caucasus" (1946), "The Plant Cover of the Caucasus" (1948), "A Guide to the Plants of the Caucasus" (1949) and others - books which are just as relevant to the field of botany today as they were when they were first published.

In the Botanical Garden, the period during which Germans were at work (and consequently, the period during which the Garden developed), was gently approaching its end. In time, Georgia would be annexed to the Soviet Union. However, even before that, the Garden experienced considerable difficulties. With the onset of the First World War, the finances available to the Garden started to dry up, though despite this, new sections and offices continued to open, the number of staff increased and scientific work continued. In 1918 the troubled political situation in Tbilisi also shook the garden considerably. During this period, Adolf Roloff

19. Bulletin of Tbilisi Botanical Garden (4) Tbilisi, 1906 pp. 32-38

finally left the position of Director²⁰ and for a short time remained at the Garden as a consultant. With the sovietization of Georgia, however, after working in a number of public positions for a short time,²¹ he continued his pedagogical work – something to which he had always dedicated great energy and time during his period overseeing the Botanical Garden.²²

After Roloff's final departure, leading scientific staff also left the Garden, among them Alexander Grossheim, who went first to Baku and continued his work there, before finally moving to Peterburg. After the soviet invasion, he no longer played a role in the work of the Garden, and neither did Evgeni König.

Along with the haemorrhaging of staff, the garden ceased functioning and publication of its research stopped. New building projects were stopped. Even the tunnel couldn't be finished, the planning of which was begun in 1901 according to the newspaper "Iveria"²³ and which was cut into the Sololaki ridge in 1909-1914 in order to connect what was then Bebutov Street to the Botanical Garden via the shortest route possible.²⁴ The very survival of the garden was put under question, since certain plants, the fruit garden, the Turkestan and Saline Plants Sections had been severely damaged or completely destroyed. In 1917, the Sevan High Mountain Botanical Garden was transferred to the Republic of Armenia, while the rest of the geographical sections, apart from the Bakuriani Botanical Garden, were closed, along with the meteorological stations that operated within each one of them.

Who knows how much longer this period of misfortune would have continued or how it would have ended, had it not been for the young Georgian scientists, who in the beginning of the 1920s, along with the handful of remaining specialists, began the work of saving the Garden. While it would have been almost impossible for local staff alone to work in the garden and to advance the Garden's many areas of scientific activity, now the ranks of staff were full of scientists who would go on to become famous, such as Niko Ketskhoveli,²⁵ Vladimir Menabde, Levan Kanchaveli and others. There were also women among them. Luba Kemularia-Natadze, during what was still Roloff's period of activity, in 1913, started working at the Botanical Garden. Between 1921

20. With the revolutionary uprising in Russia in 1917, he immediately renounced the position of Director of the Botanical Garden, but the Garden's Council immediately and unanimously voted to return him as Director and after a while he returned to this position.

21. During 1919-1921, he worked in the Agriculture Ministry of the Georgian Democratic Republic as a head of department, and later worked as a consultant to the People's Agricultural Committee.

22. He founded the Botanical Garden's Workers' and Gardeners' School, where he continued to work after stepping down as Director.

23. "Iveria" Newspaper, #110, 24 May, 1901 p. 2

24. Kvirkvelia, T. *The Settlements of Old Tbilisi*. Tbilisi: 1985, p. 80

25. He first started working in the Garden in 1921.

and 1924, Ksenia Bakhtadze and Tamar Sulakadze joined the young staff of the Garden, who undertook colossal work in order to save an institution that had been decimated by the country's political situation, as well as by internal upheaval.²⁶

First of all, thanks to the study of these individuals, scientific research activities and the relevant sections not only survived, but also in a short time were expanded, which meant some of them needed to be divided according to subject organization. In this way, in 1933, the Botanical Institute was created as a separate institution, and it was gifted the Garden's entire scientific material, equipment, herbarium and library. The Agricultural Institute and the state selection station were also removed from the Garden. The Botanical Garden's scientific staff was redistributed accordingly between these larger research institutions.

The Garden itself later on went on to experience an even more difficult period, such that it was almost on the edge of complete collapse, but it survived, both during the World War and the later Civil War in Georgia. Left without attention and un-irrigated, it almost died out. With scientific work suspended the Garden's resurrection was nonetheless achieved. For this, we can thank those Germans who, over time, invested their very souls in looking after the garden, and laid the foundation for such a high level of scientific work, that the complete collapse of the garden had become impossible, nor would it ever become a mere recreational park. In this case, perhaps it's not even relevant whose political interests lay behind the work of these German figures. It is a fact that they themselves started the proper organization and lay out of the Garden. They created the first herbarium, catalogue, library and museum. They constructed several buildings there and, most importantly, they made the Botanical Garden a popular scientific institution with work ongoing across the entire length and breadth of the Caucasus. Through their own efforts, they turned their period of work into a Golden Age in the history of the Botanical Garden. Tangible examples of these efforts can still be found in the Garden today: A long-suffering yew tree (*Taxus baccata*), a weeping cypress (*Cupressus funebris*), a Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*), a Bichvinta pine (*Pinus pityusa*), a Caucasian nettletree (*Celtis caucasica*) and a ginkgo tree (*Gingko biloba*) still captivate the viewer, flower and bring forth fruit.

26. The harsh winter of 1924-25 severely damaged the Garden's plant collections. Later, the River Dabakhana, the main source of irrigation for the Garden, dried up, and so water was brought to the Garden by horse from the Mtkvari River.

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THE CULTURE OF GARDENING AND ITS PRACTITIONERS IN GEORGIA DURING THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURIES

THE CULTURE OF GARDENING AND ITS PRACTITIONERS IN GEORGIA DURING THE LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURIES

NONA KUPREISHVILI

Georgia is a country distinguished by its diverse nature. Its people have been engaged in farming since ancient times and their particular attitude towards the land led to the development not only of agriculture, but also of a rich gardening culture which is typical of a country located at a geographical crossroads.

Georgia also has a long history of gardening and park design. Here, we most often encounter one of the important varieties of cultural heritage – so-called ‘artistic gardening’ – which takes its name from its non-utilitarian and decorative nature. Despite the fact that an endless series of invasions throughout history has destroyed not only most gardens in Georgia, but also the secular and religious buildings around which those gardens were created, one can say with certainty that the remaining fragments of such gardens, and the written sources that mention them, are a unique source of material for the comprehensive study of our history.

In his book entitled “The Old Gardens and Parks of Georgia”, the researcher J. Giorgberidze provides a prehistory of this topic. According to this research, the renowned literary work *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, which narrates the myth of Jason and the Argonauts, can be considered the first historical source on Georgian horticulture. Here is how Apollonius describes the palace of King Aetes of Colchis when he is visited by Jason and his companions on their mission to steal the Golden Fleece: “They stood at the entrance, marvelling at the king’s courts and the wide gates... And silently they crossed the threshold. Close by them, garden vines covered with green foliage were in full bloom, lifting high into the air. Beneath them ran four fountains, ever-flowing...”¹

According to the same author, a reference to a decorative garden, dating to the 1st century AD and located in Mtskheta, the capital of Iberia, is also extremely interesting. According to legend, the garden belonged to the ruler of the Pharnavazian dynasty, King Aderki. The King chose Elioze of Mtskheta together with his companion Longinoz of Karsani to journey to Jerusalem to witness Christ’s public crucifixion. Upon their return, carrying with them the Holy Tunic, Elioze met his sister Sidonia at the bridge of the Royal Garden. Sidonia took the Sacred Robe from her brother and expired

1. Giorgberidze, Joni. *Georgia’s Ancient Parks and Gardens*. Tbilisi, 1985 p. 19.

immediately out of great fervor. Gobron (Mikheil) Sabinin speaks about this in his famous book “The Paradise of Georgia”. It is worth mentioning that after the declaration of Christianity as the state religion, signs and symbolism relating to the new faith gradually started to appear in gardens too.² This was also happening throughout Christian Europe and Georgia was no exception. For example, in monastery or royal gardens, paths were divided crosswise with a fountain in the center, symbolizing the suffering of Christ, or else a rose bed, symbolising the Virgin Mary. The Georgian hagiographic literary work, “The Life of St. Nino”, which dates to the 4th century, used the blackberry bush in the same symbolic fashion. Labyrinths and mazes symbolized the hardships of human life (for example, the garden of the Chavchavadze family in Tsinandali). The well often located in the garden seems to hint at the idea that the garden would perish without water, just as humankind would perish without Baptism.

The academic Ivane Javakhishvili was among the first Georgian scholars to study Georgian economic life. He uncovered several important facts in this regard through studying the terminology of Georgian horticultural history and its archaic origins. The garden used to be called ‘paradise’ (samotkhe) or ‘Eden’ (tsalkoti), and the gardener ‘paradise keeper’ (mesamotkhe). We read in the first volume of Javakhishvili’s ‘History of the Georgian Nation’ that in ancient times, two general terms were used in life and literature to denote an agricultural piece of land with vegetables and fruits – vegetable garden (mtili) and paradise (samotkhe). Besides paradise (samotkhe), paradise valley (samotkheveli) was also used. The verb ‘motkhva’ in old Georgian meant walking, or strolling, while ‘samotkhe’ and ‘samotkheveli’ denoted a place to walk and to pass time. ‘Tsalkoti’ was also used in ancient Georgian writings to denote rose gardens, flower gardens and gardens in general.³

The fact that the garden was called ‘paradise’ or ‘Eden’ just proves how effortlessly biblical vocabulary is transferred from that context into literature. In the texts related to “The Life of St Nino”, the word ‘paradise’ and even, words derived from it, such as ‘mesamotkhe’ are already present as terms denoting the garden and the gardener. In this case too, Ivane Javakhishvili confirmed this theory with an appropriate scientific source, namely the Shatberdi edition of the Life of Kartli. According to this text, King Mirian tells Nino: “I love your blackberries... I would do no harm to this holy garden [...] the greatness, fruitfulness and scent of the vines...”.⁴ Vakhushti’s edition of the Life of Kartli is used to illustrate the term ‘gardener’ (mesamotkhe), which clearly indicates the existence of a garden and

2. Sabinin, Gobron. *Paradise of Georgia*. Tbilisi, 1882 pp. 9-10.

3. Javakhishvili, Ivane. *History of the Georgian Nation, Vol. 1-2*. Tbilisi, 1941 p.95

4. Giorgberidze, Joni. *Georgia’s Ancient Parks and Gardens*. Tbilisi, 1985 p. 8

a gardener at the king’s palace: “After three days Nino traveled along the Mtkvari and came to the Royal Garden, the place where Svetitskhoveli is currently located, and went into the gardener’s house...”.

The famous 12th century poet, Ioane Shavteli, provides clear evidence of the presence of gardens around royal palaces: “Should I praise these dwellings? The decorations of the wall, the fruit and flower gardens with statues of cheetahs in them...”. Rustaveli depicts the same gardens with characteristic mastery in “The Knight in the Panther’s Skin”, impressively describing the surroundings of Nestan’s castle (“It was getting dark, I went through the garden gates ...”), and the sumptuous gardens built on the banks of Gulansharo (“They saw a city engirt by a thicket of garden, with wondrous kinds of flowers of many and many a hue...”). According to some scholars of Rustaveli, the toponym Gulansharo can be interpreted as meaning “City of Blossoms”.

The writer and essayist Iakob Balakhashvili - an expert on 19th century history and author of numerous works distinguished by his original style - reveals lesser-known and sometimes even hidden facts to the readers through his works. His book “The Rose Garden” is entirely dedicated to the gardens of Old Georgia, historical sources relating them and the depiction of their beauty in literature. In his book, the author tells the long history of artistic gardening, starting with the myth of the Argonauts and ending with the Gardens of Ortachala. His findings that relate to the 19th and 20th centuries are especially noteworthy, as this era of history has been less explored from this point of view. He speaks of Sololaki, King Jesse’s, Qabakh and Mushtaid gardens with interesting stories about their location and origins.

The story begins with the garden of King Mirian, followed by a description of the flower garden of King David the Builder. “The royal palace is surrounded by a short wall. The gardens around it were planted with “trees to please the eyes” of the guests, thus these gardens were not built for domestic purposes, but for recreation and entertainment. These gardens had baths, i.e. pools of water as well.”⁵ Here too, the reliable scholar Balakhashvili backs up this reference with a corresponding literary source. Once again the source is Ioane Shavteli and his poem “Abdulmesian”, providing the following appraisal of the gardens mentioned above: “Should I praise these terraces, the decorations of the walls / fruit and flower gardens pleasing the eyes / with fountains around them”.

The King of Kartli, Vakhtang V, known as Shah Nawaz, owned a very tastefully decorated recreational garden. The landscape he had arranged drew the attention of the French traveler Jean Chardin: “The outer parts of the city

5. Javakhishvili, Ivane. *History of Georgian Nation, Vol. 2*. Tbilisi, 1935 p.111

are adorned with several pleasure houses, and many beautiful gardens, of which the Ruler's is the biggest; with trees offering shade and coolness.”⁶ Obviously it would be unusual for a court poet not to praise the beauty of the ruler's gardens, and this task is fulfilled by Peshangi Pashvibertkadze. This famous poet and distant emulator of Rustaveli in the history of old Georgian literature was the author of the *Shahnavaziani*, a poem written to praise Vakhtang V: “In the midst of a pleasure garden / stand the decorative vines / the hearts of those who see them trembling in excitement / water flowing into fountains / a gardener watering the garden / not sparing a drop / with the coming of spring / Everything is full of rose water / like innumerable glass bottles. / Inconsolable, the nightingale mourns a withered rose ...”

In terms of the history of horticulture, the passion that Vakhtang VI, the ruler and caretaker of Kartli, a scholar and lawmaker, had for gardening is quite noteworthy. With his usual vigor, the King started planting his own rose garden. Moreover, he was also interested in irrigation structures, and wished to grow wild flowers and dedicate a special place to them in his garden along with cultivated roses. Here is what Vakhushhti Bagrationi says: “In the Dbanisi Gorge, in the Mountains of Kechuti and Bololi, there is a flower named hyacinth, of pure color, similar to a thistle growing low on the ground, with the scent of amber and thorns. King Vakhtang gave it a new home in his rose garden, though it did not flourish there.”⁷ This is the story of the first failed attempt of Vakhtang VI, which was later improved by other Georgian gardeners and hyacinths were eventually domesticated along with other wild flowers of the valleys and forests.

As Ivane Javakhishvili observes, until the 19th century, Georgian artistic gardening was related to the great traditions of gardening that existed in neighboring countries to the East. “The culture of gardening among the Georgian tribes”, he writes in conclusion, “would have been quite similar to that which was prevalent in the East at the time.”⁸

Another circumstance should be noted here: The style of old Georgian artistic gardens could also be felt in the private yards of western Georgia, which are considered by academics to be an integral part of the history of the country's national artistic gardening culture. Foreign travelers had a significant interest in these well-tended yards decorated with various plants. This is how an Italian missionary Arcangelo Lamberti (17th century) describes the yard of a peasant: “Every Mingrelian has such a large yard that they are more like fields than anything else. Only well-tended grass grows in the yard, and one

6. Chardin, Jean. *Travels in Georgia*. Tbilisi, 1935 p. 25

7. Bagrationi, Vakhushhti. *Description of the Kingdom of Georgia*. Tbilisi, 1941 p. 39

8. Javakhishvili, Ivane. *History of the Georgian Nation. Vol. 1*. Tbilisi, 1941 p. 37

would not find weeds there. Every resident is proud of the cleanliness of his own yard. The yard is surrounded by a trench and a fence... Large gates and trees stand at the entrance to the yard... There are various trees, especially hornbeam, planted in the yards to provide shade...”⁹

This situation changed radically from the beginning of the 19th century, when the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti was abolished by the Russian Empire, and the other principalities of the country were also occupied. The process of changing the local cultural orientation is obviously reflected in the style of garden construction. While at the beginning of the century, the garden of the famous female poet Marta Sologashvili or the garden of Erekle II's daughter, Tekla Batonishvili, are decorated with flowers and fruit trees (flowers, fruits and vegetables altogether side by side), within a short period the organization of gardens changed drastically.

The first garden in the European style was opened behind the palace of the Governor-General, on one of Sololaki's old massifs. The Consul Gamba, visiting Tbilisi at the time, commented on this extraordinary event. Here's what he wrote: “A public garden was opened in the same district surrounding the palace of the Governor-General. It's a vast territory with excellent plants and planned with great taste...”¹⁰ Later, the garden named after Emperor Alexander II and designed by the architect Otto Simonson was built on a site known previously as the “Orbeliani Aul”, on the right bank of the Mtkvari River, on the territory of the current 9th April Park, where the former Qabakh one stood (the Qabakh, being a sportsground for the Georgian aristocracy, often featured in the romantic poetry of the time, in particular, in the works of Grigol Orbeliani and Nikoloz Baratashvili). The cemetery that once stood here was moved to the territory of the present-day Vera Park. The arrangement of a park in this area was started under the direction of the gardener and landscaper Scharrer. The completion of the garden was hastened by the construction of a mechanical water pump on the Mtkvari. The garden was opened in 1865. Soon a decorative fence made at the iron foundry in the village of Chatakhi in Bolnisi district was erected around the garden.

In all of Georgian literature and art, it is difficult to find a more fetishized place than the Gardens of Ortachala. To get an idea, one need simply recall the famous paintings of Pirosmiani and the scenes of the feasts and entertainments depicted by Georgian writers, especially the romantics. What is the history of this, one of the most sought-after places for Tbilisians? Initially the small island located here between the main riverbed and the right arm of the river Mtkvari was called Ortachala. This should explain the name of the island, which is

9. Lamberti, Arcangelo. *Description of Samegrelo*. Tbilisi, 1938 p. 49

10. Giorgberidze, Joni. *Georgia's Ancient Parks and Gardens*. Tbilisi, 1985 p. 35

derived from Turkish and Georgian words: *orta* in Turkish means middle, while *chala* in Georgian designated a flood plain. The Ortachala gardens belonged to King Giorgi XII. After the King's death, his son Davit Bagrationi was forced to move to St. Petersburg and the garden became the private property of Dositheus Pirtskhalauri. Later, in the hands of a private owner, Ortachala became a place for amusement and recreation for Tbilisians. There used to be a tradition, according to which the residents of Tbilisi celebrated "Almond Day" with almond tree branches, songs and dances in Ortachala dedicated to the awakening of nature. We know that one of the popular songs at this time 'Young Spirit' (Akhal Agnago Sulo) was performed in 1829 for the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin during his visit in Tbilisi. Several extracts from correspondences between members of the Georgian aristocracy during this period, describe time spent in the Ortachala Gardens. First of all, we can find such stories in the memoirs of the romanticist poet Grigol Orbeliani. In a letter sent to Taso Aglobzhoi, he wrote: "Just recently some of us young men got together - me, Chilaev, Giorgi Mukhransky, Shakhavskoy, Mirsky, Levan, Isak, Jorjadze, Sultan Girey, Sosiko and Aghalarov. We went to Ortachala Garden in the evening and set about feasting on a bank of the Mtkvari with zurna, lutes and viols, charming singers and fresh air under the moon ..."

During Grigol Orbeliani's absence from Tbilisi, his companions often yearned for the time they spent in Ortachala and dreamed of repeating those past times in the letters they sent to him. For example, Davit Korghanashvili wrote to him: "... I wish you could return to Georgia soon so that we could feast just like in the old days, with silver bowls filled with ruby-red wine, tench served on vine leaves and a tray full of fresh fruits brought out by a barefoot gardener with a knife on his waist."¹¹ Iakob Balakhashvili also tells us how women held "drinking sessions with tea", while music and singing could be heard constantly from the tents put up out for the occasion. As proof the scholar cites an interesting description of Ortachala Gardens written by an anonymous Russian public servant in "National Notes" of 1845: "The garden, where the dinner was held, was situated in an elevated area five or six versts from the city. An alley of vines burdened with bunches of grapes, ripe peach, cherry, and plum trees along with various flowers and the number one flower of the east – rose – decorated with strong green grass..."¹²

The poet Ioseb Grishashvili, who had an unmatched knowledge of Old Tbilisi, also describes Ortachala gardens. He recalls the fisherman Lopiana, immortalized in Grigol Orbeliani's famous verse (mukhambazi): "In the gardens of Ortachala, see who I am / In the festivities of the carefree man, see who I am! /A toastmaster with a drinking bowl, see who I am! /Then

in a fistfight see who I am! / Then you will fall in love with me and say, 'My darling!' " Lopiana was a close friend of the revelers, whom he provided with fresh fish for the feasts described above.¹³ Unfortunately, the dams built for the Ortachala hydro-power station in the early twentieth century dried out this branch of the river and resulted in the disappearance of the island.

In 1894, a notable correspondence was published in numerous issues of the newspaper "Iveria", the author of which is Giorgi Chichua.¹⁴ A few words should be said about this very interesting individual. "Giorgi Chichua was an innovator in agriculture, a tireless supporter and enthusiast of agrarian farming and a progressive public figure. He paid special attention to the development of subtropical cultures and profitable industries. He was the first to grow grape varieties in Samegrelo's regions and villages: Tsolikauri, Saperavi and others. He had a well-equipped estate, which he used as an experimental station and demonstration farm for the peasants of the village" – this is how the author, Tengiz Chkheidze presents Giorgi Chichua in his extremely important work "Georgian Agronomists".¹⁵

At the initiative of Giorgi Chichua, wide paved roads were built to Eki community and the villages of Ushafati, Potskho and others. People met the appearance of carriages on these roads with celebration. Giorgi Chichua opened a school for poor people in the village of Upalkari. His work was especially fruitful when he served as the head of the Princely Estates of Georgia Bank. He provided regular assistance to agricultural schools. Even a tragic event (he accidentally killed a royal servant and was exiled to remote Astrakhan) could not break the spirit of this strong individual.

He saw the presence of a vast number of mulberry trees in Astrakhan as an opportunity and started breeding silkworms. His work attracted the attention of Nikoloz Chernishevski, also exiled to Astrakhan at the time. In 1889 he published his work "Essay on the Work of the Sericulture Station of G.K. Chichua in Astrakhan", which describes the experience he obtained in Astrakhan in this very important field. The same year, upon Chernishevski's return to his native Saratov he vouched for Giorgi Chichua for the organizers of an agricultural exhibition held in Saratov to accept Chichua's silk garden. In this way, this garden received huge accolades. Soon after returning to his homeland, Giorgi Chichua became close to Ivane Klingen, mentioned in the correspondence of "Iveria" and started to participate actively in the future development and proper planning of our country's agricultural sector.

13. Grishashvili, Ioseb. *Collection of Stories in Five Volumes, Vol. III*. Tbilisi, 1963 p. 49

14. Chichua, Giorgi. Travel to Kutaisi province to study agricultural production. Newspaper Iveria, 1894, #19

15. Chkheidze Tengiz. *Georgian Agronomists*. Tbilisi, 1962 p. 32

11. Balakhashvili, Iakob. *The Rose Garden*. Tbilisi, 1967 p. 52

12. Ibid.

The purpose of a four-man expedition to Kutaisi province was to study contemporary agricultural production and to select sites with appropriate soil and climate to expand it in the future. Apart from Giorgi Chichua, the expedition members were: Ivane Klingen, the inspector of the Caucasian Princely Lands, the agronomist Kofok, and the agronomist officer Simenson. The expedition team was selected by Klingen. He needed precise data on the development of agricultural production, as the Princely Lands department intended “to start a variety of agricultural production in western Georgia, which would greatly benefit not only our homeland but also Russia.”¹⁶ Klingen’s assessment of Giorgi Chichua’s personality is quite interesting. Here’s what he wrote: “... I have invited an educated land-owner [...] Prince Giorgi Chichua, who is cognizant of his homeland and local life. He has provided a valuable service to us through his numerous acquaintances among Transcaucasian agriculturists... With the help of the leader of our little caravan, Prince Chichua, I even managed to find traces of the medieval culture of Italian colonies. Parks with remaining stubs of old olive trees, as well as old bay laurel alleys, but of a later era...” It is noteworthy that this information is taken from Ivane Klingen’s work published in Petrograd in 1917 “The Design of Organizing a Subtropical Economy in Transcaucasia Led by Tea Cultivation” and is verified in the above-mentioned book by Tengiz Chkheidze, “The Georgian Agronomists”.¹⁷

The author of the correspondence in “Iveria” indicates that visiting a number of Western regions served the purpose of preparing for the production of tea, paper varnish, quinine and camphor trees, as well as for distributing fresher silk worm eggs among the population, and for the cultivation of mulberry trees to feed the silk worms. The proactive steward (mouravi) of Khoni, Sharashidze, is mentioned in the letter, who even established study classes for the women who were taking care of silk worms- even the government became interested in his work. Afterwards, the expedition members travelled to Gordi, the Dadianis’ summer residence located on the border of Imereti, Samegrelo and Lechkhumi: “We went to Gordi. We found a beautiful plain in the middle of Gordi, surrounded by mountains ... a natural wall of mountains to provide cover from wind and cold. As soon as you enter the yard of Mingreli (the son of Ekaterine Chavchavadze and Davit Dadiani, Nikoloz Dadiani, the last ruler of Samegrelo), you feel as if you’re in Eden... The prince has built a beautiful garden here. Alleys follow each other... various trees evergreen in summer and winter. The pools full of fish... Rose gardens here and there. In the lower part... there are alleys of precious plants brought from foreign countries, along with flower gardens and fruit trees. The Prince has a fine knowledge of botany and lavishes his garden with attention and

16. Newspaper “Iveria”, 1894, #8, P. 1-2

17. Chkheidze Tengiz. *Georgian Agronomists*. Tbilisi, 1962 p. 31

care. The palace, with its balconies, overlooks all this beauty. Obviously such a garden can only be built on a fruitful land with a soft and delicate climate like in Gordi and in many other places of our country. This place is like a greenhouse for plants from warm countries and precious flowers. There is a moderate mountain breeze and coolness in summer and 15-20 degrees of warmth in winter. Our foreign guests were surprised by everything they saw in Gordi, though more surprised by the knowledge and work of Mingreli”.¹⁸

A few historical notes about the garden at Gordi: After the summer residence of the Dadianis - which was similar to their castle residence - was built here in 1841, Davit Dadiani invited to Gordi the celebrated agronomist and landscape architect Joseph Babin, who was also in charge of designing Zugdidi’s Botanical Garden. He was also tasked with accomplishing the same work around the Gordi palace. Later, the famous Italian gardener, Gaetano Zamberletti was charged with maintaining the garden. The territory of 80 hectares was surrounded by a stone fence with three protected gates. The complex included a bathing pool and an artificial lake created by Babin similar to the one in Zugdidi Botanical Garden. Unfortunately, the palace and the garden were later looted by the Red Army and the local population. Currently, only minor traces of the previous magnificence of this development are left here with along with the pitiful skeleton of the former palace.

After Gordi, our attention is drawn to the description of Poti. In this correspondence, Giorgi Chichua provides several important facts which are also confirmed by other sources. Of course, here the case is the Ressler Garden. But, let’s follow the order of events: “The same evening we went on to see Poti” we read in the Iveria Correspondence in issue #12 of 1894. “The next morning, we started to visit different gardens. We saw the once-famous orange and lemon garden destroyed by the Ottomans. Currently there is a variety of plants here from warm countries”.

“In the yard of almost every house, all kinds of plants flourish- eucalyptus, magnolia, cypress, oleander, acacia, paper-tree, loquat (paradise apple) blooming in winter, Japanese cedar, cryptomeria elegans, laurel, cherry-laurel and many other eye-pleasing and decorative trees. There are also sweet potatoes (baati), all kinds of flowers, camellias and others. The gardener and botanist Ressler established a horticulture school and a garden in Poti. With the plants grown here in his garden, he built Batumi Garden and decorated its boulevard. Currently Ressler’s daughter, Mrs. A. Schmitt, is taking care of this garden. She showed us various camellias and the olive, lemon and orange trees planted in the garden. This lady told us

18. Newspaper “Iveria”, 1894, #12, p. 2

that as soon as Batumi was occupied, the late Ressler started the work of growing tea bushes. He had several shrubs of this precious plant, though he could not accomplish his work due to indigence and the lack of support from those who were supposed to help him. Ressler had selected an estate near Batumi, though he was not allowed to use it. This land is now purchased by a tea grower by the name of Papov. The late Ressler took this vexation at not having finished his work to his grave. At his deathbed he was worried about who would finish the work he started. D'Alfonse bought a tea bush from Ressler, though I'm not sure what happened to it next".¹⁹

One can actually find information about the German botanists Ressler and Reier in the special literature on the development of Poti and Batumi Boulevard (for instance, the photo-album Batumi, 2006). In 1881, Ressler started building the garden in Poti around Nuri-Geli Lake, also known as Gel-Bashi Lake, at the order of Governor Smekalovsky. According to the Governor's order Ressler was supposed to complete the construction of the garden in 10 years. In three years, Ressler and Reier managed to complete the most important preparatory works. In particular, they fully cleaned the area of wild plants, built paths and planted evergreen plants. It seems that Ressler first arrived in Poti at the end of the 1870's by invitation of a former Officer of the Russian Army, Kurkovsky, who intended to establish a Homological Institute there.

For this purpose, he addressed the Caucasus Viceroy in writing and obtained 10 000 manat in cash. The so-called Kurkovsky garden was built on four hectares of land on the territory of what is now the experimental station. The garden was home to up to one thousand varieties of fruits, coniferous trees and decorative plants. Soon, Ressler and his assistant gardener Reiner went to work on Batumi Boulevard. After conducting some landscaping works on the Batumi Boulevard, Ressler unexpectedly died in 1884. From Giorgi Chichua's correspondence, we learn about Ressler's frustration, during his final moments, at having been unable to finish his life's work.

The Black Sea shores of Abkhazia and Adjara have always attracted enemies as well as friends. Naturally, the Russian Empire has not been an exception in this regard. Later, a Russian journalist called these places the Crown Jewel of the Empire- the "Russian Riviera" - and somehow this title survived time and is still actively used in the context of the political situation of the 21st century. The Royal Yacht "Derzhava" needed access to the sea and for this, appropriate infrastructure needed to be built. Later on, a favorable historic moment came that required the construction of just this kind of infrastructure. Russia's victory in the Russo-Turkish war had created new motivation and

opportunities for the development of this area. For example, a new type of visitor - business-minded generals and state servants with ambitious plans for the development of the region- appeared on the coasts of Abkhazia. One of them was a member of the imperial family, Prince Oldenburg (Принц Ольденбургский). He is depicted in the famous painting by the renowned painter Ilya Repin "At the Festive Session of the State Council" dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the State Council.

Rumor has it that the Prince wished to find a place suitable for the Russian aristocracy to spend their holidays that could compete with Nice in France. Russia started to consider the Black Sea shores as appropriate for this purpose in the late 19th century. At this time there were not many coastal towns in Russia. Therefore, the elite of the capital mainly spent their holidays in the famous resorts of France, Germany and Italy. At the same time, there was a preference that some part of the money spent by holiday-makers in Europe should remain in the homeland, i.e. "peculiar financial diversification". As noted above, the victory over Turkey accelerated events and soon Russia was able to implement this idea. Abkhazia was located in the coastal subtropical zone. There was an abundance of mineral waters and medicinal muds and the average annual temperature reached +16°C. The area was diverse and absolutely original in terms of fauna.

As for Gagra, which was destined to become a "native Nice", the climate here created completely unique opportunities, due to its unusual proximity to both a mountain range and the sea. The local climate used to be referred to as "a felicitous mix of sea and mountains." The Prince of Oldenburg made his choice in favour of Gagra. He provided the telegraph, electricity and water supply; founded a subtropical Technicum and built a weather station, which opened for the first time on 9 January 1903. This solemn event was celebrated in Gagripsh Restauant, which was built from timber purchased in Europe by the Prince himself. Later, this day was celebrated as the anniversary of the establishment of Gagra resort.

Prince Oldenburg also built a large park on the sea shore. He planted agaves, palms, lemon and orange trees, as well as cypresses. This park is still intact, and is one of the key attractions of Gagra, along with Gagripsh, the prince's fortress and the famous alley of columns. On 17 May 1912, Emperor Nicholas II of Russia visited Gagra, which was the culmination of the resort builders' plans.

There is one interesting personality from this period: the famous Russian geographer and botanist, Pavel Tatarinov (1833-1905) who is related to the history of Sokhumi Botanic Garden. After graduating from the Gatchin Orphan Institute for the children of officers and public servants, Tatarinov distinguished himself with dedicated service and was raised to the position

19. Newspaper "Iveria", 1894, #12, pp. 2-3

of Privy Counselor. In 1885 he settled near Sokhumi in order to fully dedicate himself to his favorite activity – gardening. He purchased several land plots to the east of Sokhumi, on the outskirts of the city and built a dacha there, which is no longer standing. He used the rest of the land to build a Botanical Garden with a collection of plants ordered from various corners of the world. 48 varieties of palms, 20 varieties of eucalyptus, 27 kinds of cypress and many other trees were planted in the garden right away.

Tatarinov even built a small hydro-meteorological observatory to study the weather. Later he provided Gori School students with instruments for observing the weather and they successfully continued the hydro-meteorological observations started by Tatarinov. In 1892 as a summary of his work, Tatarinov published an article in the “Horticulture, Fruit Farming and Gardening Herald” entitled A Six-Year Experiment in Sokhumi (1886-1893), in which he wrote about the work he had accomplished around Sokhumi.

In 1891 Pavel Tatarinov received an offer to take over the Sokhumi Botanical Garden. He began the reorganization of the garden and created a Sokhumi Experimental Station for gardening and agricultural works. Sokhumi Botanical Garden became one of the departments of the station. Tatarinov ordered seedlings and seeds from various botanical gardens in Russia, particularly the gardens of Nikitin (in Crimea), Moscow and Petersburg, enriching the Sokhumi Garden’s collection. However, he was so dedicated to his work that he went even further and established business relations with Belgium, Germany and Italy. Thanks to this tireless individual, Sokhumi Botanical Garden is enriched with 15 varieties of tangerine and orange, several varieties of eucalyptus and cotton, as well as lotus, anil, Japanese persimmon and others. Soon, at his own expense, he travelled to several countries in South America and the Mediterranean and brought 45 varieties of agave, 49 varieties of palm, and various subtropical plants of 150 varieties. During his work as director, he introduced numerous plants and developed a new variety of wheat.

Tatarinov was also actively involved in the social life of Sokhumi. He was a member of the Nobility Council and an Honorary Judge of the city, as well as a permanent member of Sokhumi Agricultural Society, which he himself founded.

Giorgi Chichua mentions this same Tatarinov in the correspondence already cited above. Here is what he wrote about Sokhumi: “In the center of the city there is a beautiful Botanical Garden. In every corner, it is flourishing. Here, one could find anything his heart may desire! Countless varieties of flowers and plants from warmer countries, Some brought from remote locations, some grown locally, evergreen and blossoming almost all year long. Here, one would not find people without yards. Roses are blossoming in these yards in winter and summer. There are many lemon and orange trees, eucalyptus and other similar trees. We visited

the summer house of the Privy Counselor named Tatarinov. This man resigned and moved to Sokhumi several years ago. Tatarinov has a fine knowledge of botany and has studied the climate and soil of our country. He has built a garden full of different vegetation brought from warm countries. He has several walkways of different varieties of oranges, which grow well and bear fruits. Mr. Tatarinov’s work is so remarkable that it is clear to everyone that the vegetation of warm countries can flourish in the climate of our country. This garden is like a museum of plants from warm countries, which is how this honorable man described it to Senator Abaza during his stay here...”²⁰

At the close of the 19th, and start of the 20th centuries, Russian botanists and gardener-scientists were increasingly keen on the idea of building a large Botanical Garden in the so-called subtropical zone of the Russian Empire. Batumi- the last part of wide tropical zone was selected as the place where this idea would be implemented. More precisely the garden was to be located on the coastal strip between the Chakvistskali River and the Green Cape (Mtsvane Kontskhi), located 9 km from the city center at 0-220 meters above sea level. Its plantlife mainly consisted of early Colchis forest (beech, chestnut, lime) and evergreen underbrushes (cherry-laurel, rosebay etc.).

It was known that the humidity of the air reached its maximum here, with average precipitation of up to 2 500 ml. Indeed, neither in Russia nor on the Mediterranean shores could one find such high levels of moisture. For comparison, we can take Anapa, a resort town on the Black Sea coast, where annual precipitation is only 425 ml. Along with high humidity, temperate winters and warm summers are characteristic of Adjara region. The lowest temperature in Batumi was around 4-6 °C, while the average annual temperature was 15°C. In January, air temperatures could rise to 7°C and in summer as much as 23°C.

The writer Archil Kikodze, author of the text composed for a highly-illustrated album dedicated to Georgian nature, wrote that: “Adjara is the most subtropical place in western Georgia. In the Botanical Garden of Batumi, tropical and exotic plants grow as if they had been planted in their native regions in the Amazon or Central Africa. The local flora, though, is so similar to jungle, that it’s hard to say where the botanical garden ends and where Adjara’s natural landscape begins.”²¹

The establishment of the Batumi Botanical Garden on its current location and its subsequent development took place in several stages. The first stage is associated with the famous French aristocrat, Gabriel D’Alphonso. He was one of the first people to reside here for the summer. Later he procured his own

20. Newspaper “Iveria”, 1894, #19, p. 3

21. Photo-album, text by Archil Kikodze, Tbilisi, 2012 p. 84.

house in Chakvi. A gardener-decorator, or 'landscape designer', as we might call it today, D'Alphonso built a small park in the lower part of the current Botanical Garden in 1881. He procured rare decorative plants from the South of France. In 1885-89 Gabriel D'Alphonso served as gardener-decorator in Batumi. He took advantage of this position to embellish the city's coastline and bring to fruition the idea of creating a classical boulevard here. Today in this boulevard we can see the wonderful monument to Gabriel D'Alphonse with which the city of Batumi has honored this esteemed gardener-decorator.

The second stage started in 1892 when Pavel Tatarinov, already familiar to us, left the position of Director of Sokhumi Botanical Garden and moved to Batumi. In the upper part of today's Botanical Garden, Tatarinov created the so-called "acclimatization garden", where a rich collection of coniferous evergreen plants was created by the beginning of the 20th century. He also constructed his own house nearby. Today this building belongs to the administration of the Botanical Garden. Despite huge efforts, the official opening of Batumi's Botanical Garden was delayed and took place only after some time.

This extraordinary mission was accomplished by Andrei Krasnov, the new director of the Batumi Botanical Garden. He was a well-known Russian botanist, the first PhD holder in the field of Geography in Russia and a professor of Kharkov University (and incidentally, the brother of White Army General Krasnov). After the Russian government finally adopted the plan of the Batumi Garden Organization, Krasnov was charged with fulfilling this task. At the time, Krasnov had already written many scientific works and studies (later in 1915, another of his works entitled "South Kolkhida" (Южная Колхида) was published in Petrograd). Professor Krasnov was first acquainted with Batumi and enchanted by its magical landscapes in 1893. According to him, the local climate matched the climates of famous resorts in Europe, and for this reason, Krasnov decided to turn this area into a new homeland for cultivating subtropical plants.

It is noteworthy that he approached the task of developing Batumi Botanical Garden not only as a botanist but also as a geographer and a landscape designer. This approach subsequently resulted in the creation of small sections of subtropical plants from North America, Japan, China, the Himalayas, Chile, Australia and New Zealand. In addition, Krasnov used the method of phytomelioration and planted Australian eucalyptus trees to dry the wetlands, due to the special ability of these trees to remove excess moisture from the soil with their roots. The ecological situation in the area was improved as a result of this method. Andrei Krasnov died in Tbilisi in 1914. His last wish was to be buried in the Botanical Garden, from where one could see Chakvi against the background of snowy mountains as well as part of the sea. Today, visitors of Batumi Botanic Garden can see Krasnov's bust on his grave.

There is another, less visible, person in the history of Batumi Botanical Garden, who worked there in 1902-1907. This is the Georgian scholar, horticulturist and lecturer at the Tbilisi School of Horticulture Ioseb Lionidze. He also actively cooperated with the Batumi agricultural journal "Subtropics". Incidentally, Professor Krasnov and Professor Kochunov were frequent guests of Ioseb Lionidze's family. They often made use of his advice as a practising gardener. It would be more appropriate to talk about Ioseb Lionidze in the context of Tbilisi School of Horticulture, though unfortunately very few materials on his work there are available. However, the work of Ioseb Lionidze can be well-traced to the school.

A few words should be said about the genealogy of Lionidze. Ioseb was born into the family of the impoverished Kakhetian Prince Dimitri Lionidze in 1868, in the village of Kondola. He was a direct descendant of King Erekle's advisor, the famous historic figure, Solomon Lionidze, one of the main characters of Nikoloz Baratashvili's poem 'The Fate of Kartli' (Bedi Kartlisa). Ioseb Lionidze was a graduate of Tbilisi Horticulture School himself. In 1889 he was appointed as a lecturer and a chief gardener of the school. The school principal and a famous teacher, Ostapovich and another school teacher Vano Japaridze, were very successful in running the school. Ioseb worked there until 1896, and the famous gardener-decorator Mikheil Mamulashvili was one of his students.

In 1896, Ioseb Lionidze married a German teacher, Maria Greff. Maria was highly educated and fluent in several European languages. She completed her studies as a teacher in London and Paris. Mariam Orbeliani, daughter of Vakhtang, met her in Paris and brought her to Georgia as a tutor to her nieces. The girls to whom she taught English and German became the wives of the renowned Georgian critic Kita Abashidze and one of the founding fathers of the Georgian University, Ivane Javakhishvili.

Maria Greff and Ioseb Lionidze met in Lamiskana. She married him and was faithful to her husband and his country for the rest of her life. Through her support Ioseb managed to improve his horticultural knowledge in Germany. After returning home, with the support of Ivane Andronikashvili, the Chief of the city, Ioseb Lionidze started growing subtropical plants in Alexander Park and Boulevard. At the same time, acacia trees were removed from the streets and replaced by California laurel, palm and other plants.

Simultaneously, Ioseb Lionidze worked at the nursery of decorative, citrus and fruit cultures. He was highly successful in this. Every year, he was producing 150 000 citrus grafts. He also cultivated 57 varieties of rose. The creation of nurseries in and of itself stimulated the cultivation of subtropical and decorative plants all over the city. Such a successful practice enabled

Ioseb Lionidze to achieve significant victory at the Petersburg exhibition held in 1913, which was named “Russian Riviera” by its organizers. The Black Sea coast gardens, including Batumi, took part in the exhibition. The jury was planning to grant the highest award to Prince Oldenburg, but Ioseb Lionidze managed to prove that most of the Prince’s exhibits were brought from France and not produced on the Black Sea coast. For this reason, Prince Oldenburg’s garden was awarded second place, while the city of Batumi won first place. A personal award was granted to Ioseb Lionidze for cultivating decorative and citrus plants. In the last years of his life, Ioseb Lionidze decorated the garden in the yard of Tbilisi State University.

The fact that artistic gardening and horticulture were actively developing in the big cities of Georgia is confirmed by the history of the Kutaisi Central Garden, also known as the Boulevard. As both L. Gvenetadze, the author of the article “Kutaisi’s Central Garden, Boulevard” and Isakadze note in the article “The First Urban Garden in Georgia”²²: “This garden was originally built for the sake of strolling and recreational purposes”. It was appropriately termed the “Boulevard”, a French word, which means a wide street in a city, usually with trees along each side. However, it gradually acquired greater importance for the Kutaisians and became a favorite place for gathering - a kind of city forum and people’s parliament.

Before the Boulevard was built, there was another urban garden in Kutaisi; according to one source it was built by the Governor of Imereti Gorchakov, and according to another, by Darejan, the daughter of King Solomon of Imereti. It is interesting that this garden was of a mixed type from the very beginning, and in addition to decorative plants, one could also find fruit and vegetable gardens here. This was not a garden in the European style, and in fact it had some elements of the oriental garden. The garden existed in this form until the 1850s (part of its territory was taken by the St. Nino School and other new buildings that appeared in the city). In 1825-28, during the period in office of the Vice-Governor of Kutaisi, P. Glinesarov, a kind of foundation was created for the boulevard in the form of plane-trees planted on a big plaza. Unfortunately, the city did not maintain the record of the landscaper’s identity, although there is an assumption that he must have been a Frenchman, as suggested by the French style of boulevard gardening. The garden’s historic description is as follows: square-shaped, enclosed with a wooden fence painted red, with a path parallel to it. The other two paths extended through the length of the garden in a cross-shape. In the center of the cross an area for music and dancing was set aside. Flowers and tall trees were planted on both sides of the path. There were wooden and stone benches and the boulevard was also decorated with

ryegrass. Later, in the 1870s, drinking water was supplied to the garden and a special stall for non-alcoholic beverages was arranged. Small, delicate bridges were built over the garden’s small ponds.

The deterioration of the economic situation in the country, which mostly affected the nobility, produced changes in the life of the garden. For this reason, the well-known Georgian writer, Sergei Meskhi, editor of the newspaper ‘Droeba’ wrote: “Not only the Boulevard, but the streets of Kutaisi itself seem to me somehow abandoned and deteriorated.”

In the 1880s the city’s self-government, which was not particularly known for its speedy decision-making, still managed to partially reconstruct the garden. Paths and alleys were added to the garden. In 1888, a wooden pavilion was built for the visit of Emperor Alexander III to the Caucasus. Despite the fact that a group of young Georgian writers known as the Blue Horns were already comparing Kutaisi to a “dead Brugge”, public discussions continued to take place on the boulevard: discussions about the banking sector, the assessment of candidates for self-government and even some innovative talk was heard here. In 1908, the Boulevard of Kutaisi became the epicenter of events dedicated to Akaki Tsereteli’s jubilee celebrations. In the 1950s the garden was fundamentally renovated and many precious decorative plants were brought here from Sokhumi’s Botanical Garden.

As for the Kutaisi Botanical Garden, it should be noted that it covers a rather small area of 10 hectares, although it enjoys distinction in Georgia due to its history and plant collections. The history of the garden begins in the year 1820 with the establishment of a small plant nursery, headed by the then-governor Beliavski and later by Gagarin. The name of the latter is related to the invitation of the French horticulturalist Regner - a usual practice in the Russian Empire of that time. For 15 years the visiting gardener was in charge of planned development works. Rumor has it that among the plants brought for the nursery in 1820 was a Northern American Sequoia, which still grows in the Kutaisi Botanical Garden today and is a kind of emblem of the park, having survived being hit by lightning twice. The height of the tree is 50 meters and it is visually very impressive. After Regner, responsibility for the garden passed to the Scot, Jacob Marr. This very interesting and indefatigable individual, whose biography is full of interesting stories, came to Georgia as a merchant. He was an associate of Mikheil Vorontsov and the last Ruler of Guria. Jacob Marr approached this new assignment with enthusiasm and dedication. Besides showing interest in the cultivation of fruit and grape varieties in Guria and Imereti, he contributed a lot to the cultivation of local, endemic and foreign varieties and the introduction of various plants. It’s worth adding that this tireless Scot was also the father of

22. Newspaper “Kutaisi”, 1986, #8, P. 3-4

Niko Marr, a famous Georgian linguist and Professor of Petersburg University. The house where Niko Marr was born is still maintained on the territory of the garden. In the second half of the 20th century the garden was designated as a Botanical Garden. Currently, local staff are in charge of maintaining the garden as it is. Obviously, some positive changes have been made as well. For instance, a rosarium was added to the garden, several planted pathways have been renovated and a small chapel has been built.

It is impossible to speak comprehensively about horticulture within the historical period chosen for this study without mentioning the history of the agricultural school of the Tsinamdzghvriantkari (Tsinamdzghvrishvili family). Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili founded this Agricultural College at his own expense, and its history is directly related to the activities of the Samotsianebebi ('The Generation of the 60s' – a group of educators) and the ideas they preached in the 1860s. For a traditional agricultural country such as Georgia, the Samotsianebebi, and especially Ilia Chavchavadze, considered the training of specialists equipped with appropriate knowledge to be a most urgent task. For this idea to become reality, intelligent and progressive people were needed to push forward new initiatives.

Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili was one such distinguished figure. It is interesting to note that during the 1860s, Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili published several critical articles under the pseudonym Khoreshana Gverdtsiteli in the newspaper *Droeba* exposing various unsavoury features of public life. In his letters he spoke comprehensively about the country's stagnation and the inertia of its population, thus earning the trust and sympathy of the intelligent reader.

In 1896, after establishing his famous school, Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili published the book "The Cultivation of Vines", an extremely useful work of the time. A review made in a study dedicated to Georgian agronomists states that "The Cultivation of Vines is based on the study of rich factual materials. The author used the works of various scholars, including Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani."²³ The book was followed by another work on agriculture published to assist the teachers of the newly established school. The significance of agricultural activities to Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili in the context of the historical period (the beginning of capitalist production) is clearly seen in one of his articles entitled "What is Knowledge?" published in 1909 in "Harvest" magazine: "Those who desire the revival of our homeland and the welfare of its citizens need to have knowledge of all agricultural and economic sectors. A human being enriched with knowledge is slave to no man; he supports himself and his family with hard work, and pays his dues

23. Chkheidze, Tengiz. *Georgian Agronomists*. Tbilisi, 1962 p. 8

to society and the state in good faith ... it's time to wake up and understand that agriculture is the most important artery of our lives ... agriculture is not simply digging the land but rather a scientific discipline."²⁴

Naturally, the opening of the school was accompanied by various challenges. For the development of the school's curriculum, Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili invited famous teachers and public figures such as Iakob Gogebashvili, Niko Tskhvedadze, Mikheil Bebutishvili, the agronomist Geevski and others. However, the adoption of a curriculum was delayed by an article written by Gogebashvili: "All subjects through grades one to six should be taught in the Georgian language... Teaching of the Russian language should start from the third grade."²⁵ Kyril Ianowski, a loyal servant of Tsarist Russia, known for his anti-Georgian attitudes, was supervising Education in the Caucasus region at the time. Obviously, he was reluctant to issue a permit to implement something so beneficial and useful for our country. The case was solved by the temporary appointment of Dymtry Staroselski as Viceroy. The later was a brother-in-law of Ilia Chavchavadze and was considered to be a relatively open-minded person. With the intervention of Ilia Chavchavadze, Staroselski approved both the school charter and its new curriculum.

The Tsinamdzghvriantkari Agricultural School was opened on 4 September 1883. At the opening event, Ilia Chavchavadze noted in his speech: "One of our number, a very compassionate man said to us: just show me enthusiasm, and I'll show you the way. By his own initiative, with tireless effort and dedication he met this challenge to his honor and to our joy here in this village- he set up a cradle of knowledge and invited people to nurture its young students. This man is Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili, the cradle is that small building, which so befits this small village, and the care of its young students is provided by the masters that he has brought here ..."²⁶

The school operated with a charter drafted by Iakob Gogebashvili and a curriculum by Niko Tskhvedadze. Tsinamdzghvrishvili allocated 55 hectares of agricultural land and forest from his estate to the agricultural school. In addition, the school was equipped with a school building, a house for teachers, a student dormitory, two dining rooms with kitchens, a warehouse, a bakery and workshops, and fruit tree and vine nurseries. The areas of study were viticulture, winemaking, horticulture, vegetable gardening, silkworm breeding, cattle breeding, beekeeping and forestry.

24. Journal 'Harvest', 1909, #3, p. 8

25. Chkheidze Tengiz. *Georgian Agronomists*. Tbilisi, 1962 p. 9

26. Chavchavadze, Ilia *Speech at the opening of Tsinamdzgvriantkari School*. Newspaper 'Droeba', 1883, #177. p. 2-3

Every summer, Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili together with his students headed to Saguramo to celebrate the Feast of Saint Elijah at the welcoming home of Ilia Chavchavadze. Mikheil Javakhishvili, the great Georgian writer, who once studied at the Tsinamdzghvriantkari School was also present at one of these celebrations. His father, Saba Adamashvili, a peasant who worked hard to cultivate his lands, dreamt of his son becoming a professional agronomist. (Incidentally, after graduating from school, Mikheil had intended to continue his studies in Crimea, at the famous agricultural technical college of Nikitin, but a family tragedy radically changed the young man's plans).

In 1887, the subtropical specialist and agronomist Nikitin (after whom the Botanical Garden at Yalta was later named), who was Principle of Yalta Agricultural School, was invited to visit Georgia by Vladimir Staroselski. He met Ilia Chavchavadze, who in turn acquainted his guest with the activities of the agricultural school of Tsinamdzgvriantkari.

Nikitin was fascinated by the work of this school as well as the hospitality he received. At the request of Ilia, he agreed to admit 15 young students to the Yalta school to continue their studies there. One of these students admitted to "Nikitka", as they used to call it, was Alexander Sharashidze, who considered the visit of Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili to the Nikitin School in order to get to know the study environment there as an event of singular importance: "... His visit impressed the whole school very much. We, the Georgian students of the school, have had our self-respect increase threefold. Meeting with him somehow made the subjects that we reluctantly studied before more interesting. Ilia made us love farming, inspired us and refreshed our spirit..."²⁷

The Tsinamdzghvriantkari Agricultural School participated in the Agricultural and Industrial Exhibitions of 1889-1901 and was awarded Silver and Gold Medals for rational viticulture and the spreading of agricultural knowledge to the people. Indeed, it is difficult to disagree with the opinion of one of the scholars that "the once-unnoticed Tsinamdzghvriantkari became very famous thanks to the efforts of Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili... It is not by accident that he voluntarily distributed his estate to peasants and constantly called on them to leave their mud huts and build stone houses ..." ²⁸

The Tsinamdzgvriantkari Agricultural School existed until 1933. This school formed the basis of the Agricultural Technical College that was later created. More than 250 young people graduated this school and received degrees in agricultural science. According to figures from 2006, the school taught many agricultural subjects, although it was eventually closed in 2010.

27. Chkheidze Tengiz. *Georgian Agronomists*. Tbilisi, 1962 p. 16

28. Navdarashvili, Davit. *Ilia Tsinamdzghvrishvili*. Tbilisi, 1973 p. 67.

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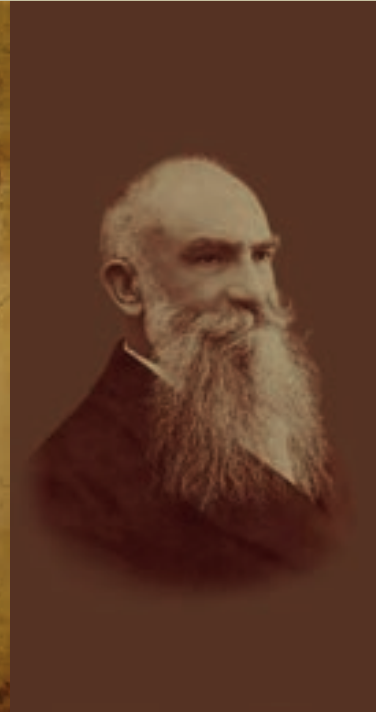
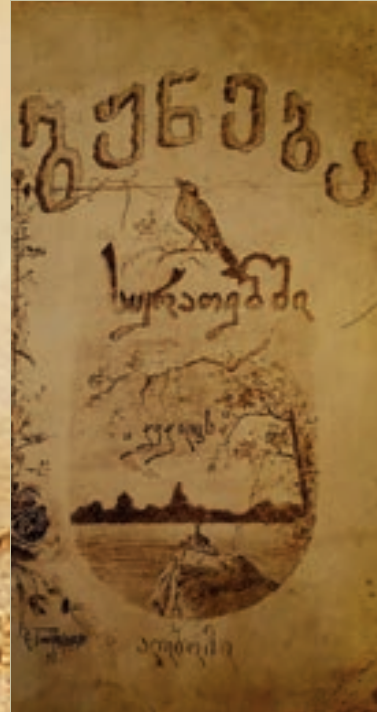
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**THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE GEORGIAN EDUCATOR
ILIA ALKHAZISHVILI IN THE STUDY OF
GEORGIAN NATURE AND THE SPREAD OF
NATURAL EDUCATION IN GEORGIA**

MELANO GOGOLADZE

“Where is your dignity, Georgia? Why do we clothe ourselves in garish and seductive colors, when we are so far behind everyone else in our cultural aspirations?! .. Indeed, that great historical moment has now arrived – a moment which demands that we either labor or we perish. Today Georgia needs a new David the Builder, a forceful personality- not a David with a long sword and strong arm, but rather a David with a sense of civic responsibility”¹. These words belong to Ilia Alkhazishvili, the Georgian public figure, educator, writer, lexicographer, journalist, pharmacist, folklorist and ethnographer, whose name is still relatively unknown to wider society. He is counted together with other Georgian public figures, who ungrudgingly served their country in those places where necessity demanded and who quietly, without ostentation, fulfilled their human and patriotic duty before the nation.

Ilia Alkhazishvili was born in 1853 in the village of Ziari, Gurjaani District. His father died when he was only six months old, and fate allotted him the heavy burden of being both an orphan and a serf. Despite this, he was able to receive an excellent education. At the request of the Shalikashvili family, whose vassal Ilia’s father had also been, and who had taken the talented young orphan in, he became an apprentice in Gori to the pharmacist Karl Schehf. Ilia diligently studied the preparation of medicines, as well as the pharmaceutical trade in general. The pharmacy’s owner turned out to be extremely impressed with his young apprentice’s diligence and acumen.

However, in order to achieve the status of apprentice pharmacist, he needed a certificate of graduation from the district school, which he didn’t have. For this reason, in 1870, Gori’s district physician, Ioseb Saakashvili, took Ilia on as an apprentice orderly. In 1872, Ilia took the medical orderly exam in one of the hospitals of Tbilisi, and in 1883 he enrolled at the Gymnasium in Kutaisi and received certification as an apprentice pharmacist. In 1886 Ilia sat exams at Kharkov University in order to qualify as a pharmacist and in 1889 he sat in on classes at Kharkov’s Medical Faculty. In addition to pursuing a formal university education, Ilia also studied Georgian folk medicine. He was also an excellent scholar of the Georgian language and

1. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. “The Civic Duty to the Homeland”. “Ganatileba” Journal. 1915, #4.

literature and Georgian history. He could speak and write fluently in Russian, and also knew French, Latin, Armenian and Turkish.

Ilia Alkhazishvili applied his broad education and passion for hard work to the selfless service of his home country. His activities were diverse and covered many different areas of work.

Cultural and educational activities

Ilia Alkhazishvili was prominent among the Georgian public figures of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He devoted much of his work to the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia, and made a significant contribution to raising the consciousness of the local Meskhi people. Through his active labors, Ilia Alkhazishvili played an important role not only in this region of Georgia, but also in the development of Georgian culture and education as a whole.

Ilia Alkhazishvili was the local representative in Javakheti of the “Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians”, which was principally occupied with opening schools, libraries and reading rooms and distributing books, educational materials, periodicals and newspapers to the local population. Many educational institutions were opened in Javakheti with his direct involvement for example, the library and reading-room at Baraleti, the library in Akhalkalaki and the Gymnasium in that same city. He took care of the educational development of all ethnic groups in the region with the same enthusiasm. He undertook invaluable work in bringing together Georgians of different religious confessions in order to elevate their sense of national identity.

Ilia Alkhazishvili was also a correspondent in Javakheti for the newspapers “Droeba” and “Iveria”. He regularly published dispatches, through which he informed Georgian audiences about daily life and conditions in this part of the country.

Apart from his active work as a journalist and publicist, Ilia Alkhazishvili penned various works of popular science and artistic pieces, which were outstanding in their use of current themes and the refinement of their style. In his creative works, he used his knowledge of Georgian nature and his research into the natural sciences to great effect. We can name a few of his works, “Nature and Life” (1897) and “Nature in Pictures” (an album for the magazine “Jejili”, or ‘Green Wheat’ from 1899), which is an excellent depiction of the animal kingdom, as well as “Dyphtheria – a Report on this Illness and Methods of Prevention and Treatment” (1902).

Work as a pharmacist

Let us also cast an eye over Ilia Alkhazishvili’s achievements in the area of pharmaceutical practice. During this period, the standard of healthcare in Georgia as a whole – to say nothing of the region of Javakheti – was extremely low. One key problem was the supply and distribution of medicines, and medical preparations were generally expensive and hard to come by. In 1863, there were a mere fifteen pharmacies in the whole of Georgia, of which ten were located in the capital, Tbilisi. From 1872, Ilia Alkhazishvili served in the Akhalkalaki region, first as a medical orderly, and later on as a qualified pharmacist. From 1877 he again carried out the functions of chief medical orderly in Akhalkalaki. At this time, there was no pharmacy in Akhalkalaki, but there was a so-called *shkafi* (or ‘repository’), which held essential medicines. Since Ilia had experience working in a pharmacy, he was trusted by the local doctor to prepare and distribute medicines himself from this local repository.

In 1880, Ilia Alkhazishvili opened his own pharmacy in Akhalkalaki. By 1883, he was serving as an apprentice chemist at his own pharmacy, and by 1886 he was assistant chemist. From 1892, however, after qualifying as a pharmacist, he managed this pharmacy himself.

Apart from the extremely low level of medical care, no less problematic was the fact that the general population was too poor to afford the services of a doctor. Ilia Alkhazishvili frequently lamented this fact, and opened his pharmacy based on one concrete aim: to make medicinal preparations accessible to ordinary people, to explain to them the importance of medicines and medical treatment and to help them understand the true value and importance of their own health. “Whosoever came seeking medicines with a doctor’s prescriptions – be they Armenian, Tatar, Jew, Georgian or any other ethnicity or nationality, if he noticed (after having asked after the family’s situation), that they were poor and lacking in funds, he would distribute medicines free of charge with the correct care and advice. The head of the patient’s household – full of hope and comfort – would be practically bowled over with joy. For this reason, Ilia Alkhazishvili earned the trust, respect and love of the entire Javakheti region”.² This is how Ilia Alkhazishvili’s contemporary, a priest from the village of Kotelia, Vasil Koptonashvili, characterized Ilia’s work.

There was only one qualified doctor serving along with his assistants in the whole of the Akhalkalaki district. He was overloaded with huge amounts of administrative work and if we add to this the fact that some of his assistants were quite greedy characters, it’s easy to understand why the poor population of the region was negatively predisposed towards both

2. Koptonashvili, Vasil. “Autobiography (Memoirs)”. Manuscript Collection of the Samtskhe-Javakheti Ivane Javakishvili Historical Museum. 1929, N. 1079

the doctor and to medicine in general. On the other hand, anyone going to Ilia Alkhazishvili for assistance would receive medicines and medical advice, and some extremely poor people would also receive financial assistance. According to the recollections of eyewitnesses, if any of the poor families of Akhalkalaki or its surrounding villages had someone fall ill, and news of their trouble reached Ilia, he would have the doctor sent to them at his own expense and would supply them with medicines free of charge. In addition to this, a pharmacy was founded in Akhalkalaki, which distributed all kinds of medicines free-of-charge to school pupils,³ with district chief of Akhalkalaki, Giorgi Tarkhan-Mouravi, as its Chair and Ilia Alkhazishvili as Treasurer.

Ilia Alkhazishvili's contribution more generally to the development of pharmaceuticals in Georgia should also be highlighted. In 1898, Ilia moved to Tbilisi and founded the "Trancaucasus Chemists' Pharmaceutical Trade Cooperative in Tbilisi", as well as the company "Pharmacist Ilia Solomonovich Alkhazov & Co." which started work in 1900. The company's main aim was to bring high-quality medicines to Tbilisi and to distribute them to the various regions of the country. Apart from the quality of the medicines, customers were also attracted by the fact that the cooperative sold the medicines relatively cheaply and sent the order to the patient's requested train station free of charge. The organization also attracted the attention of Tbilisi's Medical Department, and they started ordering medicines for their hospital from them. The organization worked successfully across the entire Transcaucasus region.⁴

The authority and prestige that Ilia Alkhazishvili enjoyed among his colleagues in pharmaceutical society is attested by the fact that, at the General Meeting of Pharmacists held in Tbilisi in 1899, he was selected by a large majority of his colleagues to be sent to the Pharmacists Congress of Russia, which he refused. At the same time, in 1901, 1902 and 1903, he was elected Chair of the Caucasus Pharmaceutical Society.⁵

In this way, not only did Ilia Alkhazishvili carve out the foundations of pharmaceutical activity in Javakheti, and make medicine and medical treatment accessible to ordinary working people, he also made an important contribution more generally to the development of pharmacy in his home country.

3. Sudadze, Nazi. "Social Development and Educational Issues in 19th Century Samtskhe-Javakheti". Tbilisi: 1998, p. 69.

4. "Tsnobis Purtseli" Newspaper, 1900, N 1130, p. 1

5. Skhiladze, R., Kavtaradze, V. An Eminent Pharmacist in 19th Century Georgia. "Pharmacist" Newspaper, 2002, N2 (37), p. 5

Nature and natural sciences

Ilia Alkhazishvili spent his childhood in the Kakheti region. "The time he spent in Kakheti stayed with the young man for the rest of his life. It was here that, as a small child, a special love for nature was first awakened in him; a love which later determined his inclination towards the natural sciences."⁶ Ilia travelled frequently to different parts of Georgia and knew these areas well. Later on, he often depicted the country's boundlessly beautiful natural landscapes in his written works.

One of the most important aims of Ilia Alkhazishvili's educational work was to stimulate interest among Georgian society in nature and its "infallible and unchanging laws", that is to say, the natural sciences themselves. Apart from engaging enthusiastically in scientific research, he also offered society inspiration: "Isn't it obvious that our wellbeing is entirely dependent upon knowledge of the natural world?"⁷ In order to achieve this, literature on the natural sciences in the Georgian language had to be created and developed. This most necessary of tasks moved forward incredibly slowly, something which greatly bothered Ilia:

"Generally, Georgian literature on the natural sciences is not yet on firm ground" he wrote. "At the current time there are very few writers who deal with these sciences, and few readers with an interest in this topic. The Georgian reader does not necessarily favor practical philosophy, and instead we prefer songs and poems, and by God's grace we have poets in abundance. But what level of cultural development are we at, when we don't have – and never have had – texts on minerology, botany, zoology, anatomy, hygiene, chemistry, physics etc, written in rational, decent Georgian?"⁸

He tried conscientiously to inspire the dignity of the Georgian people. He was convinced that Georgians had a natural talent and ability that would allow them to master the natural sciences. He considered the fact that Georgia had given the world two scientific "titans" – the physiologist and academic Tarkhnishvili and the chemist professor Petriashvili – to be evidence of this innate national gift.

Here's another excerpt from the magazine "Ganatileba" ('Education'), in which Ilia Alkhazishvili's educational and scientific articles were regularly printed:

"Despite the fact that our modern-day poets, by some miracle, have turned into Rustavelis, we nonetheless can't be considered a cultured people until

6. Kekelidze, Mikheil. "Ilia Alkhazishvili. "Mnatobi" Magazine, 1953, N11, p. 156.

7. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. "Kvali" Magazine. 1895, N8, p. 8

8. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. Criticism and Bibliography. "Ganatileba" Magazine, 1913, N6, p. 471.

the natural sciences are fully embedded in our native tongue, and no individual can be considered a learned fellow, if he has no knowledge of the natural sciences. It therefore follows, that a nation that has not developed the natural sciences in its own mother tongue cannot be considered an educated people.”⁹

Ilia considered it an affront to national dignity that Georgians were only able to familiarize themselves with the various branches of modern science and its discoveries by way of sources in Russian or other foreign languages: “Say, for example, we don’t know a foreign language. Then we Georgians resemble a semi-wild people ... Yes, dear friends; it seems that, although this problem is clear for all to see, we lack even the basic dignity required to pay it due attention.”¹⁰

By 1916, however, he could say with satisfaction that, many Georgians were already becoming interested in the sciences: “Truly, if we desire and endeavor to bring culture to the people, we must work tirelessly- we must toil for the renaissance of Georgian scientific literature. Indeed, our sense of national pride obliges us to tackle this problem and, thank God, there are already many Georgians who are equipped with higher education and who are occupied with scientific inquiry.”¹¹

However, this most important of tasks faced a serious obstruction. This was “the lack of scientific terms in the Georgian language. It is precisely this circumstance which causes many to lose their zeal, and clips the wings of those who wish to fly.”¹²

It became necessary to develop scientific terminology in the Georgian language. Ilia Alkhazishvili wrote in 1913, that he had been interested in Georgian scientific terminology for some time and had been conducting research in this area: “I am very interested in this topic, and for more than twenty years I’ve been looking into it – reading, thinking, doing all sorts of rummaging around and recording my findings.”¹³

Whilst working on Georgian scientific terminology, Ilia Alkhazishvili operated according to the following principles: He would first take account of any existing terms to see if they could be used as an equivalent: “When you’re looking for the appropriate term in Georgian, I beseech you not to bring in words from foreign languages” he wrote.

9. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. Criticism and Bibliography. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1914, N1, p. 70.

10. Ibid.

11. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. A Natural Lexicon. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1916, N4, p. 247.

12. Ibid.

13. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. Criticism and Bibliography. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1913, N6, p. 471.

te.¹⁴ Secondly, at the same time he did not approve of the tendency to simply ‘Georgianize’ every word when translating it, since in every area of the natural sciences, Greek and Latin words were allowed and, particularly when new discoveries were made, these languages were often resorted to: “The natural sciences have their own language and vocabulary, and therefore do not be surprised if you often come across some foreign names in our works. We can’t avoid this and nor should we try to”¹⁵. Thirdly, Alkhazishvili considered that, whenever possible, it was absolutely essential to create new Georgian terms. In order to coin such terms, he believed that two things were of the utmost importance: “1. We should first have thoroughly studied the chemical, physical and physiological nature of the topic and 2. We should know nature thoroughly in the Georgian language – we should know pure Georgian, colloquial and scientific, old and new, otherwise we will never be able to perform this task adequately.”¹⁶

Thanks to Ilia Alkhazishvili’s efforts, many new terms entered into Georgian scientific literature. For example, he rejected the term “mzhavbadi” (for ‘oxygen’) and instead demanded the acceptance of “zhangbadi” (from *zhangi*, ‘rust’ i.e. ‘to oxidize’). He rejected the word “haergvari” (‘air-like’) for “gas” and insisted upon the use of “gazi”. He supported the form “mzhava” for “acid” over the word “mzhave” (‘sour’) etc. As Mikheil Kekelidze pointed out, “Ilia Alkhazishvili would often search for a word for decades in old books or colloquial dialects and until he was absolutely certain of the word’s usefulness and reliability, he would never use it openly.”¹⁷

Alkhazishvili’s critical articles were frequently published in the magazine “Ganatileba” (‘Education’) in the section entitled “Criticism and Bibliography”. In these articles, the author would often criticize specific terminology, awkwardly-composed sentences and even entire works – in other words, everything which went against the rules of the Georgian language. He considered healthy criticism to be absolutely essential, both for the future development of the language in general, and for the refinement of terminology and scientific activity.

Ilia Alkhazishvili’s research on scientific terminology ended with very concrete results. Over a period of thirty years, he collected materials for the the

14. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. A Natural Lexicon. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1916, N4, p. 247

15. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. A Natural Lexicon. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1916, N4, p. 247.

16. Ibid.

17. Kekelidze, Mikheil. *Excerpts from I. Alkhazishvili’s Works of the Terminology of the Natural Sciences* “Chemistry and Biology in the School” Magazine, 1969, N1.

compilation of a pharmaceutical dictionary, which resulted in the creation of a brilliant piece of work: “Pharmaceutical Terminology, or Georgian, Russian and Latin Names for Medicines”, which consisted of 2 178 individual entries. The dictionary also included notes from the fields of botany, chemistry, medicine and zoology. Unfortunately, this lexicon was never published. Alkhazishvili also compiled “A Natural Lexicon, or Scientific Names and Terminology” according to the system of Alfred Brehm, which was published in “Ganatileba” (‘Education’) magazine in 1916. Therefore, Ilia Alkhazishvili left a definitive mark both on the development of a new Georgian literary language, and on the establishment of scientific terminology in Georgian.

Ilia Alkhazishvili’s efforts on behalf of generations of young Georgians also deserve particular attention. He set about teaching young people about Mother Nature and the animal kingdom with great love and enthusiasm, and sought to arouse their interest in the study of the natural sciences. “Study, get to know and draw close to nature ... make enquires about nature and I guarantee that you’ll find in nature a subject that you will not tire of even if you live for a thousand years. Indeed, friends, kindle the fire of love for nature in your hearts, study its infallible and unchanging laws, move closer to live-giving nature, drink from its undying spring and you will learn such boundlessly interesting facts, that your interest in life will be multiplied a thousandfold!”¹⁸ This is how Ilia Alkhazishvili addressed his young audience. In order to encourage young people’s interest in the natural sciences, he worked actively with editors of the children’s magazines “Jejili” (‘Green Wheat’) and “Nakadula” (‘The Brook’), to which he regularly contributed educational articles.

Nino Nakashidze wrote the following in “Jejili” magazine about Ilia Alkhazishvili’s achievements: “From 1915, the most excellent expert on flora and plant life - Ilia Alkhazishvili - started working with our magazine ... he has penned many excellent articles on the sciences, especially on our native plant species. As far as I know, these articles have not yet been published in book form – something which, in my opinion, would be of great benefit.”¹⁹ Alkhazishvili published his articles in “Jejili” under a unified title, “Plants and People”; and his descriptive work “The Mtkvari, Chorokhi and Rioni Rivers” and, it must be pointed out that, from the day of the magazine’s founding (in 1890), he offered his articles for free.

“The Study of Medicine” – this was the title of a book which Alkhazishvili spent over fifteen years of his life writing. For many years, he leafed

18. “Kvali” (‘Imprint’) Magazine, 1895, N8, p. 8

19. Nakashidze, Nino. The Private Archive of I. Maisuradze at the Samtskhe-Javakheti History Museum. N 263. p. 2

through old copies of the Georgian ‘Karabadini’ (a traditional text on folk medicine), searching for and comparing different diseases and ways to cure them, both ancient and contemporary. He looked at traditions from different regions of Georgia, and tried to discover if any of these medicines matched up to “those medicinal plants which are known in Europe to be effective and which every nation has brought into pharmacopeia, that is to say, into those books, which are essential reading for pharmacists and doctors”, as Grigol Volski wrote.²⁰

In this work, Ilia Alkhazishvili clearly demonstrated how the latest discoveries in pharmacology were based on the very oldest traditions. He indicated how various medicinal cures were traditionally prepared, and which was suitable for use during which illness and how the medicines were used. He also described in detail various medicinal plants and animal products, using their Georgian, Russian and Latin names and synonyms.

“The Study of Medicine” was initially sent to the editors of “Iveria” newspaper for comment and appraisal, and the newspaper replied with a letter from Grigol Volski, from which we have already quoted above. Grigol Volski defined the structure of the work as follows: 1. The true names of plants and animals in the Georgian language, and their synonyms in different regions of Georgia, 2. Latin names with synonyms, 3. Russian names with synonyms, 4. The place of origin of these animals and plants, 5. The physical characteristics of these plants (ie, their appearance), 6. Which illnesses they are used to treat and how, and 7. Which medicines are prepared from these plants and how.²¹

In 1893, “Iveria” again commented on the same work with a letter from the Chief Physician of the Akhaltsikhe district, the famous public-figure Vasil Gamrekeli:

“This composition is made up of two large volumes (...). The first one covers information on how various medicines should be prepared: selected herbs, balms, ointments and others, and so in this first volume are described all of the complex drugs (...), which are currently in use in medical science. After each medicine, information is given as to which ailment is treated using these medicine as well as the correct doses and methods of administration. In the second volume, various medicinal plants and their constituent parts are described. At the end of this volume, an index of various illnesses and complaints is given and it is also shown how one should search for methods for curing these illnesses. In a word, in these

20. “Iveria” Newspaper, 1888, N 160, p. 1

21. Ibid.

two volumes is gathered all the information that is found in modern medical science, covering pharmacopoea, pharmacognosy, pharmacy, pharmacology and more besides.”²²

Nonetheless, Ilia Alkhazishvili never managed to publish this work in book form.

Alkhazishvili wasn't only occupied with the business of practical pharmaceutical work, but he was also a theorist of this science. In his work, he made wide use of medical traditions that had been widespread in Georgia for centuries, as well as traditions which had been preserved both in the form of oral traditions and written down (in the case of the Karabadini). He knew all of these traditions well, and tried to use them in the service of medicine, something which is once again confirmed by this work.

Another of Ilia Alkhazishvili's diverse creations is his book entitled “Nature and Medicinal Science”; a work of popular science which was published periodically, as a series of articles, in the magazine “Ganatileba” (‘Education’). In this work, he enthusiastically introduces his audience to nature; to the environment in which man is suited to live and which has the greatest influence on him. The reader is told how the various branches of the sciences developed step-by-step, thanks to which “if we can't say that man is truly the king of nature, neither can we say that man is the slave of nature.”²³ He recalls those achievements and discoveries of science which have contributed to our understanding of nature. He speaks about hygiene and introduces the reader to various illnesses and the microbes and parasites that cause them and also indicates which medicines are used to treat and cure these illnesses.

In this way, Ilia Alkhazishvili's book “Nature and Medicinal Science” offers the interested reader a broad knowledge in various fields, including natural sciences, medicine and hygiene. Before it was published, Ilia alerted the writer Mose Janashvili that he was writing something “on this issue”. Janashvili felt that this type of educational literature was greatly needed. This work would truly serve to expand the Georgian language and fill the void created by the lack of this kind of literature. In addition, this was a literary and descriptive work, which was aimed at the broadest possible readership.

Alkhazishvili devoted a large section of his book to discussions about the issue of hygiene, and he also often published separate articles on this issue

22. Gamrekeli, Vasil. “A Few Words on the Manuscript of ‘A Study of Medicine’, Which is Compiled by Pharmacist Ilia Alkhazishvili”. “Iveria” Newspaper, 1893, N 272, p. 2.

23. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. “Parasites That Bite and Feed Off Humans”. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1915, N 12.

in the pages of “Ganatileba”. As was mentioned above, Ilia Alkhazishvili realized that society was lacking in this type of information and so he spared no effort in filling this gap in their knowledge. He patiently explained to his readers what role hygiene plays in daily life and how important it is to follow every rule of hygiene: “From cradle to grave, hygiene follows our every step like a guardian angel and tries to keep us from everything that is bad for our health – both spiritually and bodily...and woe betide anyone who is lazy in observing hygiene – for punishment comes soon enough!”.²⁴ And also: “Hygiene is not the same thing as medicine; quite the opposite! The point of hygiene is to stop us from needing to resort to medicine in the first place.”²⁵ As we can see, Ilia Alkhazishvili was calling upon society to live in generalized hygiene, keeping to all its rules, since this is a certain guarantee of health and long life.

In his article “The Earth and its Soil”, Alkhazishvili describes how the earth was shaped, how it came to attain its current form, and how the earth influences human health. He demonstrates how swampy places are unfit for human habitation. Using the example of Georgia, he explains how, on the Black Sea coast, in Samegrelo, living on the floodplains of the Rioni and Iori rivers actually poses a health risk. He also speaks about those diseases which are common there and based on this, he names Kartli as the best place to live in the country, in particular Upper Kartli.

He also introduces the reader to the various types of soil and their different levels of fertility. He lists the qualities that make a place good for building a residential dwelling, on what side the house should have its windows, how rooms should be ventilated and more besides.

Ilia Alkhazishvili was a man in whom the love of nature had awakened a deep interest in the subjects of the natural sciences and he was moved by a fervent desire to investigate, and he spoke with particular love, warmth and sense of vocation about forests and the great benefits they have brought to mankind. In his article “The Forest and its Climate”, he notes that “the benefits that forests bestow could be described in hundreds of volumes”, but in this article, he gives only a short list of the beneficial properties of forests: “Forests are what most determine the quality of the air, and are excellent for purifying, cleaning and cooling the air, and they deliver to us well-seasoned, oxygen-enriched air to breathe. This is even more so if the forest is of pine or spruce, in which case the forest is a real source of immortality.”²⁶ Forests have an important influence on air

24. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. “Hygiene”. “Ganatileba” Magazine. 1912, N1.

25. Ibid.

26. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. “The Forest and its Climate”. “Ganatileba Magazine”, 1913, N 6.

temperatures, and have a stabilizing effect on heat and warmth, as well as ice and cold. In a treeless landscape, ice melts quicker and this leads to increases in the flow of rivers. Frequent rains also fill rivers, and in places without forests, flash-flooding can wreak havoc on local populations. “All of this happens in places where forests are brazenly and thoughtlessly cut down and destroyed and slopes stripped of their tree-cover” Alkhazishvili tells us. We have trees to thank also for the fact that our rivers don’t dry out in summer. Forests also reduce the effects of wind and storms and the damaging effects of hail are mitigated in forested areas, which is not the case in unforested places. Besides all this, the material found in forests is of absolute necessity for human life. However, “there are forests, and there are forests”, and not all forests are of equal value for our health. For example, a large proportion of the forests of Guria and Samegrelo, which are situated in low-lying and swampy places, as well as the damp forests of Outer Kakheti do not offer any particular health benefits. It is rather the forests that cover elevated places or mountainous slopes that are a true source of good health. The author draws particular attention to the importance of the resorts of Borjomi, Bakuriani and Abastumani and describes with extraordinary passion the beautiful nature of Abastumani and the Zekari Pass.

The thoughtless destruction of forests also has a negative impact on the climate of neighbouring countries too, and so Alkhazishvili also expresses a desire for the rational management of forests to be regulated by international law. In his opinion, forests have a particular importance for Georgia: apart from the fact that forests “beautify and improve the appearance of the country” for centuries Georgians defended their forests both from enemies and from epidemics. For this reason, he believed that “wherever justice and honor reign, forests should not be destroyed, but should be prayed over.” People should be allowed to derive material profit from forests, but this should be done sensibly. “Plundering forests in a greedy and aggressive manner and the complete destruction of forests, is a thousand times worse than barbarism, and is a beastly aberration.” Ilia Alkhazishvili was particularly shocked and disturbed by the fact that in Georgia, these forest “shrines” were being wrecklessly destroyed. He took the example of the destruction of the oak forests that once stood between Kareli and Khashuri, the decimated pine forests of Samachablo and Satsitsiano, and others besides. “For the sake of only a few measly manats, forests are senselessly destroyed”,²⁷ which will bring irreversible effects in the future, he wrote.

27. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. “The Forest and its Climate”. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1913, N 6

Ilia Alkhazishvili describes how Georgia’s beautiful nature is endowed with many natural gifts, and also gives practical advice on how Georgians might make use of these gifts. For example, how bay trees could be of commercial value, or how the most beautiful villages in Georgia could be turned into resorts.

Ilia Alkhazishvili spoke tirelessly about the benefits that the sciences could bring when used in the service of the people, and he pointed out several times how the countries of Europe had achieved great success in this regard. “So let us emulate Western Europe, my friends. Georgians should remain Georgian, but it is absolutely necessary for Georgians to become European.”²⁸ However, this process should not be one of blind emulation and Georgians should not lose their own God-given identity, and nor should they violate the highest laws of nature. He introduced his audience to many scientists, whose appearance in human history changed it for the better and expressed concern for the fact that, more than the names of these scientists, people knew the names of those tyrants who had brought only war, bloodshed and devastation to humankind.

Another of Ilia Alkhazishvili’s educational works was his book “Legends of Javakheti”, which was printed in 1978. The first chapter of this book is composed of “Nature and Life”, published in 1897. “I chose this title” he says “because nature is as important as life itself”. “Nature and Life”, the subtitle of which was “From the Diaries of a Traveler”, was composed of the following articles: “The Traveler’s Dawn”, “Tabatskuri Lake”, “A Corner of Javakheti”, “Trialeti’s Tskhvari Mountain” and “Tsalka and Rekha”. The second chapter of the book is titled “By the sources of the Mtkvari” (formerly Upper Kartli and the Source of the Mtkvari), and the third was called “Legends of Javakheti”, which deals with Javakhetian folklore.

The first and second chapters of the book are written in the form of a travel journal, through which the reader is acquainted with the history, ethnography, folklore, nature and climate of the Meskheta region. The primary value of this work is that it makes the reader think about national and social problems, and speaks about the achievements of the natural sciences.

The book’s protagonists speak during their travels of various natural phenomena which they have witnessed or heard about. One of the protagonists is a natural scientist, who gives a technical explanation for these phenomena. They speak about astronomy – about the stars, the moon, about the sun, about the origins of the Caucasus Mountains and about volcanoes, for which they offer the following figurative description: “Volcanoes are the

28. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. “The Forest and its Climate”. “Ganatileba” Magazine, 1913, N 8

windpipes of the Earth, and when the Earth is angered, the wind spews out, choking and hiccupping”. The characters introduce us to lightening and electric storms, to lightening strikes, rainbows, to coral and pearls and how to find them. They speak about the animal world and its natural order, and which animals can be brought to heal. They speak of the strict order that reigns in the natural world, and of the only being that fails to conform to this natural law – man: “Only man fights and opposes the natural law, and refuses to obey it” according to the text.

And finally, it’s impossible not to mention the artistry of Ilia Alkhazishvili’s depictions of natural landscapes. He was an individual who truly felt nature; he describes nature with devotion and craftsmanship, and passes his own feelings on to his readers. After reading this book, it’s impossible for the reader not to have some interest in the nature of Javakheti. Ilia Alkhazishvili was extremely troubled by the annihilation of forests in that region, as well as in the country as a whole, and he wrote about this extensively in his work “Nature and Medicinal Science”. He gives an impressive account of the last remains of these forests: “First these forests were godlessly cut down during the period of Ottoman rule, and then later, when the region fell into Russian hands, from 1828 onwards, Armenians from Erzerum were settled here who knew nothing of the value of these forests and so, that which the Ottomans had spared, the new arrivals from Erzerum disposed of.”²⁹

The famous teacher, Niko Tskhvedadze, had the following to say about this book:

“This book contains much important and essential scientific and ethnographic material. Every issue is connected in some way with the natural sciences or astronomy, descriptions of the life of ordinary people in various parts of Georgia, or the explanation of natural phenomena, which is always described in accessible and simple language, in a narrative style. Such an excellent book should be available in every library and reading room, and in every school library, and not one, but several copies. It should be used as a textbook for every teacher in our schools, from which many important sections should be read out loud in classrooms, so that teachers can bring the words to life for the benefit of both school pupils, and society as a whole.”³⁰

We have tried in some way to introduce readers to some of Ilia Alkhazishvili’s practical work and literary creations, all of which was dedicated first and foremost to the study of the nature of his homeland. We’ve seen how

he tried to draw the attention of society as a whole to the fact that God has allotted the Georgian people the most beautiful and rich country as their portion and that this divine gift demands proper care and attention.

Ilia Alkhazishvili was well aware, that new times would bring new challenges for humanity. He knew that the Georgian people had to ensure their own continued survival through education, and that the times they were living in demanded a thorough mastery of the natural sciences. This would have been unimaginable without the creation of new terminology for the natural sciences in the Georgian language, and Ilia Alkhazishvili played an immensely important role in undertaking this absolutely essential task.

29. Alkhazishvili, Ilia. “Javakheti”. “Iveria” Newspaper, 1893

30. Tskhvedadze, Niko. “Ganatleba” Newspaper, 1909, N1, p.122

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THE GREEN POLICIES OF LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IN TBILISI BETWEEN 1875 AND 1917

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As a result of rapid urbanization, almost half the world's population now lives in cities. Thanks to the high density of urban settlement, industrial production and the development of automobile transport, modern cities are also characterized by a microclimate that is damaging to human health. For this reason, the improvement of environmental conditions and the protection of public health should be one of the main priorities of any city government. The most effective way of managing these problems is the creation and maintenance of green spaces, forests, public parks, squares, gardens and lawns. Green spaces not only improve environmental and climatic conditions, they also have aesthetic value and are an integral part of the planning of urban environments. In this respect, the picture in our capital city of Tbilisi is not a very good one.

It's very interesting to look at what sort of situation existed in Tbilisi in terms of green spaces over the last century or so, and what sort of work was carried out by the city's institutions of self-government from the very first day of their establishment on 1 January 1875, until 1917, when city government in Tbilisi underwent a fundamental restructuring. Generally in the modern world, the creation of new green spaces, and the maintenance and preservation of existing ones, is an essential part of the work of any municipal authority.

The place in which the city of Tbilisi grew up was, from time immemorial, covered with forests – something which is evident even in the legend of the city's founding by King Vakhtang Gorgasali.

After the transformation of Tbilisi into a city and its declaration as the capital of Kartli, many gardens, vineyards, orchads, flowerbeds and other green spaces were developed here, and these are mentioned in both local and foreign sources.

According to the 10th century Arab geographer Istahar, Tbilisi was “a place full of riches, with many fruit orchards and gardens”;¹

In 1672-73, the Frenchman Jean Chardin, a jeweler and trader in expensive food products, travelled through Tbilisi and called it the most beautiful

1. *History of Tbilisi, Vol. 1, Tbilisi from the Earliest Period until the End of the 18th Century.* Tbilisi, 1990 p. 73

city in the world. He wrote that “the city’s outer districts are beautified by many entertainment venues and splendid gardens. The largest garden in the city is that of the Governor. There are not so many fruit trees here, but rather there are countless beautiful trees offering shade and cool air”², which proves that apart from fruit orchards, there were also specially-designed gardens in the city.

According to the French traveler and natural scientist, Joseph Patton de Tournefort, who travelled through Tbilisi in July 1701, “... in the local gardens, beautiful plants are thriving and the locals care for them better than they do in Turkey.”³

Interesting reports about the gardens of 18th century Tbilisi are also left to us by the German scientist Johann Güldenschedt, the Russian diplomat Captain Yazikov and Vakhtang Batonishvili (Prince Vakhtang). On the map of Tbilisi produced by the latter, eleven gardens are listed, namely Qaibula, Mamasakhlisi, the Queen’s Garden, Tbileli Garden (ie, the garden of the chief ecclesiastical hierarch of the city), Tbilisi’s Seidabad Garden, the Castle Garden, Krtsanisi Garden, Bebuta Garden, the New Garden at Meidan and Bejana’s Garden.⁴

By ‘Castle Gardens’, the author is referring to the garden of the King, and therefore we can surmise that in Tbilisi and its environs, the King had several gardens, as did the Queen, the Princes, the Bishop of Tbilisi, noblemen and civilian traders.

As a result of Agha Mahmad Khan’s invasion of Tbilisi in 1795, the gardens of the city were burned and almost completely destroyed along with the rest of the city. This was the situation in the Royal City of the Georgian Kings, when, in 1801, Russia annexed the Kingdom of Kartl-Kakheti and it became part of the Russian Empire. Tbilisi was declared the capital city of the Tiflis *guberniya*, (‘governate’), while later on it became the administrative, political, economic and cultural center of the entire Transcaucasus region.

The historian Platon Ioseliani tells us what fate befell the largest and most important of Tbilisi’s three hundred gardens:

The garden of Queen Mariam, wife of King Rostom, which was laid out in Sololaki and had a large stone pond, was first given to Tekle Batonishvili, and later on it fell into the hands of private individuals.

The garden belonging to the Georgian Kings, which was next to Queen Mariam’s garden, was sold by the state treasury in 1824, while in the

2. Jean Chardin’s *Travels in Persia and Other Countries of the East*. Tbilisi, 1974, p. 323.

3. Tournefort, Joseph. *Travels in the Countries of the East*. Tbilisi, 1988, p. 66

4. Vakhushti Batonishvili. *Map of Tbilisi*. Map Collection of the Georgian National Museum, copy i-140.

garden of the Metropolitan Bishop of Tbilisi, the Church of the Ascension was built on part of it and the rest was destroyed. In the garden of the noble family Orbeliani, the garden of the Caucasus Viceroy’s palace was built, while the Bagration-Mukhraneli family’s garden next to it passed into private ownership and was destroyed when houses were built on the site. King Giorgi XII gifted King Iese’s garden to Kovalensky, Emperor Paul’s envoy to the Kingdom of Kartl-Kakheti, later it passed to the Engineering Department. The Georgian Catholicos’ garden in Seidabad district became the property of the Georgian Exarch. The Royal Garden in Leghvtakhevi (‘Fig-tree Gorge’) was passed to the State Treasury, and later became the city’s Botanical Garden.⁵

According to Gamba, the French consul in Georgia, the Russian administration sold King Erekle’s garden in 1820 for the price of 5000 silver manats.⁶

It seems that from the beginning of the 19th century, the majority of the gardens and planted areas that passed into private ownership were destroyed. Plant cover disappeared from the slopes of Mtsatsminda, Sololaki Ridge and Makhata Mountain, which led to changes in the cities microclimate.

In the 1860s, in the city’s oldest districts – Kala, Seidabadi Vardisubani, Sololaki and Kukia – some traces remained of the gardens and their valuable plants. In place of these gardens, new residential districts appeared, in which the yards of private houses preserved some of the former greenery after the gardens themselves were cut down. This is indicated in the city’s toponymy, which preserves names like Garden, Botanical and Vardisubani streets and Orchard, and Forest and Fruit lanes, among others.

In the 19th century, Tbilisi traditionally developed along the river, in a north-westerly direction, joining to it separate villages and settlements and at the same time, ‘Garetubani’ (the ‘outer district’) underwent intense development. “There was a predictable link between the growth of Tbilisi and the reduction in the amount of green space in the city ... the city largely grows at the expense of gardens and parks; construction moves forward, while green space moves backwards – this is how growth happens.”⁷

Since Tbilisi was considered the primary city in the Caucasus region, close attention was paid to its urban development in the European manner. This also affected its greening policy. The first public parks appeared in

5. Ioseliani, P. A *Description of the Antiquities of Tiflis*. Tiflis, 1886, pp. 271-272.

6. Polievktov, Mikheil and Natadze, Grigol. *Old Tbilisi*. Tbilisi: 1930, p. 80.

7. Beridze, Vakhtang. *The Architecture of Tbilisi between 1801 – 1917, Vol. II*, Tbilisi: 1963, p. 51

Garetubani, an extension of the private garden of the Governor-General's palace. "It's a gigantic garden full of marvelous plants and tastefully planned" wrote Gamba.⁸

In the 1850s, during the period of Viceroy Mikheil Vorontsov's rule, a flower bed was planted in this garden at the initiative of the viceroy's wife. The flowers were mostly procured from abroad. Banquets were arranged in this garden,⁹ along with other entertainments.¹⁰

A new garden was also laid out on the left bank of the Mtkvari (Kura) river, which is widely known as Mushtaid Garden. This garden was originally created in Kukia by the Shiite religious leader Mujtahir (Mushtaid), who had been exiled from Persia, in memory of his deceased Georgian wife. After several years, Mushtaid returned to his homeland and the garden was sold to a private individual, from whom the state treasury purchased the park in the 1850s. The state authorities then rented the park out to private individuals. Despite the fact that this park was inaccessible to much of the population due to its distance from the city center, for many it became a favorite place, where "members of the public would take a stroll and carnivals and concerts were held. Entry was free of charge for women."¹¹ According to Ioseb Grishashvili, the garden was specifically for those "who had been raised in the European fashion."¹²

Tbilisi's urban economy and infrastructure developed rapidly and across an ever-wider area during the vicerealties of Mikheil Vorontsov and Alexander Baryatinsky. Trees were first planted along one side of Golovinsky Prospekt ('Golovin Avenue') in 1848,¹³ while trees were later planted along the newly-created Mikheil Avenue, which underwent intensive development after the opening of the Mikheil and Vera bridges. It is worth pointing out, that during the construction of Vorontsov Street (now Vakhtang Gorgasali Street), Vorontsov made every effort not to touch the gardens of Seidabad, which beautified the area.¹⁴

During the period of Vorontsov's rule – in 1845 – the so-called "Royal Garden" that had been laid out in Leghvtakhevi was turned into the Botanical Garden. Previously, after it had become state property in 1801, it

8. Polievktov, Mikheil and Natadze, Grigol. p. 81

9. Chkhetia, S. *Tbilisi in the 19th Century*. Tbilisi p. 183.

10. Zubov, P. *"Six letters to Georgia and the Caucasus written in 1833 by Platon Zubov"*. Moscow, 1834 p. 71.

11. Beridze, Teimuraz. *Tbilisi, Children's Encyclopedia*. Tbilisi, 2012, p. 100.

12. Grishashvili, Ioseb. *The Literary Bohemia of Old Tbilisi*. Batumi, 1986, p. 68

13. Bezhanishvili, G. 1961. *"Tbilisi's Green Outfit"*. Tbilisi, 1961 p. 13.

14. Ioseliani, Platon. Above, p. 254.

had been known as the "Tbilisi Treasury Gardens". At this time, the garden only consisted of 6 hectares of land and the garden's collection consisted of fruit trees, vines and vegetable cultivars. The garden quickly took on a new function: furthering the development of gardening and agriculture in the Caucasus and the cultivation of decorative and medicinal plant species of the Caucasus region. An immensely important role in developing the garden was also played by the German scientists who managed the botanical garden over many years. They include Schemiott, Demonkal, Deutschmann, Scharrer, Hintzenberg and Rolov (Rolloff). The size of the garden also increased over time, as an irrigation system was installed, a hot-house, greenhouses and a plant nursery, from which saplings were distributed free-of-charge to the local population. A museum was built, a herbarium of Caucasian plants was created, reserves were set aside and much more besides. In this way, over many years the garden became an important institution for scientific research.

Until 1912, locals could access the garden free-of-charge upon presentation of a special card. Later on, regulations were tightened and many things were forbidden. Entry to the park was possible by paying a fee, except for children under the age of ten, students and those wishing to enter the park for the purpose of studying the collections. In that part of the garden where rare scientific collections and plants requiring special care and conditions were held, access was only possible with the special permission of the garden's director.¹⁵

The largest public recreation park at the time, located to the East of Golovin Avenue, which was known as Alexander Park, also became a leading example of the art of park landscaping. Plans for the park were first produced in 1859, during the period of Baryatinsky's vicerealty, by the German architect Otto Simonson (1832-1914). Also important was the role played by the learned German gardener Heinrich Karl Werner Scharrer (1826-1906), who brought trees and other plants from Gustav Vieweg's forestry in Kojori.¹⁶ The park was opened in 1865 and was named in honor of the Russian Emperor Alexander II.

Alexander's Garden was laid out over two terraces. On the upper terrace, there was a cemetery dating from the late medieval period, which was later moved to Vera. The lower part of the park, however, was an open plain which was later called Qabakhi, and it was here that public entertainments were held, such as ball-games, horse-races and boxing. Later on, this square was called Alexander Platz by the Russian administration and military exercises

15. Tiflis Address Book. Tiflis, 1912 p. 120.

16. Mania, Maia. *European Architects in Tbilisi*. Tbilisi: 2006, p. 22.

were held here. In 1855, Tbilisi residents made a public oath of allegiance to Alexander II here after his coronation as Emperor.¹⁷

The trees that had been planted in the park quickly flourished, and it soon became one of the most frequented recreational parks in the city, where residents sought refuge from the burning sun of Tbilisi's summers. It was especially popular with ordinary Tbilisians. In 1879, when Alexander Baryatinsky passed away, the grateful population of Tbilisi held a memorial service in a church built in the park.¹⁸

The park's development and beautification were facilitated in great measure by an irrigation system created especially for the park. The sound of Russian and European music was frequently heard here, while foreign acrobatic groups would perform circus tricks for audiences.¹⁹ This sort of innovation and form of entertainment proved unacceptable for many Tbilisians.

The greening of Tbilisi, as well as the supply of the city with fruits and vegetables, was greatly helped by German settlers in the city, who founded two colonies on the left bank of the Mtkvari River starting in 1818. One of them was the so-called Tiflis Colony, located to the north of Kukia along the banks of the Mtkvari (present-day Davit Aghmashenebeli Avenue and adjacent streets). According to reports by the doctor N. Toropov, in the 1860s there were elderly people who had heard from their forebears that this part of Kukia had once been covered by dense forest into which villagers rarely ventured, since it was a hiding place for marauding Lezghians who would often rob the local people.²⁰

The second colony was located five versts from the Tiflis Colony, on the territory of Didube. This area is now Samtredia Street and the area adjacent to it. This settlement was named Alexandersdorf, in honor of the Emperor Alexander I.

In this area, the Germans built small residential houses with fruit orchards, vineyards and vegetable gardens. This is particularly characteristic of the Germans who settled in Alexandersdorf, since the Germans in Kukia were generally artisans and craftspeople. Many of them went from the colony to the city, where they rented accommodation and plied their trade in the city.²¹ This is not to say, that the settlement at Kukia was lacking in green spaces. Thanks to the Mushtaid Garden and the unique irrigation system

17. Kishmishev, A. *Personal Memoirs*. Tiflis, 1909, p. 28.

18. *Information about the Activities of Tiflis City Council for 1879. Tiflis, 1880 p. 11.*

19. Beridze, Teimuraz. *...Thus Tbilisi Was Born*. Tbilisi: 1977, p. 102.

20. *A Look at Tiflis in terms of Pyrotology. 1826. Dr. N.Toropov. Tiflis pp. 2-3.*

21. Beridze, Teimuraz. *...Thus Tbilisi Was Born*. Tbilisi: 1977, p. 208.

that had been constructed in the colony, this area was quickly covered with greenery and gardens and orchards appeared. The Russian writer Platon Zubov, who visited Tbilisi in 1833, considered the German colonies, together with the bath district and Seidabad, to be the beauty of Tbilisi,²² while according to the above-mentioned Doctor N. Toropov, this area was a real oasis in the northern part of the city, protected from the Mtkvari, stagnant air and drought, even during the hottest parts of the year.²³ Due to high humidity, there were frequent cases of malaria in the German colonies and in order to ensure that the damp didn't reach their houses, the colonists were forced to elevate their homes from ground level.²⁴

The city of Tbilisi continued to grow. In 1852, the German Colony was officially incorporated into the city. In the 1860s, the construction of urban buildings began here and the gardens of the colonists were reduced in size and a network of streets was developed in their place and Mikheil Avenue (present-day Davit Aghmashenebeli Avenue) was also developed. Along the length of this avenue, green spaces were created, and this area became one of the city's greener districts. Summer clubs were opened here, which were beautified by the remains of the old gardens. Tbilisians frequented these gardens with enthusiasm, where concerts of vocal and instrumental music were often held, as well as charity galas and lotteries, soirées and other entertainments, often featuring fireworks.²⁵ The gardens on Mikheil Avenue that enjoyed the most popularity included "Semein", "Stuttgart", "Aklimatizatsiony Sad", "Italia", "Mikhailovsky" "Vaza", "Sadovodstko G. Larshe", "Zolotoe Vremiya"²⁶ and others.

To the South of Tbilisi, on the Right Bank of the Mtkvari River, the gardens and vineyards of Krtsanisi and Ortachala could be found, which provided a daily supply of fresh fruits and vegetables for the people of Tbilisi.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the gardens of Ortachala belonged to King Giorgi XII. "Later on, after the King's son went to Russia, they passed into the possession of Archbishop Dositeos, whose surname was Pitskhelauri, and later on they were purchased by an Armenian from Tbilisi, the city dweller Ter-Shimovan and to this day they remain with his descendents, who use them for business, and not for entertainment."²⁷

In the 19th century, the large district around this island in the Mtkvari River

22. Zubov, Platon. Above, p. 67.

23. *A Look at Tiflis in terms of Pyrotology. 1826. Dr. N.Toropov. Tiflis, p. 21.*

24. Ibid, p. 39.

25. Berdzenov, N. Birladze, D. *Tiflis in Historical and Ethnographical Terms*, 1870, pp. 128-129.

26. Tiflis Address Book. Tiflis, 1884, p. 36.

27. Ioseliani, Platon. *The Life of King Giorgi XIII*. Tbilisi: 1978, p. 73

was called Ortachala, while the gardens themselves became a place for city dwellers to stroll, entertain themselves, relax and hold banquets. Apart from ordinary Tbilisians, members of the upper classes also frequented these gardens. In May 1829, Tbilisi society held a reception here for the Russian writer Alexander Pushkin, while in 1850 they held a similar event for the future Emperor, Alexander II. The meeting with the heir to the Russian throne took place in the garden of the above-mentioned Ter-Shimonov, which was deemed to be the most suitable for such an event.²⁸ We know from Ioseb Grishashvili, that the gardens of Ortachala were a place where common people would pass the time, where the city's *amkrebi* ('guilds') would hold their celebrations. "For almost forty days (from the Monday after Easter until the Feast of the Ascension) Ortachala and other outer parts of the city were full of the noise of guild celebrations. They would go to the city's gardens, where they would slaughter a holy offering and go about preparing *shilaplav* (a dish of rice and meat)."²⁹

In the 18 June 1869 edition of the newspaper *Droebe*, a letter was printed in which the author describes the new public gardens of the time, and makes his choice in favor of the gardens of Ortachala. He writes, that "public gardens, to tell you the truth, are much of a muchness. It's true that their trodden and tree-lined paths, their cleanliness and tidiness is exemplary, but nothing compares to our gardens in Ortachala! What could compare with this poetic chaos, this crookedness, the freshly-sprouting vines, the smell of its tall and pleasant walnut trees, heavy with green-rinded fruit, the eye-catching and mouthwatering variety of fruits? How can this be compared to the above-mentioned parks, with their regimentally-planted trees and their paths paved with roughly-beaten bricks?"³⁰

In Krtsanisi and Ortachala, the following privately-owned gardens could be found: "Mayskaya Roza", "Druzya", "Nad Kuroy", "Mon Plaisir", "Semein", "El Dorado", "Argentina"³¹ and others.

In Tbilisi, near the Blue Monastery, at the point where the Vere River joined the Mtkvari, the gardens, vineyards and orchards of Vere could be found. This area was known for its variety of landscapes and different types of plants. Later on, part of the gardens was given over to an orthodox cemetery. At different times, private individuals created gardens here: "Biriuz", "Fantazia", "Eden", "Aquarium", "Georgia"³² and others.

28. Kishmishev, A. Above, p. 25.

29. Grishashvili, Ioseb. Above, p. 37.

30. Resident from the Area of Anchiskhati. *A Walk in Tbilisi*. "Droebe" Newspaper, 1869, 19 June, #25, p. 1

31. Tiflis Address Book. Tiflis, 1912 p. 120.

32. Ibid. p. 121

Tbilisi experienced a shortage of planted flower-beds and lawns.

In the 1880s, Arthur Leist, a German writer and publicist who was settled in Georgia, devoted an article to the state of Georgian horticulture called "The Georgian Garden". He writes that "They might ask what need there is in Georgia for artificial gardens, when the entire country is itself a natural garden. But no, horticulture is an important facet of national culture. Along with architecture, horticulture is an indicator of national tastes, and the material prosperity of the people.... It's an indicator of the external face to which the foreigner's attention is immediately drawn. A nation without gardens is a nation without beauty or attractiveness."³³ The author writes with disappointment, that the Georgians go about their affairs with a purely practical attitude and give greater preference to orchards and vineyards. "From God and from Nature, Georgia already has everything necessary for the development of the art of horticulture. Whoever has land at his disposal should spare neither effort nor funds in building a garden. The garden is the face of everyday life, of our unique architecture, in which tastes and working culture are made manifest. Of course, natural beauty is no small matter for a country, but cultural beauty, which is created by intellectual and physical labor, is no less important and admirable..."³⁴

Shalva Chkhetia writes that "according to the figures of the 1864 census, which match the archival data for 1865/66, during this period there were a total of 267 gardens in Tbilisi..."³⁵ He also reports that the majority of these gardens, 262, were private, while four of them belonged to the state and one – Alexander Park – was the property of the city.

These figures are not representative of the real situation, since at this time only three gardens – the Botanical Garden, Alexander Park and Mushtaid Park – were owned by the state. As for Alexander Park being under the jurisdiction of city government, this too isn't entirely true, since this form of ownership didn't exist during this period. This situation changed on the 16 June 1870 with the declaration of the "City Ordinance", as a result of which the large cities of the Russian Empire received the right to self-government, including Tbilisi- the principal city of the Caucasus region. City reform started late in Georgia, however, and starting from 1 January 1875, Tbilisi's self-government institutions began their work.

Despite the fact that the idea of self-government was nowhere else in Europe so disfigured as it was in Russia, this event still had significant

33. Leist, Arthur. *The Heart of Georgia*. Tbilisi: 1962, p. 251

34. Ibid, p. 253

35. Chkhetia, Shalva. Above, p. 123.

ramifications. It meant a step towards democratic forms of government, since it was based on the principle of elections and it was representative, meaning that different social classes took part in it and it created an arena for the creation of progressive social forces.

The main function of the institutions of self-government was the management of communal utilities, including water supply, the paving and lighting of streets and squares, transport, sanitation, street cleaning and the development of green spaces. The institution was also charged with healthcare, education and the resolution of cultural problems.

Due to the fact that the electoral system was based on property ownership, only around 4 or 5 % of Tbilisi's population voted in city elections. A large proportion of the city's elected officials were wealthy traders, industrialists and bankers, as a result of which the members of the City Assembly were often referred to as the "Crocuses of Sololaki" or the "Financial Big-Shots".

Nonetheless, the new electoral legislation opened the way to public office for such famous local figures as Niko Nikoladze, Sergei Meskhi, Ilia Tsinamdzghvishvili, Giorgi Kartvelishvili, Ivane Machabeli, Niko Tskhvedadze, Davit Sarajishvili, Anton Purtskheladze, Kalistrate Tsintsadze and others. It's interesting to note that elections were also held on the territory of Tbilisi's parks and gardens.³⁶

As for the ethnic composition of the City Assembly, most of the members were Armenians, Georgians and Russians. However, Germans too played an important role in the work of Tbilisi's institutions of self-government. At various points during its history, the following Germans were elected to the City Assembly: Albert Salzmänn, Konstantin Reiter, Stanislaw Weis von Weisenhof, Wiktor Dingelstedt, Leopold Bielfeld, Ivan Meier, Hermann Barth, Johann Wetzell, Friedrich Wetzell, Gustav Siegbert, Kurt von Kutzschenbach, Ferdinand Karl Otten, Andres Fischer, Eugen Wurzel and others.

Voters elected a 72-member City Duma which was endowed with legislative authority, and from which a three-member executive organ, or Council, was elected. The Council and Duma were overseen by the City Chief.

Sergei Meskhi wrote in the newspaper *Droeba*, "If every voter regards his own business as the general, social business of the city, and the city's business as his own business, only then will the city and its inhabitants achieve success. Only then will our city get what it truly needs."³⁷

In the first years after the establishment of self-government, the city's

governing institutions were busy settling such important issues as the creation of governing structures, the confirmation of the city's coat of arms, a census of the city's population and the resolution of issues relating to the building in which the self-government institutions would function. At this stage, the issue of the city's green spaces was not on the agenda. However, the city's inhabitants knew how important green cover was for the city, and they frequently resorted to the press to protest the felling of trees and to complain about air pollution and unsanitary conditions in the city.

Of particular interest is a letter published in the newspaper *Iveria*, in which the author writes: "Tbilisi was once blooming and full of green thanks to the abundance of trees and gardens ... but over time, those gardens have been cut down, and in their place huge dwellings have been constructed and buildings have sprung up everywhere. Air no longer flows freely through the city, it has become suffocating and it is impossible to live here in summer ... The city should add as many recreational parks, gardens, woods and tree-lined paths as it can, and then see how our currently unplanned Tbilisi can be transformed into a pleasant place to live."³⁸

Certainly the city government made the first steps in this direction, and the Forestry and Parks Committee was set up in the City Duma, while the City Council also appointed a Chief Gardener.

According to the City Ordinance, Tbilisi became an independent, legal subject, which could own real estate and other property. It was considered the full, legal owner of this property and could sell it on or rent it out. Alongside city, or municipal property, state, church and private forms of ownership also persisted on the territory of Tbilisi.

In 1881, the Russian Empire's State Council decided to relieve themselves of responsibility for the three largest parks in Tbilisi- the Botanical Garden, Mushtaid Park and Alexander Park- which were in the possession of the State Treasury, since their upkeep was proving too much of a financial burden. ³⁹Before anything else, they suggested that Tbilisi's city authorities take on responsibility for them.

Tbilisi's self-government institutions investigated the issue thoroughly, paying particular attention to the situation in these parks and what benefit the city would receive if they agreed to the offer. It turned out that two parks – Mushtaid and Alexander Park – had already been rented out with entirely unfavorable contractual conditions. In the parks themselves, the

36. "Announcements", *"Iveria"* Newspaper, 1897, #94, p.4.

37. Meskhi, Sergei. "To the Citizens of Tbilisi". *"Droeba"* Newspaper, 1874, #449, p. 1

38. "Tbilisi", *"Iveria"* Newspaper, 1878, #13, p. 2.

39. Session...16 October 1887, *Izvestia* p. 4.

situation was not good, since the leaseholders had not looked after the parks properly.

The city itself also had financial difficulties. For these reasons, the city authorities were slow in giving an official response. It was only on 11 April 1883 that the City Duma adopted an ordinance that mandated the acquisition of all three parks by the city authorities, albeit subject to certain conditions. For example, the city had to be freed from the obligations of paying the annual fee for the irrigation system in Alexander Park - which was 3 650 manat - to the system's private owner Qurghanov. The city authorities also demanded that repayment on the loan required for the purchase of Mushtaid Park be spread out over eight years. The city authorities also refused to pay 14 500 manat to the State. This amount came from the Caucasus Viceroy's special fund and was spent on repairing hand rails and steps in Alexander Park.⁴⁰

Talks on the matter continued for several years. German deputies were actively involved in these discussions; Dilgenschtedt and Weisenhoff argued that the transfer of the parks to the city authorities was of vital importance.

It was the opinion of one deputy, that these parks should be a place where the flora of the whole Caucasus region could be brought together in one place, to which he received the reply that the city needed the parks for the purpose of purifying the city's air and not for botanical study.⁴¹ The city authorities also rejected the acquisition of the Botanical Garden, since it would be unable to accept responsibility for the maintenance and development of the plant collection there.⁴²

Several deputies expressed the idea that it would good if the State could help the city authorities and take on the costs associated with the upkeep of these parks.

The dispute came to an end when the State Treasury rejected the transfer of Mushtaid Park and the Botanical Gardens to the city authorities and agreed only to the transfer of Alexander Park.⁴³

In 1890, the city acquired the central and lower parts of the Park, and in 1896, the upper part was also leased to the city for a period of ten years.⁴⁴ The city was forbidden to sell the park entirely or in part, and

40. Session... 11 April, 1883 Izvestia pp. 112-115.

41. Session... 18 October 1885, Izvestia p. 147.

42. Session. 1 October 1884. Izvestia p. 215

43. Session. 16 October 1887, Izvestia p. 45.

44. "Systematic Compilation of Decisions on Important Issues of the Urban Economy at Tbilisi City Council from 1875 to 1902". Chrelaev S. Tiflis 1902 p. 155.

its jurisdiction was not extended to those buildings in the park which were in the possession of the State Treasury or the Church. These were the Museum of Military Glory, the building of the Agricultural Society, the belltower of Saint Alexander Nevsky Church and the Church of St Nicholas.

Patrolling and security for the park was the responsibility of the City Gardener, who directed the work of three supervisors. In order to protect the park from thieves, all three sections of the park were fitted out with iron gates which were shut during the night.⁴⁵

On 3 March 1903, at the initiative and expense of the city authorities, a monument was erected in the central part of the park to the Russian writer Nikolai Gogol, the unveiling of which was attended by all the members of the City Duma, while on the 21 May 1909, a free public library was opened in the park, which was dedicated to Alexander Pushkin.

Those city deputies who had believed that over time the Alexander Park would become financially profitable for the city turned out to be wrong in their assumption. In the records of the Tbilisi city budget, there can be found only the expenses paid out for the upkeep of this park, and no income from it is recorded.

Despite the fact that Mushtaid Park never became city property, the city authorities continued to make sure that the park never lost its social function, even in the hands of private leaseholders, and they spared no effort in order to achieve this. For example, the city authorities took responsibility for watering the park and even spent a certain amount of money on this.⁴⁶

The city authorities also started the work of arranging public squares around the city. The creation of parks required the setting aside of smaller land plots within the city limits.

Special sessions were held in order to decide where the new squares should be built, and which parts of the city were in most need of them. They gave special priority to those areas where tree cover was lacking. One such place selected was Yerevanskiy Square, on a site between the Orthodox Seminary and the Tamamshev Caravanserai, where a market for firewood was frequently held and where ox-carts and transport wagons often choked the road. The City Council presented the City Duma with a project containing precise dimensions and a budget which had been prepared by the scientist and horticulturalist Heinrich Scharrer. He himself

45. Records. 1893. Tiflis p. 21.

46. Iveria (139) 1888, p. 3

was charged with arranging the plant cover for the square. At the same time, a desire was expressed for the majority of the plants to be evergreen and coniferous. It was also decided that the square should be fenced off. Since the fence would have represented a significant expense, the city authorities requested that it be prepared by students at the city's trade school, and so it was wrought from plain iron in a very simple fashion. Due to a lack of funds, the capitals for the fence were prepared using stone from Algeti and Soghanlugh that had been left over from other construction projects.

An ordinance for the construction of the square was adopted by the City Council on 21 May 1884, and the square itself was opened in 1885. The square covered an area of 587 fathoms and cost the city 5 106 manat and 88 kopeks. This budget included costs for the construction of a boulevard and the planting of trees around the building of the City Hall.⁴⁷ Residents of Tbilisi referred to this square as the "New Square".

On 12 April 1890, the City Council adopted a resolution on the erection of a monument to Alexander Pushkin on the territory of the New Square. The idea of placing a monument here was suggested by the former Politzmeister of Tbilisi, Lev Rosinsky, who raised the 2 281 manat and 5 kopeks required for its construction. It was also his wish that the structure be a copy of the monument to Alexander I that stood in the Imperial Lyceum in Petersburg.⁴⁸

The monument was prepared according to a design by the sculptor Khodorovich and was officially unveiled with great ceremony on 25 May 1892. The square was also renamed in honor of Alexander Pushkin. In order to maintain order in the square and to protect the trees there, a guard was appointed who wore a special medal to indicate his position.⁴⁹

In subsequent years, Tbilisi's city authorities opened several municipal squares within the city limits, on Morsazid Street (present-day Vere Lane), next to the Church of St. Theodosy Chernigovskiy (now the beginning of Griboedov Street), On Mamadaviti Square (now Besiki Square), on Amaghleba Street (which still bears the same name), Abbas-Abadi Square (now Lado Gudiashvili Square), on Exarch Square (present-day Erekle II Square), Mukhranskiy Square (now Baratashvili Square), Catholic Street (now Gia Abesadze Street), Navtlughi Square (present-day Bochormi Street in Avlabari), Tsitsianov Rise (now Baratashvili Rise), Kakheti Square (present-

47. Records. 1884. Tiflis p. 77-78.

48. Session. 12 April 1890. Izvestia p. 51.

49. Records. 1895. Tiflis p. 59.

day Avlabari Square), Tavi Square (now Europe Square), Norio Street (now known as Norio Rise), Avchala Square (present-day Giorgi Chitaia Square) and New Trinity Square (now Tsinandali Street in Avlabari).⁵⁰

In October 1889, the City Duma decided that at the site of the Caucasus Exposition, next to Mushtaid Park, a city park should be developed, about which one deputy announced that "we have proven ourselves unable to take care of existing parks, such as Mushtaid Park, the Botanical Garden and Alexander Park- why are we rushing to build a new one?"⁵¹

Tree saplings for planting along Tbilisi's streets were often bought on the local market. Due to a lack of quality, these trees often perished soon after planting, and so it was decided to set up a plant nursery on the site of the Caucasus Exposition.

The plant nursery was opened in 1891, and thanks to a high-quality irrigation system, the first results were already evident by 1894-95. Both evergreen coniferous trees and deciduous species were raised here, including thuja, cypress, pine, Japanese birch, box, photinia, white acacia, begonia, bilberry, oleaster, willow, Caucasian and American maple, walnut, poplar, oak, ash, several varieties of rose, jasmine and others besides. The city was supplied with the saplings it required, and some were also sold for profit, which gave the city some income. By 1895, the area of the plant nursery was increased to ten *desiatinas* (just over ten hectares) and the number of saplings rose accordingly, to 200 000.

Several experimental greenhouses were also arranged at the plant nursery, where various plant species were cultivated. Care and maintenance of the plant nursery fell to the City Gardener, who had a small room set aside there. In order to protect the plants from wind and the nearby Mtkvari, the nursery was encircled by a border of trees.

Saplings from the nursery were distributed to different parts of the city according to their toleration of various levels of moisture. In those parts of the city where plants could be watered, moisture-loving species were planted.

Flowering varieties of shrubs and bushes were generally selected. They were planted, for example, in the decorative beds and lawns of Alexander Park.⁵²

The intensive planting of the city's streets and boulevards with saplings was started in 1894. Some of these plants later perished, but at least 60% survived. In order to prevent wind damage to the newly-planted trees, the

50. Tiflis Municipal Calendar. 1917. Tiflis p. 92.

51. "The Issue of Turning the Exposition into a Municipal Garden", Iveria, 1890, 17 January, p. 3

52. Records. 1895. Tiflis: p. 59.

city authorities started protecting them with wooden staves and barbed-wire. The new proliferation of plants wasn't to everyone's liking, since they thought that they would lead to the rising of damp in their homes and cellars, and for this reason cases of local residents digging up the saplings and destroying them were not uncommon.

A committee for the development of woods and forests was also set up, so that whenever citizens requested permits for the construction or repair of their houses, the City Council's construction department could mandate residents to take care of the trees and plants on their street. In 1895 and 1896, thousands of trees were planted in the streets of Tbilisi.⁵³

Despite these measures, the issue of green spaces and the problem of air pollution remained important challenges for the city. The Georgian press was active in covering these issues: "No matter how much we beautify the city, no matter what other good works we might undertake, if the city lacks clean and healthy air, life will not be desirable in such a city and the city will never be attractive to visitors", according to "Iveria" Newspaper.⁵⁴

More active and effective measures were needed in order to improve the city's green coverage. It was considered that one such measure should be the planting of forests both inside the city limits and around its periphery. The city authorities of Tbilisi had already started thinking about just such a measure in the 1880s: "The principle charm and beauty of the city is forests and air quality is largely dependent, all the more so in a warm country such as ours" wrote "Iveria".⁵⁵

In September of 1893, the City Duma deputy Nikoloz Khudadov presented a budgeted plan for the creation of an artificial forest on the left bank of the Mtkvari River, in Nadzaladevi, on the pasturelands of Kukia. Nikoloz Khudadov was born in 1850 in Gori, and graduated from Tbilisi's First Gymnasium, and later from the Military and Medical Academy in Petersburg. He underwent apprenticeships in Germany and Switzerland and later married Ana Tingenhausen. He worked as the Head Physician at the Railway Hospital in Tbilisi and was an active public figure. He founded a Sunday school to teach workers reading and writing and a temperance society, among other things. He was killed by the Black Hundreds in 1907.

Nikoloz Khudadov himself oversaw the development of the forest park at Kukia, which Tbilisians later referred to as Khudadov Forest. The location of this forest park was chosen due to the fact that the left bank of the

53. Records.1895. Tiflis p. 60.

54. Iveria (85) 1888, p. 1.

55. Ibid.

Mtkvari river was generally less green, and apart from that, this was an elevated location from which water would flow in streams during torrential rains onto Avchala Street, threatening the safety of local citizens. The city authorities hoped that the forest park would be of use to the people of Tbilisi during particularly hot weather and would compete successfully with Mushtaid Park, which was becoming ever smaller and losing its original function. "In total, twenty days would be required for working on this land. During those days they will continue to plough the area and later on they will plant saplings there" wrote "Iveria".⁵⁶

From the very beginning, the city was supplied with saplings by the State Treasury's forestry, while later on the administration itself established a small plant nursery. The entire area of the forest park was laid out in parallel rows of saplings, with a distance of 10-12 foot between them. Out of necessity, this distance was subsequently increased to 3 fathoms. A furrow and ditch was dug around each sapling in order to keep enough water around the roots of the plant and to prevent it from flowing away too quickly. The following varieties were planted there: Judas tree, acacia, oak, ash, almond, maple, walnut, chestnut, persimmon, sour cherry and cypress. Labor for these planting works was supplied by the inmates at Metekhi Prison. Each one was paid a daily rate of 40 kopeks. Each group of 20-25 prisoners was overseen by one guard, who also received remuneration – 50 kopeks a day. A road to the forest - as well as roads inside it - was also built. Bushes were planted around the periphery of the forest, which served as a fence and separated the area from the rest of the city. Two guards were appointed to the forest, who were also given dogs. During the night, these dogs were let loose inside the forest. Field mice and rabbits were a serious problem for the forest park, since they emerged during the middle of the night and damaged the roots and leaves of the saplings.

According to the report of the city authorities' Park and Forest Committee dated 5 January 1897, the territory of the forest park was increased, and covered up to 60 desiatnas, while 350 000 saplings had been planted, of which only 4-6% died. The Park and Forest Committee Chairman, A. Rotinov, stated that "the aim of Tbilisi's city authorities has been achieved and the money spent on this project has not been wasted."⁵⁷

At a session of the City Duma held on 1 February 1907, the acting Chief of the city V. Cherkezishvili spoke about the killing of Nikoloz Khudadov, underlining his immense public work in developing the forest park and

56. Iveria (215) 1893 pp. 1-3

57. Records. 1897. Tiflis p. 64.

planting the streets of the city with trees. He made the suggestion to the administration that Khudadov be buried in this forest and that it be known thereafter by his name. The administration, however, didn't fulfill this request.⁵⁸

At a session of the City Council on 20 May 1898, an ordinance was adopted mandating the development of a small park on the site of the deconsecrated Vera cemetery.⁵⁹ Vera Park opened later, in 1911.

In 1917, the entire area of the City of Tbilisi (not including Vake district), was 2 589 desiatinas and 1 376 fathoms, of which 327 desiatinas and 160 fathoms⁶⁰ was given over to parks and squares, which was very low in comparison to other cities in the Russian Empire at the time.

On 30 July 1917, elections were held for the self-government structures of Tbilisi based, for the first time, on the principals of universal and equal suffrage and the secrecy of the ballot. This began a distinctively new phase in the history of Tbilisi's self-government, which was also reflected in its practical undertakings.

58. Session. 1 February 1870. Izvestia: p. 19.

59. Iveria, 1898 (106), p.2.

60. Tiflis Municipal Calendar. Tiflis, 1917 p. 83.

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