

KARTVELOLOGICAL STUDIES IN POLAND  
(1920-2011)

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**Abstract:** The present paper is a general review of the development of Kartvelology in Poland. However, this topic cannot obviously be exphansted in a short article. Since, the compilation of a bibliography of works connected with Georgia has not been completed yet, further long-term work is needed to study Kartvelological research here. Nevertheless, I should try focus attention on the main issues by describing the basic stages of Kartvelological studies in Poland.

**Key words:** *kartvelology, Gregory Peradze*

The review of the development of Polish kartvelology, that I am going to present you in a moment, will not be a full exploitation of the subject. It is simply impossible. In fact, the bibliography of works relating to Georgia is still incomplete. In order to obtain a more comprehensive picture we still need a long-lasting study. Nevertheless, I can present the basic lines of development and achievements of Polish kartvelology, focusing on key issues.

In the reborn Poland after 1918 the first work on the history of Georgian literature and culture was undertaken by George Nakashidze. It was his initiative to publish an almanac devoted to the works of Shota Rustaveli. These works, however, gained much greater momentum, when Fr. Archimandrite Gregory Peradze came to Poland as a professor at Warsaw University. The achievements of Fr. Peradze before the arrival in Poland had already been impressive. He had published his works in many languages including Georgian, German, English and French. In Poland, Fr. Gregory Peradze published an unknown Georgian gospel coming from the monophysites, an article about Georgia's involvement in the history of spiritual culture in the Balkans, the Georgian version of the

Liturgy of the Apostle Peter, an apocryphal letter of Dionysius the Areopagite about the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul, fragments of his own diary from a trip to the Holy Land and Syria, a series of reviews, as well as excerpts from articles published at the time or previously in Georgian, German and English languages. Fr. Peradze was primarily interested in ancient Georgian literature and he published mostly in the journal of the University of Warsaw called "Elpis". A distinct role was played by a magazine titled „East-Orient" that was associated with the Promethean movement. It appeared in the years 1930-1939, and dealt with the history of the Caucasian countries from a political and sociological perspective.

Worth mentioning are some works of an informative nature, published in the interwar period, such as a book about the history of Georgia by John Kavtaradze, a book by Sergo Kurulishvili about Georgia under the rule of the Bolsheviks, the work on the ethnography of the Caucasus by Casimir Moszyński, history of Georgia written by Tadeusz Szpotański, as well as a translation of the history of Georgia, translated from the French language.

The outbreak of World War II interrupted not only kartvelological studies, but in general all studies on Polish soil. After the Second World War, the situation of kartvelological studies in Poland was tragic. Professor George Nakashidze left Poland at the end of the war, and Fr. Archimandrite Gregory Peradze died in 1942 in Auschwitz concentration camp. The thriving Georgian emmigration from before the war, was now virtually non-existent. The situation did not change until John Braun went to study in Tbilisi. After returning to Poland professor Braun took up the study of the Georgian language, and Basque language. From the list of his vast achievements we should mention the catalog of Georgian and Armenian manuscripts in the Polish collections, consultation in translating the „Knight in the Tiger Skin" by Shota Rustaveli, works on grammar of the Georgian and Basque languages and a number of encyclopedic entries. For many years, Professor John Braun was the only specialist in Georgian language in Poland and in the broad sense of the terms, in culture and literature of Georgia. On June 20, 2002, in recognition of achievements, Professor Braun was elected a foreign (academic) member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences.

During this period, a significant number of important works relating to kartvelology appeared in Poland, such as the history of Georgia by Bohdan Baranowski and the same author's book about Polish interests in Georgian culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the work of Andrew Chodubskiego in the field of ethnic relations in the Caucasus, translations of David Lang's books on Georgia and Armenia, the anthology of Georgian poetry, translation of Georgian art history by Shalva Amiranashvili and professor Wojciech Materski. The gap in studies of cultural and religious literature was to some extent filled by the „Catholic Encyclopedia”, published since 1972 by the Catholic University in Lublin.

At that time Polish Orthodox Church at the request of the Georgian Church was researching the life and work of Fr. Gregory Peradze, and managed to collect his complete scientific achievements. Some of these materials have already been translated into Georgian and published, among other things, in the eleventh issue of the historical journal „Artanudshi” in 2003.

Along with socio-political changes in Poland, the situation of kartvelology has changed too. In 1991 the Georgian-Polish Society was established. In the same year the society released the first issue of its journal „Pro Georgia. The work and materials on the history of Polish-Georgian relations”. The journal had the following sections in every issue: articles and studies – materials, documents; memories – chronicle and review; necrology. However, until 2002 this journal was popular-scientific in nature, although there were in it a number of valuable papers in the first two sections, namely in “articles and studies” and „documents and memories”. The very creation of the journal is linked to the arrival in Poland of the young Georgian scientist, David Kolbaia, who is the editor of „Pro Georgia”. He also published a translation into Polish of „Conversion of Kartli”, while E. Biedka published translation of „Martyrdom of Saint Shushanik” by James Curtaveli.

In 2002, the „Pro Georgia” became a journal of kartvelological studies and is published by Institute for East European Studies, Warsaw University, headed by director Jan Malicki. In this way, Mr. David Kolbaia transformed „Pro Georgia” into the first kartvelological journal in Poland. The arrival of Mr. Kolbaia in Poland, in a sense is a repetition of the situation from the interwar

period, when the arrival of the Georgians to Poland gave impetus to kartvelological research. Furthermore, the situation of kartvelology changed quite radically too.

Institute for East European Studies has decided to prepare for printing and publication of the collected works of St. Gregory Peradze. We present to you today the first two volumes of this work, as well as the recent issues of the journal „Pro Georgia”. This journal is celebrating its twentieth anniversary this year. It is hard to overstate here the merits of Mr. David Kolbaia as editor of this journal. This allows us to believe that kartvelological studies in Poland will continue to grow successfully.