

Tbilisi According to the Foreign Sources

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Abstract

In the second part of the fifth century King of Georgia Vakhtang Gorgasali reconstructed and extended Tbilisi alongside some other cities and made it the capital of the country. From that time, the significance of the city considerably increased and together with some other distinguished cities of the world, it was frequently mentioned in the works of foreign travelers and scholars visiting Georgia.

The present paper introduces the evidence of foreign sources about Tbilisi from the fourth century until the twentieth century in Greek, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Turkish and European languages.

Attention is drawn to the location, the architecture, the population, its occupation, the conquerors of the city, and the fights against them.

One can see that regardless of the ethnic composition of Tbilisi, which changed over time - the city managed to preserve its face and peculiarities: aspiration towards freedom, tolerance, and hospitality. All visitors were delighted by the sulfur baths, the architecture, the educated people, their taste, and the beauty of the women.

Since Tbilisi preserved its position as the main city of the country for a long time, the paper also includes a brief history of Georgia presented from a special perspective.

თბილისი უცხოური წყაროების მიხედვით

გიული ალასანია
საქართველოს უნივერსიტეტი

მეხუთე საუკუნის მეორე ნახევარში ქართლის მეფემ, ვახტანგ გორგასალმა, სხვა ქალაქებთან ერთად თბილისიც გააფართოვა, გააშენა და ქართლის მთავარ ქალაქად აქცია. იმ დროიდან თბილისის მნიშვნელობა გაიზარდა და მსოფლიოს სხვა გამორჩეულ ქალაქებთან ერთად ხშირად იხსენიებოდა უცხოელ მოგზაურთა და სწავლულთა ნაშრომებში.

წინამდებარე სტატიაში წარმოდგენილია თბილისის შესახებ უცხოური წყაროების ცნობები, დაწყებული IV საუკუნიდან XX საუკუნის ჩათვლით: ლათინურ, ბერძნულ, სომხურ, არაბულ, სპარსულ, თურქულ, რუსულ და ევროპულ ენებზე.

წყაროებში გამახვილებულია ყურადღება ქალაქის მდებარეობაზე, მის განაშენიანებაზე, მოსახლეობაზე, მათ საქმიანობაზე, ქალაქის დამპყრობლებზე, მათთან ბრძოლაზე.

ირკვევა, რომ მიუხედავად ეთნიკური შემადგენლობისა, რომელიც განსხვავებული იყო სხვადასხვა დროს, ქალაქი საუკუნეების მანძილზე ინარჩუნებდა სახეს და ერთსა და იმავე ნიშნებს: თავისუფლებისათვის მებრძოლ სულს, ტოლერანტობას, სტუმართმოყვარეობას. ყველა მნახველი აღფრთოვანებულია გოგირდის აბანოებით, ქალაქის არქიტექტურით, მოსახლეობის განსწავლულობით, მათი გემოვნებით, ქალების სილამაზით.

რადგან თბილისი დიდი ხნის მანძილზე იყო ქვეყნის მთავარი ქალაქი, სტატიაში გარკვეული კუთხით წარმოდგენილია საქართველოს ისტორია.

According to archaeological excavations, Tbilisi has been populated since ancient times. However, written sources have only preserved information about the city from the fourth century A.D. It is only natural that Georgian written sources are the main source for studying the history of the city. At the same time, a lot of material has been preserved in Greek, Latin, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, European, and Turkish and Russian sources. Tbilisi was conquered several times from the ancient era onward. There were trade routes that brought merchants, travelers, investigators or missionaries giving us an opportunity to restore the picture of the Tbilisi of old times in a more or less complete way.

Roman Sources

A fourth century A.D. map drawn by a Roman geographer named Castorius is the oldest foreign source about Tbilisi. According to researchers, one of the points on the map ‘Tphilado’ refers to Tbilisi. The indication of the city on the map of Castorius can be accounted for by the location of the city on a trade road, which emphasizes the significance of Tbilisi in this respect.

Byzantine Sources

The oldest foreign narrative source about Tbilisi is the work of the historian Theophanes Byzantine who in his description of the uprising of 571 calls Tbilisi the capital of Iberia (Kaukhchishvili, 1982, pp. 283-284).

Theophanes Byzantine provides information on the arrival of the Byzantine emperor Heracles in Georgia (approx. 752-818). In this source, there is a narration about the meeting of Heracles with his Turk allies. The author remarks: “Persians ... saw all this from Tbilisi (Τιφλίς) city” (Theophanes of Byzantium, 1967, pp. 210-212).

Though Byzantine sources provide a lot of information about Georgia, there is little information about Tbilisi in them since Byzantines dealt with western Georgia. Even when Kartli was divided into two parts (because of the Byzantine-Persian treaties of 591 or 628), the part of Kartli under the Byzantine control reached Tbilisi and the rest of the territory, including Tbilisi, was under the Persian control.

The Byzantine emperor of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, Michael Panaretos, provides some significant information about Tbilisi. First, he tells about the military agreement between the Georgian King David IX and the King of Trabzon, Aleks III. At the same time, he refers to the former as “the King of Tiplisi”. Later on, he calls the city “marvelous Tiplis”, a most wealthy city. While relating Temur Leng’s attack

on Tbilisi and the confinement of the King of Georgia Bagrat V, which he dates back to November 21, 1387. According to him: “No one can calculate the wealth he got the possession of, the icons he robbed and set fire to, the gems, purls, gold and silver he took away with him” (Gamkrelidze, 1960, pp. 41,45).

Armenian Sources

From the sixth century on Tbilisi is often mentioned in Armenian sources. Namely, in the collection “Epistles Book” (fifth to thirteenth centuries); in the works of historians Anania Shirakatsi (seventh century), Sebeos (seventh century), Movses Kalankatuatsi (seventh century), Movses Daskhurantsi (tenth century), Ukhtanetsi, (tenth century), Thomas Artsruni (tenth century), Iovannes Drasxanakertsi (tenth century), Stephanos Asoghik, known as Asoghik of Taron (tenth and eleventh centuries), Pseudo Shapuh Bagratuni (eleventh century), Matheos Urhaetsi (Matthew of Edessa) (twelfth century), etc.

In the Geography of Anania Shirakatsi, Tbilisi is mentioned as “Tpkhik” (Khorenatsi, 1877, p. 40).

Movses Kalankatuatsi thinks Tbilisi is “like any other well-known big trade city”. He provides detailed information on the connection between the Byzantines and the Khazars, on the fight for Tbilisi in 627-8, and on the robbery of repressions carried out there. What is especially impressive about his narration is the information he offers about the wealth of the city and the way “numerous heavily loaded troops carried booty and placed it in ricks and heaps in front of their sovereign so frequently that it was exhausting to look the immeasurable amount of gold and the talants of silver. And who can ever thoroughly describe the church vessels decorated with pearls”. Later the author remembers the wealth taken from Tbilisi for a second time: “silver glasses and vessels for drinking decorated with gold were taken from Tbilisi when after it was destroyed” (Kalankatuats, 1985, p. 70, 81).

The seventh century author Sebeos provides information on how Byzantium and Persia shared Kartli. That was followed by the shift of control of western Kartli until Tbilisi to Byzantium (The history of historian Sebeos, 1939).

From the ninth century, Armenian sources refer to Tbilisi as “Paitakaran” (built of wood). In the Georgian translation of the Armenian hagiographic work of the ninth and tenth centuries “The Torture of Saint Priests of Armenia Ariastake, Orthanei, Osiki, Grigol and Daniel”, “Paitakaran” is explained as “which is Tbilisi” (Melikset-Beg, 1958, p. 34).

Thomas Artsruni, the tenth century Armenian author, narrates the attack of the Arab Military Leader Bugha Turk on Tbilisi in 853 in his work “The History of the Artsruni Family”. Thomas Artsruni notes that “Bugha ordered his troops to reach the city called “Tplik” that used to be called Paitakaran in old times. The author also informs us that Tbilisi was built of cedar including the fences, fortresses, chambers and all the houses, decorations, and the equipment of the citizens” (Melikset-Beg, 1958, p. 34; Artsruni, 2002, p. 59).

The tenth century Armenian author Ukhtanetsi, who saw Tbilisi himself, considered it to be “a big capital, amazingly constructed, fantastic, well-known and stupendous.” Based on his report, Tbilisi had a rich store of books that the author used (Ukhtanetsi, 1975, p. 67).

Pseudo Shapuh Bagratuni (eleventh century) relates that in the early tenth century “Smbat Bagratuni, the son of Ashot (Smbat the Confessor) Bagratuni (890-914) conquered “Paitakaran, which is Tpilisi” (Melikset-Beg, 1958, p. 35).

Matheos Urhaetsi, an Armenian author, a contemporary of the events, provides most notable information on the seizure of Tbilisi by David the Builder. He relates that “David occupied Tbilisi, which was under Persian control, and annihilated the people of the city. He ordered 500 Sarangs (military leaders) to impaled on logs and killed in a brutal way” (“Evidence of Mate Urhaetsi on David the Builder”, 1966).

Samuel Anetsi another Armenian author of the twelfth century - remembers the occupation of Tbilisi by David the Builder and considers this to be an important event (Maisuradze, 1967 p. 63).

Stephanos Orbeliani (1258-1304) remembers Tbilisi while narrating the rebellion that took place in the reign of Giorgi III and reckons that the city was safely fortified and protected. The author relates: Giorgi III “mounted on a horse, retreat instantly and entered Tpilis, and reinforced here” after which the rebels “did not any longer go there, but waited for him to leave” (Orbeliani, 1978, p. 84, 114).

Kirakos of Gandzak, the Armenian historian of the thirteenth century, provides noteworthy information on Tbilisi at the time when it was attacked by Khwarazm-shah Djalal al-Din and the Mongols. He narrates: “(Djalal al-Din) went to Tbilisi. The Persians there supported him. He seized the city, extirpated many of the citizens, forced a big part of them to reject Christianity and accept the false and tempting faith of the Muslims”. Based on the information of the same author, neither elderly nor young people could survive the Mongols’ attack. Even David, the son of Lasha, seated by the Mongols, escaped from Tbilisi. There is also a significant note about the movement of rich Armenian traders from Kars to Tbilisi and their settlement there with their families. Some of the

Armenians were later promoted and one of them called Umeki was even called the father of the king (“The history of the Mongols based on Armenian sources with excerpts from the history of Kirakos of Gandzak”, 1974, p. 8).

Grigor Aknertsi, the thirteenth century Armenian, author relates that a rebellion was being prepared against Mongolians in 1249 in Tbilisi. However the attempt of the rebellion failed because of traitors. The uprisings of 1259-1260 failed, too (Aknertsi, 1961, p. 26, 27, 28).

Vardan Areveltsi, an Armenian historian of the thirteenth century provides information on the seizing of Tbilisi by David The Builder, the rebellion of the Orbelis during the reign of Giorgi III and the attack of Khwarazm-shah Djalal al-Din Tbilisi. Vardan Areveltsi relates: “The King of Georgians, David, the son of Giorgi - the son of Bagrat, “who seized Tbilisi from Persians, defeated Melik - the Sultan of Gandzak and put 500 disarmed men on logs in Tbilisi” (Areveltsi, 2002, p.139). Iovanes Erzinkatsi, a famous Armenian astrologist and philosopher, remembers Tbilisi in the following way in 1284” I had an opportunity to visit the kingdom protected by God, a big famous city Tbilisi called Paitakaran by historians” (Maisuradze, 1967, p. 66).

Mkhitar Airivanetsi, an Armenian author of the thirteenth century associates the founding of Tbilisi with Vakhtang Gorgasali (Airivanetsi, 1990, p. 66).

In 1411, in the speech made on the occasion of the devastation of Georgia and the death of Grigol Tateveli, the Armenian scholar and writer Matheos (Mathe) Vardapet remembers Paitakaran - a city in Georgia (Melikset-Beg, 1958, p. 35).

Thomas Metsop, a historian of the fifteenth century provides us with significant information on the attacks of Timur the Lame (1386) and the Black Shepherds’ (Kara-koyunlu) leader Djahan-shah (1440). In the first case, according to the author, “there were a lot more people who were killed than those who survived”, while in the second case, the aggressors ruined to the ground all the churches built by Georgian kings – old and new – and threw the Cross of Our Lord onto the ground” (Metsop, 1987. p. 24).

In the “History of Albania,” written in the late sixteenth century by Iovanes Tsaretsi, relates a Turkish campaign led by Mustafa Lala Pasha in 1578. He remarks that Mustapha Lala Pasha “reached Paitakaran, which is Tbilisi, erected a fortress there and fortified it” (Melikset –Beg, 1958, p. 35. n.d.).

In the beginning of the seventeenth century an anonymous Armenian writer related the campaign of Shah ‘Abbas in eastern Georgia, stating that “the King of Persia entered Kartli and seized Paitakaran city, which is the same as Tbilisi”.

Arakel of Tabriz, an Armenian author of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, tells us about Tbilisi in the context of the events of the beginning of the seventeenth century. He also recollects Giorgi Saakadze (Davrizhetsi, 1973, pp. 465, 466, 491).

The “Diary” of an Armenian merchant - Zakaria Aguletsi (1630-91) contains some notes of Armenian merchants in Tbilisi, the mint of Tbilisi, which belonged to the vali of Kartl-Kakheti, the same Rostom, in 1651. Zakaria Aguletsi minted coin there. In the same year there was a flood in Tbilisi (Aguletsi, 1979, p. 21).

Zakaria Kanakertsi (1627 – 1699), an Armenian historian of the same century, tells of the arrival of the Armenian Catholicos Hacob Jughaetsi to collect money for debts. The historian also presents detailed information on the Tumanishvili-Baratashvili disagreement (Kanakertsi, 1969, p. 186-194).

Esaiah Hassan Jalaliants - the Catholicos of Gandzasari (1702—28) and an Armenian historian wrote about the fight for Tbilisi in the 1720s. The author relates the attacks of Constantine II of Kakheti (Muhammad-Kuli-Khan), the seizing of Tbilisi with the help of hired Lezgian troops and Vakhtang VI’s departure from Georgia (Maisuradze, 1967, p. 59. n.d.).

The Armenian Catholicos Abraam Kretatsi (who died in 1737) visited Tbilisi. He witnessed the entrance of the Persian Nadir Shah into Tbilisi and 17 days spent by him in the city. There were 300 Armenian households on his list of “the unreliable” whom he was planning to settle in Khorasan. However these families managed to escape by paying 3,000 Tumans and 3,000 “Kharvali” of wheat (Kretatsi, 1967, p. 55).

A few Armenian authors describe the seizing of Tbilisi by Agha Muhammad Khan. In their notes they refer to the capital of East Georgia as Tbilisi, and more often as Paitakaran. For example, the story of Serob (Serabin) was written in the end of 1795. An untitled anonymous lament was finished on March 26, 1796. A history by another anonymous author was completed in January 1796 (Melekset-Beg, 1958, p. 35).

Serob Grich (1770-1836) was a witness to the event: “It was worth seeing the fight. The thunderous sound of swords hitting shields reached the mountains. The surroundings were deafened by the sound of swords, the buzz of guns never stopped, one would not be able to hear the hum of arrows flying...”. The author notes that the city was particularly rich and when Persians invaded: “They got rich with gems and pearls”. The author calls the invaders brutal: “They wiped out a part of the population, took some hostage. They tortured people of their confession even more than Christians ... The eunuch Khan of Persians left the city in six days” (Maisuradze, 1967, p. 58).

Arabic Sources

From the mid-seventh century, Georgia faced a new invader: Arabs. From the ninth century on, Arab historians provide data on Georgian-Arab relations, including information about the early period. The earliest source is a work by Abu 'Ubayd al-Kasim (770-838) which contains notes on the Kitāb al-amān ("Letter of Protection") delivered to the population of Tbilisi by Habib Ibn Maslama - an Arab colonel (Tskitishvili, 1987, p. 55). The text of the "Letter of Protection" is part of al-Baladhuri's history (about 820-892) (Balazori, 1927, pp. 12-13). The author also describes the invasion of Bugha Turk: "The troops of Bugha attacked Tbilisi. Fifty thousand men were burnt there, the survivors were enslaved, and the dead were robbed". The same author draws our attention the appearance of Tbilisi. He relates: "Mtkvari is a long river. It is not in the middle of madina. Tbilisi is on the west bank. Sughdabil is on the east bank. Tbilisi has five gates: Maydan gate, Kari gate, Minor gate, Sughdabil gate, Rabad gate". All the entrances were to Tbilisi. With one entrance the city is linked to its part, Sughdabil, with another to Rabad, "Kari gate" was on the way to Kars city. The author informs us that Bugha Turk entered Tbilisi from the east – Sughdabil (Japaridze, 1967, p 64. n.d).

Humayd Ibn Zandjuwayh (died in 865.) has provided information on the same "Letter of Protection".

Ibn Khurdadhbih (ninth century) is another Arab author to remember Tbilisi (Ibn Khardadhbih, 1986, pp. 108, 130).

Ahmad b. A'tam Al-Kufi – an Arab author of the ninth century – helps in determining that the Tsanar-Kakhetian revolt of early 770 followed by the establishment of the Tbilisi Emirate (Alasania, 2007).

Al-Ya'kubi – an Arab author of the ninth century informs us of the treachery of Tbilisi 'Amir Ibn Isma'il and the response of Bugha Turk with a campaign (Yakubi, 1927, p. 14; Menteshashvili, 1955, p. 198).

Based on the reports of al-Istakhri, the tenth century Arab geographer and traveler, Tbilisi was a constituent part of Arran and in the whole Arran "There are not any cities that are bigger than Barda (Bardha'a, formerly capital of Arran), Derbend (Darband) and Tbilisi (Tiflis)." However the same author notes that "Tiflis is smaller than Derbend and it has two walls, made of fired bricks. This is the city of abundance, a lot of fruit and plants. A lot of goods and honey are taken from Tiflis by Mtkvari (Kur). There are warm waters in Tbilisi... hot without fire" (Karaulov, 1901, pp. 11-15).

Ibn Hawkal, an Arab traveler and geographer, visited Tbilisi In the middle of the tenth century (born in 943). He confirmed the information of al-Istakhri, according to which Tbilisi is the second wealthiest city in

South Caucasus after Derbend. “It (Tbilisi) has two rocky walls made of fired brick, three gates”. It is abundant, fortified, rich in inexpensive products”. It surpasses other wealthy countries and fruitful states”. The author points out that the city is situated on River Mtkvari, mentions hot baths, floating mills where wheat and cereals are ground. At the same times the author notes that the city is surrounded with enemies, yet the people in Tbilisi are hospitable especially towards scholars and scientists (Sikharulidze, 1976, p. 34).

Abu Dulaf – an Arab poet and scientist visited Tbilisi in mid tenth century. According to him, Tbilisi is an outpost of Islam, surrounded by *dār al-kufr* (countryside was in the hands of infidels). Yakut al-Hamawi al-Rumi provides the same information. Abu Dulaf recollects River Kurr, which has water-mills(‘urūb) for milling purposes, a fence and baths “that do not need heating or the pumping of water” (Dulaf, 1967, p. 55).

Al –Mukadasi (died. about 990) - an Arab author of the tenth century, notes that “Tbilisi is located on both sides of Mtkvari that are linked with a bridge of stone walls faced with wood” (Japaridze, 1967, p. 62).

Sadr al-Din ‘Ali Al-Husayn, an Arab author of the twelfth century, informs us on the strength of the traditions of Christianity in spite of the Islamic rule. The author remarks that they had the most popular church which was as important for local Christians as Ka’ba is for the Muslims (Al-Husayn, 1967, p. 66).

Al-Idrisi, an Arab traveler and geographer of the twelfth century, relates that the Tbilisi madder - popular in all Middle East - was exported to Gurgan and from there to India” (Japaridze, 1967, p 60).

Various authors have preserved records on the traditions of tolerance and national policy in Tbilisi. Al-Fariqi (1116- 81) who arrived in Tbilisi in 1153 and started to serve Demetre I, provides reliable information on the Georgia at the time of David and the subsequent period. He informs us that in the first decade of the twelfth century David made Tbilisi pay the contribution of 10,000 dinars every year. The local population paid the contribution before the integration of the city. After the city was seized, the citizens had to pay taxes were varied according to their ethnic affinity: Georgians paid five dinars, Jews – four dinars, and Muslims – three dinars. Based on the information of the Arab witness “The king respected Muslims. Scholars, theologians and sufis were respected and appreciated even more than by Muslims themselves. The trend continued in the time of Demetre I. The author relates how the king of Georgia went to mosque, attend Khutba, then “Went out and made a donation of 200 red dinars...I

saw the respect for Muslims that they would not even have in Baghdad”, states the author (Sikharulidze, 1976, p. 83-91; Kiknadze, 1992, pp. 90-92).

Sibt Ibn Al-Jauzi (1186-1257) notes with satisfaction that after the seizing of Tbilisi David the Builder “at times alone and at times with his children, went to the main praying place of Muslims – the Mosque, on a religious day of Muslims - on Fridays and listened to prayers, and the reading of Koran there. He presented the clergy with immeasurable gold”. He built an asylum for poets and suphies, helped them financially, and organized balls for them” (Tskitishvili, 1967, pp. 204-20).

Ibn al-Athir (1160-1234) - a famous Arab author of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, informs us about the liberation of Tbilisi by David the Builder and the conquest of the city by Djalal al-Din: “They slaughtered all Georgians that were there. Neither the old nor the young could escape the anger of Djalal al-Din except those who converted to Islam”. The author does not hide the fact that the troops of sultan mistreated Muslims living in Tbilisi, “They tortured them unjustly. The poor wrote a message to Georgians begging them to come back. They promised to open city for Georgians for this purpose” (Ibn Al- Asir, 1940, p. 160). Tbilisi is one of the strong and inaccessible cities situated on both sides of Mtkvari. It is a big river “.

In some sources Tbilisi is presented as a cultural, scientific and educational center. As-Samani (1113-1167) an Arab writer of the twelfth century pays a special attention to the people whose *nisba* (relative name) was *al-Tiflisi* (Tbilisi residents) and *-Kurdji* (Georgian). There were Georgians among them who had relations with scientific centers in Jerusalem, Damask (Damascus), Merv (Marw), Baghdad, Nishabur, Aleppo (Halab), Mecca (Makka), Isfahan and others (Sikharulidze, 1967, p. 63. n.d.; Japaridze, 1990, pp. 65-78).

Yaqut al-Hamawi al-Rumi,, an Arab author of the thirteenth century has left us an interesting description of Tbilisi. “Taflis or Tiflis” is the capital of the Djurzan region. This is a city, beyond which Islam is not spread. There is a river called Kurri flowing in the middle. It flows into the sea. There are millstones in the river for grinding. The city has a big fence around it. There are very hot springs that do not need heating or water-pumping... This is a hot spring that comes from the earth...this bath, as many of the Tbilisi residents told me, is for Muslims and others are not allowed to use it” (“Evidence of Yaqut on Georgia and the Caucasus”, 1964, p. 38).

There are records on the attack of Bugha Turk in the work of Zakariyya Al-Ghazwini (died in . 1283) – an Arab geographer and cosmographer of the thirteenth century. The author states that “Tbilisi is a fortified city. It is divided by Kur River. The residents are Muslims and

Christian. On one of the banks of Kur one could hear the call of mu'adhhdhin, on the other - the peals of the Christian nākūs (ring bells) to summon the community to divine service". The author also remembers "a very hot bath where the water is neither heated nor pumped". According to the data of Al- Ghazwini, the following goods were exported from Tbilisi: quick-silver, birch, felt cloaks, outfit, neat carpets, beds, fine shawl, silk, etc. Right here, there is a reference to the gold coin "perpera" ("Evidence of Zakariya Al-Ghazwini on Georgia and the Caucasus", 1975, p. 40).

Abu-l Fida (1273-1331), an Arab historian and geographer, relates the last period of the Tbilisi Emirate (Fida, 1967, p. 55).

The Arab historian Ibn al-Fuwati (1244-1323) provides data on the Muslims of Tbilisi who worked in the Maragha Observatory (Japaridze, 1984, p. 218-223).

The Arab historian of the thirteenth century Muhamad al-Hamawi narrates that David the Builder used to have debates with Gandja Kadi on the origination on the eternity of Jesus Christ (Japaridze, 1995, pp. 218 – 223).

An Arab author of the thirteenth century (died in 1249) Shihab al-Din Muhammad an-Nasawi, a private secretary of Khwarazm-shah Djalal gives a full description of the seizure of Tbilisi. He narrates that "they exterminated all Armenians and Georgians in the city" , i. e. all Christians. Georgian troops and noblemen sought refuge in the fortress hoping that the troops of Djalal al-Din would not be able to cross the river. But when the invaders went over the bridge and laid siege to the fortress, Georgians asked for mercy. And Sultan got whatever was created in Tbilisi for centuries. Even the most skilled and informed person would find it difficult to measure all the wealth. Hillocks of packs of paper would not be enough to make a complete list of the wealth". The same author informs us on the Tbilisi arson and occupation of the city and the participation of the husband of Rusudan – the son of the ruler of Erzurum. An-Nasavi's description goes as follows: "Tbilisi is built on the bank of Mtkvari, in mountains and valleys. The river separates the city from the fortress. It is a wide river and impossible to cross. There is a big wooden bridge between the city and the fortress. But it was burnt" (Shikhab ad-Din Mohammad an-Nasavi, 1973, p. 168).

'Abd al-Rashid al-Bakuwi's (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) information is essentially the repetition of the notes on Tbilisi left by the forefathers. "Tiflis, situated at longitude 83°05'E and latitude 43°05'N, is a fortified city beyond which there is no Islam. It is the capital of the al-Kurdj (Georgia) state. It was founded by Khusraw (Khosro) Anushirwan and fortified by Ishaq Ibn Isma'il, the maula (client) of Umayyads. Tiplisi is cut by river Mtkvari. The locals are Muslims and

Christians. One can hear Azan on one bank of River Mtvvari and the ringing of bells - on the other. The roves of the city are made of Italian pine-tree. Among the marvels of the city, there are baths where the waters are neither heated nor pumped, since the baths are built on hot springs” (Abd Ar- Rashid Al -Bakuvi, 1971, p. 90).

Persian Sources

Georgia has had relations with the Persian speaking world since ancient times. Yet, unfortunately few written sources have been preserved and the information that available about Georgia and Georgians mostly comes from Turk-Seldjuk tribes for whom Persian was the official language and the language of clerical work. Persian was the basic language for historiography as well. The language was used in the states of Ilkhans, Black and White Shepherds, hence the historiography was created in Persian. There are some interesting records in the historical works written in Safawid Persia. The interest for eastern Georgia is natural as well. It shows that Safawid Persia as well as the other above-mentioned states, exercised control over eastern Georgia, according to the established tradition. Here we can see notes on Tbilisi. In some case the information presented here is the same as the information of the sources analyzed above.

However, there is an exception; the tenth century anonymous geographic work “Hodud al- Alam”, which describes Tbilisi as “a big flourishing city, strong, cultivated and wealthy in many ways. It has two walls and it is a Islamic boundary with the land of the unbelieving. River Mtkvari flows in the middle. It has a spring, very hot, upon which they have built baths where the water is always hot, even without warming” (Istakhri, 1937, pp. 22-24).

In the historical chronicle written in Arabic in 988/89 by the Iranian Hasan al-Qummi (died in 1015/16) “The History of Qum”, the original Arabic version of which has not been preserved to this day and about which we only know from a later period (early fifteenth century) Persian translation – there is a citation of one Shi’i hadith associated with the name of Imam Dja’far al-Sadik (died in 765), where Tbilisi (Tiflis) is mentioned among the three cities distinguished by God. The context of the hadith is the proof of the popularity and authority of the city in the middle ages Islamic world, especially in Shi’i circles. We can meet the Shi’i hadith in question in other Persian and Arabic written sources of the later period (seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) .

According to the Persian historian Bayhaki (1099-1170), Arabic was spoken in at the Georgian court . The author relates that in 1148

the King of Georgia Demetre I sent questions to the Sultan of Seljuks in Syrian and Arabic languages and Bayhaki was to answer the questions (Kiknadze, 1992, pp. 100-101).

According to an author of the second half of the twelfth century, Nadjib Hamadhani, "Tbilisi is a big and wealthy city and has two strong fortresses". He also notes that there are 40 baths in Tbilisi. In some cases there are certain discrepancies in the different manuscripts of the work. According to one of them, the water was naturally warm in the springs. In another, there is a remark "when one bath was warmed, all the others were warmed, too". The same author emphasizes the beauty of Tbilisi women who sit in stores and do not hide their faces (Kiknadze, 1992, pp. 102-103).

The Persian historian Ibn Isfandiyar (12-13 cc) informs us that Tbilisi was popular for its fabrics. The author remembers Tamar as the Padishah of Abkhazia and Tbilisi (Beradze, 1976, p. 70).

The narration of witnesses is especially important. One of such anonymous witnesses was in Georgia in 1210 as a captive. Seemingly, he saw Tbilisi and later gave a detailed description of the city in his work "Adja'ib al-Dunya" (Wonders of the World). At the same time, in some cases he gives information used by his forerunners. However we can trace a difference: "Tbilisi is a big fortified city. It is situated in a gorge that is difficult to pass. In the river that flows in the city there is a single-span bridge. There are a lot of trading places by the bridge. There is a well-equipped fortress just across the river. The palaces of the kings are built in the fortress. The fortress has many towers. Very close to the fortress there runs water. So whatever is thrown from the windows falls into the water". The author repeated the information that Tbilisi belonged to Arran. However he also notes that "Georgians have now owned it for about 110 years" ("Evidence on "the Wonders of the World" on the Caucasus and Georgia", 1978, p. 28).

There is information about one of the mills with chains, which is a copy of a bridge over a big river in one of the cities of Andalusia. That the author compares it to the bridges of Tbilisi and Baghdad. Unlike Nadjib Hamadhani, who remembers only 40 baths, the number of baths here is 65. The author relates that the water in the baths has been created hot by the Most High God without fire. The author states that though locals of the city are Muslims, they are firm monotheists. They love foreigners. There are many mosques in the city and they call for prayers well. There is also an indication that there were non-Muslims in the city. The source repeats information about women who do not cover their faces, unless they are Muslims. In the end, there is a list of goods that Tbilisi was popular for: horse equipment, arms, sweets, beeswax, expensive furs, glass, bowls, crystal products, etc.

The Persian historian and civil servant Djuwayni (1226-1283) has preserved some important information on the attack by Khwarazm-shah Djalal al-Din on Tbilisi and the hold-up of the city in 1226. The author notes that “he dug each fortress or village in the vicinity of Tbilisi that were filled with the followers of the devil (i.e. Christians) and his retinue got immeasurable booty” (“Evidence of Juveini about Georgia”, 1974, p 32-33).

Rashid ad-Din, a historian of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and a courtier of Ilkhan provides information on the attacks of Mongols and Khwarazm-shah Djalal al-Din (Rashid ad-Din, 1952, pp 194-195).

Hamd Allah Mustawfi Qazwini (1281-1350) describes Tbilisi alongside many other geographical places in his cosmographic-geographic work “The Pleasure of Hearts”. Like many other monuments, the author first remembers baths built on the naturally hot springs of the city. He describes Tbilisi as “the capital of the united Georgia, which is situated in a fallen gorge, one side of which borders on the mountain. There is River Mtkvari flowing in the middle. There are houses on the rocky bank of the river, located by terraces” (Puturidze, 1937, p. 23).

There are short notes on the history of Georgia and Tbilisi and among others in the works of Persian authors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Tabatadze, 1974, pp. 6-14; Katsitadze, 1975, pp. 7-26). e.g. a Persian author Fasihi Khafi (1375-1442) (Katsitadze, 1967, p.65) tells of the first attack of Timur Lang, the ravage of Tbilisi, captivity of the King of Georgia Bagrat V and his conversion to Islam. Even expensive presents — including David the Builder’s armour which he presented to Timur Lang according to Fasihi Khafi — could not save the king of Georgia.

The same information about the attack of Timur Lang on Tbilisi, the captivity of Bagrat V and his conversion to Islam is presented in the work of ‘Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi (1413-82), a Persian-speaking author from the Middle Asia (Samarqandi, p. 55. n.d.).

In connection with the fact we should mention Hafiz-i Abru (died in 1431) (Haphere Abru, p. 66. n.d.).

According to Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi (1454), Tbilisi was a strongly-fortified city. But the warriors of Timur Lang attacked the city from all sides, occupied it, exterminated all the watchmen, captured King Bagrat, and put shackles on him (Katsitadze, 1967, p. 66; Tabatadze, 1974, pp. 64, 67). The “faithless ... Georgians were fortified in their fortresses. They fortified their fortresses and prepared for war”, “The faithless were sent to hell by swords”. That is repeated by ‘Abd al-Razzak Samarqandi and Mirkhwand.

Notes of same nature are preserved in the work of the author of the first half of the fifteenth century Mu‘in al-Din Natanzi (Katsitadze, 1967, p. 62; Katsitadze, 1975, p. 118).

In his book Nizam al-Din Shami (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), who lived in the palace of Timur Lang, relates the same events devoted to the life and work of Timur Lang. At the same time, he also narrates how Timur Lang delivered presents to King Bagrat and appointed him as a ruler (Nizam ad-Din Shami, 1967, p. 62).

The Persian historian Ibn Ruzbihan (fifteenth century) has left interesting notes on the relations between Georgians and the White Shepherds Turkmen. According to him, Uzun Hasan the ruler of the White Shepherds Turkmen seized Tbilisi in 1477 and appointed Sufi Khalil Beg as a ruler. As it later appeared, Georgians returned to the city soon. The same author relates the occupation of Tbilisi in 1489 by Sultan Ya‘kub, by the same the White Shepherd Turkmen and the disposition of a small garrison there (Kiknadze, 1992, pp. 115 – 128; Kiknadze, 1995, pp. 113, 117, 193).

One of the important sources on the Georgia of the sixteenth century is the work of the Persian historian Hasan-i Rumlu (1531 or 2 to the late 1570s). The author gives us a detailed account about Georgia, the attacks of Shah Tahmasp I, the siege of the Tbilisi Fortress, the capture of many of people and the taking of a great deal of wealth from Tbilisi (“Evidence of Hasan Rumlu on Georgia”, 1966, pp. 22-23).

The Persian-speaking Kurdish author Sharaf ad-Din Khan Ibn Shams-ad-Din Bidlisi (born in 1543) informs us about the campaign of Diw Sultan and Shah Tahmasp I in Georgia and the seizure of Tbilisi by him, and on the commander of Tbilisi garrison –Renegade Gulbat and his sons (Sharaf-Han Ibn Shamsaddin Bitlisi, 1976, pp. 64-65; Tabatadze, 1962, 159-187).

The Persian historian of the later period Iskandar Munshi (1560-1634) supposedly was a witness of the seizure of Tbilisi (1606-7) by Shah Abas I. The author gives us the description of the city fortress and notes that Tbilisi was a well-fortified and defended city: “There was a strong bridge over the river. The only baths of the people of the city there were only baths with fresh water. A few baths are inside the fortress, the others are outside. There are about thirty or forty baths today. Some of them work, others may start to work. The towers of the fortress are so high that they reach the sky. There is river on one slope of the mountain. Therefore no ruler of the country could imagine that the fortress could be taken because it had three high mountains on three sides. There is River Mtkvari flowing on one side and therefore there is no location of the troops close to fortress and the city”. “The majority of the city residents are Armenian and Georgian Christians. There are some Muslims

as well. In the city and the suburbs there are many Christian prayer houses (mostly ancient)“ (“Evidence of Iskander Munshi on Georgia”, 1969, pp. 64-65).

Safawid author Urudj Bey Bayat (known as Don Khuan the Persian, died in 1605) — whose work was written in Persian — left some evidence about Tbilisi. The only preserved text, a Spanish translation, was published in 1604 in Validolid. The text from Spanish to English was translated and published by G. Le Strange in 1926. In 1959, in Teheran, a Persian text translated from English was published. Oruj Bey Bayat accompanied Shah Abbas I’s embassy to Spain. In his book he narrates the events of the second half of the sixteenth century, namely the attack on Tbilisi of the commander Lala Mustapha Pasha, the subsequent fight for the city, and the entrance into the city by Sinan Pasha, Ferhad Pasha. It becomes evident how hard it was for the Ottomans to keep Tbilisi in the conditions of the permanent fight on the side of the Georgians. “The capital city situated on Mtkvari which meets Aragvi”, notes the author (“The Book Of Oruj Bey Bayat”, 1988, pp. 103, 106, 115).

The Persian poet of the eighteenth century Saphi Khalkhali devotes a special tribute to Tbilisi. He believes that Tbilisi is “the rival of Paradise. Even the Garden of Eden is nothing as compared to Tbilisi. God was merciful to spend all the good the city ... people who came to Tbilisi forgot their motherland” (Saphi khalkhali, 1967, p 63).

General Majd al-Saltane, a representative of the Qadjar Dynasty who traveled in the Caucasus in 1894, gives us an impressive picture of Tbilisi: “Tbilisi is the provincial center of Georgia. There is the Batumi-Baku Railroad built on both sides of River Mtkvari on the length of one parsang (six or seven kilometers). In the city center there are several boulevards where there most administrative buildings, civil and military museums, hotels (London, The Caucasus, Versaille, Grand Hotel), churches, theatres, a circus, and public clubs are concentrated. There are lamps on the boulevard”. According to the author, there were tram lines in all the streets of the city and 3,000 phaetons to be rented. Here there was also a factory for the production of phaetons and coaches, the products of which were taken to Iran. There were also factories for the production of planting machines, medical institutions, pharmacies, precise mechanism shops. The author mentions baths, telephones, bicycles, the army, the clothes of soldiers, places for the disposition of the army, women’s morale, the myth of the Sanan Tomb on the Mount Mtatsminda (Majd al-Saltane, 1971, p. 17, 25-45).

Memoirs and travel books – reflecting impressions received during journeys to South Caucasus, namely visits paid to Tbilisi - of many of the Persian authors contain interesting information on Tbilisi of the nineteenth century. Among these Persian authors are: Mirza Salih

Shirazi, Sultan Muhhamad Sayf al-Dawla, Mirza Mehdihan Momtahaen ad-Dawla, Mirza Khanlari-Khan I'tisami al-Mulk, Muhammad Hasan Khan I'timad al-Saltana (Sani' aa-Dawla), Farhad Mirza Motamad al-Dawla Haj Saiahi, Mirza Muhammad Husayn Farahani, etc. There was the Shah of the Qadjar Iran – Nasir ad-Din (1848-1896) who visited Tbilisi during his three trips from Iran to Europe (1873, 1878, 1889). The latter included impressions of Tbilisi in the description of his journeys.

European Sources

From the fourteenth century Catholic missions were founded in Georgia, first in Sukhumi in 1318 and in Tbilisi in 1329. The envoys of the Pope came with missionary purposes. Many of the missionaries impart important information on the Georgia of the time, including Tbilisi. Italian merchants also give us different notes (Tamarashvili, 1902 , p. 32).

Pope John XXII believes that “Tbilisi - the center of the Georgian Kingdom – is the best, most amazing, full with people, skilled, and wealthy city”.

“After a lot of consideration and intensive talks with our brothers, upon their advice and proceeding from our full right as apostles... we are instituting the famous, wonderful and appropriate city of Tbilisi as an episcopal city to praise our Lord... We would also love this name to be preserved in the future: the episcopal city of Tbilisi... We have also decided that there should be built a cathedral church upon which we confer the episcopal title”...(Tamarashvili, 1902 , p. 34) says the Bula of 1329 of John XXII .

The famous Venetian traveler of the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries Marco Polo (1254-1324) recollects Tbilisi as a city of craftsmen, with a prosperous population (Marco Polo, 1967 p. 62).

Flemish traveler of the fourteenth century Wilem Rubrucvis also remembers Tbilisi. He states that River Mtkvari, which “cuts the main city of Georgians across” lies in the basis of the name of Georgians (Kharadze, 1987, pp. 43-44).

The famous Venetian merchant of the fifteenth century Josafa Barbaro, who came to Tbilisi in 1475, describes the 1477 White Shepherd Turkmen occupation of Tbilisi with an army of 30-35 thousand with 20-24 thousand cavalrymen. He relates that the population fled in advance. Uzun Hasan took four or five thousand hostages from the city without any confrontation (“Italian Travelers in Georgia in XV c. Josaphat Barbaro and Ambrozio Contarini”, 1894, p. 56; “Evidence of Italian travelers of fifteenth century about Georgia”, 1981, p. 56).

Venetian Ambrosio Kontarini was in Tbilisi two times in 1475. He noted that there was a Black Plague epidemic in Tbilisi, the city was destroyed. The segments of the city that had not been attacked were quite densely populated, with a considerable number of Catholics among them (Mamistvalishvili, 1981, p. 56).

A witness Giovanni Maria Anjolelo confirms the information on how Tbilisi left by the population was seized by Uzun Hasan in 1477 (Mamistvalishvili, 1981, p. 78).

An anonymous Venetian author of the second half of the sixteenth century informs the Venetian Senate of the conquest of Tbilisi by an Ottoman commander Lala Mustapha Pasha in 1578 (Tbilisi, 1967, p 55).

Italian Thomaso Minadoi, who accompanied the Ottoman army as a doctor during the 1578-1585 eastern campaigns, is the author of some interesting information on eastern Georgia and Tbilisi in particular. He imparts that in 1580 a Turkish commander Sinan Pasha appointed “one Georgian nobleman as the ruler of Tbilisi. Because of an old hostility with Simon, the man had taken the Turkish side and was accepted by it in such a way that Sinan Pasha relied on him to protect the fortress” (“A History Of The War Between The Ottomans And Persians In Four Books”, 1588, p. 149).

An Italian Chronicle confirms “that Sinan Pasha appointed a Georgian renegade, who used to be a servant of the old owner of Tbilisi, as the Pasha of Tbilisi” (“The Turkish-Persian War and Christian Georgians”, 1987, p. 41).

In the beginning of 1663, after a long interval that was followed by the movement of missionaries to western Georgia at the time of King Rostom, a group of missionaries of three Padre entered Tbilisi. On October, 23, 1663 a missionary Serapino Melikokel relates in his report the establishment of a new mission: “Though this Georgian king has been converted to Islam, he still accepted us very well. He gave us two houses: one for us to live in and another for a small church. People respect us and the king appreciates us” (Tamarashvili, 1902, pp 223-224). Later, on March 30, 1671, the same person narrates the reopening of the school closed the previous year on the order of the Catholicos. “We teach Georgian, Italian and Latin to youngsters” (Tamarashvili, 1902, p. 237).

In the letter of Padre Bernard Neapolitan of 1672, there is a narration on the success of the missions, including the mission in Tbilisi (Tamarashvili, 1902, p. 238).

The French traveler of the seventeenth century Jean Sharden (1643- 1713) – who was in Tbilisi from September 1673 to February 28, 1673 – preserved a lot of information on Tbilisi. According to him, “Tbilisi is one of the beautiful cities. Yet, it is not very big”. There is a ref-

erence to River Mtkvari: “on the bank of which most houses are built on a steep cliff. Apart from the riverside, the city is surrounded with a magnificent solid wall”. In the South, on the slope of a mountain there is a big fortress. The residents and the population there are only Persians”. Though the city belongs to an Islamic state and there were several attempts to build Mosques there, Sharden remarks that “There is not a Mosque in the city”. “People would rise in no time. They would start destroying the construction and attacking the builders”. Later the author also observes that the sovereigns rejected Christianity only formally, “All the external signs of Christianity are preserved in the city. All churches have crosses above church towers and numerous ringing bells. Alongside other sorts of meat, pork is also sold in public, without hiding. As for wine, you will come across it in every corner”. In spite of the fact that the densely populated Tbilisi was culturally and ethnically diverse, as Sharden puts it and “nowhere in the world you will meet so many foreigners, they are all involved in trade”. There are 14 churches in the city. The Catholic author considers that “This number is too big for a country where the significance of faith is diminished to the extent”. Sharden describes each church separately, yet puts a special emphasis on Sioni, “erected on the bank of the river and built out of fine carven stone. It is an old construction and looks like all old oriental churches”. The author recalls sulfur baths, shops, caravansaries, the city council buildings, gardens. He gives the description of a sovereign’s palace, which is “beyond any doubt one of the beauties of Tbilisi”. Sharden relates the activities of Catholic missionaries in Tbilisi and evaluates them as not quite successful. The author believes that one of the reasons is the obstinacy of Georgians who regard their rules more correct. Sharden makes a short historical deviation and remembers the attack of Bugha Turk on Tbilisi, the burning of the city, the slaughter of 50,000 people, the entrance of Djalal ad-Din into Tbilisi and the devastation of the city. The author presents the first graphical image of the city (1671). In the picture, the city built on the bank of Mtkvari is encircled with fences. as for the left bank of Mtkvari, only the Metechi Church and the surrounding territory have fences.

At a nadem (dinner-party) in the palace of Vakhtang V “The whole hall was illumined with 40 big torches. Four of them, which were close to the King were made of gold, the others were made of silver”. There were 120 bowls on the table. 1,000 pitchers and horns, 60 jugs, and 12 silver bowls, gold jugs – plain and enameled. Bowls and jugs, some were covered with gold, some decorated with gold and others decorated with gems and silver (The journey of Jean Sharden in Persia and other Eastern countries, 1975, p. 295, 303,317, 321 – 326).

A Frenchman Jean Baptist Tavernier (1605-1689) emphasizes the fact that “especially in Tbilisi Georgian women have one more advantage apart from their beauty: they have more freedom than other Asian women”. The same author remarks that in Georgia women are better at writing than men (Polievktov, 1935 , pp 181-182).

Dionijo Carli da Pianchenca, a representative missionary of the Capuccin Order, has left important information on eastern Georgia of the last quarter of the seventeenth century . He points out that the city that used to be located on the trade roads was left beyond these roads at his time and started to decline from the 1670s. By the year 1681 the population of Tbilisi reached 12,000. The author stresses the positive attitude of Georgians to Catholics and states that Giorgi XI, when he learnt about the Vienna victory started learning Italian himself. The author describes Tbilisi as “situated between two mountain ridges. The main part of the city is on the plain, while the rest of it is on the slope of a mountain. It is surrounded with a wall on three sides. There is River Mtkvari on the forth side. In the south there was erected a fortress, where there is the Persian garrison. Across the bridge there is a fortress city, yet as compared to the city it is on quite an elevated area...The market is the most beautiful part of the city. The products here are most cheap” (“Description of Tbilisi by Dionijo Karli”, 1951, pp. 157 – 182).

In the numerous letters sent from Tbilisi to Rome by European missionaries disclose interesting information on their confrontation with Armenians. They state that Armenians strove to drive Catholics away from Tbilisi and Georgia in general. The Georgian king did not support them in this confrontation. In the letter of May 15, 1679 Padre Ioseb relates: “The Blessed God gave such a heart to the Georgian King, though he is Islamized, he never uttered a word in favour of the Armenians. One word would be enough to destruct our Church” (Tamarashvili, 1902, p. 252).

The letter of Padre Julio Kremoneli of August 30, 1690 has the same content : “Though there is a hell fury aimed at wiping away and destroying the mission in Tbilisi to the present day, we thank our Lord that thanks to Him the mission has amazingly prospered in terms of faith in God and the number of people who have been converted to Catholicism” (Tamarashvili, 1995. p. 667).

In the information on Georgia given in the Dictionary of Erbelo (1697) there are some notes on the capital –Tbilisi, too.

The first European scientist who became interested in Georgia, was a French doctor, botanist, and member of the Academy of Sciences of Paris - Joseph Tournefort. He visited Tbilisi in 1701 and recalled it as “a big and densely populated city, with well-set baths “that are also an entertainment place for the citizens”. “The houses here are near the

ground and poorly lighted. They are built with in a simple way with fired bricks. The streets are paved in an ugly way. Above the fortress city, there is a fence which, though located on a good place, is half destroyed and only protected with a weak tower". The scientist liked the palace of the king and described it in great detail. Joseph Tournefort is the author of a graphic representation of Tbilisi with fence (1701). In this representation the farther part of the fence is densely populated on both sides of Mtkvari (Turnefor, 1988, p 44).

On April 15, 1708 Brother Reginaldo Lentiteli presented a gloomy picture of the mission in Tbilisi: "The mission of Tbilisi, which was founded forty-eight years ago, has never been persecuted as brutally for such a long time as it is now. It has never had so many enemies. While the enemies in the past were only Armenians, this time there are Greeks and Georgians among them, too. A Greek patriarch of Jerusalem wrote a letter to the King and other noblemen from Constantinople, in which he demanded categorically that European padres — as tempters and liars -- be driven away from Tbilisi" (Tamarashvili, 1995, p.668).

There are similar notes in a letter of Padre Angelo Popieli of April 18, 1718. Padre relates the rout of the Church by the Armenians of Tbilisi (Tamarashvili, 1902, pp 335-336).

In the eighteenth century France became interested in Georgia and Georgians. Tbilisi is mentioned in "Persian Letters" (1721) of Sharl Luis Montesquieu. In an article devoted to Georgia and the Georgians in the French Encyclopedia of the eighteenth century, Luis de Jokour mentions various cities separately and refers to Tbilisi as: Teplis, Taplis, Tiplis.

A German surgeon Schneese who participated in the ambassadorial mission of Persia in 1733-36 recollects Tbilisi, too (Polievktov, 1935 , pp. 173-174).

Unlike some of his forerunners Peisonnel, the French traveler of the 1750s and 1760s, stresses the significance of Tbilisi as the trade crossroad where there pass caravans form Ganja, Yerevan, Shamakhi, Tebriz, Erzurum every day ... "and every month 150-200 good arabas are taken from there to Yerevan, Erzurum, Tebriz". "It is a fact that this city is a storing place of caravans taken from Persia to Constantinople, Smirna, Aleppo and the caravans taken from the above cities to Persia", declares the author (Gvritishvili & Meskhia, 1952, pp. 165-166).

Jiulio Bonaventura Trente (eighteenth century) — an Italian monk of the Capuccin Order — provides information on the persecution of Catholics in Tbilisi and the attitude of Anthon Catholicos in his report of December 12, 1755 (Polievktov, 1935, pp 187-188).

Although the plays of a Italian Dramatist Karlo Gocci were staged in 1762-64: *Woman-Snake* and *Blue Monster* as well as *A Wonderful*

Georgian Woman staged by Karlo Goldoni the previous year were not written about by witnesses, they clearly point out the popularity of the Georgians and Georgia. One of the characters of a play by Karlo Gocci is the King of Tbilisi and the action takes place in the vicinity of the city. Tbilisi is mentioned as the capital of Georgia.

In 1770 Sharl De Grai De Fua , a French officer to Georgia with the army of Tottleben, came. The officer stayed in Tbilisi in the palace of Erekle II. He gives us some information about Tbilisi: “The city stands on River Mtkvari. It is surrounded with good walls. There is a mountain in the city that has a good fortress built on it. The length of the city must be up to half a mile, in width - a quarter of a mile. The city is populated by Georgians, Tatars, and Armenians. The market of the city is quite big: caravans from Persia often come here” (“Evidence of De Grai De Fua on Georgia”, 1985, p. 46).

Johann Anton Guldenshtadt, a German scientist working in Russia, visited Georgia in 1768-72. The scientist described Georgia and Tbilisi. According to his data, the population of the city was 20,000. These were Georgians, the Armenians and Tatars. All of them had their places for worshiping and churches. The author mentions 15 Churches of Georgians, and 20 churches of Armenians, one church of Catholic Armenians, one Armenian monastery and three Mosques. He also draws attention to the baths. He talks about Georgian and foreign currency in circulation in Georgia. He lists the goods and products he saw in the city: brocade, broadcloth, woolen stuff, silk and cotton fabrics, leather, furs, iron, copper, alum, tobacco, fish, rice, all sorts of products, timber. The German scientist draws our attention to the activities of the population “There are various craftsmen in the city: leather masters, dyers, knitters, blacksmiths, etc.” There were factories for salt and soap production, a bullet production factory, a mint, a glass producer’s, a dye-house, a printing house, etc (Gelashvili, p. 57, n.d.; “Guldenshtedt’s Journey in Georgia”, 1962, 1964. p. 87, vol.I; p. 21, 177, vol. II).

Iakob Reineggs - a German doctor living in Russia - was in the palace of King Erekle II in the eighteenth century. He taught German in a school for children. He opened a medical college and the noblemen school. Iakob Raineke taught artillery tactics to the Georgian military. He headed the printing-house and ordered a printing machine for it from Vienna. He was also the teacher of prince David Bagrationi. Iakob Raineke is the author of the historical topographic description of the Caucasus.

Ian Pototski from Poland met a traveler from Tbilisi during his journey in the Caucasus (1797-1798). The traveler from Georgia

informed him that in the distance of three versts from the city Avars kidnapped people and cattle and these attacks were caused by the fact that the King of Georgia stopped paying tribute to the Avars a few years before (Rainegs, 2002; pp. 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20; Rainegs, p. 62. n.d.; Polievktov, pp. 162-165. n.d.).

In his letter of August 4, 1800 sent from Rome to Tbilisi, Franchiske Padoeli presents a situation in Tbilisi after invasion of Agha Muhammad Khan: "Five years ago Persians invaded this ill-fated city unexpectedly and burnt almost the whole city. We are in a rented house. Our Catholics are almost all left homeless; they have a lot of debts and have no idea how to pay them back" (Tamarashvili, 1995, p. 699).

A lot of Europeans serving in Russia saw Tbilisi in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some of them passed on some important information about Tbilisi.

Wilhelm von Freygangs (1783 – 1849), a German residing in Russia, devoted a book to Georgia during in his journey in the country, from where he was sent to Persia to conduct negotiations with Abas Mirza. A bigger part of the book belongs to his wife Frederica Kudriavskaia (1790-1863). The book provides a detailed picture of the destruction in Tbilisi after the attack of Agha Muhammad Khan. Though, there is also information on new schools, houses, markets, an old fortress and a caravanserai. The authors are fascinated by site of the city and the view from the elevated bank of the river. They mention baths where the people spend a whole day and even a night per week; the noblemen; one of them – Tekla, the daughter of King Erekle II - seems to have made a special impression on the authors (Polievktov, 1946, pp. 56-58).

Heinrich Julius von Claproth from Germany spent the period from January 13, 1808 to July 1808. He informs us of the size of the population, which was, 18,000, not including Russians (Claprot, 1967, p. 61; Polievktov, 1946, pp. 107 – 111).

A German Professor working in Russia - Dietrich Kristoph Romel remembers the Tbilisi of the beginning of the nineteenth century as a populous city where Orthodox traditions are observed (Gioshvili, 1967, p. 63).

The Belgian colonel Rottiers of the Russian Army, who traveled in Georgia in 1811-18, remembers Tbilisi in the "Guide between Tbilisi to Constantinople" ("Itineraire de Tiflis a Constantinople par le Colonel Rottiers", 1820, p. 116).

According to the French scholar De Lil "Tiflis – the capital of Georgia- is not a big city ... But it is the most beautiful and the most

important city of Persia. The River Kura flows in the middle of the city. There are houses built on steep cliffs of its banks. The city is in a forest and surrounded with a fence. In Tiplis there are up to 14 churches. Georgians have six churches, the Sioni Cathedral is the most important of them. In spite of the fact that Tiplis is under the Muslim rule and the region is run by a Muslim King, Persians have no mosque in any place apart from the above mentioned fortress. Georgians are free, relentless and brave. And though they have been subjugated, they still have preserved a military spirit to return liberty” (Iamanidze, 2006, pp. 233-234).

In 1817 two Englishmen, Colonel Johnson John and artist Porter Roberto Ker , traveled to Georgia. The authors liked the location of the city and the sulfur baths. Johnson even compared the baths to a fashionable resort in England Cheltenham. However he did not like the Georgian dancing and the way Georgian women dress (Polievktov, p. 104; Polievktov, pp. 132-134). Ker Porter describes the old narrow streets of the city. Though he also points out that new roads are being built and the construction process is underway. He approves of the way men dress but criticizes Georgian women in this respect. He recognizes the beauty of Georgian women yet dislikes the cosmetics they use.

In the poem “the Lighter of Harem” by Irish Thomas More published in 1817, the author depicts the beauty of a young Georgian woman and recollects the hot baths of Tbilisi. There is a comment from the work of an Arab writer Ibn Hawkal, According to the author, “Tbilisi is popular for its naturally hot water.”

The Spanish general Van Don Jean Halen who served in the Russian Army describes the “Ermolov Tbilisi” that he saw with his own eyes in 1819-20 (Van Don Jean Halen, 1967, p. 66; Polievktov, pp. 92-94. n.d.).

In 1820-24 Jacques Francois Gamba, the French Consul in Tbilisi, pays a special attention to the description of the city: “Cyrus or Mtkvari splits Tbilisi into two parts. On the right side there is Old Tbilisi, sulfur baths and the new city, on the left side, there are suburbs Isani and Avlabari and a village populated with Germans”. By his information “there were about 24,000 people in Tbilisi in 1820”. If we compare the figure with the notes of Claproth, we can trace the rapid growth. The authors stresses the significance of Tbilisi as a link between Asia and Europe. He thinks that “ the city can be considered a junction between Europe and Asia” (Gamba, 1967, p. 57; Polievktov, pp. 86-89. n.d.; Polievktov & Natadze, 1929, pp. 74-84).

An English traveler - Robert Lyall who visited the Caucasus in 1822, is another person to provide information about Tbilisi. According to his observation Tbilisi was a quite vivid city but he didn't like it snar-

row and sinuous streets. He thinks new streets in the city were laid by General Ermolov (Roberto, 1967, pp. 20-61; Polievktov, pp. 118-120. n.d.).

A French naturalist - Sharles Belanger visited Tbilisi in 1825 and later described the city (Belanzhe Charl, 1967, p. 56).

Karl Edward Eichwald – a German professor working in Russia - traveled in the Caucasus in 1825-6 with a Kazan University expedition. During the expedition, the professor visited Tbilisi. The author studied the history of the city and gave an extensive narration on it. He regards the history of Tbilisi as “a short description of the battle that the small kingdom waged with its neighbors for over 1,500 years”. And though the author of the narration is informed of the former grandeur of the city, the city was so destroyed after the invasion of Agha Mahmad Khan that he attributed the transformation of Tbilisi into a city to Ermolov (Eichvald, 2005, pp. 33-34).

In 1826 Willian Mantith - English and Indian Engineering Army officer - visited Paskevich's headquarters in Tbilisi. Later the officer described the city (Mantith, 1967, p. 61).

A German Vetter came to Georgia by the military road in 1827. He described Tbilisi, in which he had spent a fortnight (Fetter, 1967, p. 65; Polievktov, 1946, pp. 148 – 149).

In 1828 T. Armstrong spent almost all November in Tbilisi. He compared the city to Naples. He described the life of the city and trade that has big prospect, in the author's opinion. T. Armstrong describes Georgians as strong brave people, who are keen on taking alcoholic drinks, however. He considered Georgian women as most beautiful he had ever seen (Polievktov, 1946, pp. 65-66).

A English traveler – Thomas Alcock – came to Georgia by the military road in 1828. He attended a ball at the Pashkevich's and described the high society of Tbilisi (Thomas, 1967, p. 62; Polievktov, 1830, p. 63).

A English officer Arthur *Connolly* visited Tbilisi in 1829 and enjoyed it so much that didn't want to leave.

More detailed information about the city is preserved by Robert Minen, who was there in December 1829 and January 1830. Tbilisi, by his impression, was joyful, full of life, and significant. He pays attention to the increasing population and developing trade in the city.

According to the data of a Frenchman - Diubua de Monpereaux - by 1834 there were 3,662 houses in Tbilisi, 4,936 families and 25,290 people, excluding Russians (Tiflis, Encyclopaedia of Islam).

An English traveler - Richard Wilbraham visited Tbilisi in 1837 during the visit of the Russian Emperor Nikolai I. The traveler relates about the city that is situated on broad and fast Mtkvari, that flows in the

narrow gorge. He was fascinated by the city in spite of the fact that certain things seemed tasteless to him: "On terraces there are open squares and gardens. There are gloomy ruins of an old castle on a high mountain. On a steep cliff of the left bank there is a modern citadel surrounded by water". The traveler stresses the beauty of the Georgian people. At a ball in honor of the visit of the Emperor, Georgian noblemen "dressed in their magnificent well-designed clothes proved that they are truly the most beautiful people in the world". The author speaks about the beauty of Georgian women separately. When he remembers Germans living there, he notes that German women living there "cannot compete in beauty with the black-eyed sensitive neighbors of theirs". Right there, the author remarks that though "the women are beautiful, they are not organized" ("Richard Wilbraham's Journey in Georgia", Trans. 1990, pp. 17, 20, 27, 41, 45).

A missionary from the USA - Smith Eli visited Tbilisi in 1838. He has recorded some information about Tbilisi (Smith, 1967, p. 63; Polievktov, pp. 138-140. n.d.). In his report of January 25, 1841 one of the missionaries states: "We should pay special attention to our church in Tbilisi out of the newly established churches. Due to insufficient place and the number of foreigners even half of the Catholics willing to enter it, cannot manage to do that... We are thinking of building a new bigger church with the support of your God fearing believing society and hoping to get the assistance of the local population: Georgians and foreigners" (Tamarashvili, 1995, p 715).

Carl Heinrich Emil Kokh – a German botanist who traveled in Eastern countries in 1836 and 1843–44 and visited Tbilisi five times was excited with the city. The traveler notes, "I cannot tell you of any other place that has produced such a pleasant influence on me. Because here, in Tbilisi, the oriental spirit is preserved alongside the European character. . . There has been a gymnasium in Tbilisi for a long time. Of course it cannot be compared to German gymnasia, but it has a clear advantage over some similar French schools in that it has rejected the overly formal style of teaching" ("Evidence of K. Kokh and O. Spenser on Georgia and the Caucasus", 1981, p. 153).

Envoys from Rome inform us on the cessation of activities of the Catholic mission: "On the first day of 1845 there stopped two German two-wheeled carriages at our door... Then there came two police officers attended by courier. They entered the Monastery and dragged us out. . . Catholics were falling in groups before us so as to bid their last good bye. . . On our way we were accompanied by one police officer, Kossaks and other supervisors. They did not leave us till the border with Turkey. In this way they made us leave Tbilisi" (Tamarashvili, 1995, pp. 721-722).

A German traveler of the first half of the nineteenth century, Moris Wagner, provides some interesting information on Georgia and Tbilisi in particular. He describes parts of the city separately. "When I compare the cities of the old world renowned for their wonderful location: Constantinople, Genua, Neapol, Prague, Bursa, Zalsburg, Algeria, etc. to the picture of the Georgian capital, I cannot place Tbilisi in the last place",- states the author charmed with the beauty of the Georgian women ("Moris Wagner About Georgia", 2002, p. 32).

The famous French writer Alexander Dumas (1802-70) was in Georgia from November 23, 1858 to January 11, 1859. "I have to confess that when I was traveling to Tbilisi I believed I was going to a half-wild city. I was mistaken", says the famous writer. He considers that Georgian ladies were only two weeks behind the Italian fashion. This opinion was strengthened at the New Year Party where he met Georgians in beautiful national clothes. He was specially charmed by the women. The author also notes the ethnic diversity of the city population and the numerous visitors. Before Christmas Dumas observes the city again and remarks that "Tiplisi is a broad amphitheatre which is located on both sides of its river as though specially for the celebration. The slope bank of the river was almost full with people. On all the roofs there were representatives of different nations of different colors: the wind was waving silk, satin, velvet, and white veil decorated with gold in such a way that one would think that it was the spring breeze. Each house was like a basket of flowers". The author remembers the Sioni Church, the sulfur baths and describes the Georgian "supra".

"Beyond any doubt, I have never seen a hall so delightful as the theatrical hall of Tbilisi in all my life. Ladies with beautiful faces made this hall look even more beautiful" (Dumas, 1988, pp. 196-204). The author remembers the Sioni Church, the Georgian supra and the sulfur baths.

An Englishman John Oliver Wardrobe (1864-1948) traveled in Georgia in 1887. He devoted a book to the country *The Kingdom of Georgia - A Journey in the Country of Ladies, Wine and Song* and presented an exciting description of Tbilisi: "Impression produced by Tiflisi on the mind of a foreigner is unique. Its location, the atmosphere, the various face of the streets, the simplicity and gaiety of the social life – taken together makes a most intensive and pleasing impression". Being enthusiastic about the Georgian culture and fascinated by Tbilisi, he left us notes on individual districts and streets of Tbilisi. He believed that the best hotels are in Tbilisi. However he advised everyone to find lodging in a Georgian family. The author praises Georgian hospitality and notes that the most disgusting thing for Georgians is stinginess. According to Wardrobe, the population of

Tbilisi was 105,000. In his work, Wardrobe speaks about the ethnic diversity of the city. Apart from Georgians, there lived Russians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Persians and a few Europeans (French and Germans). In the end, the author concludes that “Tbilisi is a city where one can live without ever being tortured with sadness” (Wardrobe, trans. 2001, p. 52; Wardrobe, 1967, pp. 64-65).

William Richard Morfil from England (1834-1909) came to Georgia in 1888, visited Tbilisi and after returning home published the article with his impressions from the city. Being in Tbilisi, he visited museum, the Society Disseminating Literacy, editing house of Newspaper *Iveria*, was invited to Ilya Chavchavadze’s place, got acquaintance with interesting persons. He also purchased the books there.

A French traveler Levie visited Tbilisi in the 1890s. According to his impression, the city is “a lovely sight. It is not deprived of European motion and buoyancy. There are all sorts of people moving in the streets. You can come across Russian officers, peasants, and women dressed according to the latest Paris fashion” (Emil, 1967, p. 61).

At the end of the nineteenth century Jane Dieulafoy from France relates that Tbilisi was the residence of General Governor of the southern provinces, which has been made to be part of Russia against its will, by force. The streets in Tbilisi are wide and paved well; the houses – built in an excellent way, the gardens – looked after properly. The author remembers the palace of the Prince Constantine, the museum, the numerous barracks, and later – the markets, and regions populated with people. He says that the beauty and elegance of the women is not faded regardless of the reputation they have (“La Perse la Chaldee et la Susiane par Dieulafoy Mme Jane Dieulafoy”).

Enrico Castelnuovo, an Italian writer (1839 – 1915) in one of his works *Before the Departure (The Diary of Helen)* remembers Tbilisi where the brother of the main character has lived for three years. Here he also talks about the Georgian women “famous for their beauty round the world”. The author informs us that the population of the city is 61,000, that the city is the main trading place between Europe and Persia. It is situated on Mtkvari and has hot sulfur springs. The name of the city – meaning “the city of warm water” – is associated with these springs. Enrico Castelnuovo uses Orsole’s writings in his work. The latter has described Tbilisi, the eastern markets, national clothes, shops and the cultural life. Unlike other authors he was not fascinated by the beauty of Georgian women because, as he says: “There is no buoyancy in their beautiful features”.

Amur August Lui Joseph Bartello the same Baron de Bai – a French historian and a public figure (1853-1931), and a great supporter

of the Georgian culture, visited the country several times. He met Ilya Chavchavdze and devoted a book to Tbilisi (“Bai Amur Ogiust Lui Joseph Bertello Baron De “, 1967, p. 55; Panchulidze, 1969).

Turkish Sources

From the mid-sixteenth century. Persia and the Ottoman State divided Georgia by spheres of influence. Western Georgia was usually controlled by the Ottomans, and eastern Georgia - by Persia. Such a division was often on paper.

For a number of reasons Persia failed to gain control over and get into western Georgia. On the contrary. As a result of later treaties it lost and ceded the eastern part of Samtske-Saatabago to Turkey – the areas which befell Turkey before under the Amasia Treaty of 1555. Unlike Persia, Turkey in some cases managed to get into eastern Georgia e.g. in 1578 or in 1723. In such cases Turks strove to establish Turkish administration there. Therefore, Turkish chroniclers paid greater attention to Tbilisi.

A great Turkish historian of the sixteenth century, Mustapha Ali, was the personal secretary of the conqueror of Tbilisi and East Georgia Lala Mustapha Pasha in 1578. Though Mustapha Ali did not take part in east campaigns, he devoted a special work to it *The Book of Conquest*. The book contains notes on Tbilisi “The Tbilisi castle is a big magnificent fortress which is very similar to the great and splendid city of the Arabs – Alepo with the depth of its trenches, the height of the city and its piers. At the same time, since there are River Mtkvari and hot springs there, it also looks like the capital of Hungary Budapest” (Shengelia, Ali Mustapha, 1967, p. 55).

In the work of a Turkish author of the same century Mustafa Selaniki there is a reference to “the Tbilisi fortress built along the river that would make all the rulers of the world envy” (Selaniki & Puturidze, 1960, pp. 263 – 264).

Solak Abu Bakr b. ‘Abd Allah, an Ottoman historian of the sixteenth century, describes Tbilisi: “We went to the famous fortress called Tbilisi. The people of the vilayet are all Georgians. But the cursed Kizilbash Khan - called Dawud Khan - subjugated them. We went there and made a camp near the fortress. We stayed there for about five or six days. The fortress of the city is located in one gorge. The vilayet is moderate in terms of the climate and water. It has seven or eight great ilijes, a round garden. There are also vineyards. There is a big river flowing in the middle of the city. It is called the Mtkvari. In the city, there is a bridge over the river. When the fortress was occupied by the Kizilbash,

merchants loaded with silk coming from Shirwan and Zagem went over the bridge and paid the customs. It traded in yuk akhche per year. This is what the vilayet is like” (Abdulah, 2006, p. 36).

A Turkish author Ibrahim Pečevi has preserve information on the seizure of Tbilisi by Mustapha Lala Pasha and the disposition of its garrisons. Several Turkish authors remembers the seizure of Tbilisi by Sinan Pasha in 1580 and the appointment of a Georgian ruler. One of them is Ibrahim Pečevi, whose description resembles the narration of Mustafa Ali a lot: “There were several suitors of the Beylerbey of Tbilisi. Of all the Georgian Beys, Giorgi Bey was the smartest. He declared loyalty to the former commander. He was appointed as a ruler of the vilayet of Tbilisi and was named Yusuf Pasha” (“Evidence of Ibrahim Pechevi concerning Georgia and Caucasus”. Trans. 1964, p. 61).

A Turkish writer and scholar of the seventeenth century, Katib Čelebi, has preserved notes about Tbilisi. Different works by him contain information about the city. One of such works is a geographical work *Jihan-numa (The Mirror of the Universe)*. According to Katib Čelebi “Tiplis is a castle and a city, situated at longitude 83 and latitude 33, on the River Mtkvari, east of the Georgian mountains. There is a mountain on one side of the city. The city has three entrances. The entrances are opposite one another and River Mtkvari is between these entrances. The castle is built on both sides of a huge cliff covered with plants. The distance in between is very narrow. There start 10 inches in the place of the river bed. In old books the name is called the Kasaba of Georgia that had been conquered by Islamic people before Georgians regained control over it and before it was seized by Muslims again. It is currently under Shirvan rule. There are a lot of baths in the eastern suburb of the town. The old baths with domes were built on pleasant moderately warm water in old times. The water in the baths has the smell of sulfur and is very good for health. Ahmed Amin tells that due to the miracle of creation, if you put ten eggs into the water, nine of them will boil and the tenth egg will disappear” (“Evidence of Katip Chelebi concerning Georgia and Caucasus”, 1978, p. 117-118).

Tbilisi was described by a Turkish traveler of the seventeenth century Ewliya Čelebi. The traveler visited the city in 1646-7. He relates that “On the bank of river Mtkvari there are two fortresses on a steep cliff opposite each other. These fortresses are called Bitlisi-Tbilisi. There is River Mtkvari flowing between them. Since the bridge between the cliffs is big, it is easy to move from one fortress to another. The big fortress is south of River Mtkvari and the small fortress – north of the river. On the bank of the river, on a steep cliff, one can count 6,000 steps around the big fortress built by Bitlisi. Yet, it was built long ago. The height of the wall is 60 inches. The small fortress is built by Yezdigard Shah. The

majority of the population are Sunnis from Ottoman times. They follow the faith of Hanafi and Shafi'i. There is a lot of ulema. They raise wheat, the white and fine Tbilisi bread, red and white peaches. Tbilisi is famous for its cotton wool and the Angora fleece." The traveler remembers the naturally hot waters of Tbilisi, too (Evlia Chelebi, 1971, p. 293-297).

Some Turkish authors tell us of the Turkish seizure of Tbilisi in 1723. One of them is Ćelebi-Zade Isma'il 'Asim Efendi, who held the post of a royal historian in 1723-30. In his work there is a reference to "the vilayet of Tbilisi embroidered with silk". The author relates that based on the Ojaklik Agreement and by means of paying a bribe of 40,000 kurushs - Uzun Mustafa Agha, one of the shameless Aghas of Erzurum, appointed Shah Nawaz (that stands for Bakar) son of Vakhtang, converted to Islam, called Ibrahim as the governor of the city (Shengelia, 1973).

A Turkish author of the eighteenth century, Gurji Zade, informs us of the same fact. In his book devoted to the conquest of East Georgia by Turks in 1723-1724, *The Book of the Tbilisi Conquest*, he regards Tbilisi "a lovely bride engaged with Ottomans", or "an abundant table". Here we can also see the disobedience of Georgians, a permanent fight for the liberation of the city. As the author recounts "the city of Tbilisi was surrounded with the enemies of religion like "an ample table with hungry dogs". The author remembers Vakhtang VI and his son Bakar (Shah Nawaz) as cursed and perfidious (Gurji- Zade, 1975, p. 18-19, 25).

The Turkish historian of the nineteenth century Cevdet -Pasha informs us on the invasion of Agha Mahmud Khan and the capture of Tbilisi (Shengelia, 1967, p. 66).

Russian Sources

A Russian merchant of the seventeenth century Vasili Yakubovich Gagara wrote of the city : there are four fortresses in Tbilisi, and there's a river flowing between them. The river freezes neither in winter nor in summer. He also mentions hot waters "There must be more than 60 hot wells" (Tsintsadze, 1965, p. 13; Polievktov, p. 35. n.d.).

Mayor General of the Russian Army Nikolai Danielovich Yazikov, who visited Georgia in 1770, tells that Tbilisi was quite a populous city and that there is a trade in Asian goods: brocade, taffeta, leather. There were also some goods from Russia. There are a lot of various craftsmen there and separate districts for different crafts. There were "many rich merchants in the city" and the annual rent income of the city mint amounted to 30,000 (Gvritishvili & Meskhia, 1952, p. 167).

Russian colonel Stephan Danilovich Burnashov informs us that in the Tbilisi of the 1880s there were up to 500 shops. He narrates how

Russians took their goods to the markets of India and Persia via Tbilisi and how even more goods were imported from there. The same author states that “the primary striving of Erekle II is the Europeanization of the people” (Burnashov, 1786; Burnashov, 1967, p. 56).

After the annexation of Georgia by Russia in 1801 throughout the nineteenth century and later Georgia and Tbilisi in particular were visited by many Russians for various goals. They left their impressions in a written form. Russian Tsar Nikolay I made Georgia “Southern Siberia” and a place for exile. Prior to the uprising of “Decabrists” A.S. Griboedov, A.A. Shishkov, V. K. Küchelbecker came to Tbilisi. In 1829 A. S. Pushkin arrived in Tbilisi. Later - in 1837 M.Yu. Lermontov visited Kakheti.

“Give Caucasus peace and don’t seek earthly paradise on Euphrat”,- Said A. A. Bestuzhev-Marlinski,, who stated, “I love the evenings and nights of Tbilisi” (Bestuzhev – Marlinskii, 1948, p. 139), while M. Lermontov was writing to his friend Raevski, “If you go to the Caucasus you will return a poet from there” (“Through the Ages”,1983, p. 230).

A famous Russian critic B. Belinski was sure that “The lot fell upon the Caucasus to be a cradle, inspiration and governing of Russian poetic talents” (“Through the Ages”,1983, p. 231).

A. Griboedov served in the office of Commander-in-Chief Ermolov, later in the office of Paskevich. He had close relations with the high society of Tbilisi. He married the daughter of a poet A. Chavchavadze, Nino. He also played an essential role in the foundation of a Russian newspaper *Tiflisskie vedomosti* (1828, 4 July), and in setting up schools and a commercial bank. He attempted to open a Public library. His poem “Woe from wit” was heard first in Tbilisi and in the same city lies his body. A. Griboedov devoted lyrics Tbilisi, his ideas about the future of the city are expressed in his plan for the reconstruction of the city. According to V. N. Grigoriev, “One rarely loves motherland, the way he loved Georgia – so sincerely and ardently” (“Russian writers on Georgia”, 1948, p. 2.). “I am so much used to this place deadly won’t leave it”- writes A. Griboedov about Tbilisi in a letter: “Do hasten to Tbilisi, you can’t believe what a luxury it is”. He describes the city, the way it grows becoming more and more beautiful” (“Russian writers on Georgia”, 1948, p. 71.).

A. Pushkin came to Tbilisi on his own and remembered the days spent there with pleasure. “I don’t remember a day when I was more joyful than now. I see how I am loved, understood and appreciated and how it makes me happy”, writes the great poet (“Russian writers on Georgia”, 1983, p. 15).

According to A. Pushkin “A big part of Tbilisi is built in the Asian style: the houses are near to the ground, the roofs are flat. In the northern part of the city the houses are built in accordance with the European architecture. Close to them there starts a straight square. The market is divided into several rows. The counters are filled with Turkish and Persian goods that are rather cheap. The arms from Tbilisi are expensive in the East” (“Russian writers on Georgia”, 1983, pp. 173-174).

M. Gamazov visited Tbilisi in 1831. He liked the city, which evoked his interest in the East in general. The poet devoted some verses to the city. In these verses he mentions Navtlughi, Avlabari, Mtkvari, the sulfur baths (Bogomolov, 1984, pp. 22-37).

A Russian officer Fiodor Fiodorovich Bartolomey who traveled to Georgia in the 1830s provides us with important information on Tbilisi (Tedorovich, 1967, p. 56; Polievktov, p. 8. n.d.).

From 1846 till 1918 newspaper *Kavkaz* was being published in Tbilisi. The newspaper contained interesting information about the Caucasus and Georgia. I. Polonski, V. Sologub, M. Brosset and others cooperated with the newspaper. One of the editors O. Konstantinov vividly describes the city in his *Essays of Tbilisi* and Tbilisi news. He mentions Maydan, Avlabari and Sololaki, gives information about charcoal dealers, dressmakers, hair dressers, petty tradesmen, describes markets, squares, traditions (“Russian writers on Georgia”, 1983, pp. 29-31).

A famous writer V. Sologub (1813-1882), who had close relations with A. Pushkin, Iu. Lermontov and who visited Georgia in 1850, draws attention to Tbilisi, among the other sites. He liked the theatre, but notes that it would be better if more Georgian plays were performed there. He sees the future of the city in light colors (Bogomolov, 1984, pp. 77-92).

Writer E.A. Verderevski also lived in Tbilisi. He came there in the 1750s and described the city: narrow streets, market, Avlabari, Peski etc. in his works (Bogomolov & Khutsishvili, 1983, pp. 70-72).

In 1844-45 writer A.S. Afanasiev-Chuzhbinski was greatly impressed by Tbilisi with its ethnic diversity. He described the life and occupation of common people, sulfur baths, Georgian songs. In his opinion, Tbilisi could become a significant center of science, culture and trade. It had to be covered with a net of the High schools, where representatives of different nations, and among them highlanders would study (Bogomolov, 1984, pp. 58-98).

In 1852 a famous writer Lev Tolstoy came to Tbilisi. He liked the city so much that decided to stay there for service: “Tbilisi is a civilized city, it follows Petersburg, at times successfully. The society here is

selected and big. There is a Russian theatre here, Italian Opera, which I attend as I can afford with my humble opportunities,” - said the writer. He also wrote the following about the city: “I think there happened a great moral change in me I became better here” (Russian writers on Georgia, p. 49. n.d.).

A Russian journalist, Dunkel Welling, who was in Tbilisi in 1860 confirms the notes. He presents the picture of Tbilisi as of a European developed city with 212 streets and 10 squares. He states that “The bridges, streets and squares of Tbilisi are illuminated with 302 lamps that have a bright light. Gas is obtained as a result of liquid burning” (Polievktov & Natadze, 1929, Dunkel-Veling, 1967, pp. 95-102).

A Russian statesman Nikolai Alexander Pavlov, who served as Senator and Head of the Main Office of the Caucasus Directorate in Tbilisi from 1863, provides some interesting notes about Tbilisi. He tells us that in Tbilisi the streets of the right embankment of Mtkvari started to be paved in 1867. The process was finished that year. One thousand one hundred and fifty two private houses were built in Tbilisi in 1862-72. The population of Tbilisi was 81,181 in 1872. The author also provides information on the educational institutions of Tbilisi (Nikolai, 1967, p. 62).

In the 1880s, G.I Uspenski, A. N. Ostrovski, A. P. Chekhov, P. I. Chaikovski, M. G. Savina and others paid a visit to Tbilisi. Here, in the newspaper *Kavkaz* the first work of M. Gorki “Makar Chudra” was published. The writer was always grateful: “I can think that just the great nature of the country and romantic softness of the people, these two forces, gave me an impulse, which made a vagrant into a writer” later remembered M. Gorki (Russian Writers on Georgia, p. 88). He writes about Tbilisi: “I never forget that in this city I made the first steps on the road on which I have already been pacing for forty years”.

A great Russian singer F. I Shaliapin received his first singing lessons and first stepped onto the stage in Tbilisi.

P. Chaikovski was quite amazed by Tbilisi which he visited five times. By its location Tbilisi reminded him of the Italian cities Genoa, Venice, Florence. “It is quite a European city, very well organized, clean, with good climate, rich shops, and a perfect opera”. The composer talks about an old and modern city with European and Asian parts. He thinks that the combination of Asia and Europe determines the attractiveness of the city. He was very much surprised by high music culture. He didn’t expect that his creation was so well known and performed. “I can consider the month spent in Tbilisi as the best in my life. I like Tbilisi with its splendid southern climate and extreme originality. The local musicians are so attentive and respectful to me that it can’t leave me indifferent”. He repeats that he likes the city very much many times.

“The main streets are vivid, the shops rich. All smells of Europe” (Aslanishvili, 1940, p.7).

In 1923 Tbilisi was visited by a famous Russian writer, K. T. Paustovski. The writer notes that Tbilisi is a city with rich traditions, but it doesn't await the return to the past, being quite modern. The author compares the rich and diverse market of the city to the Persian carpet, talks about clean offices. The author says “There is a restrained vivacity, there are more essential and genuine deals”. Having visited the tomb of Griboedov the writer once again thought, “How old this earth is, covered with the millennium dust.” He met Titsian Tabidze, Lado Gudriashvili, and Nikoloz Shengelia, and reflected that if he were younger he could stay in the city for ever (Jincharadze, 1970, p. 4-5).

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