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THE POPULATION OF TBILISI THROUGH THE EYES OF FOREIGN TRAVELERS (First Half of the XIX Century)*

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The writings of foreigners traveling to Georgia in the first half of the 19th century for various purposes contain interesting information about the geography, history, cities, population, trade, agriculture, and other issues of this country. In this article, we present their information about the ethno-religious and social composition of the population of Tbilisi.

The first quarter of the XIX century. According to Alexander Negri, a Greek diplomat in the service of Russia, there were 4,000 houses and 20,000 inhabitants in Tbilisi at the end of the 18th century. After the invasion by Aga-Mohammed Khan in 1795 and the removal of prisoners from the Kartl-Kakheti kingdom, in 1803, there were 14,620 souls in the city Julius von Klaproth, a German linguist and orientalist, based on police information, noted that excluding the Russian functionaries and the garrison, in 1808 there were 18,000 souls in Tbilisi, half of whom were Armenians. In particular: one Georgian patriarch (katholikos), Antoni – son of King Erekle, 60 Georgian, 81 Armenian and 4 Catholic clerics, one Tatar effendi, 160 *aznaurs* (noblemen), 216 *tavads* (princes), 1983 citizens, 252 peasants and 426 servants or serfs of princes.

The Belgian colonel Rottier, who served in Georgia in 1811 to 1818, wrote in his work that "to the tranquility and prosperity of the country", the Russian government sent the members of Erekle II's family to St. Petersburg and other cities in the interior of the Empire, assigning them pensions in accordance with their dignity and their political rank. In addition to this, the colonel cites the story reported by the priest of St. George's Chapel, Onisime Ioseliani, about the arrest of the last queen of Kartl-Kakheti, Mariam Tsitsishvili, and her forced exile to Russia along with her underage children by order of Prince Paul Tsitsianov. It seems that the news about the protection of the royal honor by the Georgian queen caused great interest in Europe. This section of Rottier's works was printed in English in Great Britain in 1829. Later, in 1845, the French historian, Frédéric Lacroix, included this topic in the last chapter of his book, "Policy of Russia towards the conquered peoples."¹

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¹ The London Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, Etc, N 658, 29 August, 1829; Frédéric Lacroix, *Les mystères de la Russie: Tableau politique et moral de l'Empire russe d'après les manuscrit d'un diplomate et d'un voyageur*, Paris, Pagnerre - Editeur, 1845, („Politique de la Russie envers les peuples conquis“) 441-445.

Fourteen years after the Persian invasion of Tbilisi, in May 1809, a French mission from Iran arrived in this city. A member of this mission, Lieutenant Camille-Alphonse Trezel wrote: "Tiflis is the first city where we had the pleasure of finding an image of the mores of Europe. Saddened for two years by the existence of the silent cities of Asia, whose narrow and secluded streets are only a series of bare walls reflecting waves of fiery dust, we greedily enjoyed all the movement of the Christian city". It was the sound of church bells; unlike in Muslim countries, the walls did not completely cover the houses of Tbilisi inhabitants, neighbors were talking to each other, and after the church service, the women were walking in the garden. This information of the French officer emphasized the difference between Georgian women and the regulated manner of life of Muslim women. The lieutenant also noted the fact that the brave Georgians had the same idea of honor as the French - they knew how to fight a duel.

In 1811-1812, the wife of the Russian diplomat Wilhelm von Freygang, Frederika von Freygang, was in Tbilisi; she touched upon the important functions of the bathhouse in the life of Tbilisi women. As in Persia, Turkey, Moldavia, and Wallachia, after taking a bath in the Tbilisi bath, women were subjected to special manipulations and cosmetic procedures. She writes: "After a session in these vaults, an hour's sleep, and bowl of fruit are very pleasant, even for us Europeans; and although the bathhouse is not attractive, I have taken a liking to it, at the risk of becoming a little Georgian." This phrase of the lady connected this custom of Tbilisi women with Muslim culture and emphasized its westernity. According to Staff Captain Maurice Kotzebue, Tbilisi men spent Saturday in a bathhouse, where they smoked tobacco, feasted with wine and cheese, and played the guitar. For Tbilisi women, the bath served as a kind of beauty salon, and for men - as a tavern.

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In the Armenian family following the patriarchal way of life, the process of Europeanization was relatively slow. The English officer John Johnson (1817) describes a supper at the house of Prince Bebutov, where he saw his family ladies and was entertained by watching a variety of dances characteristic of various tribes inhabiting the Caucasus region. For him, everything was new in terms of demonstrating the costumes and customs of the country, but he criticised women's clothing, cosmetics, and noted the unnatural coldness of the ladies towards him. As Johnson comments, this adherence to Moorish customs was to be expected among the inhabitants of a country so long under the yoke of the Mahomedans.

An Englishman, Thomas Alcock, noted, that Georgia was one of the oldest Christian countries, and Tiflis had lost much of its Asiatic character since it has belonged to Russia,

but the manners and costume of the Georgians were completely oriental. They adopted partially European habits, and are divided in this manner, as well as geographically, between the Persians and Russians: they sat cross-legged, but not on the ground like the Persians, but on a sort of sofa; they do not eat without knives and forks, but have one perhaps between two or three; a single plate also frequently serves the whole party. Their dress is not the large flowing robe of the south, nor is it the tight coat of the north; it is a medium, and a very pretty costume.

The process of development of Tbilisi began after the end of the first Russian-Iranian war of 1804-1813, during the rule of General Yermolov (1816-1827). By order of the general, the captured Turks and Persians dismantled the ruins of the city, the engineers expanded and paved the streets in separate sections. The construction of barracks began in the city. The houses of the Armenian princes, Madatov and Bebutov, stood out among the houses of Tbilisi dignitaries. According to Sir Robert Kerr Porter, the Governor-general – Yermoloff, has chosen his place of residence at on the gentle slope of a hill, fronting the river, and a fine view of the Caucasian mountains. This building, with the arsenal, hospital, churches, and a few villas in the neighbourhood, were the only erections, in or near the place, that reminded one at all of Europe. The rest was purely Asiatic; but very different from the idea, commonly received in Europe, of that term,—gay minarets, painted domes, and gilded trellice-work.

In the first half of the 19th century there were no hotels in Tbilisi, but a room could be rented from the Armenians. Julius Klaproth and his companion (1807) stayed at the house of the Armenian priest David Khaitmassian in Tbilisi. In July 1817, John Johnson and his companion, and then in the autumn of the same year Sir Robert Kerr Porter, lodged in the house of the principal Armenian resident, whose father, Arratoon Issaya Khan, also known as Khoja Aratoon, served as treasurer of some of the English envoys at the Persian king's court. The house was excellent, and was situated in the quarter inhabited by the General and the Governor, being near both their residences. Gamba first stayed with a Frenchman, and then moved to the more comfortable apartment of the Armenian Jacobs Khan, the banker of those British who were traveling from India to their homeland through Georgia. In June 1822, Scottish traveler Robert Lyall found a room with an Armenian, Piranof. According to the American traveler, George Leighton Diston, there were five hotels in Tbilisi in December 1847, but they were not furnished. In 1849, Lady Mary Leonora Sheile and her husband British Ambassador to Iran (1844-1854) General Sir Justin Sheile were hosted in a very richly furnished house by an Armenian merchant known for his wealth.

Before the barracks were built in Tbilisi, the soldiers were accommodated in the houses of the local population. According to the French diplomat Amédée Jaubert (1807), Russian soldiers participating in the first Russian-Persian war (1804-1813) wintered in Tbilisi, where they transported the dissolution of mores and the shameful licentiousness which in Petersburg passed for European civilization and urbanity. They have thus alienated the hearts of a large part of the inhabitants of Georgia. The Scottish captain John Macdonald-Kinneir (1813) and Sir Robert Kerr Porter (1817) noted that the Georgians were very annoyed by the settlement of Russian officers in their houses. According to Thomas Lumsden (1819), a lieutenant in the Bengal Horse Artillery, nothing of this kind would be tolerated in India, for a high spirited Hindoo would never tolerate the disgrace if his women being exposed to the company of strangers.

Emigration of Armenians to Tbilisi. Located on the left bank of the Kura, the suburb of Avlabar, connected to Tbilisi by a bridge, was inhabited by poor Tatars, Kurds and a colony of Armenians who fled mainly from Yerevan neighborhood during the first Russian-Iranian war of 1804-1813. Colonel Rottier considered the Armenians to be the most suitable subjects for the Russian Empire.

According to Jacques-Francois Gamba, the French consul in Tbilisi in 1821-1824, numerous Armenians living in Tbilisi, in their manners and natural abilities, did not resemble the Georgians, whose fighting spirit was in complete contrast to the peace-loving nature of the Armenians. Georgians followed agriculture and handicrafts, and trade was treated with disdain. Economical Armenians showed great savvy in commercial activities. According to Gamba, in 1825, 2,500 Armenian, 1,500 Georgian, 500 Tatar and Persian families lived in Tbilisi and its surroundings, totaling 4,500 families. There were not less than 6 souls in each, making a total of 27,000 souls. To this number were added the composition of the garrison, officials and foreigners - 6,000 souls, which was 33,000 souls. This number was constantly increasing due to the influx of Armenians who emigrated from Persia and Turkey, who sought refuge there from the tyranny of the Turks and the oppression of the Persians.

The most important person from the Armenian emigration to Tbilisi was Nerses, the patriarch of the Armenians who escaped from the Etchmiadzin monastery in 1822. He was well aware of the plans of the Russians and ensured their execution. He tried to revive the national character in all sections of his parish by spreading education. Thanks to his efforts, a large caravanserai was built in the new part of Tbilisi in 1820, and a school for Armenians was built in 1824.

A colony of Germans and other Europeans. In 1817-1820, by order of Alexander I, General Yermolov founded eight colonies of Württemberg Germans in Tbilisi province. The Germans were provided with land, houses, cattle and seeds. The general hoped that they would have a very beneficial influence on local agriculture and all kinds of handicrafts, and that the people of the East would share the secrets of European culture by interacting with them. In New Tiflis (*Neù-Tiflis*), a German colony located near Tbilisi, there were 35 families in 1830, and 40 families in 1840. Their neat one-story wooden houses and gardens showed the frugality and respectability characteristic of these people. They were also good artisans and earned enough by their labor to support the pastor and the Protestant church at their own expense. The activity of the colony was regulated by a family council, which considered the interests of all members together with the governor of the province. Friedrich Bodenstedt called the colonist Germans the broad-shouldered Argonauts of the Neckar, who settled in the vineyards on the fertile banks of the Mtkvari, who preserved their language and customs. In Avlabari, on the Sands, the German Salzman had a very beautiful and comfortable house for receiving travelers.

In 1816-1821, the Belgian Joseph Kamberlain was appointed as an architect in Georgia, and the only known project he completed in Tbilisi dated March 27, 1819 was the house of Princess Tekle. Due to the murder of an officer during a duel, a young German officer, Baron Meinzing, was exiled to Tbilisi. He was forced to leave the German Legion, and was deprived of the rent of his estates for twenty years. According to French doctor Jules-Charles Teule, German doctors served in military hospitals of Tbilisi.

Jean-Paul, the French lieutenant of Napoleon's army captured in 1812, was well known in Tbilisi. He accompanied one general in Tbilisi as a cook. After the general left, he stayed in town and ran a very successful restaurant for several years. In addition, he rented a room to foreigners. Then he quit that job and settled in a German colony with his German wife. But when someone asked him to prepare some dishes, he prepared them at very low prices, but with the aplomb of a true French chef.

A Swiss merchant de Castellaz also lived in the German colony. He considered the trade in luxury goods the most successful business in Tbilisi and had high hopes for wealthy Armenians, Georgians, Persians and officers of the Russian army. In addition, he had received the privilege of spinning silk thread from the Russian government for ten years, and for this purpose, he had invited craftsmen from the south of France, Vivaré, but due to his death, this plan was not implemented. M. le Baron Rosen proposed M. Tesseyre for this post of administrator/manager there. The first owner of the establishment was also a Frenchman, M. Chérot.

There was also a French colony in Tbilisi. It consisted of people brought from France by Jacques-Francois Gamba, who were supposed to help him in the process of utilizing the large area in Imereti received from the Russian government.

In the twenties of the 19th century, there was an Italian artist in Tbilisi, under whose supervision copper statues were cast in Tbilisi. An Italian doctor had a medical practice in Tbilisi, treating merchants, Armenian clergy and propaganda missionaries. The French and Swiss who settled in the new part of Tbilisi made wigs and confectionery for the aristocrats.

Catholics. Gamba and Bélanger noted that in Tbilisi, where people of so many different nationalities lived, under such a tolerant government as that of Russia, there was a great diversity of religious buildings: Greeks, Catholics, Muslims, and Armenians had churches, temples, and mosques, and all practiced their religions with equal freedom. In the manifesto issued by Alexander I on September 12, 1801, it was written that "every resident of Kartli-Kakheti would maintain his rank, religion and personal security".

In the first half of the 19th century, Philippe da Forano, prefect of the missions in Georgia, lived in Tbilisi for more than twenty years. He had well studied the character of Georgians and Armenians, which contributed to the increase in the number of Catholics. In 1825, there were 600, and in 1834, 341 Catholics of both sexes in Tbilisi. Nicholas I viewed the activities of the Capuchins negatively. According to Count Suzanne, an Orthodox woman before her death called a Catholic priest and renounced her religion and died a Catholic. Although the story was kept very secret, the government found out and told the priest that if he ever took part in such a thing again, he would be sent to Siberia. The Russian government aspired to a unified religion, and anyone who dared to resist was considered an enemy. On January 1, 1845, Friedrich Bodenstedt himself witnessed the expulsion of the old monks of the Capuchin Order from Tbilisi by the Cossacks and the police.

Muslims in Tbilisi. According to Frederica von Freygang, Jafar Koli-Khan of Sheki, who had Russian subordination and the rank of lieutenant general, settled in Tbilisi and tried to imitate European rules, but did not ignore Persian customs either. In 1814, Persian ambassador Mirza Abolhassan Khan Shirazi traveled to St. Petersburg via Tbilisi to negotiate the Golestan peace treaty. In 1815 Mirza Saleh Shirazi went to London via Tbilisi to get an education. By Charles Bélanger, in 1825 in Tbilisi stayed Fath-Ali Shah's

ambassador, Beglarbegi of the Tabriz Fath-Ali Khan, responsible for ratifying the treaty of Gulistan prepared by General Yermolov. Khan was familiar with European habits, as he lived for a long time in St. Petersburg, where his father was a colonel in the Russian army until his death. According to a Scotchman Armstrong's report (1828), during the second Russian-Ottoman war, the pashas of Kars and Bayazed were in Tbilisi, released *on parole*; There were from 1600 to 1800 Turkish prisoners in Tbilisi and its environs, who were assigned to various jobs. In 1829, Khosrov Mirza, the seventh son of Abbas Mirza, went on a diplomatic mission through Tbilisi to St. Petersburg. The best literary friends of Friedrich Bodenstedt were Circassian singers and theologians from Tbilisi, the poet Mirza-Shafi Vazeh – «the wise man» from Ganja, the sage Mirza Yusuf from Baghdad and the scholar Abbas-Kouli Khan. In 1848, Bahman Mirza, the fourth son of Abbas Mirza, who emigrated from Persia for political reasons, lived in Tbilisi.

The second half of the 19th century. According to English politician Thomas Alcock, the customs and dress of Georgians were very oriental. They partly adopted European customs and were thus divided between Persians and Russians.

According to the observation of the French doctor, Jules Charles Teul, the population of Tbilisi was growing so fast that one of the most profitable things was building houses and renting them out. The reason for this was encouragement of industry, protection of trade, safety of roads, concentration of army units in Tbilisi and the number of officials who were leaving the largest part of their salary there, which was increasing the consumption of industrial and agricultural products.

At the end of August 1848, Ida Pfeiffer, an Austrian traveler who was fascinated by the panorama of Tbilisi, said that she was very surprised by the appearance of the city, and excluding the domes of the church, since Valparaiso, Tbilisi was the first city she saw built in the European style..

Lady Mary Leonora Sheile was surprised that the high position of military governor of Tbilisi was occupied by the "Georgian Armenian" General Bebutov, distinguished in Turkish and Persian campaigns. According to the traveler, Russia was more cosmopolitan than England. By her characterization, the Georgian was bold, turbulent, reckless, extravagant; while the Armenian was mean, cringing, timid, always intent on gain. Lady Mary noted that the official part of Tbilisi was full of impressive buildings, in the shops of the part of Tbilisi, jammed with a diverse local population, a lively trade was going on. She called Tbilisi a prosperous, active and noisy city, which would become a rich trade center in the future, because it was located between the Black and Caspian seas and on the great road of Russia, Persia and Asia Minor.

Integration with the Russian authorities. From the beginning of the 19th century, the Russian government installed in Tbilisi tried to integrate into the local high society. Representatives of the former Georgian royal family and wealthy Georgian and Armenian princely families such as the Eristavs, Tumanovs, Chavchavadze, Karganovs, Andronikovs and Orbeliani were gathered around senior Russian civilian and military officials. At the balls held in the palace of Russian rulers, the dresses of the Georgian and Armenian ladies who danced the mazurka and quadrille met the most stringent requirements of Paris. The chiefs of various Tatar and Circassian tribes invited to these balls, dressed in magnificent

clothes and adorned with the most expensive weapons, stood apart from this circle of society, where the dominant language was French and the clothes were black tailcoat.

Tbilisi streets, bazaars and caravanserais. The diverse ethno-religious composition of Tbilisi was best manifested where people constantly moved – in the streets, markets and caravanserais of the city.

According to the accurate census of the Russian statistician, Orest Evetsky, by 1834, excluding Russians and the garrison, there were 25,290 souls in Tbilisi, including 5,483 Georgians, 18,815 Armenians, which was three times the number of Georgians, 725 Muslims, 60 Jews, 5 Catholics. Among the Georgians there were 60 people from Imereti - 50 men and 10 women. In 1804, the authorities gave the right to live in Tbilisi from Western Georgia only to those who had migrated before 1804, and these measures slowed the migration of the population of Western Georgia to Tbilisi.

Almost all the trade and crafts of Tbilisi were in the hands of Armenians. Tatars and Georgians also traded in Tbilisi markets. Since the twenties, the ethnic palette of vendors in the bazaar has become more diverse; Germans supplied Tbilisi market with potatoes, vegetables, milk, butter, cheese, beer, wine and fruits. In the square next to the market, Lezgins, Tatars and Ossetians sold furs, carpets, woolen socks or exchanged them for Persian and European goods. After the introduction of Georgia into the common customs system of the Russian Empire, Russian merchants appeared in the markets of Tbilisi. There were many kinds of workshops in Tbilisi markets. According to the data of 1845, there were 1,448 Armenians, 256 Georgians, 71 Catholics, 58 Tatars, 35 Germans, 14 Persians, 12 Jews, 12 Turks subject to Russia, 9 Russians, 6 Greeks, 4 French, 1 Pole, a total of 1,926 craftsmen in Tbilisi. The number of Armenian artisans was three times higher than the other 478 artisans. According to the data of 1845, 1448 out of 1826 craftsmen were Armenians. Therefore, it was not surprising that almost all Georgians in Tbilisi knew Armenian, and almost all Armenians knew Georgian, Tatar, Persian and other tribal languages. It was a truly entertaining spectacle to watch the artisans at work, and a most pleasant promenade for foreigners, officers of the garrison, and their families.

Merchants from various eastern countries - Iran, Turkey, Didi Bukhara, Kandahar and other cities lived in caravanserais – some kind of hotels. Camel caravans brought Persian and Indian goods from Baku and Shemakha, and Turkish goods from Poti and Kutaisi, giving Tbilisi a special look and enlivening the environment.

Georgians, Armenians, Persians, Russian soldiers, Tatars, Nogai Tatars, Turks, German-speaking newcomers, Circassians, Lezgins, Ossetians, Greeks, Spanish-speaking Jews, Gypsies, Kurds, Mingrelians, Imeretians, Gurians, Tushetians, and other mountain peoples were mingling with each other in Tbilisi the streets and in the noisy market. Tbilisi women, wrapped almost entirely in black or white chadors looked effective. In Tbilisi, the key point between Europe and Asia, sometimes merchants from Paris, couriers from St. Petersburg, merchants from Constantinople, Englishmen from Calcutta and Madras, Armenians from Smyrna and Yazd, Uzbeks from Bukhara were arriving at the same time. The different physiognomies, languages, costumes and weapons of these foreigners were a strange mixture of European customs and Oriental luxuries.

According to a Russian diplomat Ivan Golovin, Tbilisi may be compared to Prague for its general aspect, and to Cairo for the concourse and active life.

Conclusion. Since 1801, Tbilisi has changed its old political significance and became the main city of Russian possession in Georgia. At the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the permanent population of Tbilisi consisted of Georgians, Armenians and a small number of Muslims. If at the turn of the 18th-19th centuries, the permanent population of Tbilisi consisted of Georgians, Armenians and a small number of Muslims, in the first years of the 19th century, Russian military officials and soldiers joined the population of Tbilisi. In the twenties, the emigration of Armenians and Germans began actively, which was caused by military, political, religious and economic reasons.

Apart from them, several hundred Persians, several dozen Greeks, French and Jews lived in Tbilisi. Therefore, people of different nationalities, whom foreign travelers encountered on the streets, markets and caravanserais of Tbilisi, should be distinguished from permanent residents. For Russian military and civilian officials, the stay in Tbilisi was a long-term migration, for traders of different nationalities, craftsmen from different parts of the Caucasus, Iran and Turkey, and for those who came to seek work, it was a seasonal migration, for those who came to trade in the markets from the outskirts of Tbilisi, it was a daily or pendular migration, for officers sent to Tbilisi for military service in connection with the war, it was an episodic migration.

The population of Tbilisi mainly belonged to four religious- confessional communities. They were: Orthodox - Georgians, Russians and Greeks, followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church - Armenians, Muslims - Tatars and Persians, Catholics – Italian fathers, French, some Georgians and Armenians. Protestant Württemberg Germans formed a separate community. According to the data of the Caucasian calendar for 1848, there were 29,853 souls in Tbilisi, including 14,361 Orthodox, which includes Russian military and civil officials and Greeks, 13,779 Armenians, 415 followers of the Armenian-Catholic Church, 371 Catholics, 371 Lutherans, 1317 Muslims.

According to the data of 1803, the population of Tbilisi was 14,620, and according to the data of the Caucasian calendar for 1850, it was 30,814 souls. Thus, for 46 years, the population of the city increased by 16,194 people, which was the result of the emigration of the Armenian population, Russian officials and natural increase. These figures did not include the garrison. In the first half of the 19th century, the processes of internal migration of the population were still poorly represented. The specific ratio of city dwellers in the general population did not exceed 4-5%.

Based on the information presented, it can be said that in the first half of the 19th century, Tbilisi played an important multicultural role, because social representatives of different ethnicities and religions lived there next to each other.