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## **Georgian Historiography – Reality and Perspectives (View from inside)\***

Institutional division of historians here in Georgia comes to the pattern as follows: Institute for Georgian History and Institute of World History. While making a description of modern level of historiography, one needs to have this division on mind. Indeed, those engaged in National History produce more creativity due to not some special skills, but special case – pioneering the use of the Georgian sources, they are leaving few rooms for the historians from other countries engaged in this very field for originality. On the other hand, World historians often have to repeat what have been already told in the West. Still, in some fields, like Oriental studies, the Georgians have been maintaining top-position.

Now, about details, starting from evaluation of research in National History.

The belowed chronology for historians was that of early origin and Feudalism up to the 18<sup>th</sup> c., less censored by the Soviets. And achievements are prominent, in all three levels of historiography, i.e. 1) source-study; 2) construction of basic historical narrative; 3) interpretation and generalization.

From the very optimistic spring-board, all the major Medieval Georgian historical writings are edited and re-edited (like “Kartlis Tskhovreba”, Life of Kartli – Georgia). And we have special corpus for both, epigraphics and documents. Archaeology of Georgia is that we can be proud of. And numismatics walks side-by-side with it. Linguistic school is even more prominent.

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\* Developing History Research in Georgia – What Are the Needs. Academic Swiss Caucasus Net. Workshop. Tbilisi. Iliia Chavchavadze Tbilisi State University. 2010. 04.

As to historical narrative, *Essays on History of Georgia* is excellent tale, 4 volumes of which are still valuable, needing to be mended a bit, updated, and then – re-edited. Those 4 volumes cover the period from Palaeolithus to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. Issued in the seventies of the last century and re-issued in the eightieth as Russian version, i.e. while still the Soviet rule, the authors expelled Marxism by using the term “Protofeudalism” instead of “Slaveholding” to determine the type of early Georgian Societies. What we really need now, for full story about Georgia, that is to underline strictly local integratory affiliations (like Georgia as a part of Europe) and to make minor changes into periodization.

Situation is complicated concerning historiography of the 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> cc. It had been avoided by most of prominent scholars. Now we have democracy and archives are waiting for the historians first to edit the documents, and then to compile the narrative accompanied by free, academic evaluations. Still, many works have been already written or are being written, needing synthesis for full story about Georgia, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> c.

For just nowadays life, strong integration is being observed between traditional ethnology and sociology. Ethnologist, or, perhaps, already anthropologist, equipped with the methods of sociology, can provide as, for next year perhaps, with certain kind of narrative source. And that is not bad.

One more big problem exists – our scientific language, of course, is Georgian. And that is normal. Still, we have to render the scientific works in other than Georgian language to make them available for scholars from other countries.

Now about historiography of World History. The picture is even more divergent. Georgian achievements in Hittite and Urartian studies are celebrated over the World. Classical studies maintain usual high level, showing the joint job of philologists and historians, i.e. interdisciplinary solution of the problems. The same story can be told for Oriental studies generally, especially for the Arabian studies.

European Medieval History is the field which should be much improved and activated, like Byzantine studies, in fact, completely represented by the philologists.

Research in Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America is becoming more and more intensive due to general interest towards this

very field. Indeed, many things happening now, can be mirrored in the past, so, the solutions too can be borrowed from the past.

Interdisciplinary researches like American studies or European studies are at bay now.

Legislation is good if promotes economic growths; that is main principle of evaluation for history. And now, perhaps, we have the basic story for each of the countries about how she moved from monarchy towards democracy, from serfdom to free labour, the villages being gradually transferred into the prosperous industrial cities, etc. But what is about every day life for the commoners, prices on food, incomes, cost of life?! Quisine and canalization, banking and usuary, women and children, all they deserve more attention.

Still the place is left for big histories. Countries having almost similar evolutionary rates have been always coming together within a certain zone of integration, unifying additionally ex. architectural styles, confessionnal visages, etc. Semiarid areas had been forming Asian space, moderate latitudes – Europe. Former had been vanguard, losing gradually advantage. How geography worked? What are the perspectives of unified World? Or, maybe, it is just a dream.

We have to answer these questions.

Georgian historical thought started its slow gestation from short stories passing upon mouth to the heavily structuralized researches based on complex comprehension of all types of the sources, classification of which has its own methods.

And what is the next step – historiosophy or futurology?! We have to think about.