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## **PROFESSOR DAVIT PAVLIASHVILI (1928-2021) HISTORIOGRAPHIC ESSAY**

The paper studies the key directions of scientific works of a famous Georgian historian, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, Academician of Tskhum-Apkhazeti Academy of Sciences Davit Pavliashvili. Davit Pavliashvili has implemented a complex and monographic study of numerous significant issues of Georgian history. He lived and worked in two periods. The first was the Soviet period, when the entire system of thought, including historical science, was under strong ideological pressure. Despite this fact, the author expressed relevant opinions and drew important conclusions. The second period is the Post-Soviet epoch, when the country and the science became free from centralized pressure and scholars had an opportunity to study interesting issues without any ideological restriction. In this period, Davit Pavliashvili's works became even more diverse and interesting.

**KEYWORDS:** ethnography, fruit-growing, historiography, local studies.

**H**istoriographic research forms an important part of the contemporary Georgian historical science. Special focus should be made on the study of life and works of outstanding representatives of scientific disciplines. On this background, it is important to outline the general tendencies of development of historical science.

The given paper is of historiographic nature. It aims to study the scholarly works of a recently deceased Georgian historian Davit Pavliashvili. Although it is impossible to cover the issue in one paper, this is just a modest attempt to raise the issue.

In the beginning, I will offer the reader brief information regarding Davit Pavliashvili's biography. This will help form certain opinion concerning the scientist's life and works.

Davit Pavliashvili was born on June 1, 1928, in Tkviavi village of Gori district. He finished school in Tkviavi and entered Tbilisi State University.

Initially, he studied biology. Then he continued his studies at the Faculty of History. After graduating, he started working at Simon Janashia State Museum of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia. In 1964, he maintained a Candidate Dissertation on the topic – Fruit-growing in Eastern Georgia (Based on Ethnographic Material). In 1966-1977, Davit Pavliashvili was junior scientific worker of the Institute of Economics and Law of the Georgian Academy of Sciences. From 1977 until 2006, he was senior (and later, leading) scientific worker of the Institute of History and Ethnography of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. In 1986, he maintained a Doctoral Thesis on the topic – “The History of Development of Fruit-growing in the Soviet Georgia“. Parallel to this, he was assistant-professor (and, later, professor) of Tbilisi State University. Due to his fruitful and active scientific activities, he was elected Academician of Tskhum-Apkhazeti Academy of Sciences. Davit Pavliashvili died on November 6, 2021.

The fields of Davit Pavliashvili’s scientific interest were: Georgian history, ethnography, economic history and local studies.

Davit Pavliashvili’s scientific activities should be divided into two parts. The first was the Soviet period, when the entire system of thought, including historical science, was under strong ideological pressure. The second period is the Post-Soviet epoch, when the country and the science became free from ideological pressure.

During the first stage of scientific activities, Davit Pavliashvili focused on the scientific study of fruit-growing. Ivane Javakhishvili formed scientific grounds for the development of this field.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, the given field was not thoroughly analyzed in Georgian historiography. Therefore, the young scholar became interested in this issue. Having written several articles on fruit-growing, in 1961, Davit Pavliashvili published a monograph “Fruit-Growing in Eastern Georgia (Based on Ethnographic Material)” (Pavliashvili D., 1961). The monograph proves the scholar’s thorough knowledge of the issue. He was aware of ample theoretical literature in the field. Besides, the author avoided description of the general situation in Georgian fruit-growing and focused on a narrow, regional vision, describing the peculiarities of fruit-growing in Eastern Georgia. Although this monograph was written in the Soviet period, it provides ample ethnographic material and relevant conclusions which preserve their scientific value till today.

The importance of the above-mentioned monograph is proved by the fact that Juansher Songhulashvili wrote an interesting review of this book (Songhulashvili, J 1963: 232-236). In this review, the author outlines the key trends of fruit-growing discussed by D. Pavliashvili. The reviewer also

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<sup>1</sup> Of special interest in this regard, is Ivane Javakhishvili’s “Georgia’s Economic History“, which mentions interesting fields and provides the methodology of development of research in these fields (Javakhishvili 1934, 98-138).

provides interesting and relevant advice for further research of the issue.

Davit Pavliashvili's monograph was also analyzed by Valerian Itonishvili, who published a paper in an authoritative Soviet edition "Soviet Ethnography", 1983, dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Soviet Georgian ethnography (Itonishvili V.D. 1983: 35). Pavliashvili's monograph is also discussed in Aleksī Robakidze's article "Georgian Soviet Ethnography" (Robakidze, A. 1986: 166).

The theoretical and practical significance of Pavliashvili's book is analyzed by Prof. Ronald Topchishvili, a famous Georgian ethnologist, Academician of Gelati Academy of Sciences (Topchishvili, R. 2021: 171).

In 1964, Davit Pavliashvili maintained Candidate Dissertation based on the above-mentioned book. He was awarded the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences. The author continued working on the given issue and enriched Georgian historiography with numerous interesting works. Of special interest in this regard are two monographs: the first one is "The Development of Fruit-Growing in the Soviet Georgia", volume 1 (1921-1945) (Pavliashvili D., 1974), and the second one is a book written in Russian - The Development of Fruit-Growing in the Soviet Georgia (Historical-Economic Research) (Pavliashvili, D. 1979). Both these works are based on ample historical material and archive sources. We should underline the fact that the second work was published in Russian, hence, it was available for the scientific circles of the entire Soviet Union. This work might have passed the Soviet borders and spread abroad, which, in modern sense, equals scientific internationalization. The above-mentioned works fully meet the requirements of the epoch in which they were created. Assessment of these works from modern viewpoint would be over-critical and hamper the adequate evaluation of the issue.

The above-mentioned two monographs and numerous papers formed grounds for Davit Pavliashvili's Doctoral Thesis, maintained successfully in 1986, when Davit Pavliashvili was awarded the scientific degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences.

When analyzing Davit Pavliashvili's works published in the Soviet period, our attention should be drawn to one extremely interesting article. In 1976, Georgia celebrated the 100th anniversary of Academician Ivane Javakhishvili. Numerous events were dedicated to this date, articles were written about the great Georgian scholar, and Ivane Javakhishvili's works were published in 12 volumes.

As part of the celebration, the Institute of Economics and Law of Georgian Academy of Sciences published a collection of scientific papers, including Davit Pavliashvili's work presenting Ivane Javakhishvili from a yet unknown perspective, namely, the paper studies Ivane Javakhishvili's contribution to the research of fruit-growing in Georgia. In this historiographic paper, D. Pavliashvili underlined the role of Ivane Javakhishvili in the

study of this important issue (Pavliashvili, D. 1976: 100-112).

As mentioned above, the second period in which Davit Pavliashvili continued his scientific activities was the Post-Soviet epoch, when science became free of ideological pressure, but the political cataclysms in the country hampered academic development. Due to social hardships, numerous scholars quit academic activities. On this background, we should appreciate Davit Pavliashvili who not only continued his scientific activities but also diversified and enhanced them.

In this period, Davit Pavliashvili focused on local studies.<sup>1</sup> The forerunner of this scientific direction in Georgian ethnology was Sergi Makalatia. Later, this field developed, and Davit Pavliashvili offered series of works, consisting in several books and articles focusing on the historical-ethnographic research of Central Kartli. The scientific value of these works is great indeed: the author introduced new material and brought interesting arguments. Using his brilliant analytical skills and research methods, the author dwells upon numerous interesting issues. D. Pavliashvili describes the lifestyle of the local community in detail. Certain aspects of the local culture had not been analyzed until Pavliashvili's research. This proves the topicality and scientific value of the above-mentioned works (Pavliashvili, D. 1998; Pavliashvili, D. 2003, Pavliashvili, D. 2005 and so on). In 2012, D. Pavliashvili united and updated his works and issued a monograph consisting of more than 550 pages called "Essays in the History of Central Kartli" (Pavliashvili, D. 2012).

In 2005, Professor Pavliashvili published an interesting research work in the field of local studies. This is a monograph called "Tusheti". As the author himself notes, this is a popular research, but it is obvious that the book is an outstanding example of scientific-popular research, distinguished by rich and ample material in local studies. Of special importance is the material collected by the Ethnographic Department of the State Museum in 1962-1963. In his book, D. Pavliashvili offers numerous oral folk stories. It should be underlined that collection of oral folk stories is a popular direction of Georgian historiography. The founder of this direction is Giorgi Chitaia. Besides the interesting oral stories, D. Pavliashvili focuses on numerous interesting issues related to Tusheti's agriculture and spiritual culture (Pavliashvili, D. 2006).

The next book by Davit Pavliashvili was "The Chronology of Georgian History. Georgia and its Neighbouring States". In this book, the past of our country is viewed and presented in an unusual and original style. This is scientific-popular research in which the author discusses Georgian history from the perspective of its relations with the neighbouring countries. This is an interesting diachronic approach presenting the past reali-

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<sup>1</sup> The forerunner of this scientific direction in Georgian ethnology was Sergi Makalatia

ty as well as interesting tendencies of development (Pavliashvili, D. 2015).

Special attention should be made on Davit Pavliashvili's book "Separate Town of Mukhrani. Mukhrani Seigniorial". Although the book is written in the scientific-popular genre, it presents a thorough research of the given district, including historical-geographic analysis, issues of agriculture, material and spiritual values and so on. The book is written in a simple language. However, the research is based on rich and diverse local study sources. All this makes the book interesting for broad circles of readers (Pavliashvili, D. 2015).

Davit Pavliashvili also contributed to Rustvelology. He analyzed "The Knight in Panther's Skin" by great Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli from an interesting angle, namely, he studied how Rustaveli reflected the issue of gardening in his poem. D. Pavliashvili compared Rustaveli's opinions with those of the scientific literature and thus offered an interesting and original research (Pavliashvili, D. 2000, 26-34). In this work, the scholar proved that analysis of fiction literature is not only a prerogative of philologists, and that literary works provide valuable information regarding the epochs in which they are written.

Special mention should be made of D. Pavliashvili's reviews in which he presents the reviewed works in an interesting manner, using a refined academic tone. He underlines the scientific value of the reviewed books and papers. His critical comments are tactful and well-grounded. Mention should be made of his brilliant review of Juansher Songhulashvili's work "Horticulture in Tbilisi Adjacency (Based on Ethnographic Material) (Pavliashvili 1960: 186-188). Another review worth mentioning is the review of Giorgi Jalabadze's work "The History of Agricultural Tools of Eastern Georgia" (Pavliashvili 1961: 178-180). The above-mentioned two reviews were written in the beginning of D. Pavliashvili's scientific career. They prove the author's attitude to the phenomenon of reviewing. Radical approach to a scientific work was unacceptable for D. Pavliashvili. His reviews are neither eulogy nor radical criticism; they moderately reflect the positive and negative aspects of the reviewed scientific works.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that prof. Davit Pavliashvili was an outstanding representative of historical science in Georgia. His works are diverse both in content and theme. His characteristic features were: professionalism, thorough analysis and complex vision of issues. Davit Pavliashvili made a special contribution to the study of Georgia's economic geography, ethnography and historical geography. His research is still topical and his works form grounds for further research in the above-mentioned fields. Special mention should be made of Davit Pavliashvili's scientific-popular works, which promote scientific issues among broad circles of readers.

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