

## Papuna Orbeliani

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### Abstract

*XVII century Georgian Historian Papuna Orbeliani is one of the prominent representatives of Georgian historical literature of the Renaissance era and his story “chronicles of Kartli” comprising the history of the 1739-1758 years is one of the best patterns of old Georgian historical literature.*

*The direction and character of the Renaissance period (XVI-XVIII) was defined due to Georgian political and social situation.*

**Key words:** *Papuna Orbeliani, Sekhnia Chkheidze, Ivane Javakhishvili, “Chronicles of Kartli”, Ottoman rule, Kizilbash Rule, etc.*

### Introduction

XVIII century Georgian historian and political figure Papuna Orbeliani wrote historical work “Ambavi Kartlisani”. The work refers to the history of Kartli and Kakheti in the 1739-1758 and according to the author represents the continuation of “Kings’ Life” written by Sekhnia Chkheidze. According to the assessment of Iv. Javakhishvili, “Papuna Orbeliani is quite opposite to Sekhnia Chkheidze. The latter one was very cruel and didn’t pay attention to the terrible situation of the mother land, while Papuna Orbeliani describes this terrible situation very emotionally. He thoroughly knew inexpressible disastrous condition of the 17th century Georgia and the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century”.

### Main Part:

The life and work of Papuna Orbeliani is unknown. By the facts described in his work it is proved that he was very close figure with the royal family and at the end of 1750, he occupied the position of chief judge (senior judge). Besides he participated in the army of King Erekle II and struggled against disobedient princes and external enemies as well. Papuna Orbeliani –the chief judge is mentioned in one of the documents of 1757 which was discovered by Shota Meskhia. According to Elene Tsagareishvili, as he was the judge of the King Teimuraz, he would have occupied this position in 1757-1762 (until the death of king Teimuraz), but in his work, Papuna Orbeliani writes nothing about his position as the chief judge.

Ivane Javakhishvili’s opinion about Papuna Orbeliani’s biographical issues is very interesting. In one of the parts of the work, Papuna tells about himself in the third person: “in 1747 the country was so inconstant after the fear of Khan that nobody hoped to consolidate in Kartli. Papuna Orbeliani and Kaplani preferred their spoiling instead of losing their lands, asked the petition from their lord and went to their estate and hardened their fence...”. According to the work historian describes the strengthening of his heirdom Dmanisi, Tashiri and Lore fortress and the fact of Lezghins reconciliation. According to the data, Ivani Javakhishvili thought that Papuna Orbeliani’s heirdom castle and estate was Dmanisi, they had slaves in the gorge of the river Khrami, In Tashiri; It is seen that their influence spread on Lore as

well.

Papuna and Kaplan Orbeliani were the representatives of Kaplanishvili extended family, Kachibasdze-Baratashvili big feudal family. They had obstinate struggle for preserving their own estates and maintaining their influence.

“Ambavni Kartlisani” is the best original source to study the history of XVIII century Kartli and Kakheti. The work is compositionally completed and historical facts are presented in chronological order. Papuna Orbeliani is witness and often participant of the events described in the work. Different from contemporary as well as previous era historians, Papuna Orbeliani only conveys his contemporary events with which he stands aside from the old historiographical tradition which implies the description of the history of the country from the ancient period. It should be considered that the great merit of Papuna Orbeliani, as a historian is that he paid great attention to chronology and he hasn't conveyed any fact without dating. According to Iv.Javakhishvili, the character of the work is as chronicle, the rule of the story is chronological, the language of Parsadan Gorgijanidze is consolidated and developed. Though the work has got the influence from Giorgi Mtatsmindeli. Main sources for him were seen and heard, but heard from the trusty people”.

According to the work, King Teimuraz ordered and even helped Papuna Orbeliani to write historiographical work. The historian himself remarks about it in the beginning of the work: “me, Papua Orbeliani started to describe”...

The work comprises rich information about the current issues taking place in Kartli and Kakheti in the middle of the XVIII century. In the history of Georgia this era is characterized very badly: Georgian people who had just freed themselves from the rule of Ottoman Turkey had found themselves in a new trouble. The Eastern part of Georgia appeared in the rule of Iran. Papuna Orbeliani conveys horrible results of “Osmaloba” and “Kizilbashoba” (Rule of Ottoman Turkey and Kizilbash in Georgia), he gives detailed description of the inventory of Kartli by Iran and the establishment of taxes. He says: Mumeiz came to make inventory on Kartli. Shah Officers hadn't left even one village, deserted village, building, plant or population not to have taxed and made inventory on it. “[4;52] According to Papuna, there weren't such horrible taxes during the governance of Ottoman Turkey and Georgia was never taxed such terribly from Iran “ [4;52]. In his work Papuna refers the tax as “maluja”, according to K. Demetrashvili, the tax corresponded to mali, which was the tax for the land established during the governance of Tatars. Maluja established by Kizilbash meant the tax of the land and it was the hardest and the most unbearable tax ever [5;108].

It's true that the content of the work refers to political issues (the reign of Kizilbash people in Kartli and Kakheti, the policy of Nadir-Shah towards Kartli and Kakheti, the time of Lezgian raids, the struggle of Georgian people against enemy, state policy of Teimuraz and Erekle) but different from Sekhnia Chkheidze, Papuna Orbeliani wasn't only content with describing war issues and gives important information about economic and social situation in Kartli and Kakheti. Quite interesting material is conveyed in the work about state and religious system in the Eastern Georgia. Especially important are those places from where we find out how kings Teimuraz and Erekle try to study old Georgian system “while Moslem kings occupied Georgian throne, Christian church was lack of king's supporters and humiliated their faith, and now in the conditions of Teimuraz's accession the throne in a Christian way, it's possible to restore crazy rules“[4;]. In Papuna's viewpoint, king should be actively involved in regulating religious issues.

He has well described the enthroning process of Catholicos Anton I and accession process of Teimuraz II in a Christian way (October 1, 1745, on the feast day of living Pillar). He pays great attention on restoring and correcting of forgotten Christian rules. "It was a long time since Kartli hasn't had Christian king. Moslems had been administrating it for a long time. That's why Orthodox rules were changed a lot." In his work he has described in details the wedding ceremony of Erekle II and various other official feasts. Historical facts and events are conveyed in details in chronological order: the struggle of Teimuraz II and Erekle II towards Georgia's centralization with Moslem khanates of Transcaucasia, with Lezgian raids ,etc.

The work "Ambavni Kartlisani" by Papuna Orbeliani is an important historical source not only for investigating the ongoing situation inside the country but also for finding out the relations between the neighboring countries.

It's a great merit for Tedo Jordania to reveal the work as an original source and to investigate it critically. He was the first person who brought Papuna Orbeliani's "Ambavni Kartlisani" in a scientific circulation which he had discovered in Petre Dadiani's house and contains 12 verses.

The material discovered by Tedo Jordania has got an inscription (p3): "I got this material in Petre Dadiani's family. T.Jordania. Written by Toma Batonishvili in 1964", next inscription is enclosed to the end of the manuscript (p75): "This manuscript is re-written on August 20, 1765 by poet Toma (I suppose his surname is Meskhishvili) and he is presenting it for our precious history and gives us unknown collection of poems by our famous annalist Papuna Orbeliani. I purchased it in 1899 from Petre Dadiani's family to donate to the library of literacy society. It is well seen on page 83 that the author of the work is Papuna Orbeliani, in the first line of the XVth strophe the author denotes: "The servant of king Teimuraz". According to Tedo Jordania the person who re-wrote the work had started this process on September 7, 1764 and had finished its writing work in 1765. [6]

According to the first inscription of Tedo Jordania, Tomas surname is Batonishvili and according to the second inscription his last name is Meskhishvili. L.Kutateladze paid attention to the part of the manuscript, where the testament has the form of a poem:

"Me, Toma born by the God as a poem,

Son of the King David,

His servant and planted tree am writing this"

According to his opinion, the son of King Giorgi mentioned in the text is Ionane Batonishvili but according to inscription, the manuscript is written by Ketevan Tsereteli, the wife of Ioane Batonishvili. As it is seen, the re-writing process of the text was ordered by her to Toma Muskhelishvili who was serving in the royal family [7;215-217]

From the poetic legacy of Papuna Orbeliani, especially important is historical poem which was called "Shechirvebani Kartlisani" (Miseries of Kartli) by its publisher L. Kutateladze. The historian paid attention to one of the sentences of Papuna Orbeliani's testament where Papuna denotes: "...I have been narrated it by the trusty people". According to L.Kutateladze, Papuna Orbeliani starts narrating the story by describing previous period events of 1739 and in the main part he has described what he has seen and heard himself. As it is seen, the person who made the copy of Papua Orbeliani's poem didn't pay attention to this part and started the re-writing process by continuing Sekhnia Chkheidze's history.

In the Institute of Manuscripts, Kutateladze found unknown poetic work, where Kartli's kings' lives are described about 17 years ago, before 1739. In his opinion, before Papuna Orbeliani started writing "Ambavi Kartlisani", he had created historical poem where he conveys the era of "Osmaloba" (Rule of Ottoman Turkey in Georgia) and "Kizilbashoba" (rule of Kizilbash in Georgia) including 1936. He starts narrating the story from describing the reign of King Vakhtang of Kartli who was cheated and for escaping from khan trusted the sultan of Ottoman Turkey". The latter one entered with big army in Kartli. In his work he has described the life of Georgian kings and nobles and the internal disorder in the country. According to the first line, he called the work "Shechirvebani Kartlisani" and it contains 74 strophes.<sup>1</sup>

Papuna Orbeliani's work has deserved high assessment from the contemporary people. In 1773, "Ambavi Kartlisani" was re-written by David, the son of the archpriest of Khareba Cathedral and he called the work "little Kartli's Tskhovreba". Papuna Orbeliani's "Ambavi Kartlisani" is published for three times: at first it was published by D. Chubinashvili, for the second time it is re-printed in unchanged form from D. Chubinashvili's edition to "Sakartvelo's Tskhovreba" by editing Z. Chichinadze. Third critical edition belongs to Professor Elene Tsagareishvili. There exist French translations of this work done by Mari Brose.

Ivane Javakhishvili gave high assessment to Papuna Orbeliani's work: "Papuna Orbeliani is well aware of life, thinks deeply and is a historian who is inspired with national social feelings ... We can freely say that after Vakhushti, we can declare Papuna Orbeliani as a charm of Georgian historical literature of the Renaissance period" [3]

**conclusion:** Historian Papuna Orbeliani quite well knows the history of not only his contemporary Kartli and Kakheti, but the history of Iran and Turkey and that's why conveys the facts in details and in complete preciseness.

The text of "Ambavi Kartlisani" by Papuna Orbeliani is published for three times: at first it was published by David Chubinashvili, for the second time it was re-printed in unchanged form from David Chubinashvili edition to "sakartvelos tskhovreba" by editing Z. Chichinadze. The mentioned editions are based on one manuscript only. The critical text of Papuna Orbeliani's "Ambavi Kartlisani", based on six manuscripts, with introduction, dictionary and an index was published by E. Tsagareishvili in 1981.

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