

HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHIVAL STUDIES

British writer John Frederic Badel about Georgia of the era of King Erekle II

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Abstract. The history of Georgia, with its importance and diversity, has always attracted special attention among many prominent scholars around the world. This is the reason for the fact that there is much valuable foreign scientific research on the history of our country, besides Georgian. One such undeniably valuable book is *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* by the British writer, traveler, and journalist John Frederick Baddeley (1854-1940). It was firstly published in 1908 in major cities around the world, including London, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta. In the present article, I will focus only on the episode of the above-mentioned book, which talks about Georgia in the era of Erekle II and his era. It is noteworthy that the above book is not the only work created by the author on this topic, and John Frederick Baddeley has written numerous other books about Russia and the Caucasus. The British author's similar interest in all the above was because he had been to Russia several times at different times. In 1879 he even lived for seven months in the Russian Empire, while he was a correspondent for the *London Standard* in St. Petersburg. The great estimation of John Frederick Baddeley is evidenced by the fact that from 1902 until the end of his life, he was also a member of the Royal Geographical Society of United Kingdom.

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The history of Georgia has repeatedly become the subject of interest for many foreign researchers. It is a clear manifestation of this interest that, apart from the Georgian one, there are many valuable foreign scientific studies about the past of our country. One of these works is the book *"The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus"* by the British writer, traveler, and journalist John Frederick Baddeley (1854-1940), which was first published in 1908 in such big cities of the world as London, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta.

It is significant that the above-mentioned book is not the only work created by the author regarding the mentioned issue, and John Frederick Baddeley has written other works about Russia and the Caucasus. The British author's special interest in this issue was because he had been to Russia several times. In 1879, he lived in St. Petersburg for seven

HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHIVAL STUDIES

months as a correspondent of the "London Standard" newspaper (founded in 1827 and currently published under the name Evening Standard/London Evening Standard).

The fact that from 1902 until the end of his life he was also a member of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain, founded in 1830, shows the great professionalism and authority of John Frederick Baddeley.

From the above-mentioned book by John Frederick Baddeley, in which the history of our country is presented in a general way, this time I will focus only on the episode in which we are talking about Georgia during the era of Erekle II.

Before discussing the Kartl-Kakheti kingdom of the time of Erekle II, the British author first focuses on the reign of Tamar and refers to her rule as the peak of the country's power, and then emphasizes the state difficulties created in the country, which led to the disintegration of our country into separate kingdoms and principalities. Here is what John Frederick Baddeley himself writes about it:

„In the twelfth century, under the famous Tamara' (1184-1212), the Georgian kingdom had reached the height of its power, and the great queen's fiat ran unchallenged over the larger portion of the Caucasus. But terrible times were to come. The Mongol and Tartar invasions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, frequently repeated with every circumstance of ruthless atrocity, brought ruin and desolation on the fair inheritance of the Georgian race, and Tamara's lowland kingdom was broken up into the separate principalities... while in the more mountainous regions the unhappy people, left to their own devices, relapsed into paganism and a barbarism from which they have not yet emerged.

Tchenghis Khan and Timour were succeeded by the Sultans of Turkey and the Shahs of Persia, and the subsequent history of the Georgian race for four hundred years is that of one long martyrdom, culminating in the sacking of Tiflis and massacre of the inhabitants in 1795 by the accursed eunuch, Agha Muhammad Shah" (Baddeley, 1908: 18-19).

In the above-mentioned book by John Frederick Baddeley, the policy of Russia towards our country, which was reduced by Persia, is interestingly evaluated. Although the British researcher gives a mostly correct assessment of this event, we also find some factual inaccuracies in his narration. For example, when talking about the peace treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) concluded after the Russo-Turkish war of 1768-1774, the British writer mistakenly notes that the Turkish influence

HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHIVAL STUDIES

on Georgia was completely ended by the mentioned agreement. In addition, the text also wrongly mentions Shahi Ali Murad (1781-1785) of Iran as the immediate successor of Karim Khan (1751-1779). As proof of all the above, I will check the corresponding fragment from the author's narration:

„More than once during these centuries of oppression the Tsars of Kakhétia and Kartalinia had turned to Moscow for help, but in vain. Russia was too far away, and the Muhammadan Powers too strong. But at last, in 1769, Todtleben, with 400 men and four guns, crossed the mountains by way of the Dariel gorge, entered Tiflis, and the next year, having meantime been reinforced, marched into Imeritia, took by storm the strong castle of Bagdat and captured Koutais, the capital, which had been held by the Turks for 120 years. In 1774 the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji put an end to Turkish domination in Imeritia and Georgia, and in the north-west established the river Koubán as the boundary between Russia and Turkey.

Irakli II, Tsar of Kakhétia and Kartalinia, was now relieved of all fear of direct hostility on the part of the Turks, but they still gave secret support to the Mussulman mountaineers; and when Ali Mourád, the new Shah of Persia, reversing the policy of his predecessor, Kerim Khan, insisted on Georgian subjection, Irakli, in despair, turned, as his ancestors had done, to the Northern Power, whose dominions were now separated from his own solely by the mountain chain, and implored protection. The commander-in-chief of the Russian troops in the Caucasus was at that time (1783) Lieut.-General Count Paul Potiomkin (here author implies Count Pavel Sergeevich Potemkin (1743-1796), Russian statesman, soldier, and writer - O. N.), first cousin of Catherine's favourite, the celebrated prince of that name. The latter, engaged in consolidating his Turkish conquests, had already in view the establishment of Russian influence, if not authority, in Transcaucasia; and, acting under his instructions, Count Paul hastened to embrace the favourable opportunity now offered. There was no road over the central chain, nothing more than a bridle-path of the roughest kind, and the passage through the Dariel defile and on over the pass above Kazbek and Kóbi was fraught with every danger. Rock and ice falls were of frequent occurrence below, avalanches above; and the northern half of the route was in the hands of the Ossietines, who levied toll on all passers-by, and were so powerful and truculent in these, their native, fastnesses, that in 1772 a force of 600 men with two guns was barely sufficient to

HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHIVAL STUDIES

relieve the Academician Guldenstedt (here author implies Johann Anton Güldenstädt (1745–1781), Baltic German naturalist and explorer in Russian service – O. N.), who with his party had been cut off by them at the village of Stepan Tsminda (St. Stephan, now Kazbek) on his return journey from Tiflis. Potiomkin's first care was to build a fort, Vládikavkaz, where the Terek issues from the mountains, and connect it by fortified posts with Mozdók. His next was to convert the bridle-path into something in the nature of a road; and such was his energy and that of the 800 Russian soldiers employed on the work, that in October 1783 he was able to drive to Tiflis in a carriage drawn by eight horses" (Baddeley, 1908: 19–20).

John Frederick Baddeley also interestingly describes the signing of the treaty with Russia and the subsequent developments. The book emphatically mentions that Russia, shortly after the conclusion of the agreement, deliberately avoided its obligation to provide military assistance to Georgia, which, according to the British writer, brought the worst consequences for our country. It is also noteworthy that the author, while talking about the above-mentioned contract, makes several factual errors. For example, instead of Georgievski, Gori is indicated as the place where the treaty was signed, and the date of its publication is mentioned as the time when the treaty entered into force. In proof of all the above, I will check the relevant quote from the book:

„By this time Catherine had already taken Irakli II nominally under her protection, for by an Act signed at Gori on the 24th July, the latter had acknowledged himself a vassal of Russia, and on the 3rd November two Russian battalions with four guns, having crossed the mountains by the newly-made road, entered Tiflis in triumph. The day was cold and gloomy, and the shivering Georgians remarked that their new friends had brought their climate with them; but they had brought something else it was thought, or at least hoped-permanent protection, that is, against the Tartar and Persian-and the sorely-tried inhabitants of Tiflis rejoiced accordingly. They were doomed, however, to bitter disappointment. Catherine's proclamation establishing her suzerainty over Georgia was published at Tiflis 25th January 1784, but the Russian troops were soon withdrawn, and in the absence of military protection the Empress's interference proved worse than useless; it helped to exasperate Persia, and contributed thereby to the

HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHIVAL STUDIES

invasion of Agha Muhammad. Russia then declared war, and an army was despatched under command of Count Zóuboff, which in 1796 took Derbend, Kouba, and Baku, and conquered all the Persian khanates lying between the latter city and the eastern confines of Georgia. But the great Empress died soon after; Paul succeeded; and the Russian troops were once more withdrawn north of the mountains. Derbend and Baku were abandoned, and only became permanent possessions of Russia in 1806" (Baddeley, 1908: 20-21).

Unfortunately, nothing is said about the Krtsanisi Battle (1795), its vicissitudes, and its results in the book of John Frederick Baddeley. In it, only the last period of the reign of George XII (1798-1800) is mentioned in a few words, when Paul I (1796-1801) issued a manifesto on the abolition of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti. It should be noted that the book contains a false note in the form of a footnote to the effect that the above-mentioned Russian emperor's decision to automatically approve his successor Alexander I (1801-1825) on September 12, 1801, while both of these (January 18, 1801 and September 12, 1801 Manifestos) documents were agreements drawn up independently of each other. To further clarify all the above, I will check the relevant quote:

„In 1799 Vládikavkáz, meantime abandoned and destroyed, was rebuilt; for the third time a Russian force crossed the main range to Tiflis; and a year later, just before the death of the Tsar George XII., Georgia, by a manifesto (18th December 1800) of the Emperor Paul,' who was then meditating the invasion of India,' was finally united to Russia. That country now had to face the permanent hostility of Turkey and Persia, and that being so, the presence of independent Mussulman tribes and communities within her own borders constituted a danger such as no State would willingly endure. The subjugation of the mountaineers by Russia was thenceforth a necessity; and, in the long run, it was inevitable" (Baddeley, 1908: 21-22).

As a conclusion, these are the historical vicissitudes that are given about the past of our country in the above-discussed book "The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus" by John Frederick Baddeley. Although in many cases the author avoids in-depth analysis of historical events, the book mentioned by the British writer can still be considered one of the most significant foreign sources for researchers interested in the problems of Georgian history.

HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY, ARCHIVAL STUDIES

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