

### **Important sources for studying Grigol Orbeliani's life and works and Compiling his biobibliography**

**Abstract:** Grigol Orbeliani was not only a poet but a high-ranking government official as well. Lots of documents, reflecting his activities have been published in the Acts of the Caucasus Archeographic Commission. He is often mentioned in the memoirs of the military men, orders, official notifications, reports, appeals etc. Investigation of these documentary sources allowed us to date a number of his personal letters, identify individuals mentioned in them, revive the feelings that formed the basis of the poem “A Toast, or a post-War Feast near Yerevan” and gave us an idea of his difficult and contradictory life.

*key words: Grigol Orbeliani, Georgian Literature, biobibliography; textual researches.*

Most Georgian writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were not only artists, but also accountable political, state, or public figures, and naturally, it is important to consider each of these aspects in order to study their lives and works. The writer's biobibliography is the type of publication that comprehensively brings together a diverse palette of his activities. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, around the world, due to the primacy of complex approaches to the issue, special attention is paid to such publications based on documentary sources.

Chronicles of writers' life and works are based on any kind of historical sources that contain information about their biographical details, writings, or the feedback published about them during their lifetime. In the writers' biobibliographies the most important thing is their literary works, but the context of their poetry and fiction is their whole life, with all the details and nuances. Therefore, in order to create a unified portrait of Grigol Orbeliani as a figure, everything that he has experienced is important.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Georgia, which was occupied by Russia, the paperwork was conducted in Russian, so not only official documents, but also a large part of the personal correspondence of Georgian writers and public figures were executed in this language. In recent years, digital versions of important documentary sources have been published on the internet, allowing us to explore lesser-known sections of the history of this period and bring them into scientific circulation.

Experience has shown that archival materials, personal letters, and diaries are the best sources of information for biobibliography, but in the case of each writer, given the era and his activities, there are still some sources that represent particularly necessary information. In the case of Ilia Chavchavadze, such were the minutes of the Society for the Promotion of Literacy (Ninidze...2017), and with Grigol Orbeliani, as a high-ranking government official, such were Acts of the Caucasus Archeographic Commission (Acts...1904: 895) , where documents from the archive of the Central Administrative Board of the Viceroy of the Caucasus were published: orders, notifications, reports, appeals, military action magazines, official correspondence of leaders, etc.

By processing the relevant volumes of the Acts, we have gained a great deal of information about the life and work of Grigol Orbeliani and created more than one hundred

fifty annotations, through which many details have been added to the writer's biography. It has been documented that in 1845, together with General Kudashov, he repulsed an attack by Shamil's warriors near the village of Khojalmakhi (Acts 1885: 420). In 1846, he smashed the enemy's pickets and together with other units, captured Kutisha (Acts 1885: 438), while in 1847, he defeated the Gumbeti Naib-Abacardybir on Mount Arkas (Acts 1885: 443), in 1848, he took the village of Aymaki in Dagestan (Acts 1885: 482), in 1853 - the village of Khitrakh (Acts 1885: 354), in the same year he expelled Shamil's troops from Zaqatala (Acts 1885: 355), in 1854, he took the village of Burtunay (Acts 1885: 565) and others.

Although Grigol Orbeliani deals extensively with the issues of the Caucasus Wars in his personal correspondence, the epistolary legacy of the General's work on the Caucasus cannot provide us with systematic data. With the help of "Acts", it is possible to restore the detailed sequence of dates. Details of certain historical events become clear from the reports of Grigol Orbeliani published in the same publication. For example, we learn that Haji Murat managed to kidnap Akhmed Khan's wife, Nokh-Bek, from Dzhungutai with the help of his sister Fatma, one of Nokh-Bek's servants. Fatma informed her brother of the woman's whereabouts, lowered a ladder from the window, helped him kidnap her, and went with them (Acts 1885: 444) .

Orbeliani describes in detail how it was difficult for Shamil's son Jamaleddin to get used to his homeland after returning from Russia. He underwent circumcision, after which he felt bad. Shamil tried his best to create a suitable environment for him. Jamaleddin was accompanied by teachers of Arabic and Avarian languages and mullahs who took care of his religious education. He was often saddened, and when Shamil asked him about the reason, he replied that he was saddened by the death of his benefactor, Emperor Nikolai I. Shamil showed considerable generosity towards him, even allowing him to read magazines sent from Russia, and was patient regarding his refusal to lead the squads and take part in the attacks. It is also said that Shamil was going to make Jamaleddin marry Daniel-Beg's second daughter (Acts 1888: 63).

The "Acts" talk about Grigol Orbeliani's numerous legislative and project proposals. For example, the issue of the legality of the purchase of Arabic and black servants by the population of the Caspian region abroad (Acts 1885: 63). The documents confirm that Grigol Orbeliani has repeatedly been the initiator of renaming, opening, and closing military posts in the Caucasus region. He often appealed with the requests of relief and mercy for the suffering ones. He shows great care in dealing with the issues of protecting family members of warriors, their living conditions, orphaned children, inviolability of personal property, personal dignity etc.

From the same Acts, we learn not only the facts of historical significance, but also the details of the household. For example, it is documented that in 1851, the Orbelianis petitioned the Emperor to allow their lands to be divided into four estates (Acts 1904: 238). This was approved in 1854. From the Acts we learn how Grigol Orbeliani negotiated with Shamil to free the women and children captured from Kakheti, including the wife and children of his deceased brother and his young niece. The acts show that Grigol Orbeliani made some kind of contribution to obtaining the permission by Ilia Chavchavadze to publish the magazine "*Sakartvelos Moambe*" (Georgian Herald) (Acts 1885: 828-830).

From a technical point of view, one circumstance is very interesting – Grigol Orbeliani, in addition to reports and appeals in official business relations, often sent letters to the same addressees on the same topic. This somehow duplicated correspondence (appeals and letters)

carried the same official number, and it seems to have gone one way in terms of record keeping. Unlike appeals and reports, letters are less likely to be used in a formal manner and, more importantly, they provide more information and evaluate various events and facts differently, and they reflect not only public, declared essence but their perception by the government agencies.

It seems that Grigol Orbeliani was good at the reconciliation of pragmatic and emotional aspects of management. He paid great attention to the selection of individuals as local rulers who were well acquainted with the morals and traditions of the local population, had a good experience of living with them, and most importantly, understood the importance of such type of governance. Grigol Orbeliani frequently focused on this issue in the “Acts”. It was in this context that he looked at his addressee, Nikolai Yevdokimov. General Dmitry Sviatopolk-Mirsky, who has been to the Caucasus many times and is well aware of local problems, was considered a necessary candidate in this regard.

The initial characteristic of biobibliographies is the biography compiled by the dates, which, as applied research, allows researchers and other interested communities to perceive the facts in a complex way. For example, a reader may encounter on one and the same page the views of a figure on the same subject in an official address, a personal letter, a diary, a memoir, or a publicist letter. Observing the similarity or difference of interpretations of the same fact in the text of different purposes gives us an irreplaceable opportunity to study the author's system of thought, and his nature. It is a biobibliography that allows us to observe the intensity of the author's work. In this regard, we find such an interesting case in the Acts: on October 25, 1861, Grigol Orbeliani sent five documents, three of them appeals (to Adjutant-General Mikhail Khomutov, Ataman of Don Troops, Dmitry Milyutin, Military Minister, and Alexander Stroganov, Governor-General of Bessarabia and Novorossiya), one response (to Dimitri Milutin, Military Minister) and one letter (to Nikolai Yevdokimov, Commander of the Kuban District Troops). The topic is indeed adjacent, but all addressees are accountable and, most importantly, the task is responsible. This degree of work intensity is a significant feature of Grigol Orbeliani's portrait.

When working on biobibliography, we look for data on a person's life and work everywhere, both in the main texts and in the so-called colophons. We are dealing with a similar case in the Acts, when we come across an interesting case in which the editor puts a footnote: On October 6 1857, Grigol Orbeliani sent a report to the Military Minister, Nikolai Sukhozanet, describing their successful efforts from September 29 to October 6 in capturing Burtunay, a well-fortified site by Shamil. The editor's note is attached to this report. We read in the footnote that it seems that the Emperor, who was greatly satisfied with this victory, wrote on Grigol Orbeliani's report with his own hand with a pencil: “I am grateful to General Grigol Orbeliani himself and the other leaders.” (Acts 1885: 888-9)

As we can see, the documents published in the Acts make clear not only what Grigol Orbeliani was doing, but also how the imperial authorities evaluated his actions. For example, in 1845, the Commander-in-Chief of the Caucasus Troops, Mikhail Vorontsov, sent a report to Alexander Chernyshyov, the Military Minister, informing the latter that they had received hundreds of food carts to be transported from Yevgenievsky Prison to Kirka in a timely manner, saying that this was due to the organizational skills of Lieutenant Colonel Grigol Orbeliani, the ruler of Dagestan (Acts 1904: 1053). In his report to the Emperor, the Viceroy of the Caucasus,

Mikhail Vorontsov emphasized Grigol Orbeliani's good organization not only in military affairs but also in civilian affairs, such as the construction of roads. He writes that thanks to these roads, Grigol Orbeliani was in time to help General Wrangel with the auxiliary army and thus, contributing to the defeat of the enemy. Here he notes with satisfaction that in 1851, the 1200 Ingilos residing in the Char-Belakan district, voluntarily converted to the Orthodox faith, and several churches were built for them. The Viceroy considers all this to be the merit of the reasonable leadership of the district governor - Grigol Orbeliani (Persian... 1901)

Personal correspondence, as well as archival materials and official documents, often mention people we know nothing about. In order to compile an annotated index, it was necessary to obtain additional information about them. In such cases, the "Caucasus Calendar", which was published in 1845-1916, provides a great deal of information about the institutions that existed at that time, the people that worked there, and the positions they held. "Caucasus Calendars" are accompanied by an index for persons, where they are entered by surnames and initials. In this way, we found pages that provide information regarding the names of these individuals, their father's name, and their position. This data allows us to obtain more information about them in different databases.

Military figures of the 19th century often kept diaries and wrote memoirs. The name of Grigol Orbeliani is often found in the documentary writings of many of them. Consequently, we learn from these sources when, in what battles he participated, what difficulties he faced, and how he overcame them. In this regard, we have obtained important data from the memoirs of Count Simonichi, "Persian War, Campaign of 1826" (Simonichi 1901) . An equally important source is Vasiliy Potto's work "Caucasian War" (Potto 1900), as well as materials on the history of individual regiments, especially when referring to the regiments in which Grigol Orbeliani served at various times (Kazbek 1865; Boguslavsky 1892).

Investigation of the above-mentioned documentary sources allowed us to date a number of personal letters of the author, identify individuals mentioned in his works and revive the feelings that formed the basis of the poem "A Toast, or a post-War Feast near Yerevan" (Sukhtelen 1827Ж 16-17). Summing up of the results gave us an idea of the difficult and contradictory life of the poet. We saw a complex person with internal turmoil: the pragmatism of the state figure and the lyricism of a poet, the cruelty of a warrior and the lenity of an ordinary citizen.

## References:

**Acts 1885:** Acts collected by the Caucasian Archeographic Commission, vol. X, Tiflis, 1885.

**Acts 1888:** Acts collected by the Caucasian Archeographic Commission, vol. XI, Tiflis, 1888.

**Acts 1904:** Acts collected by the Caucasian Archeographic Commission, vol. XII, Tiflis, 1904.

**Boguslavsky 1892:** Boguslavsky L., The History of the Apsheron Regiment (1700-1892), vol. 2, 1892.

**Kazbek 1865:** Kazbek G., Military History of Regiment of His Imperial Majesty, the Greatest Prince Konstantin Nikolayevich in connection with the History of Caucasian War, Tiflis, 1865.

**Ninidze 2017:** Ninidze M., Rukhadze G., Ilia Chavchavadze: Life and Work Chronicles, Tbilisi, Mtatsminda, 2017.

**Potto 1908:** Potto V., Caucasian War. Vol. 4, Turkish War 1828-1829, Tiflis, 1908.

**Simonichi 1901:** Simonichi I., Persian War, Campaign of 1826, From the Notes of Count Simonichi, Caucasian collection, vol. 22. 1901.

**Sukhtelen 1900:** Sukhtelen P., Message to G.E. Eristov regarding the siege and capture of the Sardarabad fortress, Central Historical Archives of Georgia, F. 548, desc. 3, N85.