

© 2021. В. Ш. Авидзба

Абхазский институт гуманитарных исследований им. Д. И. Гулиа
г. Сухум, Абхазия

Обзор главных книжных публикаций об Абхазии русских авторов XIX в.

*Исследование выполнено при финансовой поддержке Российского фонда
фундаментальных исследований в рамках научного проекта № 20-012-00098*

Аннотация: В статье представлен аналитический обзор книжных изданий русских авторов XIX в., содержащих информацию об Абхазии. В числе изучаемых изданий есть книги, известные и имеющие широкое использование в науке, а также редкие, на которые не обращалось должного внимания. Рассмотренные издания содержат сведения об Абхазии физико-географического, военно-топографического, военно-статистического, историко-этнографического, лингвистического и археологического характера. В статье предпринята попытка установления различий познавательного интереса авторов к Абхазии. По своему объему материалы анализируемых текстов различны, некоторые из них представляют собой раздел или главу книги, а есть и обобщающие издания, целиком посвященные Абхазии. Несмотря на встречающиеся между изданиями расхождения в описании этнического облика абхазского народа, все они способствовали накоплению знаний о нем, и сыграли важную роль, в процессе становления научного абхазоведения. Предвзятые оценки и порицательные характеристики, даваемые отдельными авторами историческим обстоятельствам, подвергнуты критическому анализу.

Ключевые слова: Абхазия, Черноморское побережье, Кавказ, русская литература, литература путешествий.

Информация об авторе: Василий Шамониевич Авидзба, кандидат филологических наук, главный научный сотрудник, Абхазский институт гуманитарных исследований им. Д. И. Гулиа Академии наук Абхазии, ул. Аидгылара, д. 44, 384900 г. Сухум, Республика Абхазия

E-mail: v.avidzba@yandex.ru

Дата поступления статьи в редакцию: 10.06.2021

Дата одобрения статьи рецензентами: 21.09.2021

Дата публикации статьи: 25.12.2021

Для цитирования: Авидзба В.Ш. Обзор главных книжных публикаций об Абхазии русских авторов XIX в. // Два века русской классики. 2021. Т. 3, № 4. С. 80–91.
<https://doi.org/10.22455/2686-7494-2021-3-4-80-91>



This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

Dva veka russkoi klassiki,
vol. 3, no. 4, 2021, pp. 80–91. ISSN 2686-7494
Two centuries of the Russian classics,
vol. 3, no. 4, 2021, pp. 80–91. ISSN 2686-7494

Review Article

© 2021. Vasiliy Sh. Avidzba

D. I. Gulia Abkhazian Academy of Sciences
Sukhum, Abkhazia

Review of the Main Book Publications about Abkhazia by Russian Authors of the 19th Century

Acknowledgements: The study was supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), number 20-012-00098.

Abstract: The article provides an analytical overview of the books by Russian authors of the 19th century, containing information about Abkhazia. Among the studied editions are well-known books that have widespread use in science, as well as rare ones, which have not been given due attention. The reviewed publications contain information about Abkhazia of a physical-geographical, military-topographic, military-statistical, historical-ethnographic, linguistic and archaeological nature. The article attempts to establish the differences in the authors' cognitive interest in Abkhazia. The materials of the analyzed texts differ in terms of their volume, some of them represent a section or chapter of a book, and there are also generalizing publications entirely devoted to Abkhazia. Despite the discrepancies encountered between the editions in the description of the ethnic appearance of the Abkhaz people, they all contributed to the accumulation of knowledge about it, and played an important role in the formation of scientific Abkhaz studies. Biased assessments and condemnatory characteristics given by individual authors to historical circumstances have been critically analyzed.

Keywords: Abkhazia, Black Sea coast, Caucasus, Russian literature, travel literature.

Information about the author: Vasiliy Sh. Avidzba, PhD in Philology, Senior Researcher, Department of Literature of D. I. Gulia Abkhazian Academy of Sciences, 44 Aidgylara St., 384900 Sukhum, Abkhazia.

E-mail: v.avidzba@yandex.ru

Received: June 10, 2021

Approved after reviewing: September 21, 2021

Published: December 25, 2021

For citation: Avidzba, V. Sh. "Review of the Main Book Publications about Abkhazia by Russian Authors of the 19th Century." *Dva veka russkoi klassiki*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2021, pp. 80–91. (In English) <https://doi.org/10.22455/2686-7494-2021-3-4-80-91>

One of the important peculiarities of the cultural and historical development of the Russian Empire during 19 century was continuous education in all its areas. A large number of books, magazines and newspapers in European languages, in languages of the empire's peoples, were published during that century in Russia. After Georgia, and later other Caucasus regions, had annexed Russia, a number of works about Caucasus and its people were released. The reference literature including geography books and various statistical descriptions represents extremely informative sources of the Russian philology of that time. Such sources include, for example, a series of works by E. F. Zyablovsky [Zyablovsky 1810; 1815; 1837]. His books were of the reference nature and did not contain any detailed descriptions of the countries and peoples mentioned in them. One of his earlier books, "Description of the Russian Empire for All States...", tells about the Circassians, Abkhazians, Ossetians, Lezgins, and Kists. The description of the Abkhazians says, "the Abkhazians or Abkhazeti live on the eastern coast of the Black Sea and all over the Kuban. They used to be under the governance of individual knyazs who depended on the Georgian czars, and now they belong to Russia; they follow their own traditions. As regards religion, it has some traces of Christianity. Their manners, customs, housing, exercises and other things are quite similar to the Circassians" [Zyablovsky 1810: 59–60]. The phrase "and now they belong to Russia" means that Zyablovsky wrote that part of his book after the Principality of Abkhazia had come under control of the Russian Empire, i.e. after 17 February 1810. In the book "Statistical Description of the Russian Empire in its Present State...", the author does not distinguish between the Abkhazians and the Anazins who lived on the northern side of the Caucasus mountains.

In 1835, O. S. Evetsky published a book in St. Petersburg with a long name that was typical of that time: "Statistical Description of the Transcaucasian Region Followed by an Article: Political State of the Transcaucasian Region at the End of 18 Century and its Comparison with the Current State".

The book consists of two parts and was written by the government order. It is obvious that it was aimed at obtaining various information about the Transcaucasian Region. It is based on the communications collected by officials of the Georgia's Commander in Chief Department, official documents and the archive of his executive office, as well as literature sources, such as the work by S. M. Bronevsky "The Latest Geographical and Historical Developments in Caucasus" (1823), works by the German orientalist, academician of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, Julius Klaproth, "Travelling Round Caucasus and Georgia in 1807–1808" (1812), the Italian geographer Adriano Balbi "The Ethnographic Atlas or Classification of Ancient and Modern Languages and Peoples of the World" (1826). The author did not personally undertake any expeditions to the provinces of the region he is describing, he primarily relied on the above mentioned materials and sources. Abkhazia is mentioned in various parts of the book. In the determination of the boundaries of the Transcaucasian Region it is mentioned twice, "...westward, with the Anapsky Region and Black Sea, from the destroyed fortress of Gagra (in Abkhazia) to the fortress of St. Nicholas (in Guria)" [Evetsky: 2].

In 1836, Nikolay I ordered to prepare, examine and correct every three years examine military and statistical overviews of the governorates and regions of the Russian Empire. According to the order a program was developed providing for publication of 18 volumes consisting of 82 parts that would contain data about all administrative and territorial units of Russia. Officers of the Headquarters were charged with performance of that large-scale task. As a result of their work 17 volumes consisting of 70 parts were published from 1847 to 1858.

The information about Abkhazia is available in two books of this series, in particular in the overview titled "The Eastern Coast of the Black Sea". Its author, N. I. Karlhof, describes the life of the peoples of that territory, broadly characterizes the ethnic groups of the Adygeis (the Circassians) [Karlhof]. Unlike his many predecessors, he gives rather precise names of the places. The author pays attention to bays along the coast — the bays of Novorossiysk, Gelendzhik, and Sukhumi. Karlhof considers a number of factors destabilizing the situation and preventing introduction of the public order in Abkhazia. Such factors include some customs and beliefs supported by the nation. He believes the blood vengeance to be the primary reason of instability. The author pays particular attention to it considering it a harmful survival of times past exhausting national forces. Many authors of 19 century

wrote about the blood vengeance among the Abkhazians [DuBois de Montperreux; Tornow]. Kalhof's observations are largely accurate. As a rule, the main actors of the "predatism" (as he calls their way of life) were the young generation of the local noblemen. Using their relations and social bonds, the young slashing fellows involved the peasant youth in their activity. Behaving in such a manner, they wanted glory and public honor.

In 1858, one of the parts of the volume about the Caucasus region by the Stabs-kapitan A. I. Lavrentiev was published. The work contains the latest data about the territories of the Kutais Governorate: about transport routes, climate, natural resources (flora and fauna and subsoil assets), ethnographic essays about various peoples, composition of the population, agricultural and manufacturing industries, home and foreign trade, education, statistics about monasteries, churches and clergy, essays about the internal hierarchy of the population, its everyday life, forms of the internal governance [Lavrentiev]. In the short section about the historical past of Samurzakan in which Lavrentiev insists that "it was belonged to Mingrelia", the author fails to give an impartial historical picture [Lavrentiev: 20]. At the same time he correctly explains why Mingrelia got the status of a *pristavstvo* (territorial unit) independent from Abkhazia, namely due to the territory division between the Mingrelian and the Abkhazian rulers. The struggle of Abkhazia and Mingrelia for Samurzakan is described in the works by P. Kraevich, D. Machavaiani, and I. Bartolomey [Kraevich; Machavariani]. The historian S. S. Esadze gives a comprehensive explanation, "The Mingrelian rulers reinforced their rights to Samurzakan due to their continuous acknowledgement by the chief Caucasian authorities [Esadze: 107–108].

The names of the mountain peaks (including description of their various branches) and rivers listed by Lavrentiev represent valuable data of the physical and geographical part of the overview. Lavrentiev thinks that the climate of Abkhazia is general "rather detrimental" due to long-lasting rains and humidity. At the same time he notes that the south-eastern part "has milder and healthier climate". The most wide-spread diseases include fever, febrilily, scurvy, and ophthalmitis, and the most unhealthy places are Pitsunda, Bombora, and Sukhum-Kale, i.e. the places where the Russian military communities were accommodated. Lavrentiev expresses a somewhat simplified and perfunctory opinion of the Abkhazians' economy. The section about the manners and customs is merely a set of various data. Lavrentiev actively uses customary set phrases and clichés, such as "wildness", "rudeness", "ignorance",

“indolence”, “lack of eager to work honestly”, etc. He is of the opinion that the Abkhazians of that time were a culturally undeveloped nation. The book by Lavrentiev contains a chronological table of historical events and most important governmental orders related to the Kutais Governorate. It is of particular value in terms of the statistical data, description of various facilities (cities, roads), economy (trade), etc. that existed during the author’s life.

In 1862, a book by the baron P. K. Uslar “The Ethnography of Caucasus. Linguistics. The Abkhazian Language” was published that laid the foundation for the scientific study of the Abkhazian language [Uslar]. Petr Karlovich Uslar was a military engineer, but due to his inclinations he became an outstanding caucasologist — a linguist and ethnographer, researcher of the languages and customs of the mountain peoples of Caucasus. The book consists of a foreword, 12 main sections, models of the Abkhazian language, a collection of the Abkhazian words and an alphabetical index of the Russian words. The main part of the work contains the alphabet and summary of the grammatical system of the Abkhazian language. Uslar bases the alphabet on the Russian Cyrillic alphabet supplemented with several Latin and Georgian letters; the alphabet includes 55 symbols. The author gives a phonological characteristic of each sound. As models of the Abkhazian speech he uses folk texts accompanied by the grammatical analysis of each word, and as an illustration he gives the beginning of a fairy tale, a fable and three proverbs.

The work by Uslar laid the foundation for the Abkhazian written language and gave an impetus to publication of first books in the Abkhazian language. In 1865, a first “Abkhazian Alphabet Book” and in 1866 the translation of “The Brief Sacred History” based on the alphabet proposed by Uslar were published. Both books were published by a commission led by I. A. Bartololy that included the Abkhazians, among others.

The two books considered below were published after a number of historical dramatic events — the Lykhnenskoe uprising (1966), and the forced mass movement of the Abkhazians to the Ottoman Empire (1877–1878). The existence of the Principality of Abkhazia had been discontinued by that time (1864) and Abkhazia had got the official name — Sukhumi military unit; its territory was divided into three okrugs (regions) (Bzybsky, Sukhumsky, and Abzhuysky) and two pristavstvos (territorial units) (Tsebdinskoe and Samurzakanskoe).

The works by A. V. Vereshchagin, by the Archimandrite Leonid (Kavelin), and the countess P. S. Uvarova are among the books of that time worth

paying attention. These authors wrote much about Abkhazia, and the book by Archimandrite Leonid is completely about it.

In 1870–1880 the books by A. V. Verashchagin “Notes about Travelling Round the Black Sea Region” (1874), “A Reference Book for Settlers and Buyers of Land Plots in the Black Sea Region and Travellers to the Black and Azov Seas” (1874), “Growing Horsetooth Corn for Seeds on the Black Sea Shore of Caucasus” (1884), “Colonization of the Black Sea Shore of Caucasus: Vital Issue of our Periphery” (1878), “Meaning of Transport Routes for Colonization of the Black Sea Shore of Caucasus” (1878), “Influence of Overland and Maritime Traffic on the Development of the Black Sea Shore of Caucasus” (1885), “Overview of Colonization of the Black Seal Shore of Caucasus and its Result” (1885). Vereshchagin made three trips to the Black Sea shore of Caucasus to collect data about it — in 1870, 1873, and in 1879. All his books are based on those trips. Vereshchagin wrote about a number of issues related to the measures taken by the government to colonize the region. His books are full of details about the places he visited. He marked the rivers, ridges, roads that he examined in terms of their suitability for settlements and measures for their arrangement. Based on his observations accompanied by characteristics of various places, climate, and flora, Vereshchagin divides the coastal territory into three categories: convenient, hardly convenient and absolutely inconvenient for living. His work “Notes about Travelling Round the Black Sea Region” is the result of the thorough and detailed examination of the territory giving the minutest particulars of the region colonization along with the analysis of the situation and proposals on the colonization acceleration. The data given by Vereshchagin about the natives of the region — the Circassians and Abkhazians — and the numerous original toponyms recorded by him are of the historical value. The Free Economic Society published the majority of the books by Vereshchagin. They contain author’s notes and reports about meetings of the society.

In 1885, the book “Abkhazia and the New Athos Monastery” written by the Archimandrite Leonid, whose full is Lev Aleksandrovich Kavelin. This book plays an important role in study of the history of Abkhazia. Its title page says that the book was published “to support building the monastery”. The book consists of two parts with 4 chapters each. Kavelin refers to “various Caucasus (Tiflis) publications”, “monastery notes” and, which is important, results of his “personal observations” as to the sources of materials for his work. The author traditionally begins his book a geographical and historical

essay about Abkhazia and then proceeds to the history of Abkhazia from the ancient time to his days. Doing so, he tried to describe the nation's history as a whole, rather than by periods, coherently connecting the most significant historical events with each other. A priest, Kavelin rejected other confessions and religions. That is why he does systemize the religious beliefs of the Abkhazians, but considers them to be "absolute mess". Kavelin shares his ideas about the measures that should be taken to restore Christianity in Abkhazia. An individual chapter of his work tells about the Christian monuments of Abkhazia. The author describes temples in historical terms following their fate, mentioning their founders after whom they were named, examines their appearance, interior, inscriptions, etc. In some cases he gives a detailed description of the place where a temple is situated; records names of the nearby villages. The author discloses peculiarities of various Abkhazian traditions mainly through their connection with the hospitality custom.

Kavelin's work further tells about the most important events related to the monastery restoration: sanctification of the altar of the restored church, visiting the monastery by notables, death in Moscow of the church's first rector hieromonch Arseny, etc. Publication of this book is a significant event. It was also important that its title contained the original name of the country — Abkhazia instead of the official name of that time — Sukhumsky region.

Another valuable work about Abkhazia is the book "Travelling Notes" by P. S. Uvarova that was written following results of five expeditions: during two of them (1878 and 1881) she accompanied her husband A. S. Uvarov, and the other three (1886, 1888, 1890) were organized by her [Uvarova]. The notes are in the form of a diary. The first and the third parts of her work, Uvarova just occasionally mentions Abkhazia, while a considerable part of the second volume is dedicated to it. It includes primarily results of the expedition of 1886 combined with her memories about her prior visit to Abkhazia. The expedition worked in Abkhazia for about three weeks.

Uvarova says that on the second day of their staying in Abkhazia they met in Sukhumi with other members of the Moscow Archeological Society led by her who had already commenced archeological excavations — V. I. Sizov and N. V. Nikitin. After discussion of the action plan, they proceeded to the scheduled exploration. Uvarova as a professor was primarily interested in ancient monuments of the Christian architecture of Abkhazia. According to the modern researcher of Christian monuments, archeologist and art expert L. G. Khrushkova, Uvarova "personally examined the total of 102 monu-

ments of the Christian architecture” [Khrushkova: 104]. Over thirty out of them that she recorded and studied were located in Abkhazia. The expedition under her leadership found a lot of destroyed and abandoned churches.

Uvarova professionally explored those temples that could be examined. In those cases she recorded in detail almost everything, from the construction material of the monument, its dimensions, and structure to the description of its location. The data obtained by the expedition members were the result of their visual observations, and in some cases of their archeological excavations. Sometimes local dwellers took part in the excavations.

In her work “Caucasus. Travelling Notes” Uvarova broadly uses toponyms and hydronyms of Abkhazia. The names of settlements and rivers are primarily original, however sometimes she uses their re-names. The book contains a large number of ethnographic observations. The works of Uvarova about Abkhazia are extremely valuable. The data provided by her are continuously draw attention of scientists who study the historical past of Abkhazia.

The above mentioned publications contain physical and geographical, military and topographical, military and statistical, historical and ethnographical, linguistic, and archeological data about Abkhazia. The volume of the materials differs greatly, however, despite some misunderstanding of the essence of the national life of the Abkhazians, some difficulties and excessiveness that are due to the personality of the authors and their views, and the goal of the publications, all of them have contributed to gaining knowledge about Abkhazia and have played an important role in development of the scientific Abkhazia study.

**Список литературы
Источники**

Архимандрит Леонид. Абхазия и в ней Ново-Афонский Симоно-Кананитский монастырь. М.: Тип. В. Ф. Рихтер, 1885. 143 с.

Верещагин А. В. Путевые заметки по Черноморскому округу. М.: Изд-е Н. Н. Мамантова, 1874. 204 с.

Верещагин А. В. Значение путей сообщения в деле колонизации и развитии Черноморского побережья Кавказа. СПб.: Тип. Т-ва «Общественная польза», 1878. 80 с.

Верещагин А. В. Влияние сухопутных и морских сообщений на колонизацию Черноморского побережья Кавказа. СПб.: Тип. Т-ва «Общественная польза», 1885. 48 с.

Верещагин А. В. Исторический обзор колонизации Черноморского побережья Кавказа и ее результат А. В. Верещагина. СПб.: Тип. Т-ва «Общественная польза», 1885. 36 с.

Дюбуа де Монперэ, Фредерик. Путешествие вокруг Кавказа. Майкоп: Полиграф-Юг, 2010. Т. I: У черкесов и абхазов / пер. с франц. Н. А. Данкевич-Пущиной. 164 с.

Евецкий О. С. Статистическое описание Закавказского края. С прибавлением статьи: Политическое состояние Закавказского края в исходе XVIII века и сравнение оною с нынешним. В 2 ч. СПб.: Печатано в Тип. Штаба Отдельного Корпуса Внутренней Стражи, 1835. 508 с.

Зябловский Е. Ф. Землеописание Российской империи для всех состояний, Санктпетербургского Педагогического Института Ординарного Профессора Евдокима Зябловского. СПб.: Императорская Академия наук, 1810. 215 с.

Зябловский Е. Ф. Статистическое описание Российской Империи в нынешнем ее состоянии с предварительными понятиями о Статистике с общим обзором Европы в Статистическом виде: в 5 ч. СПб.: В Морской тип., 1815.

Зябловский Е. Ф. География Российской Империи Заслуженного Профессора Зябловского. СПб.: В тип. Министерства Внутренних Дел, 1837. 167 с.

Карлгоф Н. И. Военно-статистическое обозрение Восточного берега Черного моря. По рекогносцировкам и материалам, собранным на месте, составил Генерального Штаба Полковник Карльгоф. СПб.: В тип. Департамента Генерального Штаба, 1855. 45 с.

Клапрот Юлиус. Описание поездок по Кавказу и Грузии в 1807 и 1808 годах, по приказанию Русского Правительства Юлиусом фон Клапротом, придворным советником Его Величества Императора России, членом Академии Санкт-Петербурга и т. д. / сост. и пер. с англ. К. А. Мальбахов. Нальчик: Республиканский Полиграфкомбинат им. Революции 1905 года; Издат. центр «Эль-Фа», 2008. 317 с.

Краевич П. Д. Очерк устройства общественно-политического быта Абхазии и Самурзакани // Сборник сведений о кавказских горцах. Тифлис: Тип. гл. упр. наместника Кавказского, 1870. Вып. 3. С. 1–25.

Мачавариани Д., Бартоломей И. Нечто о Самурзакани // Зап. Кавказского отдела Императорского Русского географического общества. Тифлис: Б. и., 1864. Вып. 6. С. 74–83.

Торнау Ф. Ф. Воспоминания Кавказского офицера. М.: АИРО – XXI век, 2008. 442 с.

Уварова П. С. Путевые заметки Гр. Уваровой в 3 т. М.: Тип. А. И. Мамонтова и Ко, 1887.

Эсадзе С. С. Историческая записка об управлении Кавказом. Тифлис: Тип. «Гуттенберг», 1907. Т. 1 / сост. редактор Военно-исторического Отдела Окружного штаба Семен Эсадзе. 616 с.

Исследования

Базылева Е. А. Кавказский отдел Императорского русского географического общества и его библиотека // Омский научный вестник. 2015. № 5. С. 12–15.

Хрушкова Л. Г. Прасковья Сергеевна Уварова — выдающийся исследователь христианских памятников Кавказа // Актуальные вопросы истории христианства на Северном Кавказе. Ставрополь: Издат. центр СтПДС, 2013. С. 100–116.

Шамба С. М. Россия – Абхазия: история и современность // Вестник МГИМО-Университета. 2010. № 3(12). С. 9–13.

References

Bazyleva, E. A. “Kavkazskii otdel Imperatorskogo russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva i ego biblioteka” [“Caucasian Department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and its Library”]. *Omskii nauchnyi vestnik*, no. 5, 2015, pp. 12–15. (In Russ.)

Khrushkova, L. G. “Praskov’ia Sergeevna Uvarova — vydaiushchiisia issledovatel’ khristianskikh pamiatnikov Kavkaza” [“Praskovya Sergeevna Uvarova, an Outstanding Researcher of the Christian Monuments of the Caucasus”]. In: *Aktual’nye voprosy istorii khristianstva na Severnom Kavkaze* [Actual Issues of the History of Christianity in the North Caucasus]. Stavropol’, Izdatel’skii tsentr StPDS Publ., 2013, pp. 100–116. (In Russ.)

Shamba, S. M. “Rossiia – Abkhaziia: istoriia i sovremennost’” [“Russia – Abkhazia: History and Modernity”]. *Vestnik MGIMO-Universiteta*, no. 3(12), 2010, pp. 9–13. (In Russ.)