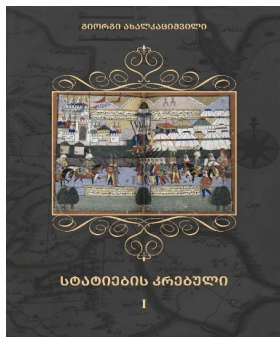


Review of George Akhalkatsishvili's Monograph - A Collection of Articles, Volume I. Publisher: "Polygraph" Ltd., Tbilisi, 2025.



Within the evolving landscape of contemporary Georgian historiography and Oriental studies, George Akhalkatsishvili's book - A Collection of Articles (Vol. I) – stands out as a significant scholarly publication that reflects the diligence, methodological rigor, and intellectual originality of a young Turkologist and historian of the East. This volume, which brings together works written between 2019 and 2025, highlights the author's aspiration toward international academic standards and his strong sense of scholarly responsibility in the systematization and interpretation of historical knowledge.

The studies included in this collection thematically encompass a broad spectrum of relations between medieval Georgia and the Islamic states of the Near East - from the period of the Arab conquests to the reign of King David IV the Builder. Of particular note is the article "Relations between Georgia and the Islamic States of the Near East from the Arab Conquests to the Reign of David IV", in which the author, drawing upon an extensive corpus of primary sources, analyzes the diplomatic and military contacts between Georgia and the Islamic world from the seventh to the twelfth centuries. By juxt-

aposing Arabic, Persian, and European sources, Akhalkatsishvili offers a fresh interpretation of key issues and re-evaluates earlier Georgian historiographical perspectives. The study is distinguished by narrative coherence, factual precision, and exemplary source analysis - qualities that may be regarded as among the chief merits of the volume.

The thematic diversity of the collection is equally noteworthy. It addresses a wide range of topics in the medieval history of the Near East, such as Timur's campaigns against the Mamluks and the formation of the White Sheep Turkmen (Aq Qoyunlu) state. These studies are particularly valuable for their broad regional perspective. For instance, in "The Aq Qoyunlu State under Qara Osman Yulug (1378–1435)", the author presents a detailed account of the internal and external political history of the Turkmen polity, offering a nuanced analysis that enhances our understanding of the political dynamics of the region in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. A similar comparative approach is evident in the article devoted to "Timur's Campaign against the Mamluks (1400–1401)", which effectively integrates Islamic and European sources, thereby enriching the study's comparative significance.

A distinct feature of the book is the inclusion of studies dedicated to the diplomatic dimensions of international relations in the medieval era. Particularly remarkable are the essays "From the History of Diplomatic Relations between Pope Pius II and Mehmed II – *Epistola ad Mahometum* (1461)" and "Prince Cem's Struggle for the Throne and Pope Alexander VI Borgia." Here, the researcher situates historical facts at the intersection of European political culture and Ottoman diplomatic traditions - an approach rarely articulated with such complexity in Georgian historiography. Special attention is paid to written sources, including Latin and Ottoman texts, through which the author reconstructs a realistic picture of the diplomacy of the age.

The study “The Jesuits in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century” represents a compelling example of research on cultural and civilizational interactions. It demonstrates the author’s tendency to perceive historical processes not merely through political lenses, but also in terms of intellectual and cultural interrelations. Particularly valuable is the innovative historiographical contribution “Valide-i Muazzama Mahpeyker Kösem Sultan - The Zenith of the Ottoman Women’s Sultanate,” in which, through a critical analysis of recent Turkish and Western scholarship, the author interprets the “Women’s Sultanate” not simply as a dynastic phenomenon but as a social and political institution within the Ottoman Empire.

Of special importance for Georgian historiography is the jointly authored article “A Comparative Analysis of the Great Registers of the Vilayet of Gurjistan of 1574 and 1595” (co-authors: Davit Sartania, Dali Nikolaiashvili, Avtandil Ujmamadjuridze, and Maia Tsitsvidze). Based on a solid foundation of source criticism, this study examines the influence of the Ottoman administrative system on the southern regions of Georgia. The authors meticulously analyze demographic, economic, and social data across two chronological stages, drawing conclusions of value to scholars of both Turkology and Georgian social history.

The final section of the volume, comprising reviews and essays dedicated to fellow scholars, also merits attention. George Akhalkatsishvili duly acknowledges the contributions of his predecessors in history and Oriental studies. In his reviews - such as “Meskheti According to Ottoman Registers” and the evaluation of Emzar Makaradze’s monograph “The Main Issues of Turkey’s Domestic Policy, 2000–2024” - one discerns the author’s critical acumen, academic objectivity, and refined evaluative culture. This section gains additional emotional depth from the brief but poignant essay “**Gocha Japaridze**

— **In Remembrance,**” which serves not merely as a memorial text but as a historiographical homage to a scholar whose intellectual influence is evident in the author’s academic formation.

The structure of the book is well organized and clearly reflects the evolution of the author’s scholarly interests. Each article consistently develops his academic perspective - from the Arab expansion of the seventh century to the political history of the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth century. Akhalkatsishvili systematically employs multilingual sources - Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Latin, Georgian, and European - which greatly enhances the scholarly significance of his work.

George Akhalkatsishvili’s *A Collection of Articles, Vol. I (2025)* is a publication of high academic quality that not only encapsulates the first stage of his scholarly career but also demonstrates the growing potential of a young Turkologist. The thematic choices reveal his dual commitment - to the study of Eastern civilizations and to situating Georgian history within a broader international context. This approach is of particular importance for Georgian historiography, as it strengthens the global perception of the country’s history and promotes its integration into the international research discourse.

In conclusion, **A Collection of Articles, Vol. I (2025)** – presented in both Georgian and English - constitutes an exemplary model of how youthful enthusiasm, combined with rigorous scholarly method, can produce a work rich in both content and quality. It will undoubtedly serve as a reliable reference for professional historians, Turkologists, Orientalists, as well as for students and emerging researchers.

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