

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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CAUCASUS HISTORY – Philosophy

Overview

Philosophical studies developed in the Caucasus under the influence of the Greeks in the 4th century. It started with the translations of major doctrinal and polemical works from Greek philosophers. When the Byzantine Empire experienced a dramatic decline in intellectual life, the Greek cultural heritage was preserved in the Caucasus states through these translations and commentaries by philosophers.

In the 19th century, under the influence of Enlightenment ideas and the Russian free-thinkers, philosophers began to disseminate scientific knowledge and liberate schools and education from the church's influence.

In the early 20th century, the Bolsheviks propagated Marxism in Baku. Marxist-Leninist ideology became dominant in Azerbaijan. When Soviet power was established in the Caucasus states, all the activities of hostile ideologies and the study of non-Marxist philosophy were banned; dialectical and historical materialism became the dominant ideology in philosophical thought.

POST- CLASSICAL PERIOD

SOUTH CAUCASUS

GEORGIA:

Pazisi (Poti) Academy: In the 4th century, there was a philosophical school in Colchis called the *Pazisi Academy*. Colchis was a Greek colony and the Academy was founded by the Greeks. Students came from different parts of the Hellenic world to study philosophy there.

Peter the Iberian: Prince Peter the Iberian was a philosopher and the one of the founders of *Christian Neoplatonism* in the 5th century.

ARMENIA:

David the Invincible (Anhaght): David was a Neoplatonist philosopher and the first scientist of Medieval Armenian non-religious philosophy in the 6th century. He wrote introductory handbooks to teach beginners. His translations were the best examples of the Hellenistic tradition in Armenian literature of the 6th to 8th centuries. His major work was *The Definition of Philosophy*. David's other works were published in the *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca* in Greek, but his work, *The Interpretation of Aristotle's Analytics* has reached us only in Armenian.

Hovnan Mayravanetsi: Mayravanetsi was an theologian and philosopher addressing the issues of social justice under Christian teaching, and was a follower of Miaphysitism.

Hovhannes Imastaser: Imaster was a philosopher and theologian. Imastaser standardized the Armenian prayer book and Psalter.

Questions:

1- What was the relationship between the ideas of the Neoplatonic schools and Christian teaching?

Readings:

- 1- Mikaberidze, A., *Historical Dictionary of Georgia*, Scarecrow Press Inc., 2007.
- 2- Khachikyan, A., *History of Armenia*, Edit Print, Yerevan, 2010.

EARLY MODERN PERIOD**SOUTH CAUCASUS****GEORGIA:**

Ioane Petritsi: Petritsi was another *Neoplatonist* philosophers who lived in the 11th century. He was famous for his translations of Aristotle, Nemesius, Ammonius Hermiae, Proclus Diadochus and many other philosophers' works. Petritsi was the founder of Christian Neoplatonism. He created the basic philosophical concepts of *Logos, cosmos, noema, nous, psyche, anima, ethos, theos, Aletheia, dianoia, gnosis* in Georgian.

Euthymius the Athonite: Athonite was was a monk and a philosopher from the 11th century. He made translations of many religious treatises and philosophical works like the translation of the Greek version of the *Wisdom of Balahvari*, a Christianized version of the life of Buddha. He also translated philosophical, religious and legal texts from Greek to Georgian.

Arsen Iqaltoeli: Iqaltoeli was a churchman and a philosopher from the 12th century. He translated from Greek major doctrinal and polemical works and published them in his book *A Book of Teachings* (Dogmatikon). He was under the influence of Aristotelianism.

Epraim Mtsire: Mtsire was a Georgian monk who served in Antioch. He was also a theologian and a philosopher from the 12th century translating the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Basil the Great and John of Damascus. He was the author of the *Tale on the Reason for the Conversion of the Georgians*.

Anthim the Iberian: Anthim was a Georgian theologian and philosopher who founded a printing press in Tbilisi in 1709. In his homiletic work, the *Didache*, he criticized contemporary habits and morals in reference to classical philosophy.

ARMENIA:

Gregory of Tatevatsi: Tatevatsi was a philosopher and theologian from the 15th century. He was a follower of Miaphysitism. His writings were against uniting the Armenian church with Rome. In 1397, he wrote the *Book of Questions*, a basic and comprehensive theological outline.

Shahamir Shahamirian: The 18th century writer, philosopher and author of the first Armenian Constitution, Shahamirian, talked about gender equality and the equal participation of women in political and social life.

AZERBAIJAN:

Seyid Yahya Bakuvi: Bakuvi was a scientist and a philosopher from the 15th century. He was the author of philosophic treatises like *Comments to the Flower Garden of Secrets* (Sharh-i Gulshan-i raz), *Secrets of Searchers of the Truth* (Asrar at-Talibin).

Mohammed Karabakhi: Karabakhi, in his work titled *Refutation of Philosophers*, discussed the philosophical ideas of Al-Gazali, Fakhraddin er-Razi, Azudaddin al- Iji and others.

Questions:

- 1- Why were almost all medieval and early modern Armenian and Georgian philosophers clergymen?

Readings:

- 1- https://www.azerbaijans.com/content_644_en.html
- 2- Zardabli, I., *The History of Azerbaijan*, from ancient times to the present day, Rossendale Books, 2014.
- 3- Mikaberidze, A., *Historical Dictionary of Georgia*, Scarecrow Press Inc., 2007.
- 4- Poghosyan, G. "History of Evolution of the Armenian Sociological Thought", *Social Sciences*. Vol.4, No. 5, 2015
- 5-- Khachikyan, A., *History of Armenia*, Edit Print, Yerevan, 2010.

19TH CENTURY

SOUTH CAUCASUS

GEORGIA:

Solomon Dodashvili: Dodashvili was a Georgian philosopher and linguist who wrote *Logic, Methodology of Logic*, and *Brief Grammar of Georgian language*.

During his stay in Russia, under the influence of the Decembrist Revolt in 1825, he was exposed to Enlightenment ideas and the Russian free-thinkers. In 1831, Dodashvili established a circle in Georgia to discuss overthrowing the Russian authorities and bringing the Georgian monarchy back.

ARMENIA:

The philosophical thought in Armenia in the 19th century carried the influence of the European ideologies. Many leading European and Russian philosophers' works were translated into Armenian.

Armenian philosophers like Khachatur Abovian, Mikael Nalbandian and Gabriel Patkanian, under the influence of the Enlightenment thinkers, made great contributions liberate schools and education from the church's influence and they also began to disseminate of scientific knowledge in Armenian society with their work. At the end of the 19th century social thought was developing around the ideas of Marxism.

AZERBAIJAN

Ali bey Huseyn oğlu Huseynzade: Huseynzade was an Azerbaijani philosopher, writer, thinker, and the creator of the modern Flag of Azerbaijan. Huseynzade always advocated the moral values of society, and was under the influence of Pan-Turkish ideology.

Zeynalabdin Shirvani: Shirvani, in his philosophical work the *Kashf ul-Maarif (The Discovery of Enlightenment)* talked about the famous philosophers and their beliefs and theories. He also included his biography in the preface.

Questions:

- 1- What motivated the Russian Orthodox Church to annul the Georgian church's autocephaly and take direct control of it?

Readings:

- 1- Hovannisian, R. G., "Russian Armenia. A Century of Russian Rule", *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas Neue Folge*, Bd. 19, H. 1 (MÄRZ 1971).
- 2- Sarkiss, H.J., "The Armenian Renaissance, 1500-1863", *The Journal of Modern History*, Dec., 1937, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Dec., 1937).
- 3- Zardabli, I., *The History of Azerbaijan*, from ancient times to the present day, Rossendale Books, 2014.
- 4- Coene, F., *The Caucasus, An Introduction*, Routledge, 2010.

5-Poghosyan,G. "History of Evolution of the Armenian Sociological Thought", Social Sciences.Vol.4, No. 5, 2015.

<http://article.sciencepublishinggroup.com/html/10.11648.j.ss.20150405.12.html#paper-content-5>

6- Philosophers of Azerbaijan

https://www.azerbaijans.com/content_644_en.html

20TH CENTURY

SOUTH CAUCASUS

GEORGIA: Prior to the Soviets, there were philosophers who worked under the influence of German philosophy, especially, Kant. Geronti Kikodze published his work "Nation, Language and Aesthetic Culture" in 1909, "The Life and Ethical Ideal" in 1910 where he defended Kantian philosophy against Nietzschean and Marxist philosophies that spread in Georgia after 1901.

Shalva Nutsbidze: In 1918 the first philosophical society, the *Joane Petritsi Philosophical Society*, was founded in Tbilisi through Shalva Nutsbidze's efforts. Shalva Nutsbidze studied the history of Georgian philosophy in the 1930s. While he was in Germany, he created a philosophical doctrine called *Alethiologian Realism*. He also developed the *Theory of the Eastern Renaissance* and the *Nutsbidze-Honigmann Theory*. Nutsbidze was also one of the founders of the Tbilisi State University, and became the Dean of the Department of History of World Literature, Doctor of Philosophy (1944).

He authored: "Bolzano and the Theory of Science: The Principles of the Alethology" (1973), "An Introduction to Philosophy (The Problem of Knowledge)" (1974), "Peter the Iberian and the Philosophical Legacy of Antiquity" (1975), the first book of *The History of Georgian Philosophy* (1983), and the second book of *The History of Georgian Philosophy* (1985).

In 1946, *the Institute of Philosophy* was founded at the Academy of Sciences. The philosophers Z. Kakabadze, N. Chavchavadze, V. Kvachakhia fought against the domination of the Socialist Realist depiction in Aesthetics.

S.B. Tsereteli: Philosopher Tsereteli emphasized the importance of formal logic and discussed its relations with dialectics in his *Dialectical Logic* (1965,1971).

K. S. Bakradze: Bakradze also examined the relation of logic to dialectics. Under the influence of B. Russell, he published the second edition of his book *System and Method in Hegel's Philosophy* (1958). He also published the books *The Method of Analysis in Bourgeois Philosophy* (1960), *Modern Positivism* (1961), *The Problem of Origin of Cognition by Husserl and Russell* (1969).

A. Bochorishvili: The Georgian philosopher A. Bochorishvili opened the Department of Philosophical Anthropology at the Institute of Philosophy in 1967. He authored three volumes: *Principles of Psychology* (1957-1962), *Phenomenological Aesthetics* (1966), *Theoretical Principles of Philosophical Anthropology* (1976).

Seit Devdariani: Devdariani was a philosopher who, due to his fervent political activities against Soviet rule, was executed during Joseph Stalin's Great Purge. Devdariani wrote several books on philosophy. One of them was a three-volume *History of Georgian Thought*. This book disappeared after his execution. Only one chapter on "18th-century Catholicos Anton I" has survived and was published in 1989.

Merab Mamardashvili: Mamardashvili was a philosopher who served as the chair of the Department of the Tsereteli Institute of Philosophy of the Georgian Academy of Sciences between 1987-1990. He was fired from many of his teaching posts and from the editorial board of the journal *Problems of Philosophy*. He was not allowed to travel abroad for two decades. Under the influence of the French philosopher René Descartes and Immanuel Kant, Mamardashvili devoted his works to analyzing the rationalist theory of perception, and worked on philosophical gnoseology, the metatheory of language and consciousness, the

relationship between culture and consciousness, and the fundamental role of consciousness in human experience. He was the author of *The Process of Analysis and Synthesis* (1958), *Forms and Contents of Thinking* (1968), *The Problem of Objective Method in Psychology* (1977), *The Arrow of Cognition* (1978), *Classic and Non-classic Ideals of Rationality* (1984), *Conscious and the Philosophical Calling* (1988), *Cartesian Meditations* (1993) and many others.

Philosophical studies in Georgia made further advancements with the contributions of philosophers like G. Tevzadze, A. Begiasvili, N.Z. Cavcavadze, A.T. Bocorisvili, G. Bandze ladze, O. Bakuradze, Z. Kakabadze, G. Margvelasvili, G.V. Cincadze, E.I. Kodua, G. V. Macitadze, Z.N. Mikeladze, M. Tselidze, S. Xidaseli from Tbilisi University and in the Institute of Philosophy.

ARMENIA: In 1944, *the Sector of Philosophy* was founded in the Academy of Sciences. In 1969, the Sector was turned into *The Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Law of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia*. The philosophers studied such issues as the dialectic of the relations of production, the issues of philosophy of labor and technology, social progress of socialist humanism, on issues of correlation between ideology and politics, of science-based management of the society etc.

With the spreading ideas of Marxism and Leninism, the works that were published gained a new perspective in dealing with the problems of societal evolution. The philosophers like Vladimir Osipov contributed to the social issues of the education system as well as of labor, technology and scientific and technological revolution. He authored *Socio-Philosophical Analysis of Contemporary Theory of Lifelong Education* (1989), *School - Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1986), *Education System and Scientific-Technological Revolution* (1985) etc.

Other philosophers like Alakhverdian worked on sociological and political issues of the life while Gevorg Poghosyan studied on the issues of methodology and techniques of applied sociological research.

AZERBAIJAN: In the early 20th century, the Bolsheviks propagated Marxism in Baku. Marxist-Leninist ideology became dominant in Azerbaijan. When the Soviet power was established in Azerbaijan, all the activities of hostile ideologies and the study of non-Marxist philosophy were banned; dialectical and historical materialism became dominant ideology in philosophical thought. In the 20s, the philosophers Huseyn Javid, Jafar Jabbarli, Nariman Narimanov, Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh and Heydar Huseynov made valuable contributions to the development of this discipline.

Most of the research was conducted at the Baku University, however, when the university was closed between 1930-1934, all the researches transferred to the Azerbaijani Scientific Research Institute. The study of Philosophy was institutionalized in 1945 as part of Azerbaijani Academy of Science. The Institute included the departments Dialectical and Historical Materialism, History of Philosophy, Ethics and Esthetics, and Scientific Atheism. The philosophers who worked in this institution studied both the classics of western philosophy and Azerbaijani themes as in G.N. Guseinov's *19th century Azerbaijani Thought* published in 1952. The philosophers in this institution also studied the classics of eastern philosophy and the philosophical works of Nizami and Khagani.

In the 60s, the Institute began to increase their research on the subject of scientific atheism as in the articles "Science Refutes Religious Revelations" (1965), "The Formation of Atheistic Worldview of Azerbaijani People" (1967), "The Ideology of Islam and its Critique in Azerbaijan in the Early 20th Century" (1973) and "Atheistic Motifs in Azerbaijani Oral Tradition" (1973) etc.

One of the proponents of the Enlightenment, and a supporter of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, Nariman Narimanov discussed the principles of dialectical and historical materialism in his article "The path of knowledge of Communism" which was a manuscript written in the Azerbaijani and Russian. He also created philosophical terminology in the Azerbaijani language.

There was a group of Azerbaijani philosophers who opposed the proletarian dictatorship and Marxist philosophy in exile like the philosophers A. Agaoglu, A. Guseynzade M.E. Rasulzadeh, Hussein Baykara,

Afandiyev Asif Gasım oglu and others. Guseynzade immigrated to Turkey to avoid punishment for his nationalist ideas and Turanism. In his works, Agaoglu discussed the influence of Western culture in Brahmanic, Buddhist and Islamic values and the relations with the Eastern world. He wrote *Three Cultures*, *The State and the Individual* and *The woman in Islam for the Sake of Islam*.

Afandiyev Asif Gasım oglu (Asif Ata) founded the *Ethic and Aesthetic Moral Upbringing Club* in 1976. Based on Western philosophical thought, he created a doctrine that was concerned about human morality and the creation of a wise man, and advocated that without the moral improvement of a man, the improvement of a society was not possible, contradicting the Marxist theory.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Marxist-Leninist ideology rapidly declined in popularity in Azerbaijan.

Questions:

1- After the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia's power in the North Caucasus was weakened and the political influence of local leaders was diminished. They urgently needed to strengthen their relationship with the local elites, rather than to built institutions to improve the conditions in the region. Why would the Russian authority not try to promote democracy, rather than increasing the privileges of the executive leaders of the republics?

Readings:

1- Rayfield, D., *Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia*, Reaktion Books, 2012.

2- <http://countrystudies.us/georgia/27.htm>

3- <https://article.sciencepublishinggroup.com/html/10.11648.j.ss.20150405.12.html#paper-content-5>

4- Kharatyan, H., "Religion and the Secular State in Armenia" in *Religion and the Secular State: Interim Reports*, XVIII. Congress of Comparative Law, 2010.

<https://classic.iclrs.org/content/blurb/files/Armenia.pdf>

5- Zakariadze, A. & Brachuli, I., *Philosophy in Georgia: From Neoplatonism to Postmodernism*, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Press, 2018

http://press.tsu.ge/data/image_db_innova/brachuli-sabechdi-varianti2222.pdf

6- Tevzadze, G., "Philosophy in Contemporary Georgia", *Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.* vol. 175, No 2, 2007

7- Poghosyan, G., "History of Evolution of the Armenian Sociological Thought", *Social Sciences*, 2015; 4(5): 119-126

8- https://www.azerbaijans.com/content_642_en.html

9- Ruble, B.A., Teeter M. H., & Sutter E.B., *Soviet Research Institutes Project: Volume III The Humanities*, Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, 1981.

10- https://www.azerbaijans.com/content_639_en.html