

International Memory of the World Register

“Description of Georgian Kingdom” and the Geographical Atlas of Vakhushti Bagrationi (Georgia)

2012-46

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

“Description of Georgian Kingdom” and Geographical Atlas of Vakhushti Batonishvili are unique manuscripts which represent the first attempt of complete description of Georgian territory. History and Geography of the country are collected in one book. “Geographical Atlas” is a special cartographical heritage not only for Georgia, but for the development of culture of the countries of Europe and Russia.

“Description of Georgian Kingdom” and Geographical Atlas represent autographs of Vakhushti Bagrationi created in 1743-1755. According to the index of the author it is elucidated that the maps and the genealogical schemes were the part of the manuscript. Later the maps were taken (supposedly in 19th century) and bound separately as a “Geographical Atlas”. The maps are compiled on the same paper as the text of the work. So it is specified that the maps were parts of the work, the geographical description of each region was followed by adequate map and they were inserted later by the author, after the work was completed.

Vakhushti Bagrationi was a Georgian prince; geographer, historian and cartographer; son of King Vakhtang VI. In 1724 King Vakhtang VI left for Russia, together with his suit and son Vakhushti. The prince spent immigration in Moscow. After his decease “Description of Georgian Kingdom” together with atlas was purchased by St. Petersburg Asian Museum in 1838 from Konstantine Bagrationi (1793-1844; the son of King David of Imereti), the owner of the document for that time. Because the atlas was owned by Petersburg Asian Museum, it was called “Petersburgian Atlas”. In 1925 “Description of Georgian Kingdom” and atlas of Vakhushti were transferred to Georgia from St. Petersburg Saltikov-Shchedrin library and are preserved at the Central Historical Archives of the National Archives of Georgia.

The maps of Vakhushti are distinguished with topographical details and completeness from all the rest cartographical images that were compiled before and partly afterwards, since the exact topographical copying began. According to the researchers, the maps of Vakhushti Bagrationi played a special role in studying the geography and cartographical description of Caucasus and the territory of Georgia. Europe acquainted with Caucasus, privately the cartographical images of Georgia and nearby territories, according to these maps.

In the work “Description of Georgian Kingdom” is presented the history of Georgia from the ancient period till 40s of the 18th century. It was the only monumental researches of Georgian Historical write of that period. Thoroughly accomplished maps are the part of the work. It contains the history of the separate kingdoms and principalities of Georgia, their geographical descriptions and maps.

The main theme of the multilateral activities and research of Vakhushti Batonishvili represent the geography, cartography and history of Georgia. He left us the first complete and through geographical description of Georgia’s historical territory and geographical atlas of the country. So he occupied prominent place not only among Georgian scientists, but European geographers as well.

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

National Archives of Georgia

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

Custodian and owner of the National ownership

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Teona Iashvili, General Director of the National Archives of Georgia

2.4 Contact details

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	
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2.5 Declaration of authority

I certify that I have the authority to nominate the documentary heritage described in this document to the International Memory of the World Register.

Signature

Full name (Please PRINT)

Teona Iashvili

Institution(s), if appropriate

National Archives of Georgia

Date: 09.03.2012

3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

If inscribed, the exact title and institution(s) to appear on the certificate should be given

“Description of Georgian Kingdom” and Geographical Atlas represent autographs of Vakhushki Bagrationi created in 1743-1755. The size of the work is 42X17cm, 372 pages and the size of the atlas 42X33cm, 21 pages. Both works are inserted in green mosaic carton cover. The atlas and “Description of Georgian Kingdom” have French titles “Atlas pur wakhoucht” and “Wakhoucht, Histuare De Georgia (Original)”. Atlas is placed in leather setting that is supposedly created at Asian Museum. Maps and tables are stroke on thick papers. It consists of 19 maps and 2 genealogical schemes of Bagrationi (Georgian Royal Family). 2 of the maps represent the Georgia and it depicts the whole Caucasus. The rest of the maps are dedicated to the separate parts of Georgia.

Following maps and tables are presented in the atlas: 1. Caucasus map “The portion of eight sons of Targamos” showing countries; 2. “The portion of Kartlos from the country”; 3. Ten

Duchies of King Farnaoz's period; 4. Genealogical table of Georgian kings till 1744; 5. Map of Trans-Caucasus; 6. Kartli (general); 7. Kartli to the North of Mtkvari; 8. Shida Kartli; 9. Kartli; 10. Old Duchies; 11. The countries of Gachiani and Gardabani; 12. Kartli to the South of Mtkvari; 13. Somkhit-Sabaratio and Satsitsiano; 14. Kakheti and Hereti; 15. Ossetia; 16. Genealogy from Adam to Virgin; 17. Genealogy of Bagrationi till 1744; 18. Samtskhe-Saatabago; 19. Imereti; 20. West Georgia; 21. Odishi, Abkhazia and Jiketi.

The settlements on the maps are depicted with artistic conditional signs. The names of Geographical objects are written with Georgian secular script of 18th century. The atlas is decorated using water-colour paints: inscriptions, rivers, border lines, relief – with black colour; kingdoms, principalities – with coloured paints.

The relief is depicted with the method, typical to the middle centuries. This method was unable to depict exactly such complicated relief that is usual for Caucasus. In spite of this the scientist manages to depict the main watershed ridges, their branches, mountains and plains with appropriate rightness and from this side the maps approach the modern demands.

The maps of Vakhushti Bagrationi cause interest with the depiction of the outline of the embankments of the rivers and the lakes. For example, the black sea side is depicted with tortuous line, instead of the straight one on every map.

In Caucasus of the 18th century, as well as in all other countries, the topographical research of location, also the description of population, cities, location of villages, fortresses, roads were usually made by foreign travellers. Accordingly the maps of Vakhushti Bagrationi represented the first detailed images of Caucasus that was a real progress for that period.

The basis of the maps of Vakhushti's atlas was the primary sources of graphic character of field works. It's known that Vakhtang VI (father of Vakhushti Bagrationi) and Vakhushti had geodetic equipment – astrolabe (it is preserved at the division of feudal epoch of the State Museum of Georgia) that was brought from Esfahan by the King. It's worth mentioning that the books of the description of the country's population, documents of royal inventories, also the descriptions of places and country-cottages represented auxiliary materials in Vakhushti's cartographical works. And for creation of the maps the main source was the material captured by field planning.

“Description of Georgian Kingdom” covers: List of the villages of Kartli-Kakheti; introduction of the work for the readers; nature and customs of Georgia; description of Georgian Kingdom; separation of the Kingdom in three Kingdoms and 5 principalities; chronicle; comparative inventory of foreign and Georgian Kings; indexes, Kinklos (Georgian calendar).

Vakhushti Bagrationi mastered the rich heritage of old Georgian historical write, rationally used the achievements of early centuries, improved, smartened and developed existed data, added much more new and turned chronicle into history. As a result Vakhushti left the equivalent historical work “Description of Georgian Kingdom” of the scientific level of his modern epoch.

He complemented the Georgian chronicle with the inevitable part – description of place. This was the basis of historical geography.

One of the main dignities of the geographical work is the abundance and exactness of the described materials gathered in the manuscript and it is differs the work from many others created in the 18th century and earlier period and is dedicated to Caucasus. This is confirmed with the multiplicity of the geographical objects mentioned in the work. For example, Vakhushti Bagrationi describes 800 Orographical unites (ridge, apex, ravine, plain), 440 rivers, 22 lakes and others. The population and the natural conditions of the territory of Georgia are discussed in the work in details. Besides that the work includes information about

the Geological structure of Georgia (though Geology did not exist as a science for that period). The author also mentions rocks and minerals. He discusses about 30 different rocks and minerals.

The work is the result of the complicated, long and strenuous work. The text seems to be written in different periods and for a long time. Sometimes it's written with light ink, sometimes with sharp black ink. The high calligraphic technique is worth mentioning. Its prominent pattern is the text added on the edges with microscopic letters.

3.2 Catalogue or registration details

“Description of Georgian Kingdom” – Fond 1446, Manuscript No. 103, Pages 372

Geographical Atlas – Fond 1446, Manuscript No. 105, Pages 21

3.4 History/provenance

Describe what you know of the history of the collection or document. Your knowledge may not be complete, but give the best description you can.

“Description of Georgian Kingdom” and Geographical Atlas of Vakhushti Bagrationi were created in 1743-1755.

Vakhushti Bagrationi was a Georgian prince; geographer, historian and cartographer; son of King Vakhtang VI. In 1724 King Vakhtang VI left for Russia, together with his suit and son Vakhushti. The prince spent immigration in Moscow. After his decease the “Description of Georgian Kingdom” together with atlas created in 1745 was purchased by St. Petersburg Asian Museum in 1838 from Konstantine Bagrationi (1793-1844; the son of King David of Imereti), the owner of the document for that time. Because the atlas was owned by Petersburg Asian Museum, it was called “Petersburgian Atlas”. In 1925 “Description of Georgian Kingdom” and Geographical Atlas of Vakhushti were transferred to Georgia from St. Petersburg Saltikov-Shchedrin library and are preserved at the Central Historical Archives of the National Archives of Georgia.

This work is the only autograph reached to our days that fully depicts the history and geography of Georgia and is attached the maps.

3.5 Bibliography

1. Irakli Maturashvili – “Cartographic Heritage of Vakhushti Bagrationi”, Tbilisi, 1990
 2. Zurab Tatashidze – “Geographical and Cartographical Heritage of Vakhushti Bagrationi”, 1997
 3. Marie Brosset – About the documents of the astronomer Delil preserved at the Archive of Russian Geographical Society. News of Imperial Russian Geographical Society, vol.1. No.1. 1865
 4. Levan Maruashvili – “Vakhushti Bagrationi - the founder of Georgian Geographical research”, Tbilisi, 1956
 5. Roin Metreveli, Zurab Tatashidze – “Vakhishti Bagrationi – great scientist and patriot”, Tbilisi, 1997
 6. Ivane Javakhishvili – “Prince Vakhushti”, Tbilisi, 1945
 7. Marie Brosset – “Geographical description of Georgia by Prince Vakhushti and original printed”, St. Petersburg, 1842, in Georgian and French languages
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4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name	Address
Georgia	

Telephone	Facsimile	Email

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name	Address
National Archives of Georgia	1, Vazha-Pshavela Ave., Tbilisi, Georgia

Telephone	Facsimile	Email
+995(32)2372801	+995(32)2372801	info@archives.gov.ge

4.3 Legal status

Provide details of legal and administrative responsibility for the preservation of the documentary heritage

State ownership

4.4 Accessibility

The documents are kept in a securely locked fireproof safe. Since they belong to the group of documents of significant importance, access to them are strictly restricted. "Description of Georgian Kingdom" is not delivered in the reading room. The manuscript has the Xerox copy that is accessible for researchers in the reading room.

What concerns the Geographical Atlas black and white photo copy and facsimile coloured illustrations of atlas, published in 1997, dedicated to the anniversary of Vakhushti Bagrationi are preserved at the archive. Both of them are accessible for any interested person in the reading room.

4.5 Copyright status

Describe the copyright status of the item(s) / collection

The National Archives of Georgia is the copyright holder. It is stipulated by article 25 of the law on the National Archival Fonds and the National Archives that during publishing the document of the national archival fonds it is mandatory to indicate the owner and the custodian of the document.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity.

According to the index of the author it is elucidated that the maps and the genealogical schemes were the part of the manuscript, later the maps were taken (supposedly in 19th century) and bound separately as a “Geographical Atlas”. The maps are compiled on the same paper as the text of the work. So it is specified that the maps were parts of the work, the geographical description of each region was followed by adequate map and they were inserted later by the author, after the work was completed.

The first publisher of Vakhushti Bagrationi Marie Brosset during his research had the disbanded manuscript; the maps were taken from the work. That’s why when Marie Brosset mentions the maps everywhere notes the pagination of the original together with the number of the map.

5.2 World significance

The main theme of the multilateral activities and research of Vakhushti Batonishvili represent the geography of Georgia, cartography and history. He left us the first complete and through geographical description of Georgia’s historical territory and geographical atlas of the country. So he occupied prominent place not only among Georgian scientists, but European geographers as well.

The introduction of the work is “Character and Habits of Georgia” and it consist the questions of our history, life of Georgian people, social and state system, law, religion, habits and others. All this was discussed on the base of the deep research of primary sources, as well as the achievements of European Historiography of 17th-18th centuries. Vakhushti was the first Georgian historian who described the social system of feudal Georgia. Vakhushti Bagrationi gathered the data of existence culture of Georgians and their neighbour peoples. Factually his work was the foundation of Georgian ethnography. He has described the customs of marriage, funeral, grief and others. Important place of the work concerns Georgian costumes.

The ethnographical data of Vakhushti are of the same importance today, not only because it is the first scientific work in this sphere, but his work is actual today as well with its research and analysis towards many questions of modern life.

The maps of Vakhushti are distinguished with topographical details and completeness from all the rest cartographical images that were compiled before and partly afterwards, since the exact topographical copying began. According to the researchers, the maps of Vakhushti Bagrationi played a special role in studying the geography and cartographical description of Caucasus and the territory of Georgia. Europe acquainted with Caucasus, privately the cartographical images of Georgia and nearby territories, according to these maps.

The works of Vakhushti Bagrationi were used during his lifetime as well by Russian and European researchers also. That’s why his works are of world significance not only by the opinion of Georgian researchers but according to the opinion of foreign prominent cartographers.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

Does the heritage meet any of the following tests? (It must meet at least one of them.)

1 Time

The works of Vakhushti Bagrationi, geographer, historian and cartographer were created in

1743-1755. He was son of King Vakhtang VI. In 1724 King Vakhtang VI left for Russia, together with his suit and son Vakhushti. The prince spent immigration in Moscow. As Vakhushti mentioned in 1745, he lived in "Moscow Presna" and worked there.

In the work "Description of Georgian Kingdom" is presented the history of Georgia from the ancient period till 40s of the 18th century. It was the only monumental research of Georgian Historical wrote in that period. Thoroughly accomplished maps are the part of the work. It contains the history of the separate kingdoms and principalities of Georgia, their geographical descriptions and maps.

The 18th century was the era of refraction in the development of world cartography. France is distinguished in this direction. New methods of compiling the scheme of maps were treated. According to them composition of cartography was started in Georgia as well. And Vakhushti Bagrationi worked on the atlas of Georgia intensively.

Research of the atlas confirms that the initial of the Georgian cartography is much earlier than the maps of the 18th century. Vakhushti had different cartographical materials that haven't reached to our days unfortunately.

2 Place

The works of Vakhushti Bagrationi were written in Moscow. The prince spent immigration in Moscow. As Vakhushti mentioned in 1745, he lived in "Moscow Presna" and worked there. Vakhushti began his scientific work in Georgia and continued and ended it in Moscow. In 1925 "Description of Georgian Kingdom" and Geographical Atlas were transferred to Georgia.

3 People

The cartographical works of the Georgian scientist were widely used in 18th century in Russia and West Europe. With the help of these maps new maps were compiled by: Zhozef Delil (1766), Anton Giuldenshtadt (1772), Burnashev (1784), Sukhotin (1771) and others.

One of the copies of Vakhushti's atlas is preserved at the Petersburg's branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Science of Russia. This atlas is in Georgian language and represents the copy of the atlas of Vakhushti of 1745.

French academician Zhozef Delil arrived to work in Russia in 1726. He worked in the sphere of Geography and cartography and was compiling the map of Russia. During the composition of the scheme of the map he used the maps of Vakhushti Bagrationi together with the other maps. He made the copies and sent them in Paris. So the maps sent from Russia, among them Vakhushti's maps were gathered at the national library and the library of the King of France.

The cartographical works of Vakhushti were first noted to Europe in 1837 with the help of the scientific newspaper No XCVII in Leipzig (preserved at the archive of Russian Geographical Society – category 52, inventory 1, No.1, page 9). The newspaper mentioned: "From Georgians we have received the exact maps of Caucasian mountains, where even the smallest villages are pointed in the mountains and nearby territory. The most part of these maps are already translated from Georgian and Mr. Delil will manage its edition. So, the unknown mountains of Caucasus will be all of a sudden more noted than the countries of Europe".

So the West Europe acquainted with the exact cartographical images of Transcaucasia and

Georgia from the Georgian sources, particularly with the help of Vakhushti's maps.

4 Subject and theme

The main theme of the multilateral activities and research of Vakhushti Batonishvili represent the geography of Georgia, cartography and history. He left us the first complete and through geographical description of Georgia's historical territory and geographical atlas of the country. So he occupied prominent place not only among Georgian scientists, but European geographers as well.

5 Form and style

The work is the result of the complicated, long and strenuous work. The text seems to be written in different periods and for a long time. Sometimes it's written with light ink, sometimes with sharp black ink. The high calligraphic technique is worth mentioning. Its prominent pattern is the text added on the edges with microscopic letters.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

This work is the only autograph reached to our days that fully depicts the history and geography of Georgia and is attached the maps.

6.2 Integrity

The documental heritage is complete and doesn't have any signs of damage.
