

## Some Peculiarities of L. Tolstoy's *Hadji Murad*

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The article refers to the details of writing story *Hadji Murad* by the great Russian writer Lev Tolstoy. Lev Tolstoy had close friendship with Georgian writers Nino and Ilia Nakashidze. They often shared thoughts in the writing of this story. The story was written during eight years. This issue will be very interesting, for Tolstoy creative people.

**Keywords:** L. Tolstoy, Nino Nakashidze, Ilia Nakashidze, *Hadji Murad*, Shamil, Dagestan

### Introduction

The author, who was fascinated by the romantic character of Caucasus from the early age, spent four years in Georgia, first as the civilian and then as a military figure. Tolstoy had to fight against mountaineers several times in Caucasus.

He visited several places in Caucasus. His domicile was Stanitsa Starogladovskaya which he described in "The Cossacks" in detail. Besides this place, Tolstoy also visited Tbilisi, Khasavyurt, Old Yurt, Grozno, Pyatigorski, Zheleznogorsk, Mozdok, Caspian Sea coast.

Tolstoy with great enthusiasm describes his impressions of travelling and the greatness of Caucasus nature in his numerous diaries, letters and stories.

L. Tolstoy was fascinated not only by the Caucasus landscapes but also by people. Though he could not get on with the officers' society, he became closer with Cossacks and mountaineers. He made friends with the old Cossack Epishka (Epiphane Sekhini), who later became the prototype of one of the characters of "Cossacks"—Eroshki. Cossacks loved Tolstoy in its turn and respected him greatly. They liked his courage, boldness and obstinacy. The author showed his great spiritual strength and stubbornness in the clashes with Chechens, when he was almost captured.

Tolstoy worked hard in Starogladkovskaya. He continued working on his early works ("Childhood" and "Adolescence") and started writing those that were dedicated to the Caucasus Wars: "Tareshi", "The Wood Cutting" and "Cossacks". Tolstoy tried to read and write as much as he could in the Caucasus. It was the very place where the character of an artist and a thinker was formed.

Tolstoy paid great attention to *Hadji Murad*. This character was first met in Tolstoy's letter to his brother Sergeon December 23, 1851. Decade later L. Tolstoy (1988) recalls *Hadji Murad* in his pedagogical works: "I spoke about Caucasian bandits—says Tolstoy—they recalled Caucasian stories, which I had told them years earlier and I still began telling stories about bandits, Cossacks and *Hadji Murad*".

Years had passed since returning from Caucasus. "Anna Karenina" and "War and Peace" were written and Tolstoy conquered the readers' hearts and 42 years later an unexpected event made the author to recall the forgotten episode. This fact caused his excitement and gave him no rest.

It happened in the summer of 1896. During that period Tolstoy visited his brother with Pirogov, who informed them about *Hadji Murad*'s movement to Russian side. On his way back Tolstoy had to walk on a newly plowed grass. He was covered with dust and stained, but still alive. Feeling the strength of life coming from the plowed land, excited the author and somehow made him think about *Hadji Murad*.

*Hadji Murad* was violated physically and spiritually several times, but he survived. Even his escape from Nukha proves this. He hid in the rice plants not far from a small island Aul. He was surrounded from all sides. He roughly handled attacks. Then some wounds, but he still continues to fight. There is no way out. Deadly wounded *Hadji Murad* with his last effort hardly rises up and then falls, no longer able to move.

In the diary entry dated July 19, 1896 L. Tolstoy states that Birkava's bush recalled him of *Hadji Murad*. Not only recalled, but inspired as well to write a work about this mountaineer with the strong character and luck. The writing of *Hadji Murad* began in the Shamardini monastery while visiting his sister. In a month the outline of the story was ready, but the plot underwent several changes.

S. Shulgin—the author of the historical essays about Shamil and *Hadji Murad* recalls his talk with L. Tolstoy in 1903: "I will have to investigate the epoch of Nikoloz, look through the manuscripts and published documents. All these are needed to create several characters though the reader might not notice them, they are still very important." Despite other historical stories, *Hadji Murad* accurately reveals historical reality.

The author was interested in every detail connected with *Hadji Murad* that he obtained from his Caucasian friends I. Nakashidze, S. Esadze and S. Shulgin. Leo was interested even in insignificant detail.

L. Tolstoy studied numerous printed and archival sources in order to get to know the wars in Caucasus, the past of Dagestan and the characters of Shamil and Hadji-Murad. But he showed interest not only in documents, but also he tried to get information from veterans, from those who witnessed the fights. The famous Georgian writer Nino Nakashidze recalls: "Once it was nearly 5 o'clock, Ilika had just returned from work, the door opened and Leo Tolstoy entered the room. Then we lived on Pluchikha.—If I won't bother you I need some information about Hadji-Murad. There is a board and care home for seniors in Moscow. There should live the warrior of Dagestan war. I would like to know if that's true. You might know something".

Ninos' husband, a well-known writer Ilika Nakashidze, eagerly helped the writer and remembers the time when the warriors with great enthusiasm recalled the past they had gone through.

Ilika Nakashidze helped L. Tolstoy in collecting the material after his return in Georgia. As we have already mentioned, among others who helped him were: the famous historian Colonel S. Esadze, S. Shulgin the teacher from Tbilisi, Korganov who had the opportunity to witness the last days of *Hadji Murad*'s life, historian general Poto and others. Numerous letters and documents were sent to Yasnaya Polyana from Tbilisi. L. Tolstoy thanks his friend from Tbilisi for help in a thank you letter (which is kept in the Archives of the Institute of Georgian Literature) and sends them books with his autograph.

It was hard not only to collect the material, but also working on the stories was followed by disturbance and emotional feelings. There were the times when the author even thought to give up the writing of the story. Sometimes L. Tolstoy was working on "Easter" and "Farther Sergius" instead of *Hadji Murad*. And then filled

with the energy continued writing Caucasian episodes. Writing the first chapter of the book took a long time. There are several versions of the chapter (Kept in the museum of Yasnaya Polyana).

Several records point to the difficulties and dissatisfaction that accompanied the process of writing. Among them are:

September 14, 1896: "I made the draft of *Hadji Murad* ery badly, awfully"

October 21, 1896: "I looked through *Hadji Murad*"

November 21, 1897: "I have thought a lot and I'm gathering material for *Hadji Murad*. I have thought and read a lot, started writing, but stopped immediately".

January 13, 1898: "I'm trying hard to find the satisfying form for *Hadji Murad*, but in vain. But, somehow I'm close to it". (Tolstoy, 1988, pp. 34-45)

There are a lot of similar records in the diaries of 1902. In the diary of November 30th the author writes: "I have continued writing. If I am alive, I'll finish it tomorrow".

But health problems became a barrier. It was finally finished in February, 1904. It took 8 years to write the story.

### Conclusion

The story caused great interest. L. Tolstoy perfectly knew that period and the role of Shamili and *Hadji Murad*. He protected the historical truth based on the authentic documents. The author expressed great sympathy to the ordinary people. It was clear that those people had no cause of the outbreak of war and authorities gave rise to hatred between the peoples.

Chapter 15 is dedicated to Nikoloz I. The man with lifeless eyes, was thrilled to be ferocious and fierce. Tolstoy worked a lot on this chapter. The author tried to describe him with great precision. Censorship banned some facts in the story that revealed the King's despotism.

The folklore of mountaineers' is entirely expressed in *Hadji Murad*. Numerous sayings, a tale and three songs are examples of sarcasm. L. Tolstoy was first among Russian writers who perfectly described Daghestan and Shamil and *Hadji Murad*'s characters.

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