

## ROZETA GUJEJANI

### ETHNOGRAPHIC LEGACY OF ARCHPRIEST BESARION NIZHARADZE (1852-1919)

The article presents the key aspects of Archpriest Besarion Nizharadze's accomplished life. He was a clergyman, teacher and translator; worked at the chancellery, pursued his research, investigated and protected the monuments of Georgian cultural heritage (crosses, icons, liturgical items and manuscripts), studied the specificities of the Svan idiom, stressed the importance of teaching of the Georgian language in schools, and strongly opposed the Russianization process in Georgia. Archpriest Besarion Nizharadze's ethnographic legacy deserves special mention among his great accomplishments. The article analyzes the importance of Archpriest Besarion Nizharadze's ethnographic legacy for the field of ethnology.

Archpriest B. Nizharadze's contribution to ethnography is important for the following sub-fields: the history, way of life, religion, social relations, law, and cultural and economic type of the Georgian mountain dwellers; also, specifying biographical data of local figures, and finding, defending and studying of the antiquities.

B. Nizharadze's ethnographic essays are thematically diverse. He describes the Svanetian traditional way of life: folk beliefs, holidays, rituals, domestic relations, forms of kin, etiquette, norms of the custom law, legal process, rural community, forms of popular governance, economic activities, folk medicine, etc.

The scholar put special emphasis on social problems of the Svaneti population, namely, poverty, lack of roads, lack of doctors and opportunities for education. It could be claimed that Archpriest Besarion Nizharadze's ethnographic legacy includes a description of almost every aspect of spiritual, social and material life of the Georgian mountain dwellers (Svans).