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## Preface

There is a saying: *“History is geography over time and geography is the history in space.”* This is particularly true in relation to Georgia where the history and geography are mingled so closely that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish them from each other. It is noteworthy that this country has three names. The first is the autonym “Sakartvelo,” country of Kartl’s. The second is the name under which the country is known in the West, “Georgia,” and the third “Gurdjistan” (land of the wolves). There is the Russian name, “Georgia.” Kartvel is a community of Caucasian ethnological tribes who lived in the territory between the Big Caucasian ridge and the Anatolian plateau, in its central and western parts. The country’s modern name is Sakartvelo (country of Kartl’s). After the adoption of Christianity in the fourth century, the country was renamed after the Patron St. George; Georgia—country of St. George. The Turks and the Iranians call it “Gurdjistan,” the country of wolves. The fact of the matter is that the Georgians showed such invincibility in battle that they became known as “Grdži” or wolf. Therefore, Georgia is a country with three accepted names.

At the end of the twentieth century, in a majority of countries in the world, the successful resolution of socioeconomic, political, demographic, and ecological problems was largely dependent on the protection of population and engineering-economic objects from natural disasters, and ensuring conditions for their sustainable development. These problems are most acute in mountainous regions, like in Georgia, where unplanned development of natural ecosystems results in drastic consequences. It is, therefore, necessary to understand not only the probability of changing conditions (natural as well as political and demographic), but also the probability of the resulting economic losses. This book discusses the political and economic history and geography of Georgia, the problems it has faced, and how it has overcome and is overcoming them.

The subject matter of this book is divided into 20 chapters. Beginning with a discussion of Georgia’s location and climate, Chap. 1 provides a brief account of historical development, political systems, economy, population, and culture. The remaining chapters are organized in four sections. Section 1, encompassing five chapters, deals with historical geography. Chapter 2 deals with ancient history, including seeds of civilization, environmental peculiarities, cultivation, culture, functionality, basin evolution, interaction of man and nature, landscape evolution, cultural mosaic, habitable places, ecological conditions, hunting and other food sources, and concentration of population. Historical and political geography is dealt with, in Chap. 3. It discusses the history of the territorial transformation of Georgia and geopolitical problems. Ethnic groups and religions are covered in Chap. 4. It deals with the composition of the Georgian population and religions. Demographics constitute the subject matter of Chap. 5. It deals with demographic landscape, territorial disposition of population, dynamism of population, natural growth, population structure by age and sex, migration of population, social structure and employment, employment, geography of unemployment, urban geography, creation of Georgian cities, urbanization, geography of villages, ethnic geography of Georgians, Georgians outside of Georgia, basic ethnic groups, ethno-genesis of Georgians, Georgian lan-

guages and dialects, and Georgian surnames. Chapter 6 discusses sociocultural geography encompassing the standard of living, education, culture and science, medical geography and healthcare, and traditions.

Section 2 deals with geological processes and contains three chapters. Geology is the subject matter of Chap. 7 encompassing geological formations, seismic activity, landforms and relief, scheme of geomorphological zonation, expressiveness in the relief and geological structures, and mineralization. Chapter 8 is on geodynamical processes, including erosion and surface wash-down, mudflow, and landslides. Glacial and periglacial processes are treated in Chap. 9. Included are glaciers in Georgia, geography of glaciers, glacial melting, avalanches, cryogenic processes, classification of periglacial formations, and impact of cryogenic processes.

Ecological processes are discussed in Sect. 3, which comprises five chapters. Landscapes constitute the subject matter of Chap. 10, which discusses abrasion of coastline, use of remote sensing, factors affecting landscapes, transformation of landscapes, landscape mosaic, and landscape architecture. Chapter 11 covers deforestation and reforestation. It deals with Georgia's forest cover, lowlands, protected forests, declining forest cover in unprotected areas and the government's effort to replenish deforested areas with new plantations, biodiversity, and anthropogenic changes. Chapter 12 deals with desertification encompassing deforestation and droughts, desertification, desert landscapes, soils, influence of anthropogenic activity, and characteristics of landscapes. Ecosystems, including vegetation, arid and semiarid ecosystems, and fauna, are discussed in Chap. 13. It also includes a discussion of the impact of urbanization, karst, unique highs, vegetation, arid and semiarid ecosystems, and fauna. Anthropogenic impact on the environment is dealt with in Chap. 14 encompassing hewing of forests and forest restoration, felling of woods and general depletion of the region's flora, conservation of biodiversity, and biodiversity.

Developmental geography is the focus of Sect. 4, spanning six chapters. Economic history is covered in Chap. 15. It discusses nature and society in the ancient era, nature and economy in antiquity, nature and economy in the middle ages, economy in the nineteenth century, economy in the first quarter of the twentieth century, and economy in the socialistic era. Chapter 16 deals with the Georgian economy, including the fuel-energy complex, manufacturing industry, land fund, agriculture, transportation, communication and trade, communication, internal trade, resorts and tourism, and foreign relations. Natural resources are dealt with in Chap. 17. It discusses water resources, agricultural land resources, mineral resources, soil and coal deposits, building materials, and landslides. Chapter 18 deals with sustainable development discussing regions of ecological disaster, pollution of ecosystems, transformation of space and growing of cities, ecological catastrophes and zones of misfortune, sustainable development, and aesthetics. Chapter 19 is on global warming and climate change, including warming trend, climate, climate diversity, formation of climate, factors affecting climate, agroclimatic districts, hydrography, soil and processes of degradation, and erosion. Law and government are discussed in Chap. 20. It includes the central government, regional and local authorities, the electoral system and its organization, activities and responsibilities of government, protection of environment and natural resources, international relations, and freedoms and human rights.

Tbilisi, Georgia  
Tbilisi, Georgia  
College Station, Texas, U.S.A.

Igor V. Bondyrev  
Zurab V. Davitashvili  
Vijay P. Singh

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Bondyrev, I.; Davitashvili, Z.; Singh, V.P.

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