



# Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia

By Donald Rayfield

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## Edge of Empires: A History of Georgia By Donald Rayfield

Located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe, Georgia is a country of rainforests and swamps, snow and glaciers, and semi-arid plains. It has ski resorts and mineral springs, monuments and an oil pipeline. It also has one of the longest and most turbulent histories in the Christian or Near Eastern world, but no comprehensive, up-to-date account has been written about this little-known country—until now. Remedying this omission, Donald Rayfield accesses a mass of new material from recently opened archives to tell Georgia's absorbing story.

Beginning with the first intimations of the existence of Georgians in ancient Anatolia and ending with today's volatile President Saakashvili, Rayfield deals with the country's internal politics and swings between disintegration and unity, and divulges Georgia's complex struggles with the empires that have tried to control, fragment, or even destroy it. He describes the country's conflicts with Xenophon's Greeks, Arabs, invading Turks, the Crusades, Genghis Khan, the Persian Empire, the Russian Empire, and Soviet totalitarianism. A wide-ranging examination of this small but colorful country, its dramatic state-building, and its tragic political mistakes, *Edge of Empires* draws our eyes to this often overlooked nation.

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#### Review

“Donald Rayfield’s *Edge of Empires* is a wonderful history of Georgia, lifting the lid on that country’s torrid, rambunctious past (and present). Impeccably researched, limpidly written and full of insight.”

(William Boyd, *Books of the Year*, *The Guardian*)

“Donald Rayfield’s panoramic *Edge of Empires* is an impressive work that helps us understand why this south Caucasus nation of 6.4m people lodged in a hostile and unstable neighbourhood looks so longingly to the West. . . . *Edge of Empires* is the most wide-ranging and reliable history of Georgia one is likely to find for many years to come.”

(Tony Barber, *Financial Times*)

“[An] ambitious and comprehensive history of a complex country. . . . Mr. Rayfield’s powerful theme is of brief periods of prosperity and security, ended by invasion, conquest, looting and despoliation.”

(*The Economist*)

“The most comprehensive and up-to-date history of Georgia available in English. This tour de force explains why the small south Caucasus nation looks longingly to the west. A work of consummate erudition from Britain’s foremost expert on Georgian history and literature.”

(“*Books of the Year*,” *Financial Times*)

“Rayfield offers the most comprehensive and detailed survey history of the country of Georgia to date. . . . An excellent and indispensable reference for libraries, studies, researchers, and general readers. Essential.”

(*Choice*)

2013 Outstanding Academic Title

(*Choice magazine*)

#### About the Author

**Donald Rayfield** is professor emeritus of Russian and Georgian in the Department of Russian, Queen Mary, University of London. He is the author of *Stalin and His Hangmen: The Tyrant and Those Who Killed for Him*.

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