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THE GEORGIAN KINGDOMS OF THE SOUTH WESTERN CAUCASUS
IN OTTOMAN-RUSSIAN RELATIONS
1783-1806

145589

The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

by

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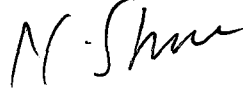
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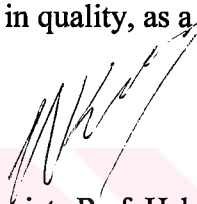
September 2004

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in International Relations.



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ABSTRACT

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Located at the crossroads in between of the Black and the Caspian Seas, the Southern Caucasus in general, as well as the Georgian ethnic territories in particular, since the earliest times of the written history had been the area of continuous struggle among the major powers of the region. For several centuries Georgia stayed to be the scene of intensive military conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and Persia, what resulted in her being divided into the respective spheres of influence and brought about the political fragmentation of the Georgian lands.

Following the new historical tendencies that surfaced during the second part of the 18th century, there appeared a new regional actor in the Southern Caucasus, which steadily increased its military-political weight there- Russia. In its advance to the Caucasus St. Petersburg needed a certain foothold, wherefrom it would be able to spread its influence all over the Southern Caucasus. At the same time, reunified under the scepter of Erekle II the Eastern part of the old Georgian kingdom, Kartli-Kakheti, sought to ensure its own positions in the area by alliance with some large regional superpower. Due to certain historical reasons such an alliance had been concluded in 1783 with the Russian Empire as the Georgievsk Treaty.

The Porte, for the most part being concerned about the eventual Russian advance further southwards, in various ways tried to hold out in the Caucasus, but at the time could not preserve her previous positions. Growing stronger, using the favorable international situation as well as internal Georgian disagreements, Russia by the beginning of the 19th century managed to complete the direct incorporation of the larger part of the old Georgian territories.

ÖZET

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Güney Kafkasya, özellikle de etnik Gürcü toprakları, Karadeniz ve Hazar Denizi arasında geçiş yolları üzerindeki konumuyla tarihin en eski zamanlarından beri bölgenin büyük güçlerinin devamlı mücadele ettikleri bir bölge olmuştur. Yüzyıllar boyunca Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve İran arasında devam edegelen yoğun askeri mücadeleye sahne olan Gürcistan toprakları, bunun neticesinde siyasi fragmentasyonu da beraberinde getirecek etki alanlarına bölünmüştü.

XVIII. yüzyılın ikinci yarısındaki tarihi temayüller neticesinde askeri-politik ağırlığını artıran Rusya Güney Kafkasya'da yeni bir bölgesel aktör olarak ortaya çıkmıştı. St. Petersburg, Kafkasya'daki ilerleyişinde bütün Güney Kafkasya'ya etkisini yayabileceği stratejik bir üsse ihtiyaç duymaktaydı. Eski Gürcistan Krallığı'nın doğu parçasını oluşturan ve Erekle'nin asası altında birleşen Kartlı-Kaheti, daha büyük bölgesel bir güç ile ittifak kurarak kendi konumunu kuvvetlendirmek arayışı içerisindeydi. Böyle bir ittifak Georgievsk antlaşmasıyla 1783 yılında Rusya ile gerçekleştirilmiş oldu. Ancak Gürcülerin ve Rusların amaçları birbirinden ciddi şekilde farklıydı ve bu fark ileride daha da berraklaşacaktı.

Bab-ı Ali, daha güneye doğru nihai bir Rus ilerleyişinden genel itibariyle endişe duyarken, münferit yollarla Kafkasya'da tutunmaya gayret etti, ancak bunda başarılı olamadı. Daha da güçlenen, uygun uluslararası durumu ve dahası Gürcistan içerisindeki anlaşmazlıkları değerlendiren Rusya, XIX. yüzyılın başında eski Gürcü topraklarının büyük bir kısmını doğrudan kendi topraklarına katmayı başardı.

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Dear reader, this volume you have just opened owes much by its very existence to many people. I hardly can express all my sincere gratitude to my first teacher and supervisor, Prof. Mykhailo Stepanovich Burian, who showed me the door to the scholarly world and who always generously helped me throughout my studies in Luhansk and Kyiv, heartily supported me in Moscow, and did much more besides. I would never be able to find the proper words in order to thank him.

I am also very indebted to Lesia Vasylivna Matveeva, the Director of The Oriental Studies Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv, and Mykola Vitaliiovich Druzhko, the First secretary of the Ukrainian Embassy in Ankara, for their invaluable help concerning my trip to Ankara.

In Bilkent University I was lucky to get to know many teachers which are not only brilliant scholars of vast academic knowledges, but also have a remarkable human qualities. During my stay in Bilkent I learned a lot from them. Special thanks belong to Prof. Norman Stone and Assoc. Prof., Dr. Hakan Kırımlı, for all their kindly help, very useful advices and criticisms, encouragements and the time they spent while supervising my work. Besides, I am much and sincerely grateful to Dr. Mitat Çelikpala, whose valuable comments helped me to shape this thesis in its present form.

Last but not least, I thank Ibrahim, Kostia, Berat for their friendly support and editing of the first drafts of this work, and, of course, exceptional thanks to my family.

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Introduction

Considering the late 18th century in European history, one would certainly mention two historical events, which were of crucial significance for the whole continent of Europe- the Great French Revolution in the West, and the process of expansion of the growing Russian Empire in the East. These two, each in their own way, defined the general tendencies of socio-political development of Eurasia, thus notably influencing a universal historical process. In this sense both also came to be quite important in the fate of a relatively small Christian people, which calling their nation *Sakartvelo*, and which generally known by the name of Georgians, living to the South of the Caucasian Mountains in the western part of the isthmus between the Black and the Caspian seas.

By the end of the 18th century the whole Southern Caucasus, including Georgia, became an arena of direct struggle among three imperial forces, namely Russia, Turkey and Iran. In addition we may include the internal quarrels among Georgians themselves, between small Georgian kingdoms as well as within the royal Bagratid¹ family- and we get to a certain extent the adequate picture of political situation in the area at the time.

The primary objective of this work is to trace the process of Russian advance to the lands, which had normally constituted the core of Georgian statehood since early

¹ Bagratids- the dynasty of the Georgian and the Armenian kings, known from the 4th century, ruling in Georgia in the 9-19th centuries.

mediaeval times. In accordance with the main aim, the tasks will be as follows: to trace the regional activities of the Russian Empire; to characterize the Caucasian politics of the Ottoman state, the power, which also claimed the leadership in Western parts of the Southern Caucasus and the Black Sea littoral; to analyze the influence of other states (meaning West European countries and Iran); to describe domestic disagreements among the Georgians which caused the lack of unity and therefore became one of the reasons for the loss of the Georgian independence.

The chronological scope of the thesis includes the time of actual incorporation of the Georgian lands into Russian Empire, the process, which although has its long pre-history, can be formally started with the Georgievsk Treaty, creating a Russian protectorate over Kartli-Kakheti (Eastern Georgia, or Georgia proper) and traced in its initial stage to the official annexation of the main body of the Georgian ethnic territories (Kartli-Kakheti, Mingrelia and Imeretia) at the beginning of the 19th century.

In this sense the administration of prince Pavel Dmitriievich Tsitsianov, appointed in 1802 as the Chief Administrator (*glavnoupravliaiushchii*) of Georgia, constitute an essential part of this study. By 1806, during Tsitsianov's administration, almost the whole Southern Caucasus had been included in the borders of the Russian Empire. Accordingly, the year 1806 may be considered as a certain milestone in the history of Russian advance to the Southern Caucasus as well as in the history of Ottoman-Russian relations regarding the area. Within that year the death of Tsitsianov and the start of the war between the Ottoman Empire and Russia marked,

in a way, the end of the initial period of consolidation of Russian positions in the Southern Caucasus.

In accordance with the objectives and chronology of the study, the second chapter deals with historical background of the socio-political development of the Georgian lands up to the last quarter of the 18th century, the time, when Georgievsk Treaty of 1783 between Georgia and the Russian Empire had been signed. It analyses the character of Russian-Georgian relations at the time as well as the activities of the Ottoman state concerning the Caucasus. So it covers the mission of Ferah Ali Pasha as a commander (*muhafiz*) of the Black Sea fortress of Soğucak, the Ottoman reaction upon the uprising of Sheikh Mansur in the Northern Caucasus, and the war in the Caucasian theater during the Russian-Ottoman war of 1787-1791. The consequences of this military opposition of two empires are also examined in the chapter.

The third chapter deals with the details of the defensive alliance of the Ottoman Empire and Russia, analyzing the international background for such an event, abnormal in view of the previous and future serious contradictions of these two traditionally antagonistic states.

The concluding chapter examines the Caucasian aspect of the Ottoman-Russian alliance and investigates events in the Southern Caucasus around the proclamation of the Manifesto on the incorporation of Georgia (Kartli-Kakheti) into the Russian Empire. The chapter also focuses upon the structure and activities of the Russian

administration in Georgia, headed by general Pavel Dmitriievich Tsitsianov during this time.

Accordingly, the thesis in general traces the dynamics of the Ottoman-Russian and Georgian-Russian relations in the Southern Caucasus at the end of the 18th-early 19th centuries, which serves for better understanding of the Russian and the Ottoman politics in the region, as well as the history and the character of the Georgian people and statehood.



CHAPTER I: ANALYSIS OF SOURCES

Of the sources, this study is mainly based on, one has to mention, first of all, *Proceedings of the Caucasian Archaeographical Commission (Akty sobrannye kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu Kommissiei, or further- AKAK)*, Ed.by Adolf Berzhe, Vol. I-XII, Tiflis, 1866-1904. This is the rich collection of highly valuable documents relating to the history of the Caucasus and Caucasian peoples, which consists of twelve volumes. Chronologically the materials, published here, cover the period from the 10th century until 1862 and written in Russian, Ottoman, Georgian, Armenian, Arabic, Persian, Tatar languages (with Russian translations provided). The main body of the documents concerns the activities of the Russian administration in the Caucasus and Russia's relations with the local Caucasian rulers as well as leading regional powers- the Ottoman Empire and Persia.

Collection contains the letters, reports, memos of the Russian statesmen, civil officials, military commanders serving in the Caucasus, such as Karl Knorring (Lieutenant-General, Commander of the Caucasian Line in 1799-1802), Petr Ivanovich Kovalenskii (Russian minister, or ambassador, in Georgia, 1799-1800), Ivan Petrovich Lazarev (General-Major, Commander of the Russian troops in Georgia, 1799-1803), Pavel Dmitriievich Tsitsianov (Astrakhan Military Governor, Chief Administrator in Georgia, 1802-1806), Andrei Iakovlevich Italinskii (Russian Ambassador to The Ottoman Empire, 1802-1806), a number of Russian military commanders of smaller rank.

There are also the documents relating personally to the last Kartli-Kakhetian king Giorgi XII and other representatives of the Georgian ruling family. Besides, one can find the correspondence of the Russian Caucasian authorities with the Ottoman borders governors of Chaldir, Akhaltsikhe, Kars *pashaliks* as well as with the rulers of Caucasian khanates and the shah's government of Persia.

Thus the materials, collected and published by the Caucasian Archaeographical Commission, constitute an extremely important source for the history of the Caucasus as a whole and the Southern Caucasus in particular. This study is primarily based on the documents of the given collection.

Other sources, which I had chance to use, add to the general base of the study. These are the various documents of international character, presented in the published collections, respectively in English, Russian and Turkish (Ottoman in modern Turkish characters) languages: Anderson, M.S. *The great powers and the Near East, 1774-1923*. Edward Arnold, London, 1970; *Pod stiagom Rossii: Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov*. Moscow, 1992; Erim Nihat, *Devletlerarası hukuku ve siyasi tarih metinleri*, Vol. I, Ankara, 1953. There I could find the full texts of the Russo-Ottoman peace treaties of Kuchuk-Kainardji (21 July 1774), Jassy (9 January 1792), the Georgievsk treaty on Russian protection over Kartli-Kakheti (24 July 1783), the Decree of the Directory on launching the Egyptian campaign (12 April, 1798), General Bonaparte's Proclamation to the Egyptians (2 July, 1798), the texts of the defensive alliances of the Ottoman government with Britain (5 January 1799) and Russia (23 December 1798, 23 September 1805).

The main issues of Russia's foreign policy during the period have been reflected in the documents of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, published in: *Vneshniaia politika Rossii XIX i nachala XX veka*. Series I: 1801-1815. 7 vols. Moscow, 1960-1967. These documents give the wider perspective of overall activities of the Russian diplomacy at the time, which is important for assessing the place of the Caucasus in the list of international priorities of St. Petersburg. Some information on Ottoman relations with the Caucasian khanates may be found in collections, prepared for publication in the Turkish Prime Ministry Ottoman Archive (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi): *Osmanlı Devleti ile Kafkasya, Turkistan ve Kırım Hanlıkları arasındaki münasebetlere dair arşiv belgeleri (1687-1908 yılları arası)*/ Editor-in-chief Ismet Binark, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivi, Ankara, 1992; *Osmanlı Devleti ile Azerbaycan Türk Hanlıkları arasındaki münasebetlere dair arşiv belgeleri*/ Editor-in-chief Ismet Binark, 2 Vols., T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivi, Ankara, 1992.

As an additional source, while studying the question of the Ottoman-Russian alliance, directed against France, I used the English translation of the famous chronicle of Sheikh Al-Jabarti on the French occupation of Egypt by General Bonaparte, witnessed by the Arabic historian: *Al-Jabarti's chronicle of the first seven months of the French occupation of Egypt* (تاریخ مدات الفرنیس بمصر) /Ed. and transl. by S. Moreh, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1975.

I fully admit the shortage of the Ottoman as well as the actual absence of original Georgian materials, which, of course, may be only partly compensated by

those Russian translations presented by the editors from the Caucasian Archaeographical Commission.



CHAPTER II. GEORGIEVSK TREATY AND AFTER – CHANGING STATUS QUO IN THE REGION (1783-1798)

II.1 Georgian kingdoms by the last quarter of the 18th century-imperial borderground

Any time when we need to explain a certain social event or phenomenon, we have to interpret it not just as a static given episode, but to look upon it in a wider historical perspective. Accordingly, while speaking about the South Western Caucasus² at the turn of the 18-19th centuries, we clearly must mention the general picture of the previous history of the area. This will provide the necessary understanding of the times, which are among the most crucial periods in the history of the Georgian³ people.

Owing to its specific geographical location the Caucasus was destined to be the battleground of various imperial powers, for millennia struggling to introduce their sovereignty over that land. To control the whole Caucasus, or even part of it, meant to control the traditional trade routes from Europe to Persia and India, as well as the famous “Silk road” which linked Europe and China. Accordingly, the political domination in the region definitely granted large material benefits for the ruler. No wonder that since the earliest times the Caucasus turned into the scene of permanent power conflicts. In view of that, different cultural traditions and world outlooks

² I use the term South Western Caucasus to denote the area, since ancient times populated predominantly by autochthonous Kartvelian speaking people and roughly confined within the following geographical borders- in the North the mountain ridge of the Greater Caucasus, on the South the Lesser Caucasus and the outer reaches of Armenian plateau, in the West the Black Sea and in the East- the Kura-Araks lowland. These are the natural borders of the territory.

³ The Georgians call themselves *Kartvelebi* (sing. *Kartveli*), their land *Sakartvelo*, and their language *Kartuli*.

clashed and interpenetrated, influencing the social development of the region and leaving certain ineffaceable traces within the local societies.

All this may well be referred to the territories since pre-historical times inhabited by proto-Georgian population, which eventually became the core of Georgian statehood and the cradle of the united Georgian nation. As a result of the internal process of ethnic and state consolidation, as well as under the direct or indirect impact of such “Great Powers” in the 1st millennium BC as Assyria, Urartu, Achemaenid Persia and the Greek state-colonies⁴ there emerged the first local kingdoms of Colchis (Western Georgia, 6 c. BC) and Iberia (or Kartli; Eastern Georgia, 4-3 c.c. BC).⁵

Since then the Georgian lands for many centuries were the field of almost incessant battles for influence and domination. In the course of history the rival states (all of them being in fact to a greater or lesser extent Empires) could be replaced by other ones, younger and stronger, which might give way to another, even stronger, but the general picture remained the same- the Southern Caucasus took on the role of imperial border- and battleground. The list of old rivalries is rather long and quite impressive: among the antagonist powers were Rome (then still republican) and the Pontus of Mithridates VI Eupator, again Rome (now imperial) and Parthia, Byzantium and Sassanid Persia, Byzantium and the Arab Caliphate, then there are the Mongol and Timur invasions, along with continuous wars during the 16-18th centuries between the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia, chronologically closer to the time period of this work.

⁴ Phasis (Poti), Dioskurias (near Sukhumi) are among the largest.

⁵ Not to mention the tribal unions and proto-states of the previous times.

Thus, Georgia had been always in the epicenter of all the socio-political processes common to the whole Middle Eastern area, consequently combining within society both occidental and oriental cultural traditions. In particular, the Georgians became one of the earliest peoples to adopt Christianity,⁶ even before the official partition of the Roman Empire and emergence of Byzantium. At the same time, throughout the centuries the small Georgian states⁷ stayed not only under the influence of Byzantine Empire, but also under those of their numerous Muslim neighbors- the Caliphate, Seljuk Empire, Ottoman Empire and Persia. Following the downfall of Constantinople in 1453 Georgia came to be isolated from the rest of the Christian world. As a result, Georgian culture took certain specific features to it in architecture, painting, sculpture, music, as well as in literature and education.⁸ To quote L. Rhineland, up to the Russians' arrival in the 18th century, "the Middle East had been the sole source from which Georgian cultural life had received its nourishment. Persian was the *lingua franca* of Georgian statesmen, scholars, and merchants, the rich Persian culture their model".⁹ Although being Orthodox Christian, Georgian society, obviously, might be called as well to some extent oriental, constituting an integral part of the Middle Eastern cultural space.

⁶ In Iberia (Eastern Georgia) Christianity was officially proclaimed as the state religion around 337 (the date of baptizing of the royal family).

⁷ During the early mediaeval epoch there became known several regional centers, such like Iberia (Kartli), Kakheti, Tao-Klardjeti.

⁸ There is an interesting detail in memoirs of Captain de Grailly de Foix, aide-de-camp of the Russian general Todtleben, on his reception at the Georgian court: "...Héraclius m'invita de m'asseoir, mais comme ils étaient tous assis sur des tapis, les jambes en croix, et qu'il m'était impossible de m'asseoir comme eux, je répondis que le respect que je devais à Sa Majesté ne me permettait pas d'être assis en sa présence. Il insista, et me déclara qu'il ne m'entendrait que lorsque je serais assis. Je fus obligé de lui en dire la véritable cause, que les habillements européens n'étaient pas commodes pour être assis dans cette posture"(David M. Lang *Count Todtleben's Expedition to Georgia 1769-1771 according to a French Eyewitness* // Bulletin of the School of oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 13, No 4, 1951, p.890).

⁹ L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.33.

Together with the necessity to survive in an uncertain environment of hostile neighbors Georgia had also her own thriving times. The golden age of Georgian mediaeval statehood goes back to the 11-12th centuries. Then the internal economic and social development, the favorable international situation¹⁰ became the important preconditions of political unification of the land. At the beginning of the 11th century with the accession of Bagrat III Bagrationi (975-1014), at the same time the legal successor to the thrones of small kingdoms of Kartli, Kakheti and Tao-Klardjeti, the Georgian lands became for the most part united within one state. There appeared the universal for the whole land term *Sakartvelo* and the common Georgian language.

During the rules of king David IV Aghmashenebeli ("the Builder"; 1089-1125) and queen Tamar (1184-1213) the area enjoyed days of glory and stability. David IV Aghmashenebeli's rule marked an especially dramatic revival of the country. There were introduced some administrative reforms, aimed to strengthen the royal power. For instance, interestingly, David IV established the highest post of royal adviser, called *vizier*. Also, he abolished all titles of Byzantine origin. Tbilisi¹¹ was chosen to be the capital. Throughout the 11-12th centuries Georgia, having taken under her influence the Northern Caucasus, Southern Azerbaijan, all of Armenia and the South-Eastern Black Sea region, grew to be one of the most powerful states in the region.

Quite soon, however, the Mongol invasion put an end to the heyday of Georgian statehood. There started a long period of political and economic decline, which resulted in the disintegration of the former state of United Georgia in 1490-1491. It experienced a division into three Kingdoms- Georgia proper (*Iberia-Kartli*),

¹⁰ The weakening of Arabian Caliphate in the end of 10 c., later- capture of Constantinople by crusaders in 1204.

¹¹ According to the Georgian pronunciation of that city's name, known also as Tiflis.

Kakhetia (*Kakheti*), and Imeretia (*Imereti*), - and one principality in Southern Georgia, Samtskhe-Saatabago. By the 16th century the process of disintegration became ever more intensive: within the Imeretian kingdom there surfaced practically independent principalities- Mingrelia, Abkhazia, Guria. Though family ties (all the aforementioned kingdoms were ruled by different branches of the same Bagratid dynasty) and common historical memory still preserved certain consciousness of unity, it never prevented dynastical clashes and territorial disputes. The whole land remained the battleground of the two great post-mediaeval Near Eastern Muslim powers- the Ottoman Empire and Persia.

The Ottoman- Persian rivalry over the Southern Caucasus in the 16-18th centuries constitutes a special page in history of both Middle Eastern powers, as well as in the history of the Georgian people. It lasted for more than two centuries and never ended with a complete victory of any one of these two states.¹² As a result, Georgia in general stayed almost always divided between the Ottomans and the Safavids,¹³ the western part of it (Imeretia) belonging to Turks, the eastern (Kartli and Kakhetia)- to Persians.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the border remained stable all of the time. Far from that, Eastern Georgia several times changed its sovereign. So, according to the peace treaty of 1555 the Ottoman Empire acquired Imeretia while Persia got Kartli and Kakheti. Then, during the 1578-1590 war the Turks took from Persia Eastern Georgia together with Azerbaijan and Eastern Armenia (Istanbul Peace

¹² Wars of 1514-1555, 1578-1590, 1602-1612, 1616-1618, 1623-1639, 1723-1727, 1730-1736, 1743-1746.

¹³ The ruling dynasty of Persia in 1500-1736.

Treaty of 1590). After that Shah Abbas I¹⁴ brought Eastern Georgia again under the Persian scepter (Istanbul peace Treaty of 1612).

We may talk about some sort of a stable Ottoman-Persian border in the Southern Caucasus only after 1612. Despite the fact that quite often during the subsequent wars the adjoining territories happened to be occupied by rival armies, all these military activities were just about to confirm the existing official border. Even the breakdown of the Safavid dynasty and the effort of Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730) to use the favorable circumstances¹⁵ in order to extend his dominions did not change the situation. The new ruler of Persia, Nadir,¹⁶ never accepted the loss of the Southern Caucasian provinces and restored the *status quo* in two successive wars¹⁷ with the Ottomans.

As for Georgia, the relative stability of the Ottoman-Persian borders and the continuity of military conflict between its imperial neighbors meant nothing more than just being torn into pieces. For several centuries, since the division of 1490-1491, the Georgian people were witnessing the terrible decline of their homeland, the once mighty Near Eastern monarchy, now turned into a number of small and weak vassal states of two large, both Muslim, regional superpowers. More than that, these small Georgian kingdoms, - Imeretia, Kartli, Kakhetia, - always stayed within the zone of direct hostilities, with all the easily imaginable negative consequences for their social, economic and political development.

¹⁴ Abbas I (1571 -1629) – shah of Persia (since May 1587) from Safavid dynasty. During the rule of Abbas, Safavid Persia reached the highest point of its political might and power.

¹⁵ In 1723-1727 war the Ottomans occupied Eastern Georgia, Eastern Armenia and Azerbaijan.

¹⁶ For a short period managed to unify Iranian state, shah in 1736-1747.

¹⁷ 1730-1736 and 1743-1746.

The defensive potential of Georgia was considerably reduced, thus giving way, in particular, to ever increasing looting raids by the Daghestani peoples upon the Georgian borders. The attempts of the Georgian ruling elite to find a solution to their given problem made them look for support from abroad and quite naturally led to an establishment of diplomatic contacts with the Muscovite principality,¹⁸ which after gaining a foothold on the Caspian in the mid-16 century (following Ivan IV the Terrible's (1533-1584) conquest of the Kazan and Astrakhan khanates in 1552 and 1556 respectively) had been looked upon as a natural ally and at the same time as the only independent Orthodox state. Logically, many Georgians would like to seek their co-religionists' protection against hostile neighbors.

On the other hand, the Georgian policy of the growing Muscovite principality may well be described as such of a two-fold kind, state-oriented and imbued with utter pragmatism. According to H.J. Armani, "Russia (i.e. late-mediaeval Muscovy) was bound to have developed an ambivalent Georgian policy, one which sought to make satellites of Iberia, Kakhetia and Imeretia, but which was reluctant to assume responsibility for direct involvement because of them".¹⁹ Moscow endeavored, as any other state, simply to strengthen its positions in the international arena. Regarding the Caucasus this meant to take under its own control the old trade routes crossing the region, and, for that reason, to diminish the influences of other competitors, among whom the Ottoman Empire was considered to be the main threat. Thus it was better to have friendly supporting elements among the motley Caucasian population. The Orthodox Georgians appeared to be suitable for that role.

¹⁸ The first official Georgian embassy had been sent to Moscow by Alexander I of Kakhetia to Ivan III in 1492.

¹⁹ H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.61.

In general, Moscow was involved in diplomatic relations predominantly with Kakhetia. The small Caucasian state, geographically adjoining Daghestan, was most anxious to conclude the protection treaty with Muscovy. However, in the 15-17th centuries Moscow never had the necessary potential to organize large-scale intervention in Caucasian affairs. The very name of Muscovite-Kakhetian relations meant for that time a somewhat irregular exchange of embassies, sometimes with intervals of 20-30 years. This never became an obstacle, though, as is emphasized by I.V. Bocharnikov, it involved giving the full title of tsar Fedor I (1584-1598) as “ruler of the land of Terek, the Georgian tsars and the Kabardian land, Circassian and Mountain princes”²⁰ (after the conclusion of the Moscovy-Kakhetian Treaty of protection in 1587, which had never been fully realized for various reasons)- a simple formality, which might lead to more concrete Russian steps and activities in the Caucasus. Time- that is all that was needed to make such a formality become real.

While the 17th century brought little change to the general balance of powers in the Caucasus, traditionally influenced by the Ottoman and the Safavid Empires, the following 18th century came to be crucial in that sense. At this time there appeared the third regional imperial force - Russia. Of course the new Russian Empire did not surface all of a sudden, it was rather the product of a universal trend of socio-historical development that found its reflection in the actual realities of Muscovite tsardom at the end of the 17th century.

²⁰ I.V. Bocharnikov *Geopoliticheskaia ekspansiia Rossii na Kavkaze v XVI-XX vekakh* // Ievraziiskii vestnik, No24 (<http://www.e-journal.ru/time-st1-24.html>), quotation from Soloviev S.M. *Sochineniia. V 18 kn. Kn. IV. Istoriia Rossii s drevneishikh vremen. T. 7-8/* Otv. red.: I. D. Kovalchenko, S.S. Dmitriev. - Moscow, 1989. - p.269.

Now it is very important to mention the phenomenon of modernization in non-Western societies, an essential point in the social development and the historical fate of any country sharing a background different from the Western European. It concerns the processes underway in Western Europe approximately after 1500- rapid industrial growth, the exploration of newly discovered overseas territories, the emergence of elements of capitalist society and their influence upon other, non-European, traditional oriental societies. The very time of Europe's rapid progress was a time of severe structural crisis that broke out in the whole conglomerate of numerous oriental civilizations and countries. Every such non-Western society during the 17th -19th centuries had to find the way to overcome its obvious, compared with the West, backwardness. Quite often the aims of reformers and the character of their reforms are amazingly similar and many times this striking similarity had been stressed by many scholars. One surely will find parallels, regardless of time and space, in the activities of Peter I²¹ in Muscovy, Muhammad Ali²² in the Ottoman Egypt, Mahmud II²³ in the Ottoman Empire, Tewodros II²⁴ in Ethiopia etc. Along with the striking similarity of the questions put by history, any country had to look for an answer of its own, having no luxury for mistake. Those societies, where the aforementioned trend had been noticed earlier and the necessary transformational processes had been started in earnest and timely, apparently had more advantages when compared to other ones, rejecting the new heretical doctrines, still living according millennia-old traditions.

²¹ Tsar of Muscovy, ruled in 1682-1725, the first emperor of Russian Empire since 22.10.1721.

²² Pasha of the Ottoman Egypt in 1805-1848, the founder of virtually independent Egyptian state within the Ottoman Empire.

²³ Sultan of the Ottoman Empire in 1808-1839.

²⁴ Negus of Ethiopia in 1855-1868, reunified Ethiopian state and started the process of country's centralization.

On turning to the Caucasian power triangle at the beginning of the 18th century, even the very broad comparison of the Ottoman Empire, Persia and Russia in terms of the existing innovative policy of the state would present a fairly exact picture of each country's prospects for being more successful than its opponents. The Ottomans did not perceive the whole seriousness of growing crisis,²⁵ when, after some reforms of a rather cosmetic, not structural character, they won several victories in the first half of the 18th century.²⁶ As concerns Persia, it falls a prey to constant internal conflicts throughout the whole century (the reign of Nadir Shah²⁷ may serve just as a brief exception), even disappearing for some time as an organized political body. The old Muscovy, on the contrary, during the long rule of its outstanding tsar-reformer Peter I the Great (1683-1725), starting not only from victories, but also with defeats (the battles of Narva (1700) and Pruth (1711) were complete disasters for Peter), gradually gained in strength, becoming the Russian Empire.

Peter the Great's Persian campaign of 1722-1723 became the first serious Russian undertaking in the Caucasus. After the Nystadt Peace Treaty,²⁸ signed on August 30, 1721, Russia officially got the status of important military power, which had been further confirmed by Peter's adopting the title of emperor in October of that

²⁵ Among the events which are considered as traditional points of departure in the decline of the Ottoman state are- the unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683; Treaty of Karlowitz (nowadays Karlovci, in Croatia) signed in 1699 - the Ottomans ceded most of Hungary, Transylvania and Slavonia (Eastern Croatia) to Austria, while Podolia (province in Western Ukraine) passed to Poland. Most of Dalmatia along with the Morea passed to Venice; the Treaty of Passarowitz (nowadays Pozarevac in Serbia) signed in 1718- the Ottomans lost the Banat, northern Serbia with Belgrade, northern Bosnia, Lesser Wallachia to Austria; Treaty of Belgrade in 1739- Austria ceded to the Ottomans Serbia with Belgrade and Lesser Walakhia.

²⁶ The Pruth battle in 1711 finished the Ottoman-Russian war of 1710-1711. The Ottomans regained control over the fortress of Azov, lost to Russia in 1696; Retaking of Morea from Venice in 1715.

²⁷ Shah of Persia in 1736-1747, the actual ruler since the middle of 1720-s.

²⁸ This Treaty put the end to the Russo-Swedish Northern war (1700-1721). According to the treaty of Nystadt Russia was given possession of Ingermanland, Estland, Livland and Karelia, along with the towns of Vyborg and Keksholm and all the islands in the Gulf of Finland, together with the Moon Sound Archipelago. In addition, Russia was acknowledged to be the most powerful state in the Baltic.

same year. As a result, there emerged a new mighty Eurasian state- Russian Empire. Now, when in the North everything had been settled, the South became the new strategic direction of Peter's enterprises.

The western littoral of the Caspian Sea, crossed by the key trade routes connecting Eastern Asia with Western Europe, drew the attention of the Russian emperor because of its strategic importance. Peter hoped to obtain control over the rich transit trade passing through the Eastern coast of Caspian, and, taking the example of West European countries in overseas colonies, to establish Russian trading posts in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, these territories were supposed to serve as Russia's military base in the region. Since Persia experienced at that moment the most severe domestic crisis, with the Safavid dynasty coming to an end, the planned action would also prevent the possible growth of the regional influence of the Ottomans, who were then the primary Russian opponent in the Black Sea- Crimea- Caucasus area.

These were the general motives of Peter's Persian expedition, while the pretext appeared after an attack by several Daghestani tribes on Shemakhi, the capital of Shirvan²⁹ in 1721. Then some Russian merchants, who traded there, were killed and their property looted, the total losses evaluated from 472,000 to 4,000,000 rubles³⁰ (though, as M.Atkin points it out, Russian merchants were not the main victims of a raid, at this very time "Iranian officials and other Shia Muslims in the city fared still

²⁹ One of the Caspian coastal provinces, inhabited predominantly by a Turkic speaking Azeri population.

³⁰ David M. Lang *Georgia and the Fall of the Safavi Dynasty* // Bulletin of the School of oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 14, No 3, Studies Presented to Vladimir Minorsky by His Colleagues and Friends. 1952, p.536.

worse. Between 4,000 and 5,000 of them were massacred by the Sunni mountaineers in reprisal for Iran's anti-Sunni policies"³¹). As a result, the political skies over Persia turned cloudy. By August 1722 Russian troops, brought by Peter I down the Volga and next through the Caspian, stood at the mouth of the Terek river. Ready as well to rise up against Persia was the Georgian king Vakhtang VI (1716-1723), hoping that Orthodox co-religionists would help to restore Georgian independence. The Ottomans were also prepared to send an expeditionary corps to Persia (i.e. Persian vassal territory of Eastern Georgia), though they never wished to enter into an open conflict with Persia or Russia. At the same time Persia was lying a helpless prey to its neighbors.

Peter I and Vakhtang VI concluded an agreement on joint military activities in Persia. However, after taking in September 1722 the city of Derbent, the Russians had to retreat for the lack of supplies, widespread disease, and the desire to keep stable relations with the Ottomans. Vakhtang VI, who had already entered the lands of Persia, was never informed by his ally about this decision. The Georgian king found himself in a difficult situation. The Ottoman forces under Ibrahim Pasha, encouraged by the Russian retreat and the dethronement of the Persian Shah, moved into Eastern Georgia, then the vassal of Persia, and occupied it.

The winners and the losers came to be known after the two treaties, the Russo-Persian (1723)³² and the Russo-Ottoman (1724), which cleared the situation- Persia ceded to Russians its territories on the western and southern coast of Caspian, and the

³¹ Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1980.- p. 4.

³² This Treaty was signed by Shah Tahmasp's representative and in fact was not recognized neither by shah Tahmasp nor later by Nadir.

Ottomans recognized the Russian control over the Caspian littoral while Russia recognized the right of the Ottoman Empire to western Persia (including the Eastern Georgia). Vakhtang VI had to escape in 1724 to Russia together with some representatives of Georgian aristocratic families, who were the first Georgian immigrants in Russia, and who eventually became the part of all-Russian nobility (their number is assessed to be more than 1 thousand).³³

Yet the Russian command over Caspian littoral proved to be not so easy and profitable, as it seemed earlier to Peter. The local population emigrated from Russian-occupied territories; there were considerable problems with supplies as well as heavy casualties from diseases. In the end, after a decade of Russian rule, the lands around Western and Southern Caspian coast were returned to Persia by Tsaritsa Anna³⁴ according to treaties of Rasht (1732) and Ganjeh (1735). Respectively, on consideration that the Ottomans were the main threat to Russia's interests in the vast region from the Crimea to the Caspian, the maintaining of the good relations with Persia was the central objective of Russian Persian policy in the 18th century.

Though the Persian campaign of Peter I did not bring any radical changes in the Caucasus, still it revealed some principal trends in Russia's Caucasian strategy- the firm interest in the region, the ability to use the weak points of an opponent, the pragmatic approach towards use of alliances, necessity to overcome the difficulties with local terrain and lack of infrastructure. Furthermore, just at the time of Peter's expedition started the practical structuring of Russia's Caucasian policy towards other main actors of the area- Persia and the Ottoman Empire.

³³ H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.107.

³⁴ The Tsaritsa of Russia in 1730-1740.

With the noticeable decline of the Ottoman and the Persian state apparatus, along with gradual growth of Russian power and necessary experience, the near future promised to usher in a new stage of Russo-Ottoman-Persian hostilities on the disputed Caucasian borders. In the light of traditional rivalry of these powers in the Caucasus, including Christian areas of Georgia, Russia's chances for success objectively should have been more convincing. It became especially clear by the end of the 18th century, during the reign of Catherine II the Great (1762-1796).



II.2 Erekle II, Georgievsk and Russian-Georgian relations

There is some portion of symbolism in the fact, that one and the same year happened to be the date of ascending the throne of both Russian and Georgian monarchs, whose rule had to last for the whole second half of the 18th century. In 1762 Russia got her new, and eventually much more than simply successful empress, Catherine II the Great, while in Georgia Erekle II³⁵ of Kakhetia after the death of his father, Teimuraz II³⁶ of Kartli, inherited the Kartlian throne, thus having unified the whole Eastern Georgia into one kingdom. As far as it concerns the Russian-Georgian relations, the time between early 1760-s and late 1790-s may be fairly called the epoch of Catherine II and Erekle II. Both Catherine and Erekle had to become the most important decision makers in their countries for the period of more than thirty years.

Soon after Catherine's enthronement the Caucasus again appeared to be in the focus of close Russian attention. Quite naturally, the decline of neighboring Islamic powers and on the other hand the speedy transformation of the Russian state into new mighty European power created a situation, when St.Petersburg acquired an excellent opportunity to intervene. Though the strategic importance of the Caucasus (as the crossroad of trade routes and possible military base) had been always recognized in Russia, the practical realization of the plan to put this area under control started only

³⁵ King of Kakhetia since 1744, in 1762-1798 the king of united Kartli-Kakhetian kingdom (occupying the eastern part of modern Georgia). I use the Georgian form of his name, Erekle, though in the Russian sources he has been called Iraklii.

³⁶ King of Kartli, 1744-1762.

during the reign of Catherine II, as a part of wider plan to reach the dominance over vast territories from the northern coast of the Black Sea up to the coast of Caspian. At this time, in the last quarter of the 18th century, the primary goal of the Russian Empire was to neutralize the regional influence of the Ottomans, the most serious rival able to create a significant opposition towards the realization of St. Petersburg's great annexationist plans in the South.

Orthodox Georgia was supposed to be a natural ally for Russia, obviously perceived by the Russian government as a very convenient political tool in the forthcoming struggle with the Ottoman Empire and Persia, both Muslim, over the Caucasus. However, it is very questionable, whether Russia was interested in creating the strong and unified Georgian state. As V.Degoiev admits, "St. Petersburg willingly, still not unconditionally, supported her (Georgia) as an ally against Turkey and Iran. Though only till the time when such an alliance would be useful for Russia. Sooner or later independent Georgia would become an obstacle for the implementation of imperial plans of the Russian government in the Caucasus".³⁷ Russia never wanted to harm her relations with the Ottomans and the Persians just for the sake of the sovereign Georgia.

For that reason Georgian interests necessarily differed. Despite the previous devastations, for Georgia the mid-18th century turned out to be the period of a certain recovery. Together with the ongoing decline of the Ottoman Empire and Persia, the latter even being temporarily fallen into the chaos of domestic intertribal struggle after the breakdown of the Safavid dynasty and the death of Nadir Shah, there

³⁷ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*. - M. Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p.14.

emerged the possibility of a gradual Georgian revival. 1762 marked the beginning of the political and dynastic reunification of the area. As mentioned before, Kartli and Kakheti were for the first time after many centuries unified under the same scepter, that of Erekle II.

The ruler of Kartli-Kakheti had been a strong and ambitious politician, dreaming of creating a great and strong Georgian state, as it were his own Great Georgian Empire. To resolve the numerous security problems, at the same time keeping in mind the question of territorial enlargement of his kingdom, Erekle needed some kind of military support, which he supposed he would from Russia. In words of Laurens H. Rhinelanders "king Heraclius [Erekle] had begun to conceive of himself as the builder of a new state, the shaper of a new and viable Caucasian society, and he sought Russian support for his venture...His [Erekle's] realm was a Caucasian state rather than a national Georgian kingdom"³⁸. For these reasons Russian-Georgian relations could be described as allied, for each side needed the help of the other, though at the same time both countries had their own strategic aims, just occasionally corresponding.

Together with reunification of Eastern Georgia the last quarter of the 18th century witnessed a further escalation in the Ottoman-Russian relations, also influencing the overall situation in the South Western Caucasus. The Russian southward expansion of Catherine, the Ottoman rising concern and the following growth of tension in relations between the Russians and the Ottomans finally resulted in the war of 1768-1774. Even though for the most part of military activities were

³⁸ L.H. Rhinelanders *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.32.

waged in Europe (the Balkans and Mediterranean), and the formal reason for the war's starting was the Russian involvement in the Polish affairs, the Caucasus and Georgia had been engaged as well. Russia tried to create in the Ottoman East an additional front, designed to relieve the situation for the Russian armies in the Balkans. During this campaign, using as a pretext the appeals for help by king Solomon I of Imereti (in 1760 and 1768), Russian troops for the first time entered the Georgian lands.³⁹

On August 24, 1769 the first Russian detachment, under command of Count G.H. Todtleben crossed the river of Terek and on 10 September arrived in Kartli-Kakheti.⁴⁰ From the very moment of his arrival the Russian general showed an ever-increasing disrespect to the locals, including the ruler of Eastern Georgia Erekle himself. Constant lesser and greater disagreements between Todtleben and Erekle did not contribute to the success of the military operations. A good example here is Todtleben's unwillingness to participate in the siege of Akhaltsikhe in spring 1770 (the main operation in the campaign), using the pretext of waiting for reinforcements. The united Russo-Georgian army moved to Akhaltsikhe, but near the fortress of Aspindza Todtleben on his own accord and never consulting his Georgian ally, unexpectedly turned back to Kartli-Kakheti with all his forces, thus leaving Erekle II without support. On 20 April Erekle defeated the Ottomans in a battle near Aspindza, but had to return in view of Todtleben's disloyal activities (the Russian general

³⁹ Captain de Grailly de Foix, a French officer in the Russian service, aide-de-camp and military secretary to this expedition's commander Major-General Todtleben has left his memoirs, See in detail: David M. Lang *Count Todtleben's Expedition to Georgia 1769-1771 according to a French Eyewitness* // Bulletin of the School of oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 13, No 4, 1951, pp.878-907 (original French text). The number of the Russian troops in Georgia has been evaluated around 4, 000 people.

⁴⁰ David M. Lang *Count Todtleben's Expedition to Georgia 1769-1771 according to a French Eyewitness* // Bulletin of the School of oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 13, No 4, 1951, pp.883-885.

concluded peace with the enemy and started to occupy the cities and fortresses of Karlo-Kakheti). Obviously such relations between Georgian and Russian commanders would bring poor results for the entire Russian-Georgian campaign of 1769-1771.

On the whole, the sending by Catherine II of this expedition, as H.J. Armani puts it, had “significant diplomatic implications, which, in a sense, outweighed the military side”.⁴¹ As a matter of fact, the period of the Russian expedition’s stay in Georgia is usually more, than with other things, associated with the political intrigues produced by Todtleben.⁴² Both in Eastern and in Western Georgia Russian general did support opposition to existing monarchs- Erekle II and Solomon I (internal Georgian opposition included dynasts of Mingrelia, Guria and Abkhazia- correspondingly, Dadiani, Gurieli, Shervashidze).⁴³ Like before Aspindza battle, he never respected the royal dignity of Erekle, often behaved like there were not any local authorities, and normally regarded the Georgian king as an enemy rather than a friend.⁴⁴ Todtleben hoped to depose Erekle, to send the princes into exile and to put the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti under direct Russian control. However, due to the exclusive popularity of their monarch among the Georgians these plans were too bold and untimely, having brought nothing except the mutual discontent. Finally, in 1772 Russian troops were withdrawn from Georgia.

⁴¹ H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.123.

⁴² Count Gottlieb Heinrich Todtleben became known as a great intriguer far earlier, since the Russian siege of Berlin in 1760 (There is a masterly description of the episode of taking Berlin by Russians in V.Pikul’s brilliant historical novel “Perom i shpagoi”(By pen and sword)).

⁴³ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost’*. - M. Russkaia Panorama, 200, p. 17.

⁴⁴ All this- also in the memoirs of de Grailly de Foix, who describes Todtleben’s expedition in Georgia as a member of Russian expeditionary corps and direct participant of events.

D. Lang gives the following evaluation of the activities of the Russian Major-General: "In the event, Todtleben's deplorable conduct of affairs imperilled the safety of his troops, rendered decisive victory impossible, strained Russo-Georgian relations, aggravated the discord between the autonomous princes of South Western Caucasus".⁴⁵ On the other hand, one should also admit that the expedition of Todtleben (read- Catherine II), compared to that of Peter I, was a certain step forward in an attempt to get a foothold in the region.

Although short-termed, the Russian direct military engagement in Georgia against the Ottomans had brought its results with conclusion of the peace treaty. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca,⁴⁶ signed on July 10, 1774, in one of its 28 articles mentioned also the situation in Georgia. According to article 23, the Porte officially renounced its rights of tribute, earlier paid by the Georgians, and recognized the general amnesty for all combatants in the Caucasian theater. However, the Ottomans retained their nominal suzerainty over Mingrelia and Kartli-Kakheti, as could be seen in the final section of the 23rd article:

Но как упомянутые народы находятся подданными
Блистательной Порты, то Российская империя не имеет
совсем впредь в оные вмешиваться, ниже притеснять их⁴⁷
(For as the said people are subjects of the Sublime Porte,
Russian Empire must not, in the future, to interfere in any
manner in their affairs, nor mistreat them in any way)

On the whole, the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji did not give special political gains to Georgia, neither Western, nor Eastern. All the attention of the Russians and the Ottomans during the period was largely concentrated upon the northern areas of the Black Sea and

⁴⁵ David M. Lang *Count Todtleben's Expedition to Georgia 1769-1771 according to a French Eyewitness* // Bulletin of the School of oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 13, No 4, 1951, p.881.

⁴⁶ Village, nowadays situated in North-Eastern Bulgaria (Southern Dobruja).

⁴⁷ *Pod stiagom Rossii: Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov*. Moscow, 1992, p.88.

particularly upon the Crimean Peninsula. Both Russia and Turkey first of all were concerned about the political status of the Crimea, the former aspiring to complete the incorporation of the whole northern littoral of the Black Sea, with the Crimea being an especially valuable and desired territorial acquisition. Certainly the owning of the Crimean Peninsula meant substantial strategic advantages for realization of the central point of St. Petersburg's program in the Russo-Ottoman struggle at the time- to exert control over the entire Black Sea region. In the Russian view, one of the most important parts of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty was the third article, on independence of the Crimean khanate,⁴⁸ which in the plans of St. Petersburg quite soon had to bring about the subjugation of the Crimea to Russia. Hence the Russian government was not especially eager to break the existing treaty with the Ottomans. H. J. Armani has described the Georgian politics of Russia in the following words: "Before 1783 Russian cooperation in support of its Caucasian co-religionists had not been the product of a meaningful and forthright policy, though we might agree that it was devised for the most conscionable of reasons".⁴⁹

Both Georgian states, Imeretia and Kartli-Kakhetia, despite the visible strengthening in the second part of the 18th century, the trend proved by Küçük Kaynarca Treaty, remained in a state of stable instability- a characteristic feature of regional state of affairs. The Georgians continued to live under the influences of the same old main regional powers, namely Turkey, Persia and Russia, as well as being involved in complicated system of relations among other small South Caucasian states- khanates of Karabğı, Shirvan, Nakhchevan, Erivan, Gence, Derbent, Baku, Kuba, Nukha, and Daghestani Shamkhalate of Tarku. Russia, being busy with the Crimean question, adopted a cautious way for the South Western Caucasus and had no intention of meddling actively in local politics. Thus, notwithstanding the previous contacts with their Orthodox co-religionists, the Georgians simply could not expect any concrete obligations on the part of St. Petersburg.

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.80-81.

⁴⁹ H.J. Armani The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., Ph.D. dissertation, 1970.

Erekle II had to act within an atmosphere of uncertainty about the possible conduct of supposed Russian allies. Even though Kartli-Kakheti was the strongest among all of the small local powers in the Southern Caucasus, the position of Erekle II was as V. Degoiev said, “between hammer and anvil”.⁵⁰ Kartli-Kakheti had to anticipate any kind of dangers from any side, be it Iranians, Ottomans, Lesghian Daghestani tribes or neighboring Turkic Azeri khanates. As a result, the Kartli-Kakhetian king had to pursue a policy of balancing different interests. Turning in all directions Erekle II tried to find support for his plans to create the Greater Georgia. There was a serious need of an ally, which could be only one from among of the three mighty actors within the Big South Caucasian triangle.

The tragedy of the situation was in the fact that the idea of strong Georgian kingdom did not much correspond to the interests of Turkey, Persia or Russia. Any kind of union with Persians was unthinkable, for Isfahan, regardless of the names of the ruling dynasties and their domestic politics, had always believed Eastern Georgia to be a vassal territory of Persia. The attempt to conclude an alliance with the Ottomans in 1776 came to nothing, as the Porte also sought not the strengthening of its neighbor, but wondered how to exploit its current weaknesses. Obviously only on considering all pros and contras did Erekle II adopt the final decision about radical change in the status of his realm- to accept the Russian protectorate over Kartli-Kakheti.

At the end of 1782 the Kartli-Kakhetian king asked Catherine II to take his kingdom under Russian protection. Erekle wanted Russia to recognize his rights

⁵⁰ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*. - M. Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p.27.

over Erivan and Gence khanates, to help in acquisition of Akhaltsikhe and Kars *pashaliks* and to defend the eastern parts of the kingdom from Lesghian raids. For his own part Erekle promised to support Russia in case of her own war with Persia or Turkey.⁵¹ Now, when the Crimean question was about to be resolved, Catherine II could turn to the Southern Caucasus.

St. Petersburg looked upon Georgia as a well-situated springboard both for defense and attack against the Ottomans. It was to an extreme extent painful and difficult for the latter to accept the loss of the first exclusively Muslim province (meaning the Crimea), thus the new Russo-Ottoman war would break out at any fitting moment. For that reason St. Petersburg was in fact interested in Georgia- in order to have a certain foothold in the area and provide direct communication between the Crimea and the Caucasus, thereby strengthening the regional Russian influence.

Following the Manifesto “On acceptance of the Peninsula of Crimea, the island of Taman and the whole Kuban area under the Russian rule” (“О принятии полуострова Крымского, острова Тамана и всей Кубанской стороны под Российскую державу”), signed by Catherine II on April 8, 1783, there was concluded also (on July 23, 1783) the Treaty of Georgievsk,⁵² a military alliance between Kartli-Kakheti and Russia.

⁵¹ Ibid. p.27.

⁵² *Pod stiagom Rossii*: Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov. Moscow, 1992, p.238-247 (the full text of agreement in Russian); V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*. - M. Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p. 28; also see C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun Kafkasya siyaseti*. - İstanbul, 1979, p. 75-76; M. Aydın *XIX yüzyılda Kafkaslar'da nüfuz mücadeleleri (1800-1830)*.- Ph.D. dissertation, İstanbul, 2001, p.47.

This Treaty consisted of 13 articles, plus 4 separate and one additional article. Conditions of the final draft of the Treaty were far from those proposed by Erekle II. Russia took obligation to defend Kartli-Kakheti against its enemies, namely the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Instead, from now on Eastern Georgia lost a good deal of her inalienable rights of a sovereign state. According to the 3rd article, the kings (tsars in Russian text) of Kartli-Kakheti just after ascending the throne were to send special envoys to the Russian imperial court in order to be confirmed in their royal office. In exchange, from St. Petersburg they had to send the document of investiture together with royal insignia (banner, saber, scepter) to the Kartli-Kakhetian kings, starting from Erekle II.⁵³ Besides, it was ascertained by the 4th article, that the Georgian state in future could not have an independent foreign policy.⁵⁴ Russia got also the right to have in Tiflis, the Kartli-Kakhetian capital, her own regular representative (article 5).⁵⁵ As for the Georgian nobility, it was equaled in its status to the Russian one (article 9),⁵⁶ while the Georgian Patriarch- Catholicos became an ordinary archbishop of Russian Orthodox Church (article 8).⁵⁷ What was left in the Georgians' prerogative was the unrestricted right to govern their own internal affairs, including taxation and administering the criminal courts (article 6).⁵⁸ To assure her obligations Russia had sent to Georgia two battalions of infantry and four cannons (separate article 2)⁵⁹.

⁵³ *Pod stiagom Rossii: Sbornik arkhivnykh dokumentov*. Moscow, 1992, p.241; in addition to royal insignia imperial court in St. Petersburg had sent to Erekle II a crown, specially made for that occasion (Additional article to Georgievsk Treaty, in: *Pod stiagom Rossii*, p.245-246).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 243.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 242.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p.244.

Clearly such number of troops was to a large extent rather symbolical, and could not provide, in case of real threat, an efficient defense even of own borders of Kartli-Kakheti, not to mention about realization of Erekle II's ambitious plans to enlarge the territory of his kingdom. Still, to use H.J. Armani's words, the aforesaid Georgievsk Treaty in its core was not less than a "part of Catherine's plan to encircle and destroy the Ottoman Empire".⁶⁰ Russia did indeed threaten the Ottomans, making one step more towards her eventual subjugation of the Southern Caucasus. In several months after conclusion of Georgievsk treaty, on 15 November 1783 two Russian battalions with four canons, under the command of Petr Potemkin (cousin of the famous Grigorii Potemkin⁶¹) entered the Georgian capital, Tiflis.

Undoubtedly, such an event as Georgievsk influenced the general situation in the region, and it is necessary to look at its repercussions. Quite naturally, any state, involved into Caucasian affairs, viewed the treaty in its own perspective. While Istanbul and Isfahan were unsurprisingly extremely anxious about the Russian-Georgian Treaty, there was no unity even among the Georgievsk allies themselves.

Erekle II cherished ideas of regional hegemony, and creation of Greater Georgia, and hoped to get sufficient Russian military help for that purpose. However, as was said, the whole Russian armed contingent consisted only of two battalions with four cannons, so the king of Kartli-Kakheti found himself in a difficult situation, relying mostly upon his own forces, resources and diplomacy. In the diplomatic view, though, Georgievsk became for Erekle II a good instrument to

⁶⁰ H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.142.

⁶¹ Potemkin Grigorii Aleksandrovich (1739-1791)- Russian statesman and military commander, in all probability the secret husband of Catherine II, since 1776 the governor of Novorossia, Azov and Astrakhan, commander-in-chief of Russian army in Russian-Turkish war of 1787-1791.

threaten the neighbors with the possibility of flooding Eastern Georgia with Russian troops in case of need. Objectively, even if it could be real, this task was not so easily achieved.

The first and foremost reason was the fact that Erekle II would, as much as he could, ask the Russians to support him, but all decisions concerning the use of Russian military power, after all, were made in St. Petersburg. And the Russians, certainly, pursued their own aims and defended, first of all, their own interests. These interests only partly corresponded with those of the Kartli-Kakhetian ruler. From Russia's perspective, the whole of Georgia was viewed just as a good base for Russian regional influence, the foothold for future expansion. Until the circumstances would become ripe St. Petersburg never wanted to increase the concerns of Turkey and Persia by too dynamic activities in the area and to trigger an untimely war on the Caucasian theater. So, after the demonstration of force, Petr Potemkin's detachment left Tiflis in February 1784. Erekle II had to stay without any real military assistance against his uneasy Persian neighbors.

The explanation of such policy may be found in the relative weakness of the Russians in all of the Caucasus and particularly in the Southern Caucasus at the time. During the rule of Catherine II there had just been started the gradual advance in the area, the foundation of new fortresses, the construction of fortifications of the Caucasian Line. The famous Georgian Military Road⁶² still did not exist, communication through the Greater Caucasus ridge was difficult and not safe, while

⁶² It runs between Tbilisi (Georgia) and Vladikavkaz (Russia) and stretches some 220 kilometers through forests, mountains, and mountain passes. The road was built by the Russians between 1799 and 1863 and follows the traditional route used by invaders and traders throughout the ages.

the fortresses on the Georgian coast of the Black Sea were in the hands of the Ottomans. Moreover, in the Northern Caucasus Russia was involved in the war with mountaineers led by Sheikh Mansur⁶³ and thus simply could not weaken her Caucasian troops just for the sake of Erekle II's ideas about the strong Georgian Empire in the Southern Caucasus. It also should be noted, that such Greater Georgia of Erekle II, in any case, would even contradict St. Petersburg's strategic perspectives as to its own regional hegemony. On the whole, the general situation in the Caucasus after the Georgievsk Treaty of 1783 became even tenser, with the balance gradually shifting towards the advantage of Russia.

Compared with the South Western Caucasus, the Crimea at the current moment was of more strategic importance for Russia, and the main attention of the Russian authorities was concentrated upon the Peninsula. The owning of the Crimea had been considered indispensable for control over the whole Black Sea basin. Still, the Crimean Peninsula never was a final limit for Russian claims. No one made a secret of this- in 1783, at former Tatar village of Akyar Russia hurriedly started to build a military haven- Sevastopol. In accordance with Catherine II's orders, on the gates leading into the city there had been put an inscription- "The gates to Constantinople".⁶⁴ In a way it was, of course, not just a symbolical demonstration. There existed some practical plans on the matter, known as the Greek project- to drive the Turks back into Asia and restore the former Greek-Byzantine Empire on the shores of Bosphorus with Catherine's grandson Constantine at the head, as well as to create out of Moldavia and Walachia another state, which was supposed to become a

⁶³ The war lasted since 1785 until 1791.

⁶⁴ A.D. Novichev *Istoriia Turtsii*. Vol.1-4-. Leningrad, 1963-1978, Vol.1, p.242; see also- A. F. Miller *Mustafa-pasha Bairaktar*. Moscow-Leningrad, 1947, p.67.

buffer- principality of Dacia.⁶⁵ With so openly expressed anti-Ottoman preparations of St. Petersburg (it hardly could be a coincidence, as A. Miller points out,⁶⁶ that even all of the names of Catherine II's grandchildren were of Greek origin-Constantine, Alexander and Elena, while on the newly taken territories in Northern Black Sea littoral there had been founded the city of Kherson,⁶⁷ also implying pro-Greek tendencies on the part of the Russian government) to extend its influence further into the South, such that the peace Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca would evidently become only an uneasy truce before new armed hostilities.

All in all, the Russian acquisition of Crimea, as well as the establishment of protectorate over Georgia, both in the same 1783, increasingly exacerbated the current state of affairs in Russo-Ottoman relations. As for Georgia, equally Western and Eastern, in the second half of the 18th century it came to be torn apart by diverse forces of domestic and international character.

The traditional regional actors, such as the Ottomans and Persians, suffered a deep socio-political decline. This meant that the whole Southern Caucasus at the time became an area of relative power vacuum, a situation which another newly risen actor, Russia, naturally tried to use. Clearly St. Petersburg could not establish its own influence in a night; the task required time and resources, both still needed by Russia in order to resolve the "Crimean question".

⁶⁵ B.A. Dranov *Chernomorskie prolivy: mezhdunarodno-pravovoi rezhim*. Moscow, 1948, p.57; J.T. Alexander *Catherine the Great-life and legend*. - New York, 1989, p.247; The authorship of the Greek project being originally assigned to Austrian chancellor of state and minister of foreign affairs Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz (1711-1794), and then to influential figures in Russian politics of Catherinian times, such as the powerful favorite of Catherine II, governor-general of Novorossia, Azov and Astrakhan, prince Grigorii Alexandrovich Potemkin (1739-1791) together with prince Aleksandr Andreevich Bezborodko (1747-1799), the secretary of Catherine II, later the Chancellor of Russia.

⁶⁶ A. F. Miller *Mustafa-pasha Bairaktar*. Moscow-Leningrad, 1947, p.67.

⁶⁷ The first center of Russian Black Sea fleet, founded around 1778.

All together the current complicated situation helped the king of Kartli-Kakheti, Erekle II, to unify Eastern Georgia and create a rather stronger Georgian state, in a sense even a small South Caucasian Empire (only half of Erekle' subjects were Georgians,⁶⁸ others being Armenians or Azeri Turks). Yet Kartli-Kakheti never enjoyed internal unity, being a scene of constant domestic noble feuds. Moreover, in terms of military capacities Erekle's realm by no means could be compared to its big imperial neighbors, so that it had to look for support of one of them. Though Erekle II as an experienced politician fairly well understood the possible consequences of his decision, the conclusion of Georgievsk treaty with Russia appeared to be a logical choice of the Kartli-Kakhetian king, the only possible step at the moment- with all its visible as well as hidden advantages and disadvantages for the Georgian side.

⁶⁸ L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.33.

II.3 The Caucasus politics of the Ottoman state after Georgievsk

As mentioned above, 1783 had marked a huge growth of Russian power in the Black Sea region. The Crimean peninsula, the Taman peninsula and Kartli-Kakheti appeared to be under direct, or nominally indirect (but still in both cases in practice full) domination of Russian Empire. However, at the same time certain geopolitical assets were left at Ottoman disposal - Western Georgia technically was considered to be a vassal territory of the Ottomans, while several fortresses, old ones and those being in process of construction, (Anapa, Soğucak, Gelincik, Sohum) on the eastern coast of the Black Sea had been directly controlled from Istanbul. Obviously the Sublime Porte was going to use all of the available resources in order to stop the further logical steps of its strong northern neighbor- continuous advance in the direction of the Caucasian Black Sea littoral and the Western Georgia.

The Ottomans fairly perceived the Georgievsk agreement as a material threat to their interests, not only challenging their domination in the area, but also endangering the Porte's own security. Catherine II the Great (1762-1796) started a long process of steady political incorporation and administrative integration of the Caucasian region. During her rule there had been built in the North Caucasus the following military fortifications: the Azov-Mozdok line (with fortresses of Stavropol, Georgievsk, Konstantinogorsk, Mozdok); in 1784 the fortress of Vladikavkaz (rus. "The master, or, ruler of Caucasus") had been founded. Vladikavkaz became an important strategic center at the entrance into the Darial Gorge, a well-located pass to

the South Western Caucasus.⁶⁹ In Sevastopol, in the then already annexed Crimea, Grigorii Potemkin constructed a great naval base *just two days by sea to the Ottoman capital* (italics are mine, V.M.), Russian troops with artillery were then deployed in Georgia.⁷⁰ Accordingly, now, when Kartli-Kakheti signed with Russia the protectorate treaty, its capital Tiflis also turned into a real base for the possible Russian invasion of Anatolia.⁷¹

Taking into consideration the necessity of self-protection, something had to be done for the Turks (as well as for the Persians, for that matter). The worried Ottoman Empire intensified its political activities in Caucasia. There were plans of creation a wide coalition of Daghestani and Azeri khanates against Erekle II.⁷² In spring 1785 the Porte managed to form an anti-Russian war league consisting of Suleyman Pasha, the governor of the Ottoman frontier province of Akhaltsikhe (Ahıska), as the initiator, along with the khans of Shirvan, Karabagh, Nukha, Khoi, and the Lesghian tribes. But the supposed expedition against Georgia was never realized and soon the alliance collapsed.⁷³

A number of Ottoman fortresses on the Black Sea coast (Soğucak, Gelincik, Sohum), earlier merely frontier peripheral places, got the highest importance after the downfall of the Crimean Khanate and were reinforced at the beginning of the 1780-s. In many respects these reinforcements are connected with the name of Ferah Ali

⁶⁹ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*, Moscow, Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p.15.

⁷⁰ H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.142.

⁷¹ C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kafkasya siyaseti*, İstanbul, 1979, p.79-80.

⁷² Ibidem, P.83.

⁷³ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*, Moscow, Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p.32.

Pasha,⁷⁴ an Ottoman bureaucrat of Georgian origin, brought to Turkey as a slave in his early childhood. On 25 December 1781⁷⁵ this Ottoman official was appointed *muhafiz* (commander) of Soğucak fortress. On 20 April 1782 the first regular representative of the Ottoman Empire in the Caucasus landed at Soğucak and began to perform his new duties.

Ferah Ali Pasha's people, upon their arrival, were amazed by the picture of general neglect and complete desolation. After a long inspection of the fortress only two people were found- one soldier with his wife, both exhausted to the utmost extent.⁷⁶ During his three years of service⁷⁷ in his post the first *muhafiz* of Soğucak had indeed managed to change the situation for the better. As an able administrator, Ferah Ali Pasha dealt with all kinds of questions- repopulation of the abandoned and neglected Ottoman strongholds, supply of provisions, building materials, military equipment, securing of good relations with aboriginal tribes, and propagation of the Muslim religion among them. Besides, during Ferah Ali Pasha's time in office, there had been started the construction of a first-class fortress at Anapa (1782),⁷⁸ which in future caused many troubles for the Russian side.⁷⁹ Ill-timed death caused by some infectious disease in October 1785, however, put an end to the activities of the first, and, perhaps most talented, Ottoman *muhafiz* in the Eastern Black Sea coast area⁸⁰.

⁷⁴ C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kafkasya*, İstanbul, 1979, p.61; about previous activities of Ferah Ali Pasha look: Yağcı Zübeyde Güneş *Ferah Ali Paşa'nın Soğucak Muhafızlığı (1781-1785)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Samsun, 1998, p.62-68.

⁷⁵ Zübeyde Güneş Yağcı *Ferah Ali Paşa'nın Soğucak Muhafızlığı (1781-1785)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Samsun, 1998, p.68.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p.76.

⁷⁷ In total, three and a half years, until his death in 1785.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, p.129.

⁷⁹ Starting since 1791, Russians did take the fortress for four times and thrice returned it to Turkey. Eventually, in 1829 it was taken for the last time and incorporated by Russia.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, p.147.

In any case, though, the work started by Ferah Ali Pasha was carried on, despite frequent changes of Ottoman officials in the post of *muhafiz*.

While the Porte tried to strengthen its positions on the littoral, the North Caucasus became the scene of a great anti-Russian uprising of the Caucasian mountaineers under the leadership of Sheikh Mansur.⁸¹ The Sheikh Mansur movement began in 1785 when the Chechen named Ushurma (Mansur (Arab. victorious)- is an adopted name) started to preach among fellow countrymen. Mansur called upon the mountaineers to return to the true ascetic ways of Islam, to refuse to follow all of the old clannish customs and accept the Shariah as the only law. Eventually this religious movement acquired a strongly anti-Russian character and came to be directed against the Russian forces concentrated in the region. The tsarist colonial expansion united the mountaineers in their efforts to resist it, to defend their lands and rights, while Muridism,⁸² the teaching spread by Mansur, became the common ground for such unification.

The mountaineers constituted a real threat to the Caucasian line of newly built Russian fortresses; anti-Russian proclamations had been distributed by Mansur's followers throughout the whole Caucasus. As for the Ottomans, they tried to watch closely the situation and already Ferah Ali Pasha did send his own official representative to Mansur, in order to get more information about the famous leader

⁸¹ Sheikh Mansur (1760-1794)- a Chechen, whose actual name was Ushurma, born in Aldy village in Chechnya. Leader of national and religious movement of Caucasian peoples against Russian authorities in the Northern Caucasus during 1785-1791; among the latest works on Sheikh Mansur look: Yağcı Zübeyde Güneş A Chechen national hero of the Caucasus in the 18th century: Sheikh Mansur // *Central Asian Survey*, March, 2003 22(1), p.p. 103–115.

⁸² In detail the phenomenon of Muridism has been described lately in: A. Zelkina *In quest for God and freedom: the Sufi response to the Russian advance*. Hurst & Company, London, 2000, p.63.

of the Caucasian mountaineers.⁸³ Quite naturally even more concerned were the tsarist authorities, which decided to organize a preventive expedition against Mansur.

A Russian detachment over 3,000 soldiers⁸⁴ under the command of colonel Nikolai Pieri had the order to take Aldy, the native village of Mansur and the center of uprising. Pieri's main aim was to arrest the leader of mountaineers.⁸⁵ On July 6, 1785 the Russians stormed and entered the village of Aldy, though they found it virtually abandoned with no sign of Mansur or his supporters. So Pieri simply ordered all of the houses in the village to be set on fire, Mansur's own house had been leveled to the ground.⁸⁶ From now on any friendly attitude towards Russians was out of question.

The villagers managed to take their revenge almost immediately. Hiding in the forest-covered mountains, they blocked the only way back for Pieri's detachment, surrounded it and completely destroyed it, half of the Russian soldiers being killed, and Colonel Pieri himself being mortally wounded in the battle. Another remarkable point- amongst the few Russians who survived the combat was Prince Bagration, of the royal house of Georgia, then serving as a non-commissioned officer, afterwards a distinguished general, and known as one of the heroes of the patriotic war of 1812.⁸⁷

This first success of Sheikh Mansur gained him high prestige among the North Caucasians. News of the mountaineers' victory over the Russians flew all over the

⁸³ C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kafkasya siyaseti*, İstanbul, 1979, p.117.

⁸⁴ A. Zelkina *In quest for God and freedom: the Sufi response to the Russian advance*. Hurst & Company, London, 2000, p.63.

⁸⁵ John F. Baddeley, *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*. Richmond, 1999, p.49.

⁸⁶ A. Zelkina *In quest for God and freedom: the Sufi response to the Russian advance*. Hurst & Company, London, 2000, p.65.

⁸⁷ John F. Baddeley, *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*. Richmond, 1999, p.49.

Caucasus, gaining more and more fantastic features. In the end it was depicted as a divine miracle, with Mansur never trying to refute these beliefs of the common people. Once the conflict started, the rebels, inspired by their triumph at Aldy, tried to take one of the key positions of Russians in the Caucasus, the fortress of Kizliar.⁸⁸ On 15 July 1785, one week after the destruction of Pieri's detachment, mountaineers attacked the Kizliar fortifications. Objectively this raid hardly had any chances of success; so were the other raids of that summer- against Grigoriopolis and for the second time against Kizliar.

Nevertheless the tsarist authorities became anxious about the overall situation in the Caucasus. Mansur had been gradually developing into a serious opponent- he sought to reorganize the whole life of mountaineers, to create a kind of regular taxation in order to support his military campaigns. Mansur put an obligation on each mosque to mobilize from two to ten people and demanded 60 kopecks from each household to maintain the army.⁸⁹ During the next two years almost all of the Caucasus came to be involved in an anti-Russian revolt.

Yet, unfortunately for the mountaineers, despite their initial successes, they could not overcome tribal isolation and after several defeats at the hands of the Russian army their confidence faded away. On the other hand, Russians still never could feel at ease in the region harassed by Mansur's periodic guerilla raids. What is more, it was always difficult to catch the leader of mountaineers, for in case of need

⁸⁸ As A.Zelkina points out, situated at the cross-roads between southern Russia, Daghestan and the North Caucasus, Kizliar was crucial in linking the Caucasian fortified line with Astrakhan and the Russian hinterland and as such was the true center of Russian might in the North Caucasus both in political and economic terms. However, the Russian official administrative center was Ekaterinodar (nowadays Krasnodar).

⁸⁹ A. Zelkina *In quest for God and freedom: the Sufi response to the Russian advance*. Hurst & Company, London, 2000, p.63

he could find shelter on the Ottoman side, and periodically used for that purpose the fortress of Anapa on the Circassian coast of the Black Sea.

Logically one may and also should put here the question about the attitude of the Ottomans towards events going on in the Northern Caucasus- to what extent did the Sublime Porte support Sheikh Mansur and, secondly, what kind of cooperation, if any, did exist between Mansur and the Ottomans. As mentioned earlier, Ferah Ali Pasha had tried to gain detailed information about personality and activities of a new regional leader in Chechnya, for that purpose having sent to Mansur a special envoy. However, even Mansur himself could not unite and put under equally efficient control all of the mountain tribes, for the Ottomans, it was all the more difficult to undertake serious steps in this field. The politics of the Porte had been confined only to the traditional encouragement of mountaineers by distribution of presents among local Caucasian tribal leaders.⁹⁰ Consequently Mansur started and performed his operations against the Russian troops solely on his own, without any kind of solid assistance from the Ottomans. The leader of mountaineers never considered himself to be much obliged to the Porte⁹¹ and had to rely in the given situation only upon his own resources.

Nonetheless objectively the Ottoman Empire and Sheikh Mansur's people were allies in their struggle against the Russian forces in the Caucasus, especially after the new Russian-Turkish war broke out in 1787. This war was a result of increased confrontation between two neighboring empires in the vast region stretching from the Black Sea basin to the Caucasus. The Ottomans tried to restore their domination in

⁹⁰ C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kafkasya siyaseti*, İstanbul, 1979, p.145.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, P.172.

the Crimea as well as to oppose the spreading Russian influence over the Caucasian area. The aims of St. Petersburg were quite the contrary.

While the main hostilities were going on in Europe, on the Danubian theater, Russia could not wage war on the same scale in the Caucasus. Although, according to the terms of Georgievsk, Russians had to protect Kartli-Kakheti, Saint Petersburg preferred to withdraw its troops (October 1787) from Eastern Georgia,⁹² so as not to provoke the Porte into starting wide hostile activities in the South Western Caucasus.⁹³ Clearly it was an outrageous violation of Georgievsk Treaty of 1783, even despite the fact that two battalions quartered in Tiflis were not enough for effective defense. Grigorii Potemkin, at that time the chief commander of all Russian troops engaged in the war against the Ottomans, justified this step by stating that the withdrawal of Russian troops would appease the Turks and would be a better guarantee of Georgia's security than if the troops were left.⁹⁴

There was another explanation- to stay in Georgia for the Russian troops in those conditions would be a complete folly. The isolated position of the small Russian Caucasian force, aggravated by very limited communication through the Georgian Military Road, the continuous threat of being cut off from the main bases of supply in the Northern Caucasus, Sheikh Mansur's uprising in the rear- all these factors certainly influenced St. Petersburg's decision to withdraw its troops from Georgia.

⁹² Two battalions of colonel S.D. Burnashev. Again Russian troops (the two regiments under major-general Ivan Petrovich Lazarev) entered Georgia in February 1799.

⁹³ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*, Moscow, Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p.37.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

To use the favorable situation, the governor of Childir (tur. Çıldır) Suleyman Pasha in 1788 embarked on an expedition to Tiflis,⁹⁵ as a consequence of which the Georgian ruler Erekle II, regardless of the still existing Georgievsk Treaty of 1783 with Russia, now concluded another allied treaty, with the Porte.⁹⁶ At the same time, the Russian withdrawal from Georgia indeed appeased the Ottomans and the South Caucasian front was never opened. Thus, for the Southern Caucasus, the general situation during the late 1780-s and early 1790-s was becoming ever more complicated, though for the time being a direct military confrontation within the borders of Georgia proper was avoided.

Unlike the European theater, where the Russian army under the command of Aleksandr Vasilievich Suvorov⁹⁷ achieved great successes in the battles of Ochakov, Focsani, Rymnik, Izmail, the Caucasian campaign was of more moderate character. The war in the North Caucasian theater had been waged primarily with the purpose of establishing (for the Russian side) or maintaining (for the Ottomans) control over Anapa fortress, the main base of the Ottoman power in the Caucasus, where the spiritual and military leader of mountaineers, Sheikh Mansur, could always find a shelter from the Russian troops. At the same time the Caucasian front, although seemingly not so significant as compared with that one of the Danube, in fact did

⁹⁵ C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kafkasya siyaseti*, İstanbul, 1979, p.146.

⁹⁶ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*, Moscow, Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p.38.

⁹⁷ Aleksandr Vasilievich Suvorov (1729-1800)- an outstanding Russian military commander, Prince of Italy, Count of Rimnikskiy, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, Generalissimo of Russia's Ground and Naval forces, Field Marshal of the Austrian and Sardinian Armies, Prince of Sardinia. Seriously wounded six times, he was the recipient of the Order of St. Andrew the First Called Apostle, Order of St. George the Triumphant First Class, Order of St. Vladimir First Class, Order of St. Aleksandr Nevskiy, Order of St. Ann First Class, Grand Cross of the Order of St. Joan of Jerusalem, (Austria) Order of Maria Teresa First Class, (Prussia) Order of the Black Eagle, Order of the Red Eagle, the Pour le Merite, (Sardinia) Order of the Revered Saints Maurice and Lazarus, (Bavaria) Order of St. Gubert, the Golden Lionness, (France) Order of the Carmelite Virgin Mary, St. Lasara, (Poland) the White Eagle, the Order of St. Stanislaus.

cost Russia huge material and human resources and eventually influenced the process of Russian advance in the Northern as well as in the Southern Caucasus.

The stronghold of Anapa on the Black Sea coast was a permanent headache for several Russian generals succeeding each other in the post of commander of the forces quartered in the Northern Caucasus. The first two attempts to seize Anapa ended in failure. Neither general Petr Tekeli nor general Yurii Bibikov in autumn 1788 and late winter of 1789, respectively, managed to take hold of Anapa.

Especially disastrous was the untimely started and poorly prepared Bibikov's operation. The Russian expeditionary corps embarked on the campaign at the end of winter, when the roads turned into a mixture of melting snow, mud and water, with scanty supplies, on the way having to defend itself against the raids of local Circassian tribes, and reached its final destination in no condition to take the recently reinforced first-class Ottoman fortress. In the battle against the garrison supported by Circassians, who attacked Bibikov's troops from the rear, the Russians did not manage to take Anapa. Bibikov, with a hungry and tired army, without sufficient supplies, trapped by tricky spring weather and hostile tribes, could not stay for a long siege and had to retreat. This retreat turned into a real catastrophe for Russians. J.F. Baddeley describes it:

Provisions gave out, the weather was vile, the roads mere quagmires, and the unfortunate soldiers, perishing of cold and hunger, fought their way verst by verst⁹⁸, as best they could, back to the Kouban and to safety. The official relation puts the losses at no more than 1100 men, but according to other accounts, of the 8000 only 3000 returned whole, and these in a most pitiable state,

⁹⁸ Verst (rus. Versta)- old Russian measure of distance, equals to 1.0668 km.

bringing along with them 1000 sick and wounded, of whom but a small minority recovered.⁹⁹

The Kuban River,¹⁰⁰ enormously flooded with melting spring waters was the last obstacle on the way of retreating Russian soldiers. Many of them were killed by the Ottoman pursuers or drowned in Kuban. Afterwards those who survived were rewarded with a silver medal with the inscription “For loyalty”.¹⁰¹ The victorious side, on the other hand, was jubilant. According to the Turkish historian Cemal Gökçe, the news of the success of the Ottomans in campaign against Bibikov’s force had been sent to Istanbul together with two hundred heads and ears,¹⁰² which in all probability had to serve as a proof of victory.

This failure of Russian arms encouraged the Porte for more energetic activities. The Ottomans under the command of the *Serasker*¹⁰³ of Anapa, Battal Hüseyin Pasha,¹⁰⁴ started to prepare a massive expedition that was to be directed against the main Russia’s Caucasian outposts- Vladikavkaz, Kizliar, Georgievsk.¹⁰⁵ In case of success, the Porte thought not only to undermine the Russian positions in the Caucasus, but hoped also to oust its Northern adversaries from the whole area completely.

⁹⁹ John F. Baddeley, *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*. Richmond, 1999, p.53.

¹⁰⁰ Since 1774 according to Kuchuk Kainardji Treaty Kuban River was recognized as the official border of Russia.

¹⁰¹ Ibid; this medal was in a sense unique, since it was given for defeat, and not for victory.

¹⁰² C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kafkasya siyaseti*, İstanbul, 1979, p.155.

¹⁰³ A high Ottoman military rank.

¹⁰⁴ Battal Hüseyin Pasha was the elder son of Canikli Ali Pasha, the governor of Trabzon. He had been appointed governor and Serasker of Erzurum in 1784. Then he served as governor of Trabzon in 1788 and after that was appointed Serasker of Anapa on 26 November 1788. Gökçe, op. cit, p.151.

¹⁰⁵ C. Gökçe *Kafkasya ve Osmanlı imparatorluğu'nun kafkasya siyaseti*, İstanbul, 1979, p.158.

On September 15, 1790 Battal Pasha and his huge army,¹⁰⁶ which also included mountaineers, passed to the other side of Kuban River,¹⁰⁷ which meant that the Ottomans crossed the official Russian border. However, the bold plans of the Ottoman commander proved ill fated. Battal Pasha was stopped and defeated by the detachment of general Herman,¹⁰⁸ which, though much smaller in number, appeared to be more efficient. Especially, Battal Pasha himself was taken prisoner, saved from death by a miracle. The consequences were in a real sense of the word catastrophic for the Ottoman side. Bibikov's failure was forgotten, Russian prestige was restored and the strategic initiative passed to the Russians completely. Thereby the Porte had to abandon any ideas of invasion, seeking only to defend its present positions. Sheikh Mansur's movement also lost its initial strength, with Mansur himself taking a refuge in Anapa.

Following Battal Pasha's disaster another Russian expedition against Anapa was organized, already for the third time during the war. In summer 1791 (now not in winter, keeping in mind the failed Bibikov's campaign) under General Ivan Vasilievich Gudovich¹⁰⁹ once more started the siege of that impregnable fortress. This time preparations were of the most serious character, for the third in a row failure would enormously damage the prestige of the Russian forces in the whole of the Caucasus which almost unquestionably would lead to a series of new revolts and

¹⁰⁶ Army of Battal Pasha has been estimated of 25 000-50 000.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Herman, Ivan Ivanovich (1741-1801)- Russian general, of Saxon origin. Entered the Russian military service in 1769. Participant of the Russian-Turkish wars of 1768-1774, 1787-1791, suppression of Pugachev revolt, Polish campaign 1794. Fought in Netherlands with the Russian corps against the French in the war of Second coalition. The victory over the Ottoman army in upper Kuban River is one of the most prominent in his career.

¹⁰⁹ Gudovich Ivan Vasilievich (1741-1820), senior Russian military commander of Ukrainian origin, Count (1797), General Field-Marshal (1807). In 1791-1796 and 1806-1809 commander of Russian forces on Caucasian fortified line, de facto governor general of the Caucasus.

increase the general recalcitrance of the population. Moreover, retreat could easily bring a threat of complete annihilation of the entire expedition as a result of the intensified guerrilla raids made by mountaineers.

After two weeks of siege the stronghold of Anapa was captured in June 1791. The Russian losses were indeed heavy- 93 officers and 4000 men killed and wounded, about half of the troops engaged.¹¹⁰ Among the few prisoners taken in the fortress, the Russians took as well the person, especially wanted by St. Petersburg: Sheikh Mansur.¹¹¹ That event, along with the loss of such a strategic base as Anapa, became a serious blow upon mountaineers' rebellious movement. Following the fall of Anapa all hostilities on the Caucasian theater were stopped.

According to the peace treaty of Jassy, signed on 29 December 1791, the Ottoman Empire ceded the territories on the Northern coast of the Black Sea (between the mouths of Southern Bug and Dniester) to Russia and also reiterated the conditions of both Küçük Kaynarca Treaty (1774) and those of Georgievsk Treaty (1783) regarding the Russian protectorate over Eastern Georgia. At the same time, concerning the state of affairs in Europe not quite favorable to St. Petersburg, Russia made certain concessions to the Ottomans in the Caucasus- the Russian Caucasian border did not change, being delineated by the river Kuban, while Anapa was given back to the Ottoman Empire. It mattered that the changes in the Caucasus throughout the 1770-s and 1780-s, were again officially confirmed. St. Petersburg increasingly strengthened its influence in the region.

¹¹⁰ John F. Baddeley, *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*. Richmond, 1999, p.55.

¹¹¹ Mansur, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment as a mutineer, died three years later, in 1794.

In the Georgian perspective the Russian victories over the Ottoman Empire in the late 18th century necessarily meant the eventual growth of the Russian involvement in the regional political process. But St. Petersburg was anxious not to let its relations with the Porte or with Persia worsen. Russia evidently wanted to avoid needless confrontation with neighboring Muslim powers, for at the time after the Great French Revolution she gave priority to the European theater of diplomatic affairs. This also accounted for the withdrawal of the Russian troops from Kartli-Kakheti and the unanswered request of Solomon II¹¹² in November 1794 on the military assistance against the Ottomans¹¹³. As for Eastern Georgia, the realm of Erekle II, Russians could not, or would not, prevent the expedition of the Persian ruler Aga Muhammad¹¹⁴ to Tiflis in 1795, which resulted in a terrible plunder of the Kartli-Kakhetian capital.

The campaign against Persia, which followed, was largely brought on by considerations of imperial prestige and started the following year in April under the command of general Valerian Zubov.¹¹⁵ Though on the whole successful, this campaign did not much influenced the general situation. In November with the death of Catherine II Zubov got the order from new emperor, Paul I (1796-1801), to leave the Southern Caucasus. In words of V. Degoiev, Georgia was to become a victim of

¹¹² King of Imeretia in 1789-1810.

¹¹³ "Solomon II to Gudovich, (November 29 [December 10], 1794)", *Akty sobrannye kavkazskoiu arkheograficheskoiu Kommissieiu* (later- *AKAK*), Ed.by Ad. Berzhe, Vol. I-XII, Tiflis, 1866, Vol. I, p.553-54.

¹¹⁴ Aga Muhammad Qadjar (1742-1797)- ruler of Persia in 1779-1797, shah since 1796, the founder of Qadjar dynasty.

¹¹⁵ Zubov Valerian Aleksandrovich (1771-1804)- Russian general, younger brother of Catherine II's last favorite, Count Platon Zubov. In his Persian campaign he occupied Derbend, Baku, Kuba, Shemakha, Gandja. No direct clash between Russian and Persian armies happened, however.

Russia's big European politics, centered upon the question of uncompromising struggle against the revolutionary France.¹¹⁶

To sum up, by the end of the 18th century the Russian Empire, in any case, was already in a sense a Caucasian state in the exact meaning of the word, though it still had a long way to go in order to complete the logical process under way of political incorporation of the whole Caucasus.

As regards the Caucasian politics of the Sublime Porte, at the time it was mostly of a defensive character, confined to the building and reinforcing the fortresses in strategically important places; sending presents to local rulers, in order to secure their adherence; in war time the announcing of decrees, to encourage the indigenous Caucasian population to participate in anti-Russian military activities. The only direct offensive action, the expedition of Battal Pasha during the war of 1787-1791, turned out to be a great catastrophe for the Porte. In the course of time the Ottomans were losing the initiative, while their Russian counterparts gradually gained ever more strength. The more active phase of Russia's interference in Georgian affairs started somewhat later- after the deaths of Catherine II and Erekle II, respectively in 1796 and 1798, when many remarkable changes happened in the European political arena.

¹¹⁶ V. Degoiev *Bolshaia igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*, Moscow, Russkaia Panorama, 2001, p.49.

CHAPTER III. THE DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND RUSSIA – THE ORIGIN, NATURE, SIGNIFICANCE

III.1 Political background of the Ottoman-Russian defensive alliance

On December 23, 1798 the Grand Vizier and the *Reisü-l-küttap* (the foreign minister) of the Ottoman Empire, respectively Ismet Bey and Atıf Efendi, on the one side, along with the Russian ambassador Vasilii Tomara on the other, had signed quite an unusual agreement, consisting of 14 articles.¹¹⁷ This was the defensive alliance (*tedafüi ittifak*) between the traditional rivals, the Ottoman Empire and Russia, which throughout the centuries had been involved in almost incessant wars against each other. By 1798 there had happened already six Russo-Turkish wars in history, the last of them ended just seven years before, in 1791. Furthermore, hardly had another seven years elapsed, as there another series of wars between the Sublime Porte and St. Petersburg began- for the 19th and early 20th centuries reaching a total number of five armed conflicts.¹¹⁸ In view of the long history of this rivalry the short era of the Ottoman-Russian alliance appears to be an exceptional episode, and, clearly, requires attention.

In order to understand as well as explain such unique cooperation it is necessary to look at the general state of affairs in European politics at the time. In brief, the end of eighteenth century was a dramatic era for the whole continent of

¹¹⁷ Akdes Nimet Kurat *Türkiye ve Rusya*. Ankara, 1990, p.46.

¹¹⁸ These are the wars of 1676-1681, 1686-1700, 1710-1713, 1735-1739, 1768-1774, 1787-1791, and 1806-1812, 1828-1829, 1853-1856, 1877-1878, 1914-1918.

Europe- the Great French Revolution with its radical ideas of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* had drastically influenced the existing situation in the international arena and caused a long chain of wars of revolutionary France with the European monarchic regimes. The Revolution was followed by the challenge of Napoleon Bonaparte, a man, whose name became the symbol of the whole epoch. The traditional Anglo-French antagonism had been revived and was brought to the highest extent, Britain being the permanent organizer and participant in all the seven anti-French coalitions, created during the years 1792-1815.

The Ottoman Empire and Russia, as main actors in the European diplomatic game, obviously could not stay apart from the main scene of international politics. For imperial Russia “the heretical” ideas of freedom and equality, together with the execution of a legitimate monarch, Louis XVI, were the most horrifying events. St. Petersburg certainly wished to avert the spreading of the revolutionary infection, dangerous for all European monarchical regimes. For that reason Russia looked for any kind of possible cooperation against Republican France. There was a second motive on the part of St. Petersburg: to prevent the possibility of growing French influence in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The attitude of the Sublime Porte towards the French expansion was not of ideological, but of political character- France occupied Egypt, at the time a nominal, but still official province of the Ottoman Empire. This occupation became especially bitter, for the Ottomans never expected such a move from a traditional friend. France was certainly the closest ally of the Sublime Porte among the European powers after

the 16th century.¹¹⁹ Now, at the end of the 18th century, the long-lasting worldwide Anglo-French rivalry threatened the Ottoman Eastern Mediterranean. France, which after the Seven Years war of 1756-1763 had lost to the English her colonial possessions in North America (Canada, Eastern Louisiana) as well as almost all the colonies in India. Both for French and English history this event was a crucial point. Defeat in the Seven Years War further undermined the prestige of the *ancien régime* in France and to some extent caused the events preceding The French Revolution; at the same time it did not eliminate traditional antagonism between England and France. The latter, whether monarchic or republican, for a long time could not accept the end of her dreams of great colonial empire and sought revenge. Napoleon's Egyptian expedition was an attempt to deliver as painful as possible a retributive blow at England. At the same time, it also happened to be a direct aggression against the Ottoman Empire.

The idea of capturing Egypt had been considered, and not only by Napoleon, as an alternative to direct French invasion of Britain. The supposed aim was to control the land and sea contact of England to India, and to return to France the status of a great colonial power. Napoleon addressed the Directory, "Really to ruin England we must make ourselves masters of Egypt".¹²⁰

As a result the French were steadily moving further in the Mediterranean- in 1797 Napoleon Bonaparte conquered the Republic of Venice, thus by the Treaty of

¹¹⁹ Ottoman-French diplomatic relations started in 1525 and in January 1536 there was concluded a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Trade alliance between the Ottoman sultan Suleiman I the Magnificent (Kanuni) (1520-1566) and Francis I (1515-1547), king of France. At the same time a secret offensive alliance against the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V Habsburg (1519-1558) was signed. The treaty opened the commerce of the Levant to the French alone, and as a result of the agreement, diplomatic relations between France and Turkey lasted for centuries // For more details see introductory part in: Ismail Soysal *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)*, Ankara, 1987, p.p. 1-22.

¹²⁰ J.A.R. Marriott, *The Eastern question: an historical study in European diplomacy*: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p.164.

Campo Formio (October 17, 1797), concluded between France and Austria, the Adriatic littoral of Dalmatia together with the Ionian islands, the former Venetian possession situated off the western and south-western coast of mainland Greece and Albania, were ceded to the French Republic (in fact they had been occupied even earlier, in the summer of 1797)¹²¹. The Ionian Islands, in the words of Bonaparte, were of more strategic importance for France than all Italy.¹²²

On March 3, 1798 Bonaparte presented to Directory his project of invasion to Egypt and already on March 5 got the official appointment as the commander of Egyptian expedition. On May 19 Napoleon and his troops, in total numbering 38 000 men, set off from Toulon, the ship of general named "Orient".¹²³

Another base for the French advance in Mediterranean was to have been organized on Malta, captured for that purpose by Napoleon's Egyptian army on the way to its final destination in June 1798. Consequently the French troops landed in Egypt on July 1; took Alexandria on the 2nd, fought and won the battle of the Pyramids on the 21st, and on the next day occupied Cairo. Three weeks had sufficed for the conquest of the Lower Egypt.¹²⁴ All these activities made the Ottomans very concerned about their possessions in the Near East. Furthermore, Sultan Selim III (1789-1807), who personally was a great sympathizer with France, felt bitterly insulted by the totally unexpected step by a traditional Ottoman ally.

¹²¹ v.: Boris Mouravieff *L'Alliance Russo-Turque au milieu des Guerres Napoléoniennes*. - Neuchâtel, 1954, p.13; Norman E. Saul *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807*, Chicago, 1970, p.55; İsmail Soysal *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)*, Ankara, 1987, p.p. 164-165.

¹²² J.A.R. Marriott, *The Eastern question: an historical study in European diplomacy*: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p.166.

¹²³ İsmail Soysal *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)*, Ankara, 1987, p.p. 186-187.

¹²⁴ Ibidem, p.169.

However, as J.C. Hurewitz points out, the seizure of the Ottoman territories by the French did not make the Sublime Porte throw itself immediately into the Russian embrace.¹²⁵ The contradictions were too strong and the military confrontation too fresh in the memory to be forgotten.

Here the English role in the creation of the Russo-Ottoman alliance should not be underestimated, for even after Napoleon appeared in the Eastern Mediterranean, “the Sultan and his vezirs dragged their feet, refusing to formalize any defensive arrangement with Russia without the simultaneous participation of the United Kingdom”.¹²⁶ Such a situation was understandable. While in Russia during Catherine’s times the celebrated Greek Project had been worked out, Britain at the time had not observable plans as to the division of the Ottoman Empire. The Sublime Porte therefrom regarded Britain with less suspicion than she did Russia, and, therefore, the British decision to adhere to the Russo-Ottoman alliance of 1798 (the similar Anglo-Turkish defensive alliance was signed two days later¹²⁷) to a large extent created this very coalition. Now, within the framework of the second anti-Napoleonic coalition,¹²⁸ both the Russian and the Ottoman Empires needed to cooperate.

Thus by the end of the 18th century all the parties - the British, the Ottomans, the Russians, - were uneasy about French Mediterranean and Near Eastern activities,

¹²⁵ J. C. Hurewitz, *The Background of Russia's claims to the Turkish Straits/ Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten*, cilt 28, sayı 3, 1964, p.478.

¹²⁶ Ibidem, p.478-479.

¹²⁷ M.S. Anderson, *The great powers and the Near East, 1774-1923*. Edward Arnold, London, 1970, p.21.

¹²⁸ The name “Second Coalition” (1798-1800) designates the second major concerted effort of multiple European powers (Austria, England, Russia, Turkey, Portugal, Naples and Vatican) to contain revolutionary France.

each nation having its own particular reasons. Britain had already been at war with France since 1793, the old colonial rivalry being the main reason for Anglo-French confrontation. The Ottoman Empire experienced the occupation of her own territory, and her interests at this point completely corresponded with those of the British- to throw France out of Egypt and the Near East. As for St. Petersburg, news of the French capture of Malta, which reached the Russian capital on 23 July, also prompted Paul I's (1796-1801) resolution to take more decisive action.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Saul Norman E. *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807*, Chicago, 1970, p.62. Paul I had himself proclaimed Grand Master by those Knights who escaped to Russia (November 1798) and was considered to be a protector of the Order of St. John. However, proclamation of a married non-Catholic as head of a Catholic religious order was wholly illegal, and never recognized by the Vatican.

III.2 Practical cooperation and mutual suspicions

Negotiations on the Ottoman-Russian alliance started at the military conference, held in Istanbul on 8 September with Fedor Fedorovich Ushakov¹³⁰ (then the commander of the Russian Black Sea fleet), Kadir Bey (the commander of the Turkish fleet), Sir Sidney Smith (admiral, representing the British Royal Navy), [Vasilii] Tomara (the Russian ambassador in Istanbul), Atıf Efendi (*Reis-ül-küttap* of the Porte), and other Turkish officials in attendance.¹³¹ An agreement was on joint action of Russian and the Ottoman fleets in Mediterranean against the French under the command of the Russian admiral Ushakov. In spite of the wishes of the British representative, who preferred to use the allied fleets in Egypt, the planned Russian-Ottoman operation in view of other participants was to be directed against the Ionian Islands, which became an important naval base of France.

At this point another problem concerning the Black Sea Straits arose. In order to take part in the hostilities on the Mediterranean theater, the Russian navy needed to get a permission to pass through the narrows. Fairly enough, the Ottoman government looked on the appearance of Russian ships in the area with the utmost suspicion. It was not a big secret for anyone, that “apart from the common allied goal of containing France, the Russians still privately desired Ottoman territory,

¹³⁰ Ushakov Fedor Fedorovich (1745-1817), famous Russian naval commander, one of the architects of the Russian Black Sea fleet, participant of the Russian-Turkish wars 1768-1774, 1787-1791, in 2001 canonized as a saint by the Russian Orthodox church.

¹³¹ Norman E. Saul *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807*, Chicago, 1970, p.66.

particularly the Straits, and tried to make the alliance serve both ends at once".¹³² St. Petersburg and the Sublime Porte, regardless even of their status as allies, never ceased their hidden rivalry, the Straits being the key issue in it. As for Russia, the possible acquisition of free passage through the narrows would become a great opportunity to use the situation as a good historical precedent and claim the same rights in the future. At the time of the joint war against France, however, as Hurewitz puts it, "Russia was...to enjoy naval transit not as of right but only on Ottoman sufferance".¹³³ As was stated in the Russo-Ottoman Treaty of 1799, the passage of the Russian fleet and its free communication between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean

may not establish the right or serve as a pretext for claiming future free passage of war vessels through the Canal; this passage is solely reserved for the situation of a common war or dispatch of such aid as the Ottoman Porte might demand in virtue of the Treaty of Alliance and subject to prior agreement.¹³⁴

For that reason the monopoly of the Ottomans over the Straits had been universally recognized at the time, and Russia, though keeping in mind her own secret design, was not to have any exception. Hence the Russo-Turkish alliance started during the war of the Second Coalition against France- in mutual suspicion towards each other, but with a common strategic goal.

There were also hostilities in the North Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, which were waged by the allied armies of Britain, Austria and Russia; the Ottoman military was engaged in two theaters- the Near Eastern (Egypt and Syria) theater,

¹³² J. C. Hurewitz, *The Background of Russia's claims to the Turkish Straits/ Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten*, Vol. 28, No 3, (1964), p.480.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, p.484.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

where the Anglo-Turkish armies were acting, and the Adriatic (Ionian Islands) theater, where the Turkish forces cooperated with the Russians.

The Russo-Turkish cooperation started even before the official signing of the agreement on the alliance, following the joint military conference of three powers, Russia, Turkey and England, held on September 8, 1798. At that time, that is, in autumn of 1798, several Eastern Mediterranean territories newly occupied by the French included Egypt, the Ionian Islands and Malta. All of them as outposts for French military and navy had a great strategic significance in Bonaparte's plan to defeat England on the routes leading to India. Hence the purpose of the anti-Napoleon coalition was to oust Napoleon's army from Egypt and to recapture all of the Mediterranean islands taken by France. The task did become far easier after the decisive naval victory of the British fleet under Rear Admiral Horatio Nelson at Aboukir Bay on 1 August 1798, which cut off the French army in Egypt from home. The French came to be isolated in the trap of the distant foreign land with an unfamiliar climate and terrain, surrounded by sometimes hostile local population. Now the maritime domination of the allies was unassailable.

When Napoleon in October 1798 stayed in conquered Egypt,¹³⁵ he had to face the first Cairo uprising, and prepared the expedition to Syria. At this very time the British blocked the island of Malta, while the Russo-Turkish joint navy, commanded by Ushakov, started military operations in the Ionian archipelago. During October the allies had taken the islands of Cerigo, Zante, Cefalonia and Santa Mavra. On 8 November began the siege of Corfu, the largest and the most important island of

¹³⁵ For details on French administration in Egypt look: *Al-Jabarti's chronicle of the first seven months of the French occupation of Egypt* (تاريخ مدات الفريديس بمصر) /Ed. and transl. by S. Moreh, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1975.

archipelago. It lasted until mid-February 1799, when the commander of the French garrison of Corfu, general Chabot, signed on February 19, 1799 the act of capitulation. From now on the Ionian Islands were controlled by the allies and were proclaimed as a federal republic under the joint protection of Turkey and Russia.¹³⁶ Two vehemently anti-republican monarchic states, two empires became the protectors of a republic- another amazing combination of the time. According to Russo-Ottoman agreement of March 21, 1799, the Ionian Islands self-governing Republic was put under the Porte's suzerainty (Article 1) and had to pay to the Ottomans 75.000 *kuruş* every three years. Russia became a guarantor of the Republic's integrity.¹³⁷

Meanwhile Napoleon embarked on his Syrian campaign. In February 1799 the French army set out in the northeastern direction, to Syria, taking on its way El Arish (February 19, 1799), Jaffa (March 7, 1799) and started the siege of the fortress of Acre (from March 18 till May 20, 1799). Eventually, for various reasons, among them the waste of time because of the strong resistance of the smaller Syrian fortresses, the English help to the defenders and the determined character of the latter - the blockade never had the desired effect. On May 20, 1799 general Bonaparte had to raise the siege and move back to Egypt. Despite another victory of French arms over the Ottomans in the first Aboukir battle on 25 July,¹³⁸ the situation remained just the same- the army of the French, though still strong and well-organized, being completely isolated and its future precarious.

¹³⁶ J.A.R. Marriott, *The Eastern question: an historical study in European diplomacy*: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p.172; J. C. Hurewitz, *The Background of Russia's claims to the Turkish Straits/ Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten*, Vol.28, No 3, (1964), p.485; Ismail Soysal *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)*, Ankara, 1987, p.p.302-304.

¹³⁷ Fahir Armaoğlu *19.yüzyıl siyasi tarihi (1789-1914)*. Ankara, 1997, p.86.

¹³⁸ The second battle of Aboukir took place on 22 March 1801, now the British overwhelmed the exhausted French. The British commander, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, was mortally wounded in the battle.

Even worse were France's war prospects in Europe. Italy, earlier conquered by Bonaparte, was lost for France during 1799. The Russo-Austrian forces of an outstanding Russian general Alexander Suvorov beat the French generals Moreau, Macdonald, Joubert and regained Milan, Turin, Mantua. The Allies had also taken Naples and Rome. Admiral Nelson besieged Malta. At this very critical point Napoleon left his Egyptian army to general Kleber's command and departed for France, where in a coup d'état of 9 November (18 Brumaire) 1799 he overthrew the government of the Directory and as a First consul of the republic set up his own military dictatorship.

Within the next two years the conduct of the all-European war came to be more successful for France. In 1800 Napoleon beat the Austrians in Northern Italy, restored French control in the Apennines, and at the beginning of 1801 made peace with Austria. Napoleon's (as already he may be called, instead of Bonaparte) France became the continental hegemon. However, by this time the French lost all their Mediterranean bases on the Ionian Islands and on Malta, the trapped Egyptian army was on the verge of capitulation and consequently surrendered on 18 June 1801. By the end of September the last French forces had left the country. Accordingly, France, as exclusively land power, could not put the crucial blow to the naval hegemony of Britain, while the British were unable to damage the continental hegemony of France.

The Second coalition gradually disintegrated. Already at the end of 1799, when Admiral Ushakov's fleet got the Tsar's order to return to Russia, the tension in the Russo-British relations increased. When the British took Malta in September 1800,

and the British admiral Sir Alexander Ball became the governor of the island, Paul I felt especially angered, for he had his own views on the island's status. At the end of 1800 St. Petersburg declared its abandonment of the coalition. On 8 October 1801 the peace treaty between Russia and France was signed. Paris as well had concluded on the next day, 9 October, a separate preliminary peace agreement with the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁹ In the end, Britain, without her continental allies, also agreed to negotiate a ceasefire. The peace of Amiens, 25 March 1802, for the time being finished the war.

As for Russo-Ottoman relations of the period, at the beginning of the 19th century there were two trends in Russia's politics towards the Ottomans, both clearly expressed by prince Adam Czartoryski¹⁴⁰ in his memo, submitted to Alexander I on 29 February 1804.¹⁴¹ It was an obvious advantage to St. Petersburg to have on its southern borders a weak and, therefore, friendly Ottoman Empire, which could be with no trouble influenced and would never be the source of aggression, but supposed to serve as buffer state. In Czartoryski's own words,

Our objective at the moment cannot be other than that of preserving the Ottoman Empire in its present state and hindering its partition. The advantage of having a weak and peaceful neighbour, and the facilities which our trade on the Black Sea has recently obtained, are sufficient reasons for contending ourselves with the present state of affairs and preferring it to any opportunities which the future might offer and of which our trade on the Black Sea has recently obtained, are sufficient reasons for contenting ourselves with the present state of affairs and preferring it to any opportunities which the future might offer and of which the consequences must always be to some extent uncertain.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ İsmail Soysal *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)*, Ankara, 1987, p.321. Final British-Ottoman treaty signed on 25 June 1802 in Paris, for details look: Soysal İsmail *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)*, Ankara, 1987, p.p. 334-337.

¹⁴⁰ Czartoryski Adam Jerzy (1770-1861)- descendant of the old Lithuanian-Polish family, in 1804-1806 Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia.

¹⁴¹ M.S. Anderson, *The great powers and the Near East, 1774-1923*. Edward Arnold, London, 1970, p.23.

¹⁴² Ibid.

On the other hand, Russia was interested in preserving her image of religious protector of the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Sultan, the spirit of the Catherinian Greek Project was still alive and the bait of Constantinople and the Straits too tempting. Moreover, St. Petersburg was afraid of the possibility that Constantinople would fall under the rule of some strong power, such as Napoleonic France at the time. Czartoryski writes on this: "It is easy to see that, in this last case above all, the safety of the Russian Empire would be deeply compromised and one of the most essential outlets for her trade would find itself at the mercy of another power", - thus leaving open the chance of redivisioning of the Ottoman European possessions, - "it is very possible, and this supposition must not be lost sight of, that matters may become so complicated and develop in such a way that they make the fall of the Turkish government and its retreat into Asia inevitable".¹⁴³ The said tendencies, that is, to maintain the Ottoman Empire as a relatively weak neighboring state that could be easily controlled and serve as a shield against stronger and hostile powers, or, on the contrary, just partitioning all the Ottoman territories in Europe and put an end to this old rival of Russia, - both approaches existed simultaneously as, so to say, a minimum and a maximum-program; which was to be adopted depended upon the current international situation.

For the Porte its alliance with Russia had a character of necessity, for, clearly, it had to react in some way to the French occupation of Egypt, a province of the Ottomans. The earlier French occupation of the Ionian Islands after Campo Formio made the situation even more difficult for the Ottomans. Both Britain and Russia came to be seriously concerned with the prospects of the French threat to their

¹⁴³ Ibidem, p. 24-25.

regional interests. This brought about the Russo-Ottoman-British alliance. However, with the abandoning of the Egyptian territories by the French (on 27 June 1801 one part of the French army under command of general Belliard surrendered in Cairo, on 30 August the second part under general Ménou surrendered in Alexandria¹⁴⁴), all the causes for mutual animosity between the Sublime Porte and Paris were gone. The Ottoman state found itself in a situation, described by Paul F. Shupp: "The Porte was...hesitating to make any decisive move, fearing Russia and Great Britain should there be evidences of overtures made by Turkey to France, and on the other hand fearing Napoleon if Turkey developed closer relations with Russia and Great Britain".¹⁴⁵

Therefore from the Turkish point of view, without any certain prospects of future, with Russian troops still occupying the Seven Islands Republic, the internal situation within the state being extremely unstable (reforms of *nizam-i cedit*, regional separatism, first Serbian uprising of 1804)- to break unilaterally the alliance with Russia would mean endangering the state by a new war against the northern neighbor.

At the same time in Russian-Turkish relations there were many undercurrents, which should also be taken into account. Armaoğlu points out that misunderstandings between the Porte and St. Petersburg, to be more accurate the Ottomans' discontent with their ally, started about the Ionian Islands. According to the Russo-Ottoman agreement on the status of that Archipelago, Russia had to withdraw her 3.000 armed forces from the Islands within three months, but instead it

¹⁴⁴ İsmail Soysal *Fransız ihtilâli ve Türk-Fransız Diplomasi Münasebetleri (1789-1802)*, Ankara, 1987, p.301.

¹⁴⁵ Paul F. Shupp *The European powers and the Near Eastern question, 1806-1807*. - N.Y. 1966, p.47.

even increased the number of troops.¹⁴⁶ Another point, which caused dissatisfaction in the Porte, was the violation of the rules of passing through the Straits by the Russian ships. For example, the Turkish historian mentions cases where the Russians anchored in front of Istanbul and Russian sailors walked all over the city,¹⁴⁷ - to the smoldering discontent of the Ottoman authorities.

The British and the Russians, in their turn, appeared to become dissatisfied by the following fact- when Napoleon proclaimed himself on December 2, 1804 as emperor, Sultan Selim III wished to recognize the title. In the end, however, he had to refuse, for St. Petersburg and London made their point clear on that matter¹⁴⁸. Besides, a number of serious unsettled Russo-Ottoman contradictions left intact: the questions of the Straits, Western Georgia and its Black Sea coast, and the still with memories of rivalry over the Crimea.

To sum up, the nature of the Ottoman-Russian relations at the beginning of 1800-s was indeed of an extremely complicated character. On the one hand, there were objective reasons for both parts to preserve the *status quo*, since no one wanted to cause troubles in relations with the closest (if not in political and cultural, but at least in geographical terms) neighbor, especially during such an unstable time in European history as the epoch of the Napoleonic wars. Neither the Ottomans nor the Russians needed a new armed conflict- the former because of the previous negative experience, existing internal crises and uncertainty about the current political situation on the continent and their place in it, the latter for the same reason of complicated relations with France, as well as the difficult situation in the Caucasus,

¹⁴⁶ Armaoğlu Fahir *19.yüzyıl siyasî tarihi (1789-1914)*. Ankara, 1997, p.88

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

where, after the Russo-Iranian war started in 1804, an additional rival would not be welcomed. On the other hand, though, they were left the troublesome and in no way settled issues, which had always been a ground for new conflicts in the future.

Although after long and tedious negotiations, started on Czartoryski's instructions, the Russian ambassador in Constantinople Andrei Iakovlevich Italinski succeeded in concluding a renewal of the 1798 Russia's alliance with the Porte on 23 September 1805,¹⁴⁹ against the French, considered then to be the most serious enemy, a great number of these bigger and smaller dissatisfactions eventually made this alliance a short-lived one.

The Ottomans did not trust France, but even more they did not trust their north neighbor. The reason for the Porte's decision to extend the alliance could then be explained by the fact that the words and promises of Napoleon at the time were insufficient, and his victories over the Russian armies were yet to come. However, as soon as Napoleon defeated the third coalition¹⁵⁰ in the battles of Ulm and Austerlitz, and occupied Vienna and forced Austria to sign the Treaty of Pressburg¹⁵¹ at the end of 1805, the Ottoman government changed its position.

¹⁴⁹ Norman E. Saul *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807*, Chicago, 1970, p.211; Anderson, M.S. *The great powers and the Near East, 1774-1923*. Edward Arnold, London, 1970, p.25.

¹⁵⁰ In May 1803 Anglo-French hostilities broke out again. Also by 1805 a third coalition was formed of Austria, Great Britain, Russia and Sweden against France. The third Coalition collapsed quickly because British naval victories (Battle of Trafalgar, 21.10.1805) were again counter-acted by French land victories- at Ulm (20.10.1805, one day earlier than Trafalgar) and Austerlitz (2.12.1805).

¹⁵¹ The Treaty of Pressburg was signed on December 26, 1805 between France and Austria. According to this treaty substantial European territories were taken from Austria. The French gains of the previous treaties of Campo Formio and Lunéville were reiterated and Austrian holdings in Italy and Bavaria were ceded to France. Certain Austrian holdings in Germany were passed to the German allies of France.

Already in January 1806 the Sultan recognized the imperial title of Napoleon, thereby reversing the policy that had been shaped by Russian pressure¹⁵². Starting from this year there arose more and more conflicts around the passage of Russian military ships through the Straits. After the arrival of the French ambassador extraordinary Horace Sebastiani in July to Constantinople the breaking-off of Russian-Turkish allied relations became a matter of time. Not without the influence of Sebastiani Sultan Selim III on 18 August 1806 deposed the pro-Russian hospodars of the Danube Moldavia and Wallachia principalities. An immediate answer of St. Petersburg was the occupation of both principalities before the end of the year. On 14 November the Porte denounced the previous defensive alliances, and on 18 December 1806 Selim III declared war upon Russia.

¹⁵² Norman E. Saul *Russia and the Mediterranean, 1797-1807*, Chicago, 1970, p.211.

CHAPTER IV. THE SOUTH WESTERN CAUCASUS IN 1798-1806

IV.1 Incorporation of Kartli-Kakheti

All of the general tendencies in Ottoman-Russian relations at the break of 18-19th centuries may well be traced also in the particular area of the Caucasus. The alliance of the Sublime Porte with St. Petersburg, though not ending effaced, to some extent reduced the tension existing between two Empires in this region. Although Russia sought to put to an end the Ottoman nominal suzerainty over the Georgian states, it also wanted to preserve, at the moment, its alliance with the Porte.¹⁵³ In the words of Armani,

...one sees immediately the bitter paradox of these [Russian-Ottoman] relations. The Porte, which needed Russia's assistance to protect its frontiers from possible French invasion, was expected to pay the price of this aid by recognizing Russian suzerainty over Georgia. Russia, on the other hand, while sorely tempted to seize Poti, Sukhumi, Akhaltsikhe, in addition to Imeretia and Mingrelia, was compelled by its other interests, to keep the trust of the Ottoman government.¹⁵⁴

Such was the picture of Ottoman-Russian relations in the Caucasus when, after the deaths of Catherine II and Erekle II, there was opened a new chapter of Russia's involvement in Georgian affairs. During the years of its alliance with the Porte, St.

¹⁵³ For example, Alexander in his Highest prescript (*Vysochaishii reskript*) orders to general-lieutenant Karl Knorring, commander of the Caucasian line, to reject the petition of king Solomon II about Imeretia's submission to Empire, look: "Aleksander to Knorring (September 17 [29], 1801)", *AKAK*, Vol. I, p.559; the same character has the letter of Chancellor, Aleksandr Romanovich Vorontsov, to Tsitsianov: "...in regard to the consideration of overall relations... these general relations should be taken more important in concern to local successes", "Vorontsov to Tsitsianov (August 5 [17], 1803)", *Ibidem*, Vol. II, p.873.

¹⁵⁴ H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.193.

Petersburg strengthened its positions in the region, having incorporated the larger part of the Southern Caucasian territories lying in between the Black and the Caspian seas.

While the Georgian internal disorders along with appeals for help did make the process of incorporation much easier, there were also clear advantages Russia objectively tried to reach regardless of Georgian or any other interests, having in mind its own well being. Economic, political, strategic benefits were obvious reasons to justify in the eyes of Tsarist state officials the necessity of expansionist politics in the Southern Caucasus. It has to be stressed here, that apart from mere practical ones, there evidently existed considerations of an ethical character. Many of the Russian officials and military commanders did sincerely believe in the special nature of their mission- to bring the backward savage peoples of the Caucasus to the daylight of progress and civilization.¹⁵⁵ Of course, this belief never made Tsarist officials to forget the fundamental interests of the Russian Empire.

Finally, though almost everyone considered the advance in the Caucasus to be quite useful for Russia, still there was a certain uneasiness about possible international consequences and St. Petersburg had to act here with the utmost cautiousness. At the same time, the current decline of the old regional powers, Ottoman Turkey and Persia, did enable St. Petersburg to interfere more actively into the political vacuum that emerged.

¹⁵⁵ Such an attitude goes in the line with so-called *White Man's burden*, the famous principle expressed later by R. Kipling in his poem of the same name (1899). In this view, non-European cultures are seen as child-like as well as demonic, with people of European descent having an obligation to dominate them until they can take their place in the world. Very remarkable are the words from Alexander I's Highest prescript (*Vysochaishii reskript*): "Russian tsar took the mission to care about Georgia exclusively out of pity for poor Georgian people", look: "Aleksander to Knorring (September 17 [29], 1801)", *AKAK*, Vol. I, p.562.

Following Erekle II's death, his older son George, born in the second marriage, inherited the Georgian throne as George XII (1798-1800). The new king right away after succession found himself in a difficult position. Despite all of his talented father-predecessor's attempts to create Greater Georgia the international and domestic situation for this small South Caucasian state towards the end of the 18th century increasingly worsened. In fact, George XII did not have an efficient, battle-worthy army, which would be capable to defend the king and his kingdom, his treasury was empty and his own brothers did not recognize him as the only and legitimate ruler. Chaos, anarchy and complete decline were the obvious characteristics of the period.

Soon after his succession to the throne, in October 1798, George XII sent prince Garsevan Chavchavadze as his ambassador to St. Petersburg. Chavchavadze had to find out about the status of treaties concluded earlier between Georgia and Russia and to ask for military support. In addition, the new king of Kartli-Kakheti wanted his son David to be officially appointed as his successor by the Tsar.¹⁵⁶ Next spring, in April 1799, Paul I decided to confirm the Georgievsk Treaty of protectorate¹⁵⁷ and to send P. Kovalenskii as Russian *minister* (ambassador) to Georgia.¹⁵⁸ In addition, by the end of November, a corps of three thousand men under the command of general Ivan Petrovich Lazarev entered Kartli-Kakheti.¹⁵⁹ Almost at the same time the newly appointed Russian ambassador Petr Ivanovich Kovalenskii arrived in the Kartli-Kakhetian capital, Tiflis. The king had not only

¹⁵⁶ M. Aydın *XIX yüzyılda Kafkaslar'da nüfuz mücâdeleleri (1800-1830)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Istanbul, 2001, p.52.

¹⁵⁷ V. Degoiev *Bolshaya igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*. Russkaia Panorama, Moscow, 2001, p.50.

¹⁵⁸ "Instruction from State Collegium of foreign affairs, given according to H.M. decree to minister in Georgia, Kovalenskii, April 16 [28], 1799", *AKAK*, I, p.93.

¹⁵⁹ V. Degoiev *Bolshaya igra na Kavkaze- istoriia i sovremennost'*. Russkaia Panorama, Moscow, 2001, p.50.

accepted Kovalenskii and his people with the utmost hospitality, but also fulfilled all of the suggestions made by the Russian ambassador.¹⁶⁰

Kovalenskii composed an extensive note about the general situation in Georgia upon his arrival.¹⁶¹ He describes it in the following way:

“The situation in Georgia at this time was of the most critical character... disagreement in opinion among people from all social groups, and even in the capital itself, the small number of the Russian army and the constant impossibility of getting supplies from Russia; the lack of provisions in the capital...all this on the whole caused total fear and despair everywhere”.¹⁶²

Such was the picture at the end of 1799. Moreover, the conflicts and the spirit of never ending competition between two chief Russian officials, general Ivan Petrovich Lazarev and civilian Petr Ivanovich Kovalenskii never brought stability and made the confused situation even worse. Lazarev and Kovalenskii constantly disagreed with one another, and, lacking clear instructions, they took sides in the dynastic arguments over the throne.¹⁶³ In the end George XII asked the tsar to recall his ambassador, and in August 1800 Kovalenskii received a proper prescript from St. Petersburg.¹⁶⁴

The general situation in Georgia thus never improved by 1800. It became even worse when Fatkh Ali Shakh decided to restore the lost Persian influence in Kartli-Kakheti, still considered by the ruler of Persia as traditionally dependent territory. In

¹⁶⁰ “Kovalenskii to Knorring (Commander of the Caucasian line), December 2 [14], 1799”, *AKAK*, I, p.39.

¹⁶¹ “Note of Kovalenskii on Georgia (*Zapiska Kovalenskogo o Gruzii*)”, *AKAK*, I, p.111-120.

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, p.115.

¹⁶³ L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.40.

¹⁶⁴ “Rescript, given to minister Kovalenskii (*Reskript, danniy ministru Kovalenskomu*), August 3 [15], 1800”, *AKAK*, I, p.96.

summer 1800 from Teheran to Tiflis there had been sent a delegation with letters, demanding the eldest son of George XII to be placed as a hostage at the Shah's court. At the same time a Persian army began to assemble on the frontier.¹⁶⁵ Remarkably enough, George XII received Fatkh Ali's envoys not in his own palace, but in the residence of the Russian representative Kovalenskii, under the big portrait of the Russian Tsar.¹⁶⁶ Thus, the answer of the Kartli-Kakhetian king was known even before the very start of negotiations- encouraged by hopes for Russian support, George XII rejected the demands of Teheran.¹⁶⁷ Fatkh Ali Shakh, in his own turn, preferred not to run the risk of immediate confrontation with Russia and for the moment did not attack his disobedient vassal protected with Russian bayonets (as he certainly might have regarded the Kartli-Kakhetian ruler). However, despite the retreat, the attitude of Persia towards the status of her northern borders could not obviously change, Teheran could not simply renounce its traditional sphere of influence to Russian newcomers and the threat of Persian invasion to the Southern Caucasus had always been real enough.

The imminent foreign aggression, as well as the deepest internal crisis, made George XII to look for two things to be preserved- integrity for his kingdom and throne for his family. The king of Kartli-Kakheti made a decision to save both by paying the price of independence and complete submission of his kingdom under control of St. Petersburg.

¹⁶⁵ John F. Baddeley, *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*. Richmond, 1999, p.60.

¹⁶⁶ M. Aydın *XIX yüzyılda Kafkaslar'da nüfuz mücadeleleri (1800-1830)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Istanbul, 2001, p.53.

¹⁶⁷ The new capital of Qajar dynasty

On the other hand, as L. Rhinelanders emphasizes, George XII thought in Persian political terms and had a confused understanding of the Russian form of government.¹⁶⁸ According to the king's plan, Kartli-Kakhetians would obey all Russian laws. At the same time it was requested that George and his descendants be left as the autonomous heads of the domestic Georgian government (with the title of King of Georgia).¹⁶⁹ In other words, the king of Kartli-Kakheti saw his kingdom as an integral part of huge empire, although this part was to be autonomous in its internal affairs. While such agreements were possible within the Persian political tradition, for Russia to give some special status to one of her provinces would be an incredible thing,¹⁷⁰ as St. Petersburg's primary aim in domestic politics had always been to reach homogeneity of the state, to make imperial administration to the highest extent unified and centralized.¹⁷¹

Yet at that particular moment, in the mid-summer of 1800, the ruler of Kartli-Kakheti was eager to realize the plans about joining his kingdom to Russian Empire. George XII thought it as the only possible way to save Georgia from chaos, while the Tsarist government in St. Petersburg had certain doubts about possible international consequences for that step and was not in a special hurry with the answer.

At last, on December 22, 1800 Paul I had signed the Manifesto on the incorporation of Georgia (Kartli-Kakheti) into the Russian Empire. That Manifesto, however, was not ratified by the Kartli-Kakhetian king, who died one week after

¹⁶⁸ L.H. Rhinelanders *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.39.

¹⁶⁹ Ibidem, p.39-40.

¹⁷⁰ Incorporation of Finland in 1809 and its autonomous status within the Russian Empire should be considered an exception.

¹⁷¹ Thus the Russian political and administrative institutions and practices replaced during the 2nd part of XVIII c. the unique institutions existing on newly subjugated Baltic, Byelarussian, Ukrainian territories.

(December 28, 1800) and was therefore unable to know the decision of the Russian Tsar. For George XII's successor, David, the news of the Manifesto, when Russian authorities officially proclaimed it for Georgians on January 18, 1801, came as a bolt from the blue. The Commander of Russian army in Kartli-Kakheti general Lazarev had to declare that Paul I would not appoint a successor to the Georgian throne, as Paul I ordered the Russian military forces stationed in Georgia for the defense of the kingdom to annex the country and dissolve the monarchy.¹⁷² Before long, however, a quite unexpected event happened and brought some confusion about the fate of the Georgian issue. The Russian Tsar had been assassinated during a court coup on March 12, 1801.

The new tsar, Alexander I (1801-1825), having certain initial hesitations on the subject, delayed the final decision concerning the future of the Georgian monarchy until thorough discussion of this issue in the State Council. Some Tsarist officials of the highest rank believed that the Caucasus was not worth attention. For example, Viktor Pavlovich Kochubei¹⁷³ and Nikolai Nikolaievich Novosiltsev¹⁷⁴ preferred to act in the Caucasus cautiously, trying to avoid any complications in relations with Britain.¹⁷⁵ On the other hand, it was also obvious, that in Russian interests it would be better to strengthen the presence in the Southern Caucasus and have a valuable

¹⁷² H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.145.

¹⁷³ Kochubei Viktor Pavlovich (1768-1834)- Russian statesman in late 18-early 19th centuries, of Ukrainian origin. Personal friend of emperor Alexander I. Diplomat, served in Russian Embassies in Stockholm, London, Constantinople. Russian ambassador to the Ottoman Empire (1792-1797). Vice-Chancellor of Collegium of the Foreign affairs, minister of internal affairs (1802-1807), State Chancellor (1834).

¹⁷⁴ Novosiltsev Nikolai Nikolaievich (1761-1836)- Russian statesman, personal friend of Alexander I, his adjutant for special missions. President of Russian Academy of Sciences (1802-1810). After 1831 member of State Council and later its president.

¹⁷⁵ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossiia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.102.

foothold in the area. The Zubov brothers¹⁷⁶ were the proponents of this latter point of view.¹⁷⁷

The issue of the incorporation of the Kartli-Kakhetian kingdom had been discussed in the State Council twice, on 10 and 15 April 1801.¹⁷⁸ Moreover, at that very time, in April, Alexander I also dispatched Lieutenant-General Karl Fedorovich Knorring, the Commander-in-Chief of Russian forces in the north Caucasus, to examine the situation on the spot.¹⁷⁹ The Russian emperor could not choose whether to make Georgia a Russian protectorate or to abolish its monarchy and incorporate it as a part of the empire.¹⁸⁰ Alexander I preferred to think over carefully all of the advantages and disadvantages in both options.

After long preparations Alexander I made the decision to annex Georgia, signing on September 12, 1801 the new Manifesto¹⁸¹ on the abolition of the Georgian kingdom. This document proclaimed that the main reason for annexation was Russia's attempt to preserve peace in Georgia, to save her from external threat and the royal princes' struggling over the throne.¹⁸² In fact, this Manifesto just confirmed

¹⁷⁶ The Zubov brothers- Platon Aleksandrovich Zubov (1767-1822)- Russian statesman, general (1800). Since 1789 the favorite of empress Catherine II. In 1796 commander of the Russian Black Sea fleet. Participant of the coup against Paul I, and of direct murder of the emperor (1801); Nikolai Aleksandrovich Zubov, the elder brother of Platon, Russian general, also participated in the coup against Paul I, and in the murder of the emperor (1801), Nikolai was married to field marshal Aleksander Suvorov's daughter; Valerian Alexandrovich Zubov (1771-1804)- Russian general, commander of the expedition of 1796 to the Caucasus against Persia.

¹⁷⁷ L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.43.

¹⁷⁸ A.V. Fadeev, *Rossia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.106.

¹⁷⁹ L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.41-42.

¹⁸⁰ Ibidem, p.44.

¹⁸¹ "The Highest Manifesto (*Vysochaishiy Manifest*), September 12 [24], 1802 (Sic!)", (Obviously a misprint. Instead it should be of course 1801), *AKAK*, Vol. I, p.p. 432-433.

¹⁸² Ibid.

that of Paul I, proclaimed earlier.¹⁸³ However, it was only on 12 April 1802 that by the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian forces in the Caucasus general Karl Fedorovich Knorring there had been made the final announcement to the Georgian people on abolition of the Georgian monarchy, dismissing the Bagratid dynasty and establishment of the new administration in Tiflis.

Obviously it was not anomalous that a large segment of the population of Kartli-Kakheti met the news with open hostility towards the newly introduced Russian rule in the country. Instead of the supposed allied relations Georgia, unexpectedly to many people, became just an ordinary part of the Russian Empire. The numerous princes of the Bagratid dynasty, the Georgian nobility, clergy, peasantry- all of them in their own way not only disliked the declaration, made by General Knorring, but also formed an extensive opposition to the Russian administration.

The numerous Bagratid princes looked to restore the monarchy and their dynastic rights to the throne, the Georgian noblemen tried to restore their influence in the state apparatus, for at the moment they had been for the most part replaced by the Russian bureaucrats and thus lost traditional prestige and, what even counted more, the usual source of income they previously had being at the state service. Furthermore, their pride was hurt by the arrogance of many Russian officials, treating the natives as savages, for the Georgians usually did not speak Russian or French. L. Rhinelanders gives the following description of what the Georgian aristocrats might have felt:

¹⁸³ Ibid.

The nobles were particularly upset. Their position as society's leaders was seriously threatened. Russian police captains were interfering in what the nobles considered to be their private affairs by attempting to police the clans' gentry and peasants. Their dignity and pride were hurt at being given orders by Russian officials of such a low rank- men who, furthermore, did not even speak their language.¹⁸⁴

The following document, issued in St. Petersburg about prince Bagrat Georgiievich, is eloquent: "To prince (*tsarevich*) Bagrat... H.M. granted a yearly pension of 3 thousand rubles from the state treasury and condescended to desire him quietly to enjoy his property in Georgia, freely using the lands, that belong to him there"¹⁸⁵. Though not bad in contents, this was undeniably humiliating in terms of noble and national pride.

The Georgian autocephalous Church also eventually had to become a part of the Russian Church,¹⁸⁶ subordinated to the Synod.¹⁸⁷ The Church services from now on, if not instantly, but gradually were to be transferred into Russian, as in any eparchy of the Russian Orthodox Church. The former property of the Georgian Church henceforth ceased to belong to its previous masters. Thus the Georgian clergy, fairly proud of their Church as one of the most ancient in the Christian world,¹⁸⁸ could not stay aside from the forces of anti-Russian opposition.

¹⁸⁴ L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.79-80.

¹⁸⁵ Prince Aleksandr Kurakin (vice-chancellor) to general Knorring, 27 May 1802, AKAK, I, p.282.

¹⁸⁶ Since 1811 the Georgian autocephalous Church ceased to exist, when it became an exarchate within the Russian Orthodox Church.

¹⁸⁷ The highest state organ of the church administration, created by Peter I in 1721, with the civilian official (Ober-Prokuror) appointed by the emperor.

¹⁸⁸ The Georgian Orthodox Church got its autocephalous status in 487, when it separated from the Patriarchate of Antiochy.

As for the princes, brothers and children of George XII, they were expected to become the leading figures of an anti-Russian opposition. For many members of the royal family, however, the most essential question was the struggle for the throne. Among the Georgian princes and noblemen there had been formed two parties: one of them supported the elder son of George XII, David, while the other backed the last king's brother and, accordingly, an uncle of David, prince Iulon. The leaders of the first party agreed to establish a Russian administration in Georgia, while the second party insisted upon preserving an extensive internal autonomy ("own king" and "own laws"). The open opposition to the Russian rule had been grouping around Erekle II's son, prince Aleksandr.¹⁸⁹

The Russian authorities, in order to prevent possible unrest, tried to send away to St. Petersburg all members of the former ruling dynasty. For that reason the commander of the Russian army in Georgia Ivan Lazarev lost his life, being stabbed by Tsaritsa Mariam, widow of George XII, on April 19 1803, when he came to arrest her with the purpose of sending her to Russia¹⁹⁰. Together with Mariam, there had been sent to the Russian capital the sons of the last Kartli-Kakhetian king, George XII: the heir to the throne Prince David and Prince Bagrat. Together with them their uncle, brother of George XII Prince Vakhtang¹⁹¹, was forced to go to St. Petersburg. Old Queen Darejan, the widow of Erekle II, and her two sons, Princes Iulon and Parnaoz were sent off soon after that¹⁹². Other children of Erekle II, Prince Aleksandr and Prince Teimuraz fled from Georgia abroad, looking for asylum and

¹⁸⁹ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossiia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.97.

¹⁹⁰ Ibidem, p.64-65.

¹⁹¹ L.H. Rhinelanders *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.87.

¹⁹² Ibid.

support in neighboring Imeretia and then Persia. Only one son of Erekle II, the head of the Georgian Church, the Catholicos Antoni did remain in Georgia.¹⁹³

The same day, when the Manifesto of Alexander I had been proclaimed, on September 12, 1801, there was issued another decree, defining the status of local Georgian administration.¹⁹⁴ Georgia had been divided into 5 districts (*uezds*), 3 of them in Kartli (Gori, Lori, Dusheti), and 2 in Kakhetia (Telavi, Signakhi)¹⁹⁵. Accordingly, Georgia ceased to exist as one politico-administrative body and the Georgian lands were officially divided into several provinces within the Russian Empire.

On May 8 1802 there was established the so-called Supreme Georgian Government ("*Verkhovnoe Gruzinskoe Pravitelstvo*"), consisting of 4 departments ("*expeditions*") – Executive (*ispolnitelnaiia*), Treasury (*ekonomicheskaia*), criminal (*ugolovnaia*), civil (*grazhdanskaia*). Together with the Russian bureaucrats there participated in commissions the Georgian aristocrats.

For instance, the Executive department consisted of the following persons- the Civil Director (*Pravitel Gruzii*) was the head of department, and two other counselors, one from Russian bureaucrats, the other from the Georgian nobility; Treasury department- the head was from Russian bureaucracy, and four counselors from Georgian nobility, two Kartlian and two Kakhetian princes together with treasurer (*saltkhutses*); Criminal department (the head was from Russian bureaucracy

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Decree on local administration in Georgia, approved by H.M. on September 12, 1801, in Moscow (*Postanovleniie vnutrenniago v Gruzii upravleniia, Vysochaishe utverzhdennoie v 12 den' sentiabria 1801 goda, v Moskve*), AKAK, I, p.437.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

and 4 other counselors were represented by the Georgian princes). The Civil department (the head was again a Russian bureaucrat, and 4 counselors from Georgian nobility).¹⁹⁶

The Civil Director of Georgia, the heads and counselors of departments formed the Supreme Georgian Government. The general assembly of the members of this government constituted the highest decision-making organ¹⁹⁷. In fact, however, as Russian historian A.V. Fadeev points out, all of the real power belonged to the Civil Director of Georgia (“*pravitel Gruzii*”) Kovalenskii, who was subordinated to the Chief Commander in the Caucasus general Karl Fedorovich Knorring.¹⁹⁸

Georgia became a completely Russian territory ruled in fact by Russian officials. The annexation of the Kartli-Kakhetian kingdom by Russia, which happened at the beginning of the 19th century, came to be a result of the process, started much earlier with the general Russian advance in the Caucasus, and, what is more, that process of territorial enlargement did not finish with the annexation of Kartli-Kakheti. At that time and for most of the 19th century, to use the expression of L. Rhineland, “...the whole Southern border of the Empire was fluid and would remain so for time to come”.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Decree on local administration in Georgia, approved by H.M. on September 12, 1801, in Moscow (*Postanovleniie vnutrenniago v Gruzii upravleniia, Vysochaishe utverzhdennoie v 12 den' sentiabria 1801 goda, v Moskve*), AKAK, I, p.437.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.107; look also: L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.66.

¹⁹⁹ L.H. Rhineland *The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854*. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.45.

IV.2 General P. Tsitsianov as the Chief Administrator (*glavnonachalstvuiushchii*) in the Eastern Georgia- subsequent Russian advance in the area

Having ascertained that Knorring was incapable to provide peace and order in Georgia, in view of considerable discontent among the Georgians with recent events, Alexander I recalled him and on September 11, 1802 appointed to his place Lieutenant-general Pavel Dmitriievich Tsitsianov.²⁰⁰ On 10 February 1803 Tsitsianov arrived to the Georgian capital Tiflis.²⁰¹

There were several reasons for this appointment- origin, education, loyalty, and experience of the new Chief Administrator in Georgia. First of all, one has to mention that Tsitsianov's ancestors belonged to one of Georgia's noblest families. His grandfather, Prince Paata Tsitsishvili, had emigrated to Russia in King Vakhtang VI's suite in 1724.²⁰² Thus Tsitsianov himself was born and had grown up in Russia. Despite being wholly Russianized, at the same time, in a sense, this Russian general was supposed to be not a complete stranger in Georgia. He knew both Russian and Georgian customs and culture, and spoke both languages fluently.²⁰³ Mariam, the widow of George XII, the last Georgian king, was born Princess Tsitsianova,²⁰⁴ hence was a relative of new Russian commander.

By the time of his appointment to the Caucasus Tsitsianov was already 48 years old, had spent all his life in Russian military service during the long rule of

²⁰⁰ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossiia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.108.

²⁰¹ Abbas Kuli Bakukhanov *Gülistan-i İram*. Baku, 1991, p.184.

²⁰² L.H. Rhinelanders The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.84.

²⁰³ *Ibidem*, p.85.

²⁰⁴ The list of Georgian Tsar Family (*Spisok Gruzinskoi Tsarskoi Familii*) AKAK, Vol. I, p.200.

Catherine II, distinguished himself in Russian-Turkish war of 1787-1791 and in 1796 participated in Count Zubov's expedition to the Southern Caucasus. Tsitsianov was an experienced and loyal officer, who could know the local situation in Georgia and the Georgians themselves presumably far better than anyone else in Russia at that time. Hence St. Petersburg would find this Russian general a very valuable guard of Russian interests in Caucasian affairs.

When Tsitsianov came to Georgia, he had to strengthen those positions Russia already acquired in the area. But this mission was supposed to be not an easy one, for the reason that St. Petersburg tried not to complicate its relations with neighboring regional Powers- the Ottoman Empire (at that time though an ally of Russia, still afraid of possible encroachments from the North) and Persia (already preparing for war, since the Persians considered Kartli-Kakheti, recently annexed by Russia, to be their historically dependent territory). Russian strategic aims in the Caucasus were clearly expressed in a memorandum by the state counselor, Aleksandr Romanovich Vorontsov,²⁰⁵ sent to Tsitsianov.²⁰⁶ The general spirit of this document reflected the two-faced character of Russia's Caucasian politics. On the one hand, Vorontsov advises to act carefully and not raise the possible doubts of the Sublime Porte about excessive Russian aggressiveness, and on the other hand, shows interest in new territorial annexations. While speaking about the prospect of taking the Akhaltsikh *pashalik* from the Ottoman Empire, the Russian state counselor expresses that vision:

²⁰⁵ Aleksandr Romanovich Vorontsov (1741-1805), Count (1760), Russian statesman and diplomat. During 1802-1804 the state counselor.

²⁰⁶ "Memorandum of Count Vorontsov to Prince Tsitsianov", *AKAK*, II, p. 873-874.

...You, dear Sir, keeping thoughts about this annexation in absolute confidentiality, let the flow of time to complete this, for it may happen that time would give the possibility of doing this without special troubles. Sometimes that seems impossible, which afterwards, so as it were dropped into the hands. An example of that is acquisition of the Crimea²⁰⁷.

It goes without any saying, that St. Petersburg in order to hold firmly the newly acquired territories situated in the Southern Caucasus and cut from the rest of Empire by the Caucasian ridge, objectively had to seek ways to connect these lands with mainland Russian areas. An obvious answer was to obtain both the Black and the Caspian Sea littorals, uniting the Georgian coast of the Black Sea with the Crimean Peninsula taken in 1783 and the Caspian side with the Russian seaport of Astrakhan, located in the estuary of Volga river. Eastern Georgia thus became only an initial foothold for further Russian penetration into the South Caucasian region. Tsitsianov's task was clearly to enlarge the strategic foothold Russia got in Kartli-Kakheti.

The Chief Administrator started with the eastern direction. Within one year after his appointment Tsitsianov undertook an expedition against the Lezghian tribes, living to the northern east of the Kartli-Kakhetian capital Tiflis, in the area called Jaro-Belokan. The Russian force under command of major-general Vasilii Guliakov²⁰⁸ in March 1803 moved into Jaro-Belokan territory.

Embarking on this expedition, Tsitsianov pursued two aims: the first was to protect the inhabitants of Kakheti from continuous devastating Lezghian raids, the second- to extend further to the east the sphere of Russian control. Though

²⁰⁷ Ibidem, p.873.

²⁰⁸ Guliakov Vasilii Semionovich (1751-1804)- major-general, took part in Russian-Turkish war of 1768-1774 and Russian-Swedish war of 1788. According to orders of Prince Tsitsianov he headed the Russian expedition against the Lezghians in 1803. This expedition came to be last in his life- Guliakov was killed by Lezghians on January 15, 1804.

Guliakov himself was killed in January 1804, the campaign itself was successful. Both aims were achieved- after some fierce encounters the Lezghians were subdued and by the spring of 1804 Tsitsianov concluded an agreement with their chieftains. According to this agreement, Tsitsianov recognized the Lezghians' rights to the land and villages they had formerly possessed. In return, the Lezghians swore fealty to the emperor and agreed to pay a yearly tribute of 220 *pudy*²⁰⁹ of silk, later converted to 13,200 rubles.²¹⁰ While in the past the tribute was paid by the Georgians to the Lezghians, from now on the latter had to pay to the Russian Georgian administration.

Another territory, which Tsitsianov was determined to submit, was the Gence khanate, located to the south of Kartli-Kakheti. The reason that made the Chief Administrator of Georgia come to this decision lay in the unfriendly actions of Ganjians against the Georgian merchants and the unsteady politics of Javad Khan, the ruler of the khanate.²¹¹ On the grounds that Gence in medieval times belonged to Georgian kings, the Russian commander demanded its submission. As Javad Khan of Gence refused, in November 1803, when hostilities still went on in Jaro-Belokan, Tsitsianov set out against the khanate.

In mid-December the siege started. Despite the fact that five letters were sent to the defenders with proposals to submit and pay 20 thousand rubles of contribution as well as to send the Khan's son as a hostage to the Russians,²¹² the

²⁰⁹ Pud- old Russian measure of weight, equals to approximately 16,4 kg.

²¹⁰ L.H. Rhinelander The incorporation of the Caucasus into the Russian empire- the case of Georgia, 1801-1854. Columbia University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972, p.91-92.

²¹¹ Abbas Kuli Bakukhanov *Gülistan-i İram*. Baku, 1991, p.185.

²¹² M. Aydın *XIX yüzyılda Kafkaslar'da nüfüz mücâdeleleri (1800-1830)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Istanbul, 2001, p.69.

Ganjians still resisted, until on January 3, 1804 Tsitsianov's forces managed to take the fortress. On capturing the capital of khanate, there were slaughtered from 1,500 (Russian sources) to 3,000 (Ganjevi and Iranian sources) inhabitants.²¹³ After the massacre of city population, which followed, and the death of Javad khan himself with some members of his family, Gence was renamed into Elizavetpol.²¹⁴ Tsitsianov renamed the city after the wife of the Russian tsar, Elizaveta, thus giving a message about the Russian intentions to stay in the region for a long time, to be more precise- for good.

The Gence operation increased the concerns of neighboring Persia about the trends of Russian politics in the region, perceived by Teheran as its own sphere of influence. Moreover, it was a dangerous precedent of direct threat to Persian security that could not be overlooked. The Southern Caucasus in its eastern part appeared to be on the verge of Russo-Persian war.

To preserve his image and dignity, the Shah sent to Tsitsianov a letter, composed in a stern, strict style, demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of shah's vassal. In fact, it had a character of an ultimatum, providing the last chance to keep *status quo*, thus avoiding war.²¹⁵ However, the effect produced by the letter happened to be quite the contrary to the expected. The outraged Russian general replied in equal terms, addressing the Shah:

If you, desiring the good fortune of Persia, will come to your senses and reflect that neither the empty, grandiose threat nor the Persian army numerous as the sands of the sea who fight with feathers, not swords, are frightening to those who are accustomed to

²¹³ M. Atkin *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*. -Minneapolis, 1980, p.83.

²¹⁴ Abbas Kuli Bakukhanov *Gülistan-i İram*. Baku, 1991, p.185.

²¹⁵ The letter of Mirza Mamed Shafi (the head of shah's government) to the Russian Commander-in-Chief in Caucasus P.Tsitsianov, received on May 23. 1804, AKAK, vol. II, p.808.

conquer in all parts of the world...etc. (in Russian original translation: буде же вы блага Персии желая, опомнитесь и помыслите, что тем, кои привыкли побеждать во всех частях света, не могут быть страшны ни пусто великолепны угрозы, ни войска Персидския, многочисленные наподобие морского песка и воюющия перьями, а не мечем...).²¹⁶

Thus Tsitsianov got for Russia new footholds in the Southern Caucasus and showed no hesitation about the possibility of starting hostilities with Persia. The Russian-Turkish defensive alliance, still in force, made the Chief Administrator at the time more or less sure about his western flank.

In an atmosphere of growing confrontation the war was nearing and it started soon with the siege of Erivan (Yerevan) in summer 1804 by Tsitsianov's Russian troops, who paid no attention to Persian protests and demands for the withdrawal of the Russian army from the Southern Caucasus. According to the usual way of treating the small khanates of the area, the Russian commander first of all sent a letter with standard wording about the fortress' surrender, the quartering of Russian troops there and the necessary tribute payments.²¹⁷ The khan of Yerevan having in mind Persian support answered in the negative, and after that Tsitsianov at the end of June moved against the khanate, where eventually he had to fight more with Persians than with local forces. This expedition was less successful than the previous. Despite initial success, when on July 11, 1804 Tsitsianov for the first time defeated the Persian army near Echmiadzin monastery,²¹⁸ he could not take Yerevan. Within several months Tsitsianov's forces, because of problems, usual for the Caucasian frontier,

²¹⁶ The letter of P. Tsitsianov to Mirza Shafi, May 27, 1804, AKAK, vol. II, p. 808-809.

²¹⁷ M. Aydın *XIX yüzyılda Kafkaslar'da nüfûz mücâdeleleri (1800-1830)*, Ph.D. dissertation, Istanbul, 2001, p. 71.

²¹⁸ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossii i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p. 119.

namely lack of supplies and increased disease, on September 3 had to raise the siege and return to Georgia.²¹⁹

Without a doubt, Tsitsianov in less than two years having only a limited number of forces²²⁰ managed to increase the sphere of Russian political influence. Taking Jaro-Belokan and Gence territories, the Chief Administrator had reached at once attained both his aims- firstly, Kartli-Kakheti in fact became free from Lezghian raids and secondly, the South Caucasian territories under direct or indirect Russian control moved further to the East towards the Caspian. At the same time, the war with Persia became inevitable, and in fact started with military operations in Gence. However, the Russian commander did not show much fear or anxiety about the prospect of that war, for technical organization and discipline in the small Caucasian Russian army could not be compared to that of the Persians, which though numerous, mainly consisted of irregular tribal cavalry. In addition, the Ottoman Empire, still being a formal Russian ally, at the time seemed to be not willing to have any significant military conflict with its northern neighbors and did not make a threat of immediate new war on its part.

Russia's South Caucasian policies along with the eastern direction had also a western one. Besides Kartli-Kakheti, which had already become a part of the Empire, there existed a number of other small political bodies created by the Georgian people in the South Western Caucasus - Imeretia, Mingrelia, Guriiia. At

²¹⁹ Abbas Kuli Bakukhanov *Gülistan-i İram*. Baku, 1991, p.186.

²²⁰ By the end of 1803 in Tsitsianov's disposal for all Caucasian directions there were only eight not fully manned infantry regiments, one dragoon and one Cossack regiment, the overall number of soldiers reaching less than 15 thousand of infantry and cavalry (Fadeev, A. V. *Rossiiia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.115).

the time they enjoyed de facto independence, nominally being vassals of the Ottoman state.

After incorporation of Kartli-Kakheti, or Eastern Georgia, into the Russian Empire St. Petersburg, as it was shown before, in order to control this new territory in the Southern Caucasus in the most effective manner, had to connect it through the sea coasts with continental parts of Russia. Otherwise Georgian possessions would be in the position of legs, cut from the body by the high wall of the Caucasus, which made any connections extremely difficult and sometimes even impossible. So, among the top-priority strategic tasks of the Chief Administrator in Georgia the joining of Western Georgian semi-independent territories also had its own important place. Tsitsianov sought to provide direct communication of Georgia and the Crimea and to get maritime bases for the Russian fleet on the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus.²²¹

This is shown in the rescript of Alexander I (1801-1825) to Tsitsianov, “upon completion of this order [to occupy Imeretia and Mingrelia, together with the seizure of Baku, V.M.], you will proceed to establish uninterrupted communication between Baku and Georgia, which, upon the occupation of Imeretia and Mingrelia, will unite, so to speak, the Caspian Sea with the Black—thus opening to our trade a new route, closed until now to Russia owing to the severity of the ...peoples of those places”²²². The first and foremost goal of the Russian state was to control the isthmus between the Black and Caspian seas.

²²¹ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossiia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.111.

²²² “Alexander I to Tsitsianov (26 October [7 November] 1803)”, *AKAK*, Vol. II, p.359-360.

In view of the complicatedness of the general situation in the Caucasus, including a number of domestic and international issues, the task obviously could not be an easy one. Keeping in mind their two opponents, the Ottoman Empire and Persia, the Russians had to act quite carefully in the whole Caucasus, always trying to preserve good, or at least neutral, relations (as much as possible) with one of them.

The Ottoman-Russian alliance to some extent reduced the tension between two Empires in the Caucasus. For Russia, although it sought to put to an end the Ottoman nominal suzerainty over the Georgian states, also wanted to preserve, at time, its alliance with the Porte.²²³ In the words of Armani,

...one sees immediately the bitter paradox of these [Russian-Ottoman] relations. The Porte, which needed Russia's assistance to protect its frontiers from possible French invasion, was expected to pay the price of this aid by recognizing Russian suzerainty over Georgia. Russia, on the other hand, while sorely tempted to seize Poti, Sukhumi, Akhaltsikhe, in addition to Imeretia and Mingrelia, was compelled by her other interests, to keep the trust of the Ottoman government.²²⁴

The long-term strategic aims of St. Petersburg, however, did not leave much doubt.

The difference between Russian politics concerning the Western and the Eastern parts of Georgia, was rather in tactics than in strategy. Unsurprisingly

²²³ For example, Alexander in his Highest rescript (*Vysochaishii reskript*) orders to general-lieutenant Karl Knorring, commander of the Caucasian line, to reject the petition of King Solomon II about Imeretia's submission to Empire, look: "Alexander to Knorring (September 17 [29], 1801)", *AKAK*, Vol. I, p.559; the same character has the letter of the Chancellor, Aleksandr Romanovich Vorontsov, to Tsitsianov: "...in regard to the consideration of overall relations... these general relations should be taken more important in concern to local successes", "Vorontsov to Tsitsianov (August 5 [17], 1803)", *Ibidem*, Vol. II, p.873.

²²⁴ H.J. Armani *The Russian annexation of the kingdom of Imeretia, 1800-1815- in the light of Russo-Ottoman relations*, Georgetown University, Ph.D. dissertation, 1970, p.193.

Solomon II (1789-1810), the ruler of Imeretia,²²⁵ the most influential Georgian kingdom in the West, could clearly see the tendency and knew quite well what should be expected from St. Petersburg in the near future. Now the Imeretian king, to use Armani's expression, might "vividly recall Russian violations of the Treaty of 1783 (Georgievsk), and their other promises of protection for the royal family of Bagratids of East Georgia—all broken".²²⁶ Yet Solomon lacked efficient capacity to forestall danger, overhanging and distinctly felt. The general situation in the Western part of Georgia was also, as in the East, developing according to the Russian scenario.

Territorial dispute over Lechkhumi region between Solomon II and the prince of Mingrelia, Gregory Dadiani, made it easier for the Russians eventually to incorporate both states. Lechkhumi, the territory claimed by both Imeretia and Mingrelia, according to their own interpretation of historical tradition, happened to supply a good excuse for Russia to interfere. For example, Solomon II's greatest resentment may be seen in his answer to general Knorring:

I was surprised (wrote Solomon) by the letter of major general Lazarev: he demands that I should reveal him the reason for gathering my troops. The free kingdom has the right to give orders within its borders- how, when and why it may deem necessary²²⁷

In the course of hostilities Solomon II managed to conquer not only Lechkhumi, but also many regions of Mingrelia proper.²²⁸ Gregory Dadiani, on seeing that he would lose everything to the Imeretian king, asked St. Petersburg for help. Trying to get

²²⁵ Imeretia, together with Kartli and Kakheti, was one of the three kingdoms that came into historical existence after the division of the medieval united kingdom of Georgia in 1491. Solomon II (1789-1810)- king of Imeretia, the last of Bagratids who reigned in Georgia, East or West.

²²⁶ Ibidem, P.171.

²²⁷ "Solomon to Knorring (August 25 [6 September], 1802)", *AKAK*, Vol. I, p.574.

²²⁸ "Lazarev to Knorring (December 5 [17], 1802)", *AKAK*, Vol. I, p.580 ("Tsar conquered the provinces of Dadiani: Odishi, Lechkhumi, Guria, Suaneti. and Abkhazy up to the very Black Sea or Pontus").

support against Solomon, Dadiani on December 2, 1803 swore Mingrelia's allegiance to the Empire. Now in internal Georgian conflict the Russians backed the Mingrelians.

Nevertheless with Mingrelia's coming under its protection, St. Petersburg was still unable to establish a sound connection between the Crimean Peninsula and the Caucasus, for Poti, the strong fortress on Mingrelia's littoral was still in the hands of the Ottomans. Except for the small place of Redut Kale, built by the Russians on the seacoast, there were no other ports which Russia would be able to use. Upon the Russian request to use the Ottoman port of Poti (the Ottomans called it Faş) in order to land troops from the Crimea the Porte answered in the negative²²⁹. On the other hand, as Baddeley says, Imeretia was now isolated and could no longer hope to maintain its independence²³⁰. Thus Solomon II, in order to keep the chances of controlling the disputed area, agreed to sign the similar Treaty of protectorate on April 25, 1804, which meant in practice that Russian troops were placed in Imeretia and Mingrelia.

On reading the Memorandum of Count Vorontsov, the foreign minister, to Tsitsianov one may see that the fate of both West Georgian polities had been already earlier decided in St. Petersburg:

However, the ancient borders of Imeretia and Mingrelia have to be included into our territory. The prospects for the conquest of the lands up to the very Arax river are a part of a wider plan, for which might be put no specified time. But you, taking into consideration your own opinions, follow this aim according to the circumstances and resources at your command²³¹.

²²⁹ "Tsitsianov to Alexander I (October 29 [10 November], 1804)", *AKAK*, Vol. II, p.483.

²³⁰ Baddeley, John F. *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*, Richmond, 1999, p.66.

²³¹ "Vorontsov to Tsitsianov (August 5 [17], 1803)", *AKAK*, Vol. II, p.874.

At this time, nominally, upon signing the agreement with Imeretia, the Russian South Caucasian dominions already extended from sea to sea. Despite the fact that the convention was signed, Solomon did not get Lechkumi, as was promised to him by Tsitsianov. For that reason, Imeretia and the Empire became ever more hostile, neither Solomon nor Russia observed the convention on a protectorate, which nevertheless gave to St. Petersburg formal grounds to claim Imeretia, by this time only existing on paper. The annexation of almost the whole Georgia at time still was not decidedly sure. The king of Imeretia tried to turn to the Ottomans for assistance,²³² but even the Ottomans with their internal problems could not effectively resist the Russian advance, despite the fact that were much concerned about it.

Consequently the Russian-Ottoman antagonism had been gradually growing, notwithstanding the defensive alliance, hitherto being in effect.

The shaky character of Russian-Ottoman relations in this period found its reflection in the episode of late 1804- early 1805, concerning the conflict between Gregory Dadiani's widow Nino, supported by the Russians and the Abkhazian ruler Kelesh-bek Shervashidze, the nominal vassal of the Porte. When Gregory Dadiani died on November 5, 1804, his elder son and successor Levan had been kept in Abkhazia at Shervashidze's court. Kelesh-bek demanded from Dadiani's widow a huge contribution for the child, so that she turned to Russians for help.

²³² "Italinskii (the Russian ambassador in Constantinople) to Tsitsianov (June 18 [30], 1803)", *AKAK*, Vol. II, p.873 (The Russian ambassador to the Porte speaks about Solomon's envoy to the Sultan, who asked for the Ottoman help against Russians. It should be noted that, according to the information of the Russian diplomat, the Imeretians got a negative reply from the Sultan government).

Tsitsianov, first of all sent to the ruler of Abkhazia a harsh letter.²³³ At the same time, in early 1805, to the fortress of Poti there came an Ottoman emissary, Erib-efendi. Russian representative in Imeretia and Mingrelia, general Litvinov, met him and asked, as a formal ally, to influence the Abkhazian ruler Kelesh-Bek,²³⁴ for Abkhazia, like many Ottoman Caucasian possessions, was nominally supposed to be an Ottoman vassal territory. While Erib-efendi, ready to display the supremacy of the Porte, wrote the letter demanded by the Russians, Tsitsianov sent his order to general Rickhoff to make some demonstration of Russian strength on the border with Abkhazia and provide the release of younger Dadiani, kept by Kelesh-Bek.

Rickhoff set out for this mission, but exceeded the instructions he got from Chief Commander, having caused deeper aggravation of Russian-Ottoman relations. On crossing the border between Mingrelia and Abkhazia the Russian general was fired upon by the garrison of the small Abkhazian fortress of Anaklia, which belonged to the Ottomans. Rickhoff never tried to make the situation clear and on April 9, 1805 simply took this small fortress. However, there was no special necessity in seizure of Anaklia, for Kelesh-Bek gave up Levan Dadiani already on April 11²³⁵. The actual political consequences of this action certainly went far beyond the supposed military effects. Now it was not easy for St. Petersburg to convince the Ottomans of its peaceful intentions. The Porte was shocked, and, without a doubt, neither the apologies of Tsitsianov²³⁶ or of the Russian ambassador Italinskii, nor the fact, that Anaklia was returned on October 1, 1805, could reduce her suspicions. On the other hand, for the present time both sides, the Ottomans and

²³³ "Tsitsianov to Litvinov, January 21 [February 2], 1805", *AKAK*, Vol. II, p.497-498.

²³⁴ Fadeev, A. V. *Rossiia i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.120.

²³⁵ "Report of major-general Rikgof to Tsitsianov, April 16 [28], 1805", *AKAK*, Vol. II, p.514.

²³⁶ "Report of Tsitsianov to tsar, April 12 [24], 1805", *AKAK*, Vol. II, p.510.

the Russians, never wanted to upset prematurely the existing status quo and tried to preserve a certain stability in the region, even renewed the defensive alliance (September 23, 1805), with all undercurrents left.

With the affairs of the Western direction somewhat settled, by the end of 1805 the Russian Chief Administrator in Georgia once more turned to the East. There was left still unconquered, but strategically very important the Baku khanate, situated on the Caspian coast. In December 1805 Tsitsianov with a detachment of 1600 men and 10 guns set out from Gence in new campaign.²³⁷ At first Tsitsianov on his way annexed the khanate of Shirvan and on January 30, 1806 crossed the border of the khanate of Baku,²³⁸ the fortress where ten years before during Zubov's expedition he had been commandant.

Upon Tsitsianov's demand to surrender the Baku fortress, Hussein Kuli Khan of Baku promised to give the keys of his capital to the Russian commander. The ceremony of submission took place on February 8. The overconfident Tsitsianov neglected all possible dangers and came to meet the Khan in person, only with one adjutant. During the ceremony, at the moment when Hussein Kuli Khan handed him the key of Baku, the Khan's cousin from behind shot Tsitsianov in the head.²³⁹ Another Russian officer, who accompanied the general, was also killed. Afterwards the head and hands of the Chief Administrator in Georgia were cut off and sent to Teheran.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ A. V. Fadeev, *Rossii i Kavkaz pervoi treti XIX veka*. Moscow, 1960, p.123.

²³⁸ John F. Baddeley, *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*, Richmond, 1999, p.70.

²³⁹ Abbas Kuli Bakukhanov *Gülistan-i İram*. Baku, 1991, p.188.

²⁴⁰ John F. Baddeley, *The Russian conquest of the Caucasus*, Richmond, 1999, p.71.

Following the death of Tsitsianov, so praised by Russian historians and so hated during his term of service in the Southern Caucasus by the indigenous population,²⁴¹ little changed in objectives of the Tsarist government regarding the Caucasian direction of its policies. So, by October 1806 Baku fell to the Russian troops under general Grigorii Ivanovich Glasenapp.²⁴² And yet Tsitsianov's death was a serious blow to the Empire's positions in the region. In Tsitsianov Russia lost the most ardent defender of her interests on the Caucasian frontier.

The achievements of the first Chief Administrator of Georgia were noteworthy. Within three years Tsitsianov had managed notably to extend Russian possessions in the Southern Caucasus from sea to sea, and all this despite a shortage of men and supplies, at a time when the main focus of St. Petersburg's politics had been concentrated upon the problems caused by the rise of Napoleonic France in the West (for example, while Tsitsianov prepared his eventually unlucky expedition to Baku, Europe at the beginning of December 1805 witnessed the battle of Austerlitz).

Although from the Russian perspective many questions were left unsettled, with Tsitsianov's successors searching the ways to resolve them, it was Tsitsianov who, following the traditions of the Caucasian policies of the Tsarist government in the 18th century, provided a sound ground for further Russian advance into the area in the next, 19th century. All the achievements of the first Chief Administrator of

²⁴¹ Having taken charge of Caucasian affairs, Tsitsianov started a policy, which could be defined as "Let them hate while they fear". No wonder, Russian general became known, for instance, among the local Turkic people as "ishpokhdor" (wrongly pronounced one of Tsitsianov's titles, "inspector of the Caucasian line", which meant in local Turkic languages "his work is dirt") and was called by the Iranian chronicler Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat "the shedder of blood" (Atkin M. *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*. -Minneapolis, 1980, p.73).

²⁴² Glasenapp Grigorii Ivanovich (1750-1819)- Russian general, of Baltic German origin. In his early career participant of Russian-Ottoman wars of late 18th century. After 1807 governor general of Siberia (inspector of the Siberian Line).

Georgia during his relatively short term of office in the Caucasus could simply be read on the new political map. Having established a protectorate over Kartli-Kakheti, the Russian Empire incorporated large territories to the East as well as to the West of this small kingdom in the Eastern Georgia. The newly annexed lands of Imeretia, Mingrelia and the Azeri khanates in point of fact already connected the coastlines of the Black and the Caspian seas, even if the seizure of fortified places such as Anapa, Sukhum, or Poti was a strategic task for Tsitsianov's successors.



Conclusion

Being throughout the centuries the border ground in the military-political confrontation of various mighty powers, which in the course of time superseded one another in their attempts to gain the full control of the region, the Southern Caucasus by the late 18th-early 19th centuries became an arena of complicated diplomatic games that involved both big and small actors- the Ottoman Empire, Russia, Persia, and local Caucasian state formations. As for the South Western part of the Caucasus, known as Georgia and since ancient times populated predominantly by the autochthonous Kartvelian speaking people, by 1800 it was a conglomerate of different self-dependent territories. Despite the common ethnic origin, linguistic and cultural unity, since the end of the 15th century these lands did not have any political integrity. As a border territory surrounded by several imperial centers of power, Georgia²⁴³ witnessed all the negative consequences of being a battleground for large-scale imperial rivalry. As for the socio-political development of the area, it was seriously slowed down by constant border conflicts and frequent military campaigns. Moreover, the ethno-cultural concept of Georgia, as it mentioned above, simply did not exist in political sense.

The dynastic reunification of Kartli and Kakheti, or Eastern Georgia, in 1762 under the scepter of Erekle II and with its capital in Tiflis marked a certain revival of the Georgian statehood. In its relations with other local state formations of the

²⁴³ The term Georgia is used here in its larger sense, meaning not only Kartli-Kakheti (eastern part of the Georgian lands, or Georgia proper), but also all other territories inhabited by people of the Kartvelian ethnic group, namely Imeretia, Svanetia, Guriiia, Adjaria, Samtskhe-Saatabago.

Southern Caucasus, Kartli-Kakheti became one of the most influential regional powers. Another favorable factor for Kartli-Kakhetian consolidation at this time was internal disorder in Persia, lasting for several decades after the death of Nadir Shah.

However, by the end of the century the king of Kartli-Kakheti found himself in a difficult situation. On the one hand, the decline of Persia was temporary and any new Shah in government would try by all means to restore his lost influence in Eastern Georgia. On the other hand, the growing antagonism of the Ottoman Empire and Russia would surely also affect the affairs of the Southern Caucasus. Again in its history Georgia appeared to be between powerful forces.

In line with the general rise of the Russian power and the steady Russian advance to the South in the 2nd half of the 18th century, together with the Black Sea coastline and the Crimean Peninsula, the Caucasus increasingly attracted the attention of St. Petersburg. The first serious demonstration of Russian interest in the region was the Persian campaign of Peter I in 1722-1723, while during the rule of Catherine II Russia's interference in Caucasian politics already had a regular basis.

Among the primary objectives of St. Petersburg were to put under Russian control the routes of Oriental trade, crossing the Caucasus, as well as to gain a strategic foothold against the Ottoman Empire, thus expanding Russian influence in the area and forcing out that of the Ottomans and the Persians.

The treaty of Georgievsk on a Russian protectorate over Kartli-Kakheti, concluded in 1783, deprived this small kingdom of the most important rights²⁴⁴ and became the turning point in history of the Southern Caucasus. St. Petersburg in this way sought to realize its program by getting Christian Georgia as an ally, whereas Georgia tried to protect itself, by and large, if not with the Russian bayonets²⁴⁵, but at least through the possibility to threaten the local neighbors with potential interference of Russia on the side of her ally. For the Ottoman Empire and Persia Georgievsk treaty meant the real and serious threat. This plain fact could serve as an explanation of activities of these two states in the Caucasus after 1783. Especially bitter was this date for the Ottomans, as within that very year St. Petersburg subjugated the Crimea. Since then the peninsula in a sense became a spearhead directed against the Ottoman state. Now the desirable aim of Russia was to unite the Crimea with the Caucasus, and that of the Porte- to prevent it. Accordingly, the mission of Ferah Ali Pasha in reinforcement of the Ottoman fortresses in the eastern coast of the Black Sea, various attempts to encourage indigenous Caucasian population in anti-Russian activities, giving shelter to Sheikh Mansur, Battal Pasha's expedition during the war of 1787-1791- all these, as well as the Persian expedition of Aga Muhammad to Tiflis in 1795, might be seen as attempts to find an answer to growing menace from the North.

Mutual distrust and hostility between the Ottomans and the Russians, however, at the turn of the 18th-19th centuries did not come in the way of an official Ottoman-

²⁴⁴ From now on the ruler of Kartli-Kakheti had to be confirmed in his office by Russia. Tiflis also lost the right of independent foreign policy.

²⁴⁵ The troops sent by St. Petersburg (two battalions with four cannons) were obviously insufficient for defense of the new ally. Moreover, this force had been withdrawn in summer 1787, just before the Russo-Ottoman war, since St. Petersburg at time, lacking the necessary resources and infrastructure in the Caucasian region, uprising of Sheikh Mansur in the rear, was not inclined to increase its already numerous problems in relations with the Porte.

Russian defensive alliance, concluded by the Sublime Porte and St. Petersburg in the end of 1798. Such an unexpected alliance became possible due to important changes in European politics- Napoleon's Egyptian expedition together with the French occupation of Ionian islands were treated by the Porte as a direct encroachment upon Ottoman interests in Eastern Mediterranean. St. Petersburg, in its turn, looked for any possible cooperation in preventing the dangerous revolutionary infection, spread by a Republican France that had executed its own legitimate monarch. It should also be mentioned, however, that the Ottoman-Russian contradictions were too strong and that there was a large British contribution in creating such an extraordinary alliance within the anti-French coalition.²⁴⁶

Both empires, while being allies, in view of the joint struggle against the Napoleonic France thus tried not to emphasize the problems existing in their own relations in the Caucasus. The Porte had to recognize Russian suzerainty over Georgia, officially declared on September 12, 1801 in the Manifesto of the emperor Alexander I. At the same time the Russians avoided disturbing the Ottoman fortresses on the Black Sea littoral,- the episode of the Anaklia crisis is quite expressive on that point,- as well as undertaking any expeditions against the Ottoman *pashaliks*, adjoining the new borders of the Russian Empire, in particular the *pashalik* of Akhaltsikhe.²⁴⁷ Yet it was St. Petersburg, which strengthened significantly its positions in the region during the time of this alliance.

With the acquisition of Kartli-Kakheti Russia could not stop her advance, for this newly gained quite important strategic foothold was isolated from other

²⁴⁶ See: J. C. Hurewitz, The Background of Russia's claims to the Turkish Straits/ *Türk Tarih Kurumu Belleten*, Volume 28, No 3, 1964.

²⁴⁷ "Count Vorontsov to Prince Tsitsianov, August 5 [17], 1803", *AKAK*, Vol. II, p. 873.

mainland Russian territories by the ridge of the Greater Caucasus and the best way to keep it was to connect Kartli-Kakheti with the Black Sea and the Caspian littorals, wherefrom with Astrakhan and the newly gained Crimean peninsula.

In many respects the activity of Prince Pavel Dmitriievich Tsitsianov (Tsitsishvili) in the post of Chief Administrator in Georgia much contributed to realization of this task. Despite the lack of supplies and peoples, unfamiliar for the Russian soldiers the climate and terrain, not always friendly attitudes of the local population Tsitsianov managed within little more than three years to enlarge the Russian possessions in the Southern Caucasus. The Georgian areas of Mingrelia and Imeretia in the West, a number of Turkic Azeri khanates in the East (the Jaro-Belokan area of Daghestan, Gence and Shirvan khanates) as a result of Tsitsianov's diplomatic and military activities had to recognize Russian sovereignty.

Among the factors, which considerably facilitated the work of Tsitsianov there should also be noted political fragmentation, internal struggling within the Kartli-Kakhetian ruling dynasty after the death of Giorgi XII, as well as rivalry between the neighboring Georgian state formations (the territorial conflict of Imeretia and Mingrelia is an illustration in point).

We must also mention the cultural dimension, which was of a two-fold kind. Though all of the Georgian social institutions for centuries were influenced by Oriental models, religiously the Georgians stayed Christian and thus in that sense close to the Orthodox Russians. Moreover, there had already existed a Georgian diaspora in Russia since the time of Vakhtang VI, Tsitsianov's own family being an example. Therefore St. Petersburg had certain real possibilities to influence the situation in Georgia according to its interests and indeed efficiently used them.

Starting from Kartlo-Kakheti, Mingrelia and Imeretia at the beginning of the 19th century, the process of incorporation of the most part of the Georgian ethnic territories into the Russian Empire, meant, on the one hand, that Georgia in the sense of an independent, or even dependent politico-administrative unit simply ceased to exist. On the other hand, as an indirect consequence of the politics of St. Petersburg, for the first time since 1491 almost all of the Georgian lands appeared to be united within one state. That objectively helped to preserve the area from the traditional devastating raids of the rival imperial neighbors and to some extent, together with the fact of existing of the certain anti-Russian opposition among the Georgian aristocracy as well as peasantry, provided the long awaited social stability in the region.

At the same time the Ottoman-Russian antagonism stayed a one of the most important elements in the system of European international relations throughout the whole 19th century. The Southern Caucasus, a valuable territorial acquisition of St. Petersburg, as a foothold for potential Russian invasion further southwards obviously constituted a serious threat for the Ottoman state and continued to be the scene of tense struggle between the Sublime Porte and Russia.

At the beginning of the 19th century, though the larger part of the Georgian ethnic territories got under growing Russian control, the Ottomans still did not lose all of their own means of influence in the Caucasus. At the Porte's disposal were the fortresses on the Eastern coast of the Black Sea (the chief one was Anapa), some opportunities to keep up relations with the local Caucasian tribes, and diplomatic help from the European states, but to hold their shaken positions in the area became an ever more difficult task for the Ottomans.

Along with the numerous contradictions existing between two powers in Europe, the Russian advance in Georgia, no doubt, was one of the factors that further worsened the Porte's relations with St. Petersburg, accelerating the new war, started in 1806.



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APPENDIX

Договор о признании царем Карталинским и Кахетинским Ираклием II покровительства и верховной власти России

(Георгиевский трактат)

24 июля 1783 г.

Во имя Бога всемогущего единого в Троице святой славимого. От давнего времени Всероссийская империя по единоверию с грузинскими народами служила защитой, помощью и убежищем тем народам и светлейшим владетелям их против угнетений, коим они от соседей своих подвержены были. Покровительство всероссийскими самодержцами царям грузинским, роду и подданным их даруемое, произвело ту зависимость последних от первых, которая наипаче оказывается из самого российско-императорского титула. Е.и.в., ныне благополучно царствующая, достаточным образом изъявила монаршее свое к сим народам благоволение и великодушный о благе их промысел сильными своими стараниями, приложенными о избавлении их от ига рабства и от поносной дани отроками и отроковицами, которую некоторые из сих народов давать обязаны были, и продолжением своего монаршего призрения ко владетелям оных. В сем самом расположении снисходя на прошения, ко престолу ее принесенные от светлейшего царя карталинского и кахетинского Ираклия Теймуразовича о принятии его со всеми его наследниками и преемниками и со всеми его царствами и областями в монаршее покровительство е.в. и ее высоких наследников и преемников, с признанием верховной власти всероссийских императоров над царями карталинскими и кахетинскими, всемилостивейше восхотела постановить и заключить с помянутым светлейшим царем дружественный договор, посредством коего, с одной стороны, его светлость, именем своим и своих преемников признавая верховную власть и покровительство е.и.в. и высоких ее преемников над владетелями и народами царств Карталинского и Кахетинского и прочих областей, к ним принадлежащих, ознаменил бы торжественным и точным образом обязательства свои в рассуждении Всероссийской империи; а с другой, е.и.в. также могла бы ознаменить торжественно, каковыя преимущества и выгоды от щедрой и сильной ее десницы даруются помянутым народам и светлейшим их владетелям.

К заключению такого договора е.и.в. уполномочить изволила светлейшего князя Римской империи Григория Александровича Потемкина, войск своих генерал-аншефа, повелевающего легкой конницей регулярной и нерегулярной и многими другими военными силами, сенатора, государственной военной коллегии вице-президента, астраханского, саратовского, азовского и новороссийского государева наместника, своего генерал-адъютанта и действительного камергера, кавалергардского корпуса поручика, лейб-гвардии Преображенского полка подполковника, главного начальника мастеровой оружейной палаты, кавалера орденов Св. апостола Андрея, Александра

Невского, военного Св.великомученика Георгия и Св. равноапостольного князя Владимира больших крестов; королевских прусского Черного и польского Белого 240 Орлов и Св.Станислава, шведского Серафимов, датского Слона и Голстинского Св.Анны, со властью, за отсутствием своим избрать и снабдить полною мочью от себя, кого он за благо рассудит, который по тому избрал и уполномочил превосходительного господина от армии е.и.в. генерал-поручика, войсками в Астраханской губернии командующего, е.и.в. действительного камергера и орденов российских Св.Александра Невского, военного великомученика и победоносца Георгия и голстинского Св.Анны кавалера Павла Потемкина, а его светлость карталинский и кахетинский царь Ираклий Теймуразович избрал и уполномочил с своей стороны их сиятельств своего генерала от левой руки князя Ивана Константиновича Багратиона и его светлости генерал-адъютанта князя Гарсевана Чавчавадзева. Помянутые полномочные, приступив с помощью Божией к делу и разменяв взаимные полномочия, по силе их постановили, заключили и подписали следующие артикулы.

Артикул первый

Его светлость царь карталинский и кахетинский именем своим, наследников и преемников своих торжественно навсегда отрицается от всякого вассальства или под каким бы то титулом ни было, от всякой зависимости от Персии или иной державы и сим объявляет перед лицом всего света, что он не признает над собой и преемниками иного самодержавия, кроме верховной власти и покровительства е.и.в. и ее высоких наследников и преемников престола всероссийского императорского, обещая тому престолу верность и готовность пособствовать пользе государства во всяком случае, где от него то требуется будет.

Артикул второй

Е.и.в., приемля со стороны его светлости толь чистосердечное обещание, равномерно обещает и обнадеживает императорским своим словом за себя и преемников своих, что милость и покровительство их от светлейших царей карталинских и кахетинских никогда отъемлемы не будут. В доказательство чего е.в. дает императорское свое ручательство на сохранение целости настоящих владений его светлости царя Ираклия Теймуразовича, предполагая распространить таковое ручательство и на такие владения, кои в течение времени по обстоятельствам приобретены и прочным образом за ним утверждены будут.

Артикул третий

В изъявлении того чистосердечия, с каковым его светлость царь карталинский и кахетинский признает верховную власть и покровительство всероссийских императоров, поставлено, что помянутые цари, вступая наследственно на царство их, имеют тотчас извещать о том российскому императорскому двору, испрашивая чрез посланников своих императорского на царство подтверждения и инвеститурой, состоящей в грамоте, знамени с гербом Всероссийской империи, имеющим внутри себя герб помянутых царств, в сабле, в повелительном жезле и в мантии или епанче горностаевой. Сии знаки или посланникам вручены будут, или же чрез пограничное начальство доставлены будут к царю, который при получении их в

присутствии российского министра долженствует торжественно учинить присягу на верность и усердие к Российской империи и на признание верховной власти и покровительства всероссийских императоров по форме, прилагаемой при сем трактате. Обряд сей и ныне исполнен да будет со стороны светлейшего царя Ираклия Теймуразовича.

Артикул четвертый

Для доказательства, что намерения его светлости в рассуждении толь тесного его соединения со Всероссийской империей и признания верховной власти и покровительства всепресветлейших той империи обладателей суть непорочны, обещает его светлость без предварительного соглашения с главным пограничным начальником и министром е.и.в., при нем аккредитуемым, не иметь сношения с окрестными владетелями. А когда от них приедут посланцы или присланы будут письма, оные принимая, советовать с главным пограничным начальником и с министром е.и.в., о возвращении таковых посланцев и о надлежащей их владетелям отповеди.

Артикул пятый

Чтоб удобнее иметь всякое нужное сношение и соглашение с Российским императорским двором, его светлость царь желает иметь при том дворе своего министра или резидента, а е.и.в., милостиво то приемля, обещает, что оный при дворе ее принимаем будет наряду с прочими владетельных князей министрами равного ему характера, и сверх того соизволяет и со своей стороны содержать при его светлости российского министра или резидента.

Артикул шестой

Е.и.в., приемля с благоволением признание верховной ее власти и покровительства над царствами Карталинским и Грузинским, обещает именем своим и преемников своих:

1. Народы тех царств почитать пребывающими в тесном союзе и совершенном согласии с империей ее и, следственно, неприятелей их признавать за своих неприятелей; чего ради мир, с Портой Оттоманской или с Персией, или иной державой и областью заключаемый, должен распространяться и на сии покровительствуемые е.в. народы.

2. Светлейшего царя Ираклия Теймуразовича и его дома наследников и потомков сохранять беспеременно на царстве Карталинском и Кахетинском.

3. Власть, со внутренним управлением сопряженную, суд и расправу и сбор податей предоставить его светлости царю в полную его волю и пользу, запрещая своему военному и гражданскому начальству вступаться в какие-либо распоряжения.

Артикул седьмой

Его светлость царь приемля с достоулыным благоволением толь милостивое со стороны е.и.в. обнадеживание, обещает за себя и потомков своих:

1. Быть всегда готовым на службу е.в. с войсками своими.

2. С начальниками российскими обращаясь во всегдашнем сношении по всем делам, до службы е.и.в. касающимся, удовлетворять их требованиям и подданных е.в. охранять от всяких обид и притеснений.

3. В определении людей к местам и возвышении их в чины отменное оказывать уважение на заслуги перед Всероссийской империей, от покровительства коей зависит спокойствие и благоденствие царств Карталинского и Кахетинского.

Артикул осьмой

В доказательство особого монаршего благоволения к его светлости царю и народам его и для вящего соединения с Россией сих единоверных народов, е.и.в. соизволяет, чтоб католикос или начальствующий архиепископ их состоял местом в числе российских архиереев в осьмой степени, именно после Тобольского, всемилостивейше жалует ему навсегда титул Святейшего Синода члена; о управлении же грузинскими церквами и отношении, каковое долженствует быть к Синоду российскому, о том составится особый артикул.

Артикул девятый

Простирая милость свою к подданным его светлости царя, князьям и дворянам, е.и.в. устанавливает, что оные во Всероссийской империи будут пользоваться всеми теми преимуществами и выгодами, кои российским благородным присвоены, а его светлость, приемля с благодарностью толь милостивое к подданным его снисхождение, обязывается прислать ко двору е.в. списки всех благородных фамилий, дабы по оным можно было знать в точности, кому таковое отличное право принадлежит.

Артикул десятый

Постановляется, что все вообще уроженцы карталинские и кахетинские могут в России селиться, выезжать и паки возвращаться безвозбранно; пленные же, если оные оружием или переговорами у турок и персиян или других народов освобождены будут, да отпустятся восвояси по их желаньям, возвращая только издержки на их выкуп и вывоз; сие самое и его светлость царь обещает исполнять свято в рассуждении российских подданных, в плен к соседям попадающих.

Артикул первый на десять

Купечество карталинское и кахетинское имеет свободу отправлять свои торги в России, пользуясь теми же правами и преимуществами, коими природные российские подданные пользуются; взаимно же царь обещает постановить с главным начальником пограничным или с министром е.в. о всемерном облегчении купечества российского в торге их в областях его или в проезде их для торгу в другие места; ибо без такого точного постановления и условие о выгодах его купечества места иметь не может.

Артикул второй на десять

Сей договор делается на вечные времена; но ежели что-либо усмотрено будет нужным переменить или прибавить для взаимной пользы, оное да возымеет место по обостороннему соглашению.

Артикул третий на десять

Ратификации на настоящий трактат должны быть разменены в шесть месяцев от подписания его, или и скорее, буде возможно.

В достоверие чего нижеподписавшиеся полномочные по силе их полных мочей подписали сии артикулы и приложили к ним свои печати в Георгиевской крепости, июля 24-го дня 1783 г.

На подлинном подписано:

Павел Потемкин.

Князь Иван Багратион.

Князь Гарсеван Чавчавадзе.

СЕПАРАТНЫЕ АРТИКУЛЫ

Артикул сепаратный первый

Твердое е.и.в. намерение, дабы единовверные ей народы, толь тесными узами с империей ее соединенные, пребывали между собой в дружестве и совершенном согласии в страх завистующим им соседям и в отражение соединенными силами всякого покушения на их свободу, спокойствие и благоденствие, побуждает е.в. преподать его светлости царю карталинскому и кахетинскому Ираклию Теймуразовичу дружественные советы и увещания о сохранении дружбы и доброго согласия со светлейшим царем имеретинским Соломоном и о постановлении всего того, что может только пособствовать пресечению различных распрей и к упреждению всяких недоразумений, обещая императорским своим словом не только споспешествовать стараниями своими событию сего толико полезного дела, но и на

таковой мир и согласие дать свое ручательство.

Его светлость царь Ираклий, приемля с должной благодарностью великодушные е.в. попечения о соблюдении дружбы между народами единого происхождения и закона и высочайшее ее ручательство, исповедует сим, что в делах их взаимных со светлейшим царем Соломоном ныне и впредь признает е.и.в. совершенным арбитром, подвергая распри и недоразумения, между двумя владельцами паче всякого чаяния происходящие, ее верховному решению.

Артикул сепаратный второй

Для охранения владений карталинских и кахетинских от всякого прикосновения со стороны соседей и для подкрепления войск его светлости царя на оборону е.и.в. обещает содержать в областях его два полных батальона пехоты с четырьмя пушками, которым провиант и фураж по их штатам производиться будет в натуре от земли по соглашению его светлости с главным пограничным начальником за положенную в штатах цену.

Артикул сепаратный третий

На случай войны главный пограничный начальник всегда со стороны е.и.в. уполномочен быть долженствует с его светлостью царем карталинским и кахетинским согласить и положить на мере о защищении означенных земель и о действии против неприятеля, который не иначе как за общего врага разумеет быть должен. При чем постановляется, что ежели бы часть войск карталинских и кахетинских употреблена была для службы е.и.в. вне пределов их, то оным имеет быть производимо полное содержание противу прочих войск е.в.

Артикул сепаратный четвертый

Е.и.в. обещает в случае войны употребить все возможное старание пособием оружия, а в случае мира настоянием о возвращении земель и мест, издавна к царству Карталинскому и Кахетинскому принадлежавших, кои и останутся во владении царей тамошних на основании трактата о покровительстве и верховной власти всероссийских императоров, над ними заключенного.

Сии сепаратные артикулы будут иметь такую же силу, как бы оные в самый трактат от слова в слово внесены были. Чего ради и ратификации на них в тот же срок вместе разменены быть должны. В достоверие чего нижеподписавшиеся полномочные по силе их полных мочей подписали сии артикулы и приложили к ним свои печати в Егорьевской крепости июля 24-го дня 1783 г.

На подлинном подписано:

Павел Потемкин.

Князь Иван Багратион.

Князь Гарсеван Чавчавадзе.

ДОПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АРТИКУЛ

Как карталинские и кахетинские цари от давних времен венчаются царским венцом и помазуются на царство святым миром, то е.и.в. именем своим и преемников своего императорского престола не только всемилостивейше позволяет помянутым царям употребление сего священного обряда, но еще в вящее доказательство отличного своего благоволения жалует им сверх прочих знаков императорской на царствие инвеституры, в договоре положенных, обыкновенную царскую корону, которую как е.выс-во ныне владеющий царь Ираклий II употребляет, так и светлейшие его преемники той же венчаемы быть должны.

Е.выс-во царь Ираклий, сию высочайшую милость е.и.в. с достоуважением и благодарностью приемля, обещает именем своим и преемников своих, что обряд священного тех преемников его на царство венчания и помазания не прежде совершаем будет, как по учинении положенной трактатом присяги на верность всероссийскому императорскому престолу и по получении утвердительной императорской грамоты с инвеститурой.

Сей артикул имеет почитать быть принадлежащим к числу других, трактат составляющих, в достоверие чего уполномоченные к подписанию того

трактата по данной им доверенности оный подписали и печатями укрепили в 24 ... месяца 1784 г.

Павел Потемкин.

Князь Иван Багратион.

Князь Гарсеван Чавчавадзе.

ОБРАЗЕЦ, ПО КОТОРОМУ ЕГО СВЕТОСТЬ
ЦАРЬ КАРТАЛИНСКИЙ И КАХЕТИНСКИЙ ИРАКЛИЙ
ТЕЙМУРАЗОВИЧ
УЧИНИТ КЛЯТВЕННОЕ ОБЕЩАНИЕ НА ВЕРНОСТЬ
Е.И.В. САМОДЕРЖИЦЕ ВСЕРОССИЙСКОЙ И НА ПРИЗНАНИЕ
ПОКРОВИТЕЛЬСТВА И ВЕРХОВНОЙ ВЛАСТИ ВСЕРОССИЙСКИХ
ИМПЕРАТОРОВ
НАД ЦАРЯМИ КАРТАЛИНСКИМИ И КАХЕТИНСКИМИ

«Аз нижеименованный, обещаюсь и клянусь Всемогущим Богом пред святым его Евангелием в том, что хочу и должен е.и.в. всепресветлейшей и державнейшей великой государыне императрице и самодержице всероссийской Екатерине Алексеевне и ее любезнейшему сыну, пресветлейшему государю цесаревичу и великому князю Павлу Петровичу, законному всероссийского императорского престола наследнику, и всем высоким преемникам того престола верным, усердным и доброжелательным быть. Признавая именем моим, наследников и преемников моих и всех моих царств и областей на вечные времена высочайшее покровительство и верховную власть е.и.в. и ее высоких наследников надо мною и моими преемниками, царями карталинскими и кахетинскими, и вследствие того отвергая всякое надо мною и владениями моими, под каким бы то титулом или предлогом ни было, господствование или власть других государей и держав и отрицаясь от покровительства их, обязываюсь по чистой моей христианской совести неприятелей Российского государства почитать за своих собственных неприятелей, быть послушным и готовым во всяком случае, где на службу е.и.в. и государства всероссийского потребен буду, и в том во всем не щадить живота своего до последней капли крови. С военными и гражданскими е.в. начальниками и служителями обращаться в искреннем согласии. И ежели какое-либо предосудительное пользе и славе е.в. и ее империи дело или намерение узнаю, тотчас давать знать. Одним словом, так поступать, как по единоверию моему с российскими народами и по обязанности моей в рассуждении покровительства и верховной власти е.и.в. прилично и должно. В заключение сей моей клятвы целую слова и крест Спасителя моего. Аминь».

Сей образец имеет служить и будущим впредь царям карталинским и кахетинским для учинения клятвенного обещания при вступлении их на царство и при получении подтвердительной грамоты со знаками инвеституры, от российского императорского двора жалуемой.

В достоверие сего нижеподписавшиеся полномочные по силе их полных мочей тот образец подписали и приложили к нему свои печати в Егорьевской крепости июля 24-го дня 1783 г.

На подлинном подписано:

Павел Потемкин.
Князь Иван Багратион.
Князь Гарсеван Чавчавадзе.

(Source: <http://www.hist.msu.ru/ER/Text/georgia.htm>)

Высочайший Манифест о присоединении Грузии к России от 12-го-сентября 1801 года

Божией милостью, Мы, Александр первый, Император и Самодержец
Вероссийский, и прочая и прочая и прочая.

Объявляем всем обитателям царства Грузинского, кому о том ведать надлежит. Покровительство и верховная власть Российской Империи над царством Грузинским всегда налагали на монархов российских и долг защиты. В 1796 году, против сильного впадения к вам Аги-Магомет-хана, в Бозе почивающая великая государыня императрица Екатерина Алексеевна послала часть войск своих. Столь успешное тогда не токмо спасение царства Грузинского, но и счастливое покорение всех областей и народов от берегов Каспийского моря до рек Куры и Аракса ограждали вас от всяких опасностей. Оставалось, токмо внутренним благоустройством благоденствие ваше утвердить навеки. Но внезапное и скоропостижное отступление войск российских из Персии, Армении и из пределов ваших испровергли справедливое ожидание ваше. Все потом претерпенные вами бедствия: нашествие неверных и иноплеменных народов, разорение городов и селений, порабощение и увлечение в плен отцов, матерей, жен и детей ваших, наконец раздор царской фамилии и разделение народа между разными искателями царского достоинства влекли вас в междоусобные брани. Окружающие вас хищные народы готовы были напасть на царство ваше и ненаказанно растерзать его остатки. Соединением всех сих зол не токмо народ, но даже и имя народа грузинского, храбростию прежде столь славного во всей Азии, истребилось бы от лица земли. Стоя в бездне сей, неоднократно, призывали вы покровительство российское. Вступление войск наших и поражение Омар-хана аварского приостановили гибель вашу, устранив всех хищников, наполняющих горы Кавказские, и тех, кои раздирают область Персии и великой Армении. Затихли крамолы посреди вас, и все вы единодушно и торжественно воззвали власть российскую управлять вами непосредственно. Мы, вступя на всероссийский престол, обрели царство Грузинское, присоединенное к России, о чем и манифест в 18-й день января 1801 года издан уже был во всенародное известие. Вникая в положение ваше и видя, что посредство и присутствие войск российских в Грузии и донныне одно удерживает пролитие крови нам единоверных и конечную гибель, уготованную вам от хищных и неверных, сопредельные вам народов, желали Мы испытать еще, нет ли возможности восстановить первое правление под покровительством Нашим и сохранить вас в спокойствии и безопасности. Но ближайшие по сему исследования наконец убедили Нас, что разные части народа грузинского, равно драгоценные нам по человечеству, праведно страшатся гонения и мести того, кто из искателей достоинства царского мог бы достигнуть его власти, поелику противу всех их большая часть в народе столь явно себя обнаружила. Одно сомнение и страх сих последствий, возродив беспокойства, неминуемо были бы источником междоусобий и кровопролития. Сверх того бывшее правление, даже и в царство царя Ираклия, который духом

и достоинством своим соединил все под власть свою, не могло утвердить ни внешней, ни внутренней безопасности. Напротив, столькратно вовлекало вас в бездну зол, на краю коей и ныне вы стоите и в которую, по всем соображениям, должны вы будете низвергнуться, если мощная рука справедливой власти от падения сего вас не удержит. Сила обстоятельств сих, общее посему чувство ваше и глас грузинского народа преклонили Нас не оставить и не предать на жертву бедствия язык единоверный, вручивший жребий свой великодушной защите России. Возбужденная надежда ваша на сей раз обманута не будет. Не для приращения сил, ни для корысти, ни для распространения пределов и так уже обширнейшей в свете империи приемлем Мы на себя бремя управления царства Грузинского. Единое достоинство, единая честь и человечество налагают на Нас священный долг, вняв молению страждущих, в отвращение их скорбей, учредить в Грузии правление, которое могло бы утвердить правосудие, личную и имущественную безопасность и дать каждому защиту закона. А посему, избрав нашего генерал-лейтенанта Кнорринга быть главнокомандующим посреди вас, дали Мы ему полные наставления открыть сие правление особенным от имени Нашего объявлением и привести в силу и действие предначертанное от Нас постановление, к исполнению коего приобщая избранных из вас по достоинствам и по общей доверенности, уповаем, что вы, вверясь правлению сему, несомненно под сенью оного начально спокойствие и безопасность обрящете, а потом и благоденствие и изобилие.

Все подати с земли вашей повелели Мы обращать в пользу вашу, и что за содержанием правления оставаться будет, употреблять на восстановление разоренных городов и селений. Каждый пребудет при преимуществах состояния своего, при свободном отправлении своей веры и при собственности своей неприкосновенно. Царевичи сохраняют уделы свои, кроме отсутствующих, а сим годовой доход с уделов их ежегодно производим будет деньгами, где бы они не обретались, лишь бы сохраняли долг присяги. Во взаимность сих великодушных попечений наших о благе всех и каждого из вас, Мы требуем, чтобы вы, для утверждения постановленной над вами власти, дали присягу в верности по форме, при сем приложенной. Духовенство, яко пастыри душевные, первые должны дать пример.

Наконец да познаете и вы цену доброго правления, да водворятся между вами мир, правосудие, уверенность как личная, так и имущественная, да пресекутся самоуправства и лютые истязания, да обратится каждый к лучшим пользам своим и общественным, свободно и невозбранно упражняясь в земледелии, промыслах, торговле, рукоделиях, под сенью законов, всех равно покровительствующих. Избытки и благоденствие ваше будут приятнейшею и единою для Нас наградой. - Дан в престольном граде Москве, сентября 12-го дня 1801 года.

Подлинный подписан собственной Е.И.В. рукой тако: Александр".
М.П.

Печатано в Москве, при Сенате, 1801 г. сентября 20 дня
(Source: Акты собранные Кавказской Археографической Коммиссиею. Том 1. Тифлис, 1866. С. 432-433)

Постановление внутреннего в Грузии управления,
Высочайше утвержденное в 12-й день сентября 1801 года,
в Москве

Грузия разделяется на 5 уездов, из коих 3 в Карталинии: Горийский, Лорийский и Душетский, и 2 в Кахетии: Телавский и Сигнахский.

Чиновники и места для управления Грузией назначаются следующие: Главнокомандующий.

Правитель.

Верхнее Грузинское Правительство, которому иметь пребывание свое в Тифлисе.

Верхнее Грузинское Правительство делится на четыре экспедиции:

1) Для дел исполнительных или правления. В ней председательствует правитель Грузии и 2 советника или мдиван-бега, - один из Российских чиновников, а другой из князей Грузинских.

2) Для дел казенных и экономических. В ней начальник из Российских чиновников и заседают четыре советника или мдиван-бега из князей Грузинских, - 2 Карталинских и 2 Кахетинских и губернский казначей или салтхуцес.

3) Для дел уголовных. В ней начальник из Российских чиновников и заседают 4 советника или мдиван-бега из князей Грузинских.

4) Для дел гражданских. В ней начальник из Российских чиновников и заседают 4 советника или мдиван-бега из князей Грузинских.

Правитель Грузии, начальники и советники экспедиций суть члены Верховного Грузинского Правительства.

В общей собрании оно председательствует главнокомандующий, а в небытность его правитель Грузии.

Общее собрание Верховного Грузинского Правительства есть место, которое принимает апелляции на экспедиции и большинством голосов решает дела окончательно.

Экспедиции поступают: Исполнительная по правилам Губернскому Правлению, а Казенная, Уголовная и Гражданская - Палатам, особенно и всем вообще в законах Российской Империи постановленным, с тою однако отменю, каковую по соображению обстоятельств найдет нужным ввести главнокомандующий вместе с правителем Грузии, с Высочайшего утверждения.

Экспедиция Уголовная вносит дела, кои подвергаются князя или дворянина лишению жизни или чести, к главнокомандующему, а сей с мнением своим представляет оные И. В.

В каждом уезде быть Уездному суду.

В каждом уездном суде заседает уездный судья из Российских чиновников и 2 заседателя или мсаджули из дворян Грузинских той округи.

К исполнению сих судов относятся дела принадлежащие к уездным судам по Российским законоположениям, следственно и апелляции на сии суды вносятся по роду дел в экспедиции Верховного Грузинского Правительства.

В каждом уезде быть Управе земской полиции.

В ней заседает кап.-исправник из Российских чиновников и 2 заседателя или эсаулы из дворян Грузинских той округи.

Управы сии поступают по правилам, начертанным в законах Империи для Нижних

Земских судов и особенно для земских комиссаров.

Позволяется главнокомандующему вместе с правителем Грузии учредить магистраты в тех городах, где окажется прямая в них нужда, со Всевысочайшего утверждения.

В Грузии учреждается Медицинская Управа, на том основании, как оные существуют по губерниям Империи Всероссийской.

В городах: Тифлис, Гори, Лори, Душете, Телаве и Сигнахе быть по одному казначею или хазинадару из дворян Грузинских.

В сих же городах быть по одному коменданту из Российских чиновников и в помощь им по одному полицмейстеру или нацвалу из дворян Грузинских.

К обитающим в Грузии Татарам Казахским, Борчалинским и Памбакским определить приставами или моуравами из Грузинских князей, к каждому по одному, а к поколениям Хевсуров, Пшавов и Тушев - одного и всякому из приставов сих придать в помощь по одному из чиновников Российских.

Вновь вышедшие из Карабага Армяне, по особым привилегиям управляемые, остаются под начальством своих меликов.

Приставов сих и начальствующих Армянами главнокомандующий имеет снабдить на отправление должностей их наставлениями сообразно тем правилам, какие преподаны кап.-исправникам и равно как сии, поставляются приставы те и мелики в соотношение к правительствам и судам, в земле Грузинской учреждаемым.

Назначение из Грузинских князей и дворян в должности по местам, кои выше для них предоставлены, зависит от лучшего усмотрения главнокомандующего, дабы на первый раз вступили в должности люди способнейшие и отличающиеся общим уважением и доверенностью сограждан своих.

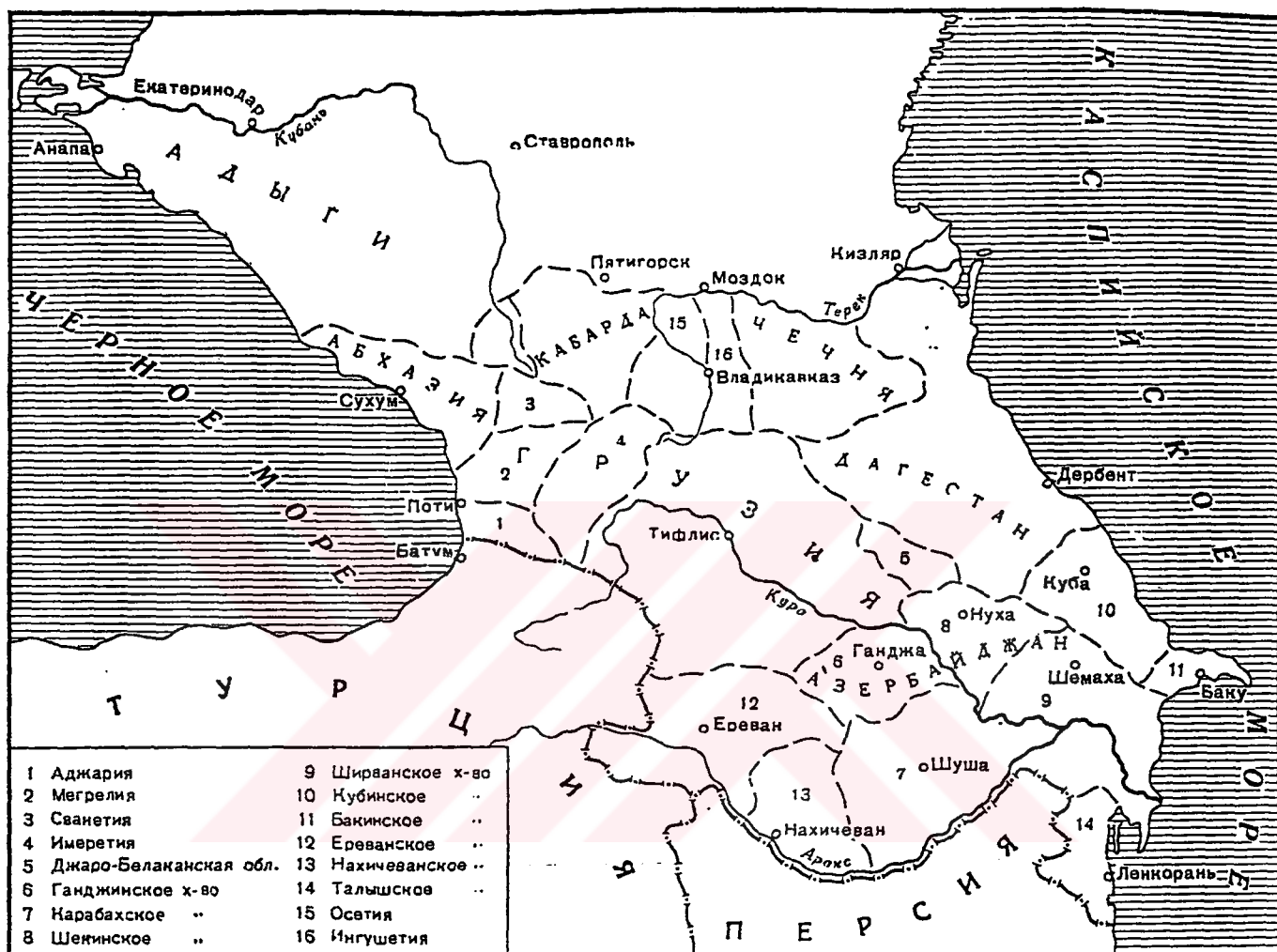
По истечении же года от открытия вновь учреждаемого в Грузии Правительства, выбор в советники и в прочие должности, Грузинским князьям и дворянам предоставляемые, отдать в волю князей и дворян, для чего главнокомандующий вместе с правителем и обязаны предуготовить завершенно пристойные правила и представить оные на Высочайшее воззрение.

Дела гражданские имеют быть производимы по настоящим Грузинским обычаям, кои следует привести в известность, как сделано сие при учреждении в Кабарде Родовых судов и расправ и по Уложению изданному царем Вахтангом, яко по коренному Грузинскому закону. Главнокомандующий вместе с правителем Грузии должны начертать из Уложения сего и из обычаев народных правила поведения всех в Грузии учреждаемых правительств, и в случае какого либо недостатка, который в продолжении времени, конечно, оказаться может, руководствоваться законами Всероссийской Империи. Уголовные же дела производить по общим законам Российского Государства, дозволяя однако главнокомандующему вместе с правителем сообразить их с умоначертаниями тамошнего народа и вместе по обеим сим статьям представить мнение свое на Высочайшее усмотрение. А между тем бдительно наблюдать следует, чтобы во всех землях, управляемых именем и властью И. В., пресечены были всякие злоупотребления, несправедливости, угнетения, разбои, смертоубийства, а также истязания по делам уголовным. Долг главнокомандующего будет облегчать жребий и самих преступников благостью законов Российских и истребить пытки и смертную казнь.

Иноплеменным народам, в Грузии обитающим, в разбирательстве по части дел гражданских быть на прежнем их положении и в делах уголовных поступать с ними по общим вышеначерченным для Грузинского народа правилам.

На подлинном собственною Е. И. В. рукою написано тако: "Быть по сему. - Александр."

(Source: Акты собранные Кавказской Археографической Коммиссиею. Том 1. Тифлис, 1866. С. 437-438)



КАВКАЗ В НАЧАЛЕ XIX ВЕКА