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Western Georgia During The Ottoman-Russian Relations
In The First Half Of The XIX Century

Specialization: The History of Georgia

Annotation

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The actuality of the research topic. The political, economic and, strategic importance of Georgia in the South Caucasus has been and still is expressed in the fact, that it factually was and is some kind of bridge, that connects the North and the South, the East and, the West. Its capability and role are also determined by the fact, that it provides access to the Black Sea. Therefore, Georgia, which is located in the Transcaucasia, during the different times has often become the subject of interest of various civilizations.

The analysis of the policy implemented by the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire shows, that the noted historical period is characterized by significant changes for all the three counties (Georgia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian Empire): The first gradually loses its statehood, the second loses its position in the region and the third, taking advantage of this, expands its territorial boundaries.

During the confrontations between the Ottomans, Russia and, Iran for gaining power in the Caucasus, Georgia was trying to end its inner disarrangements in the country, to ensure peace and for that purpose, to gain foreign support. In 1801, Emperor Alexandre I declared the unification of the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti to Russia and targeted western Georgia. In 1803, the Russian Empire acknowledged Mingrelia, in 1804, Imereti and Guria, and in 1810, Abkhazia under its rule, which was the very first steps taken for the full annexation. In such a way, the Russian Empire gained great supremacy in the South Caucasus and Georgia became its bridge-head in the South Caucasus, one of its main strongholds in the direction of the south.

One of the purposes of the Russian state policy, even from the period of Emperor Peter I, was to gain access to the Mediterranean Sea by conquering the Strait of Istanbul and the Strait of Dardanelles. Moreover, after the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, Russia, by fitting the role of the defender of Orthodox Christians, was trying to bring the co-religionist people in the region under its influence, which was an important factor to conquer Georgia.

From the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire started to lose the status of having a world power, which also resulted in weakening the Ottomans' influence in western Georgia. Porta had an attempt to rehabilitate during the wars with Russia in the years of 1806-1812 and 1828-1829, but, because of weak military forces and the internal disarrangements inside the country, the Ottomans were unable to do so and fully lost their influence in the region.

Like in eastern Georgia, the establishment of the Russian influence in Imereti resulted in a change of the governing system. Right behind the strengthening process of the Russian language and culture, the Georgian Language and culture were weakened and its importance was reduced. Despite that, at the cost of great efforts, Georgia, even under such pressure, was able to preserve and uphold its values (language, culture, ethnic identity) and to stand on its own feet again.

Unfortunately, even today the Russian threat towards Georgia still isn't removed and thus, we think, that the research in this area is very actual, especially, considering the fact, that Turkey remains one of the main players in the region.

The scientific news of the dissertation will be the fact, that based on the new Ottoman archival materials, western Georgia will be represented as the main center of the Russian-Ottoman confrontation. Based on the causality form, there will be considered the gradual growth of the Russian influence and role, whilst the Ottomans, due to their weakness, were conceding their positions, also, in the same region, the more or less independent kingdoms were opposing each other, which was followed by the complete liquidation of the statehood of western Georgia.

The theoretical-methodological basis of the work is principles and methods, which are established in the modern historical science, such as chronological, historical-comparative, retrospective, political analysis, and others, of which complex use has allowed us to fully expand and present the topic. In order to show the Ottoman Empire's policy towards the Kingdom of Imereti and other principalities, occupied by Russia, during the battles in the first half of the 19th century, we used a variety of documentary or other materials, which allowed us to make much more credible conclusions and evaluations. The research and its results presented in the paperwork are also based on numerous scientific literature, monographs, or articles prepared by individual scientists, which helped us to fully understand the epoch and to choose the correct directions.

The theoretical and practical importance of the paperwork. The paperwork will be interesting for those who are interested in the history of Georgia, the dynamics of neighborhood relations, the socio-political situation of the Kingdom of Imereti and other principalities, geopolitics and events concluded in the region in the first half of the XIX century, also for professors, teachers. and students. It can be used during preparing the appropriate educational courses in universities. The results of the research, along with the attached bibliography, can be of interest whilst working on undergraduate, graduate and other kinds of research paperwork.

The history of studying the issue. During the preparation of the paperwork, we mainly used Turkish and Georgian sources. The Russian material is also used more or less. From the Ottoman sources, the most important are the documents, which are preserved in the Ottoman archives of the President, where more than 100 million archival files are kept. One set of these documents is written in Georgian. Part of them was found and with relevant comments were published by the researcher I. Baramidze.

Whilst working on the dissertation, we used a certain part of documents from the work of Mumin Yildıztaş - "Georgia and the Georgians in Ottoman Archival Documents".

During the research, great help was provided by the works of Turkish researchers. The work of the famous Turkish scientist, Sanizade Mehmed Ataullah, who compiled the history of the Ottomans in 1808-1821, is noteworthy. In this work, he described the events, which he saw with his own eyes. In his four-tome work, he devoted his space to information about Georgia, in particular, about western Georgia. He has determined the documents reflecting

the situation in Batumi and Poti. Also, he provided detailed information about the condition in Georgia and about King Solomon II of Imereti.

In the twelve-tome work of the famous historian, Cevdet Pasha, about the history of the Ottoman Empire, there is a lot written about the XIX century's Georgia. In it, the author has provided detailed information about the Ottoman-Russian wars of the same period, the role of the Caucasian people in these wars, also, the issue of Georgia and others. In the work, we also read interesting reports about the Georgian, Armenian and other people of Caucasus. In the second tome of the work, Cevdet Pasha provides information about the fact of sending gifts to King Solomon II in order for Russia to subdue the kingdom of Imereti, etc.

Cevdet Pasha's work, "History of the Crimea and the Caucasus" is also noteworthy, in which, the reports about the geography, history, and ethnography of the people living here are provided.

The period of Cevdet Pasha is continued by Ahmed Lutfi Efendi, who tells us about the events, developed in 1825-1876. The paperwork provides very significant and important reports about the battles for Akhaltsikhe, the events of Adjara, the capture of Anaklia and Poti fortresses and others, happening during the Ottoman-Russian war of 1828-1829.

From the authors of the existing paperwork about Georgia, we can name N. Aiildiz and A. Ozcan. Also, Uzun Charshili, Mukhtar, Berkok, Gökce, Bilge, and others, who provide important information about the policy implemented by the Ottomans in the Caucasus, about the Ottoman-Russian wars, and the reports of Russia conquering western Georgia.

The work of A. Qurati, H. Gursoi, O. Kose, I. Ortail about the Ottoman-Russian relations are noteworthy.

The work of Sadik Müfit Bilge about "the Ottoman Empire and the Caucasus" is interesting, as it provides detailed information about the events developed in western Georgia during the Russia-Ottoman wars, also, about the governor of Sokhumi, Aslan Beg, King Solomon II of Imereti and about the attitude of the Georgians, who were sheltered in Ottoman-Turkey, towards Porta.

Jemal Gokcen's work – "The Caucasus and the Caucasian policy of the Ottoman Empire" is very noteworthy, as in it, separately and in details, based on archival sources, reports of the Russian-Ottoman wars of 1806-1812 and 1828-1829, the social and military operations in western Georgia, the situation of the Ottomans in the Caucasus and the establishment of Russia in the Caucasus can be read.

In addition to monographs, we also used scientific articles, that are connected to certain issues of our dissertation. Among them, the works of Şinasi Altundag, Nebi Gümüs, Hayri Capraz, Mustafa Budak, and others must be noted out.

Of course, accurate and in-depth analysis of the condition of Georgia, during the Ottoman-Russian war, is mostly presented in the studies of Georgian scientists, therefore, whilst working on our dissertation, our main focus was on them.

First of all, the famous archeologist and historian of the XIX century, the member and the correspondent of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Dimitri Bakradze, should be noted out, who discovered and studied many Ottoman documents.

Ts. Abuladze's achievement is extraordinary in terms of studying the Ottoman documents. He translated and published the Ottoman documents, which were preserved in the collection of the Institute of Manuscripts, and which contains information about the last years of the reign of Solomon II, and which confirms the relationship between the Ottoman bureaucrats and Solomon II.

Professor Mikheil Svanidze has made a significant contribution whilst studying the relationship of Georgia and the Ottoman Empire, who, by using Georgian, Turkish and European scientific literature and sources, as a result of working many years, published "The Ottoman History" in three tomes, covering the whole period (1299-2000). The main dignity of that work, which distinguishes it from others, is the demonstration of the history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey as a whole, and the fact, that the mentioned work is the first Georgian study in terms of such a common vision.

There are numerous studies of Professor Nodar Shengelia connected to the history of the Ottoman-Georgian relations. His works about Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Akhaltsikhe, Batumi, Sokhumi, and other cities and regions are very significant and noteworthy.

N. Qortua's monography - "Georgia in the Russian-Turkish war of 1806-1812", is interesting, which contains quite extensive material about the role and actions of Georgia in the war.

Many issues of the political and socio-economic history of western Georgia in the first half of the XIX century are well covered in the monography of M. Dumbadze.

The legacy of the famous Georgian historians T. Jordania and N. Berdzenishvili is noteworthy. The work of G. Vachradze, Sh. Chkhetia, Z. Tsintsadze, and others are related to western Georgia and the period, interesting for us.

Very significant materials are preserved in Russian historical sources and literature. Among them, the tomes of documents, published by the Caucasus Archaeological Commission should be noted out, as there are such materials gathered, that are related to the establishment of Russia in the Caucasus.

In the work published in 1960-1970 - "Внешняя политика России XIX и начала XX века. Документы российского министерства иностранных дел" - there are documentary materials presented about the events of the mentioned period, which is important for our topic. it is the first publication and the report giving information about the foreign policy of Russia in the XIX century.

Also, the documents of the Russian Foreign Policy Archive from 1801-1804 are important, in which there is quite extensive information about the different actions taken by Russia and the Ottoman Empire.

Among the official documents, there is a lot of paperwork about the actions of Russian troops, made by Russian researchers. Without a doubt, from that mentioned works the most popular is Vasily Potto's (son of Aleksander) „Кавказская война“ (the War of Caucasus), published in 5 volumes. The fourth tome of this work gives information about the Ottoman-Russian war of 1828-1829.

Another important work related to the actions of Russian troops is Alexander Bitis "Russia and the Eastern Question: Army, Government and Society, 1815-1833". It analyzes the military operations of 1828-1829, as well as, the antebellum and post-war events.

Important information about the Ottoman-Russian relations is contained in the mutually prepared paperwork – "The 1828-1921 wars on the border of Turkey and the Caucasus", which was written by an English academician, specializing in the history of the South Caucasus (particularly Georgia), Allen and with the Russian writer, P. Muratov.

Of course, the historiography of the subject of interest to us isn't fully settled, nor we claim to fully present it, but the mentioned monographs, certain articles, and scientific works mainly reflect the current condition of studying the problem.

Approbation of the work. The paperwork has successfully passed the approbation in the Department of History, Archeology and Ethnology of BSU, on November 2, 2020. A certain part of the paperwork, in the form of articles, has been published in scientific journals.

The structure of the paperwork. The work consists of an introduction, 3 chapters, 7 paragraphs, and a conclusion. A list of used sources and scientific literature is attached to it. Also, as an attachment, there are several Ottoman documents presented.

In the introduction, the actuality of the topic, the goals of the research and objectives, the theoretical and methodological foundations of the paperwork, and scientific novelty is reviewed there. Also, the modern level of studying the issue is widely presented, and the importance of separate sources and scientific literature is highlighted.

Chapter I. Western Georgia on the boundaries of the XVIII-XIX centuries

§ 1. Western Georgia at the end of the XVIII century. The weakening of Ottoman's positions in the region.

In the middle of the XVIII century, western Georgia was under the influence of the Ottomans, while eastern Georgia was under the influence of Iran. Since the end of this century, the strong state interests of Russia have been actively emerging in the Caucasus region, which previously wanted to establish itself there, as well.

From the end of the XVIII century, western Georgia was socially, economically, and politically extremely weak and fragmented into certain state formations. It covered the Kingdom of Imereti and the Principalities of Guria, Mingrelia (Odishi), Svaneti, and Abkhazia.

In 1784, Solomon I, a king of Imereti, died. After several years of battles, the throne was taken by David, who was the son of King Solomon's brother, Archil. He, in honor of his uncle, named himself Solomon and thus went down in history with that name. He was first rivaled by David, son of Giorgi, (cousin of Solomon I), then Giorgi, son of Alexander, (Grandson of Solomon I), but he managed to retain power.

The Kingdom of Imereti didn't recognize the independence of the principalities, but was considering them as its subordinate and was fighting for subordination, but the unification of Georgia didn't happen at that time.

One of the most important political units in western Georgia was the Principality of Mingrelia. At that time, its head didn't have its old influence over Abkhazia, however, the principal of Mingrelia, Dadiani was considered as the most powerful principal, who at that time could present 6-8 thousand men of arms.

In 1792, Solomon II overthrew Grigol Dadiani from the throne and gave it to his brother, Manuchar. However, at the end of the century, Grigol regained the government of Mingrelia. Dissatisfied with the situation, Solomon II preferred to stay patient, but, afterwards, he was constantly fighting against Grigol Dadiani, both, secretly and openly. Dadiani was forced to find a protector and in 1803 he went under the subordination of Russia. After that agreement, Russia's role in the principality's political decisions was significantly increased.

For the XVIII century, the Principality of Abkhazia is under the influence of the Ottoman Empire. In 1787, during the start of the battle between Russia and Turkey, the Ottoman subordinate Kelesh Ahmed Beg was appointed as a ruler of Abkhazia. He moved the administrative center of the Principality of Abkhazia from Zufu to Sokhumi.

The Principality of Guria was fighting energetically against the Ottoman invaders. Its principal had a tense relationship with the King of Imereti and the principal of Mingrelia. In 1792, Simon III Gurieli died. The throne was taken by his brother, Vakhtang, but in 1797 he was banished from the principality by his second brother, Qaikhosro.

During that time, Svaneti was divided into two parts – The Principality of Dadeshkelian Svaneti and free, masterless Svaneti. That land was relatively less connected with the central regions of Georgia at that time and was more closed. Therefore, the majority of Svaneti's population was less likely to participate in the political life of Georgia.

The condition in western Georgia was somehow toned by the situation in eastern Georgia. The Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti went under the protection of Russia in 1783, and in 1801, Russia, by violating the agreement, annexed the kingdom. The Ottoman Empire, which was paying attention to the developed circumstances, increased the military contingent in the fortresses of Poti, Batumi, Sokhumi, and Anaklia.

It can be said, that after the annexation, the indicator of strengthening Russia's powers in eastern Georgia was the fact, that Russia deployed its permanent troops here. The annexation of other regions of Georgia was only a matter of time.

§ 2. Western Georgia in the 1800s.

The beginning of the Russian reign

The year 1801 was a turning point for both, the Russian policy in the South Caucasus, as well as, for the history of Georgia. Unlike the Ottomans, the Russians were much more active in the Caucasus. From that time, they achieved to annex other parts of Georgia, as well. In particular, the Kingdom of Imereti, also, the principalities of Mingrelia and Guria. The new era has started in the history of the Georgian people – a long and hard epoch of being part of the Russian Empire.

The Russians took advantage of the conflicts in western Georgia and started to oppress King Solomon II of Imereti. They began to build Redut-Kale on the Black Sea coast, at the confluence of the river Khobistskali.

Solomon II was unable to maintain independence due to Russian aggression and threat and was forced to subdue to them. On April 25, 1804, there was a Treaty of Elaznauri drawn between the Kingdom of Imereti and Russia, by which Imereti, with the Principality of Guria, came under the rule of the Russian Empire. Solomon II retained the throne and internal independence.

The principal of Guria, Qaikhosro Batonishvili was dissatisfied by the fact that the Kingdom of Imereti was subdued by Russia. He sent a letter to P. Tsitsianov, after which the military forces of Russia took a side of Qaikhosro and Mamia Gurieli in the internal affairs of Guria. Because of that, Vakhtang and Levan Batonishvili contacted Solomon II, who was a fighter against the Russian violence and were helping him in the relations with the Ottomans.

On October 23, 1804, the principal of Mingrelia, Grigol Dadiani died. His place was taken by Levan V, who previously was kept as a hostage by the principal of Abkhazia, Qeles Beg Sharvashidze, but, as a result of Russian intervention, he was let off. Because of Levan's juvenile age, until 1811, the principality of Odishi was ruled by her mother, Queen Nino, daughter of Giorgi XII, with the help of a four-member council.

Russia realized, that the success in western Georgia could be maintained only by increasing its military troops there. Russia's real goal was to take full control of the Black Sea coast. In 1804, they took the coast between Poti and Anaklia and started to build Redut-Kale. They temporarily took Anaklia, as well, but because of the protest of the Ottomans, they reverted it.

It should be noted out, that the principal of Abkhazia, Qeles Ahmed Beg Sharvashidze somehow opted for Russia, but as a vassal of the Ottomans, he avoided taking open steps in that direction. In May 1806, Qeles Ahmed Beg was subdued to Russia. Because of such kind of disobedience, the Ottomans gave the power in Abkhazia to his son, Aslan, who ordered the execution of his father – Qeles Ahmed Beg on May 2, 1808.

On June 10, 1810, the Russians captured Sokhumi and declared Abkhazia as an administrative unit of Russia. Aslan Beg helped himself by escaping. Thus, Abkhazia lost its connection to the Ottomans and became a subject of Russia. Safar Beg (Giorgi) received the throne of the principal of Abkhazia.

The rulers of Russia showed great interest in the Principality of Svaneti, as well. In the case of conquering the people of the Western Caucasus, Mtiels, Svaneti was given some importance.

Russia's actions in the region restricted the power of King Solomon II of Imereti and posed a threat to him, but he didn't have enough power to stop Russia's development in the region. Solomon was forced to surrender to Russia, but before being deported to Russia, he achieved to run and fled to Akhaltsikhe. He then moved to Trabzon and continued to fight against Russia from there. Unfortunately, on the one hand, because of the fights between the Ottomans and Russia, and on the other hand, because of the inner disagreements, Porta was unable to provide proper assistance to the Georgians.

The Ottomans were unable to gain an advantage over Russia, and after losing their influence in western Georgia, they gradually lost influence in the South Caucasus, as well.

Chapter II. Russo-Ottoman wars and western Georgia in the first third of the XIX century

§ 1. The general description of Russian-Ottoman relations

During the XVIII-XIX centuries, the Ottomans and Russia had plenty of military confrontations. The main reason for the conflict between the two empires was the geopolitical longings and competition in the trade-economic sphere. The Ottoman-Russian relations were grounded in the XV century. From that period, the bilateral trade and diplomatic relations started to develop gradually.

After having domination over the Black Sea, from the century of XVI, the Ottomans aimed at the Mediterranean Sea and central Europe, which wasn't considered as a threat by Russia, therefore, didn't show much interest in it.

In 1552, Russia subordinated the Khanate of Kazan and in 1556, the Khanate of Astrakhan. Whilst moving south, Russia posed a threat to the Ottoman's domination in the Black Sea basin, and their rule here, also, posed a threat to the Khanate of Crimea. Petre I of Russia (1682-1725) realized, that to develop trade relations, large ports were necessary, as well as, access to the warm (south) seas. He was also realizing, that to achieve that goal, it was needed to subordinate the geographical area, which was owned by the Ottomans. From that time, the relations of the Ottomans and Russia entered into a phase of confrontation.

In 1696, the Russians took Azov. Based on the Treaty of Constantinople, drafted on July 13, 1700, between the Ottomans and Russia, the Ottomans were forced to cede the fortress of Azov to Russia. However, based on the Treaty of the Pruth in 1711, the fortress of Azov was returned to the Ottomans.

In 1722, Emperor Peter took the field towards the South and occupied the city of Derbent. It was considered undesirable for the Ottomans, to have another country's governance in the South Caucasus established, therefore, due to the conquest of Baku By Russa in 1723, the two states got on the brink of war. However, the problem was solved. According to the treaty signed in Istanbul on June 24, 1724, the South Caucasus territories of weakened Iran was divided between two states. Russia got Mazandaran and Gilan, whilst Ganja-Karabakh and Yerevan were transferred to the Ottomans. Also, the whole territory of Georgia fell into the hands of the Ottomans.

By the second half of the XVIII century, the Ottomans were experiencing a regression in internal affairs. A large multi-ethnic state began to going backwards. The crisis and military-political weakening got the reason for the fact, that the Ottomans couldn't keep up with the European countries in the respect of the country's development. Contrary, the reforms, which were carried out by Emperor Peter I at the beginning of the XVIII century, strengthened Russia, which allowed him to start an intervention in the region.

On October 8, 1768, due to putting down the public rebellion in Poland and for the bloodshed, the Ottomans declared war on Russia, which cost them much. Based on the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji, which was drafted on 21 July 1774, Crimea's independence got recognized. That was the first time when the Ottomans lost Muslim-populated territory and the dominant status over the Black Sea.

It can be said, that the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji boosted the Russian ambition in the direction of the Caucasus, giving him the status of a defender of the rights of Christians living there.

In 1783, Russia annexed Crimea. In the same year, Russia took Kartli-Kakheti under its protection. That tensed relations with the Ottomans. By the end of the 1780s, the relations between the Ottomans and Russia got even tenser and escalated into a large-scale war. The Ottomans weren't ready for the war. Whilst for Russia, it was an opportunity to expand its spheres of influence. Ekaterine II opted for destroying the Ottomans but was well aware that the European states wouldn't allow him to do so. Despite the fact, that she had an advantage on the fronts, she started peace talks with the Ottomans. As a result, on January 9, 1792 (in the old style – December 29, 1791) there was a Treat of Jassy drafted, under which Russia got Crimea and Taman.

After the war, Russia strengthened its position on the Black Sea. There was a growing threat, that Russia would start actions in the direction of the Straits and Istanbul. Despite the Ottomans' attempts, to hold Russia's progress towards the Caucasus and the Black Sea was unsuccessful. Porta, which was weakened politically, economically, and militarily and which no longer had the old strength, was forced, to recognize the domination of Russia in the region.

§ 2. The Russo-Ottoman war of 1806-1812 and the Kingdom of Imereti.

The difficulties of post-war years

Before the Ottoman-Russian war of 1806-1812, Russia got quite strong in the South Caucasus. The important circumstance was the fact, that Russia, which was opting for dominating over the Black Sea, started to establish its governance in the Caucasus, in particular, in western Georgia. On its own, the Ottomans were trying to strengthen their positions on the Caucasus front. In particular, to protect the eastern coast of the Black Sea from the Russian aggression, maintain positions in western Georgia, and at the same time, to weaken Russia's influence in the South Caucasus.

On September 25, 1805, there was a nine-year treaty drafted between the Ottomans and Russia for friendship, which gave Russia the right to cross the Straits. Despite that, the two empires failed to maintain an amicable relationship. The growth of Russian military troops in western Georgia raised concern for the Ottomans. Between the two countries, there were unresolved problems presented in the Balkans, as well.

The very first thing, that the Ottomans did in the Caucasus after starting the war, was the attack on Redut-Kale on February 20, 1807, which was the only node that connected the Russians to the Caucasus. The attack to break this node, which was located between Georgia and Crimea, was unsuccessful. For its part, Russia had decided to capture fortresses of the Black Sea, such as Anapa, Sokhumi, Poti, etc. Tsitsianov was directly stating, that Poti was a much more important acquisition than a whole Mingrelia.

The Russian army attacked the Caucasus front and took Anaklia and Anapa. But they soon realized that they couldn't keep it and left the fortress.

The Ottomans weren't ceding any fortress on the Black Sea coast of Georgia without a fight. From the first day of the war, they were trying to regain control over the whole of western Georgia. But the first results of the war strengthened the positions of Russia and didn't give an opportunity to the Ottomans to establish in Georgia.

After the defeat at Akhalkalaki, the Russians lifted the siege of Poti and moved the troops to Redut-Kale. But that was a temporary maneuver. On November 15, 1809, General Orbeliani took the fortress of Poti, after which, Russia has significantly weakened the Ottomans' impact on the region of western Georgia and firmed its positions on the Black Sea.

After the loss of Poti, the Ottomans turned their attention to Sokhumi. Aslan Beg, who was recognized as a ruler of Sokhumi, was commanded to intervene in the war against Russia. In order to help him, weapons and money was sent by the Ottoman warships. Russia, considering the fact, that Giorgi Sharvashidze would need help in Abkhazia, appointed him as a principal of Abkhazia, under the subordination of the Russian Empire, on February 17, 1810. Russia, who was preparing to take Sokhumi, sent warships from Sevastopol. On top of that, Russia asked the army of Mingrelia to go to Sokhumi for support.

On July 9, 1810, the Russian military troops took a significant strategical point of the Black Sea coast - Sokhumi. On August 23, Giorgi Sharvashidze took an oath of allegiance to the Russian Empire. In such a way, the throne of Abkhazia was taken by the principal, who was a subordinate of Russia.

At the same time, the pursued King Solomon II of Imereti didn't stop fighting with Russia and asked for help from the Ottomans. Porta gave hope to Solomon and materially contributed to him, but that wasn't enough for the king's plans to be carried out.

After unsuccessful battles against Russia, the Ottomans had neither the military nor the political resources to continue the war. On May 16, 1812, a truce, the Treaty of Bucharest was signed. The borders of the Ottomans had to be reversed back to the pre-war conditions. Sokhumi, Sujuk-Ale, Poti, and Anapa, which were conquered by Russia, were to return to the Ottomans.

However, it seemed, that Russians didn't think of leaving the region. Unlike Poti and Anapa, Russia didn't empty the fortress of Sokhumi and managed to maintain it. Because of that, the Ottomans tried to occupy Sokhumi by force and sent their military troops there. In March-April of 1813, the Ottomans demanded Russia to return the whole of western Georgia. They did the same in November but got a denial from Nikolay Rtishchev.

From the period of signing the Treaty of Bucharest until April 1828, when the new war between the Ottomans and Russia started, a series of bloody mutinies happened in western Georgia, and a frequent change of rulers and principals took place there. Which is noteworthy, western Georgia again remained the battlefield for the Ottomans and Russia for gaining authority. On the other hand, the Treaty of Bucharest played an important role in defining-formatting the policy of Russia in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Straits.

§ 3. Western Georgia during the Ottoman-Russia war period of 1828-1829.

The results of the Treaty of Adrianople

In the late 1820s, another military confrontation broke out between the Russians and the Ottomans, which was caused by several reasons:

1. After the French revolution, as a result of advancing the national idea, there were revolts of the Serbs and Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, which were supported by Russia; 2. Russia's historical ambition towards the Ottomans, starting from Emperor Peter I; 3. Claim for compensation for damage done to the Ottoman fleet in Navarino after getting a denial from the European country and Russia about the request of solving issues linked to the Greek; 4. An attempt of Nicholas I to use the hard condition of the Ottomans in favor of himself (factually, being without an army – after annulling the army of janissaries, the process of formatting new army wasn't yet started), which aimed to take Istanbul under his control.

During that period, the Russian-encouraged rebellion of Greek was in an active phase and the suppression of that rebellion caused dissatisfaction among the European countries, especially – dissatisfaction of England and France. The allies unexpectedly attacked the fleets of the Ottoman and Egypt on October 20, 1827, and sank 52 Turkish warships within hours. The Ottomans broke off diplomatic relations with them and started to prepare for war.

After the closure of the straits for Russian ships by the Sultan Mahmud II of Ottoman, thus violating the Convention of Akkerman, in April 1828, Russia declared war on the Ottomans. The military engagements were successful for Russia, but the condition on the Transcaucasian front was very tense.

Sophia, Queen of Guria, who was fighting for the independence of Guria against Russia, addressed the Ottomans for support. She was thinking, that such extreme measures would enforce Russia, not to annul the hereditary and the principality rights of Gurieli. Unfortunately, the Queen shared the fate of Solomon II.

In June 1828, the Ottomans passed the Fortress of Anapa to the Russians. The Russians also achieved success towards Kars, from where Paskevich set out for Akhalkalaki and took the city. The new aim of Russia was the center of Childir Eyalet – Akhaltsikhe. After the bloody battles, on August 16, the Russians took the fortress. Akhaltsikhe for the first time in its history fell into the hand of the Russians. City, with a population of 50 thousand people, was buried-desolated by the Russians and was looking like a small town. This was followed by taking Artaan and Baiazet.

At the same time, the Russians achieved success on the Black Sea coast, as well. On June 15, Poti was transferred to the Russians. After taking Poti the direct sea movement towards Crimea, the Sea of Azov, and the Caucasus was provided. Despite the defeat, the Ottomans continued to fight for lost territories in order to return them back.

Paskevich, in the summer of 1829, resumed the military operations and took Erzurum, Baiburt, and Gumushane at a stretch. In the same year, the Ottomans sent additional military troops from Trabzon to Adjara to retake Guria and Mingrelia. The Russians, with the leadership of General-Major K. Gese, defeated the Ottomans in the battles of Adjara and encroached Kobuleti. Despite the victory, due to the firm fortification line of the Ottomans, the army of Russia was unable to move forward.

In the end, as a result of battles of 1828-1829, in the Anatoly-Caucasusa total of 9 fortresses were transferred to the Russians. Including Akhaltsikhe, Erzurum, Anapa, Poti, and Akhalkalaki (Gökçe, 1957: 242). Therefore, Russia further strengthened its position in the Caucasus and the Black Sea.

On the western front, Russia for the first time in its history was able to reach Edirne by passing the Balkans and to approach Istanbul. The European countries, concerned about Russia's such progress, were putting pressure on Mahmud II, for him to make peace. Nicholas I, on his own, was a proponent of peace, as he thought, that an entry to Istanbul would result in a sharp reaction of the European countries.

The Ottomans, who were defeated in the battle of September 14, 1829, by signing the Treaty of Adrianople (Edirne), gave up all their rights in the Caucasus. The Russian merchantmen, as before, without any resistance, were able to pass the Straits, located in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. The country of Ottomans agreed to pay 11 and a half million ducats, as compensation for the war, and Anapa, Poti, Akhaltsikhe, and Akhalkalaki remained to the Russians. Erzurum, Kars, and Baiazet were returned back to the Ottomans. Turkey also recognized the unification of Imereti, Mingrelia, and Guria to Russia. It means that Russia in the Transcaucasus got the entire eastern shore of the Black Sea – starting from the confluence of the Kuban, ending in the St. Nicholas Fortress (Shekvetili in Guria). Joined Poti, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, a large part of the pashalik of Akhaltsikhe – 10 Sanjaks.

As it turns out, even in 1829, Batumi was already supposed to join Russia, but due to the confusion of river names during drafting the agreement and treaty map, the border was established not on the river Chorokhi, but on the river Cholok, and therefore, Batumi remained in the Ottoman Empire.

Chapter III. Western Georgia in the context of the Russia-Ottoman relations from the Treaty of Adrianople to the Crimean War

§ 1. Resistance movements in the Caucasus in the 30s-50s of the XIX century

According to the Treaty of Adrianople, drafted after the Russo-Ottomans war of 1828-1829, the border between the two states was determined on the river Choloki, placed between the Batumi and Poti, flowing into the Shekvetili Bay. The Ottomans transferred the strategically important fortresses of the east coast of the Black Sea to Russia, which were owned by them before. In such a way, the Ottomans' political influence and presence in the Caucasus were significantly reduced.

After the victories against the Ottomans and Iran, Russia temporarily ended its operations in the South Caucasus. In the early 1830s, the military troops of Russia became more active in the North Caucasus, including on the North-East coast of the Black Sea. Speaking of militarily and politically, the end of the Ottoman's existence in the Caucasus didn't mean that Russia was fully controlling it, as the Caucasians didn't want to be under influence of neither the Ottoman Empire nor Russia. Their goal and wish were to be independent. The transfer of the Anapa Fortress to the Russians, which was generally considered as the most important base to rule the Caucasus, provoked a hard reaction of the Caucasians living in the region (Adyghe people and the Circassians). They didn't want to be under the reign of Russia. Therefore, their resistance to Russia lasted for many years.

The fight against the attacks of Russia in the Caucasus was carried out in the name of a movement arisen from a religious belief, which was based on the national battle and national will to protect the homeland. The first such battle is linked to the name of Imam Sheikh Mansuri of Chechen origin (1785), which was later continued under the leadership of Imam

Shamil,¹ under the name of the Miuridizm movement (1834).² This movement, during its existence, was fighting against Russia in the Caucasus very effectively.

Russia failed to properly assess the strength of the Caucasian people, who were united to defend their homeland, acting on the principles of Ghazawat. Because of such resistance, their domination in the Caucasus was very difficult. In the battle against the people of the Caucasus, Russia was unable to achieve success, therefore, as much as it could, was trying to convince them, that the Caucasus belonged to Russia. That's why Russia sent a threatening warning to the Caucasians, where it was said, that the Russian army had even reached Istanbul, after the success of King Nicholas I, signed the Treaty of Adrianople, thus getting the Caucasus handed over by the Ottomans. And if the Caucasians wanted to live peacefully in the region, they needed to establish relations with Russia. This warning, which was sent by Russia to the Caucasian people, had no effect on them.

Despite the fact, that the Ottomans didn't have political influence in the region of Caucasus, they tried to morally support the Caucasians in their wars against the Russians. Because of the growing ambitions of Russia, England was also in sympathy with the Caucasians and secretly was helping them, which is confirmed by the meeting of the representative of the British Embassy in Istanbul, David Urquhart with the Adyghe people in 1834.

In 1837, Emperor Nicholas I visited the Caucasus in order to directly study the events, developed in the region, the causes of the unsuccessful actions of the army of Russia, and to end the Caucasians' fight for independence. This intensified the ongoing battles in the Caucasus and made resistance stronger and turned it more severe. Russia, along with its military units, used the man of arms of Imereti, Guria, and Mingrelia.

The battles of 1843-1844 waged by Shamil against Russia was successful. These victories gave courage to the Kabardians and made them ready to fight against the Russians in 1843. The revolts of the Kabardians and their alliance with Shamil caused serious concern to Russia.

After the appointment of Vorontsov (1844-1856) and Baryatinsky (1856-1863) as the viceroys (1844), there was a change. It became obvious, that the influence of Shamil and his strength were gradually weakening. The Caucasians were tired of years of bloody wars. On December 5, 1859, after the surrender of Shamil, the battles against the Russians continued on their own until 1864. The final victory was left to the Russians, which was followed by the mass migration of the Caucasians to the Ottoman Empire. The number of migrants reached

¹North Caucasian Muslim, who was fighting for freedom. He is addressed as a "Caucasian Eagle" in Turkey for fighting against Tsarist Russia.

²The national-religious resistance movement, which was referred to as Miuridizm, by the Russians. The name was spread in Russian and Western literature in this way. By the Muslims, this Muslim movement was referred to as a Ghazawat.

hundreds of thousands. This was one of the most tragic events in the whole history of the Caucasus and went down in history like that.

Despite the fact, that Russia conquered the whole Caucasus by winning over Georgia and established its control over the Black Sea, in order to reach the full hegemony in the region, Russia had to carry out many years of battles against the Caucasian people, who were resisting the Russians properly.

§ 2. The administrative governance of Imereti.

The Russification policy and its consequences

After signing the Treaty of Adrianople with the Ottomans, Russia gained full control over Georgia. Russia perceived the Transcaucasus, as its colonial part. The military-occupational system of Russia towards the non-Russian people was pursuing a policy of brutal national-colonial oppression and direct Russification.

Russia, dominating in western Georgia, created a temporary government there, which was ruled by the Russian rulers. Georgian nobles were appointed as their deputies. The system of governance covered 4 districts (округ): Kutaisi, Vake, Shorapani, and Racha. The district was ruled by the ruler individually. The region of Imereti was ruled by that system until 1846, before the creation of Kutaisi province.

In December 1829, by the order of Emperor Nicholas I the Principality of Guria was abolished and it turned into a province of the Russian Empire. It was named region of Guria. Guria was declared as a military-administrative region, where the “temporary administration” was created. The villages were governed by “Mouravi”, according to the old Georgian rules. Guria was governed by this system until 1840.

The rules, that were introduced in Georgia according to the law, in 1801, remained mainly unchanged for 40 years, and according to the officials, they no longer met the increased demands. Based on the new regulations, adopted on January 1, 1841, the Georgian Kingdoms and Principalities were united under the centralized, unified system of governance and were presented as a province of Georgia-Imereti. Georgian nobles were no longer governing. The new system and regulations caused dissatisfaction among the people. The locals of Imereti didn't adapt leaving Imereti as an ordinary region and the fact that it was centrally dependent on Tbilisi. And that caused disarrangements in the region of Imereti.

As soon as Russia got stronger in the Caucasus, it gradually began to oppress the autonomous kingdoms in Georgia. That pressure was especially difficult for the Dadiani of Mingrelia. In 1840, Levan Dadiani resigned from the post of ruling the principality and he was replaced by his son, David.

The new system of governance, which didn't consider the characteristics of the local population and local conditions, got problems in the legal, administrative, and financial

directions. Such kind of condition put the need to reconsider the reforms carried out in 1840. Emperor Nicholas I, considering the special situation of the Caucasians, reflected in the battle for their independence, decided to introduce an institute of a viceroy, as a form of governance. In the regions, where the so-called viceroys were ruling, but still, it was difficult to have them under control, the centralized governance wouldn't function anymore and the territory would be ruled based on the regional conditions.

In 1844, the position of Commander-in-Chief was abolished. The viceroy was given both civilian and military power and was responsible only in front of the King. In December 1846, there was new administrative reform implemented, as a result of which, Georgia was divided into two provinces – the provinces of Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Guria has joined the province of Kutaisi, in the form of Ozurgeti County.

The imperialist plans of Russia affected Abkhazia, as well. In 1830, the demonstrations started in Abkhazia. The rebels were supported by other people of the Caucasus too. Due to the lack of marine powers, Abkhazians addressed the Ottomans but didn't receive the proper assistance from them. In the end, demonstrations were suppressed in 1834.

In order to reduce the Ottomans' influence in the region, new measures were taken, which were reflected in building roadways from the fortresses and Anapa to Poti (Ayдын, 2017: 57). Despite the implemented events, Russia still failed to prevent the Ottomans' connection to the region. The government started to make military supervision on the Black Sea coast fortresses controlled by the Principality of Abkhazia.

In 1837, the Government of Russia united Tsebelda to the Principality of Abkhazia and established Russian reign there. In 1840, the disputed Samurzakhano between the Mingrelia and Abkhazia was declared as a separate unit (the Sabokaulo (regional police) of Samurzakhano) and was subdued to the province of Kutaisi.

As for Svaneti. The Government of Russia's interest in it got increased especially after successfully ending the Russo-Ottoman wars. From that time on, solving the issue of Svaneti, on the one hand, was related to strengthening the positions of Russia in western Georgia, and on the other hand, was related to the issue of ruling over the people living in the Western Caucasian mountains. In 1833, Dadeshkeliani got subdued to Tsarist Russia.

Due to the internal political problems, the Ottomans could no longer present their existence in western Georgia and they didn't have enough political, military, and economic power to confront Russia.

CONCLUSIONS:

- The Russo-Ottomans relation starts in the XV century. This relationship, mainly, was determined by economic factors. However, over time, economic relations turned into political and trade rivalry and into conflict, which was caused by the geographical location

and the desire to redistribute the geographical influence. The desired idea of Russia – to have a corridor in the Black and Mediterranean Seas and Straits, also, to bring the world's orthodox coreligionists under its rule – was an important factor in relations with the Ottomans.

- For Russia, the Ottoman Empire was an obstacle and resistance in the way of realizing the state policy idea – having domination in the Black Sea and the Caucasus. From the reign of Ekaterine II, the foreign policy of Russia was openly stated and that was to seize the regions (such as Crimea and Georgia), that were under the influence of the Ottomans and to establish Russian domination there.

- The peaceful coexistence between the Ottomans and Russia in the XVI century was shattered by the Russian invasion of Kazan and Astrakhan. From that period, the relations between the countries were flowing with the background of constant fights.

- While the Ottomans, Tsarist Russia, and Iran were fighting each other for their establishment in the South Caucasus, in Georgia, the king of Kartli-Kakheti Erekle II was trying to preserve the independence and sought help from Europe, but to no avail. That resulted in the Treaty of Georgievsk, which was drafted on July 24, 1783, between Russia and the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti.

- Russia, who tried to play the role of Orthodox Christians' defender, took advantage of Georgia's political weakness, as the country was a battleground of the fights between Iran and the Ottomans, and because of being in a very bad condition, gave a promise to a coreligionist country to help. But Russia's goal has never been to protect Georgia. Russia only wanted to become the governor of the eastern shore of the Black Sea and to expand the sphere of influence on the territories, that belonged to the Caucasus.

- It turned out that the conquest of eastern Georgia by Russia in 1801 was a crucial factor, for Russia to successfully implement the policy of establishing itself in the Caucasus. From Russia's point of view, making a borderline in the Caucasus and carrying out events, similar to constructing a military road in Georgia played an important role for Russia to establish its authority in the South Caucasus and thoroughly justify itself there.

- From the beginning of the XIX century, Russia was operating in the Caucasus quite actively. It can be said, that the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji and the Treaty of Jassy, drafted in the years of 1774 and 1791, made a great contribution to this, of which Russia received superiority over the Ottomans. However, the problem between the two countries wasn't solved with that and for reaching an agreement several wars got needed in the 19th century.

- Based on the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainarji, Russia was entitled to protect the rights of Orthodox Christians living in the Ottoman Empire and because of that, had an opportunity to permanently interfere in their internal affairs. On top of that, Russia for the first time got the right, to move its trade and military ships in the Black Sea, thus shaking the one-century old reign of the Ottoman Empire there. The Ottomans' loss of Crimea, was one of the

defining factors in starting a war with Russia, as Porta couldn't adapt to the reality, that it lost the Muslim-populated territory.

- From the century of XIX, in the relations between the Ottomans and Russia western Georgia had an important role, which at that time included the Kingdom of Imereti and four Principality: Guria, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, and Svaneti. The Kingdom and the Principalities weren't carrying out a unified policy. Moreover, they were often confronting each other, weakening them both Militarily-Politically and economically.

- From 1801, Russia achieved to subordinate different regions of Georgia – Kingdom of Imereti, as well as, Principality of Mingrelia and Guria, very fast, in succession. In the annexed regions, Russia introduced a new system of governance, but in the principalities, it maintained the local rulers. From the end of the 1820s, in four decades Russia successively abolished the limited power of the head rulers and completely liquidated the Georgian statehood.

- In 1810, Solomon II, the last monarch of Imereti, defeated in a battle with the Russians, was forced to flee his homeland, take refuge in the Ottomans Empire, and to continue fighting for the country's freedom from there. The Ottomans provided monthly financial assistance to Solomon II and the nobles, accompanying him. That was a kind gesture of support and help from the Ottomans, but to avoid the threat from Russia much more was needed.

- Despite the fact, Russia had a very strong military power in the region, the Georgia patriots continued to fight against them. The head rulers from western Georgia were often asking the Ottoman's for help against Russia. Ottomans, as they could, were sending material, technical and financial resources to the region, but that wasn't enough to overcome the Russians' resistance. Porta was unable to do more, because of the wars against Russia and the disagreements in the internal affairs.

- It can be said, that the failure of Solomon II in the wars against Russia, was provoked by not only lacking an adequate military capability and foreign support, but, also, because of the fact, that other Principalities of western Georgia, apart from few circumstances, sided with the Russians, or were forced to do so.

- The Ottomans, concerned by Russia's successful progress, in order to prolong their existence in western Georgia, took some measures, but all the attempts failed, as Russia's influence over the Caucasus was growing up day by day. In the wars against the Ottoman Empire, Russia gained the victory. Therefore, in the agreements drafted after the wars, all the consequences were reflected, which ended in the loss of the Ottoman Empire's influence over western Georgia.

- The reason that escalated the war between the Ottomans and Russia in 1806, wasn't only the events happening in western Georgia. The relations of the countries were also exacerbated by the fact, that Russia, with human resources, also, materially and militarily was supporting the revolt of the Serb in the Ottoman Empire, led by Kara George, in 1804.

The military clash in the front of the Caucasus took place in the fortresses of the Black Sea – Poti, Sokhumi, and Anapa, and the ground warfare was ongoing in the regions of Akhalkalaki and Imereti.

- During the Russo-Ottoman war of 1806-1812, the Russian army captured territory on the seaside of the Caucasus, the territories from Anapa to the region of Kemhal. After the unsuccessful battles against Russia, the Ottomans had no military and political power to continue the war. For Russia, which was on the brink of war with France, ending the war was profitable. In the end, based on the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812, the Ottomans achieved to secure its border and returned the fortresses of Sujuk-Kale, Poti and, Anapa, which were taken from them by Russia during the war. However, after signing the Treaty of Bucharest, Russia started to conquer the Caucasus rapidly.

- From the period of Emperor Petre I, Russia's goal was to destroy the Ottomans Empire. Nicholas I, enthroned in 1825, gave a different direction to that goal. At that time, Russia's strategy wasn't to fully destroy the Ottomans. Russia aimed, to turn the Ottomans into a weak and powerless state, which would be dependent on Russia. "The Ottomans Empire is a man gravely ill, we should take our portion without a waste of time" – that's how King Nicholas I thought, who, after the end of the Russo-Turkish wars of 1828-1829, based on the agreement drafted with the Ottomans, was opting not to conquer the Ottomans as a whole, but to get as many benefits as possible.

- Sultan Mahmud II of Ottomans was trying to maintain the power to solve internal and external problems and didn't grudge any effort in this regard. The sultan was busy reforming the different directions. In 1826, he abolished the old army (the corps of Janissary), and the formation of a new one for the war with Russia wasn't yet finished, therefore, the current state of the Ottomans, was favorable for Russia in every way.

- Due to the French Revolutionary uprising of 1789, the idea of nationalism became more prominent, which, like Europe, had an impact on people of different nationalities living in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the Greeks, who were living in the Ottoman Empire, with the demand for independence, made a revolt. Russia, within the framework of defending the ideology of Orthodoxy, took that issue as its internal problem. Russia supported the Greeks and tried to use that incident and inflict a heavy strike on the Ottomans.

- Due to the insufficient military forces, it was very hard for the Ottomans to suppress the revolt. Russia managed and turned the Greek revolt into an international problem, with the support of England and France. The three countries were trying to persuade the Ottomans to recognize the independence of Greece. When the attempts showed no result, England, France and Russia burned the Ottoman fleet in Navarino, which was the reason for starting the Russo-Ottomans war of 1828-1829.

- The Ottomans didn't yet have an army of full value. Therefore, suffered from a lack of military forces on both the Eastern and Western fronts. The government tried to complete

the military forces with the help of volunteers, but, that idea didn't work. The number of volunteers going to war appeared to be insignificant, which caused great disappointment to the King.

- The Ottomans were forced to transfer the fortresses, which were under their control, to Russia, during the wars in Georgia and the territory of Anatoli – Erzurum, and Kars. During those battles, the Ottomans were helped by a part of Georgians, as well. During the Russo-Ottoman war of 1806-1812, Solomon II was fighting against Russia, too and during the Russo-Ottoman war of 1828-1829, Queen Sophia of Guria was fighting against Russia, as well. Unfortunately, this battle ended in defeat and the Queen of Guria also shared the fate of the King of Imereti.

- The militarily weakened Ottomans were unable to gain victory against Russia. They conceded the defeat and the results of the war were finalized by signing the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829. During the 1828-1829 wars, the Ottomans didn't achieve to maintain their influence over western Georgia and along with the entire Caucasus, according to the terms of the agreement, ceded them to Russia. That was the beginning of a new process for both the Ottoman Empire and the Caucasian people.

- Despite the fact, that Russia achieved great success in the Caucasus by conquering Georgia, in order to fully exercise its dominance over the region, it was forced to fight off the people living in the Caucasus. The Muslims of the Caucasus, united under the flag of Miuridizm –a national and religious movement, which didn't adapt to being ruled by Russia, were involved in the war against them until 1864. Despite the fact, that the Caucasus wasn't controlled by the Ottomans, they didn't lose interest in this region. The Ottomans secretly helped the people of Caucasus fighting against Russia, but it wasn't properly done due to the political, military, and economic problems. In the end, Russia overcame the resistance of the people living in the Caucasus and brought them under its rule, but, the majority of them forcibly immigrated to the Ottoman Empire.

- After drafting the Treaty of Adrianople, Georgia was completely transferred to Russia, which was followed by the changes in political, economic, and social spheres, within the framework of the policy of Russification. Russia annulled the interim governments and instead of them, made a centralized administration. The head rulers of Russia had different views on the governing system in Georgia. Part of them supported the governing process with the centralized administration, whilst, the second part was opting for creating an administrative system, that would be adapted to the local and regional people. Russia has never supported to make a governmental system based on the structure of national governance. Its priority has always been to rule by centralized management.

- According to the new regulations enacted in 1841, the Georgian Kingdoms and Principalities were united under a unified system of governance, in a centralized way, and were presented as a province of Georgia-Imereti. However, the new regulations were unacceptable for the people living in Imereti, which again was a reason for dissatisfaction

among the people in the region. In 1844, Russia decided to introduce an institute of “the Viceroy”. According to the new regulations, in 1846, instead of the province of Georgia-Imereti, there were created the provinces of Tbilisi and Kutaisi. After some time, the districts of Guria, Mingrelia, Svaneti, and Abkhazia were created, which came under the jurisdiction of the province of Kutaisi.

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