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VARIANTS OF FAMILY NAMES IN THE 19TH CENTURY MESKHETI

Having different variants of one and the same family names in the 19th c. Meskheta was conditioned by rejecting traditional family names triggered first in the period of spreading Ottoman rules in Meskheta and continued when the region fell under Russian's rule.

The war against traditional Georgian family-names meant the war against Georgian ethnicity. The Ottoman Turkey demanded from Georgians not only converting to the Moslem Faith but also changing their family names at the beginning those meskhians who converted to the Moslem faith bore both Georgian and Turkish first names and family-names were left intact, as it would breach the principle of marking. Georgian family names had different systems from the Turkish one, as the latter is based on the patrimonial principle. So the new family-names should depend on the altered first names (e.g. first name Useina>Usein oġli).

In the 19th century the Georgian-Armenian-Turkish family name endings were substituted by Russian endings, but this took place only on the formal level while in informal personal relationship people referred their friends and relatives with their original names.