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AREA OF SETTLEMENT OF ETHNIC GEORGIANS IN BLACK SEA REGION OF REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

Along with Tao-Klarjeti, ethnic Georgians in Turkey also live in the regions of the Black and Marble Seas. Here they live in a few vilayets in compact settlement and are descendants of the Muhajir Georgians who were exiled from historical-ethnographic regions of South-West Georgia, i.e. Adjara, Shavshet-Imereti, Klarjet-Ligani gorge.

In the south of the Black Sea the ethnic Georgians live in a few villages of Giresun Vilayet. A large number of ethnic Georgians lives in the city of Unia and the region of Ordu Vilayet. By the data of the head of the cultural center of the Unia Georgians, a total population of the Unia region is 120 000, from which 35-40 000 are ethnic Georgians. They are in large numbers in the Patsa region which comprises fourteen Georgian villages. Georgians also live in the city of Charshanbash of the Samsun Vilayet and in Khalipazar and its nine villages. Many ethnic Georgians are settled in the city of Sinop and the Sinop Vilayet. Fifty-six Georgian villages are located in this geographical region. Kastamon Vilayet is another area of settlement

for ethnic Georgians. The urban population (125 000 people) of the city of Erpelek includes the ethnic Georgians who represent 45% of the city's total population. According to the Erpelek Mayor who is of Georgian ancestry, "six villages of our region are Georgian and they speak Georgian". The ethnographic data revealed that the migration of Georgians to the territory of the Ottoman Empire did not start only after the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878. The very process has further continued and, in fact, individual migrations had never stopped until the emergence of barriers on the border between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Turkey. In 1828 twelve villages of the Muhajirs that had arrived from Samtskhe-Javakheti existed on the border of Balikesir and the Bursa vilayets. Here the Meskhs are called "Akalian Gurjisun". The Georgians live also in Kurdistan – there are five Georgian villages in Diarbekir. A main part of the Georgians here is Turkisized. Georgians live near Istanbul in the Black Sea city of Shilesh. They are Bertian Georgians who migrated there during the Russian occupation. According to the preliminary data, ethnic Georgians populate more than 100 villages in this geographical area of Turkey. A major part of the Georgians living in the Black Sea area of Turkey well remember their own origin, the routes of migration of their ancestors, the Georgian surnames, and maintains ethnic consciousness. It becomes clear that the religion *has not* always *been* an *underlying cause of Muhajirism*. One of the reasons of migration also was the overpopulation in the historical-ethnographic regions of West Georgia. Exceeding Georgian population had no enough land plots. According to the ethnographic data, by the time of their migration, only one or two generations of a larger part of Sinop Georgians had adopted Islam having preserved some of the traditions of the Christian religion. This could indirectly be proved by the fact that those who immigrated from Kheba-Maradid to Sinop drink wine even today, and not a single wedding is held without wine drinking.

Georgian Muslims who migrated to the foreign land were first settled in an unpopulated area of the Black Sea coastline. But they faced problems there as, having migrated from the mountainous regions, failed to adapt to new climatic conditions. Only a few years later they selected mountain-hill places for settlement near the sea.

Georgian Muslims who migrated to the Black Sea area of the Ottoman Empire, at first maintained contacts with their home country. This is proved by the fact that after a few years in exile they took many of the agricultural plants (for instance, vine, fruit seedlings, etc.) from their former orchards and vineyards.

After the historical-ethnographic regions of South-West Georgia joined the Russian Empire, some settlements were abandoned by the population, for example, the Murghuli gorge was almost depopulated and its population settled in the south of the Black Sea area. But eight years later nearly half of the Muslim Georgians from Murghuli returned back.