

GEORGIAN PARADIGMS OF THE GREEK PROJECT

ABSTRACT

The article examines the global international project of the 70s and 80s of the 18th century envisaging a new distribution of Europe at the expense of the areas of the Ottoman Empire. This topic acquires a final feature in a conceptual form in the correspondence between Catherine II and Josephus II, the Emperor of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire under the name of the “Greek Project”.

The present article provides the first attempt in historiography to review the Greek Project with regard to the Caucasus.

Initially, the Soviet historiography apparently consciously refrained itself from examining the Greek Project due to political factors, since the objective study of the latter would ensure presenting the Russian Empire as an aggressor. Afterwards, the research of the given problem would present a clear manifestation of the Russian Empire as an aggressor state. Later, the investigation of the Greek Project was constrained within narrow limits presenting it merely as the political agenda, the plan of conquering Crimea.

The Greek Project can unequivocally be considered as a key to the political history of Georgia of 1750s and 1780s. A number of studies have shown that without considering the Greek Project, numerous problematic questions remain unanswered up to the present day. Namely, the patience and tolerance shown by Erekle II, the King of Kartli and Kakheti towards the Russian intrigues is impossible to explain without the Greek Project. By implementing the Greek Project, a comprehensive Christian area would evolve in the South Caucasus allowing Georgia to acquire a qualitatively distinct and desired form of all times.

The Greek Project is an attempt to create a Christian global political model, a political background that can serve as a precondition for the restoration of a real united Caucasian home, safeguarding of irreversible development and security for all royal principalities and khanates in the Caucasus.

This is the reason why the state-oriented thinker Erekle II avoids responding with aggression to permanent intrigues of Russia. Erekle II tries to engage in this great political game as a ruler of a sovereign political entity.

For the Imperial Court of St. Petersburg, such an attitude of Erekle is a guarantee of success. However, Russia chooses a completely different way, confronting Erekle’s benevolent alliance with hostile, imperial sentiments. A central message of these sentiments implies that independent Georgian royal principalities and even more so the Caucasus as a closely-knit, common political area, and the dedication of Georgian principalities to achieve the Caucasian political unity is considered to be an anti-Russian phenomenon from the Russian perspective.

Such a consistent and hostile attitude towards the Caucasus led to the failure of Russian policy - it could neither establish a model of Christian globalization nor neutralize the Ottomans.

Therefore, the study and understanding of the referred problem is rather important to identify the directions and priorities of contemporary political processes.

Keywords: The Greek Project; The Ottoman Empire; The Kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti; Erekle II; Catherine II; Joseph II, Friedrich II, The Russian Empire; The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.