

**Between colony and province: Projects on the Integration of  
Transcaucasia into the Russian Empire, 1820-1830s**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to understand what role in the Russian imperial policies was attributed to Transcaucasia by the Russian political elite in 1820-1830s. This question is studied through the analysis of the Russian projects for the development and integration of the region into the Russian empire. These projects (often described in letters, reports and notes) reflect the attitudes and ideas, intentions and plans on Transcaucasia of the functionaries of the central and local administrations, military officers, diplomats and public figures, who subscribed to varying political views. Two main strategies of the Russian relations with Transcaucasia were suggested by the projects: creation a kind of the colonial enterprise on the pattern of the East Indian Company and the state-based incorporation of the region into the common imperial system. The projects are analyzed through the prism of three main approaches in the study of the Russian expansion in Transcaucasia, which are based on the concepts of “colony”, “frontier” and “orientalism”.

I argue that understanding of the role attributed to Transcaucasia lies in the consideration of the correlation between the notions of “colony” of the overseas empires and “frontier” of the contiguous empires. On the question, was Transcaucasia “colony” or “province” in the first half of the 19th century, I answer, it was neither. “Colony” and “province” were the two extremes in the range of the alternatives in the discussion on the incorporation of the Transcaucasian frontier into the Russian imperial system.

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## Introduction

The transformations of the Russian statehood during the imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet epochs, as well as the changes in the political configuration of Eurasia raise the question of continuity, persistent and transitory factors of the Russian policy in its borderlands<sup>1</sup>. The significant changes in the historical studies of the contiguous empires during the last 15 years make it possible to reconsider the traditional explanations of the empires' political behavior and to overcome the limitations of the traditional imperial and national narratives. These changes include shift of the focus of the research from the study of the main actors themselves, i.e. the great 19<sup>th</sup> century empires and their peripheries or colonies, to the analysis of the logic and context of the interactions between them. In the sphere of Russian foreign policy, the attempt to overcome deterministic and oversimplified models was made by Alfred J. Rieber in his article entitled "Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy: an Interpretative Essay". The author defines persistent factors of Russian policy not as permanent geographical or cultural notions, which predetermine political outcomes, but as "a range of possibilities and a set of constraints" in dealing of the Russian elites and the masses with other peoples. I think to understand the political activity in a particular time and a particular region, it is necessary to study the perception of these "possibilities" and "constraints" by the policy-makers of the exact period. In other words, it is necessary to trace, what factors were considered by the policy-makers as more or less important: geopolitical and strategic interests, questions of the economic development, ideas of prestige, ideological aspirations or any other moments.

This thesis is devoted to the formation of the attitudes of the Russian political elite towards Transcaucasia at the end of 1820s- 1830s, the period after the end of the Russian-Persian (1826-1828) and the Russian-Ottoman (1828-1829) wars. The Turkmanchai Peace Treaty between the Russian Empire and Persia (1828) and the Adrianopol Peace Treaty between the Russian and Ottoman Empires (1829) signified almost the complete joining of Transcaucasia to the Russian Empire. The end of the wars and the strengthening of the

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<sup>1</sup> One of the last examples of the discussion on the question: Legvold, Robert, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century and the Shadow of the Past* (Columbia University Press, 2007)

Russian position in the region raised the problem of the integration of the newly acquired territories and their population into the Russian imperial system.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand what role in the Russian imperial policies was attributed to Transcaucasia by the Russian political elite in 1820-1830s. I argue that that understanding of the role attributed to Transcaucasia lies in the consideration of the correlation between the notions of “colony” of the overseas empires and “frontier” of the contiguous empires. “Colony”, (as politically and economically controlled by the empire, but culturally and socially separated from the metropolitan entity), and “province” (imperial periphery completely integrated into the imperial system) are two extremes in the range of the alternatives in the discussion on the problem of the incorporation of the Transcaucasian frontier into the Russian Empire in 1820-1830s. The main part of the Russian political elite imposed the role of the colony on Transcaucasia. At the same time, the policy-makers suggested incorporating the region according to the patterns, predetermined by the realities of the “complex frontier”. Thus, in the case of Transcaucasia in 1820-1830, we can see the incompatibility between the colonial intentions and the realities of the imperial frontier policies.

The question of the role attributed to Transcaucasia by the Russian political elite is studied through the analysis of the Russian projects for the development and integration of the region into the Russian empire. These projects (often described in letters, reports and notes) reflect the attitudes and ideas, intentions and plans on Transcaucasia of the functionaries of the central and local (Caucasus) civil administrations, military officers, diplomats and public figures, who subscribed to varying political views.

The projects are analyzed through the prism of three main approaches in the study of the Russian expansion in Transcaucasia, which are based on the concepts of “colony”, “frontier” and “orientalism”. These concepts and approaches help me to define the character of the Russian policies in the particular region of Transcaucasia in the broader context of the Russian and other empires’ policies in other borderlands and colonies. The concepts are considered in the first chapter.

The first concept is “colony”. In a short historiographical review I focus on three aspects of the application of the concept of “colony” for the study of the Russian policies in Transcaucasia: the definitions of the Russian colonial expansion, the problem of the patterns

of the Russian imperial policies and the discussion on the question how to define the status of Transcaucasia in the Russian Empire, as Tadeusz Swietochowski poses the question, was Transcaucasia a “Colony or Province?”<sup>2</sup> One of the main problems of the application of the concept of “colony” for the study of the Russian experience in its borderlands is the fact that in history this concept was elaborated with the reference to the colonial experience of the overseas empires. The establishment of the colony assumes at least three aspects: the conquest of the alien territory with a culturally different population, the exploitation of this territory and population by a controlling power, or, at least, the existence of the perception of such an exploitation and the presence of a kind of colonial ideology. Historiography, which studies the Russian policy in Transcaucasia as the example of the colonial expansion, assumes the establishment of the colony in the region. At the same time, the historians, who study the patterns of the Russian imperial rule indicate a tendency of complete incorporation of the region into the imperial system. These two approaches combined and considering the development of the “Russian colonialism” and the “patterns of the imperial policy” together, it is almost unavoidable to reveal the contradiction between the idea of the establishment of a Russian colony and the Russian pattern of the integration of the new territories into the Empire. In the case of the overseas empires, the establishment of a colony supposes the separation of its political and social systems from the metropolis’ ones, while in the Russian case the intention to create a colony is accompanied by the striving for the social and administrative unification of the colony with the metropolis. I think one of the ways to understand this contradiction is to trace how the ideas of colonialism and unification were represented in the projects and plans on the development of Transcaucasia.

The second concept is that of “frontier” or “complex frontier”. I use this term to define the complex of the interaction and processes in the borderlands of the empire. The borderlands can be contested by the empires. In other words, in the definition of frontier its main component shifts from territory to process of inter-imperial and internal interactions. Frontier can be defined as a complex of interactions, which occur in different spheres of a borderland’s life. Andreas Kappeler distinguishes the following types of frontiers with regard to their functions: geographical frontier between climatic zones; social frontier between

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<sup>2</sup> Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan : A Borderland in Transition* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1995), 12



different ways of life and systems of values; military frontier between military entities and religious and cultural frontier between different cultural traditions.<sup>3</sup> Alfred J. Rieber clearly indicates frontier as a system. In the essay “The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers”, the historian argues that “the interplay of physical geography, warfare, and cultural change shaped frontiers over a prolonged period into an ecological system that fully justifies the use of the term ‘complex’ ”<sup>4</sup>. In the case of Transcaucasia, it is possible to trace the presence of all these aspects of “frontier”, which are interconnected. John P. LeDonne distinguishes two types of “frontier”: “outer frontier”, which is situated out of the empire’s territory and “inner frontier”, which became part of the empire. So, the situation in Transcaucasia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be interpreted as the complicated system of interactions and as the transformation of the outer frontier into the inner frontier of the Empire.

The third concept I am employing is that “orientalism”, which is rooted in the famous work by the same title by Edward Said. The author relates the notions of knowledge and power domination. I think, it is possible to distinguish two parts in the theory of Said. The first is the approach in itself, which asserts that there is a connection between the development of oriental studies and literature, the creation of knowledge and the construction of the image of the otherness and the implementation of policy towards these others. The second part is the result of the study based on this approach. The result of Said’s study is the claim that colonial discourse and knowledge, formulated by the vocabulary of that discourse, became an intellectual basis for the establishment and development of western dominance and colonial policy in the Near East. If the first part, the approach in itself, is independent of particular historical conditions, then the second part, the conclusion, is based on the application of the approach for the study of the particular historical context of British and French policy in the Near East and development of the Oriental studies and literature in these countries mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In my opinion, the historians can use the approach, suggested by Said, but it is, perhaps, unavoidable that to draw any conclusions, it is necessary to “fill” the frameworks of the approach with the study of the particular historical context of the development of the

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<sup>3</sup> Andreas Kapeller, “Yuzhnyi i vostochnyi frontier Rossii v XVI–XVIII vekah” (Southern and Eastern Frontiers of Russia in 16-17 centuries) - <http://abimperio.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=670&idlang=2&Code=#smt> (28.03.2007)

<sup>4</sup> Alfred J. Rieber “The Comparative Ecology of the Complex Frontier,” in *Imperial Rule*, ed. Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 178.

public and political thought and colonial experience of different countries in different territories.

I do not directly apply the approaches, based on the concepts of “colony”, “frontier”, and “orientalism” to the study of the projects on the integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian Empire. These concepts define three guiding lines for analysis of the projects. The first one is the study of the main aspects of the representation of the region and the correlation of this representation with the notion of “colony” and the formulation of the Russian ideology in Transcaucasia. The second one is the analysis of the correlation between the ideas of the establishment of the colony and other attitudes towards the administrative, economic, social and cultural integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian imperial system. The third aspect is the reformulation of two former questions from the point of view of frontier theory: how was the complex of interactions in the Transcaucasian frontier perceived by the authors of the projects and what strategies of the integration of the frontier into the Russian imperial system were suggested in these projects?

In the second chapter, I consider two aspects of the formulation of the Russian ideologies in Transcaucasia. First, I indicate the main aspects of the representation of the region and its population and the connection of this representation with the idea of “colony”. Second, I trace the main aspects of the formulation of the ideology of the Russian policy<sup>5</sup> in the Transcaucasia. From this chapter it follows that the “colony” was the most popular, but not the most self-evident and undisputable notion which was attributed to Transcaucasia in the definition of its place in the Russian Imperial system. It is necessary to emphasize that I concentrate on the aspects both of the representation and the ideology which became the part of the argumentation, used by the authors of the projects.

In the third chapter, I distinguish two main strategies of the Russian relations with Transcaucasia suggested by the projects: the creation of a kind of colonial enterprise on the pattern of the East-Indian Company and the state-based incorporation of the region into the common imperial system. The idea of the company was suggested by the famous Russian

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<sup>5</sup> It is possible to assert that there was no any state unified ideology of the Russian policy in Transcaucasia. Here under “ideology” I mean a number of ideas of the Russian state functionaries and public figures, which justify their position on the Russian policies in Transcaucasia and the development of the region. The number of these ideas can be covered under the “notion” of the “civilizing mission”, but to avoid implications and associations, which can distort the understanding of the Russian ideas of 1820-30s, I prefer not to use this notion, but to operate by the neutral terms of “ideology” and “ideas”.

writer, diplomat Alexander Griboedov and a functionary of the Caucasus administration, Petr Zavileyskii in 1828. This project was widely discussed and remained little-known in 1820-30s. Among the projects, which assumed the leading role of the state institutions in the integration of the region into the Russian Empire I consider the ideas of the Minister of Finance Kankrin, the senators Mechnikov, Kutaisov and Hahn and the commanders-in-chief in Caucasus Paskevich and Rosen.

In the conclusion I consider the question of possible of the alternatives in the definition of the role of Transcaucasia in the Russian policies and strategies of the integration of the region into the Russian Empire.

## **Chapter 1. Transcaucasia in the Concepts of the Russian Policies in its Borderlands**

The projects for the development of Transcaucasia present the main ideas of the different Russian plans of 1820-30s for economic exploitation of the region, its administrative arrangements, establishment of the relations between Russian officials, settlers and different strata of the local population. They also disclose the main aspects of the ideas of the Russian mission in Transcaucasia and other aspects of the development of the region under the Russian Empire's control. All these ideas emerged in the process of the complicated interactions between different actors in the region. The projects can be considered as well the results of these interactions. The character of these interactions created the particular context of the emergence of the projects. In order to understand the plans of the Transcaucasian development in this diverse context it is necessary to define the main concepts and approaches in historiography, which not only describe, but also explain the formation of the Russian policies in the region in 1820-1830s. These concepts and approaches help historians to define the character of the Russian policies in the particular region of Transcaucasia in the broader context of the Russian and other contiguous empires' policies in other borderlands and colonial experiences of the overseas empires.

I think, it is possible to distinguish three main approaches in the contemporary studies of the empires, which have been applied for understanding of the Russian policies in Transcaucasia of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first two approaches deal with the territorial expansion of the Empire. One interprets the processes in the region in relation to the development of the Russian colonialism; the other deals with the complicated interactions in the regions defined through the notions of "borderland" and "frontier". A third approach studies

the representation of the region as “the Other” or “the Orient” by the empire’s elites as one of the factors of the imperial policy making.

### ***1.1. Russian colonialism and the patterns of the imperial policies.***

To understand the study of the Russian presence in Transcaucasia through the prism of imperial expansion and the development of Russian colonialism, I will focus on three aspects: the definitions of Russian colonial expansion, the problem of the patterns of Russian imperial policies and the question how to define the status of Transcaucasia in the Russian Empire, or, as Tadeusz Swietochowski poses the question, was Transcaucasia a “Colony or Province?”<sup>6</sup>

One of the main problems of the application of the theories of colonialism to the study of the Russian experience in its borderlands is the fact that in history and social science these theories were elaborated with reference to the overseas empires’ colonial experience. That is why, as one of the first authors who considers the history of the Russian Empire as the history of a multiethnic state, Andreas Kapeller, mentions, the colonialism model cannot be easily transferred to the Russian context and such terms as “colony” should be used in relation to a specific historical situation.<sup>7</sup>

The main difference between the overseas empire and the Russian Empire is that the core area or the center of the latter is not separated from the territories, supposed to be its colonies, by the vast oceans. The problem for analysis of the Russian imperial policies is that

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<sup>6</sup> Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan : A Borderland in Transition* , 12

<sup>7</sup> Andreas Kapeller, *The Russian Empire : a Multiethnic History*, trans. Alfred Clayton Harlow, (England : Pearson Education, 2001), 5

the notions of “borderland”, “frontier” and “colony” as well as the processes of the territorial expansion and colonization overlap<sup>8</sup>.

It is possible to distinguish at least three meanings, which are referred to the colonization process in the historiography of Russian colonialism: first, foreign labor immigration into Russia, second, peasant migration from the Central Russia to periphery, third, “imperial colonization” on the pattern of the Western overseas empires, following with the conquest of alien territories.

Willard Sunderland argues in the article “Empire without Imperialism? Ambiguities of Colonization in Tsarist Russia”<sup>9</sup> that the first two types of colonization were the parts of the “natural, unimperialist” process. The author demonstrates, that in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Russia the terms “kolonist”(colonist, settler) and “koloniia” (colony, settlement) were used to indicate foreign farmers and their settlements within the empire. It is necessary to mention that in the same meaning these terms were applied by Russian officials to the German rural settlements Ekaterinenfeld, Annenfeld and Elenendorf in Transcaucasia in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>10</sup>.

The second understanding of colonization is a resettlement of Russian peasants along the open frontiers of the Russian state. While Willard Sunderland defines this process as “internal peasant migration”, which is not connected with empire-building, Michael Khodarkovsky argues that the peasant migration was part of the creation of the empire, which

<sup>8</sup> Marc Ferro, *Colonization : a Global History*, (London : Routledge, 1997), 2

<sup>9</sup> Willard Sunderland, “Empire without Imperialism? Ambiguities of Colonization in Tsarist Russia,” *Ab Imperio*, 2 (2003) - <http://abimperio.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=707&page=3&idlang=1&Code=#smt>, 05.05.2007

<sup>10</sup> *Akty, sobrannye Kavkazskoiu Arkheograficheskoiu Kommissiei*, (AKAK), Vol. 7, (Tiflis: Tipografiya Glavnogo Upravleniya Namestnika Kavkazskogo, 1878), 236

“was no less a colonial empire, than any of the other Western European powers”<sup>11</sup>. The only difference, according to Michael Khodarkovsky, is that Russian possessions lay not overseas, but “within its ever-expanding contiguous boundaries”<sup>12</sup>. I think two main points separates the argumentations of two authors: first, about the agents of colonization, second, about the presence or absence of an ideology of expansion. Sunderland argues in the frameworks of the Solov’ev – Kliuchevskii conception that Russia was a country that colonized itself<sup>13</sup>. According to Sunderland, colonization of the open frontiers was “a question of population redistribution and agriculture”, and peasant colonists “did not construe their colonization as an imperialist endeavor”. The colonizers did not have both the ideas of the economic exploitation of the local nomads and the sense of “national/religious/civilizational superiority” or a kind of the civilizing mission<sup>14</sup>.

In contrast to Sunderland, Khodarkovsky finds and indicates both the main role of the state (the metropolis) and the ideologies of expansion in the Russian advancement in the South frontier. The author argues that even prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century “Russian expansion in the south was driven by strategic and politico-theological considerations”<sup>15</sup> of the state. The process of the advancement is defined as the incorporation of the vulnerable frontier into the empire’s borderland. Khodarkovsky argues that the ideology of the expansion existed both before and after the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but by the mid-eighteen century it changed its vocabulary “from notions of political theology to the modern European notions of rationality and Enlightenment”<sup>16</sup>. Khodarkovsky attributes the Russian success in expansion to its superiority of arms and to the

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier : the Making of a ColonialEempire, 1500-1800* (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 2001), 6

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Willard Sunderland, “Empire without Imperialism? Ambiguities of Colonization in Tsarist Russia” - <http://abimperio.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=707&page=3&idlang=1&Code=#smt>, 05.05.2007

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier : the Making of a ColonialEempire, 1500-1800*, 224

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 225

use of the western method of colonization, which is defined as “a systematic fashion to incorporate the new territories and peoples into the empire’s military, political, economic and administrative system”<sup>17</sup>.

While Willard Sunderland distinguishes a separate type of non-imperialist colonization as a resettlement, Khodarkovsky considers resettlement as one of the parts of the creation of the colonial empire. I think it is also possible to assert that according to the logic of Sunderland the conquest and the incorporation of such territories as Transcaucasia and Central Asia indicates the new type of the Russian imperial colonialism, but the application of Khodarkovsky’s approach to the question of the incorporation of Transcaucasia allows me to assert that this incorporation was just the continuation of the previous Russian expansion in the south and addition of new colonies. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that Khodarkovsky defines the colonization of the steppe as “an organic colonialism”, determined largely by the security needs. According to the author, the expansion into the Caucasus and Central Asia, despite the fact that it was the part of the same process “began to look like a classical example of western colonialism driven to conquest and domination by utilitarian concerns”<sup>18</sup>. For him, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Russian colonial expansion was no different from the colonial expansion of the western overseas empires.

Both Sunderland and Khodakovsky recognize that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian colonialism changed. It obtained the form or both the form and content of the western type of colonialism of the overseas empires, which includes conquest and incorporation of the territory into the imperial system, economic exploitation and the ideology of the civilizing mission. Ronald Suny notes that in the case of the imperial colonization, the metropolis gets a profit

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's Steppe Frontier : the Making of a ColonialEempire, 1500-1800*, 225

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 229



from the relations with the colony, and there is an exploitation or, at least, the perception of the exploitation of the colony by the metropolis<sup>19</sup>. Thus, it is possible to distinguish the third meaning of the colonization in Russian history, which is similar to the colonial experience of the overseas empires.

It is possible to assert that in different regions different motives of the colonization, including security and strategic interests, trade routes, resources and other aspects of economic exploitation could take priority. In the Russian case, it is also necessary to take into account one more “psychological” motive. This motive is an idea, that the possession of a colony would serve as a confirmation of the imperial status of Russia and the status of the great power. According to Mark Bassin, for the first time, the desire to equate Russia with the European empires, that is with the overseas colonial empires, made necessary a definition of an ideological border between the European and Asiatic parts of Russia. The metropolis was attributed to the European part, the role of colony was attributed to the Asiatic part, beyond the Urals<sup>20</sup>. Transcaucasia and Central Asia were then referred as colonies. Firouzeh Mostashari in her study of the Russian colonial policy in Azerbaijan quotes Muriel Atkin’s consideration of the motives of the Russian expansion in Caucasus: “ [...] Russia, after a century of westernization, developed a colonialist outlook that was consciously imitative of western overseas expansion”<sup>21</sup>. Firouzeh Mostashari also agrees with a number of the scholars “that Russian imperialism was imitative of western imperialism”, especially in the case of

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<sup>19</sup> Ronald Suny, “Imperia kak ona est: imperskaia Rossiia, “nazionalnoe” samososoznanie I teorii imperii” (The Empire Strikes Out: Imperial Russia, “National” Identity, and Theories of Empire), *Ab Imperio* 1-2 (2001) <http://abimperio.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=438&idlang=2&Code=#smt> 05.05.2007

<sup>20</sup> M. Bassin, “Russia between Europe and Asia: the Ideological Construction of the Geographical Space”, *Slavic Review*, Vol.50, N.1(1991), 5-6

<sup>21</sup> Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 163. Quoted in: Firouzeh Mostashari, *Tsarist Colonial Policy, Economic Change, and the Making of the Azerbaijani Nation: 1828 -1905*. (Ph. D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995), 58

Transcaucasia<sup>22</sup>. One of the main parts of this “borrowed imperialism” became the orientalizing of the image of Transcaucasia in Russian public thought, which will be discussed in the third part of this chapter.

Thus, all three definitions of colonization in the historiography of the Russian Empire raise the question whether Russian colonialism was identical to the colonialism of the overseas empires or had such peculiar features, deriving from the particular phenomenon of the Russian expansion that was unique. In the case of the policies in Transcaucasia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this question turns into another one, whether Transcaucasia was a Russian colony or it was just one of many provinces of the empire?

The claim that the Russian Empire established a colony in Transcaucasia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be doubted by the fact that at that period the territory was not only profitable for the empire, but even self-supporting<sup>23</sup>. The relations, when the imperial metropolis economically exploits the colony were not established. Ronald Grigor Suny and other researchers of Transcaucasia argue that “the hopes of the colonialists that Transcaucasia might become a market for Russian manufactures and a source of raw materials for Russian industry were not realized in the first half of the nineteenth century”<sup>24</sup>. Thus, it is difficult to claim, taking into account only the economic criteria, that the Russian Empire established the “colonial” regime in Transcaucasia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Another aspect, which reveals the peculiarity of the Russian “colonial” policy in Transcaucasia is the investigation of the **patterns of the integration** of the newly acquired territories and their population into the Russian imperial system. This question with respect to

<sup>22</sup> Firouzeh Mostashari, *Tsarist Colonial Policy, Economic Change, and the Making of the Azerbaijani Nation: 1828-1905*, 41-42.

<sup>23</sup> David Marshall Lang, *The last years of the Georgian monarchy, 1658-1832*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 273

<sup>24</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press in association with Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif., 1988), 95

Transcaucasia was raised by the Russian officials in the early stages of the Russian advancement in the region in 1810-s. Especially important this question became at the end of 1820s- beginning of 1830s, after the end of the Russian-Ottoman and Russian-Persian wars.

Some scholars distinguish two camps among the Russian elite on the political and administrative integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian imperial system<sup>25</sup>. Firouzeh Mostashari defines these two groups as the “integrationists” and the “localists”. The purpose of the first group was the unification of the region with the empire as quickly as possible. The representatives of this group disregarded regional specificity. The author consider Nicholas I, Alexander III and Nicholas II as well as “sections of the central bureaucracy” as the representatives of that group<sup>26</sup>. The representatives of the second group, mainly the members of the local administration, “opted for a gradual introduction of the Russian laws”, advocated for caution in dealing with local laws and traditions, encouraged the participation of the local people in the administration.<sup>27</sup>

It is necessary to mention, that , I think, that in 1820-1830 there was no such clear division between the groups and often the same person could be defined as the representative of both of the groups. This question will be considered in the third chapter.

Marc Raeff in his almost classical article “Patterns of the Russian Imperial Policy toward the Nationalities”<sup>28</sup> takes into account the possibility of the existence of the different approaches of the incorporation of the newly acquired regions into the Russian Empire, but the

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<sup>25</sup> Firouzeh Mostashari , *Tsarist Colonial Policy, Economic Change, and the Making of the Azerbaijani Nation: 1828 -1905*, 41-42.; Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan : A borderland in transition*, 13-14; Ronald Grigor Suny , “Eastern Armenians under Tsarist Rule”, in *The Armenian People. From Ancient to Modern Times*. ed. R. G. Hovannisian. Vol. II (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1997), 113

<sup>26</sup> Firouzeh Mostashari , *Tsarist Colonial Policy, Economic Change, and the Making of the Azerbaijani Nation: 1828 -1905*, 74

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>28</sup> Marc Raeff, “Patterns of Russian Imperial Policy toward the Nationalities”, in *Soviet nationality problems*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York : Columbia University Press, 1971),22-42

author argues, that, the methods of incorporation could be different: they could be “more flexible, gradualistic, and took into consideration local traditions and traditions”, their goal remained the same – “administrative and social homogeneity throughout the empire”<sup>29</sup>. The recognition of the idea that the incorporation could be implemented through different patterns is connected, according to Raeff, with the popularity of “the romantic notions of historicism, respect for tradition, and the uniqueness of every culture and society”<sup>30</sup> in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus the local autonomy and the complete integration of the territory and its population into the imperial system lie on the same line, which starts with the conquest and acquisition of the territory, then goes through incorporation and ends with assimilation.

What is the explanation of the “almost automatic reaction of Russian administrators”<sup>31</sup> to extend the social administrative arrangements, prevailing in the Russian provinces on the other parts of the Empire? Marc Raeff finds the answer in the absence of a “strong tradition of localism” and “a kind of feudal or protofeudal ‘federalism’ .”<sup>32</sup> Ronald Grigor Suny explains the striving for homogeneity by the necessity to oppose the rivals in the international system and to increase the efficiency of the state administration. Suny also mentions an important moment, that the overseas empires (like the British, French and Belgium empires) could have different political regimes in the metropolis (“democracy”) and in colonies (traditional local regimes), because for coexistence of the different political regimes within one empire it is necessary to have a distant separation between the two parts of the empire. Such a separation in the contiguous empires could not be always implemented and the realization of the reforms in one of the parts of the empire could be a factor of destabilization for another part (for

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<sup>29</sup> Marc Raeff, “Patterns of Russian Imperial Policy toward the Nationalities”, 37

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 32

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 30

example the privileged regimes in Finland and the absence of the similar institutions in the main part of Russia).

Thus, it is possible to conclude that Russian “colonialism” in Transcaucasia is studied through the prism of its correspondence with the patterns of the colonial experience in overseas empires. The intentions of the elites and the ideology of colonialism are considered as the common aspect of the Russian and western colonial policies. At the same time the studies of the Russian patterns of the integration of the new territories into the Empire reveals that the intention to create a colony is accompanied by the striving for the social and administrative unification of the colony with the metropolis. I think one of the ways to understand this contradiction is to trace how the ideas of colonialism and unification were related in the projects and plans on the development of the region of Russian officials and public figures.

### ***1.2. Theories of frontiers in the study of the Russian Empire’s expansion in Transcaucasia in the first third of the 19th century.***

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> - the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Russian Empire established its control in the main part of Transcaucasia as well as in the part of Poland, Finland and Bessarabia. It is almost unavoidable to face the problem of understanding and explanation of the events and processes in the Western and Southern borderlands of the Empire at that period. The approach, which paved the way for understanding of the problems which were raised with the new acquisitions for the empire’s political elite is study of the role of the frontiers in the history of the empires. The approach is originated in the essay of Frederick Jackson Turner on the role of the frontiers in the American history (1893). The idea of Turner received a wide

range of the interpretations. The approach was applied in the studies of the formations and functioning of various political entities in different regions<sup>33</sup>.

The aim of this sub-chapter is to comprehend the possibilities of the theories of frontier for definition of the situation in Transcaucasia in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I think in respect to the relations of the Russian Empire and Transcaucasia, the range of processes and interactions in the region in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be defined as the transformation of the complex, multilevel, outer frontier into the inner frontier of the Empire. This sub-chapter will explain these definitions.

In historiography there are several definitions and classifications of frontier. In 1950s one of Turner's progenies Walter Prescott Webb distinguished European and American conceptions of frontier. According to Webb, in Europe frontier is defined as a synonymous of border and dividing line between the sovereignties. Americans perceive frontier as a part of the national territory, "not a line to stop at, but an area inviting entrance"<sup>34</sup>. Thus Webb, like Turner, differed frontier as a line from frontier as an onward area of development. Fifty years later Alfred J. Rieber suggests more complicated classification of the interpretation of frontiers in historiography and social science. The historian separates frontiers into three main types. First, state frontiers, which define the limits of public authority. This type includes three subtypes: the frontiers of Antiquity, Islamic state frontiers and the West European subtype of frontiers, which introduce the idea of correspondence between "natural" and "national" borders. Second, the dynamic type of frontiers, which is defined as an "advancing line of settlements". This type of understanding of frontier is based on application of Turner's concept of the

<sup>33</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, "Frontiers in History", in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioral Studies*, vol.9 (Amsterdam, New York: Elsevier, 2001), 5812 - 5818

<sup>34</sup> Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Frontier*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951), 2., Quoted in: Joseph L. Wieczynski, *The Russian Frontier. The Impact of Borderlands upon the Course of Early Russian History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 6

American frontier for studies of the territorial expansion of other political entities. Besides American subtype of the dynamic frontier, Rieber also distinguishes two other subtypes: first, the British Empire and, second, Imperial Russian and Chinese frontiers, which belongs to one subtype. One of the most influential figures in interpretation of the Russian and Chinese frontiers became Owen Lattimore. On the base of the study of the relations between China and the nomads of its Inner Asia's borderlands, Lattimore defines frontier as the "outer limit of zones on the margins of socioeconomic systems that represented their 'optimal limit of growth'"<sup>35</sup>. In the case of China, frontier is a territory from the China's periphery to the outer limits of the nomadic world<sup>36</sup>. Lattimore's approach was applied by John P. LeDonne for study of the Russian expansion.

The third type of frontiers distinguished by Alfred J. Rieber is symbolic frontiers, which indicate not territorial, but civilization and cultural grounds of the division between different worlds.

I think it is possible to distinguish two interpretations of frontier used in the studies of the Russian expansion. First, frontier as the "advancing line of settlements", as open and colonized space, where the pioneers interact both with nature and local inhabitants. This approached is used for the investigation of the expansion before the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Volga region, Siberia and Southern Steppes<sup>37</sup>. Second, frontier as a contested zone between two and more core areas or empires<sup>38</sup>. This interpretation is used in the studies of the expansion in the imperial period. In the study of the transformation of the Russian frontier both approaches can

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<sup>35</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, "Frontiers in History", 5816.

<sup>36</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Conatinment*. (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

<sup>37</sup> Joseph L Wieczynski , *The Russian Frontier. The Impact of Borderlands upon the Course of Early Russian History*.

<sup>38</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Conatinment*.

overlap. Nevertheless, the main characteristic of the notion of “frontier”, which separates it from “borderland”, is that “frontier” is not only a peculiar territorial zone, but “frontier” is a particular dimension of life, the process or the system of interactions. I think, it is possible to assert that in works by Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, Alfred J. Rieber, Thomas Barrett, Andreas Kapeller and other authors, “frontier” is defined as a system of interactions within the territorial space. Evan Haefeli seeking for the distinction between frontier and borderland define borderland “as a place where autonomous peoples of different cultures are bound together by a greater multi-imperial [or more recently multi-national] context”<sup>39</sup>. In other words, in the definition of frontier its main component shifts from territory to process of inter-imperial and internal interactions.

In respect of the Northern Caucasus, Thomas M. Barrett distinguishes the following elements of the frontier processes: in- and out- migration of large number of people, the settlement and creation of new communities, and the abandonment of the old ones, transformation of landscape and “the interactions of neighbours, not just in war, but in everyday life”.<sup>40</sup> It is necessary to mention that Barrett distinguishes three “rubrics” of study of the frontier: environmental history, social history and ethnohistory<sup>41</sup>. So, only one of the rubrics is connected with the study of the territory, and not of its political, but environmental aspect.

Alfred J. Rieber clearly indicates frontier as a system. In the essay “The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers” the historian argues “the interplay of physical geography,

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<sup>39</sup> Evan Haefeli, “A Note on the Use of North American Borderlands,” in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (October 1999), 1222, 1224., Quoted in: “Analyzing the Phenomenon of Borderlands from Comparative and Cross-cultural Perspectives” - [http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/mears.html#\\_ednref2](http://www.historycooperative.org/proceedings/interactions/mears.html#_ednref2), (27.03.2007)

<sup>40</sup> Thomas M Barrett, “Lines of Uncertainty. The Frontiers of the Northern Caucasus” in *Imperial Russia. New Histories for the Empire.*, ed. Jane Burbank and Davis L. Ransel (Indiana, 1998), 148-173.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 151



warfare, and cultural change shaped frontiers over a prolonged period into an ecological system that fully justifies the use of the term ‘complex’ ”<sup>42</sup>.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that in a number of works frontier is considered as a system, which includes complicated processes and place of this processes.

Frontier can be defined as a complex of interactions, which occur in different spheres. Andreas Kappeler distinguishes the following types of frontiers with regard to their functions: geographical frontier between climatic zones; social frontier between different ways of life and systems of values; military frontier between military entities and religious and cultural frontier between different cultural traditions<sup>43</sup>. I think it is possible to assert that, depending on the region and time, one of these or other spheres of interaction becomes predominant. It allows historians to distinguish different types of frontiers. Andreas Kapeller differs military frontier, extractive frontier (definition connected with the intensive exploitation of the territory) and settlement frontier. It is necessary to emphasize, that Kapeller notices, that these differentiation in the case of the Russian Empire was important before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Europeanization of Russia since the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century brought to the views of the Russian elite the ideas of progress and the Russian “civilizing mission” in the East. Since that period the classical frontier, as the sphere of the military, economic, and cultural interactions was not closed, but it was supplemented or, according to Kapeller, changed into ideological frontier in people’s mind<sup>44</sup>. Alfred J. Rieber defined this kind of frontier as a symbolic one<sup>45</sup>.

I think it is necessary to add to the previously mentioned characteristics of frontier one more – personal dimension. It is not about the social groups of the frontiersmen like the

<sup>42</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “The Comparative Ecology of the Complex Frontier”, 178

<sup>43</sup> Andreas Kapeller, “Yuzhnyi i vostochnyi frontier Rossii v XVI–XVIII vekah” <http://abimperio.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=670&idlang=2&Code=#smt>, 28.03.2007

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Alfred J Rieber, “Frontiers in History”, 5812-5817.

Cossacks in the different Russian borderlands or sectarians in Transcaucasia. It is about individuals, often representatives of the imperial elites, whose political views were influenced by their personal experience of frontiers. The typical examples of these “men of frontier”, often mentioned in works on history of the Russian Empire, are originates from Georgia General Peter Bagration, Russian Commander-in-Chief in Caucasus in 1802-1806, Prince Pavel Dmitrievich Tsitsianov, originates of the Little Russia, statesmen in the time of Elizabeth Petrovna brothers Razumovskys and confidant of Alexander I Pole Adam Czartoryski. Less typical examples are Catherine’s II favourites Alexander Bezborodko and Grigorii Potemkin, who played “decisive roles in the formation of the Russian foreign policy after 1774”. Both of them came from the valley of Dniepr. According to John P. LeDonne, the origin of these statesmen from the borderland influence their attitudes on Russian policy in the Western and Southern frontiers<sup>46</sup>. The study of the representatives of the frontiers in the empire’s centre is not unusual for historiography. I think it is also necessary to study from the point of view of frontiers’ history a kind of the “inverse process”: the influence of the abundant frontier’s experience on political views and style of administration of the representatives of centre in the frontiers. I mean such figures as general Ermolov, his assistant and the famous Russian writer Alexander Griboyedov, commander-in-chief of the Polish army Grand Duke Constantine and, especially, count Ivan Fedorovich Paskevich, who was moved by Nicolas’ I decision from Caucasus to Poland. Consideration of the stories of the “men of frontier” is important for understanding of the connection between the state and history of frontier and political decision making.

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<sup>46</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment*, 107

Thus, it is possible to conclude that the frontier as a complex has several dimensions: geographical, social, military, cultural, personal and other ones. In different regions and periods each of these dimensions can play more or less important role and to be in different correlations with the other dimensions. This correlations influence the characteristics of the exact frontier.

The characteristics and importance of the frontiers as well as policies towards frontiers can vary in different regions and be transformed with time. These transformations can be understood through comparative studies. This paper is not a place for such a study, but it is important for the purposes of the work to define the state of the Russian frontiers in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I will concentrate in the Russian new acquisitions in Poland in Transcaucasia. What is the role of these acquisitions from the point of view of frontier's history? I will rely on the works of two authors John P. LeDonne and Alfred J. Rieber, because they consider the cases of Poland and Transcaucasia in the context of the frontiers' history of the empire. This approach is different from the regional studies of individual borderlands and their relations with the centre of the empire<sup>47</sup>.

Both regions participated in the contest for the borderlands long before the proclamation of the Russian Empire in 1721. However, if Poland was one of the core areas, which contested for "The Pontic Steppe" (area between the lands of the Lithuanians and Poles, Muscovite State and the Crimean Khanate)<sup>48</sup>, then Transcaucasia was the object and field of the contest since the times of the struggle between the Byzantine and Persian Empires.

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<sup>47</sup> Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russia and Azerbaijan : A borderland in Transition*, Edward C. Thaden, *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*, (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1984); Tuomo Polvinen, *Imperial borderland : Bobrikov and the attempted Russification of Finland, 1898-1904*, (Durham, N.C. : Duke University Press, 1995), 342

<sup>48</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, "The Comparative Ecology of the Complex Frontier", 184

The peculiarity of the work by LeDonne<sup>49</sup>, which can be considered as its disadvantage, is its geographical determinism. At the same time it is necessary to mention that the author makes a reservation that there are other variables of foreign policy, but exactly geography constitutes permanent framework for interplay of the other variables in the foreign policy making<sup>50</sup>. I think this reliance on one of the possible factors of foreign policy does not allow the author to create more or less complete picture of the processes in the borderlands, but it makes possible to set a unified system of coordinates, which can be used for comprehension of structural similarities in the processes in different borderlands. This system can also help to find such moments, which can indicate that events in different borderland are the parts of one common process. According to LeDonne, this common process is the Russian expansion, in the directions, predetermined by the drainage basins of the Baltic, the Black sea, the Caspian and the Pacific. The ultimate goal of the expansion is the periphery of the heartland. In this expansion in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia clashed with Sweden, Poland, Turkey and Persia.

The Russian relations with Poland and, I think it is possible to presume, with Transcaucasia were the integral part of the Russian relations with the Ottomans. Russia, the Ottoman Empire and Poland contested for the Pontic Steppe, and Russia and the Ottomans played in Transcaucasia. The question of Pontic Steppe was closed by the partitions of Poland and the Treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardzhi in 1774, when Russia established its dominance in the

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<sup>49</sup> Relying on the geopolitical models of Halford Mackinder, Alfred Mahan, Geoffrey Parker and Owen Lattimore, LeDonne suggest his vision of the Russian expansion, predetermined by the geopolitical structure of international relations in Europe. According to LeDonne's model, there is the Heartland of Eurasia, which is flanked by the European Coastland (Western Europe), "Arabia" (South-west from Persia and Turkey) and Monsoon Coastlands (China, Japan). Russia lies in the centre of the Heartland. The ultimate and natural goal of the Russian expansion is to achieve the peripheries of the Heartland. In its movement arising Russia, which is one of the core areas, inevitably goes into struggle with the surrounding Russia declining core areas (Sweden, Poland, Turkey and Persia). The object of the struggle is the control of the frontiers, which are the territories between the core areas.

<sup>50</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment*, p.xiv

area. The control over the most part of Transcaucasia was established as a result of the Russian-Ottoman and the Russian-Persian wars and treaties from 1770-s to 1829.

According to LeDonne, in both frontiers Russian strategy had common features: - superiority of the military power, - ability to turn in its favour the fragmentation of frontier through attraction of the local “men of power”, - systematic policy to destabilize the rival core areas.<sup>51</sup> The “spirit of crusade” was one of the main aspects in the struggle with the Ottomans and Persians<sup>52</sup>. Structurally this factor coincides with the support of the dissidents in Poland. According to LeDonne, the importance of the processes both in the western frontier and in Transcaucasia is that Russia achieved new frontiers. Contested borderlands between Russia, Poland and the Ottomans in the West and between Russia, the Persians and the Ottomans in the South became the inner frontiers of Russia. In the West, Russia joined the part of the Polish core area. Transcaucasia is considered by LeDonne as a frontier, but the author mentioned that Georgia played such a role, which, I think, can be interpreted as a role of a core area. Georgia itself was surrounded by the frontiers. The key moment for the maintenance of the Russian control in the Central Caucasus was the control of the North Caucasus, especially the Georgian frontier in Ossetia with the passes, connecting the Southern Russia with the Central Caucasus. The same role for the control of the Eastern Caucasus was attributed to Dagestan<sup>53</sup>.

After the subjugation of the frontiers of the Pontic Steppe and Transcaucasia and establishment of the control over the part of the Polish core areas, the next logical step in the movement towards the periphery of the Heartland, according to LeDonne, was the attempts to

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<sup>51</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment*, 83, 95

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 89-90

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 103

transform the Russian core area into the Russian protectorate<sup>54</sup> and struggle for the Persian core area, which opened the Russo-British Indian frontier<sup>55</sup>.

It is also necessary to mention that subjection of the part of Poland and Transcaucasia transferred the questions of these territories from the realm of the foreign policy to the sphere of the inner frontier policy.

If John P. LeDonne concentrates on the external aspect of the “closing of the frontiers”, Alfred J. Rieber indicates the consequential contradictory internal processes. The historian distinguishes two main processes in the Pontic Steppe. First, colonization and resettlement, which “helped the Russians stabilize the region”. Second, the development of “a mythology of Cossack independence”, gradual growth of Ukrainian nationalism and undermining of the central power<sup>56</sup>. Regarding Transcaucasia, Rieber notes that “the final delimitation of the contested frontiers [...] did not end the unstable conditions in the region, but only signal a new phase of internal resistance”<sup>57</sup>. I think it is necessary to add that there were inconsistent attempts and projects of the colonization of Transcaucasia<sup>58</sup>. Thus the imperial centre faced the problems of the development of the frontiers and the unavoidable processes of the internal resistance and undermining of the imperial control.

In conclusion, it is possible to define the situation in Transcaucasia in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the concept of “frontier”. Transcaucasia can be defined as the area of the “complex frontier”, which includes different types of frontiers: - geographical frontier between steppes and mountains as well as between different types of climate; social frontier

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<sup>54</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World, 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment*, 123

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 128

<sup>56</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “The Comparative Ecology of the Complex Frontier,” 187

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.192

<sup>58</sup> See: Nicholas B. Breyfogle, “Colonization by Contract: Russian Settlers, South Caucasian Elites and the Dynamics of Nineteenth-Century Tsarist Imperialism,” in *Extending the borders of Russian history : essays in honor of Alfred J. Rieber*, ed. Marsha Siefert (Budapest : CEU Press, 2002), 143-167

between the ways of life, economic and social behaviour of the different groups of the local population and the Russians; military frontier between the Russian, Ottoman and Persian empires as well as the military frontier between the Russians, inhabitants of Transcaucasia and mountaineers of the North Caucasus; - religious frontier between the Russian Orthodox, the Georgian and Armenian Christian religions, Islam and paganism; -symbolic frontier between the European and Asiatic civilizations.

Transcaucasia can be considered as the complex and multilevel frontier. Transcaucasia in itself is the frontier between the Russian, Ottoman and Persian Empires. At the same time Transcaucasia includes several centres of different cultures (Georgian, Armenian, Muslim, Osetian and others) and the frontiers between these centres. These frontiers can not be always defined by the territories, but they exist in the spheres of culture, religion, economic behaviour and so on.

The situation in Transcaucasia in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be also considered as the transformation of the outer frontier into the inner frontier of the Russian Empire.

So, the Transcaucasian frontier in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is a complex system, which includes different elements and dimensions, which make frontiers peculiar and different. The character of frontier partly creates the specific context of decision making, but to understand its influence on decision-makers, it is necessary to study not only the complex of frontier in itself, but also construction of the image of frontier in views of political elite.

### ***1.3. The paradigm of Orientalism in the study of the Russian representation of Transcaucasia and the policies in the region in the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.***

There is a double context of Russian policies in Transcaucasia: the intellectual environment or the images of Transcaucasia appeared in the works of Russian authors; and there is the practice of the imperial or foreign policy. The connection between these two spheres illuminates the possibilities and limitations of the paradigm of Orientalism in the study of the Russian expansion in Transcaucasia in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The historian Andrey Zorin has been of one the major contributors to an analysis of the influence of literature on Russian political ideology. His work is part of a general discussion on the possibilities of the application of Orientalism in Russian Empire which will be explored in this subchapter. Finally, I will deal with the works, which apply Orientalism to a study of the representation of Caucasus in Russian literature.

The Russian historian Andrey Zorin made one of the first remarkable attempts to establish the connection between the development of culture, in particular, literature, and the formation of the state ideology of foreign policy in the case of the Russian Empire. His work “Feeding the Double-Headed Eagle”,<sup>59</sup> does not deal with the Caucasus, but the first three chapters of his book are devoted to the role of literature, particularly Russian ode, in the formation of the ideology of the Russian policy in the Black sea region during the rule of Catherine II<sup>60</sup>. For his methodology, which is important for my work, Zorin relies on the

<sup>59</sup> Andrey Zorin, *Kormya dvuglavogo orla... Russkaya literatura i gosudarstvennaya ideologiya v posledney treti 18 – pervoi treti 19 veka. (Feeding the Double-Headed Eagle... Russian Literature and state ideology at the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century)* (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2001).

<sup>60</sup> I do not touch upon a question of the definition of “ideology” and the difference between “ideology”, “myth”, “program”, “discourse”, etc. This question is mentioned in paragraphs by Richard Wortman, Mihail Dolbilov and Alexander Filushkin in the discussion over the work of Andrey Zorin in journal *Ab Imperio* (in English and



Clifford Geertz's conceptions of culture and metaphor. He argues that literature and its metaphors create ideology and not vice versa. According to Zorin, ideology comes from poetry and novels and then transfers to political slogans and programs<sup>61</sup>. The historian illustrates this thesis through the example of the influence of the Russian odes, especially of the odes of little known today poets Petrov and Pavel Potemkin, on the development of Catherine's II "Greek Project" (establishment of the Greek Empire) in 1782. Zorin argues that the ideas central to the project initially appeared in the odes and then they were transferred to the political program. Poet Pavel Potemkin was a cousin and Petrov was close to one of the main figures in the Russian policy in the Black sea and empress's favorite Prince Grigorii Potemkin. The historian assumes that Prince Potemkin had read literary works of the cousin and friend and converted the system of poetic metaphors into a political project<sup>62</sup>.

Despite the fact that the book by Andrey Zorin is one of the first and most impressive attempts to reveal a connection between literature and state political projects, there are several problems in his argumentation. First, as one of the participants of the discussion of the book in journal *Ab Imperio* (2002, no.1) Elena Vyshlenkova mentions, the historian does not prove the statement that literature gives rise to the main points of ideology<sup>63</sup>.

Second, it is not clear, even if Prince Potemkin adopted the ideas of the "Greek project" from Pavel Potemkin and Petrov, whether it was because the Prince was impressed by the odes or because the poets were close to the Prince. Third, there is a theoretical question: what is the mechanism of translation of literary metaphors or art images to the political programs. Does

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Russian) See: "Forum AI," in *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2002), - <http://abimperio.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=266&idlang=2&Code=>, 25.03.2007

<sup>61</sup> Andrey Zorin, *Kormya dvuglavogo orla*, p. 25-26

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 59

<sup>63</sup> Forum AI, <http://abimperio.net/scgi-bin/aishow.pl?state=showa&idart=266&idlang=2&Code=>, 25.03.2007

the fact that authorities and political figures are also readers imply that literary metaphors convert to political ideology?

One of the most influential approaches to answer the question on the connection between processes in science, literature, public thought and formulation and implementation of the imperial policies is Orientalism, originated in the book of the same name by Edward Said.

Said relates the notion of knowledge to power. Several definitions of Orientalism are provided in the work. First, it is an academic study of the Orient, second, it is the “style of thought based upon ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and (most of the time) “the Occident”. At the same time Orientalism is defined as “the corporate institution” which deals with the Orient<sup>64</sup>. The main idea which connects all these definitions is that Orientalism is a way of studying and creating the image of the Orient in science, literature and public thought that paved the way and justified the establishment of the Western domination and colonial rule over the peoples of the East. Employing Michel Foucault’s notion of a discourse, Said shows that the Orientalism is not the invention of one or several authors, but it is a tradition of thought, that was formed during several centuries through the development of a special vocabulary and imagery, which describes the Orient as the absolutely strange, mysterious, and, at the same, less developed and inferior to the European part of the world. According to the logic of Orientalism, “to have knowledge” about the countries of the East means “to raise above” them, “to dominate” and, finally “to have authority” over the East<sup>65</sup>.

Said concentrates on the traditions of the British and French Orientalism, their policy in the Near East and on the development of the American Orientalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century,. At the

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<sup>64</sup> Edward, W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books)., 1994, 2-3

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32

same time the author notes that Russia, as well as Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal made “important contributions” to Orientalism<sup>66</sup>. These traditions also need special studies. More than two thirds of the Russian Empire’s territory were situated in Asia. Before the beginning of the World War I that territory included South Caucasus and Central Asia and the empire spread its influence in the Northern Iran and Manchuria. Thus, the question of possibilities for applying Said’s theory for the study of relations between the knowledge of the Orient and power relations in the Russian Empire is appropriate.

The editors of the collection of essays “Russian Empire in the Foreign Historiography”, which was published in Russian in 2005, note that until now Said’s theory has not had a direct influence on studies of the Russian Empire<sup>67</sup>. But the theory is mentioned in the collection of essays “Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and People”<sup>68</sup> and in the work of the Russian historian Sergey Soplenkov “Road to Arzrum: Russian Public Thought about the Orient”<sup>69</sup>. Mainly the theory of Orientalism is used by the literary critics discussing the representation of the Caucasus in Russian literature. One of the first attempts to consider the question of possibilities for application of the Orientalism theory in study of relations between Russia and borderlands was the article by Nathaniel Knight, published in *Slavic Review* in 2000<sup>70</sup> and the discussion on this article in journal *Kritika* in 2001<sup>71</sup>. Knight studies the activity of the

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<sup>66</sup> Edward, W. Said, *Orientalism*, p. 17

<sup>67</sup> *Rossiiskaya Imperiya v zarubezhnoy istoriographii (Russian Empire in the Foreign Historiography)*, ed. Werth Paul, W., Kabytov P.S., Miller, Alexei, I. (Moscow: Novoye Izdatelstvo, 2005), 274

<sup>68</sup> *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and People*, ed. by Brower, Daniel, R. and Lazzerini, Edward J. (Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1997).

<sup>69</sup> S. V. Soplenkov, *Doroga v Arzrum Rossiyskaya obschestvennaya mysl o Vostoke (Road to Arzrum. Russian Public Thought about the Orient)* (Moskva: Vostochnaya Literatura, 2000), 188-189

<sup>70</sup> N. Knight, “Grigor’ev in Orenburg: Russian Orientalism in the Service of Empire?” *Slavic Review*, Vol. 59 N. 1 (2000) : 74-100

<sup>71</sup> A. Khalid, “Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. Vol. I. no. 4 (2000) : 691-700; N. Knight “On Russian Orientalism: A Response to Adeeb Khalib” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. Vol. I. no. 4 (2000) : 701-716, M. Todorova, “Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*. Vol. I. no. 4 (2000) : 717-728

Russian scholar and bureaucrat Grigor'ev in Orenburg in the border with the Kazakhs. On the basis of this investigation, the author notes two factors that do not coincide with Said's theory. The first one is that whereas the theory of Orientalism supposes existence of the clear division between the West and the East in the perception of the Western public thought, Grigor'ev insisted that Russia was neither Europe, nor Asia, but it was situated between these two parts of the world. The second point is that Knight, taking into account the fact that interrelations between power and science were possible, denies that those connections always and inevitably existed. The local governor-general did not pay attention to the opinion of the scholar. Grigor'ev was disappointed and came back to Petersburg. His knowledge and political plans, which were based in that knowledge, were not used by the policy makers. According to Knight this example shows that it is more efficient to investigate particular cases of relations between knowledge of orientalists and imperial rule, than any common discourse of these relations <sup>72</sup>.

The historian and specialist in the culture and policy in Central Asia at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Adeeb Khalid in the response to Knight claims that the particular case is not a model for explanation of the Russian colonial policy. The main idea of this author is that the Russian colonial experience should not be differentiated from the European one. The author asserts that, despite the fact that Russia is considered as a peculiar case, both Russian politicians and intellectuals had the same representation of Asia as the Europeans. They employed the same notions for describing Asia, which were used in the rest of Europe: despotism, fanaticism, deceit, violence and eroticism <sup>73</sup>. And this representation of the Orient (Vostok) justified the establishment of the Russian dominance in Asia. Khalid quotes the famous Russian writer Dostoevskii to show that the Russians played the same role in Asia as

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<sup>72</sup> *Russian Empire in the Foreign Historiography*, 274-275

<sup>73</sup> A. Khalid, *Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism*, 697

the Europeans: “In Europe we were hangers-on and slaves, but in Asia we are masters. In Europe we were Tatars, but in Asia we too are Europeans.”<sup>74</sup>

The author of the work on the European representation of the Balkans Maria Todorova also participates in this discussion. This historian argues that in fact the dispute between Knight and Khalid is more about the acceptance of the idea of the uniqueness of the Russian colonial policy, than about the application of Said’s theory<sup>75</sup>.

I think, it is possible to agree with Todorova that the problem of the dispute between Knight and Khalid is that their acceptance or non-acceptance of Said’s theory depends on their positions on the idea of the originality of the Russian policy in contrast to the European one. I think to understand the possibilities for application of Said’s theory for Russian Empire studies, it is important to overcome the question of the Russian “special path” as a precondition for understanding and acceptance of the methods of study.

The other problem of the dispute between Knight and Khalid is their perception of Said’s theory as a kind of a holistic pattern that should be fully either accepted or rejected by the historians of the Russian Empire. I suggest that it is necessary to distinguish the sense of Said’s approach and to understand factors that should be taken into account, when historians apply the concept of “Orientalism” in their investigations.

I think, it is possible to distinguish two parts in the theory of Said. The first is the approach in itself, which asserts that there is a connection between the development of oriental studies and literature, creation of knowledge and construction of the image of the otherness and implementation of policy towards these others. The second part is the result of the study based on this approach. The result of the Said’s study is the claim that discourse and

<sup>74</sup> A. Khalid, *Russian History and the Debate over Orientalism*, 697

<sup>75</sup> M. Todorova, *Does Russian Orientalism Have a Russian Soul? A Contribution to the Debate between Nathaniel Knight and Adeeb Khalid*, 717

knowledge, formulated by vocabulary of that discourse, became an intellectual basis for establishment and development of the western dominance and colonial policy in the Near East. If the first part, the approach in itself, is independent from particular historical conditions, then the second part, the conclusion, is based on the application of the approach to the study of the particular historical context of British and French policy in the Near East and the development of the Oriental studies and literature in these countries mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In my opinion, it is possible to assert that historians can use the approach, suggested by Said, but it is, perhaps, unavoidable that to make any conclusions, it is necessary to “fill” the frameworks of the approach with the study of the particular historical context of the development of the public and political thought and colonial experience of different countries in different territories. Only after this operation it would be possible to make conclusions about universality and particularity of the relations between the construction of the knowledge of the Orient and implementation of the colonial policy by different countries.

To characterize the relations between knowledge and power in the Russian colonial policy, like in cases with any other countries, it is important to take into account the context of time and place of each historical period.

It is possible to indicate several factors that influence the development of Russian Orientalism. I posit three of them, which, to my mind, should be considered in the study of the creation of perception of the East by Russian public and political thought in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These factors are the transformation of the notion of the “Orient” in Russian political thought, dependence of Russian representations of the East on the European ones and peculiar features of the Russian politics in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

One of the main ideas of the theory of Orientalism by Said is that the Orient is not a geographical reality, but it is a concept, that became an ideological and political reality and part of the Western self-identification<sup>76</sup>.

As it was mentioned above, according to specialist in cultural and political geography Mark Bassin, a kind of the “Russian Orient” emerged at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the ideological border “Europe” and “Asia” was signified and Siberia was proclaimed as a Russian “colony”<sup>77</sup>. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Caucasus was joined to Russia and in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia began expansion in Central Asia and Far East. The notion of the otherness changed. Central Asia and Caucasus became a part of the Empire, but they remained alien to the population of the core territory. The Orient in the perception of the Russians also included neighboring countries: Turkey, Persia and China. Susan Layton notes that at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even Georgia, “an ancient bastion of Christian civilization,” was identified by the Russians as a part of “indolent” Asia<sup>78</sup>.

One of the factors, that influenced the development of Russian Orientalism is the sources of the Russian perceptions of the East. Russian historian, Sergey Soplenkov, distinguishes two main sources of construction of the Russian elite’s attitudes towards the East: Western-European thought and then, the experience of the Russians who had worked or traveled in the Eastern countries<sup>79</sup>. Said mentioned that “the major steps in Oriental scholarship were first taken in either Britain and France, then elaborated upon by Germans”<sup>80</sup>. Before and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian diplomats, officers and travelers before or during their activity in the East studied these regions through the works of the

<sup>76</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1-2, 5

<sup>77</sup> M. Bassin “Russia between Europe and Asia: the Ideological Construction of the Geographical Space”, 5-6

<sup>78</sup> Susan Layton, “Nineteenth-century Russian Mythologies of Caucasian Savagery”, in *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Bordelands and People*, 82

<sup>79</sup> S. V. Soplenkov, *Doroga v Arzum Rossiyskaya obschestvennaya mysl o Vostoke*, 81

<sup>80</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 17-18.

western writers and scholars. Representation of the East, especially Caucasus, in Russian literature in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was significantly influenced by a Western literary tradition. Ewa M. Thompson in the account of Pushkin's and Lermontov's participation in creation of the Russian analogue of the ideology of civilizing mission emphasizes that both authors "invoked the authority of French and English writers, citing their remarks and adopting their rhetorical techniques."<sup>81</sup> Another part of the borrowings from the Western literature was connected with the influence of the European Romanticism. This influence can be traced in the depiction of nature. Susan Layton notes that "Pushkin *made* the Caucasus poetic by situating it [...] within long-standing traditions of European writing about the Alps"<sup>82</sup>. On the basis of the study of the Russian periodicals of 1820s Susan Layton asserts that the British experience "retained prominence as a colonial model [...]"<sup>83</sup>. It is possible to assert that the formation of the attitudes of the Russian elite about the East was influenced by the European authors, especially at the beginning of the Russian penetration to the Eastern countries, when there were no original Russian theories of the Orient.

Another aspect that influenced the formation of the Russian perception of the East was the internal political situation and the state of public opinion in Russia. I think it is worth to show the connection between the Russian internal policy and perception of Caucasus, Persia and the Ottoman Empire by the Russian officers and bureaucrats. Many representatives of the so-called "liberal nobility" and officers hoped for transformation of the autocratic regime in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The radical movement was culminated by the unsuccessful uprising of the Decembrists in December, 1825. At that period Caucasus became a place of

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<sup>81</sup> Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism*. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), 58

<sup>82</sup> Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 38

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 74



exile or public and military service of many of the representatives of the opposition circles. They participated both in the wars with the mountaineers of the North Caucasus, with Turkey and Persia and in the civil governing of Transcaucasia. Their vision of these regions was constructed on contrast with the internal political situation in Russia. Representatives of the Russian elite noted such features of these countries as despotism, absence of both private property and personal immunity. These characteristics showed the inferiority of the Eastern countries in contrast to Russia, but at the same time many Russian intellectuals identified the eastern despotism with the Russian autocracy, and that is why they identified Russia with the less developed Asia in contrast to Europe<sup>84</sup>. At the same time Russian poets, like Pushkin, created the image of the Caucasus as a realm of freedom in contrast to official autocratic life in Russia<sup>85</sup>. Thus it is possible to say that there was ambiguous understanding of the Caucasus, Persia and Turkey by the representatives of the Russian elite in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Construction of that vision was influenced not only by the perception of life in these territories, but also by the perception of the political and social life in the center of Russia. I think, that is why, it is important to study not the perception of the whole East, but the perception of each separate territory, like North Caucasus, Georgia, Persia, the Ottoman Empire and so on. This kind of study will help to create more clear comprehension of the perception of the east by the Russian elite in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In regard to Transcaucasia the theory of Orientalism by Said is mainly used as a “methodological inspiration” by the researchers of representation of Caucasus in Russian literature. The research of the relations between Russian literature and events in Caucasus in the

<sup>84</sup> S. V. Soplenkov, *Doroga v Arzum Rossiyskaya obschestvennaya mysl o Vostoke*, 104-105

<sup>85</sup> Analysis of the Pushkin's poem “The Prisoner of the Caucasus” in: Susan Layton, “*Nineteenth-century Russian Mythologies of Caucasian Savagery*,”. 82-85

first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is based on study of the works by Pushkin, Lermontov, Bestuzhev-Marlinskyi and other poets. Ewa M. Thompson depicts works by Pushkin and Lermontov as the contribution to the formation of the ideology, which paved the way to the establishment of Russian colonialism in Caucasus<sup>86</sup>. A more complicated picture is provided in the fundamental and impressive work by Susan Layton “Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy” (1994). Based on Michail Bakhtin’s idea that literary history is a process of dialogue between two eras and cultures, Susan Layton makes a methodological reservation that it is impossible for today’s reader to understand the literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as it was understood by readership of that epoch<sup>87</sup>. The author develops the idea of contribution of the literature in the creation of the imaginative geography of Caucasus.

According to Susan Layton, the image of Caucasus created by Pushkin, Lermontov and other poets, especially regarding to Georgia, indeed “helped to marginalize it [Georgia] as a little corner of Asia forgotten by Europe” and awaiting Russian overlords<sup>88</sup>. At the same time, the image of tribesmen, constructed by the poets disrupted ideology about Russia’s European stature and Russia’s right to subjugate the Orient. In literature the Orient was considered not only as something alien to Russia, but often as an organic part of Russia.<sup>89</sup>

Nevertheless, the tendency to depict Caucasus as the region which should be colonized and developed was predominant. For the purposes of the paper I will concentrate on the image of Transcaucasia, especially Georgia, which is studied by Susan Layton. This image was created through use of two “methods”: feminization of the territory and orientalizing of the people of the region. Feminization included the representation of Georgia as a “virgin terrain”.

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<sup>86</sup> Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism*, 57-73

<sup>87</sup> Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*, 11

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 88

Orientalization consisted of imposing on the region Islamic character, despite the fact that Georgia is an ancient Christian country, and depiction of local people, especially men, as “lazy” natives. As the result, according to Layton, the leading trope in creation of the image of the region can be interpreted as “the passive virgin ready to satisfy male desire and indeed just waiting for man to take advantage of her”<sup>90</sup>. In translation to the political language it means a justification for colonization of Georgia and adjacent territories by the Russians.

I think, in the works on Russian literature the connection between literary imagination of the region and political ideas is not demonstrated. Susan Layton and Ewa M. Thompson present the study of Pushkin and other poets, but there is no other side of the dialogue between power and literature. The authors do not show the traces of the literary representation in the political documents. Based on Said’s theory the contribution of literature to the development of Russian Imperialism is supposed. Imperialism as “apparently boundless imperial ambition” is attributed to policy without any discussion.

To reveal the connection between representation of the region, as it was interpreted by Susan Layton, and political action, I think, it is necessary to study the political programs and other documents, prepared by the decision makers of the epoch.

Thus, I think it is possible to conclude, that the importance of the theory of Orientalism by Edward Said in the study of the Russian Empire lies in the use of an approach, which analyzes relations between the creation of knowledge about the East, construction of the image of Asia in perception of different social and political groups, formation of the Russian self-identification and implementation of the colonial policy. At the same time, it is necessary to emphasize, that this approach will open new cognitive possibilities for historians if it is

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<sup>90</sup> Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*, 178

applied to an investigation of each case taking into account the peculiar context of the sociopolitical situation, place and time.

I think, it is possible to conclude that in the contemporary historiography Russian advance and conquest of Transcaucasia have been mainly studied through the prism of three concepts: colonialism, theories of frontiers and orientalism. It is necessary to mention that two of these three approaches: studies of colonialism and orientalism were developed with the reference to the experience of the overseas empires. It is possible to claim that the direct application of these concepts for historical study of the policies in any particular regions impossible. I think, study of the main concepts of the Russian Empire's advancement is important in two aspects. First, it allows me to consider Russian policies in Transcaucasia in the broad context of the Russian advancement in other borderlands and the colonial experience of the other empires. Second, the review of the concepts allows me to indicate the main theoretical "reference points" for an analysis of the projects of the development of Transcaucasia. It is possible to distinguish the following "guiding lines" for analysis of the Russian Transcaucasian projects which will help me to reveal the peculiarities of the Russian representation of the region and strategies of its development. First, it is necessary to trace the main aspects of the representation of the region and how this representation was correlated with notion of "colony" and formulation of the Russian "civilizing mission" in the region. Second, it is necessary to trace the correlation between the ideas of the establishment of the colony and attitudes towards the administrative, economic, social and cultural integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian imperial system. Third, from the point of view of frontier theory, two latter questions could be formulated as how the complex of interaction in Transcaucasia was perceived by the authors of the projects and what strategies of dealing with this complex were suggested in these projects.

## **Chapter 2. The Formulation of Ideas on the role of Transcaucasia in the Russian Imperial Policies.**

In this chapter I will deal with the representation of Transcaucasia and the formulation of ideas on the role and development of the region under the control of the Russian empire. The question of the civilian development of the region and the methods of its integration into the Russian Empire were raised during the early stages of the Russian expansion on the region, but this problems became especially important at the end of 1820s, when the border of the Russian Empire with the Persian and the Ottoman Empires in Transcaucasia were settled by the Turkmanchai (1828) and Adrianopol(1829) Peace Treaties correspondingly. The end of the wars called attention on the unresolved pre-war problems of the civil administration of Georgia and raised the complex question of the integration into the Empire of the newly acquired territories inhabited by a mixed population that was alien for the Russians. However, the elaboration and implementation of the plans of the integration of the region was hampered by the lack of information about Transcaucasia and vague understanding from what point of view the newly acquired territories should be treated. Russian literature of the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century created the ambiguous romantic image of the fascinating, alluring and dangerous land. This representation could be a part of the public discourse on Transcaucasia, but , I think , the influence of the literary works on the ideas of the policy-makers remains unclear. The author of the critique on the “Overview of the Russian possessions in Transcaucasia...” mentioned that Caucasus was known mainly from its poetical side, but not as a province, which nature had innumerable sources of wealth<sup>91</sup>. Thus, one of the primary tasks towards

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<sup>91</sup> Review of “Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskome, etnograficheskom, topograficheskom i finansovom otnosheniyah” (Overview of the Russian possessions in Transcaucasia in

Transcaucasia at the end of 1820s was to collect information about the region and to formulate a position, which would define and justify the strategy of the region's integration into the Russian Empire.

In this chapter I'd like to demonstrate that the "colony" was the most popular, but not the most self-evident and undisputable concept which was attributed to Transcaucasia in defining its place in the Russian Imperial system. In the first sub-chapter I will indicate the main aspects of the representation of the region in the descriptions of Transcaucasia, which preceded the emergence of the projects. The second sub-chapter is devoted to the main aspects of the formulation of the ideology of the Russian policies in Transcaucasia. It is necessary to emphasize that I concentrate on the aspects both of the representation of the region and ideas of the Russian mission, which became the part of the argumentation in the discussion on the strategy of the integration of the region into the Russian Empire. That is why my analysis is based on the documents, mainly descriptions, of Transcaucasia, which ideas were reflected in the projects of the development of the region at the end of 1820s -1830s.

I concentrate mainly on the study of the documents, connected with activity of the administrations of the commanders-in-chief in Caucasus Ivan Fedorovich Paskevich (1828-1831) and Grigorii Vladimirovich Rozen (1831-1837) and central empire's officials at the same period. These documents are the correspondence of the state functionaries (Minister of Finance Egor Frantsevich Kankrin, Paskevich, Rozen, Paskevich's assistant Griboedov, military governor of Tiflis Sipyagin, civil governor of Georgia Zavileyskii and others), and also the results of the expeditions and revisions of Transcaucasia, published in separate books or in the main "thick" journals of that time. The analysis of these documents allows me to

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statistical, ethnographic, topographic and financial respects"), *Biblioteka dlya chtenia, zhurnal slovesnosti, nauk, hudozhestv, promyshlennosti, novostey i mod.*, vol. 26, section 5, (1838): 2

indicate both the main aspects of the representation of the region and the main ideas of the concept of the civilizing mission. It is necessary to dwell attention on one of the most influential descriptions of Transcaucasia “*Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskoy, etnograficheskoy, topograficheskoy i finansovoy otnosheniyah*” (The Overview of the Russian possessions in Transcaucasia in statistical, ethnographic, topographic and financial respects)<sup>92</sup> (then to refer to this work I will use “*Obozrenie...*”) This “*Obozrenie...*” was initiated by Minister of Finance Kankrin in 1827 and then supported by administrator-in-chief Paskevich. The information was collected by the functionaries of the Ministry of Finance in 1828-1835 and published in 1836<sup>93</sup>. The aim of the “*Obozrenie...*” was to provide a complex description of the region, which includes the demonstration of its “rich” natural resources, and way of life, economic behavior, values and traditions of the local population. Ultimate purpose of the work was to prove the idea of the establishment of the colony in Transcaucasia. The “*Obozrenie...*” received different reactions and became the center of the discussion on the question of colony in Transcaucasia<sup>94</sup>. Among the other authors it is worth mentioning that the results of the revision of the region by senators Kutaisov and Mechnikov (1829-1831) and Hahn (1837).

In addition to representation of Transcaucasia in Russian sources, foreign sources also played an important role in formation of the perception of Transcaucasia in Russian elite. The idea of colony was declared by Kankrin and other bureaucrats before the official expeditions

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<sup>92</sup> “*Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeniy za Kavkazom v statisticheskoy, etnograficheskoy, topograficheskoy i finansovoy otnosheniyah*” (Overview of the Russian possessions in Transcaucasia in statistical, ethnographic, topographic and financial respects), 4 volumes, (Saint Petersburg: Department of Foreign Trade, 1836).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 11-16

<sup>94</sup> Gagemeyster, “O nadezhдах Zakavkazskogo kraya kak kolonii” (On expectancies of the Transcaucasian land as a colony), *Biblioteka dlya chteniya*, vol. 30., section 4., (1838) :1-7; Shopen. *Nekotoryye zamechaniia na knigu Obozrenie rossiiskih vladenii Za Kavkazom, sostavlennoye chlenom-korrespondentom statisticheskogo otdeleniia soveta Ministerstva Vnutrennih Del* (Shopen, Some remarks on the book Overview of the Russian possessions in Transcaucasia, composed by corresponding member of the section of statistics of the council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs), (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia of V. A. Plushara, 1840)

started to explore the territory. The task of the authors of the "Obozrenie..." was not to understand whether it is possible or not to establish a colony, but to confirm the supposed rich natural resources of the land. In the discussion on the resources of the region the officials even refer to the stories of the ancient authors<sup>95</sup> and myths about Argonauts and the Golden Fleece<sup>96</sup>. More important sources were the travelogues, notes, description of the expeditions of the foreign and Russian (they could be subjects of the Russian Empire of the foreign origin or foreigners on the Russian service) naturalist and travelers, like Iogann Antonovich Gyuldenshtedt and Baron Friedrich Marschall von Biberstein at the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century) Johann-Friedrich von Parrot in 1810s, French travelers Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux, Julius von Klaproth, and French consul in Tiflis Jacques-Francois Gamba in 1830s and many others<sup>97</sup>.

It is necessary to mention that for the most part the documents and the ideas of the authors on the representation of Transcaucasia and its population coincide. That is why, I think it is possible to assert that there was a common view of the region among the officials dealing with Transcaucasia. The exception is the difference of opinions in the consideration of climate and natural resources of the region.

### ***2.1. Representation of Transcaucasia in the projects of the region's development***

In the analysis of the representation of Transcaucasia I will concentrate on the aspects, which I think, influence the formulation of the Russian ideologies and the strategies of the

<sup>95</sup> Minister of Finance Kankrin in the letter to Sipyagin in 1827, in: AKAK, v. 7, doc. № 11, p.70-71

<sup>96</sup> One of the authors of the "Obozrenie..." Pavel Vysheslavitsev in his article on Transcaucasia. Vysheslavitsev P., "Vzglyad na Zakavkaz'e v hozyaystvennom i torgovom otnosheniiakh ego k Rossii" ( View on Transcaucasia in its economic and trade relation with Russia), *Syn Otechestva*, vol. 166 (1834) : 29

<sup>97</sup> The references of these and other works of travelers in: "Obozrenie..." , p. II-III; Shopen, Some remarks on the book Overview of the Russian possessions in Transcaucasia, 2; AKAK, vol. 8, 17-18



incorporation of the region into the Russian Empire: the perception of the geopolitical changes, the characteristics of the local population, and the discussion on the idea of the colony in Transcaucasia, which is connected with the question of the definition of “colony” and the evaluation of the resources of the region.

How did the settlement of the borders in 1828 and 1829 the borders in Transcaucasia between the Russian Empire and the Persian and the Ottoman Empires change the perception of the geopolitical situation in the region by the Russian officials? The functionaries of the Ministry of Finance in their "Obozrenie..." considered these changes as the beginning of the new epoch in the politics both in Transcaucasia and in Asia. This new epoch is characterized by several aspects. First, Russia's role in Transcaucasia turned from being the neighboring country- protector of these lands to being the possessor of the land and the absolute lord of the local people<sup>98</sup>. Second, the Treaty of Turkmanchai established the natural border (“Araks river and mountains”) between the Russian and Persian possessions<sup>99</sup>. Third, Russia had won a decisive victory in the inter-imperial rivalry in the region over the neighboring empires, gained strong political influence on Persia and Turkey and significantly increased its power in Asia<sup>100</sup>. If the authors of the "Obozrenie..." claim that the victory was achieved at the cost of the blood and the suffering of crossing from one climatic zone into another one, another apologist of the Russian colonialism, Vladimir Mikhailov, emphasizes the factor of the Russian superiority in education and enlightenment. Mikhailov also claims that, in contrast to America, where the rivalry between the equally enlightened European empires threatened the colonies of these empires, in the Russian Asian borderlands there are no dangerous competitors, which are able to threaten the Russian possessions there, because of the inferiority

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<sup>98</sup> *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeniy za Kavkazom*, 3, 6

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 4

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7

of the neighbors, especially in sense of the level of their enlightenment. Mikhailov considers this fact as favorable factor for the organization of the colony in Transcaucasia<sup>101</sup>. Another consequence of the treaties of 1828-29, which, according to the reviewer of the "Obozrenie...", was missed by its authors, is the transformation of the territory of the Don Cossacks and the Caucasus oblast from the borderlands into the internal Russian province, which make these territories much more secure, then they used to be<sup>102</sup>.

I think it is possible to assert that from the speculations of the authors of the "Obozrenie..." and Vladimir Mikhailov, at least two aspects of the justification of the establishment of the colonial rule in Transcaucasia follow. First, Russia paid a high price for the victory and has a right for a kind of reward, which can be achieved through the exploitation of the newly acquired territories. Second, Russia played as a European power in the struggle with the Asiatic empires and, that is why, Russia, like other European enlightened powers, should have colonies, Russia can bring to the colonies the ideas of order, laws of Christianity civic consciousness and enlightenment<sup>103</sup>, and, finally, Russia should not be afraid of the rivalry of the inferior Asiatic countries.

As the result of the Russian expansion in the eastern Caucasus at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and two Russian-Persian wars in 1806-1813 and 1826-28 the Russian Empire acquired the territories, inhabited by the Muslim Turks (defined as "Tatars" in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century) and Armenians. In terms of the theory of frontiers, Russia acquired a part of the frontier zone along with the border with the Persian and Ottoman Empires, which was inhabited by the people of the same ethnic groups. The settlement of the border raised at least

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<sup>101</sup> Vladimir Mikhailov, "O mogushey byt polze ot kloniy" ( On the possible benefits from colonies), *Syn Otechestva*, vol. 153, (1832), 212

<sup>102</sup> Shopen. *Nekotorye zamechaniia na knigu Obozrenie rossiiskih vladenii Za Kavkazom*, 3

<sup>103</sup> Vladimir, Mikhailov, " O mogushey byt polze ot kloniy", 159-160

two main problems with the local population, the problem of their loyalty to the Empire and the organization of the migration from one Empire into the other one . In 1828 Paskevich informed adjutant-general Dibich, that it was possible to consider at the beginning of the war with Persia in 1826 that almost all inhabitants of the Muslim provinces came over to the Persian side and allied with the escaped khans<sup>104</sup>. Another problem was the migration of the Armenians from Persia to the new lands of the Russian empire, which were inhabited mainly by the Muslims. The short-term solution of the first problem was defined by the Treaty of Turkmanchai with Persia. The sides agreed not to demand extraditions of deserters (soldiers escaped from the army, often to the enemy's side) and, at the same time, not to allow deserts to settle and take up their residence in the districts , defined in the Treaty (in Persia the territories along the border were prohibited for the persons defined by the Russian government, and in the Russian Empire the khanates of Karabagh, Nakhichevan and partly Erevan were closed for deserters from Persia)<sup>105</sup>. This point was applied for the figures, who could influence other people (like khans, beqs and spiritual authorities), but usual people could migrate from one state to another and to settle at any place which was permitted by the government. In long-term perspective the problem could be solved, according to Paskevich, through the integration of the Muslim population and their institutions into the Russian imperial systems. Count Paskevich defined the measures, which should be taken into account by the Committee, which was responsible for the elaboration of the project on the governing of the Muslim provinces. These measures (transformation of the nomadic way of life of the local people into sedentary one, organization of the militia, which staff should consist of local people and the involvement of the local

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<sup>104</sup> AKAK, vol. 7, doc № 366

<sup>105</sup> Turkmanchaiskii mirnyi dogovor mezhdru Rossiei I Iranom (The Peace Treaty of Turkmanchai) Article 14, in : Griboedov, A.S., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Complete set of works) Vol. 3, (Saint Petersburg: Institute Russkoi Literatury RAN( Pushkinskii Dom), Publishing house "Dmitrii Bulanin", 2006), 383

people into the development of the local industry)<sup>106</sup> fit the ideas of the civilizing of the local population. Paskevich also suggested organizing the local religious authorities in the organs leaded by one mujtahid on the patterns of the Russian consistories (organ of the administration in the local eparchies)<sup>107</sup>. In regard to the organization of the migration of the Armenians to the Russian Empire, the idea of the local imperial administration was to resettle the Armenians on the free lands and preclude the conflicts between the Armenians, Muslims and imperial authorities because of land. Such a conflict could break the loyalty of the Muslims to the Empire.<sup>108</sup>

Thus, I think it is possible to conclude that the imperial authorities perceived the results of the wars with Turkey and Persia as the crucial changes in the geopolitical situation in the region which turned Transcaucasia into being a part of the Russian empire and raised the question of its civilian development of the territory, which ultimately will solve the problem of the loyalty of the frontier population.

The attitude of the Russian officials towards the local population can be traced through the study of the materials of the expeditions and ethnographic descriptions, like the "Obozrenie..." and, also, through the study of the argumentation of the functionaries in the discussion on the various questions, like the punishment for theft<sup>109</sup>, the introduction of the guild system<sup>110</sup> or the development of the arable farming in the region<sup>111</sup>.

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<sup>106</sup> AKAK, vol.7, doc. №368, p. 424

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., doc.№ 370, p. 425

<sup>108</sup> Griboedov, A. S., *Zapiska o pereselenii armyan iz Persii v nashi oblasti 18-25 sentyabrya 1828* (Note on the resettlement of the Armenians from Persia to our territories), in Griboedov, A.S., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol 3, p.321-324.

<sup>109</sup> AKAK, vol. 7, doc. №38, p.22

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., vol. 7, doc. №112, p.150-151

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., Vol.7, doc.№117, 119, 123, p. 156-163.

The common notion, which is used for the definition of almost all the groups of the local population is “Asiatic people” (*Aziiatzy*), inferior to the Russian and Europeans. This notion means that being on their level of development, these people are not able to govern and to develop economy efficiently. The inferior morality of the most part of the local people is also an indicator of their “Asiatic character”.

Russian authorities maintained that most of the local nobility was incompetent for administration. Paskevich in his argumentation for the appointment of assessors in the low-level local police boards claims, admitting the position of the previous commander-in chief Ermolov, that Georgian nobility is useless for the purposes of administration and justice, because its representatives are not active, industrious and diligent and they are not familiar with the notions of order.

The local Asiatic people are also not able to make any significant improvements in economy. There are several explanations of this incapacity, but most of them can be reduced to the absence of any aspiration for change. The local people live and enjoy life in the conditions of the abundant nature. These people are satisfied by the products, which they have, in other words, the level and culture of their consumption does not motivate them to introduce any innovations<sup>112</sup>. The lack of education and proper habits is one of the arguments in the decision of the Russian State Council to refuse to introduce the guild system in the Caucasus. It is necessary to mention that the decision of the State Council emphasizes that the introduction of his system in another borderland – Bessarabia can not be a pattern for Transcaucasia,

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<sup>112</sup> From explanation of the necessity to resettle peasants to Georgia, letter of adjutant-general Stekalov to Count Kankrin, AKAK, vol.7, doc № 139, 181.

because of the significant difference between the territories, as well as character, beliefs and customs of the populations of these regions<sup>113</sup>.

Another aspect of the “Asiatic” character of the local people is the low standards of their morality. Such definitions as ‘deceit’, ‘lie’, ‘flattery’, ‘distrust’, ‘pretense’, ‘rapacity’ and others are referred in a varying degree to all ethnic groups of Transcaucasia<sup>114</sup>. Another problem, mainly of the Christian population, is the weakening of their proper religious feelings, which is one of the main reasons of the substitution of the law by the local savage customs, like the blood feud, or Muslim traditions, such as bride purchase<sup>115</sup>.

One of the main aspects of the representation of the peoples of Transcaucasia is the idea that all above-mentioned negative characteristics are not steady and unchangeable. The incapacity for the economic or political development is not congenital, it is more a result of the complex of the circumstances of the existence of these people.

It is possible to distinguish three main aspects of these circumstances. First, the legacy of the many centuries of the Asiatic domination over the region. This aspect is especially important for the Christian Georgians and Armenians. The main idea, which explain the Asiatic character of these and some other ethnic groups can be found in the most part of the descriptions of these peoples. This idea is that the Georgians and Armenians lost their own, original character and had to change their virtues to those of the evil habits of their oppressors<sup>116</sup>. Thus, the main causes of the disadvantages of the local people, including Tatars, are neither their religion nor ethnic origin, but the circumstances of their survival under the

<sup>113</sup> AKAK, vol.7, doc № 112, 150-151

<sup>114</sup> Example: description of the Georgians and Armenians in Tiflis, in: *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeny za Kavkazom*, p. 71

<sup>115</sup> From the description of the Ossetians, in *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeny za Kavkazom*, Vol. 2 , 191-199

<sup>116</sup> The idea is clearly articulated in Klaproth’s description of Armenia, in: Klaproth, *Opisanie Rossiskoy Armenii*, in: *Biblioteka dlya chtenia*, 1834, vol. 4., section 3., 7

conditions of the despotic, Asiatic regime of the Persians<sup>117</sup>. For example the authors of the "Obozrenie..." differ the Armenians of the Bambako-Shuragilskaya distance (district), which was the part of Georgia and the Armenians of the newly acquired territories from Persia. The Georgian Armenians have such qualities as civility and courtesy in contrast to the meanness of the Armenians, former subjects of Persia<sup>118</sup>. At the same time it is necessary to note that Alexander Griboedov in his argumentation for the resettlement of the "Persian" Armenians, mentioned that the Georgian Armenians are mainly shopkeepers and useless for the state treasury, but the resettlers from Persia are craftsmen and ploughmen and that is why much more useful than the Georgian Armenians<sup>119</sup>.

Another aspect, which predetermined the inferiority of some groups of the local population, is their nomadic way of life. This idea can be traced in the argumentation of Paskevich in 1829 on the necessity to decrease the punishment for petty theft. The assumption of Paskevich is that this crime is not very serious according to the wild customs of some local groups and that is why the punishment for this crime could be commuted. The question was, for which groups of the population, defined as savage, this regulation could be applied. Previous commander-in-chief Ermolov suggested to apply this rule to the mountaineers. There was an idea to extend the regulation to the Muslims and the Ossetians. The argument of Paskevich was that in many localities the behavior of the Muslims does not differ from the behavior of the Armenians and other groups. The number of thefts depends not on the ethnic origin or religion, but on the way of life of the particular groups. The vice of theft is a feature of the semi-wild mountaineers, nomads and semi-sedentary tribes. The success in the struggle

<sup>117</sup> By the same factor the authors of the "Obozrenie..." explain the behavior of Tatars in the provinces of the former North-west Iran, see: *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladenyi za Kavkazom*, vol. 3, 81

<sup>118</sup> *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladenyi za Kavkazom*, vol. 2, 305

<sup>119</sup> A. S. Griboedov, *Zapiska o pereselenii armyan iz Persii v nashi oblasti 18-25 sentyabrya 1828*, 324

with such vices as a theft can be achieved through the spread of education and the transformation of the nomads into a sedentary population. Thus, the nomadic character of life is one of the indicators and causes of the inferiority of the part of the local population.

One more factor that, according to the "Obozrenie..." and other descriptions of the region, hampers the economic development of the part of the region is the Muslim religion. The Muslims are often more religious than the Georgians and Armenians and their moral state can be higher, than , the other groups; for example, as the "Obozrenie..." mentions, the Tatar women care more about chastity, than the Armenian women<sup>120</sup>. However the characteristics of the religion, such as a blind and fanatic faith, further the feelings of submission and slavery, and prevent the development of the intellectual abilities and economic skills of the population.

However, as it was mentioned, the characteristics of the local population, which hamper their development were not considered as inherited, permanent and unchangeable. The authors of the "Obozrenie..." emphasize that, thanks to the advanced attitudes of the Russian government, the local population is not in position of "Negroes"<sup>121</sup>. It was supposed that each of the groups of the local people has its own potential, which could be developed under the favorable conditions of the Russian rule. The Georgians and the Ossetians have more developed abilities for enlightenment, than the other peoples. The Armenians also have quick mind and even narrow-minded Tatars, according to the "Obozrenie...", "at all times do many useful things". According to the authors, to develop all these peoples, it is necessary to motivate them by the examples of more progressive behavior<sup>122</sup>. These attitudes can be explained by ideas on progress in the development of people, which were popular among the Russian elite.

<sup>120</sup> *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeny za Kavkazom*, vol. 3, 280

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 8

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 63, 118, vol.2 , 192



The idea is that the Russians and the peoples of Transcaucasia are not the representatives of different, superior and inferior, civilizations, but they belong to different stages in the development of one common civilization or culture. It means that at previous stages of their history, the Russians were at the same level of development as the people of the Orient, including Transcaucasia, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This idea can be traced in the descriptions of the political and legal cultures of the local population. For explanation of the relations between khanates and subjects, the authors of the "Obozrenie..." refer to the relations between the Russian princes and their subjects several centuries ago<sup>123</sup>. The Georgian law code of king Vakhtang VI reminded to of the Russian and European regulations in the Middle Ages to the authors of the "Obozrenie..."<sup>124</sup>. The researchers of the activity of Alexander Griboedov also notes, that the writer and diplomat considered the Orient as a backward culture, similar to Russian culture in its pre-European days. To prove this idea the fragment from Griboedov's travel notes, is usually quoted. This fragment describes the visit of diplomat to a Kadzhar prince Sardar Hussein-Khan in Erevan in February, 1819: "I was transported to our homeland two hundred years ago. The host seemed to me a genial Muscovite, offering sustenance to foreign guests, the farashes were as the members of his household, and I [was] Olearius. The strong drink, raw vegetables and dishes of sweet foods-all this aided the transport of my thoughts to our olden days..."<sup>125</sup>. Researcher of the Griboedov's activity M. V. Stroganov interprets the Griboedov's understanding of the relations between Russia and Asia as the

<sup>123</sup> *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeny za Kavkazom*, vol. 1, 70

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 128-130

<sup>125</sup> Griboedov A. S., *Putevye zametki* (Travel notes), in Griboedov, A.S., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol 2, .302-303. The translation is quoted from: Angela, Britlinger, "Persian Frontier: Griboedov as Orientalist and Literary Hero," in *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, (Sep-Dec, 2003) [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3763/is\\_200309/ai\\_n9281341](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3763/is_200309/ai_n9281341), 16.05.2007

conflict between two stages of the development of one culture. This idea, according to Stroganov, is influenced by the theory of progress of Giambattista Vico<sup>126</sup>.

Thus, it is possible to assert that the local people were represented as the inferior in comparison with the Russian and Europeans, but capable of development under favorable conditions of Russian rule.

Another aspect of the representation of Transcaucasia is the attitudes of the travelers and the Russian officials towards the nature, climate and resources of the region. It is possible to distinguish two main positions in these questions. The first depicts Transcaucasia as an El Dorado, a land of plentiful natural resources, which is waiting for the people able to cultivate it. The supporters of the other position focus on the various problems and dangers of the Transcaucasian nature. The ideas of the first group are expressed on the "Obozrenie..." and several articles, devoted to this description of the region. According to these works, the main advantage of Transcaucasia is that it combines various types of climate, soil and mineral resources in comparatively small, but well situated parcels of land between two seas. These factors create the opportunities for the development of the various branches of production and trade and make it possible to transform the poor province into a flourishing and profitable one similar to an Empire colony. The author of the review of the "Obozrenie..." exclaims that none of the English colonies can be compared with Transcaucasia in the diversity of its resources and culture on such a small territory<sup>127</sup>. The opponents of this position stress the various problems of the region. The first problem is the insalubrity of the local climate, especially for

<sup>126</sup> M. V. Stroganov, "Narody Vostoka v poeticheskoy realnosti I realnoi politike Griboedova" (The peoples of the Orient in the poetic reality and the real policy of Griboedov), in *Khmelitskii sbornik*, (Smolensk., 1998), p. 57.

<sup>127</sup> "Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeniy za Kavkazom...", Review, in: *Biblioteka dlya chtenia*, 1838, vol. 26, section 5, 2-3

the new settlers. This argument can be proved by the facts cited in the correspondence of the Russian officials. For example, the Minister of internal Affairs informs Count Paskevich, that from 91 families, which established the colony (settlement) Annensfeld in 1819 by 1831 only 48 families remained. The other families died because of the unhealthy climate and diseases<sup>128</sup>.

The critic of the "Obozrenie...", Shopen, indicates two other problems crucial for the perspectives of the colonization: shortage of arable land and shortage of water. The author demonstrates that it was difficult to find free lands for the German settlers in 1819 and sectarians. The plans of the development of plantations in 1834 also failed, because the necessary free lots of land were not found<sup>129</sup>. Thus all these problems cast doubt on the representation of Transcaucasia as a new Russian El Dorado.

The nature and the resources of Transcaucasia received different evaluations, but most of them were connected with the notion of colony. It is possible to assert that at the end of 1820s – very beginning of 1830s, when the role of the military and strategic interests relatively decreased,<sup>130</sup> Transcaucasia mainly was represented in the ideas of its development through the notion of "colony". The idea of colony was not an only role attributed to Transcaucasia. The region still was considered as an important military bridgehead, territory of the trade transit and even as a quarantine barrier against the spread of diseases from Asia<sup>131</sup>. It is necessary to emphasize that Transcaucasia was not considered as a colony, but in the discussion on the future of the region the most popular claim was that Transcaucasia was the suitable place for the establishment of a colony.

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<sup>128</sup> AKAK, vol 7, p. 243

<sup>129</sup> Shopen. *Nekotorye zamechaniia na knigu Obozrenie rossiiskih vladenii Za Kavkazom*, 136-138

<sup>130</sup> The role of the military factor increased in 1830s with the beginning of the new stages in The Caucasus War (in The North Caucasus)

<sup>131</sup> *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeniy za Kavkazom*, vol. 1, 12-13, 89

It is arguable that the notion of “colony” and the question of the application of this notion to the case of Transcaucasia was not elaborated by the Russian administrators. The Russian officials had a rather abstract idea of “colony” and “colonial rule”, which was based and borrowed from the experience of the overseas empires. The fact that the idea of “colony” for Transcaucasia was borrowed follows from the way how the “colony” was defined by the Russian bureaucrats. In the correspondence with the Minister of Finance Kankrin on the tariffs and the perspectives of the industry in Transcaucasia, Paskevich makes a “classical” definition of a “colony” as a source of materials for the factories of the metropolis and the market for the products of these factories<sup>132</sup>. The authors of the "Obozrenie..." indicate one more component of the “colony”. It should be a territory in the South, or, at least, a territory, which Russia can substitute for the colonies of the other empires in India and the South America<sup>133</sup>. For the apologists of the establishment of the colony in Transcaucasia it is a common idea, that this region should substitute for Russia America and the Eastern India<sup>134</sup>.

The authors of the "Obozrenie..." claim that Transcaucasia should be a Russian colony, but they emphasize, that to become a colony it should be better developed in economic sense. One of the obstacles of this development is the “Asiatic character” of “*obshee ustroistvo*” (“general order”, I think it can be interpreted as the political, social and economic order) of the different lands in the region<sup>135</sup>. In other words, to transfer the territory into the state of colony it is necessary to overcome its “Asiatic character” or to raise the order and the people of these lands on the new stage of development, which will create the conditions for the exploitation of the region. I think it is arguable that it was assumed that at a new stage of development, the

<sup>132</sup> AKAK, vol 7, doc. № 108, p. 243

<sup>133</sup> *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeny za Kavkazom*, vol. 1, 31

<sup>134</sup> Mikhailov, Vladimir, O mogushey byt polze ot klonyi, 157-159.

<sup>135</sup> *Obozrenie rossiiskih vladeny za Kavkazom*, vol. 1, 12-13

people and orders of the territory would be closer to the orders and population of the metropolis, i.e Russians, in social, political and cultural aspects .

The patterns and methods of the overcoming the “Asiatic” character can be considered through distinguishing of main aspects of the Russian “civilizing mission”.

## ***2.2. Formulation of the ideology of the Russian policies in the projects of the region’s development***

In 1820-30s the Russian Empire did not have any unified and formulated ideology of its policy in Transcaucasia, which could determine and justify the purposes of this policy. At the same time it is possible to trace in the projects a number of ideas, which justify the strategies of the development of the region, suggested in these projects. Most of the projects have similar ideas and it is possible to distinguish some common tendencies in the formulation of the Russian mission in Transcaucasia. The main idea of a kind of “generalized” ideology is defined by the term “*sbliizhenie*” (rapprochement) of the local population and institutions with the Russian and therefore European ones. Different projects suppose different aspects, spheres and patterns of rapprochement. The idea of rapprochement has two purposes: first, overcoming of the “Asiatic” character of the local people (civilizing the people), second, rapprochement allows the Russian imperial authorities to make the region, its population and institutions understandable and suitable for the patterns of the imperial governing. In terms of the frontier theory, I think, rapprochement means the structuring of the complex of the interactions and processes typical for frontier according to the usual for the empire patterns and ultimate incorporation of the frontier into the united imperial system.

To understand and to define “*sbližhenie*” (rapprochement) in the terms of “acculturation” and “assimilation”<sup>136</sup> it is necessary to separate the “short-term” and the “long-term”, remote purposes of “*sbližhenie*” as well as it is necessary to separate abstract desires and intentions of the policy-makers from the purposes of their plans and policies. It is also necessary to emphasize there was no unified understanding of “*sbližhenie*”. If the Minister of Finance Kankrin rejected any ideas on cultural rapprochement, senators Kutaisov and Mechnikov defined one of the main aims of their project as “to make local people speak, think and feel in Russian” (“zastavit tamoshnikh zhiteley govorit, myslit’ i chuvstvovat po-russki”) <sup>137</sup>. Nevertheless, it is still possible to assert that in the most projects the possibilities of assimilation were placed in the remote future as the reference points, but not the purposes of the suggested policies.

I think, in the “short-term” and the “medium-term” perspective, the ideas of the rapprochement in the projects can be interpreted in terms of “acculturation”. The idea of “*sbližhenie*” (rapprochement) is linked with the aspiration to establish order in the region, which was considered as the base for its development. Rapprochement was considered also as one of the main factors of the loyalty of the local population and the efficiency of the administration. Mainly “*sbližhenie*” (rapprochement) means the transformation of the rules, institutions, way of life and economic behavior into a Russian pattern. At the same time

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<sup>136</sup> For the discussion on the correlation between the concepts of “acculturation”, “assimilation” and “russification” in the context of the Russian Empire, please, see: Alexei Miller, *Imperia Romanovykh i natsionalizm: Esse po metodologii istoricheskogo issledovaniia* (The Empire of the Romanovs and nationalism: Esse on the methodology of the historical study) (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2006), 54-77. Here I admit the definitions of acculturation as “internalization of new cultural models borrowed in the course of contacts with another community” and assimilation as “a process of appropriation, of the inclusion in a new community, adoption of a new world view, new traditions and emotional attachments”. (Alexei Miller, *Imperia Romanovykh i natsionalizm*, p. 58)

<sup>137</sup> *Kolonial’naia politika rossiskogo tsarizma v Azerbaidzhane v 20-60 gg. 19v.* (Colonial policy of the Russian tsarism in Azerbaijan in 1820-1860s, vol.1 (Moscow, Leningrad, 1936), doc. № 22, 280)

different projects assumes different policies in education, particularly in study of the Russian and local languages, and in the religious sphere.

Here I will focus on the main aspects and the methods of rapprochement and civilizing process.

The obvious aspect of the civilizing is the introduction of the education and enlightenment of the indigenous population. The ultimate purpose of the education is the rapprochement in morals, customs and laws. The spread of education means the establishment of the uyezd (district) schools and gymnasium in Tiflis. Paskevich suggested studying in all district schools the Russian language, but also in Georgia – the Georgian language, and in the Muslim provinces – the Tatar language<sup>138</sup>. But senator Hahn in his project casts doubt on the necessity to teach the local languages, which, according to the senator, will separate the local people from the Russians.

The introduction of education also aimed at the integration of the local elite into the Russian imperial elite. In 1828 Paskevich argued for the establishment of the boarding house in order to separate the noblemen's children from their parents and to ensure the efficiency of the study of the Russian language<sup>139</sup>. The project of Mechnikov-Kutaisov-Paskevich, suggests that at the age of 12 children of the local noblemen should be sent for education to Moscow or Petersburg. After the completion of education these young people should work in Russia no less than five years. These measures, according to the authors of the project, could weaken "Mahometian belief and draw young people close to the Russians" It is necessary to note that these measures were a part of the plan of the creation of Muslim and Armenian noble class on

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<sup>138</sup> AKAK, vol. 7, doc. № 69, p. 62

<sup>139</sup> AKAK, vol. 7, doc. № 73, p. 64

the pattern of the Russian nobility. That is why the steps in education, which is higher than elementary , were applied to the children of the local nobility, but not to all young people.

Education was obvious, but not the most efficient part of the civilizing process. According to Paskevich and his supporters, the efficiency of the civilizing mission could be achieved through imposing of the Russian administrative institutes and regulations. The idea of civilizing became the argument of the commander-in-chief for the unification of the region with the Russian administrative system<sup>140</sup>. Different projects suggested different pace and degree of the introduction of the Russian institutions, but the common idea was that imposing of the Russian patterns of the state order was the important factor of the social “learning” and civilizing. The question of the resettlement is also considered by Paskevich in the connection with the civilizing mission. The settlers, who know the agricultural economy, could demonstrate the best example of the farming for the indigenous people<sup>141</sup>. The transformation of the nomads into the sedentary is also the part of the civilizing project, suggested by the administration of Paskevich.

Another aspect of the civilizing mission is also connected with the idea of order. Russia is defined as a pacifier of Transcaucasia. During the previous periods of the RussianTranscaucasian relations, the Empire played the role of the protector and ensured the survival of local ethnic groups, but after the end of the wars the Russian role turned to being a “pacifier” of the region. The Russian Empire united the different and fighting with each other lands into one political entity. This unification, according to the authors of the "Obozrenie...", allows the local entities and people to overcome the their disagreements. This factor creates peaceful conditions not only for the economic development of the region, but also for the

<sup>140</sup> AKAK, vol. 7, doc. № 47, p.38-39

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., vol. 7, doc. № 47, p.38-39



“development of mind” of the indigenous people<sup>142</sup>. One of the examples of “pacification” is the decrease of the hostility between the Sunni and the Shiah in the Eastern Caucasus. It was caused, according to the "Obozrenie..." , by the equal relations of the imperial government with all sects, while under the khanates, depending on the territory, one of the sects oppressed the other one.

In general, rapprochement was mainly considered as a movement of the Transcaucasian people towards the Russian culture and customs, but at the same time, it is necessary to mention the idea of mutual confidence between the Russians and the indigenous people was raised by the authors of the "Obozrenie..." as one of the conditions for the development of Transcaucasia within the Russian Empire. The "Obozrenie..." called to overcome the notions of “conqueror” and “winner” in the relations between the Russians and local people and to develop mutual trust.

Thus the ideologies of the Russian policies in Transcaucasia were defined through the idea of rapprochement, which covers almost all aspects of the interaction between the Empire and the indigenous people. Rapprochement could include the measures, which today can be defined both as “assimilation” and “acculturation”.

Thus, I think it is possible to conclude that the idea of colony was rooted in the representation of Transcaucasia as a rich land, which could be profitable for the Empire. The local population, because of its “Asiatic” character was not able to develop the territory. This fact justifies not only the leading role of the Russians in the economic exploitation of the region, but first of all it puts the question of the overcoming of the “Asiatic” character of the population and their orders. This civilizing of the population (Russian civilizing mission) was supposed to be done with the help and leading role of Russian cultural and, depending on the

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<sup>142</sup> Obozrenie vol. 1, p.73

project, political, economic and social institutions. Civilizing supposes the rapprochement of the Transcaucasian population and their customs with the Russian order and ultimate unification of the political, social, economic and cultural structures of the region and the Empire.

### Chapter 3. Strategies of the civilian development of Transcaucasia

In this chapter, I will deal with the plans on the integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian imperial system. These plans were suggested by the functionaries of the Russian central and Transcaucasia administrations. The projects reflect the philosophical and political attitudes of the functionaries and their perception of Transcaucasia. The attitudes of the authors were also influenced by the positions, which they occupied in the imperial bureaucracy. I distinguish two kind of the projects: one assumed the establishment of the private company for the development of the region, the other assumed the leading role of the state in the integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian imperial system.

#### ***3.1. Idea of the Colonial Company in Transcaucasia (the project of the Russian Transcaucasian Company By Alexander Griboedov and Petr Zavileyskii)***

The idea of the Russian Transcaucasian Company (*Rossiiskaia Zakavkazskaia Komapniia*, also referred to here as the RTC) is the unique project among the other plans, devoted to the development of Transcaucasia and its integration into the Russian imperial system. The project supposes the significant role of the private actors in the development of the region, the establishment of the kind of the colonial company and a certain degree of its economic autonomy. The project had never been implemented and, it is doubtful that it had any chance to be realized. Nevertheless, the study of the project and the discussion over it can help to reveal the attitudes of the part of the Russian political elite towards the role of Transcaucasia in the Russian imperial politics and to understand possibilities for the implementation of the alternative ideas to the state-based strategies of the incorporation of Transcaucasia into the Russian Empire in 1820-1830s. The project was suggested by the

middle-rank, but influential figures in of the Russian administration in Caucasus – the assistant of the administrator-in chief and then the Russian Minister Plenipotentiary in Persia Alexander Sergeevich Griboedov and the chief of the regional treasury (*kazennaya expeditiia*) Petr Dem'anovich Zavilkeyskii .

Alexander Griboedov is one of the most outstanding and enigmatic figures in the history of the Russian culture. Griboedov is well-known as the author of the brilliant verse comedy “Woe from Wit” and one of the founders of the Russian dramatic art. But, Griboedov’s profession, in contrast to Pushkin’s one, was not literary , but political and diplomatic. In 1817 Griboedov was taken on the staff of the Collegium of the Foreign Affairs and in 1818 he was designated to the Russian Mission in Persia. In 1822 the young diplomat was appointed as the diplomatic assistant of the commander-in-chief in Caucasus Ermolov, but from February, 1823 till 1825 Griboedov had leave of absence. He came back to Caucasus in the autumn of 1825, but in January, 1826 Griboedov was arrested and accused of the participation in the Decembrists’ conspiracy. The accusations were not proved, the diplomat was released and he continued his work in Caucasus with the new chief Paskevich. In 1827 - 1828, at the end of the Russian –Persian war, Griboedov actively participated in the negotiations with the Persians. Griboedov became one of the main authors of the Treaty of Turkmanchai. This mission was resulted in the appointment of Griboedov as the Minister Plenipotentiary in Persia, responsible for the implementation of the Treaty. Before his departure to Tehran Griboedov got married to the 16-year-old daughter of the Georgian Prince Chavchavadze, Nino. On the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1829 a fanatic mob stormed the complex of the Russian mission in Tehran. Griboedov along with almost all members of the Russian mission,

except one, was slaughtered<sup>143</sup>. The project of the RTC had been signed by Griboedov and Zavileyskii scarcely a year earlier, on 17 of July, 1828.

It is possible to assert that not only Griboedov's plays, but his life became a phenomenon of the Russian culture. The "stormy" life, the activity and the tragic, but heroic end of the life of the playwrighter and diplomat is often perceived as the story of the literary hero. Angela Britlinger even asserts that Griboedov often himself represented his life as a story, Britlinger argues "not only did Griboedov's contemporaries conceive of his life as the life of a literary hero-ultimately writing a number of narratives featuring him as an essential character-but indeed Griboedov saw himself as a hero and his life as a narrative."<sup>144</sup> In this context, one of the last and one of the most significant works by Griboedov, the project of the RTC is considered as one of the final "poems", which introduced one more intrigue in the complicated final days of the writer-diplomat. The perception of the last years of the Griboedov's life and the admiration by his figure inevitably raise the emotions, which influence not only the literary works on Griboedov (from Pushkin to Tynyanov), but also the historical works, especially of the Russian authors. The works of the Soviet historians of the 1950-70s created the apologetic picture of the Griboedov's activity<sup>145</sup>. In that works the project of the RTC is interpreted through the reaction to it by the Decembrist Burtsov and "krepostnik" (advocate of serfdom) M. S. Zhukovskii. According to the Soviet historians, the

<sup>143</sup> About life and the death of Griboedov see: Angela Britlinger, "Persian Frontier: Griboedov as Orientalist and Literary Hero," ; Laurence Kelly, *Diplomacy and Murder in Tehran: Alexander Griboyedov and Imperial Russia's Mission to the Shah of Persia* (L., N.Y., Tauris, 2002); O. V. Orlik, "Tragicheskii konec diplomaticheskoi deyatelnosti A. S. Griboedova" (The tragic end of the diplomatic activity of A. S. Griboedov), in *Novaya I Noveyshaya Istoria*, №6, (1994): 147-171; E. N. Tsimbaeva, *Griboedov*. (Moscow: Molodaya Gvardiia, 2003);

<sup>144</sup> Angela Britlinger, "Persian Frontier: Griboedov as Orientalist and Literary Hero," [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3763/is\\_200309/ai\\_n9281341](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3763/is_200309/ai_n9281341), 17.05.2007

<sup>145</sup> Pashuto V.T. *Diplomaticheskaya deyatelnost A. S. Groboedova* (The Diplomatic Activity of A. S. Griboedov), in : *Istoricheskie zapiski*, 1947, vol. 24, p. 111-159.; Shostakovich, S. V. *Diplomaticheskaya deyatelnost Griboedova* (The Diplomatic Activity of Griboedov), (Moscow-Leningrad: Izadatelstvo Socialno-economicheskoi literatury, 1960); Popova O. I., *Griboedov –diplomat*, (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1964), Enikolopov., I. K., *Griboedov i Vostok* (Griboedov and the Orient), (Yerevan: Aistan, 1974)

representatives of the opposite camps, the “reactionary” and the “progressive” criticized the same project. Natan Yakovlevich Eidelman overcame this “tradition” by considering the project of Griboedov through the comments on it. The historian provides a fascinating analysis of the destiny of the project both through the Russian political and economic context of the 1820s and through the world outlook, literary work and even psychology of Griboedov. The author connects the “utopian” character of the project with the Griboedov’s idealism and the uniqueness of this figure for the Russian context of 1820s<sup>146</sup>.

I would like to consider the project of the RTC not only as a part of the Griboedov’s personal experience, but from the point of view of the discussion on the strategy of the incorporation of Transcaucasia into the Russian Imperial system.

Unfortunately, there is no one source that can provide the whole and complete text of the project. The researchers use three main sources to reconstruct the content of the project. The first one is the publication of the part of the project in the newspaper “Tiflisskie gubernskie vedomosti” in 1831. The autograph of this part is unknown. The second co-author of the project of the RTC P. D Zavileyskii published its first part as the introduction of his own plan of the Transcaucasian Trade Company. The second source is the covering letter to the project of the RTC, signed by Griboedov and Zavileyskii and submitted for the consideration to Paskevich in September, 1828. The autograph of this letter is kept in the fund of Paskevich in the Russian State Historical Archive. For the first time the letter was published in *Russkii vestnik* (1891, vol.216) in the article by A. Malshinskii. This letter clarifies several positions of the project. The first two sources were published in several collections of the Griboedov’s works. These documents are traditionally entitled as “*Vstuplenie < k projektu ustava > 17 iulya*

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<sup>146</sup> N. Y. Eidelman, *Byt mozhet za khrebtom Kavkaza* (Perhaps, beyond the wall of the Caucasus) (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), 150-168

1828” (Introduction to the project of the charter 17, July, 1828) and “*Zapiska ob uchrezhdenii Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii 9 sentyabrya 1828*” (Note on the establishment of the Russian Transcaucasian Company, 9, September, 1828). Last time these documents were published was in 2006 in the third volume of the complete set of works of Griboedov<sup>147</sup>. The third source is the synopsis of the whole project made by the general commissary (*general-intendant*) of the Caucasian Corps Mikhail Stepanovich Zhukovskii to make comments on the project. The autograph of the synopsis and the comments is kept in the fund of baron G. V. Rozen in the archive of the Russian State Historical Museum. These comments were published by O. P. Markova in 1951<sup>148</sup>. The content of the synopsis by Zhukovskii coincides, except several small differences, with the first part of the project, published by Zavileyskii, and the researchers believe that the rest of the notes, made by Zhukovskii reflect the structure and the main positions of the second part of the project of the RTC, which was not found. Thus the structure of the project is reconstructed on the base of three documents: publication of the first several parts of the project by Zavileyskii in 1831, the covering letter on the project, found in the documents of Paskevich and the synopsis and comments of the project made by general Zhukovskii<sup>149</sup>.

The project of the RTC is based on the same representation of Transcaucasia and its population as many other projects on the development of the region. This representation

<sup>147</sup> Griboedov, A.S., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Complete set of works) Vol. 3, 325-346

<sup>148</sup> O. P. Markova “Novye materialy o proekte Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii A. S. Griboedova i P. D. Zaveleyskogo” (New materials on the project of the Russian Transcaucasian Company of A.S. Griboedov and P. D. Zaveleyskii), in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, vol. 6, (1951):324-390.

<sup>149</sup> For the problems of the textual analysis and the reconstruction of the structure of the project of the RTC, see: Kommentarii (Comments), in Griboedov, A.S., *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (Complete set of works) Vol. 3, 561-575; and N. A. Tarkhova N. A., “O “Proekte Rossiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii” (po materialam arkhiva Paskevicha v RGIA)” (About “The Project of the Russian Transcaucasian Company” (On the materials of the archive of Paskevich in RGIA), in *Problemy tvorchestva A. S. Griboedova*, ed. S. A. Fomichev (Smolensk: TRASTIMAKOM, 1994), 285-295

includes description of the rich natural resources and the population, which, because of its “Asiatic” character can not be fully exploited. The problem can be solved through the enlightenment of the population, which means the involvement of the local inhabitants into the economic activity, conducting by the Russian agents. The peculiarity of the projects is the claim, that this agent should be a company-monopoly in the selected spheres of agriculture, manufacturing and trade. The main assumption of the project is that neither the individual efforts of the private entrepreneurs, nor the government’s activity are able to make a breakthrough in the economic development of the region. Individual enterprises do not have enough capitals and experience to launch the successful enterprises. Even if these actors would manage to concentrate resources for the development of one business, they are doomed to failure, because the local population is not able to behave rationally in economic sense and also because of the lack of infrastructure in the region. The government’s projects also would fail, because the civilian administration is not able to control each household and all the plans would fail at the level of the economic behavior of these households<sup>150</sup>. The solution of these problems, according to the authors of the project, is the joining up of the “producers-capitalists” in one company to share their knowledge, financial resources and efforts in the region’s agriculture, manufacture and trade<sup>151</sup>.

The company would be beneficial for itself, for the region and for the empire. The very beginning of the activity of the company would stimulate the movement of the capital both in the region and in Russia, and bring profits for the shareholders. The activity of the company in Transcaucasia would be an example of pragmatic economic behavior. The successes of the company would attract the local actors and motivate them to change their narrow and abstract

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<sup>150</sup> Griboedov A. S. , *Vstuplenie < k projektu ustava > 17 iulya 1828*” (Introduction to the project of the charter 17, July, 1828), 327-331

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 331



minds into more progressive way of thinking. As the result the region would have a “mass of helpful people”, who would turn Transcaucasia to prosperity. The activity of the company would also stimulate the transformation of the nomads into asedentary way of life. One of the political effects of the company is that the enlightened and rich population of Transcaucasia would be a positive example for the “barbarian” mountaineers. Thus, besides economic profits, the main benefit of the company’s activity is its “civilizing” effect, which would raise Transcaucasia on the new level of development. The Empire, according to the authors of the project, also would have the significant economic profit. It would be able to substitute at least a quarter of the import of the “southern” products ( natural dyes, fruits, silk, cotton, grape, wine) by the own production<sup>152</sup>. The enriched local population would be able to pay taxes and to buy the products of the Russian manufactures. The ultimate moral and political effect of the company would be resulted in the *sblizhenie* (rapprochement) of the Russian and the local population. According to the authors of the project, “team-work” and collaboration in the joint work on different enterprises would develop mutual understanding, make the representatives of the different peoples equal and finally would turn the relations “possessor- inferior subject” into the peaceful and pleasant relations between the equal subjects of the Monarch.

The project of the RTC assumes the development of the local industry, which according to the authors would not cause negative effects for the Russian industry, but would be able to substitute the Persian products for the local inhabitants. The authors also had plans to open new markets for the Transcaucasian products. Georgia would be able to substitute the colonies of America not only for Russia, but also for Europe<sup>153</sup>. In order to achieve all these purposes the authors of the project asked for the privileges, which distinguish their ideas on the company

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.338

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p. 334

from the other projects. First of all, the company should get the protection (*pokrovitelstvo*) of the Monarch and be granted the rights of the monopoly for 50 years<sup>154</sup> in the development of the new branches of economy and trade, as growing of the new plants or the development of the new industries. The monopoly assumes the absence of the competing companies, but it is not clear, whether this regulation was applied for the private households. The second request of the authors of the project is the receiving by the monopoly of all free lands and the orchards, which were in the state possession. The third aspect is the right of the company to buy the Russian and Georgian peasants and resettle them in the lands of the company. An important source of the labor force, according to the authors of the project, could be also numerous Armenian migrants<sup>155</sup>. The resettlers should be exempted from state duties. Griboedov and Zavileyskii also asked for the *porto-franco* (free port) on the Black Sea and the exemption of the company from the customs duties. The authors also mentioned the right of the company for the establishment of the relations with the “possessors of the Transcaucasian provinces” (*vladeltsy zakavkazskikh provincii*), which are under the control or the protection of Russia.<sup>156</sup> The company was supposed to be governed by four presidents: the commander-in-chief in Georgia, the Tiflis military governor, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of the Interior Affairs<sup>157</sup>. It is necessary to note, that, in contrast to the Russian-American Company, whose directors were elected by the general meeting of shareholders<sup>158</sup>, the chiefs of the RTC, according to the project, supposed to be independent from the shareholders and appointed according to their positions in the central and local imperial administrations.

<sup>154</sup> Markova O.P. *Novye materialy o proekte Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii*, 365

<sup>155</sup> Griboedov A. S. *Zapiska ob uchrezhdenii Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii 9 sentyabrya 1828* (Note on the establishment of the Russian Transcaucasian Company, 9, September, 1828)., 339

<sup>156</sup> Markova O.P. “Novye materialy o proekte Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii”, 383

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386

<sup>158</sup> Ilya Vinkovetsky, “The Russian – American Company as a Colonial Contractor for the Russian Empire”, in *Imperial Rule*, 161

I think this and some other positions of the project cast doubt on the tradition in historiography that Griboedov wanted to create a kind of “state within state” in Transcaucasia. I think it is arguable that the question follows not from the content of the project, but from the perception of the plan by its critics and their analysis. These perceptions, which, possibly, can be called misperceptions, characterize the attitudes of the part of the Russian elite towards Transcaucasia. I would like to consider this question in the context of the discussion in historiography on the broader question: why the project was not implemented. In the part of the Soviet historiography (O. I. Markova, O. P. Popova) the failure of the project is connected with the “negative” reactions of general Zhukovskii and the former Decembrist Burtsov. This tradition, as it was mentioned above, had been reconsidered since the publishing of the book by Natan Y. Eidelamn “Byt mozhet za khrebtom Kavkaza”. I think the consideration of two aspects of the historical context of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can explain the failure of the project: first, the patterns of the imperial rule in this period and the implementation of the similar projects and, second, the level of the socio-economic development of the Empire.

Both contemporaries and then the historians almost automatically identified the project of the RTC with the activities of the English East Indian Company and the Russian-American Company (the RAC)<sup>159</sup>. Indeed, it is possible to find only one reference to these companies in the project (particularly in the synopsis of the project by Zhukovskii), in the place, where the authors ask for the privileges, including the rights of monopoly and prohibition of the activity of the other companies<sup>160</sup>. If the experience of the East Indian Company provided just a general model of a company, which plays the role of a “colonial contractor” of the empire, then the RAC could be a real example for the authors of the project of the RTC. The

<sup>159</sup> Kommentarii (Comments), p. 573

<sup>160</sup> Markova O.P. “Novye materialy o proekte Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii”, 357-358

experience of the RAC was well-known among the Russian elite in 1820. In 1821 the RAC received a new twenty-year contract to manage the territories and resources on the Northern Pacific Rim<sup>161</sup>. It is also known that Griboedov had good relations with the functionary of the RAC and future Decembrist Kondratyi Fedorovich Ryleev, who could inform Griboedov about the activity of the RAC<sup>162</sup>. The authors of the Comments to the new set of the Griboedov's works argues that the most part of the privileges asked by Griboedov and Zavileyskii correspond with the privileges of the RAC. According to the Comments, these corresponding privileges include: the rights of monopoly for the company, the right to occupy the lands in the Transcaucasian provinces, the exclusive rights to use these lands, preferential terms of trade, the right to use the local inhabitants in the works and the exemption of the staff of the company from some kinds of the state duties. It is quite possible that Griboedov and Zavileyskii took into account the experience of the RAC and the East-Indian Company, but I would like to emphasize the significant differences between these projects, which, to my mind, do not allow me to assert that the RTC was supposed to play the same role in Transcaucasia as the RAC in the Northern pacific region or the English company in the Eastern India. I think it does not follow from the text of the project of the RTC that the company intendss to implement the political or state administrative functions. The authors of the projects do not ask for the control over the whole Transcaucasia, they just ask to be given rights over 120 thousand dessiatina (approx. 330 thousand acres) of the free lands in the particular territories of Transcaucasia. There is also no the idea of the creation of the separate colonial administration. The authors of the project do not mentionthe question of the administrative division of the region. The idea that the chiefs of the company would be the heads of the

<sup>161</sup> Ilya Vinkovetsky, "The Russian –American Company as a Colonial Contractor for the Russian Empire", 165

<sup>162</sup> Kommentarii (Coments), p. 574

existing local imperial administration (ex officio) and the heads of the imperial Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Interior Affairs, I think, confirms that the company would not challenge the existing administration of the region: instead the company claims to be the “contractor” of the state in the economic development of the region. The authors of the Comments also interprets the claim of the company to establish the relations with the possessors of the Transcaucasian provinces, which are under the control or protection of Russia, to promote trade there<sup>163</sup>, as a claim for the “diplomatic freedom” in the relations with the khanates in sympathy with the example of the East Indian Company<sup>164</sup>. I think, it is possible not to agree with this interpretation. The project does not contain any ideas on the relations of the RTC with the foreign countries (Persia, Turkey or others), the rights of the company to have the diplomatic institutions, military forces and to take any diplomatic actions. The authors of the project emphasize that their claim applies only to the “possessors”, which are under the Russian control.

Another aspect which makes the project of the RTC different from the activity of the RAC is the ideas of the development of the local industry in Transcaucasia which, according, to the authors of the project, would not harm the development of the Russian manufactures. The Soviet historian Maria Konstantinoivna Rozhkova compares the project of the RTC with the project of the Orenburg Asiatic Company (*Orenburgskaya Aziatskaya Kompaniia*) , proposed by Orenburg’s governor P. K. Essen in 1823. This project, like the RTC, assumed the development of the local “productive forces” and the involvement of the local producers and merchants in the development of the region. The idea of the industry in the Orenburg

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<sup>163</sup> Markova O.P. “Novye materialy o proekte Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii”, 383

<sup>164</sup> Kommentarii (Comments), 573

region was rejected by the Minister of finance Kankrin<sup>165</sup>. The attitudes of Kankrin towards Transcaucasia will be considered in the next sub-chapter, but here it is necessary to mention, that the development of the industry in the Empire's periphery contradicted Kankrin's general understanding of the industrial development of the Empire. General Zhukovskii in the comments on the project of the RTC also notes the Transcaucasia is the market of the Russian producers and this region should not have its own industry.

The final aspect, which distinguishes the project of the RTC from the example of the RAC is the ultimate purpose of the creation of the company. The role of the Russian-American company, besides its functions of the colonial administration, was to be a "commercial enterprise in the service of shareholders"<sup>166</sup>, which should profit from the exploitation of the region's natural resources and the development of trade. In the case of the RTC, the profitability of the company was linked with the main purpose of the economic, and, as a result, cultural development of the region, overcoming of its "Asiatic" character and the integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian Empire on the basis of the mutual *sblizhenie* (rapprochement) between the local population and the Russians. So, I think, the RTC can be considered as the temporary large-scale economic enterprise, whose purpose was the economic prosperity of Transcaucasia. This prosperity was considered as the basis for the moral and political development of Transcaucasia within the Russian Empire.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognize that the idea of the RTC was perceived, at least, by the critique of the project general Zhukovskii, as a threat to political power of the imperial center in Transcaucasia. The main idea of the general's comments is that the

<sup>165</sup>M. K. Rozhkova, *Economicheskaya politika tsarskogo pravitelstva na Srednem Vostoke vo vtoroy chetverti 19 v. i russkaia burzhuasia*. (The economic policy of the tsar government in the Middle East in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Russian bourgeoisie) (Moscow, Leningrad, 1949), 55. Quoted in Comments, 574-575

<sup>166</sup>Ilya Vinkovetsky, "The Russian-American Company as a Colonial Contractor for the Russian Empire", p. 173

common benefit could be achieved if everybody would follow the common rules and order. The general has three main objections. First, he assents that the monopoly of the company would limit the absolute power of the state and government both in the economy and in the other spheres. The company's claims for the relations with the "possessors of the provinces" and the "enlightening" effect of the company's activity are perceived by Zhukovskii as an encroachment on the prerogatives of the government<sup>167</sup>. Second, in the comment to the part of the project, which refers to the experience of the East-Indian and the Russian –American companies, Zhukovskii asserts that Georgia and Transcaucasia are not the same things for Russia as the "wild Northern American islands" or the Eastern India. According to the general, the government indeed would not start the exploitation of the Northern-American territories, but Georgia and the Transcaucasian provinces are not unknown areas, they are "part of the body of Russia", which are more or less developed, and that is why there is no sense to grant the special rights to the company. The third moment is the understanding of the significance of the region for Russia. The general insists that "these unkind peoples" [presumably, the peoples of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia] Caucasus were subjugated not for making profits from the "sugar plantations", but to ensure the security of the "heart of Russia" [Central Russia]. It is necessary to give one more example, which demonstrates the difference in the positions of the authors of the project and the general. In the discussion on the positive influence of the economic activity of the settlers on the local population, the authors note the example of the "North-American United States" as the "instructive example" (*pouchitelnyi primer*). Zhukovskii replies: very instructive, not only in the economic part, but

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<sup>167</sup> O. P. Markova, "Novye materialy o proekte Rossiiskoi Zakavkazskoi Kompanii", 365, 383.

also in the political relation, especially for its [the United States] former fatherland England<sup>168</sup>. The general hint at the separation of the United States from England.

If we leave out the theory, that Griboedov had a real intention to separate Transcaucasia from Russia and the project had an implicit meaning<sup>169</sup>, I think it is possible to reveal some aspects of the understanding of the role of Transcaucasia among the part of the Russian elite both from, the project and from the comments of Zhukovskii. The positions of the authors on the economic policy in the region are subordinated to their visions of the role of Transcaucasia in the Russian Empire. For the general the priority is the strategic concern of the security and the integrity of the Empire. These interests, according to Zhulovskii, could be ensured by the existence of the common order and rules both in the center and in the periphery of the Empire, particularly in Transcaucasia. According to this logic, the independent or uncontrolled by the government economic development of the periphery also threatens the general strategic interests. For the authors of the project of the RTC the priority is the political and cultural *sblizhenie* (rapprochement) of the Russians and the local population on the basis of the rapid economic development of the region, which could be implemented by the Company. The Company could be created taking into account the patterns of the Russian and foreign colonial companies. But the main purpose of the RTC is not profit, but the incorporation of the region into the Russian empire. I think it is arguable that both Zhukovskii and the authors of the project could represent Transcaucasia as a territory similar to the “tropical” colonies of the overseas empires, but the discussion on the development of the region demonstrates that both sides seek

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<sup>168</sup>Ibid, 361.

<sup>169</sup> These ideas can be traced in the novel by Russian writer of 1920s Yury Tynayanov “Smert Vazir-Mukhtara” (The Death of Vazir-Mukhtar) (1928) and the article: B. Paramonov “Kanal Griboedova” (the Channel of Griboedov), in: Znanie-sila, 1991, No3, 4, 5. Quoted in : L. A. Stepanov , “Diplomaticheskay deyatel'nost i poeticheskoe myshlenie Griboedova” (The diplomatic activity and the poetic thinking of Griboedov), in *Diplomaty-pisateli; pisateli-diplomaty*, (St Petersburg: Obshchestvennoe ob'edinenie Soyuz Pisateley Sankt-Peterburga, 2001), 167



not the methods of the colonial rule, but the methods of the incorporation of the territory with its complicated population into the imperial system. In the terms of the frontier theory, both sides, the authors of the project and their critique are discussing on the relations between the Empire and its frontier, but while the general makes an accent on the strategic aspects of the frontier, the writer-diplomat Griboedov and his co-author functionary Zavileyskii emphasize the socio-economic and cultural frontier, which should be incorporated into the main imperial “body”.

Thus the project of the RTC could be rejected, because it did not coincide with the views of the part of the local and central imperial administration on the methods of the incorporation of the Transcaucasian “frontier”. But this argument can be considered as one of the parts of the possible explanation. The other part lies in the socio-economic context of the Russian Empire in 1820-1830s. After the death of Griboedov, the project of the RTC was not forgotten. In 1831 the second co-author of the project Petr Zavileyskii established the Transcaucasian Trade Company (*Zakavkazskaya trgovaya kompaniya*)<sup>170</sup>. The company should be the mediator between the producers and merchants of Russia and Transcaucasia. Thus, according to Eidelman, one of the parts of the project of the RTC was implemented. But in 1834 it was recognized that the project failed as well as some other ideas to establish the trading company in 1830-40s. Neither the merchants of Moscow nor the merchants and small manufacturers of Transcaucasia gave credence to these projects<sup>171</sup>. Eidelman asserts that Griboedov and Zavileyskii suggested a Utopian project, which did not have any chance to be implemented in the Russia of 1820s. Griboedov overestimated the “caractère bourgeois” of the Russian elite, which was not ready to perceive seriously such large-scale projects as the

<sup>170</sup> N. Y. Eidelman, *Byt mozhet za khrebtom Kavkaza*, 150-154

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154

Russian Transcaucasian Company. Eidelamn and another historian Stepanov can not separate the literary work of Griboedov from his political activity. These historians believe that Griboedov was ahead of his time and they even consider the project of the RTC as the reflection of the Griboedov's poetical dreams and illusions<sup>172</sup>. Historian Frederick Starr, who is, probably, not fascinated by the figure of Griboedov, indicates three factors, which predetermined the failure of the project: the absence of free capital, the absence of strong banking system and the relatively low return on imperial investments<sup>173</sup>.

Thus, it is possible to conclude, that Griboedov and Zavileyskii suggested the project of the large-scale temporal enterprise, similar to the colonial companies, to develop the economy of Transcaucasia and to create the basis for the economic and cultural rapprochement of the region with the Russian Empire. In the particular socio-economic and political context of the second half of the 1820s the idea of the company either was not perceived as a real and profitable enterprise or was perceived as a threat to the absolute power of the imperial state in its periphery.

### ***3.2 . State-based strategies of the development of Transcaucasia***

It is known that the project the RTC was not admitted on the level of the regional imperial administration, while the other projects, which assumed the leading role of the state in development of Transcaucasia, were discussed on the highest level of the imperial government. It is possible to distinguish four main positions towards Transcaucasia at the end of 1820s-1830s: the attitudes of the Minister of Finance Kankrin, the project of the senators Kutaisov,

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., p. 165-169; L. A. Stepanov, *Diplomaticeskaja deyatel'nost' i poeticheskoe myshlenie Griboedova* (The diplomatic activity and the poetic thinking of Griboedov), 168-172

<sup>173</sup> F. S. Starr, "Tsarist Government: The Imperial Dimension," in *Soviet Nationality Policies and Practices*, ed. J. Azrael (New York, Praeger, 1978), 9

Mechnikov and the commander-in-chief Paskevich (1827-1831), the approach of commander-in-chief, baron Rozen (1831-1837), and the plan by of senator Pavel Hahn. The ideas and plans of all these functionaries were considered by the Russian State Council (the highest consultative organ), but, finally, the most part of the projects was not launched. The proposals of Pavel Hahn were partly implemented in 1837-1841, but then these attempts were evaluated as unsuccessful. In 1845 the institute of viceroyship was established in Transcaucasia. I think, this fact can be interpreted as the failure of the imperial center to elaborate the complex plan of the integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian imperial system. In this sub-chapter I demonstrate that the imperial functionaries did not manage to elaborate either a consistent policy on the transformation of Transcaucasia into the Russian colony or a project for the complete incorporation of the region into the “body” of the Empire. As a result the central and local imperial authorities did not provide the consistent policy, but had to react to the circumstances of the transformation of the “outer” frontier into the “inner” frontier and the necessity of its incorporation.

The attitudes of the tsar’s Minister of Finance count Kankrin towards Transcaucasia are not expressed in one project. The position of the minister can be traced through his correspondence with the Caucasian officials<sup>174</sup>. The project of senators Kutaisov and Mechnikov and commander-in-chief Paskevich is the result of the report of Paskevich on the situation in the region in 1830<sup>175</sup>, revision of the region by the senators and the discussion over the report on this revision between the senators and Paskevich<sup>176</sup>. The project is presented in

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<sup>174</sup> *AKAK*, vol. 7.

<sup>175</sup> *AKAK*, vol.7, doc. №47

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 7, doc. № 64

the Resolution (*Postanovlenie*) of the State Council on May, 13, 1833<sup>177</sup>. The comments of Paskevich, which differ from the opinion of the senators are separated from the main part of the text. Baron Rozen did not suggest a complex project, but his position is mentioned in the resolution of the State Council on Kutaisov-Mechnikov-Paskevich project and the official correspondence<sup>178</sup>. The suggestions of baron Hahn on the reorganization of the administration in Transcaucasia are presented in his report to the Emperor in 1837<sup>179</sup>.

Minister of Finance Egor Frantsevich Kankrin was the main and consistent ideologist of the creation of the colony in Transcaucasia. According to Kankrin, the colony should have a special status and should not be incorporated into the common imperial administrative system. Transcaucasia, as a colony, and its population, can not be a part of Russia in moral sense and, finally, the region should be remained as the “Asiatic province”, which is well governed by the empire. The only sphere of unification is the financial system, which has to be under the complete control of the imperial Ministry of Finance<sup>180</sup>. According to Kankrin, the policy towards the region should pursue two traditional colonial goals: to make the region a market for the Russian manufactures and to develop only such branches of the agriculture and industry, which can supply Russia by the raw materials. It is also desirable to make the region financially profitable, but the main purpose is the support for the development of the industry in the core area of the Empire<sup>181</sup>. Kankrin opposes the ideas of the creation of the transit trade

<sup>177</sup> *Kolonial'naia politika rossiskogo tsarizma v Azerbaidzhane v 20-60 gg. 19v.*” (Colonial policy of the Russian tsarism in Azerbaijan in 1820-1860s, vol.1( Moscow, Leningrad, 1936), doc. № 22, 259 – 294,

<sup>178</sup> AKAK, vol.8, doc. №11, 17

<sup>179</sup> *Kolonial'naia politika rossiskogo tsarizma v Azerbaidzhane v 20-60 gg. 19v., doc.№24, p. 301*

<sup>180</sup> About the place of Transcaucasia in the economic, financial and tax policies of the Russian Empire see: chapter 5, 11 in: E. A., Pravilova, *Finansy Imperii: Dengi i vlast v politike Rossii na natsionalnykh okrainah, 1801-1917* ( The Finances of the Empire: Money and power in the policy of Russia on the national peripheries, 1801-1917), (Moscow: Novoe Izdatelstvo, 2006), 102-127, 245-271.

<sup>181</sup> AKAK, vol 7, doc. № 107, p. 134; M. K., Rozhkova, *Economicheskaya politika tsarskogo pravitelstva na Srednem Vostoke*, 88

center between Europe and Asia in Transcaucasia<sup>182</sup> and the development of the infrastructure which could facilitate the activity of the local producers and merchants<sup>183</sup>. For example, the minister opposes the establishment of the local office of the *Kommercheskii Bank* (Commercial bank). To understand the attitude of Kankrin towards Transcaucasia it is necessary to take into account his vision of the economic development of the Empire. Historian Walter McKenzie Pintner studied the economic policy under Nicholas I. On the base of this analysis the author argues that the guiding standard of the Kankrin's policy was the idea of the "strength of the state as an independent entity, separate not only from other states but from the welfare or happiness of the population itself"<sup>184</sup>. The historian asserts that Kankrin does not follow any theory and does not stimulate the industrial development, but the minister is trying to maintain the stability. According to the historian, the policy is reduced to the reaction on the immediate situation and its possibilities. In the industrial sphere, Kankrin tries to protect the existing manufacturing activity and, at the same time, not to stimulate its further rapid development<sup>185</sup>. According to this logic, I think, it is arguable that, for Kankrin, the joining of Transcaucasia is not a desirable factor for the successful development of the Russian industry, but one of the new circumstances, which threatens the economic and financial stability of the empire. These threats are the financial burden of the empire's presence in Transcaucasia, uncontrolled expenses of the local administration, transit trade between the European cities and Asia, which threatens the positions of the Russian merchants and other moments. To overcome the threats it is necessary to adopt the economic policy in the periphery to this circumstance in the most effective way. According to Kankrin, this way is the establishment of

<sup>182</sup> M. K., Rozhkova, *Economicheskaya politika tsarskogo pravitelstva na Srednem Vostoke*, 93

<sup>183</sup> *AKAK*, vol 7, doc. № 117,119, p. 156-163

<sup>184</sup> Walter, McKenzie Pintner, *Russian Economic Policy under Nicholas I* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 20-21

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 238

the “colonial” relations between the center and the periphery and the maintenance of the strict control over the colonial finances. The problem is that the introduction of this control and the unification of the financial system of the empire with the different systems, existing in Transcaucasia, demands changes in many other social and economic systems of the region: the relations of property, the relations between peasants and nobles, reorganization of the local duties and taxes and so on. The solution of problem of the financial order was linked with the complex reorganization of the region. The project of these reforms was suggested by the senators Kutaisov and Mechnikov and commander-in-chief Paskevich.

Paskevich, as well as the senators supported the idea of colony<sup>186</sup>. At the same time, their project assumed almost complete transformation of the administrative and socio-economic systems of Tanscaucasia according to the regular order of the Russian empire. According to the project, Transcaucasia should join the “common political body” (“*odno politicheskoe telo*”) of the Empire<sup>187</sup>. The authors of the project define four purposes of their plan: - to confirm that the region will be forever with Russia; -to make Transcaucasia self-sufficient and profitable for the Empire; - to enable the region to defend itself and to provide recruits for the imperial army; and to tie up the local inhabitants with Russia<sup>188</sup>. The authors suggest establishing of two, Georgian and Muslim *gubernia* (provinces) and Armenian oblast. The provinces and the oblast consist of *uyezds* (districts), administrated by the officials on the common Russian patterns. The judicial system, according to the project, should include the civil and criminal chambers, uyezd and city’s courts, and , also the “Mohammedan” (sharia) court in the Muslim uyezds. In contrast to the other Russian provinces, Transcaucasia would have the Supreme government (*Verkhovnoe pravitelstvo*), which would be the supreme administrative and

<sup>186</sup> AKAK, vol 7., doc.№108, p. 140

<sup>187</sup> *Kolonial’naia politika rossiskogo tsarizma v Azerbaidzhane v 20-60 gg. 19v., doc.№22, p. 280*

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 280

judicial body in the region. The members of the Supreme government would be the president (commander-in-chief in Caucasus), the vice-president (military governor) and five members. One or two members would represent the local population.<sup>189</sup> In fact, the Supreme government should implement the functions of the imperial Senate (the supreme judicial and administrative organ, subordinated to the emperor) in Transcaucasia. The main reason for the establishment of the Supreme government, according to the project, was the remoteness of Petersburg and the imperial authorities from the region.

In the economic sphere, the project suggested motivating the local people for arable farming, growing of the tropical products, development of industry and trade, which would be useful for the empire, and organization of the farms, which would be the models for local land owners and peasants. The project implied resettlement of the Russian noblemen and peasants to Transcaucasia. One of the forms of the colonization by the Russians, according to the project, could be the military settlements (*voennye poseleniia*), which settlers would combine agricultural works with the military service. One of the arguments for this form is the consideration, that with time, the settlers would be able to provide the recruits, which, in contrast to the soldiers from Russia, would be acclimatized and able to serve in Transcaucasia<sup>190</sup>. The Russian nobility should be the main agent of the Russian imperial rule in the region, but, at the same time, the project suggested establishing of the local Armenian and Muslim nobility. The authors believe that the special status, guaranteed by the Russian government, would ensure the loyalty of the local elite to the Empire. Paskevich disagreed with the senators in the question of the Muslim clergy. The senators argued for weakening of the Muslim clergy and the sharia courts. The senators assumed also the gradual conversion of

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 265

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 288

the Muslims to Christianity. Paskevich objected these arguments. The idea of the commander-in-chief was to control the clergy through organization of the religious offices (*dukhovnye prisutstvennye mesta*) on the patterns of the Russian local spiritual authorities. In other words, Paskevich suggested adopting the local religious system according to the Russian patterns, known for him.

Thus the project of the senators and Paskevich assumed almost the complete reorganization of the local life according to the imperial common patterns and the unification of the local institutions with the imperial ones. The plan of Kankrin and the project of Mechnikov-Kutaisov-Paskevich could supplement each other. The complex reorganization of the region, suggested by the senators and commander-in-chief could create conditions for centralization of the Transcaucasian finances. The senators and Paskevich agreed with the idea of “colony” as a thing that can make Transcaucasia self-sufficient and profitable. The difference between two projects was that Kankrin suggested centralizing of one, financial system, while the senators and Paskevich intended to incorporate almost all administrative, political, socio-economic and cultural systems into the imperial ones. This difference can be explained by the different motivations of the authors of the projects. For Kankrin the primary interest was the financial stability of the empire, while the senators and the field-marshal had to take into account the strategic and military interests, consolidation of the Russian power in the region and loyalty of the local elites and masses to the Empire. Paskevich had the experience of the direct contacts with the local population and he was much more careful on breaking the local traditional institutions.

The same consideration was taken into account by the successor of Paskevich in Caucasus, baron Rozen. But, in contrast to Paskevich, new commander-in-chief opposed both the financial centralization and introduction of the common imperial orders. Rozen insisted on



preserving the system of the military-popular government (*voenno-narodnoe upravlenie*) in the Muslim territories. According to this system, the commandant of the particular territory was responsible for both civil and military administrations. Under the supervision of the commandant, in each province an advisory council was created. This council consisted of beks and ordinary citizens. The commandant took over most of the powers and prerogatives of the khans, and continued to operate within the old system.<sup>191</sup> Each of the territories has its own tax system. Rosen insisted on preservation of these systems, which was created with regard for taxpayers' ability to pay, and opposed the introduction of the common tax rules. Rosen also argued against the abolishment of "reduced tariff"<sup>192</sup>, which stimulated the development of the transit trade in Transcaucasia. Several explanations of the position of Rozen are provided by the historians. The Soviet historian Petrushevskii argues that the Baltic-origin nobleman Rosen referred to the experience of the strengthening of the imperial power in the Baltic territories, where the rights of the German nobility were recognized<sup>193</sup>. M. K. Rozhkova notes that Rozen was supported by the Transcaucasian merchants in his argumentation for the development of the Transcaucasian transit trade<sup>194</sup>. Another factor of the position of Rozen, as well as, other commanders-in-chief, according to Rozhkova, was the necessity to ensure the provision of the army with the local resources. Firouzeh Mostashri argues that "Rosen's conciliatory attitude towards the Muslim population" can be considered as the reaction of the baron on the numerous revolts in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia in 1830s, development of Muridism and the intensification of the resistance in the North Caucasus<sup>195</sup>. All these explanations demonstrate the necessity to preserve the loyalty of the population in

<sup>191</sup> Firouzeh, Mostashari, *Tsarist Colonial Policy*, 78

<sup>192</sup> M. K., Rozhkova, *Economicheskaya politika tsarskogo pravitelstva na Srednem Vostoke*, 99

<sup>193</sup> Petrushevskii I. P. *Sistema Russkogo kolonialnogo upravleniya v Azerbajjane v pervoi polovine 19 veka*, 20

<sup>194</sup> M. K., Rozhkova, *Economicheskaya politika tsarskogo pravitelstva na Srednem Vostoke*, 100

<sup>195</sup> Firouzeh, Mostashari, *Tsarist Colonial Policy*, 92-93

Transcaucasia and to ensure the efficiency of the army in the conditions of intensification of the military struggle in the Caucasus.

In 1837, during or right after a personal tour of Nicholas I to the Caucasus senator Pavel Invanovich Hahn(*Gan*) persuaded the emperor to dismiss Rosen . The reason was the failure to suppress the rebellion of Shamil in the Caucasus and the lack of the order in Transcaucasia<sup>196</sup>. Senator Hahn became a head of the “Committee for the restructuring of the Caucasus”. Firouzeh Mostashri defined Hahn as “a staunch proponent of imperial uniformity.”<sup>197</sup> Hahn’s plan, which almost completely ignored the local conditions, was partly implemented in 1840-1841. Transcaucasia was divided into two parts: the Georgian-Imerety guberniia, consisted of the Georgian and Armenian population and the Caspian oblast, which included the former Muslim khanates. The local administrations were reorganized on the model of the inner Russian uyezds. The representatives of the local Muslim elite were dismissed and replaced by the Russian officials. In fact, the significant part of the local elite had been deprived of their social positions and property<sup>198</sup>. That policy increased the anti-Russian sentiments and the resistance of the population, and could weaken the positions of the army in the struggle with Shamil. In 1844-45 the new form of governing in Transcaucasia – viceroyalty (*namesnichestvo*) was established.

I think this fact can be considered as a failure of the imperial state to elaborate any consistent strategy towards Transcaucasia. S. F. Starr emphasizes that “To maintain the empire

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<sup>196</sup> AKAK, vol. 8, p. xix-xxi

<sup>197</sup> Firouzeh, Mostashari, *Tsarist Colonial Policy*, 95

<sup>198</sup> *Kolonial’naia politika rossiskogo tsarizma v Azerbaidzhane v 20-60 gg. 19v., doc.№24, p. 301-317;*  
 Petrushevskii I. P. *Sistema Russkogo kolonialnogo upravleniya v Azerbaidzhane v pervoi polovine 19 veka*, 25-27;  
 Firouzeh, Mostashari, *Tsarist Colonial Policy*, 96-98

was an end in itself, the chief objective of Russian political life”.<sup>199</sup> The problem was that there was no unified position on the maintenance of the empire. In the case of Transcaucasia in 1820-30s, the imperial authorities were challenged with the necessity to integrate the complicated region into the Empire. The attitudes of the officials were influenced by different factors. Among them I can distinguish philosophical and political outlook of the functionary, his perception of the region and the position of the functionary in the imperial bureaucracy.

The project of the RTC can be considered as the expression of the complicated philosophical outlook of Griboedov. The combination of Romantic and Enlightenment ideas was reflected in the recognition of the potentiality of the Orient people for historical progress. Griboedov and Zavileyskii proposed a model of the development of the region and enlightenment of the local peoples through their involvement into the economic activity common with the Russians. The project also assumed the active participation of the private actors in the economic development of the region. The Company was just a suitable form for implementation of this model. At the same time the project includes practical intentions to make the region profitable for the Empire. The idea of the company assumed a separation from the common imperial economic order. This fact was perceived by the local military administration as a threat to the power of the imperial bureaucracy. In 1820-1830s the private sector was not able to provide the resources for the large-scale enterprises, the main part of the imperial bureaucracy was not ready to admit the active private role in the policies in the periphery of the empire. The military authors of the projects, Paskevich and Rozen, had to take into account strategic and tactical military interests, ensure the efficiency of the Caucasus Corps and preserve the loyalty of the local population. Nevertheless, two commanders-in-chief

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<sup>199</sup> F. S. Starr, *Tsarist Government: The Imperial Dimension*, 31, This opinion is supported by the historian of the Russian policies in the New Russia and Caucasus Anthony L. H. Rhineland, see: Anthony L. H. Rhineland, *Prince Michael Vorontsov. Viceroy to the Tsar* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990)

preferred different scenarios for integration of Transcaucasia into the Russian Empire. Paskevich argued for political and cultural rapprochement along with the establishment of “colonial” economic relations between the center and the periphery of the empire. Rozen opposed all plans of the rapid unification in administration, economy and culture. For Rozen, to preserve the control in region, it was necessary to act according the local, not imperial patterns. The apologists of the complete incorporation of the Transcaucasian institutions into the Russian ones were the representatives of the central imperial bureaucracies, who usually did not have sufficient experience of the contacts with the local population. Thus, the authors of the projects were motivated by different ideas on the “maintenance of the empire”. Different aspects, financial, military, cultural and others had priorities for the authors of the project. The problem was that the ideas of these projects were not conciliated and integrated into one consistent policy towards the region. The fact that this problem was not solved can be explained by the absence of the ideology of the relations between the Empire and its peripheries. According to Rhinelander, this kind of ideology could not be provided by the “conservative and traditionalists regimes”, like the Russian regime under Nicholas I<sup>200</sup>.

I think, another explanation of the absence of the unified policy lies in the local context of Transcaucasia. The complexity of the interaction and the processes in the frontier did not allow policy-makers to compose the hierarchy of the interests and priorities of the imperial policy in the region. Most of the projects attributed to Transcaucasia the role of the Russian “tropical ”colony, but for all of them the “colony” was not end in itself. The “colonial” Company of Griboedov did not assume the creation of the colony in the region. For the Minister of Finance Kankrin, “colony” was the method of the incorporation of Transcaucasia into the imperial system. In other state-based projects the intention to establish a “colony”

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<sup>200</sup> Anthony L. H. Rhinelander, *Prince Michael Vorontsov. Viceroy to the Tsar*, p. 134

did not correspond to the suggested strategies of the incorporation of Transcaucasia into the Russian Empire.

## Conclusion

The settlement of the borders between the Russian Empire and the Persian and Ottoman Empires in 1828 and 1829 signified almost complete joining of Transcaucasia to the Russian Empire. In terms of the frontier theory, the complex and multilevel outer Transcaucasian frontier became an inner frontier of the Russian Empire. Russian policy-makers faced the challenge of the incorporation of the area with the whole range of military, social, economic, cultural, political, ethnic, religious interaction and processes, into the imperial system. One of the factors of the imperial policy-making in the region was the perception of Transcaucasia and understanding of its role in the imperial policies by the Russian political elite. I dealt with this question through the study of the representation of the region in the projects on its integration into the Russian empire. Thus, I tried to understand the role, which was attributed to Transcaucasia from two angles: the representation of the region and the intentions towards the future development of the region. Such an analysis allows me to conclude that the role attributed to Transcaucasia lies in the correlation between the notions of “colony” of the overseas empires and “frontier” of the contiguous empires.

Transcaucasia was represented in the projects as a rich uncultivated land, which can play a role of “tropical” colony for the Empire. The local population, depicted as “Asiatic”, according to the authors of the project, was considered to be not able to develop the territory. This fact justified the leading role of the Russians in economic exploitation of the territory. At the same time, this fact raised the question of helping local inhabitants to overcome their “Asiatic” character and the necessity to implement “civilizing” measures, defined as *sblizhenie* (rapprochement) with the Russians. Rapprochement primarily meant the move of the

local peoples towards the Russian and European cultural, socio-economic and political patterns.

Despite the fact that the region was mainly represented as a potential colony, the strategies of its incorporation into the Empire, suggested in the studied projects, did not aim at the establishment of the colonial rule in Transcaucasia. For the Minister of Finance Kankrin, the establishment of the colony was not a purpose in itself, but it was just a preferable method to deal with the circumstances, which could threaten the financial stability of the empire. The project of Alexander Griboedov and Petr Zavileyskii proposed the establishment of the company on the pattern of the colonial companies of the overseas empires. At the same time, the project did not assume the establishment of colony and aimed on the creation of the basis for the economic and cultural rapprochement of the region with the Russian Empire. The projects of Mechnikov-Kutaisov-Paskevich, baron Rozen and senator Hahn declared the desire to have a colony in Transcaucasia, but proposed the plans of the incorporation of the region, which contradicted in economic, cultural or political aspects the idea of colony. All these projects can be considered as a reactions on the problem of the integration of the Transcaucaian frontier, area with the various complicated interactions and processes, into the “body” of the Empire. The attitudes of the authors of the projects were influenced by different factors. Among them I can distinguish philosophical and political outlook of the functionaries, their perceptions of the region and the positions of the functionaries in the imperial bureaucracy. The differences between the projects can be explained by the fact, that for each project one of the aspects of the intecations in the frontier had a priority. For Griboedov, the cultural social frontiers had priorities. Rozen considered the military frontier as more important than economic. For Kankrin, the solution of the problems of economic frontier subordinated the problems of all other aspects of the frontier interactions. In general, the

imperial authority did not manage to conciliate the ideas of all the projects and to elaborate the unified policy towards Transcaucasia.

Thus, in the case of Transcaucasia in 1820-1830 we can see the incompatibility between the colonial intentions of the part of the political elite and the realities of the inconsistent imperial frontier policies.

This conclusion makes it possible to answer the theoretical question: was Transcaucasia “colony” or “province” in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? I think, it was neither. The region was neither “colony”, nor “province”. “Colony” and “province” were the two extremes in the range of the alternatives in the discussion on the problem of the incorporation of the Transcaucasian. Both these “extreme” strategies had not been implemented in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In this paper I concentrated on the study of the projects of the high and middle-ranking functionaries of the central and Caucasian imperial administrations. I think to understand why their projects failed, and, generally why the attempts to elaborate any consistent strategy towards the region failed, it is necessary to take into account many other factors. It is almost unavoidable to enter other political spheres, first of all, it is necessary to study the attitudes towards the peripheries of empire, particularly, Transcaucasia, of the key figure of the emperor Nicholas I and his court. Second, the situation in Transcaucasia should be considered in the broader context of the imperial policies in the other borderlands. Third, the incorporation of Transcaucasia can be considered in the broader context of the socio-economic situation both in the empire and in the world. It is necessary to correlate the global economic situation, characteristics of the colonialism of the particular period and the Russian intentions in its borderlands. Fourth, the local Transcaucasia context can be considered not only through the traditional studies of local resistance to or adaptation of the imperial rule, but also



from the perspective of new approaches , such as environmental history, which can reveal unexpected, but, possibly, key factors of the imperial policies in the region.

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