

**ALMANACH VIA EVRASIA, 2013, 2***Tsvetelina Haralampieva,**PhD Student in Russian History,**Faculty of History,**Sofia University,**Eurasia center VIA EVRASIA***SCOTTISH MISSIONAIRES IN KARASS AND THEIR ROLE  
IN THE RUSSIAN COLONISATION OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS IN  
THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE XIX CENTURY**

The years of the reign of Alexander I were saturated with events that with a view to the foreign policy turned the Russian Empire into a major player on the international stage, while in domestic terms, it faced one of the biggest challenges to preserving the integrity of the Russian territories – the Caucasian war. It was the result of the unwillingness of the North Caucasus nations to accept Russian rule after the annexation of their lands to the Empire. This forced Russia to be flexible in the colonization of the region by combining the methods of war with the attempts to establish a permanent peaceful coexistence between Russians and Caucasians. Among the latter was the idea of returning some of the nations living in the North Caucasus to the Christian faith and preaching Christianity as a means of pacifying the martial spirit of the local population. It is precisely here that the need to send missionaries<sup>1</sup> to preach the Word of God and to convert the population on the spot occurred.

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<sup>1</sup> Missionary activity existed as early as the middle of XVIII c., when the so called Ossetian Commission sent priests to return the Ossetians to Christianity. Initially it was under the jurisdiction of the autocephalous Georgian church, and then – of the Russian Church as its field of action expanded. During the period of its existence until 1793, 6000 people were converted. The work of the Commission was restored in 1814 during the reign of Alexander I, and in the period from 1817 to 1824 more than 52 thousand mountaineers were converted and 50 churches built. See: Tarran, M. The Orthodox Mission in the North Caucasus - end of 18 c.-beginning of the 19 c. *Central Asian Survey*, Vol.10, N1-2 (1991), pp.103-117.

*Клычников, Ю.Ю.* Использование религиозного фактора в российской политике на Северном Кавказе в конце 20-х – 30-те годы XIX века. – Вопросы Севернокавказской истории. Вып.6. Част I. Армавир, 2001, 55–61.

Not only Russian Orthodox missionaries were included in the efforts to pacify the mountaineers through the Christian faith, but also foreigners belonging mostly to Protestantism or other Christian denominations. The Orthodox Russian Empire consciously allowed and even supported their activity on its territory. In addition to the permission for settlement of foreign missionaries in the North Caucasus, a resettlement of Germans (including those belonging to Christian sects) from the German states was taking place<sup>2</sup>. On the one hand, the authorities considered the life of the colonists and missionaries, who were perceived as righteous, peaceful and exerting an ennobling influence on the region, a good example and a model that could contribute to the pacification of the rebellious indigenous mountain population. On the other hand, being situated in a border area, the foreign colonies would contribute to the consolidation of the Russian rule in the region and to enhancing the border security. The latter was related to another objective of the Caucasian policymakers - to restrict the influence of the Islam which was intensely used for anti-Russian propaganda and for unification of the mountaineers in their struggle against the Russian rule after the emergence of the Muridism.

Foreign missionary work flourished especially during the reign of Alexander I – ideologist of the Holy Alliance in which the European monarchs were guided in their deeds by Christianity not letting the future confrontation of the European nations and which even envisaged an European nation united by the Christian virtues to be created. Hence, the foreign missionaries were not seen as a threat, and even enjoyed the patronage of the Ober-Prosecutor of the Russian Empire Prince A.N. Golitsyn, who became Head of the new institution - Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and People's Education in 1817. The Prince himself had a particular notion of the Christian religion. He did not perceive the difference in the currents and did not distinguish between the Orthodoxy and the other denominations of Christianity. According to him, the differences in the doctrines, canons and ordinances were of secondary importance because all of them were manifestation of the same Spirit of Christ<sup>3</sup>. This explains his support for the establishment of the Russian Bible Society in 1813 which involved Scottish missionaries and of which Golitsyn himself became Chairman<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Чернова-Деке, Т.Н. Немецкие поселения на периферии Российской Империи. Кавказ: взгляд сквозь столетия (1818-1917). М., 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Голицын А.Н. [Письма к архимандриту Фотию] Публ. и коммент. Н.И. Барсова. – Русская старина, 1882 - Т. 33. - № 3, с.768.

<sup>4</sup> Canton, W. *A History of British and Foreign Bible Society*, Vol.1 (London, 1904), p. 194.

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This favorable environment led to the emergence of a small Scottish colony in the North Caucasus, where the Scottish missionaries were making tremendous efforts to spread the Scriptures among the local Muslim population. As early as 1802, the Edinburgh Bible Society sent its missionaries in the region. Henry Brunton and Alexander Paterson created the Scottish colony in the village of Karass located near the fortress Georgievsk<sup>5</sup> and 30 miles from Kislovodsk. The village was named after a Tatar Sultan, buried a few versts north of the settlement<sup>6</sup>. About 10 thousand acres of land were given to the colonists. Part of it was given free of charge and the rest – to be used for free for a period of 30 years, and after the expiration of this period the colonists had to pay 5 copecks per acre. The colony itself had the right of self-government and its own court for civil cases. As to criminal cases - they were heard according to Russian legislation by Russian courts. The Supreme Court of the colony was the Committee of Missionaries and in subordinate position was a court of three Germans responsible for the direct maintenance of order in the settlement<sup>7</sup>. The latter originated after the settlement of German colonists in Karass in 1810. The Germans did not have a pastor and therefore Sunday sermons were led by their teacher, and the baptism of children was carried out by Mr. Paterson, in the words of his fellow Mr. Glen – a Scottish missionary from Astrakhan, who arrived in 1817 and became known for translating the Bible in Farsi<sup>8</sup>.

By virtue of a Manifesto of Alexander I of 25<sup>th</sup> December 1806 the Scottish missionaries were given more rights and benefits. Among the main ones were: 1. Adequate amounts of land would be allocated to the Scottish colony as well as the right of inheritable possession without possibility under any pretext the relevant land to be sold or ceded; 2. Freedom of faith according to the doctrines and ordinances existing in the community; 3. The colonists would be exempted from all personal and land taxes and charges whatsoever, for a period of 30 years, from military and civil service, and also from military quarters; 4. An internal government of the colony was granted – *upráva*\* with elective

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<sup>5</sup> Today the city of Georgievsk, located 210 km southeast of Stavropol, Russia. At that time it was the center of the Caucasus province.

<sup>6</sup> Canton, op.cit., p.179.

<sup>7</sup> Henderson, E. *Biblical researches and travels in Russia* (London, 1826), p. 447.

<sup>8</sup> Glen, W. *Journal of a tour from Astrachan to Karass* (Edinburgh, 1823), p. 68.

\* *Upráva* (Russian) – a historical board in pre and post-Soviet Russia responsible for any social, class or administrative matters.

members and also a court and *raspráva*\*\* for commercial and other cases with exception of criminal trials; 5. Members of the colony were allowed to practice any crafts, industry and trade, without being enrolled in workshops and guilds;

6. They were allowed to turn Muslims and pagans from the mountain population in their faith, and make them members of the colony; 7. To ransom slaves from the mountain peoples, with the exception of Russians and Georgians, as the years of dependence on the Society and the terms for receiving freedom were defined; 8. It was forbidden for the members of the colony to sell the people ransomed by them; 9. The “ransomed” and those who had received freedom as well as all foreigners coming from abroad who the colonists had accepted as members of their community, would enjoy the same privileges granted to the colony; and finally, each member of the colony was permitted to leave Russia at any time<sup>9</sup>.

Rev. Henry Brunton, who was experienced in foreign missions, became the Head of the colony. Prior to his coming in the North Caucasus he had led a mission in South Africa. He had a command of many languages and in Karass he also learned the local Tatar dialect which helped him translate religious literature for the local population. At the beginning the local population comprised about 500 people, all of whom were Muslims, speaking 6 or 7 different languages. As a result of the outbreak of plague in 1804 among the Kabardians and Tatars, as well as of the battles between the Russian army and the Kabardians, the region was almost deserted. In addition to the natives, some of the Scottish missionaries sent in 1803 and 1805 to support the activities of Brunton and Paterson, also died. Thus by 1810 Karass numbered 39 people<sup>10</sup>, but with the settlement of German colonists the population increased. The exact number was given by A. Paterson in May 1813, namely 166 inhabitants of the colony of whom: 26 British, 17 born on the territory of the Russian Empire and dependent on the missionaries, 123 Germans<sup>11</sup>.

The first task of the Scots that arrived in Karass was to master the local language in order to be able to print liturgical literature and to preach among the population. Their ultimate goal was to turn it in the Christian faith. H. Brunton, who stood out with particular success in mastering the local language, focused

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\*\*\* *Raspráva* (Russian) - a special court for peasants in the XVIII and early XIX century.

<sup>9</sup> ПСЗ, Первое собрание, Т. XXIX, № 22410, 960–962.

<sup>10</sup> Henderson, *op.cit.*, pp. 446–447.

<sup>11</sup> АКАК, Т. V, с. 929.

himself also on learning its written form. As Henderson wrote: „he had only been two years at Karass, when his knowledge of the Turkish was so matured, as to warrant his undertaking a translation of the New Testament into that language.”<sup>12</sup> The affirmation of another author was also similar – William Canton, who wrote: "Brunton had acquired Tatar-Turkish in such idiomatic purity that by many of the natives he was regarded as a renegade Turk."<sup>13</sup> As early as 1806 the missionaries, who had their own printing press, had managed to print a certain number of religious literature described by Julius von Klapprot<sup>14</sup>, who visited Karass the same year. Henry Brunton successfully printed 5 000 copies of the Gospel of Matthew in 1807 after translating it into Tatar language<sup>15</sup>. It was stated that the used dialect covered the territories from the Volga River to the Black Sea, the greater part of Persia and was understood by the Tatar tribes beyond the Caspian Sea, whose dialects differed only in spoken but not in written form<sup>16</sup>.

The printing of the books required tremendous efforts and even struggles with nature. Due to the harsh winter conditions and the unstable premises in which the missionaries labored, their work was seriously hampered. The trough of water, used for wetting the paper froze and all the iron-work of the press was covered in frost. The cold prevented the ink from spreading properly on the paper wherefore the printed materials looked very unrepresentative and even indifferent. The danger of Circassian tribes' attacks coming mostly across the Kuban River was constant. Notwithstanding all hardships the British Bible Society approved the printed versions and even granted funds for printing of 5000 copies of the New Testament. This happened in 1813 and 1820. Due to the danger of destruction of the printing press in the raids of local mountain peoples, it was later transferred to the Scottish colony in Astrakhan, established in 1815.

With regard to this in 1813, Paterson referred to the Russian authorities of the Caucasus with appeal to provide for their security and described in detail what the consequences of the raids of different Caucasian peoples for the colony

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<sup>12</sup> Henderson, op.cit., p.421.

<sup>13</sup> Canton, op.cit., p. 179.

<sup>14</sup> Von Klapprot, Julius. *Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia* (London, 1814), p. 273.

<sup>15</sup> R. Harrison made an attempt to explain the specifics of the language used in his book “*Notes of a nine year`s residence in Russia*” (London, 1855), pp. 424–425.

<sup>16</sup> Canton, op.cit., p. 180.

were<sup>17</sup>. As a result, the Commander-in-chief of the Caucasus General Rtsishev issued a prescription that a regiment and 50 Cossack patrol were allocated to guard the colony. Also, he appointed a clerk - *pristav*, subordinate to the civil Governor of Caucasus, who would live in Karass, win the confidence of the colonists, and be able to communicate with them in English or German. He would be responsible for the welfare of the colony, and in case of weakening of the security, would inform the Commander of the Caucasian line. The local police would also be at the *pristav*'s command<sup>18</sup>.

Another main activity of the missionaries, except for the translation of liturgy literature, was the recruitment of followers. In connection with this a new practice, as mentioned earlier, was introduced, namely the ransom of slaves from the mountain peoples who were put entirely under the wardship of the mission. They adopted Christianity and helped carry out communication with the local population. Usually they were young people – girls and boys, kept as slaves after their capture by the Tatars during the raids over the Circassians and other tribes from the North Caucasus. The main idea was a generation of future missionaries to be raised to continue the activity of the Scots after they have left this world. For the realization of this idea, the missionaries sent an appeal to their supporters in Scotland to raise funds for the ransom of slaves. "For £25 a boy could be rescued, educated, taught basic skills so that he could earn a living, persuaded to accept the Christian faith and, if intelligent enough, trained to take part in missionary work."<sup>19</sup> After the conversion, the “ransomed” boys and girls were given new names - usually those were the names of the people who had donated the money for their upbringing, or names chosen by the sponsors. \_\_

One of the conditions for ransom, laid down from the very beginning by the Russian authorities, was that the slaves should not be Russians or Georgians. The Interior Minister Earl V. Kochubey's fears, set out in a report to Alexander I on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1802, were related to the habit of some of the mountain peoples to capture Christians and then to sell them. Later this practice became part of the system of *amanats* (captives) when hostages were used during negotiations or exchange of prisoners-of-war. In his report, the Interior Minister warned the Russian Emperor that if a permission was given to the Scottish

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<sup>17</sup> AKAK, T. V, 909–912.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 913.

<sup>19</sup> Stewart, G. Shotlandskaia kolkonia, *Stewarts*, vol.19, N 2 (1993), p.103.

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missionaries to ransom Georgians and Russians that would become a cause for increasing the attempts of the mountain tribes “to steal our people”<sup>20</sup>.

The practice of ransom didn't take particular effect especially with regard to the realization of the long-term idea for continuity in the activity of the Scottish missionaries. Indicative of that was the number of the "ransomed" and baptized children. In 1813, Paterson pointed out that they had taken 16 boys, 7 girls, 3 women and 4 men from the Kabardians of whom 9 had adopted Christianity at their own will, 6 had died and 6 had been kidnapped<sup>21</sup>, i.e. carried off. The latter was used as one of the arguments stated by Paterson in his claim for a security guard of the colony to be appointed.

Subsequent statistics was provided by M.V. Jones in his article “The sad and curious story of Karass”<sup>22</sup> on the basis of the Report of the Edinburgh Missionary Society for 1817. It presented a list with the names, ages and ethnic origin of the “ransomed”, who were 27 in total, males and females, prevailingly young people between 14 and 30 years of age, some persons in their 50s, and two children aged 3 and 8. Short information was provided about every one of them and also an account of what was happening with them at the time of writing of the Report. 27 of those people were still alive and helping the missionaries in their activity, respectively 11 persons in Karass and 7 persons sent to the new established Scottish colonies in Astrakhan (4) and Orenburg (3). Among the main activities of the “ransomed” in Karass were to interpret for the Scots in their conversations with the Tatars and to help translate, print and distribute liturgical literature. All this came to show the modest role which the Scottish mission had in the conversion of the local population and involving it on service. The lack of efficiency, of which the Russian authorities also became aware, was one of the reasons which led to the end of the Scots' missionary activity at a later stage.

Last but not least, the preaching of missionaries in the villages surrounding the colony should be noted. The Scots often held talks not only with the locals in an attempt to prove the truthfulness of the Christian faith to Islam, but also theological disputes with local Mullahs and Effendi<sup>23</sup>. Sufficiently detailed description of such meetings was given by Glen in his journal. He

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<sup>20</sup> ПСЗ, Первое собрание, Т. XXVII, № 20 522, с. 370.

<sup>21</sup> АКАК, Т. V, с. 910.

<sup>22</sup> Jones, M. The sad and curious story of Carass, *Oxford Slavonic Papers* (1975), p. 80.

<sup>23</sup> Effendi – signifies Master or Lord; a title given to priests who have received a more learned education than others, after returning from some eminent seminary.



visited Karass in 1820 and described many similar disputes and conversations as a first-hand witness. For example, Glen stated that the Muslim found it hard to understand how it was possible for God to have a son and to grasp the dual nature of Jesus Christ because they „believe that God is one, and that he is eternally and unchangeably the same”<sup>24</sup>. In another case, a Kabardian Wyden<sup>25</sup> said that religion was something that concerned Imams and Effendi and it was not his business to comment its doctrines, just believe in them<sup>26</sup>. It is very interesting that often in order to explain better the sense of Christianity or some testaments the missionaries gave examples from real life using the figure of the Russian Emperor. They opposed it to the figure of some unspecified Governor, and in their stories the Russian Emperor always represented Christianity and God, while the Governor – Islam and Allah. For example, those stories taught that Muslims should not blindly believe that Islam was a religion given to them by God like Christianity. Just like if the Russian Emperor ordered new money to be printed and put into circulation, and a the Governor of some remote province decided to emit fake money, it was the people’s responsibility to make sure that this was precisely the money issued by the imperial order<sup>27</sup>. Another example in the same direction: the Russian Emperor, for reasons related to the domestic financial situation of the country, issued an edict which determined what food his subjects should be fed with. The diet was nutritive for the people. However, after some time, for other reasons he issued a new edict and changed the diet, but the new diet was also as nutritive as the previous one. One Governor from a close province strictly followed the second edict and the people in the province felt well, while another Governor from a remote province changed the diet informing the population that it was in compliance with the new edict. The people from both provinces unreservedly believed that they followed the orders of the Tsar, but those from the second one began to suffer. And then the rhetorical question comes - which of the Governors should the population believe to be following the orders of the Emperor? The first edict was the Law of Moses and the second – the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Governor of the remote province was the author of the Koran<sup>28</sup>. Therefore, the

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<sup>24</sup> Glen, op.cit., p.72.

<sup>25</sup> Wyden – a noble man next in rank to a Mirza (an inferior prince, next in rank to a Sultan)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 112–115.



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figure of the Russian Emperor represented God, and the Governor of the close province – Jesus Christ who is the one and only mediator between people and God. The examples given here come to show several things. First, the approach of the missionaries and their attempt to prove that the only “true” religion is Christianity through examples which were accessible for the listeners and through which the Muslims (in most described cases they were Kabardians or Tatars) could arrive at that conclusion by themselves. Second, hardly the use of the figure of the Emperor was accidental. Rather the aim was through it to persuade an unshakeable faith in the autocrat, in his decisions which guaranteed the prosperity of his nation just like God with the New Testament guarantees the only right way towards salvation. And third, as Islam was not the “right” religion and was inferior to Christianity, and the Mullahs and Effendi themselves differed in the interpretation of the Koran and couldn’t be the real mediators between people and God, so the disobedience to the Russian Tsar and the trust in people who don’t follow his orders would have bad consequences for the people. It is safe to say here that the missionaries’ role in the Russian colonization of the Caucasus is evident precisely in its northern part, which in the provided examples was the distant province of the Empire. Consciously or not, with their stories the missionaries met the expectations of the Russian authorities.

H. Brunton died in 1813, which was considered a big loss for the colony because of his virtues and skills. The New Testament, which was translated by him and known as “Nogay” or “Tartar” New Testament, was printed the same year. A. Paterson became Head of the colony. The period until 1821 could be considered an active one for the Scottish missionaries in Russia and the Edinburgh Bible Society (Scottish Missionary Society since 1818) which could boast itself with the printing of a lot of liturgical literature by the missionaries, with the establishment of two new colonies in Astrakhan and Orenburg, and with the sending of new missionaries to Karass. On the other hand, the lack of mass conversions and mass adoption of Christianity by the local population was sufficiently indicative of the lack of success in this area. Paterson himself faced a number of problems in Karass with the motivation of the missionaries, with their daily needs and living conditions, and their coexistence with the German colonists (only Paterson spoke German). In a broader context, both the Directors of Edinburgh Society as well as the Russian authorities were responsible for the hardships of the missionaries and the decline of the colony. In the first case, the problem arose from the remoteness of the Edinburgh Society from its missionaries, and its inability to understand the situation in which they found themselves. Instead of support, especially after 1821, when the position of



Secretary for Correspondence of the Society was taken by Dr. William Brown, letters<sup>29</sup> were received in Karass which were not encouraging at all for the missionaries and were constantly reproaching them for the lack of observable results from their activity, thus undermining their morale. The small number of conversions was mostly being noted and when the accusations of not following the advice and recommendations of Edinburgh were added, the daily life of the Scots became really tense. But despite everything, neither the visits to the neighboring villages and the preaching, nor the distribution of liturgical literature and the studying of the local languages stopped.

As to the attitude of the Russian authorities towards Karass and the Scottish missionaries, it also underwent serious changes. At the beginning Alexander I attested his support not only for the Scottish missionaries, but also for the Russian Bible Society established in 1813. He donated 25 000 rubles for it but also wished to become a member of the Society paying an annual subscription of 10 000 rubles<sup>30</sup>. In 1819, at a magnificent ceremony the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian Biblical Society was celebrated. In this period, the Society had managed to establish about 173 branches all over Russia, to print 371 600 copies of the Bible of which 120 105 were in circulation. They were translated into 46 languages and only 13 of the foreign language versions were imported from abroad<sup>31</sup>. But those were the last successful years of the Russian Bible Society. However a turn came very soon, connected with two events of internal and external character, namely Metropolitan Seraphim's<sup>32</sup> ascension to the highest office in the Church and the revolutions in Europe and the Balkans.

The Metropolitan of St. Petersburg Mihai<sup>33</sup> died in 1821 and his place was occupied by Seraphim who became Metropolitan of Novgorod, St. Petersburg, Estlandia and Finland, and took a leading role in the Holy Synod. He became one of the most intransigent opponents of the Russian Bible Society (whose ardent defendant he was at the beginning) and of Prince Golitsyn. The results of his activity didn't delay as just the same year, only 7 months after its establishment, the colony in Nazran was closed and the missionaries were forced

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<sup>29</sup> Jones, op.cit., p. 67.

<sup>30</sup> Canton, op. cit., pp. 195–196.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 406.

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.biografija.ru/show\\_bio.aspx?id=116573](http://www.biografija.ru/show_bio.aspx?id=116573) (17.09.2012);  
[http://www.ortho-rus.ru/cgi-bin/ps\\_file.cgi?2\\_3066](http://www.ortho-rus.ru/cgi-bin/ps_file.cgi?2_3066) (17.09.2012);

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.ortho-rus.ru/cgi-bin/ps\\_file.cgi?2\\_5952](http://www.ortho-rus.ru/cgi-bin/ps_file.cgi?2_5952) (17.09.2012);

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to withdraw in Karass. The next step was related to the right of the missionaries to convert to Christianity - a right which, according to the Russian law, belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church. This issue was resolved for Karass, when in May 1823 Prince Golitsyn informed the missionaries that they had the right to convert based on the Manifesto from 1806. For the other colonies, however, even for the oldest ones like Sarepta, this was prohibited.

A strong opposition by Metropolitan Seraphim, Archimandrite Photius<sup>34</sup> and Aleksey Arakcheev was formed against the Minister of Spiritual Affairs and People's Education. They managed to achieve their goal and in 1824 the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and People's Education was closed and Prince Golitsyn retired. The new Minister of People's Education Alexander Shishkov joined the fight against the Russian Bible Society. In May of the same year, Metropolitan Seraphim became the Chairperson of the Society. In December, in a report to Alexander I, he presented the Society as dealing with mystical false teachings and recommended that its abolishment was necessary. The final decision on the closure of the Russian Bible Society was taken by Nicholas I on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1826. The right of disposal with its property was given to the Holy Synod, to which all paper and typographic materials were passed.

Meanwhile, in 1824 at a meeting of the Directors of the Scottish Bible Society in Edinburgh the decision for the withdrawal of all missionaries<sup>35</sup> from Russia was defeated by a narrow majority. Their further actions, however, connected with the interference in the future of Karass and the attempt to influence the Russian authorities in relation to A. Paterson, confirmed precisely that intention. In addition to the activities of the "opposition" led by Metropolitan Seraphim, the end of the Scottish missionary work was not delayed.

Another factor which contributed to this outcome should be noted - the change of the political situation in the Balkans and Europe, connected with the outbreak of the revolutions that put an end to the Vienna System. Over time, Alexander I had become disappointed with the Holy Alliance in which Russia had a leading role. A confrontation between the British and the Russian Empire also began to emerge in particular with regard to the Eastern Question. The aim of the British policy to limit the Russian influence in Europe and the Balkans led to a deterioration of the relations between the two countries. On the other hand, the Decembrist uprising was regarded by the new Emperor Nicholas I as an

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<sup>34</sup> [http://www.hrono.info/biograf/bio\\_f/foty\\_spasski.php](http://www.hrono.info/biograf/bio_f/foty_spasski.php) (17.09.2012);

<sup>35</sup> For the period 1823-1826, the majority of the Scottish missionaries left Russia and returned to Scotland.

attempt to spread revolutionary "contagion" on Russian soil. Therefore, the foreigners located in the country, especially British subjects were looked with suspicion. This was also valid of the Scottish missionaries in Karass, who were situated in the troubled North Caucasus region and who, with the lack of particular success in their missionary work, could fall among the main suspects of being British agents inciting the native population against the Russian Empire.

General A.P. Ermolov expressed similar position with regard to the foreign missionaries. On 12<sup>th</sup> January 1827 he wrote to V.S. Lanskoj to give further explanation as to why the Scottish missionaries left not only Karass, but also Russia. In this document<sup>36</sup> he clearly expressed his opinion about the dangers which allowing foreigners to preach Christianity among the Caucasian peoples posed. According to Ermolov, the missionary work could be a cover up used by the agents of foreign countries, which were not indifferent to the Russian Empire's acquisitions in Asia, to penetrate Russia. Foreign missionaries, in their enlightenment work with the people living in the inaccessible areas of the country, could not achieve rapprochement of the culture and customs of the mountaineers and the Russians because the Christianity they preached was not Orthodox. On the contrary – they could contribute to intensifying the enmity between them with their moral teachings. Furthermore, General Ermolov also raised the question of what Europe would think about the fact that foreigners were invited to preach Christianity among the population. There were two possible answers to this question – either Russia didn't have enough resources for this or the Russian clergy was incapable of preaching the Word of God. The General also didn't think that by leaving Karass the Scots would inflict damage on the region because, as far as the economy was concerned, they were not exactly an example of industriousness. Nor had they contributed to the introduction of any new crafts or farming methods. And regarding their main occupation – preaching of Christianity, it was known how little they had achieved. Therefore, at the end of his report, Ermolov suggested that a separate missionary society be established to preach the Orthodoxy, which would be subordinated to the already existing Ossetian Commission<sup>37</sup>.

The actions undertaken as a result of the statements made in the previous document were also discussed in the report of General G. A. Emmanuel to

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<sup>36</sup> AKAK, T. VI, Ч. 1, с. 480.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

General I. F. Paskevich dated 14<sup>th</sup> May 1827<sup>38</sup>. Wishing to prevent missionaries from deviating from their doings and in order not to allow them and the colony to obey a foreign institution based in Edinburgh instead of the Russian laws, the opinion and recommendations of General Ermolov were regarded as reasonable, but only some of them were taken into consideration by Nicholas I.

Meanwhile, the Directors of the Scottish Bible Society set about to discredit A. Paterson before the Russian authorities with the aim of imposing another *starshina*<sup>39</sup> at the head of the colony. Thus, apart from the problems with the German colonists, Paterson found himself involved in the intrigues of Edinburgh. As early as April 1825, a proposal for his withdrawal from the board of the colony was received from there. Paterson would receive a certain sum in addition to his salary in exchange for immediately passing the administration of Karass to Mr. Galloway<sup>40</sup> and returning to Scotland. Paterson decided to stay and despite all tried to maintain the normal work in the colony. His decision was based on the position of the Committee of Ministers from 15<sup>th</sup> December 1828<sup>41</sup> approved by the Emperor. According to it, there were not sufficient grounds for revoking the powers of the missionaries to convert the mountaineers given to them by Alexander I, including as incompatible with the Russian policy after the opinion of General Ermolov. It was also considered that until a Russian Missionary Society was established, the mountaineers should not remain "lost" for Christianity, however insignificant the number of the converts might be. Therefore, the Committee decided to leave to the Scottish colony all its rights and benefits granted by virtue of the Charter of 25<sup>th</sup> December 1806 and did not forbid the missionaries to convert Muslims and pagans from the mountain peoples, who might then become members of the colony. The position specified what rights and lands would be given to the German missionaries from the Basel colony in Shusha wishing to migrate to Karass, what lands would be allocated to the Germans from Saratov and their families, as well as what privileges would be granted to other new colonists emigrating to Karass. As far as Paterson was concerned, it was decided that he would be awarded with 1000 tithe of land in

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<sup>38</sup> АКАК, Т. VII, с. 932.

<sup>39</sup> Starshina - In Chechnya, in the XIX century, the elected or appointed by the royal government (in the auls, who took Russian citizenship) head of aul. For example, in Ossetia it is used as a name for leader/head of Ossetian tribe.

<sup>40</sup> A Scottish missionary arrived in Karass in 1805.

<sup>41</sup> ПСЗ, Второе собрание, Т. III, № 2517, 1112-1113.



inheritable possession because of his 25-year service as a starshina. In order to put an end to the internal controversies between the Scots and the Germans, it was decided that their administration would be separated as Paterson was left Head of the Scottish missionaries, while the Germans from Saratov would choose their own starshina. Karass would be under the supervision of the military commandant of Kislovodsk, and if problems arose, he had to report to the commander of the Caucasus region<sup>42</sup>.

This document guaranteed that Paterson would remain at the head of Karass for several more years and the missionaries would continue to perform their activities<sup>43</sup> undisturbedly. Still, it was clear that the colony would be brought under the sway of the Russian authorities and its problems would be resolved by them. Ermolov's fears that foreign missionaries contributed to the confrontation between the mountaineers and the Russians were probably not taken into consideration due to the small number of baptized. However, it was precisely the small number of baptized that a few years later would be used as an excuse for ceasing the activity of the Scots.

The decision of the Committee of Ministers, however, was not enough to stop the actions of the Directors of the Scottish Missionary Society against Paterson, according to whom the colony in Karass was nearly ruined. They wrote two letters to the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Empire - the first dated 20<sup>th</sup> February 1830<sup>44</sup> and the second one dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1831<sup>45</sup>. In them they convincingly stated that Mr. Paterson was no longer a missionary of the Society and had not been one since 1824, also he was not a pastor and had never been ordained. Such was Mr. Brunton, while Paterson was sent with him to the colony as an ordinary craftsman. He was also accused of usurping the government of the colony as a starshina and of having no rights over the powers that were attributed to him in the Russian documents. The Directors were worried by the fact that Messrs. Galloway and Glen, who as Scottish missionaries and members of the respective colony should enjoy the same rights and privileges, were not mentioned anywhere in the decisions of the Committee

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.1113

<sup>43</sup> As a contemporary in 1826 Henderson calculated publishing activity the Scots in Karass, including branches of the mission in Astrakhan and Orenburg, over 100 thousand printed copies of the New Testament, catechisms and religious treatises. Henderson, op.cit., p. 454.

<sup>44</sup> AKAK, T. VII, c. 941.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 944.

of Ministers. In the second letter additional examples of Paterson's unpunished and illegal actions towards the colonists were given. However, both letters were left without answer.

In 1833, due to financial reasons, the Scottish Missionary Society was forced to close the mission in Karass and to withdraw Messrs. Galloway and Glen from Russia. The first one stayed and lived in the colony until 1838, when he returned to Edinburgh with one of the "ransomed" Tatars to collect donations for the construction of a church in Karass<sup>46</sup>. For the Society this was the end of the colony. However, the decision of the Russian Emperor about its fate was not delayed.

Only 7 years had passed from the decision of the Committee of Ministers when in 1835 the attitude towards Karass, the Scottish missionaries and Paterson changed drastically. Of course this turn of attitudes had its own background, because even though the Scottish Missionary Society received no reply to its letters, special attention was paid to them. On 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1831, the Interior Minister sent an inquiry<sup>47</sup> to Baron G.V. Rosen, who had to determine to what extent the complaints of the Society were true, and requested the General's recommendation on how the order in the colony could be restored.

The Commander of the army in the Caucasian Line and Head of the Caucasian region General A. A. Velyaminov prepared a detailed report<sup>48</sup> dated 19<sup>th</sup> July 1834 about the Scottish colony for Baron Rosen and in connection with the request of the Ministry of Interior. First of all, the report remarked that the decision of the Committee of Ministers from 1828, regarding the constitution of Karass, was still not applied into practice and would remain so as long as A. Paterson participated in the government of the colony. Falsely claiming to be a starshina and missionary of the Scottish Bible Society, he was bringing Karass to ruin. In the name of the welfare and peace of all the colonists Paterson had to be removed if not from the colony in general, at least from its government, and because of his illegal actions deprived of the 1,000 tithe of land granted to him earlier<sup>49</sup>. The expose continued with statistics on the population of Karass, which gave an idea of the number of colonists during that period, namely 34 families, of which 3 of Scottish missionaries, 9 of converted mountaineers and 22 of German colonists. General Velyaminov's proposals for the government of

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<sup>46</sup> Jones, op.cit., p.77.

<sup>47</sup> AKAK, T. VII, 311–312.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 314–317.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.314.

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the colony followed – he suggested that a single authority is created - uprava consisting of an equal number of members from both the Scots and the Germans. Together they would choose the starshina of the colony, and they would all have a 3-year mandate and no one could be elected for two consecutive terms as starshina. One could be re-elected as starshina only after one term of three years had passed. Thus abuses related to the same person occupying the position of starshina in the course of many years would be avoided. Karass would be subordinated to the Chief of Pyatigorsk District, just like it was until that moment, who would govern it on the same basis on which he governed the other districts in his jurisdiction and would be responsible for it before the Head of the Caucasian region. All other items of the document issued in 1828 by the Committee of Ministers would be implemented immediately. As for the land, each family would receive 60 tithes of land and the surplus would be preserved by the Caucasian State Chamber until the colony needed it, i.e. for the settlement of new colonists. Finally, the wrongful actions of General E.F. Engelgardt - the former commander of the left flank of the Caucasian Line, towards the colonists were presented and recommendations for their limitation were made<sup>50</sup>.

On the basis of General Velyaminov's report, Baron Rosen prepared his position<sup>51</sup> to the Minister of Interior D.N. Bludov dated 10<sup>th</sup> January 1835. It reiterated many of the conclusions and recommendations of the Head of the Caucasus region. Once again the beginning of the document was devoted to the person of A. Paterson who, in the words of the colonists, sowed the seeds of discord among them and did not allow them to fully enjoy their rights. Baron Rosen gave a few examples from the complaints of the colonists against their starshina, as well as the counterclaims made by Paterson. Then he said that on the basis of the report submitted to him, he could not but conclude that it was precisely Paterson – a person who did not have the title “pastor” and was not governing as starshina with the consent of all the colonists - who was guilty of all the disorder in the colony. Therefore, in addition to Velyaminov's recommendations, Rosen wrote, that it was also necessary not to allow Paterson to participate in the elections for members of the uprava and for starshina, and that he must be banned from performing religious ceremonies in order to deprive him of every possibility to exert influence on the colonists. However, according to the High Commissioner of the Caucasus it was not right to deprive him of the lands which had already been granted to him as an award, but rather

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.315.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.317–320.



they had to be allocated to him after the lands in the colony were distributed among the colonists<sup>52</sup>. In general, Baron Rosen agreed with General Velyaminov's other prescriptions and measures were taken for General Engelgardt not to show anymore his partiality for Paterson through improper actions.

The subsequent analysis of the High Commissioner concerning the presence of foreign missionaries in the Caucasus in general is particularly interesting. For so many years (especially in Karass the colony existed for 32 years), they did not achieve any success in the spread of Christianity among the pagan mountaineers and the Muslims, nor with regard to the expectations of the Russian government, namely to develop the agriculture and economy of the Caucasus region. This is proven by the fact that only nine people were converted as well as by the lack of occupation with any craft or establishment of any factory in the region. This means that all this time the colonists were quarrelling among themselves who should take the leading role in the colony. The actions of Paterson and the other missionaries, who were bothering the government with their problems for years, were also indicative of this. All these resulted in Baron Rozen's fears about the problems in the recognition of the Russian rule over the mountaineers. He once again recalled General Ermolov's opinion from 1827 regarding all those issues and believing it to be reasonable, he pointed out again the need to create a Russian Society to spread the Orthodoxy in the North Caucasus<sup>53</sup>. Another proof of the incapability of the foreign missionaries and that the Russian authorities didn't need them, was the success of the Ossetian Commission, whose preachers despite all difficulties and limitations had succeeded from 1817 until 1834 to baptize 70 000 people. Because of this and in order to prevent any unforeseen consequences in the future, Baron Rozen proposed all activities of the foreign missionaries in the North Caucasus and

Transcaucasia which were connected to the conversion and preaching of Christianity among the peoples, being either obedient or disobedient, on the territory of the Russian Empire to be banned and to allow them either to leave the country or to stay, exercising only activities which in their character were inherent to the respective colonies. The report of the High Commissioner ended with the fears that if the influence of the foreign missionaries grew, it would be extremely difficult for the Russian priests to fight against the already indoctrinated views<sup>54</sup> at a later stage.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.318.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.319.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.320.

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From the documents presented so far conclusions can be drawn in several directions. The first conclusion that stands out is related to the accusations of the Scottish Missionary Society against A. Paterson, which were probably not groundless. Hence the question, whether the directors really tried to intentionally discredit the starshina, and to what extent their fears that the colony was devastated were reasonable. If they were right, this would mean that the Russian authorities were ill informed for several years about the condition of Karass and the actions of Paterson. It is possible that under the protection of General Engelgardt he really acted autocratically and illegally, and that his actions remained to some extent hidden from the government or presented with certain degree of partiality in the assessments. This is also suggested by the fact that after the letters of the Scottish Missionary Society were sent to the Minister of the Internal Affairs, the latter appointed a check-up to see if the accusations corresponded to the reality. It is possible that the complaints of the colonists, presented in 1835 by Baron Rozen, were not seriously taken into account and were considered insignificant. It is also possible that the final decision about the destiny of Karass was taken with a view to the changing international relations and most of all with a view to the signing of the Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi with the Ottoman Empire, which not only gave a leading influence to the Russian Empire in the Black Sea region and the Straits, but was also served as the basis for creating a strong opposition against it in Europe.

Meanwhile, the fights of the mountain peoples against Russia had become organized in their character. Since 1834 the fight was led by Imam Shamil. This fact and the worsened relations with Great Britain once again brought to light the fears that the foreign missionaries in the Russian Empire were in fact agents, who under the cover of preaching Christianity among the mountaineers, were actually working them up and agitating them against the Russian rule. That is why Baron Rozen reminded the fears of General Ermolov, which he actually shared himself in his report to the Minister of Interior.

No matter what influenced the decision of the Russian government regarding Paterson and Karass, it is a fact that the Scottish missionaries did not live up to the expectations of either the Scottish Missionary Society or Russia. Especially as far as the baptized mountaineers were concerned. As to the printed literature that they were distributing, it could not exert enough influence to change the religious picture in the North Caucasus. As a result of this and the reports of the respective responsible persons, the completely logical

*polozhenie*<sup>55</sup> "For the measurements of the organization of the Scottish colony in the Caucasus mountains"<sup>56</sup> by the Committee of Ministers followed, approved by Nicholas I on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1835. The beginning of the document stated that the missionaries in Karass baptized only 9 people for 32 years and after their rights were confirmed in 1828 - not even one. For half this time the Ossetian Commission managed to baptize 70 thousand people. This showed that the Scots were not interested in missionary activities and therefore they did not need the rights that were granted to them. It was also mentioned that the Basel missionaries were not interested in conversion to Christianity. Instead they had directed their actions towards the local Armenian youth, which caused troubles with the Armenian clergy. As the Orthodox Church was expecting to receive approval for the creation of its own mission in the Caucasus soon and having in mind the previous considerations, a decision was taken that the activity of the other missionaries in the region was no longer needed. As a result, the Scots from Karass and the Germans from Basel were banned from practising missionary activities. Instead, their actions had to focus on agriculture, trade and setting up factories. The responsibility to make sure that the ban was observed was assigned to the Head of the Caucasus province under the supervision of Georgia's High Commissioner. Specifically regarding Karass it was announced that source of the trouble in the colony was A. Paterson who illegally appropriated the rank starshina and was bothering the colonists over the land ownership and other public affairs. As a result of this and the studied positions and opinions of the responsible individuals in the Caucasus, the Minister of Interior recommended the following actions regarding the Scottish colony to be taken: 1. A. Paterson to be banished from Karass; 2. Every family from the colony, including the Germans from Saratov to receive 60 tithes of land; 3. 1000 tithes of land to be given to Paterson, situated as far as possible from the colony; 4. To create uprava consisting of three people - one Scott, one German and a starshina – this position would be occupied by a Scott and a German taking turns, and all of them would be elected for a period of three years<sup>57</sup>. The recommendations were approved and only several days later Bludov sent to Baron Rozen the approved decision of the Committee of Ministers containing

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<sup>55</sup> Положение - нормативный акт, имеющий сводный характер и определяющий структуру, функции, компетенцию органа или системы органов, либо порядок их действий в определённых случаях, либо регулирующий совокупность организационных, имущественных, трудовых отношений по конкретному вопросу.

<sup>56</sup> ПСЗ, Второе собрание, Т. X, № 8271, 767–769.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 769.

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the same items<sup>58</sup>. Those decisions were implemented in less than a year and a report for that was given by the High Commissioner of Caucasus to the Minister of Interior<sup>59</sup>. Exception was made for only one of them - Paterson was allowed to stay in Karass because his house and garden were situated there and because Baron Rozen believed that once excluded from the activity of the colony, the ex-starshina could not exert any influence over the colonists. Afterwards, Paterson and Karass remained out of the sight of the Russian authorities. And on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1847, the Scottish Missionary Society also seized to exist.

Information about Karass appeared again in the 1870s, when Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace - British public servant and later editor and foreign correspondent of "The Times", visited Caucasus for research purposes. After noticing the name "Shotlandskaya Koloniya" near Pyatigorsk on his map he decided to visit the place where he found Germans instead of Scots. By a pure chance Sir Wallace found an old man - typical Circassian by his own description, who told him in authentic clear Scottish accent: „Od, man, I`m a Scotsman tae. My name is John Abercrombie. Did ya never hear tell o` John Abercrombie, the famous Edinburgh doctor?“<sup>60</sup> That was actually a ransomed Circassian child who bore the name of the famous Edinburgh doctor who donated the money for his upbringing. Even though the information is quite insufficient, Dr. John Abercrombie was probably the only sponsor who could be proud of "his" ransomed child and could rest in peace knowing that the funds that he invested lived up to his expectations. The indirect data shows that the "ransomed" missionary contributed to the spreading of the Bible translated into Tatar and Mongolian languages because he worked for a long time as a printer at the mission of London Missionary Society in Selenginsk<sup>61</sup>. However, there are very few such cases as the Circassian child Abercrombie, which comes to show yet another failure of the Scottish missionaries in their attempt to create a generation of followers.

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<sup>58</sup> AKAK, op.cit., p. 321.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

<sup>60</sup> Baxter, J. Scots in the Caucasus – a Curious Missionary Enterprise, *Scots Magazine*, Vol.16, № 1(Oct. 1931), p.9.

<sup>61</sup> Jones, op.cit., pp. 79–80.

The baptism of the last Sultan of Crimea, however, is considered a serious success of the Scottish missionaries. Khan Katti-Geray Krim-Geray (his name was often just mentioned as Katti-Geray) accepted Christianity in 1807 in Karass and adopted the Christian name of Aleksey Ivanovich. The Russian Tsar even allowed him to go to Scotland, where he enrolled in the University of Edinburgh to receive missionary training. Katti-Geray lived there for several years and in 1820 even married the daughter of a rich British man. Miss Neilson from Milbank accompanied her husband back to Russia where she was known under the name Anne Yakovlevna Krim-Geray. Upon his return to Crimea, Aleksey Ivanovich took up his missionary activity and started preaching Christianity among the Tatar population<sup>62</sup>.

In general the role of the Scottish missionaries in the peaceful colonisation of the North Caucasus remained very limited. The reasons for this had to do both with external factors, which were beyond the control of the missionaries, as well as internal ones. The change of the political situation in Russia, the following struggle of the Russian church against the Protestants, the discontinued funding by the Scottish Missionary Society are among the external reasons that led to the actual "closure" of the colony as missionary. However, the Scotts themselves did not give any reasons for that not to happen. The small number of converted mountaineers could also be attributed to the wrong approach of the foreigners because the Christianity did not correspond to the conditions in which the North Caucasus tribes lived and, on the other hand, it was accepted as the religion of the people who wanted to conquer them. In fact, studying the language of a certain nation does not necessarily have to do with studying its culture and customs, and in this case that was an obstacle to finding the right approach for preaching Christianity. It was also very hard for the Scottish missionaries to explain the Christian doctrines to the local population, whose perceptions based on the Islam did not allow for a different interpretation to be accepted. The position of the Muslim clergy was also very strong – it had a leading role in the perception of religion, and therefore it would be very difficult for the common people to occupy this function. Situated in a troubled region which the Russians wanted to make inseparable part of their Empire, the

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<sup>62</sup> Hakan Kirimli. Crimean Tatars, Nogays, and Scottish missionaries. The story of Katti Geray and other baptized descendants of the Crimean Khans, *Cahiers du Monde russe*, № 45/1-2 (2004), pp. 61-107;

Lyall, R. *Travels in Russia, the Kremea, the Caucasus, and Georgia*, T.1 (1825), pp. 237–239; Baxter, J. Scots in the Caucasus – a Curious Missionary Enterprise, *Scots Magazine*, Vol.16, № 1 (1931), pp.5–6; AKAK, T. V, c. 929.

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mountaineers were united by their common faith and typical culture in their struggle against the Russian authority. Christianity simply did not offer them an alternative that would satisfy their needs. On the contrary – accepting a different religion would mean treachery. This is also proven by the fact that the baptized mountaineers became members of the colony and never returned to their homeland. They supported the activity of the missionaries in Karass or some other missionary colony with translations or some other craftsmanship that they knew but they did not have any realization left among their own people, neither could affect them in the way desired by the preachers. The very fact that the missionaries were escorted by guards and the colony itself was guarded shows that the mountaineers were not particularly hospitable or sympathetic to them. It is questionable how much of the translated Christian literature was used as intended, and how many copies actually reached the population if any. The settlement of the German population in the colony should not be underestimated as a factor contributing to the failures, because it led to daily problems taking away from the missionary's attention.

After all, the Russian authorities, having assessed the real benefits or rather the lack of them, decided to create their own missionary society and considering their foreign policy interests to limit the access of foreigners to the Empire. The actual contribution of the Scotts for the Christianization of the North Caucasus remained modest as their role was strongly localized in the area of Karass. With the consolidation of the resistance of the mountaineers which became more organized in its character and had its own ideology, the peaceful means for submission and colonisation of the North Caucasus remained in the background of the plans of the Russian emperors.

*Editor: Mariya Prokopova-Gochova*

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