

History

Religious Project of Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani's Diplomatic Negotiations in Versailles

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ABSTRACT. From January to June 1714, Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani had been negotiating in Versailles, asking the support of Louis XIV to release Vakhtang VI from Iran's captivity within the framework of religious project. The details of this plan first appeared in the 70s of the 17th century due to the capitulation of Turkey in 1673 and Iran in 1708. Consequently, France was granted the privilege to protect Catholics in the East, and the Foreign Mission of Paris acquired guarantees of safety. The plan of Versailles was aimed at establishing Paris Foreign Mission in Georgia in order to open a trade route to Persia through Georgia. Georgian politicians realized these aspirations of France and taking into consideration the fact that Iran and the Ottoman Empire would not allow the political union of France with Georgia, they tried to reach the goal by the above-following project. According to it, Paris Foreign Mission (from the Jesuits and the Saint-Lazare Congregation) would be occupied in missionary sphere in Georgia as well as in the college founded by them. The Georgian youngsters brought up in this college would later master military art, craftsmanship and trade in France. As a result, the country would have professional engineers, officers and disciplined soldiers. This would prepare the ground for the unity of the churches and Georgia would be a reliable base for France in the Eastern politics of Versailles. Such religious disguise would hide the future liabilities of the economic and political relations between France and Georgia in the eyes of Turks and Persians.
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Key words: religious project, Paris Foreign Mission, college, religious unification, alliance goals

According to the sources, unknown till today, in Versailles, in January-June, 1714 [1: 160; 218] Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani's diplomatic negotiations with the support of Louis XIV with regard to the release of Vakhtang VI from Iran's captivity [2: 347-351] were held within the framework of religious project. Since the seventies of the 17th

century, this plan was supported by the aspiration of founding Paris Foreign Mission ("Missions étrangères") in Georgia by Versailles [3: ff. 108; 112; 180 r – 183 v]. This decision was closely linked to Louis XIV aim "To open a trade route to Persia from the Black Sea to Samegrelo, and from here through Eastern Georgia" [3: ff. 167-168].

Paris Foreign Mission had to play the crucial role [3: ff. 162-165], the activity of which on the territories of Ottoman (1673) [4: 101-105] and Iran Empires (1708) was supported by the treaty of capitulations [5: 71-72; 6: 333-336]. On this basis France was granted legitimate privileges to protect Catholics in the East, while French missionaries acquired security guarantees [4: 102; 5: 72]. At the same time, the right of the patronage from the Roman Curia allowed Versailles to carry out an independent religious policy [7: 128-130]. Accordingly, defence-protection of the missionaries and Catholics in the Ottoman space in Constantinople was a predominant right and duty of French Ambassadors [4: 102]. Now "...under their firm protection, missionaries were able to arrive in Georgia through the territory of Turkey" [8: f. 124]. Versailles had great financial support for the Foreign Mission Society [9: 499-500]. Obviously, this factor prepared an opinion in Georgia about the special significance of the French Protectorate on Catholic Missions operating in the East [10: ff. 429-430], which with its total essence revealed at the beginning of the 18th century. In short, the Georgian secular and theological sovereigns (Vakhtang VI, Sulkhan-Saba, Catholicos Grigol II of the West Georgia), quite reasonably believed that Louis XIV was "... the protector and supporter of all the missions in the East" [5: 184]. The content was defined by France's commercial interests, which "always appeared in the first place" [4: 101].

"Protecting novice Catholics and caring for their interests" [4: 102] by Versailles gave a great support to Georgian politicians for the idea of establishing the French Mission in Georgia [3: f. 109]. It would become reality if Louis XIV would himself protect the Georgian Catholic community, thus Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani made an effort at the very first audition in April, 1714, with the "Sun King" [5: 198].

Although the plan of Louis XIV had not received any specific form in Georgia, but at the beginning of the 18th century, many French

missionaries gathered around Iran and Georgia [8: ff. 97; 97 v; 98; 100; 106 v].

So in the Empires of Iran and Turkey, the missionaries of France's Foreign Mission were greatly honored by the power of these capitulations [8: 84 v-85]. Nevertheless, the entry of Catholic missionaries in Georgia was restricted by the leaders of the both Empires. The French Constantinople Ambassador dealt with this problem [8: 124].

From all the above-mentioned it can be stated that these Georgian politicians were well-aware of the essence of France-Turkey and Iran-France capitulations. Undoubtedly, Sulkhan-Saba's religious project was entirely focused on it. It was based on the extensive memorandum which reflects the possible prospects of development of bilateral relations [5: 211]. According to it, Sulkhan-Saba arrived in France for the purpose of "...asking for the Missionaries" [5: 123]. In this "Great Project" [5: 212] based on Sulkhan-Saba's argued proposals, a plan for the establishment of France's Mission in Western Georgia, Abkhazia and Circassia worked out [1: 112; 5: 213].

In addition to this, together with French leaders, Saba formulated a specific outline for the development of French trade with Georgia [5: 214-219], the results of which was to ensure the successful mission of the missionaries [5: 190].

In subsequent negotiations with French diplomats, Sulkhan-Saba attributed a specific perspective to the project. He asked Louis XIV to send missionaries of the Jesuits and Paris Saint-Lazare Congregation to Georgia [5: 164], who had great authority among the clergy [11: 603]. Sulkhan-Saba never accidentally focus on the arrival of French Jesuit missionaries in Georgia. This order "was firmly focused on his Eastern politics in France from the middle of the 17th century." [12: 163-164] "For the purpose of establishing Mission in Samegrelo, Louis XIV personally allocated fund of 1000 ecus from Saint-Lazare congregation to support 10 missionaries

and their Head annually” [1: 288; 13: 389; 392]. This fact indicated the mutual interest of the both parties.

Here arises the following question: what was the main purpose of Sulkhan Saba's project by establishing France's Foreign Mission in Georgia? According to the sources, the answer could be: firstly, French missionaries would be busy with educational activities [5: 219-220; 11: 603]. Under the disguise of their missionary activity, they would found a college in Georgia [5: 219] and "...for 12 years..." [14: f. 140 v] make a significant change in the professional education of Georgian youth. The youth educated by them would master military service, craftsmanship and trade [5: 222-225]. As a result, "genuine Christianity", or Catholicism, would have widely been spread in Georgia [14: 138 v]. As a result, the country would have had professional engineers, officers and disciplined soldiers trained in France [5: 225; 14: f. 140 v]. Such religious disguise would hide the economic-political relations between France and Georgia in the eyes of Turks and Persians [5: 220; 14: f. 140 v]. Secondly, the abbots of France's mission would have been the trade missionaries in the interests of Versailles [3: f. 167], at the same time, Catholicism would have been spread in western Georgia, Circassia, Abkhazia

[5: 236], thus preparing the ground for the unity of the church [1: 222; 15: 592]; Thirdly, French politicians had no doubt that Georgia united with the Catholic faith and Circassia would create a power which "... would not be defeated by any other power in the whole world" [5: 222]; Fourth, the privileges granted by capitulations would have less restricted France's religious policy in Georgia and would have prepared the ground for the unification of the Churches, which had consistently been opposed by Iran and the Ottoman Turkey [5: 321-322; 10: ff. 432-433 v].

Thus, the bilateral initiative and interests attributed a real essence to the project. Its main purpose was to return Vakhtang VI to the throne, which would guarantee the implementation of this project [5: 213]. Its realization aimed at connecting Georgia with Western progress and developing the future mutual trade-economic, political and cultural-educational relations.

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ისტორია

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§ საქართველოს ტექნიკური უნივერსიტეტი, საინჟინრო ეკონომიკის, მედიატექნოლოგიებისა და სოციალურ მეცნიერებათა ფაკულტეტი, ევროპეისტიკის სასწავლო და სამეცნიერო-კვლევითი ინსტიტუტი, თბილისი, საქართველო

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ო. ჯაფარიძის მიერ)

ვერსალში, 1714 წლის იანვარ-ივნისში, სულხან-საბა ორბელიანის დიპლომატიური მოლაპარაკებები ლუი XIV-ის შუამდგომლობით ვახტანგ VI ირანის ტყვეობიდან ქრისტიანობით გათავისუფლების შესახებ რელიგიური პროექტის ჩარჩოებში მიმდინარეობდა. ამ გეგმის კომპონენტები XVII ს. 70-იანი წლებიდან ჩნდება, რომელიც საფრანგეთ-თურქეთის (1673 წლის) და საფრანგეთ-ირანის (1708 წლის) კაპიტულაციებს ეფუძნებოდა. მისი ძალით საფრანგეთს აღმოსავლეთში კათოლიკეების დაცვის პრივილეგიები მიენიჭა, ხოლო პარიზის უცხოეთის მისიონს – უსაფრთხოების გარანტიები. ამას ემყარებოდა ვერსალის გეგმა, რომ საქართველოში დაეარსებინა პარიზის უცხოეთის მისიონი და მისი მეშვეობით საქართველოზე გავლით სპარსეთამდე სავაჭრო გზა გაეკვლია. ქართველმა პოლიტიკოსებმა გააცნობიერეს რა საფრანგეთის ეს მისწრაფებები და ის, რომ ირანი და ოსმალეთი არ დაუშვებდა საფრანგეთ-საქართველოს პირდაპირ პოლიტიკურ კავშირს, აღნიშნული პროექტით სცადეს მიზნის მიღწევა. ამის მიხედვით, პარიზის უცხოეთის მისიონი (იეზუიტებისა და სენ-ლაზარის კონგრეგაციიდან) საქართველოში იღვაწებდა როგორც სამისიონერო სარბიელზე, ასევე აქ მათ მიერ დაარსებულ კოლეჯში. აქ აღზრდილი ქართველი ახალგაზრდები საფრანგეთში დაეუფლებოდნენ სამხედრო საქმეს, ხელოსნობასა და ვაჭრობას. შედეგად ქვეყანას ეყოლებოდა პროფესიონალი ინჟინრები, ოფიცრები და დისციპლინირებული ჯარისკაცები. ეს მოამზადებდა ნიადაგს ეკლესიათა უნიისათვის და სარწმუნოებით გაერთიანებული საქართველო საფრანგეთის საიმედო საყრდენი იქნებოდა ვერსალის აღმოსავლურ პოლიტიკაში. ასეთი რელიგიური საბურველი თურქებისა და სპარსელების თვალში დამალავდა საფრანგეთ-საქართველოს შორის ეკონომიკურ-პოლიტიკური ურთიერთობის მომავალ სამოკავშირეო მიზნებს.

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