



Additional information № 8

The Treaty of Iberians



King Erekle II of Georgia

King Erekle II was famous for his bravery and smartness in politics not only in Transcaucasia, but also in Europe. Frederick the Great was rather more realistic when he summed up the leading military figures of his age as **“Moi en Europe, et en Asie l’invincible Hercule, roi de Georgie** (In Europe I am invincible, but in Asia it is the unconquerable Hercules, the King of Georgia, Irakli II) (*A Modern History of Georgia*, D.M.Lang, London 1962, p. 583).

King Erekle II tried hard to bring Georgia under European influence. That is the reason why he employed the German gentleman Jacob Reineggs, to translate the German administrative law into Georgian. King Erekle rebuilt roads, industrialized the country, established the Chamber of Commerce and opened weapon factories. He also established several educational institutions and conducted a census of the local population. The King invited Italian merchants to revive trading relationships. Besides, King Erekle founded a regular army, in which even the Royal dynasts were forced to serve.

After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, Georgia’s passage to Europe became impossible. Despite his numerous attempts, King Erekle failed to establish allies in Europe. The only solution was to create an alliance with Orthodox Russia, which was the closest approach to Europe. That is why the diplomatic relations with Russia had become so important at that time. He was supported by a famous statesman of the age, a certain Solomon Lionidze (1754-1811), who was a vigilant Chancellor and a faithful adviser to the King.

Following the Treaty of Georgievsk King Erekle strengthened his political domination in the region and became more attracted to the neighbouring Pashas. Even the Persian Shah, Agha Muḥammad Khān Qājār, asked King Erekle to mediate with Russia. The Armenians asked King Erekle to restore the ancient Kingdom of Armenia under his Crown. Imereti, Samegrelo and Guria looked at this king as a national hero and saviour of their country (*Georgia and Russia*, G. Veshapeli, Tbilisi 1918, p.13).



Vice-Chancellor Solomon Lionidze

In 1789 King Irakli II put his grandson, Prince David, on the Imeretian throne. After six months from this historical event an important document, known as the Treaty of Iberians, was signed between four parties.

In the third article of this Treaty, King Erekle states: **“I wish your happiness and will protect the sons of Imereti like a father”** (*Letters and Other Historical Documents Related to Georgia, Vol. II, Issue I. Georgian texts 1768 – 1801, ed. A.A. Tsagareli, p. 172: Union Treaty of Georgian Kings and Sovereign Princes, Article III*).

From this Treaty one can clearly observe King Erekle’s rights concerning the Imeretian throne and the sovereign principalities of Samegrelo and Guria. The first part of the Treaty was signed by King Erekle himself, Queen Darejan, HH Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia Anton II, and the Vice-Chancellor Solomon Lionidze. The second part of the Treaty was signed by the King of Imereti, Solomon II, Queen Mariam and Solomon Lionidze. The third part of the Treaty was signed by the sovereign Prince of Samegrelo, Grigol Dadiani, while the fourth part by the sovereign Prince of Guria, Simon Gurieli (*Imereti in the XVIII Century, M. Rekhviashvili, Tbilisi 1982, p. 340-341*).

The famous Georgian historian, Grigol Veshapeli, wrote the following: **“For the purposes of the Russian protectorate, the Treaty signed in 1790 between the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti, Imereti, Samegrelo and Guria, recognizes the “paternal care” and the sovereign rights of the King of Kartli-Kakheti, Erekle II, over the whole Georgia - Iberia”** (*Georgia and Russia, G. Veshapeli, 1918*). In the same study Veshapeli also notes: **“The Treaty, signed and sealed by the Kings and Princes as well as by high religious officials and public figures, was proclaimed everywhere. A copy of this was submitted to the Empress of Russia, Ekaterina II, as was required by international diplomatic acts”**.

Following the signing of this Treaty, the official letters of King Erekle II started to bear the following title: **“The King of all Georgia and others.”** (see: *Fund 1448, Doc. № 2616; Fund 1448, Doc. № 845*). This title was later on inherited by his heir and King Giorgi XII. A missive sent to Emperor Paul I, King Giorgi XII styles himself as: **“Царь всея Грузии”** (King of All Georgia).

On 18th January 1801, in a letter sent to Russia, the Crown Prince of Georgia, David XII, like his father and grandfather, wrote as follows: **“the legitimate heir of our Royal forefathers and of my father King, the Georgian heir by which title I was approved, His Royal Highness of all Georgia, Kartli, Kakheti and others, the son of King Giorgi Iraklievich, Crown Prince David”** (*Letters and Other Historical Documents Relating to the XVIII Century Georgia. Vol. III, A. Tsagareli, St. Petersburg 1891, p.220*).

Today only the direct heirs of the above mentioned Kings have the hereditary right to bear the title “Of All Georgia”. Presently this belongs to the Head of the Bagrationi-Gruzinski Royal family, HRH Crown Prince Nugzar.

