



KAKHETI

KAKHETI, a region in eastern Georgia. Historically the region represented part of Iberia (see KARTLI) Kingdom. After the Arab invasion in Georgia in the mid-8th century, the Kakheti principality was created. During the 11th and the early 12th century there existed a Kakheti Kingdom, then it was integrated into a united Georgian kingdom. By the end of the 15th century, Georgia was fragmented into separate kingdom and principalities, and from 1465 Kakheti also became a kingdom.

An intensive relations with Persia began during the Safavids for Kakheti, as well as the rest of the eastern Georgia. Kakheti's proximity to the main line of Gilān-Šemāka-Astrakhan was an important factor that facilitated its external trade (Berdzenishvili, p. 115). At the beginning of the 16th century, the Kakhetian king Alexander I (1476-1511) recognized suzerainty of the shah. According to the Amasya Treaty of 1555 (see AMASYA, PEACE OF), between Persia and the Ottomans, Kakheti as a part of the eastern Georgia fell under the Persian sphere of influence. In this period, Kakhetian kings avoided wars to keep the region economically strong. In the last quarter of the century, as the Ottomans became stronger, Kakheti was mainly subjected to them.

During the rule of Shah Abbas I (q.v.), anti-Persian orientation in Kakheti gradually became stronger; this was followed by the Qizilbāš military expeditions in Kakheti during 1613-17, causing much suffering on the part of the inhabitants. The kingdom lost a considerable part of its population; some died, while others were forced to resettle in Faridan (q.v.) near Isfahan, as well as in Khorasan and Māzandarān. On the other hand, settlement of Turkmens



in Kakheti began. The latter were meant to make a strong base for Persia in Caucasus, “while Kakhetians resettled in Iran would be agriculture workers and devoted warriors of Shah” (Berdzenishvili, p. 302). Besides, as it turns out, the shah was looking for an appropriate form for cohabitation of the local Kakhetian population and the newly settled Turkmens (Abisaab, p. 65).

Eastern Georgia remained under Persian suzerainty until the end of the 17th century. In 1648 Kakheti was put under the rule of the *wāli* of Kartli (q.v.). He was already titled as “the Sovereign of both Kartli and Kakheti” (Puturidze, p. 231). This rule was only nominal; the Persian officials appointed by the shah were the real governors of the region. The Persians were positioned in the main fortresses of Kakheti. Kakhetians organized a major revolt in 1659 and managed to drive away a significant part of the Turkmens. Nevertheless, Kakheti remained under full Persian control. From 1677 to 1703, the members of Georgian royal house of Bagrationi lost the Kakhetian throne and were replaced by Persian governors.

In the last decade of the Safavid dynasty, the Ottomans prevailed again in Georgia, but in 1734-35 Nāder Shah Afšār managed to drive away the Ottomans from eastern Georgia and reinstated Teimuraz II Bagrationi as the *wāli* of Kakheti (1729-44). Teimuraz led a careful policy in Kakheti and succeeded in attacking the Ottomans with the help of the Persians. In 1742, an exemption was granted by the shah, and Kakheti was liberated from tribute to Persia. In 1744, Nāder Shah even permitted Teimuraz to be coronated as the King of Kartli in accord with the Christian traditions (Kutsia, p. 133), while his son Erekle became king of Kakheti. In 1762, Erekle II became king of the united kingdom of Kartli and Kakheti.

According to the Golestān treaty (q.v.) of 1813, Persia withdrew its ambitions over eastern Georgia. This set an end to the active involvement of Persia in Georgia. In the next Russo-Persian treaty, that of Torkamančāy (1828), Persia reaffirmed its recognition of Russian suzerainty over Georgia. Consequently, Iran lost Georgia for good, though Kakheti, among other parts of Georgia, maintained its importance in economic terms and particularly as a trade and transit route.



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