

**Caucasus War by the Eyes of Artist F. Roubaud**  
*Guerra del Cáucaso a los ojos del artista F. Roubaud*

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*Fecha de recibido: 2020-10-14*

*Fecha de aceptado para publicación: 2020-11-18*

*Fecha de publicación: 2020-11-20*



**Abstract**

The topicality of the study is due to the fact that today, both the territory and citizens of the North Caucasus are a historical phenomenon. One of the less studied historical phenomena is the integration of the Caucasus into the Russian Empire. The conquest of the Caucasus began in the early 18th century and is closely related to the Persian campaign of Peter I (1722-1723). However, historians sometimes forget the major uprisings in Chechnya and Dagestan (1877-188). It was at the same time that the Russo-Turkish War took place. At the same time, the 200,000-strong group of tsarist troops maintained calm in the region. The Caucasian War is a poorly studied phenomenon in the history of the Russian state. The annexation of the territory of the Caucasus to the Russian Empire has had both positive and negative consequences. The conquest of the territories of the Caucasus took place on the basis of the war between the Russian Empire and tribal associations of the North Caucasus under the leadership of different Imams. The war continued for almost 50 years and caused discontent among the local population with the actions of the Russian Empire's generals. The peoples of the Highlands offered fierce resistance to the Russian Imperial Army. Our study of the topic of the study is connected with the incorrect treatment of the causes of the Caucasian war in the press and mass media. This entails negative consequences, starting with the emergence of nationalism, both among the modern highland people and among the rest of the population of the country, and, injecting terrorism in the person of «Islamic terrorism». The subject of the Caucasus is covered in the article in the context of the appeal to the works of the artist Franz Roubaud in historical and Theosophical contexts. The reliability of the results is based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the respondents' submissions. The research contributes to the understanding of the problem, which gives new sources for the development of science.



**Keywords:** Caucasian War, Franz Roubaud, morality, moral values, the problem of the Caucasus, Akhulgo, Imam Shamil, communications.

### Resumen

La actualidad del estudio se debe al hecho de que hoy, tanto el territorio como los ciudadanos del Cáucaso Norte son un fenómeno histórico. Uno de los fenómenos históricos menos estudiados es la integración del Cáucaso en el Imperio Ruso. La conquista del Cáucaso se inició a principios del siglo XVIII y está estrechamente relacionada con la campaña persa de Pedro I (1722-1723). Sin embargo, los historiadores a veces olvidan los principales levantamientos en Chechenia y Daguestán (1877-188). Fue al mismo tiempo que tuvo lugar la Guerra Ruso-Turca. Al mismo tiempo, el grupo de 200.000 efectivos de tropas zaristas mantuvo la calma en la región. La Guerra del Cáucaso es un fenómeno poco estudiado en la historia del estado ruso. La anexión del territorio del Cáucaso al Imperio ruso ha tenido consecuencias tanto positivas como negativas. La conquista de los territorios del Cáucaso se llevó a cabo sobre la base de la guerra entre el Imperio Ruso y las asociaciones tribales del Cáucaso Norte bajo el liderazgo de diferentes imanes. La guerra continuó durante casi 50 años y provocó descontento entre la población local con las acciones de los generales del Imperio Ruso. Los pueblos de las Tierras Altas ofrecieron una feroz resistencia al Ejército Imperial Ruso. Nuestro estudio del tema del estudio está relacionado con el tratamiento incorrecto de las causas de la guerra del Cáucaso en la prensa y los medios de comunicación. Esto conlleva consecuencias negativas, comenzando por la aparición del nacionalismo, tanto entre la población moderna serrana como entre el resto de la población del país, y la inyección de terrorismo en la persona del «terrorismo islámico». El tema del Cáucaso se aborda en el artículo en el contexto de la apelación a las obras del artista Franz Roubaud en contextos históricos y teosóficos. La confiabilidad de los resultados se basa en un análisis cualitativo y cuantitativo de las presentaciones de los encuestados. La investigación contribuye a la comprensión del problema, lo que brinda nuevas fuentes para el desarrollo de la ciencia.

**Palabras clave:** Guerra del Cáucaso, Franz Roubaud, moralidad, valores morales, el problema del Cáucaso, Akhulgo, Imam Shamil, comunicaciones.

### Introduction

The study of the topic of the study is linked, in our view, to the incorrect treatment of the causes of the Caucasian war in the press and mass communications and information media. This has had negative consequences, starting with the emergence of nationalism, both among the modern mountain people and among the rest of the population, and fuelling terrorism. It is the phenomenon of terrorism in the Caucasus that most of the media show as Islamic. The topic could not be avoided, since even for the time being there were many problems which were subsequently made worse by misunderstandings among peoples. In the historical memory of Russian society, a dualistic understanding of the Caucasian War has developed. For example, A. Rosen did not doubt the correctness of the action of the tsarist government, although «and we brought to the Caucasus only weapons and fear, made the enemies even more savage and belligerent». Then, as A. S. Pushkin perceived the Caucasian war as a given and offered «cultural re-education» and the establishment of Christianity.

I would like to highlight this difficult subject with the help of the beautiful French painter, Franz Roubaud, who was in the Caucasus for a long time,

traveled and later painted paintings that are appreciated and admired by fans.

Franz Roubaud was born on 15 June 1856 in Odessa, a time when the Caucasian War was coming to an end. At the age of 9 he was appointed to the Odessa School of Painting and Drawing, and in 1878 he entered the Bavarian Royal academy of arts. During the holidays Franz Roubaud came to Russia, traveled in the Caucasus, Ukraine, Central Asia. Caucasus became one of the artist's favorite themes. In 1886 he received an order to write 17 paintings on the subject of the Caucasian wars for Tiflis: «Entry of Emperor Peter the Great in Tarki on 13 June 1722», «Entry of Russian troops in Tiflis on 26 November 1799», «Sturm Lenkorani by General of Kotlyarevsky on 31 December 1812», «Battle of Elisavetpol on September 13, 1826», «Surrender of Fortress of Erivani on October 1, 1827», «Storm of Aura of Gimra on October 17, 1832», «Capture of Akhulgo on August 22, 1839», «Sturm by the Circassians of Mikhailovsky Fortification on March 22, 1840», «Storm of Fortress of Salta on September 14, 1847», «Death of Sleptsov on December 10, 1851», «Capture of aul (mountain village) Dargo on July 6, 1845», «Battle of Kuryuk-Dar on July 24, 1854», «Crossing of Prince Argutin through snow mountains of the Caucasus», «Capture of Gunib



and capture of Shamil on August 25, 1859», «Sturm Kars on the night of November 6, 1877».

You can see the sketch that historical events in the territory of the modern Caucasus did not begin in 1817, as the official history informs us, but from the time of Peter I. In order to fulfill the order, the artist had to study chronologically historical events, to come and see the battle scenes on your own. In

the Caucasus, the artist created a large gallery of images of highlanders. Unfortunately, the difficulty of the work was that it was a state commission and Franz Roubaud creativity was limited by certain requirements. Every painting Roubaud was obliged to present for consideration of the commission and for approval of the Chief Commander of the Caucasus region.



"The Entry of Emperor Peter the Great into Tarki" by F. Roubaud

The fate of Roubaud developed so that his paintings passed from hands to hands, for example the famous painting «Storm aul Akhulgo» which was located in 1924 on a shaft in the Artillery Historical Museum in Leningrad, suffered from a flood, and in 1928, in consequence, it was transferred to the Dagestan Local History Museum. To date, four panoramic fragments have been stored in Makhachkala.

### Methods

The following methods have been used to investigate the problem in detail:

*The system method* - defines the need for a holistic analysis of historical events and phenomena in the totality of the single, special and common, and diverse components of the historical process. *The method of comparison* is to compare historical facts, to compare historical facts with modern books and historical letters. *Empirical methods* - conversations, observations. *Analytical method* - content analysis.

### Results and Discussion

Given the historical fact that the order was governmental and had such a purpose, the artist had the question of how to show the heroism of Russian soldiers and warlords in the capture of the territories of the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia. It is worth noting that the paintings did not always correspond to what was happening. Narrating about the heroism of Russian soldiers during the capture of Caucasian territories,

Roubaud, often intuitively, shows how valiantly the highlanders fought against the capture of their territories. The success of any study is to examine the positions of all parties, to be able to think critically. A study was conducted in the form of an analysis of information on the two warring parties. The result is that the problems and interests of both sides have emerged. If these problems are resolved, the conflict may be over.

The Russian Empire had its reasons, namely, the desire to establish itself in the Caucasus, while introducing its own legislation, which was fundamentally contrary to the views of the indigenous peoples, most of whom professed Islam; the reluctance of indigenous peoples to join the Russian Empire; that Alexander I wanted to rid the Russian Empire of the constant raids of the peoples of the Caucasus on their lands. The reasons for the resistance of indigenous peoples were that they did not want to adopt legislation other than Shariah, although it was not fully in existence. In other words, foreign intervention prompted the establishment of a united Sharia State in the Caucasus. The second reason for the strong response that we can see, having seen the painting of Roubaud «Storm aul Gimra on October 17, 1832», where even women and children help fight back men and protect their aul from the invaders - is that was the massive genocide carried out by Yermolov, which Emperor Alexander I ignored. This is evidenced by letters from the front addressed to the emperor himself, sometimes these letters are not from ordinary soldiers.



«The storming of aul Gimry» 17 October 1832 F. Roubaud

The second important point to be made is that modern historians interpret the Caucasian war as a war against infidels Russians, in other words, jihad. Jihad (from an Arab. الجهاد [dʒiˈhaːd] - «effort») — a notion in Islam, meaning zeal in the way of Allah, a struggle for faith. The concept of military jihad (armed struggle for the spread of Islam) became the main meaning of the word for non-Muslims and received the name «holy war» (<https://ru.wikipedia.org>).

We note that Imam Shamil did not forbid the construction of churches and synagogues, did not call for the killing of infidels, that is, not Muslims. As a believer and a connoisseur of Muslim law (Fiqh), Imam Shamil could not call for the killing of infidels without reason, it is forbidden in the Koran. Modern figures in their defense use an interpretation of one of the Quran's verses: Your God has told angels: I'm with you. Strengthen those who believe! I will instill terror in the hearts of those who do not believe. Chop their heads and chop off all their fingers» (Коран, Сура 8, Аят 12 (8:12)). The mistake in this situation is that each verse, each verse is connected to each other and without explanation scientists are not literally read. Al-Kurtuubi interprets the words of God Allah: There are two groups of non-believers. The shedding of blood, the taking of property and aggression against non-believers in the first group are prohibited. And this is: 1) Mu'ahid: a non-believer with whom there is a non-aggression treaty for a certain period of time. 2) Zimmy: a non-believer who lives in Muslim countries and with whom a protection treaty has been concluded. 3) Mustaamin: a non-believer who has entered the Muslim State safely. For example, a trader who came to the country for trade or other reasons. The second group of non-believers are those non-

believers who are fighting against Muslims, those with whom there is no non-aggression treaty, no protection treaty, and no security treaty. It is about this group of non-believers that their property and blood are allowed. » (Аль- Куртуби, аль-Джами' ли-ахкам аль-Куран). Another argument is that Imam Shamil highly valued and revered those who rejected genocide and military aggression. Dagestan scholar, son-in-law of Imam Shamil, Sheikh Abdur-Rahman Ghazi-Kumukh (1837-1900) wrote in his book «Kitab al-Tazkirat» (Book of Memories): «Now (continue) a summary of the situation of escaped or captured soldiers in our villages. Shamil moved with his comrades Muhajirs to New Dargo after the destruction in 1844 by Prince Vorontsov of Old Dargo. He had about 300 soldiers who defected to us from different places, or prisoners. Among them were watchmakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, craftsmen. Shamil ordered the faithful to his Mührid Black Alimmad Grozny, appointed above the soldiers (commandant), to build for them a special village near Dargo, to collect them there and release provisions and uniforms from the treasury through Treasurer Shamil and give them full rest. Alimmad built a settlement for them and placed them there, as Shamil ordered, and provided them with everything they needed. They were given land for planting cabbages, corn, onions, etc. The soldiers settled there and lived peacefully, satisfied with the commandments of Allah and Shamil». The author further writes: «Another story»: One day Cossack monks from Russia came to us, who are going to practice their religious cult on foreigners, they were Old Believers. They asked Shamil to let them live on his land. He allowed them, they built their houses on a high ground near Dargo, in a forest where there is a lot of green and cold and pleasant water. They built another structure that looked like a chapel. In the corners, they hung their



icons for worship. Near the houses they planted some cabbage, onions, corn, and lived in peace. As follows from the author's text, one day he went to see how they lived. When they saw him, they showed me respect, they approached me. They knew his father, so they allowed him to enter his sanctuary (place of worship) and his comrades were refused. Inside the room there were many icons, candle lamps. It was not known where they got these candles from in the Chechen forests, where there were no lamps at all. The monks were dressed in long-to-the-heel hoods. All of this was of interest to me (Шейх Абдур-Рахман Гази-Кумухский, 1837-1900 гг). On the basis of this information, it appears that Shamil was not fighting against another religion, or another nationality, but against the aggressors.

The letter from General Yermolov to the Tsar, in which he openly states that he will exterminate the Chechen peoples, confirms the arguments for genocide: Oh. They, the Chechens, outrage the entire Caucasus. Damn tribe! Their society is less populous, but it has grown enormously in the last few years because it accepts the friendly villains of all other peoples who leave their land after committing any crimes. And not only. Even our soldiers are fleeing to Chechnya. They were attracted by the perfect equality and equality of Chechens, who recognized no authority in their midst. These outlaws welcome our soldiers with open arms! So Chechnya can be called a nest of all outlaws and a den of our escaped soldiers. I gave these crooks an ultimatum to hand over escaped soldiers, or vengeance would be terrible. No, not a single soldier has been handed over! They had to wipe out their auls. Of course, there are no such people under the sun, no less treacherous. They don't even have the plague! I will not rest until I see with my own eyes the skeleton of the last Chechen» (<https://kreamik.livejournal.com>). From Yermolov's letter to the Chechens Pritechya from the 8 September 1818. "... Without benefits and the

participation of the inhabitants themselves, the fraudsters of river Sunji cannot come. It is also known that no party of fraudsters can take refuge unless it is assisted by residents who are connected and related to each other, may even exclude them from Terek, being in a much smaller number themselves, and so will no longer be exculpatory, which is unable to hold because of the large number..." (Акты Кавказской Археографической Комиссии, 1875).

Every year, Russian punitive detachments carried out devastating raids on Chechnya, killing people and all means of subsistence. This was not done sporadically, not every once in a while, but systematically, in accordance with the plan proposed by Yermolov's closest companion, lieutenant-general A.A. Velyaminov: "The enemy is completely dependent on the harvest for sustenance, and if the grain harvest is destroyed, then in five years' time famine will force the Chechens to submit. In order to implement this plan, it is necessary to form 6 detachments consisting of 6,000 infantrymen, 1,000 Cossacks, 24 cannons, 500 carts with provisions, and 1 cart for the sick and wounded. ù" (Джон Баддели, «Завоевание Кавказа русскими. 1720-1860», 2011). In response to these invasions, the highlanders took action against military garrisons and Cossack settlements located on the captured lands. According to A.A. Bestuzhev-Marlinsky, who himself participated in the Caucasian war in one of his letters... "Why destroy the gift of God and the work of man," they said... And this rule of the mountain "bandit" is a valor that the most educated peoples could be proud of if they had it..." (Михельсон, 1985).

A lot of books have been written, plays, musical works have been created and paintings have been painted, but nothing compares in the transmission of that difficult situation which was in war, as panorama Franz Roubaud «Sturm of aul Ahulgo».



"Storm of Aul Ahulgo" by Franz Roubaud 1891

At about 3 o'clock the fight continued, at all that time almost no shots were heard, only daggers, bayonets and checkers issued a knock, constantly meeting with each other, none of the murids escaped, all of them laid down or taken prisoner» (Khadzhi Murad Donogo, 2020).

### Summary

1. Modern Fatherland history devotes too little time to studying this issue, both among the indigenous peoples of the Caucasus and among the rest of the population of our vast homeland. The omission or superficial study of this issue has a bearing on the perception of the world and on the outlook of the citizens of the Russian Federation. This later translates into negative inferences and ideas based on a low level of knowledge. The provocateurs use this to create negative cells of society, use all kinds of methods of destabilization of the situation, call for nationalism and violation of the Constitutional order of the Russian Federation.

2. It is worth admitting that the Caucasian War is an obscured area of Russian history where many important points remain unclear, the consequences of which are the emergence of inter-ethnic conflicts.

3. Recognition of the mistakes of each side is an important part of the rapprochement between indigenous peoples and Russians. Perhaps that is the way out.

4. It is worth reviewing the legislation concerning the Muslim republics of the Russian Federation, to learn from the experience of the United States, where each state has its own legislation that is subject to the common Constitution. The Russian Federation is a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional country and a State governed by the rule of law, where the rights of all citizens are respected and implemented, regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation.

### Conclusions

As previously stated, the Caucasian War remains a poorly studied page of Russian history, the consequences of the seizure of the Caucasian territories by the Russian Empire are still being felt to this day, and the issue became particularly acute after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Citizens who had previously professed Islam had begun to receive information of various kinds, which had either been hidden during the Soviet era or had been lost. Countries that wish to destabilize law and order in the Russian Federation are taking advantage of this problem. The importance of this



problem is demonstrated not only by the study of history, the acquisition of truthful information, but also by the use of the lack of knowledge of the majority of citizens by the detractors. A key factor in the lack of a solution to the problem was State inaction, which placed restrictions on the study of history and religion through the incompetence of the administrative apparatus.

#### Acknowledgements

*The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.*

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