

## **Caucasus: Georgian Hagiography on ECAI**

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Georgian narrative sources occupy a significant place in the history of the Middle Eastern culture. It gives a deeper understanding and appreciation of peoples and their civilization, their moral and spiritual achievements as spiritual life of a nation is a clue to understanding its culture.

Hagiography is one of the most interesting branches of Georgian original sacred writings and the most ancient genre of Georgian writing, which continued to live till 18th century, when it stopped its existence in Europe and Russia. It was the principal sphere of interests for several centuries. The depth and strength of the Georgian tradition of original sacred writings has been undiminished in spite of the centuries but it has not been studied yet and translated.

Hagiography played a vital part. It reflected the fight of Georgian people against foreign invaders and the country's political, social, economic and cultural life. It was historical sources and at the same time literary, that's why medievalists pay special attention. Born in Roman Empire Hagiography spread through the all-Christian world.

Georgian literature, which has its 15-century history, considered starting with hagiography. Medieval Georgian literature oriented on Byzantine did try to follow together with it, created a new Christian culture, which helped to develop national hagiography.

Original works appeared with translations from Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Hebrew.

The Christian religion was introduced into Georgia in the first half of the 4th century at the time of Constantine the Great. The proclamation of Christianity as a state religion took place at the time of the last pagan king of Kartli Mirian, who was at the same time, the first Christian king of Kartli. The conversion to Christianity was assisted by historical circumstances. The adoption of Christianity in Georgia represented the influence of Byzantium and the Christian west. It had important consequence for king of Kartli as it strengthened king's power in free communities, in unruly provinces and helped to keep under subordination, and ensured the acquisition large lands of the pagans and created favorable

conditions for consolidation of the Georgian people and in further facilitated the reunification of Georgian lands into single state (from the end of the 10th century). Christianity tu hy. Georgians were keen to adapt the theological literature of Greek.

The ecclesia (or church) in Georgia always played a significant place in its spiritual and political life. The Georgian Church went the way of all other churches. It has been the center of its national life and education as it was in other countries of the Christian West and East, and for 16th centuries was a "bastion of Christianity in the Orient". Georgians developed their own script and literature. Georgians visited the shrines of the Holy Land Jerusalem and left as evidence inscriptions, which dates 4th century. Christianity produced thinkers and protagonists of faith and writers. Among them Bishop of Urbnissi, St. Grigol of Handzta and others.

Georgian ecclesiastical writers studied classical philosophy and exact sciences, anatomy and medicine, natural history, astrology, etc. There were very few authors who were not monks, priests or bishops.

Literature always tries to reflect history. Medieval Georgian literature is marked by the woks of spiritual character. Translations of the Gospel and the New Testament, were derived from Greek and Syriac originals. Georgian writing of that epoch is connected with stories of early saints, sacred writings, apocryphals, and hagiographic works. Georgians translated works, that answered the necessary questions, wrote K. Kekelidze. At the first period of literature development there was lack of historical literature and Hagiography satisfied the requirements of historical literature of the epoch. Translated hagiographic works, written simple, alien of rhetoric, language was known in Georgia as "kimen". The first sample dated from the 4th century was the " Life of Antony" by Atanus Alexandrius since the 10th century hagiography had undergone a new trend, which was strengthened. The founder of this trends the Greek writer Simeon Lagophet ( Meeorgian scholar Korneli Kekelidze in 1912.

The public veneration of Saints in the Christian Church has existed since the 2nd century. Christianity was introduced in Georgia in the 4th century. The earliest Christian -saints were martyrs. The word "martyr" means, "witness".

The earliest Georgian Hagiographic monuments came from the 5th century. The high level of work points out of the existence of proper tradition. Prokopius Kesarius wrote: "in spite of the fact that the Iberians (Georgians) were under Persian sway, they adhere better than others to the Christian faith statutes". Feudal society of Medieval Georgia fought against the Persian invaders and later against the Arabs. This struggle was dictated by political and

economic interests, had meaning of the struggle for faith and promoted to working out the cult of suffering and torture. And as a result of it had an effect on forming proper literature. This confrontation manifested itself in the "Martyrdom" or "Lives of Saints" of the peoples who suffered or became its victim.

The main subject of hagiographers is the struggle against the conqueror religion. The narration is symbolic written very documentary, the acts of hero are extraordinary and simplified, oriented towards the edification and wants "to exalt a great collective feeling, a religious feeling". The writers mostly eyewitnesses, describe the Vitae of Saints, genuine acts of martyrdom, of witnesses' accounts. They are contemporaries and familiar with the martyr, as say "all this we see with our own eyes".

Hero of Hagiographic works is concrete historical persons, who reached spiritual perfection, Christian "thesis" on the way of imitation to Logos. Hagiographer tells the story of heroes of Christian religion who lived in concrete historical circumstances and such works usually "possesses a definite value for the study of the history of a given country". Author makes acquaintance with the subject of the study "man" and society, tells the events and occurrences of the epoch.

The earliest Georgian hagiographic work is the Martyrdom of St. Shushanik. Each hagiographic work has a certain historical interest engendered in the struggle for national self-consciousness. The struggle against mazdeizm is described in the Martyrdoms of Saints: Shushanik (5th cent.), Evstate Mtskheteli (6th cent.), Habibo Nekreseli (11th cent.), and Rajeden the First (12th cent.). The struggle against Arab invaders described in the Martyrdoms of Saints: Abo (8th cent.), Kostanti Kakhi (9th cent.), Michael Gobron (11th cent.), nine infants of Kola (9th cent.). The spread of Christianity to Georgia is narrated in "The Life of St. Nino the Illuminator of Georgia". The Lives of Georgian Saints are described by Giorgi Merchuli in the "Life of St. Grigol Khandzteli (10th cent. )", Basil Zarzmeli in "Life of Serapion Zarzmeli (10th cent.), and in the "Life of Holy Fathers of Assyrian" (n saints of Georgia, whose cults have survived continuously from their own times until the present day. They contain vivid descriptions of life in the Caucasus, in Byzantium and Palestine and give us "insight into the history and aspirations of an important branch of the Eastern Church", and into its relationships with Zoroastrian Persia, the Arab Caliphate, the Imperial court of Constantinople and the whole world of medieval Christendom.

Georgian hagiographic works are still not well-known or appreciated as sources for scientific research. Only some of them have been translated : into Russian by M. Sabinin, N. Marr. K. Kekelidze, V. Dondua, K. Kutsia and N. Vachnadze, G. Tsulaia, into Latin by Peeters,

into English by O. Wardrop, D. Lang, and into German by K. Schultze.

The appearance of "Martyrdom of Kostanti Kakhi" is ascribed to the period of the Abasid caliphs, namely the ninth century AD, when the country's "cultural efflorescence was accompanied by the revival of literature in Arabic", both translations and original works.

The Life and Suffering of the Holy martyr Kostanti Kakhi (Georgian) who was tortured by Japhar, king of Babylonians narrates about Arabs invasions of Caucasia.

It is a first-rate source describing Georgian history of the 9th century. There are known eight manuscripts of this monument. Seven manuscripts are at Korneli Kekelidze Institute of manuscripts in Tbilisi and one at the Institute of Oriental studies in Russia, Sankt-Petersburg. "Martyrdom of Kostanti Kakhi" has been published in 1882 by M. Sabinin. The text was not critical, without indication the base manuscript and including words and expressions, which are not in known manuscripts. Peeters edited in "Acta Sanctorum" Latin version in 1925 based on Sabinin's edition with investigation, which later received the most serious study from and was subject to criticism from K. Kekelidze. The second edition fulfilled S. Kubaneishvili in 1946 based on manuscripts A-130 and A-170 and includes brief information about list of scientific literature around it. K. Kekelidze Institute of manuscripts in i Kakhi", based upon eight manuscripts with necessary corrections. The Russian version of the monument published N. Vachnadze and K. Kutsia and provided with extensive historical-philological investigation and comments. The translation is based upon Il. Abuladze edition. Translators made adequate translation and exactly conveyed the author's text.

Towards the time of writing this work or for the 9th century the Arabs Caliphate began early cracking. Byzantine was also weakening at same time. National character in feudal Georgia had struggle against Arabs invaders. Love of one's country is an element of the faith of God ( Baha' u l'lah ). Georgians struggled for its independence and faith. Appeared heroes who preferred death to apostasy and put to death by Arabs, among them St. Abo, David and Constantine, Archil and our hero Kostanti Kakhi. There were four samtavro or political units of the indicated period in Georgia: Tao-Klarjeti (south-western Georgia); Kakheti, Hereti (eastern Georgia) and Abkhazeti. Georgia began to struggle for its independence and for unification Georgian lands into single kingdom. Author of "Martyrdom of St. Kakhi" like the hero of this monument lived in the 9th century during the time of rise the national-lier Mediterranean Sea and Caucasus. It was composed between 853 and 856. Anonym's account has the merit of being written soon after St. Kostanti death but not later than 856 as Queen Theodora was dethroned and not earlier 853, when St. Kostanti was put to death. From historiography is well known, that Queen Theodora, wife of Byzantine Imperor

Pheophil (829 - 842) reigned over Byzantine Empire from 842 to 856 years. There is not information about his social position. We share presumption that anonym "could be monk," and lived in West Georgia or Greece. He wrote: " I too, even though only unworthy monk, have wanted to do what earlier writers had done". It is well known mostly monks described the Life of the Martyrs and suppose our anonym was not exception. The author of The Lives of Kostanti tells: "At that time certain devout believers began to write about the lives of the Holy martyrs+". Ab for the sake of Christian faith. It proves the style of narration. He knows the Church ecclesiastical literature and efficiently uses. He is monophysite and his narration begins with eulogy to God and Holy Spirit: "we all know that those who write books can only do so with the help of the Holy Spirit", and continue "even though he had not seen these events with his own eyes, but he described what the Holy Spirit made known to him". Hagiograph knows the Holy Writ and retells how Apostles proclaiming and baptized: "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28,19 ). Author is high-educated person. He is contemporary and apparently eyewitness of describing events. Towards the time of writing this monument there was rich hagiographic literature as translated so original. Analysis of the text shows that author knew Georgian hagiographic works, mostly "Martyrdom of Aboxt allowed us to make a decision that anonym was acquainted also with

| <b>Manuscripts</b>  | <b>Date copied</b>                                  | <b>Copyist</b>                      | <b>Description</b>   |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| A:A- 130 K. Keke-lidze Institute  | 1704-1713   | Gavriil Saginov                     | Georgian script-Khutsuru, damaged without bounding.  |
| B: A-170 K. Keke-lidze Institute  | 1733  | Ierodeacon Ioann                    | Georgian script Khutsuri, leather-bound.   |
| C: A- 176 K. Keke-lidze Institute   | XVIII cent<br>some pages incanted are XVII th cent. | unknown, different                  | Georgian script -Nuskhuri, without the initial sheet   |
| D: H-2077 K.Keke-lidze Institute<br><was kept in Moscow central Archiive untill 1922, No 1260 | 1736  | Svetitskhioveli Archpriest Alexi    | Georgian script -Nuskhuri, table of contents-asomtavruli, initial letters asomtavruli cinnobar, includes pictures of 26 Saints |
| E: H-1672 K. Keke-Institute lidze   | 1740  | Sioni Archdeacon Ahron (in Tbilisi) | Georgian letters-Nuskhuri, titles-   |

|   |           |                   |  |
|---|-----------|-------------------|--|
| F: H-2121 K.Keke-<br>lidze Institute                  | 1748      | cinnobar Nikolozi | Georgian letters-<br>nuskhuri, without<br>initial sheets, titles-<br><br>cinnobar. |
| G: H-22 Sankt-Pts,<br>Oriental Institute<br>H: S-3637 | -<br>1838 | Prince Teimuraz   | Georgian letters-<br>Mkhedruli,titles<br>cinnobar                                  |

| Date | Editor                       | Place      | Language | Manuscript  |
|------|------------------------------|------------|----------|---|
| 1882 | G.(Michael)<br>Sabinin       | Petersburg | Georgin  |   |
| 1925 | P.Peeters (Acta<br>Santorum) | Belgium    | Latin    | Based on M.Sabinin's text   |
| 1946 | S.Kubaneishvili              | Tbilis     | Georgian | Based on Manuscript<br>A130; A-170<br>Critical text   |
| 1964 | Il.Abuladze                  | Tbilisi    | Georgian | Based on<br>Manuscripts<br>A-130; A-170<br>A- 176*; H-2077**;<br>H-1672***; H-2121****; H-22;<br>S-3637*****; |
| 1978 | K.Kutsia<br>N.Vachnadze      | Tbilisi    | Russian  | Based on Abuladze's text  |

Christian Greek philosophy /2nd century AD/ Aristid and used his works. Anonym very

\* Full-length description of the manuscripts / for collection A-130; A-170; A-176/ see in: Opisanie rukopisei Tifliskigo tserkovnogo muzea Kartalino-Kakhetinskogo duhovensvtva, sostavlenoe F. Jordania, Tiflis, 1903, pp.139, 178-180, 185.

\*\* for collection H- 2077 see in Sakartvelos saistorio da saetnografio sazogadoebis kofili muzeumis helnatseribi, vol. V, prepared for publishing L. Meparishvili, editor Al. Baramidze, Tbilisi, 1949, pp.44-47.

\*\*\* for collection H-1672 see in : Ibid, vol .IV,prepared E. Metreveli, editor K. Kekelidze, Tbilisi, 1956, pp. 101-105.

\*\*\*\* for collection H-2121 see in: Ibid, vol. V, pp. 74 -75.

\*\*\*\*\* for collection S-3637 see in: Kartvelta shoris tsera kithvis gamavrtselebeli sazogadoebis helnatseribi. Prepared T.Bregadze, T. Enukidze, L. Kiknadze, M. Shanidze. Ts. Chankieva. Editor E. Metreveli, Tbilisi, 1967,

laconic narrates about Christian literature and basic books, which is verbatim excerpt from the "Life of Ioan Zlotoust". He often uses cites from Holy Scripture and sacred writings in his work.

The author uses the temporal and spatial components. Anonym indicates dates linked with the acts of martyr and begins the narration with the following: "I desire to tell about life and death of our holy and blessed martyr Kostanti, who lived during our time, when Queen Theodora reigned as a servant of God. While Theodora's son Michael was still growing up, the blessed Theodora reigned over kingdom of the Greeks and rescued the people from the foolish iconoclasm which took place during the time of her husband". Hagiographer names the date when St. Kostanti was eighty-five.

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About data of Kostanti Kakhi capture by Zirak testified epigraphic source, particularly the inscription on Ateni Sioni church, which proves that Kostanti-Kakhai was in 853 year in town Samara: "On August 5th, Saturday c'ronicon 73, Arab chronology 239, Bugha set to fire Tpilisi and captured emir (ruler) Sahak and killed him. And the same month, August 26, on Saturday, Zirak captured Kakha and his son Tarkhuji". Besides there is Psalm of Georgian anonym written at the end of ninth century and dedicated to Kostanti Kakhai. Information

about capture and death of Kakhai was found in historical work "History of Artsrunids" of the 10th century Armenian historian Tovma Artsruni. Iv Javakhishvili proved identity of our martyr with Kakhai from inscription which later shared other scientists. The other data is 232 year by Ishmaelite, that doesn't accord with Georgian calendar. In due with it Iva, Later V. Silogava indicated on the committed error in 18th century manuscript. According to him "zeda datserili" which means "in scripts" and such term can't be used for hagiographical text. Instead of it should be "zeda tselsa" which means "upper edge of year". One year of Christian calendar consists of two adjacent years by Muslim chronology.

Geography of the work:

The geographical frame for author is Kartli, Jerusalem, Jordan, Tbilisi and Sammara. St. Kostanti lived in "the land of Kartli, in the district of Zena-Sopeli". Kartli was extended from the middle valley of the river Mtkvari to the Alazani and Iori on the east, and to the Chorokhi on the west. The territory was divided into Zemo (Upper) Kartli, Shida (Inner) Kartli and Kvemo (Lower) Kartli. The basic feature of the epoch for Georgia was defence against the Arab caliphate, Byzantine empire and the Khazars. Kartli was significant as trade routes passed through and control over it meant political supremacy. Kartli became the center of Christianity in Georgia and church was that institution which could consolidate the nation against enemies. To the describing period West-Georgian church finally got out of Byzantine subordination and reunited with other part of the Georgian church and the divine service was on Georgian language. Author elucidate that Kostanti was from district Zena Sopeli, that means he was from Shida Kartli.

Toponym "Zena-Sopeli" mentioned 6th cent text "Martyrdom of Habibo" in the meaning of Shida Kartli. Leonti Mroveli (11th century) wrote: "country from Aragvi and Tpilisi till Tasiskari and Parnavi, Uplos, son of Mtskhetos called Zena-Sopeli, which now calls Shida Kartli.

Blessed Kostanti visited Jerusalem and Jordan to worship at sacred places. Georgians like other Christians after the time of Constantine the Great visited the shrines of the Holy Land, some of them stayed in Palestine as monks, living in Greek monasteries and worshipping in their own language and then built their own monasteries and churches. Evidence of Georgian's settlement in Palestine came to us in the form of mosaic pavements with inscription in the Georgian language dates from the 5th century.

Kostanti was taken to Tpilisi and brought before Bugha. Author does not give us information about Bugha and his campaign to Tpilisi, which he set on fire and captured among others Kakha. The basic task for author was to describe martyr's deeds and acts. In his



short and laconic work hagiography stressed that "a few have been described" and only "to glorify the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit". His mission is to give us his heroes purely, factual brief records of genuine Christian, who suffered for God's faith. Author tries to show us "cumulative" ideal of Christian perfection. We know some rare things about him, but all are significant and symbolic. His social name is the expression of a social model of his country. Blessed Kakha is of noble rank, he is feudal lord with great influence "leading noble persons in the land of Kartli" in political life of his country. Text is rich of quota nti's deeds and acts with God's commandments.

Kostanti was taken to "a town called Sammara in land of Babylon", where was captured by Babilonians king Japhar and put to death. Author get obtained that Sammara was "in the land of Babylon (quekanad babilovnisasa)". Sammara was then the capital of Abassyd caliphate. Georgian medieval literature mention Abbasyds caliphate as "land of Babylon"<sup>1</sup> The main subject of hagiographer is the struggle against the conquerors. These works reflect the past of Georgia history, drawing on their erudition and knowledge author describe historical events and facts in relation to the general historical process and make use of Georgian and non-Georgian sources. This work is remaindness what a trmendous welth of traditions and cultural values w have inherited from the past, what a store of symbols for dignified and spiritually fulfilling life. The same data might also be used to prepare other hagiographic works and can be generate a series of cultural and historical maps. ECAI project are ideally suited for realization of this project and crossing national borders electronically expanding boundaries of study.

We brought as a case study Vitae of St Kostanti Kakhi. Database structure is as follows: textual data (catalogue data, textual contents of manuscripts), graphical data (images of manuscript originals), bibliography, sound (psalms).

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