

European missionaries in Georgia

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Abstract. Church of Georgia, European missionaries, Lexile "Amirandarejaniani", archive of Bernardo of Naples, diplomatic mission Christopher de Castel album.

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The Church of Georgia is one of the oldest among the Orthodox autocephalous churches. Christianity was preached here in the 1st century by the apostles Andrew the First, Simon Kananeli and Matata (in western Georgia), but it was declared the state religion only at the beginning of the 4th century, when St. Nino came to Kartli (in the eastern part of Georgia) from Cappadocia. Georgia is an exceptionally tolerant country, where the harmonious coexistence with religious minorities has been going on for centuries. The Catholic world and the West were one of the bright spots that the kings of Georgia, tormented by constant battles, could imagine as an ally. They did not prevent, on the contrary, they tried to let European missionaries enter the country and bring progress.

The first Catholic missionaries began to enter Georgia in the 13th century. Back in 1329, by order of Pope John XXII, they moved the episcopal center of the Catholic Church oppressed by the Ottomans from Smyrna to Tbilisi. The first missionaries were members of the Franciscan order - the so-called Minorities. Later, the Pope of Rome issued a decree establishing "Propaganda Fide" i.e. "Faith Propagation Organization". The goal of this organization was to spread Catholicism in the countryside of the Middle East, for which Catholic priests, the same missionaries, were sent to these countries.

In the 17th century, the Vatican drew up a special instruction concerning the work of missionaries in Georgia. The instructions stated the spiritual privileges and indulgences that the missionaries could enjoy. The Pope sent to Georgia the founders of the Order of Theatines - Avitabele, Archangelo Lambert, Giudice of Milan, Christopher de Castel and others. One of the goals of the Vatican was to draw the missionaries' attention to the issue of the unification of the Roman Church and the Georgian Church.

The missionaries initially built an apartment in the town of Gori in Kartli, where they were owned by Teimuraz I, who tried to strengthen ties with the European kings and princes with the help of the missionaries. The situation changed after Teimurazi's conquest of Imereti and Rostom Khan's enthronement. Although Rostom did not harass the missionaries, he did not pay much attention to them either. Because of this, the missionaries moved to Samegrelo to the court of Levan II Dadiani. Catholic missionaries gained great popularity in Odisha, because they brought the advanced knowledge of the world at that time, introduced healing, agricultural and engineering innovations, taught foreign languages. On the one hand, Levan II Dadian wanted to raise

the cultural level of the population of Samegrelo in connection with the missionaries, and on the other hand, to get rid of dependence on the Ottoman economy. We should think that the expression of respect by the Georgian kings and princes towards the Pope was due to political, economic and cultural motives rather than religious motives.

In the 60s of the 17th century, the missionaries of the Franciscan Order - Capuchins, who were actually agents of the French trade capital, came to Georgia. Their goal was to find new trade routes between France and Persia. Capuchins did not carry out religious-educational propaganda in Georgia.

The work of the missionaries provided some service to the Georgian culture, including "Amirandarejanian" written by Sulkhan and Begtabeg Tanyashvili.

Moses Khonel's "Amirandarejaniani" (a work of the funerary-adventure genre, which started the secular stream in Georgian writing and laid the foundation for the development of the Georgian heroic-Sarajino novel. We cannot find accurate information about its origin. According to lexical and morphological archaisms, as well as other signs, it must have been created in the XI- at the end of the 12th century) by the 60s of the 17th century, Sulkhan and Begtabeg Tanyashvili were completely destroyed. The poem reached us in the only damaged manuscript of the beginning of the 18th century. At the beginning of Chapter VIII of the poem ("The Story of Talismans"), Savarsamidze tells us the story of his owner's strange dream. The narration of the dream is not finished when some Basreli people invade the narration, obviously, the text is missing in this place. In the archives of Bernardo, the famous 17th century missionary of the Capuchin monastery "Torre del Greco" near Naples, several stanzas of a Georgian poem containing the above story were found. Magali Todua determined that it is the part of Tanyashvili's poem that is interesting for us (Todua, 1975:154). This is proven by the fact that, in addition to the unknown stanzas at the beginning, he preserved the 17 tapes of the poem known to us.

Bernarde of Naples was in Georgia twice - in 1661 and 1670 with seven Capuchin missionaries, whose goal was to spread Catholicism in Georgia. A fragment of Bernarde's poem was found during his stay in Georgia in 1670-1679. The translated "Amirandarejanian" fragment cannot fully fill the gap indicated above, it lacks the episode of the meeting with the caravan, which is narrated in about forty lines in the prose text.

The second missionary, whose name is connected with "Amirandarejanian" in Galax, is Christopher de Castel, in whose album there is a portrait of the poet Sulkhan Avtandilashvili or the son of Avtandil. Pavle Ingoroqva was the first to point out that the poet depicted in Kastel's portrait could be Gamleksavi Sulkhan of "Amirandarejaniani". "Sulkhan Avtandili dze ordered his portrait to be painted for the above-mentioned Castell... Having given some oriental image as a guide and model for the European artist, Sulkhan Avtandili dze seems to have given a special task to the artist to present him as a poet par excellence by observing all the traditional details accepted in the East

While painting the poet's picture. This original was a portrait of Shota (Rustaveli) and it is natural that Shota, i.e. A poet to whose school belonged the person who ordered the picture" (Ingoroqva, 1968:250-231).

Sargis Kakabadze also touched on the identity of the poet expressed in Kastel's portrait, but unlike Pavle Ingoroqva, he could not decide who should be expressed in the portrait - Sulkhani or Shota (Kakabadze, 1966: 94).

Kastel lived in Georgia in 1632-1658. He assimilated the Georgian people, their customs and left about 600 paintings on the Georgian theme, they contain the most valuable material for studying the history of Western Georgia in the first half of the 17th century. Castel wrote the following inscription on Sul Khan Avtandilashvili's picture: "The most talented Sul Khan of the Georgian family born in Georgia. Sul Khan Avtandilashvili, a famous poet in the kingdom of Iberia-Kolkheti. Look at its history" (Christopher de Castell, 1977: 109).

Liana Kekelidze shares the opinion that Sul Khan Avthandilashvili and "Amirandarejaniani" Gamleksavi in the picture are the same person. In Georgian reality, the father's name often performed the function of a surname, therefore, "referring to the poet as Avtandilashvili should not have been unusual. Since it became known through the documentary material that Sul Khan is really the son of Avtandil Shansheyan, the surname Thaniashvili must be a product of the poet's second surname (Taniashvili), which he bore, Thaniashvili is the diminutive form of this surname" (Kekelidze, 1983:123-124).

It can be assumed that Sul Khan was on a diplomatic mission at the court of Levan Dadian, the chief of Samegrelo, where Kastel was working at that time. Sul Khan had an interesting biography, which Castel found it necessary to record. The controversial issue would have been shed light on the volume of Kastelli, in which Sul Khan Avtandilishvili's biography is discussed, but, unfortunately, this part was lost forever, because it fell into the sea.

The work of the European missionaries turned out to be a happy one for "Amirandarejaniani". Bernardo Neapoleli saved us some lost stanzas of the poem, and Christopher de Castel's album has a portrait of Sul Khan Taniashvili.

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