

Georgia and Europe in the Early Middle Ages

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The article deals with relations of Georgia to Europe in the late antique period and the early Middle Ages. The analyses rests on the Byzantium and the Western European, as well as on Georgian written sources: historical chronicles, hagiographic texts and other information, reflecting political relations of the Iberia and Lazika—those-days kingdoms, located on the territory of Georgia—to the Western European and Byzantine space. The offered analysis will concentrate on the shared characteristics of European space in the Middle Ages and will compare them to the general tendencies of development of Georgia in the same period. This enables to draw conclusion that Georgia was the part of the unified Christian space of the early Middle Ages.

Keywords: Georgia, Europe, Middle Ages, late antique

Introduction

The definition of the concept of Europe is quite complicated. Europe as space is represented in human imagination rather than in any concrete scientific definition (Schneidmüller, 1997, pp. 5-24; Pocock, 1976, pp. 12-29; Pocock, 2007 pp. 205-219; Pagden, 2002, p. 33). Europe as space or mentality or a unity of certain common features is represented differently at various stages of historical development (Leyser, 1992, pp. 25-47; Karageorgos, 1992, pp. 137-164; Schneidmüller, 1997, pp. 5-24). The concept of Europe is completely vague in the works of Greek historians, as the antique world mainly represented three continents—Asia, Europe and Africa and made difference between these continents only to a small extent (Fischer, 1957, pp. 10-19). References of Europe in the works of Greek authors are very far from our modern understanding of the concept. In Herodote's work Europe is described from the Atlantic Ocean to the river Phasis in Colchis. Representations of Europe are similar in the works of Pliny, Orosius and Augustine (Herodotus, 1920. p. 23; Plinius, 1967, pp. 229-231; Orosius, 1990-1991, p. 2; Augustinus, 1955, p. 521; Schuller, 2004, p. 6; Hiestand, 1991, pp. 33-47).

The borders of Europe are represented differently in the works of medieval scholars (Herbers, 2007. pp. 21-41). For the definition of European identity and the medieval perception of the borders of Europe it is important to identify the key features of the European space—Christianity in general, or later Catholicism and the area of influence of the Pope of Rome, or the social structure characteristic of European feudalism, or climatic zones (Herbers, 2013, pp. 351-352). Michael Borgolte brings an example of the characteristics of Europe by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi in the historical frame, where mention is made of five stages undergone by Europe. The first stage is ancient Greece versus Iran, the second stage is created by Rome, and its Eastern borders reach the Rhine and Don rivers. The Eastern State of Byzantium is a Eurasian State between Europe and the Orient

(Borgolte, 2005, pp. 1-29).

The *Etymology* by the VI century scholar Isidore of Seville is an encyclopedic work. According to it, the Earth is divided into three parts—Asia, Africa and Europe (*Divisus est orbis trifarie, e quibus una pars Asia, altera Europa, tertia Africa Nuncupatur*). Byzantium with its Eastern extensions is considered part of Europe (von Sevilla, Clarendon, 1911; Marixverlag, 2008).

It is characteristic of medieval works to divide the Earth into three parts. One of the bases for such division is a Biblical story of Noah and his three sons. According to medieval Christian literature, Europe is the lot of the youngest of the three—Japheth. The border between the lots of Shem and Japheth, i.e. Asia and Europe, is defined only once and, according to the above-mentioned works, it is located in Asia Minor (Oschema, 2001. pp. 191-235; Herbers, 2007, p. 22).

On the map compiled at Saint Gallen Monastery in IX century Europe, Asia and Africa are marked and a comment is made that Noah's sons divided the earth in this way (*Ecce sic diversunt terram filii Noe post diluvium*) (Herbers, 2007, p. 22). Similar comments on the division of the Earth are given in the works of the Anglo-Saxon scholar Bede Venerable (VIII c.) and German monk Otto of Freising (XII c.) (Herbers, 2007, p. 24). The chronicles of the late Middle Ages also make mention of the borders of Europe (von den Brincken, 1992, pp. 50-51). On the map the borders are more or less marked, whereas in the comments the borders go to the East (Javakhia, 2008, pp. 120-131; Jaspert, 2007, pp. 43-69).

European Identity of Georgia According to Georgian Sources

The medieval maps are compiled based on the viewpoints of medieval scholars. Mention is chiefly made of the sacred places, as the aim of distant travels of medieval people was to visit sacred places. Pilgrimage and worship of saints played an important role in the unification of Europe. As the saying goes, pilgrim routes unite Europe (Heß, 2008, pp. 11-16).

The above-mentioned general characteristics of European borders given in the medieval literature yield important information for Georgian history.

According to Georgian tradition, the Japheth theory of the origin of Georgians implies that Georgia is part of Europe, because, as it was mentioned above, medieval European authors consider Europe as the motherland of the posterity of Japheth (Leonti, 1942, p. 3). Besides, there is a theory according to which in the early Christian and antique epochs the differentiation between Europe and Asia was based on the opposition between the Hellenistic world and Iran. This theory naturally leads to the conclusion that Georgia was part of the European space. Georgia was a Greek ally in the struggle against Iran, it was the protector of Dariali entrance from which foreign elements tried to penetrate into Europe (Melikishvili, 1970, pp. 500- 570).

Georgian historical tradition considers that the Georgian State emerged as a result of the destruction of the Empire of Alexander of Macedonia (Leonti, 1942, pp. 22-23). This is one more proof of Georgia's belonging to the European space, as Europe is what appeared on the basis of Hellenistic tradition.

Georgian political history and Georgian medieval ways of thinking confirm the belonging of medieval Georgian culture to the European culture. The European medieval culture was diverse in itself—the Catholic culture coexisted with the Orthodox Christian and Arabic-Islamic cultures (Borgolte, 2005, pp. 117-163).

The data of the medieval literature of Western Europe and the data of contemporary medieval studies enable obtain more materials to prove the European identity of Georgia.

Europe as a concept is rare in the medieval literature and the term became frequent much later (Borgolte, 2001, pp. 16-17). Europe of the early Middle Ages should be represented as a unitary space where there still exists a cult of its unifier—the Emperor of Rome, in this case the Emperor of Byzantium. In both Christian and Barbaric cultures the Emperor of Rome was a symbol of worldly life. In the Christian world there was a widespread opinion that Constantine the Great was given a cross by the Lord himself, not for his unique life but because he was the Emperor of Rome (Knowles, 1967, pp. 3-15; Dargon, 2003, p. 128). Later, this turned into the cult of the Anointed Emperor (Treitinger, 1956, p. 29). This, until the VIII century Europe was represented by the space of Christian Rome where even the barbaric inhabitants recognized the primacy of the Emperor of Byzantium. Only the blessing of the crown of the Emperor of Rome by Charlemagne (768-814) was the basis of division of the Christian Rome. Later this was added by a split in the Christian church which gave rise to the oriental Christianity called Orient and the Western Christian world called the Occident (Ohnsorge, 1947, p. 15; Barraclough, 1964, p. 12; Robert, 1996, p. 34; Herbers, 2007, pp. 25-30).

Europe of the early Middle Ages seems a space that appeared on the basis of antique culture with a certain influence of Hellenism. If the antique culture was directed towards the secular life of famous people, the vector of the Middle Ages were saints and their lives. Therefore, the attitude to the antique culture was changed, but the European space was viewed as the Christian world that has its antique traditions.

Europe implies Christian space. That is why the liberation of Spain from the Arabs is called *reconquista* i.e. the returning of lands. The crusaders thought that they did not invade oriental lands but returned them, as they viewed Palestine as the domain of Christianity (Axt, 1996, pp. 287-319; Tyerman, 2007, pp. 1-5).

In the Middle Ages Georgia existed in the unified Christian space, unified Europe joined by Christian Rome the leader of which was the Emperor of Byzantium (Treitinger, 1956, p. 56). The latter governed the new empire from the new, Christian Rome—Constantinople. In my opinion, the Christian civilization of medieval Europe appeared as a unitary space. However, it may have had different preconditions in the Eastern and Western Europe. A. Rudakov's opinion on Byzantium as a unitary Christian space is as follows "Similar to the monarchies of Cyrus, Alexander and Augustus, Byzantium was a clear illustration of the idea that genuine human culture does not require the existence of national states. Similar to the above-mentioned monarchies, Byzantium purposefully tried to implement the ideal of a unified parish and one shepherd who is in the eye of God *condicio sine qua non*—the saviour of the world. If an intellectual Byzantine took pride in imagining himself as *Romea*, in this case he did not take into account his nationality or the Greek language. Otherwise it would be strange for Greeks, Syrians and the inhabitants of Asia Minor to call themselves *Roman*. This name implied a belonging to the greatest cosmopolitan monarchy which united the entire civilized world, all peoples and tribes, under the crown of the orthodox Basileus. They are the heirs of the welfare transferred to them from the ancient civilization" (Rudakov, 1997, pp. 64-65).

In ancient times (i.e. since the formation of Georgia as a unitary State) Georgia was actively involved in the universal processes. Apart from its potential, this was conditioned by Georgia's location in the region where the antique culture was being developed. Georgia's contribution to the development of the cultures of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean region is thoroughly discussed in the works dedicated to the history of culture. Georgia was

closely linked to the antique world. Georgian statehood was formed after the disintegration of the huge empire of Alexander the Great.

Georgian Political and Cultural Relationship with the West in Early Middle Ages

The Middle Ages started in Georgia alongside with the general European Middle Ages. Georgian culture developed simultaneously with the European medieval civilization. Both European and Georgian civilizations had common preconditions and, therefore, the same trends of development. Like other European States, Georgia viewed itself in the Roman space. After the destruction of the pagan Roman Empire, Georgia was unified under Christianity and thus closely linked with Byzantium and other peoples within this new Empire. Georgia viewed Byzantium as a genuine protector of Christianity. Georgian and Greek sources completely agree on this matter. This can be proved by the fact that back in the V-VI centuries Byzantine titles were given to the rulers of both the Eastern and Western Georgia. In the works of Greek historians Priscus of Panium, Agathias Scholasticus, John Malalas, Procopius of Caesarea and others there are proofs of the relationships between the Kings of Lazik'a (Egrisi) and Byzantine court, according to which the kings of Lazik'a recognize themselves as the representatives of the Byzantine Christian world. Priscus of Panium (V c.) describes the visit of Gubaz I, the King of Lazik'a to Constantinople during the reign of Leon I (457-475) (Priscus, 2014, p. 102; Priscus, 1841, p. 88). Greek historian Theopanus (IX c.) tells that in 522, after the death of Damnaze the King of Lazik'a, his son C'ate (Tsathé) visited the Byzantine Emperor Justine I. During the visit C'ate was bestowed various royal gifts and married the daughter of Patricius of Constantinople¹. Procopius of Caesarea (VI c.) writes in his book *Wars*: "The Lazi at first dwelt in the land of Colchis as subjects of the Romans, but not to the extent of paying them tribute or obeying their commands in any respect, except that, whenever their king died, the Roman emperor would send emblems of the office to him who was about to succeed to the throne" (Procopius 1833, pp. 356, 216). Agathias Scholasticus (VI c.) tells that C'ate the brother of Gubaz II who occupied the throne of Egrisi after a long war, lived in Byzantium. The Lazians request the Byzantine Emperor Justinian the Great (527-565) to appoint C'ate King.²

The fact that Georgians viewed themselves within the entire Roman space is proved by the story of the arrival of Christian missionaries in Georgia. This fact is told in the literary monument called "*Conversion of Georgia*". Despite the fact that there were Christian bishops on the territories close to Georgia, Georgian King sent envoys to Constantinople in order to invite missionaries from there. "The King sent envoys and saint Nino's

¹ Hoc anno Tzathus Lazorum rex regni Persarum desertor factus, Cabade regnant atque adeo ipsum amante, ut in Lazorum regem eu, extulisset, ad Justinianum Byzantium venians, Chrustianum fiery, et ab eo Lazorum regen renuenciari rogavit Imperatorem. Hunc Imperator benign acceptum baptismi lumine illustravit, et filiam declaravit. Romanam vero duxit uxorem, Homi Patricii et Excurapalate neptem, nomine Valerianam, quam demum Lazorum rex creatus in patriam duxit: discessit ille redimitus corona, et chlamyde, quails est Imperatoris candida ornatus, cui supertius tabula ex auro fuit adsuta, in qua Justini Imperatoris imago coloribus acu ductis depicta erat; toga parter candida auro Phrigionis arte affixo et Imperatoris essigie conspicua: O croelae quipped ejus puniceae erat, martgaritis more Persico distinct, simmiiter et zona ejus erat aurea gemmis inspersa. Theopanis *Chronographia*, R. P. jacobus Goar ord. FF. Predic. Congreg. S. Ludovici Vicarius generalis Latine reddidit, Theopanem Notis illustravit, Varias lectione multiplici Codd. Collatione adjecit. Ex Typographia Bartolomei Javarina, 1729, p. 115.

² Agathias Scholasticus tells: "Supplices itaque Imperatorem orarunt, ut defuncti manibus hoc gratificaretur; nihil vero aliud dixerunt, quam ut facinus illud impunitum ne reliqueret sibi designaret non alienigenam aliquem, neque peregrinum, sed Tzathen iuniorem Gubazae fratrem, qui tum temporis Byzantii degebat, utque ita ipsis denuo patria lex conservaretur, et regni generis iam inde ab antiqua continuata sibi que constans et inviolate succession—Agathiae Myrinaei, *Historiarum libri quinque*, cum versione Latina et annotationibus bon. vulcanii. B.G. Niebuhrius; accedund Agathiae Epigrammata—Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, Bonnae: Weber, 1828, p. 170.

writings to Greece and asked King Constantine to send priests. And the priests arrived soon. And the King assigned Bishop Ioane and one deacon and gave a book of Queen Elene and an icon of the Lord and a True Cross for St. Nino" (Gigineishvili, Giunashvili, 1979, p. 322). Another source proves that King Vakhtang Gorgasali strived to form an independent church in V century. "The King sent envoys to Greece and asked the King and the Patriarch to assign a Catholicos" (Gigineishvili, Giunashvili, 1979, p. 325).

Constantinople sent not only priests, but also an architect. This confirms that the primacy of Constantinople was extremely significant for Georgia, same as for the entire Christian world. Constantine the Great was the first to initiate large-scale monastic constructions in Jerusalem and Rome.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that King Mirian asked Constantinople to send priests to Georgia, as the history of the *First Council of Nicaea* (325) proves that at the given stage Emperor Constantine the Great held the reigns of Christianity (Treitinger, 1956, p. 133).

The primacy of the Emperor of Rome can be proved also from the work dedicated to the life of Vakhtang Gorgasali compiled by Juansher (XI c.). The description of Vakhtang Gorgasali's dream ends with the coronation of Vakhtang by the Emperor of Byzantium: "The Caesar raised his hand and took the crown from the cross and placed it on Vakhtang's head" (Juansher, 1942, p. 168). Georgia's Byzantine orientation and recognition of the Byzantine Emperor by Georgians is made more vivid by the following story told by Juansher: "After fighting with the Persians, all the princes of Georgia gathered and sent an envoy to the Greek King asking him to assign a king out of the representatives of the royal family and to retain the princes on their posts. The Caesar agreed and assigned a king—the nephew of Mirdat', son of Vakhtang from the Greek wife, the name of the new King was Guaram and he reigned in Klarjeti and Javakheti" (Sabanisje, 1987, p. 447).

Georgian culture of the early Middle Ages was initially part of the entire Christian civilization that later turned into common European civilization. Thus, Georgian culture as part of the Christian culture made a foothold of the medieval civilization. We cannot share the opinion that the adoption of Christianity as a State religion in Georgia led to the threat that Georgia would be a provincial culture within the great Christian civilization (Berjenishvili, 1990, p. 383). Such conclusion was probably based on the viewpoint that the Christian civilization was formed in Europe, and Latin and Greek languages played a dominant role in it. I argue that these languages could not be a basis for the dominance of any nation in the Middle Ages. Neither earlier nor in the Middle Ages did these languages express any national identity. In any case, at the beginning of the medieval Christian civilization Georgian culture played one of the leading roles.

As, due to the reverses of fortune, Georgian literature of this period has not survived, Georgian contribution to the European civilization should be analyzed based on Greek and Latin sources that yield the names of Georgian scholars who contributed to the development of the Christian civilization (Greek language sources).

Numerous eminent persons who were ethnic Georgians are mentioned in the Western sources. Their role was of importance in the development of medieval thinking. Among these, mention should be made of the IV century public figure Bakur, representative of Georgian royal family. He was an eminent philosopher of that epoch. His works have not reached us, but it is known that he was called "the favourite of Gods" (Seek, 1906, p. 94). He is mentioned by IV century famous philosopher Libanos, who was the teacher of many important persons including political and religious figures. Libanos' letters to the fathers of the Christian church—Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia are well-known. Bakur participated in the

Adrianopolis struggle in 378 (Marcellinus, 1986, pp. 286-287). Georgia's role in the development of Christian civilization can be proved by the mention of Peter Iberian. Peter Iberian and Ioane Lazian played an important role in the development of the monastic life of the East in V c. The significance of Peter Iberian for the history of early medieval culture can be confirmed by the quotations of his contemporaries - "A man astonishingly famous in the world", "the second Moses", or "the second Saint Paul" (Zacharias, 2014; Kofsky, 1997, pp. 209-222). In Georgia the Middle Ages started when Christianity was adopted as the State religion. This happened in the epoch the reign of Constantine the Great, during the reign of Mirian the King of Kartli.

The Early Medieval Georgia and Common Christian Space

Georgian cultural development took place first in the Hellenistic world, later in the Roman Empire and the Byzantine space. On each stage of development Georgia tried to lead an independent political life and develop its unique culture, the general values of which were similar to the culture of the people alongside with whom Georgia created first antique and later Christian culture. Both in the Roman epoch and the Middle Ages, Georgia fulfilled its political function—to protect the Roman space from the barbarians. Georgia's function is vivid: it was the defender of the Caucasian gate from the barbarians. Georgian annals confirm this on the example of Vakhtang Gorgasali: "He subdued the Ossetians and the Kipchaks, built the Ossetian gates and a stronghold called the Dariali Gate. Now, according to the King's order, the Ossetians and the Kipchaks are unable to cross the border" (Juansher, 1942, p. 156). The fact that Georgia protected the Roman space from the barbarians proves Georgia's belonging to the Roman space that became Christian in the IV century.

Another proof of Georgia's belonging to the European space is Ioane Sabanisje's (Sabanisje's (VIII c.) information: "Not only the Greeks gained the Lord's faith but also we, their distant relatives, as the Lord says: "They would come from the East and the West and strengthen the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob". And now the inhabitants of Kartli have the faith and are called sacred mothers, the inhabitants of this place and the foreigners who come from other lands are among Jesus our Lord, glorified be his name now and forever. Amen" (Kekelidze, 1935, p. 62). Georgia's belonging to the Christian culture is confirmed in the description of North Caucasian peoples by Ioane Sabanisdze: "Savage people, horrible and ugly-looking, beasts by nature, bloody creatures without faith and recognition of God the Creator" (Sabanisje, 1987, p. 447). Later, in the late Middle Ages, the barbarians are mentioned as the inhabitants of the territories beyond the Caucasus (Bezzola, 1974). In this respect, mention should be made of the European travellers of crusade times, members of the Fransiscan and Dominican orders (de Saint-Qventini, 1965, pp. 45-47; Javakhia, 2005, p. 66; Altaner, 1933, pp. 233-141; Vauchez, 2007, pp. 754-799), who view the territory beyond the Caucasus as the domain of Gog and Magog.

In general, the cult of saints plays an important role in the definition of the unitary space and identity. The cult of saints unites similarly thinking Christian society. Contemporary historians note that the worship of saints and pilgrimage created a unitary space in Europe. Pilgrimage to the sacred places and worship of saints united the society of the early Middle Ages (Le Goff, 2005, p. 23).

The common institute of saints proves the existence of unitary Christian space in the early Middle Ages. The existence of common saints among early medieval Georgia and the Western Europe is proved by the materials related to the general history of church collected by Michael Tamarashvili (Tamarashvili, 1995). Out of these materials, mention should be made of a book of prayers dedicated to the IV century Pope Sylvester and Pope

Leon I (V c.), who saved Rome from the invasion of the Huns. The same can be illustrated by Georgian religious calendar in which there is a prayer for the celebration of Saint Leon the Great on January 18: "Leader of Orthodox Christianity and servant of kindness and modesty, Leon, the enlightener of the entire world and the priests, the spirit created by God, all-wise, with your teaching enlighten us all, as the lyre of God, pray to Christ our Lord to forgive our souls. As you became a priest of our church, the lions began to speak of God's faith, you served the Holy Trinity and enlightened your parish with the learning of God, glorified be your name, for you know the secrets of Divine Grace" (Tamarashvili, 1995, p. 182).

The evolution of the Christian military thinking, identical to the European Christian world, is confirmed by the attitude of Church to the institute of saints. In order to illustrate this fact, mention should be made of the greatest martyrs of IV century who are of equal importance for the entire Christian world. However, later they acquired national features and became the protectors of certain peoples and cities.

In the early Middle Ages there were numerous saints, but we focus on those saints who are equally important for the Western and Eastern Christian worlds. Among such saints, above all one should mention St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki, St. George of Cappadocia and St. Martin of Tours. These saints were successful military commanders of their epochs. Later they rejected their military service and started to pray and fast. Thus they became the protectors of Christ's host. The lives of these saints and their worship shows how a man's attitude to military service may change and how in the early Middle Ages military Christian thinking was developed. These saints are Christ's host, protectors of their peoples, towns etc. The cult of St. George in Georgia is similar. A prayer dedicated to this saint shows that he is viewed as the liberator of prisoners, protector of the poor, curer of the disabled and the undefeated commander of the kings (Javakhia, 2005, p. 45).

Georgian Christian culture was initially a part of the world Christian culture. According to Georgian sources, Georgians viewed themselves as part of the entire Christian civilization.

The comparative study and analysis of the genesis of medieval Christian civilization, its preconditions and characteristic features, comparison of the Eastern and Western forms of Christian civilization leads us to a conclusion that the medieval Christian civilization was developed within the entire Roman space. The nations that formed part of the Roman civilization participated in its formation according to the level of their development. At this stage it is too early to speak of the typological differences between the Eastern and Western Christian civilizations. Thus, it is too early to argue that Georgian culture belongs to the Byzantine civilization of the Eastern Rome, as the typologically different Byzantine civilization was formed at a later stage.

As it is clearly seen from the general characteristics of the early Middle Ages, at this stage in history there is more general Christian thinking than particularly national. Even though there are national interests, they are represented on the background of general Christian ideology. The forms of thinking are identical throughout the entire Christian Roman Empire. In the early Middle Ages both in Western Europe (Franks, Langobards, Ostgoths, Westgoths...) and in the Eastern Europe (Georgian States of Kartli and Lasik'a) the newly-formed national political units equally recognize the Emperor of Rome (Byzantium) as the leader of the Christian Empire. This can be proved by the award of the title of the representative of the royal court from the Emperor of Byzantium (Barnwell, 2000, pp. 6-29). Besides, the historical sources of this epoch equally mention the Emperor of Byzantium as the leader of the Christian world. This can be proved by the fact that the coronation of the Emperor or any other significant event in the Empire occupies a special place in the national literature (*Conversion of*

Georgia, Leont'i Mroveli, Juanšer, Gregory of Tours, Bede Venerable, the annals of the Langobards and Goths). Frequently, while dating this or that event, mention is made of who was the Emperor of Byzantium at a given time.

The mode of thinking is similar in the entire Christian world. The thinking of this period yields similar information about the punishment for sins or God's protection in hardships. Actions are motivated in a similar way. God's protection in struggle and the model of Constantine the Great gaining victory over the pagans with God's help (led by a cross) is equal for the entire Christian space. Georgia's participation in battles is always motivated by Christianity, all victories and losses are in God's hand (either motivated by sins or by the strength of faith, service of Christian causes and, what is most important, struggle in the name of faith—prayers before battles, repentance and struggle “under the protection of the cross”).

Military thinking and the Christian attitude to war underwent similar evolution in Georgia (rejection of military service as a profession, the theory of fair war and sacred war—struggle for Christianity and protection of the Christian motherland). Initially the Christians think that war and bloodshed are inadmissible for Christians. Later on, an idea of fair war appears i.e. the war aimed at the protection of motherland and Christianity. A Christian, Christ's serviceman (*Milites Dei*), who in earlier times would serve God only by prayer and obedience, later transformed into Christ's military servant and fought for motherland and Christian faith.

The analysis of the genesis of medieval Christian civilization proves that Georgians, alongside with the Greeks and other nations of the Indo-European race, created medieval civilization. There are identical ideas about the functioning of clerical and worldly authorities in the entire European world. Georgians view themselves as part of the unitary Christian world. Georgian kings recognize the primacy of the church of Rome (Constantinople) and serve the interests of the world church³.

In general, medieval Georgia should be viewed as a state located on the crossroads between the East and the West. The Orient, in the form of Iranian and Arabic culture, certainly played an important role in the development of Georgian culture. However, it is our aim to compare Georgian Christian viewpoints and aspirations to Western values. All the above-mentioned confirms that the ideology of Christian Georgia was formed in the early Middle Ages in accordance with the Western Christian ideology. This is clearly reflected in Georgian historical works and hagiographic texts.

Conclusion

The Middle Ages in Georgia starts with the European Middle Ages and the Georgian culture develops similar to the European civilization of the Middle Ages: they both rely on the shared preconditions and share the same characteristics of development. There are similarities between the clashes and contradictions on the territory of Georgia and on the mass resettlements of people on territory of Europe. In the late antiquity and the early Middle Ages various tribes have influenced on the development of different kingdoms located on the territory of Georgia: Goths, Huns and other nomadic tribes, which were in conflict with the great Roman Empire.

³ Until the end of the IV century the Patriarchate of Constantinople was not as powerful as the Roman church, but, as the Emperor resided in Constantinople and had real power over the world church, Constantinople was often viewed as the centre of Church.- Javakhia Bejan, *Antik'urobidan šuasauk'uneebisak'en (dasavlet evrop'a, bizant'ia, sakartvelo)* [From Antiquity to the Middle Ages (Western Europe, Byzantium, Georgia)], Tbilisi, Universali, 2005, p. 45.

Georgia – both during the Antique Rome, as well as in the Middle Ages – had the function to defend the Romanian space from barbarians. Georgia, similar to those-times independent European entities, considers itself to be the part of the Roman space. After the demolishment of the pagan Roman space, Christianity becomes the driving force of unification of Georgia which connects Georgia not only to the successor of the Roman Empire – Byzantium, but also to the diverse people, which were nominally remaining in the constituency of this empire. The political and cultural processes of Georgia initially were developed in the Hellenic Space and later in the Roman Empire and the Byzantine space; the latter united the Christian World of the early Middle Ages. Meantime, during each stage of its development, it was trying to create its independent political life and created self-sustained culture, based on similar values hold by the European culture of the early Middle Ages.

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