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With the right of manuscripts

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Editions of "St. Nino's Life"

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SYNOPSIS

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Introduction

The subject of the research and the relevance of the Paper.

Christianity has left an indelible mark on the history of mankind. It became the basis of many historical events and facts. This religion with its ideology predetermined the future and political life of many people and countries, including Georgia and the Georgian people as well.

IV century AD is one of the most important periods in the history of humanity. After the crucifixion of God, the Christian religion, which was founded on the day of Pentecost, suffered many torments, persecutions and humiliations during the first three centuries of its history. Therefore, a new phase in the history of mankind has begun since IV century AD, when Christianity became the state religion in different countries.

Georgia is one of the first countries which recognized Christianity as the state religion in the 20s of the IV century, and this fact is undoubtedly associated with the name of St. Nino, who spread Christianity in Georgia.

The Georgian Church is Apostolic, because the Apostles spread Christianity. The preaching of the Apostles is one of the main principles of autocephaly. In Kartli (Iberia) Christianity was declared as a state religion during the reign of the king Mirian. The Georgian Church was subordinated to the Antiochian Church and gained independence (autocephaly) later, during Vakhtang Gorgasali's reign. This fact was confirmed by the VIII Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (680 BC): "Brdzanes esret tsnidisa eklesiisa sakartvelosatvis, romel ars tsmida mtskheta, rata ikos stsor pativita vitartsa samotsikulo katolike eklesiani" (the autocephaly of the Georgian church was recognized by the order of the Holy Church of Constantinople). (Chapter I: 232; Goiladze 1991: 189).

However, it is unclear why St Nino entered Georgia if the apostles spread Christianity themselves. The answer to this question was sought in ancient times as well. So, still Ephraim noticed some inconsistencies

regarding this issue. He tried to explain the reason of such an inconsistency. In his opinion, after the Apostles, people have forgotten the doctrine of Christ and turned to paganism. Ephraim notes that the similar fact took place in Greece as well. "Vidre zhamtamde meored pavled zatsit tsodebulisa didisa Kostantinesta" (It was St Konstantinewho helped the Emperor to spread Christianity throughout the empire). According to Ephraim, the Lord did not leave Georgia and sent St. Nino to preach again. "Upalma artsa chuen mtsireni dagtevna uguatsad, aramed esret ganago kualad armotsodebai chueni".

St. Nino's merit is that Christianity has been declared a state religion after she entered Kartli. As a result of her sermons, together with the members of the royal family, the whole nation adopted Christianity. Therefore, she is considered to be the Enlightener and the Apostle of the Georgians.

Another important fact is that the Georgians's Enlightener is a woman. As far as we know, this is the only case in the history of the Christian world. On this occasion, the famous Kartvelologist, Bernard Utie noted: "Georgia is really incomparable because your Mother, your Enlightener, your Apostle is a woman, St. Nino; as far as I know, it happened only once in the history of the world, and it happened in Georgia." The public figure of the second half of XII century, the Catholicos-Patriarch Nikoloz Gulaberisdze (1150-1177) also paid attention to the above mentioned fact. He tried to answer the question: "...kholo pirvelad ese sadziebeli ars, tu raistvis ukue dedakatsi achina da tsarmoavlina gmertman chuenda mimart?" (Why did God choose woman to accomplish this goal and not a man?) According to Nikoloz Gulaberisdze, one of the factors that caused christianization of Kartli by St. Nino, was the Virgin Mary's interest. The Mother of God wanted to convert this country to Christianity herself, but the Lord decided to send the Apostle St. Nino to deliver Christianity instead of her.

There are multilateral and diverse writing sources dedicated to St. Nino. Such a variety is caused by the fact that, besides the Georgian written sources, the similar information can be found in the earliest foreign written sources. On the other hand, the diversity of Georgian sources can be explained by the existence of several editions of the hagiographical work dedicated to the Georgian enlightener, which date back to different centuries.

The goals and objectives of the paper are to present St. Nino's contribution to the history of Georgian Hagiography. Each new epoch reinterpreted the life of St. Nino in a new way, the new editions of "Nino's life" were created; they responded to the demands of different epochs in their own way. The research aims to identify the main cycles of "St. Nino's Life" and to analyze various editorial changes made to these cycles.

The scientific novelty and significance of the research: The Paper presents the peculiarities of each edition of St. Nino's life with the Hymnographical completeness. Along with the scientific value, the thesis has a pedagogical purpose as well; it will be useful for students and undergraduates.

Research Methodology - is based on comparative research method, that establishes the relationship of a literary text to other artistic texts included in different cultural contexts. The use of this method allowed us to analize the peculiarities of the editions of "Nino's Life" by comparing, contrasting, and generalizing the texts.

We also used the intertextual theory in analyzing the editorial peculiarities of various texts. The method of hermeneutic research has been applied for interpreting the individual realities of hagiographic texts.

The structure and content of the research: The Dissertation Paper consists of the Introduction, five chapters and the Conclusions. It is

accompanied by a list of used literature. The objectives, tasks and problem solving logic are based on the following structure of the thesis:

Chapter I "The Composition And Structure of "The Christianization of Kartli";

Chapter II "Nino's Life" by Leonti Mroveli;

Chapter III "Nino's Life" by Arsen Ikaltoeli;

Chapter IV "Readings" by Nikoloz Gulaberisdze;

Chapter V The Periphrasis of Nino's Life and Svinixar Editions;

MainConclusions;

Bibliography.

SYNOPSIS

Chapter I–"The Composition And Structure of "The Christianization of Kartli"–deals with the oldest Georgian historical source, which narrates about St. Nino's life. It is known under the name of "The Christianization of Kartli" („Moktsevai Kartlisais“). This ancient monument has been the focus of the general public from the day of its discovery and publication.

"The Christianization of Kartli" consists of two paragraphs: Paragraph 1 - "Chronicles" narrates about the history of Kartli from IV century AD until IX century in the form of chronicles. As the "Chronicles" reflects only a few facts from the life of St. Nino, it is called a small edition of "St. Nino's life".

However, "St. Nino's Life" is much more fully illustrated in Paragraph 2 - "The Christianization". That is why it is known as a complete edition. These editions slightly differ from each other.

"The Christianization of Kartli" came to us in the form of four manuscripts. Among them there are: the **Shatberdian** (copied in Shatberdi Monastery in southern Georgia), the **two Sinai** editions (rewritten on Mount Sinai), which belong to X century, and the **Chelishi** manuscript (stored in Chelishi Monastery), which dates back to XIV

century. The above manuscripts of "**The Christianization of Kartli**" are the independent from each other editions.

The oldest manuscript of the work, dedicated to the Georgian Enlightener's activity, dates back to X century, although, it does not mean that the work itself was written during this period. It must have been created before. For a long time in Georgian Historiography there was a prevailing opinion that "**The Christianization of Kartli**" is a monument, written in IX century. Even today, a great deal of scientists shares this opinion. As evidence, they lead the factthat the narration in the chronicle of the "Christianization" ends with IX century and, therefore, the life of St. Nino is dated back to this centuryas well.

According to recent textual studies, "**The Christianization of Kartli**" was not written in IX century, as it was previously thought, but during St. Nino's activity, what is closer to reality. However, as the researchers point out, the authentic text has not come to us, because "St. Nino's Life" has undergone significant changes.

Naturally, the non-existence of originally created monument "**The Christianization of Kartli**" hinders the establishment of the similarity quality of the four manuscripts with the original. Moreover, despite the research of several generations of scientists, there is still no common opinion not only about the exact date of writing the original of "**The Christianization of Kartli**", but also the sequence of writing individual chapters, included in it, is unknown as well.

It is obvious that "**The Christianization of Kartli**", describing that the Christianity became the state religion in the Kingdom of Kartli, could not be written earlier than 20-es of IV century, as presumably during this period of time Kartli was converted to Christianity.

Thus, the original version of "**The Christianization of Kartli**" should be considered to be written in the first half of the IV century and in the period of time between the IX-X centuries.

However, such an opinion cannot be either absolutely correct. First of all, as we have already mentioned, "**The Christianization of Kartli**" consists of two optional chapters - "**Chronicles**" and "**Nino's Life**". According to the opinion established in Georgian Historiography after a thorough study of the monument, not only the both chapters of it must be written at different times, but also the individual texts or component sections of each chapter must have the editions of different years. Moreover, there is no single idea whether the two chapters were joined together. Wherein, one group of scholars considers "**The Christianization of Kartli**" as a single work. As we can see, there is a variety of opinions.

The version of the latest date for the creation of the first edition of "**The Christianization of Kartli**" belongs to I. Javakhishvili. According to his observation, the monument was created in IX century.

This point of view was shared by K. Kekelidze and Ts. Kurtsikidze as well. (see p. 67).

The different opinion, related to the mentioned issue, is offered by P. Ingorokva. According to him, the original version of Chapter II "St. Nino's Life" of "**The Christianization of Kartli**" was written in VIII century (see 12, p.525).

According to the first publisher of the monument E. Takaishvili, the fact that the narration in the chronicles begins with the establishment of Kartli statehood and continues until the reign of Stefanos II, i.e. the second half of VII century, and only after this there comes the dry list of the Eristavi and the Catholics, indicates that the estimated time of the initial creation of "**The Christianization of Kartli**" is the second half of VII century. The idea that "**Chronicles**" were written in the second half of VII century, was shared by P. Ingorokva and M. Lortkipanidze.

However, the dissenting point of view belongs to S. Kubaneishvili. In his opinion, the creation of the above work is related to the "honest cross" celebration and the construction of the Jvari Temple (built at the

end of VI century at the time of Stepanoz I), appropriately, the work could not have been written before VI century.

At the end of XX century in the Georgian Historiography the issue, related to the date of writing "**The Christianization of Kartli**", still re-emerged in the foreground. The researchers again highlighted the high level of cultural-historical value of "**The Christianization of Kartli**", as it was not only the oldest monument of Georgian historiography, but the date of its creation was also associated with the spread of Christianity in Kartli according to the newly conducted researches.

This point of view is considered by Z. Aleksidze: "... probably, the history of Kartli was originally written before the death of Mirian King and it was called "The Christianization of Kartli". It included the dry chronicles of creation of the Kartli Kingdom, the construction of Mtskheta, the list of pagan kings and the extensive story of Christianization of Kartli by St. Nino. Such a structure accurately illustrates the model of traditional church history and chronicles. It seems that later, some other chapters were added to "The Christianization of Kartli", while the title remained the same. At the end (30-es of IX century) the list of the Eristavi and the Catholics must have been attached to it. At the same time, there would have been created a proto edition, from which the Shatberdi and Chelischi editions appeared later, and which united "Chronicles" and "Nino's Life" under the title "The Christianization of Kartli"..."

The version of "**The Christianization of Kartli**" to be created in IV century is shared by: Iv. Lolashvili (see. 24, p.439); G.Kuchukhidze (see. 25, p.129); G. Giorgadze (see. 26, p. 156); S.Gogtidze (see. 27, p.40).

As we can see, the date of the alleged writing of the original edition of the ancient monument "**The Christianization of Kartli**", includes itself a fairly wide (IV-IX centuries) period of time.

However, the only thing that all the scientists agree with is the fact that there is a trace of not one edition in the work. The monument

created around the time of Christianization of the Kartli Kingdom, was edited at least twice (in VII and IX centuries); together with the unchanged narration about the Christianization of the Kartli Kingdom the unknown editors added the dry list of the Eristavi and Catholics. In this way, the "so-completed" monument became the basis for the creation of many other historical works ("Kartli's life" and others).

Chapter II - "Nino's Life" by Leonti Mroveli—deals with the edition by the historian Leonti Mroveli, dating back to the second half of XI century; it is included in "Kartli's Life".

"The Life of Georgian Kings and First Clergymen and Relatives" narrates about the story of the enlightener Nino, related to the activity of Mirian King. Leonti Mroveli's edition is a peculiar alteration of the Shatberdi-Chelischi one.

According to "Kartli's Life" by Mariam Queen and Ana Queen, "Archil's Torture", "Life of Kings" and "The Christianization of Kartli by Nino" are written by Leonti Mroveli.

Unfortunately, the information about Leonti Mroveli's life and activity has not reached our days. It is noteworthy, that one of the manuscripts of the Athos Iberian Monastery (N61) mentions the name of "the Archbishop Leonti Miroveli", although, there is no other information about him. We cannot even reliably say that the historian and Leonti Mroveli, mentioned in the Athos' manuscript, are the same person. The cross of Trehvi's stone, dating back to 1066, confirms that the Ruisi Bishop Leonti lived in the second half of the eleventh century.

We can only approximately determine the time in which the historian worked.

Leonti uses "**The Christianization of Kartli**" and the **Shatberdian "St.Nino's Life"**, he mentions the preaching of Andria and Svimon Kananeli in Georgia. Due to this fact, Leonti Mroveli could not live before XI century.

Leonti Mroveli's work "The Life of Georgian Kings and First Clergymen and Relatives" did not come to us in its original form. As a result of rewriting, "The Life" has been quite damaged over the time.

The work of Leonti Mroveli is divided into two parts: the first one includes the pagan times of life of the Georgians "**First Clergymen and Relatives and Kings**"; the second one reflects the period of time beginning with **Mirian King's reign and ending with Vakhtang King**.

"The Christianization of Kartli" and "St. Nino's Life" by Leonti Mroveli almost literally repeat the Shatberdian "St. Nino's life". The only difference is that narration in Leonti Mroveli's work is given in the third person.

The Catholicos Arsen quite rightly remarked about St. Nino's life described both in Shatberdian work and by Leonti Mroveli: „mravalketsa da masve tanaagreulobasa hambavisasa mkitkhveli ver asdis, orive natsarmoebi mkitkhvelatvis friad satskino iko da msameneltatvis ukhmar“ (the both works were quite boring for readers).

Chapter III – "Nino's Life" by Arsen Ikaltoeli – explains that the lack of both editions (the absence of chronological sequence, related composition) has been taken into consideration by Arsen Ikaltoeli, as a suggested author of a new metaphrastic edition of XII century. With a great patriotism he has created a historic literary document, which contains interesting and sometimes unique information about the Christianization of Kartli and its enlighteners.

In the Shio-Cave Arsen Ikaltoeli, i.e. Arsen Beri wrote an original hagiographical work about the life and work of Nino Enlightener.

At the end of the edition of "Nino's Life", Arsen Beri characterizes a religious situation created in Georgia after the sermons of the Apostles: „Mefe kartveltai da umravlesi kerdzo kuekanisa chrdiloisai dashta masve sibnelesave da satstursa kerptmsakhurebisasa“, (The Georgian King and the northern parts of Kartli came out of the darkness and cast off the

shackles of paganism); in its turn, this circumstance entailed the necessity of Nino's missionary activity.

This great factor was caused by the following circumstances:

For centuries the Georgian intelligentsia was interested in the history of the Christianization of Georgia and tried to find out the names of the missionaries who preached the religion of Christ for the first time. This issue was affected even in the period of early feudalism, when the fragmented records already existed, but there was not a coherent story about Kartli's conversion to Christianity. That is why the patriotic attitude of the clergy was gradually permeated with the idea that the old recordings should be gathered together and the history of Christianization of Georgia (how the Georgian people were converted to Christian faith, who was the first Georgian Christian king or who were the enlighteners) should be rewritten.

Thus, in IX century there was created a monument "The Christianization of Kartli", which reflects the political and spiritual life of the Georgian people, narrates the story of previous Georgian kings, Mirian King and Nino Enlightener. In the second half of XI century, on the basis of this work a historian Leonti Mroveli wrote a new story about the life and activity of St. Nino - "The Christianization of Mirian King by Nino the Apostle, the Saint and Holy Mother of Kartli" and included it into his historical work "The Life of the Kings". However, none of these works represent Nino's biography in a chronological order: from her death to birth. Because of the fragmentation, the reading of the Shatberdi-Chelishian (i.e. "The Christianization of Kartli") and Leonti Mroveli's editions was impossible on Nino's day of commemoration.

That's why the Georgian theological writing faced a new task: to write a story about Nino's life that would satisfy the artistic taste of the Georgian intelligentsia of XII century, would be used in liturgical practice, would not distort the historical reality and would not contradict church censorship. The clergymen of the Shio-Cave Monastery offered to

perform it to Arsen Beri (Ikaltoeli). So, he fulfilled this request with great zeal: he wrote a new edition (with original structure) of Nino's Life, which dominates the previous editions by its literary and historical values. The author has attached a remarkable testament to his work, where he pays attention to the following circumstances:

a. he names the sources used during writing the work, namely: "The Christianization of Kartli"), Leonti Mroveli's "The Life of Kings", the Holy Scriptures and the works of Holy Fathers;

b. he marks the shortcomings of the stories - the sequence of narratives is violated in them, so, their reading is boring and their listening is not interesting;

c. he explains the reason: "As they were unclear and difficult to understand, they were not read on Nino's day of commemoration.

d. he tells a brief content: the book narrates about the life of the saint in accordance with the sequence of stories - beginning with the birth and life with parents, then travelling, labor, activity and sermons;

e. at the end of the story he tells how he has described everything: "I neither wrote anything superfluous, nor missed anything, I was honest and briefly and simply gave you a true story. If there was a need, I used the phrases and expressions of the Saints".

The last part gives such an impression that Arsen Beri took the old edition of "Nino's life" and mechanically arranged the stories in it in a chronological order. From the content of the work it becomes clear that he has copied an original work.

K. Kekelidze and K. Tskhadadze note, that Arsen Beri has literately processed the first two editions, corrected them by materials obtained from the other sources and issued a new edition of "Nino's Life". It conveys all the signs of metaphrastic Hagiography. The author presents his own ideas on a number of issues, which solutions are provided in the main part. The conclusion includes the historical stories from different sources as well.

Arsenian texts are penetrated with new motives, passages; they include an introduction and an appendix as well; at the same time they are compressed: the author refused some historical realities of the old editions and took away the Armenian tendency, as according to the official ecclesiastical view of XI-XII centuries, which categorically opposed monophysical - Gregorian religion, the relationship of the Georgian Enlightener with Armenians was unacceptable.

The monument consists of three parts –an Introduction, stories about Nino's life, an Appendix and a Will. Among them the Introduction and the Appendix are completely written by the author himself; several passages are involved in the main plot.

The narration begins with a description of Jesus Christ's birth and his Messianic activities. The author draws a detailed picture of the birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary, his upbringing, christening, miracles, sermons, death, resurrection and ascension, then the appearance of the Apostles and the spread of the Christian doctrine. After this, Arsen Beri narrates about the missionary activity of the Apostle Andrew. He uses a well-known to him work translated by Efthvime Mtatsmindeli (H 1347). Then, Arsen Beri refers to the missionary activities of the Apostles and mentions the Christian martyrs, among whom there was a citizen of Cappadocia, a famous rider Zabilon (Nino's father).

The introduction of the work ends with the reference to this fact. The description of Nino's life and activity substantially repeat the editions of "The Christianization of Kartli" and Leonti Mroveli's work, but some of the old stories are shortened, i.e. some of phrases have been altered at the author's own discretion. For example:

"The Christianization of Kartli": „Da mashin gamovida Mirian mefe tual-sheudgamita khilvita“.(p.118.) „Mistses Susana tsolad misa da tsarvides tvisad kalakad Kolaased. Da me oden vishev matgan. Da igi{ni} arian mshobelni chemni“.(p.109).

Leonti Mroveli: „Mashin gamovida Mirian mefe sazarelita da tualtsheudgamita khilvita“. (p.88). „da mistsa Susana tsolad Zabilons. Da tsarvida Zabilon tvisad kalakad Kolastrad. Ese tsmidai Nino, momdzguari Kartlisa, matgan ishva oden mkholod, tvinier skhvisa shvilisa“.

Arsen Ikaltoeli: „Amisa shaemdgomad gamovida mefe Mirian ebnita da knarita, da khmita nestvisaita da mravlit sakhiobita. (p.21). „Mistsa sikharulit dai tvisi tsolad Zabilons da tsargzavna kueknad tvisad Kapadukiad, romeltagan ishva mkholod girs da netari Nino – kheta ketiltagan nakofi ketili da satno gmrtisai“. (p.13).

Arsen Ikaltoeli uses extensive passages in his work. For instance: the division of languages, which took place in the year of Christ's crucifixion (Acts of the Apostles, ch.2); the draw among the Apostles (where to go to preach the Christian doctrine); Georgia - the Virgin Mary's draw.

The biographical facts from Nino's life, unorderedly presented in "The Christianization of Kartli" and Leonti Mroveli's "The Life of Kings", are arranged in the chronological order by Arsen Ikaltoeli and represent a completed work that is one of the brilliant hagiographical monuments of Georgia. Some of the passages in it (eg. Nino's prayer, general theological considerations and some historical realities) are the fruit of Arsen Ikaltoeli's fantasy (or his own opinion).

Arsen Ikaltoeli's passages or amended historical realities are of great importance for the study of the history of Kartli's Christianization, as, describing Nino's life, the author took into account mainly those materials that he believed were reliable and true.

Thus, Arsen Ikaltoeli's edition of "Nino's life" is a very important hagiographical work. It contains interesting and sometimes unique materials and information about the Christianization of Kartli and the Enlighteners. In this regard Arsen's contribution is priceless.

Chapter IV - “Readings” by Nikoloz Gulaberisdze—
considers "Svetitskhoveli's Readings", a monumental script written by Nikoloz Gulaberisdze.

Gulaberidze's work contains the most noteworthy information about the history of the Georgians' Christianization. The author explains why Christianity in Georgia was converted by a woman named St. Nino, and why a Georgian queen was also a woman named Tamar. A woman's cult, which has become an aesthetic phenomenon in "The Knight in the Panther's Skin", is clearly reflected in this work as well. Thus, "Svetitskhoveli's Readings" expresses a state ideology. "Svetitskhoveli's Readings" contains such references that do not exist in other sources. For example, *The story of the Turkish invasion* (Sabinin 1882: 109), *Kozman Beri's stories* (Sabinin 1882: 109), *Nicholoz's uncle, Svmeon Patriarch* (Sabinin 1882: 110) -115), *a vision of David Agmashenebeli, which he told to John Catholic* (Sabinin 1882: 114 -115), *the bishop's oath, which is important for the history of the Georgian hierarchy*, etc.

"Readings" is also important from the point of view of assessing the contribution of St. Nino, since Gulaberisdze is the author of the Tamarian era, who not only describes, but also highly appreciates Nino as a woman and an enlightener. At the same time, we should note that the description of St. Nino's life was not Gulaberisdze's goal. The monument has a completely different purpose.

K. Kekelidze points out that "Niloloz Gulaberisdze's goal was to describe the miracles that were performed by the Svetitskhoveli during the Christianization of the Georgians and after it. Since the story of Svetitskhoveli occupies a central place in Nino's life, it is clear that the author could not help but describe Nino's life as well" (Kekelidze 1951: 298). The analysis of the genre specificity of Gulaberisdze's work is closely linked to the review-evaluation of the composite issues of the monument. From the plot-compositional point of view, "Svetitskhoveli's Readings" consists of four conditional segments: 1. Introduction; 2. Nino's

life; 3. a) Svetitskhoveli and b) Miracles of a Robe; 4. Christianization of Svetitskhoveli (Hairretism / Jubilation).

In the Introduction, the author explains the reason for the composition-plot and logical construction and structure (Nino's line in the narrative) of the work ("Reason for Evidence", Sabinin 1882: 70): „Samni ese samebisa tsmidisa msakhvebelni: katolike eklesia, kuarti uflisa da sueti tskhoveli, saunjesa ukudavmkofelsa guanakofeben, mironsa, vitartsa gmertmkofelsa da natelmkofelsa gvitskaroeben“ (Three of these saints are: the Catholic Church, the Lord's rope and the Svetitskhoveli).

Therefore, the composition of the work is constructed in the following way: the speech is about the Catholic Church, the contribution of the Apostles, where Peter and Jacob are mentioned, then the author logically proceeds to Nino, who is one of the founders of the Georgian Church. If Peter is a "rock" on which the church has been built, St Nino is the "foundation" (the thirteenth Apostle), the "reason" that causes the strength of the eastern churches of the Georgians, the Savior who releases from slavery". (Sabinin 1882: 71).

The rope story, where the miracle happened for the first time, is organically connected with St. Nino. Thus, the compositional structure of "Svetitskhoveli's Readings" is the following: 1. **Introduction;** 2. **Establishment of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Kartli (St. Nino's Life - The Story of the Rope; The Miracles of the Sveti and the Svetitskhoveli);** 3. **The Christianization of Skvetitskhoveli (Hairretism).**

From the very beginning the author reveals the purpose for writing a work, the involvement of facts from St. Nino's life, as well as the specifics of the selection of the involved facts: „Rometu vin gamotsulilvit medzieblobdes dasabamsa da vinaobasa da sadaobasa netarisamis ninosasa, tsigni igi khelad miigen agtserili motserilobit motkhrobisatvis kartvelta tskhovrebisa da misgan geutskos kovelive agmavsebelad chuenisa naklulevanebisa, kholo chuen shasabamisad tsmidisa amis dgesastsaulisa mkholod agmavseblad kma sakofeli retsa sul mtsired

shemoklebuli tkhrobili mokhsenebai ninositsa agvtserot da shemdgomiti shemdgomad sheudginot kovelive jerovani gamosacheneli da satsnaurmkokeli suetisa tskhovelisa da kuartisasaufloisa didebulebabai ugunurebisa chuenisagan shesadzlebeli". (Sabinin 1882:73). (the author writes about Nino's activity because her life and contribution are closely connected with the life of the Georgian people).

Thus, Nikoloz Gulaberisdze explained the reason for writing the short version-edition of St. Nino's life, the motivation of composing the work and, at the same time, indicated the primary source of the information about St Nino's merits.

In his I volume of "The History of Georgian Literature" K.Kekelidze has noted the similarity of Gulaberisdze's "Readings" with the monument of Leonti Mroveli. According to the researcher, Nino's activity and contribution here are also as highly appreciated, as in "The Life of the Georgians". (Kekelidze 1951: 298).

In our opinion, "Svetitskhoveli's Readings" is a work of a homolytic genre, namely, a festive preaching. As it is known, a homily is a sermon preached by the clergy; it can be recorded before or after the sermon.

Despite the fact that the work includes quite an extensive episode from Nino's life in the monument, we cannot say that the icon of the saint is created. It is important for the writer not to generalize St. Nino's merit, but to show the result of St. Nino's contribution- the foundation of "the Eastern Church of the Georgians". The involvement of St. Nino's merit in the work serves Nikoloz Gulaberisdze's goal to start Svetitskhoveli's celebration. Nino is not a central figure of Gulaberisdze's work. The contribution of Georgian Enlightener is not shown here (although Kekelidze says that the work contains the understanding and evaluation of Nino's contribution and activity in Georgia", what we absolutely agree with. However, we suppose that Nikoloz Gulaberisdze related this understanding-contribution to his purpose for writing "Readings" (K. Kekelidze 1951: 105). The narration either begins with the

first days of Nino's activity(as it generally happens in the hagiographic works, with the Lord's or Mother of God's admonition for Saints to preach) and does not end with her death. Actually, the image of St. Nino is drawn in various contexts in the work. Such a different vision creates Gulaberisdze's goal. The author declares himself: „rametu vin gamotsulilvit medzieblobdes dasabamsa da vinaobasa da sadaobasa netarisa mis ninosasa, tgsigni igi khelad miigen agtserilobit motkhrobisatvis kartvelta tskhovrebisa da misgan geutskos kovelive agmavsebelad chuenisa naklulevanebisa”(the book is written not to tell about St Nino herself, but to tell the story of her merits and the life of the Georgians in general).

Chapter V - The Periphrasis of Nino's Life and Svinaxar Editions—deals with the episode of casting lots among the Apostles, after which the Mother of God had to preach in Iveria, but the Lord decided to send the Apostle Andrew instead of her. This chapter also explains why it became necessary to send St. Nino to preach in Georgia after the Apostles.

The Apostles converted many people to the true faith, but the king and most of the country remained in the darkness of idol worship. This fact caused St. Nino's arrival in Kartli and preaching the Christianity again.

As a result of the preaching of St Nino, Christianity was declared a state religion in Georgia in 326, when the King Mirian and the Queen Nana ascended to the throne.

The story of sending St. Nino to Georgia begins with the fact that once when Nino was praying to the Virgin Mother of God appeared to St. Nino in a dream and ordered her to go to Georgia and preach there. She gave Nino a miraculous cross that would shield her against all visible and invisible enemies. When St. Nino awoke and saw in her hands the miraculous cross, she kissed it with tears of joy. Then, tying it in her hair, she went to see her uncle the patriarch. When the blessed patriarch heard how the Mother of God had appeared to St. Nino and had

commanded her to go to Iberia to preach the Gospel of eternal salvation, he saw in this a clear expression of the will of God and did not hesitate to give the girl his blessing.

In summer St. Nino set out on a long journey and finally arrived to Georgia from the mountains of Javakheti. She stayed at Paravani Lake for two days, where she met some shepherds who gave her food to refresh her after the long and tiring journey. Lying down to relax, she fell asleep and had a dream: there appeared to her a man majestic in appearance. His hair fell to his shoulders, and in his hands he held scroll written in Greets He unrolled the scroll and gave it to Nino, commanding her to read it, and himself suddenly became visible.

Strengthened by this divine vision and consolation, St. Nino continued her journey with renewed fervour. Having overcome difficult labors, hunger, thirst, and fear of the wild animals, she reached the ancient Kartlian city of Urbnisi where she remained about a month, living in Jewish homes and studying the manners, customs, and language of a people new and unfamiliar to her.

The same chapter describes the miracles performed by St. Nino in the name of the Lord, the result of which was the conversion to Christianity the Queen Nana and the King Mirian.

Chapter V also deals with the Svinaxar editions of St. Nino, which are similar to extensive editions of Nino's life.

The Georgian liturgical collections contain four editions of Nino's Svinaxar Life. The only list of the earliest edition of the short Svinaxar life is included in 4 manuscripts of XI century, the text of which was published by the academician I.Javakhishvili in his "Description of Georgian Manuscripts of Mount Sinai".

This Svinaxar life is a periphrasis. Some sentences of a free narrative form reflect a main moment of Nino's activity - "The Christianization of a forgotten country - Kartli". It is also said that the reason of Nino's mission in Kartli can be explained by the choice of the Mother of God to

send Nino to preach in Georgia. This fact could not be taken from the editions of Nino's life.

It is unclear, which of the four extensive editions of "Nino's Life" is based on the given work, although, the short editions by Arsen Ikaltoeli and the work by Nikoloz Gulaberisdze should be excluded, because they were created later than the Svinaxar life.

The first edition of Nino's Svinaxar Life is the basis for a second well-known, comparatively extensive edition of the manuscript dated back to XIV century.

The H-600 manuscript, included in widely known Chelishian edition, contains Nino's Svinaxar life and chants in the end of the extensive Nino's life.

In spite of the apparently svinaxar nature of the work, it is not included in any liturgical collection.

From the compilation of the two editions of Nino's Svinaxar life it can be seen, that the four short oldest texts of Nino's life were formed from the XIV century list. This fact can also be confirmed by their textual data.

CONCLUSIONS

"Nino's Life" reveals such an important event of the history of Georgian culture as conversion, or Christianization, of Kartli in a very interesting and original way. The leaders of clerical and secular sphere were well aware of the political and religious-cultural essence and importance of the Christian worldview adoption. An indestructible proof of this is the work devoted to the Christianization of Kartli. Indeed, it is not surprising, since Christianization is a well-known and thoughtful step in the history of the nation. It should be emphasized that the Enlightener of the Georgians is a woman, as it is the only case in the history of Christian countries.

The merit of the holy Nino is that adopting Christianity and proclaiming it the state religion are related to her arrival in Kartli. As a result of her preaching, the members of the royal court together with the entire nation were converted to a new religion. Therefore, St. Nino is considered to be an enlightener and apostle of Georgians. The Georgian sources call her "The Kartli's Savior" and "The Georgians' Mother".

The Georgian Church celebrates a feast dedicated to the Enlightener of the Georgians twice a year: on the first of June - her arrival to Georgia, and the twenty-seventh of January - St. Nino's death. Respect for St Nino is attested in the ancient hagiographic monuments dedicated to her. She has become a muse of inspiration for many old and modern Georgian poets.

Each new epoch reconsidered the contribution of St Nino, and, accordingly, new editions of "Nino's Life" were created, which in turn responded to the need for different epochs. The writing sources, dedicated to St. Nino, are multilateral and diverse. Such a variety is caused by the fact that, besides the Georgian written sources, the similar information can be found in the earliest foreign written sources. On the other hand, the diversity of Georgian sources can be explained by the existence of several editions of the hagiographical work dedicated to the Georgian enlightener, which date back to different centuries.

Among the editions of "Nino's Life", there can be pointed out the following:

1. The text of the oldest editions of "Christianization of Kartli" contains:

a) a short version of "Nino's Life", which mentions an earlier book of short version of "Christianization of Kartli" by Grigol Archdeacon;

b) An extended version of "Nino's life" is mainly based on Nino's narration and represents a collection of memories of St Nino's contemporary figures - Sidonia, the priest Abyathar, Perozhavri Sivnieli, Salome Ujarmeli, the priest Jacob, the Queen Suji and the King Mirian.

2. "Nino's Life" by Leonti Mroveli is based on the two texts included in "Christianization of Kartli"; it provides a short version of "Nino's Life"’s edition with the function of the chronological paradigm of "Christianization of Kartli" and inserts passages from the full version of "Nino's Life".

3. "Nino's Life" by Arsen Ikaltoeli is the first work dedicated to the Enlightener of Georgians, which includes the corrections of the main drawback of "Christianization of Kartli" and "Nino's life" by Leonti Mroveli (as the author indicates himself) - the lack of chronological narration. Moreover, Arsen enhances the text with the references from other works, dedicated to "Christianization of Kartli".

4. Nikoloz Gulaberidze's "Readings" is a homiletic work, which deals with such important issues of public life in Georgia of the Queen Tamara epoch as a woman's activity as an apostle and a ruler; the work also narrates about the miracles of Georgian saints, some of which are completely alien to other editions of "Nino Life".

5. The periphrasis of "Nino's Life" is a shortened version of Arsen Ikaltoeli's text.

6. In the first edition, St Nino's contribution is presented in the context of preaching the Virgin Mary and the Apostles. The second swinaxar edition, which dates back to XVI century, is much more extensive.

The purpose of the considered monuments is to show the role and contribution of St Nino and the importance of Christianization of Kartli.