**1.6.1.1.1. Some Issues of Political Legitimization through the Cult of Saints in the Late Antique Caucasus./N. Aleksidze/. Bulletin of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences (Moambe). –2020. –v.14.–#1. –pp.137-143. –eng.; abs.: geo., eng.**

The paper discusses the regional peculiarities of the cult of saints in the Late Antique Caucasus. It argues that the Caucasian, i.e. Albanian, Armenian and Georgian written sources introduce distinct concepts, practices and rhetoric of sanctity into the saintly discourses of the Eastern Roman Empire. In late antique Caucasian sources one can identify a particularly strong interest in the interrelationship of the cult of saints and the political discourses, most notably in the context of the legitimization of royal rule. For this purpose the paper analyzes two late antique literary productions: Agathangelos’ fifth-century History of the Armenians, written in Armenian, and the anonymous Life of Vachagan III the Pious, a part of the History of Albanians, also written in Armenian albeit with a complicated date, with a brief reference to the Georgian Conversion of Kartli. Based on a study of these texts, the paper further argues that the politicization of saints’ relics that these texts engage are on the one hand adopted from eastern Roman rhetoric, in particular Constantinian and Theodosian authors, and, on the other hand, borrowed from Iranian and Zoroastrian concepts of royal investiture. According to these early Caucasian narratives, the relics serve the purpose of legitimizing the political state of affairs; they sanctify a monarch’s rule through creating a metaphysical bridge between the foundations of Christianity and the recent times, by assigning to the kingdom or monarch a central place in the history of universal salvation. Ref. 6.

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