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## **Georgian Men's Dress of XVII Century: According to a Comparative Analysis of the Paintings of the Italian Missionary Cristoforo de Castelli and Georgian Fine Arts' Sources**

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**Abstract**---The article raises the issue of the importance of the work of Cristoforo de Castelli, an Italian missionary, Patrice of the Order of Theatine, in the study of Georgian historical costume. The sketches made by the author during his work in Georgia are analyzed, according to which it is possible to identify the types of clothes. According to the drawings, the clothes of different strata of the population are compared with the clothes of historical figures depicted in the monumental paintings of Georgian monuments of the same period and the clothes of the characters depicted in the illustrations of literary works. It emphasizes the identity of the costume depicted in Castelli's paintings and the miniatures of Georgian artist Mamuka Tavakarashvili and the similarity of some of the paintings. Finally, it is concluded that the visual material created over the years by Castelli as an eyewitness is still relevant today.

**Keywords**---17<sup>th</sup>-century clothing, album de Castelli, Cristoforo de Castelli, Georgia, historical costume, miniatures Tavakarashvili, missionary.

### **Introduction**

Traditional Georgian costume is one of the most important monuments of the spiritual and artistic heritage of the Georgian nation. In its modern form, it was formed in the middle of the XVIII century, as a result of the long evolution of the historical costume. The process of evolution of the Georgian historical costume, unfortunately, is less studied, because we do not have samples of costumes earlier than the XVIII century. Due to the weak durability of the fabric, the material is destroyed. In the absence of material monuments, it is very important

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to study the informative and fine materials contained in the descriptions of European travelers and the records or official reports of foreigners on various missions (for diplomatic, religious, nature and geographical research) (Fisher et al., 2000; Daniel et al., 2016).

From foreign sources, the report and album of the Italian missionary Cristoforo de Castelli, also known as Teramo Castelli (1597-1659), Patrice of the Order of the Theatines sent from the sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Latin: Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide), is extremely important for the study of Georgian national dress of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He not only described the years of his work in Georgia (1628-1652, according to some sources 1831-1854) in letters and reports but also for centuries captured in pictures and sketches. The materials collected by the author as an eyewitness and the sketches performed locally comprise seven thick albums and are preserved in the Palermo Communal Library. And the official letters, report cards, and sketches (visual documents of the mission's work) that patre sent over the years as a report to Rome are scattered in the Italian archives (Palermo, Naples, Florence, Rome).

To date, the work of Cristoforo de Castelli has been thoroughly analyzed by scholars in various fields, but his records, drawings, or portraits for the study of clothing have not yet been fully explored, while de Castelli's work is an inexhaustible source in this direction. Finding, analyzing, and comparing the types and forms of Georgian costumes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the works of de Castelli is the aim of the present work. Accordingly, the tasks of the research are: to get acquainted with the dressing of Georgians in De Castelli's report and the photo album; Analysis of garment shapes, grouping them according to similar marks; Finding parallels in the Georgian reality. It is clear that such an approach to the research issue – searching in foreign sources, analysis, division into groups, will be novelty in the study of Georgian historical costume. By further comparing the similarities between the foreign and Georgian materials found and determining the similarities and differences, it will be possible to reveal a still unknown shape or element of clothing and headgear, which will allow us to fully understand the evolutionary process in the future (Marinelli & Palomba, 2011; Chelazzi et al., 2013).

## **Materials and Methods**

To thoroughly investigate the subject of analysis, the following methods have been applied- Historical descriptive method (for the analysis of illustrative materials) Historical-comparative method (for identification of historical figures and comparison with Georgian analogues); Method of artistic-stylistic analysis; e.g. The "traditional" method, which is a synthesis of the researcher's intuition and positive knowledge of the subject; A practical method based on the personal experience of the researcher; Synthesis method - to formulate and report the results of the analysis. Part of the research work, in particular the Ottoman of the XVI century (Ugrekheldidze et al., 2021), and a study of seventeenth-century French sources (Ugrekheldidze et al., 2021) has already been carried out and the present study is a continuation of a previously published article, thus the research methodology is described in the paper "The Study of Georgian Historical

Costumes Based on the 16th century Ottoman Material Sources” (Ugrekheldze et al., 2021).

### Literature Review

Don Cristoforo de Castelli, Its remarkable, well-educated man, a missionary from the Holy Congregation of Propaganda Fides, has been selflessly helping the Georgian people for almost 26 years and returned home completely ill (as he notes) (Miliani et al., 1998; Garg et al., 1995; Silva et al., 2021). That he sincerely fell in love with Georgia and parted with it with heartache is clear from his words that «la Georgia fu venticinque anni sposa mia» (Georgia has been my beloved for twenty-five years). When the missionary returned to his homeland, he lost a significant part of his work due to anxiety at sea, and later, already 58 years old, he intends to restore the lost images, collect the scattered material and sort them thematically in chronological order. Indeed, in 1657-1659 he wrote a summary report of a twenty-five-year mission – “Mission to Many Lands of Unbelievers” but it’s unknown – if the author has fully restored the rudiments created over the years.

The work of this dedicated missionary has been unjustly forgotten in his homeland for more than 200 years, and only a handful of biographical information has been given about his missionary work in Georgia (Ferro, 1705; Cottone, 1733; Amat di San Filippo, 1882). It was not until 1875 that Gioacchino di Marzo, the chief librarian of the Palermo Municipal Library, noticed several volumes of interesting drawings - about the mission in Georgia (Primo Centenario Della Biblioteca Comunale di Palermo..., 1875). Marzo considered the paintings to be copies of the lost originals of the missionary Christopher de Castelli, probably because Castelli later re-painted the images destroyed during the turmoil of the sea.

In the 60s and 90s of the XX century, there was a marked increase in interest in Castelli's work from Italian science. His missionary work has been reviewed in various publications by Italian scholars: Picone (1968); Eszer (1972); Robertson & Rice (1975); Alonso (1991; 2001; 2008). Scholars have published in-depth studies of De Castelli's reports and drawings: Licini (1980; 1985), Salvatore Pedone Bernadette Majorana. But during the last decade, unfortunately, the interest in de Castel's work and creativity has been less noticeable in European scientific circles, and no significant research has been published.

The work of Don Cristoforo de Castelli was first known in Georgia through the works and photographs of Tamarashvili (1902), and more thoroughly his report and album of paintings were published by the Georgian society through the research and translation of the historian de Castelli & Giorgaże (1976). From then on, the interest in his work did not slow down. “Georgian literature and science will return to Don Christopher de Castelli's album many times. It will become a source of many remarkable works” – this is how Georgian publicist and public figure Akaki Bakradze assessed the work of a missionary (Talk about Castell's album..., 1983). Indeed, reports, up to a thousand images and sketches from seven albums and mission reports, with accompanying comments, are still of great interest as a documentary source of historical events and existence in the

country. Narrative and visual material reflecting the current historical events and life in the country is of great interest to this day as a source of documentary significance. The importance of the material is enhanced by the multilingual (often eleven-language) explanatory captions that abound in each drawing. These comments are very informative for the study of the current realities of the representatives of different strata of Georgia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, including especially the dress. The author does not neglect any part of our country. His work presents with equal interest the portraits of the kings or the lower classes, the characteristic environment of their existence and activities (wedding parties and rituals, baptism, mourning, burial, agricultural activities, sports competitions, hunting, etc.), samples of buildings, activity scenes, etc. – everything seen with his own eyes and felt by his heart. Castelli's pictures and sketches as an important source of illustration (Berryter, 2019; Jackson et al., 2008; Aceto & Calà, 2017).

Involved in all kinds of publications – fundamental works, textbooks or popular science literature. Many Georgian scholars have dedicated their research to the missionary's work in Georgia, identifying famous or unknown people in his album, describing and identifying his appearance. Among them is Sidamonidze's publication with a description of the appearance of a famous historical figure (Sidamonidze, 1957); Historian Murman Papashvili's monograph "Georgian-Roman Relations in VI-XX Centuries" – a study of Castelli's diplomatic, cultural-educational, economic and religious activities (Papashvili, 1995); Numerous publications dedicated to Castelli's work: "Christopher Castelli and his mission in Georgia" (Papashvili, 2008); "One undated letter from Don Cristoforo de Castelli" (2015); "Analysis of One Epicode From the Everyday Life of Don Cristoforo Castelli's in Georgia" (Papashvili, 2021), and others.

Undoubtedly interesting studies of Castelli's work have been conducted by Marieta Chikhladze, which are reflected in the publications: "Cristoforo Castelli da Palermo alla Georgia" (2010); "Cristoforo Castelli's narration: between the word and image" (2013); „Once More About the Sketch by Cristoforo De Castelli" (2013); „The Residences of Catholic Missionaries in 17<sup>th</sup> Century Georgia According Visual and Textual Narratives by Cristoforo De Castelli" (2017). These publications are also not without interest: Zaza Skhirtladze and Marietta Chikhladze – "Western European Artistic Style in the Christian Orthodox Environment: Icons and Frescos Executed by Christeforo Castelli in Odishi and Guria (Western Georgia)" (Skhirtladze & Chikhladze, 2017); Zaal Qortua – "From the history of relationship Odishi Principality with Europe. The great friend of Georgia – Don Cristoforo De Castelli" (Qortua, 2017).

In recent scientific publications, Castelli's work has been used as a source for the study of Georgian dress in the seventeenth century. Interesting in this regard is the research conducted by historian Jaba Samushia - the insignia of kings depicted in Castelli's album. The author has studied and characterized the crowns of the kings of Imereti, and 4 of them have been restored based on Castel drawings (Samushia, 2009). Kvantidze (2014), "Ethnographic Images from the History of Georgia in the XVII-XVIII Centuries (Historical-Ethnographic Research)" is not without interest for the research topics. In analyzing the embellishment of the garment, the author draws a parallel with Castelli's sketch.

Group of authors – N. Dolidze, M. Datuashvili, I. Ugrekhelidze etc. In the monograph – “Research of Georgian national clothes according to written sources, museum exponents and iconographic materials” (Dolidze et al., 2016), the clothes of the XVII century are discussed according to the attire of historical figures depicted in monumental paintings and de Castelli's drawings, quotes from his records. In the work of the same authors – “Illustrated Reference Book of Georgian National Clothing”, a review of the development of historical clothing describes the dress sets of 17<sup>th</sup> century clothing and their changes. Presented are some pictures and records of de Castelli with a description of the attire. The importance of Castelli's paintings for the study of Georgian historical costume is emphasized (Dolidze et al., 2017). The encyclopedic work by Giorgi Kalandia, Irine Saganelidze, and Irakli Zambakhidze – “Textile from Georgia” is also very noteworthy. The work presents the clothes and fabrics of historical figures depicted in Georgian monumental painting. In-depth scientific analysis is supported by quotations from the records and reports of foreign authors, including de Castelli (Kalandia, 2019).

No less interesting is g. Kalandia's “Fabric from Georgia (Georgian headscarf)”, which describes the history of the development of headscarves, characterizes their forms, draws parallels with Castilian headscarves (Kalandia et al., 2017). From the recent publications about the Castilian clothes of Georgians notable are the articles of Ir. Ugrekhelidze, N. Kartsidze and E. Chubinidze: “Traditional Georgian Clothing from Foreign Sources” (Ugrekhelidze et al., 2019), which discusses Castelli's paintings with other foreign sources and “Georgians and their Manner of Dress in the Resources of XV-XVII Century Italian Authors”, which provides general information on Castelli's inheritance (Ugrekhelidze et al., 2020). As we can see, despite the multifaceted study of the creative work of Don Cristoforo de Castelli, there is one unresolved issue, namely – the publications do not try to find parallels between Castellian and Georgian reality, it do not reflect the comparative analysis of the costumes of historical figures or other persons presented in his paintings and the clothing represented in Georgian fine art's materials of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## **Results and Discussions**

When analyzing Castells' work, we should not forget that he is a creator nurtured by the ideas of Italian Renaissance painting, which is characterized by the use of antique elements, so sometimes his sketches are made in antique style and the clothes are similar to ancient Greeks', especially when drawing freely (when sketches of antique figures are made next to a completely authentic temple). Instead, the image of a particular person may be somewhat stylized, but it completely conveys reality, especially when depicting historical figures. Most of the types of clothing identified as a result of Castel's study and analysis of images are sought in the Georgian reality, especially in miniature paintings, while some, it can be said, are completely different and cases of its use are not recorded in Georgian sources. The analysis of both men's and women's clothing reveals the clothing complexes, which consist of several layers, the pictures clearly show the composition of the complexes: inner shirt, outer dress, cloak and headscarf. The cloak is always open and the inner dress looks good (Nesen, 2021; Yang, 2021; Suda, 2017; Aceto et al., 2012).

Observations on Castel's clothing revealed various types of men-worn dresses, including:

- Dresses with central fastening;
- Khalat-like coat dresses;
- Tunic dresses with different hems: deep-cut neckline; With the waist extended to the waist line; With a heart cut to the breast line.

Each of these types of clothing differs from each other in some parameters (silhouette, length, completeness) and elements, these are:

- Silhouette – is found to fit the body, free, slightly extended down;
- Length of the garment – there are long, above knee-length, knee-length and hip-length dresses;
- Length of the arm – long, up to the elbow;
- Collars – there are collarless, flattened collars of various shapes and also woolen collars;
- Types of fasteners – hook fasteners called chaphrasti (it represented decorative element for chest piece), clasp fasteners (ghilkiloebi) and buttons, hidden hook buttons (gujasti), hook buttons (khrika).

De Castelli has often made portraits of privileged strata, especially kings and princes - many sketches or portraits of kings and queens of Imereti, Kartli, Kakheti, Samegrelo, Guria, Samtskhe. In these images we can find both ceremonial and everyday or military attire and harness. The nobleman's garments are distinguished by precious fabric (silk, diba, fur), abundant ornamentation, and details adorned with gold embroidery (collar, bracelet, and lower edges). It is especially interesting that in one composition the author is able to fully convey the appearance and character of a person, to describe his features and characterize the clothes, as well as to show his attitude towards him. For example: in the portrait inscriptions of King Alexander III of Imereti, Katel describes the king's attire and at the same time does not hide his admiration for his appearance: The kings of Georgia are handsome and slim, noticeably tall a golden hat, adorned with diamonds and pearls; Gold and precious stones around the neck, fur-wrapped upper garments are also decorated with gold flowers. Gold-plated red dress with large gold buttons. Golden sword and wand, Spanish-set with blonde mustache, blue shirt under clothing made with gold threads. Red pants (sheidish) inside, green shoes (Chikhladze, 2013; Chikhladze, 2017; Widana, 2017). The kings of Georgia are almost giants." Castelli's painting does not show the colors of the king's robe (Figure 1, a), but as a result of such a detailed description it is impossible not to remember the image of King Alexander III in the canopy of the western narthex of the Gelati and his garments (Figure 1, b), which are only in the color of the robe and sheidish (red in Castell's description, violet in the fresco) if different from the Castellian description. The image is quite damaged over time, but we have preserved the artist Gr. Gagarini's copy, which clearly shows the sparkle and beauty of gold-plated garments of the king (Figure 1, a, b).

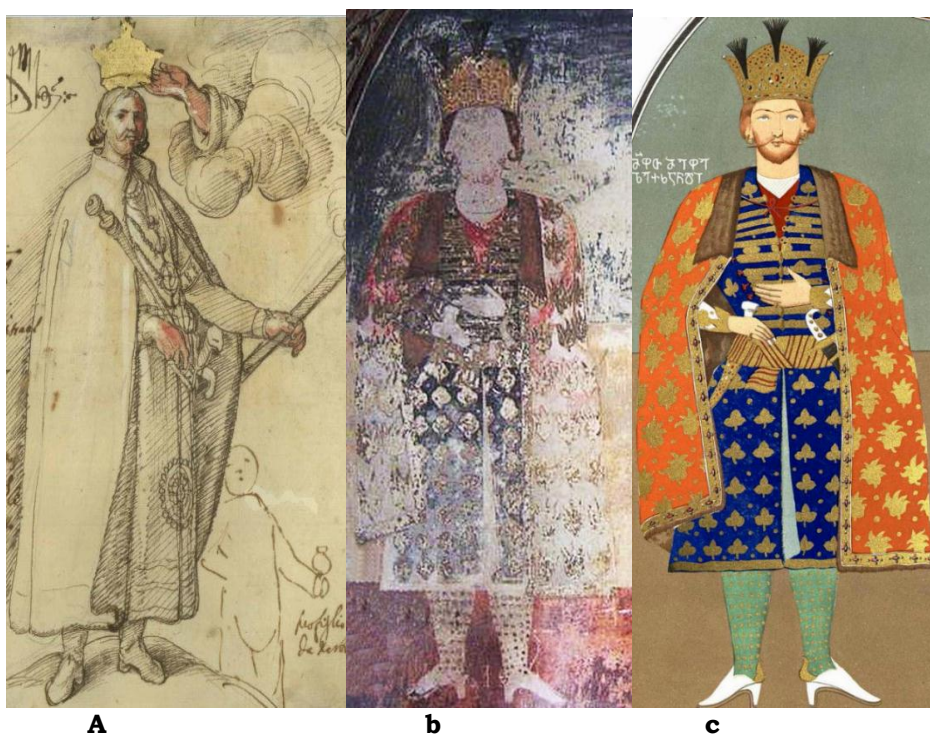


Figure 1. King of Imereti Alexander III

*Note: a – Castelli painting; b – Gelati church fresco; c – copy of painter Gr. Gagarini*

The kings' and principals' ceremonial garments also include a robe-shaped (tunic-shaped) dress, the same royal bison, which is often found in Georgian monumental paintings. For example, in Castelli's picture, "The King of Imereti attends a Catholic liturgy in Kutaisi" (Figure 2, a), the king's garment set, consisting of a long inner dress, a short bison, and a long cloak, similar to the painting of Levan King of Kakheti in Gremi temple (Figure 2, b).



Figure 2. Comparison of Casteli clothes and Georgian fine arts' sources  
 Note: a – the clothes of the King of Imereti; b – Levan King of Kakheti's clothes from the painting of Gremi Temple

Castelli's royal and nobleman costume include an inner dress and an outer bison, or an inner dress and mantle-cloak and various headgear. We can find in both short and long dresses (Figure 3, a, b).

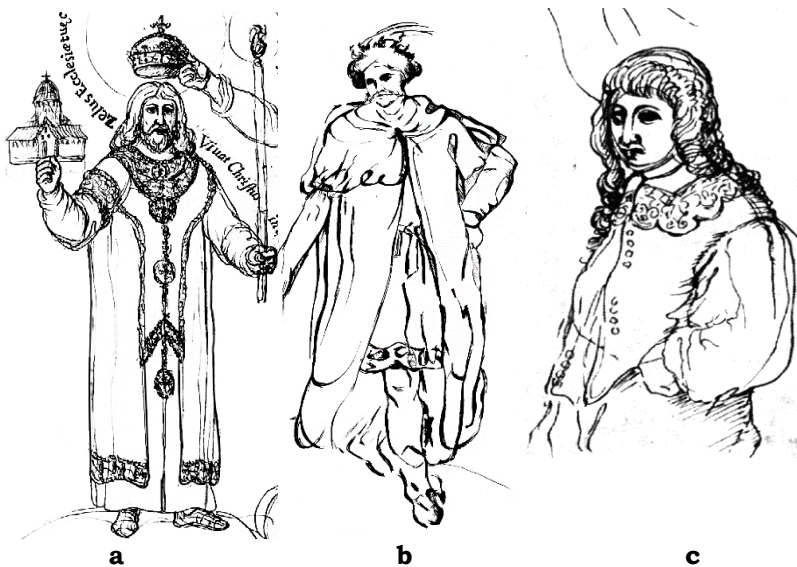


Figure 3. The clothes of kings and princes  
 Note: a – King Bagrat of Imereti; b – King Giorgi of Imereti; c – David, son of King Teimuraz

Castell depicts David, the son of King Teimuraz, in a different robe (Figure 3, c). His clothes remind us of European at first glance, leaving the impression of a collar made of lace. Presumably, it is a flattened maniac collar with a rectangular-shaped neck opening decorated with a floral ornament of gold. Its analogue has not yet been found in the sketches of foreigners and in Georgian fine materials. Kings' headscarves come in a variety of forms, from royal gold crowns to hats adorned with pearls, gems and feathers (jigha) and turbans.



Figure 4. Comparison of Castell's men's dresses with Georgian fine arts materials

Many parallels are found in the monuments of Georgian monumental and miniature painting of Castelli's men's dresses with a central fastener, the skirts of which are trimmed to the waistline with chafrast-like hook fasteners (Figure 4, a). Such dresses paints Castelli in a quite great number. They are similar to the clothes of historical figures of that time, we distinguish from them: the dress of King Alexander III of Imereti from the painting of Gelati temple (Figure 1, b, c); From the painting of Svetitskhoveli the dress of Otia, the son of Queen Mariam (Figure 4, b); from miniature paintings clothes of characters of M. Tavakarashvili's "Knight in the Panther's skin"(Figure 4, c); From the samples of embossed icons – the dress of Levan II Dadiani depicted on the icon of the Mother of God of Martvili (Figure 4, d). These sources are dated to the period of Castelli's activity in Georgia and the author often mentions the historical figures depicted here in his records. Also during his mission in Samegrelo, Castelli faced coincidentally the period of the capture of the artist and calligrapher, secretary Mamuka Tavakarashvili at the door of the principal of Samegrelo and the painting of "Knight in the Panther's skin" by the order of Levan II Dadiani. Therefore, it is not surprising that Castel and Tavakarashvili's clothes are similar, although it is impossible to see this resemblance at first glance – because of the completely different stylistic performance and drawing style. The costume or equipment depicted by them is identical to each other, which can be perceived only through in-depth observation.



Figure 5. Comparison of Castelli's dress and Tavaqarashvili's clothing

The same can be said of the dresses from Castell's drawings, which are tightly fastened to the body with buttons and hook buttons up to the waist line, and the waist is fixed with a tightly fastened belt (Figure 5, a). With analogue dresses,

Tavakarashvili paints a lot of characters in his miniatures, especially noticeable is that the posture, clothes and equipment of the crying captive noble man depicted in Castelli's painting and Tavakarashvili's character of weeping stranger knight are very similar to each other (Figure 5, a, b).



Figure 6. Castelli's and Tavakarashvili's warriors with military attire

We should touch separately on a kind of military harness, in which Castelli depicts the princes of Guria on horseback, Mamia Gurieli (Figure 6, a.), and Tavakarashvili's miniatures, where Tariel is depicted with a military harness, for example, "Defeat of Ramaz by Tariel" (Figure 6, b). Their comparison, despite their completely different manner of performance, clearly shows striking similarities. Both authors alike depict a chain helmet, protective armrests from the elbow to the wrist, and hand-held chain-protective gloves; The bottom edge of the dress worn above the chain shirt is similar. We must assume that this is how the cavalry was harnessed during the fighting, especially since a similar attire of the warriors can be found in the miniatures of other Georgian manuscripts, in particular in the Psalms of the XVI and XVII centuries copied in Western Georgia (Dzilikhani Psalm). Today, of course, it is difficult to make a definite conclusion – which is the first source, but the fact is that one of the authors, inspired by a picture of another artist, performed the drawing ([Gede Budasi & Wayan Suryasa, 2021](#); [Crisantino, 2021](#)).

## Conclusion

And this is not all, such examples can be given endlessly. The visuals presented in Castelli's album, as sources of fine art created by an eyewitness over the years have not lost their relevance even at the modern stage. His paintings provide complete and important information about the shape, silhouette, decoration, and, in many cases, the texture of the Georgian historical costume. This proves once again that Christopher Castelli, as a learned historian - with his practical work has done a great service to both Georgian historical science and the history of Georgian dress.

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