

The Khalat as a Gift and the Customs Connected to it in the Life of Eastern Georgia

(According to the Georgian written sources)

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Gift-giving is one of the major objects of research in the disciplines of ethnology, sociology, anthropology, history and cultural studies. Having studied archaic societies, the prominent French sociologist, Marcel Mauss defined gift-giving as an economic event of social-cultural worth, established on the principle of exchange and associated with the tradition of the potlach or the gift contract, which serves the single goal of *prestation totale*¹ [Mauss 2002/1923-1924].

Lévi-Strauss completely endorsed the conclusions drawn by Mauss, yet offering new insights into researching this issue. He compares the accepted exchange principle in primitive society to the same rule extant in modern times, making the conclusion that the exchange form is always two-sided, playing a far bigger role in primitive society than in modern life. In Lévi-Strauss opinion, the gift exchange was directed toward a maximization of economic advantages among primitive peoples, yet it acquired other instrumental functions of reality, like power, authority, status and emotion [Lévi-Strauss 1981:107-127].

In relation to the phenomenon of gift-giving, Gurevich, as well as Lévi-Strauss, agrees with the hypotheses of Marcel Mauss, pointing out that apart from the so-called economic triad (give, receive and pay) confirmed in early class-based societies, social aspects had been a foundation. In frequent cases, the three-fold act specifically served to strengthen social relationships, with the goal of establishing oneself and strengthening one's positions in society [Gurevich 1999:228-240].

Elene Ilnitskaya had also addressed the issue of gift-giving, endorsing the views of Marcel Mauss, Lévi-Strauss, and Aaron Gurevich, but stemming from the positions of modern society, she notes that a return gift is not demanded

1 See also Malinowski 1926.

by gift-giving – people express their feelings for each other through this, with the custom attesting the positive characteristics of making a gift and of the individual [Ilnitskaya:1].

Two contradictory hypotheses have been made out: gift-giving based on the principle of compensation in an archaic society and gift-giving not demanding a gift in return, at the same time being considered as the universal means for bringing people closer together in modern life.

The issue of clothing has been studied by Georgian as well as foreign researchers. Issues involving the utilitarian, aesthetic, regional properties and function of clothing in regard to age and sex have been shown in certain works or the fundamental research of Georgian ethnologists. Whereas in regard to researching the symbolic signs and characteristics of clothing, the work *Psychology of Clothing* by John Carl Flügel is of interest, which covers the psycho-analytical research of the symbolic functions of clothing. John Flügel sees an aesthetic pleasure in sporting one's attire in an elegant manner, with a person's sensation of freedom being awakened at the same time. To convey it in the author's words: "Becoming conscious of the fact that you are dressed perfectly gives you the sensation of freedom and being valued". John Flügel considers the perception of these feelings as one of the basic functions of clothing, which should come into a correlation with impulses that have come from the world at large. One of the impulses is the purpose of physical "protection", which serves to not only protect a person from climate conditions (heat, cold), but to also protect them from psychological pressures stemming from the outside world [Flügel 1966:108-237].

The work of the Russian researcher Bogatyrev *The Functions of Folk Costume in Moravian Slovakia* is no less deserving of attention. According to the author, out of all the different functions that have been attached to clothes, one of them always holds precedence over the others [Bogatyrev 1971:305].

In accordance with the distinguished sociologist Goffman however, clothing is a cultural element, itself having a great impact on the socio-economical, as well as the cultural aspects of life [Goffman 2010:8].

Aside from utilitarian functions, the symbolic functions of clothing (a *khalat*) have been studied in this article. One of these functions is the symbolic purpose of protecting one from the emotional experience of freedom and psychological pressure (John Carl Flügel), the dominant characteristic of this being taken up on the principle of return (Petr Bogatyrev) and subjugated to the country's political situation (Alexander Goffman). Whereas a type of gift-giving is reminiscent of the potlach, being built upon the principle of giv-

ing a gift in exchange (Marcel Mauss), which serves to strengthen positions in society (Aaron Gurevich) and acquire authority (Lévi-Strauss).

An interest in the issue was stipulated by facts that had been mentioned with a certain regularity in 17th-18th century written Georgian sources² regarding Georgian kings, princes, aristocrats, and queens receiving a khalat as a gift from the Iranian Shah. There are also facts attesting Georgian kings giving a khalat to their subjects as a gift.

The political situation extant in the country (East Georgia, Kartli) at this time is quite relevant when examining this topic, with gift units (a khalat or any other element of clothing), their dominant trait, and symbolic characteristics being directly defined by this.

Iran governed the political situation of East Georgia during the 17th-18th centuries. Rulers (mostly a Georgian that had converted to the Islamic faith) selected at the whims of the Shah presided over the Kingdom of Georgia, having been weakened by domestic and foreign adversaries. The Iranian shahs were not withholding when it came to giving extravagant gifts to Georgian kings and rulers: a weapon studded with precious gemstones, horse tackle emblazoned with gold, fur coats, and honorable khalats. They were also appointed with large salaries and positions. By giving them opulent gifts, Iran stressed the dependence of the government of the Kingdom of Georgia on its own political agenda. One of the greatest honors out of all these gifts was a khalat³ that had been bestowed by the ruler (the Iranian Shah). Giving the khalat as a tribute took place in the event of recognizing the sovereignty of the Iranian Shah. It had also been a guarantee of untouchability and success under only one condition – in exchange for receiving the *armaghan*⁴ (tribute), the recipient had to provide faithful service to the one giving the gift, making a promise of their devotion.

2 Sekhnia Chkheidze, “The Georgian History” (1658-1739); Papuna Orbeliani, “Stories of Kartli” (1739-1758); Oman Kherkheulidze, “The reign of king Erekle II son of Teimuraz” (1722-1787); Parsadan Gorgidjanidze “The history” (end of the 17th century) Teimuraz II, “The mirror of the said”. Baratashvili, “Life-will (17th-18th centuries.); Ioane Batonishvili “Kalmasoba” and others.

3 The khalat had been one of the component parts of an Iranian man’s attire, being donned over the dress. It was sewn with valuable fabric, like brocade and silk. Sometimes the fabric of the khalat was laden with embroidery that had been done with thread consisting of gold and silver. The khalat’s collar triangularly spread out around the neck. Adornment with fur was also known. The khalat opened completely down the front, being fastened with buttonholes and almond-shaped buttons forged from precious metals. It had loose sides on the lower portion [Dozy 1845:266].

4 “Armagani” is an Iranian word. It means a present, gift, something that is dedicated to somebody. In the Late Middle Ages receiving of an “armagani” was determined by the place. For example: kings of Kartli obtained gifts and letters, which were sent by Iranian

As far as how much the custom of giving a khalat as a gift had infiltrated Georgia from the Near East, a fact from the 15th century Arab historian, Al-Maqrizi is of interest. According to the historian's version, the Iranian ruler Harun Al-Rashid (786-809) is the source of the tradition of giving clothing as a gift in Eastern countries, when he had given the Iranian public figure Jafar ibn-Iahia, his favorite, a garment of honor⁵ as a gift. [Al-Maqrizi 1895-1900:89; Dozy 1845:14]. A hypothesis has been expressed that this fact is the basis for the accepted tradition of giving a robe as gift becoming established in Eastern countries. According to the established custom, the ruler bestowed an item of clothing that he had owned to a subordinate as a token of giving honor. Wearing this khalat was considered a great honor⁶ [Tsitsishvili 1954:59].

Vakhushti Batonishvili has connected the establishment of the Iranian custom of giving a khalat as a gift in Kartli to the reign of Rostom (1632-1658), noting: "King Rostom gave the Georgians dyed muslin khalats and a few other minor gifts, for the Georgians had no sort of robe-like garments, neither did they like to adorn themselves at that time." [Beri Egnatashvili 1940:171]. When examining a comparatively earlier period before this phenomenon, the same chronicler (Vakhushti Batonishvili) relays a fact that has been confirmed in Georgian written sources concerning the bestowment of an Iranian khalat to the Georgian king. According to Vakhushti's account, George X (1600-1605) had the khalat given by the Khan taken away from him, who "did not remove his own garment, but instead put the khalat on over it..." [Kartlis Tskhovreba 1973:420]. The custom had apparently been known in Georgian practice before the coronation of Rostom. Apart from this, the act of donning the khalat is especially significant in the fact that George X "did not remove" the national dress, he put it on (the khalat) over the Georgian attire.

A second fact concerning the bestowment of a khalat is connected to the Georgian king Shah-Navaz (1658-1675): Following the death of Rostom in 1658, Vakhtang Mukhran Batoni was appointed to rule the Kingdom of Kartli by the Iranian Shah (he had been considered a candidate for the throne by King Rostom of blessed memory), with his name being changed to Sheh Nava (Shah-Navaz). Sheh Nava was converted to Islam by the Khan while at the Ira-

shahs abroad [Chardin 1975:319].

5 Also cf.: Al-Zubayr 1996:99-102].

6 In Bagdad and Egypt the khalat or "tashrip" consisted of different garments. According to Nowari "valid clothes", which were presented to Al-Maliq Daud by the khalif of Bagdad, consisted of a satin dress and a "sherbush"- a headwear. The same historian informs us that a costume which was presented to the khalif of the Abbasid dynasty Al-Mustalim, was of black gossamer and his greatcoat was decorated with gold thread. The clothes, which were given to one of the viziers of Egypt, consisted of a coat and a greatcoat [Tsitsishvili 1954:59].

nian Royal Court and departed for his homeland, having been adorned with a khalat showing the Khan's favor: "The king went to Soghanlugh⁷, put on the Khan's khalat, adorning his cap with a *razham*⁸, and thus came into town..." [Gorgidjanidze 1925:269]. Although George X dons the khalat that had been sent by the Shah over his national attire, Shah-Navaz returns to the homeland from Iran wearing a khalat.

George XI⁹ (1676-1688) had received the khalat of honor from the Shah along with other valuable gifts. He had removed his Georgian attire and emerged from Narikala Fortress dressed in Iranian fashion [Giorgadze 1951:175]. The ceremony of donning the Iranian khalat is something that must be observed in the king's case in the given source, as well as with the previous two figures (George X and Shah-Navaz) – after removing his national attire, George XI dons the khalat sent by the Shah.

As can be seen, all the actions of donning the khalat differ from the others. The three kings (George X, George XI, Shah-Navaz) declare the Shah's sovereignty, yet the rite is carried out by them in different ways.

An interesting fact in connection with this has been preserved in an account by Dionigi Carli, a 17th century Italian missionary and traveller, having become a direct witness of a display of the Iranian Shah's demonstration of sovereignty and providing a detailed description of what happened: "King George XI issued an edict one week prior regarding the ceremony of donning the Iranian khalat in the town square, where he had to publicly declare his obedience to the Iranian Shah by receiving and donning the garment (Iranian) of honor. The appointed time arrived. The square filled up with people. The king emerged from the royal palace decked out in national Georgian attire, mounted on a beautiful horse three hours prior to the setting of the sun. Fifty foot soldiers armed with swords and pistols accompanied him. The procession went through the city marketplace and entered the fortress according to the customary rules. While in the fortress, the king removes his Georgian attire and dons the khalat sent by the ruler through the assistance of the Persians. Having dressed in the Persian manner and emerged from the fortress (Narikala G.K.), the king returns to the palace via the same route. He wore this khalat the entire day and could have worn it for even longer, had he desired to do so." [Giorgadze 1951:175]

According to the account of the Italian missionary, the appointed rite for donning the khalat sent by the Shah becomes apparent, taking place in the

7 Place in Tbilisi.

8 A cap adornment being attached to the cap by members of the upper class in the early and late Middle Ages.

9 Giorgi XI was King Shahnava's son.

following: the king had to remove the national attire and then don the Iranian clothing. It becomes thus clear that George XI had thoroughly carried out the established rite (removing the national costume and putting on the Iranian). George X had acted in a different manner, donning the khalat bestowed by the Khan over the Georgian attire. Thus the courtesans took the liberty to tell him that his action would not be favorable with the Shah. The king had then replied: “You don’t know anything in the least. If I do this, then he might tell me something else that fits his fancies and this is now the best thing regarding this.” [Kartlis Tskhovreba 1973:420]. By behaving in this manner, the king had stressed semi-obedience to the Iranian Shah.

The case of Shah-Navaz is different. He declares his allegiance to the Shah in Iran and accordingly returns to Georgia dressed in the khalat. The khalat of honor that had been bestowed upon Shah-Navaz by the Khan can be conditionally regarded as “royal regalia”.

Based on the aforementioned sources, three forms of presenting the khalat have become manifest: a. A semi-recognition of the Shah’s sovereignty (George X); b. Full recognition (George XI); c. Being clothed with a khalat as “royal regalia”, or the return of the Georgian king to the homeland, having declared his obedience (Shah-Navaz).

The gift item or khalat and its direct connection to the political situation has also been confirmed. If it were not for the Persian dominance in 17th century Eastern Georgia, the Georgian kings would not have received the khalats sent by the Khan as a gift, appropriately not being compelled to recognize the sovereignty of the Iranian Shah.

In connection with presenting a garment of honor as a gift, a number of facts are pertinent that have been preserved in Georgian written sources from the early period and the Middle Ages, according to which an even more extensive practice of presenting a garment of honor in Georgian reality makes itself known (1st-2nd; 5th-6th; 9th-11th; and 12th centuries AD).

According to “The Life of Kartli” (Kartlis Tskhovreba) by Leonti Mroveli, the Kingdom of Georgia had been quite advanced¹⁰ at the turn of the 1st cen-

10 It stepped up its expansion to the east against the state of Albania, where the Parthian influence had been important. The western part of Albania – the upper forks of the Iori and Alazani Rivers should have been transferred over to the constitution of the Kingdom of Georgia as a result of joint campaigns by the Romans and Iberians during this period, known in Georgian sources by the name of “Hereti”. The next advance of Kartli has been connected to a more active engagement in Eastern political affairs by the Roman Empire at the turn of the century. Kartli expands its borders southward, eastward, and to the southwest. The king of Kartli had subjugated a tribe known as the Zydretae on the modern day territory of Achara, or in other words, the Kingdom of Kartli had extended its borders to the Black Sea. Thus, Kartli had made incursions into land held by Rome, sepa-

tury AD. The ruler at that time was King Parsman II (120-170 AD), who set off for Asia Minor with the aim of seeing the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. The Roman Emperor Hadrian had sent valuable gifts to the king of Kartli, inviting him as a guest. Parsman II did not meet with the Emperor, but he instead had also sent extravagant gifts to Hadrian, some of them being golden cloaks. Having been offended by the king's non-attendance, the Emperor took the gifts that he had received to the circus arena and had the gladiators put on the valuable cloaks [Kartlis Tskhovreba 1955:73; Tumanov 1966:17; Rapp 2003:289-290].

A second occurrence regarding the bestowment of a garment belongs to a relatively later time period (the 6th century). King Tsate I (620s) of Lazika, being under the hegemony of Sassanid Iran, makes a decision following the death of his father to defect from Iran and become a subject of Byzantium in the first half of the 6th century. Tsate goes to the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I¹¹ (518-527) in 523 with the request to make him a Christian and coronate him in the Christian rite. The Emperor received Tsate with great honor, baptizing him as a Christian and wedding him to Valeriana, the daughter of one of the most distinguished people in Byzantium. Having been gifted with an honorable garment and royal regalia, the Emperor bade Tsate I farewell to his homeland [Ioannis Malalae 1831:143; Georgica 1936:23; History of Georgia 2012, vol. 1:95-96; Guiland 1970:72].

It is apparent that the receipt of the garment of honor and the royal regalia by the king of Lazika (Tsate I) from the Emperor (Justinian I) had been stipulated by the extant political relationship between Byzantium and Lazika (Egrisi) at that time (6th century)¹², being expressed in the vassal dependence that Lazika had toward Byzantium. Another thing that is clear is that during this time the Georgian kingdoms were governed by kings that had been appointed by Byzantine emperors, with the demonstrative function of the garment of honor as royal regalia also becoming prominent.

rating extant territories under Roman domination on the southwest coast of the Black Sea from each other. This of course strained relations between the states of Rome and Kartli [History of Georgia 2009:49; History of Georgia 2012, Vol. 1:302].

- 11 Justine I firstly promoted in military service, finally became emperor, despite the fact that he was uneducated and nearly 70 years old. The rule of law was important in establishing the Justinian dynasty. The celebrated representative of this dynasty was Justin I's nephew, Justinian I [Cameron 2000:63].
- 12 According to the chroniclers, this should have approximately taken place before 523, when Kartlian kings still had control over all of West Georgia to the waters of the Egrisi River [History of Georgia 2012, Vol. 1:73-74].

Starting from the 6th century, Georgian kings were bestowed with “honor” by Byzantine emperors (“Magistros”, “Hypatos”, “Patrikios”, “Curopalates”¹³, “Nobelissimus”, “Caesar”). This process should have naturally continued on from the 9th-11th centuries, for as it is known, a new Georgian state was formed in southwest Georgia in the 9th century¹⁴, founded by Ashot Bagrationi. In Georgian historiography, this state had been called “Tao-Klarjeti”, “The Realm of the Georgian Curopalates”, or “The Kingdom of the Georgians” [History of Georgia Vol. II 2012:208-212]. Rulers from the Bagrationi Dynasty in Tao-Klarjeti were especially bestowed with various different titular offices by the Byzantine emperors, with the emperors sending them a garment of honor and a medal as a sign of sovereignty [Javakhishvili 1962:28].

The tradition of handing over a garment of honor even continued into the 12th century. According to *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*, King Parsadan had to give his own cloak as a sign of respect toward Tariel, but having the aim of expressing even greater respect, the king offers him a choice, ordering Tariel to select the item of clothing himself [Nozadze 1958:119].

On the basis of the aforementioned sources, it can be concluded that giving clothing as a gift has been considered as a uniform subject of political significance. Its form and the ceremony of handing it over was accordingly defined by the person controlling the country's political course. If Parsman presented a golden cloak to win over the Roman Emperor in the early 1st -2nd centuries, and in likewise manner, King Tsate I of Lazica returned from Byzantium with royal regalia and a garment of honor in the 5th-6th centuries, khalats bestowed by Iranian and Turkish rulers however, take the place of the Roman-Byzantine cloaks in the late Medieval period.

The Iranian Shah did not only send precious khalats to the kings, but to queens as well. “When Kakhi Batoni and Queen Tamar had arrived at the ruler's place, he was greatly impressed, showing them exceedingly great honor and bestowing upon them a heavy khalat and a small gift”, as told by Papuna Orbeliani [Orbeliani 1981:64].

The Khan (of Kartli) had gifted the head members of the royal court as well with lavish khalats in order to win them over, having been shown and

13 Since the year 899, the insignia of being a Curopalates consisted of a red tunic (ancient Greek clothing), a jacket, and a belt. The emperor would give out these insignias himself, due the great importance bestowed upon them [Kazhdan 1991:1157, 1158].

14 In the same period money in Georgia consisted of local silver coins on which Georgian kings bore the Byzantine court titles. These kings were: David Curopalates (there are three examples of such coins: in Berlin, Schwerin and in the Hermitage Museum), Bagrat IV Novelissimus, Giorgi II Sevastos, David IV (Agmashenebeli) Sevastos [Kapanadze 1969:62, 66, 67, 68; Gagoshidze 2000:206, 208]. Some of these coins are kept in the National Museum of Georgia.

obliged with honor. They would have the guarantee of having a good source of income and immunity in exchange for this [Orbeliani 1981:67, 89, 96].

The Persians did not only give khalats in order to win people over, they had also had the custom of giving a robe (khalat) as a way to express condolences or share in a festive moment. With the two sons (Teimuraz II, Erekle II) of Queen Tamar greatly bereaved by their mother's death, the Iranian Shah had sent khalats to them as a sign of sympathy in their time of distress: "The ruler's messenger approached both kings in order to provide great consolation regarding the passing of the queen and to give khalats in exchange for the black garments" [Orbeliani 1981:114].

In the course of time, the Georgian kings also became used to the tradition of presenting robes, so they started giving presents to show their respect and, therefore it became a tradition, the inculcation of which in Georgian life is well manifested in the poem of King Teimuraz II "Sarke Tkmulta" ("The Mirror of Sayings"). The mother-in-law presents a robe to the groom:

"When the day broke, the mother-in-law sent a gown to the groom,
He put it on, and quickly turned to her to show his gratitude" [line 456].

Robes were given to the groom's best men too:

"It is high time to go to the groom; we should have seen to see him before now,

All the groom's men will receive a gown.

All those who come from the groom's side,

And the herald they'll send will fly swiftly as wind" [Line 469].

A herald was awarded not only with a gown, but with rich brocade and a bowl too:

"As the herald informs of the groom's arrival, he is given a bowl of wine,
The bowl was bought for much money and a heavy gown".

His shoulders are covered with brocade and he leaves with great joy saying:

"I deserve all these for my hard work" [Lines 469, 470].

A tailor, who made the wedding dress, was not left without a gown either:

"Three times they sang songs before the dress was cut, The dressmaker was dressed in a gown that very same day" [Line 460] [Teimuraz II:1939].

In due course, there were many facts in the ethnographic reality of the giving of presents of robes to nobles and peasants. It is interesting to know if there was any difference in the quality of those gowns whether of color, fabric or decoration. As there were different social classes, naturally a present made by a king to a nobleman, a merchant and an ordinary person would be of different quality. There obviously should have been differences in decoration and

textile. Unfortunately, there is no information concerning this fact, either in historical sources or in the records of travelers.

Tsitsishvili has stated that the presentation of a garment previously owned by a ruler had been accepted in the very beginning, where “as time went on, such a gift was already being given from the royal treasury or having been newly tailored” [Tsitsishvili 1954:59]. Here, Tsitsishvili had been implying the treasury of the Iranian Shah and not that of the Georgian kings. It has not been ruled out that the Georgian kings had tailors specially make the khalats in the Iranian style as a gift. It is also assumed that Iranian khalats had come into Tbilisi via the trading business, where those wishing to buy one had a large selection to choose from according to size, color, and quality.

According to Vakhushti’s information, khalats that had been given out by the Iranian Shahs were made of lain¹⁵ [Kartlis Tskhovreba 1973:418]. There is even a brief description of the Iranian khalat: in the account of the 17th century Italian missionary, Dionigi Carli, the Persian khalat that had been given to George XI¹⁶ (1676-1688) had been a light-colored, long garment extending to the ground, yet not even Dionigi Carl had paid attention to the quality of it [Giorgadze 1951:175].

Dozy’s definition of a khalat fits one belonging to Erekle II (King of Kakheti 1744-1762, King of Kakheti and Kartli 1762-1798) kept at the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Art of the Georgian National Museum (Inv. N 3648) (Ill. 1). It is easy to see the Iranian quality of Erekle II’s khalat through a comparative study of the khalats’ descriptions, with the everyday purpose¹⁷ of his khalat becoming clear as well. This attests somewhat to the gradual establishment of Iranian dress in Kartli.

Dozy’s description of an Iranian khalat is already known, now a few words must be said regarding Erekle II’s khalat.

King Erekle’s khalat has been stitched together with light-colored cotton fabric, on which geometric zigzags branching out like tree branches have been embroidered using colored mullin yarn. The ends have been finished off with contoured, circular ornamentations, which at one glance leaves the viewer with the impression of flowers. Small fringes embroidered with blue thread have been scattered about at the base of the fabric as an element. The khalat

15 In the Arabic language “lain” or “lein” means soft, gentle. It is a cotton cloth produced domestically. It is the same as coarse calico which was dyed in blue. “Akhaluhi” (long men-wear dress under a Circassia coat), underwear and shirts were spun with a thin thread; this material was used for blankets and mattresses in Kiziki, Imereti, Tusheti, and the Pshavi regions of Georgia. In the 18th century dresses and “akhaluhi” made of lein were considered to be good clothes to wear in Georgia [Metreveli 2012:179].

16 Giorgi XI was King Shahnavaz’s son.

17 The slightly worn appearance of the exhibit provides the basis for this assumption.

is wide, extending to the ground, with an opening completely down the front, being closed at two different spots with pairs of reinforced buttons and button-holes. The ends of the khalat are unfastened on both sides. It has an erect collar with three quilted stripes going around it lengthwise in respect to its ornamentation. The sleeves open out widely from the top, with them being unfastened 7 cm. in length from the elbows on down to the wrists. The open area has been bordered with lace around the edges. A white fabric has been used to line the khalat, whereas the sleeves are speckled with flowers using light-colored fabric¹⁸. (Ill. 2). The entire length of the khalat is 139 cm, with the baseline being 124 cm. The width of the shoulders is 56 cm and the sleeves are 58 cm long.

If an observant comparison is made between the descriptions of the khalat shown by Dozy and the one owned by the Georgian king (Erekle II), it can be seen that both have been cut out on the same pattern. The in running edges of the lower hem, the buttoning scheme, and the shirt-front of the khalat that has been left open are what makes them similar. There are also some distinctive differences between the two garments. The majority of Iranian khalats have a triangle-shaped neck-line transferring over to the shoulders due to its shape. Apart from Dozy's description, the attire of figures portrayed in miniatures will be of interest in researching the topic. One example is an Iranian version of a miniature of Shah-Name by Pirdous, where the figures presented on it have khalats showing shirt-fronts with a triangle-shaped neck-line (Ill. 3) [Shahnameh 1988]. The sleeves of King Erekle's khalat are different from the Iranian khalat. If this aspect of the Georgian king's garment is loose and free, then the khalats encountered on the Iranian miniatures have short, as well as long and tight-fitting sleeves. A difference can be noted in how the khalat is buttoned up. The khalat belonging to Erekle II is fastened using buttons and buttonholes made from fabric (Ill. 4), whereas the Iranian one is fastened with metal spherical-shaped braids. Iranian khalats having buttons and buttonholes are encountered as well [Persian miniatures 1960 Central Asian Miniatures 1964; D'Allemagne MCMXI].

Aside from the pattern, the type of fabric used for King Erekle's khalat is of interest. As was mentioned before, the fabric is cotton on which embroidered flowery ornaments have been added with colored threads. Similar types of fabric were prepared in Iran during the Safavid Dynasty (Ill. 5 a, b). Its equivalent textile has been entered in a catalogue of Iranian fabrics, being called a fabric belonging to the third group, the so-called "Fabrics with Purely Botanical Motifs" [Neumann 1988:13].

18 Lining sleeves with a different type of fabric was done in light of adorning them so that the sleeves would look attractive when folding them up.

It had been ascertained that King Erekle's khalat had been sewn from Iranian fabric, being cut out using an Iranian pattern, and having the characteristic details of an Iranian khalat (opened to the bottom, buttons running down the front, slits on the sides). Differences can be made out too, like the diversity of collars and sleeves.

“As the result of Iran's rise in the political arena during the 17th-18th centuries, a gradual introduction of Iranian and Turkish clothing took place in Georgia. It first occurred in the form of gifts, whereas it gradually became established in everyday life later on.” [Javakhishvili 1962:40].

In the beginning (the first half of the 17th century - George X (1600-1605); Teimuraz I (King of Kakheti 1606-1648, King of Kartli and Kakheti 1625-1632)), Iranian clothing that had been introduced in the form of gifts was not that widespread in Kartli, which cannot be said for the following period (the 17th century to the second half of the 18th century - Teimuraz II (King of Kakheti 1709-1715, King of Kartli 1744-1762), Erekle II (King of Kakheti 1744-1762, King of Kartli and Kakheti 1762-1798)). Members of the feudal aristocracy had elements of Iranian clothing stored away in their homes as “impromptu clothing” (the first half of the 17th century). One pertinent fact has been preserved in the correspondence of Russian delegates in connection with this: Teimuraz I had visited Russian ambassadors that had come to Kakheti. The Persian ambassador's visit coincided with this time. Upon gaining wind of this news, the Georgian king and the aristocrats removed their national attire and met the Iranian guests dressed in Persian clothing. When the Russian ambassadors had asked them the reason as to why they changed their clothes, the Georgians responded: “This doesn't please us as well, but we have no other recourse” [Javakhishvili 1962:41].

By taking this event into consideration, the significance of the Georgian aristocracy wearing an Iranian khalat in the first half of the 17th century is clearly seen, whereas in regard to the second half of the same century, the Iranian influence on Georgian national attire is quite noticeable, with elements of Iranian clothing having become firmly established in the Georgian way of life even more. As one proof of this, it is possible to name some painted works of the kings of Kartli and Kakheti, the father and son Teimuraz II and Erekle II by an unknown artist (Ill. 6, 7), where they are featured in Iranian clothing. Aside from this, a royal dress belonging to Teimuraz II kept in the Fund of Medieval History at the Simon Janashia Georgian Museum of the Georgian National Museum and two akhalukhs owned by Alexander Batonishvili (the son of Erekle II) kept in the Embroidery Fund of the Museum of Art need to be examined as material evidence.

Teimuraz II's dress¹⁹ has been sewn from a comparatively rough, light brown-colored brocade, on which botanical motifs have been added with gold thread. The upper portion of the dress fits very closely to the body, being divided at the waist, with the lower portion being looser. Slits have been added to the sides of the dress, giving its lower portion a semi-spherical form. The sides at the end have been loosened. The dress is open in the front, being clasped together with metal lacing attached to the shirt-front. There is a tight-fitting collar, with the sleeves also fitting close to the arms. The space from the armpits to the elbows is open, yet being narrow and unbuttoned at the wrists (5 cm in length). The wrists have been edged with lace on Teimuraz II's dress, as well as on Erekle II's khalat. The sleeves on the dress end with oval-shaped cuffs, being folded over the sleeves. It's notable that the cuffs have been covered with a different fabric. Dimensions of the dress: entire length – 124 cm. Skirt width – 112 cm. Sleeve length – 60 cm. The dress is accompanied by a pair of white stockings, having been embroidered with white silk thread at the ankles. Length – 65 cm.

A fabric similar to the one used for Teimuraz II's royal dress, as well as for Erekle II's khalat (Ill. 9) is kept at a museum in Germany, belonging to the third group of fabrics [Neumann 1988:17].

In order for the origins of Teimuraz II's dress to become more apparent, it would be beneficial to look over Iranian clothing from the same period.

“If there is to be a discussion regarding clothing that has been preserved from the Safavid period of the 18th century, slight discrepancies can be made out in the design and lining of the fabric. In comparison to earlier centuries, a roughening and stiffening of the fabric, particularly the brocade is discernible in this period. Cotton or a different sort of fabric was used for the lining in the 18th century, which was considered to be quite rough in the 16th-17th centuries. Aside from this, the ornamentation form of the fabric changed. If animals and birds were shown in earlier times, there is an abundance of botanical ornaments in the 18th century. The effect had been transferred to the dress sleeves and the lower section” [Āsaf 1973:47].

As can be seen, Āsaf has emphatically pointed out the roughening of the brocade's fabric, focusing on the fabric being filled with botanical ornaments, the sleeves being lined with cotton or a different kind of fabric in general, and the cut at the wrist or the lower section. The royal dress of Teimuraz II is characterized by the aforementioned peculiarities.

19 It is an archaeological object which was found during the excavation of Teimuraz II's grave by archaeologists Giga Paichadze and Vakhtang Japaridze and were transferred from Astrahan Museum in June 22, 1977.

There is a striking parallel to the length, shirt-front, and simplicity of Teimuraz's dress in the notes of the French traveler, Jean Otter, who called the attire of Iranian men elegant and less cluttered. The traveler sees a similarity between Iranian and European dress (from the standpoint of their length and sophistication), considering long, Turkish clothing as a contrast to them [Otter 1748:39].

A portrait of Nadir-Shah (1736-1747) done in acrylic paint, kept at the Geneva Museum is also worthy of note, where there is a great similarity between the dresses of the Shah and Teimuraz II. Both of them are based on one pattern: a waistline, an upper section hugging close to the body, and the lower section hanging more freely with slits and unfastened ends.

The dress of Nadir-Shah is open in front, being buttoned up with almond-shaped metal buttons and buttonholes [Karimzadeh Tabrizi 1991:73]. It seems that the material is of the same type of heavy silk as Teimuraz's dress. In both cases the material has been laden with floral ornaments. Unfortunately, it cannot be ascertained if the inner side of the sleeves are open or closed on Nadir-Shah's portrait. The sleeves are tight-fitting on the arm, similarly to Teimuraz's dress. The only differences are in the dress sleeves and collars. Although the sleeves of the Georgian king's dress end with oval-shaped cuffs, the Shah's have been truncated [Chardin 1711:37]. There is also a variation in the collars. The collar on Teimuraz's dress is erect, whereas the Shah's is triangular, extending out to the shoulders and decorated with fur.

It has been ascertained according to the material under review that the dresses of Teimuraz II and Nadir-Shah are almost identical, yet there are some noticeable variations between them. The Georgian king's dress supposedly should have been sewn by a local tailor, adorning it with the different variations of sleeves, collars, and cuffs customary to aristocratic clothing.

*Akhalukh*²⁰ belonging to Alexander Batonishvili kept at the Museum of Art are also of interest (Ill. 11, 12). Both of them have been sewn with a woolen fabric from Kermān, being lined with cotton and open in front, and fastened with three silk buttons and loops attached under the armpits. The lower portion is loose in the sides and lined with a special kind of printed silk showing red carnations (considered as a symbol of eternity in Iran). Circling around the edge of the garment is a fringe of red satin. The shirt-front of akhalukh N585 has been sewn in a rectangular form, with that of akhalukh N702 however being in a triangular shape. There is an upright collar and straight sleeves having an open armpit area, ending with a lace border. The sleeves have been adorned

20 According to the museum inventory, book garments were donated to the museum by Tamar Bagrationi (Gruzinskaya) in 1921.

with truncated cuffs, being clasped together with buttons and buttonholes woven from blue silk thread.

The akhalukh was one of the elemental parts of an Iranian man's attire, used as an underlayer for the khalat [Karimzadeh Tabrizi 1991:74; Herbert 1919:232-233]. Akhalukh belonging to Alexander Batonishvili had a similar form to the Iranian version, almost reiterating the Iranian garment characterized by Chardin [Chardin 1975:116].

Akhalukh that had been cut out according to an Iranian pattern had been known in Georgia from the 10th century to the middle of the 13th²¹. Nino Chopikashvili has attributed their frequent use to the Persian influence, bringing parallels from Persian miniatures that had been made in various different periods [Chopikashvili 1964:27-35].

The akhalukh had also been one of the basic components of a Georgian man's attire, being worn under the dress (the 16th century – to the first half of the 18th century) (Ill. 13), whereas later on it was worn under the chokha (from the second half of the 18th century to the first half of the 20th century) (Ill. 14). If an observation is made on the Georgian akhalukhs appearing in illustrations 13 and 14, comparing them to the one belonging to Alexander Batonishvili, it can be ascertained that they have almost nothing in common between them (if the collar and the section in the armpit area is not taken into consideration).

A border induced by wear can be seen on Erekle II's khalat, as well as on Alexander Batonishvili's akhalukhs (Ill. 15), usually appearing on a garment after extended use. This itself attests however to the intense use of the garment. Illustrations (Ill. 16) of the Georgian versions of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and *Shah-Name* are yet more proof of this [Shahnameh 1988; Khuskivadze 1976]. Lastly, if a comparison is made of the "folk" painting [Khuskivadze 2003] that had been done on the walls of late Medieval churches²² to Iranian

21 A new type of clothing circulated in Georgia starting at the end of the 10th century, being worn with different variations from the 11th to the middle of the 13th century. This type of clothing is worn by: Diocletian on a silver icon of St. George mounted on a horse from Mravaldzali; St. George – pictured on the frontal of the west entranceway at Nikortsminda; Nighvarai Saurmagisdze – on a relief from Akhasheni; secular figures pictured on the eastern and northern walls of the ossuary at Davit Gareja, etc. The upper portion of the garment fits close to the body, with the shirt-front being fastened as such that a stripe goes across diagonally. The end of the garment is wide, with slits that have been added in. When examining such a garment from the 10th century, it belongs to the second group of the second type of clothing, representing one of the forms of mens' clothing on Persian miniatures from the 13th and 14th centuries to almost the 16th century, with minor differences [Chopikashvili 1964:27-35].

22 The hall church of St. George in the village of Chala (Sachkhere District); the Church of St. George in Koreti (Sachkhere District); the Church of the Archangels in Bugeuli (Am-

miniatures from the 16th-18th centuries [Shahnameh 1988; Pope 1939], the mass establishment of Iranian clothing in Kartli can undoubtedly be seen.

Thus, the functional and symbolic purposes of gift-giving and the phenomenon of the *khalat* or dress have been shown in the article. The dominant characteristic of the gift *khalat* has been manifested, being founded on the principle of giving in return and submitting to the political situation extant in the country. As a gift, the *khalat* was confirmed in the reality of East Georgia during the late medieval period. The Italian missionary, Dionigi Carli relates in connection to this that giving a *khalat* as an extravagant gift had to have taken place by following specific rules, symbolically implying a recognition of the Shah's sovereignty.

By studying written Georgian sources from an earlier period, it was ascertained that the rite of presenting a garment of honor had been known in Georgian practice much earlier than the late Middle Ages (1st-2nd; 5th-6th; 9th-11th; and 12th cc). Two stages of the rite have been distinguished: the 1st-2nd; 5th-6th; 9th-11th; and 12th centuries, being connected to the close political ties with Rome and with the Byzantine Empire later on and the 16th-18th centuries, when Georgia had a forced but permanent relationship with Iran.

The deritualization of the rite of presenting a *khalat* has also been shown in the article, when gifts cease being a special item and become established in everyday life. Exhibits kept in funds at the Georgian National Museum (the royal attire of Teimuraz II, the Iranian dress of Erekle II, the Iranian *akhalukhs* of Alexander Batonishvili), written material, "folk" wall art, and miniature paintings have been brought forth to illustrate this.

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სურ.1. ერეკლე II-ის ხალათი
Fig. 1. King Erekle II's robe



სურ. 2. ერეკლე II-ს ხალათის სახელო
Fig. 2. A sleeve of Erekle II's robe



სურ.3. სპარსული მინიატურა
Fig. 3. A Persian miniature



სურ.4. ერეკლე II-ის ხალათის ფრაგმენტი
Fig. 4. An element of King Erekle II's robe



სურ. 5. ირანული ქსოვილის ნიმუშები

Fig. 5. Iranian cloth



სურ. 6. ერეკლე II

Fig. 6. King Erekle II



სურ. 7. თეიმურაზ II

Fig. 7. King Teimuraz II



სურ.8. თეიმურაზ II-ის სამეფო კაბა და მაღალყელიანი წინდა

Fig. 8. King Teimuraz II's royal dress and silk sock



სურ.9. ირანული ქსოვილის ნიმუში
Fig. 9. Iranian textile



სურ.10. ნადირ-შაჰის პორტრეტი
(ჟენევის ხელოვნებისა და ისტორიის მუზეუმი)
Fig. 10. The portrait of Nadir Shah (Geneva Museum of Art and History)
www.pinterest.com



სურ. 11, 12. ალექსანდრე ბატონიშვილის ახალუხები
Fig. 11, 12. Prince Alexander's „Akhalkh“



სურ. 13. კაბა-ახალუხი
Fig. 13. Men's dress with akhalukhi



სურ. 14. ჩოხა-ახალუხი
Fig. 14. Chokha-akhalukhi



სურ. 15. ახალუხის ქობა
Fig. 15. The edge of clothes



სურ. 16. ირანული მინიატურა

Fig.16. Iranian miniature



სურ. 17. ქართული კაბა (XIX ს.)

Fig. 17. Georgian women's dress

სურათები 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17
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