

KHATUNA GOGIA

WAYS OF CHRISTIANIZATION OF MYTHOS CULTURE

According to the area and typology of its development Georgian culture belongs to the eastern-Christian cultural and historical region. Orthodox Church has determined philosophical views, legal system, and moral codes, ethical and aesthetical ideals. The synthesis of the old and the new is characteristic feature of the Georgian culture. We should discuss Pre-Christian (heathen) and Christian periods not only as historical epochs but also as definite forms of conception, as two different rules of comprehending the universe.

In Megrelia there is a mythos culture known by the name of "zhini antari". The word "antari" is regarded a phonetic variant of the Latin "altar". According to ethnographic data *zhini antari* is a place of where the sacrifice is offered, a heathen divinity. I think that here we have the practice of conforming of the Christian liturgical culture to paganism, making it easily accessible for common people. "zhini" is the loftiest world in the heaven as compared to "tudoni kiana" - low country, low world. The fact indicates itself that in Megrelia we have the traces of hierarchy of the Christian knowledge, and the cults of these kinds are on the borderline between the canon and folk understanding, serving as examples of the so-called folk Christianization.