

IRANO-GEORGIAN RELATIONSHIPS IN A.D. I-VI CENTURIES

Because of its geographic location Georgia has always been in the center of attention of her neighboring countries. For centuries it presented the connecting crossroads of civilizations. Owing to this fact the Georgians adopted cultural elements of various nations and countries to enrich their society. However, they were not submissive to the foreign influences and always maintained their identity.

Iran and Georgia had been related since the Median epoch and these relationships became stronger during the Achaemenid Empire.

Iran and Rome exerted their cultural influence on Georgia for long periods. Before Parnavaz introduced the Georgian alphabet Georgians were well versed in Greek, Iranian and Aramaic scholarships. This is approved by the bilingual inscription excavated in the vicinity of Mtskheta written in Greek and Aramaic languages belonging to the heathen epoch. The monument also suggests the Georgian and Persian contacts.

During the Sassanid Empire the importance of Georgia increased two-fold because of the joint interests of Iran and Rome to defend their lands from the raids of the northern tribes. It is also noteworthy that Georgia embraced Christianity during this period.

Iranians declared a full-scale war on Christianity. To achieve her aim Iran made extensive use of the situations in the subjugated countries.

During the reign of King Vakhtang Georgia's contacts to Iran became more efficient, although the relations remained tense.

No doubt, Iran exerted great influence on Georgia with its strength and wealth. Georgia fell under almost permanent control either of Iran or Iran's vying countries. However, Georgians never gave up the wish to fight for the liberation of their country and underwent heroic battles. It must be also noted here that Georgians also exercised more or less influences on their neighbors that became evident during the subsequent centuries.