

## LELA CHOGOVADZE

### ON IDENTITY OF SULKHAN AVTANDILASHVILI

The album of the Roman Catholic missionary, Don Cristoforo De Castelli is kept in Palermo Community Library. The album was created during his stay in Western Georgia (Imereti, Guria, Samegrelo, Apkhazeti) in 1628-1654. The album is comprised of 570 drawings on Georgian topics, according to which the 17<sup>th</sup> century Georgia becomes vibrant with its life, manners and customs, as well as people. Castelli's album includes portraits of many famous and unknown persons including Sul Khan Avtandilashvili. Castelli's note indicates the following: "a well-known poet in the kingdom of Iberia – Colchis". A literary critic Akaki Bakradze regretfully noted in his article that "no documents on the activities of Sul Khan Avtandilashvili have survived".

Based on scientific research it has been established that Sul Khan Avtandilashvili lived and worked in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He turned "Amiran-Darejaniani" into a poetic composition and served as a secretary-scribe of the Royal Court of Kartli. The poet's name – Avtandilashvili (son of Avtandil) is not unusual. Documentary materials revealed that Sul Khan was the son of Avtandil Shansheani. The surname Taniashvili should have been derived from the poet's another surname, an official one at that time – Avtandilashvili. Taniashvili is Avtandilashvili's diminutive form – Avtandili-Tandia-Tania, hence, the relevant form of the surname is derived: Avtandilashvili-Tandiashvili-Taniashvili. The rhymed "Amiran-Darejaniani" was the last work by Sul Khan. King Archil and Ioane Bagrationi regarded him as a good poet. Castelli had written Sul Khan's biography but, unfortunately, this part did not survive.