



Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

Genoa Conference and Ambrose Khelaia

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Annotation: Saint, Georgian clergyman and public figure, scientist — this is how the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia and the Archbishop of Mtskheta-Tbilisi Ambros Khelaia is referred to today. Georgian theological and public figure, scientist, Patriarch of the Catholicos of All Georgia and Archbishop of Mtskheta-Tbilisi in 1921-1927. 2012 was declared the year of Ambrose Khelaia.

Keywords: scientist, Theological, language.

Besarion Zosime Khelaia was born on September 7, 1861 in the village of Martvili, Zugdidi region. He studied at the Tbilisi Theological Seminary.

1885 Graduated from the Tbilisi Theological Seminary. From 1887 to 1896 he was a priest in Sochi, then in Sukhumi. He was also the supervisor of the church-parish schools of Sokhumi, New Athos and Likha and a teacher of the Georgian language. Fought against the Russificationist and chauvinist policies of Tsarism in Abkhazia. He appeared in the press against Golubtsov, a blacksmith, and Bishop Arsen (Izotov), who instilled in Abkhazians hatred of Georgians and persecuted the Georgian language.

In 1897, at the age of 36, Father Ambrose enrolled in the Kazan Theological Academy, having been widowed a year earlier. The first son of father Ambrose and his wife, Elizabeth Merchule, was born in 1888. Sadly, the firstborn died within a few months. A year later they had a daughter Nino, then Alexander and Anna. Fate soon separated Father Ambrose from his wife. Elizabeth went through childbirth. There are three orphans left who have never been removed from the side. He was with him while studying in Kazan and even during his deportation. He was a caring father and then ... a similar patriarch. Ambrose Khelaia's wife, Kesaria, gave birth to her third child - Anna (my grandmother) at the age of 23. Ambrose was ordained a monk after the death of his wife. Caesarea is buried in Ilori, in the bell tower, because Ilori was a shrine to the Mechlers. My grandmother Anna, a baby, a emaciated girl, did not leave Ambrose for a moment. Neither gave it to a relative. The breast was sucked by a Megrelian woman, then by a Russian foster mother and her sister. In general Ambrose was an extraordinary father. He took all three children with him everywhere. They were also accompanied by deportation ----- tells us about Ambrose's granddaughter Ana Kldiashvili.

According to contemporaries he was a talented, highly honest, kind and virtuous man. It is enough to name the words that the patriarch said to the body of Ilia Chavchavadze. His words show that he was quite educated, resourceful, and quite a great philosopher as well. A person who had a good insight into the political or religious activities of Georgia at that time. Here are his words uttered before the corpse of Ilia: I dare and dare to say a few words before this glorious corpse.

Today, the whole of Georgia mourns the corpse of the son of a glorious landlord. Today, Georgia has lost the greatest poet, excellent and dedicated public figure, the pride of literature. We do not have Ilia Chavchavadze - the poor of his nation. He was killed by the dirty hand of the barbarians.



Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

But did the glorious Ilya die? "Be ye therefore faithful unto death, and give unto me the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). - The Lord commands us through the mouth of the Apostle John the Theologian and thus shows us what we must be like in this world to inherit the eternal crown - the crown of immortality. Blessed is he who does his duty honestly in this world, believes and selflessly serves the truth, this is the basis of action - the basis of action. "Righteous is the death of the Lord" of such a man (Psalm 115: 6). He is immortal in His work, His memory will forever remain in a grateful nation. In addition, man is a teacher and mentor even after death, because, according to the apostle, he also speaks after death (Heb. 11: 4).

Therefore, Iliia did not die either. He is alive. He just died from life to death. Though the eloquent Bagen was silenced, but the deed of his eloquent shouts and shouts. He will remain immortal with his work as long as the Georgian nation exists. Moreover, even if the Georgian nation is transformed and destroyed due to the opposite time, the memory of the great poet-figure will not be lost, because the work of this glorious son of Georgia belongs not only to the Georgian nation, but also to humanity, of which Georgia is a part. The rested is glorious with his multifaceted work for the benefit of the homeland. The greatness of his merit is the reason why the whole of Georgia mourns him so bitterly. But, Georgians, not an unforgettable Iliia is a mourning satire, but our homeland doomed by fate - its loser. Wasn't it enough that the reverse time-situation caused us trouble, that we ourselves did not add unwritten trouble ?! But it is believable that this unprecedented barbaric murder was committed by the son of Georgia, the Georgia in whose selfless service he spent the whole 50 years. If this is blamed on Georgia, then our corruption, moral decline, savagery, perversion will be truly satirical. We have to think deeply about this if we want to remain a Georgian nation. The rest is blissful. The road is paved. He faithfully served the ideals that he chose for the benefit of the Georgian nation half a century ago until the last minute. He has not taken a single step, he has not betrayed them, and for this, according to the apostle, he is ready for the "crown of life" (Revelation 2:10), the crown of immortality. Even death from a glorious corpse has any significance for us, it undoubtedly teaches us something. Let us consider this blood shed by the barbarians to cleanse our national sins, to turn us from the wrong path, to unite and strengthen the children of Georgia as a whole.

Let us swear by this present corpse that we will be true executors of the commandments which the deceased has bequeathed to us through his work. If we have unity in the service of national ideals, then no doubt our homeland can still produce the glorious Iliad figure, and then finally rejoice in the glorious immortal soul of the departed. To be the last sacrifice, at the national table sacrificed for the good of the homeland and with us as a means of national sins. The greatness of this sacrifice is the guarantee that in the future our perversion, our ignorance will be eradicated and we will join forces to serve honestly in the revival of the homeland. If such merit has been bestowed upon us by the blood of this sacrifice, if we have joined in devotional service to the land - it will be the last, truly great merit of the great Elijah - the desired fruit and crown of his long labor. For us, it will be a real debt, the execution of his will and at the same time the best respect for the memory of the deceased. God has given us the ability to do this. May your memory be eternal, devoted to the land, glorious poet, Iliav! "

Ambrose Khelaia was ordained a monk in Kazan in 1900 and was promoted to the rank of Archimandrite. He graduated from the academy in 1901. He soon returned to Georgia and was appointed the head of the Chelishi Monastery. His name is connected with the discovery of "Chelishi Otkhtavi" and "Moktsevai Kartlisai" in Chelishi Monastery.

There is a legend-like story about this discovery — In 1902, during his ministry in Chelishi Monastery, Ambrose Khelaia, who came out of the monastery yard, heard a voice from the monks, asking the monks for a place and asking them to dig up the land. Under the ground, the monks

Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

found a small akldama, where, along with other manuscripts, they discovered "Moktsevai Kartlisai" dating back to the XIV century.

The scientific merit of the Catholicos-Patriarch Ambrose is especially interesting. Unfortunately, to date there is no complete bibliography of the works of the saint.

A significant part of his letters are published in Russian newspapers. Some of the manuscripts are preserved in the National Center of Manuscripts, in the archives of the Patriarchate, in various libraries and museums of Georgia, in private collections. Some manuscripts of unpublished works are still considered lost. St. Ambrose became interested in studying Georgian history and Georgian manuscripts while still studying at the Kazan Theological Academy. He also defended his dissertation "Fighting Christianity with Islam in Georgia".

In 1915-1917, he published a magazine under the pseudonym "Amber". In "Gantiadi" and "Tskhovreba" he published "Journey to Racha-Lechkhumi", where he interestingly described the history of the manuscripts of the Chelishi Monastery.

One of the most serious scientific works of Ambrose is "Bedia and the Temple of Bedia" written in 1920. It deals with the history of Bedia Temple, epigraphy, Bedia Gulan, political, economic and ecclesiastical history of Western Georgia. 1901 Appointed Archimandrite of Chelishi Monastery. In 1904 he was transferred to Tbilisi as a member of the Synodal Cantor and the head of the Transfiguration Monastery. During the First Russian Revolution, Ambrose fought for the restoration of the autocephaly (independence) of the Georgian Orthodox Apostolic Church, which led to his deportation to Russia in 1905.

In 1905, under the leadership of Ilia Chavchavadze, a struggle began to restore the autocephaly of the Georgian Church, which had been abolished by Russia. The father of the nation was supported by a number of prominent figures, including Nico Marie, Alexander Tsagareli, Bishops Kirion and Leonidas. . .

Ambrose Khelaia also took an active part in this great national cause.

The Georgian clergy sent a petition to the Russian Synod to restore the autocephaly of the Georgian Church. Emperor Nicholas II set up a special commission to investigate the matter. Bishops Kirion and Leonide left for St. Petersburg together with Ilia Chavchavadze. Unfortunately, at this stage, the issue of autocephaly of the Georgian Church has not been resolved positively. "I ask God ... for victory in the cause for which you are invited to the capital city of the North. It is true that the fate of our church autocephaly has turned badly, but what can we do, when we were happy to create now ...

The opinion of me and the priest here, what is better for you, is this: to give up nothing and whatever is given to us by force, we obey only temporarily. "When we see a convenient time, we will try to do what is requested in the petitions." Ambrose Khelaia's letter to Bishop Leonides

The long-awaited ecclesiastical freedom was still gained by the Georgian Church. On March 12, 1917 (A.D. 25), the restoration of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church was announced in Svetitskhoveli Cathedral.

"I congratulate the suffering Georgia on the good news: the restoration of the autocephaly of its church. Rejoice, you mother parents, in the Catholic Church, rise up and bring your life for the benefit of the people set on the path of unbelief, rise up with the purity and purity of the ancients. "In 1907, he attended the ecclesiastical assembly, which decided to teach theology in Georgian in seminaries and theological schools. The Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church met this fact with great indignation. Exarch of Georgia Nikon dispersed the assembly of autocephalous forces with the help of the Cossacks and beat its participants with whips, but Nikon was not satisfied with this and demanded from St. Petersburg: On May 28, 1908, Exarch Nikon was assassinated by a revolver on

Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

the steps of the Synod office, although no killer could be found, but priests in favor of Nikon's "ideological opponents" began to be persecuted and deported. Archimandrite Ambrose Khelaia was exiled to Russia, and Bishop Kyrion was tortured in Nikon's assassination. It is true that neither of them could be proved guilty, but both were punished: Father Ambrose was banned from the priesthood and sent to the Trinity Monastery in Ryazan, where he had to live in cruelty for more than a year. The Holy Synod of Russia completely ignored every request of Archimandrite to return to his homeland. Archimandrite Ambrose fought tirelessly to protect the interests of the Georgian nation and the Georgian Orthodox Apostolic Church. That is why the government was especially persecuted.

He was first transferred to Russia in 1903 to oversee the Ust-Medvedsa Theological Seminary of the Diocese of Don, where he remained until the end of 1905.

"In the second half of January 1909, Mergo shed tears for me and left for my homeland and moved to the north. On January 28, I reached my destination. It was the monastery of the Trinity in Ryazan. For a long time I was not able to see the sights of the monastery. Due to the journey and spiritual suffering, the patient was taken to a damp house and was not allowed to see a doctor for a long time. Because of this, my illness lasted for a whole month and a half. In the early days no one was allowed to enter with me except the treasurer of the monastery, the priest-nun Basil. I was not allowed to walk freely - not only outside the walls of the monastery, but also in the yard of the monastery. Added to this was the harshness of winter and heavy snow, and because of this I was locked up in my damp Senaki. " The thoughts and efforts of the exiled father Ambrose were directed only to Georgia. He tried not to lose his courage, continued his scientific and social activities, cooperated with the "Georgian Historical and Ethnographic Society" ...

Akrimandrit, who was interned in exile, constantly asked for permission to return to Georgia, but in vain - he was a very dangerous force for Russia.

"It is difficult to get my case back if the circumstances have not changed radically. Now no one is punished more than me, everyone else is named after suspicious people .

Only Ambrose is not worthy of anything and is not considered a reliable person in the Synod. I do not even know what he did wrong ... Anyway, thank you very much for your compassion, because I am not accustomed to compassion. We too (I have some in my face who have a name in us), recently, when I was given the opportunity to return to my homeland, were severely beaten. God forgive.

They should not do that to those in my situation ... We are like that, unfortunately, Georgians, we have not yet reached the level where we do not replace public affairs with personal ones.

God knows when we will be able to realize true patriotism. Does not everything that happens around us wake us up ?!

1915 3 November.

/ Ambrose Khelaia's letter to Romanoz Pantskhava /

"... the treasurer, who should have always been with me while walking, pointed to one of the graves and told me that the Queen of Georgia was fasting here ... it turned out that she was buried there ... the Queen's wife ..." - Mariam, who died in 1821. "During my stay in Ryazan, the only consolation for me was to come to this grave and sit for hours, because here I felt something native and I was comforted by boundless dreams. I often could not hold back the tears that often filled my mind. Even before her death, the sinful Mariam would have thought that someone Georgian would have seen her grave, counted the eternal remembrance in her mother tongue, and even shed tears about the fate of her homeland. Spilled near his grave ?! "

Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

Meanwhile, rumors were circulating in Georgia that Ambrose Khelaia was financially well-off and simply did not want to return. The saint wrote about this in his letter: "My Exorcist" with heartache: The writers of this letter have probably not yet experienced the loneliness of the soul, they have not experienced the severity that a sophisticated person experiences in the homeland, unless he is on the path of degeneration and his heart aches for the state of the homeland. ”

1908 New charges are brought against him for allegedly taking part in the assassination of Exarch Nikon. In 1910 he was acquitted, but was not allowed to return to his homeland. He arrived in Georgia only in August 1917. He was first the Metropolitan of Chkondidi, then of Abkhazia and Sokhumi, and from September 1921 the Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia and the Archbishop of Mtskheta-Tbilisi. The global changes that took place in Russia in February 1917 created a favorable moment for the restoration of the independence of the Georgian Church.

On March 12 (25) 1917, the autocephaly of the Georgian Church was solemnly proclaimed in the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta, and on March 16, a meeting of clergymen was held in Tbilisi, which decided that from now on the service in the Zion Cathedral should be performed in Georgian.

In September 1921, the Holy Synod elected Metropolitan Ambrose Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia and Archbishop of Mtskheta-Tbilisi. The country occupied by the Bolsheviks is facing a severe ordeal: the persecution of the church, the restriction of the rights of the Georgian language and the transfer of historical lands to others begin. The Catholicos seeks to attract the attention of the world community and in 1922 sends a memorandum to the Genoa International Conference, attended by representatives of 29 states. The conference was attended by representatives of dozens of countries, including delegates from Red Russia. The memorandum described the annexation of Georgia by the Bolsheviks and the dire consequences of that annexation. The Bolshevik government of Georgia did not forgive the Catholicos-Patriarch Ambrose Khelaia for sending a memorandum, exposing his anti-national policies and arresting him. The prisoner held himself dignified in the Soviet court. He addressed the court as follows: "The heart belongs to my Georgia, the soul - to God, the corpse is what you want it to be." It was quite a bold and courageous statement in Georgia at that time. In Georgia, where Russian policy was newly established.

Here is an excerpt from his memorandum: "In 1918, the nation declared its independence and immediately began to restore its political and national-cultural life. Georgia, bloodied in the war, once again faced the yoke of such a heavy and shameful slavery, the like of which it has not experienced in its centuries-long history. The occupiers, indeed, try to convince everyone at home and abroad that they have liberated and made the Georgians happy, but how happy the Georgian nation feels, I, his spiritual father, best say, boldly and without exaggeration, say that these are completely inappropriate Georgian experiments. On the back of the nation, it will inevitably lead to physical extinction and spiritual influence and corruption!

The nation will hear you, but will not be able to remove the voice. In such circumstances, it is my pastoral duty and duty to hear the vast cultural humanity: I, as a representative of the Church, do not enter into the appreciation and regulation of various forms of political life. But I can not wish for my nation a device that is relatively more conducive to its physical revitalization and cultural development.

So I ask:

The occupiers, indeed, try to convince everyone at home and abroad that they have liberated and made the Georgians happy, but how happy the Georgian nation feels, I, his spiritual father, best say, boldly and without exaggeration, say that these are completely inappropriate Georgian experiments. On the back of the nation, it will inevitably lead to physical extinction and spiritual influence and corruption!



Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

1. Immediately withdraw the Russian occupation army from the borders of Georgia and secure its land and water from foreign invasion and seizure of power.
2. To enable the Georgian nation to organize its life as it wants, without the force and dictation of others. "

1922-1926: The government actively fights against the church, the methods are brutal, the monasteries are closed, the clergy are arrested and shot, they are forced to give up church activities. Noteworthy is the active anti-religious propaganda, it is enough to look at the communist newspaper: especially in the run-up to the church holidays, strong anti-religious articles appear. The government opposes all means to religion in order for society to finally get rid of this institution. There is also a clear aggressive attitude towards the Orthodox Church in particular. Catholicos-Patriarch Ambrose Khelalaia has clearly resigned from the government, he has been in confrontation with the regime since the day of the occupation, followed by a famous letter in Genoa, authored by Ambrose. Sending a memorandum to the conference was an unprecedented case. The government did not take this fact seriously and soon Catholicos Ambrose was arrested. Along with the patriarch, 9 members of the Catholic Council were also tried at the trial.

They were accused of: sending a memorandum to the Genoa Conference, hiding treasures of Georgian churches and monasteries, misappropriation of church property registers and the absence of a representative of the Patriarchate in the procedure of handing over the military temple (which was on the territory of the current government palace) to the Communist Party.

Here are some excerpts from the March 1924 trial:

Judge Baratashvili - What was the nature of your memorandum?

Catholicos Ambrose was the representative of Georgia at the Genoa Conference and the sovereignty of our nation was to be protected there. I thought this memorandum would help our representative and so I sent it.

Prosecutor Okujava - If not the Soviet set-up, how did you request the set-up?

Catholicos Ambrose - one that would be based on the will of the people.

Judge Erkomaishvili - What would you expect from the memorandum sent to the Genoa Conference?

Catholicos Ambrose - I defended the idea of state and ecclesiastical freedom of Georgia.

Judge Erkomaishvili - Why did you demand the withdrawal of the Red Army from Georgia, which is the defender of the interests of the working people?

Catholicos Ambrose - I still do not know who is defended by the Russian army. When I demanded the withdrawal of the Red Army, I meant intervention because intervention takes place through the army.

Judge Erkomaishvili - When was Georgia free?

Catholicos Ambrose - before the entry of the Red Army. After the Red Army entered, Georgia lost its independence. Prosecutor Machavariani - Is the issue of territory political or religious?

"Catholicos Ambrose - both politically and religiously, because the loss of territory is a loss for the church."

At the same time, the newspapers cover the trial "Catholicos Ambrose and his" brothers "(in quotes) almost every day in the newspapers. Where it is repeatedly mentioned: "During the introduction of the accused, voices are heard in the courtroom:" Down with Ambrose "," Down with the counter-revolution "," Hatred of Ambrose ".



Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

Sessions are adjourned as the workers-servants throw themselves out and shout: Let us, we will judge the traitors of the working class. Kadnier poems, articles are written. E.g. "The accused do not plead guilty, lie, insinuate, they are traders with truth and conscience." When the patriarch leaves the courthouse, specially invited Communists throw eggs at him.

And after all this the Catholicos says the final word in court, where there is not even a hint of greed seen. On the contrary, these are the words of the Patriarch of the Nation, who fights, cares and loves even in the face of death:

"Will the majority of the workers of the Georgian nation, against whose interests I wanted to sacrifice myself and my personal interests, even oppose my speech?" No, I will not believe it... "and again:" A peasant whose lands are irrigated with the blood and bones of their ancestors, this peasant, believes that he will always be a lover of his homeland and will never hate or defend the idea of his freedom. "

Here are some excerpts from his closing remarks on the main allegations, which can be considered as an example of ecclesiastical thinking: Servants are godly, "we should pray for them and not say evil to them, but to say no to evil does not mean not to criticize their actions, not to point out their mistakes; if I saw the danger of national extinction, I owed it to myself to speak out."

He writes about the accusation of hiding the church treasure: "I was serving in Sokhumi and things were hidden without me" but if I was really hiding

"Participant, even then I could not feel guilty, because the clergy was in debt, took care of the property of the church, and from time immemorial, they resorted to this means in times of unrest and the invasion of enemies."

"Your proposal (to hand over the church to the Communist Party) was unacceptable to us, because by accepting it we would become traitors to God's decree and faith. This is it and this is it. "

Finally: "As our forefathers thought it sweet to accept suffering for their homeland and their faith, so sweet will be the punishment that the Supreme Court will sentence me for taking the vote to protect the freedom of the native church and nation. It will be the crowning achievement of the cross that has been borne by me for almost 37 years of my life.

The voice raised by me to defend my national interests and the condemnation that I will be sentenced by the Supreme Court will find its place in the heart of every Georgian - a Georgian who has not yet lost his faith and love for his homeland. I will consider myself happy with this as well. As believers say - be the will of God! - And address you in the words of Christ: "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28).

None of the accused pleaded guilty. The sentence of Catholicos-Patriarch Ambrose provides for the death penalty, but for a venerable age is punishable by imprisonment for up to 8 years, with severe isolation and confiscation of all property. While in prison, his children were allowed to visit their father several times. They thought that the Catholic was meeting them always calmly and calmly, as if nothing was bothering them. No matter how hard the period of imprisonment was, it also shows that he was asked to voluntarily resign from the patriarchate, which he refused. After that, talking about his physical impotence is probably not worth it.

An amnesty issued in late 1924 acquits the Catholicos.

According to his granddaughter, Anna Kldiashvili, one day a neighbor boy told Bebiamis (daughter of the Catholicos-Patriarch, Ambrose) that the Catholicos was crossing the Metekhi bridge. Whether he entered Zion or not, the people fell to their knees. Then it turned out with joy "it seems that Christianity can not be destroyed by force in Georgia" — Again the wise admonition of the patriarch and the call that the nation should not lose its spiritual nourishment. The sermons he



Interdisciplinary Conference of Young Scholars in Social Sciences

delivered after his release from prison are preserved. In his first sermon, two years after the separation, he thanked the parishioners for the compassion they felt from them during this difficult time and said, "It was not the result of my dignity, but of the fact that you love Mother Church and value the quality you chose my worth... In works of faith you are not like a reed that is constantly swaying and swaying where the wind blows, but you are steadfast and unshakable. This is especially gratifying for me. " His paternal care for the parish is especially evident in the same sermon. He says that before he takes up his duties, he wants to know what the situation is in our church. You will probably be surprised, because it is already known that churches and monasteries are ruined and ruined. But, in the church he meant himself and their hearts. As he then says, this church seemed to him more beautiful now than before.

A heavy and difficult cross of the patriarchate, prison health was shaken and he died on March 29, 1927 while performing a liturgy. Before he died, he prayed to the Lord: "Lord, look at this vineyard, which was founded by your right hand."

The Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia Ambrose Khelaia was a symbol of freedom in life, and after his death - a national hero, who was ordained by the Synod of the Georgian Orthodox Church in 1995. High Priest Ambrose was canonized on behalf of the confessor. He became the heavenly protector of the Georgian nation and Georgia. He is buried in the Temple of Zion and his remembrance day is celebrated on March 16 (29). Yes, Ambrose Khelaia's contribution to the salvation of Georgia and its spiritual development is really great. Catholicos Ambrose, in spite of his brief patriarchy, bore the brunt of the patriarchy, the cross that sacrificed his life. Those years, which are the years of his patriarchy, are a very difficult period not only for the history of our country, but also for the clergy. Indeed, it must have been wise and philosophical for him to cope with the pastoral care of the Church in such a difficult period and to respond to the country's indomitable enemy in the international arena. . .

We think that Ambrose Khelaia honestly owed a debt to our multi-suffering nation. The nation that sanctified him and created Sts. Icon of Ambrose Khelaia.

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