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Georgian and Armenian identity perception according to the Georgian Medieval sources

Ethnicity is a perceptible phenomenon that can be revealed by observing subjectivist factors. As for Soviet historiography, debates about ethnicity took place since the 70s of the XX century, although ethnicity was understood essentially in the Soviet Union. Accordingly, the study of ethnicity is a relatively new in post-Soviet space, and it is also relatively new in Georgia.

Georgian sources provide valuable information to observe ethnic phenomenon, where Georgian unity is usually identified itself in relation to “others”. Armenians are often represented in these “others”. Thus, Georgian sources contain very interesting information how Georgians perceived Armenian identity in Middle Ages too.

The study of ethnicity requires observation of certain ethnic characteristics. Revealing the intensity of the ethnic markers determines the internal tightness of the unity itself and shows which characteristic emphasizes the unity the most. Intensity of ethnic markers is changeable due to the various circumstances. Among ethnic features, it is generally accepted that religion was the core element of identity in the Middle Ages. A common understanding of religious and ethnic identity is not infrequently seen in early Georgian hagiographic writings and other historical sources. After political unification of Georgia (XI c.), the Georgian cultural elite revised the ethnic unity, where only common religious membership did not coincide with

membership of Georgian unity. On the other side Armenians, first of all, are perceived as religious community.

The aim of the paper is to reveal Georgian and Armenian identity perception (seen through Georgians eyes) by observing identity markers in Medieval Georgian sources.