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DOI: 10.56812/2953-7851-2022.1-28

The Status of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia in the 14th - 16th centuries

In 14th - 16th centuries the role and importance of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Georgia increased along with the creation of the Armenian community in Georgia. The Diocese became an important institution connecting Armenians living in Georgia and St. Etchmiadzin. The history of the Armenian Diocese, being an inseparable part of the spiritual and political life of the Armenian diaspora in Georgia, is remarkable from the point of view of revealing its status and role above all. Because of this a comprehensive study of history of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia becomes highly desirable.

The existing list of Diocese leaders is interrupted in 1284 and resumed only in 1443. However, the comparison of existing historical and archaeological sources allows to raise and discuss a number of key issues related to the history of the Diocese.

The relations between the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin, the Armenian Diocese in Georgia and the Georgian kings are of special interest. After the Catholicosial See of Etchmiadzin was moved to Armenia, the borders Armenian Apostolic Diocese in Georgia was regularly divided between the bishoprics of Sanahin and Haghpata. Both bishoprics functioned under St. Etchmiadzin governance. Moreover, in the 16th century, most part of the Armenian Diocese in Georgia was included in the borders of Sanahin. At the same time, starting from the 12th century, we observe the continuous huge influence of the Georgian authorities on the Haghpata Diocese.