



## Svetitskhoveli Cathedral

### Christ's Mantle

Since ancient times, Mtskheta was called the second Jerusalem, because in the first Jerusalem, Jesus was born and tortured on the cross. By the legend Christ's mantle was buried in Mtskheta, where now Svetitskhoveli Cathedral stands. Georgian historical sources ("*Tskhovreba Kartlisai* (The Life of Kartli)" and "*Moqtsevai Qartlisai* (Conversion Kartli)") tell that once upon a time Jews people settled in Iberia after Nebuchadnezzar (dynasty in Babylon) expelled them from their country. Their descendants, Elioiz and Longinoz as representatives of Mtskheteli Jewry witnessed the Passion of the crucifixion of the Christ in Jerusalem. Christ's mantle was divided into four parts by soldiers. The robe was given to Elioiz and Longinoz. They took the robe of the Lord with them to Mtskheta where Elios was met by his sister Sidonia who immediately died from the feelings she had experienced while embracing the garment of the Lord. It is believed that St. Sidonia will embrace the Savior with a robe in her hands during the Christ's second coming. Sidonia was buried with the robe of Christ in her hand in the royal garden. Lebanese cedar grew over her grave.

### Life Giving Pillar

AD 337, Miracle that happened directly in the place of Svetitskhovli where Christ's Mantle was buried. In the 4th century AD, when Saint Nino was spreading Christianity, Mirian, the first Christian king of the Iberian kingdom, ordered to build the first Christian church on the place of grave of Sidonia, The Lebanese cedar that grew on her grave was cut down and seven pillars were made to build the church, one of which appeared miraculous. During the construction of the church, constructors could not manage to put the miraculous pillar in the right place. According to legend, the pillar was cut by itself and stopped in the air. After the praying to St. Nino, the pillar fell into its place by itself. Name of "Svetitskhoveli" consists of two words. "Sveti" -pillar, "Tskhoveli - (giving life (in old Georgian language))". The first construction was a small wooden church. A miniature church of the 14th-15th centuries was built on the southern wall. This small church is an exact copy of the church built in the 4th century by order of Emperor Constantine on Mount Golgotha in Jerusalem, on the site of the crucifixion of Christ. It was built for those local believers who did not have the opportunity to see the place of Christ's torment in Jerusalem. The church was built in Svetitskhoveli because Mtskheta was called the "second Jerusalem".

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## Golden Age

AD 11<sup>th</sup> century masterpiece Svetitskhoveli Cathedral is the second largest church building in Georgia. Known as the burial site of the claimed Christ's mantle, Svetitskhoveli has long been among the most venerated places of worship in the region. Svetitskhoveli is a symbol of strength, brevity, Christianity and Europe. The relations between the Byzantine Empire and Georgia as one of leading and influential countries in Europe together with Byzantine represent a complex cycle of long-term political, economic, cultural and religious relations, which continued continuously from the formation of the Byzantine Empire to its fall. The Georgian Golden Age describes a historical period, spanning from roughly the late 11th to 13th centuries, during which the Kingdom of Georgia reached the peak of its power and development. In addition to military expansion, this period saw the flourishing of medieval Georgian architecture, economy, painting and poetry, which was frequently expressed in the development of ecclesiastic art, as well as the creation of first major works of secular literature. This trend culminated in an epic written by Georgia's national poet Rustaveli - *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. The poem celebrates the medieval humanistic ideals of chivalry, friendship and courtly love. For Georgia the Golden Age forms an important part of its status as a once-powerful and ancient nation that maintained relations with Greece and Rome. Svetitkhoveli is a symbol of: Georgia in the golden age; freedom and independence; Europe and Georgian renaissance.

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