

VAKHTANG BERIDZE
1ST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
OF GEORGIAN CULTURE



Georgian Art

in the Context of European
and Asian Cultures



Proceedings

JUNE 21-29, 2008 GEORGIA



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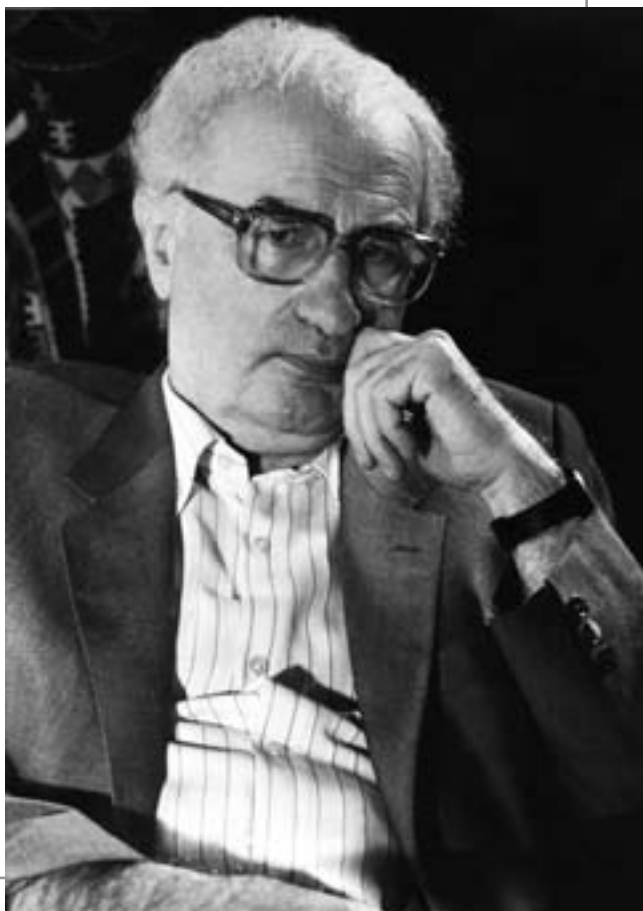
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Vakhtang Beridze

The Proceedings of the International Symposium "Georgian Art in the Context of European and Asian Cultures" are dedicated with great respect to the memory of Vakhtang Beridze, one of the most distinguished Georgian scholars, Director of the Giorgi Chubinashvili Institute of Georgian Art History, and founder and organizer of the International Symposiums on Georgian Art, 1974 to 1989.

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Preface

The proceedings of the International Symposium “Georgian Arts in the Context of European and Asian Cultures” published here are a compilation of studies made during the last two decades by major international art historians and professionals who are specialists in Georgian art history and cultural development. The papers were presented in Georgia in June 2008.

The symposium, which was organized by Georgian Ministry of Culture and GACC International Initiative of Georgian Cultural Studies in cooperation with various national and international institutions, was specially noteworthy. It was the first meeting of international scholars on Georgian culture to take place in Georgia, and followed a hiatus in such activities of nearly 20 years. Leading Georgian and international scholars gathered in Tbilisi to present their investigations in their respective fields as well as to discuss the future of Georgian cultural and scholarly studies. One outcome is the presentation of the Symposium proceedings, published with the generous support of the National Agency for Preservation of the Georgian Cultural Heritage.

The forthcoming proceedings include the papers of almost 100 leading scholars from the Caucasus region, Europe and the United States. They highlight and summarize discoveries and investigations in the field from the past 20 years; define directions for additional art historical studies; and discuss the mechanisms available to raise the level of international scholarship in Georgian Cultural Studies. An additional aim is the creation of enhanced methods of improving international collaboration and networking opportunities between art historians specializing in the South Caucasus area. And finally, the proceedings pay particular attention to the ever-evolving contextualization of Georgian art in relation to its European and Asian counterparts, as well as to Georgia’s contribution to the world’s past and present cultural heritage.

By taking into the consideration the political and social changes in the region, the themes at the Symposium focused on a combination of academic studies and the practice and problems of cultural heritage preservation in Georgia, thereby fostering much-needed discussions on the role and potential of cultural heritage for economic development via cultural tourism, culturally-based projects for development, etc.

I am especially pleased to note how many scholars expressed interest in presenting their work, which confirms the growing international importance of Georgian cultural studies. I would like to thank our many esteemed colleagues who have contributed their time and scholarly efforts to the placement of Georgian culture and its many achievements in their appropriate place in world art history.

As my final note, I must take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Organizational Committee and the Symposium Project Team for their creativity and hard work in assembling the program; Georgian authorities for their advisement; and local and international donor and sponsor organizations for their generous support in making the Symposium a success.

Maka Dvalishvili

Project Leader

GACC International Initiative for Georgian Cultural Studies

President, Georgian Arts and Culture Center

The symposium “Georgian Arts in the Context of European and Asian Cultures,” dedicated to Georgian art and culture in general, conveys a significant strategic trend in state cultural policy. By simultaneously observing our remote past in the light of our vast relations and historical-cultural context, it gave us an opportunity to have a deeper and more objective comparison.

As it is well known, six international symposiums on the issues of Georgian art, held from 1977-1989 in Italy and Georgia, organized by G. Chubinashvili Institute of Georgian Art History were of special significance for popularization of Georgian culture and science and for their promotion on an international scale. Initiator and inspirer of the events was full member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Vakhtang Beridze, a prominent scholar and public man of our times. After a nearly 20 years gap, the necessity to hold analogous symposiums has emerged.

The present collection of papers provides a good affirmation of the goal of the current symposium: To generate the interest of an international scientific community in Georgian culture and to promote collaboration between Georgian and foreign scholars. This collection is comprised of the best works from Georgian and foreign scholars who have written on issues concerning Georgian art.

The symposium, which once again widely displayed Georgian culture and its originality, is an event of special significance in art studies and the scholarly environment of Georgia in general.

Nikoloz Vacheishvili

Director General

National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia

Symposium Bodies

The Symposium is organized by the Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia and Georgian Arts and Culture Center

Co-organizers: *Department of Tourism and Resorts of Georgia; Georgian National Academy of Sciences; Giorgi Chubinashvili National Center of Georgian Art History and Monuments Protection; Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University; Ministry of Education, Tourism and Sports of Achara Autonomic Republic; Tbilisi State Academy of Arts.*

Advisory board: *Nikoloz Vacheishvili, Chairman, Minister of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia; Dimiti Tumanishvili, G. Chubunashvili National Center of Georgian Art History and Monuments Protection, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts; George Bugadze, Rector of Tbilisi State Academy of Arts; Otar Bubashvili, Chairman of the Department of Tourism and Resorts of Georgia; Roin Takidze, Minister of Education, Culture and Sports Achara Autonomic Republic; Tamar Beruchashvili, Deputy State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration; Thomas V. Gamkrelidze, President of Georgian National Academy of Sciences;*

Leading implementing organization: *Georgian Arts & Culture Center*

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We would like to acknowledge Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia, Department of Tourism and Resorts of Georgia; Ministry of Education, Tourism and Sports of Achara Autonomic Republic, Administration of Governor in Kakheti Region for their support in realization of the Symposium.

We have the deepest gratitude for Georgian National Academy of Sciences, G. Chubunashvili National Center of Georgian Art History and Monuments Protection, I. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, Georgian National Museum, The University of Georgia, Georgian Historical Monuments Defense and Survival Center; Merab Berdzenishvili International Culture Center «Muza».

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We have the deepest gratitude to the members of scientific council Dimitry Tumanishvili, Michael Abramishvili, Anna Kldiashvili, Nino Gaganidze, Nana Kuprashvili, Giulia Caneva for their enormous work.

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Vakhtang Beridze is a person who does not need to be introduced. As undoubtedly one of the most distinguished Georgian art historians; the teacher of a number of generations of art historians, architects, painters, directors, and actors; and the originator of and participant in many initiatives, he will never vanish from the memory of Georgian society. He was also famous overseas: colleagues knew him as a distinguished scholar, whereas others, who have ever met him, found him to be a widely educated intellectual and a fascinating person. His broad-mind was what supported him in his relations with people of different professional backgrounds, ages and nationalities. It was this feature that helped determine the success that Vakhtang's and his Italian friends, Adriano Alpago-Novello's and Nino Kaukhchishvili's (great appreciators of Georgian culture), had in organizing the International Scientific Meetings on Georgian Art History time after time.

As it is widely recognized, the symposiums of Georgian art were held six times from 1974-1989. Three of them, initiated by the G. Chubinashvili Institute of Georgian Art History and its director V. Beridze, were held in Georgia and judging by their reception, their popularity equaled that of the Kartvelologian congress. Because of this, nobody was surprised, when during the 2007 Symposium in New York – a joint project of Columbia University, Georgian Arts and Culture Center and the Tbilisi State Academy of Art – the idea of establishing the annual meeting of scholars of Georgian art was launched. The suggestion to revive the tradition of the symposiums and dedicate them to the memory of V. Beridze followed.

Only the future will show how productive the cooperation between Georgian and overseas art researchers will be, and also what will be the frequency and format of the symposiums. Yet, the most significant fact is that the first steps toward the rebirth of the collaboration have already taken place, and it is now up to our enthusiasm and long term vision to determine how successful and fruitful it becomes.

Dimitri Tumanishvili

Chairmen of Symposium Scientific Council

G. Chubinashvili National Center of Georgian Art History and Monuments Protection

Tbilisi State Academy of Arts

In 1974, in Bergamo, Italy, an international symposium dedicated to Georgian art was held. The event was initiated by our foreign colleagues: Paolo Verzone, a prominent expert in the history of medieval European and Byzantine architecture and professor at Bergamo University; Nino Kaukhchishvili, our compatriot from Italy; and architects Adriano Alpago Novello and Enzo Hibsich. The above individuals received backing from Vakhtang Beridze, the prominent Georgian scholar and public person, who succeeded, not only in promoting the scientific-research program thought out Giorgi Chubinashvili, but also in significantly contributing to the promotion of Georgian art and art studies on an international scale.

Five international symposiums were held after the Bergamo meeting: two of them in Italy and three in Georgia. Initiator and leader of all three symposiums (both in management and scientific issues) was Vakhtang Beridze. Significant support was granted by the Chubinashvili Institute of Georgian Art History. Actively involved were the Georgian Academy of Sciences, different institutes of the humanities, as well as museums and art galleries. Of note is the support granted by Georgian governmental officials.

From the viewpoint of representation, the number of visiting and local speakers, the thematic diversity of the presented papers and the chronological range within which fell the discussed monuments, all three Georgian symposiums can be considered the large-scale events. Prominent art historians from different countries had a unique opportunity to familiarize themselves with Georgian culture and samples of ancient and modern Georgian art. These scholarly meetings resulted in a very interesting events: Centers for Georgian art studies were open in several European countries, including Italy, France, Germany and Belgium; Georgian scholars were invited to deliver lectures in different European universities; foreign scholars have visited Georgia with the same mission; our foreign colleagues have published articles, essays, catalogs, books, and albums dedicated to the Georgian art; exhibitions of the Georgian cultural heritage were held in Europe, USA, Russia, etc. Symposiums held in Italy and Georgia gained international recognition of Georgian art and the Georgian school of art studies.

“Step-by-step, Georgian art gains a foothold in the timeline of the general evolution of art; the foothold, which she deserves, thanks to high artistic and historical values of its own monuments. Still more is to be done both at home and abroad. Georgian art is inexhaustible. Still more monuments will be revealed and many problems will be awaiting for us; light will be shed on unknown pages of history; some of the already conceived pages probably will be elucidated differently in correspondence with newly acquired knowledge. Popularization of Georgian art both in Georgia and abroad must not be slowed down. Good undertakings must be continued and strengthened”. The recent symposium is a hopeful response to the above words by Vakhtang Beridze.

Teimuraz Sakvarelidze

G. Chubinashvili National Center of Georgian Art History and Monuments Protection

Ancient Georgia

Ancient Georgia



Nino Shanshashvili George Narimanishvili

*Archeological Research Center
of National Museum of Georgia. Georgia*

CULTURAL INTERACTIONS OF MESOPOTAMIA AND THE SOUTH CAUCASUS IN THE EARLY BRONZE AGE

Between the late 4th millennium and early 3rd millennium BC, new cultural elements appeared in the Kura-Araxes cultural region of the South Caucasus. In our opinion, these were influenced by the region's relations with Northern Mesopotamia. Cultural innovations included the use of mud-brick buildings (Kvatskhela, Kul-Tepe II, Shengavit) (A. Javakhishvili, L. Glonti, 1962, 15); cist tombs (Tamarisi, Koda, Kiketi, Ardasubani, Safar-Kharaba); burial of the dead under dwelling floors (Amiranis Gora); the adornment of building walls with polychrome paintings (Gudabertka); attempts to create ideogram scripts (Ozni, Amiranis Gora, Beshtasheni, Aradetis Orgora, Cixiagora); the development of painted pottery (Kvatskhela, Beshtasheni, Ozni) (N. Shanshashvili, 2005, 84) and miniature architectural models, such as incense burners (Kvatskhela, Ozni, Amiranis Gora, Khizanaant Gora, Digasheni); anthropomorphic clay figurines (Kvatskhela, Amiranis Gora, Khizanaant Gora, Cixiagora) (A. Javakhishvili, L. Glonti, 1962, 33) horned objects, or pot stands (Kvatskhela, Khizanaant Gora, Kulbakebi, Zveli, Arich), seals (Akhali Jinvali, Gudabertka); stamped pottery (Kvatskhela); and anthropomorphic clay high relief (Natsargora).

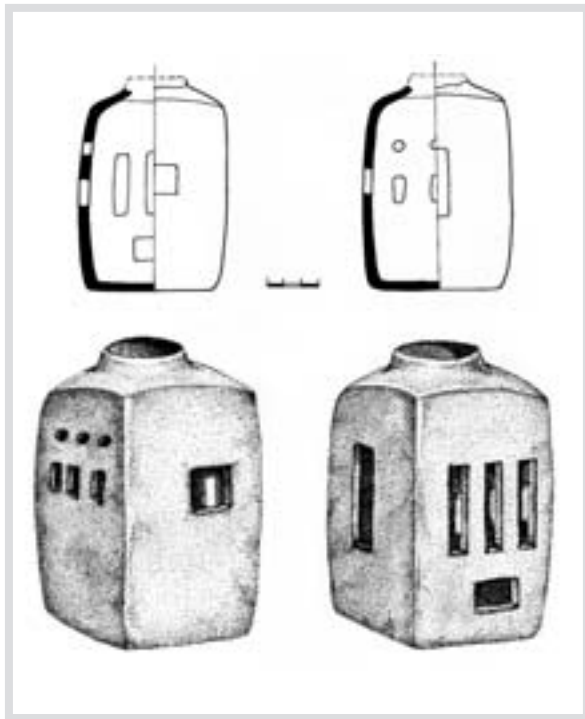
These cultural innovations must have been linked to Mesopotamian influences. Such cultural practices emerged in Mesopotamia in the 7th millennium BC and remained in use until the 2nd millennium BC. The artifacts discovered in the South Caucasus were local imitations of Mesopotamian models.

Connected to Mesopotamian cultic practice are miniature models of buildings or incense burners. These models have been found in Eridu Abu-Shakhrain

in the Ubaid period, also in the Level XI Temple at Tepe Gawra, which dates to the second half of the 4th millennium B.C., and in Khafajah of the Jemdet Nasr period (3200-2800 B.C.) (B.I. Goff, 1963, fig. 147, 237, 328, 496). A model of a circular building was found in Mari (2700-2500 B.C.) (Fortin 1999, 278). These kinds of architectural models or vessels for keeping incense have been found in Kvatskhela (pic. I), Amiranis Gora, Khizanaant Gora (pic. II) (I. Kikvidze, 1972, tab.XXIV-1) Ozni and Digasheni. It is significant that we have not found these kinds of models either in Anatolia or in other regions of the Caucasus.

Clay objects with a flat base and two horn-like projections have been found in Level XI at Tepe Gawra (B. I. Goff 1963, 134, fig. 562), similar "horn-objects" are characteristic of the Kura-Araxes culture. These small-size objects, such as the model incense burners, have been found in a temple and are considered as the cult objects in Tepe-Gawra. "Horn objects" of the same period have been found in Tell-Brak. Usually, "horn objects," as amulets, were functioning from the Halaf period in the Near East.

Abstract representations-sign symbols had appeared on sites of the Kura-Araxes culture (Ozni, Beshtasheni, Kvatskhela, Kvemo Aranisi) by the first half and middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. (pic. III, 1, 2). Sign-symbols are generally scratched on raw clay before the firing of Kura-Araxes pottery, while representations in relief, occasionally painted, are also attested. Painted vessels with similar iconography, though revealing a richer set of ornaments, have been brought to light in Turkey, in the Upper Euphrates region, on Early Bronze Age II and III sites (Arslantepe, Degirmentepe, Han Ibrahim Shah, Imamoglu, Korucutepe). The painted pottery tradition had a long history in Northern Mesopotamia and in the Upper Euphrates basin. Ornamental motifs used to adorn pottery in the 3rd millennium B.C. in Eastern Anatolia and the South Caucasus were quite similar to those used by the potters of Hassuna, Halaf and Ubaid cultures. The sign-symbols of the Kura-Araxes culture reveal a striking similarity with the hieroglyphic scripts of the ancient civilization: Sumerians, Proto-Elamite, Proto-Indian and Hittite-Luvian. The sign-symbols of



Model of building from Kvatskhela.

the Kura-Araxes culture and some ornamental motifs have been found to have parallels in North Mesopotamian ceramic ornamentation, where Kura-Araxian-like ornamental motifs existed for millennia, starting from the Halaf ceramics up to the mid 3rd millennium (N. Shanshashvili, 2005, 84). From our point of view, South Caucasian sign-symbols derive from proto-Sumerian writing systems. Consequently, the Kura-Araxes sign-symbols apparently originated from the same source, where the concept of writing was born.

Mesopotamian influence is apparent in the clay anthropomorphic high relief (height 45 cm, width 31 cm, pic. IV) discovered at the Natsargora ancient settlement site, which dates to the end of the Early Bronze Age (the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C.). The building where the high relief was found also dates to the end of the Early Bronze Age.

The high relief, which is damaged, is anthropomorphic. The upper part is decorated with seven extensions. The middle and highest one divides the relief in two symmetrical parts. From the central extension, on both sides of the ridge, at a lower level, there are hollows. In the left hollow is set the obsidian "eye" (the right "eye" is lost). Below the "eyes," on both sides of the ridge, are "spirals" in relief, formed with

concentric circles. On the right side of the relief, in the center of the spiral, are set the obsidian "eye" and "eyelashes." This terra-cotta high relief has no analogies in South Caucasian artifacts; however, a clay idol from the Aragvi gorge belongs to the same period.

Anthropomorphic images with incrustated obsidian eyes appear in the South Caucasus at the end of the Early Bronze Age. Two hearth trivets ornamented with obsidian "eyes" have been discovered. One was found in the village of Zveli, the other at the ancient settlement of Berikldeebi, in the Bedeni culture layer.

The high relief is stylistically like the anthropomorphic images (H. Z. Kosay, 1976, tab. 83-58, 59; 85-51, 69, 70) made in high relief depicted on big clay vessels discovered in layers IX-X of the Pulur ancient settlement in Anatolia (beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C.). The clay anthropomorphic hearths were found on the same ancient settlement, which have the eyes and mouth made by relief spirals (H.Z. Kosay, 1976, tab. 19-1; 21-1,3).

The Natsargora high relief is similar to the small-size anthropomorphic sculptures discovered in the Tell-Brak "Eye Temple" (3rd-4th millennia B.C.) (B. I. Goff, 1963, fig. 657-660), and also to the alabaster stele discovered in Mari, dating to the same period (M. Fortin, 1999, fig. 295), and the anthropomorphic figures depicted on early dynastic cylinder seals. The Natsargora high relief is in some way similar to that of a beardless hero with untidy hair, who is fighting beasts of prey with his sword; this is depicted on the cylinder signet found throughout the early-dynastic period. According to the different indicators (hairstyle, cloths, headscarfs, etc.), it is now thought that these signets were prepared in the Muslim period, i.e., 2800-2700 B.C.

Figures of fighters with masks and crowns topped by rays appear on the cylinder seals of the same period. In some cases, a third eye is placed in the forehead. During the Akkadian period such figures were not depicted on the seals. Some archaeologists find these images similar to Ningirsu or related gods. As Ch. Fosset commented, cylinder seals on which fighting motifs are depicted indubitably represented amulets (Ch. Fosset, 2001, 45-56). The great hero figure depicted on

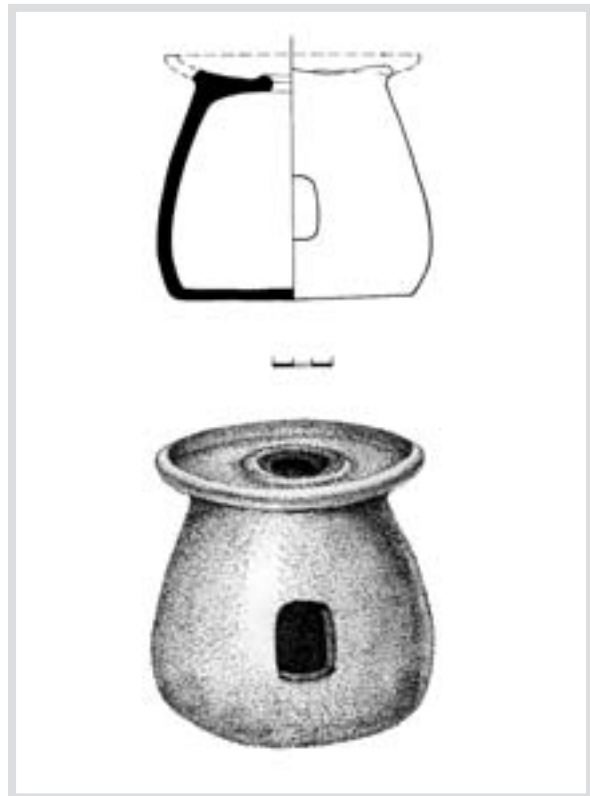
Mesopotamian seals is very similar to the painted image on a building in Arslantepe VIA (end of the 4th millennium B.C.), in Anatolia. This figure has untidy hair and rake hands (M. Frangipane 1997, 48, fig. 14).

Typologically, the Natsargora high relief comes closer to the clay and stone plaques, figures or masks found throughout Mesopotamia from the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. to the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. They depicted images of different mythological scenes, gods or demons. The ancient Mesopotamians placed these images in the entrance door of a building or hung them on the walls in order to protect the building from evil forces.

This custom is often described on Assyrian clay plaques: "I put Lugalgiru and Alamu on the right and left of my door. I placed the god Lugalgiru at my door, the strong god." Sometimes the image was painted on the house wall, or was depicted as a bas-relief. At the entrances of towns, palaces and temples the Mesopotamians erected protective stone, bronze and silver colossuses (Ch.Fosset, 2001, 46).

There were two different categories of spirits and demons – good and evil. The good spirits had protective functions. They had to live in the body of a human being, in the house or palace so that evil spirits could not locate it. There were no empty places; Mesopotamians believed that if a good spirit left a human body, an evil spirit would try to occupy the empty place. So, from the ancient Mesopotamians' point of view, the human being and his home were always occupied by supernatural forces (Ch. Fosset, 2001, 19). This kind of a function had to have the zoological and anthropomorphic hearth trivets spread in the South Caucasus in the Early Bronze Age.

It's very difficult to determine the function of the Natsargora high relief. It is known that high relief terra cotta and stone votive plaques or masks existed throughout Mesopotamia from the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C., particularly from the early dynastic period until the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C.; it appears that images dedicated to the gods were placed on house or altar walls. Between them were the gods' images, mythological, or cult scenes, also images of different demons or masks which pro-



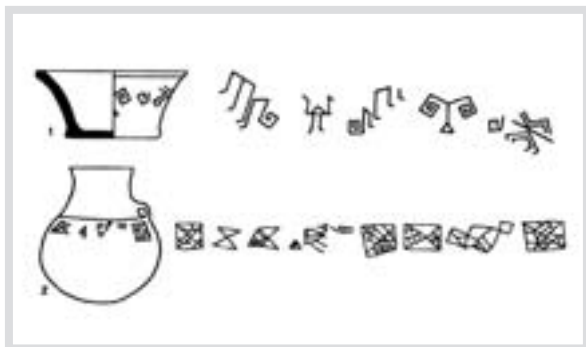
Incense burner from Khizanaant Gora

tected the house from evil spirits.

It is possible that the Natsargora high relief was hung on a wall, or stood on a podium; it is also possible that it was used in rituals and as a mask. Typologically, the Natsargora relief is close to Mesopotamian "votive plaquettes," but stylistically it is very similar to the anthropomorphic images discovered in Eastern Anatolia (Pulur, Arslantepe).

At the end of the 4th millennium B.C., stone-built tombs (pic. V) appeared in the South Caucasus; archaeologists believe they were built for the noble persons of the community.

In the 4th and 3rd millennia B.C., stone or brick-built tombs were very rare in the Near East. In each case they were distinguished by rich inventories of grave goods and accordingly represented the tombs of nobles. Stone or brick-built tombs with rich inventories appeared in the Elazig-Malatya region of Anatolia. In the so called "Royal" tomb, found in Arslantepe VI 1st Level and dating to 3000-2900 B.C., a large amount of black burnished pottery, metal weapons and adornments of South Caucasian origin were found, among them was a diadem-like exemplar

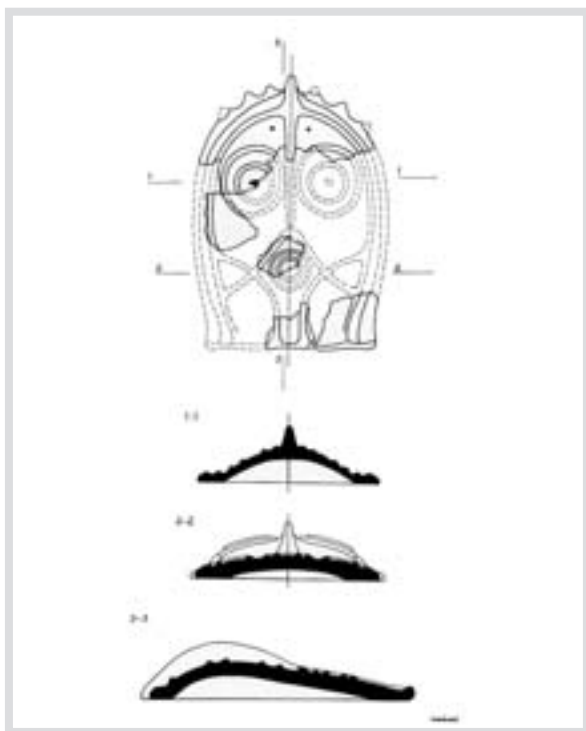


Sign-symbols from: 1. Ozni; 2. Amiranis Gora

discovered at Kvatskhelai. In the opinion of M. Frangipane, most of the dead buried in the tomb were foreigners, Caucasians, but successors of noblemen and an old elite (M. Frangipane, 2003, 33-34).

Two brick-built tombs were discovered in Kocutepe B level, which dates to 3500-3000 BC. The inventories of these tombs and the architectural finds have parallels in the XI-IX levels at Tepe Gawra, in the Uruk cultural area, where the burying of deceased nobles in stone or brick tombs decorated with diadems was not uncommon.

From our point of view, the stone tombs in the South Caucasus were constructed by imitating those of Upper Mesopotamia, because some persons of the



High relief from Natsargora

Kura-Araxes culture's society already had pretensions of being "king." They tried to imitate the Tepe-Gawra noblemen visually at least, even though it seems that they lacked the economic status for this pretension.

The period from the end of the 4th millennium to the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C. in the South Caucasus was marked a series of social changes. The period saw the emergence of large and small shrines (Kvatskhela, Gudabertka, Amiranis Gora, Shengavit) and the burial of pagan priests and "kings" in special graves (Sachkhere, Tamarisi, Amiranis Gora, Kiketi, Koda, Safar-Kharaba) with distinct burial inventory and insignia. Another change was brick houses, possibly belonging to nobles.

These facts attest to the presence of a social class enjoying greater privileges than ordinary community members. Religious, or community property already existed in this culture that needed protection. The sign system served to record and to store related information. These facts clearly confirm Northern Mesopotamian cultural influence on the material aspects of the Kura-Araxes culture from the end of the 4th millennium B.C. Where could the contact zone of the Kura-Araxes culture and the Mesopotamians have been? Mesopotamian ceramics and imports as such are not seen in the Kura-Araxes cultural period in the Caucasus. But Kura-Araxes pottery appears in a small amount on the Upper Euphrates in the middle of the 4th millennium B.C., in Arslantepe, in the Elazig-Malatya region, which contributed to the strong economic prosperity of this period. The Elazig-Malatya region's economic prosperity was connected to the penetration of Uruk traders in the middle of the 4th millennium B.C. It is possible that the commercial interests of the Mesopotamians spurred the development of metallurgy as well as the beginning of the Bronze Age, with its concurrent economic and cultural revival. The result of these processes included demographic growth and the spread of the Kura-Araxes culture over extensive territories. From our point of view, the contact zone of Sumerian merchants and Caucasian metallurgist existed precisely in this region.

In the opinion of M. Frangipane, Arslantepe's monumental architecture and wealth points to the exist-

ence of an early state organisational system here (M. Frangipane, 1997, 45-48). The source of Arslantepe's population's wealth was the metal trade. This is proved by the finding of a hoard of weapons in one of the rooms (A 113) of Building III. Arslantepe played an important role in Syrian-Mesopotamian relations as it was located at the borderline between the two different cultural areas. Consequently, at the end of the 4th millennium Malatia represented an economically developed and well-organized regional center and Kura-Araxes area tribes could supply bronze and probably gold from the middle of the 4th millennium B.C.

It became apparent that for the "Caucasians" it was not enough to supply raw metals, and in Arslantepe's VI B-1 period, ca. 3000-2900 B.C., the "Caucasians" destroyed the city. The introduction of the Kura-Araxes culture negatively influenced the development of Arslantepe. The "Caucasians" couldn't join the local economic system, which caused a short-term economic crisis in the Malatya region (M. Frangipane, 2003, 32-34). It is possible that for some period of time the "Caucasians" were able to monopolize the East Anatolian market and connected directly with Mesopotamian merchants, as in the first half and the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C., their black burnished pottery appear in the cities of North Syria (Tell-Brak, Tell-Mozan). We can assume that at the turn of the 3rd-4th millennia B.C., people of the Kura-Araxes studied Mesopotamian cultural achievements and tried to introduce them into the South Caucasus.

It is possible that in the first half of the 3rd millennium an administrative bureaucratic machine – a primitive copy of the Mesopotamian theocratic administrative model – was in formation in the South Caucasus in the Early Bronze Age. Despite this, there are no traces of monumental architecture and sign-symbols failed to turn into written language. Small villages of the Kura-Araxes culture failed to develop into cities/towns. No matter why, since the reasons are not clear to us, this society did not rise to the level of an "urban civilization."



Tomb from Safar-Kharaba

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REVISITING THE SILVER VESSELS FROM TRIALETI

In this paper I revisit two silver objects with representational art from kurgans in Georgia of the Trialeti culture, excavated in the late 1930's and belonging to the early second millennium BCE, which I first briefly discussed in my doctoral dissertation (K.S. Rubinson, 1976). Briefly, the contexts of these objects are two of the Trialeti kurgans of the "flowering period," the rich Middle Bronze Age burials first excavated on, and named for, the Trialeti plateau (B.A. Kuftin, 1941). The burials, lying under large mounds and some with long stone roadways approaching them, were of elite individuals. The large graves contained many kinds of burial goods, including wagons, ceramics, bronze weapons and vessels, gold objects including jewelry and vessels, silver vessels, objects of obsidian and other materials.

The two silver vessels with figural decoration excavated in Georgia are a goblet from kurgan 5 and a bucket from kurgan 17. In 1987, another silver goblet of this culture was excavated in Armenia, at the site of Karashamb (V.E. Oganessian 1988; V.E. Oganessian, 1992a, 84-102; V.E. Oganessian, 1992b, 26-36).

The two goblets are similar in shape and size and share angular rosette ornaments at the base. The Karashamb goblet is more complex in decorative layout and iconography. Details of the treatment of the human figures differ in the two; for example, the figures on the Trialeti goblet have beards and those on the Karashamb vessel are beardless. Overall, the goblet from Trialeti presents a relatively static and quiet scene, in contrast to the greater variety, movement, and violence on the Karashamb goblet. However, despite their differences in style and tone, the two goblets share a principal scene of a large seated individual holding a goblet before a hoofed table flanked by animals approached by walking figures also holding goblets. Boris Kuftin, when he first published the Trialeti excavations, suggested that the walking figures on the Trialeti goblet resembled the much later figures on rock reliefs from the sites of Carchemish

and Zincerli, now south-eastern Turkey (B.A. Kuftin, 1941, 89-90). Although these were the only comparisons he illustrated in his book, Kuftin mentioned other archaeological materials from Anatolia. Among the similarities he suggested was Cappadocian cylinder seals, a broad category of seals used in trade in the early second millennium BCE (B.A. Kuftin, 1941, 88). My research demonstrates that Kuftin's observation was in fact very astute; most specifically, the seals of the local Anatolian style share many iconographic elements with the Trialeti-culture silver goblets (K. S., Rubinson, 2006). Highly specific iconographic elements such as headless figures with stalk-like neck lying in positions with limbs akimbo are virtually identical on the Karashamb goblet and a seal impression from Kültepe-Kanesh in Anatolia (K.S. Rubinson, 2006, 256-257).

Kültepe had a living-quarter where men from Assyria in northern Mesopotamia came to trade tin and textiles for silver and other goods. In the large ancient city, a variety of archaeological materials was found, among them clay tablets which record trading adventures and transactions. These tablets were sealed with cylinder seals in several styles, principally what are now called Assyrian style and Anatolian local style. The Trialeti silver goblets share many details with the Anatolian local style seals rather than the Assyrian style seals, even when they show the same presentation scene (K.S. Rubinson, 2003; K.S. Rubinson, 2006, 257-259). Many other visual details also indicate strong connections between the images on the goblets and the local style seal impressions from Anatolia.

In addition to this class of cylinder seals, there are other objects which demonstrate a connection between the Trialeti culture materials and Kültepe-Kanesh. Dominique Collon first published the observations that two objects excavated at Trialeti, a copper/bronze cauldron and the silver bucket from kurgan 17, had handles of a type known at Kültepe, as well as other sites to the west of Trialeti. (D. Collon, 1982, 95-101; K.S. Rubinson, 2001). With more materials from the Kültepe excavations published, we can now see that many examples of this kind of handle - a basket handle inserted in a looped piece of metal which is attached by a third metal piece, either butterfly-shaped or barrel-shaped, to the vessel itself - were found at

the site (I.M. Akyurt, 1998, Fig. 103, j,k,l,m). Could it be that the bucket and the cauldron were imported from Kültepe, along with whatever carried the borrowed imagery of the goblets?

While the cauldron remains challenging, because of the figural imagery it seems possible to demonstrate that the bucket is an exotic in the Trialeti Culture assemblage. As in the case of the goblets, there are iconographic and stylistic similarities between the bucket and Anatolian local style seals. On both the bucket and local Anatolian seals, animal hair is represented both as bands of hatched lines and also as alternating groups of hatched lines dividing the body. And there is an identical guilloche on the bucket and seals from Kanesh, though this is a less complex and thus less determinative element. What is striking on the bucket, in contrast to the goblets, is the overall distribution of the animals on the field of the bucket surface, generally without a groundline. Such overall patterning is found on Anatolian local style seals from Kültepe.

However, no object identical to the bucket can be found in the assemblage so far published from the excavations at Kültepe. Thus it is the circumstantial evidence: the similarities of the arrangement of the visual field and details of iconography between the Anatolian local style seals and the bucket, together with the kind of handle and handle attachment, that point to a possible Anatolian origin for the bucket. That the bucket may not be local may also be suggested by the difference in appearance of the figural surface on the bucket and on the goblet. The relief on the bucket is lower and flatter than that on the goblet; it would be useful to have a technical study of the precise mechanical production of the relief surfaces of both vessels to see if the manufacturing techniques are significantly different, as they appear to be.

In the context of the possibility that the bucket is imported, the observation made by Kuftin that two animals at the bottom of the bucket are virtually identical to two on the goblet raises some interesting questions (B.A. Kuftin, 1941, 87 and fig. 93). The vessels come from two different burials, dating to roughly the same century or two (Gogadze's Middle Bronze II group) (E.M. Gogadze, 1972). If we propose that the animals on the bucket inspired the ones on the goblet, how might we understand the artistic tradition into

which the animal images were borrowed?

In the long period before the coming of kurgan burials and increased social inequality to the Georgian highlands, the Kura-Araxes artistic tradition had both two- and three-dimensional representations of humans and animals. Although animals sometimes were depicted in rows on ceramic vessels, they could also be presented as discrete single elements. In the subsequent Early Kurgans period, the same characteristics existed and we also can observe a penchant for containing decoration within boundaries (K.S. Rubinson, 2006).

In the following period of the Trialeti Culture, we see new iconography on the Trialeti goblet. As described above, the animals in the lower register may have been copied from the bucket itself, the presentation scene from a seal or sealing not preserved. In the application of these new images to the goblet, the maker may have brought to the creation of the decoration the orientation of animals in rows already known. In addition, the boundary lines for the scenes may also be based on pre-existing traditions, although, as N. Japaridze has noted (N. O. Japaridze, 1988, 16), the figures are standing on ground lines for the first time in Georgian art, a quality seen in much ancient Near Eastern art of this period and earlier. Also new in Georgia at this time is imagery presented as a narrative, with the introduction of the elements of time and trajectory, common for centuries in the art of the ancient Near East and frequent in cylinder seals.

Although I have suggested that the silver bucket from Trialeti is imported from Anatolia and have demonstrated here and elsewhere that the source of much of the iconography of the Trialeti goblet is likely Anatolian local style seals and other, possibly foreign, goods such as the bucket, there remains the question of why we see this new imagery in the art of Georgia at this time. In an analysis of the Karashamb goblet, Adam Smith suggested that "the most compelling aspect ... is its representation of a rather limited set of practices central to the reproduction of political order: war and conquest, feasting and celebration, punishment and ritual, hunting and the technology of violence. The central theme of the piece is clearly the conquest of enemies and the glorification of the ruler and the apparatus of political authority." (A.T. Smith, 2001, 166).

In the Trialeti goblet, we see what may be the glorification of the ruler, but the other elements Smith describes do not appear. So Smith's explanation of the use of the borrowed iconography does not apply in the Trialeti case. How can we explain the choice of decoration on the Trialeti goblet? Is the borrowed iconography sufficient in itself to suggest the power of the local elite for whom the goblet was made – that is, as Mary Helms states, “By obtaining ... goods from afar, persons of influence, or elites, are involved in symbolically charged acts of both acquisition and transformation by which resources originating from locales outside society are obtained and brought inside society where they may be materially altered and/or symbolically reinterpreted or transformed to meet particular political-ideological requirements.” (M. W. Helms, 1993, 4). Does the imagery on the Trialeti goblet specifically speak to the vast distances covered and the goods brought from afar, such as perhaps the Trialeti bucket, as the local elites participated in the vital exchange network described only in part in the ancient texts as the Assyrian trading system, making the Middle Bronze age Southern Caucasus an essential part of the Ancient Near Eastern economy and vice versa? Is the Trialeti goblet itself, although made locally, an embodiment of the power of contact over distance because it carries symbol sets from far away, and could the individual with whom the goblet was buried one who had participated in a ceremony similar to that shown on the goblet? Could it be that this Trialeti tomb is somewhat later than that excavated at Karashamb, and that the rulers of the Trialeti culture no longer needed to remind their subjects, or their gods, of their physical prowess? That participation in the international trading network brought power and authority enough? As we refine the still elusive chronology of the Trialeti Culture, perhaps we will one day be able to suggest that scenario with assurance.

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SEMANTICS OF IMAGES AND MODEL OF THE UNIVERSE IN PRE-CHRISTIAN GEORGIAN CULTURE (ON KVATSKHELI DIADEM EXAMPLE)

The monuments of ancient material culture found on the territory of Georgia are characterized by amazing stability of artistic image-depiction. With artifacts greatly remote from one another in the time span we come across countless, almost identical images indicating the persistence of faith-conceptions and a very profound tradition feeding them (M. Khidasheili, 2001, 112). Certain images of beasts and birds, as well as images of ornamental motifs are constantly found throughout a long historical epoch, with some of them disappearing for a while and then recurring again, others, transformed in a way, shifting from the archaic period to the Christian culture. These image-depictions themselves, their coordination, semantic links, permit to shape a certain notion about the world view of the people of those times and to try to reconstruct the model, the picture of the world existing in their consciousness. We will attempt to fulfill this task on the basis of several examples of images depicted on a copper diadem dated by the 3rd millennium B.C.

The diadem, beautifying the head of a woman buried in one of the Kvatskheli graves, represents our earliest artifact decorated by figure image¹, and it contains such images, that are found in the monuments over the territory of Georgia over many millenniums. This images – two birds (cranes), three circles and a couple of deer are integral to the five-part structure of the carefully arranged general décor.

The key fact is that the composition is centripetal and the centre is made up of a circle, while on both of its sides, in a mirrorlike manner are symmetrically distributed other images.

The artistic language of the images is extremely la-

conic, meager, and even, economic. The images which were made with punches are schematic and simple, though fairly eloquent and informative. Such stylistics clearly points to the fact that these simple schematic images are not just designs to the diadem, but they bear certain function of sign-symbols. Sign-symbols are generally characteristic for the ancient agricultural cultures and among them, the Kura-Araxes culture as well, where this diadem was first created (B. Ribakov, 1966, 107; M. Chdasheli, 2001, 61; N. Urushadze, 1988, 28). At the very first glance it becomes evident that it is an object containing rather rich encrypted-encoded information, or, if we may say so, there is a broad "text" beyond it, which we are going to "read".

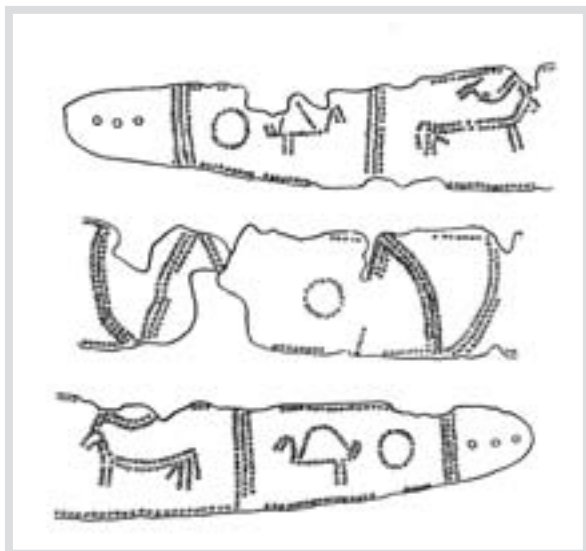
We'll start with the image of the crane.

According to ancient beliefs, crane is a symbol of spring, in other words, of the revival and revitalization of nature. It is a sign of awakening of the nature from sleep (death) and the beginning of a new agricultural year; that is why scholars associate it, quite justly, with fertility (L. Ghlonti, 1982, 61-62). Thus, the annual circulation of nature is encoded in this image. But here a question is bound to arise: why is the symbol of natural revival the crane and not the swallow that, as is common knowledge, that it is first to arrive among the birds and for this reason it is regarded as the first herald of spring? Presumably, we have to search for some other logics here and to reach down to some other, deeper strata of the crane as a symbol.

The multilayered character of the archaic face-images is an ordinary phenomenon and according to M. Elliade, the abundance of implications attached to one and the same face-image or word in archaic cultures indicates that the consciousness originating them visualized the world as an organic whole. The ancient man managed to grasp this wholeness through direct observation of the way of life of the crane (M. Elliade, 1999, 184).

The crane belongs to the knee-jointed species comprising of four families: heron, ibis, stork and crane. They are birds of prey, but the crane does not reveal any predatory features, and the white crane being particularly distinguished in this respect and was an object of worship in ancient eras (K. König, 1997, 121). At the same time the crane is the only one among

Ancient Georgia



Kvatskheli Diadem. 3rd millennium B.C. Scheme

this species of birds that on the arrival in a locality settles in the vicinity of humans; moreover, cranes often build their nests on the roofs of houses and return to one and the same place every spring (K. König, 1997, 122). It is also remarkable that the representatives of the crane family dwell in water resources: lakes, rivers, ponds, marshes etc., where from one bank, a man can strike an eye contact with a man on the other bank. Such water is considered as a boundary between of this world the next world in the mythologies of many (if not of all) nations (the river Styx – in Greek mythology, beneath the Nile – in Egyptian mythology and etc.). At the same time, water, and mainly running water, is the carrier of the information between the two worlds². In a word, the crane dwells between two worlds – this world and the next world, between the sacred and profane spaces because of its habitat and appears as a mediator between them. But what does its mediation represent in particular? In order to answer this question another aspect of water established according to the ancient faith-conception should be discussed. There is no life without water; water is the prerequisite of rain or irrigation, thus of natural fertility. It is equally necessary for the earth and all live creatures on earth. "Water is the symbol of all the possibilities, it is *fons et origo* (source and origin), place of gathering of all the potential of the objective reality. This all-inclusive definition covers another, highly important, aspect of water as an element: water is very

often identified with the male sperm (M. Eliade, 1999, 184). To maintain this point of view M. Eliade cites an example from the Sumerian language where the word "a" signifies both: the water and sperm. At the same time, it also denotes conception.

Thus, according to the above-cited information, two essential aspects have been identified in connection with the crane:

1. Water, as the connector of the profane and sacred spaces, or, on the contrary, marking them off, and the crane, dwelling on this boundary, representing a mediator between these two spaces.
2. Water as the fecundating element; in respect to human beings – the sperm.

At first glance the second aspect of water, appears to have nothing in common with the crane. However, if we keep in mind that in the mythology of numerous peoples, and in particular, in the faith-conceptions of European peoples, the crane or stork, is associated with the childbirth, in this case emphasizing the above-mentioned aspect of water seems quite relevant (M. Gimbutas, 1932, 135).

Even today the belief that a baby will certainly be born in a house on top of which a crane has built its nest is confirmed through the mythology of numerous peoples. There was a belief in the ancient time, according to which appearance of a crane in the sky flying from the South meant that a childless mother would have a baby, and even the cracking of the cranes's beak was regarded as the confirmation of the same fact. Even today, there is a tradition in Germany, when in spring, on Good Friday youngsters come out into the streets equipped with special jingles and imitate the clatter of the crane (K. König, 1997, 140). In ancient eras spring was the time for weddings.³

Thus, according to the beliefs of ancient man the crane helped spirits in the process of incarnation, in the process of approaching the immediate place of their embodiment; i.e., the crane served the role of a conductor, of a guide for the spirits. This mythological picture of a crane holding a wrapped-up baby by its beak is even today a rather widespread image in western countries, though no longer has anything it has nothing to tell to the contemporary man, who regards it as a naïve and fabulous image, since the basic

knowledge of the idea has been lost.

The link between a crane to the child's birth is also supported by the Georgian data as. In Samtskhe-Javakheti, in the village of Murjakheti there stood two megaliths, stone columns or whales – "lalia" and "dzikva" ("dzikva" - "milk stone" in Georgian)⁴. Women having no milk to feed their babies, as well as childless women, went up to those columns and brought some sacrifice – a black hen, a pigeon, a lamb - and kept vigil there. Such rituals were associated with child-bearing (N. Abakelia, 1991, 33). It is noteworthy that over the whale in the village of Gandza a pair of flying cranes is also depicted (A. Kldiashvili, M. Izoria, 2001, 29). Thus, the connection of a crane with child-bearing is confirmed in the mythology of various nations, as well as in Georgian materials.

On the basis of our previous discussion, a direct link between the crane and the birth of a human being took definite shape, but cranes are not represented singly on Kvatskheli diadem in the segments designated for them; a circle is set in behind their images. This was not accidental; therefore, now we have to discuss the significance of the circle and afterwards define what ideological connection these two symbols have with each other.

The symbolics of circles in ancient cultures is not so diverse and is characterized by a certain universality (C. Jung, 1962, 7-108). On the one hand, the circle is a symbol of eternity, of the endless circulation of the universe, which is characteristic for the developed civilizations (Egypt, Mesopotamia), and on the other hand, it was a symbol of the sun in earlier epochs. As is known, ancient man used a point, a cavity or a circle to depict the sun (N. Urushadze, 1989, 33). As we already know, three circles are found on the Kvatskheli diadem. According to the researcher of diadem, Ms L. Ghlonti, the circle in the centre of the diadem indeed represents the sun, while the other two (i.e. those behind the cranes) – represent the morning star and the moon, though Ms L. Ghlonti does not specify in her study which is which. This is natural, as their identification is practically impossible – all three circles are absolutely identical in shape and dimensions, which does not permit us to regard them as different astral bodies. Following this logic, it turns out that the three

suns are depicted on the diadem simultaneously, which at first glance seem absurd, though if we consider the diadem in its own context, the explanation can be found quite easily.

On the material monuments made by early agricultural tribes in general, and in Kura-Araxes culture in particular, the tendency of depicting celestial bodies and heavenly bodies rotating in the sky is evident (M. Khidasheli, 2001, 64). "Static" celestial bodies are not found in this culture; on the contrary, they were always shown in motion⁵. On the ceramics of the same age it was widespread to depict four spirals on the crown of a cross, portraying four different positions of one and the same celestial body (I. Surguladze, 1997, 44-53). The composition of two coupled spirals resembling spectacles were also indicative of the rotation of the sun, its two positions – the rising and setting, which implied the idea of the "death" and "rebirth" of the sun (M. Khidasheli, 2001, 64). In the case of the diadem the "static" celestial body is specifically depicted and even, threefold, in its visible shape, the circle, this at first glance contradicts the major tendency of the epoch. However, if we take this object – the diadem - not separately, or individually, but in the context of its own function and destination, we will get quite a different picture. In case the owner of the diadem was wearing it while serving in a ritual (i.e., while fulfilling the direct function of the object), the extreme "suns" would fall into the rear part, with the central one falling on the frontal part. Thus viewer would not have been able to see the circles simultaneously. However, while going all around the object he would be able to view each of them individually in consecutive order within a certain span of time. In this process he would actually behold the three positions of the celestial body – the sun: the sunrise, zenith and sunset, i.e. the birth, life and death. And man could perceive all this by means of the diadem revolving around a genuine circle. Thus, the sacred mystery of the sun's rotational cycle would be played out in the profane space. For this reason, acceptance "static" celestial body an unconventional shape for the epoch, becomes possible in the case of the diadem. In practical terms the principle is not violated here, as here too the rotation of the heavenly body is depicted, though not within the

limits of a single image (as is the case in Kura-Araxes spiral), but by means of three individual images. Consequently, by means of replicating one and the same form – the circle – three times, the concept of the cyclic form of the sun, or, more broadly, of the cyclic form of the astral world is highlighted in this case.

Thus, we can infer that behind the cranes on the diadem there are images of the suns. And here a new question arises: how is the crane associated with the sun? The connection of the signs of the crane and the sun is confirmed through numerous monuments of the Kura-Araxes culture. Most frequently the crane is found alongside with the spirals. “The pottery of the Kura-Araxes culture found on the territory of the South Caucasus is often decorated by the images of scrolls, and sometimes, together with water birds (the crane)” (L.Ghlonti, C.Davlianidze, 2001, 96). Such motifs are rather diverse. Besides, we think the image of the crane holding a scroll or spiral by its beak is of special interest. In order to identify this concept we have to go back to the semantics of the spiral. As we mentioned above, it is common in scientific literature to accept the idea that the spiral, especially when it is coupled and is revolving in different directions, personifies two positions of the sun, its rising and setting, i.e. the rotation of the sun is conveyed by the form of the spiral. If so, then what may the image of a crane holding a spiral by its beak mean? Is the crane holding the sun? To a certain extent, this image, as the crane is the herald of the spring, may be indicative of the increase of daylight, of the expanding of the sunlight. But this must be the only and probably, the most superficial layer of this picture. To disclose this deepest layer encrypted in the old Georgian ceremonial song “The Sun Indoors and the Sun Out-of-Doors” may prove helpful. Even today this song is rather popular in Georgia. “Although the text of the song “The Sun indoors and the Sun out-of-doors” may seem simple, a whole complex of ideas is hidden in it, which is indicative of the deepest stratum of experience of Georgian people” (N.Abakelia, 2001, 177). It is significant that this song was performed when a son was born into a family (but not when a daughter was), thus, it was connected with the so-called ritual of “the birth of the son”, which was performed at night (L.Gvaramadze, 1987, 12).

In the very first line “The sun inside and the sun outside”, two positions of the sun – inner and outer – is stated (N.Abakelia, 2001, 176; I.Surguladze, 2003, 36-57). This is a formula according to which ancient man perceived the movement of the sun, its rising and setting as from inside-out, and vice-versa, from the exterior into interior, as an eternal journey. The second strophe already represents direct summoning of the sun (“to the sun: “come inside, or: come home”), but here we find one contradiction: if “the sun indoors and the sun out-of-doors” is a constant, a permanent given, then why summon the sun so insistently? (This strophe is replicated at the end of every verse of this ceremonial song). Does it not seem likely that it may, to a certain extent, be linked to the birth of a child, i.e. to the birth of a son?

The fact is that on the mythological plane the sun and the sunrise are linked to the birth. In ancient religions the sun is born every day and dies every evening. So it appears, that the birth of the sun, or its entry into the inner space, here is equivalent to the son getting inside, or entering the body. But how can the sun enter a human being? In this respect it’s interesting to consider how ancient people regarded the sun. According to Georgian tradition the sun was called “the eye of the universe”. We also have the concept of “the eye of the family”, which was applied like an epithet to the best member of the family, distinguished by talent or some other merit. Thus, in the microcosmos the sun (the eye of the universe) represents excellence, distinction due to its qualities: it is eternal and is able to the power that grant life to this world, that is, to the “inside” of the unity of humankind, to all living creatures (plants, bests, humans). What can equal to the sun in the human microcosmos? It is human Spirit which is eternal and can grant life. Consequently, if this appeal concerns the astral body – the sun, on the macrocosmic plane, i.e. at the time of childbirth (the son), it implies his spirit. Thus, the sunrise, coming of the sun inside, into the home, must be indicative of the birth of child, i.e. must be indicative spirit entering the body.

Such a connection between the sun and human beings is confirmed by a number of expressions that have survived in the Georgian Language: “I swear by your sun”, “Your sun”, “I swear by the sun I could not

imagine you would be alive until now" (The Knight in the Panther's Skin"). Every human being had his/her sun (i.e. his/her share of the sun) (V.Bardavelidze, 1957, 111-114) and this immortal part of his/hers, the same as his/her spirit, in other words, this sun was the embodiment of his *self* (or *ego*), delivered from all the evil. Accordingly, it becomes clear that when appealing to the sun in this song, the singers appeal to the spirit of the son, to his "ego", who, in their opinion, stayed "outside" or beyond the physical world before his birth and now he had to enter this "inside", the concrete body, i.e. this physical world. Therefore, we can conclude that man's spirit, his "ego" is his sun, the sun of his microcosmos and if the spiral is the sign of the rotating sun, than the image – the crane holding a spiral by its beak - virtually represents bringing of the spirit of the newborn child from the other world into this world, from the next world into this life ("samzeo" - the world of the sun). We believe, that this specific idea is encoded in this widespread image of Kura-Araxes culture. We also think that the crane on the Kvatskheli diadem with a circle-sun at the back may be indicative of this idea.

Hence, as a result of the aforesaid we can define a number of conceptual strata of this sign-symbol, the crane:

1. The crane is the herald of spring and in general, is heralding the revival of the nature, thus pointing to the cyclicity of the nature.
2. The crane is the herald of birth of the child it is guiding human spirits from the next world to this world.

We can also make the following inference: the emphasis produced by means of the three independent circles depicted on the diadem, as we saw above, is focused on the sun, and probably, in general, on the cyclicity of the astral world, i.e. on the death-and-rebirth of the whole astral world, while by means of the crane emphasis is focused on the cyclicity of the nature, on its death and rebirth. In the same way, the crane, together with the circle-sun, embraces another aspect discussed by above – the birth of a human being.

Could it be indicative of the constant death and rebirth of a human being? In other words, can these images be the means of encoding human being's bodily



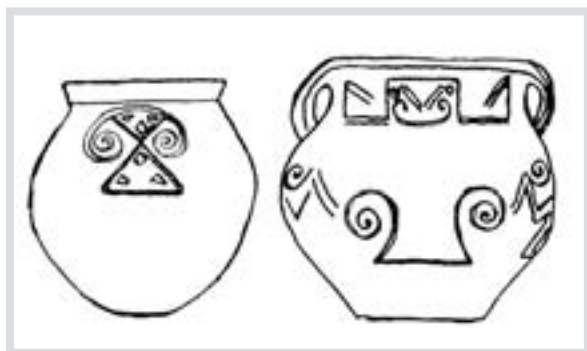
Ceramics with two coupled spirals.
Kura-Araxes culture. Scheme

revival and rebirth, which as is known, was widespread concept in the ancient world (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Western Asia and Greece)? The only way to find a convincing answer to this question lies through the analysis of the semantics of another image of the diadem, of the deer and through investigation of its relation to the other images of the diadem.

Since the Neolithic Age deer had participated in the beliefs and conceptions of the ancient population of Georgia (T.Chubinashvili, 1965, 167). Its images are widespread in the early agricultural societies, as well as in Georgian materials.

One of the aspects of the image of deer is related to its skin and hair, (I.Surguladze, 2003, 131-154), which is the symbol of earth and implies floral fertility and its cyclic revival (animals shedding their coats in spring can be categorized in the same context). It is noteworthy that on the images of deer, special emphasis is made on the phallus. It also relates to fertility, though this time it is indicative of the fertility of fauna.

Another, and probably the most important aspect of the deer, originates from its horns. The foundation for the sacral significance of the deer and its horns was laid in the early agricultural communities and then it was widely depicted in the folklore. In Georgian folklore the deer is regarded as a creature with supernatural strength, having connection with the heavenly world owing to its clustered upward-thrusting horns. A particularly remarkable conception is found in one of the Georgian fairy-tales: a man in his search for God



Ceramics with two coupled spirals.
Kura-Araxes culture. Scheme

ascends a hill and climbs up the horns of a deer that is standing there, thus reaching the sky (G.Tsotsanidze, 1987, 212). The fairy-tale makes clear that deer personifies the connection between different regions of the Universe ("sknelis"). That is the deer and its horns acquired the significance equivalent to the cosmogenic tree (I.Surguladze, 1997, 150), the tree personifying the universal image of the world with all three "sknelis": "qveskneli", or the nether world – the roots, "skneli", or the earthly world - the trunk, and "zeskneli" - the world above the earth populated by the gods - the crown of the tree). Thus, the deer conveys the concept of the wholeness of the world, the principle of the wholeness of the regularities operational in the world (M. Chdasheli, 2001, 112).

So, if we summarize all the aforesaid, we may draw such a picture:

The circle-suns of the diadem personify the cyclicity of the universe, i.e. the cycle of day-and-night. The crane, in general, is the image-portrayal of the annual cyclicity of nature and of the birth of man, while the deer, on the one hand, denotes fertility of flora and fauna in particular, and, on the other hand, is a sign of the wholeness of the world, of the unity of the regularities operating in it. Consequently, if we sum up the multi-layered meanings of this semantic line (the sun, the crane, the deer), it becomes clear-cut that they are united by a single idea, by the only regularity operating in the world – cyclicity. This is the central idea of the diadem, containing such a text that can be expressed in these terms: The principle of the unity of the world, cyclicity, or death and rebirth is operational in all the spheres of the profane world – the astral world (the

sun), the nature (flora and fauna – the crane, the deer) and in the human world as well. Man is involved in this sequence too, though his image is not found on the diadem. Here we find only an indication of the birth of a human beings. However, taking account of the fact that the diadem decorated with such a codified-enciphered "text" were used to adorn human beings and even the deceased, it becomes evident that here man is conceptualized as involved in the constant rhythm of the cyclicity, the transformation, death and rebirth, and in this way the concept of reincarnation is emphasized. This cyclicity is one aspect of ancient man's model of the universe, of his image of it, which became clear-cut through the analysis of the semantic line of the depictions we have discussed. The system of depicting the images of the diadem itself, the compositional structure, the principle of distributing them on the plane and their interrelationship permits interpretation of other aspects and other parameters of the universe – the time and space as well; however, these topics required additional papers.

Circle-Sun--	1) Cyclicity of the astral world (day-and-night cycle) 2) The Birth of man
Crane -----	1) Natural cyclicity (annual cycle) 2) Man's birth
Deer -----	1) Natural Cyclicity, revival of flora and fauna 2) Principle of unity of universal regularities
Man -----	Cyclicity <i>Constant cycle of death and rebirth - reincarnation</i>

Notes

- 1 Later on, in the Late Bronze Age, decorating metal artifacts with thematic compositions acquired systematic character and establishes traditionally (bronze engraved belts, axes, etc.)
- 2 It is notable, that the treasures were always buried by such water, mainly on the deserted river banks, i.e. in places whence it could be moved to and fro. (O. Lortkipanidze, 2001, 178-189).
- 3 According to a suggestion in ancient eras human reproduction, identical to that of animals', was subject to a chronological principle and was regulated so that reproduction occurred in spring, while birth took place mainly in winter, by Christmas time (coinciding with Christ's birth). (R. Shtainer, 1916, 173)
- 4 It is notable that the whales were installed by the water as it was supposed to be the place of strength. (M. Makalatia, 1985, 102).
- 5 According to the Georgian ethnographic materials the halting of the Sun was generally identified with death. (N. Urushadze, 1989, 31-45).

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THE BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENTS FROM TRIALETI

BACKGROUND

The Bronze Age (III-I millennia B.C.) architecture in South Caucasus is represented by three main types: wooden log, adobe and stone. Among stone architecture special place hold so called "cyclopean" monuments. They are distinguished by their scale that differ them from other South Caucasus monuments. The term "cyclopean" does not embrace all particularities of such monuments and therefore it bears certain comparative-ness. Hence, we also use term "cyclopean" tentatively for those monuments that are built by big size rough or slightly worked on stones. "Cyclopean" buildings constitute one form of "megalithic" constructions.

"Cyclopean" settlements and fortresses are widespread all over Georgia and south-west Azerbaijan. They also exist in north-east Turkey around lakes Van and Urmia and northern Iraq. In Europe "Cyclopean" monuments can be found in Mediterranean (Nuraga, Naveta, Torre). In Greece "Cyclopean" fortresses appear in the second half of the second millennia B.C. The same type of fortresses can be found also in Turkey, on the territory of old Caria (L. Melikset-Beg 1938; G. Narimanishvili, N. Mgeladze 2002; W. Kleiss 1969; W. Kleiss 1972; S. Kroll 1984; M. Ingram, G. Summers 1979; O. Belli 1993; T. Brwon, 1958, G. Narimanishvili, N. Schanschaschvili 2001).

Main feature that distinguishes Georgian "Cyclopean" settlements and fortresses is that all types of constructions – dwellings together with associated fortress walls or stand alone fortresses are built from big size rough, non-worked stones. This type of construction technique appears in the South Caucasus from III millennia B.C., although the earliest "Cyclopean" settlements does not have fortification walls. The technique almost disappears in the middle of the first millennia B.C. Later on stone was used only for foundations and lower level of structures while upper parts

of walls were built from adobe. At the same time more important become wooden elements. Wood was used as "armature" for walls or from wood logs were built load bearing constructions of walls while empty spaces were filled in by pebble and adobe. Around the same period worked stone appear as construction material. In the Middle Ages in many of the South Caucasus settlements, even in big ones were built using so called dry, without mortar as binder, technique for stone walls. But those settlements did not have fortresses or fortification systems. Therefore we use term "cyclopean" only for those settlements and fortresses that are built using "dry" technique and have fortifications.

There are different opinions about dating and interpretation of "cyclopean" settlements in the South Caucasus. Some scholars suggest that they appear in III millennia B.C. S. Esaian who studied "cyclopean" fortresses in north-eastern Armenia could confirm only one case of the III millennia B.C. stratum. The same period levels were found at Beshkenasheni and Tezi "cyclopean" settlements in Trialeti (B. Kuftin 1941, p.108). Although it is not clear what is a relationship between those levels and "cyclopean" fortresses (B. Kuftin 1941, 115-117).

It seems that in XVI-XV centuries B.C. "cyclopean" walls enclosures around the settlements starting appeared (Beshkenasheni). In the following periods construction of "cyclopean" settlements and fortresses become widespread (G. Narimanishvili, N. Schanschaschvili 2001; G. Narimanishvili, N. Shanshashvili 2001^a).

We would argue based on surveyed "cyclopean" settlements on Trialeti plateau that this type of monuments emerged from XVI century B.C. (Beshkenasheni) and in XIII-VII centuries B.C. they became dominant (Sabechdavi, Knole, Crici, Baret, Akhaldaba, Losh, Armenian monuments).

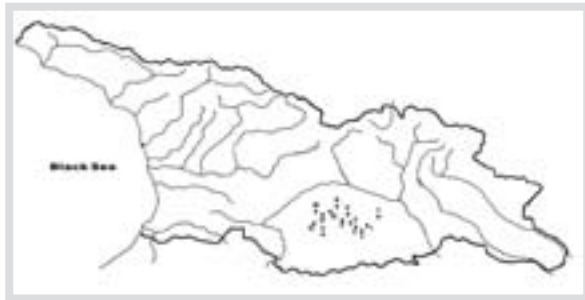
In the central regions of the South Caucasus from XVI century B.C. construction of "cyclopean" settlements and fortresses started and by XIII century B.C. they cover the territory that previously were occupied by monuments of Trialeti and Baret cultures. Surveys conducted on the "cyclopean" settlements and fortresses in the South Caucasus clearly indicate that this type of monuments dominate in the XVI-V centuries B.C. in the central and eastern parts of the South Caucasus. Big majority of them belong to the XIII-VIII centuries. In the second half of the II millennia and the first

half of I millennia B.C. one can observe intensive construction activities of the "cyclopean" settlements. In XIII-XII centuries B.C. should start construction of stand alone "cyclopean" fortresses. We argue that "cyclopean" fortresses that are dated as VI-IV centuries B.C. in fact were built much earlier and they were re-used later on, when Urartu empire fall down.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Trialeti is located in southern Georgia, in the north-east part of Smaller Caucasus mountain range. Southern part of Georgia together with Armenia, south-west part of Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia constitute Anticaucasus range.

Trialeti is limited from north by Trialiti range,



Map of Trialeti „cyclopean“ monumets' location

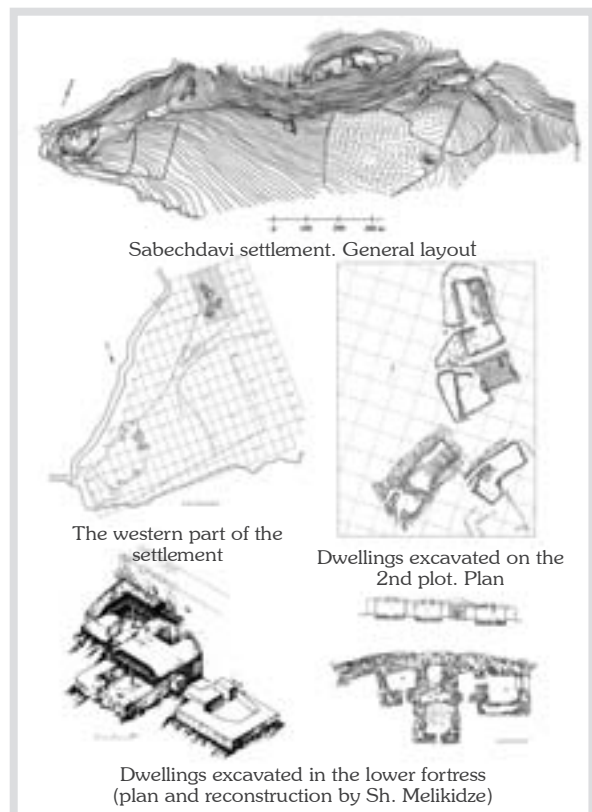
form south Javakheti range, from west Samsari range and eastern part of Javakheti range, and from east by Algeti valley. According to the current administrative division Trialeti belongs to Tsalka municipality.

Tsalka hydrographic system belongs to the Eurasian inland basin. Important river of this basin is river Mtkvari (length – 1515 km). Rivers from Tsalka region fed from right bank side Mtkvari river. The biggest among them are river Khrami (220 km) and Algeti (128 km). On Tsalka highlands one can find tectonic type lakes. Bareti and Santa (Uzungeli) lakes belong to this type and few smaller lakes. Big majority of those lakes are drying (Kariaki, Dash-Bash, Imera, etc.).

Tsalka is characterized by continental climate. It is surrounded by high mountain ranges and itself is situated on high plateau. The plateau average temperature during winter time is lower than in other parts of Georgia on the same altitude. Temperature change reaches 25-26 degrees. Average January temperature is -3-8 degrees, July 15-20 degrees. Temperature absolute minimum is -25-30 degrees.

TRIALETI "CYCLOPEAN" SETTLEMENTS AND FORTRESSES

Sabechdavi "cyclopean" settlement (G. Nari-manishvili, Z. Makharadze, N. Shanshashvili, Sh. Melikidze 2004. is situated in two kilometers north-east from Beshtasheni village of the Tsalka rayon, on the left side of the river Bashkov-su, along Eli-Baba hill. "Cyclopean" settlement that occupies top and southern slopes of the hill is dated by XIII-XII centuries B.C. based on archaeological survey. The settlement comprises of residential areas that were built in and around two fortification systems (upper and lower fortresses). The lower fortress that is located in the western part of the settlement is stretched along east-west line for 162 meters, while north-south is 90 m. Fortification walls are built from big basalt stone, without using any mortar. Walls are three to four meters thick. Along whole perimeter of the fortification wall about 30 dwelling are adjacent to it. Between dwelling "streets" and "corridors" were left. Currently height of remaining walls reaches about 0.8-1.5 m. The central area of the fortress seems used to be free from any constructions. The lower fortress is situated on a cape, conflu-



Sabechdavi „cyclopean“ settlement

Ancient Georgia

ence of the river and dry gorge. It has two entrances and looks like it had two parts. One entrance is from south. Its width is about 5 m. On the right from the entrance used to be constructed on natural bed-rock a pentagon (?) shaped construction, which is badly damaged nowadays. As mentioned above the lower fortress was divided into two parts. It is divided by one meter thick wall which in the centre had a 1.3 m door. The western part of the fortress seems had not been occupied as there are no dwellings. Its length is 87 m (north to south) and width 32 m (east to west). In the other part of the fortress along its inner perimeter to the fortification wall are adjacent about 30 dwellings.

Akhaldaba. The monument is situated north from the village Kariak, on the top of the hill, on the left bank of the river Chil-Chil. This town type fortified settlement. Around the settlement goes a fortified wall built from big size stones without using mortar. The thickness of the fortification wall is 3.3-4 m. In the fortification wall there are for gates and one door. The gates are arranged where streets of the settlement end. The streets are about 4-5 meters wide. One could

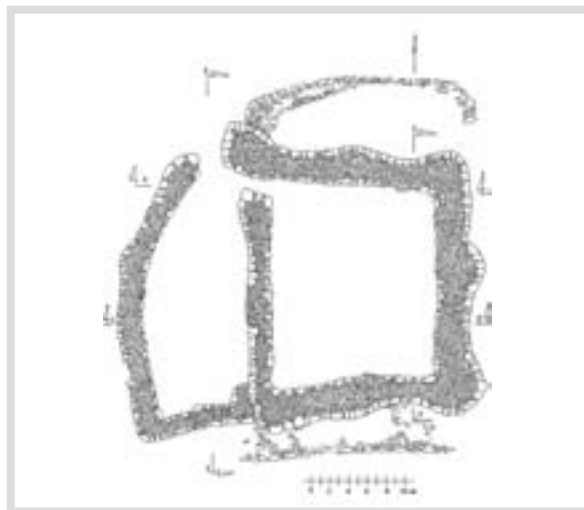


Akhaldaba „cyclopean“ settlement

distinguish residential area and a citadel. Residential buildings are built in a way that two of them share the same wall and again walls are built without mortar. Inner space of the settlement is divided into two independent parts by a wall. The citadel is also divided into two parts and it is connected to the settlement with a door that is done in the eastern wall.

Nardevani "cyclopean" fortress is located on the south-eastern outskirts of the modern village Nardevani, on the right bank of the small river. The monument is almost square plan fortress that is built in

"cyclopean" tradition. Inner dimension of the fortress is 18 m (east-west) by 21.5 m (north-south). The fortification wall thickness is about 3.5-4 m. The fortress corners and mid of the fortification walls are thicker and have round shape and thus give round tower impression. The fortress outside of it, from three sides –

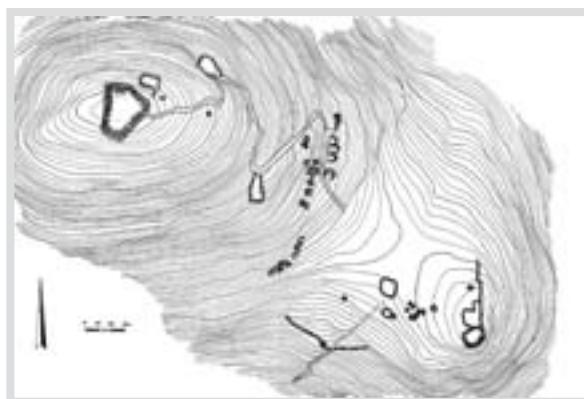


Khevrma „cyclopean“ fortress

west, south and north have either yards or fortified areas as those areas are lined by the walls built with the same technique as the fortress itself. In the north wall of the western yard there is a gate, in the same space in the north-western corner of the central part there is a door. From the west the fortress is protected by the high cliff to which in some parts basalt walls added.

Shaori is located in about 20 km from Beshtasheni, on Javakheti plateau, on Paravani lake on the altitude 2775 m. Shaori complex has captured scholars attention for long time now. Rather thorough description of Shaori was done by Melikset-Bek in 1938.

Shaori complex consists of two parts and it is



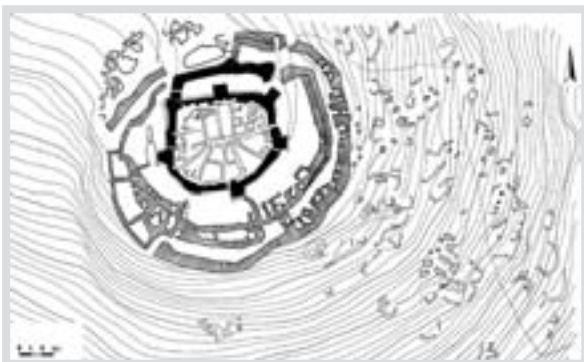
Shaori „cyclopean“ complex

spread over two mountain tips –lower and higher. The central, major part, fortress is located on the highest area. It has shape of irregular rectangle. The rectangle is built from local basalt big stone without using any mortar or using “dry” type masonry. The fortress has one meter wide and 1.3 height entrance from the east. To this entrance comes stone paved road. This road starts from the small value located between the two mountain tips.

Archaeological excavation has never been conducted at Shaori. Its architecture and construction technique shows resemblance with Zurtakerti burial mounds, which are dated I half of the II millennia B.C. As there are no other closer parallels for Shaori complex as a hypotheses one may suggest that Shaori also can be of the same date. Apart of construction technique and material Shaori and Trialeti burial mounds also show certain similarity of architecture. Even though it is difficult to speak about the same date but one could not exclude it either.

The location of Shaori, its construction peculiarities, very small size of rooms (spaces) there give good ground to doubt its usage as dwelling. On the contrary existence of “cult” places and menhirs indicate at religious nature of the monument. The paved road also seems to be used for ritual processions.

Abuli is the second “cyclopean” monument near Paravani lake, located in south-east from it on the slope of mount Mtsire Abuli. Abuli is a complex and very big monument. It is built from basalt stones without using any mortar. It comprises from the central fortified part around which there is residential area. The residential area is mainly spread to the east from the central part. The central area can be accessed from two gates from South and East.



Abuli „cyclopean complex

CONCLUSIONS

Based on surveyed “cyclopean” monuments in Southern Georgia we would argue that there are five types. The typology based on planning and nature of the monuments.

1. “Cyclopean” settlements that built in confluences of rivers and do not have a fortification wall all around settlement. From two sides they are protected by high cliffs along rivers while open part is fortified by thick fortification wall and ditch (Beshtasheni, Beshkenasheni). It is possible that Trialeti Akhalkalaki (Dash-Bash) settlement is of the same type.

2. The settlement that have a citadel and outside of it non-protected settlement (Sabechdavi, Knole, Utsklo, Baret, Akhaldaba, Tezi, Losho).

3. Stand alone fortresses within of which there are some constructions but outside there are no buildings (Crici, Zemo Beshkenasheni).

4. Stand alone fortresses where neither inside nor outside of them any constructions identified (Kokhaji, Chkhikvta, Khevgma).

5. Whole complexes built using “cyclopean” technique (Shaori, Abuli) that are located on high hill tops. They have fortified central parts but constructions in them are so small that it gives good ground to suggest that those constructions were used as cult places.

Differences among “cyclopean” settlements indicate that within the structural “hierarchy” there was complexity in society organization. In some cases there is a citadel or few fortified areas and around them there are non-fortified or less fortified settlements. In majority of cases settlements outside of citadel are partitioned from the citadel by strong walls. The citadel itself is divided into two or three parts (Sabechdavi, Knole, Akhaldaba, Kokhaji). In Akhaldaba citadel comprised from two totally independent parts that have individual gates. Only one part of the citadel is connected with the settlement outside of the citadel. This fact may indicate on not only civil but military hierarchy.

It is possible to assume that main function of citadels were military control and protection of less protected settlements.

Big “cyclopean” settlements (the first and sec-

ond type) are rather complex ensembles. Their main feature is strong fortification walls and a citadel, residential areas that have regular plans. As a rule they have few fortified areas (Sabechedavi, Tezi, Losho), or few fortified areas that are located within one fortification (Utsklo, Baret, Akhaldaba). Constructions are clustered within fortifications. It seems that settlements outside of fortifications appeared later on, when either space for population within fortified areas not enough or population tends to settle near fortified areas for having a protection due to instable situation. At the same time existence of a citadel indicates at high class already started their segregation from the rest of the society. Planning principles of "cyclopean" settlements show high level of urbanization that is one of the key components of civilization.

Big and complex "cyclopean" settlements (Beshkenasheni, Tezi, Losho, Baret) are located in strategic places, like main roads that connect Trialeti to other regions. Only on those settlements one can trace long existence of settlements. On all of them (but Baret) there were found Kuro-Araks culture (Early Bronze Age) artifacts. The Middle Bronze age levels can be traced only on Beshkenasheni settlement. From the II millennia B.C. all of them are used intensively. By the end of the II millennia B.C. some of them cease existence (Crici) but new ones appear (Knole).

Stand alone fortresses probably were fort posts and ensure protection of certain areas while at the same time protecting roads. One can suggest that stand alone forts were part of unified fortification system created by the central authorities and thus they are parts of bigger picture and do not intend to protect only limited territories. In case this suggestion is correct than it would be possible to speak about unified fortification system of Assyrian sources "Nairi country" (G. Melikishvili 1954; G. Melikishvili 1959).

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IMAGES OF HORSES IN ANCIENT GEORGIA

Among specimens of small sculptures produced in various ages and made predominantly of metal, particular attention of researchers is drawn to the figures of horses, as well as their graphic images.

Although images of horses are fewer than those of deer's and capras (West Caucasian Tur-goat antelope found only in the western side of the Caucasian Mountain range), they still convey significant information about economy, military activities, spiritual world and social life of the society that created them. Furthermore, figures of horses along with their attributes, artistry and artistic-stylistic peculiarities, indicate the degree of creative mastery at the various stages of societal development.

Horses resided on the territory of Georgia and Caucasus from prehistoric times, which is confirmed by the bone material excavated from Paleolithic layers of the Dmanisi archaeological site and from Sagvarjile (I. Gabunia, A.Vekua, D. Lordkipanidze, 1997, 160-170; L.Gabunia, 1959, 263-271).

The images of horses, as well as other animals, are inscribed on rocks in Patara Khrami area of Trialeti. These inscriptions are dated back to late Mesolithic era. The horses are recognized to be of *Caballus* type, which later developed into modern domestic horse (*Equus caballus*) (M.Gabunia, 1980, 22-26).

According to archaeological data, in early stages of Maikop culture, the population of Caucasus had already domesticated horses (R. Munchaev, 1973, 71-77). Remains of domestic horses and throat latches (III millennium B.C.) were also found in Eastern European steppe-forest zone (V. Kovalevskaia, 1970, 189-193).

The bone material obtained from the Early Bronze Age monuments indicated that communities residing on the territory of Georgia kept horses, as well as other domestic animals.

Georgia maintained close connections with the Middle East from prehistoric times, where horses and

two-wheel chariots were known from IV millennium B.C (Fr. Hančar, 1936; V. Tsalkin, 1952, 147-156).

From economic and military standpoint, horses were most widely used by Hurrite tribes, which had very close ties with Georgian-Caucasian world (G. Meliqishvili, 1959).

The existence of developed horse-breeding is confirmed by excavations of a barrow near the village of Doghlauri (Kartli Region) dating back to second half of XV B.C., containing two horse skeletons, bronze wheel-shaped throat latches, two mouth traps, etc (I.Gagoshidze, E. Koridze, A.Gogichaishvili, 1986, 56-65). Presumably Doghlauri barrow contained two battle chariot horses, which indirectly indicates that in Eastern Georgia, in the middle of the 2nd millennium, B.C., two-horse battle chariots were in use (K. Ramishvili, 2007, 23).

A grave of a warrior and his horse, dating back to second half of XIV B.C., was found in the village of Abanoskhevi, Aragvi Gorge (G. Gogochuri, 1987, 528-529).

Approximately from the same time period are a bronze horse figurine with trimmed mane from Shindisi Chapel (XIV-XII B.C.) (B.Maisuradze, L. Pantskhava, 1984, 18, table XXIV, 1 (975), and small clay sculptures of horses and chariot wheels from Tserovani burial ground (XIV-XIII B.C) (V. Sadradze, 1991, 67, table XC). There were punctures made in the lower parts of the limbs to connect the clay wheels to the sculpture of the horse (Picture 1). Evidently, the figures of horses were standing on four wheels, which according to V. Sadradze, intended to symbolize a four-wheel chariot, and where the horse was seen as a supreme pulling force. Undoubtedly, the terracotta horse sculptures with wheels are dedications to the cult of horse.

It takes a considerable period of time from domestication of an animal to turning it into a cult object (V. Sadradze, 2002, 137).

The terracotta horse figurines were found in Western Georgia as well. Namely, Noakhvamu barrow of pre-achaeamid era, which contained pieces of horse sculptures. Among the pieces there is a remarkable horse head with a very long neck and a stylized manor. Researchers linked these sculptures with the cult of horse (B. Kuftin, 1950, 200-202. table 58-1, 2).



Clay Sculpture of a Horse on the Wheels from Tserovani Burial Ground, XIV-XIII B.C.

According to Kuf tin, Naokhvamu horse sculpture echoes the style of Dipylon vase paintings.

In Caucasus, abundance of notable artefacts with graphic images of horses were unearthed in Colchian burial grounds: bronze axes with engravings, buckles, dagger handles and so on (L. Pantskhava, 1988, 67, table XV-1, 2; XX-2, 5), while the images of horses and horse-driven chariots are common in Central Caucasian bronze belts (M. Khidasheli, 1982, table VIII, XX, XXI, XXIII, XXIV, XXX). From this point of view, Tlia burial ground (No 350) deserves attention, where among objects characteristic of Kolkh culture, there was a belt with engravings of the images of various animals and people, including horse-driven two-wheel chariot (Picture 2). The burial complex dates back to VII B.C (B. Tekhov, 2002, 211-214, table 20, 22b).

Engraved belts with horse images were omnipresent all across the Eastern Georgia, and in all of South Caucasus. These horse related scenes are quite diverse. For example, on a belt unearthed in Tlia burial ground (No 224), we can see incessant lines of galloping horses all around the belt (M. Khidasheli, 1982, 146, table VIII, 11) Bronze belts often have pictures of sacred hunts (M. Khidasheli, 1982, 147, table XXI, 22). Especially noteworthy are three large pieces of belts found near Lore fortress, on the territory of modern Armenia, which according to all indications should be

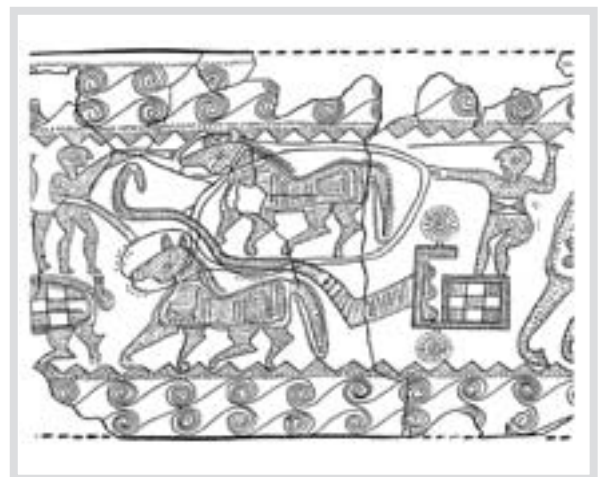
depicting a military parade (M. Khidasheli, 1982, 148, table XXX, 35). This composition gives vital information on the ammunition and attire of mounted troops of those times.

Engraved belts with similar composition originated in the Western Georgian stream of Colchian culture have not been found. They are not found in Northern Caucasian Kuban Cultural space either. Engraved belts, including those with the images of two-horse chariots, should have travelled to Liakhvi Gorge from the central part of South Caucasus through Shida Kartli region, which creates grounds to assume that Liakhvi Gorge (Tlia burial ground) was the crossroad of two cultural streams coming together - from Western Georgia and South Caucasus.

While discussing the belts with the engravings of horse-driven chariots, it is impossible not to mention a model of two-horse chariot made of bronze found in Tsitseltskaro. This unique artefact dates back to IX-VIII B.C (Unterwegs zum Goldenen Vlies, 1995, 106, table 90), although we do not rule out dating it by much earlier period (picture 3).

Graphic images of horses are commonly found on Colchian ritual axes, which clearly indicate the existence of widespread cult of horse in Western Georgia.

In Bronze Age, horse became object of worshipping, which signifies that horse played a vital role in the social life during those times. Like in Middle East and Indo-European areas, on the territories inhabited



Graphic Image of a Horse Pulled Chariot from Tlia Burial Ground No 350, VIII-VII B.C.

by Georgian tribes, horse was seen as a sacred animal connected with the cast of fertility deities, sun and celestial bodies. Decorating horse images with solar signs reflects its divine nature (M. Khidasheli, 1982, 80-81).

If the stylized images of horses were predominant in the Bronze Age, in so-called Ancient Era realistic depiction of horses started spreading gradually. Examples of these are Akhlagori temple hangers with the images of two horses (I.A. Smirnov, 1934, 223-229, table III, fig. 26) and gold earrings unearthed in Vani, with the image of an equestrian standing on wheels, though the latter image is rather sketchy (Unterwegs zum Goldenen Vlies, 1995, 147, table 146).

Late-elinistic era, stylised images of horses re-emerged (Picture 4) (Unterwegs zum Goldenen Vlies, 1995, 157, table 158), which is well depicted in scenes of Chviri buckle (M. Khidasheli, 1972 table IX, X, XI).

Establishment of the horse cult and its popularisation in late-Hellenistic period was facilitated by the recognition of the supremacy of Armazi Deity, as a result of reforms carried out by King Parnavas in III B.C., on one hand, and the spread of Mithraism in the countries of Middle East and Georgia, on the other. From this perspective, it is interesting to note the excavations carried out in the village of Kvemo Aranisi (New Zhinvali), where in the ruins of a chapel, along with terracotta figures of horses, a skeleton of a foal sacrificed to deities was also uncovered (PAI v1975, 1979, 108-120, table LII).

Late-Roman era artifices, such as silver bowls with the inscriptions of a horse in front of an altar, indicate spreading of the cult of Mithras in Georgia, and its merging with the local cults of the sun and the horse. In addition to Armraziskhevi, Bori and Zguderi (K. Machabeli, 1976, table 28, 29, 30, 31), such bowls were found in Aragvispiri burial ground as well (K. Ramishvili, 2000, 68-77, table II, 2). Among the currently available artefacts we can distinguish between two groups of horse images found at the bottom of silver bowls: 1. bowls, depicting horses calmly standing in front of the altar. The horse's upward facing head creates a sombre atmosphere. The altar is solemnly decorated, with an apple, a pomegranate and a cone placed on its surface (K. Machabeli, 1976, table 28,



Bronze Model of a Horse Pulled Chariot from Tsiteltskaro, XI-VIII B.C.

29) 2. Bowls depicting an image of a horse with the raised right limb on its bottom, as if it is fervently trying to protect an inextinguishable fire burning on the altar (K. Machabeli, 1976, table 30, 31; K. Ramishvili, 2000, table II, 2). In this composition the face and entire body of the horse is extremely expressive, and the horse with its tensed muscles is depicted in the moment of neighing, while the fire burning on the altar is placed between two pomegranates on the sides. We think, that based on the examples given above, there are two rituals or celebrations related to the cult of the sun: 1. One is dedicated to fertility and victory, when the symbol of the sun, i.e. a horse depicted in a calm posture, and 2. The other depicting the process of protecting inextinguishable holy fire – this is when a divine horse is portrayed tensed, expressive and excited. All of these give certain material for studying general issues of Mithraism religion.

Spreading of Mithraism is indicated in the material collected by S. Makalatia in Samegrelo, where the reminiscences of the cult of Mithra are still evident in ethnographic reality under the names of "misroba", "meisaroba" and "jegemisarioni" (S. Makalatia, 1938, 31, 45). The cult of a horse was widely spread in the mountainous regions of Eastern Georgia as well (K. Ramishvili, 2007, 39).

During the first several centuries of A.D., divine supremacy of a horse over traditionally "holy animals", became even more pronounced. During this



Image of a Horse engraved on a Bronze “Chviruli” Buckle, Zekota (Surami), I-III c.

period, interesting images of horses and equestrians were found in abundance in Aragvi Gorge, mountainous regions of Alazani midland (K. Ramishvili, 2007, 39), and Kdeleti (G. Lomtadze, 1957, 74, fig. 12). They are made by moulding bronze or silver in such a way, that the design on their visible (façade) side is done in a considerably high relief. In fact, the reverse side of the sculpture (invisible one) is curved in, and it has a special fastener inside, consisting of a pin and a hook for fixing it. The fastener was usually made of iron and its base was fixed on the horse's back leg. Such images of horses were used as fibulae and dates back to III-IV c (K. Ramishvili, 2007, 9).

On all instances on the fibulae, the images of horses, are depicted in its right profile, with its head raised, and gazing upwards (picture 5). The stillness of the figures notwithstanding, thanks to the liquid modality of separate parts of animals, especially of torso, head and neck, internal dynamism and expression of the scene is achieved. Figures of horses are symmetrical and proportional. Protruding parts of torso (back, belly and chest) done in a high relief, creating voluminous effect of the body. At the same time, plaited halters are depicted with naturalistic precision, which is moderately combined with somewhat stylised features of legs (hoofs), tail, face (eyes, ears, and muzzle), and a saddle. As much as the visible

side of the fibulae is detailed, the invisible one is more schematic, and adapted to practical requirements. In this way the creator solves two problems: on the two back legs depicted schematically, he attaches a fastener and at the same time, devoid the figure of additional weight, which allows the sculpture to be curved inside following the shape of an animal. On the bodies of animals, symbolic shapes of celestial bodies (sun) are engraved. Horse mane and fasteners look like rays with chains hanging on them. This might be underlying the divine nature of the horse, its unity and connection with the sun.

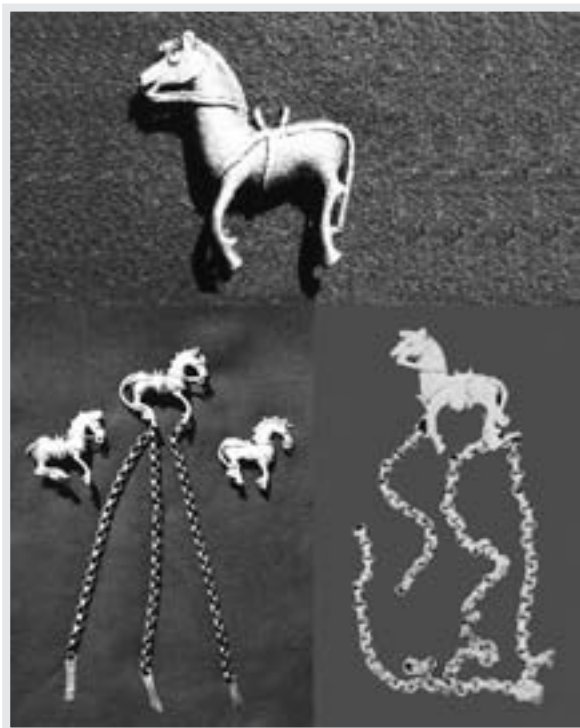
A fibulae with the engraving of an equestrian from Alazani midland village of Duisi (K. Ramishvili, 2007, table XXII)³, many parts of which are much like the equestrian unearthed in Kdeleti, is noteworthy (G. Lomtadze, 1957, 74, fig. 12). Both sculptures are made of bronze, with the right side profile. In both figures, horses are shown lengthways from the right side, while the inner (invisible) side is curved inward and at the legs only rust from the fastener remains. Torsos of the riders are rounded sculptures. Palms of the hands of both riders are unusually large and placed on the crest of the horse on the facade side. This might be indicating divine character of the rider and “all-powerfulness” of his hands.

Fibulae with the engravings of horses are no longer found in the burial sites of V century onwards. The latest specimens were found in Khevi, a bronze figure of a fully saddled horse, unearthed in Gveleti burial ground, dated VI-VII c. Shape and size is quite similar to a horse sculpture found in Aragvi Gorge, but the item from Gveleti did not retain a fastener (D. Mindorashvili, 2005, 81-82, table XI, 117). Here we would like to mention, that similar figures of horses, though with a hanger in the shape of a circle placed on horse's back, appears in North Caucasus from VIII century, and were more common in IX century (V. Kovalevskaia, 1978, 119, 120). Presumably, Gveleti burial ground sample should be indicating the existence of one of the routes (Dariali Gorge) through which such figures travelled into the North Caucasus from the South.

The feasibility of omnipresence of pre-Christian cults and cult-related services in the mountainous regions of Georgian are corroborated by the fact

that some of them are practiced in these regions to this day. There are documented facts of worshipping horses, sacrificing them to deities or their participation in various rituals in the mountains of East Georgia (Pshav-Khevsureti, Mtiulet-Gudamakari, Tusheti, etc). For example, on the top of the mountain near the village of Makarta, there is a chapel of St. George, where, according to the traditions, horses and foals are sacrificed. The same is confirmed in Kanchki St. George chapel, which is located west to the village of Bakurkhevi, as well as in the chapel of Sachalis Chali village in Khevsureti. Similar practices were retained on the other side of Khevsureti, in the community of Arkhoti, on the mountain of Zetuki, the village of Amgha, and on Tebulo mountain on the other side of the gorge.

Based on the same ethnographic data, horses in the mountainous regions of East Georgia (especially in Khevsureti), were seen as protectors of humans from evil forces, and were considered sacred animals. Therefore, they were praying for horses, along with other domestic animals, requesting their deities their well-being.²



Horse-shaped Fibulae made of Bronze and Silver from Aragvi Gorge (Nedzikhi and Badriani Burial Grounds), III-IV c.

Thus, according to ethnologic data, containing clear evidence of horse cult and religious services, as well as based on the analysis of the archaeological materials, which is partly represented by the fibulae of horses and equestrians, it is clear, that the horse was from the prehistoric times considered a sacred creature, symbol of divinity, its incarnation, which reflected the development of the ideology of the society which produced them, the ideology which retained itself until the official recognition of Christianity. Late-Roman fibulae with the shapes of horses had already assumed decorative function.

Horses participated in the economic and military life of Georgian tribes from prehistoric times, which can be clearly illustrated by the variety of terminology related to horses and horse-breeding. We tried to compile a small dictionary of terms on this topic. Sul Khan Saba Orbeliani's "Sitkvis Kona" and materials preserved in ethnographic life greatly assisted us in this endeavour.

Notes:

- 1-2 permanent exposition from the Telavi Museum.
- 2 These facts are based on the information provided by Iv. Tsiklauri and B. Aludauri (K. Ramishvili, 2000, 73).

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GEORGIA AND EURASIA IN THE 2ND AND 1ST MILLENNIA, B.C. – EVIDENCE OF BRONZE PLASTICS

Georgia, located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, was involved in the historic and artistic processes ongoing in the ancient world, as reflected in artefacts of material culture. Various artistic streams penetrating the territory of Georgia in prehistoric times had left visible traces in works of art. Despite foreign influences, metalwork revealed here bears common artistic features, distinguishing it both the earliest and synchronous Eurasian metalwork.

By focusing on several groups of bronze plastics, this presentation aims to trace the sources of these influences, as well as to show constant traits that contribute to the originality of these objects.

Minor bronze plastics of the so called Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture¹ (Fig. 1) form one of the groups of artefacts, making it possible to trace contacts of Georgia with the outer world. These statuettes, having no predecessors, emerge suddenly in the 15th century B.C., without any stages of development, spreading over the entire central South Caucasus (Eastern Georgia, Armenia and Northwest Azerbaijan).

The archaeological culture within which these figurines were manufactured is characterized by highly developed metallurgy. Knowledge of complex casting techniques enabled the people of this culture to produce hollow bronze objects with openwork decoration. As for the complexity of production, these objects are unparalleled among both previous and synchronous cultures across Eurasia, which characterizes this society as uniquely skilled in metallurgy among the higher civilizations of the ancient world.

This kind of metalwork is represented in the statuettes under discussion; they were excavated from the graves of socially high-ranking representatives

of this culture; accompanying grave furnishings show that the Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture formed part of the contemporary civilized world. Namely, it used key artistic principles characteristic of Near Eastern art to produce hieratic, timeless figures with a solemnity of images. At the same time, it was skilled in all technical modes used in jewelry-making, including granulation and filigree and it had progressive war weaponry and tamed horses with the horse-harnesses analogous to those found in the Near East and Aegean. Similar to the military empires of the ancient world, it possessed the two-wheeled driven chariot, a powerful military device; it buried the deceased on funeral carts, like the royal-rank representatives in ED III Ur (Mesopotamia) and EBA Central Anatolia; and, particularly significant in that case, following the rite of the Near Eastern cultures, it decorated funeral carts with sculptures embodying the idea of the renewal of life and immortality.² Comparison of chariot standards from Georgia and the South Caucasus with objects from the Near East makes it possible to find certain relations between these materials.

The geography of these objects covers two local regions of the Near East – southern Mesopotamia, from where they apparently penetrated into Luristan and Central Anatolia, the territory adjoining the central section of the Halys River. One sample is known from Syria, i.e., the region connecting Mesopotamia and Anatolia. The extreme northern border of this area is Georgia and the South Caucasus. The chronology of the objects, according to their topography, testifies to their distribution from the South to the North. Based on controlled excavations, the earliest samples are found in southern Mesopotamia (Kish, Ur – 26th - 25th centuries B.C.³); next are the central Anatolian examples (Alaca Hüyük, Horoztepe, Çorum – 25th to 22nd centuries B.C.⁴); while objects from the South Caucasus are of the latest date, determined as the third quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C.⁵

Within this vast, culturally diversified space these local regions are also singled out by analysis of the objects.⁶ Among Near Eastern and South Caucasian chariot standards, two major groups can be distinguished according to the different traditions of fixing the standards to the chariot, as well as accord-

ing to their artistic, typological and functional peculiarities. One group is formed by the ED Mesopotamian rein-rings⁷ in which the Luristan and Syrian samples⁸ are united; a concern for detailed and realistic treatment of forms is clearly discernible in these objects. The second group comprises EBA Central Anatolian specimens,⁹ to which sculptures of the South Caucasian Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture¹⁰ show a close affinity. Unlike the objects of the first group, those of the second one are characterized by imagery alienated from reality and by a tendency toward the generalization of forms. Also noteworthy are the differing artistic modes found in these groups; namely, the introduction of spatial motifs into flat compositions and a mild modelling of forms is characteristic of the Mesopotamian group, while, in keeping with Anatolian-South Caucasian standards, space, as an artistic category, is totally neglected by the strict profile aspect of the figures; the silhouette and sharply outlined contours acquire predominant significance.

Two stylistically different stages are discernible in the development of Anatolian-South Caucasian sculptures: the Anatolian is more archaic, and the South Caucasian is more advanced and mature; in particular, the latter show further perfection of the composition, grounded on the unshakeable equilibrium of figures and the perception of an object in its integrity; a flexible and elastic silhouette acquires maximal expressiveness; the characteristics of the animal are more pronounced, emphasizing its significance.

Apart from the evolutionary changes, South Caucasian sculptures gain different stylistic traits, which identified as extremely laconic artistic "language," generalized forms, provide with exhaustive characteristics. That is why, in these objects, an animal never lacks the liveliness of the image, and the plastic form - artistic convincingness.

The tradition of decorating the figurines with openings, a technical innovation differentiating these objects from contemporary Eurasian metalwork, is of no lesser importance in revealing links between the Central Anatolian and South Caucasian specimens. At the same time, metal smiths of the Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture scored great achievements in the technique of casting bronze objects. Mastering com-

pllicated metallurgical processes, they further improved the lost-wax technique and, apart from flat, pierced objects, characteristic of the culture of Alaca royal graves, produced technically more complex voluminous forms with openwork decoration.¹¹ It can definitely be stated that the casting of hollow openwork objects – a most significant technical innovation in the history of bronze metallurgy – is connected with the people of Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture.

Such distinguished achievements in metallurgy, which must have been grounded in long experience, correspond to evidence in the Bible and Classical written sources, indicating that Georgia and the South Caucasus in general were most likely to have been inhabited by tribes skilled in metal processing.¹²

Lack of data makes it difficult to localize the manufacturing center of sculptures in the territory of Anatolia, from which the artistic stream penetrated into the South Caucasus. However, the concentration of graves containing chariot standards in the South Caucasian region bordering on Anatolia (from 23 such graves excavated at present, 18 were discovered on the territory of Armenia close to Turkey), as well as openwork figurines from the Kars district, analogies of which abound in the South Caucasus,¹³ should indicate that the major center of Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture was located in eastern Anatolia. It is from this region proper that the radiation of this culture seems likely to have reached not only the South Caucasus, but Central Anatolia as well. This is confirmed by the statuette from Cappadocia¹⁴ with features common to Anatolian and South Caucasian sculptures and the weaponry of the figure depicted on the royal gate at Boghaskoy¹⁵ – the helmet with ear-flaps and the so-called Central Transcaucasian axe, i.e., artefacts characteristic of the Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture. This relief is dated to the New Hittite Kingdom, 13th century B.C., namely, to the time of the flourishing of the Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture, the period, when it spread widely and seems to have been quite powerful in the South Caucasus.

The bronze plastics excavated in Treli cemetery, on the territory of Tbilisi, are another group of sculptures bearing traces of contacts between Georgia and the outer world. Based on their character, these

materials find their place within the cultural area of the Iranian-speaking nomadic tribes; this area covers geographical regions with diverse cultural traditions throughout the vast territory of Eurasia, from eastern Europe to northeast China; the Treli items reflect the so-called Cimmerian stage in the movement of these tribes in the South Caucasus, i.e., they belong to the era prior to the political activity of the Scythians in the Near East, namely, to the period when the Scythian triad is not yet established.¹⁶ However, they contain those main components of the material culture which will later on become characteristic of the Scythian culture in the widest sense. These are: a sculpture on an open-work "cage," a horse head-figured standard (Fig. 2), and a horse-bit's cheek-pieces with plastic decoration.¹⁷

In terms of chronology, the following picture is seen in connection to Treli and its Eurasian parallels: earlier or synchronous to Treli are those artefacts of the Near Eastern Iranian group that are the source of this artistic stream. I mean bronze objects from Luristan and northwestern Iran, the general chronological verge of which is set between 10th - 7th centuries B.C.¹⁸ Synchronous with Treli are the so-called Greek-Macedonian bronzes from the Balkan Peninsula and the so-called Thraco-Cimmerian bronzes from eastern Europe dated to the 8th - 7th centuries B.C.¹⁹; all other artefacts, that is to say, Scythian proper, belong to the period following the Treli objects, i.e., to the 7th - 5th centuries B.C.²⁰ Accordingly, the Treli sculptures provide significant material that not only reflects cultural relations and contacts of Georgia in the second quarter of the 1st millennium B.C., but which is also important for the study of the origins of early nomadic and Scythian art.

The Treli sculptures represent a complex artistic phenomenon. On the one hand they show close links with the statuettes of Lchashen-Tsintelgori culture: the typology of the object - a rotating figurine around a pedestal, openwork ornamentation, a predominance of generalized voluminous forms; on the other hand, their relationship with the artefacts of the Iranian group is obvious, i.e., objects from Luristan²¹ and northwestern Iran dated to the first centuries of the 1st millennium B.C. (Marlik,²² Cemetery B at Tepe-Siak,²³ Ziwiye²⁴). The Treli sculptures fit the



Sasireti Hoard (Eastern Georgia).
14th-13th century B.C.

artistic taste and aesthetic norms prevalent in the Iranian world, namely, the organization of compositions by the combination of the vertically and horizontally developed forms, a tendency towards dynamic, elastic forms, elongated proportions and exaggeration of forms, introduced to enrich the expressiveness of the figures. However, the adopted motifs and artistic modes undergo a peculiar transformation; namely, the ornamental and decorative treatment of forms typical of Iranian objects is distinctly replaced by the striving towards laconism and generalization of forms, i.e., the same stylistic traits that differentiate Lchashen-Tsintelgori plastics from their Anatolian parallels. If the almost abstracted simplicity of the "deity" from Treli is the major artistic mode to achieve expressiveness of the statuette, Luristan finial standards are distinguished by the lavishness of the decorative elements and the linear, ornamental treatment of the forms. Scythian objects,²⁵ in which conventional, decorative elements are peculiarly combined with realistic artistic modes, also show an approach differing from Treli



Treli Cemetery, Grave N16 (Tbilisi).
8th-7th century. B.C.

sculptures. A standard with the figure of a horse head from Treli is maximally deprived of details and is distinguished by the pronounced characteristics of the animal and the expressiveness of the forms. The application of minimal artistic modes, elastic and dynamic forms also differs decoration of the Treli cheek-pieces from the Scythian group of objects.²⁶ Respectively, in Treli sculptures, the forms and motifs adopted from Luristan and northwestern Iran undergo considerable transformation based on the traditions of Lchashen-Tsitelgori culture, acquiring new artistic characteristics, which confirm their local production.

Apart from the Near Eastern Iranian world, Treli bronze work is also linked with the nomadic cultures – I mean the motif of an animal with a curved neck, animal-headed cheek-pieces and sculptures on openwork “cages” The geography of these objects comprises the vast territory of the dissemination of these tribes – in addition to northwestern Iran and Luristan,²⁷ the Balkans, Eastern and Central Europe, the North Caucasus, the Far East.²⁸ These links give us grounds to suppose that these nomadic tribes have played a mediatory role in the contacts between the South Caucasus and Iran. Near Eastern elements reflected in Treli indicate the movement of these tribes from the South. Accordingly, it seems most likely that representatives of these tribes, importers of the new

artistic taste, had commissioned the production of these objects. Thus, Treli artefacts provide evidence that in the 8th - 7th centuries B.C., Georgia took part in the common artistic and historic processes ongoing in the territory of Eurasia, associated with the appearance of the Iranian-speaking nomadic tribes in the historic arena.

Artistic modes and forms adopted from the Near Eastern Iranian world found no further development on the territory of Georgia. Based on the data available at present, this artistic stream is not seen in materials excavated beyond the boundaries of Tbilisi, and its existence should be considered as episodic; on the other hand, the artistic tradition linked with Anatolia, which seems likely to penetrate alongside a vigorous wave of the ethnic element of this culture, becomes widespread and firmly established in Eastern Georgia. This is confirmed by the existence of the local artistic centers of the Lchashen-Tsitelgori culture.²⁹ Also noteworthy is the continuity of this tradition, traceable within certain time periods – the Treli sculptures (8th - 7th centuries B.C.) and bronze openwork belt-buckles (3rd century B.C. - 3rd century A.D.),³⁰ in which this tradition is marked by the coexistence with the forms imported from the outer world. However, if in the Treli examples described above, tradition was transformed through the forms adopted from Luristan and northwestern Iran, openwork belt-buckles, apart from the Near Eastern Iranian world,³¹ has shown certain links with the artefacts found across Siberia and the Far East.³² At the same time, those peculiarities and common, specific traits which make these objects original works of art are clearly discernible. As stated above, these traits are: laconic artistic “language,” plain, generalized forms, the predominant importance of the silhouette, the monumentalization of the form, the transcendent character of images linked with their artistic persuasiveness, the representativeness and significance of the image; all these differentiate objects excavated in Georgia from their Eurasian parallels.

As evidenced by the above-discussed materials, art in prehistoric Georgia developed in close contact with the civilizations of the Near East, and impulses penetrating from the latter enriched artistic form with new elements. Novelty introduced at each stage,

apart from the creation of new sculptural forms, was a stimulus to display those peculiarities that preconditioned the originality of this art, being preserved as its constant, unchangeable feature over the centuries.

Notes:

1 G. Mansfeld, B. Krozingen, 2001, Abb. 15-17; Unterwegs zum Goldenen Vlies, Archäologische Funde aus Georgien, 1995, S. 95, 246; G. Nioradze, 1932; T. I. Achundov, I. G. Narimanov, 1996, tab., 7, 2-3; T. Akhundov, 1993; A. Esayan, 1980, tab., 27, 28, 1-3; 29-33; S. G. Devejyan, pl. 6, 8; S. G. Devejyan, 1982, 2, pl. 1-3; T. S. Khachatryan, 1979, p. 142; A. Grigoryan, N. Stepanyan, 1965, pl. 6; A. A. Martirosyan, 1964, pl. X, 3-4, fig. 64.

2 N. Gomelauri, 2005, pp. 21-27.

3 Ch. Watelin, S. Langdon, 1934; C. L. Woolley, 1934. For the dating of Near Eastern standards, see: P. Calmeyer, 1964.

4 J. Mellaart, C. Blegen, 1971, pp. 369, 405; T. Özguç, M. Akok, 1957, p. 218; T. Özguç, 1980, p. 474.

5 R. und M. Abramischwili, 1995, p. 192; †R. Abramishvili, M. Abramichvili, 2008

6 N. Gomelauri, 2008

7 C. L. Woolley, 1934, pl. 166, 167; Ch. Watelin, S. Langdon, 1934, pl. 25, 1-3; M. Rostovtzeff, 1932, pl. LXXI, 1-2; M. Mallowan, 1948, pl. VII-VIII.

8 P. Calmeyer, 1969, Abb. 1-2, Taf. I, 1; E. Porada, 1965, tab. 13; Cl. Schaeffer, 1948, fig. 82, 17.

9 E. Akurgal, M. Hirmer, 1976, Abb. 1-6, 10, Taf. I-III; T. Özguç, M. Akok, 1958; T. Özguç, 1980., tab. II-IV.

10 Concerning functional links between Alaca and South Caucasian objects, see: W. Orthmann, 1967; G. Mansfeld, B. Krozingen, 2001

11 N. Gomelauri, 2008, fig. 3, 8, 13, 26, 28, 1 fig. 2

12 Bible, Genesis, IV, 22; Xenophon, Anabasis, V, 4, 1-34, V, 5, 1.

13 N. Gomelauri, 2008, fig. 7, 8-9, 10-11

14 A. Tallgren, 1930, fig. 76.

15 E. Akurgal, M. Hirmer, 1976, fig. 64-65.

16 R. Abramischwili, 1995, S. 37.

17 R. Abramischwili, 1995 tab. 1, 2, 6-11, 5, 4-5, 11-15

18 P. R. Moorey, 1971, pp. 12-126, 129; E. Negahban, 1965, p. 326; R. Ghirshman, 1964, pp. 3, 9-16, 98-125.

19 J. Bouzek, 1971, pp. 84, 89, 94.

20 E. V. Perevodchikova, 1980, N2, p. 44

21 E. Waele, 1982, fig. 78-82.

22 V. G. Lukonin, 1977, pp. 11, 43

23 V. G. Lukonin, 1977, p. 17.

24 R. Ghirshman, 1964, fig. 168.

25 M. Artamonow, 1970, Taf. 5.

26 A. I. Melyukova, 1976, fig. 1, 1

27 O. W. Muscarella, 1988, cat., NN 251, 301, 353, 375-376, 379; P. R. Moorey, 1971, cat., NN 74, 75; H. Mahboubian, 1997, cat., NN 99, 101.

28 J. Bouzek, 1971, pl. 13, 2-5, 7-8, 12; E. V. Perevodchikova, 1980, fig. 3-7; E. V. Perevodchikova, 1965, fig. 1, 3-5, 3, 10-11; A. I. Melyukova, 1976, A. A. lessen, 1953, 18, p. 95; K. F. Smirnov, 1976, fig. 5, 14; E. Herzfeld, 1941, fig. 293; M. Artamonov, 1973, fig. 163

29 N. Gomelauri, 2008, fig. 3.

30 National Treasures of Georgia, 1999, pp. 194-195

31 H. Mahboubian, 1997, cat. N219, p. 191; Treasures of the Eurasian Steppes, 1998, cat., N44, p. 45

32 Treasures of the Eurasian Steppes, 1998, pp. 83, 89, 126; M. I. Artamonov, 1973, pp. 85-167

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COLCHIAN RITUAL AXE /SEMANTICS AND ARTISTIC STYLE/

Correct interpretation of artistic style problems of material culture remains of the pre-Christian period has a great importance for the demonstration of national features characteristic of Georgian art. Georgian art has followed a complex and long way of evolution. In the interpretation of this problem as an organic whole exactly its initial archaic stage is assigned the significant role.

The study of the question is complicated by the fact that the archaic society is characterized by certain peculiarities, as compared with classic civilizations. First of all, syncretism of thought is typical of this society. Hence, its spiritual culture is specific as well, the visual counterpart of which is pictorial art. At that time all varieties of artistic creation and social consciousness exist with a mutually diffusive form (M.S. Kagan, 1978. 276) and creates the so-called syncretic complex (V.B. Miritanov, 1973, 11) each variety of which is defined by the universal form of world outlook – mythos thought.

When the process of breaking of the unifying features determined by mythos consciousness begins from the middle of the second millennium BC – the area of distribution of cultures reduces, the localization with the ethnic feature occurs; as the collective consciousness breaks up, features of artistic style take shape.

Thus, in the early class society the symbols developed at the previous stage, constructions of the symbolic contents are retained, but their visual aspect changes, a totally new artistic-stylistic manner of rendering is formed, which is caused by the individual mentality of a particular society.

At the turn of the 2nd-1st millennia BC bronze metallurgy reaches the summit of its development in Transcaucasia. Accordingly, the existence of metal wares of artistic craftsmanship assumes a universal character in the first centuries of the millennium. The high level of their execution indicates the existence

of workshops staffed with professional craftsmen. In my view, the most obvious pictorial expression of this wide-spread unity in Transcaucasia is the Colchian ritual axe. In the form of the latter, namely, axes decorated with an engraved drawing, we must be dealing with a qualitatively different phenomenon, the significance of which goes beyond chronological boundaries and represents one of the important stages of Georgian art.

The existence of the Colchian axe is dated to the 15th to the 7th-6th cc. BC. By the 9th c. BC its formation as variants was completed. After this, the shape of the Colchian axe did not undergo substantial changes. L.Sakharova singled out six basic types. Axes of I-II-III types seem to have their own way of development. Their direct prototypes and early forms are attested to in the 15th-14th cc. BC. IV-V-VI types are created comparatively later. Their basis is the morphological features of axes of I and II types, existing already. Their new appearance is determined by double curvature of the body. This new morphological feature, in the author's view, must have penetrated into the existing shapes in the 11th-10th cc. BC (L. Sakharova, 1998, 40). As a result of this novelty, new, unique shapes came into being.

Such a visual change of axes must have a certain explanation. It is hardly imaginable that the creation of a new type was caused by the requirements linked with the household or battle function. As O. Lordkipanidze assumes, at this stage the axe gradually loses its household and probably battle purpose as well and retains the cultic-ritual function (O. Lordkipanidze, 1989, 195).

The new function defined the visual modification of the artifact, which was made in different directions (rise of axes with the doubly bent body, graphic décor, introduction of the sculptural element into the decoration). The basic feature unifying the artifacts under discussion is their function – ritual Colchian axe. Proceeding from this, the main importance is given exactly to its symbolism (the cosmic axis), whereas the visual aspect, whether it is a certain change of the shape or the use of decorative elements in the decoration (graphic or plastic), has an auxiliary function and aims to stress the especial, outstanding purpose of these specimens.

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I think the decorative is determined by the symbolic importance of the object proper, therefore, its consideration independently must be incorrect. I suppose, the incised design at a certain stage copy the symbolic contents of the axe. Gradually, together with the increase of decorativeness, this moment becomes more conventional and less obvious. Taking into account the above-mentioned, the following division of ritual axes has become possible: Plain;

1. With a decorated butt;
2. The decorative system in which the emphasis is on the cheek of the axe;
3. Specimens in which the basic element of the compositional solution of décor is a triangle.

Taking into consideration the wide distribution of axes in the chronological period under discussion, facts of their discovery in large numbers in burials and "hoards", it should be assumed that the symbolism of axes is taken mostly from the mythos-cosmogonic world, and reflect the broad idea of public significance. As is known, the world outlook of the people living on the territory of Georgia was defined by the mythos conception. This religious-mythos complex originated within the early farming culture, and later on, in the early class society it assumed the completed form. For man thinking mythologically the centre of the universe, where there was the cosmic axis, was a place of tremendous importance. The closest contact between the heavenly and the earthly spheres is achieved exactly there. The mythos reversion of time occurred there. The impulse which was activat-

ed at the beginning of time acted there always with a new power. So, time as well as space is totally different there. This defines the sacrality of "the hub of the heaven and the earth" (Z. Kiknadze, 1976, 21). In my view, the cult axe must have been interpreted as a symbol of this central idea. The symbol was not experienced as a conventional sign, it always revealed its archetype and had the sacred character (Burgardt, 1999, 35). Thus, it provided for man's constant contact with the sacred.

So, axes decorated with a graphic drawing are only a part of the unity of Colchian ritual axes. They are not different phenomena either functionally or qualitatively. The axe proper contains sacred information, whereas the décor gives an opportunity of further deepening and strengthening of the basic idea of mythological thought. Different variants of the pictorial demonstration of one idea are created.

The complete identity of the decorative ornamentation and the contents of the object defines the organic unity. By means of zoomorphic and astral symbols the model of the cultural world is rendered. Bringing this general, universal idea to the forefront determined to a great extent one of the basic traits of ancient art of Transcaucasia - recurrence of the mythological complex on remains that are remote from one another by a long period of time.

The general pattern of the distribution of figural representations and decorative motifs is determined by the axe shape. At the same time, within the given frames the boundless opportunities of variation are retained. Proceeding from this, all axes share an overall unity, but within this unity each axe distinguished by its individual character.

According to my classification, examples without any décor are singled out as a separate group. In this case the change of the visual aspect is manifested in the refining of proportions, change of the quantity of edges, their mutual correlation. I regard the rise of the unique axes, with double curvature body, as a similar phenomenon. It is noteworthy that the existence of miniature axes is not infrequent in "hoards" and burials of the first centuries of the 1st millennium BC. In my view, this fact is one more argument indicating the sacred nature of axes.



1. Kobani

2. Chabarukhi Treasures

The second group unites are specimens with decorated butts. They are fewer in number. I think, within this group fall the examples with a visual aspect showing the earliest signs of ornamentation. However, the motif itself does not cease to exist and occurs later together with other elements of ornamentation. In this case its compositional function is totally different.

The next group contains the specimens where the centre of decorative is appears on the cheek of the axe. It is especially extensive, it passes through all stages of evolution. It unites compositions with figural representations as well as geometrical ornaments.

At the same time, specimens of this group by means of zoomorphic representations demonstrate clearly the symbolic contents, an expression of which is the axe proper and which must determine its sacred character. Noteworthy, the further modification of this motif is manifested within this group as well. Of figural representations early specimens mostly show dog and deer. From the viewpoint of the construction of the composition, there is a significant difference between them. All examples with the representation of a dog, with rare exceptions, are crossed by a decorative band /fig.1/, whereas the specimens with the deer images, also with few exceptions, on the contrary, have no such a band /fig.2/. This difference may be based on the assumption of I.Surguladze that parts of axes with the cult purpose are conceptualized in the correspondence with elements of cosmos, which, in the author's view, is indicated by the semantics of the figures shown on them. In this case, the band has acquired a great semantic loading, as the boundary between the heaven and the earth. Along with this, taking into account L.Pantskhava's view, according to which, antlers of the deer represented on Colchian axes are often exaggerated and can be the Tree of Life (L. Pantskhava, 1988, 40), in this case, the band loses its function as the boundary between two spheres of the universe.

Thus, if the assumption is real that the decorative band can be understood as the boundary between the heaven and the earth, its necessity is disclosed in relation to the deer image, for its antlers are interpreted as the equivalent of the Tree of Life and represent themselves a means of contact with the heaven.



3. Tlia, Burial # 333

4. Tlia, Burial # 76

It also seems significant that the paws of the animal depicted on axes are sometimes shown in the form of triangular fins. Some researchers regard this fact as a result of stylization (L.Pantskhava, 1988, 21). Some attribute them to the water world (I.I. Meshchaninov, 1925, 11), others interpret it as a fantastic animal (P.S. Uvarova, 1901). In my view, the fin-like ending conceptually represents a snake and must point to the nether world. The more so if we take into account that this motif occurs on chronologically so remote remains as bronze buckles.

I think, the same content is accentuated on the specimens from the Surmushi hoard and Koban, where the representations of a bird and the so-called Maltese cross are found over the dog's head. Both images are related to the heavenly world.

The specimens of the same group of axes decorated only with a band or a band imitation are considered from the similar viewpoint. The function of the bend as a compositional device of decorative ornamentation is quite important. The distribution of the décor on the facets of the axe is a fairly difficult task. Each change of its shape requires coordination of décor and correspondence with the shape. In this case the band, dividing the geometrical feature of a complex shape into simpler parts, is a certain frame for the representation given on the cheek and closes the composition. There is no fundamental difference between the mentioned specimens and one group of axes covered with geometrical ornament. In this case too attention is focused on the cheek. The carpet-like



5. Tlia, Burial # 209

ornament made up of different elements covers the bounded surface /fig. 3/. By means of relatively simpler devices the logical system of decorative ornamentation of axes is obtained, which corresponds fully to the axe shape.

The wide distribution of this motif and existence without real changes over a quite long period were due to these reasons. Several specimens, having no lower framing, are different to some extent, this time the character of the décor is different too - the carpet-like ornamentation is replaced by swastika-type ornament, with the well-defined centre /fig. 4/.

In the group under discussion several variants of decorative solution (specimens decorated with figural representations, geometrical motif and ornamental band) occur within a single compositional scheme. The two latter are in fact unchanged over the period of their existence. Unlike them, images on specimens with figural representations underwent significant evolution (increase of decorativeness).

I singled out as a separate group those Colchian axes the ornamentation of which is based on a graphic triangle. In this case the basic scheme, according to which a zoomorphic or geometrical motif is arranged on the axe surface, is fundamentally different. If decorative elements occurring on other, earlier discussed specimens stress the division of the axe surface into simpler geometrical planes, here, on the contrary, the emphasis is on revealing the entire plane of the axe. For the most part the band is omitted. Another significant difference is that on the earlier discussed specimens the composition on the cheek of the axe

is closed, finished in itself, self-sufficient, whereas in this case the decorative system is open, directed to the blade of the axe. This moment leads to a totally different result from the viewpoint of perception. To a certain extent visual dematerialization of form occurs, which in fact contradicts the basic principle of artistic treatment of the materials under study. The question of the unity of form and décor emerges, the equilibrium between them is violated and requirements of compositional solution of ornament move to the forefront. It should be specified here that in this case we are speaking about form, not plane. If we consider separate facets of an axe independently, here the correspondence between plane and décor is almost irreplaceable.

It is noteworthy that a similar compositional approach is mostly found in relation to axes with the doubly curved body, rather than those with the vertical body. Thus, the fundamental principle of decorative ornamentation of these objects is observed. The primary importance is attached to the shape of the axe, which defined basic ways of the arrangement of décor. The adornment of axes with the doubly bent body is more complex. The introduction of additional elements becomes necessary. One of the directions of the solution of this task is a triangle, whereas other details are arranged around it. By this feature the geometrical ornament of the curvilinear contour of the axe is set within frames. /fig. 5,6/.

I have discussed several groups of Colchian ritual axes. On the basis of typical examples of this unity I have tried to demonstrate the character of the interconnection of shape, contents and décor. As a result of this, I assume that from the 1st millennium BC in western Transcaucasia a considerable part of bronze culture is identifiable, the predominant image of which is a creature depicted in a fantastical manner. Its creative realization is characterized certain artistic stylistic features. Special importance for the clear demonstration of these features attaches to the manner of representation of the figure. The volume, real form is rendered by means of the strong continuous line. At the same time, the body proper is covered with emphatically plane-decorative drawing (rhomboid net, horizontal or vertical bands of slant-

ing notches, dots, filling different parts of the body with various geometrical features). The unity of these mutually exclusive features gives a special air to the entire representation. On the one hand, is decorative, does not break the "picture" plane, whereas the plastic outline creates the illusion of reality. Both extremes are excluded. Decorativeness does not pass into ornamentality. At the same time, is devoid of any naturalism, everyday life elements. The peculiar manner of rendering movement strengthens the produced impression. At a glance, the figure is running. At the same time, instead of reflecting a specific movement one finds the static sign denoting movement. The figure is constructed on the basis of mutually opposite data (volume-plane, movement-motionlessness, particular-general). Hence, perception of the figure itself is contradictory, it is on the boundary of real and unreal. Not a single representation is perceived as fantastic. Even the dog, which is one of the popular images of the Colchian graphic style and there is extensive literature concerning the identification of its species and essence, is devoid of fantastic elements. From the viewpoint of perception, it is a natural and organic part of the animals shown on Colchian axes. All this does not mean that in the form of these figures we are dealing with specific images existing in the real environment. Each of them reflects a far more general concept. Not a particular deer, "this deer" is shown, but its general image, archetype. The majority of figures, representing an integral part of the entire image, retains unity, and forms inner autonomy. By its structure it repeats the initial structure and shows connection with all the three spheres.

Component parts of graphic décor (figure, geometrical feature) become related to one another not by action or content, but by formal compositional devices, whereas for mythologically-minded man is determined by the sacred character of space.

In my view, in the form of these features we are dealing with the general traits defining the artistic style, the existence of which is not determined by a certain period of time and is manifested with varying intensity at different stages of the development of pre-Christian art. These are:

1. The paramount importance of the plastic shape;

2. Showing the texture and technical properties characteristic of the used material in the visual side of an artifact;

3. The well-marked compositional drawing;

4. The full compositional compliance of the plastic shape and engraved drawing;

5. The ability of free variation within the boundaries of the existing iconographic scheme;

6. The high degree of abstracting of a specific image;

7. The loss of the real prototype in the process of stylization.

I assume that in the form of the figure shown on the cheek of Colchian axes we are dealing with an abstract symbol, which visually is associated with the natural environment as much as possible. The master attains this by the fact that the basic feature of the real prototype predominates in every conventional representation. When stylization occurs, this affects not the real, for example, generalized form, but the representation of a fantastic creature.

It seems significant to specify what the initial element is, on the basis of which further stylization occurs, how real it is, what symbolic contents it has and how much the semantic loading is retained in the process of further modification.

In my view, these representations are of two types: the first, when a separate part of an axe is decorated with a zoomorphic figure of the collective kind, not existing in reality, corresponding to a particular sphere, and the other is a polymorphous creature, which shows connection with all three spheres.



6. Tlia, Burial # 297

At the first stage of the existence of this image on the basis of semantic requirements conventional variants were developed, and later on the stylization corresponding to the artistic-compositional requirements of this image occurred. At this stage the artistic-creative potential of the society creating this culture is manifested. It may seem unexpected, but the features of an individual approach are clearly observable on best specimens of this group. The high degree of artistic thought allows preventing the danger of the formation of a certain stereotype.

The images given here are abstract in their essence, because they do not serve the reflection of the particular, real environment, a certain action, but encryption of abstract ideas, concepts by means of symbols. Thus, the initial element of stylization is abstract. Proceeding from this, in the form of representations executed in this artistic style we are dealing not with a specific zoological species, but a generalized image, which at all stages of the evolution is devoid of any naturalism, everyday life details. Zoomorphic motifs in this case should be considered as the general model of religious worldview, with different variants of visual manifestation, with relevant transformation according to the requirements of the function (Colchian axe, head decorations) and material (bronze, silver, gold).

In spite of the fact that in the course of time zoomorphic images undergo certain desacralization, up to the Christian period they represent one of the significant spheres of the artistic activity of the Georgian and the Caucasian ethnos, in general. On the basis of the semantic and stylistic analysis of the archaeological material defined by a certain period of time (Early Iron-Late Classical Period) and theme (zoomorphic representation), the following results have been obtained:

1. The unity of the artistic-stylistic features typical of Colchian bronze culture goes beyond the boundaries of a single phenomenon and largely determines the character and further evolution of pre-Christian art in general.

2. From the first millennium BC in Western Transcaucasia a considerable part of bronze culture is identifiable, in which a polymorphous creature is the prevalent image. It is associated with the most popular image of Georgian folklore – *Paskunji* (Firebird). At

the initial stage this representation was a cosmic creature with three essences, which was linked with the three domains. Over the centuries this mythological image was gradually simplified and naturalized;

3. The diadems existing in the Early Classical period are a result of the further transformation of the pictorial equivalent of the content elaborated in the first centuries of the 1st millennium BC;

4. In the artistic décor of the Early Classical period jewellery the polymorphous, fantastic creature is replaced with a representation of identical contents – a stylized tree or rosette;

5. Variants of a similar representation recur in head ornaments of the Late Classical period as well / Kldeeti, Gonio, Loo/.

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DEFINING “GEORGIANNESSE” IN ANTIQUITY: ARTIFACTS AND CONCEPTS

There are dozens of gold pieces in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg that are called “Scythian”.¹ After centuries of nomadic life, a Scythian kingdom was organized, reaching its greatest extent in the fourth century, during which the northern Caucasus area, including Azerbaijan and what is now Georgia, and the eastern Mediterranean, including Thrace toward the Balkans, was encompassed.²

A question that might be raised regarding this primarily nomadic and, eventually more sedentary and agricultural, group is this: who produced the stunning works in metal that the Hermitage displays with such justifiable pride?³ The scholarship reflected in the Hermitage collections and elsewhere suggests that the Scythians themselves began to produce works in various metals, particularly gold, by the seventh century.

But it is one thing to decorate one’s body, as the Scythians are believed to have done,⁴ and eventually to develop wealth through slave-trading with the Greeks and through growing and shipping wheat, flocks and cheese to Greece. But it is quite another to mine and smelt diverse ores and to produce intricately designed jewelry, with complex motifs and careful craftsmanship. Generations of experiment and experience would be required to produce the famed Scythian gold jewelry and ornaments.

The processes needed to yield such works of art make a nomadic group a less than more likely candidate to be the producer of that art. Would or could they have done so once they became more agricultural and less purely nomadic? Possibly, but even as increased political stabilization moved forward, mining, forging, smelting, designing, crafting would have required skills that need considerable time to develop. On the other hand, even while they were still largely or even entirely nomadic, as well as throughout their increasingly settled periods, the Scythians traded

with - as they eventually conquered and lived cheek by jowl with - any number of other peoples, including Georgians and eventually Greeks. The Greeks already had a burgeoning range of productivity, demonstrating great artistic skill - in stone, bronze and ceramics. But Georgia had a particularly rich history of metallurgy that extended many centuries back as far as the Early Bronze Age.

In recent years, as I have been informed by Karen Rubinson, there has emerged archaeological evidence to suggest that some nomadic peoples could and did mine and smelt and fashion metal objects.⁵ Let us assume that the Scythians are among these groups. Yet the fact remains that the stunning metal work associated with and/or ascribed to them is all dated to the periods during which they were becoming increasingly sedentary,⁶ and as both conquerors and settlers, were sharing the Caucasus region with the Georgians, among others, with their long metallurgical history.

Thus I am proposing that the artists who produced the spectacular Scythian gold pieces were not Scythian - or in the case of some of them, not Greeks, as the Hermitage scholars have suggested - but *Georgians*. Or at the very least, that it was Georgian craftsmen who tutored the Scythians to create such objects. Such an assertion would not be dissimilar to ascribing the so-called Roman “Portrait Head of Brutus” to an Etruscan craftsman - or to a Roman craftsman under Etruscan tutelage.⁷

If we are seeking a framework within which to place “Georgianness” in antiquity, we might start with this: that an essential part of material cultural Georgianness must refer to the substance, *metal*, and to the diverse activities of *metallurgy*. From the skill to *mine* it⁸ to the knowledge of how to *smelt* it,⁹ of which there are myriad examples from within the third and second millennia; to the genius of how to *craft and decorate* tools and weapons and jewelry, of copper and bronze, of silver and beaten, cast, filigreed and granulated gold, with or without elaborate implants of semi-precious stones - all of this is evidenced in work from diverse Georgian archaeological sites that predate the arrival of the Scythians into the region, (or the Hittites, Assyrians, Persians or Greeks for that matter) by nearly two millennia.

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“Georgianness” is reflected in a phenomenal sweep of objects, from the still-impressive copper dagger of the early third millennium from Tsartsis-Gora, its handle and blade molded as one piece with delicate threads of wavy decoration on the handle; to the gold necklace at Ananauri with stylized ram’s-horn motifs, triangular elements and rope motifs, dated to 2500-2300 BC [fig 1]; and from the remarkable, tiny lion from Tsnori, with the “mane” cast to emulate granulation and filigree to the unparalleled double-



Necklace, Gold, Ananauri, 2500-2300 BC

walled gold cup inset with dozens of carnelians, lapis lazuli, amber and jet, from Trialeti, which date from between ca. 2300 BC and 1700 BCE.

Georgianness as a meeting among metallurgical skills encompasses the magnificent 17th-16th-century silver goblet also from Trialeti, with its double frieze of hammered relief figures [fig 2]; It includes a range of dynamic *animalia*, handsome bronze daggers and delicately decorated bronze spearheads.¹⁰ Georgian metalwork shapes bronze axeheads incised with abstract geometric and sometimes feline or equine forms - and in at least one case, offering a sculpted figure of a bull surmounting the top of the heel.¹¹ It encompasses carefully wrought silver bowls¹² and an early fourth-

century gold diadem from Vani. This delicate yet robust work twists a rope of gold into a circle culminating with two diamond-shaped lozenges, each divided into flat, isosceles triangles in which mirroring pairs of lions attack mirroring boars, the two lozenges linked by connecting hooks [fig 3].

Also from Vani is a fifth-century BCE gold necklace with 81 spherical beads from which depend 31 tiny tortoises, their surfaces overrun with rows of tiny grains and wires of gold. An early fourth-century gold earring from Vani may be even more astonishing. The ovoid circle of the primary ear-clinging element offers multiple rows of granulation and a splendid rosette, and hanging from this ovoid, by means of a tiny hook, is a pair of miniscule riders on horseback, the elongated equine legs terminating in a four-wheeled base from which, in turn, there depends an array of minute acorns, connected to the wheeled base by tiny chains. Riders, horses and wheel-base are all covered with miniscule grains [fig 4].

Similar in overall feel to this last piece is a fourth-century temple pendant from the Akhalgori hoard in Sadzeguri with elaborately-saddled horses and acorn-like droplets. This temple pendant and the Vani earring bear a striking resemblance, particularly with regard to the tiny detailed decorative elements, to the richest among the pieces in the Hermitage’s so-called Scythian hoard - ascribed by the museum to Greek craftsmen. Given the history of Georgian metallurgy that leads in a multi-valent and yet fairly direct line to these pieces, it seems not unreasonable to credit Georgian craftsmen with *both* groups of objects.

Nor does Georgian metallurgical craftsmanship dissipate when the Scythian kingdom does, but it continues into the Greek-Hellenistic and Roman periods. This we may see from delicate gold works to the nearly 200 examples of the quintessential bronze Georgian buckle of the 1st-3rd century CE in which a large animal - usually a horse or an aurochs - and several smaller animals are placed within an open, basket-weave pattern of rectilinear lines and framed with rows of herring bone or double spiral patterns and punctuated at the four corners of the frame by pointed omphalos motifs [fig 5].

These buckles bring us to a further series of

questions regarding the criteria for "Georgianness": those of style, subject, symbol and motif. If we cannot always identify these so easily - or if at times, we are confronted with overtly non-Georgian subjects - that does not necessarily reflect an absence of Georgian self-consciousness as far as symbols and motifs are concerned; it reflects, rather, on Georgia's place, geographically and conceptually, *at* and *as* a crossroads among diverse cultures and civilizations, and the willingness of Georgian culture to absorb and interweave diverse inputs from others. It reflects the Georgian ability to apply its craftsmanship to the subject and symbol needs and demands of its neighbors, from the Scythians and the Persians to the Greeks and the Romans. Thus the definition of "Georgianness" as it is being shaped in antiquity includes inter-cultural *malleability*.

Since Georgia is located at a geographic meeting point between the Near East, Anatolia and the eastern Mediterranean, and the Caucasus Mountains and south central Asian steppes beyond them, it would be surprising if Georgia had *not* been the recipient of cultural and not only political input from all sides. Its very nature as a crucible of visual and other ideas is marked by the more than occasional difficulty in arriving at certainty with regard to whether a given object was created in Georgia or imported. We recognize that Georgia had an extensive interchange with other peoples and cultures - not only the Scythians or the Greeks, of course, but also the progression of kingdoms and empires that defined Anatolia and the Middle East across antiquity, perhaps from as far back as the time of the Sumerians, and certainly culminating with the Achaemenid Persians.³³ On the other hand, beyond the syncretistic Greeks of the Hellenistic period, the Romans who affected a cultural continuum for Hellenism (and to a lesser extent, for Etruria) interfaced Georgia, as did later Persian powers, from the Parthians to the Sassanians.

One of the obvious manifestations of Georgian visual and conceptual connections to nearby lands is in the symbolic representation of divinities exhibiting a combination of human and animal traits. Felines standing on their hind legs as they carry objects, alone or in procession, scorpion men, bulls and rams with

human faces - these are all part of the vocabulary of Middle Eastern art as far back as the Early Bronze Age. So the style and content of the silver cup from Trialeti [fig 2] - along the upper register of which moves a procession of figures with human bodies but with tails, and heads that might be viewed as either human or animal, bringing offerings to a seated figure who sits before an offering table - reflect this tradition. Indeed, as Rubinson has pointed out, that distinctive hoofed offering table or altar shares with Hittite art a common



The Trialeti Goblet, Silver 18th-17th century BC

source in seals from the Assyrian trade colony sites of the period and cult basins from Ebla in Syria.³⁴

Not only figures with mixed human and animal traits, but particular *kinds* of animals are part of the millennia-long engagement with divinity which reflects the human concern for survival. Virile *animalia*, such as bulls, rams and lions, representing not only strength, but in the case of bulls and rams, fertility, and in the case of lions, power to deliver death, are part of Georgian art in antiquity, as they are endemic to the art of the Near East and eastern Mediterranean. They are associated with the capacity of gods to yield life and death which is understood across a panoply of cultures. Beyond obvious figurines - the gold cast lion, or the bull adorning a bronze axehead - Georgian art

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abounds in depictions of rams' heads and extensively spiraling and often somewhat stylized rams' horns, but also, in the gold Ananauri necklace [fig 1] what we may recognize as *extremely* flattened and stylized ram's horns.¹⁵ These are of the sort that, surmounting capitals in the architectural configurations of Anatolia and, later, Greece, will be called Aeolic and, further stylized, Ionic, capitals. We might ask when and where the stylization that culminated in such capitals by the Greek period began. Could it have been in Georgia? Even if not, Georgia would present itself as one of the earliest locations for such stylization.

The Ananauri necklace, furthermore, in its main pendant, offers a complex triangle/arrow motif. That



Diadem, Gold, Vani, I half of 4th century BC

is: upper-facing, negative-spaced (ie, cut-out) triangles intersperse downward-facing, positive-spaced triangles. The configuration symbolizes the meeting of opposites: heaven and earth, divine and human, male and female (the stylized, upper-thrusting male phallus and the downward-facing female "pubic triangle") - even as the entire combination, together with the element above it squeezed between the stylized ram's horn motif, forms a distinct and phallic arrow formation. I am suggesting both that the configuration offers a complex and sophisticated symbolic statement of fertility and thus of survival in a world governed by difficult-to-control forces (in which fertility is essential to survival); and that, whereas this idea is not unique to Georgia,¹⁶ it is in evidence very early in Georgian art, thus offering the possibility that Georgia is not merely the heir to, but perhaps a progenitor of such a motif.

We can recognize other instances of *animalia* and imagery that concretize the abstraction of fer-

tility, from distinctive stag-finials that suggest connections to pre-Scythian (and not merely Scythian) nomadic art, to yet earlier, Neolithic female figurines with prominent breasts and thighs;¹⁷ to a silver fifth-century BCE omphalos - swollen womb-symbolizing - bowl from Pitchnvari and an equally exquisite gold fourth-century BCE omphalos bowl from Vani - both of which, in style, symbol and material, relate to similar bowls produced by the Achaemenid Persians during the same period, but in terms strictly of symbol and broad style, share common ground with imagery extending as far afield as Etruria.¹⁸

The diadem from Vani, with its double-isosceles-triangle lozenges and their lion-and-boar images, also recalls a broad-based idea across the Middle East and the Scythian steppes, of the triumph of order over chaos [fig 3]. Either two figures, symbolizing order, attack and defeat a central figure symbolizing chaos; or alternatively, the central single figure is a master or mistress of the beasts, controlling two wild animals that flank it. But the diadem also recalls the configuration of such scenes on the triangular pediments of Greek temples. The Vani piece suggests that compositional lessons regarding fitting a group of figures neatly into such a frame have been well-learned - but the combination of two such configurations as mirrors of each other, to say nothing of multiplying each doublet twice, shapes this "pedimental style" in a uniquely Georgian manner.

Similarly unique is the application of the principle of mastering nature - a parallel to the issue of fertility-*cum*-survival - expressed in the aforementioned buckles from a variety of Georgian sites with multiple infinitizing patterns along the frames, corner omphaloi and a large animal - a horse or aurochs or stag - surrounded by smaller creatures, such as birds or dogs, as if they are its acolytes: as if the large animal is itself the master/mistress of the beasts [fig 5]. One may certainly think of classical Greek and Roman gods and goddesses, such as Artemis/Diana, paradoxical patron of the hunter and protector of the hunted,¹⁹ but if such an association were to be made with the Georgian buckles, those objects would reflect a unique articulation of the principle represented by the goddess, transformed into a dominating animal who protects and governs the animals.²⁰

Nor is Artemis/Diana the only god or goddess familiar from the Greek tradition evidenced in ancient Georgian art. Dionysius is represented, both directly and indirectly - whose cult is usually said to have traveled west into Greece from origins in Anatolia, rising to prominence within the Greek pantheon by the Hellenistic period. Thus a large mosaic floor representation at Dzisa shows the god and his human bride, Ariadne; and on the other hand, a splendid second-century BCE victory figure dug up at Vani but of indeterminate manufacturing origin, was an affix from a vessel decorated with images of eagles, Pan, a satyr, Ariadne and several maenads, all of which would associate the figure with Dionysius.

Conventional thinking supposes that the wine god's cult traveled east to Georgia as well as west toward Greece, or that the cult, expanded in and beyond Greece in the Hellenistic period, arrived to Georgia along with other elements of Greek culture that are in evidence in the archaeological record of the last half-millennium BCE. But it is also arguable, given the strong likelihood that viticulture began in Georgia,²¹ and the association between Dionysius and wine,²² that the cult *began* in Georgia and traveled west - in which case such objects represent at least the returning *home* of religious ideas and their visual manifestations through interface with the Greeks, and at most the *continuation* of an idea that has carried from the Neolithic Shulaveri to Hellenistic Vani.

Nor is ancient Georgia limited to the presence of *Greek* religious elements. For the substantial second-century BCE sanctuary at Dedoplistskan has been interpreted as a Zoroastrian cult center - its structures resemble a Zoroastrian fire temple complex such as those that once populated Persia, where Zoroastrianism emerged in the 6th-century BCE. Western Georgia - Colchis - had become a tribute-paying ally of the Achaemenids by the fifth century BCE, and the evidence of the Achaemenid presence is particularly notable at Sairkhe, where, among other objects, a series of tiny gold disks has been found upon which the Zoroastrian personification of light and good, Ahura Mazda, is shown - who is also identifiable with Armazi, chief deity in the pre-Christian Georgian pantheon. So, too, small golden eagles with outspread wings,

found at both Vani and Sairkhe, recall the eagle on the Achaemenid royal standard.

By late antiquity, the spectacular fourth-century silver and gilded silver bowl from Mukuzani with flora and fauna overrunning its exterior has co-associated



Earring, Gold, Vani, I half of 4th century BC

the Zoroastrian tradition with another, newer faith: Christianity. Offering in general the attributes of Zoroastrian cult objects, on the interior the bowl offers a cross - which has by then just begun its ascent to primacy as a Christian symbol. In that case the grapes and their vines on the exterior, which in another context might be assumed to be a symbol of Dionysius, have here very possibly become Christological.²³

By the time of this bowl, the presence of and interchange among diverse peoples, polities, and traditions in what we call Georgia was reflected in the

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primary use of the Greek language by the elite in Colchis (the west) and of Aramaic in Iberia (the east) - and even in the development of a unique variant of Aramaic script, called Armazic (or Armazian). This writing system is itself symptomatic of synthesis and innovation: it seems to have evolved from an early script upon which two subsequent Persian scripts (Parsi and Pahlavi) were also based. Within a century, a uniquely Georgian writing system would be in use.²⁴



Buckle, Bronze, Gebi, 1st-3rd century BC

By the time Georgian script was definitively operative - the fifth century CE - the Sassanians had long supplanted the Parthians to the east and the surviving Roman Empire to the west had become limited to its East Roman, Byzantine descendant. Georgia would still be a crucible into which both poured their political, artistic and spiritual influences. Georgia in antiquity combined its own brilliant history of metallurgical skill and a range of its own subjects, symbols and motifs with the confidence toward malleability that enabled it to absorb and synthesize an ongoing range of external influences within its visual and conceptual culture. These qualities, key elements in emerging "Georgianness", would continue out of antiquity into and beyond the medieval period to encompass other media, from stone carving to textiles to illuminated literature, and a new range of spiritual directions - Christianity in contention yet co-existence with

Islam and Judaism - as Georgia continued to pursue its course of self-expression through the centuries.

Notes:

1 "Scythian" refers to a diverse nomadic people that began to dominate the Pontic steppes of what we now call Kazakhstan, southern Russia and Ukraine from the early Iron Age and whose presence was felt in the region through the first few centuries of the Christian era. The "Scythian" tribes that arrived at some degree of political stability during this period had been marauding wanderers in the Sayan-Altay area perhaps two thousand years previously, but, spreading westward by about 900 BCE and settling in a somewhat more defined manner and with a more clearcut political and cultural structure, became, in part, agricultural, and not only nomadic, over the next 500 years. By the seventh through sixth centuries, a Scythian kingdom is said to have been organized, and by the fifth century and following, a second kingdom was established, reaching its greatest extent in the fourth century.

2 Even after the decline of Scythian hegemony, their presence could be observed throughout the area they once dominated, as late as the late second century CE.

3 Thus, works such as the fifth-century BCE gold temple pendants, with finely granulated droplets shaping a complex composition of chariot-like figures from which fruits or nuts depend; or the carefully wrought pendant shield decoration presenting a kneeling deer-like animal with repeating-patterned antlers that extend back from the head all along the back. The first of these is ascribed to the Greeks while the second is, by implication, ascribed to the Scythians themselves.

4 They are believed to have decorated themselves with intricate designs representing specific tribal affiliations and real as well as mythological beasts.

5 The discussion with Rubinson took place at the conference on Georgian Art and Culture that took place in Tbilisi in June, 2008.

6 Which is to say that they are not credited with having spent their earlier, nomadic centuries developing these skills.

7 This quintessential "Roman" image, made for a Roman client, perhaps portraying a Roman figure, is understood to have been most likely created by an Etruscan artist or at least by a Roman artist working in the studio of an Etruscan master who was part of a long artistic heritage of bronze work, when the Romans themselves, conquerors of Etruria, were not yet arrived to that point of producing such artworks independently. The same may be said of the equally iconic "Capitoline Wolf" - to this day embraced as the consummate symbol of Rome, yet understood to have been manufactured by or at least under the tutelage of an Etruscan artist.

8 Copper was already being mined in Racha, Svane-ti and Apkhazeti during the last part of the Early Bronze and first part of the Middle Bronze Ages - the period of the Kurgan and Trialeti cultures.

9 That is, to combine different metals, copper with tin and copper with arsenic, and bronze mixed with tin.

10 For example, the spearhead from the Shilda sanctuary in Kakheti, from the 13-12th centuries, with zig-zag decorations that are stylized snakes, their culminating heads still observable.

11 We see this, for instance, in an early sixth-century axehead from the Ozhora cemetery in Shida Kartli.

12 For example, the fifth-century BCE omphalos bowl with three concentric rings of repousse droplets and stamped palmettes and lotus blossoms, found at the so-called Greek necropolis in Pitchvnari.

13 Given the first part of this essay, there is a fine irony to the very legitimate suggestion made by David Braund that the Scythians may have influenced the Georgians with regard to the burials of Colchian aristocrats together with their horses, from the sixth century BCE or even earlier. See Braund, *Georgia in Antiquity*, 56 and 130-1.

14 See Karen Rubinson, "A Note on the Trialeti Goblet," in Soltes, *National Treasures of Georgia*.

15 For further discussion of bull and ram symbolism, see Soltes, *Our Sacred Signs*, 18-22, and also the paper by Mikheil Abramishvili found elsewhere in this volume.

16 We can find it shared across myriad cultures within the broad matrix of which Georgia is a geographic centering point.

17 For instance, the clay figure from Khramis Didi-Gora, dated to the sixth millennium.

18 I am referring specifically to the placement of the omphalos at the center of a bowl as a symbol of fertility, birth and rebirth within a continuous cycle of being.

19 Indeed, the second-century Roman writer, Arrian, writes of a cult center to Artemis/Diana at the mouth of the Rioni (Phasis) river.

20 A related and relevant discussion of the transformative range of the "mistress of the beasts" motif appears in Alexander Moshinsky's article, "The Cult of the Double-Edged Axe in the Northern Caucasus." (See the bibliography for full citation). Even within the limits of Greek mythology we may recall how certain gods and goddesses may assume animal avatars at times toward some specific purpose.

21 See Patrick McGovern, "Georgia as Homeland of Wine-making and Viticulture, in Soltes, *National Treasures of Georgia*.

22 He is credited in classical mythology with having discovered how to extract it from grapes together with the subsequent fermented quality that the extraction process can yield.

23 Christ is the Good Vintner, who prunes the vine-

yard of humanity to keep it healthy, just as the wine of the grapes itself is also a symbol of his blood, shed in his self-sacrifice on behalf of humanity.

24 Georgian tradition actually ascribes that writing system to a much earlier era, and to the Georgian king Par-navaz, who is said to have ruled ca 299-34 BCE, but that issue is not relevant to my discussion. Appropriately enough, one of the earliest works that has survived and uses the Georgian writing system, *The Martyrdom of St. Shushanik*, portrays the Iberian (eastern Georgian) saint of that name choosing Christianity - and as a consequence, a martyred execution - over the Zoroastrianism embraced by her husband.

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GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE OF UPLISTSIKHE

The rock-hewn city of Uplistsikhe has been the center of scholars' attention for more than two centuries thanks to its unusual appearance and rich history. Yet, it was not until 1957 that the comprehensive study of this unique Georgian cultural heritage site was undertaken. The Georgian State Museum of Art's Uplistsikhe Archaeological-Architectural Expedition was then established; led by Academician Sh. Amirashvili, its members worked intensively until 1991. The expedition included archaeologists, art historians, architects, geologists and specialists from other fields. Beginning in 1976, the expedition was led by T. Sanikidze.

The entire site of the ancient city (23.5 acres/9.5 ha) was excavated. Diggings were also organized in the area surrounding the site, including in Katlanikhevi, Bambebi, the village of Uplistsikhe, Chanakha Mitsa and Lashtakhevi. The expedition uncovered rich archaeological material dating from various periods, which shed light upon the centuries-old uninterrupted history of Uplistsikhe and its distinguished role at certain stages of the country's development. It also enabled scholars to establish the initial urban fabric of the city and the main phases of its carving and building, as well as to identify the architectural composition of separate caves and their typological groups.

The diggings in the center of the ancient city in 1977-78 revealed a rare ritual treasure trove at a depth of 16.5 ft/6 m, which contained gold, copper and bone jewelry, pottery and a terracotta figurine of a beautiful female deity, the embodiment of the Sun, from Tanagra. Nearby were found iron hoops (with hubs) of four large wheels of different diameters, in which complex cosmogonic beliefs of the dwellers of Uplistsikhe are encoded.

The treasure trove, discovered following long observations at the ancient city and the comparative study of written records and finds and propositions suggested by preceding researchers, completed a circle. This in turn allowed us to make new assumptions on architectural and functional characteristics of the site, as well as on its history. The facts and events formed an orderly chain, thanks to which it has been established that beginning from the early Hellenistic period until the adoption of Christianity in Georgia in the early 4th century, Uplistsikhe was a temple city. All records relating to the site further confirmed this opinion. The aforementioned conclusion enabled us to make a general outline of the history of Uplistsikhe and the main features of its architecture, which are summarized below.

The huge bare cliff massif of Uplistsikhe, an overhang of Mount Kvernak toward the left bank of the Mtkvari River (the Kura), positioned as if by the divine providence, and the natural caves located in it, must have compelled attention from early times, the more so that since prehistoric times, stone and cliff were considered as sacred symbols of strength and stability, while a cave signified a womb giving birth to supreme deities (Zeus and Christ). This universal religious phenomenon, attested in many theological sources, is frequently manifested in Georgian ethnography and place names. Uplistsikhe, in fact, means the abode and domain of the Lord.

Here, as in Gareji, Vardzia and other prominent cliff complexes, sacrificial altars and dwellings must have existed as early as the Paleolithic Age, but archaeological evidence suggests that these emerged in Uplistsikhe not earlier than toward the end of the 2nd millennium. Both the shrine and dwellings are carved into the cliff. It is evident that the importance of cliff grew further over time. The trend must have been caused by socio-economic reasons and primarily by the divine grandeur of the cliff. Later, when the local population moved to the lowlands, only the shrine remained in the cliff. A self-managed theocratic community was established, which, having taken advantage of the honor of possessing the cliff and becoming stronger, acquired hegemony over Shida (Inner) Kartli. The Sun (a heavenly body), as well as the land

(agrarian), underworld (chthonic) and water deities were worshipped.

The settlement of the fertile lands surrounding the cliff started back in the early Bronze period. There also used to be a temple on Katlanikhevi Hill. In the 1st millennium B.C. The Katlanikhevi and Uplistsikhe communities began to contend with one another for primacy. The confrontation ended in the victory of Uplistsikhe, but the Katlanikhevi community torched the shrine. Thus, the Katlanikhevi gods, including the deity associated with the solar cult, the sculpture of which was found on the site, had to “resettle” to the Uplistsikhe caves. Later, the same kind of figurine of this goddess, imported from Tanagra, was discovered in Uplistsikhe.

This long process occurred in the late 4th and early 3rd century culminated by the carving and building of a new temple city on this site. It took several decades to complete the grandiose work, and the entire rock massif was cut into under a common theological concept of urban development. Only a strong, economically advanced society could afford such a plan, and this would necessarily require the active involvement of the supreme authorities. Indeed, there is a very likelihood that Uplistsikhe had been the capital of Kartli before Mtskheta gained this title. However, the state of affairs changed soon with the ruling dynasty accepting idolatry as the nation’s official religion, which gave more independence to Uplistsikhe.

Hence, the main stage of building Uplistsikhe coincides with early Antiquity, time when major changes were underway in the country. It was then that the Kingdom of Kartli was founded. Urban-type settlements turned into cities (an “urban explosion”). Uplistsikhe must have had specially made caves, structures and roads even before that time, but all of these were destroyed together with massive work carried out on the cliff. It is also noteworthy that the urban fabric of the city has not changed since then.

From the west and the south the city was protected by a tall cliff and from the east and the north, by a strong wall with four gates, a secret tunnel leading down to the River Mtkvari, a trench and a broad platform erected upon it (an element of fortification atypical of Georgia). The entire defense system

merged harmoniously with the triangular cliff massif.

The city used to be divided into three districts (by boundary trenches), which differed from each other in scale and building density. The southern part occupied the smallest area. It preserves plans of simple dwellings, a vast arena and an altar-niche, the only religious cave in this section. The south section of the city must have once housed temple slaves (guards).

The northern part was most likely the section where middle-class residents lived, as is indicated by the remains of temples and houses of simple design. A large wine cellar, comprising a complex, tri-partite structure, and a storage room for communion wine in which pits for fifty-eight wine pots and a grape-press were found, was located near the edge of the cliff (several grape-press can also be seen in other parts of the ancient city). Designed to store large amounts of wine, these storage facilities indicate how vast and densely populated the areas subordinated to Uplistsikhe were. Members of the temple community would bring their harvest to this site; grapes used to be pressed here in order to endow the liquid with sacredness; a vast number of worshippers received drink at regularly held festivals. A wine cellar also served as a shrine.



Uplistsikhe. View from the south.

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The middle section of the city, i.e., where the temple was located and pagan priests resided, occupies the largest area of the cliff. The main street, which leads from the southeastern gate, divides the area into two parts. It then branches out and leads up through steps to the city's central square. The main temple of hewn stone used to stand on the top of the cliff. Some of the fragments of the temple are incorporated into a Christian Church (Uplistsulis or the Prince's Church) standing on its site.



Uplistsikhe. Master plan of the ancient city.

This section is where all important shrine temples and altars are concentrated. Some of these preserve their original scale and forms, e.g., the Makvliani, the double-pillar (Tamar's Hall) and Korediani shrines. Next to them are the ruins of several large caves and ordinary buildings, which must have sheltered pagan priests and served as a sanctuary.

This urban and functional structure of Uplistsikhe corresponds with Strabo's note (Strabo, *Geogra-*

phy, XII, 2,3), according to which the Caucasian temple community was made up of pagan priests, *theophoroi* (free cult servants) and *hieroduloi* (temple slaves).

The Uplistsikhe caves and structures from the period of Antiquity can be classified into three distinct typological groups. The first group unites temples with a vaulted portico, the main spatial elements of which are an open portico terminating into a semicircular vault, a covered room (rooms) at the back and an open courtyard-hall in front. The group is further divided into simple and complex variants. These temples afford parallels with an eight-stepped temple in Vani, a model of a pagan church in the village of Gamdlitskaro and St. Nino's Svetitskhoveli. To the second group belong hall-type temples, the main elements of which include a hall with a flat ceiling and a courtyard-hall in front. The third group has round domed shrines, which are represented by two varieties: (a) a cylindrical body carved in the cliff with a semi-spherical dome, and (b) a semi-spherical dome erected right from the floor level.

The plans, scales and forms of the rock-hewn temples follow the rules and traditions typical of above-ground stone and timber architecture. A broad repertoire of building art, including pillars, pilasters, bases, capitals, arches, vaults, beams and caissons, is employed extensively.

During the six or seven centuries beginning in the late 4th and early 3rd centuries B.C. Uplistsikhe continued to lead an intensive way of life, which is confirmed by rich archaeological evidence. Majority of finds are certainly of Proto-Georgian provenance. Of particular note are the items used in serving the cult, some of which have been discovered exclusively in Uplistsikhe. One of the temples bears Aramaic inscriptions containing a reference to a shrine. There are also some imported objects of pottery, minor sculpture, coins (Roman and Parthian), and early-Sassanid bulla with Pahlavid inscription, etc.

This strong temple center seems to have had relatively distanced relations with the royal court. According to a historical note, in the 1st century B.C. King Arsuk "took hold of" Uplistsikhe and "reinforced" it. However, this was only a brief episode in the relations between the city and the supreme powers. Up-



Uplistsikhe (schematic drawing).

Uplistsikhe of the period of Antiquity remained a self-governed temple community, within a common state system.

In the early centuries of our era Uplistsikhe acquired a number of new complexes, including a cave, the ceiling of which is decorated with fine Roman caissons. A long time ago it was "christened" as a theater by some scholars, the idea which has eagerly been reaffirmed by Georgian theater specialists. However, the cave has nothing to do with an Antique theater. Among other reasons, it could not serve as a theater simply because it can accommodate only 25-30 people. It was rather a temple with a portico typical of Uplistsikhe, which is yet another confirmation of the fact that nothing changed in the city throughout the centuries either in religious life or in architecture. There is only a slight difference between buildings of this type and the coffered temple. The courtyard-hall of the latter has a shape of a quarter of a circle instead of that of a rectangle or a square characteristic of other ones. Another temple having the same sort of courtyard-hall was carved above, slightly to the north.

However, it is still possible to suggest the presence of a certain type of theater in Uplistsikhe. Ceremonies in temples, to which only cult servants had access and where pagan priests assembled to make judgments, to foretell the future and to offer sacrifice, were in many cases performed in the style of theatricalized religious mysteries. Thus, it would be reasonable not to limit the search of the origins of Georgian theater to the coffered temple, but rather to seek them in the more distant past, i.e., in any temple dating from 4th-3rd century B.C. in Uplistsikhe.

The adoption of Christianity in Georgia led to the decline of Uplistsikhe. The Christians treated Uplistsikhe and its community, including those who "serve Uplistsikhe dwellers and worship the Boriana's devils" ruthlessly. They devastated the city; they destroyed everything they could and even ruined the sources of the water supply by blocking a holy well at a minor gate. This led to the dying away of life in Uplistsikhe for a long time.

Then beginning in the 6th century Uplistsikhe began to revive. A large three-nave basilica, partly carved in the cliff, emerged in place of a pagan temple in the center of the town; temples were converted into dwellings (some of them were even double-storied); new dwellings were carved or built, which indicate that Uplistsikhe was again heavily populated.

In the 9th and 10th centuries Uplistsikhe again had to play a prominent role in the history of Georgia. When Tbilisi was under Arab rule, Uplistsikhe emerged as the Georgians' main city and the shelter of the forces struggling for the consolidation of the country. Georgian and Armenian kings and leaders often fought for Uplistsikhe. "He who seized Uplistsikhe would control Kartli" (I. Javakhishvili).

Under such circumstances Uplistsikhe continued to develop further. One of the city's most conspic-



Uplistsikhe. Double pillar temple (Tamar's Hall).



Uplistsikhe. Archaeological treasure.

ous buildings, the Uplistsulis, a three-church basilica, which marks the center and overlooks the entire area, was built in the 10th century.

This long period of prosperity of Uplistsikhe came to an end in the 1220s-30s, when the Mongol hordes attacked Georgia. "And there used to be a town before Genghiz," says the 18th-century historian and geographer, Vakhushti. The Mongol attack was followed by an irreversible process of final decline and fall. Judging by written records, archaeological evidence and the site's external appearance, in the Middle Ages none of Uplistsikhe's former glory remained. Moreover, caves surrounded by wickerwork, shacks standing in streets and approach roads creat-

ed a picture of complete chaos, though most of these were broken up during the excavation and cleaning of the site.

Three churches of different sizes united by means of a common entrance, which hardly retain any signs of their original function, were carved at the north-west edge of the cliff. Yet, there were some highlights. Note must be made of a single-nave church, and especially of its porch (14th-15th century) erected in the north, which had a semispherical roof with cruciform ornaments redolent of earlier decorative patterns; unfortunately it collapsed in the 1980s following an earthquake. An almost square auxiliary room with an umbrella-shaped dome supported by a single pillar standing near Uplistsulis basilica also appears highly remarkable (the dome attracted the particular interest of the first researchers at Uplistsikhe). The forms of the structure are so unusual and rough that it is impossible to fit them even within the context of the time, chaotic though it was. Most probably, it was made by invaders affirming a different religious confession. The impulses from the time of Uplistsikhe, the remains of paganism, were still alive. There were churches (Uplistsikhe once even served as a monastery and was subordinated to the Mtskheta Catholicate), but next to them were also to be found altars typical of the pre-Christian era – miniature models of temples with porticoes (several temples of this kind have been discovered), where the dwellers of Uplistsikhe continued to sing praise to their old deities. A soothsayer and an oracle survived to the end. However, the 19th century saw the final depopulation of Uplistsikhe.

As a final note, the aforementioned plan of the study of Uplistsikhe and the history of the site is explained in detail in my monograph *Uplistsikhe* (Tb., 2002). Based on the analysis of rich and diverse written records, and of the architectural and archaeological material, it reconstructs, to the extent possible, the picture of the almost 3000-year history of this outstanding site. This article further enriches the picture with several important points. Despite this, to my mind, there is still much to be done in Uplistsikhe and for Uplistsikhe.

The architectural structure and function of some of the caves in the ancient city require further clarification. The northeastern and northwestern gates are in need of cleaning. A necropolis should be found. The villages of Uplistsikhe, Kvakhvrelis and a number of sites around the place must be excavated. Hence, the questions surrounding Uplistsikhe continue to pose a challenge, which, regrettably, the contemporary generation of scholars fails to respond to adequately. It is rather a matter of future programs and efforts.

Future scholars will need to continue along the established path and to envision the knowledge and experience accumulated in the past, as well as to maintain an appropriate methodology. I find it necessary to underline this because we have already seen attempts made to distort the history of Uplistsikhe by people trying to publicize arbitrary and nonscientific original propositions, but, luckily, these will not affect the site.

Uplistsikhe is now facing another threat. Being neglected, it is on the verge of destruction. The site requires constant maintenance. It is in need of properly thought-out consolidation and conservation work that would be based on scientific calculations. Uplistsikhe lacks a true and knowledgeable supporter or support agency that would take proper care of the site and make sure that no mistakes are made while implementing this highly important task. The consolidation and conservation work conducted previously saved a large number of caves. Only the surface consolidation effort appeared inappropriate; it is a task that scientists continue to tackle to the present day.

Two decades ago, I produced a detailed project for the conservation, management, and promotion of Uplistsikhe. I even started its implementation, but the plan was soon blocked. The ceiling of Queen Tamar's Hall, which originally rested on two pillars, but stood without it throughout the last 3-4 centuries, was reinforced with a thin concrete pillar, an element that appears alien to the refined architecture of Uplistsikhe. It stands as an illustration of an unprofessional and heartless approach to the site. The multi-ton monolithic ceiling is bored through in the middle and the brilliant decoration is damaged. The stability of the

huge cliff massif is at risk, and this part of the site will not survive a serious earthquake. However, there is a relatively simple, and more importantly, a highly reliable project for hall reinforcement, in which the initiators of the aforementioned intervention took no interest whatsoever. Uplistsikhe may now lose its most distinguished and precious part, and together with it this magnificent site could lose the attraction and mystery which have been attracting people like a magnet.

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TOWARD INTERPRETATION OF THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC FIGURE FROM KATLANIKHEVI

The archaeological finds unearthed in 1951 in Building No. 1 of the earliest settlements at Katlanikhevi, located near the cave town of Uplistsikhe include the clay head of a woman sculpted in high relief (Fig.1). D. Khakhutaishvili suggests it is a ritual object representing the image of the Great Goddess Nana, dating to the 1st millennium BC (D. Khakhutaishvili, 1969, 19-29).

The sculpture, which has obsidian-encrusted eyes, seemingly had been attached to the clay wall, through which it finds parallel, as D. Khakhutaishvili suggests, in the painted clay head of the goddess Ishtar, attached to a temple wall of the Jemdet-Nasr period (3100-2900 BC) in the same manner. In addition, the head's typological-iconographic traits (middle-parted hair rendered with a thickened layer of clay) reveal a formal closeness with the well-known sculpture of the goddess from Uruk, identified in some studies with the goddess Inanna.

Among the objects discovered on Building No. 1's floor (fragment of a clay model of a bull-calf, pottery pots and discs made of their pieces, damaged figures of animals, a bullock-cart wheel, pierced cobble-stones, etc.) D. Khakhutaishvili interpreted the discoid-shaped items as representing a material emanation of the solar cult. He thereby recognized Building No. 1 as a shrine of the "Great Mother Nana" [the same *Mze-Kali* (*Sun-Woman*), Barbale].

While studying the cult of Armazi, the supreme divinity of pre-Christian Kartli (the Eastern Georgian kingdom), my attention was drawn to the evidence given in "The Life of St. Nino," the Early Christian Georgian account of the Enlightener of Georgia, which offers a perspective through which to survey the problem of identification of the Katlanikhevi figure in a broader cultural context.

In this writing St. Nino is referred to as the

"daughter of Armazi," appealing to the saint to heal the sick Persian magus Khuara. King Mirian addresses her thus: "...through God's mighty power you're skilled in healing, you're the daughter of Armazi."

As a final result of the examination of the supreme divinity, the origin of Armazi from the Iranian Ahura Mazda has been proved through a comparative study of Aramazd, the supreme divinity of pre-Christian Armenia, which became a bridging link between Armazi and Ahura Mazda. The functional as well as other aspects of these gods coincide with those of Armazi, to say nothing of the phonetic closeness of the names Armazi, Aramazd and Ahura Mazda (Md. Persian Ohrmizd). It is notable that in the "History of Armenia" by Movses Xorenaci, the Georgians' god is referred to as Aramazd while St. Nino is referred to as Nunē. The reference to Nunē instead of Nino shouldn't be taken as an attempt of "Armenization" of the Georgian religious realm as suggested by some scholars, but as proof that for Xorenaci Aramazd and Armazi are identical gods as both of them are connected with Ahura Mazda.

There is also evidence reflected in the record given in Kartlis Tskhovreba ("Life of Kartli") on the name "Armazi"; as mentioned by the Chronicler, Parnawaz, the first king of Kartli "erected the idol after himself and named it Armazi, for in Persian they called Parnawaz Armazi." Thus, the reference to "Armazi" as "Aramazd" is obviously the Armenian transliteration of Ahura Mazda (Hormuzd, Ohrmazd), just as he calls St. Nino "Nunē," which is an alternative form of the Sumero-Assyrian Nana, Nanaia; in Hebrew Nanea (Maccabees II, 1, 13, 15), and in Armenian Nanē.

The same Nanē is mentioned in The History of Armenia by Agathangelos, who announces that: "...in Tsil St. Gregory obliterated the temple of Nanē, daughter of Aramazd" [(Agath. 786), J. Russell, 1987, 59]. It thus becomes evident that there is obvious connection between Nino-Armazi and Nanē-Aramazd. It has been suggested that Nanē (Nana, Nanaia) was worshipped in Armenia and, close to Georgia, other civilizations venerated her as the Great Mother Goddess. The reference to Nanē as "daughter of Aramazd," like that to Nino as "daughter of Armazi," need not be taken literally but figuratively. It may be

compared, as suggested by J. Russell, to the Yasht 17.16, dedicated to the yazata Aši, where the goddess is referred to as the daughter of Ahura Mazda (J. Russell, 1987, 241). Aši represents fortune, prosperity and fecundity, thereby finding parallels with the cult of the Great Mother Nana (Nanē), the goddess venerated across the Near and Middle Eastern (Sogdia) regions.

A century ago Bishop Kyrion (Kyrion Sadzaglishvili) studied the etymology of the name Nino and equated it with Ur-Nina, whom he refers to as the goddess of the Georgian pagan pantheon. He suggests that she is of Chaldaean origin, just as were the ancestors of the Georgians who worshipped the goddesses Ur-Nina and Ur-Bau. K. Sadzaglishvili interprets the prefix Ur as "slave"¹ but recognizes Nina and Bau as the personal names of the goddesses (Episcop Kyrion, 1910, 312).

The names containing the root Nin, Nan are attested in Early Christian Georgian writings, apart from St. Nino and King Mirian's wife Nana, in the two goddesses Ainina and Danana, whose cults were introduced to Kartli, according to Georgian textual sources, by King Saurmag ["...Saurmag ... erected two idols of Ainina and Danana along the road of Mtskheta" ("Kartlis Tskhovreba")].

L. Melikset-Bekoff suggests that the name Danina (resp. Danana) is close to that of the Armenian goddess Anahit. He traces the name Nano in the refrains of Georgian songs (Harni-Arnano, Arnia-Arnano), and recognizes it as the transliteration of Nina, the name with the most ancient origin. The root "Nan" is contained, as pointed out by Melikset-Bekoff, in the words denoting "mother" (Nina, Nino, Nana, Nano, Nena, Neno, Nani, Nane, Ana) in Georgian as well as in the Armenian and Tatar languages,² and Georgian lullaby songs words lav-Nana, Nanina are likely to have the same connotations (L. Melikset-Bekoff, 1914, 17-18).

N. Marr interprets Ainina and Danina as the two alternative names of one and the same goddess worshipped as Anahita by Iranians and Nana by non-Iranians (N. Marr, 1902, 9).

Following the same line of thinking, M. Tsereteli admits the possibility of the establishment of the cult of Anahit through Ainina and Danina, although differentiating them hypothetically ("Ainina and Nina,

the latter being the same Nana"), suggests that "... in this case we're dealing with the two names of one and the same goddess known as Ishtar in Sumer and worshipped under varied names: Ninni, Ininna, Inanna, Nana, among which the names Nana and Nina had been widespread throughout Asia Minor and Georgia." (M. Tsereteli, 1924, 100-101).

As seen above, the etymology of the name Nino traces its origin back to the circle of Sumerian, Asia Minor, Iranian and Armenian goddesses, although this initial clue for the phonetic interpretation needs a further line of research based upon additional evidence.



Anthropomorphic figure. Katlanikhevi.

The juxtaposition of the noted concept makes clear the connection of Nin-o both with the Iranian Anāhitā and the Sumerian Inanna, with which, as the preliminary investigation suggests, coincides the derivation of the Armenian Nanē from Inanna. Semitic peoples such as the Akkadians and Babylonians called the Sumerian Inanna Ishtar or Astarte. In the light of this evidence, the problem of the interrelationship between Inanna-Ishtar and Great Goddess Nana attested in pre-historic Georgian religious beliefs comes to fore.

The information on the cult of the Great Mother Goddess Nana found in the Georgian evidence has been corroborated by ethnographic studies conducted in the mid-20th century by V. Bardavelidze, who advanced the concept of a triad of gods consisting of the supreme male god (Moon), Mze-Kali (Sun-Woman) and Kviria (Morning Star). Specialists assumed the

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identification of the second-in-rank goddess Mze-Kali (Kal-Babbar, Nana) with Great Mother Goddess Nana without any attempt at re-examination of reliability of the noted concept and it became firmly established in scholarly circulation until now. However, it raises a question of which goddess is meant under this name: is the Great Mother Goddess Nana, personified as such in connection of archaeological finds having solar semantics, identical to the goddess known by the same name in ancient civilizations since the Paleolithic age, or is she of Georgian, local origin? Furthermore, it is tempting to equate Nana with Nena, Nana meaning "mother" in western Georgian dialects, although as mentioned above, this evidence was not unfamiliar to other countries too.



"Great Mother" figurines. Khramis Didi Gora.

As studied by scholars, the names of the Asia Minor Great Mother Goddess Kubaba (identical with Cybele) such as Nana are considered to be *lallwörter* meaning "mother" (J. Russell, 1987, 235). Because of this very fact the question raised above might seem unreasonable; moreover, if we take into account that the worship of the Great Mother of nature, the goddess of fertility, was common to various geographic regions in prehistoric times, the evidence that found visual expression in the "Paleolithic Venuses" presenting themselves, together with other figurines of the Mother Goddess, as the earliest patterns of plastic art. The Great Mother's cult seems unlikely to have been distinguished by characteristics peculiar to each region. It is noteworthy that the anthropomorphic "naturalistic" figurines of a woman, dated back to the Chalcolithic Age (the 5th millennium BC) and recog-

nized as the Great Mother Goddess having protective power over nature, were unearthed at Khramis Didi Gora (Fig. 2), the evidence placing Georgia together with Mesopotamia (Karim Shahir, Jarmo, Hassuna, Tel-Halaf, Arpachia), Iran (Tepe-Sarab), Asia Minor (Tulin-Tepe, Norshun-Tepe) and Armenia (Shengavit, Mokhranblur) within a geographic area wherein the most ancient layers of her cult worship have been attested through the archaeological records.

Thus, the universal rather than national character of the Great Mother's worship seems hard to doubt, unless we survey the studies sharing the concept of the solar character of the Great Mother Nana, differentiating her completely from the goddess known by the same name in the aforementioned countries. The connection of the Great Mother Nana with the archaeological objects taken as her attributes or symbols, hasn't been attested elsewhere, since the studies devoted to this goddess worshipped outside Georgia contain no evidence for such a connection. However, this fact in no way lessens the indisputable value of V. Bardavelidze's works, although it should not be arguable that the Christian rituals and liturgical chants in which the scholar rightly traces the elements of paganism infiltrated into Christian worship, cannot nonetheless be a reliable clue to both reconstruction of pagan pantheon and personification of a concrete divinity.

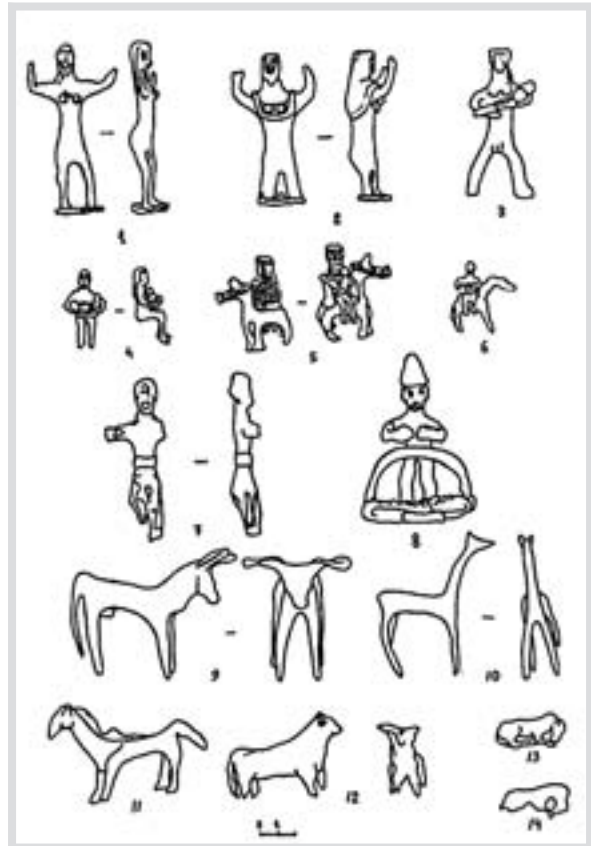
Thus, the difficulties attending the interpretation of archaeological materials viewed as cultic objects, are due, in general, to the conceptions based upon single-disciplinary research, encouraging scholars, in case with the Great Mother Nana, to connect her with solar-semantic items whereas her association with the sun-goddess appears to be rather questionable. From the methodological point of view, it would be more reasonable to treat any kind of data containable within a single disciplinary framework (ethnographic in our case) as a supporting argument rather than key determinant for interpretation of the divinities. Moreover, that examination of such a wide-ranging, complex and multi-faceted divinity as the Great Mother of nature, the goddess of maternal universality needs a cross-disciplinary approach to the problem as well as comparative analysis of cultural-religious evidence from Georgia and from the outer world.³

In her early study "From History of the Most Ancient Belief of the Georgians" V. Bardavelidze traces the origin of worship of the Christian St Barbara attested in the religious rituals practiced by the Svans (a North Georgian tribe) in that of the pagan astral cult of the sun-goddess Barbale, recognizing her as the goddess associated with the Sumerian sun divinity Babar, so that we find there no notice of her connection with the Great Mother Nana. In the following work "Drevneishie religioznyie verovaniya I ovryadovoe graficheskoe iskusstvo gruzinskikh plemen" (The Earliest religious Beliefs and Ritual Graphic Art of the Georgian Tribes) published in 1957 in Russian, V. Bardavelidze introduces the Great Mother Nana for the first time into scholarly circulation, referring to her twice as the "hypostasis of the sun-goddess Kal-Babar" without bringing forward any evidence for such an identification and any parallel to the goddess known by the name Great Mother Nana in other countries.

V. Bardavelidze suggests that the Georgian lullaby refrain – "lav-Nana, Vardo Nana, lav Naninao" – is connected with the cult of Nana. She also mentions that the evidences for Nana's function and nature can be found in Georgian fairy tales and legends, whereas her cult worship elements have been preserved in nursery rituals carried out in the treatment of persons suffering from infectious diseases (smallpox, measles, called "Batonebi" in Georgian). She points out that in the Batonebi "departure" ritual, the astral nature of the Great Mother Nana, her connection with the sun in particular, is evidenced by circular motion of the ritual performers around the sick person, as well as in dancing in a ring. The fact that in the Georgian highlanders' religious texts the earth is defined as one "owned by the sun." that is, by the goddess Nana (Barbale, Mzekali), as suggested by V. Bardavelidze, like the saying "I swear by your sun" referred to in the proof of the same connection, together with all above-mentioned considerations, is neither reliable nor sufficient evidence for an explanation of why the sun-goddess is called the Great Mother Nana.

In her next study "Kartvel tomta astralur ghvtalebata panteonis ganvitarebis ert-erti udzveles safexurtagani" (One of the Most Ancient Stages of the Development of Astral Divinities' Pantheon of Georgian Tribes) published in 1959 in Georgian, V. Bardavelidze

formulates the concept of the triad of divinities worshipped by the Pshav-Khevsurs (the eastern highland tribes), but no longer making any note of any kind of the relationship between its second divinity and Great Goddess Nana. That is, basically and in brief, all our knowledge about this goddess built upon ethnographic evidence.



Images of goddesses and animals [Ureki (4, 9, 10, 13, 14), Mukhurcha (6), Bombori Treasure (3), Samos(5)].

As pointed out by J. Russell, the name of the Great Mother goddess, whom the Romans called Magna Mater, is encountered most frequently in Asia Minor as Kubaba or Cybele. The cult of the Mother Goddess has been dated as far back as the Paleolithic Age. The goddess is usually shown enthroned, flanked by two lions. One of her titles seems to have been "the lady," as attested in North Syrian theophoric name Al-li-Kubaba, meaning "Kubaba is the lady" [(17th-16th centuries B. C), J. Russell, 1987, 235]. Mother of all, Cybele was the ruler, not only of the land, but of the life-giving waters. In the legend of Cybele and her son

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and lover Attis, Nana is mentioned as the daughter of the River Sangarius.

The goddess Nana is probably to be identified with Nanā, patron goddess of the Sumerian city of Uruk, whose name in Sumerian, Innin or Inanna, means "Lady of Heaven." Nanā was principally a goddess of fertility and she seems to have adopted the attributes of Cybele; this is evidenced by the image of Nanā (and likewise Cybele) shown accompanied by a lion, as on the Sumerian cylindrical seals dated back to the 3rd millennium BC. J. Russell mentions that Nana



Goddess standing between two stags. Ghebi.

is also depicted together with other animals or pairs of animals (J. Russell, 1987, 235).

As the name of the moon divinity of the Sumerian city of Ur, Nana reveals a closeness to Inanna; in fact, it has been suggested that in prehistoric times they were one and the same divinity or had a common origin. More frequently Inanna is taken as the moon god Nana's daughter but endowed with masculine power, the evidence being reflected in her androgenic nature – Inanna, just like Ishtar, is the goddess of both love and war. The worship of the two goddesses Anāhitā (Arm. Anahit) and Nana (or Nanai, Arm. Nanē) is widely attested in Iran and in countries to the west and east in pre-Islamic times, and they shared so many aspects that it seems fitting to consider them together. Nana/Inanna's connection with the moon can be attested by the iconography of Anāhitā (Arte-

mis) being depicted with a crescent moon above her head, as well as by Anāhitā's title "Lady," applied to her later in Zoroastrian and Armenian texts associating this goddess with Inanna.

A gold plate with the image of Anāhitā shown in the same manner was discovered in Georgia at the palace of Dedoplist Gora (1st century BC to 1st century AD). In the Parthian period, Nana was widely venerated. An image of Artemis in Greek dress from Palmyra is labeled NNY, Nanai (J. Russell, 1987, 238). The Roman writer Tacitus calls Anāhitā the "Persian Diana" [(*Annals* III.63), J. Russell, 1987, 245]. It should be noted here that Artemis is the daughter of Zeus, who in the process of the syncretization of divinities in the Hellenistic epoch and even earlier⁴ became the equivalent of Ahura Mazda, the Iranians' supreme divinity. Agathangelos refers to Anahita as "the daughter of great, manly Aramazd" (Agath. 53).

From early times, Inanna and Ishtar became increasingly identified, until, by the period of Sargon the Great (about 2300 B.C.), they were so similar that in discussing them scholars usually treat them as one deity – Inanna-Ishtar. An unmistakable symbol of Inanna-Ishtar was the eight-pointed star or rosette, which signified her identification with the planet Venus (E. Williams-Forte, 1983, 176), the morning or evening star venerated by the Babylonians as Ishtar and called by the Persians Ana-hiti-s meaning "undefiled." A significant symbol of Inanna was a hook-shaped twisted knot of reeds or a wheatear, representing the doorpost of the storehouse (and thus fertility and plenty).

Terracotta figurines of a naked woman with a child recognized as the Great Mother Cybele and Attis, widely known both in the Eastern and Aegean worlds from Neolithic time through the Hellenistic period, find a parallel in the small-scale bronze sculpture unearthed in No. 3 burial at Ureki (Western Georgia), which has been interpreted by T. Mikeladze as representing the Great Mother goddess [(Fig. 3, No. 4), T. Mikeladze, 1990, 63-66].

This monument, together with the women figurines from Khramis Didi Gora appears to be reasonable evidence suggesting that her cult was venerated in Georgia, to say nothing about the sculptured image of Rea-Phasiane (Cybele), holding a tympanum in her

hand and standing together with two lions, as described by the Roman writer Arrian, at the River Phasis in Colchis, whom V. Bardavelidze rightly recognizes as the Great Mother Nana.

M. Khidasheli and L. Pantskhava have exhaustively and convincingly examined the ways of Ishtar-Artemis-Dali (Georgian goddess) connection with the zoomorphic images of stags, whose astral symbol is the moon. In this respect, an openwork bronze buckle found in Gebi (West Georgia) is a subject of special interest. It shows the image of the goddess standing between two figures of fantastic stags (Fig. 4); M. Khidasheli considers her to be the goddess connected with the moon, referring to studies by A. Ross and F. Hančar in which connection between the moon and the goddess riding a two-headed animal or pair of animals is carefully examined. As noted above, J. Russell points out the same evidence in the iconography of the goddess Nana.

In ca. 1700 B.C. the Elamite King Kuter-Nahunte captured the statue of the goddess of Uruk and bore it off to Susa. Under the Achaemenids, the Persians probably adopted the cult of the goddess from the conquered Elamites (J. Russell, 1987, 237); in later centuries her worship is also abundantly attested there. According to II Maccabees I.13, the Seleucid king Antiochus IV (mid-2nd century BC) sacked the temple of Nanaia in Persis, providing evidence that the cult of the goddess persisted in eastern Iran. This has been proved by archaeological records: R. Ghirshman suggests that the thousands of the "mother goddess" figurines discovered in the Near East attest her cult worship, supposedly under name Nanai, from the territory of Asia Minor to Susa, continuing until the Parthian era. As mentioned by R. Ghirshman, in Susa was venerated Nanaia which is the Semitic name of Anahit (R. Ghirshman, 1954, 269).

Seemingly, the Mother Goddess was venerated as Nanai later too, in the Sassanian era, which is evidenced by one historical document: Akbalach, the Christian nobleman who was a contemporary of Shahinshah Bahram (388-399 B.C.), son of Sapur II, narrates that Sapur transferred ninety families from the southern district of Mesene to Mesopotamia and settled them in the village which was named "Ninety" after number of the families that were transferred to-

gether with their idol Nanai: "they venerated Nanai whom they had brought from their native land."⁵ In the 4th century AD, the same Sassanian king Sapur II commanded a general named Mu'ain or Mu'in, a recent convert to Christianity, to worship the Sun, Moon, Fire, Zeus, Bel, Nebo and Nanai "the great goddess of all the world" (J. Russell, 1987, 238). The cult of the latter had also been established in remote Sogdia – Nanai was the city goddess of Panjicant, and was called "the Lady." On Kushan coins the lion-riding goddess depicted with crescent moon above her head is titled "Nano" (C. Trever, 137, Figs. 10, 11), while reverse shows the image of the bull which is unlikely to be random: the particular sacrifice offered to Nano/Nana was the cow or bull, perhaps because of the connection of the animal with fertility.⁶



"Altar on Boat." Tell Billa.

In his attempt to examine semantic meaning of the bull-headed altar found in Building No. 3 at Katlanikhevi D. Khakhutaishvili points out the ethnographic evidence of religious belief recorded by V. Bardavelidze in Svaneti (North Georgia) that the reproduction of cattle depends greatly upon having offered bulls to the sun goddess. Thus, it is understandable that D. Khakhutaishvili connects the bull cult attested in Katlanikhevi with the sun goddess, whereas, even putting aside other evidence, the connection of the bull with the moon, widely known in ancient cultures, was also reflected in the Ancient Greek Orphic Hymns, wherein the crescent moon is addressed thus: "the luminous Selene, bull-horned moon."

As Khakhutaishvili suggests, a terracotta figurine of a bull with four holes on its back supposedly for attaching something, which was found together with the Katlanikhevi anthropomorphic figure in Building No. 1, can be paralleled with the seal of the Jemdet-Nasr period showing a bull with an altar attached to its back (Fig. 5). The scholar confines his observation solely to this detail, not pointing out the element of

special significance in this case: it seems more essential that the altar is crowned by the symbol of Inanna (a wheatear) rather than the bull himself. Regrettably, the scholar has overlooked the evidence for reasons we can understand.

If follow the line of thinking given above, then Khakhutaishvili would find in this evidence a direct argument for taking the bull figurine as a sacrificial animal offered to the goddess who could well be named Inanna or the Great Mother Nana – as mentioned above, the bull was an animal sacrificed to Inanna/Nana. This consideration is strengthened by archaeological evidence from the Ureki burial: together with the figurine of the goddess with a child, a terracotta figurine of a bull (Fig. 3, Nos. 9, 10) was unearthed, which T. Mikeladze connects with the Great Mother goddess, like the images of bulls on the reverse of 4th-century BC Colchian coins, as their front side shows the image of this divinity. T. Mikeladze supports his opinion with a successful argument: in the same burial were also found figurines of lions or leopards (Fig. 3, Nos. 13, 14), the animals discussed above in relation with the Great Mother goddess.

At one time I. Kikvidze did not share the concept that D. Khakhutaishvili offered on the identification of the Katlanikhevi figure with Great Mother Nana. Rather, he argued against the reliability of tracing the origin of the cult of the Great Mother Nana back to Georgian legends and seeing it preserved in folk life, in the rituals for treatment of illness at Batonebi. Nevertheless, given the above-mentioned evidence, such an identification would be acceptable if we go beyond local ethnographic data and examine this problem in a broader cultural-religious context.

One is inevitably reminded of the epithet applied to the Virgin in the mediaeval Georgian chants: “the Mother of God, thou are the Moon” – perhaps, echoing that of the most remote Great Mother goddess...

Notes:

1 Although “Ur” might well be associated with Ur of the Chaldeans from which Abraham went to Canaan .

2 To this listing should be added the Persian dialects in which “Nana” means “mother” like as in Sanskrit (C. Trever, 137).

3 The same one-disciplinary-based research led scholars to misinterpretation of Armazi being identified er-

roneously with Asia Minor moon god Arma through solely phonetic closeness of their names, the conception supplemented by the only argument of migration of the Mushk-Moskhs from Asia Minor into Kartli, the tribes recognized as the predecessors of the Georgians.

4 The Greek writer Aeschylus (525 B.C. – 456 B.C.) in his “Persia” refers to Zeus instead of Ahura Mazda.

5 This event finds a striking parallel in the “Kartlis Tckhovreba:” Azo, a legendary ruler of Georgians immigrated eighty families from his original homeland Arian-Kartli and settled them and himself in Mtskheta where he brought Gats and Gayim, the two idols referred to in Georgian writings as the deities of the Georgians’ ancestors.

6 As known, correlate to Nana the goddess Cybele’s most solemn ritual was the Taurobolium, a sacrifice of a bull.

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THE APOLLO TEMPLE IN DIDI MTSKHETA “APOLLO-SUN”

(SULKHAN-SABA ORBELIANI, “SITKVIS KONA”)

As has often been noted, many crucial issues of Didi Mtskheta’s history as Georgia’s capital city have not yet been studied, including those relating to the Mtskheta district, where two very significant cathedrals, Svetitskhoveli and Samtavro, were built.

According to Georgian normative written sources, at least up to the 3rd-4th century A.D., there was the King’s Garden on the territory where Svetitskhoveli stands now. There is full agreement on this issue in *The Conversion of Kartli*, *The Life of St. Nino* and Leonti Mroveli’s *Lives of the Georgian Kings*. There is also full agreement among Georgian chronicles concerning the issue that timber (the Lebanon fir tree, cypress) cut in this area was used in the construction of the first church, at least for pillars: “Saint Nino quickly constructed a church down the paradise; and the pillar was made of a timber, which erected itself” (*The Conversion of Kartli*, 1979, 322). “And they immediately accepted the timber and began construction and cut a fir tree and prepared it for a pillar and on its basis they made the foundation of the church” (*Life of St.. Nino*, 1979, 343); Saint Nino “instantaneously received power and taught the builders, and cut the fir tree and made seven pillars for the church from that fir tree. And they built the wall by the timber and erected six pillars by themselves...” (Leonti Mroveli, 1955, 112); King Mirian “... ordered the felling of the beautiful cypress tree and made timber for the erection of a temple” (manuscript about St.. Nino’s life; at Mtskheta) (A. Natroev, 1900).

The 4th-century Byzantine historian Rufinus (†395,) wrote of King Mirian’s conversion and the construction of Svetitskhoveli: “... according to everyone’s unanimous demand, they are constructing a church: and, so, walls should serve as supports. And when the first and the second pillars were erected and it was the third pillar’s turn, although all kinds of

equipment, as well as bull’s power and human power were used, it [the third pillar] was only raised only on half (Byzantine Authors About Georgia, 194, 206, 207). The chroniclers Socrates and Sozomen narrate the story in the same way; in addition to Georgian-Byzantine written sources, the history of Svetitskhoveli is narrated in Arabian-Ethiopian manuscripts and in an extract of a Coptic manuscript. These texts have been critically considered at different times by E. von Dobschütz, N. Zottenberg, Iv. Javakhishvili, A. Lopatinsky, M. Tamarashvili, L. Melikset-Beg, and others.

1. On his returning to Iberia, the blessed Theophanus saw an extraordinary church, built with great diligence...” I, your most humble servant Theophanus, allow myself to write to you, who trusted me and appointed me the bishop of the Iberian region... And so, the Lord granted this blessing to his servant, the holy virgin Teognosta [Nino]. Two marble pillars were erected in an old temple, where Apollo’s oracle resided. The workers wanted to remove the pillars and install them into the iconostasis of the church, but couldn’t even move them” (Sidonian text; Borgia papyrus) (M. Tamarashvili, 1995, 204).

2. “... these people [the Georgians] built a great church; and for this purpose pillars were required. One monument had beautiful pillars. The virgin prayed to Christ with tears, and the pillars moved to the church” [Coptic ms] (M. Tamarashvili, 1995, 208).

The trustworthiness of information preserved in these manuscripts deserves brief comment. The manuscripts attracted attention as soon as they were published and as I have already mentioned, many researchers noted information provided by them. Obviously, the majority of them referred to the manuscripts while considering some specific issue, although almost nobody doubted the identity of Teognosta [Nino] or the fact that the story narrated in the manuscripts related to Georgia. But with few exceptions Georgian scholars have not investigated these texts, and nobody has used the information they provide while investigating the history of Svetitskhoveli cathedral. In my opinion, although these texts, unlike other foreign-language chronicles, are less popular among present-day researchers, nothing prevents us from referring to them and from using the information they provide.

A comparison of Georgian and foreign chronicles clearly confirms that they agree on only one issue – the construction of a Christian church. On other matters (the name of the saint, the place of construction and the materials used), they differ significantly according to the sources. In particular, according to Georgian chronicles, King Mirian chose the site for the future church in the “King’s Paradise,” and the temple was built of wood, Sveti-tskhoveli (living pillar), from timber cut nearby (Lebanon fir tree, cypress). According to one of the sources, “earlier, a huge holy oak tree, hallowed by the people, grew on site of the cathedral. After King Mirian adopted Christianity, the holy oak tree was cut and the first wooden church was built. (N. Vachnadze, 1998, 225; *Kavkaz*, 1878).

The Byzantine historians say nothing about the materials used for construction of the King’s Paradise or the church; “Paradise” isn’t mentioned in the manuscripts either; instead, as we have already mentioned, there is very interesting information about the existence of Apollo’s Oracle’s monument or some other monument (the function isn’t specified) on the site (or near to) Svetitskhoveli; and just their architectural elements (pillars) were used during construction of Christian cult building.

In the 1950s to 1970s, during the course of archaeological and restoration work (directed by V. Tsintsadze) undertaken in the cathedral’s interior the remains of the foundation of an earlier building were revealed, known in the scientific literature as “the remains of foundation of the first wooden church” (Description of Georgian Historical and Cultural Monuments, 1990, 261-269). But here attention is attracted by the fact that “under the remains of the wooden church, a foundation built of neatly cut quadras was revealed; supposedly part of the altar of a pagan temple [? T. B.], destroyed by St. Nino, which was used for further construction.” (M. Bediashvili, 2003, 27; V. Tsintsadze, 1991); and again – “under the two pillars, supporting the dome of the cathedral, the ornamented foundations of a 5th-century basilica were discovered..., and capitals – in the deacons’ space” Description of Georgian Historical and Cultural Monuments, 1990, 264). Unfortunately, the text does not state the age and further fate of the capitals.

About five years ago the historian Guram Kipiani published a letter, “Capitals of the Wall Pillars from Svetitskhoveli Yard” (G. Kipiani, 1998). In my opinion, he reasonably considers that the capitals, seen by him in the yard at Svetitskhoveli, in front of Catholicos Anton’s house in the yard (at that time Mtskheta Museum-Reserve was located there), might be precisely the monuments discovered during these restoration works (G. Kipiani, 1998, 63). Kipiani considers that these architectural elements date to the 2nd century A.D., and concludes: “obviously, they represent the remains of an ancient monumental building” (G. Kipiani, 1998, 63).

The only information that the Georgian chronicles provide concerning the existence of a building near the present cathedral is that “St. Nino saw the small house of the warden of the Paradise in the entrance of the King’s Paradise ...” (*The Life of St. Nino*, 1979, 336). Also, according to Leonti Mroveli, St. Nino “approached the entrance of the Paradise, and saw small house of the warden of the Paradise” (Leonti Mroveli, 1955, 93). Some different, and, in my opinion, very interesting information, deserving attention, is provided by Mtskheta variant of life of the Saint: “and begged (King Mirian begged St. Nino) to show the image of the church, and she displayed the image of new temple ... further, the King ordered the building of another temple in his Paradise, in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, where cypress stood among blossoming sweet-smelling flowers (*The Life of St. Nino*, Mtskheta edition) (A. Natroev, 1900, 141).

The notion of “other” is defined by Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani as “not this,” “different” (Shukhan-Saba Orbeliani, I, 1993, 126); in the dictionary attached to the 1st volume of *the Life of Kartli*: “other” (“another”)” (Leonti Mroveli, 1955, 453). Thus, according to Mtskheta manuscript of St. Nino’s life, it almost seems that there was one temple in the Paradise and construction of another, the second temple, was started by the king’s order. In this case, the Mtskheta version of the chronicle confirms information preserved in Coptic manuscripts concerning the existence of a pre-Christian temple in the place (near) the future cathedral. In addition, the so-called Borgia papyrus specifies “a temple, where Apollo’s oracle resided.”

With regard to the cult of Apollo (though without discussing this deity's ancient chthonic roots, which are outside the topic and scope of this paper), several basic beliefs about this deity, one of the most popular of the ancient antique world, are important for the issue under consideration. Apollo was a radiant deity; he personified the Sun (Apollo-Phoebus); he was protector of muses and source of inspiration (Apollo-Muzaget); a healer (Apollo-Pean); a prophet, etc. I want to draw attention to some specific characteristics of this deity and consider each of them with regard to Georgian reality. The existence of the cult of Apollo as a radiant deity (according to Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani, as Apollo-Sun) seems absolutely real to me, and I would like to prove this stated idea with the help of relevant arguments.

(1) "King's Paradise" – "Apollo's Oracle." I would remind readers of the description of the King's Paradise preserved in Georgian chronicles: (a) *The Conversion of Kartli* mentions only the "Paradise," and quickly constructed the church in the Paradise" (The Life of St.. Nino, 1979, 322).

The Life of St.. Nino (Shatberdi collection) describes the King's Paradise thus: "I arrived to the city of Mtskheta and headed toward the King's Paradise. And as I came up to the entrance to the Paradise, there was a small house" (arrival of St.. Nino in Mtskheta, described by Salome Ujarmeli (Life of St.. Nino, 1979); "I have a vision that a man of light color came and told me: "I entered the Paradise, under fir trees there is a small vineyard, nicely prepared... and the sky birds came, entered the river and bathed and came to the Paradise, and had rest in vineyard and ate flowers and told me that the Paradise is mine, surrounded me, singing; colorful and beautiful was the vision of them" (arrival of St.. Nino in Mtskheta, described by Salome Ujarmeli (Life of St.. Nino, 1979); "I should not deny the King's Paradise and the height of fir trees and fruitfulness of vineyards and their sweet smell..." (request of King Mirian to St.. Nino) (The Life of St.. Nino, 1979, 326, 343).

The last passage quoted here is extended in Leonti Mroveli's composition: "... but I shouldn't deny the King's Paradise and the height of fir trees and fruitfulness of vineyard and sweet smell of flowers; as

the vision you had – the birds, washing and cleaning their wings with water, sitting on trees in the Paradise and singing with sweet voice" (Leonti Mroveli, 1955, 111).

For comparison, consider the description of Apollo's temple and the adjacent territory in Greater Antioch: "when the vow of silence was over, Apollonius came to Greater Antioch and went to Apollo's Temple of Laurel, which Assyrians associated with the Arcadian legend. They stated that was the place where Ladon's daughter Daphne turned into laurel tree. And really, the River Ladon flows in that area, at one time virgin Daphne is greatly respected. The temple is surrounded by unusually high cypresses, and the area is rich with ample and quiet springs, where, according to the legend, Apollo used to bathe. There, as narrated, young tree rose from the ground, the name of which comes from the name of a young Assyrian man – Cypress – and really, the beauty of the tree makes such a transformation well-grounded (Flavius Phyllostratus, 1985, I, 16).

In my opinion, the description of the "King's Paradise" in the Georgian chronicles has much in common with by Flavius Phyllostratus' description of the area of Apollo's Temple in Greater Antioch.

(2) A second factor speaks in favor of the existence of Apollo's (the Sun's) Temple near the present Cathedral is an interesting burial, beyond the Temple's eastern wall. The Mtskheta Institute of Archaeology studied this in 2001 (see the report by the Institute's director, A. Apakidze et al., 2002). Among many interesting things, a scribe's equipment was found; the silver casing on one side was decorated with images of all the nine Muses with the relevant Greek inscriptions. I stress this fact because one of Apollo's functions was in fact the patronage of creativity and the Muses (Apollo-Muzaget). If we take into account that the casing of the ink-pot was decorated with high reliefs of the three greatest Greek writers, Homer, Meander and Demosthenes, the picture will become clearer.

(3) Apollo-Pean. Apollo is a healer as well. In this regard, he even competes with his own son, Aesculapius. This feature of the deity has special importance for the topic under consideration.

St.. Nino heals a child from Mtskheta, whose condition was hopeless ("nothing could cure the child");

she even heals the Queen in an area of blackberry bushes (Queen Nana was first shown St.. Nino's power by God in a blackberry field); and when "the chief Magus, the Persian Khuara, was diseased, tortured by an evil spirit, and was facing death," he "was taken by Saint Nino and me [Sidonia] and Queen Nana to the Paradise, under the fir trees, and made him face the East, in the pose of adoration" (The Life of St.. Nino, 1979, 340). It is remarkable that the chronicler briefly, in two lines, tells the story of the Queen's recovery, unlike the story of Khuara's illness ("Khvara", according to Mroveli), which is narrated in the chronicles in an extended manner; the appeal and promises of the King to the slave woman – if she manages to heal Khvara – are also stressed (Leonti Mroveli, 1955, 340, 341).

Thus, according to our sources, the healing of Khvara required his going to the "Paradise." A question arises – why? I suppose that this moment is specially stressed, as the highest priest was concerned; besides, as a very cautious supposition, I would suggest that he was the priest of the Sun cult; i.e., the chronicler specially stresses the circumstance that his deity failed to heal the highest priest, I repeat, the highest priest of the Kingdom; instead, this mission was successfully completed by St.. Nino through diligent prayer to her God – Jesus Christ.

Couldn't St.. Nino heal Khvara with her prayers in the blackberry area? She healed there everyone – ordinary citizens and even the Queen. Khuara's case is something special (the method of healing is almost the same) – she was healed exactly in the place, where the main temple of the cult, which Khuara served, was located. It's difficult to state or deny whether the highest priest named Khuara (Khvara) lived in the Kingdom of Kartli, who, according to the *Life of Saint Nino* was the brother of Queen Nana's mother; and according to the *Life of Kartli*, the "high priest was King Mirian's relative" (Leonti Mroveli, 1955, 106); besides, the chronicler implies a blood relationship and not a relationship based on ethnic origin (compare: "Georgian by relatives"). Mroveli introduces Khvara's ethnic origin ("Persian") little earlier.

Possibly, the author of the *Life of Saint Nino*, and, subsequently Leonti Mroveli, introduces this personage in the narration on purpose, moreover

with a stressed theophoric name: "Kvara" = "Sun." It would be interesting if we recall that the deity H(Kh) var Khshaeshta (Avestian language), the same as H(Kh)varshadi (Mid-Persian) – "shining Sun" – appears in the Iranian pantheon (V. Kriukova, 2001, 95). Khvara's (Khuara's) ethnicity would not prevent from taking the position of high priest; it is known that the Iranian Megabiz was the priest of the temple of Artemis's in Ephesus; furthermore, even Persians went to that temple to pray (Dandamaev M. A., Lukonin V. G., 1980, I, 6,7; II, 51; Xenophon, 1951, V, 6, 6); more so if we recall that Khvara was the representative of the royal family.

The issue of the relationship of Anisto, the "warden of the Paradise," and St.. Nino also seems interesting, as well as the issue of whom did the chronicler mean under the notion of "woman – warden of the Paradise."?

On the third day after the destruction of the pagan idols "[St.. Nino] arrived in Kartli, crossed the Mtkvari River, and headed toward the King's Paradise, where there was a pillar, erected by the Lord and the Cathedral Church, and as she approached the entrance to the Paradise, she saw a small house of the warden of Paradise. St.. Nino entered, and a woman sat there, whose name was Anisto. And as the woman saw her, she stood up, hugged her and caressed her as a scientist, washed her hands and anointed her, treated her with bread and wine, and Saint Nino spent nine months with her" (Leonti Mroveli, 1955, 93).

First of all, let's clarify Anisto's function. The opinion established in Georgian historiography that the "King's Paradise" was literally a garden, park, recreation facility; thus, the "warden" mentioned in the chronicle is presumably the guard of the garden. "... King's garden, according to the source, was located in the city, and not at some other place, and a woman-warden stood at the entrance to the King's garden, i.e., where she was supposed to be" (I. Gagoshidze, 1978, 29). In Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's dictionary the words "warden" and "guard" have different meanings. But, even if we avoid lexicographic investigations, we have an unbelievable picture. Let's suppose that the "King's Paradise" mentioned in chronicles was a mere recreational garden, with orchards and vineyards. In

this case it would be illogical to put a woman there as a guard. In this case, it would be natural to imagine an armed, well-trained team of men; a woman-guard in the King's recreational garden seems absolutely senseless.

In my opinion Anisto was the warden of Temple center (according to Saba's definition = protector). Her behavior in relation to St.. Nino also indicates this: "and as the woman saw her [St.. Nino], she stood up, hugged her and caressed her as a scientist, washed her hands and anointed her, treated her with bread and wine." Anisto's action corresponds to that of a priest, temple servant (nun) rather than to that of a guard.

Let's go back to a small passage from the Borgia papyrus: "...two large marble pillars were erected in the temple, where Apollo's oracle resided." If my judgment is correct, it becomes clear why St.. Nino heals Anisto from childlessness precisely in the "King's Paradise." Like Khvara, Anisto is the servant of Sun cult – the cult of Apollo. And, finally, the name of this woman, this warden of the "King's Paradise" is Anisto, a name almost certainly from Greek onomastics.

If the facts I have provided and my analysis of them are correct, it's clear why King Mirian's Sun darkens and a new Sun – Jesus – takes its place. Let's recall St.. John's vision of Jesus on the island of Patmos: "... his face was like the Sun, shining in its power" (Revelations, I, 16); and Matthew: "and transfigured in front of them otherwise, and his face started shining like the Sun..." (17, 2).

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TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN ATHENS AND COLCHIS IN THE CLASSICAL PERIOD: THE EVIDENCE FROM THE JOINT BRITISH-GEORGIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITION TO PICHVNARI

Ever since the 1960s, archaeological fieldwork of more than passing interest has been conducted in the settlement and cemeteries at Pichvnari (Kakhidze, 1971). Since 1998 staff from the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, in particular Michael Vickers, have participated in the research. A decade of fruitful collaboration has resulted in: the discovery of rich variety of archaeological finds that open up new approaches to the study of a number of issues; the publication of several monographs and scientific articles (Vickers and Kakhidze, 2004); attendance at international symposia; and study visits to Oxford, London, and Cambridge.

The principal objective of our work and of the presentation of finds in the Museum is to highlight once more issues of trade, and of economic and cultural relations between the mainland Greek centre of Athens and ancient Colchis in the light of recent research. Early relations between Colchis and the Mediterranean world are reflected in Greek myths and legends (Lortkipanidze, 2002). Greek authors mention the eastern Black Sea shore at an early period (Inadze 1968, 39-97). The dispersion of goods between different trading centres begins at the same time, but the scale of the enterprise increases significantly during the Classical period.

The richest and greatest variety of material evidence for relations between Athens and Colchis

in the Classical period are to be found in the Greek necropolis at Pichvnari dating to the 5th and 4th centuries BC. 325 burials of the 5th century and 93 of the 4th century have been excavated and studies as a result of fieldwork between 1968 and 2007. Some burials are accompanied by ritual, so-called "funerary" platforms with the remains of banquets (Kakhidze 1975; Vickers and Kakhidze 2004; Kakhidze 2007). It should be noted that burial complexes as well as funerary platforms have survived untouched since antiquity. Only one ancient grave had been robbed. It is thus possible to establish types and norms of burial rituals, orientation, grave goods, etc. It is one of the most extensive and informative sites not only of the Black Sea littoral but of the Classical world in general, and it well illustrates economic and cultural relations between the mainland Greek centre of Athens and ancient Colchis.

The special scientific interest of the Pichvnari Greek necropolis is that it is so far the only ethnically Greek cemetery to have been discovered in the Caucasus. The apparently peaceful coexistence of Colchians and Greeks during the whole of the Classical period is also unparalleled. It should be noted that most Greek burials are of individuals, and collective burials are rarely found. There are, however, a few cremation platforms and amphora-burials.

Greeks in Pichvnari, as in metropolitan Athens, appear to display a complex social stratigraphy and polarization. Representatives of elites are reverently buried in luxurious burials that contain a wealth of grave goods that include fine specimens of painted pottery, metalwork and jewelry. Judging by the material found, it is clear that most of the population belonged to a more modest category, while really poor burials are also found. The latter may well be burials of slaves, familiar elsewhere in the ancient world. All these phenomena are significant and valuable for the study of types of Greek colonies in the eastern Black Sea, which however will be the subject of another study.

Authentic Greek customs and traditions were strongly established at Pichvnari, in particular such practices as the eastern orientation of the graves, the presence of cremation, amphora-burials, and

feasts. It especially note-worthy that Pichvnari is the only cemetery site along the Black Sea littoral where the practice of placing a coin in the mouth of the deceased ("Charon's obol") is known from around the mid-5th century BC, while it is only known elsewhere from the 4th century BC. It might be argued that this demonstrates the existence of close links between the local settlements and the metropolis.

The study of grave goods allows for certain conclusions to be drawn. The Greeks who settled in Pichvnari clearly liked wine and olive oil. Amphorae from centres such as of Chios, Lesbos, Thasos, Chalcidice, Mende and Heracleia are found there. We believe that direct links existed between Chios and Colchis between the late seventh century BC and the third century BC. The list of domestic items, alabaster and personal belongings is even richer. It is evident that their owners had excellent taste. Attic black-gloss ceramics, either decorated with stamped decoration or plain, are most frequent. Especially worthy of mention are a black-gloss oinochoe with stamped decoration, a lekythos of the Beldame workshop, and a red-figure owl skyphos. A fine but fragmentary red-figure crater found during the joint British-Georgian excavations in 2005, is decorated with an image of Zeus attended by a winged Iris. Other Attic vases are mostly for daily use, although some of them have remarkably fine stamped and incised decoration. Ceramics made by Ionian as well as Pichvnari Colchians are also very frequent.

Other important recent finds include terracotta statuettes of Aphrodite, Demeter, and Eros-Thanatos. They were found in the area of the Greek cemetery and not in Colchian burials. One of the distinguishing features of the Pichvnari Greek necropolis compared with other similar burials of the ancient world is that a variety of gold, silver, bronze, and iron jewellery were placed in graves under the influence of local traditions. Some of the jewellery is of the finest. The level of craftsmanship displayed by local jewellers, particularly in gold, is equal to that to be found in well-known centres of the ancient world. Most gold items are locally made. Especially worthy of mention are gold crescent-shaped earrings, gold earrings with fluted elements, and gold pendants. Just as with

pottery styles, there was a distinctive style of Colchian jewellery. Not only gold, but silver jewellery was made and was presumably highly appreciated. There were silver bracelets decorated with finials in the form of rams'-heads and other animals. Masterpieces of toreutics (metalwork) occur among the objects found in the Pichvnari Greek necropolis. Elite burials are rich in items such as silver phialai, bronze ladles, sieves, jugs, skyphoi, strigils, mirrors, situlae. It is clear that Greek festivals and sporting competitions in which the local population participated were popular in Pichvnari. Charon's obols were mentioned above. There are rich and interesting numismatic finds from Pichvnari, notably formed a rather interesting and rich numismatic collection, where leading part is taken by *Kolkhidki*, including fractions as small as hemitetrastemia (one-eighth of an obol). Certain coins of Cyzicus, Sinope, Panticapaeum, Theodosia, Nymphaeum, Amisos, and Syracuse have been found only at Pichvnari. Very many polychrome glass vessels have been found at Pichvnari and their scientific value is enhanced by the fact that they have been found in closely dated complexes. They include aryballoi, oinochoae, amphoriskoi, and alabastra.

All the above-mentioned finds show that in the Classical period Pichvnari was a melting pot of Colchian and Greek traditions, and the Greek necropolis was an especially informative database. A wide range of fresh approaches are opened to us, such as: information concerning Greek colonies along the Black Sea littoral, relations between Colchian and Ionian Greek centres, links between the north and south shores of the Black Sea, and especially connections between Athens and the eastern Black Sea littoral during the



The Greek cemetery.

Ancient Georgia

Classical period. Close and regular relations between Colchian and Greek civilizations had a long pedigree. New Ionian settlements appear along the Georgian Black Sea littoral at a time when the densely inhabited territory of Colchis was itself becoming a state. The so-called Ionian period of Greek colonization was only partially successful in the Colchian context (Kakhidze, 1982).

Greek colonization did not only occur in the archaic period. Another wave of Greek colonization on the eastern Black Sea littoral can be associated with Athens. There was a shortage of land resources in Attica. According to Thucydides, Attica had been "incapable of containing its inhabitants" (1.2.6) at an early period. Attic colonization practice began to be especially active in the late archaic period. Cleruchies were sent to Chalcis, Euboea, Lemnos, Imbros, and other islands. The colonization became increasingly intensive during Persian wars and the period of the Delos League. Thrace, rich in gold and wood, was colonized, as was the Hellespont and great interest was taken in the Black Sea coast, and its eastern shore in particular.

Attic civilization reached its peak under Pericles. Settlements were created along the Black Sea coast (Plut. *Per.* 20.1-2), and expeditions were launched (Fedoseev 2003). The nature of the finds allow for Pichvnari and its environs having served as an important Athenian centre on the eastern Black Sea littoral, and it is quite possible that local Greek settlements had close links with the mainland Greek city of Athens. It is clear that local Colchians thought it reasonable to have close trading and cultural relations with that great power. On the other hand, Athens was also seeking friendly relations with local rulers. An *apoikia* or cleruchy (the precise nature of which is as yet uncertain) created near local urban centre of Pichvnari would have had close links with the metropolis. And as in the metropolis, the Pichvnari Greek settlement flourished during the mid- and second half of the fifth century BC. The Pichvnari Greek settlement ceased to exist after the invasion of Greece by Macedonia in the 330s BC. Future archaeological field research at Pichvnari promises to reveal much more fresh material for study.



Attic black-figure oinichoe, alabastron and red-figure kantharos.



Red-figure crater and black-gloss cup.



Gold earring and terracotta.



Silver bracelets, glass aryballos, amphoriskoi and alabastron.

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ATHENIAN PAINTED POTTERY FROM PICHVNARI

There is continuous chronology of painted vases from Greek cemetery in Pichvnari from the second quarter of the 5th century B.C. to the first quarter of the 4th century B.C. Black- and red-figure vessels discovered during archaeological expeditions in 1987-2007 are being divided into three thematic groups: representations of mythological subjects and scenes, their allegorical images, and cultural and ritual scenes.

A black-figure *oinochoe* (burial No 237, 2001) dated to the 5th century B.C. deserves special mention among Pichvnarian ceramic items representing mythological characters and scenes. We consider the winged goddess at the altar to be Nike, the Goddess of Victory, or a human soul embodying the goddess Psyche. The composition is executed using the silhouette technique characterizing black-figure pottery of the first half of the 5th century B.C. The period is noted for its massive manufacturing of plain and low-quality goods made in simple manner.

We find mythological characters on a bell krater on a ritual platform, found in 2006. Its shape is similar to early samples, with lugs. Special punctures near the bottom indicate that the vessel used to be an *eschara*-altar or *bothros*. The main composition depicts Zeus and Iris. The winged goddess pours from the *oinochoe* into the *kantharos* for Zeus, who is sitting on a stool, with a crosier into his left hand. The vessel has many characteristic analogues. One can see remains of heads and dress fragments of characters on the other side of the krater. According to the position of the heads, we consider the figures to be a standing woman (a goddess?) and a kneeling young man.

According to certain characteristic features, the krater's style belongs to the transition from Severe to Free Style (460-450 BC). Long hair is met rarely, appearing mostly on goddess or heroes on pottery of the archaic period. The main mass of the hair is painted in

a thick layer of black gloss, while long hair is painted in lighter and thin black gloss during the transitional or free style. The figure of Zeus is the only surviving composition on the Pichvnarian krater. His long hair falls in waves over his shoulders. The ends are painted in a lighter black gloss. Hair painting manner is near to natural one, and the surface of the face is painted with a single layer of gloss. Special interest should be paid to the painter's treatment of the eyes. The eyes are presented in proper profile and open. The inside angle is maximally opened in the characteristic drawing style of Early Classical period, while the outside angle forms an ellipse, a characteristic feature of the transitional style. The Pupil to the front is placed at upper and lower eyelids crossing. The upper eyelid is indicated by a single long line. Unlike the placement of eyes in depictions of the Archaic period, here the eyes are separated from the nose by a normal distance. The clothing is painted in the simple lines characteristic for the transitional style.

A red-figure *lekythos* from the 5th century BC also attracts our interest. The *lekythos* was found on the Greek cemetery in 2005. There is Eos, goddess of sunrise, holding a torch in her hand. This was a quite popular plot during the transitional period. If we compare the style of painting, we can find similarities with a red-figure *lekythos* by Providence Painter manner, dating to 460 B.C., now in the collection of the Pushkin Russian State Art Museum, Russia. We see the same plot, a winged goddess holding a torch into her right hand. The word ANANΓH is incised on the right side of the scene. Given this inscription, we assume the figure to be the goddess ANANΓH (N.A.Sidorova, O.V. Tugusheva, V.S. Zabelina, 1985, 43). We find the same picture on the Pichvnarian *lekythos*: a winged goddess looking to the right, holding a torch in her left hand. The figure wears a cloak, under which we can see a draped tunic. The hand holding the torch projects beyond the cloak.

The face is rather shapeless, with a massive chin, forward-thrusting lower lip, and a long, sharp nose. The head, with an obtuse *sakkos*, looks rather bigger than the body. The arm also looks rather bigger than the body. The eyes are painted in profile. The upper

eyelid is painted in a straight line, and the lower eyelid by an oval line. The pupil is near the upper eyelid. The wings are painted in parallel strokes crossed in the middle. The wings' shoulder sections are separated from the feathered lower parts with two parallel rings. The configuration of the wings is very similar to that in the *lekythos* executed by the Karlsruhe Painter, including a headed sphinx with wings on a *lekythos* in the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. There are also other features indicating the closeness in style of the Pichvnarian painter to the Karlsruhe one. We should note the head and face with forward-thrusting lower lips and sharp nose (A.A. Peredolskaya, 1967, 142). Similar artistic styles are seen in the Athena and the Aischines Painters. We should mention the similarity with the bowl at Oxford, U.K., painted by the Athena Painter. It is hardly possible to differentiate these masters, but it is obvious that all three masters executed their work in one and the same period. Thus, the Pichvnarian *lekythos* could be dated from these factors. Based on its attributes (wings, head-*sakkos*, and torch) the *lekythos* represents Eos, goddess of the sunrise.

It is interesting that the painted vessel was also found in the Colchian cemetery, proving that the local population had accepted Greek funeral rituals. A two-figure composition on a squat *lekythos* found on the Colchian cemetery (1987) could have been executed by the Shuvalov Painter, given its stylistic features (440 BC). The composition represents a young man sitting on a chair. The chair is represented in profile. In front of the young man there is a woman holding a chest.

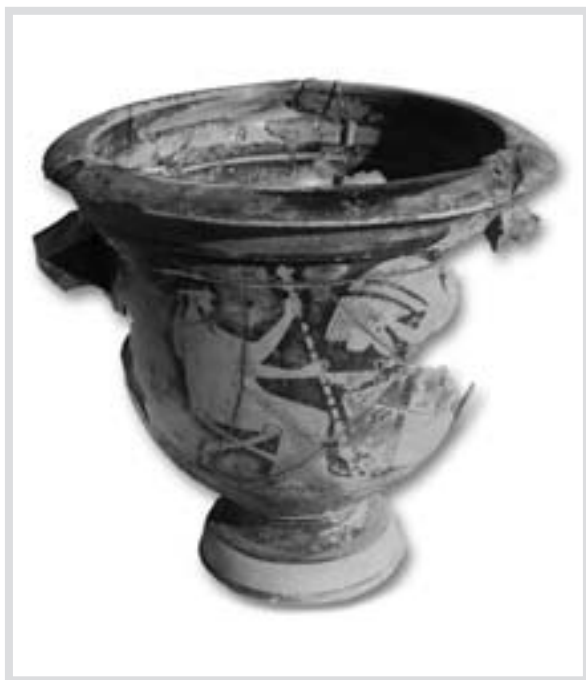
We should pay special attention to the so-called "Anodos" (up-rising) scenes representing the genesis (of Aphrodite, Athena etc.) or return from Hades back to the earth (Persephone, Hermes). Among the early artifacts at Pichvnari we should point out the squat *lekythos* representing the heads of youth with a *pilos*, and the Aphrodite and Hermes dating to the fourth quarter of the 5th century BC. Two red-figure *lekythoi* representing the rising of Aphrodite is found among recent discovery. As the "Anodos" scene symbolically means the endless circle of nature and life, it seems

rather logical to find such scenes in burials; they represent the idea of eternal existence and rebirth as well as the protection of the chthonic gods. A chthonic aspect of the Eleusinian cults appears to have been involved in using these scenes during burials. The chthonic aspect represents a theme of returning back to life. It is known that in Eleusinian cults, one of the days was called "Anodos." The day was dedicated to the return of Persephone from Hades back to earth. The mysteries themselves were not represented because of their secret rituals, though it was natural to represent the general ideas.

The "Anodos" of Aphrodite is represented on a *lekythos* (burial No 160, dated to the 5th century B.C.), discovered on the Greek cemetery in 1998. The *lekythos* is dated back to the second half of the 5th century BC. A woman's head is depicted in left profile. The ear, nose, lips and eyes are painted in a style similar to that of typical vessel painters of the 440s and 430s B.C. particularly the Kleophon painter. Here we will focus on a young woman's figure of the composition on a *stamnos*, "The Farewell with A Hero Going to Battle" (replicas at the Hermitage and the Munich Museum). The *stamnos* dates to approximately 440-435 BC (J. Boardman, 1997, 63; A.A. Peredolskaya,



Black-figure oinochoe



Red-figure crater

1967, 182). The Pichvnarian *lekythos* is very much in the master's style, thus it could be considered that it was made by one of his followers. Aphrodite's image is found also on a squat *lekythos* discovered in a Greek burial (2002/138, burial No. 83) dated to the 4th century B.C. The *lekythos* represents a woman's head on left profile. The collections of Batumi Archaeological Museum include four *lekythoi* with similar images.

Besides plots representing mythological heroes painted ceramics portray allegorical images of gods. The most common allegorical images are the owl, eagle, and swan, representing Athena, Zeus, and Aphrodite respectively. A *skyphos* representing an owl has been dated to the second quarter of the 5th century BC (2000, burial No 195). This is a "B" type *skyphos* with one horizontal and one vertical handle, a generally narrowed and curved profile body. Presents the Athenian owl and olive spring on either side.

The Pichvnarian *glaukskyphoi* are similar to Nos. 361 and 362, dating to 480-450 B.C., from the Athenian Agora. According to their stylistic features, they belong to Group I of Johnson's classification (i.e., "B" type *skyphoi*). The next period is characterized by owl images on *skyphoi* with horizontal handles, and by the last quarter of the 5th century B.C., images are found on small size pottery (F. Johnson, 1955, 119-125). Some

squat *lekythoi* representing owls have been found in Pichvnarian burials of the same period.

A squat *lekythos* representing a winged swan facing right was found in burial No. 41 (1998) in Pichvnari; it dates to 4th century B.C. Similar *lekythoi* are common for the fourth quarter of the 5th century and the first half of the 4th century B.C. A standing winged swan is represented on a red-figure *hydriskos* of the Hellenistic period has been found. The details are processed in white. It should be noted that no similarly shaped vessel of red-figure ceramic of that period has been found at Pichvnari.

Also of interest is a dolphin or whale image on a small 4th-century B.C. *lekythos*. We can relate this image to Poseidon, the sea god. This identification is strengthened by graffiti dedicated to Poseidon found in epigraphic materials discovered in a Pichvnarian burial.

Vessels depicting the plots of very ordinary burial rituals have been found among grave goods. A black-figure *oinochoe* representing a horse and knight (burial No. 195, 2000,) in a Greek burial dated back to the 5th century B.C. We believe that this ordinary plot represents the death of the knight as he is not on horseback and his traveling hat and staff express his intention to go far away. This basic belief is confirmed by the grave goods discovered in the same burial, including a red-figure *skythos* with the depiction of an owl and a terracotta figure of the goddess Demeter.

Funeral or post-funeral rituals are represented on a red-figure cylindrical *lekythos* dated to the 5th century B.C., discovered in a Greek burial in 2000. A woman is depicted frontally, holding a bowl in her outstretched right hand; her left hand is open. She wears a *peplos* and has a cloak over her left shoulder. There is a large stone-like image under her right hand that could be an altar or burial mound. The exact analogue is found on painted vessels in the Hermitage Museum, including compositions represented on a *lekythos* by Aischines, dated to 460 B.C. – in perfect condition in comparison to the Pichvnari *lekythos* (№Б183, St. 1537, B 872; Pizzat collection, discovered in Nola, Italy) (A.A. Peredolskaya, 1967, 139). The same date could be given to a *lekythos* by the Aischines Painter,

discovered in a burial on Lenormant Street (north-west of the Agora), Athens. This *lekythos* is compositionally close to the one discovered in Pichvnari. In the case of the *lekythoi* by the Beldam Painter, E. Haspels has dated the burial back to 470-460 B.C. The earliest date could be 450 B.C.C.G. Boulter, 1963). The master decorated the shoulder of the *lekythoi* with black-figure palmettes. But the Pichvnarian *lekythos* has radial ray ornament. Despite the difference, we consider the *lekythos* to have been painted by the Aischines artist.

A funeral plot appears to have been depicted on a red-gloss *oinochoe* discovered in burial No. 760, dated to the 4th century. The image is greatly damaged, a woman in cloak, bowing in front of Herm can be made out.

As can be seen from the foregoing discussion, painted vessels with mythological characters and scenes were essential items among thematically selected grave goods. The painted plots mainly represent rebirth and life after death. Greek funeral ritual elements and the dedications on the attic vessels and painted vases discovered on the Colchian cemetery of Pichvnari indicate the beginning of Greek influence. This influence is also perfectly seen in the shapes of Colchian ceramic ware, also in facing the dead toward the east and the custom of burying the dead with the so-called *Charon's obol*.

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Red-figure lekythoi



Red-figure lekythos



Black-figure oinochoe

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GONIO-APSAROS: TRADE, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN COAST

Apsaros is one of the Roman world's outstandingly important monuments. The fortress dates to the second or third quarter of the 1st century A.D., and was one of the most important nodes of the unified security system known as the "Pontos Limes." The monument itself is of great scientific value and importance and a number of very interesting architectural complexes and a diverse range of cultural items have been discovered during archaeological research and studies there.

This article considers different trade goods, specifically imported red glaze ceramics and glass items made at different manufacturing centers of the western Mediterranean and discovered in Gonio-Apsaros.

Red glaze ceramics made in the western Mediterranean were the first items found in Gonio-Apsaros. One piece of ceramic ware is marked by so-called "Barbotino" style jewelry. It was difficult to design the vessel; it is basically volute-shaped and is finished with corn-and-stem decoration (Tab.1/1). A similar piece was found in the Poetovo goods, in Yugoslavia. These items are also included in the Italian Barbotino design category, and are dated to the 1st century A.D.

A similar style of ornament is also found on items from Yugoslavia's inland forest areas in the stratum dated to the 1st century B.C. The decoration meets the 35th type as listed in H. Dragendorf's famous classification, and comes from Central Gaul. This style seems to have been quite popular throughout Central Europe. Such goods are dated to the 70s-80s of the 1st century A.D., i.e., the Flavian Age.

The Roman period is distinguished by diversity of the vessel-painting art. The most specific style is the Barbotino. The style originates from merging elements of Hellenic and Early Roman ceramic manufacturing, and vessels ornamented in this style were very popular during the 1st century A.D.

The fragments of Barbotino-style ceramics dis-

covered at Apsaros date to the second and third quarter of the 1st century A.D. Up till now, no specific cultural layers dated to the first half of the 1st century A.D. have been discovered in Apsaros. However, some coins have been discovered, including a *denarius* from the time of Hypepria (A.D. 37/38 to 38/39) of the Bosporan kingdom, a copper coin of Herod I Agrippa of Judea (37-44 AD), and others. But we hope that in the future deeper research into the early cultural strata at Apsaros will certainly reveal interesting items from this period.

The next group of ceramics imported from the Western Mediterranean was red-glaze vessels. One vessel has a horse image on the bottom (Tab. 1/2). Other examples of this design are quite popular; we find similar horse images from Carthage (J. Deneauve, 1969, 80-81), Vindonissa (S. Loeschke, 1919, 228), and the Athenian Agora (J. Peelzweig, 1961, 81); other examples are in the collections of the Central Museum in Mainz (H. Manzel, 1954, 33), and in other museums. The accompanying archaeological materials (e.g., a coin from Nero's reign) are important in helping us specify exact data for our materials. The Apsaros lamp fragment (described in paragraph 3) dates to the second or third quarter of the 1st century A.D. A second lamp also is also noteworthy; it has a sharply deepened bottom separated from the sides by ribs molded in relief. The two sides of the lamp are cut vividly (Tab. 1/3).

It is thought that this type of lamps was modeled on those made in Attica; clay and bronze lamps of similar shapes were very popular in the Early Hellenic period. They also were manufactured in North Italy, particularly in the Aquileia region (S. Loeschke, 1919, 257), and also in Gaul and in Germany. Similar lamps have been discovered in Carnuntum, in Pannonia. A. Heimerl considers that this type of lamp was imported into Pergamon from Northern Italy.

A lamp with erotic scene on the bottom was discovered by chance, and appears to have come from Gonio-Apsaros. Lamps with similar scenes were popular in Western Europe. They have been found at Carthage and at Vindonissa, and examples are held in the British Museum, the museum in Trier, and in other collections.

We believe similar samples of that Roman legions sent from European locations to Anatolia led to the importation of ceramics. Specifically, during Vespasian's reign (A.D. 69-79), the XIIIth Fulminata and the XVth Apollinaris legions were transferred from Pannonia to Cappadocia.

Glass items take on a meaningful place in the study of Georgian trade relations with western European centers. First of all, we should note vertical bowls made with bottling-pressing technology in the western Rome Empire. Their number is significant, and we have both unbroken bowls as well as quite big fragments. The Gonia-Apsaros bowls are made by the so-called Millefiori technique, which is called "Rippenschalen" in western European literature (Tab. II/1). Small fragments of similar bowls have been found on the Georgian Black Sea littoral in Petra-Tsikhisdziri Fortress and also in Uplistsikhe Fortress, and in the collection in Tsebelda. Vividly decorated vertical bowls dating to the second half of the 1st century A.D. have been discovered in Panticapaeum. There are other parallels as well.

Another diverse and interesting group is that of tetrahedral jug-shaped vessels (the so-called cubic type). In most cases we have only pieces of the base, sides, and neck. One of them has a clearly cut neck and oval shoulders. The upper edge of sharply cut hand decorates the area below the neck, and oval edge is decorated at the shoulder area (Tab. II/2). Different variations of hands also attract our interest. Most of their surfaces are decorated with rib. Parallels are found in lamps at Urbnisi and Mtskheta (A. Apakidze, V. Nikolaishvili, 1996, 33).

Many similar vessels have been discovered in England, France, Germany, Cyprus, and the Black Sea littoral, i.e., everywhere that was under Roman influence. These finds are divided into two groups, according to their origin. The first group includes vessels made in the Roman West (N. Kunina, 1997, 120), i.e., made in Gaul and other of Rome's European provinces. The second group includes vessels from the Eastern Mediterranean, i.e., those made in Syria, Egypt, and Cyprus.

Bottles made in the Roman Empire's western provinces differ in size and proportions. Most of them have thick walls made of dark-blue or blue-green glass; some of them are quite heavy because of their thick walls. Similar vessels were made in Liguria, Champagne, Cisalpine Gallia and other centers (Fremersdorf, 1998, 1, Tab. 23). Their chronology is very clearly charted. Such vessels appear in the first half of the 1st century AD, and remained popular until the second half of the first century and throughout the 2nd and 3rd centuries, but disappear in the 4th century.

It appears that vessels from the Roman Empire's

western provinces were imported to Apsaros by the transferred military contingents and not through early trade and economic relations. However, since Apsaros had functioned since early ages, it is obvious that need resulted in the systematic importation of some vessels. Further and deeper study of goods imported from the West will provide valuable data for the exact dating of the early historical periods of Apsaros. The study of trade, economic and cultural relations between Apsaros and the rest of the world is at present largely limited to the research discussed above.

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Glass



Terra Sigillata and Lamps

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ROMAN PERIOD COINS FROM GONIO-APSAROS

Gonio-Apsaros is one of the most interesting and important monuments on the eastern Black Sea littoral. Numismatic discoveries there are a valuable source for studies of trade and economic relations, and the urban life-style and political orientation of Gonio-Apsaros.

During the period 1995-2000 the Gonio-Apsaros permanent archeological expedition discovered over 150 coins dating to the Roman period on the site. The oldest one is a coin of Tiberius (14-37 AD) cut in Laudanum, Galia. Coins struck at that mint are quite rare in Roman forts on the eastern Black Sea littoral.

The discovery of a coin of the Bosporan kingdom attracted great interest. The coin was struck in 39 A.D. in the time of Hypepria. On the northern Black Sea coast Roman coins have also been found in Abkhazia, clearly proving that Pityunt, along with Sebastopolis, was a coastal trade site in the 2nd century A.D. (G. Lortkipanidze, 1991:101) It is believed that the Hypeprian coin was brought to Apsaros through trade and economic links.

The discovery in Apsaros of a coin struck during the reign of Agrippa I Herod, King of Judea (A.D. 37-44 in Apsaros is also unique; to date, no other Judaeen coins have been found in Georgia.

Among early coins discovered in Gonio are a number from Antioch, Syria, including five coins struck in honor of Nero (A.D. 54-68 AD), three coins in honor of Domitian (A.D. 81-96), and eight others dating to the 1st century AD. All of them are similar in type. The emperor's face appears in profile on one side, and the abbreviation S.C. ("With the Senate's Consent") on the other side. In addition, a single copper coin dating to the 1st century was discovered in Sukhumi (M. Trapsh, 1969:357).

Therefore, the Gonio discovery is of special importance and value. The group of Syrian coins includes a copper coin struck in honor of Titus (A.D. 79-81) found in Gadara, in the Degapol area. The coin

is unique to Gonio and no others have been found in Georgia, thus it has the greatest value.

Rome invaded Judea in A.D. 6, placing the territory under the legate administering Syria. There was a rebellion against Rome in Judea in A.D. 66. The Romans led by Emperor Titus Flavius totally destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and captured Masada, the last Judaeen-held fortress, in A.D. 73.

The XIIth Legion participated in these battles. It was formerly stationed in Antioch (it should be noted that coins minted in honor of Nero's reign have been found in Antioch). The XIIth Legion also participated in the Judean war (a Judean coin has been found at Gonio), and after the war was stationed in Cappadocia. During Titus' reign, its main headquarter were in Meltina, However, according to certain researchers (e.g., L. Yelnitski, part of the XIIth Legion was located in Apsaros during Emperor Vespasian's reign (A.D. 69-79) (L. Yelnitski, 1950:193-194).

The XVth Legion also participated in the Judean War. At first it was located in Emona (Ljubljana), and later in Carnuntum (Austria). Some of its divisions were stationed at a point on the Danube River's banks. The XVth Legion participated in Parthian War. After the Judean War it was moved to Cappadocia and then farther east to Satala, on the Armenian border.

As noted above, the XIIth and XVth legions were located on the eastern borders of Asia Minor in the 1st century A.D. Thus, it seems reasonable to believe that certain units of legions were stationed in Apsaros Fortress late in that century. Hence, it is quite logical that coins from Judea and Syria have been found here – and this reciprocally would confirm that a legionary army was in fact stationed on a permanent basis to Apsaros at the end of the 1st century. G. Lortkipanidze believes that the strategically significant location of Apsaros would make it a natural location for legionary troops.

Another factor supports the movement of coins to Apsaros. During archaeological excavations at Gonio, water pipes marked X and dated to the 2nd century A.D. were found The X sign is considered to mean that the pipe-layers were the Xth Legion, which was located in Syria at the end of the 1st century A.D. and was then moved to Palestine. M. Khalvashi believes

that an engineering battalion of Xth Legion was sent to Apsaros in order to build a water-supply system in Apsaros. However, Khalvashi does not exclude the possibility that ready-made pipes were imported (Sh. Mamuladze, M. Khalvashi, , 2000:147-149).

Glass vessels and red-gloss ceramics dated to the late 1st century discovered in Gonio are considered to have been made in Syria or Palestine and . Most of the imported red-gloss ceramics are thought to have been made in Italy, in Cos, or in Rhodes. According to M. Khalvashi's studies, amphorae from the above mentioned centers are quite rare throughout the eastern Black Sea littoral, though Gonio-Apsaros is an exception.

We should note that the stationing of the XIIth, XVth, and possibly the Xth legions at Apsaros would require the import of Syrian and Judean coins, as have been found. Based on numismatic studies, it is obvious that Apsaros had trade and economic relations with Syria at the end of the 1st century A.D.



Coins (1st-3rd centuries)

The 14 silver and copper coins minted in Cappadocia belong to later periods. This group includes one coin dating to Trajan (98-117), six to Hadrian (117-138), three to Antoninus Pius (138-161), one to Septimius Severus (193-211), one to Julia Domna (217), one to Caracalla (211-217), and one to Gordian III (238-244).

The Roman province of Colchida used to be part of the province of Cappadocia in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Due to the political circumstances, especially after Emperor Hadrian's recognition of the kingdom of Lazica, Roman coins took the dominant place in monetary circulation in Colchida. The typography of these coins is rich and diverse and several hoards have been found at various locations in Georgia, among them Ghurzuli (Gerzeuli), Nabakevi, and Ekk. In addition, Roman coins have been discovered in Tsikhisdziri, Pi-

chnari, Ureki, Supsa, Nokalakevi, Vani, Sephie, Tse-belda, Sukhumi, and Pitsunda.

According to recent studies, the coins date from the end of the 1st to the beginning of the 3rd century. The coin of Gordian III (238-244) discovered at Gonio brings the chronological line forward to the 240-250s. Roman coins dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries were used in Apsaros until the end of the 3rd century. According to K. Golenko's studies, coins were imported by sea from Trabzon to Gonio and other Black Sea towns (K. Golenko, 1964:35-36).

There are twelve denarii in the Gonio numismatic collection: four coins (one from Ephesus, one from Rome and two of unknown origin) dating to Vespasian (69-79); one dating to Trajan (98-117 AD), minted in Rome. Then there are two coins of Antoninus Pius's wife Faustina (141), minted in Rome; two coins of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD) minted in Rome; three coins of Septimius Severus (193-211 AD), minted in Rome, the other at an eastern mint. All those denarii were used along with Roman coins in Apsaros Fortress till the end of the 3rd century AD. It is believed that they were imported from Asia Minor to Georgia.

Among the numismatic treasure discovered by the Gonio-Apsaros Fortress permanent archaeological expedition, special attention should be paid to six coins from Trabzon: one of Trajan (98-117), two of Septimius Severus (193-211), two coins of Commodus (180-192), and one of Tranquillina, wife of Gordian III (238-244 AD).

For quite sometime it was believed that Trabzon coins circulated only locally. This belief was given up on the discovery of Trabzon copper coins on Pitsunda-Lidzava and Sukhumi territories, thus proving their use far beyond Trabzon. It is interesting that no such coins have been discovered in Adjara, which is much closer to Trabzon. Archaeological studies of Tsikhisdziri Fortress (near Kobuleti) have not turned up any Trabzon coins, thus proving that this Roman checkpoint was formed at the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th century. At Gonio, Trabzon coins were found only in synchronic cultural levels, and were few in number.

Because of its advantageous geopolitical location, Trabzon played a significant role in supplying

Roman garrisons located on the eastern Black Sea shore and it is natural to find Trabzon coins in different towns and settlement along that littoral.

The Gonio numismatic collection has a copper coin of Gordian III (238-244) minted in Sinope. Coins from this city were widely imported in to Colchida during the early Ancient and Hellenic periods. However, none have been found that date to the Roman period. A single coin dating to Septimius Severus' son Geta, minted in Synope in 207, was discovered in Pitsunda. Discoveries in Gonio-Apsaros, Pitsunda, Sukhumi and Nokalakevi prove that relations between the historical Colchida and Sinope continued till late Ancient period and early Middle Ages. The Gordian III (238-244) coin is also considered to have been imported into Apsaros, together with ceramic vessels, from Sinope.

A coin of Trajan (98-117 from Neacaesarea and a coin of Aurelian (270-275) from Thessaloniki were discovered in Apsaros; other coins from those mints have been found only in Pitsunda.

Scientific research on the hoard of silver coins discovered in the south-western part of Gonio Fortress in 1998 plays a valuable role in the study of monetary system of Gonio-Apsaros during the 1st to 3rd centuries. The hoard consists of 42 items. Of these, 41 items have details indicating their date, sometimes even the year of minting is revealed. The coins are those of the following rulers: (1) Tiberius (14-37), one denarius; (2) Polemon II (49-63), four drachmas; (3) Vespasian (69-79), one denarius; (4) Trajan (98-117), three denarii; (5) Hadran (117-138), two denarii, two big drachmas and one half-drachma; (6) Antoninus Pius (138-161), one denarius; (7) Antoninus Pius' daughter Faustina II (161-176), one denarius; (8) Marcus Aurelius (161-180) or Commodus (180-192), one denarius; (9) Commodus, one denarius; (10) Septimius Severus (193-211), one denarius, eight drachmas; (11) Julia Domna (217), five drachmas; (12) Caracalla (211-217)), two denarii, five drachmas; (13) Geta (211-212), one denarius, one drachma.

According to mints, the above listed coins are grouped as follows: (A) Lugdunum, Gaul, 1 (Tiberius); (B) Kingdom of Pontus, 4 (Polemon II); (C) Rome, 14 (Vespasian, 1; Trajan, 3; Hadrian, 2; Antoninus Pius, 1; Marcus Aurelius or Commodus, 1; Commodus, 1;

Faustina II, 1; Septimius Severus, 1; Caracalla, 2; Geta, 1. Roman coins are grouped as follows: Hadrian, 1 half-drachma; Septimius Severus, 19 drachmas; Julia Domna, 8; Caracalla, 5, Geta, 1; and Hadrian, two big drachmas. The core of the treasure includes coins dated to the early 3rd century AD.

The earliest coin of the hoard is a denarius of Tiberius (14-37); the latest a drachma of Geta (213), a chronological span of 176 years. The hoard was accumulated 213 years later (I. Varshlomidze, 2000:81-87) Hoards from the late Ancient period have also been found in Western Georgia, particularly in Ghurzuli, Nabakevi, Eka, Sepieti, and Pitsunda. Besides coins similar to those found at Gonio, Pontian coins have also been found. In Western Georgia, coins of Polemon II have been found in Gali, Pakhulani village (Tsalenjikha region), Pitsunda, and in Tskaltashua village (Bagdadi region). It seems natural to find drachmas of Polemon II in Apsaros; however, it is strange that they were found together with 1st- to 3rd-century coins from the mints of Rome and Caesarea. These coins were first met with in Georgia in the first half of the 3rd century. As for the other coins from the hoard, Roman (14 coins) and Caesarean (22 coins) goods have been found both in Gonio and also in the rest of Western Georgia.

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APSARUS: THE ROMAN ACCULTURATION CENTER IN THE EASTERN BLACK SEA AREA

Owing to its favorable location the fort of Apsarus and its surroundings (the village of Gonio, Khelvachauri district) are of particular interest in the study of the relations between the Classical and Georgian worlds. The material finds from the archaeological excavations conducted over a number of years give valuable information on the main results caused by the Roman presence within as well as outside the fort, especially on the ways and forms of acculturation. One of the expedition's main objectives was to study the attitude of the local population, who earlier had adopted Greek and Persian innovations, toward the Roman garrison. That is the reason why we tried to determine more precisely the dimensions of settlement in Apsarus, its architecture, building types, construction material and location. The determination of the initial borders of the local population settlement was also of great importance in order to study the further changes of the Roman occupation.

Our sphere of interest also included the comparative study of the surrounding settlement in contrast to the Roman buildings, which might enable us to distinguish common and distinctive elements in architecture and the process of alteration. At the same time we conducted research on Roman pottery, glass, metal ware and their imitations, coins, etc., In order to determine the degree of acculturation in the south-eastern Black Sea coast and hinterland, the lower part of the Chorokhi River and the Adjaristsqhali gorge with its tributaries. We also think it of great importance to find out whether Roman political power extended beyond Apsarus and whether it conducted the cultural "annexation" of the region; whether the fields of social life, governance and infrastructure were retained or not; whether their modification or abolition

took place; whether the local population was against new relations or not so, etc.

Through examination of the remains excavated on the ancient site and in or outside the fort it becomes possible to trace the pre-Roman and Roman period changes in the sphere of architecture.

As indicated by the remains of the buildings excavated outside the wall in the south-western part, to the left of the central entrance to the fort, around the site near Tower 4 and on the territory of the ancient settlement site, it becomes clear that most of the local population's buildings before the Roman period were wooden, with gable roofs. For the foundation the construction level was prepared in advance, with a layer of middle-sized or bigger stones. In some places one row is preserved. There are cases where two rows of rather big stones are preserved. Often the smooth-surface samples were used as lateral facing stones. The internal cavity of the walls was filled with a mixture of comparatively smaller stones and mud. The maximum height of this type of foundation wall was on average 40-50 cm (16-20 inches) while the width was 70-80 cm (28-31 inches). The bases assigned for the wooden posts were set proportionally along the full length of the foundation structure. Their size on average was 52 x 46 cm (20 x 18 inches). Circular hollows were made in the central part, the depth of which was 5-7 cm (2-3 inches). The amount of charred mass as well as iron and bronze nails indicates that the side walls of the buildings were covered with the nailed timber while the internal cavity was filled with the mixture of comparatively smaller stones and mud. As for the main walls' inner and outer surfaces, they were covered with plaster. The gable roofs must have been covered with solen type tiles (typical razor-clam shell style Roman tiles); a great many are present in the fallen material. However, one or two samples of grooved tile fragments have also been found.

As for the floor, it was also made in quite an interesting way. The base was assembled with 15-20 cm (6-11 inches)-wide sand layer while the surface was covered with 5-7 cm (2-3 inches)-deep clay layer. At the ground level there were a number of places where the path has been covered with fragments of tiles, bricks or ceramic ware.



Remains of pre-Roman building

The archaeological excavations on the monument clearly show that the Romans had cut through some structures built by the local population while constructing the fort's wall foundation. Most part of those buildings appeared to be left outside the fort walls [fig. 1] but some – inside.

The Romans ceased all types of construction on the fort's outer territory during later periods. However, they continued new construction activities inside the fort after smoothing the surface and preparing the construction level. Hence, we can simultaneously observe the architecture of the pre- as well as post-Roman periods on the same territory, as well as the similarities and differences that the Romans brought in and established. Traditional Roman architecture in and outside the fort territory used the architectural elements suitable for the local geo-climatic conditions. However, the reverse cases have also been observed. The local population also adopted some of the innovations, mainly those relating to the arrangements of the interiors, floor or yards of the buildings.

Generally, Roman construction techniques were totally different from the local ones. This is particularly observable in the *praetorium* [fig. 2], barracks [fig. 3], watch post, water-supply and drainage systems [fig.

4], baths and other remains. Buildings constructed by the Romans are larger and more monumental. They are characterized with rather wide (1.1-1.2 m (4 feet)) and deep-rooted foundations. They were erected with bigger stones. Some of them are 1.5 m (4 feet) long. The stone layer over them was plastered with clay solution.

Compared to the walls the quads are indented by 20 cm (8 inch). Three or sometimes four layers of stone rows are preserved on the plinth. Smooth-surface samples were selected for the side stones. The internal cavity of the walls was filled with a mixture of comparatively smaller stones and mud. In later buildings we observed cases where hydraulic lime-sand solutions were used. The maximum height of the preserved walls is 1.35-1.40 m (4 feet) and the width is 90-95 cm (35-37 inches). The main parts of the walls were traditionally of wooden material in both local and Roman buildings. The internal cavity of the walls assigned for garrisons was empty or partially nailed with timber. As for the contemporary local buildings, the internal cavity of their walls was again filled with a mixture of small, standard-sized stones and mud. This is clearly confirmed by the remains of the later period (3rd century A.D.) buildings on the ancient settlement site. However, in the barrack buildings there we can

see cases when the outer part of the wall was faced or covered with plaster or hydraulic lime-sand solution (Kakhidze, Mamuladze 2004, 28-29). As for the local population, it again used plaster for inner as well as for outer walls and especially for filling the empty spaces between the pillars. As the excavations show, they began using a hydraulic lime-sand solution after the Roman example. In both cases the buildings have gable roofs. Solen type tiles are mostly met with as roofing material. However, in later periods, the cases of using grooved tiles increased both in local and Roman construction. Stone bases preserved *in situ* might indicate that some of the buildings must have had a pillared hall, e.g., the building designated as the barracks used to have a gallery along the whole length to the east front. Within the building there were a kitchen and dining rooms, grooved-tile collectors, heating systems; sometimes the partition walls were built with solen type tiles, etc. The floors are made with hydraulic lime-sand solution, flagstones, ceramic slabs or bricks (Kakhidze, Mamuladze 2004, 10,28,32,33). The excavated materials show that the local population adopted the techniques of floor flagging or using hydraulic solution. The old traditional forms of putting a layer of 5-10 cm (2-4 inches)-thick clay over the sand or stone layer were also frequently met.

Among the already studied buildings in Apsarus the best examples of Roman construction methods are the remains of a monumental building found in front of the southern gate. It is considered to be the barracks [fig. 3]. It represents a building built using the orthostatic technique. Similar buildings have been found in Nikonion, in the village of Dobrov, in the Crimea, Chersonesos, Kharaks, and other places. They are found in the north-western Black Sea coast as well, e.g., in Tyra. Here the part of the fallen roof can be seen. The walls consist of the foundation-plinth and were built with clay solution. Like Apsarus, bigger stone slabs were used for the foundation. It was built using a complex orthostatic technique. The barracks functioned until the mid-3rd century A.D. Other similarities can be cited but one thing is clear: from the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. most buildings within the Apsarus fort were constructed with the style characteristic of the Roman fortifications though they also

used some of the elements traditionally established among the local settlers; these proved useful for the Romans as well.

Water-supply and drainage systems of the Roman period were completely different and built to a standard pattern throughout the empire [fig. 4]. They are incorporated in the general planning of the fort construction. A spring of high volume in the northern part was used for drinking water. First of all a large pool was built with a façade faced with cut stones while the inner space was plastered. No other water reservoir of this period has been found in Georgia. From the main building three pipes were laid that entered the territory of the fort's gate. The fort's inner as well as outer territory seems to have been partitioned by water pipes. It also should be noted that the water-supply systems have been preserved in their original state [fig. 4]. These features make it unique. In general, the Apsarus water supply systems correspond to the ones of a number of powerful centers of the Classical period (Kakhidze, Mamuladze 2004, 38-40). Remains of the contemporary water supply systems have also been excavated in the northern and western Black Sea areas: Olbia, Chersonesos, Kharaks, Panticapation, Mirmekion, Nova, and other sites. It should also be noted that the Romans used artesian wells as did the local population.

The Romans had arranged the draining systems as early as the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D. In this respect particularly interesting data were accumulated on the territories of the fort's southern gate and the baths. The remains of rectangular collector built with stone slabs have also been identified [fig. 4]. They were made of specially cut white-yellowish stones.



The Praetorium



The Barracks

These standard slabs may not represent any local type of stone. The walls of the collector were also built with cut stones while at the bottom wooden slabs were laid. The width of the canal is 32 cm (13 inch); its height 45 cm (18 inch). A similar draining system is found in Pityous (Bichvinta/Pitsunda), and is a century later than the Apsarus systems. The drainage system in the Acropolis of Athens is roofed with square slabs like that at Apsarus. As for the drainage systems of the contemporary local settlement, they were of comparatively simpler arrangement. They seem to have been characterized by use of two rows of bigger stone slabs. The distance between them is 35-40 cm (14-16 inches). The bottom and sides are plastered with mud. It cannot be excluded that the system was covered with slabs on the upper side. Because of a lack of proper material finds, it is still unknown if the Roman technique of sewerage systems was adopted by the local population.

In the study of the local population's relationships with the Romans significant information is provided by the osteological finds on the territories of the inner fort buildings used by the Roman soldiers as well as on the so-called household section. Of the identified bones, the most numerous were those of cattle, though there were also those of goats, sheep, pigs, horses, wild beasts and birds. The local cow was of small size and well adapted to the local natural-climatic conditions. This type of cow is recognized as the genetic inheritor of old-Georgian, old-Colchian small-size cow, and is of aboriginal origin.

It is also clear from the identification of Apsarus grain crops that the first place in the soldiers' rations (food allowance) was given to local cereals or beans (soft wheat, rye, hominy, etc.).

Obviously, the most authentic materials on the intensity of Roman-local relations are provided by the archaeological items. The influence of Classical civilization is shown on several items from the famous 1st-2nd centuries A.D. hoard (Lordkipanidze, Mikeladze, Khakhutaishvili 1980, 74-76), e.g., 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. brown clay vessels, imitations of Sinopean *louteria* (Ebralidze 2005, 94-95, fig. 53), and three other ceramic ware items (Kakhidze, Mamuladze 2004, 54, figs 23-25). The Romans hardly ever used local amphorae. Only two types of Colchis amphorae of the second half of 2nd century and first half of 3rd century A.D. have been found in the fort (Khalvashi 2002, 88, fig. 7.1-2). It cannot be excluded that they were made in the 2nd-3rd-century kiln [fig. 5] found on the fort's household territory (Khalvashi 2002, pls 3-4).

Ceramic or other types of archaeological objects were mainly imported from flourishing centers of the Roman Empire. Moreover, at the first stage of the fort's functioning (late 1st-early 2nd century A.D.), imports from the western provinces prevailed. It was only after the imposition of Roman administrative law that products from Asia Minor appeared in the region. However, this fact does in any way at all indicate trade relations between the Romans and the local population (Kakhidze 2008, 315-322). The opinion that these relations were poor can be confirmed by research conducted in Gonio's surroundings. Among the Roman imports only small material finds, made by chance at Makho, Satekhia and Makhvilauri, and the perfume vessel from Zanakidzeebi (Shalikadze 2004, 52-54), have been known so far.

The Apsarus example creates a significant contrast in relation to another Classical center in the re-



Water-supply and drainage systems



The Kiln

gion, Pichvnari. It is known that the local population of Pichvnari and the Greek colonists used to be in close contact (Vickers, Kakhidze 2004, 153-160,182,197). Generally, the Romans' "cold-hearted" attitude toward the locals can be observed in other frontier regions of the Empire as well, e.g., in Asia Minor the Greek alphabet and the Hellenic names of gods were used till the end of Roman rule, unlike in other regions of the Empire.

Naturally, this peculiarity had various explanations. However, we think it important to emphasize the specificity of the Roman state itself and its culture. Unlike Greek civilization, it was more militant, oriented on strategic goals. This is the concern of other, quite different research -- and we are not going to discuss it here.

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Medieval Georgia



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IOANE ZEDAZNELI: A GEORGIAN SAINT IN THE SYRIAN ASCETICAL TRADITION*

In the late tenth century *Life of St.. Shio of Mghvime*, we read that the early sixth century Georgian Catholicos Evlavi was concluding the Divine Liturgy in the cathedral church of Svetitskhoveli in Mtskheta when he was instructed by an angel to welcome a band of monks who had traveled hundreds of miles and who, at that moment, were nearing the city. On the basis of this heavenly introduction, the Catholicos greeted the ascetics as honored guests. The band of thirteen monks had come to the Iberian kingdom under the leadership a famed Syrian ascetic named John, later to be known as Ioane Zedazneli, who had been directed by God to undertake monastic labors in this distant land.²

The arrival of these monks, known collectively as the Thirteen Syrian Fathers, inaugurated a distinctly new phase in the christianization of the Iberian kingdom.³ This eastern Georgian kingdom, today largely made up of the regions of Kartli and Kakheti, had superficially embraced Christianity after the conversion of king Mirian III and queen Nana by St.. Nino sometime in the 330's.⁴ However, despite vigorous royal patronage, Christianity had not penetrated very deeply into the countryside. Pagan sanctuaries and high places dotted the landscape, bespeaking the tenacity of traditional belief systems.⁵ In addition, Iberia was increasingly drawn into the cultural orbit of Sassanian Persia, and the shahan'shah counted the Iberian king among his vassals. As a consequence, Zoroastrianism was making significant inroads throughout the kingdom. Further, the Iberian monarchy was engaged in an ongoing struggle with powerful local nobles who were slow to follow the king's predilections in religion.⁶ The desire for centralization seems, in part, to have motivated the king's lavish patronage of the church of Svetitskhoveli, which housed the kingdom's most sacred relic, the Robe of Christ.⁷

Once they received the blessing of the Catholicos, John and his twelve ascetic followers did not remain long in the capital. Indeed, they did not even settle in the capital's immediate suburbs. Of the thirteen, John chose to settle the closest to Mtskheta, but it took a strenuous day's climb to reach his dwelling at the top of a peak commanding a view of the Mtkvari and Aragvi river valleys – the heart of the Iberian kingdom. He chose his retreat, not for the sake of the view, but because Mt. Zedazeni was the site of a prominent pagan sanctuary. He demolished the temple, and became renowned among the country people for his ability to cure illnesses, cast out demons, and even tame the wild bears that roamed in great numbers on Mt. Zedazeni.⁸ John's disciples fanned out across Iberia, imitating his example of asceticism, miracle-working, and evangelization. They settled throughout the Mtkvari valley, from Urbnisi to Garedji and northwards through Kakheti to Alaverdi. While there are archaeological and literary hints of monastic foundations in Iberia prior to the sixth century, notably at Tsilkani north of Mtskheta, it is principally with the work of the Syrian Fathers that monastic traditions took root, with the attendant diffusion of Christianity into peripheral regions far from the confluence of the Mtkvari and Aragvi rivers.⁹

Some commentators have argued that the Syrian Fathers were, in fact, not Syrians at all, but Georgians who had come into contact with Syrian asceticism.¹⁰ Others have suggested that they were simply Monophysite dissidents who fled as refugees from Chalcedonian persecution under Justin and Justinian.¹¹ Of the 140 recently discovered Georgian manuscripts on Mt. Sinai, there is a late 9th or early 10th century text of the *Acts of Ioane Zedazneli*, in which John is clearly stated to have been born in Syria. At the same time, Sinai MS 50 also omits the celebrated visit of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers to the pillar of Simeon Stylites, included in the later *Life of St.. Shio*, when the revered stylite blesses their intended mission to Iberia. The omission of the episode is not especially telling – indeed, its presence in the *Life of St.. Shio* contributes to a number of chronological inconsistencies, since St.. Simeon departed this life in 459, at least a

half century before many authorities place the Syrian Fathers in Iberia.¹²

One profitable avenue of inquiry into the origins and character of these monks is to engage in a close analysis of the ascetic practices of St. loane Zedazneli, the leader of the Syrian Fathers. The main sources depicting St. loane are a short version of his *vita* embedded in the *K'art'lis Ts'xovreba*, that is, the *History/Life of K'art'li*, and a fuller tenth century *vita* compiled by the Catholicos, Arsenius II.¹³ These works are admittedly late, and in many respects, reflect the concerns of the early Bagratid period. However, when the depictions of loane Zedazneli and his monastic co-laborers are compared with representative sources from the early Syrian ascetical tradition, they reveal firm links between the pioneers of sixth century Georgian monasticism and their Syrian roots.¹⁴ Three works, spanning nearly a century and a half, portray the full flowering of Syrian asceticism: Theodoret's *Religious History*, the Syriac *Life of St. Simeon Stylites*, and John of Ephesus' *Lives of the Eastern Saints*.¹⁵ Theodoret's collection of saints' lives is the earliest of the three, having been written in the early 440's. Though only a selection of contemporary ascetics, Theodoret's *Religious History* recounts the formative period of the Syrian tradition. Theodoret presents a series of rather undifferentiated monastic portraits, but these become all the more useful since they constitute a more generalized Syrian ideal of ascetic holiness, and thereby a more compelling model for comparison. The Syriac *Life of St. Simeon Stylites*, while marked by later interpolations, still vividly paints the renowned pillar saint in remarkably local colors. And finally, the massive collection of John of Ephesus shows how the Syrian tradition was adapted and applied in the same period the first half of the sixth century – the same period as that of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers.¹⁶

Before examining the activities of loane Zedazneli, it should be noted that the pattern of an ascetic master journeying with a band of devoted followers is an especially Syrian phenomenon. Daniel of Taron, a Syrian monk-bishop, evangelized the southern regions of Armenia bordering Syria. He and his followers preached widely and established hermit-

ages throughout the early fifth century.¹⁷ The work of Maštoc's, himself a famed holy-man from Taron in Syria, fits into this pattern, and his creation of the Armenian script equipped itinerant Syrian monk-preachers with texts for their target audiences.¹⁸ Contemporary with the Thirteen Syrian Fathers, the Aksumite countryside in northern Ethiopia and Eretria was evangelized by a group known to Ethiopian tradition as the Nine Saints. This band of predominantly Syriac-speaking ascetics arrived in Aksum during the reign of Ella Amidas. Under the leadership of St. Aregawi, these Syrian ascetics dispersed throughout the Aksumite kingdom in order to combat paganism and establish monasteries.¹⁹

Like dozens of the holy-men depicted by Theodoret, John's impulse was to ascend a mountain and make his dwelling near, and yet apart from, a prominent city.²⁰ Perhaps St. John viewed Mt. Zedazeni as another Mt. Silpius, near Antioch, which was inhabited by a succession of hermits like Peter the Egyptian, Severus, and Malchus.²¹ One famous Syrian ascetic, Macedonius, dwelt on Mt. Silpius for nearly seventy years. John was brought up near Antioch, and local patterns of asceticism undoubtedly influenced John's own monastic lifestyle. Like his Syrian predecessors, John chose the mountaintop of Zedazeni as the arena for a spiritual contest with demonic forces which the *Life of St. loane Zedazneli* describes as a black cloud swarming about the summit.²² Their presence on the mountain-top was associated with a pagan shrine dedicated to Zaden, a prominent deity in pre-Christian Iberia. An instructive parallel is St. Maron, who lived during the first decades of the fifth century on a large hill near Theodoret's bishopric of Cyrrhus. In Theodoret's words,

Maron, embracing the open-air life, repaired to a hilltop formerly honored by the impious. Consecrating to God the precinct of demons on it, he lived there, pitching a small tent which he seldom used.²³

It should be noted that this pattern of settling on mountain-tops contrasts markedly with the symbolic geography of asceticism in Egypt, the birthplace of eremitical asceticism. As early as Pharaonic times, the principal conceptual dichotomy in Egypt was between

the green regions bordering the river—the place of life and habitation, and the desert, which had long been associated with death and malevolent spiritual forces. In the collections of stories concerning Egyptian ascetics, the hermits encounter demons associated with paganism, not in pagan sanctuaries, but usually in Pharaonic tombs which are taken over as dwellings by the monks.²⁴

The demons on Mt. Zedazeni sought to intimidate St. John into withdrawing, but through a fierce spiritual struggle, John's prayers and ascetic rigors expelled them and the black demonic cloud dissolved like a mist. A remarkable correspondence may be observed in John of Ephesus' account of the contemporary sixth-century hermit, Paul of Sophanae, who inhabited a cave in the high rocks above the Tigris, a spot which was feared locally as the dwelling of "malignant fiends." Paul erected a cross at the mouth of the cave, hung up a small bag of relics, constructed a simple oratory, and then spent several harrowing nights in prayer. Despite their incessant howling and fearful apparitions, like the spirits on Mt. Zedazeni, the demons eventually were defeated.²⁵ Moreover, Paul continued to parallel John, because both of them later founded monastic communities at the site of their spiritual battles, and gained fame among the locals as healers and exorcists. Paul of Sophanae's use of relics as potent apotropaic talismans has no close parallel in Egyptian monasticism. All the more significant, then, is the detail preserved in the late tenth century *Life of Ioane Zedazneli*, that John brought from Syria various relics of the martyrs which he distributed to each of his disciples "as a protection from the devil."²⁶

It seems unnecessary in the present discussion to heap up Syriac parallels to John's peaceful encounter with a bear on the slopes of Mt. Zedazeni or his miraculous creation of a spring of fresh water atop the mountain. The *Life of Ioane Zedazneli* tells us that many among the humble people were cured by drinking from the spring or by merely touching its water.²⁷ Today, the well is still enjoyed by pilgrims, and is situated within the small sixth century basilica church at the summit which also contains John's tomb.²⁸ Suffice it to say that all of St. John's activities would qualify

him for a near seamless inclusion in the pages of Theodoret or John of Ephesus.

John's particularly Syrian pattern of asceticism was mirrored by his disciples. The clearest example of this is in the ascetic practices of Aton of Martkhopi. St. Anton climbed a hill-top at Martkhopi overlooking western Kakheti, and there dwelt on a pillar in the classic Syrian style for many years. St. Anton, of course, is easily recognizable in the iconography of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers since he carried with him the icon of Christ, "not made by hands." The version of Anton's life found in the additions to the *K'art'lis Ts'xhovreba* even claims that Anton carried the miraculous Mandylion of Edessa, entrusted to him by the bishop of the city who sought to preserve it from an impious descendant of Abgar V.²⁹ Devotion to a heavenly *acheiropoietos* image only became prominent in the spirituality of Edessa during the early decades of the sixth century, thereby providing confirmation to the dating usually ascribed to the Syrian Fathers.³⁰

Unlike John of Zedazeni, who hailed from the vicinity of Antioch, the various sources concur that Davit Garedjeli came from the land of the two rivers, that is, the northern reaches of Mesopotamia, an area replete with monasteries and hermitages. After reaching Syria, David was drawn by the fame of St. John, and later accompanied him, first to Mtskheta and then to Mt. Zedazeni.³¹ According to the *Life of St. Shio*, John was instructed in a vision by the Theotokos and St. Nino to send out his disciples across Kartli and Kakheti. This initiates the first of three distinct phases in the career of David: his active ministry near Vakhtang Gorgasali's newly inaugurated political capital of Tbilisi; followed by his migration to the desert region of southeastern Kakheti; and finally, his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The first of these periods does not occur in either the *K'art'lis Ts'xhovreba* or in the tenth century *Life of St. Davit Garedjeli*, but only in later traditions. Nonetheless, St. David's sojourn in the vicinity of Tbilisi is entirely in keeping with both the ascetic character of his spiritual father, John of Zedazeni, and with practices long familiar to students of the late antique Syrian holy man. Accompanied by his disciple Lucian, St. David settled in a cave on the

forested slopes of a steep ridge to the southwest of the city and was credited with the flowing forth of yet another miraculous spring of water.

Unlike the typical Syrian holy man who would interact with disciples and petitioners from atop his pillar or mountain hermitage, St. David made weekly forays into the heart of the city. These high profile appearances were carried out, not for the purpose of effecting healings or exorcisms, but for the express purpose of preaching against Zoroastrianism. St. David's message was directed to the townspeople, in the attempt to convert them to Christianity, and was also directed against the Zoroastrian clergy as he publicly denounced their teachings.

This mode of confrontational asceticism was not unknown in the Christian east. What marked St. David as unusual was the regularity of his forays into city. Elsewhere, famed holy men occasionally made their appearance in cities, but only at times of perceived public emergency, as when Daniel the Stylite came down from his pillar outside Constantinople to denounce the usurper Basiliscus in 476 or when Macedonius left his mountain retreat outside Antioch to confront two imperial commissioners in the aftermath of the Riot of the Statues in 387.³² Even more dramatic was the sudden appearance of the Monophysite ascetic Sergius in the church of Amida during the reign of Justin. Sergius responded to the persecution of his coreligionists by reviling the bishop and slapping the preacher in front of the shocked congregation.³³ These, however, were exceptional occurrences. David's weekly harangues in Tbilisi were part of a calculated program of winning the urban population for Christianity. Simeon the Stylite had been an implacable foe of Zoroastrianism, denouncing mobeds, magi, and lay Zoroastrians at every opportunity. As tensions mounted between the two great empires, Syrian holy-men after Simeon continued his fierce hostility to Persian religion.³⁴ Perhaps the closest parallel for David's work in Tbilisi is the contemporary ascetic bishop Simeon, who had a missionary vision for various peoples in northern Mesopotamia under Persian cultural domination. He learned several indigenous languages in order to strengthen Christian communities and op-

pose Zoroastrianism.³⁵ Among the Thirteen Syrian Fathers, St. Abibos of Nekresi was martyred after he disrupted a Zoroastrian ritual by pouring water on a fire-altar, derisively asking, "What kind of god is this that I can extinguish him with a jug of water?"

All over the Iberian kingdom, the Syrian Fathers came into conflict with both Zoroastrianism and with native cults. These traditional cults focused on natural elements – fire, water, and sky. Perhaps this partly accounts for the local appeal of fire rituals within Zoroastrianism. Collectively, the miracles of the Syrian Fathers, as portrayed in Medieval Georgian literature, demonstrate the superiority of the Christian God over the old religions. Shio of Mghvime, lacking a censer, placed a burning coal in his own hand and remained unharmed, thus demonstrating God's power over fire. The element of water also came under their authority, as both Ioane Zedazneli and Shio of Mghvime were said to have parted the Mtkvari, and Ise of Tsilkani diverted the waters of a local stream to provide water for a parched village.³⁶ Arsenius' tenth century *Life of Ioane Zedazneli*, contains the story that at a re-gathering of his disciples at Zedazeni, St. John offered them a cup of wine. As he did so, however, he left the goblet suspended in mid-air, thereby demonstrating Christ's mastery over the element of air.³⁷ These various miracles provided a cosmological under-girding for the work of christianization carried out with such enthusiasm by these Syrian ascetics.

David and his disciple Lucian eventually left Tbilisi and proceeded down the Mtkvari. More than all the other Syrian Fathers, David chose to settle in a region most akin to the scrub deserts of Syria and northern Mesopotamia – the southeastern corner of Kakheti. When they first arrived in this inhospitable region, they lived, in the words of the *K'art'lis Ts'xhovreba*, "exposed to the heat of the sun, and the ice of winter" – a mode of life echoing that of Simeon Stylites and countless other Syrian hermits like Eusebius of Asikha and James of Cyrrhestica, whom Theodoret describes as "now inundated by torrential rain, now frozen by frost and snow, and at other times burnt and consumed by the rays of the sun."³⁸ Like many other Syrian ascetics, David and Lucian lived on roots

and grasses until one day three deer came to St.. David and allowed themselves to be milked. The Catholicos Arsenius adds the charming detail that thereafter, the deer came everyday, except on the fast days of Wednesday and Friday. In this way, David's life in the desert represents a restoration of paradise, wherein humanity exists in harmony with the entire cosmos.

From this discussion, the Syrian features of the asceticism of Ioane Zedazneli and his disciples can be demonstrated beyond doubt. As a consequence, we can see that early Georgian monastic spirituality took on a distinctly Syrian character, a quality which has endured to this day. In addition, the particular form of Syrian asceticism introduced into the Iberian kingdom was especially popular during the late fifth and early sixth centuries. This provides both a further chronological grounding for the work of the Thirteen Syrian Fathers and, more importantly, it also links Iberia into wider world of the eastern Mediterranean during Late Antiquity.³⁹

Notes:

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3 On the christianization of Iberia, see: L. Patardize, "The Conversion of Georgia according to *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (Georgian Chronicle)" in N. Abakelia, M. Chkhartishvili, eds., *Christianity in Georgia: Historical-Ethnographical Studies*. Tbilisi. 2000. 8-16; C. Haas, "Mountain Constantines: The Christianization of Aksum and Iberia," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 (2008): 101-126. On the Thirteen Syrian Fathers, see: K.S. Kekelidze, "On the Arrival of the Syrian Missionaries in Kartli," *Etyudy* 1 (1956): 19-50; B. Martin-Hisard, "Les Treize Saints Pères: Formation

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10 K. Kekelidze, "Sakitxi sirieli moyvaceta Kartlisi moslvis shesaxeb (Concerning the question of the arrival of Syrian missionaries in Georgia)," *Tpilis Universitetis Moambe* 6. 1925. 81-107 (in Georgian)

11 D. M. Lang, *Lives and Legends of the Georgian Saints*, 2nd rev. ed. London. 1956. 81-83; S. H. Rapp, *Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography*. Louvain. 2003. p. 321.

12 Z. Alexidze, "The New Recensions of the *Conversion of Georgia* and the *Lives of the 13 Syrian Fathers* recently Discovered on Mt. Sinai," in *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra Cultura dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (Secoli IV-XI), Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'alto Medioevo*, vol. 43. Spoleto. 1996. pp. 409-426.

13 The latter may be found in I. Abuladze, ed., *Dzveli kartuli agiograpiuli literaturis dzeglebi*, (Monuments of Ancient Georgian Hagiographical Literature) Vol. 3. Tbilisi. 1971. pp. 83-107 (in Georgian).

14 An instructive parallel occurs in Armenia. See, R. W. Thomson, "Syrian Christianity and the Conversion of Armenia," in W. Seibt, ed., *Die Christianisierung des Kaukasus / The Christianization of the Caucasus*. Vienna. 2002. pp. 159-169.

15 Theodoret, *Religious History*: P. Canivet and A. Leroy-Molinghen, eds., *Sources Chrétiennes* 234, 257, Paris. 1977, 1979. Eng. trans., R. M. Price, *A History of the Monks of Syria*. Kalamazoo. MI, 1985. P. Canivet, *Le*

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18 On Maštoc, see R. W. Thomson, "The Formation of the Armenian Literary Tradition," in N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews, and R. W. Thomson, *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*. Washington. 1980. pp. 135-150. Korwin's Vark' Maštoc' I [*Life of Maštoc*], M. Abelean, ed., and N. Norehad, trans., Delmar, NY, 1985

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20 Theodoret *HR* 1.2 (James of Nisibis), 22.1 (Thalassius), 22.2 (Limnaeus), 23.1 (John), 27.2 (Barbatus).

21 Theodoret *HR* 13.2, 14.1; *HE* 4.28.

22 *Life of loane Zedazneli* in Abuladze, pp. 96-98.

23 Theodoret *HR* 16.1. Likewise, an ascetic named Thalelaeus pitched a tent on a small mountain which held a demon-infested pagan precinct (Theodoret *HR* 28.1).

24 *Apoph. Patr.* Macarius 13; Palladius *Hist. Laus.* 49.

25 Jo. Eph. (V.SS.Or.) 6 (pp. 111-118).

26 *Life of loane Zedazneli* in Abuladze, p. 95.

27 *Life of loane Zedazneli* in Abuladze, pp. 99-100; *K'art'lis C'xovreba* 213, interpolation 10.

28 For a recent appraisal of the architecture of this

structure, see N. Vacheishvili, "On One Unknown Phenomenon of Georgian Ecclesiastical Architecture Open Churches of the Early Middle Ages," *Georgian Antiquities* 2 (2002): 121-140.

29 *K'art'lis C'xovreba* 208-209, interpolation 10; Z. Aleksidze, "The Mandyllion and the Keramion in the ancient literature of Georgia" *Academia: The Journal of Human Sciences* 1.1 (2001): 9-15.

30 Evagrius *HE* 4.27.

31 *Life of Davit Garedjeli* in Abuladze, pp.170-208; *K'art'lis C'xovreba* 209-210, interpolation 10.

32 *Life of Daniel the Stylite* 72-83; Theodoret, *HR* 13.7.

33 Jo. Eph. V.SS.Or. 5 (pp. 101-103).

34 V.Sym.Styl.(Syr.) 68-69, 73, 80.

35 Jo. Eph. V.SS.Or. 5 (pp. 155-7).

36 *Kartlis Cxovreba* 211-212, interpolation 10.

37 *Life of loane Zedazneli* in Abuladze, pp. 102-106.

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39 These Mediterranean connections were manifested, not only in the much-discussed presence of Georgians in Jerusalem, but also by Georgian pilgrims and monastics in Antioch: W. Djobadze, "Georgians in Antioch on the Orontes and the Monastery of St.. Barlaam" in W. Seibt, ed., *Die Christianisierung des Kaukasus / The Christianization of the Caucasus*. Vienna. 2002. pp. 37-53.

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EASTERN CHRISTIAN "IMAGE-PARADIGMS": A HIEROTOPIC DIMENSION OF MEDIEVAL ART HISTORY

The present paper does not concern any local and specific problems of arts in Georgia, it deals with the context and new methodological approaches which might explain several Georgian phenomena as an integral part of the Eastern Christian world. The paper is based on the concept of Hierotopy which has been proposed by me seven years ago. It is a new field of art historical and cultural studies focusing on the making of sacred spaces considered to be a particular form of human creativity¹. The significant phenomenon of spatial icons has been discussed in this context. This phenomenon stands for iconic (that is mediative) images not depicted figuratively but presented spatially, as a kind of vision that extends beyond the realm of flat pictures and their ideology, still dominant in our minds and preventing us from establishing an adequate perception of hierotopical projects². It is crucial to recognise and acknowledge the intrinsic spatial nature of iconic imagery as a whole: in Byzantine minds, the icon was not merely an object or a flat picture on a panel or wall, but also a spatial vision emanating from the picture and existing between the image and its beholder. This basic perception defined the iconic character of space in which various media were interacting. From this point of view, the creation of a sacred space is organization of concrete spatial imagery that can be considered typologically (that is according to a type of representation and its perception) as something quite similar to Byzantine icons³.

This artistic phenomenon, as I have argued elsewhere, creates a methodological difficulty, as it contradicts the basic principle of traditional art history - the opposition of "image versus beholder"⁴. The relationship between the image and the beholder can be most complicated, yet their structural opposition presents a pivot for all art historical discussions. The most charac-

teristic feature of hierotopic phenomena, however, is the participation of the beholder in the spatial image⁵. The beholder finds himself within the image as its integral element along with various representations and effects created by lights, scents, gestures and sounds⁶. Furthermore, the beholder, as endowed with collective and individual memory, unique spiritual experience and knowledge, in a way participates in the creation of spatial imagery. Simultaneously, the image exists in objective reality as a dynamic structure, adapting its elements according to an individual perception - some aspects of the spatial entity can be accentuated or temporarily downplayed. Creators of sacred spaces kept in their minds the factor of the prepared perception, connecting all intellectual and emotional threads of the image concept into a unified whole.

It is noteworthy that Byzantine "spatial icons", most unusual in a modern European context, have a typological parallel in the contemporary art of performances and multimedia installations, which have nothing to do with the Byzantine tradition historically or symbolically⁷. What they do share in common is the basic principle of absence of a single source of image, the imagery being created in space by numerous dynamically changing forms⁸. In this situation, the role of the beholder acquires major significance, as he actively participates in the re-creation of the spatial imagery. All the differences of the contents, technologies and aesthetics notwithstanding, allow us speak about one and the same type of perception of images.

Recent studies of spatial icons and of hierotopy in general have required serious reconsideration of existing methodology and elaboration on the newly introduced notions, one of which I am going to discuss here. It seems to be of major importance for the understanding of a number of phenomena of Mediterranean art and its fluid borders.

I will argue that in many cases the discussion of visual culture cannot be reduced to a positivist description of artifacts or to the analysis of theological notions. Some phenomena can be properly interpreted only on the level of image-ideas - I prefer to term them "image-paradigms" - which do not coincide with the illustrative pictures or ideological conceptions and, it seems, may become a special notion and a useful *instrumentum studiorum* that helps to adopt spatial imagery

into the realm of our mostly positivist discourse. The image-paradigm is not connected with an illustration to any specific text, although it does belong to a continuum of literary and symbolic meanings and associations. This type of imagery is quite distinct from what we may call an iconographic device. At the same time, the image-paradigm belongs to visual culture - it is visible and recognizable - but it is not formalized in any fixed state, either in a form of the pictorial scheme or in a mental construction. In this respect the image-paradigm resembles the metaphor that loses its sense in retelling or in its deconstruction into parts. For the Mediterranean



The "Parousia miniature" from the ninth-century Vatican manuscript of Christian Topography

world, such an irrational and simultaneously "hieroplastic" perception of the phenomena could be the most adequate evidence of their divine essence. It does not require any mystic perception but rather a special type of consciousness, in which our distinct categories of artistic, ritual, visual and spatial are woven into the inseparable whole. This form of vision determines a range of symbolic structures as well as numerous specific pictorial motifs; in addition, it challenges our fundamental methodological approach to the image as illustration and flat picture.

In previous years I have tried to present some reconstructions of particular image-paradigms that ex-

isted in the Byzantine world. Among them the image-paradigm of Heavenly Jerusalem was the most perceptible, existing practically in every church where the Heavenly City, was not formally depicted but appeared as a kind of vision, created by various media which included not only architecture and iconography but particular rites, liturgical prayers, the dramaturgy of lighting, and the organization of incense and fragrance. It is clear, that the level of sophistication and aesthetic quality of the project was quite different in the Byzantine capital from a remote village, but the principle of the image-paradigm, remained crucial in the concept of a sacred space. Probably, Heavenly Jerusalem was the most powerful image-paradigm but, certainly, not an isolated one. We may speak about the entire category of Byzantine images neglected for a long time. Some more specific examples, like image-paradigms of the Blessed City of Edessa or of the Priesthood of the Virgin, have been recently revealed and discussed⁹.

Now I would like to deal with another characteristic example of the Mediterranean image-paradigms that played a great role in the Jewish, Christian (Byzantine, Latin, Coptic) and Islamic cultures: the paradigm of the iconic curtain, or veil. I would like to demonstrate that the curtain was a powerful vehicle of the Mediterranean culture, definitive of the iconic imagery from the very beginning. It goes back to the prototype of the Temple veil and to the Jewish and Christian tradition of its theological interpretation¹⁰.

The first mention of the veil (*paroket*) of the Tabernacle's separating the holy place from the Holy of Holies and screening the Ark and the seat of God indicates that it was a kind of image, "the skilled work", woven from blue, purple, crimson and linen and embroidered with cherubim¹¹. The Jewish tradition perceived the veil as a symbolic representation of cosmos and eternity.

Josephus, writing at the end of the first century AD, stated that the veil, which had been embroidered with flowers and patterns "in Babylonian work", depicted a panorama of the heavens. He explained that the colours woven together had symbolic meaning: the scarlet signified fire; the linen, earth; the blue, air; and the purple, sea. The veil thus represented the matter, the substance, of the visible creation and the universe¹². Later Jewish mystic theology suggested that the veil was also an image of the sacred time simulta-

neously representing the past, the present and the future. The Third Book of Enoch describes how Ishmael the high priest was taken up into heaven and shown all the history of the world on the reverse side of the veil, as on a great screen.

Philo gave the same explanation of the colors of the veil as symbolizing the four elements of the world. A crucial point of his interpretation is that the veil was the boundary between the visible and the invisible creation. The world beyond the veil was unchanging and without a temporal sequence of events, but the visible world outside the veil was a place of change³³. This statement seems to me of great significance for the tradition of icon worship and deserves more careful analysis. Philo not only introduced an opposition between the earthly and the heavenly worlds, but also defined a concept of interaction between these two sacred realms, the holy and the most holy, which belong to different ontological models. The most holy realm, placed beyond the veil and existing outside time and matter, creates the eternal pattern for the changing sacred environment in front of the veil. Some traces of Philo's vision can be found in the Byzantine theology of icons. The holy image, following the curtain paradigm, is not just "the door to the heavens" (this traditional interpretation seems too simplified), but also the living spatial and transparent boundary connecting two heterogeneous sacred realms. It provides an explanation of the special concept of time and space that we may discover while contemplating icons. From this point of view, every icon could be interpreted as a curtain signifying the boundary of the dynamic space of prayer, and unifying the beholder and image in a space of unchangeable divine presence.

In the Christian tradition, the tearing of the temple veil (*katapetasma*) at the moment of Christ's death becomes a new source of interpretation³⁴. According to Saint Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, the veil is designated the flesh of the Lord: "The new and living way which he opened for us through the curtain (*katapetasma*), that is through his flesh"³⁵. There are some important aspects derived from the Christian vision of the veil. The eternity of Christ, who passed beyond the veil and thus beyond time, has been confirmed. Through the veil torn in two he opened the Holy of Holies and a way to salvation to the faithful. The Temple curtain became an

image of his redemptive sacrifice with its liturgical connotations. The veil as the flesh of Christ was one of the most influential and widespread symbols in Christian culture. A theological interpretation of the apocryphal story of the Virgin weaving the Temple veil became a popular theme of early Byzantine hymnography and homiletics, in which the weaving came to be compared with the incarnation of the Logos³⁶.

From early Christian times onwards, the veil was perceived as a powerful iconic image having various connotations, ranging from the idea of the incarnation to that of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In contrast to the Jewish tradition, a *topos* of the open curtain was highly emphasized. It seems quite natural, then, that in the period of iconoclasm, the Temple veil became one of the arguments of the icon worshippers presented at



The Tabernacle. The seventh-century miniature of the Ashburnham Pentateuch

the Second Council of Nicaea: "Thus, this Christ, while visible to men by means of the curtain, that is his flesh, made the divine nature - even though this remained concealed - manifest through signs. Therefore, it is in this form, seen by men, that the holy Church of God depicts Christ"³⁷. This vision was incorporated into the contemporary iconography.

The "Parousia miniature" from the ninth-century Vatican manuscript of Christian topography³⁸ provides the most characteristic example, and has been recently discussed by Herbert Kessler (fig. 1)³⁹. The composition of the Second Coming is actually structured by the Tabernacle, following a two-part scheme used for the Ark of the Covenant in the Jewish tradition and later in Byzantine iconography. The arched upper part represents the Holy of Holies; the rectangular lower part, the holy place, which is interpreted as a tripartite hierarchy of

Medieval Georgia

the heavenly, earthly and underground beings. Christ is represented in the Holy of Holies in the background of a magnificent gold cloth decorated with a trellis pattern filled with fleurs-de-lis. The ornamentation was probably inspired by Josephus's description of the Temple veil embroidered with flowers and patterns. As Kessler has noticed, the same decoration of the veil appeared in the depiction of the entrance to the Tabernacle in other miniatures of Christian topography.

The curtain is at once the background and the major iconic representation, symbolically inseparable



The curtains in the eighth-century murals of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome

from the image of Christ, because, in Pauline and patristic interpretation, it is the flesh of Christ. Through Christ and the Temple veil, the viewer may gain access to heaven, represented by the blue background. This is a visual embodiment of the New Testament's words about "the new and living way" that Christ opened for us to the Holy of Holies when the veil was torn in two at the moment of the redemptive sacrifice. The idea of the entrance to heaven is emphasised by the Greek inscription above the Vatican Parousia: "You have my Father's blessings" and, further, according to Saint Matthew, "Come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made"²⁰. The crea-

tor of the miniature suggests the fundamental idea of all icons perceived as mediating realms. In this respect, the icon of the "Christ veil" operates as an ideal iconic image. It is noteworthy that the curtain is closed and open at the same time. The idea of boundary seems crucial, but the possibility of crossing this threshold is no less significant. Open, the curtain is a sign of passage and transfiguration, in which the idea of *theosis*, or deification, is realised as a dynamic process, a dialectic interaction of the holy and the most holy realms with the active participation of the beholder. We may assume that the curtain as a potentially transparent sacred screen can be regarded as a basic principle of iconicity.

It is important to note that the iconic curtain has not received a formalized pictorial scheme in iconography. Most probably, Byzantine image makers deliberately avoided limiting the all-embracing symbolism of the veil to a particular pattern but rather used it as a recognizable paradigm appearing each time in a new form.

The image-paradigm of the iconic curtain has been revealed through real curtains and veils hanging in actual Christian churches. In Syrian sources from the fourth century onwards, there are several testimonies to the use of altar curtains, which were conceived as an interactive system of veils concealing, respectively, the door of the sanctuary barrier, the ciborium and the holy gifts on the altar table. Theologians identified these curtains with the Temple veils - the symbolism is reflected not merely in commentaries but even in the terminology of the church spaces divided by curtains. The evidence of written sources is confirmed by archaeological data indicating traces of hangings in the Early Syrian sanctuaries.

In one of the oldest Byzantine liturgical commentaries, ascribed to Sophronius of Jerusalem, it is said that the *kosmites* (architrave of the sanctuary barrier) is a symbolic image of the *katapetasma* (Temple veil). Multiple sources mention curtains in different contexts, such as imperial ceremonies or miraculous events in Constantinople. The Byzantine accounts fit well with the contemporary evidence from the *Liber Pontificalis* on the numerous iconic curtains presented by Roman popes to the main basilicas of their city²¹. The most characteristic example is Paschal I (817–24) adorning Santa Maria Maggiore in 822–24²². He presented to

this church several dozen textiles belonging to different types of decorations (among others “the clothes of Byzantine purple”); most were for the altar area of the basilica. There were at least three different sets of iconic curtains decorating spaces between columns in the sanctuary barriers. A year later, Pope Paschal added an extra set of iconic curtains representing another cycle: Christ’s passion and resurrection.

Another group of curtains displayed on that basilica’s great beam was connected with the sanctuary barrier’s decoration. The most significant among them was “a great veil of interwoven gold, with 7 gold-studded panels and a fringe of Byzantine purple”. According to Krautheimer, this large veil with seven images displayed beneath the triumphal arch was for the wider central opening of the pergola (barrier)²³; thus, it had to serve as an actual replica of the Temple veil over the sanctuary door. This great curtain hung in juxtaposition to another placed at the entrance to Santa Maria Maggiore, “a great Alexandrian curtain, embellished and adorned with various representations”. The two veils engaged in a visual and symbolic dialogue with a third, situated on the same horizontal axis, probably, behind the throne in the opening of the central arcade. It is noteworthy that in many cases the *Liber Pontificalis* indicates the manner of making the curtains, emphasizing their being manufactured from four different materials “of fourfold-weave”. The symbolism of this technology seems quite clear: it connects Roman textiles with the Temple veil that was made of blue, purple, crimson and linen.

I have mentioned just a few examples of the elaborate system of curtains creating a multi-layered structure of sacred screens, dynamic, changing and interacting. We can imagine that Santa Maria Maggiore, as well as other Roman churches, looked much more like a cloth tabernacle than a stone church. A good impression of this imagery can be found in the seventh-century miniature of the Ashburnham Pentateuch (fig.2)²⁴, representing the Old Testament Tabernacle as a Christian church with the eight different types of curtains arranged as a system of sacred screens. The evidence of the *Liber Pontificalis* allows us to see in this iconographic pattern a reflection of contemporary church interiors, embodying the most powerful image-paradigm, which for centuries played such a great role

in the Mediterranean visual culture, extending beyond the fluid borders of the West and East. It was not an illustration of a particular theological notion, although it had several symbolic meanings deeply rooted in Jewish tradition and its Christian interpretation, revealing in every church the imagery of the Tabernacle.

The all-embracing symbolism of the iconic curtain can be found in almost all church decoration, presented on different levels, from a concrete pictorial motif to a general structure. In this connection we should examine the well-known iconographic theme of curtains in the lower register of church walls. Curtains appeared in early Byzantine art (in the murals of the Bawit monasteries and of Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome), and they became an established device in the middle Byzantine period (fig.3). Scholars have suggested different



The curtains in the sanctuary of the ossuary church of the Petritsion (Bachkovo) monastery in Bulgaria, painted by the Georgian artist

interpretations of this motif. In my view, however, its connection with the Temple veil symbolism seems the most probable. Some new arguments can be provided. The representations of curtains were accumulated in the sanctuary area, while in the naos, plates imitating marble were depicted. A characteristic example is provided by the murals in the ossuary church of the Petritsion (Bachkovo) monastery in Bulgaria, painted by the Georgian artist (fig.4) On the curtains, represented in the altar of the twelfth-century Russian church of Saints Boris and Gleb in Kideksha, we find a pattern in the form of a candlestick with seven branches, an iconography pointing to the Tabernacle and the Temple service. However, we find the most striking example in the decoration of the mid-thirteenth-century upper church of the Boyana monastery near Sofia, Bulgaria. An original inscription that has survived on the curtains

in the lower register of the northern wall clearly identifies the meaning of the image: “*kourtina rekoma zavesa*” (“*kourtina*, called the veil”). So, the curtains in the lower zone are not the ornamental margins but an integral part of an ancient symbolic concept that goes back to early Byzantine church iconography. Going a step further in our interpretation, the holy figures above the curtains can be viewed as the images on the veil and beyond the veil, coming from heaven and becoming visible and accessible because the Temple veil was opened forever by the sacrifice of Christ. In this way, the entire pictorial space of the church can be identified with the iconic curtain, as I have earlier suggested, in the case of Justinian’s Hagia Sophia, with the mosaic



The sixth-century mosaic vaults recalling the ornamental veils. Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

vaults recalling the ornamental veils, and of Roman basilicas wherein the image of the Tabernacle curtain received a key position at the top of the altar apse (fig.5).

The imagery that I have attempted to disclose and discuss in this paper leads to an important methodological statement: the iconic curtain as well as some other important phenomena of Eastern Christian visual culture cannot be described in traditional terms of art history. They challenge our fundamental methodological approach to the image as illustration and flat picture, being quite distinct from what we may call iconography. The artists, operating with vari-

ous media including standard depictions, could create in the minds of their experienced beholders the most powerful images, which were visible and recognisable in any particular space, yet not figuratively represented as pictorial schemes. These images revealed specific messages, being charged with profound symbolic meanings and various associations. At the same time, they existed beyond illustrations of theological statements or ordinary narratives. So, this is a special kind of imagery, which requires, in my view, a new notion of image-paradigms. The introduction of this notion into contemporary art history, and humanities in general, will allow us to acknowledge a number of phenomena, not only “medieval” and “Mediterranean”, which define several symbolic structures as well as numerous concrete pictorial motifs. We still do not have adequate terminological language to use with image-paradigms, but it seems clear that beyond image-paradigms our discussion will remain foreign to a medieval way of thinking and any analysis would be limited to merely the external fixation of visual culture.

Notes:

1 A. Lidov, “Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces as a Form of Creativity and Subject of Cultural History”, in Alexei Lidov (ed.), *Hierotopy: The Creation of Sacred Spaces in Byzantium and Medieval Russia*, Indrik, Moscow, 2006, pp. 32–58.

2 A. Lidov, “Spatial Icons: The Miraculous Performance with the Hodegetria of Constantinople”, in Lidov, *Hierotopy*, pp. 349–72; “The Flying Hodegetria: The Miraculous Icon as Bearer of Sacred Space”, in E Thunoe & G Wolf (eds), *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, “L’Erma” di Bretschneider, Rome, 2004, pp. 291–321; “Leo the Wise and the Miraculous Icons in Hagia Sophia”, in E Kountura-Galaki (ed.), *The Heroes of the Orthodox Church: The New Saints, 8th to 16th Century*, Institute for Byzantine Research, Athens, 2004, pp. 393–432; “The Miracle of Reproduction: The Mandyion and Keramion as a Paradigm of Sacred Space”, in C Frommel, G Morello & G Wolf (eds), *L’Immagine di Cristo dall’Acheropiita dalla mano d’artista*, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Rome, 2006, pp. 17–41.

3 For this phenomenon, see A. Lidov, “The Creator of Sacred Space as a Phenomenon of Byzantine Culture”, in M Bacci (ed.), *L’artista a Bisanzio e nel mondo cristiano-orientale*, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, 2007, pp. 135–76; and “Spatial Icons”.

4 A. Lidov, *Hierotopy*, pp. 40–3.

5 A. Lidov, “The Flying Hodegetria”, pp. 319–21; A. Lidov, “Spatial Icons”, pp. 355–7; Nicoletta Isar, “The Vision and Its “Exceedingly Blessed Beholder”: Of Desire and Participation in the Icon”, *RES. The Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics*, no. 38, 2000, pp. 56–72.

6 For some recently discussed characteristic examples, see Annemarie Weyl Carr, “Taking Place: The Shrine of

the Virgin Veiled by God in Kalopanagiotis, Cyprus”, pp. 388–408; and Elka Bakalova & Anna Lazarova, “The Relics of St. Spyridon and the Making of Sacred Space on Corfu: Between Constantinople and Venice”, pp. 434–64, in Lidov, *Hierotopy*.

7 N. Isar, “Vision and Performance: A Hierotopic Approach to Contemporary Art”, in A.Lidov(ed.), *Hierotopy. Comparative Studies of Sacred Spaces*, Indrik, Moscow, 2008, p. 465.

8 N. Isar, “Chorography (Chôra, Chôros, Chorós) - A Performative Paradigm of Creation of Sacred Space in Byzantium”, in Lidov, *Hierotopy*, pp. 59–90.

9 A. Lidov, “Heavenly Jerusalem: The Byzantine Approach”, in B Kuehnel (ed.), *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, Center for Jewish Art, Jerusalem, 1997–98, pp. 341–53; “The Miracle of Reproduction”; “Holy Face, Holy Script, Holy Gate: Revealing the Edessa Paradigm in Christian Imagery”, in AR Calderoni, C Dufour Bozzo & G Wolf (eds), *Intorno al Sacro Volto. Bisanzio, Genova e il Mediterraneo*, Marsilio Editori, Venice, 2007, pp. 195–212.

10 For recent discussion of this tradition, see Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy*, T & T Clark, London, 2005.

11 Exodus 26:31; 36:35.

12 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 3. 6. 4; 3. 180; *War of the Jews*, 5. 211–14; 5. 212–13.

13 Philo, *Questions and Answers on Exodus*, 2. 91.

14 Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45.

15 Hebrews 10:19–20.

16 N. Constas, *Proclus of Constantinople and the Cult of the Virgin in Late Antiquity*, Brill, Leiden, 2003, chap. 6.

17 JD Mansi (ed.), *Sacrorum consiliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 13:340.

18 Biblioteca Vaticana, Vatican, Vat. gr. 699, f. 89r.

19 H. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2000, pp. 60–87.

20 Matthew 25:34

21 J Croquison, “L’iconographie chretienne à Rome d’après le “Liber Pontificalis””, *Byzantion*, no. 34, 1964, pp. 577–603 ; R Petriaggi, «Utilizzazione, decorazione e diffusione dei tessuti nei corredi delle basiliche cristiane secondo il Liber Pontificalis (514–795)”, *Prospetiva. Revista di storia dell’arte antico e moderna*, no. 37, 1984, pp. 37–46.

22 *Le Liber Pontificalis*, text, introduction and commentary by L Duchesne, vol. 1, Editions E de Boccard, Paris, 1981, pp. 60–3; R Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of Ten Popes from A.D. 817–891*, trans. and commentary R Davis, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1995, p. 27.

23 R Krautheimer (ed.), *Corpus Basilicarum Christianorum Romae*, vols 1–5, Vatican City, Rome, and New York, 1937–77, 3. 52.

24 A. Pentateuch, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, cod. Lat. 2334, fol. 76r.

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ON THE INTERRELATION OF THE WORD AND IMAGE IN MEDIEVAL GEORGIAN MURAL PAINTING

Apart from the pictorial language, the inscriptions accompanying holy images are of crucial significance in revealing their meaning. Hence, the interrelation of text and image in medieval art has become a subject of special study in the works of Western art historians (B. Schellewald, L. Brubaker, H. Maguire, R. Nelson and others).¹ Georgian scholars (T. Virsaladze, A. Volskaya, E. Privalova, I. Lordkipanidze, M. Didebulidze, Z. Skhirtladze and others) (T. Virsaladze, 2007, 95-224; A. Volskaya, 1974; E. Privalova, 1980; I. Lordkipanidze, 1992; M. Didebulidze, 2004, 116-146; Z. Skhirtladze, 1985.) have also widely addressed this issue. The already analysed data and results of recent studies make it possible to attempt a scrutiny of the problem and propose a preliminary classification of the material. The present paper highlights "functionally" different groups, illustrated with several significant examples, mostly limited to the earlier period and to the "classic" works of Georgian painting.

In medieval Georgian art, as was generally the case throughout entire Byzantine world, the most widespread are simple, concise identifying inscriptions which provide a name for the image they accompany. This type of inscriptions became obligatory in Byzantium after the Iconoclast Controversy. As H. Maguire argues, such *tituli* functioned in two ways: their significance can be defined as practical and mystical. The practical reason for naming images was that they needed to be defined, but at the same time, being more than mere means of identification, they participated in the sanctification of an image and served as a kind of mystical hall-mark binding the image and prototype to each other (H. Maguire, 2008, 27-28).

Inscriptions of this type are attested in Georgian art from quite an early period. For instance, in Telovani Church of the Holy Cross, inscriptions identifying the Holy Apostles are visible in the sanctuary murals (8th century) (Z. Skhirtladze, 1999, 101-118); in church no. 5 of the Sabereebi Monastery in Davit Gareji, images of the Archangel Gabriel, the Cherub, etc. are identified in the accompanying inscriptions in the conch composition (Z. Skhirtladze, 1985, 12-26); *tituli* identifying participants of the Crucifixion are also included in the c. 9th-century murals of the chapel located to the south of the same church in Sabereebi monastery (Z. Skhirtladze, 1985, 27-36). Apart from many other similar examples, some murals of the same period can be mentioned, which lack identifying *tituli* – these include the painting on the chancel-barrier of Armazi church (9th century) (T. Shevyakova, 1983, pl. 18) and the painted façade decoration of Akura Church (10th century) (T. Shevyakova, 1983, pl. 20-13). However, these examples can be considered as exceptions, since from the 10th century onward, inclusion of identifying inscriptions in the murals was an established tradition. It is also noteworthy that these inscriptions were made in *asomtavruli* (uncial) script and were mostly accentuated by the size and colour of the lettering.

Apart from the concise identifying inscriptions, long narrative explanatory inscriptions are also found in Georgia from quite an early period. These inscriptions not only precise, but enrich meaning of the images with an additional context. Two distinct sub-groups can be singled out among them. The first one unites inscriptions, which can be named "memorial," while the second has *tituli*, which can be described as "psychological."

The first sub-group comprises explanatory inscriptions of the martyrdom scenes, which extend the meaning of what is represented verbally. In this respect, interesting examples can be found in the murals of Lagurka (Church of St Cerycus and St Julitta in Kala, 1112) and of the Church of St George in Naki-pari (1130), both made by a royal painter Tevdore (N. Aladashvili, G. Alibegashvili, A. Volskaya, 1966, 32-75; 1983, 56-101).

In Lagurka, two of the three inscriptions accompanying Martyrdom of St Cerycus are grouped around the figures of St Cerycus and St Julitta. The inscription on the right, arranged in eleven lines, provides a detailed description of the martyrdom: "On the 15th day of the month of July, martyrdom of St Cerycus. This godless king overthrew St Cerycus from the throne..."² Another inscription, written in three lines, at the edge of the composition, between the figures of an Angel and St Julitta, says: "St Julitta thanks the Lord, who accomplished the martyrdom of St Cerycus, her son." Apart from their narrative character, distinguished significance of the inscriptions is also evidenced by their place in the overall composition.

Key participants of the martyrdom scene are grouped on both sides of the pillar, which is perceived

around her become highlighted in the centre. The inscriptions impart a particular atmosphere to this scene, distinguished by its emotionality and dramatic character – the narrative text emphasizes those details of the martyrdom that the royal painter does not depict; accordingly, inclusion of the textual narration contributes to the full, "hagiographic" presentation of the martyrdom. In this context, even more powerful is the emotional "impact" of the second text expressing gratitude to the Lord for the glorious death of the martyred saint. The "message" is perceived as more striking since it opposes tragic image of St Julitta; it introduces a certain emotional "antithesis" – awe and the joy of salvation.

Noteworthy is the explanatory inscription of the king: "Godless Kar..."³ which apart from the identifi-



Telovani Church of Holy Cross. Apse wall murals. Scheme, after Z. Skhirtladze

as the main axis of the composition. The left half of the composition shows the lifeless St Cerycus lying on the stairs, the mournful St Julitta kneeling by his head and above them, an Angel descending from heaven with a crown in its hands. The inscription, outlined in white and written in beautiful *asomtavruli*, unfolds in closely set lines, filling the entire broad surface between the pillar and the figures.

The outstretched hands of the Angel and hands of St Cerycus pressed to St Julitta's face, which seem to meet one another, lead the beholder's glance to the inscriptions, thus enhancing their accentuation in the composition – S. Julitta and the inscriptions

cation of the personage, implies its "evaluation." This is all the more remarkable because, in terms of the compositional arrangement, the king is depicted as "alienated," "beyond the bounds."

Respectively, in Lagurka, two leading "realms" of the Christian *tropologia* – image and word – harmoniously visualize the emotional fullness of the event to the beholder/reader (without it the meaning of the represented would have been hardly perceptible); this unity of the text and the image is discernible on the level of the general composition. The text is an inseparable part of the image; it even determines the compositional arrangement of the scene and, due to

its descriptive narrative character, acquires a certain “pictorial value.”

A similar interrelation of text and image is found in the Nakipari murals, where the martyrdom scenes of St George are provided with the inscriptions likewise enriched with the “hagiographic” details.

The murals in the narthex of the *katholicon* of Gelati monastery (first half of 12th century) offer an interesting example of extended narrative inscriptions. The inscriptions accompanying the representation of the Ecumenical Councils are unusually extensive – apart from introducing major participants of the Councils, the *tituli* cite focal subjects of the disputes; thus, the beholder of the image becomes a “reader” of church history as well (E. Gedevanishvili, 2008, 12-15). The



Lagurka Murals. Martyrdom of St.. Cerycus

particular significance of the inscriptions is preconditioned by the fact that all the compositions of the Ecumenical Councils are identical in structure; consequently, the inscriptions here acquire a crucial importance not only for the identification of the Councils, but also for following the “memoria” of Church history.

It should be noted that the inscriptions are the only renewed part of the mural decoration, which shows no signs of renovation. The inscriptions seem

to have been refreshed soon after the painting was completed (T. Virsaladze, 2007, 103) – relatively small original *tituli* in light brown were replaced with new ones, which were outlined in black and appear larger. What attracts attention is the way in which new inscriptions were made – in some cases, *tituli* were applied directly over the old ones, while in others, new inscriptions were made above or below the original ones (T. Virsaladze, 2007, 102-103), and both inscriptions were left legible. Thus, several-line inscriptions, doubling each other, form rather unusual “recitative” *tituli*. In the representation of the Ecumenical Councils, the image of a visualized word with its accompanying inscriptions has a “double” meaning.

The murals in Gelati narthex also contain a relatively rare type of inscriptions, which we have named “psychological.” A compositionally accentuated scene of the Miracle of St.. Euphemia is supplied with a long, eight-line inscription providing a detailed description of the history of the miracle: “in the church of the Saint and honorable martyr Euphemia ... the Council of Chalcedon was convoked ... to convince ... let us put the scroll on the breast of the Saint and Martyr ... and she will take it in her hands and give it to us ... and she took it and put it into the hands of the king and king gave it with faith ... and the orthodox ... are blessed ...”

The character of this inscription is remarkable: at the beginning, the descriptive text presents the circumstances under which the Council was convoked, while the third line opens with the statement made by a bishop in the direct speech “let us put the scroll on the breast.” The inclusion of a direct speech statement in this descriptive text gives a special implication to the image (R. Nelson, 1989, 143-157). As a result of this, the viewer appears to be physically involved in this event; it even sounds like “invitation” to the beholder to join in (E. Gedevanishvili, 2008, 13). Thus, thanks to these inscriptions, which provoke a mental participation of the beholder, the history of the Ecumenical Councils becomes a part of the present-day viewer’s/reader’s reality.

In Georgian mural painting, some examples can be found in which explanatory inscriptions acquire “psychological” connotations. In this respect, note-



Gelati. Murals of the katholicon narthex. Council at Chalcedon

worthy is the inscription of the Agony at Gethsemane in the murals of Betania and Timotesubani churches (both early 13th century), which reads: "The sleep of the disciples"; in Betania, this inscription is supplemented with another one, placed behind the kneeling Saviour – "Christ prays." If in Timotesubani, as noted by E. Privalova, the inscription accentuates the tranquil and quiet, somnolent serenity of the scene (E. Privalova, 1980, 66) introducing a particular emotional and psychological atmosphere in this most dramatic episode of the Passion cycle, then in Betania, inclusion of the second inscription actually lays stronger emphasis on the loneliness of the Saviour, "given up" by the disciples.

Medieval Georgian mural painting abounds in inscriptions which stress theological emphases within the murals' iconographic programmes. To this group belong *tituli* accompanying individual images, as well as liturgical texts, quotations or periphrases of Holy Scripture (texts on the scrolls of Prophets and Holy Bishops, inscriptions on the chancel arches), included in the mural decorations; the unity of these inscriptions unfolds the dogmatic and symbolic meaning of the murals.

Such inscriptions are found from quite an early period in Georgia. A remarkable example is the chancel painting in the Church of the Holy Cross, Telovani, where the Historic Theophany is arranged in two tiers; in the sequence of the Holy Apostles, the traditional figure of the Virgin is replaced by the image of the Mandylion. The latter is accompanied by an explana-

tory inscription – "The Holy Face of the Lord," which emphasizes the Incarnation dogma in the image of this great Christian relic. Respectively, replacing the Virgin with the "icon" of the Incarnation emphasizes a major concept of the iconographic program – the hypostatic unity of the Divine and Human Natures in Christ, which is indicated by the depiction of two images of the Saviour within a single composition – Christ Pantocrator surrounded by the Angels and the Holy Face.

Another exceptional case is the Tetri Udabno murals (7th-8th century), in Davit Gareji. The conch bears a radiant Cross inscribed in a mandorla within the Paradise. The inscription on the upper arm of the Cross – "Jesus of Nazareth King of Jews" – presents it as a Calvary Cross. The theme of Sacrifice is echoed by the Presentation at the Temple depicted on the apse wall, beneath the Cross. As underlined by Z. Skhirtladze, major emphasis here is laid on the cosmic triumph of the Victorious Cross (Z. Skhirtladze, 1999, 154). However, at the same time, within the general triumphal aspect, these murals imply accentuation of the grandeur of Redeeming Sacrifice of the Incarnate Lord, who had taken His Passion on the Cross – Calvary Cross in the conch and the Incarnation-alluding "icon" of Presentation at the Temple on the apse wall.



Gelati. Murals of the katholicon narthex. Miracle of St.. Euphemia



Betania Murals. Agony at Gethsemane

Murals in the Sabereebi church No 7 in Davit Gareji (10th century) also provide a most noteworthy case for the subject under discussion. The chancel bears a Historic Theophany, in the north cross-arm a maximally extended Crucifixion scene is unfolded, representing a detailed illustration of almost every paragraph of the Gospel text, additionally “articulated” in the accompanying inscriptions; the Triumphant Cross is depicted in the dome.

The inscription on the open Gospel of the Saviour – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God”(John, 1:1);⁴ is perceived as a major “key” of the programme. The text taken

from the Gospel of St John is centred on Logos, the same Son of God, Who had brought Salvation to the mankind through his Crucifixion (this is visualized in the north cross-arm), ascended into Heaven and shall come again with glory (chancel), while the entire concept finds its culmination in the Triumphant Cross (dome) – the most sacred sign-symbol, uniting Passion and Eternal Glory.

It is remarkable that the tri-lingual (Georgian, Greek and Armenian) inscriptions are included in the murals. The inscriptions are especially abundant in the Crucifixion, in which Armenian inscriptions are particularly long; they provide additional verbal explanations to the visual presentation of the Gospel story. In this multi-component scene not a single element is left without a written explication, e.g., around the Crucified Saviour the following can be read: 1. “and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost”(John, 19:30); 2. “and gave Him to drink a sponge put on a reed [and] filled with vinegar mixed with the gall”;⁵ 3. “Lord, remember me in Thy kingdom”;⁶ at the Virgin and St John: “behold, mother, thy son”; “behold son, thy mother”;⁷ at the maids of Jerusalem: “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves”(Luke, 23:28); at the temple of Jerusalem: “and the vail of the temple was rent”;⁸ and at the personification of the sun: “and the sun was darkened”(Luke, 23:45), etc.

It is noteworthy that such detailed explications are seen in the Crucifixion scene and are made in Armenian. It might seem that the major concern, or even the only impetus, of the painter writing these inscriptions was to ensure that no minute nuance of the meaning of this Passion scene, so thoroughly detailed, would skip the beholder’s eye; that verbal and visual forms, complementing one another, would present with utmost clarity and distinctness the martyrdom of the Incarnate God the Son on the Cross; as if one more proof of the diophysite doctrine is displayed for the non-Georgian worshipper. Accordingly, these murals and their narrative explanatory inscriptions, created during one of the periods of tensions in Georgian-Armenian dogmatic-ecclesiastical controversies, are perceived as a kind of “manifest” of Orthodoxy.

Finally, it can also be stated that the chronology of the above quoted groups is quite vast and the mode of their application is very diverse: in some cases, we have inscriptions with only one of the mentioned "functions," while in others the co-existence of several "functional" groups can be ascertained.

Notes

1 The international conference specially dedicated to the interrelation of the text and image was recently held in Basel: *Bild &Text, Text & Bild im Mittelalter, Abstracts*, Basel 2008; see also: *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, Cambridge University Press, 2007; B. Schellewald, *Stille Predigten, Das Verhältnis von Bild und Text in der spätbyzantinischen Wandmalerei. Lesbarkeit der Kunst*, Berlin, 1992; L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium: Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; R. Nelson, *The Discourse of Icons, Then and Now*, *Art History*, Vol. 12, No 2, 1989. pp. 143-157;

2 At present, the last 3 lines of the inscription are no longer legible.

3 The second line is illegible at present.

4 all quotations from the Gospel are given according to the authorized (King James) version

5 Periphrasis of the Gospel text; cf.: Matthew, 27:48; Mark, 15:36; John, 19:29

6 Periphrasis of the Gospel text; cf.: Luke, 23:42

7 Slightly altered Gospel text; cf.: John, 19:26-27

8 Periphrasis of the Gospel text; cf.: Matthew, 27:51; Mark, 15:16; Luke, 23:45

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RUSTAVELI AS EPIC AND LYRIC POET AND HIS DIVERSE ILLUMINATORS AND ILLUSTRATORS

There are recognizable characteristics that we associate with Western epic narratives and the heroes that form their centerpieces. An epic hero is typically like the rest of us and yet not: he is stronger or faster or braver and engages in adventures and quests that at best we might dream of but could never undertake. Invariably there is at least one major obstruction in the path of the success of the adventure, divinely-fashioned or otherwise.

The prize that he seeks may be as abstract and profound as finding out who he truly *is*, or as extraordinary as finding the secret of immortality. Moreover, the hero in his quest represents not only himself but the ideals and attributes most honored by the culture or country from which he derives.

An epic hero almost always has a subordinate, a side-kick who shares his adventures - and who may end up perishing. He often possesses a distinctive, identifying mark, or some flaw that will be his own eventual undoing. It is the struggle to exercise the heroic features before succumbing to the flaw that so often imbues the hero with a noble and tragic aura.

A sense of paradox - of possessing unique and grand capabilities but being doomed by an essential flaw - often extends from the nature of the hero to the nature of the narrative of which he is the center. Paradox will include tension between a sense of free will and a sense of fate and destiny as forces that override free will, as well as between strife and love. The handling of this last theme connects epic literature to lyric poetry, the subject of which is often love.¹

* * * * *

We may see these elements in the epic narratives pertaining to Gilgamesh, Moses, Achilles, Odysseus, Aeneas, Oedipus and Siegfried, to name a few.

They are expressed in unique ways in *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. Shota Rustaveli's masterpiece is both an epic poem with its narration of a heroic quest accomplished by a figure possessed of martial skills beyond the most outstanding norm, and a lyric poem, the subject of which is love.

Rustaveli tells the tale, in fact, of not one, but two heroes, not one quest, but two - the first of which is the quest of the one hero² for the other.³ Each of them has a primary relationship with a woman - it is the quest for Nestan-Darejan, the missing beloved of Tariel that shapes the second quest in which both heroes share.

The two share, one might say, a subordinate colleague in the person of the third hero (Nuradin Pridon) who joins them on that second, ultimate quest,⁴ and who, by chance (or fate, or thanks to God) is able to offer Tariel updated news regarding his lost love.⁵ In the case of Tariel one might argue, further, that he shares a subordinate colleague - Asmat: a woman, no less! - with the lost love whom he pursues, since Asmat was the personal servant and companion of Nestan-Darejan.

Thus we read the story of the quest of Avtandil for the knight of the poem's title, whose amazing prowess and swift disappearance have provoked the distress of Rostevan, king of the Arabs. Of equal stature is the story that interweaves that of Avtandil's quest, of his love affair with Rostevan's daughter, Tinatin. His heroic quest is in part impelled by his desire to prove himself worthy of her hand in marriage - she is the one who, indeed, sends him on his quest.⁶ After wandering to the farthest edge of his world,⁷ Avtandil finally finds Tariel. His discovery is facilitated, as if by an act of fate or God, by encountering six horsemen, "three brothers... lords of a fortified city" in "the far realm of Cathay"⁸ who had recently encountered Tariel.

The achieving of Avtandil's epic goal - tracking down the elusive knight in the panther's skin, himself as dangerous and exquisite and difficult to track as a panther - leads, however, not simply to a return home with his prize (the knight himself, or at least the knowledge of who the mystifying knight *is*), but to a second quest. The quest to locate Tariel proves to have been an extended prelude for the "real" quest: the search

for Tariel's lost love, Nestan-Darejan. Moreover, sandwiched between these two quests is an extended digression: the love-story of Tariel and Nestan-Darejan, the very telling of which causes Tariel to swoon again and again - and embedded within which are myriad interweaves of the ideas of love and strife.⁹

Within this long love story we learn that, as Tariel's sudden flight from the Arab kingdom of Rostevan had led to the first quest, Nestan-Darejan's sudden disappearance - she was kidnapped - had led Tariel to search for her, leading him to Rostevan's kingdom. This led to Avtandil's search for him, to their eventual friendship and to undertaking together the second quest.¹⁰ In the complex intertwining of love and strife and the interweave of tales and plots - and the unasked question of the role of fate or God or mere chance in fashioning that interweave - this epic, lyric poem is unrivaled.

There is yet more to that complexity. For in the first place, it is in the course of the second quest, that carries Tariel and Avtandil yet further beyond the edge of their world, that they encounter the knight Nuradin Pridon, a hero in his own right,¹¹ to join the first two in their search for Nestan-Darejan. There is a range of subplots, substories, adventures and tales within adventures and tales that spin the epic slowly but surely to its remarkably happy ending, in which both pairs of lovers are united - Avtandil and Tinitan, Tariel and Nestan-Darejan - to live happily ever after in their respective Arabian and Indian kingdoms.

This marks another distinction between Rustaveli's epic and most other epic narratives. With the arguable exception of Odysseus, few epic heroes and their narratives in the Western tradition end up happily, or with a sense of fulfilled resolution. Indeed, very little of ancient and medieval European *lyric* poetry offers as happy a conclusion to its address of love as does Rustaveli in his *epic* poem. So that there is something that bespeaks an awareness of and affection for the happy endings that are part of a non-European tradition - most apparently the Islamic prose epic tradition encapsulated in the *Thousand and One Nights*. There is something idealizing here - something *Georgian*, that synthesizes east and west, Europe and Asia, and that persists in embracing the conviction that, where

purity of spirit and serious effort are combined, the results will ultimately turn out positive.

There is also a sense of generosity toward one's enemies that characterizes both heroes and the overall narrative that is typically Georgian and broader than the occasional sense of respect of a worthy and noble opponent that one finds in other epic narratives. Even in his side-tale, told to Avtandil, that includes his defeat of the Khatavians, whose leader, Ramaz, had been so ignobly underhanded in his attempt to defeat him, Tariel "commended and praised [Ramaz]"¹² and advised his king, Parsadan, to forgive King Ramaz: "Since God forgives the sinner, Be, O Great King, as merciful to him who is humbled before you."¹³ Thus the national ethos that Tariel represents is not confined to his prowess with spear and sword but includes his generosity of mind and spirit.

The reference to God reminds us that both Avtandil and Tariel do their work without the benefit of divine intervention of the sort that typically occasions the successes of other epic heroes, nor is there even the suggestion that either of them possesses



Fig 1: Mamuka Tavakarashvili: King Rostevan and Avtandil Hunting. 1646. Korneli Kekelidze Insitutute of Manscripts, Tbilisi.



Fig 2: Anonymous: Illuminated Manuscript Page from *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. 1680. Korneli Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts; IM H-54.

a divine connection.¹⁴ Indeed, one of the odder elements of Rustaveli's poem is the absolute absence of the Christian God as a personage in the poem.¹⁵ The poet mainly focuses, both for himself and his heroes, on human aspiration and capacity for success and fulfillment, rather than on glorifying God - as such, offering, as a highlight of the "Oriental Renaissance" an anticipation of the humanism that will characterize the "Western Renaissance" centuries later.

At the inception of his work, he does invoke the all-good God, but it is to assist him less in shaping a more effective poem, (as it is in Homer, Virgil and others), than against the wiles of Satan's evil.¹⁶ God is invoked at other junctures,¹⁷ and of course, part of the foundation of the poem is the importance of believing in a God who is good, and who is ultimately logical and the master of events, as when Pridon encourages Tariel to anticipate success in his quest, for "God will grant us His mercy, thunder it down from heaven. He will turn your grief into joy; no more will we grieve and suffer";¹⁸ and when Avtandil confidently asserts to Tariel that they will find Nestan-Darejan, for "why did

the Lord create you, if He wished to part you forever? Why should He wish to embitter your life with unending sorrows?"¹⁹

But such references to God are both off-handed even when passionate, in terms of the overall flow of the narrative - and by no means specifically Christian.²⁰ When Rustaveli's heroes briefly have virtually supernatural powers at their disposal at crucial moments (as in their dealings with bad *kaji* - evil sorcerers/demons) this is not through the invocation or apparent presence of the Christian God. Indeed, the reality of pagan-reminiscent belief systems is never more present than when the seven planets and their associated deities from within the pagan worldview are fervently invoked by Avtandil.²¹ This "astrological" thinking is at least heretical if not entirely sacrilegious²² in manifesting reliance on powers other than the Triune God to assist humans.

But the heroes are not Christian at all: they are *Muslim*. We infer this not only because the poet informs us at the outset that he has drawn his work from what was originally a Persian tale,²³ and because his heroes come from Arabia and India, Muslim and Muslim-Hindu lands - but at one point the Qur'an is specifically referenced as lying beside Nestan-Darejan.²⁴ In other words, he has found his heroes in the very lands whose form of faith is, at the time of the poet's life and writing, most powerfully antithetical to that of the Gospels - and in the very era, in which the poet's homeland, Georgia, is both in a state of conflict with the Seljuk Turks and, more fundamentally, on the geographic vanguard of the confrontation between Christendom and the Dar al-Islam.²⁵ He has offered them as paragons of martial skill and loving, considerate human beings, instead of taking what *could* have been his course: to render them as chivalric *Christian* warriors engaged *against* Muslim infidels.

This, too, may be ascribed to the historical Georgian national ethos. Just as the early seventh-century split with the Armenian Evangelical Church did not prevent an Armenian church from being built in the heart of old Tbilisi, right nearby a Georgian Orthodox church; and just as a synagogue nestles in the same neighborhood, as the Jewish community has thrived in Georgia across centuries of intolerance elsewhere

throughout Christendom; so a mosque is part of the same urban complex. Indeed, when King David the Builder drove the Seljuk Muslims out of Georgia in the early twelfth century, Islam itself was neither driven away nor persecuted. Tariel does speak at one point of some of the mullahs reading the Qur'an over him as raving - but that is merely symptomatic of Rustaveli's humanistic amusement over any and all religious certainty. Like his nation, he is all-embracing, simultaneously serious and skeptical about spirituality.

Like many epic and lyric poets, Rustaveli may be seen as presenting himself through the surrogate of his hero - or in his case, heroes. Conversely, David the Builder's descendant, Queen Tamar, is not only the patron to whom the poem is dedicated,²⁶ but is clearly the model and alter ego for the heroic women in his narrative. If we learn for the first time in quatrain 648 the reason for the panther's skin that Tariel wears - "Since a beautiful panther is portrayed to me as her [Nestan-Darejan's] image, therefore I love its skin which I keep with me as a garment" - we also recall how Queen Tamar was referred to in the prologue as "a beautiful merciless panther."²⁷ This reference forges a direct link between Queen Tamar and Nestan-Darejan as between her and Tariel, the panther-like object of Avtandil's initial quest.²⁸

As Tariel is conceptually multi-valent, so, too, the key women in the poem are three-dimensional. Rustaveli's is a modernist mind! The poet both reflects the historical reality of his era for Georgia, led by a Queen who culminates a golden age set in motion by David the Builder, and forges his own epic path in his complex shifts in gender "roles." By comparison, not only are the females in most Western epic narratives almost incidental - certainly with respect to their action - to events. But the exception, Sophocles' *Antigone*, offers a tragic conclusion in large part *because*, as a young woman, she cannot be taken seriously by the insecure king Creon of Thebes.²⁹

* * * * *

If Rustaveli's poem offers both uniquely Georgian elements and connections to diverse aspects of the epic and lyric poetic traditions, then it should



Fig 3: Anonymous: "Avtandil Roasting a Pig." 17th-18th century. Korneli Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts; IM S-5006.

not surprise us to find the visual accompaniments to his text - illuminations and illustrations - similarly connected to other visual traditions while offering uniquely Georgian qualities. Secular subjects begin to appear in the Georgian manuscript tradition by the sixteenth century.³⁰ Most copies of *The Knight* date from the seventeenth century or later - into the twentieth century.

Thus, for example, a miniature by Mamuka Tavakarashvili from a 1646 manuscript depicts King Rostevan, Avtandil and their attendants hunting. On the one hand we recognize the flat, vertical perspective with stylized landscape elements and a sky that is hardly a sky that developed in Safavid Persian and Ottoman Turkish art of the period. On the other, we note here, (as elsewhere), a particularly Georgian taste for red (*singuri*) which we may trace all the way back to antiquity [fig 1].³¹

We may also note that King Rostevan is identified (aside from the obviousness of white beard and thus older age than young Avtandil) by headgear that had long been associated with the Seljuk Turks



Fig 4: Sergo Kobuladze: "Tariel in the Heat of Battle." 1935-7.

in Georgian art. In the unusual visual direction taken by Georgian icons depicting St. George, often instead of the dragon, a thusly attired figure is shown being slain. Such a figure represents the Roman emperor Diocletian who is traditionally said to have martyred St. George and is thus the personification of evil - but depicted as a Turk, and thus, in effect, a Muslim.³² The fact that Rostevan is similarly depicted in Tavakarashvili's illumination reminds us of the sympathetic view that Rustaveli offers of his Muslim protagonists.

The artist has also added a marvelous detail: slinking, as it were, around the bend of a hilltop is a spotted leopard - a panther. Rather than directly showing Tariel sitting weeping next to his black steed,³³ the eponymous hero of the epic is symbolized by the animal that is not only *his* stand-in but that of the lady love the loss of whom has set him weeping and wandering the earth in search of her. The panther's image also reminds us of how lively the Georgian interest always was in depicting varied *animalia*, whether in metals³⁴ or in manuscripts such as the thirteenth-cen-

tury Psalter (with its extensive use of *singuri*), IM H-75 or, differently, in the ca 1680 manuscript of Rustaveli's poem, IM H-54 [fig 2].

In this last, the manuscript³⁵ is framed - the three lines of framing are gold, red and black, thus echoing the red and black of the text and the gold of the wide-spaced border decoration. The frame colors thus directly if subtly link the text to its decoration. For the latter, all in gilt inlay - *okromelani* - offers a breathtaking array of beasts, from hares and gazelles to tigers, rhinoceri and elephants. These are afloat in a lively sea of vegetal and floral elements. No two pages of the manuscript decoration are identical. The use of *okromelani* creates a scintillating sense of both light and lightness.

The renowned anonymously created illuminations from IM S-5006, from the late 17th-early 18th centuries, are even more distinctly Safavid in inspiration than the earlier work by Tavakrashvili, with characters exhibiting wider faces and more oriental-looking eyes [fig 3]. We see this in the scene in which Avtandil is shown roasting what appears to be a pig.³⁶ If I am reading this detail correctly as a pig, the lapse in understanding - that the epic's Muslim characters would *never* consume pork - may be understood in several ways. It could be the artist's astute *illumination - bringing to light*, which is, after all, what that term means - of Rustaveli's clear preference for human nobility over specific religious tenets. It could be an analogous "slip" to that found in other illuminations accompanying this manuscript, exhibiting a variety of Georgian elements, such as when Avtandil is shown writing a letter from left to write (as one would in Georgian) rather than right to left (as one would in Persian or Arabic).

It could simply reflect the fact that such an act - of consuming pork - occasionally appears even in Ottoman Turkish illuminations. And indeed, if the facial features of Avtandil are distinctly Persian, the mode of representing figures coming over the hill with a flat lack of size perspective but with a distinct layering perspective - partially *behind* the hill and partially *behind* each other - is distinctly Ottoman. This image is, in any case, a particularly apt instance of what both the poem and Georgian culture continuously do: draw

simultaneously from Georgian and other cultures for which it has offered such an important crossroads, creating something distinctive.

Nor, where *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and its illuminators and illustrators are concerned, does this end with the end of traditional manuscript decoration. On the contrary. Sergo Kobuladze, for example produced illustrations for Rustaveli's epic in 1935-7.³⁷ In one of these Tariel surges into battle, his curved sword a slash of light against the dark power of his torso [fig 4]. The scene compresses dynamic action into a close-up of figures filling the frame and permitting the artist to exhibit his skill in emulating the Italian Baroque painters with the drama of *chiaroscuro* - light and shadow - to underscore the drama of the moment. Thus Kobuladze has further expanded the traditional Georgian synthesis of its own identity with influences from the world around it.

So, too, Levan Tsutskiridze (b. 1926), in his 1966 illustrations for Rustaveli's poem - in one of which we recognize Tariel, sitting on the ground, "who with head bent low, seemed overwhelmed with his sorrow",³⁸ holding the whip with which he would, with hardly a thought, wound and slay the finest among King Rostevan's knights who approached and attempted to seize him,³⁹ as his horse sits nearby - his upward-thrusting head in both sympathy and counterpoint to the lowered visage of Tariel [fig 5]. The space in which they are placed is deliberately vague, almost abstract - even the panther's skin is only hinted at - the entire scene dominated by an enormous moon.⁴⁰

The composition suggests a fresco with its simple lines, its still calmness,⁴¹ its visual ascent from human figure to equine figure to moon, and its stippled, subtle contours and colors. Tsutskiridze has translated a monumental medium into a more miniature mode in order to capture a detail from Rustaveli's monumental poem of consistently careful miniature details - and continuing a splendid Georgian tradition of combining artistic elements from diverse sensibilities in order to create unique and enduring works of art.



Fig 5: Levan Tsutskiridze: "Tariel at Rest." 1966.

Notes:

- 1 Indeed, it is often *troubled* love. One thinks, in this regard, particularly of Roman lyric, from Catullus to Propertius.
- 2 Avtandil, who is described, in quatrain 57 "as lithe as a panther."
- 3 Tariel, who is the "knight in the panther's skin."
- 4 Once he has accomplished his own small quest, with Tariel's help, of avenging an act of familial treachery.
- 5 Quatrains 614-20.
- 6 Quatrains 127-32.
- 7 See quatrains 181-2.
- 8 Quatrain 196.
- 9 Thus Nestan-Darejan, the embodiment of *love*, had instructed Tariel to "go and wage *war* with the enemy, prove yourself truly a hero" (quatrain 372) and had reminded him that "love has us both in her net" while commanding him, out of love, to "...go now, attack the Khatavians, invade their marches and seize them..." (quatrains 406-7).
- 10 Which theretofore had been Tariel's (and Asmat's) search alone.
- 11 Yet in the context of the overall tale, he is a subordinate colleague to both Avtandil and Tariel (as perhaps Avtandil would be regarded as subordinate to Tariel).
- 12 Quatrain 461.
- 13 Quatrain 463.
- 14 Thus the warriors Achilles and Aeneas have divine mothers; the warrior-adventurer Odysseus has the constant support of Athena; the warrior Siegfried is constantly ad-

vised by Odin and bathes in the blood of the dragon, Fafnir, making him invulnerable; Moses is in constant conversation with God. Even Oedipus, an emphatically tragic, as opposed to epic, hero, gains the prize of painful self-knowledge in part through the agency of the divinely-connected seer, Teiresias.

15 This is odd, that is, if one assumes, as most readers and interpreters naturally do, that Rustaveli is himself a Christian.

16 Quatrains 1-2, 6.

17 For example, in quatrains 188 and 209-10.

18 Quatrain 625.

19 Quatrain 919.

20 Neither the Trinity nor the Virgin Mother is ever invoked.

21 Quatrains 946-53.

22 From a traditional medieval Christina viewpoint.

23 This is in quatrain 9, although such a source has never actually been identified, so it may in any case have been simply a poetic conceit.

24 Quatrain 523.

25 Rustaveli lived during the era of the Crusades.

26 She was also, the object, apparently, of Rustaveli's passionate devotion, who was her royal treasurer.

27 Quatrain 19.

28 That is, Tariel waits in his cave twice, as Avtandil (also described as panther-like, we recall) sets forth - once to return, briefly to Rostevan and Tinatin; once to set out alone in search of Nestar-Darejan on Tariel's behalf. Thus Tariel becomes, in those episodes, like the maiden waiting at home: he who is the hero of heroes *waits* for the return of the hero Avtandil.

29 Antigone is Oedipus' loyal daughter. In the Sophoclean play named for her, she witnesses the deaths of her brothers at each other's hands and (for reasons beyond this discussion) commits suicide.

30 That manuscript tradition is primarily ecclesiastical in subject matter from the fifth through the fifteenth centuries.

31 The Roman writer, Pliny the Elder, referred in the first century to *kolkheti*, a reddish ore, among what he called the "seven renowned ores." The name derived from its place of origin: Colchis, the Greek and Roman name for western Georgia.

32 One can see this, for example, in the renowned tenth-eleventh-century icon from Tsvirmi-Tchobeni on display in the National Museum in Tbilisi.

33 As described in quatrain 83.

34 This, in a tradition extending back to the Early Bronze Age, from which we find extraordinarily crafted lions and panthers, bears and frogs, gazelles and stags, rams' heads and horses.

35 It is written in Mkhedruli script in single columns.

36 Albeit the scene seems to echo quatrains 831 and 937, in both of which the hero roasts a goat.

37 Sergo Kobuladze (1909-78) was a renowned artist

and teacher. He was rector of the Academy of Art in 1951-59 and was particularly known for his theatre set design and book illustrations.

38 Quatrain 85.

39 Quatrain 93.

40 So that either the artist has taken liberties with the quatrain that he illustrates, or he is illustrating any number of other moments when the hero - caught between the moments of intense actions that are his more frequent wont - waits for the results of others' (specifically Avtandil's) actions on his behalf.

41 And since Tariel is rarely still or calm, the artist has captured a rare moment.

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SECULAR TRENDS IN THE GEORGIAN CULTURE FROM THE PERIOD OF QUEENTAMAR AND THE CONTEMPORARY WALL PAINTING

In almost in every time and country the overall picture of cultural development comprises certain contrasting trends, sometimes hardly visible and more or less harmonized, but sometimes presenting quite dramatic confrontation.

In Georgian history, the reign of Queen Tamar (1184- 1212), a Golden Age of Georgian culture, is on the one hand characterized by an intensification of the secular spirit (even named the “Georgian Renaissance”), which is most fully reflected in Shota Rustaveli’s famous poem, *The Knight in the Panther Skin*¹, but on the other hand, the same epoch is characterized by promotion of the mystical teaching of St.. Dionysius the Areopagite, by the founding of remote and ascetic monasteries, the increasing role of the Church and its strong confrontation with heresies, etc. This ambivalence was reflected differently in different fields of art.

In this regard G. Chubinashvili remarked that 12th- to early 13th-century Georgian culture is named as the Rustaveli period, i.e., we name it after a work of literature, language, poetry, but not after other branches of art. He argues that other fields of culture didn’t reveal the same extensive adoption of the secular spirit. (G. Chubinashvili, 1936, 194).

Actually, secular literature indeed played an increased role in the life of Georgian society of that period and was more appreciated than earlier. It is noteworthy that the earliest preserved secular illuminated manuscript, an astronomical treatise, dates back to this same period.² (Sh. Amiranashvili, 1966, 28-29, ill. 56-60; G. Alibegashvili, 1979, 108-111).

It is obvious that our present knowledge is imperfect and based only on materials preserved by chance; moreover, we know almost nothing about the

secular art of this period, about painting in particular.³ All the same, the secular spirit and aspirations – “the turn toward the visual world” – are distinctly felt in the cultural life of that period (G. Chubinashvili, 1948, 55-56; E. Privalova, 1977, 149-152; L. Khuskivadze, 1990, 121-130; D. Tumanishvili, 2000, 144-145). The same is true for Byzantine culture as well, even in its earlier stages (A. P. Kazhdan, A. Wharton Epstein; 1985).

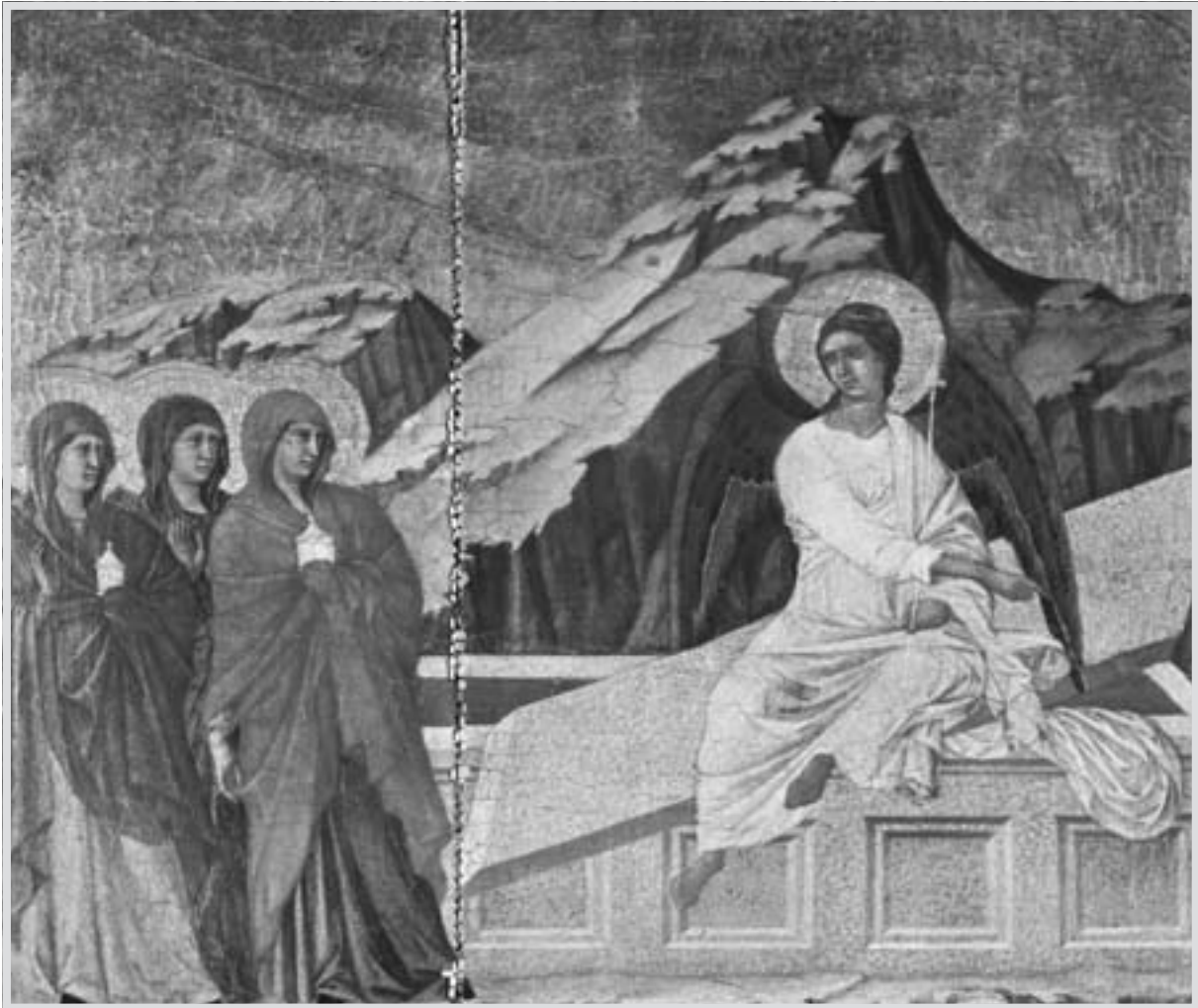
When one speaks about secular trends in a particular culture it usually implies that the culture has a Western European Renaissance-style world vision: terrestrial in its values, realistic in its manner of expression, with priority placed on earthly values and secular life, and hence, the prevalence of a realistic and representational manner of expression in art.⁴

It is true that occasionally the word “Renaissance” is used to indicate the acme of cultural development in the history of a particular culture (e.g., the Islamic Renaissance, (A. Metz, 1966), but mostly this term is used (consciously or unconsciously) to indicate West European Renaissance culture, hence, the increase of secular spirit, realistic forms of expression, etc.

The period of Queen Tamar’s reign was named the “Georgian Renaissance” by Shalva Nutsubidze, a famous Georgian philosopher, (Sh. Nutsubidze, 1976; Sh. Nutsubidze, 1947) and this assumption has been shared by many Georgian and foreign scholars as well. (M. Makharadze, 2003; A. Losev, 1991). However Sh. Nutsubidze does not equate it with the Western European cultural phenomenon. He argues, that the “Georgian Renaissance” was based on Neo-Platonic teaching and the *Corpus Areopagiticus* and that these have been revived in Rustaveli’s poem, and this was the sign of “Renaissance” in this period. (Sh. Nutsubidze, 1976. 165; 183-188).

However, other scholars argue that the teaching of St.. Dionysius the Areopagite with its hierarchical and mystical character is the very opposite of the Renaissance world-vision and ideals (K. Kekelidze, 1957, 37; M. Bakhtin, 1956, 65, 395, 435).

Indeed, the Eastern Christian world played a significant role in formation of the Western European Renaissance, both in artistic forms and in thinking; but to develop truly realistic art it was necessary to possess a quite different mentality that seems to be immanent for the European way of thinking.⁵



Duccio, *The Myriphores at the Holy Sepulcher*, 1308-1311.

One of the main traits of the Renaissance world vision is declaring earthly reality as a value, with appreciation of physical and terrestrial beauty, humanism and individuality, bringing man into the foreground and placing him at the center of the universe (M. Makharadze, 2003, 15)

All these are the aspects of a world vision. And indeed there is a significant difference in this regard between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox Churches. A change of two words in the *Credo* caused an essential distinction between the Churches not only from a theological, but also from the artistic point of view (L. Uspenski, 1989, 448-468; 293, 190).

The Western Church made it possible to create a material and realistic image of the Godhead (A. Grabar, 1984, 23), and the difference lies in just this. It is essential, that although the Orthodox church did not

officially ban realistic images (at least, no document to this effect has been preserved), there existed a kind of "self-prohibition," something like an internal "categorical imperative" that was quite natural for artists, commissioners of art, and the public. This was a guarantee of the "correctness" of any images.

To put it plainly, the Western Catholic Church turned toward the earthly world and sought the Divine in terrestrial and material forms. In contrast, the Orthodox Church was still gazing toward Heaven and perceived mankind and our world through the Godhead, as its creation, imbued and transformed by Heavenly Grace (L. Uspenski, 1989; 45-50). In the 12th and especially in the 13th century, in the art of the Orthodox Church, and in Georgian art as well, the highlighting of the human aspects is distinctly visible. However, this is not the sign or result of a "Renaissance"

sance world-view," as in Italian culture, where this was the outcome of a turn toward mankind, which became the measure of everything.

In Orthodox art this was the reflection of the strong anti-heresy movement, especially opposing the Monophysite heresy that denied Christ's human nature; hence, human aspects were purposefully highlighted in every possible way, including the artistic rendering as well (H. Maguire, 1996, 48-99).

This resulted in more "fleshy" figures, more emotional expression, an accent on the passions, etc. (A. Okropiridze, 2005, 23-29)

In any case, individuality as a value is not to be found in this cultural milieu. All the same, we can speak only about a deeper mystical and more personal contact with God, and not about bringing personal individuality into the foreground.

The surviving art reflects a somewhat ambivalent psychology of the people of this period – on one hand, a strengthened sense of the mystical perception of God and on the other hand a concurrent appreciation and valuing of earthly delights. Nonetheless, for those people the "earth" was a creation of God, enlightened by His Grace. Indeed, when we review the programs of the wall paintings from this period, we notice the stress on the triumph of Orthodoxy and the denunciation of heresies. Moreover, these paintings adorn the walls of the remote and ascetic monasteries, like David-Gareji and others. There is hardly any trace of material solidity and realistic forms.

Georgian art historians, while discussing the art of the Tamaran period, highlight the slight shift toward "secular" character and compare these works of art with those of the Duecento period in Italy (G. Chubinashvili, 1948, 55-66; D. Tumanishvili, 2000, 142-143; A. Volskaia, 1974, 150) The latter, nonetheless, are also still within the Byzantine tradition. However, even though comparable, scholars do not presume them to be similar in concept and approach with Italian proto-Renaissance paintings – they speak only about faint associations and external similarity, but not essential similitude (L. Khuskivadze, 1990, 124).

It is interesting to compare two works of art on one and the same subject, namely, Duccio's *The Myrophores at the Tomb* and the wall painting in the St... Nicholas church in Kintsvisi. Although Duccio is still

working in the traditions of the *maniera greca*, the representation clearly reveals solidity, three-dimensional structure, materiality and other signs of tangible and perceptual approach.

On one hand, in Duccio's work the influence of the *maniera greca* is still rather strong:⁶ a golden background and haloes, the specific shape of the hills, garments, etc. On the other hand, the sarcophagus is definitely a three-dimensional and solid object, rendered with the light and shadow. It is a concrete object in concrete three-dimensional space – it is definitely standing on the earth. The figure of angel, though



Kintsvisi, The church of St Nicholas, The Myrophores at the Holy Sepulchre; early 13th century

very light and softly modeled, in comparison with the Kintsvisi figure, is much more solid and concrete, each fold of the garments implies underneath a particular voluminous part of the body, the drawing of the garments is more “realistic” and differs from the flowing, spinning and rotating seen in the Kintsvisi painting – the drawing of garments in it is no more than a kind of ornamental design. The angel in Duccio’s picture really “sits” on the tomb and the figures of the Myrrophores really “stand” on the ground.

On other hand, if we compare Duccio’s picture with the work of Giotto, it will look much more “dematerialized.” It lacks the objective solidity of Giotto’s figures, their sense of volume, weight, roundness, etc. Giotto’s figures are even more different in concept from Kintsvisi than those in Duccio’s picture.

Do all these traits reveal themselves in Georgian painting of the period of Queen Tamar? Is it justified to speak about a renaissance in Georgian painting if this implies realistic terms of representation?

Separate signs of realistic rendering may be found in almost all works of art in all times, but the main thing is the artistic context of these signs, the world vision of the art in question, its aim, its conscious purpose, etc. For example, the proportions, movement, and gestures of the figures in the Daphni monastery mosaics (ca 1100), seem to be more natural and “classic” in comparison with the figures in Giotto’s works, which look more awkward, more “doll-like.” But these “dolls” have definite volume, weight, roundness and solidity, and all these attest to a new world vision, to a new, realistic approach to representation (Th. F. Mathews, 1998, 159-160; H. Maguire, 1998, 113.)

If we review the examples of wall painting from the period of Queen Tamar (the murals of Vardzia, Betania, Kintsvisi, Timotesubani, and Natlismtsemeli churches), we do not see the same features, although at first glance it may appear that some kind of “secular” air imbued these images: there are more historical portraits; the figures are more emotional and more moving; the modeling is softer and based on light and shadow; the overall rendering is more elegant and pretty, the proportions more correct, the drawing more plastic, the background setting more elaborated and the narrative character more highlighted; with a

lot of beautiful blossoming trees and flowers.

But actually the overall impression is of more “weightlessness,” lightness, incorporeality, especially if compared with more statuesque and strongly modeled figures with strong black plastic outlines in the 11th-century paintings in Sioni church at Ateni.

As for decorative elements like the wonderful cornflowers on the green earth in the Vardzia painting, or the white-and-blue blossoming bushes in Bertubani, or the flaming red color of the pomegranates in Timotesubani – all these, together with the white color of the earth in most of these paintings, is more than simple decoration and earthly beauty – it is to create an image of Heaven, of Paradise.

It is noteworthy that the plastic and spatial approach that is more appropriate for Renaissance-type of art revealed itself in Georgian art much earlier, in the late 10th-early 11th centuries (T. Virsaladze, 1963, 217, 255). Consider the façade reliefs of Oshki and Khakhuli cathedrals, chancel barriers at Sapara and Shiomgvime; the chased icon of the Virgin Hodigertia at Zarzma, the chased pre-altar cross from Mestia; murals in the dome of Ishkhani cathedral, in Ateni church, the wall paintings of Tevdore in Upper Svanteti, etc. Afterwards the development emphasized the growth of the decorative approach and “dematerialization.”

Even in Byzantium, which was much more related to its antique past and where the “perpetual Renaissance” (O. Demus, 1970, 3-4) manifested itself and secular literature played a much more important role than in Georgia, painting did not tend to create images like Giotto’s – figures with concrete volume and weight installed in concrete three-dimensional space, in other words, Byzantine painting was essentially different as well.

In this regard the 13th-century wall painting in the St. Nicholas church at Kintsvisi may be indicative as one of the most important works of this period.

The theological program and the artistic form of these murals reveal noteworthy insight into the psychology of the people of that time. The program (M. Didebulidze, 2005, 116-146) highlights the importance and power of the Orthodox Church; it is directed against heretics, confirms the priority of Heaven over the terrestrial world, considers the main aim of hu-

man life to be Eucharistic union with Christ, and man's liberation from the flesh and earthly desires and aspirations. All these elements are also demonstrated through the artistic rendering: everything is very dematerialized, the lines are thin and light, the drawing is curvilinear and floating, although plastically enclosing the figures, but all the same light and weightless and unsolid. The modeling is relevant to this – with subtle gradations of transparent shade and light, and the background setting, unlike the contemporary Byzantine examples, is very conventional, less elaborated and flat, especially the background setting. Altogether, the Kintsvisi painting is one of the most “dematerialized” creations of this period, very spiritual and as if totally transformed into light, reflecting the words of Psalm 103: 2).

There is still one interesting aspect of the Kintsvisi program in regard to its presumably Renaissance character: Sh. Nutsbidze specially underlined the importance of heretical belief (e.g., Manichaeism) for establishing the Renaissance mentality, i.e., for liberation from clerical dogmas, etc. (Sh. Nutsbidze, 1976, 40, 56-67, 80). The Kintsvisi program, however, is imbued with an anti-heretical spirit that is clearly emphasized by representing St. Sylvester and St. Nicholas – two champions of the anti-Arianistic Nicæan Council – in the apse of Kintsvisi, church, right under the image of the Virgin. In just the same way, anti-Manichaeism shaped the program of the Betania church painting. (A. Okropiridze, 2005, 198).

Thus, although certain humanistic trends are definitely seen in literature and philosophy as a result of secularization of society's consciousness and mentality, this did not significantly influence church paintings, as happened in Italy, where the secular spirit totally transformed both the ecclesiastic and secular branches of art. This is exactly where the difference lies – no new artistic language and new artistic mentality developed in 12th- and 13th-century Georgian church painting (L. Khuskivadze, 1990, 125-128).

Given this finding, an assumption made by O. Piralishvili about the Renaissance character of the Kintsvisi murals (namely, that their character is equal to that of Italian Renaissance paintings and that they nearly precede Giotto's work (O. Piralishvili, 1979, 21-25), does not seem to be correct and does not corre-

spond to the nature of this particular painting.

The development of “renaissance”-type of art in Georgia was also hindered by age-old artistic traditions, dating back to the pre-Christian period. Indeed, Georgian art was “free” of the Hellenistic legacy (K. Machabeli, 2000, 154-163) that modeled the artistic language of Byzantine art and Western European art after the 12th century. From ancient times a specific language based on the conventional rendering of forms – more linear and flattened, less realistic – developed here and hence Georgian art has its own artistic language which can be attested even in 19th- and 20th-century culture.

Medieval Georgian art shares the character of the Eastern Christian art in general, but it clearly reveals its own artistic “dialect” and specific development, different from that in other countries, and this also relates to the issue of the “Renaissance” in the period of Queen Tamar.

Notes:

1 It is the different issue, what is more essential in Rustaveli's poem – adventure and love-affair or its theological aspects and Christian connotations (M. Nozadze, 1963). The spirit of poem is much more medievalistic, than renaissance (D. Tumanishvili, 2000, 142).

2 A-65 in the National Centre of Manuscripts.

3 Façade painting of the Lashtkhveri church in Upper Svaneti with the representation of the scene from the Georgian folklore (Amirani fighting devi), dated to the 15th c, doesn't reveal any difference in regard with style and artistic rendering with the ecclesiastic images inside the church.

4 V. Lazarev argues, that it is not correct and justified to equate every instance of cultural flourishing in different countries with the Western Renaissance proper (V. Lazarev, 1970, 171, 311)

5 In the western science and thinking Renaissance is considered mostly as a progressive phenomena, “better” than the Dark Middle Ages. E.g. O. Demus sees the main sense and the contribution of the Byzantine art in preserving and transmitting of the antique artistic language and world vision to the Western culture. Demus, O., 1970. 205-239). However, other scholars highlight the importance of the Byzantine art in its own right (R. Cormack, 1997, 17-18.) There are different assessments as well, that consider the west European renaissance as a negative event from the point of view of spirituality, moral etc. L. Karsavin thinks it was a real tragedy, individualistic tragedy of breaking away from the God. L. Karsavin, 1923, 271-73. N. Kakabadze also highlights negative aspects of Renaissance, that resulted in subsequent centuries in dramatic “restoration” of flesh, reducing the human being to the biological instincts and demands, turning him into the slave of these instincts and waking up a beast in him. (N. Kakabadze, 1985, 108).

6 O. Demus argues, that the art of Duccio and

Chimabue was inspired directly by the Byzantine art and that it was exactly where from they derived the knowledge and awareness of the antique art, that finally resulted in the new renaissance world vision and brought European art to realistic terms of representation. Demus, O., 1970; 205-207; 231-233).

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ESCHATOLOGY, IDEOLOGY, CONTEXTUALISATION: THE LAST JUDGEMENT IN TIMOTESUBANI, AKHTALA AND DEČANI

The miniature in manuscript Par. gr. 74, fol. 51v (11th century) and mosaic from the cathedral in Torcello (12th century) are most often cited as typical images of the Last Judgement in Byzantine art.¹ In both instances, this composite subject has been developed on one surface only, and divided into the right and left halves of the central axis, corresponding to the good or bad outcome of the Christ's Judgement. Consequently, its formal composition suggests to the beholder that Paradise and Hell will be more or less equally inhabited at the end of Time or, in other words, that mankind is as good as it is bad.

However, in Byzantium and the countries within its cultural orbit, the most numerous examples of the Last Judgement are monumental fresco images. In that medium, the situation is much more complex. Although there are Last Judgements depicted on one surface only, as is the case in Sopoćani² and Morača³ in Serbia, there are significantly more instances where almost the entire western bay of the naos or narthex were used, including different parts of the architectural setting: the vaults, side walls, pilasters, piers, arches and lunettes. That way, by changing the system of the placement of the motifs, from a complex but basically coherent image, easily perceived from a single point, the Last Judgement became an intriguing cycle, rich in nuances of meaning.

The standardized or iconographically defined images of Byzantine Last Judgement appear rather late, in the 11th century, as testified by the first precisely dated example in monumental painting in the church of Panagia ton Halkeon (1028/1029) in Thessaloniki.⁴ This subject has a long history in mural painting in Georgia, dating from 10-11th century. Several examples, rather badly damaged (with the exceptions

of Timotesubani and Akhtala),⁵ came to us in monuments built and decorated at the time of Queen Tamar (1184-1213).⁶ The series of late Byzantine Last Judgements can also be seen in Serbian monastery churches dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, with best preserved ones in Gračanica and Dečani.⁷ From the Byzantine capital, the only known one is the extraordinary example in the parecclesion of the monastery of Christ Chora.⁸

The main message of the Last Judgement image is didactical: it is a persuasive warning to believers to be just and obedient, which is why the punished sinners in Hell are just as important part of the subject as the rewarded righteous in Paradise. Among the Byzantine examples of the Last Judgement which have survived in relatively good condition, three of them could be regarded as exceptions in terms of the intensity of their positive general statement: Timotesubani (1205-1215), Akhtala (1205-1216) and Dečani (before 1348). In these churches, in contrast to the majority of known examples, the Last Judgement is conceived as a declarative optimistic vision. In the Eastern Christian religious visual arts, obliged to teach believers the true faith and its ethics, this iconographical concept is unique.⁹ Yet, paradoxically, it actually mirrors the typical feature of Eastern Christian eschatology which interprets sin as sickness which should be cured, and not punished.¹⁰

Consequently, it is the purpose of this paper to examine the reasons which might have inspired the exceptionally strong eschatological optimism in these three Last Judgement scenes. Although all three cycles have been published and interpreted, a brief description is needed as a quick reminder.

TIMOTESUBANI

The central part of the western bay in the naos is covered with episodes from the Last Judgement, the most complex and best preserved example in Georgian medieval art (fig. 1).¹¹ On the western wall, unusually, only two motifs are depicted: the Deesis and the Paradise. The monumental Deesis is surrounded by the Virgin and John the Baptist, a suite of angels and part of the apostolic tribunal which continues on the side walls.¹² The groups of righteous, seriously



Timotesubani, The Last Judgement, drawing (after E. Privalova)

damaged, are depicted on the southern wall. Christ, Ancient of Days, is sitting on the throne, spreading his arms, beckoning to the righteous and rejecting the sinful. There is no Fiery River under Christ's throne.

At the entrance to the western bay, at the lowest part of the south-west pilaster on its southern side, the prophet Daniel is standing with an unfolded scroll, quoting the verse of his vision of the Judgement (7, 9). The close liaison between the figure of the prophet and the iconography of the subject can be recognized in the choice of Christ type as Ancient of Days, as described in the book of the prophet Daniel and quoted in the unravelled scroll.³³ On the pilaster above the figure of the prophet Daniel and the triangular wall surface above the arch leading to the side bay are episodes of the resurrection.

On the northern wall, badly damaged in the upper part, behind the apostolic tribunal, are presentations of the episodes of Hell. Among the sinners in the River of Fire are representatives of various social or religious groups, as usual: the king and the queen, the monk, the Muslim, and others. The episodes from Hell continue on the southern side of the north-western pilaster. The personification of Hades in the lowest register of the pilaster was the first image to be seen by the beholder who entered the church from the south entrance. It has been overpainted by a more suitable

Mandilion.²⁴ In order to be closer to the viewer, the Weighing of Souls is painted separately from the Last Judgement, in the lowest register of the intrados of the arch leading to the northern nave. The pan with the good deeds outweighs that with the bad ones, as is the case in Akhtala and Dečani.



Timotesubani, Paradise, Hetoimasia, detail (photo by A. Davidov Temerinski)

The culmination of the expectations and the promises to humankind illustrates Paradise, a beautiful, celestial garden, covering a surface of 20m², never seen before in Byzantine monumental art, nor in the countries within its cultural orbit.¹⁵ The Hetoimasia, with two archangels flanking it, and Adam and Eve, prostrated in front of it - included in the central axis of the composition - gives the representation of Paradise a unique and significant additional layer of meaning (fig. 2). The instruments of Passion placed as usual on the Prepared Throne, are a strong reminder of Christ's sacrifice as the precondition for a blessed eternal life. The standard Paradise motifs are divided into two groups: to the left of the Hetoimasia are the Penitent robber and the Gates of Paradise, and to the right are the Virgin enthroned between two archangels and the Bosom of Abraham.

There is no data about the construction or decoration of the church in the written sources nor on the building itself, just as there are no preserved portraits of the donors.¹⁶

AKHTALA

The Last Judgement in Akhtala occupies almost the entire surface of the western wall, where it is mainly preserved, as well as the vault and the side walls of the west cross arm, where it is badly damaged.¹⁷ The composition of the western wall is very close to the one in Timotesubani: the main compositions are the Deesis, Hetoimasia and Paradise. In the Deesis, Christ is sitting on a rainbow, beckoning to the righteous and rejecting the sinful.

The Fiery River flows under Christ's mandorla, unlike Dečani and Timotesubani. In the central axis under the Deesis the Hetoimasia is depicted with the dove, standing on the prepared throne, alluding to the Holy Trinity, which is not usual.¹⁸ The intrados of the arches on the two windows flanking the Hetoimasia are used for the doubled composition of the Enrolling of the Heavens by angels, which is most suitably chosen for this motif. On the southern side, the Heavens are, as usual, studded by schematically presented stars and celestial bodies, yet on the northern side, the Heavens are empty. This could be by chance, but also the Christ's left side may have been left empty on



Akhtala, Paradise, detail
(photo by Mileta Prodanović)

purpose, thus illustrating that the left side is the bad one. This is all the more probable since in the northern window, under the empty heavens, there are six sinners. The groups of the righteous are moving from the southern wall, to the southern window on the western wall. In the triangular surface above the southern arch is the Resurrection of the Dead, as is the case in Timotesubani and Dečani. On the false arch that frames the western wall, are the Resurrection of the Dead from their coffins on the southern side, and the torments of Hell on the northern side.

Although Fiery river, torments in Hell and individual sinners, all are presented on the western wall of the naos, the gigantesque size of the Paradise occupying almost the entire surface of the third register of the western wall, makes them appear less prominent (fig. 3). The result is same as in Timotesubani - the beholders are overwhelmingly impressed by the most positive and optimistic message. Framed as a separate visual entity, the Balance of Justice is depicted in the upper left corner of the third register. Its strong tilted pans testify in favour of the righteous soul.

The territory of Armenia, at that time part of Queen Tamar's kingdom, was ruled by the brothers Ivane and Zakare Mkhargrdzeli, from the Armenian Zakharid family. The donor of Akhtala monastery was Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, who was converted from Monophysitism into Chalcedonianism, built and decorated the new church of the Virgin and was buried in 1227 or 1231 beside its entrance.¹⁹



Dečani, Cruciform vault, the Descent of Christ, detail (photo by Branislav Strugar)

DEČANI

The Last Judgement depicted in the monumental katolikon of the monastery Dečani²⁰ is probably the most complex cycle of the subject, preserved not just in medieval Serbia, but in the Byzantine world. It is characterized by numerous specific and even unique details some of which will be stressed on this occasion.²¹

The cycle of the Last Judgement in Dečani occupies almost the entire western bay of the central nave of the naos.²² Its western wall with the cruciform vault became a huge stage for the drama of the end of the world, occupied only by dogmatic motifs.²³ The Descent of Christ from Heaven, an extremely rare motif, is presented on the western segment in the cruciform vault (fig. 4).²⁴ It is followed by *Hetoimasia*,²⁵ unusually including the main pair of intercessors, the Virgin and John the Baptist and resurrected Adam and Eve.²⁶ In the next large register, a monumental Cross equipped with the instruments of Passion in the impressive glory of the divine light, visually dominates the western wall. This is another rare motif, in spite of both its most powerful soteriological meaning and the fact that it is mentioned in various texts describing the Second Coming (fig 5).²⁷ The last composition on the western wall is Christ's judgement (Deesis)

which is in most cases, the first, opening motif. Christ holds an open Gospel book with an inscription: „Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world“ (Mtt. 25, 34) and is giving his blessing. The quoted verse is directed only to the righteous, as if there were no sinners. The same applies in the scene of His descent in the cruciform vault, where he is blessing with both hands. By presenting the Virgin and John the Baptist twice - in the *Hetoimasia*, and in the *Deesis* - the iconographer underlined the faith of all Christians in the power of the help of the two main intercessors.²⁸ Four groups of the righteous on the pilasters on the western wall - emperors, nobles, bishops and monks - are flanking Christ the Judge. This is a unique example of placing ideal rulers of the State and the Church, as intercessors, so close to Christ.²⁹

The depictions of Heaven and Hell are assigned to the reduced space of the western sides of the western pair of piers. The Weighing the Souls refers once again to the idea of just humanity.³⁰ In the Fiery River,



Dečani, Hetoimasia, Lifegiving and Honorable Cross (photo by Branislav Strugar)

completely detached from the western wall, there are not a single representative of rulers or church dignitaries, although they were always included in that episode referring to the basic statement of Christian dogmatology that all individuals are equal before Christ.

The Dečani monastery was built (1327-1335) as the mausoleum of King Stefan of Dečani, and decorated until 1348, during the rule of his son, the King, and later Emperor, Stefan Dušan (1331-1355).³¹ Shortly after a conflict between the two, during which the son won against the father, King Stefan of Dečani died (1331) imprisoned, under „vague circumstances“. Taking into account the sensitive relationship between Emperor Dušan and Saint King Stefan of Dečani,³² it might be suggested that the intercessors as the righteous kings, next to Christ the Judge imbues the Dečani Last Judgement with an additional, not only local, but even personal layer of meaning, primarily referring to both donors.³³

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In the Timotesubani, Akhtala and Dečani Last Judgements, the most remarkable images on the western wall - the main carrier of ideas – are the motifs with a strong soteriological meaning. In all three examples on the western wall there is no prominent division between good and evil. Quite the opposite, the beholder can feel secure and calm, since the impression he gains is highly promising. This has been accomplished in Timotesubani and Akhtala by the strikingly monumental Paradise, occupying the entire second and third register respectively - two unique examples of this kind.³⁴ In Dečani, there are several motifs giving the same effect: the Christ addressing twice the righteous only, the huge cross in the glory of the divine light as an ultimate instrument of salvation and emphasizing the role of intercessors. The iconographic language the painters used was certainly different, but it does not change the same humanistic goal they have successfully achieved.

What was this goal needed for?

In Dečani, eschatology and ruler's ideology are tightly interwoven. Dečani Last Judgement is located in close proximity to the tombs dedicated to the royal

couple, Stefan of Dečani and his wife Maria Paleologue,³⁵ in the western bay of the southern nave, and the portraits of both the ruler's family and the most important members of the Nemanjić dynasty, in the southwest part of the church.³⁶ I believe that the internal – dynastic factors related to the donors of the Dečani monastery, but even more so, the external - political ones, precipitated conceptual changes of the Dečani Last Judgement. During the fifth decade of the 14th century, king Stefan Dušan conquered large part of weakened Byzantine empire, and finally proclaimed himself in Serres an emperor of „Serbs and Greeks“ in 1345, subsequently crowned in Skopje on Easter day in 1346. These military victories made him the most powerful figure on Balkans.³⁷ Consequently, a triumphal atmosphere supposedly felt at the Serbian court of the time was possibly recognized in some of the official undertaking of the Emperor Stefan Dušan, as was the fresco decoration of Dečani monastery. Therefore, at least partly, the west wall of the naos was conceived as the magnificent Christ's Second coming, unparalleled in Byzantine tradition.³⁸

There is a greater variety of arguments for eschatological optimism in the Caucasus' Last Judgements. Timotesubani and Akhtala murals appears to coincide with the great military victories of Queen Tamar. In spite of the difficulties caused by gender prejudice and challenges to her legitimacy she faced in the first period, Queen Tamar had successfully proved her potential as a ruler. After expelling Seljuks in 1194-1204 from the Southern part of Armenia, this area became a protectorate of the Georgian state. The fall of the Byzantine Empire to the Crusaders in 1204, gave the opportunity to Queen Tamar already in 1205 to occupy and transform part of Byzantine territory into the Empire of Trebizond.³⁹ Finally, in 1210 Georgian army conquered northern Persia (Iranian Azerbaijan). Early 13th century was the time of highest political, military, economic and cultural development of the Georgian Kingdom ruling all of Caucasus.⁴⁰

The donor of Akhtala was Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, one of the most powerful officials at the court of Queen Tamar,⁴¹ while Ekaterina Privalova suggested that the highest military officials of Queen Tamar, the

brothers Shalva and Ivane Toreli were most probably the donors of Timotesubani.⁴² Unfortunately, neither Timotesubani nor Akhtala contain any preserved portraits of the donors, or the rulers. For neither of the monuments do we find any precise information of the time their fresco decoration were executed.⁴³ All these missing data render our understanding of the precise correlation between the ideology and the eschatology in Timotesubani and Akhtala quite provisional.

However, in my opinion, it is possible to argue that the atmosphere of triumph and the glory of the Queen Tamar and the state she represented could have been mirrored in the optimistic vision of the Last Judgement compositions painted at that time. Also, the program of the fresco decoration in the Georgian churches of that period was still inspired by Early Christian triumphal iconography of salvation.⁴⁴ Furthermore, insisting on the true Orthodoxy in the official art of the Queen Tamar was highly expected, as well. At the time, Georgian Orthodox Christian society was surrounded by Muslim Seljuks with their un-iconic tradition, and additionally burdened by the arguments with the Armenian Monophysite Church. In this context, the optimistic eschatological vision in Timotesubani and Akhtala could have been used as a confessional argument convincingly demonstrating the benefit the believer in the true Orthodoxy could attain. Consequently, the optimism of the Last Judgement in Akhtala - renovated old Monophysite monastery situated in Armenia, built by a former Monophysite donor converted into Chalcedonianism - became even more founded. The multifaceted argumentation of Georgian eschatological concept illustrates the complexity of its historical heritage and the contemporary political and religious situation of the Georgian Kingdom in the early 13th century.

This preliminary research indicates that the three Last Judgements, exceptional by the high range of their optimism, could have been related to historically and ideologically similar context in Serbia and Georgia. Yet, it can be recognized only at the most general level – as the common model of a state's power at its climax.

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Notes:

¹ H. Omont, *Evangelies avec peintures byzantines du XIe siècle*, Paris 1908, T. 41, 81; R. Polacci, *La cattedrale di Torcello, Il Giudizio Univerzale*, Venezia 1986, p. 12-16, T. 16. For Byzantine Last Judgement, see concise selection of titles: N. Vasilevič Pokrovskij, "Strashnij sud v pamjatnikah bizantijskovo i russkovo iskusstva" (The Last Judgement in Monuments of the Byzantine and Russian art) *Trudy VI Archeologičeskago S'ezda v Odesse* 1884, t. III, Odessa 1887, 285-381; A. Grabar, *L'empereur dans l'art byzantin*, London 1971 (Paris 1936), pp. 249-258; G. Millet, *La dalmatique du Vatican. Les élus. Images et croyances*, Paris 1945; D. Milošević, *The Last Judgment*, Recklinghausen 1963; B. Brenk, "Die Anfänge der byzantinischen Weltgerichtsdarstellung", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 57/1 (1964), pp. 106-126; Idem, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends. Studien zur Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes*, Wiener byzantinische Studien, Band III, Wien 1966; M. F. Murjanov, "Studies of the Nereditsa Frescoes", *Vizantijskij vremenik* 34 (1973), pp. 204-213 (In Russian with English Summary); D. Mouriki, "An Unusual Representation of the Last Judgement in a Thirteenth Century Fresco at St. George near Kouvaras in Attica", *Deltion / Christianikē Arhaiologikē Hetaireia*, 8 (1975/76), pp. 145-171; S. Tomeković, "Le Jugement dernier de l'église d'Agètria" in *XVI Internationaler Byzantinistenkongress, Akten II/5, Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 32/5 (1981), 469-479.

² Fresco painting of Sopoćani is dated in 1263-1268. See V. J. Djurić, *Sopoćani*, Belgrade 1991, pp. 46, 50, fig. 92 (in Serbian with English summary).

³ The 13th century fresco programme of the Morača narthex was overpainted in 1577/78 following the original choice of compositions and their disposition. See V. Milanović, "On the Original Fresco Programme in the Narthex of the Church of the Virgin at Morača", in: *The Monastery of Morača*, (ed. by B. Todić, D. Popović), Belgrade 2006, pp. 143, 181 (in Serbian, with English summary).

⁴ See n. 1 and also K. Papadopoulos, *Die Wandmalereien des XI Jahrhunderts in der Kirche Panagia ton Halkeon*, Graz-Köln 1966, pp. 57-76.

⁵ E. L. Privalova, *Rospis' Timotesubani*, Tbilisi 1980

(La peinture murale de Timothésoubani - in Russian with French summary), pp. 91-97, with short descriptions of other Last Judgement compositions in Georgia (pp. 223-229); T. Velmans, « L'Image de la Déisis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans le reste du monde byzantin, Deuxième partie : la Déisis dans la coupole, sur la façade et dans les images du Jugement dernier » in : *L'art médiéval de l'Orient chrétien, Recueil d'études*, Sofia 2001, pp. 94-97 (first published in *Cahiers Archéologiques* 31, 1983, pp. 129-173); N. Thierry, « Le Jugement dernier d'Axtala », *Bedi Kartlisa, Revue de Kartvéologie* XL (1982), pp. 147-185 ; A. Lidov, *The Mural Paintings of Akhtala*, Moscow 1991, pp. 59-65. Alexei Lidov's opinion that the Akhtala wall paintings belong to «the special culture of the Armenian Chalcedonians which combined several traditions and can be examined from different viewpoints in the history of Armenian, Georgian and Byzantine art», seems persuasive (Lidov, *Akhtala* p. 4). Since Georgian painters decorated western part of the church, the Last Judgement cycle was strongly influenced by Georgian tradition (*Akhtala*, pp. 105-109).

6 These are Vardzia (1184-1185), Betania (c. 1207), and Bertubani (1212-1213). See Privalova as in n. 5; and A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998, pp. 99-124 (Vardzia), pp. 154-169 (Betania); pp. 169-181 (Bertubani).

7 The church of Blessed Virgin in Studenica (1208/1209) was partly overpainted in 1568, including the Last Judgement cycle, Mileševa (before 1236), the cathedral of the Blessed Virgin Ljeviška in Prizren (1307-1313), Gračanica (1318-1321) and Dečani (before 1348), all of them rulers' endowments. See S. Ćirković, V. Korać, G. Babić, *Studenica*, Belgrade 1986, pp. 158, 162, fig. 128 (in Serbian); S. Radojčić, *Mileševa*, Belgrade 1963, pp. 35-38; drawings pp. 84-85 (in Serbian with English summary); D. Panić, G. Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, Belgrade 1975, pp. 66, 71-73, drawing 30 (exonarthex) (in Serbian with French summary); B. Živković, *Bogorodica Ljeviška. Les dessins des fresques*, Belgrade 1991, pp. 75-77; B. Todić, *Gračanica. Slikarstvo*, Belgrade 1988, pp. 159-164 (in Serbian with French summary); B. Živković, *Gračanica. Les dessins des fresques*, Belgrade 1989 (in the narthex, unpaginated); Đ. Bošković, V. R. Petković, *Manastir Dečani*, II, Beograd 1941, pp. 53-55, 69, T. CCLIX/2, CCLXXII/1, CCLXXIV, CCLXXV/1-CCLXXX/1 (b/w reproductions of the complete cycle); A. Davidov Temerin-ski, „The Cycle of the Last Judgement“, in *Mural Painting of Monastery of Dečani* (ed. by V. J. Djurić), Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade 1995, pp. 191-211 (in Serbian with English summary); M. Čanak-Medić, B. Todić, *Manastir Dečani* (=The Dečani Monastery), Belgrade, 2005, pp. 448-453 (in Serbian, English edition is forthcoming in 2009).

8 S. Der Nersessian, „Program and Iconography of the Frescoes of the Parecclesion“, in *The Kariye Djami*, vol. 4, Princeton 1975, pp. 325-331, pl. 368-407. The author indicates the probability that the greater development of the

Paradise's scenes than the punishments in Hell was intentional (p. 331).

9 Although there is a great possibility that more examples of the optimistic Last Judgements had been executed in Byzantium and the countries under its cultural influence, they did not come to us. The western parts of the churches where this subject had always found its place, almost regularly suffered more damage or destruction than the naos or the altar.

10 J. Mejendorf, *Vizantijsko bogoslovlje*, Kragujevac 1985, p. 269 (=John Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Theology*).

11 Privalova, *Rospis' Timotesubani*, pp. 91-97; Velmans, „L'Image de la Déisis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans le reste du monde byzantin“, 94-97; Eadem, « La peinture murale en Géorgie qui se rapproche de la règle Constantinopolitaine (fin XIIe-début XIIIe siècle) », in *Studenica et l'art byzantin autour de l'année 1200*, Symposium international, Académie serbe des sciences et arts, (ed. V. Korać), Belgrade 1988, p. 392.

12 In the Constantinople's, Balkans' and Russian's examples Deesis is not presented as such a prominent motif as in Timotesubani, Akhtala and Dečani. See Velmans, „L'Image de la Déisis dans les églises de Géorgie et dans le reste du monde byzantin“, p. 95.

13 Christ Ancient the Days, can also be seen in Ateni (11th century) and on the two Georgian Sinai icons (11th-12th century). See Privalova, *Timotesubani*, pp. 92, 224, n. 57; G. et M. Sotiriou, *Icons du Mont Sinai*, Athènes 1956, vol. I, pl. 150-151.

14 That was the only overpainted detail in Timotesubani, today partly peeled off. For the reasons of this modification, see E. Gedevanishvili, „Encountering the Resurrection: The Holy Face at the Timotesubani Murals“, in *Intorno al Sacro Volto. Genova, Bizancio e il Mediterraneo (secoli XI-XIV)*, (ed. A. R. Calderoni Masetti, C. Dufour Bozzo, G. Wolf), Venezia 2007, pp. 181-186.

15 Tania Velmans states that emphasize on Paradise in the Timotesubani Last Judgement is not the rule when Georgian examples are concerned, although she recognizes its strong relation with the Early Christian spirit of triumph and salvation that influenced the program of the church decoration in Georgia. See T. Velmans, « La peinture murale en Géorgie qui se rapproche de la règle Constantinopolitaine (fin XIIe-début XIIIe siècle) », p. 392.

16 Ekaterina Privalova suggests that the brothers Shalva and Ivane Toreli were the most probable donors of the Timotesubani church. See Privalova, *Timotesubani*, p. 120.

17 Thierry, *Axtala*, 147-185; Lidov, *Akhtala*, pp. 59-65.

18 Two more angels in the windows, wearing a hiton and hymation and praying with covered hands, gives the composition a liturgical meaning. Alexei Lidov's analysis demonstrates that liturgical motifs which are not characteristic of Georgian painting are stressed in Akhtala due to the stronger relationships between the Armenian Chalcedo-

nian ecclesiastical circles and the church of Constantinople (*Akhtala*, p. 67).

19 About Ivane Mkhargrdzeli, see Lidov, *Akhtala*, pp. 14-20.

20 The monastery Dečani was built in Metochia, part of the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metochia, today's self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo.

21 An exceptional work of art was executed by a gifted painter, advised by a highly educated cleric. A huge ensemble represents a kind of *enciclopediae iconografica* of Byzantine art, and includes almost all existing iconographical topics.

22 See n. 7.

23 The height of the cruciform vault is ca. 20m.

24 This image is almost a literal illustration of the angel's words during Christ's Ascension (Acts, 1,11) promising to the apostles His Second Coming. Parallel can only be seen in Ajvali kilise (913-920) in Cappadocia, but this is an early example before the standardisation of the Last Judgement in the 11th century. See N. et M. Thierry, *Ayvali kilise ou pigeonnier de Güllü Dere. Eglise inédite de Cappadoce*, Cahiers Archéologiques XV (1965), pp. 131-142, 144, fig. 24-31.

25 Among the instruments of Passion which are placed on the throne, a unique detail is the Christ's mantle, „anthropomorphic“ in a way, showing the openings for the head and arms, and looking as though filled with air, or being worn by someone invisible. The book of Evangiles, lying on the mantle, does not show any pressure on it. Presented in such a way, the mantle probably refers to Christ's mystical, eternal, presence. The throne is flanked by two angels, by the figures of the Virgin and John the Baptist, in a posture of prayer, and by one more pair of angels in deacon's robes, holding lighted candelsticks, thus enriching the image with liturgical meaning, too. See Davidov Temerinski, «The Cycle of the Last Judgement», p. 196.

26 They are kneeling in the next register, under a shallow arch, used as a reference to an *arcosolium*, the architectonically given opportunity the painter did not fail to use. On Eve's left cheek there is a round, dark birthmark, most probably an allusion to the *macula*, the visible sign of her sin.

27 In Serbia, it can be seen in Gračanica, as well (Todić, *Gračanica*, fig. 96). The triumphal atmosphere is emphasised by the highly symmetric host of angels and two tetramorphs, as well.

28 Mejdendorf, *Vizantijsko bogoslovje*, p. 270 (=Meyendorff, *The Byzantine Theology*), states that the prayer of intercessors can change the destiny of the individual determined by the particular judgement.

29 G. Millet, *La dalmatique de Vatican, Les élus. Images et croyances*, Paris 1945, pp. 82-91, gives a hierarchy of saints that function as intercessors.

30 The pan with good deeds outweighs the bad ones in Virgin Ljeviška, Karyie Djami and Gračanica, as was common in the Paleologan times.

31 It was common ktetoria of King Stefan of Dečani and young King Stefan Dušan. See S. Marjanović-Dušanić, *The Holy King. The Cult of St. Stefan of Dečani*, Belgrade 2007, 271-272 (In Serbian with English summary); A. Davidov Temerinski, "The Imperial Meaning of the Dečani Mural Painting. Prolegomena", in *Niš and Byzantium*, The Collection of Scientific Works II, Niš 2004, 242 (In Serbian with English summary).

32 King Stephan of Dečani was proclaimed a saint in 1343, before the completion of the fresco decoration. In the same year his preserved body was transferred from his tomb in the south-western part of the naos to the wooden shrine in front of the iconostasis. See D. Korać, "The Canonization of Stefan Uroš III Dečanski and the Repainting of the Royal Portraits in the Church of Dečani" in *Dečani and l'art byzantin au milieu du XIVe siècle* (ed. V. J. Djurić), Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, International Symposium, Belgrade 1989, pp. 287-295 (in Serbian with English summary).

33 The same idea might be recognized in the absence of kings, as sinners in the Fiery River.

34 In Akhtala it was achieved in spite of the torments in Hell, also depicted on the western wall, since these motifs are presented in significantly smaller size than the Paradise.

35 D. Popović, *The Royal Tomb in Medieval Serbia*, Belgrade 1992, pp. 103-106, 193 (in Serbian, with English summary).

36 D. Vojvodić, "Portraits of Rulers, Church Dignitaries and Patricians", in *Mural Painting of Monastery of Dečani*, pp. 265-275 (In Serbian with English summary); Todić, Čanak-Medić, *Manastir Dečani*, pp. 439-440.

37 S. Ćirković, "La Serbie à la veille de l'Empire", in *Dečani et l'art byzantin au milieu du XIVe siècle*, (In Serbian with French summary), pp. 3-13; S. Ćirković, "Between Kingdom and Empire: Dušan's State 1346-1355 Reconsidered", in *Byzantium and Serbia in the 14th Century*, National Hellenistic Research Foundation, Institute for Byzantine Research, International Symposium 3, Athens 1996, pp. 110-120.

38 A. Davidov Temerinski, "The Imperial Meaning of the Dečani Mural Painting. Prolegomena," pp. 245-248.

39 C. Toumanoff, "On the Relationship between the Founder of the Empire of Trebizond and the Georgian Queen Tamar", *Speculum* 15 (1940), pp. 299-312.

40 W. E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People*, London, 1932, pp.103-108; K. Salia, *History of the Georgian Nation*, Paris 1980, pp. 178-202.

41 See n. 19.

42 Privalova, *Timotesubani*, pp. 112-120. Since there is no direct historical evidence of it, it is impossible to prove this hypothesis. Antony Eastmond did not accept it with absolute certainty, and even pointed out a possibility that Timotesubani was in fact the queen's endowment. See Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, p. 211, n. 17.

43 Privalova, *Timotesubani*, p. 124; Lidov, *Akhtala*, p. 21.

44 See n.15.

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FRESCO ICONS IN MONUMENTAL ART OF GEORGIA AND BYZANTIUM: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

Painted icons, also known as fresco-icons or fictive-icons, are found in the monumental art of both Byzantium and the countries within the orbit of its influence. They appear at various places: from attributes of individual saints, seen in representations of St. Stephen the Younger, to a large scale carefully framed icons, such as the inter-columnar icons and proskynetaria, associated with the iconostasis, and preserved, for example, in the churches of Staro Nagoričino and at Nerezi (fig. 1).¹

All painted icons were separated from other images by their location, size, and/or by their distinctive frames that ranged from elaborate stucco installations that we see at Nerezi (fig. 1), to carefully delineated painted borders exhibited, for example, at Bačkovo and in the church of St. Sophia in Ohrid.² To emphasize their similarity with panel paintings, some painted icons also included a hook and a nail, as apparent on a painted icon carried by St. Stephen the Younger in the Enkleistra of St. Neophytos on Cyprus, and on the images of the church fathers in the church of St. Sophia, Ohrid and at Bačkovo.³

Painted icons are seen in the decoration of Georgian churches, too. Among other places, painted icons in Georgian monuments are also included into royal portraits. The inclusion of painted icons in Georgian royal portraits is unusual and deserves further scholarly attention. Thus, it is the purpose of this paper to examine the meaning and significance of these icons within the realm of sacred space in Georgian monuments.

The representation of painted icons is particularly interesting in two Georgian churches, the church of St. Nicholas at Q'inc'visi (c. 1207) and the rock-cut church of the monastery of Bertubani (1212-1213). Both churches were commissioned by the famous Georgian ruler, Queen Tamar (1184-1213), whose mili-

tary victories, political wisdom, and cultural achievements, marked an important epoch of Georgian history.⁴ The royal portrait at Q'inc'visi displays Queen Tamar flanked by two other members of the Bagrationi family, her deceased father, king Giorgi III (1156-1184) and her son, Giorgi Laša (figs. 2, 3). The members of the royal family are gesturing towards a painted icon of enthroned Christ who responds by looking at them, his right hand extended in their direction (fig. 4).

The presence of either Christ or the Virgin within royal portraits is commonly seen in the art of Byzantium and the countries within the orbit of its influence. However, the juxtaposition between the larger-than-life-size figures of the members of the royal family and comparatively diminutive size of the enthroned Christ, seen at Q'inc'visi, indicates that the image of Christ was indeed intended as a painted icon. The allusion to a painted icon is also suggested by the special frame of the image of enthroned Christ, its tri-lobed shape bearing close resemblances with proskynetaria icons associated with the iconostasis, as seen at Nerezi (figs. 1, 4).

The small size and framed borders also allude to a panel painting on the image of the Virgin and Christ Child represented within the royal portrait at Bertubani (1212-1213). The royal portrait at Bertubani includes only Queen Tamar and her son Giorgi Laša, both



Saint Panteleimon. The Church of St. Panteleimon at Nerezi, 1164 (photo: author)



Queen Tamar. Q'inc'visi.
(photo: Aleksandra Davidov-Temerinski)

turned towards the enthroned Virgin shown as holding Christ (fig. 5). The visual parallel between mothers and sons is as apparent as it is unusual.⁵ The energy and enthusiasm infused in the gesturing of the Virgin and Christ towards the Georgian Queen and her son is also atypical. It is clear that the presence of this painted icon is intended to communicate special messages to the beholder.

When included into royal portraits, such as at Q'inc'visi and at Bertubani, painted icons have been explained as signifiers of the special space designated for the rulers and noblemen.⁶ The use of painted icons to signify a specific locale is seen throughout the Byzantine world since at least the eleventh century. It is particularly apparent in the representation of hanging icons in the sanctuary, such as at Bačkovó monastery, where painted icons clearly emulate the panel paintings, thus adding to the realism of the liturgical space. Like the real priests during the actual rite, the painted bishops are intended to be shown as standing in the presence of real icons.⁷

Painted icons at Q'inc'visi and Bertubani also appear to be associated with the sanctuary. A distinctive frame of the icon of Christ at Q'inc'visi, as mentioned earlier, relates to the proskynetaria icons commonly flanking the iconostasis. Moreover, the image of the enthroned Virgin, while seen in icons, is also more fre-



King Giorgi III. Q'inc'visi.
(photo: Aleksandra Davidov-Temerinski)

quently associated with the sanctuary, appearing since the fifth century in the conch of the apse of Byzantine churches. It is, after all, the image inaugurated in the apse of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople following the iconoclastic controversy in 843. The intent of the artists to dedicate a special space within a church to the Georgian royal family is thus evident.

The inclusion of painted icons into the royal portraits at Q'inc'visi and Bertubani, however, also appears to be intended to communicate the special significance that icons played in the construction of the identity of the Georgian ruler during the time of Queen Tamar. If divine blessing and a statement about the special status within the economy of salvation was all she wanted to achieve in her royal portraits, a more common iconographic solution, such as the portrayal of the holy image as a standing figure, or as a bust protruding from the segment of the sky seen, for example, in the church of St. Achilleos at Arilje (1296-97), would be sufficient.⁸ The insistence on icons and, one should add, very personal ones, underlines the need to emphasize their presence and their special significance for the Queen. The need of the Georgian Queen to display a close, personal association with icons, evident in both the location and in a modified iconography, seen in enthusiastic actions of otherwise enthroned holy figures, becomes even more appar-

ent when one considers the royal portraits of Queen Tamar within the context of historical circumstances surrounding her rule.

The earliest known royal portrait of Queen Tamar has survived in the church of the Dormition, the largest church in the complex of Vardzia, dated in 1184-86.⁹ Wearing a Byzantine royal attire, Tamar is shown with her father processing towards an image of enthroned Virgin who gestures towards them; between and above the royal images is an angel holding a scepter. Represented in the shallow niche on the eastern section of the north wall, Queen Tamar is holding a model of the church, as was typical in Byzantine donor portraits.²⁰ The royal portrait at Vardzia spatially resonates with another portrait, also placed in the shallow niche located on the opposite, west portion of the north wall. This niche displays a portrait of the local aristocrat, the *eristav* of Javakheti and Kartli, Rati Surameli. He is shown as addressing an image of a standing Virgin who holds Christ Child in her left hand and gestures towards the *eristav* with her left, the intense communication between the two echoing the exchange between the royal family and the Virgin in the eastern section of the wall.²¹ While the text accompanying the two donor portraits raises the question of the actual patronage of the church, for the purposes of this paper it will suffice to note that in both instances the Virgin is shown as a painted image and not as an icon.

The church at Vardzia marks the early stages of Queen Tamar's rule, the time when she was still engaging most of her efforts to establish the legitimacy of her rule. Faced with much prejudice and many opponents upon ascending to the throne, Tamar nonetheless proved to be a potent ruler, with both political and military wisdom. Interestingly enough, while her early royal portrait in Vardzia displays the Queen as addressing the image of the Virgin, the insertion of the frame that turns the image of the holy figure, in this instance Christ, into an icon, as seen in Q'inc'visi, follows her military victories and the enlargement of her kingdom. The spatial articulation of painted decoration at Q'inc'visi, as in Vardzia, also established the connection between the royal and the donor's portrait. Displayed opposite of Queen Tamar's portrait, on the south wall of the south transept, Anton Gloni-



Christ. Q'inc'visi.

(photo: Aleksandra Davidov-Temerinski)

stavidze, Queen's chief minister, is shown as offering a model of the church to the painted icon St.. Nicholas.²² Thus, the ambiguity of donorship and close association between royalty and nobility, seen in Vardzia, is maintained in Q'inc'visi. Unlike Vardzia, however, both royalty and noblemen in Q'inc'visi address not just an image but a painted icon that emulated panel paintings.

The appearance of these painted icons coincides with Queen Tamar's efforts to establish her status as a powerful ruler. The gender prejudice and the challenges encountered by the Queen Tamar upon her ascension to the throne have been a subject of numerous studies.²³ Faced by the need to legitimize her rule and appease the opponents within the country, while at the same time deflecting and subjugating foreign enemies, Queen Tamar used all available resources to prove her ability to rule. Her use of images to intensify her power as a ruler have been extensively analyzed in Anthony Eastmond's book on the royal portraits in Georgia.²⁴ I believe that the inclusion of painted icons in her royal portraits, while unusual in Byzantium, also played a significant role in this process and was particularly connected to her military conquests.

The rule of Queen Tamar at the turn of the century was marked by aggressive military campaigns. It was the time when Georgian role in Byzantine affairs



Queen Tamar and the Virgin. Copy of the image from Bertubani. Signnaghi Museum. (photo: author)

became more prominent. Following the Crusader occupation and the fall of Constantinople in 1204, Queen Tamar sent Georgian troops to Trabizond and not only occupied large territories of Trabizond, but also installed her relative, Alexios I Komnenos (1182-1222) as the ruler of the Byzantine Empire in exile (ruled 1204-1222). She continued her advances into Paphlagonia with Alexios' brother, David Komnenos.¹⁵ Moreover, Tamar dedicated significant efforts and succeeded in subjugating Seljuk Turks. In addition, in 1209-1210, Georgia annexed territories in a successful offensive against the Persia. In essence, by the early 13th century, Georgian state annexed most of Caucasus, including Iranian Azerbaijan and the southern coast of the Black Sea.¹⁶

The presence of painted icons in royal images of the Queen Tamar appears to coincide with these military victories, suggesting that icons held an increased importance in the society. In addition to Q'inc'visi and Bertubani, where the Queen and other members of the royal family are shown as praying to an icon, even at Betania (c. 1207), which displays the royal procession led by a standing figure of a warrior saint (St. George), as was customary in Byzantium and its borderlands, the donor's portrait in the south transept of the church is spatially related to the royal procession represented in the north transept.¹⁷ Moreover, the donors, Sumbat' and Liparit' Orbeli are shown as presenting the model of the church to a painted icon of the Virgin.¹⁸ While the representation of painted icons in ktetors' portraits has been seen in other churches, such as at Psača in Serbia (1365-71), the choice of the icon of the Virgin, commonly associated with royalty and traditionally related to their military affairs is intriguing;¹⁹ especially so since, although included in the

ktetors' portrait, the icon establishes a spatial connection with the royal procession.

The peculiar appearance of these painted icons, distinguished for their vivid gestures, distinct frames and inclusion into royal portraits suggests that they may represent special, important panel paintings. One is almost tempted to believe that they were based on yet unidentified miraculous icons important to the royal family.²⁰ The existence of miraculous icons is well documented in medieval Georgia as evidenced, for example, by the Khakhuli triptych or the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God that, at one point, walked miraculously in the air and was brought to Bagrat's Cathedral by King Giorgi III in the eleventh century.²¹ However, specific icons that may have served as models for the images in Q'inc'visi and Bertubani, if indeed ever existent, still await further scholarly investigation.

In conclusion, without any attempt to even begin to explain a rather complex nature of the concept of a Georgian ruler discussed by other scholars, I would like to note that the presence of Seljuks, an un-iconic society on the one hand, and disputes related to Orthodox Christian practices in Armenia, on the other, perhaps called for the symbolic manifestation, both private and public, of the true Orthodoxy on the part of the ruling empress. What other powerful symbol, but the icon, could provide a better manifestation of that faith?²² Placed within the context of the royal image, the icons manifested the Orthodox faith of the royal family in the country composed of multiple nations and multiple faiths.

Notes:

1 For a systematic analysis of painted icons, see Ivan M. Djordjević, "Die Freskoikonen des Mittelalters bei den Serbian," *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti* 14 (1978), pp. 77-97 (in Serbian with German summary). See also Tania Velmans, "Rayonnement de l'icone au XIIe et au début du XIII siècle," in *XVe congrès international des études byzantines, Rapports et co-rapports, III: Art et archéologie* (Athens, 1976), pp. 195-227; and Manolis Chadzidakis, "L'évolution de l'icone aux 11e-13e siècle et la transformation du temple," in *XVe congrès international des études byzantines, Rapports et co-rapports, III: Art et archéologie* (Athens, 1976), pp. 159-191.

2 See Djordjević, "Die Freskoikonen des Mittelalters bei den Serbian," pp. 77-97; and see Elka Bakalova, "The Frescoes and Their Program," in Elka Bakalova, Vera Kolarova, Petar Popov, Valentin Todorov, *The Ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery*, edited by Elka Bakalova (Plovdiv, 2003), pp. 65-66, figs. 11, 45, 48.

3 For a good color image of St.. Stephen in Enkleistra, see Maria Vassilaki, editor, *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium* (Ashgate, 1998), pl. 13; For other examples and a discussion about hanging icons, with earlier bibliography, see Elka Bakalova, "The Frescoes and Their Program," in Elka Bakalova, Vera Kolarova, Petar Popov, Valentin Todorov, *The Ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery*, edited by Elka Bakalova (Plovdiv, 2003), pp. 65-66, figs. 11, 45, 48; Ida Sinkević, *The Church of St.. Panteleimon at Nerezi. Architecture, Programme, Patronage* (Wiesbaden, 2000), p. 45; Antony Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia* (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1998), pp. 200-201; Jeffrey C. Anderson, "The Byzantine Panel Portrait before and after Iconoclasm," in *The Sacred Image East and West*, edited by Robert Ousterhout and Leslie Brubaker (Urbana and Chicago, 1995), pp. 35-37; and Ellen C. Schwartz, "Painted picture of Pictures: the Imitations of Icons in Fresco," in *Forth Annual Byzantine Studies Conference. Abstracts* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1978), pp. 33-34.

4 For bibliography and discussion, see Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia.*, pp. 93-219. See also W.E. D. Allen, *A History of the Georgian People* (London, 1932), pp. 103-108; and Kaliastirat Salia, *History of the Georgian Nation*, translated by Katharine Vivian (Paris, 1980), pp. 178-202.

5 For a discussion, see Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, p. 179.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 200-202.

7 For a discussion and bibliography, see Anderson, "The Byzantine Panel Portrait," p. 36. For images, see *The Ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery*, figs. 11, 45, 48.

8 For Arilje, see Dragan Vojvodić, *Wall Paintings of the Church of Saint Achilleos in Arilje* (Belgrade, 2005), fig. 24 (in Serbian with English summary).

9 See Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, pls. XIII, XIV, figs. 55, 57.

10 *Ibid.*, pl. XIII.

11 *Ibid.*, figs. 55, 57.

12 Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, pp. 144-145.

13 See note 3 above.

14 Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*.

15 C. Toumanoff, "On the Relationship between the Founder of the Empire of Trebizond and the Georgian Queen Tamar," *Speculum* 15 (1940), pp. 299-312.

16 Salia, *History of the Georgian Nation*, p. 184.

17 Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, figs. 75-77.

18 *Ibid.*, fig. 78.

19 For Psača, see I. Djordjević, *Zidno slikarstvo srpske vlastele* (Belgrade, 1994), fig. 21.

20 I am grateful to Dr. Alexei Lidov for this suggestion. An interesting example of miraculous icons associated with a royal portrait is discussed in his article on the portrait of Leo VI in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople. See, Alexei. Lidov, "Leo the Wise and the Miraculous Icons in Hagia Sophia," in *The Heroes of the orthodox Church. The New Saints, the 8th to 16th centuries*, ed. By E. Kountoura-Galake (Athens, 2004), pp. 393-432.

21 *The Spiritual Treasure of Georgia. Book 1* (Tbilisi, 2005), p. 370.

22 For an in-depth analysis of the role of the icons of Virgin Mary and extensive bibliography, see Bissera V. Pentcheva, *Icons and Power. The Mother of God in Byzantium* (University Park, PA, 2006); for an illuminating analysis of the role of icons in the construction of the royal image during the Middle Byzantine period, see Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople," in *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, edited by Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C., 1997), pp. 81-99.

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POST-BYZANTINE TENDENCIES IN 16TH-CENTURY GEORGIAN MURAL PAINTING

Late medieval Georgian painting developed under difficult historical conditions. By the end of the 15th century Georgia was weakened as a result of the repeated invasions by the Mongols and had become divided into kingdoms. After the Ottoman conquest of Byzantium (1453) and other Christian countries, Georgia appeared surrounded by hostile states. Both Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran attacked Georgia, occupying areas of the national territory.

In this period of political and economic crisis, when the Byzantine Empire no longer existed, the cultural centers of Orthodox countries moved to the peripheries. Monastic life intensified. For the development of Georgia the existence of Georgian monasteries abroad had especially great importance. Thanks to them, over the centuries, "Georgia managed to watch every success of the cultural development of the enlightened countries of that time. Georgia too had an opportunity to be aware of everything that was written or done new and significant there, through the public figures, writers, scholars and artists working at Georgian monasteries..." (I. Javakhishvili, 1965, 339-345) At the beginning of the 16th century, of the old monasteries existing outside the country, namely, the Monastery of the Cross in Palestine and Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos, were regarded to be in the possession of the Georgians (K. Kekelidze, 1951, 97).

The preservation of the Georgian monasteries on Mount Athos was very important for the country. After the fall of Constantinople, Mount Athos became one of the significant cultural centers for Orthodox believers. Painters arriving from different countries worked at Athos (N. Kondakov, 1902, 54). It is noteworthy that Georgian painter Kyr Markos the Iberian (Georgian) painted the Catholicon of the Iviron monastery on Mount Athos (Sh. Amiranashvili, 1971, 351; L. Nikolski, 1907, 47-48; G Millet. J. Pargoire, P. Petit,

1904, 71), whereas a Thessalonian monastic priest was invited to embellish Gremi church (T. Qaukhchishvili, 1951, 333-335; Sh.Amiranashvili, 1971, 382). Such an intensive migration of painters from one country to another created the conditions for the spread of a single style of painting. As a result of close contacts, the influence of "Creto-Athonite" painting was much stronger in Georgia than in some regions and possessions of Greece, e.g., Cyprus, into which this style did not find its way at all (M. Garidis, 1989, 282) (These areas were under Catholic domination and other artistic tendencies prevailed in them.)

Georgia's difficult political and economic state would undoubtedly have had a negative effect on the development of culture, on the level of art. After the crisis period of the second half of the 15th century, the 16th century witnessed certain revival in all spheres of art – interesting monuments of architecture, miniature and monumental painting, chasing, and embroidery were created.

In Georgian monumental painting of the 16th century different artistic trends are noticeable. Two directions are clearly identifiable in it – "professional" or official, and so-called "folk." Painters with a professional education, carrying out royal orders, were oriented to the Athonite school of painting. "Folk" painters, who embellished small parish churches, worked at the request of petty feudal lords and sometimes peasants (I. Mamaiashvili, 1991, 65; I. Khuskivadze, 2003, 11-12).

The "folk" stream intensified at the end of the 15th century-beginning of the 16th century, when the number of professional painters obviously decreased as Georgia was experiencing extreme hardship. In the period under discussion, creative activity was not observable in other Orthodox countries either. For example, in the central provinces of Serbia in the first half of the 16th century, almost no paintings were made, though "folk" painters workshops functioned in the peripheries (M. Garidis, 1989, 362-363).

Specimens of "folk" painting are found in large numbers throughout the entire territory of Georgia (Vani, Chala, Koreti, Tabakini, Tsitelkhevi, Ilemi, Kallauri, etc.). Each of them is characterized by individual peculiarities, but the basic features, through which

they are united in a single stream, are typical for folk painting – simplified pictorial devices, the primary importance of untrained but expressive drawing, naïve expressiveness, the palette of naturally occurring colors. Compared with professional painting, in the “folk” painting the link to local roots is more obvious in the artistic form and iconographic program. The features characteristic of that time are revealed to a greater or lesser extent in the iconography of scenes, details of mountainous and architectural landscapes (in a very simplified and roughened form), in the figures’ proportions, and the overall structure of the paintings. In reflecting certain features characteristic of that time, the link between “folk” painting and the local tradition is especially valuable, as it attests to the preservation of the originality of Georgian painters in the difficult period of the Late Middle Ages.

The paintings of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin at Gelati, executed in the 1520s, have a transitional character between “folk” and professional painting. It has survived in various sections of the church. In the painting of this period, on the one hand, the link with the preceding Late Palaeologan painting, and on the other one, with “folk” painting is evident. The relation with the Late Palaeologan painting is indicated by some stylistic features – e.g., elongated proportions of the figures of prophets and angels in the dome, the facial type of some of them – the oblong oval, straight, small features (as with Nahum and Haggai), the character of the folds of the garments – the dropping, tapered ends of the cloak, unfolded scrolls with rolled ends, and the linear treatment of garments, but sometimes with a contrasting color. Along with the above-mentioned characteristics, this painting displays features which coincide with the pictorial devices of so-called “folk” painting – the atectonicity of compositions, ignoring the frame borders, the special importance of simplified drawing, the ornamental-decorative character of treatment, and a certain naïve expressiveness. The merging of the peculiarities of these different styles and the tendency toward simplification is typical of the early period of the development of post-Byzantine painting (I. Mamaishvili, 2005, 37). For example, the murals of the Ananauri church at Vardzia (second half of the 15th

century) (A. Kldiashvili, 2005), the wall painting in the narthex of St.. Nicholas’ Church (15th-16th centuries) at Kintsvisi.

The influence of the prevalent stream of post-Byzantine painting – the “Creto-Athonite” school – is clearly observable in the murals executed on the orders of King Levan of Kakheti (1520-1574), King Bagrat III of Imereti (1510-1565) and his son Giorgi II (1565-1583) in Alvani, Gremi, Nekresi, Katsareti, and Akhali Shuamta (M.Vachnadze, 1983), and in wall-painting of the second half of the 16th century in the churches of the Nativity of the Virgin (I. Mamaishvili, 2005) and St.. George at Gelati monastery (N. Chikhladze, 1993). The enriched and complicated iconographic programs of these murals are typical for the post-Byzantine period – new iconographic themes for Georgia are adopted, and the developed life-cycles of saints are shown.

The décor of the dome and altar apse underwent certain changes. In the dome area, “Christ Pantocrator” is represented, and not the “Triumphal Cross” or the “Elevation of the Cross,” mainly depicted in Georgian churches according to the Early Christian tradition, before the 14th century. “Christ Pantocrator” appears in the dome under the influence of Palaeologan painting and afterwards occupies this place in the décor of the Late Middle Ages - churches of the Nativity of the Virgin and St.. George at Gelati (16th century), Sveti-Tskhoveli, Samtavisi, Tsilkani (17th century). Presumably, Christ Pantocrator was depicted in the dome of the Gremi and Akhali Shuamta churches too (16th century). Nikortsminda (17th century) is an exception, where in the dome area, according to the old tradition, the Cross is shown elevated by heavenly powers.

In the dome-décor program of the Georgian churches other characteristic peculiarities of the late period are observed. At Gelati, in the dome of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin, the composition of the “Divine Liturgy” is presented. This composition is very often located at the same place in monasteries on Mount Athos (e.g., Chelandari (G. Millet, 1927, pl. 64), Vatopedi (G. Millet, 1927, pl. 64), Molivoklisia (G. Millet, 1927, pl. 153), and Stavronikita (M. Chatzidakis, 1986, pl. 25); in the dome of Gremi church are de-



Bugeuli. The Church of the Virgin. The Annunciation, St. Cosma and St. Damian, The Descent from the Cross and Lamentation (16th century)

picted the "Mandylion" and "Keramion" as in Athonite churches, and at Meteora (e.g., Molivoklisia, Stavronikita, and Meteora (M. Chatzidakis, 1990, pl. 100,101). The representation in the dome pendentives of full-length figures of the Evangelists, sitting at desks, in the process of writing, becomes characteristic of Georgian painting from the 14th century through the influence of Byzantine painting (Tsalenjikha, 14th century), the Gelati churches of the Nativity of the Virgin and St.. George (16th century). By contrast, in earlier monuments half-length figures of evangelists were shown in medallions.

As compared with the earlier period, a significant difference is observable in late medieval altar décor as well. The traditional, for the domeless churches apse conch composition – the "Deesis" was replaced by the image of the Virgin; a new theme was introduced into the program – the composition of the "Divine Liturgy" (the Gelati church of the Nativity of the Virgin, Nekresi, Gremi), which is very popular in the altar décor Athonite churches (the Catholicon of the Athos Lavra (G. Millet, 1927, pl. 118), Docheiariou (G. Millet, 1927, pl. 219), the Church of St.. Nicholas of the Athos Lavra (G. Millet, 1927, pl. 256), etc.). It should be noted that these "novelties" did not affect Georgian "folk" painting.

In spite of the obvious relation to contemporary post-Byzantine painting, the professional, official painting retained features pointing to the link with the local tradition. For example, at Gelati, in the dome of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin, Christ Pantocrator is shown, according to the requirements of the

time, but the cross still occupies one of the significant places in the ensemble of the murals. The colossal cross decorated with precious stones entirely covers the heavenly zone of the vault of the western arm and is one of the dominant accents in the ensemble of the painting. It is also noteworthy that in the following domeless churches: Khashmi's Church of the Trinity, Alvani's Church of St.. John the Baptist and Nekresi's Church of the Dormition, as is inherent for the time, the Virgin is represented in the altar apse conch. The traditional conch composition - "Deesis" is still shown in such significant place as the vault (the images of Christ, the Virgin and St.. John the Baptist are inserted in medallions).

The mural programs of Georgian churches, despite their complexity and the insertion of some late iconographic themes, are in accord with the basic features and remain within the traditional framework when compared to the wall paintings of other Orthodox countries. In this regard, it is interesting that in Romanian painting the church calendar is illuminated and tat many-plot cycles of the martyrdoms of local saints are represented (P. Komarnesku, 1959, 31); in Russian painting from the 15th century numerous compositions appear on the topics of chants (O. I. Podobedova, 1972); and that in the monasteries of Mount Athos extended cycles of Biblical plots are represented (for example, at Stavronikita) (M. Chatzidakis, 1986, schemes I-IX).

Late Medieval Georgian painting reflected the peculiarities of the post-Byzantine period painting in iconography as well in style. The system of construc-



Gelati Monastery. The Church of the Nativity of the Virgin. The painting in the dome. (16th century)



Gelati Monastery. The Church of St. George Baptism. 16th century

tion of painting in the monuments we have discussed, corresponds with the general tendencies of the style of that time. However, Georgian painting, as compared with the Greek painting, is less overburdened with representations and scenes. This is markedly true at Gelati, in the murals of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin and the Church of St. George. Their tectonic structure indicates that the system of the painterly décor of the old, monumental remains is taken into account, and thereby contact with local tradition is not lost. In comparison with Byzantine monuments, in Georgian painting the distinctness of wall-painting ensembles is also retained to a greater extent in the Palaeologan period (I. Lordkipanidze, 1992,155).

In 16th-century Georgian painting stylistic features characteristic of post-Byzantine painting are manifested in the treatment of faces linked with icon-painting, the painterly modelling of garments, the elongated proportions of figures, the schematic character of drawing; also in the coloring, created by the alternation of bright color patches against a dark blue-blackish background. In spite of the general principle of the construction of the color gamut, the coloring in Georgian painting differs from the buoyant character of Greek painting. For example, the vivid red color, being of fundamental importance in the coloring of the painting by Theophan the Cretan, is less used in Georgian or does not occur in some paintings

and scarcely at all in the murals of the second half of the 16th century at Gelati, in the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin.

The links with the tradition are retained in the donor's portrait, which, according to the custom in Georgian painting, occupies the lower register and is distinguished by its large size. If in professional painting the faces of saints display no sign of the local ethnic type, the faces of historical persons with the long, twirled moustache and pencilled eyebrows (the fashion of that time) obviously reflect the local type; these features are found in paintings in both the St. George and the Nativity of the Virgin churches at Gelati.

Thus, 16th-century Georgian monumental painting developed in the general direction of post-Byzantine painting, but through certain features it retained a link with local traditions.

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INSPIRATIONS FROM GEORGIA?: OBSERVATIONS ON THE EXTERNAL WALL DECORATION OF TWO PAKOURIANOS MONASTIC FOUNDATIONS IN THE BACHKOVO-ASENOVGRAD REGION OF BULGARIA

After a long and distinguished career spanning some twenty years, the most luminous moments of the career of *sebastos* Pakourinos were yet to come. His assistance to the Komneni in the coup to usurp the imperial throne earned him the title of *megas domestikos* of the Western imperial armies¹, an honor bestowed upon him by Alexios I (1081-1118). This title came with imperial patronage and the gift of numerous additional properties in the Balkans. Thus, Gregorios Pakourianos is an exponent of that military aristocracy who were later to become part of the provincial Byzantine land-owning elite due to the fact that they were endowed rather generously with vast real estate properties by grateful rulers in exchange for loyalty and tenure of service. He was also a patron of religious institutions and in laying the foundation of the monastery of the Mother of God *Petritzonitissa* in present day Backovo in 1083 he was realizing a life-long dream². This monastery, also called the Bachkovo Monastery, was populated by a community of Georgian monks. One of the two buildings discussed in this study is a known Pakourianos foundation, namely the ossuary of the Bachkovo Monastery and the other, the church of St.. George Metoshki in the former village of Stanymachos (present day Asenovgrad) was very likely a Pakourianos foundation³.

This study proposes to make a comparative stylistic analysis of the external facade decoration of those two Pakourianos foundations and the medieval buildings of the Caucasus. The intent is to show that this artistic idiom has been borrowed from the Caucasus with the earliest extant example coming from Georgia. The notion of the importation of ar-

tistic ideas here from the Trans-Caucasian program of facade decoration will be examined in light of the founder's land of origin and his connections with the lands of the Caucasus.

BACHKOVO OSSUARY⁴

The ossuary is part of the Bachkovo monastic complex and it stands to this day almost entirely in its original execution. Its function was as follows: the upper story was intended to be used as a regular church, i.e. for eucharistic services, funeral services and memorial services, while the lower level was a functioning crypt. In typology, it is a two-storied hall church, or a two-storied single nave barrel-vaulted church with a narthex. In plan, the upper church is a single space central rectangle with a sanctuary apse and a narthex. The nave was once covered by a barrel vault. The narthex was originally an open portico. The plan of the crypt likewise consists of three spaces: a central rectangle, a sanctuary and a narthex. The crypt is barrel-vaulted.

The Bachkovo ossuary remains preserved in whole except for some reworking of the western facade. The ornamental feature of interest here is a twice-recessed blind arcade delineating flat niches that runs along the full length of each of the southern, eastern and the upper level of the northern facades (Fig. 1). In detail, the arcade is made up of pilasters. In the center of each pilaster and attached to it is a semi-column. Thus these vertical compositions of pilasters and engaged columns with semi-cylindrical profiles rise to form arches that echo the exact same profile. As the arches spring and connect the pilasters they merge into one another cleanly and in a continuous manner, uninterrupted by capitals or impostes. Thus the columns and arches become a part of the same continuous organism.

ST. GEORGE METOSHKI⁵

As already discussed above, the church most likely dates from either the end of the 11th century or the 12th century. The typikon of the Bachkovo monastery reads: "Below the village of Stanymachos, an inn was built over the two roads"⁶. The church of St.. George Metoshki was erected for the purpose of servicing the travelers to this inn. The present day plan of

Medieval Georgia



Bachkovo ossuary- facade decoration

the church is a three-apsed basilica with four pairs of free-standing supports and a single apse at the sanctuary. Both St. George Metoshki and the inn were part of the Bachkovo monastic complex.

The part of the church which appears to be from the original building campaign is the eastern parts of the southern facade, notably the external wall decoration. The only remnants of it here are featured in a four-part blind arcade delineating flat niches in the easternmost part of the southern wall. It is twice-recessed where the vertical line of each pilaster curves into an arch in a clean sweep uninterrupted by capitals. Upon a close examination, however, one can observe that towards the very bottom of the pilasters, the rounded profile of the bricks betrays the fact that there was once a semi-column that lay on top of the flat surface of a pilaster. One can thus surmise that this wall decoration at its inception was most likely the same as that at the Bachkovo ossuary, namely, a pilaster with a semi-column attached to it in both the vertical features as well as the arches. We can also project that this program of facade decoration probably extended to the northern facade and possibly the eastern one as well.

A painting on the northern wall of the crypt of the Bachkovo ossuary depicts the patrons of the monastery, Gregorios and his brother Apasios Pakourianos

holding the model of a church, most likely that of the mother church or Katholikon. And there on the exterior one can see a blind arcade. The fresco is badly damaged but one can make out what appear to be columns connected by arches attesting to the presence of a blind arcade in yet a third building of this monastic complex. Thus in various buildings commissioned by the founder Pakourianoss, we are more than likely confronted with a program of external wall decoration that is fairly uniform in its utilization of the blind arcade, the basic constituent part of which is the semi-column attached to a pilaster.

This peculiar kind of blind arcade is a type of wall decoration never before observed in Bulgarian architecture, but only the blind arcade will be considered in the study at hand.

This decorative program is well known in the Caucasus where it has been used extensively, mostly for embellishing parts of the exterior of ecclesiastical buildings, while very occasionally used in the interior as well. Parallels have been made between the Bachkovo ossuary external decorative program and medieval Armenian facade decoration, namely the one that is characteristic of the school of Ani from the 10th and 11th centuries⁷. This author, however, would like to propose a Georgian example from the 1st quarter of the 11th century whose stylistic kinship to the Bulgarian monuments appears unprecedented in the Caucasian school of medieval architecture. I am referring to the Cathedral of St. George at Alaverdi, in Kakheti from the first quarter of the 11th century⁸ (Fig. 2). In typology, it is an oblong domed trefoil with 4 free-standing supports inscribed within a rectangle. Its extremely elegant vertical elan makes this the tall-



Cathedral of St. George in Alaverdi - decoration of apse (photo taken from Alpaogo-Novello's Art and architecture...)

est religious building of medieval Georgia. Here the decorative feature is on the inside of the building. It is a blind arcade that adorns the apse of the sanctuary. It delineates semi-cylindrical niches. The units are composed of pilasters on top of which lie semi-columns. The same pattern is repeated in the arches with perfect harmony. The lines are continuous, uninterrupted by capitals or imposts. The building material is stone. The effect that is created is one of great aesthetic beauty, perhaps as much in the simplicity of its conception as in the perfection of its execution and rhythmicity. There are, however, points of divergence between the Georgian antecedent and the Bulgarian examples. One is the building material (stone at Alaverdi vs. alternating layers of stone and brick in Bulgaria). A second one is the blind arcade (scalloped into niches at Alaverdi vs. one that has been superimposed against a flat wall in the Bulgarian buildings). The third one is the choice of site for the decoration (the lower part of a sanctuary apse at Alaverdi vs. an external facade in the Bulgarian buildings). Stylistically, though, the decorative feature which we see at the Church of St. George at Alaverdi seems identical to what we have at the Bachkovo ossuary. It is almost as if the artists at work at Bachkovo were aware of the Georgian prototype from a half a century ago and had it in mind when working at and around Bachkovo.

There are numerous other variants on the theme of the blind arcade in both Georgian as well as Armenian medieval architecture. It achieves its greatest prominence on the exterior of the church facade. In fact this concept for architectural ornamentation is very prevalent and attains a very high degree of sophistication and evocative aestheticism in Georgian ecclesiastical architecture from the 1st quarter of the 10th through the 2nd half of the 11th centuries). Some of the earliest examples that bear evidence for the possible importation of artistic ideas from Georgia into Bulgaria come from the historic principalities of Tao, Klarjeti and Shavsheti. Representatives of this highly ornamental style of façade decoration are Tbeti, Oshki and Ishkhani. Tbeti built sometime before 918 is a cruciform domed structure of the "croix libre" type⁹. Oshki was built between 958 and 961 and is an oblong domed trefoil on 4 free-standing supports¹⁰ (Fig. 3).



Cathedral of Oshki (image taken from Dr. Irene Giviashvili's website: www.virtualtao-klarjeti.com)

Ishkhani, completed in 1032 is an oblong domed cross on four free-standing supports¹¹. In addition, there are a few more examples from the Georgian school of the 1st part of the 11th century from Georgia proper. Exponents there are Alaveri Cathedral in Kakheti, once again, the Cathedral of Kutaisi in Imereti, King Bagrat III's church (Bagrati Cathedral)¹² (Fig. 4) and the church of Samtavisi in Kartli¹³. Bagrati Cathedral, begun at the end of the 10th century and completed in 1003 is an oblong domed tre-foil on free-standing supports and Samtavisi, of 1030, is an oblong cross on free-standing supports inscribed within a rectangle. In front of the exquisite blind arcature of the majestic Georgian cathedrals from the historic lands in north-eastern Turkey and from the great epoch of cathedral building in Georgia proper in the early part of the 11th century (Tbeti, Oshki, Ishkhani, Bagrati, Alaverdi, Mtskheta and Samtavisi) the viewer is confronted with an elaborate program of segmentation of the wall and plasticity. The flatness of the wall is played off against a complex and sophisticated maze of pilasters on which lie semi-columns, niches framing flat and triangular spaces and arches that manifest themselves on multiple levels. The vertical element can be made up of two parts, i.e. a pilaster on top of which



Cathedral of Kutaisi in Imereti (Bagrati Cathedral)- facade decoration

lies a semi-column. In this case, the resulting arches and niches are two-stepped. The vertical element can be made up of three parts- a semi-column on top of which lies a pilaster, on top of which lies another semi-column. In this case the arches and niches are thrice-recessed. The latter is not seen in the Bulgarian examples. The Georgian program consists of a system of different design elements coordinated and configured together to form a complex, but refined and coherent ensemble of façade decoration.

The earliest Armenian prototype for the Bachkovo ossuary arcade is that at the Cathedral of the Bagratid Kingdom of Ani, commissioned in 989 by King Smbat II and completed under the auspices of Queen Katranide in 1001²⁴ (Fig. 5). It was built by the architect Trdat. In typology it is a cruciform plan in a rectangular perimeter with four free-standing supports and the cupola rising over the central square. The building with its great internal volume, spatial design and individual architectural elements boasts an air of elegance as well as slenderness and grace. Noteworthy for the subject of this paper are certain aspects of the decorative treatment of the wall, namely the blind arcade that envelops the building in its entirety on the outside. The northern and southern and western facades are each broken up into a series of deeply sweeping elegant blind arches that spring from small rectangular impost. The arches are flat and two-stepped. Below the impost and extending to the ground are thin pilasters. Each pilaster is embellished by a slim semi-column placed in the middle of

it. The thus formed twice-recessed niches between the columns are shallow or flat.

Two other close Armenian parallels could be the Cathedral at Marmashen (988-1029) and the north church, both from the monastic complex at Marmashen²⁵ (Fig. 11). One observes in both monuments the already familiar blind arcade that winds around the perimeter of each of the two buildings. The niches that are formed under the arches are twice-recessed and flat. The vertical element, which has gained some complexity here, consists of a very flat pilaster, on top of which are attached two semi-columns. At the junctions between the arches, there are impost. The overall effect is a feeling of buoyancy and grace that we have by now become all too accustomed to in viewing the Caucasian parallels.

It is very noteworthy that the blind arcades on the external facades of the Georgian monuments discussed so far, and thus applies to the Armenian ones as well, are indeed very different stylistically than those at the Bachkovo ossuary and at St. George Metoshki in Bulgaria. The Caucasian design exhibits pilasters, semi-columns and arches are more slender and more elegant and the arcades much taller. The Bulgarian examples are stockier and somewhat shorter. The blind arcade of the Bulgarian examples is made up of mixed masonry of stone alternating with rows of brick while in the Caucasus it is rendered exclusively in stone. In Georgia, some arches spring from impost and in some cases, as in Bulgaria, they do not. Some arches delimit a deeply concave space, a deeply triangular space or simply a flat wall, as in Bulgaria. In some instances in both Armenia and Georgia we have taller and wider arches flanked by smaller and shorter ones at the transepts as opposed to the rhythmic unity and synchrony of the Bulgarian examples. The effervescence of the Georgian program of exterior decoration contrasts with the Bulgarian preference for austerity and simplicity.

In the course of my research, I have been unable to find evidence attesting to a Georgian presence in Thrace prior to the foundation of the Bachkovo monastery. However, the great migratory waves of Armenians in the Byzantine Empire to Thrace, in particular, were clearly in evidence in the 7th²⁶, 8th²⁷

and 9th¹⁸ centuries. The Armenian colony composed of emigrants from Asia Minor formed in and around the district of Phillippopolis in the second half of the eighth century and there was an influx of large numbers of Paulician heretics and Armenians clustering around Phillipopolis in the ninth century. Later and as part of their support at the frontier zone of the Empire, Armenian military personnel was recruited to the Balkans at the service of Emperor John Tsimiskes who is known to have been of Armenian descent, and the Emperors Basil II and Alexios I Komnenos¹⁹. Thus, the Armenians are in evidence in Thrace from the 7th through the 12th centuries in their capacity as soldiers and imperial military appointees.

Gregorios Pakourianos' connections to the Caucasus are strongly attested to. The founder writes: "The present *typikon* was written in Greek, Georgian and Armenian for our very sacred monastery of the most holy Mother of God *Petriztonitissa* in the month of December of the seventh indiction, year 6592, and was signed in Armenian by me myself, Gregorios Pakourianos, the *sebastos* and *grand domesticos* of the West "... "It is written in Greek, Georgian and Armenian because the monks of this monastery happen to be Georgians"²⁰... From the *typikon* we also learn that the *grand domesticos* is of Iberian origin but has Armenian non-Chalcedonian relatives. Anna Comnena writes in her *Alexiade* that he belongs to a famous Armenian family²¹. Thus, whether Pakourianos is Iberian in origin or ethnically Armenian, of Chalcedonian confession is unclear, but irrelevant to the present discussion. Furthermore, in the course of his travels, he goes to many lands looking for his fortune, among them - Armenia and Iberia²². He possessed properties in the East - in the regions of Ani and Taik and in the Armeniac theme²³. He served at Kars and Theodosiopoulos (Erzerum) and was duke of Theodosiopoulos²⁴.

This is a work in gestation. In conclusion, at best, one can surmise that the uniqueness of the blind arcade in the monuments under consideration here, echoing images of Pakourianos' homeland is a reflection of his personal taste. In transplanting these artistic images from his homeland, he brought over symbols and tokens of his cultural heritage that were dear to him and wanted to make them part of the architectural vocabulary of the landscape of his new home in the West.



Cathedral of Ani - facade decoration
(photo taken from Thierry's *L'Armenie...*)

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Notes

1. V. A. Arutiunova-Fidianian (intro., transl., and commentary), *Tipik Grigoriia Pakuriana (Typikon of Gregorios Pakourianos)*. Erevan: Izdatelstvo AN Armianskoi SSR, 1978, pp. 68, 74, 120 (in Russian); Robert Jordan (transl.), "Pakourianos: typikon of Gregory Pakourianos for the monastery of the Mother of God Petritztonitissa in Bachkovo," *Byzantine Monastic Foundations 2* edited by John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000, pp. 519, 522-523, 557; Paul Lemerle, "Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin: le typikon de Grégoire Pakourianos." Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1977, pp. 134, 157; G. Tsankova, P. Tivchev and V. Tupkova (transl.), "Iz tipika na Bachkovskiiia manastir"(From the typikon of the Bachkovo

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2. Arutiunova-Fidanian, *Tipik*, pp. 68, 75, 120; Jordan, "Pakourianos: typikon", pp. 519, 523, 557; Lemerle, "Le typikon", pp. 134, 157; Tsankova, "Iz tipika", pp. 180-181, 195.

3. The exact dating of this church is not known and there is a divergence of opinion in scholarship with respect to this issue: Stefan Boyadjiev and I believe it to be contemporary with the Bachkovo ossuary i.e., to have been built in the late 11th century, N. Chaneva-Dechevska, A. Grabar and K. Miiatev date it to the 12th century and D. Tsonchev puts in the period of 11-14th centuries.

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IMAGES OF HISTORICAL PERSONS IN GEORGIAN ARCHITECTURAL SCULPTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES (6TH THROUGH 11TH CENTURY)

The portrayal of historical characters assumed particular importance in the medieval fine arts of Christendom. The images of people who lived in a temporary reality were often depicted together with divinities as part of symbolic compositions dedicated to Salvation.

The earliest examples of this theme in Georgia survive on stone crosses, chancel barriers and church reliefs. Especially opulent in religious compositions of this kind is architectural sculpture of the 6th through the 11th centuries. Many Georgian church façades depict images of royal and ecclesiastical authorities and of builders and craftsmen. The location of these images is not strictly regulated, but they are usually displayed above doors and windows of churches.

Georgian donor reliefs of the Middle Ages are characterized by a wide range of compositional schemes, which can be explained by the presence of thematic variations.

The earliest use of this theme in Georgian architectural sculpture is evidenced on the façades of Jvari (Holy Cross) Church at Mtskheta (6th to 7th century) (G. Chubinashvili, 1936, 83-114). The church presents the figures of the erismtavaris (rulers) of Kartli and numerous members of their families in supplicatory poses. Attended by angels, all of them on bended knees before the Savior, the Virgin and St. Stephen. The majority of reliefs adorning Jvari Church are related to the theme of the Salvation, which is indicated by the poses and gestures of the figures, as well as the supplicatory inscriptions carved on the reliefs. Of note is the scene of the benediction of erismtavari Stepanoz I of Kartli by Christ on the central relief of the east façade (fig. 1). Christ is shown as putting his hand on the head of Stepanoz, who kneels before him. The blessing of

other historical characters shown here is presented without a touching hand. In medieval art we can find numerous images of royal and imperial figures, whom Christ, a heavenly creature or the right hand of the Lord, touches a crown (A. Grabar, 1946, 112), which points to the divine origin of the royal throne and to the idea of benediction by the Lord, e.g., two 10th-11th century enamel plaques of the Khakhuli triptych (G. Abramishvili, 1988, ill.11), a 10th-century ivory plaque at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (D. Talbot Rice, 2002, ill. 88) and the mosaics in the narthex of the church of Martorana in Palermo (D. Talbot Rice, 2002, ill. 152) and in the church of Monreale, in Sicily, Italy (D. Talbot Rice, 2002, ill. 155). Judging by these examples, it is possible that apart from the idea of the Salvation, the relief cross of Mtskheta represents the Lord's consecration of erismtavari Stepanoz I of Kartli, who "resides on the royal throne." (The theme of the Salvation is combined with the idea of the benediction of royal authorities.)

Benediction by the touch of a hand can be seen on a 10th-century relief from the village of Orjalari, Javakheti (T. Khundadze, 2005, 100-109). Before the wingless angel are depicted four historical characters in a prayerful pose with small crosses, attributes of holy martyrs (fig. 2). According to their clothes, namely a shin-length dress with a belt, fitting tight on the body and becoming wider below, and tall boots – these must be secular persons. Regrettably, there is not sufficient evidence in historical records to identify them properly. It can, however, be presumed that the painting shows laymen of local significance. Their depiction as martyrs must be due to some historical facts. Therefore, the touching of a hand can be a sign of guardianship of those who suffer for being faithful and of the blessing given by the angel of the Lord, as in the case of the compositions dedicated to the theme of the miraculous salvation of three men described in the Old Testament (Dan. 3,12-95).

The theme of intercession for salvation and benediction also occurs on the tympanum at Borjomi (9th century) (N. Aladashvili, 1977, ill. 65), where, like on the Jvari Church reliefs, angels intercede for historical characters and the benediction is rendered only through a gesture; one of the reliefs at Shepiak



Jvari (Holy Cross) Church at Mtskheta. Relief showing the benediction of Stepanoz I

(10th century) (L. Rcheulishvili, 1963, 167-181) displays two historical persons interceding for the salvation in an orant pose; also with their hands raised in prayer are displayed four secular persons on a slab at Adzikvi Church, 10th century (R. Schmerling, 1969, 115-121).

The relief capping the window of the sanctuary of Vale Church (10th^h century) (R. Mepisashvili, 1950, 25-52; N. Aladashvili, 1977, ill. 90-91) features a woman interceding for the salvation of a soul before the Virgin and Child; symmetrically opposed to her Gabriel the Archangel is represented, with an accompanying inscription, "Gabriel the Evangelist," which emphasizes the idea of the Incarnation of the Lord. At the same time, the archangel also intercedes for the woman presented. Thus, in this case, the personal theme of the Salvation is combined with the Incarnation of the Lord. (The relief hence concisely presents the idea of the Christian Salvation.)

There are numerous figures of historical characters shown with a church model before the blessing Savior or other divinities. On the one hand, the buildings depicted present a simplified design reflecting the architectural type to which a given donor relief belongs, and on the other hand, symbolize the entire Christian Church. Through this a connection is established between man and God. One of the most visible examples is a 9th-century relief at Opiza (N. Aladashvili, 1977, 88-89, ill. 63), which displays an enlarged right hand of the Savior "trespassing" in the framed "earthly area" and consecrating the church and, through it, the king. Next to Christ, in the "divine sphere," is depicted a figure in a supplicatory pose, who is identified as the Biblical prophet, King David, interceding for the salvation of the donor's soul. A similar scheme can be found on the reliefs at Uravli Agara (10th century) and Akhaltsikhe (10th century) (N. Chubinashvili, 1976, 46-48, ill. 23; T. Khundadze, unpublished).

An original solution of the donor theme is offered on a relief at Benisi (T. Dvali, 1986, 119-136), where the builder of the church presents a model of it to the Virgin with the Child. Below, bordering on the frame and symbolically "standing on the ground" another church of a similar design is represented. (The representation of two churches within a single composition must have had a reason.) Architectural studies have shown that Benisi Church was built in the 9th century and repaired a century later. It is possible that this relief, which, judging by its style, dates from the 11th century, shows the donor's dedication of the church to the Virgin. The donor himself later re-



Orjalari. Relief showing the benediction of historical characters

stored the building – and the first church must have been dedicated to the holy warriors, which is further attested by an inscription carved on the image of the lower church: “St.. Tevdore, ... Giorgi.” The areas flanking the slab show the Virgin and an angel on each side, turned toward the donor, as well as stylized plants, which introduce a motif of Eden into the composition, thus increasing the importance of the theme of the Salvation.

Another variation of the theme can be found on a relief at Kvaisa-Jvari (10th century) (R. Mepisashvili, 1972, 141-161), where a donor is displayed with a church model in his hand along with the scene of the miraculous salvation of Jonah the Prophet. The scene contains two key moments from Jonah’s life, namely his ordeal and salvation, which is represented through the devouring and throwing out of Jonah by a double-headed dragon. This theme from the Old Testament, which in the Christian metaphorical system signifies the Salvation and Resurrection, often recurs in Georgian ecclesiastical hymns and prayers, even in respect to the salvation of a human soul, e.g., “save the prophet from the dragon and save me from sins...” (Michael Modrekili, 1979, 5) In fine arts these words find a parallel with the relief Kvaisa-Jvari.

The donor of Joisubani Church (10th century) (N. Aladashvili, 1978, 67-76), with a church model in his hands, is incorporated into the composition of the Last Judgment located between the reliefs surrounding the sanctuary window (fig. 3). This is one of the earliest representations of the Last Judgment, but in an abridged form: the slab terminating the window features the enthroned Christ as judge juxtaposed by archangels. The content of the scene is highlighted by



Opiza. Donor relief

cinnabar inscriptions carved on the slab, which read as follows: “Judgment” and “Savior.” Below the slab, on one side, is shown the weighing of the souls of the naked figures of the faithful (above) and of the sinful (below) and a donor interceding for the salvation of the souls and with a trumpet heralding the Last Judgment. Thus, in this case, the theme of the salvation of the soul of a concrete person (Gabriel Mamasakhlisi or Gabriel the Abbot) is considered within the overall context of the Last Judgment.

The south façade of Oshki Church (10th century) (E. Takaishvili, 1952, 45-67, ill. 54 2; V. Beridze, 1981, 164-166; W. Djobadze, 2007, 112-163) depicts two donors, kings David and Bagrat, each holding a church model, on both sides of the Deesis associated with the theme of the Last Judgment and the Salvation. Yet, the words of the prayer and intercession in the inscriptions accompanying the reliefs also refer to the earthly well-being: “... exalt in both lives...” Thus apart from the scene of praying for the salvation of these persons with the intercession of the Virgin and John the Baptist, the blessing of the kings by God is also displayed.

On the Akhasheni relief in Javakheti (11th century) (N. Chubinashvili, 1959, 138), a donor is shown with a model of a domed church in his hand before the mounted figure of St.. George slaying Emperor Diocletian. In this case, the theme of the salvation through faith is considered in conjunction with the idea of defeating evil.

On the Ijareti slab (10th century) (D. Tumanishvili, unpublished), a historical character is presumably represented next to St.. George, but the saint here is shown standing and holding a scepter surmounted by a cross.

The relief carved on the gable of the east façade of Tskarostavi Church shows a donor, whom the accompanying inscriptions identify as Bishop Giorgi. The donor is shown as presenting a model of the church to the Virgin and Child (Takaishvili E., 1909 XII, 49-50, ill. IX).

There are numerous instances of depicting one or two donors with a church model, e.g., Figures of individual donors appear on the Doliskana (W. Djobadze, 2007, 47-89; D. Khoshtaria, 2005; 111-125, ill.

22, 24), Bredzi (N. Chubinashvili, 1971, 27-65, ill. 7), and Ateni Sioni (G. Abramishvili, 1993, 244-245) reliefs, while paired figures can be seen at Petobani (N. Aladashvili, 1977, 88-89, ill. 72) (a man and a woman), Shepiaki (Rati Baghvashi and his son Liparit) (L. Rcheulishvili, 1963, 167-181), Tsaishi (T. Khundadze, 1998, 24-29) and Khozhorna (G. Gagoshidze, 2003, 47-59, ills. 30-31). It is of note that the depiction of two figures on one relief also is found in Armenian façade sculpture, e.g., the donor reliefs at the Sanain (10th century), Akhpat (10th century), Dadivank and Arichi (13th century) churches.

There are many reliefs showing historical characters on both sides of a cross, in the position of praying, e.g., the reliefs at Kvaisa-Jvari (R. Mepisashvili, V. Tsintsadze, 1975, ill. 75), Zeda Tmogvi and Tsorbisi. These images are evidence of the centuries-old local tradition of the veneration of a cross, which also found reflection in Georgian stone-cross (K. Machabeli, 1998) reliefs of an earlier period (from the 5th through the 7th centuries), e.g., a large stone shaft from Brdadzor, and the Dmanisi, Kataula and Buzaveti stone shafts.

A number of original compositions also survive, e.g., three historical characters in a supplicatory pose turned toward the church plan at Korogho (N. Aladashvili, 1977, ills. 116-117), the scene of the consecration of a church shown on the top of a window of St. George's Church at Bza (R. Schmerling, 1969, 107-113, ills. 15-17); a liturgical procession on one of the reliefs at Joisubani; secular persons mounted on horses at Vale (N. Aladashvili, 1977, ills. 92-93) and Tsorbisi; a complex, multi-figure composition from Zegani, in which a donor with a church model is displayed together with the Virgin and Child, angels, a man with his legs crossed in an Oriental style, and a rabbit (I. Giviashvili, I. Koplataдзе, 2004, 88-92).

The conceptual and compositional rendering of the images of architects and craftsmen also leaves room for interpretation. Some of these persons are presented in a supplicatory pose, as for instance, a prostrate figure in the drum of the dome of Jvari (Holy Cross) Church at Mtskheta, a bust of a craftsman set in a medallion next to the south façade window at Doliskana (10th century), which is accompanied with



Joisubani Church. Reliefs on the sanctuary window

an inscription saying "made with the hand of deacon Gabriel," and is also turned to his namesake, Gabriel the Archangel (I. Giviashvili, I. Koplataдзе, 2004, 63; D. Khoshtaria, 2005, 111-125, ill. 23), with his hands raised in supplication. Some reliefs show craftsmen equipped with their tools or in the process of working, e.g., reliefs at Ruisi Church, Sapara Monastery of the Virgin and Korogho Church. The latter follows the entire history of building the church from beginning to its consecration (N. Aladashvili, 1977, ills. 99, 102-109, 113-115).

Early medieval historical characters shown on Georgian reliefs are mostly presented without a halo and more modestly – on bended knees (Jvari at Mtskheta), in a smaller size (Borjomi tympanum) or in the area demarcated from the "heavenly space" through a frame (Opiza).

Beginning from the 10th century, it was mostly kings and clergymen who were depicted with a halo, though this essential attribute in some cases had a different symbolic meaning, e.g., the halo of King Sum-

Medieval Georgia

bat in the dome of Doliskana Church signifies the divine blessing given to the living king, which is further confirmed by the inscriptions on the church (I. Giviashvili, I. Koplatadze, 2004, 59-61; D. Khoshtaria, 2005, 111-125, ill. 23-24). Kumurdo Church, which features the haloed figure of King Leon of the Abkhazs in the squinch under the dome, another honorable location in the interior, was executed after the death of the king. Apart from the royal glory, the halo here seems to be referring to his presence "in a different sphere," which is further attested by the figure of Queen Gurandukht shown without a halo in another squinch



Tbeti. Image of a donor

(N. Aladashvili, 1977, 94-96, ill. 81-84). The figures of kings at Oshki are presented with rectangular haloes, which suggests that they were depicted during their lifetime. Royal authorities at Tsovbisi (9th century), Dirbi (10th century) (G. Gagoshidze, N. Chikhladze, 2006, ill. 14, fig. 17) and Zeda Tmogvi (11th century) are depicted with round haloes.

Among the ecclesiastical persons shown on reliefs of particular note are the haloed figures of Tevdore Matskvereli (Bishop of Atskuri) at Uravli Agara (10th century) (N. Chubinashvili, 1976, 46-48, ill. 23), of Gabriel Mamasakhlisi (Abbot Gabriel) and church servants partaking in a liturgical procession at Joisubani. The haloed figures carved on the Tsaishi reliefs (10th century) (T. Khundadze, 1988, 24-29) may also be ecclesiastical persons. The one wearing a cape and holding a book in his hand is likely to be a priest, and another, who appears to be younger, a clergyman of a lower rank.

Characterized by a mix of artistic and stylistic features, the reliefs reflect a wide range of aesthetic trends and tastes of different periods and regions. It is donor reliefs that most vividly display various stages of the development of medieval Georgian relief sculpture.

Some of the early Georgian reliefs sustained the Hellenistic artistic tradition. This is most vividly illustrated by the carvings at Jvari Church in Mtskheta. The proportions and motion of these figures carved in high relief, as well as their round forms are redolent of the patterns of late Antiquity.

The following stage is illustrated by a relief at Opiza, the artistic expressiveness of which is formed by a surface slightly embossed from the background and adorned with a graphic drawing, rather than volumetric rendering. The body here is devoid of material properties, and appears dematerialized and abstract; the head, eyes and arms being enlarged, the proportions appear awkward; the figure of a human being is presented as an arbitrary-schematic sign of a man, a soul confined in a visible shape.

The same style characterizes the Borjomi, Ijareti, Joisubani, Uravli Agara, Vale, Adzikvi, Bza and other reliefs, the artistic rendering of which reveals a graphic, rather than a sculptural approach.

Georgian reliefs of the second half of the 10th century display increased interest in the sculptural rendering of the human figure. It was the time when figures were carved in a higher relief, though arbitrariness, disproportion and static postures were retained. Examples of this style include the reliefs at Petobani, Vale, Zarzma Tskaro and Akhasheni in Javakheti.

This new artistic trend found its most vivid manifestation in the architectural sculpture of the Tao-Klarjeti royal churches, i.e., at Tbeti Church (10th century) (K. Machabeli, 1968, 150-162; N. et M. Thierry, 1999, 77-100) a donor relief is carved in high relief (height 3.0 inches/10 cm), the block-like volume of which appears in the three-fourth projection. The proportions turned longer and the height of the body increased (44.5 inches/113 cm).

The Oshki reliefs present a more advanced step of the aforementioned trend. The proportions of the figures of donors in the Deesis composition on the south façade are even more elongated and refined, and the height of figures is almost life-size – 57.4 inches/146 cm. The parts of the body seem to be more differentiated and the postures less bound, thanks to which the “movement” is more convincing. From one side, the figures are detached from the wall and take shape in the space.

The sculptural heads in the upper portion of the south façade of King Bagrat's Cathedral in Kutaisi (10th to 11th century) (V. Beridze, 1974, 52-53, 133; N. Aladashvili, 1977, 135-140, ill. 140), which some scholars identify as kings, more vividly display the predilection for sculptural rendering. Completely detached from the wall surface, the heads almost turn into round sculptures. The facial features are carved in relief. Their elongated ovals, high cheekbones and internal tension are reminiscent of expressive images of Roman sculpture.

The style continued to exist and develop further in Georgian sculpture of the early 11th century, which can be illustrated by the reliefs embellishing the Nikortsinda, Katskhi and Samtavisi church façades, as well as by the images carved on the chancel barriers at Sapara, Shio Mghvime and Urtkhvi (N. Aladashvili, 1977, 143-215), among others.

The façades of churches dating from the second

half of the 11th century and the 13th century almost entirely lack reliefs. (From the 13th century through the late Middle Ages figural images, characterized by two-dimensional rendering and graphical, decorative style, can be found randomly on the walls of the churches.) Thus the process of the development of Georgian architectural sculpture came to an abrupt end. This must have been caused by the final alienation of the Orthodox Church of Eastern Christendom from the Latin Church in 1054, under Catholicos Michael Cerularius of Constantinople (S. Dille, 1998, 109-110; A. Kajdan, 1968, 149). The attitudes of the two churches to religious dogmas and ecclesiastical rites, as well as aesthetic values, diverged markedly.

It appears plausible that the further advance of three-dimensional rendering, almost reaching the use of round forms in sculpture, was rejected by Georgian ecclesiastical art because of its loyalty to Orthodox artistic traditions.

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MAIN TRENDS IN THE EARLY MEDIÉVAL GEORGIAN FAÇADE SCULPTURE OF THE 12TH - 18TH CENTURIES

The pioneering work in the study of medieval Georgian sculpture was undertaken by the renowned Georgian art historian, Academician Giorgi Chubinashvili. It was thanks to his fundamental studies that the main line and phases of the development of Georgian sculpture in general and repoussé art in particular were defined. The study of sculptures, namely those that were 'architectural' reliefs, was continued by his disciples, among whom Professor Natela Aladashvili should be granted the first place.

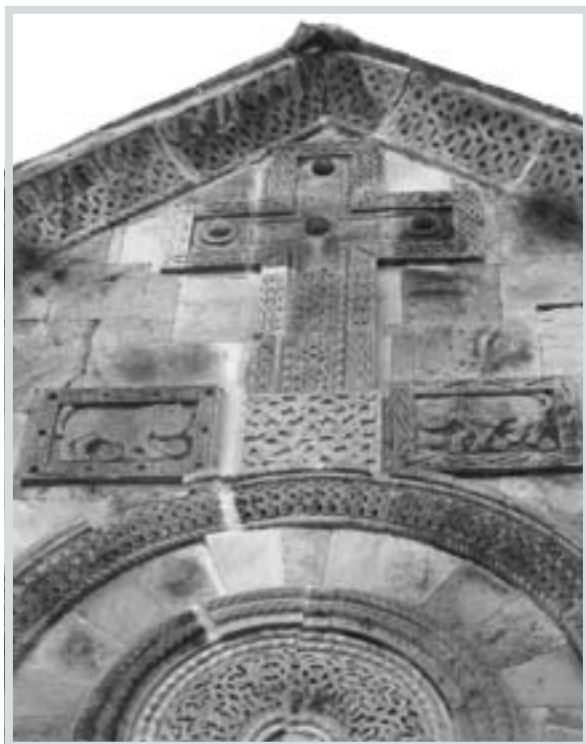
It has been commonly acknowledged that Georgian sculpture has undergone several stages of development. The 5th-6th century saw the introduction of Christian, Greco-Roman themes, and sculptural, voluminous means of rendering, which led to imitated sculpturalism (e.g. Holy Cross Church at Mtskheta and Martvili Church). The new trend in Georgia had to face a two-dimensional, decorative rendering (Edzani Sioni, Kvemo Bolnisi, Khandisi stele) which had evolved from the local tradition. Being strange to the local culture, the imported forms failed to develop further, due to which the 8th- and 9th-century Georgian relief sculpture of the transitional period, marked by creative searches based on the local soil, came to be dominated by a flat, graphical, decorative line (e.g., the relief of Ashot Kuropalates at Opiza, the Gveldesi chancel barrier and the Usaneti stele). Later, in the 10th century, the predilection for a truly sculptural and voluminous rendering turned into a trend of the period (Oshki, Petobani, Vale, etc.). The 11th century was the heyday of Georgian art (Nikortsinda, Svetitskhoveli). Like the 10th century, it was one of the most prolific and intensive periods, in which the trend toward sculpturalism reached its highest point. It was the time of the greatest accomplishments in the history of Georgian relief sculpture (this found the most

obvious reflection in the art of minor sculpture, especially in chancel barrier reliefs and repoussé artwork). The late 11th century saw the beginning of the decline of Georgian sculpture and repoussé art.

It was because of such a development that the long, post-11th-century period in the history of sculpture remained beyond the attention of art historians. It appears difficult to fully analyze the progress and problems of the following centuries and to make accurate conclusions. Yet it is possible to offer certain assumptions in relation to relief sculpture.

The outer walls of Georgian churches dating from the 12th through the 16th centuries lack thematic compositions that would be inspired by a single idea uniting the façades. It was either that the exteriors were no longer adorned with such systems of façade decoration or that they did not survive because of the ravages of time (especially in the 14th and 15th centuries). The relief compositions to be seen on the façades of the churches from this period (Pitareti, Kazreti, Eratsminda, Tsunda, Tsughrughasheni, Dmanisi Sioni, Maghalaant Eklesia, Sapara, Sadguri, Chitakhevi bell-tower and others) are mostly unrelated to each other. Characterized by different levels of craftsmanship, most of these small carvings afford an affinity with minor works of sculpture, which diminishes the force and sense of monumentality of façade carving. The style, as well as the quality of stone sculpturing from the period, is also varied, though these works include some fairly refined carvings and works that continue the line that emerged in the Georgian revival of the medieval period (12th and 13th centuries). Yet, even the best examples of this time, including figural and ornamental reliefs, are marked by weakened creative force and reduced vigor.

The architectural sculpture of the 12th and 13th centuries was dominated by ornamentation rich in vegetal and somewhat geometric motifs, as well as ornamental decoration which almost fully replaced figural images on façade surfaces. Thus, beginning from this period until the 17th century, figural representations, intertwined into ornamentation and scrolls, remained subordinate to ornamental sculpture and retained a merely decorative function. However, it is also true that despite being reduced to



Pitareti (first half of the 13th century), south façade

decoration only, sculptural reliefs carrying symbolic and theological implication were often used to highlight the most sacred parts of the architecture, such as gables, tympana, windows and capitals. The façade decoration of Pitareti of the first half of the 13th century is particularly remarkable in this regard (ill. 1). The gable and the window frames of its south façade show figural reliefs of humans and lions and human heads on the drum incorporated into ornamentation. Another example is Maghalaant Church of the turn of the 12th-13th centuries. The peacocks displayed under the arms of the Flourishing Cross at the peak of the church's west façade are perceived as part of the cross ornament. Also interlaced into the ornamental scrolls are the figures of lions on the relief of the damaged architrave of the south door of a 13th century church at Tsughrughasheni and the figures of animals tearing up the bodies of people carved atop the capitals of the same façade. St.. Saba's Church at Sapara (13th century) features sculpturally richer outer walls: the figures of birds are perched modestly in the corners of the north door tympanum, which is adorned with rosettes formed by means of a cross and tracery featuring a vegetal motif. Birds are also carved in low

relief on the top of the window of the north side of the dome. The church's west porch displays richly embellished reliefs, including cherubs in the pendentives and the heraldic composition of the birds carved on the capitals (ill. 2), in which they are shown catching a bird with spread wings with a beak; an eagle, etc.

The reliefs of Ertatsminda Church (13th century), which lack rich adornment, also suggest kinship with works of minor sculpture. These include the images of the Hunting of St.. Eustathius and a horse on the façade window and on the capitals of a niche, as well as a miniature, hardly visible figure of the master on the south façade. The solid figural reliefs on the west facade of a 13th-century church at Kazreti are perceived independently from each other (the figures of Christ, the archangels and the master must be of a later date). In the 15th and 16th centuries figural images were depicted even more sporadically, e.g., the sculptural composition showing St.. George and fantastic animals carved in high relief on the cornice of the north facade of the 15th century church; the figure of St.. George slaying the dragon on the Chitakhevi bell-tower (16th century), rendered in folk style, etc.

In general, the main traits of façade decoration of the period between the 12th and the 16th century was the loss of monumentality of relief sculpture and the reduction of their role as architectural surfaces, as well as excessively decorative and ornamental character of figural reliefs. Either lost in the architecture, or located awkwardly, or intertwined in rich, lacy ornamentation, they fail to be visually perceived at first glance.

The next stage, which coincides with the late Middle Ages (17th-18th centuries), was marked by the desire to create a system of monumental façade sculpture. Yet, the sculptural decoration of this period still produces an impression of non-related images, borrowed from various works and used lavishly without a clear pattern. Such an impression is also favored by a somewhat non-traditional, iconographic rendering of images. The study of the outstanding works of the time allowed us to explain what turns the sculptures adorning these church façades into an ensemble.

Ananuri (1689) was the first church in the Late Middle Ages to offer relief images united under a com-

mon artistic program, a practice that had long been neglected in the art of Georgian façade sculpture. It was followed by the façade decoration of the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul. Ananuri also affords an affinity with Gigos Sakdari (Gigo's Chapel) at Kintsvisi (17th century). 'Mtskheta' Church (18th century) in Lechkumi, the porch of Davit Gareji Lavra (1695) and the dome of Sioni Cathedral in Tbilisi (1710) are some of the most noteworthy examples.

In the late medieval period (17th and 18th^h centuries), as well as in the middle of the 11th century, attempts towards embracing a more sculptural rendering failed to become a dominant driving force either in façade sculpture, or minor stonework, or in repoussé art. The cornerstone of the creative searches in the field of stone sculpture was to create and revive a sculptural program united under a common theological idea of the church façades.

The artistic style of late medieval sculptural reliefs is as varied, unordinary, complex and difficult to comprehend as the iconography of the time.

The complex relief decoration, rich in images, is masterfully organized on the tall and wide areas of the Ananuri (ill. 3) and Sagarejo façades. The monumental character of the façade sculpture is created by the emphasis on a middle axis, the rigid symmetry and accurate proportions, the sense of scale and 'space' (see, for example, relief decoration of the south façade of Ananuri: images of a cross and trees of life, as if carved in space, and archangels hanging upon them), the skillful combination of figures on the wide, plain areas of the wall, and the unity of decorative and artistic design (the latter being destroyed only in some cases by the use of varied ornaments and simultaneous appli-



Sapara, porch of the Church of St. Saba (13th century)



The Church of the Dormition at Ananuri (17th century), south façade

cation of different samples of figures). The same traits characterize the compositions of the relatively less decorated Gigo's Sakdari (Gigo's Chapel) at Kintsvisi, in which reliefs are perfectly fitted to the scale of the east and west façades. The same can be said of the reliefs of the porch of Davit Gareji Lavra, which are united under the idea of the Salvation and the Resurrection and of the images set around the top of the west facade window of 'Mtskheta' Church in Lechkumi.

Yet, it is also to be noted that the concept of monumentality in these works acquires a new quality and tint not visible in previous periods: relatively increased, thickened, sometimes exaggerated and hypertrophied figures (e.g., the immense crosses dominate the entire façade decoration at Ananuri and Sagarejo) are rendered through simplified forms. Next to them are the images, which may remain unnoticed without a careful observation (e.g., the figures of the deer (ill. 4) and the half-figure of St. Nicholas on the south façade, small, chained lions at the ends of the cross-arms on the east façade of the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Sagarejo). Hence, despite the small size and lack of monumentality of some of the figures, these works reveal another kind of regularity – incorporated into the program they are perceived as sacred signs making conceptual accents. It is also remarkable that although the exterior walls of churches are rich



The Church of the Dormition at Ananuri (17th century), south façade, fragment

in theological themes, they lack excessive decoration, thanks to which wall surfaces remain to serve as the cornerstone of artistic thinking.

As manifested in the decline of the quality of craftsmanship, the use of less sophisticated technical means of rendering, as well as in the reduced sense of form, artistic intuition and taste, the general trend that defined Georgian fine arts beginning from the 14th century left its mark on even the most outstanding works of the late Middle Ages. The imitation of the works of the 'classical' period ('retrospection') failed to yield designs that would be at least slightly reminiscent of the brilliance of their models. Alongside the use of old, traditional schemes and means of rendering, the period saw the attempts of finding new forms that would respond to the needs of time. Relief figures adorning façades, once characterized by a strongly pronounced decorative character, evolved into more simple, less refined, awkward and somewhat coarse images. Sculptural forms tended to be voluminous and non-differentiated, becoming round toward edges, but yet were predominantly two-dimensional.

The art of sculpture of the time, similar to the reliefs of the 16th century, is remarkable for its per-

ception of form, full of vitality and naive attraction, which could be attained thanks to the use of simplified means of rendering and which largely derived from folk art.

As noted above, the façade sculpture of this period displays complex iconography-iconology. For a period characterized by anti-Islamic sentiments, the representation of immense crosses, key artistic and conceptual image, on the façades of the churches of Ananuri and of Sts. Peter and Paul at Sagarejo is fairly natural. The depiction of crosses of such size on the façades of Georgian churches was unprecedented. It is under the arms of these crosses, marked by triumphal and eschatological character, that the main idea of the relief decoration loaded with the images from the Old Testament and the New Testament, are presented. The most remarkable in this regard are the reliefs concentrated on the south façade of Ananuri Church.

The façade presents the history of mankind accumulated in symbols through a laconic, arbitrary language. Displayed are the Genesis, the Salvation through the Crucifixion of Christ on Golgotha and the triumph over death represented in victory over a double-headed dragon (or two intertwined dragons) with a huge cross. Defeating evil, the cross is elevated in space in the attendance of cherubs, archangels

and angels as if to unite the images of the Tree of Life, the Golgotha Cross and the Cross heralding the Last Judgment. The idea of the Second Coming is echoed in the relief icon of St. Nicholas presented at the peak of the same façade (a very rare image in Georgian stone sculpture), as well as the scene of the Glory of God by the angels of the tympanum of the south façade and the wine-red composition of the Ascension of the Golgotha Cross with a mandorla by the angels in the north facade. Related to this theme is the relief icon of the Virgin with Child presented as the Queen of Heaven (depicted with her legs crossed, this version of the Virgin is unprecedented in Georgian fine art). The idea behind the sculptural decoration of the Church of the Dormition is echoed and verbally confirmed by the building inscription, in which Bardzim, son of the *eristav* (ruler) of Aragvi pleads the Virgin, who is the 'reliever of sins' and who 'retriever of Adam to Eden,' to have mercy upon him.

The façades of the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul in Sagarejo are embellished with similar iconographic relief compositions. The synthetic image of the cross defeating the dragons on the east façade triumphantly presents the idea of the Ascension of the Golgotha cross or the Golgotha mystery: the cross (ill. 5) is erected on a three-stepped pedestal symbolizing the top of Golgotha. The heads of Adam and Eve below it remind us of the scene of the Anastasis, while further below are shown the images of two heavenly bodies 'shining' with rays signifying Christ – 'the Son of Truth.'

The façade sculpture of a small church at Kintsvisi, commonly called Gigo's Sakdari, is more modest, but equally valuable from the artistic point of view. The tympanum of the west façade here also presents the scene of the Glory of God, but a totally different version of it – the half-figure of Christ imbued with a halo without a cross is depicted through blooming sprouts affording the association with the Flourishing Cross replaced by the figure of Christ. Thus, the scene in the tympanum presents the eternal Glory of God by the angels and Christ, perceived as the Tree of Life and the Source of Life (Psalm 35, 9-10) (attended by angels) and presents the icon of the triumph of the Ascension and the eternity of Eden.



The Church of Sts Peter and Paul in Sagarejo (18th century), east façade, fragment

It is noteworthy that the simplification of the forms, language and means of rendering is characteristic of not only the Georgian art of the late Middle Ages, but also of the entire Orthodox Christian art of the time. The Christian Orient in that period almost fully ceased to produce monumental sculptures. A small number of separate stone reliefs (Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and Russian) either reveal the influence of western art or show simple images lacking craftsmanship (some of these are marked by the elements of so called "folk paintings").

Hence, after the 11th-century stone sculpture did not continue to develop consistently along the same line, though despite the 'failure' in the 15th-16th century, it was to enjoy the final wave of revival together with the flourishing of late medieval Georgian culture (17th-18th centuries). This is yet another confirmation of the sustainability of the tradition of Georgian façade sculpture in the late Middle Ages.

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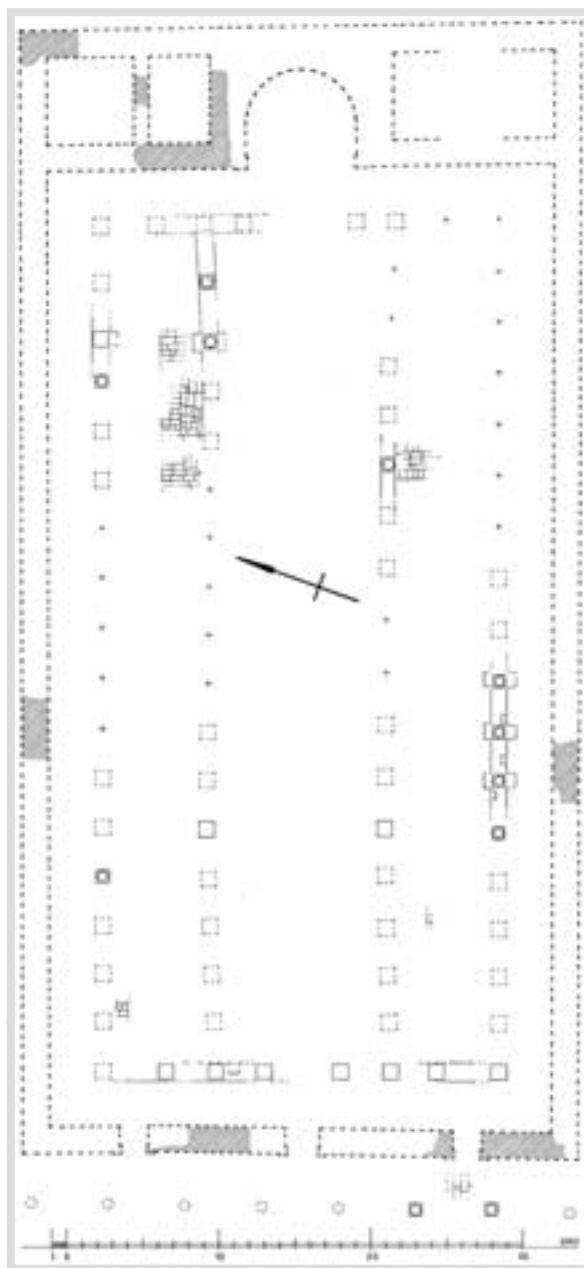
ROMAN AND LATE ROMAN ELEMENTS IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE IN EGYPT IN COMPARISON WITH THE CASE OF GEORGIA

There is no doubt that Constantinopolis, the capital of the Later Roman Empire, was the leading artistic and cultural centre of the Empire. Apart from a few exceptions, practically all the cultural impulses joking any role in the Empire had their origins in C/pel. This is especially true for the fine arts and architecture, and equally valid also for the general art in Egypt, although the traditional name as "Coptic art and architecture" leads by uncritical interpretation at first to think of a kind of independency from the development in the capital and the rest of the Empire which is not the case.

It is generally accepted that the early Christian basilica is developed out of the Roman forensic basilica, a relatively large roofed building which was for technical reasons divided with the help of rows of columns into several aisles¹. Only in this way the fact can be explained that immediately with the peace of the church given by Constantine I (324-337) everywhere in the Empire churches of roughly similar shape came into being. There is even reason to assume that already before the peace of the church, in the second half of the 3rd century, at least since the time of the Emperor Gallienus (253-268), when churches could have been built without being disturbed by pagan incursions, the churches in the larger settlements had already the shape of a three-aisled basilica.

However, apart from a few exceptions, the characteristic design of the Roman forensic basilica contains an *ambulatory* surrounding the central nave, on all the four sides while the late antique church basilicas are oblong east-west orientated buildings and have, as they came down to us in the various provinces of the Empire, additional aisles only at the longer sides of the central nave. At this point it is interesting to observe that in Egypt, at least in Upper Egypt, the

early Christian basilicas are as well supplied with such an *ambulatory* going all around the four sides (Fig. 1). It seems thus reasonable to assume that this was as well adopted from the model of the Roman forensic basilica. Whether examples of churches with additional aisles at the shorter sides in the East and West were to find also among the earliest foundations in other provinces of the Empire is not clear. But this has not much to say. Our earliest examples of ecclesiastical architecture throughout the Empire date (with the single exception of the little church at Dura Europos in Syria, which is not of basilical shape) only from the



The basilica III at Faw Qibli (Upper Egypt)

time of Constantine I the Great, but surely there have been some earlier examples of the Christian basilica, but no traces of them came down to us. We have only some literary information on them. Immediately with the peace of the church, as assured by Eusebios of Caesarea the majority of existing churches were replaced by larger ones (Eusebios, *hist.eccl.* X 2,1). This occurred, however, mainly in the larger towns and settlements, but these larger settlements were also the places, where earlier basilicas would likely have been erected. It might thus be the case that Egypt is the only country in which the earliest type of the Christian basilica was still later in use and during the following centuries always rebuilt.

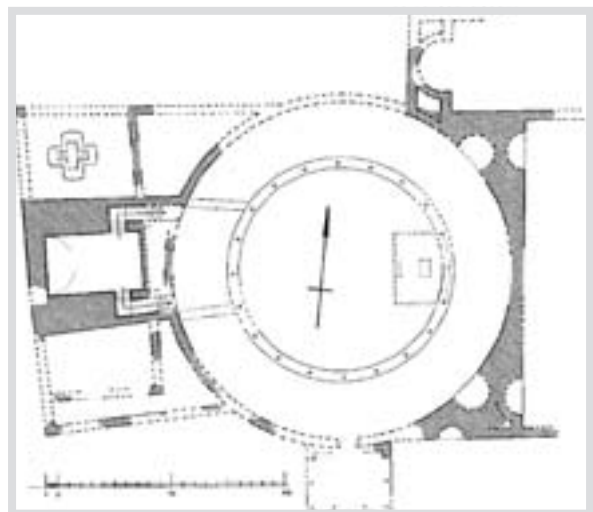
As in other provinces of the Empire the type of basilica in Egypt remained being the predominant building type until the end of the Ummayyad period, at about the middle of the 8th century. Churches with a centralized ground-plan are few. With the exemption of the newly excavated cruciform church of Antinoopolis² in Middle Egypt, which was probably the episcopal church of that town, all the known examples of centralized churches lie in the northern part of the country. The reason for this might be seen in the closer neighbourhood to the town of Alexandria, the capital of the country which was more open to adopt new ideas from other countries, especially from C/pel, the capital of the Empire. At any case these centralized churches are ambitious buildings and examples of them can thus be expected only in larger and at the same time wealthier towns where among the inhabitants sufficient people with a rich financial background were present.

First of all the two double-shelled tetraconch churches of the large pilgrimage centre of Abu Mina³, the Martyr church (Gruftkirche) and the East church⁴, the latter being apparently the spiritual centre of a congregation of monks living in a close neighbourhood around this church while the Martyr church was standing in the town and was with its underground crypt which bears the relics of the saint the most holy place of the pilgrimage centre. Both this Martyr church and the East church are datable to the 6th cent. AD. In both churches the central rectangular space has on all its four sides a semicircular conch formed of

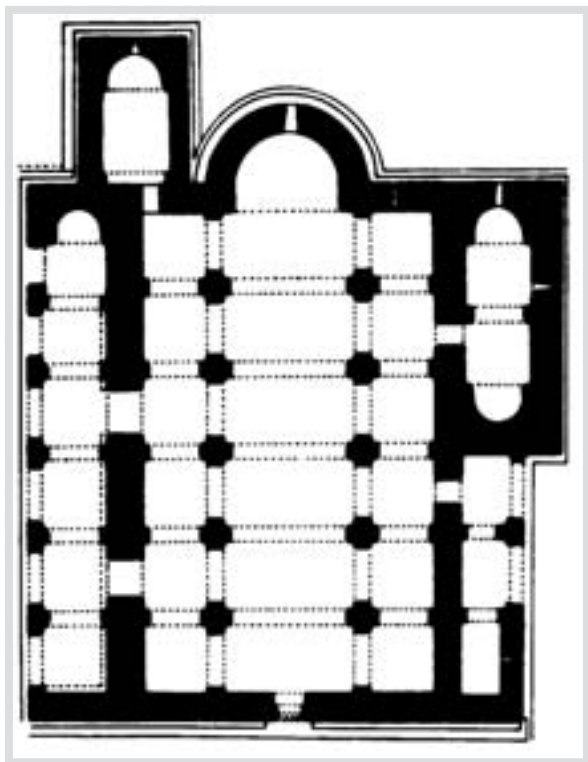
a semi-circular sequence of columns. Three conches are in the area accessible for the laypeople while the fourth one in the east is reserved for the clerics in the sanctuary functioning there as the apse in the normal basilica.

The oldest example of this building type is extant in Milan, in Northern Italy, the so-called church of San Lorenzo⁵ dating back to the 4th century. There are several other examples of this type known in Greece and the Balkan, but the majority of tetra-conch churches are situated in Syria⁶.

Another centralized type of church building which can equally be found in Egypt is the fully circular, double-shelled north-western church of Pelusium, modern Tall al-Farama, which was excavated a couple of years ago by a mission of the Islamic section of the Egyptian Antiquities Service (SCA)⁷ (Fig. 2). Unfortunately only the foundations of this building survive. It was, however, an ambitious complex outfitted with a number of imported fine-toothed composite capitals of Proconnesian marble from C/pel. Well visible are only the circular stylobate of the inner colonnade in the centre of the building and the crypt at the western end. In the room to the north of the crypt remains of a cruciform baptismal font were found and on the southern side of the church lies the foundation of an apparently large colonnaded *prothyron*. The rest is more or less conjectural. Traces for the position of the presbytery and the altar of the church are completely missing. In analogy to some other examples which



The circular southwest church in Pelusium (Northern Egypt)



The basilica of Bolnisi (Georgia)

equally were void of any apse but left some traces for the position of the sanctuary we conjectured the presbytery with the centrally placed altar as a screened rectangular area in front of the eastern sector of the inner circuit of columns.

European models of such a circular type of church buildings are few. But the most famous one is the church of Santo Stefano Rotondo⁸ in Rome dating to the middle of the 6th century and still used today for the church services. Considerably earlier is the church of Santa Costanza⁹ at the via Nomentana equally in Rome, being originally the mausoleum of Constantine's daughter Constantina. The inner perfectly circular colonnade is formed of double columns. There can be thus no doubt, that also the circular church at Pelusium is not an genuine Egyptian invention but was adopted from examples in other provinces of the Roman Empire.

Coming to churches with a cruciform ground-plan (churches of this kind should not be mixed up with transept churches which are only enlarged ordinary basilicas) two examples came recently to light in Egypt, one in Pelusium¹⁰ and the other one in Antinoopolis¹¹, the former capital of the Thebais and seat

of the *praeses*, the civil governor of Upper Egypt. The church of Pelusium, dating to the early 6th century, is composed of the crossing of a narrower five-aisled unit with a broader three-aisled unit of which in both cases the central aisles are ending at their both ends in two double-shelled conches of equal sizes, except the eastern end of the central east-west aisle where the apparently domed sanctuary is located and which for that reason had a narrower diameter without a concentric inner semi-circuit of columns. The slightly smaller church at Antinoopolis, excavated by an Italian mission in spring 2008, is so far the single example of a centralized church in Upper Egypt and at the same time a less regular structure than the one of Pelusium. From the geometrical arrangement of its ground-plan it shows a crossing of two three-aisled units surrounded on all the four sides with an *ambulatory*, a typical feature of the ordinary Upper Egyptian basilica. In the east it ends in a richly outfitted sanctuary composed of a central apse with a broad fore-choir in front flanked on both sides with several differently shaped side chambers. An original baptismal font is situated in the southwest corner of the nave. According to the ceramic finds the church is dated to the beginning of the 5th cent.

Cruciform churches are, as generally accepted, inventions of the 4th century. The most famous example of this kind is the so-called *Apostoleion*, the church of the holy Apostles in C/pel¹² founded by the Emperor Constantine I with the intension to use it as his burial place. Other examples are known from Salona¹³ in Dalmatia and of Geraš¹⁴, ancient Gerasa, in Jordan, and from the West the great church of Damous al-Qarita in Carthago¹⁵.

Typical Egyptian in this view and not repeated elsewhere are some minor details. The most obvious characteristic is the *ambulatory* which surrounds the central core of the nave on all the four sides, either if the latter is of only one aisle or divided into three aisles. In addition the eastern transverse aisle of this *ambulatory* in front of the sanctuary developed during the course of time to a particular additional element for the embellishment of the sanctuary in adding a pair of further columns in front of the apsidal arch which we like to label as a "primary triumphal arch"

while the frontal arch of the apse would become the secondary triumphal arch¹⁶.

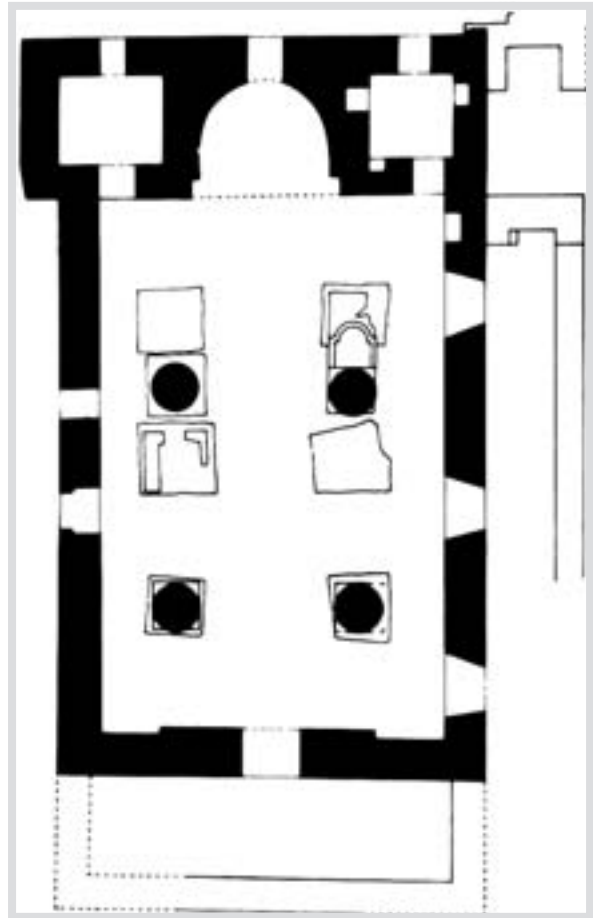
Also in Georgia some early Christian churches with a basilical ground-plan divided into three aisles are known and it might even be the case that the knowledge of this building type came equally down to Georgia from examples in the Late Roman Empire. The known examples are, however, very different from the examples in Egypt or elsewhere in the Empire.

The "Sion" basilica of Bolnisi¹⁷, precisely dated by an inscription to 478-493, is a vaulted three-aisled building with two rows of cruciform pillars (Fig. 3). Combining arches do not exist only between the pillars of the same row but are also added at the sides of each pillar to join them with the lateral walls and the corresponding pillars on the opposite side of the nave. The vaults above the aisles are carried out as sloping vaults. The church was surprisingly not provided with a clearstory above the pillars at the sides of the central nave, which speaks for its early date.

A smaller basilical church of a slightly different type is the 6th century "Kacaretis Sameba" church¹⁸ in the area of Hašmi with two series of strong rectangular pillars of, however, irregular proportions. It seems that many pillars have later been remodelled. Also this church is a completely barrel-vaulted structure, but in general its type stands closer to the late antique architecture in eastern Rome.

The ground-plan of the church of "Natlis mcemeli" in Kondoli¹⁹, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, is with its two pairs of oblong pillars and wide intercolumniar spaces very much alike the wide-arched basilicas (Weitarkadenbasilika) as they are especially known from Northern Syria²⁰ and might have also been influenced from there. Churches of this type came into being in Syria at the end of the 4th century. One of the most famous examples is the 5th century church of Qalbloze²¹ in Northern Syria, while the church in Kondoli is dated to the beginning of the 6th century. Of typically Georgian character is, however, the barrel-vaulted covering of the whole building and the deep horseshoe-shaped apse.

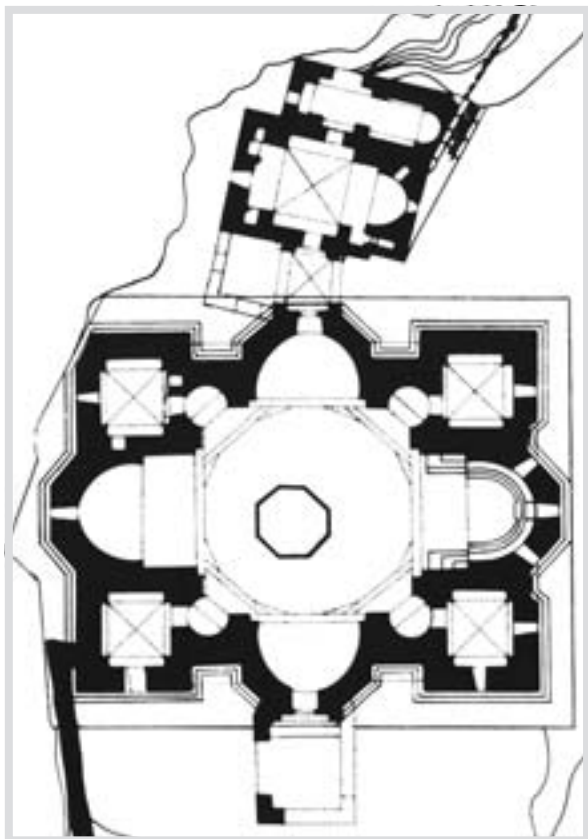
The old church of Ančishati in Tiflis (Tbilisi) keeps from outside still its original basilical shape²² (Fig. 4).



The so-called Old church of Ančishati in Tiflis (Tbilisi) (Georgia)

The interior, however, has been completely remodelled in replacing the probably two rows of rectangular pillars by two pairs of very thick columns, or better characterized as rounded pillars, positioned in a way that a roughly central square space came into being which was apparently originally not the case. A dome was, however, not erected over this central space.

There is still one other type of early Christian church architecture in Georgia: The square single aisled domed churches with four usually deep conches at the four sides of the central domed space and four over-semi-cylindrical corner niches giving access to four little, outwardly projecting corner rooms, of which the most prominent example is the "Džvari" church of Mcheta²³, which is said to be dated in A.D. 586/7-604 (Fig. 5). It is situated at a beautiful position high on the mountain opposite the old cathedral at the other side of the Kura-river. There are no churches of such kind to be found in the Later Roman Empire, but a number



The 'Džvari' church of Mtskheta, dated in A.D. 586/7-604 (Georgia)

of similar examples are known from the neighbouring Armenian architecture²⁴. Other examples of this kind are the two later chapels of the former monastery of Old Shuamta²⁵ (Dzveli Šuamta) as well as in the church of "Sion" at Ateni²⁶. The smaller chapel within the complex of the Old Shuamta churches has below its floor an underground crypt and served thus as a funeral chapel. An interesting detail of this type of churches are the nearly full-circular niches in the corners of the central square unit, through which the access to the corner chambers is led. How both are related shows a nice photograph of the small chapel in the fortified palace of King Quirikhe at the border between Kartli and Kaheti²⁷.

The majority of the surviving historical churches in Georgia belongs, however, to a different type of church architecture which is much closer related to the Byzantine architecture in the Late Roman Empire as they become customary in the 9th and later centuries. They represent more the classical cross-in-square type of the Byzantine architecture, carried out either

on three- or one-aisled ground-plans. The Georgian examples are, however, often of considerable sizes, even when they were modelled as one-aisled structures. A characteristic example is the former monastic church of Ikalto²⁸ in the neighbourhood of Telavi, a place which became famous, especially in the 11th and 12th centuries, as a cultural centre of Georgia. The ruins of the so-called Academy in the area are still in evidence. All doors are supplied with outer *prothya*. The monastery was founded by the Syrian monk Zeno who brought Christianity to Georgia. Very often the churches of this type are composed only with one pair of columns while the other two columns are incorporated into the lateral walls of the sanctuary. Occasionally the western part of these churches is prolonged for two or even three further *intercolumnia*.

But on the other hand, there are apparently no examples of the so-called octagon-domed churches in Georgia which are so famous in Greece and its islands since the early 11th century.

A characteristic example of the early shape of those cross-in-square churches is the so-called "Domed Basilica" of Cromi²⁹ which is dated by an original considered inscription in A.D. 626-634 and is shaped according to the plan of a three-aisled cruciform church. With its relatively short lateral branches it still not fully represents the classical cross-in-square structure, but the outer view of the building points already clearly to a cruciform shape. In addition the centre is clearly emphasized by the dome. This church is thus well comparable with the early Byzantine churches in the Eastern Roman Empire as for example the church of Hg. Sophia in Thessalonike³⁰.

A fully developed example of the cross-in-square type is the 11th century St. George cathedral of Alaverdi³¹, surrounded by a strongly fortified enclosure. It is the tallest sacred building of medieval Georgia. The transverse branches of the cross have on both sides a semi-circular ending. The U-shaped outer *ambulatory* on the northern, western and southern sides is of later date.

The masonry used in the Georgian churches is usually of good and high standard. Widely spread is the use of ashlar masonry for facing an inner core of rubble in the walls. Later repairs were often made

in fired bricks of equally good quality. Surprising is the general absence of columns. Practically only the tetra-conch church of Lekit has a larger number of columns. Consequently also a tradition of shaping capitals is missing. The architectural decoration is different from what one knows in the West. In some rare cases the friezes with acanthus leaves are similar to Byzantine decoration, but the classical profiles used especially in the decoration of the *geison*, still in use in Egypt in the 5th and 6th centuries are replaced in Georgia by completely different elements.

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- 2 P. Grossmann, Antinoopolis Januar/Februar 2008. Vorläufiger Bericht über die Arbeiten im Frühjahr 2008, *AEGYPTUS* fig. 1 (in press).
- 3 P. Grossmann, *Abū Mīnā I. Die Gruftkirche und die Gruft* (AV 44, Mainz 1989).
- 4 Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur* 489ff. fig. 104.
- 5 G. Traversi, *Architettura paleocristiana milanese* (Milan 1964) 67-82 fig. 6.
- 6 Die zweischaligen spätantiken Vierkonchenbauten in Ägypten und ihre Beziehung zu den gleichartigen Bauten in Europa und Kleinasien, in: *Das römisch-byzantinische Ägypten. Aegyptiaca Treverensia II* (Mainz 1983) 167-173 fig. 1.
- 7 P. Grossmann, *Neue Überlegungen zur Rekonstruktion der Rundkirche von Pelusium, Boreas* 27 (2004) 165-181 fig. 1.
- 8 H. Brandenburg, S. Stefano Rotondo. Der letzte Großbau der Antike in Rom, in: ders.-J. Pál (Hrsg.), *Santo Stefano Rotondo in Roma. Atti del convegno int.* Roma 10-13 ottobre 1996 (Wiesbaden 2000) 35-65 fig. 59.
- 9 F.W. Deichmann, *Frühchristliche Kirchen in Rom* (Basel 1948) 25ff. fig. 17; H. Brandenburg, *Die frühchristlichen Kirchen Roms vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert* (Mailand 2004) 70-86 pl. 43, 1.
- 10 CH. BONNET et al., *L'église tetraconque et les faubourgs romains de Farama à Peluse (Égypte - Nord-Sinaï)*, *GENAVA* n.s. 54 (2006) 371-384 fig. 1.
- 11 Grossmann, Antinoopolis Januar/Februar 2008. Vorläufiger Bericht über die Arbeiten im Frühjahr 2008, *AEGYPTUS* fig. 1 (in press).
- 12 Stanzl, *Längsbau* 47ff. pl. 32, 4.
- 13 P. Testini, *Archeologia cristiana* (Bari 1980²) 744-

746 Abb. 428; G. Stanzl, *Längsbau und Zentralbau als Grundthemen der frühchristlichen Architektur* (Wien 1979) 59f. pl. 9,3.

14 J.W. Crowfoot, *Early churches in Palestine* (London 1941) 85-88 Abb. 8, mit Hinweis auf weitere Beispiele; see also Stanzl, *Längsbau* 56f. pl. 9, 2.

15 F.W. Deichmann, *Archeologia cristiana* (Roma 1993) 216 Abb. 141.

16 Grossmann, *Christliche Architektur* 18ff.

17 Neubauer, *Altgeorgische Baukunst* 25f.; Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 302; the photograph 335 "View of the apse" is side-inverted.

18 Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 342.

19 Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 357.

20 P. Grossmann, *S. Michele in Afrisco zu Ravenna* (Mainz 1973) 38ff. pl. 38.

21 Chr. Strube, *Die «Toten Städte» Stadt und Land in Nordsyrien während der Spätantike* (Mainz 1996) 61ff.

22 Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 446f.

23 Neubauer, *Altgeorgische Baukunst* 13ff. fig. on p. 37; Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 389ff.

24 E. Neubauer, *Armenische Baukunst vom 4. bis 14. Jahrhundert* (Dresden o.J.) 15ff.; G. Ieni, *Typologie der Architektur, in: A.A. Novello, Die Armenier. Brücke zwischen Abendland und Orient* (Stuttgart/Zürich 1986) 191-199, 193ff. with numerous examples.

25 Neubauer, *Altgeorgische Baukunst* 66f.; Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 440.

26 Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 288.

27 Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 369 fig. 400.

28 Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 345ff.

29 Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 316ff.

30 C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture* (New York 1976) 161ff. fig. 175.

31 Neubauer, *Altgeorgische Baukunst* 122ff.; Novello et al., *Architecture in medieval Georgia* 273ff.

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WHERE DID GEORGIA'S CHURCHES START?

Vitruvius dedicated his work on architecture to Augustus, who was emperor till 14 BC. He lists arithmetic among the things which an architect should know, because "Through arithmetic ... are indicated the calculation of measurements". (Vitruvius, *Arch.* 1.1.4). So I am not going to apologise for being mathematical in this lecture. Mathematics was, in Vitruvius' opinion, at the very basis of architecture.

The history of the church began among Jews, so possibly churches originated from the synagogue. Admittedly no ancient synagogues have yet been discovered in Georgia, but in the last century scholars in the Holy Land have found about seventy. They have been excavated and studied. So there is already a large amount of comparative material.

The earliest synagogue so far discovered, Gamla, was built in Herodian times, perhaps during Jesus' lifetime. It is also one generation later than Vitruvius, so perhaps some practices like those of Vitruvius may apply, particularly in proportional building.

In the middle of the synagogue was a wooden platform for reading. And the climax of the service

came when they read the section of the Law, the oldest and most revered part of the Bible.

In Mount Sinai the Jews believe that the Law was given to Moses on two tablets of stone. God gave Moses instructions on how to build the chest or Ark which would contain them, and Moses put the two stones inside. In the days of the Temple the Ark of the Covenant and the Law was the most important and the holiest object (Figure 1).

The Ark's plan was very simple. God said that it was to be $2\frac{1}{2}$ cubits by $1\frac{1}{2}$. A cubit is a small measure about 45 centimetres long, and I will use the design of joined squares, which are the same shape, to represent it. The Jewish Temple was destroyed in 587 BC and the Ark was lost. But the memory of the Ark of the Covenant remained constant.

In most cases the proportions of the Jerusalem Temple were adopted by synagogues, but in this lecture we shall only attend to the proportions of the Ark of the Covenant, which occur in a few synagogues. (Figure 2).

In Baram, built in the third century, the outer measurements are the shape of the Ark of the Covenant. Figure 2 omits the podium, from which no proportions are measured.

Village architects often found it hard to get a right angle of exactly 90 degrees, and this is bound to affect the final measurements of a building. The result is that walls which should match in length are differ-

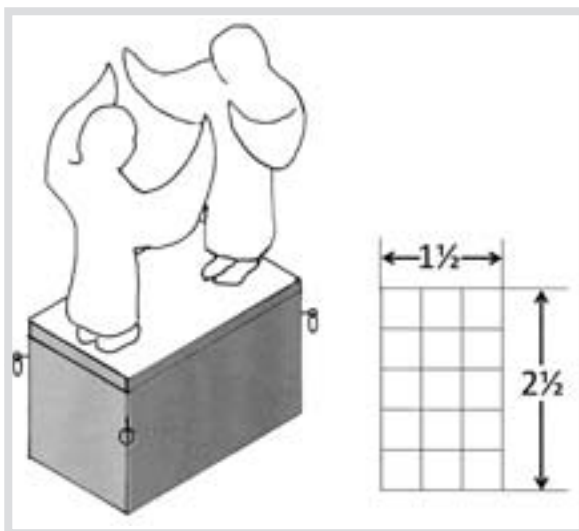


Fig. 1. The Ark of the Covenant

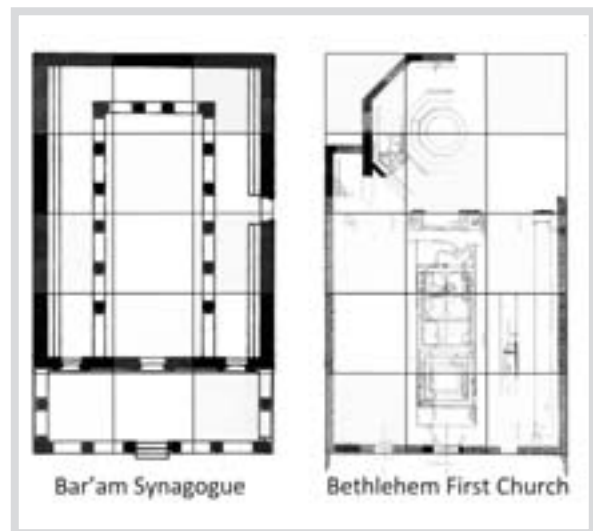


Figure 2. Bar'am Synagogue and Bethlehem Church

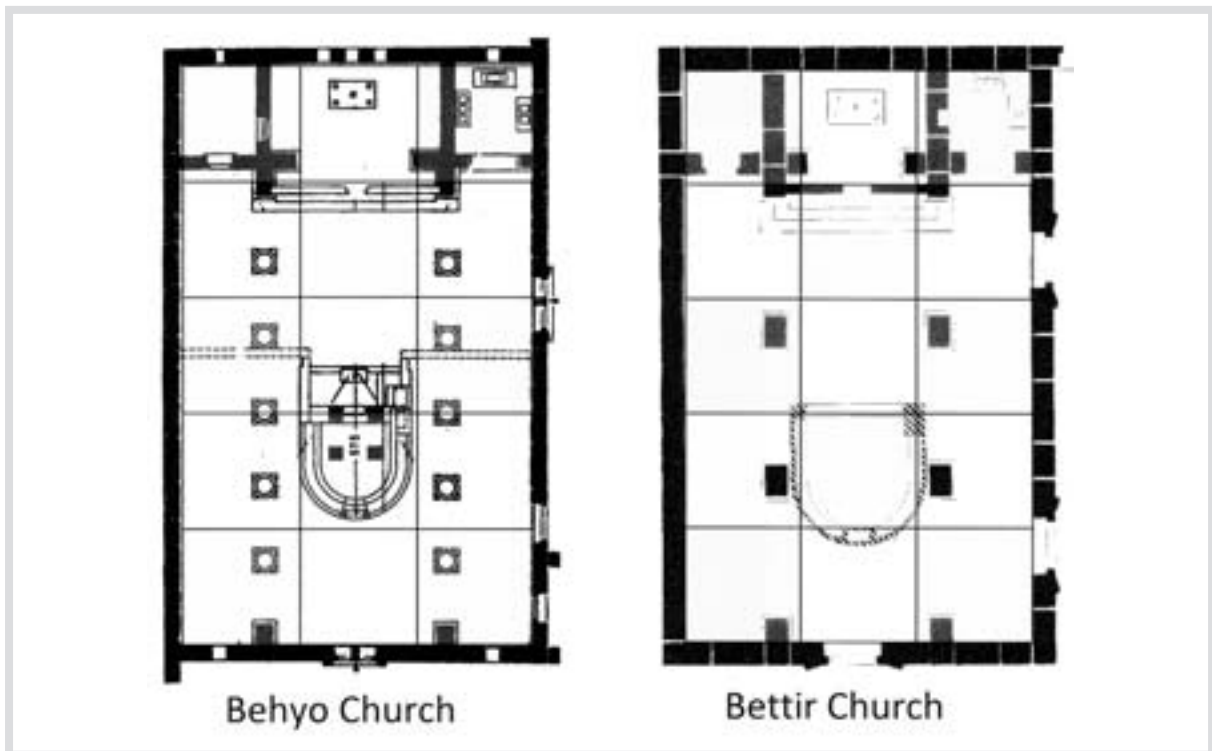


Fig. 3. Behyo and Bettir Churches

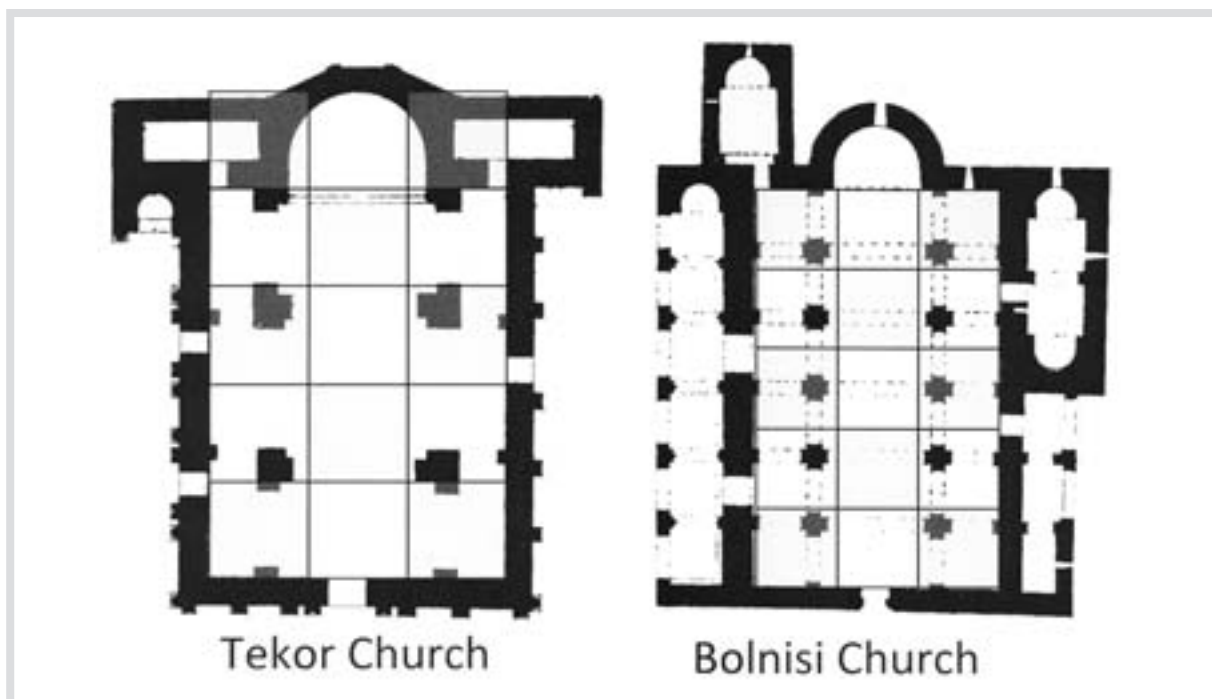


Fig. 4. Churches of St Sergius, Tekor and Bishop's Church, Bolnisi

ent. Presumably one of the walls should be the right length, so my judgement on the proportions depends on measuring the inside and outside of all the walls I am going to show you, and choosing the one which best fits the proportions of the Ark of the Covenant..

For Christians the Ark of the Covenant was a potent symbol. The Law itself, the Ten Commandments, was placed in the Ark of the Covenant. So it stood for the Blessed Virgin Mary, in whom before his birth was enclosed Jesus Christ, the heir of the Law. The church

Medieval Georgia

which above all is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin in Bethlehem, laid out by Saint Helena in 327. Are its proportions like the Ark of the Covenant? Sure enough they are.

Since all churches were proportioned like the Tabernacle or the Temple, or in this case like Ark of the Covenant, a rectangle which is five by three, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$, must, I think, be seen as the plan of the Ark of the Covenant.

The Holy Land is where it began, but how did it affect Georgia? Between Antioch and Beroea in North Syria there are two churches with the proportions of the Ark of the Covenant, Bettir and Behyo, both founded in the fifth century (Figure 3). The shape of the Ark of the Covenant covers the apse.

From 478 to 502 Yohan Mandakowni was Catholicos of Armenia. He rebuilt the church of St Sergius in Tekor. As in the two Syrian churches the shape of the Ark of the Covenant covers the apse (Figure 4).

So at last we come to Georgia. Bolnisi, was built at the same time as Tekor. Bolnisi has only the nave, without the apse, proportioned like the Ark of the Covenant.

How rare was this design? The Church at Mankhuti was built either in the sixth century or the fifth, and its nave seems to fit, and several of the hall churches of the Gori region have proportions like the Ark of the Covenant. But they start in the tenth century, when the eyes of Georgia were fixed not on Antioch but on Constantinople, so any questions about their origin must be pursued in the direction of Constantinople. Secondly all the antiquities of the Gori area were recorded in 1990, and the shape of the Ark of the Covenant only applies to far less than one per cent of the churches. Another area for which antiquities were recorded in 2000 is Javakheti, and I myself believe there are no churches with proportions like the Ark of the Covenant.

Where did Georgia's churches start? Their dependence on the Bible is clear from the fact that their proportions are like the Tabernacle or the Temple, and they share this aspect of design with synagogues. In the case of this lecture they are designed as the holiest object in the Tabernacle, which was also used as a symbol of the Virgin Mary. The satellite map (Figure 5) shows what, if you agree with this lecture,

may perhaps to be seen as a progress from synagogues in the Holy Land (the earliest building on the map is Bar'am synagogue), to the latest building, Bolnisi. Precise methods of imitating the Tabernacle or the Jerusalem Temple varied from province to province. But the proportions are the clue, laborious though it may be to measure them.



Fig. 5. The buildings mentioned in this lecture

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GEORGIAN POLYAPSIDAL CHURCH ARCHITECTURE¹

*The arches round here,
The pillars well tied,
They look as if come
From our dreams and skies.
I wonder, who built it,
A man of mercy?
A man of gift made
Great Nikortsminda!²*

Under the name Polyapsidal, we can observe church buildings of the following architectural types: triconches, tetraconches, five apsed, six apsed (hexaconches) and eight armed. Monuments of these architectural types are preserved in Georgia, as well as in the historic Georgian province of Tao-Klarjeti, in north-east Turkey (nowadays being the vilayets of Erzerum, Artvin and Ardahan), as well as in various medieval monasteries inhabited by Georgian monks.

Typological studies of polyapsidal churches of Georgia started with Prof. G. Chubinashvili, the founder of the School of Art History in Georgia. Two of his monographs, *Monuments of the Jvari Type* (G. Chubinashvili, 1948), and *Architecture of Kakheti* (G. Chubinashvili, 1959), remain not only the main publications of their type but also can be considered to be seminal studies of Medieval Georgian Architecture in general. Prof. W. Beridze was the first scholar who arranged in a typological order all the types of Polyapsidal monuments of Tao-Klarjeti, comparing them with the monuments of a similar type in Georgia (V. Beridze, 1981). Prof. Beridze compared the Georgian monuments with those Syria, Byzantium and Armenia, but his research aimed mostly at revealing their distinguishing features rather than their common origin and interrelation.

Several articles by Prof. Tumanishvili are dedicated to typological definitions and research methodology in the fields of Eastern Christian architecture and the iconography of architecture (Tumanishvili, 1 I would like to thank Dr. D. Khoshtaria who encouraged me to write this paper and also Prof. D. Tumanishvili for his extremely helpful advice.

2001:4-28). The Italian professor A. Alpagò-Novello discussed different types of Georgian church architecture and listed them together with eastern and western examples on typological tables (A. Alpagò-Novello, 1980:241-163).

Among recent works we should mention an article by Dr. Fahriye Bayram on the tetraconches of Tao-Klarjeti where she makes preliminary observations on the newly discovered tetraconch of *Itik*, located in the village of Demirkent, in the Artvin vilayet (F. Bayram, 2007:61-88).

The aim of the present paper is to analyze the existing state of knowledge on the Polyapsidal churches and to define the origins and the reasons for their development, as well as to consider the links and mutual influences of medieval Georgia with the traditions of Late Antiquity and the Christian East, which were reflected both in the spiritual and material culture.

Preliminary research made it clear that despite the different conditions from which the types emerged, their establishment and the implementation of their resources, depend in general on the stylistic demands of the epoch.

Tetraconches in Georgia ceased to be constructed after the 10th century. Prof. G. Chubinashvili ascribes the building period of tetraconches to the beginning of the 6th century, with the earliest examples in *Dzveli Gavazi, Sukh'bechi* and *Manglisi*, though he remarks on the peculiarities of the *Manglisi* tetraconch, stating that *in Manglisi the development of the form was complicated* (Takaishvili, 1970:81-92). According to *Sumbat Davidisdze* in the *Chronicles of Kartli*, one of the first three churches in Georgia was erected in *Manglisi* (R. Thomson, 1996:131). On the request of the Georgian King Mirian, the mission sent by Constantine the Great to the Iberian capital, *Mtsheta*, founded on its way three ecclesiastical centres - *Erushety, Tsunda* and *Manglisi* and adorned them with relics. *Juansher's* chronicle notes that *King Vakhtang Gorgasali* founded episcopal seats in these three places. According to Georgian scholarship, the church built by Constantine's masons have not survived. Prof. Beridze argued that *the tetraconch enclosed within the octagon was erected after the establishment of an episcopal seat by Vakhtang Gorgasali in the 5th century* (W. Beridze, 1974:28).

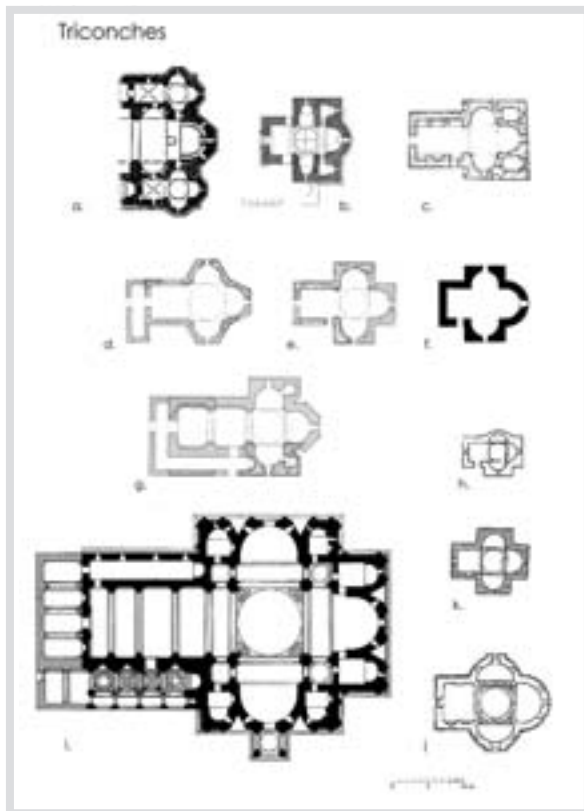


Table 1:
Triconches: a. side chambers of Vachnadziani Kvelatsminda (8-9th cc), b. Telovani “Jvarpatiosani” (8th c.), c. Isi (early 9th c.), d. Dort Kilisa (9th c), e. Bakchalo Kishla (9th c.), f. Ortuli (monument has been totally demolished, date is not known), g. Zegani, Zaki (mid 10th c.), h. Uraveli (mid 10th c), i. Oshki monastery church of St. John the Baptist (963-973), j. Jvarzeni (early 11th), k. Avnevi (14-15th cc).

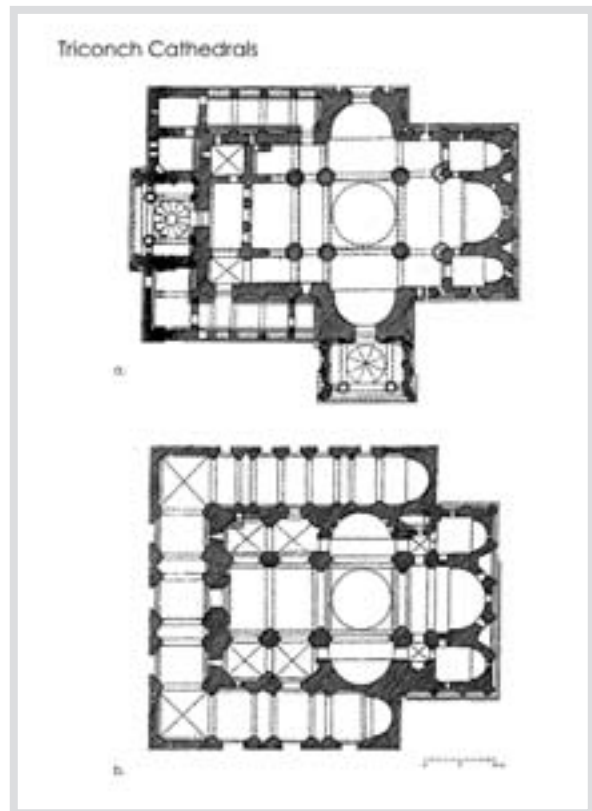


Table 2:
Triconch Cathedrals: Kutaisi “Bagrati” Cathedral (1003), Alaverdi (1010-1029).

The fundamental research on *Manglisi* by *Dr Dvali* does not provide us with sufficient arguments to prove that the tetraconch was introduced here in the late 5th and early 6th century and does not date back to the fourth century (M. Dvali, 1974:51-52,74-80). Georgian church architecture could not have started from nothing, as the country had local building traditions and experienced masons and builders. Furthermore, a chronicle records that the first churches were built by the masons of Constantine the Great, who had been intensively erecting churches in newly converted places and in holy lands.

The central form of the *Manglisi* tetraconch indicates that it may have been designed as a martyrium to house relics² rather than as a parish church. I there-

fore suggest that future studies of *Manglisi* should be undertaken, including an archeological survey of the surroundings, to identify whether the tetraconch in the octagon is the original church dating from the early 4th century.

As for the form of the tetraconch in the octagon, we can make the following observations. Though one of the greatest foundations of *Constantine the Great*, built in 327 in Antioch, *Megale Ekklesia - the Golden Octagon* does not survive, according to *Eusebius*, the cathedral had octagonal walls (R.Krautheimer, 1986:76). The question arises as to whether the octagonal dome established in the early Christian period is a reflection of the *Golden Octagon of Antioch*. The latter was a model of great importance for eastern Christianity,

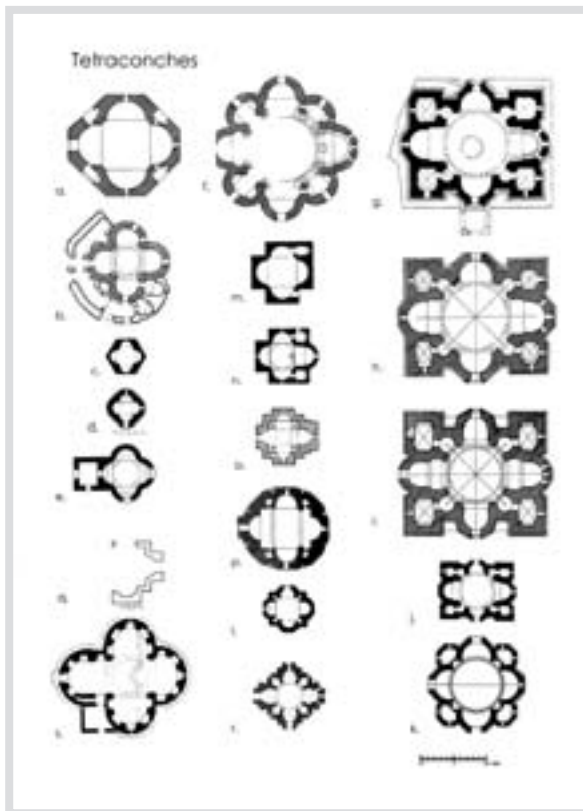


Table 3:
Tetraconches: a. Manglisi (4th-5thcc), b. Dzveli Gavazi (5th-6thc.), c. Bana chapel (presumably 5thc. -?), d. Nadjikhevi (6thc.), e. Sukh'bechi (5th-6thcc.), f. Ninotsminda (6thc.), g. Mtskheta Holy Cross, Jvari (586-604), h. Ateni (first half of 7thc.), i. Martvili (first half of 7th c.), j. Zveli Suamta Jvari type church (7thc), k. Chamhusi, Kamhis kilisesi (8th-9thcc.), l. Dzveli Shuamta small church (7thc. shortly after the Jvari type Tetraconch in Dzveli Gavazi), m. Muhlad'jigilisi (9th), n. Kineposi (9th-10thcc), o. Bobosgiri (8th-9thcc.), p. Sveti (mid. of 10thc.), q. Itik (10thc.), r. Kvetera (late 10thc), s. Tbilisi Qvashveti (1753)

and especially for the eastern Georgian church which was under the jurisdiction of the church of Antioch (W.Djobadze, 1976:67-68).

The influence of the Manglisi can be observed in the tetraconch with four corner chambers of the 6th c Ninotsminda. Here the prolonged corner rooms form part of the interior³. According to Prof. Chubinashvili the *Mtskheta Holy Cross Church (586-604)* and its composition, which is of a popular architectural type and is known in Georgia as the Jvari type and in Armenia as the Hrip'sime type, was developed from *Ninotsminda*. Other Georgian examples are *Ateni*, *Martvili* (both early 7th c., restored in 10th c.), *Dzveli Shuamta* (early 7th c.) and *Chamhusi*, called *Kamhis Kilisesi* in Turkish (8th-9th cc).

The aesthetics of the 6th-7th cc - period of the first

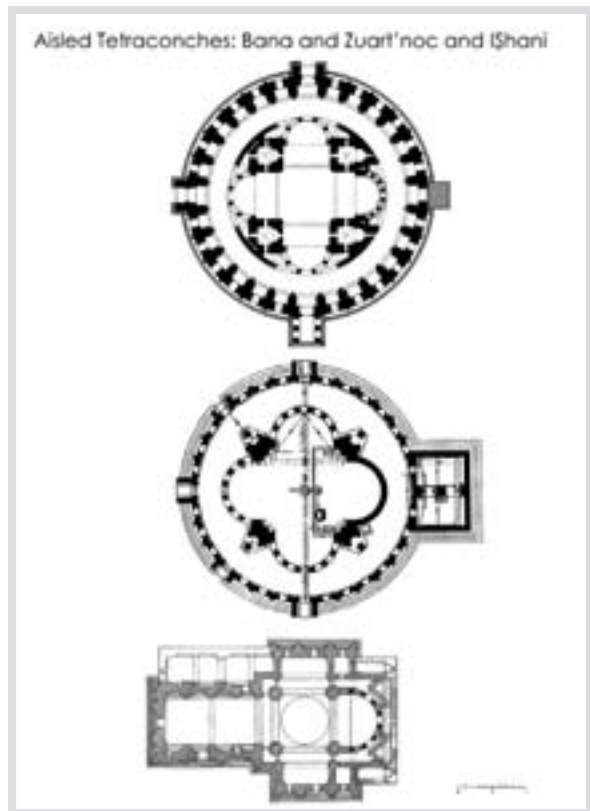


Table 4:
Aisled Tetraconches Bana, Zuart'noc (Armenia) and Ishkhani

Golden Age of Georgian Architecture are well adapted to the tetraconchal space. In this period the demands of stylistic development were oriented on a central space of equal proportions; such forms were easily implemented within the strict composition of the tetraconch.

In 9th and 10th cc, we again come across tetraconches. There is an outstanding 10th century Jvari type of tetraconch in *Kvetera* which has such a dynamic arrangement of the interior, that resembles a multi-apsed building rather than a tetraconch. However, most tetraconches, dating back to the 9th and 10th centuries are to be found in the historic Tao-Klarjeti region. Here we observe a wide variety of types.

The aisled tetraconch of *Bana Cathedral* has been a matter of controversy concerning its date

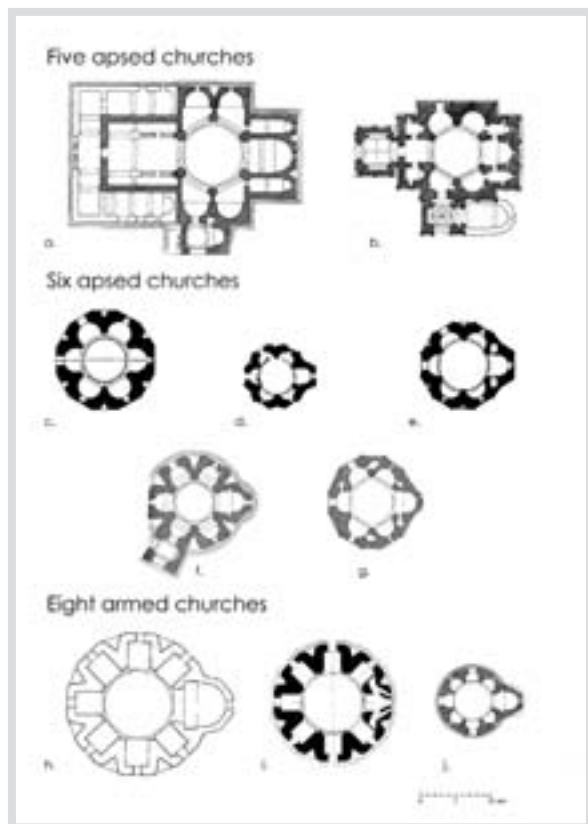


Table 5:

Five apsed Churches: a. Kumurdo (964), b. Nikor'csmindia (1010-1014); Six apsed Churches: c. Gogubani (mid 10th c.), d. Oltisi (late 10th c.), e. Kamhisi, Kiagmis Alti (mid 10th c.); f. Bochorma (late 10th c.); g. Katskhi (early 11th); Eight armed churches: h. Tbeti (960-970), i. Taoskari (late 9th early 10th c), j. Nojikhevi (late 10th early 11th c.).

and original forms and deserves special attention. The architecture of *Bana* has generally been viewed in connection with the aisled tetraconches of Egypt (P.Grossmann,1983:167-174), Syria and Mesopotamia (W.Kleinbauer,1973:89-114) and with the Armenian Cathedral of *Zvart'noc* (S.Mnacakanyan,1971:62-70; W.Kleinbauer,1972:251-253; T.Marutyan,1989:167-203; Ch.Maranci,2001:223; Ch. Maranci, 2001:105-124). But: what does the relationship to *Zvart'noc* mean? How did this form of aisled tetraconch originate? What was its prototype? In western and Armenian scholarship *Zvart'noc* is studied in connection with such monuments as *Bosra*, *Seleucia-Pieria*, *Resafa*, *Apamea* all dating back to the late 5th and to the 6thc. (R. Krautheimer,1986:137-140,229) - in the words of Eugene Kleinbauer these are *the highest ranking churches in the Orient* (Kleinbauer,1973:109).

The double shelled tetraconch forms of orthodox churches in Syria and Mesopotamia could have served as a model for the builder of *Zvart'noc*, Nerses Catholicos, who was of the Armenian Chalcedonian faith. Besides the impressive nature of the architecture, all the episcopal seats of Northern Syria and Mesopotamia were orthodox and were subject to the church of Constantinople. The church thus reflects Nerses political and religious orientation (Ch. Maranci, 2001:105-124).

At the same time, the origins of Syrian tetraconches are to be found in Roman Architecture! We have no evidence as to whether this type existed in the Roman period on the territories of Syria-Mesopotamia, which formed the eastern frontiers of the Roman Empire. But we do come across the same type of buildings in Late Antiquity – *San Lorenzo of Milan* (4thc.) (R. Krautheimer, 1986:78-81) and *the Library of Hadrian, Athens* (early 5th c.) (R.Krautheimer, 1986:119-121). The same architectural type can also be observed in northern Egypt, at *Abu-Mena* (first half of 6th c.) (R.Krautheimer, 1986: 110-111), which confirms the common Roman origin of this type.

Why was the aisled tetraconch chosen for *Bana*? Was it influenced by *Zvart'noc*, which, according to its plan, is directly related to Syrian-Mesopotamian aisled tetraconches or was it influenced by Late Antique or early Antiochian monuments? If we share the opinion that *Bana* belongs to the 7th c., it becomes clear that the builders of *Zvart'noc* and *Bana* relied on common or similar prototypes.

If the model of the Syrian Orthodox Church served as a prototype for *Zvart'noc*, one can easily imagine that Syrian church building could serve as a model for Georgian church too, especially at a time when the Georgian church was under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Antioch.

The masons at *Bana* presumably did not borrow their architectural motifs and the iconographical formula from Syrian monuments but probably adopted them from the original prototype and arranged them in accordance with traditional forms⁴. *D. Tumanishvili* and *R. Mepisashvili*, when observing the corner arrangements of the storied towers in *Bana*, came to the conclusion that the transition to the drum of the dome was the same as at *Mtskheta Holy Cross Church*

with regard to the squinches, though the drum of the dome was octagonal (R.Mepisashvili, D.Tumanishvili, 1989:151-160). Can we imagine that *Bana*, like the Syria-Mesopotamian aisled tetraconches⁵ was also inspired by the *Golden Octagon of Antioch*, with its high octagonal walls?

Who built *Bana* and when⁶? Does it date from the seventh or the early tenth century? Originally it was an Armenian monument of Tayik a region which was populated by Armenian Chalcedonians in the early Christian period are questions that have long been discussed. One may imagine that Armenian scholarship argued for the 7th c. date and Georgian for the 10th c. In that period *Bana* and Tao formed a political and religious centre of the Georgian Kingdom. In contrast the early or the later dates are agreed upon by both scholarships⁷. The answers to these questions can be resolved by an archeological survey. But nowadays we have to take into consideration that the development and establishment of Georgian and Armenian architecture took place simultaneously. Though the churches of Georgia and Armenia were separate and relations complicated, the two countries had common circumstances and interrelated historic backgrounds, as well as similar building techniques and the use of stone as the main building material. This is the reason for the similarities in Armenian and Georgian architecture which unfortunately has caused many misunderstandings by both academics and scholars.

In Georgian architecture, triconches appear after tetraconches, although the Georgians had encountered this form even in the 6th century, while in *St. Simon the Younger Stilite's Monastery* (W. Djobadze, 1986:79-82) which was inhabited by Georgian monks and frequented by Georgian pilgrims. The *Martas Martirium* in *St. Simon the Younger Stilite's monastery* had a form of triconch, of the so-called *Sohagi type*. At an early stage of development in Late Antiquity, the triconch appeared as a complementary compartment, one of the parts of a large building. It is without doubt that the triconch was not an invention of Georgian architects. The side chambers of the 8-9th cc church at *Vachnadziani* are considered to be the earliest example of triconches in Georgia. Certainly the triconch was not an invention of the Vachnad-

ziani master. Before constructing this church, he had probably traveled extensively to learn of the modern achievements in ecclesiastic architecture. At an early stage of development, the triconch appeared as a complementary compartment, the closest composition being that of the 8th c church *Dere Agzi* in Lycia (R. Krautheimer, 1986:285-286). Several large churches with a similar design of side chambers were built later, in the mid-Byzantine period, within the borders of the Anatolian landscape. These are the churches of *Lips Northern Church* and *Myrelaion* (L. Rodlay, 2001:134-137). The same is seen in monuments in *Constantinople* and in central *Anatolia*. *Vachnadziani* definitely belongs to this group of buildings.

The earliest triconch type churches are the 8th-9th c *Telovani* in Kartli, and the ruined church *Isi* in historic *Tao*. Both are distinguished by complicated plans and separated inner space. Triconches of the following period (9th and 10th cc) ie *Dort Kilisa*, *Bahcalo Kisla*, *Ortuli* and *Uraeli* are marked by simple plans and plain forms.

In contrast to tetraconches, the triconch plan offers flexibility – the transformation of the plan is generally obtained due to the rectangular form of the western arm.

This is why the triconch represented a convenient form which could satisfy the demands of a new, imposing aristocratic style of church building. The western arm was prolonged, the apses were separated, and massive pillars were erected to carry a dome. As a result, an enlarged wide inner space was achieved, which could hold a great number of worshippers. This kind of architecture met the requirements of an ambitious king such as David III Kurapalates, with buildings such as *Oshki Monastery* and later the cathedrals in *Kutaisi* and *Alaverdi* of the Georgian kingdom, which was on its way to unification.

Speaking of triconches, we should emphasize that on the Mount Athos the only architectural type is the triconch. It is no coincidence that *Oshki Church* in Tao and the Georgian monastery- *Iviron on Mount Athos* are both funded by the same donors, David III and the nobles and monks from Tao, and both are triconches with the dome resting on free standing pillars. It can be assumed that the construction was

invented by the architect at *Oshki* by combining the cross-in-square plan with a triconch and this form was implemented when constructing the *Athos Lavra*, thus producing an architectural structure which later became extremely popular in the whole of Greece and in Balkans.

Imported, but adapted, forms can be observed in the 10th c. triconch in *Yalia (Gialia)* - the Georgian monastery in Cyprus⁸. The triconch was an unfamiliar architectural type in that island.

As for **five apsed**, **six apsed** and **eight armed** churches, these are the established types of buildings in the Roman and Late Antique periods and they were widespread in early church architecture as memorial buildings, martyriums, baptisteries and tombs. These types of buildings were adopted and built but never became popular in Georgian architecture, though this design was used in certain special monuments, like in *Kumurdo* and *Nikortsminda*. Alpagno-Novello discussed these two monuments ... *with anomalous features, but exactly for their lack of conformity congenial to the Georgian mind* (A. Alpagno-Novello, 1980:248).

We can not argue that these forms had the same iconographical meaning in the 10th c. Georgian churches. Most likely it seems that the form and type appeared attractive due to certain stylistic needs, corresponding to a period known as the "transitional period", a time when architects were in search of a new space full of the rhythm of movement.

To conclude, polyapsidal church types were adopted, modified and expanded. This proves that medieval Georgia was not an isolated country but a part of the creative world strongly involved in the artistic movements of the west and east.

Appendix

Here is a list of polyapsidal architectural buildings placed in typological order.

Triconch: sixteen monuments of this type survive, of which seven are in Georgia, distributed nearly in all parts of country: Side chambers of *Vachnadziani Kvelatsminda* (G.Chubinashvili, 1959:287-320; A.Alpagno-Novello, 1980:463; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:185,298; N.Gengiuri, 2005:33-42,181-182) and *Alaverdi Cathedral* (G.Chubinashvili, 1959:369-404; G.Chubinashvili, 1970:262-278; A.Alpagno-Novello,

1980:273; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:261-265,274-275) from Kakheti region, *Telovani "Jvarpatiosani"* (V.Tsintsadze, 1959:73-90; D.Tumanishvili, 1990:238-241; Z.Skhirtladze, 1999:101-118) and *Avnevi* (I.Giviashvili, 2007:97-117) from Kartli region, *Uraveli* (I. Giviashvili, 2005:51-53) from Samtshe region, *Kutaisi "Bagrati" Cathedral* (G.Chubinashvili, 1970:262-278, A.Alpagno-Novello, 1980:262-399; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:261-265,268-273; M.Bulia, M.Janjalia, 2006:111-112) from Imereti region, *Jvarzeni* (T. Kapanadze, 1989:66-67; I.Giviashvili, 2005:53) from Samegrelo region; seven are in Turkey, located close to each other in the historic provinces of Erusheti: *Zegani (Zaki)* (E.Takaishvili, 1909:64-68; V.Beridze, 1981:148-149,315-316; P.Zakaraia, 1992:103-105; I.Giviashvili, 2003:41-58; I. Giviashvili, I. Koplatadze, 2004:88-92, 215-216) and *Tao-Oltisi: Dört Kilise* (E.Takaishvili, 1938:38; V.Beridze, 1981:147,286, P.Zakaraia, 1992:106-107; I.Giviashvili, 2004:21-28), *Bahcalo Kışla* (E.Takaishvili, 1938:52-53, V.Beridze, 1981:78,138,283, P.Zakaraia, 1992:106; I.Giviashvili, 2005:50-51), *Isi* (E.Takaishvili, 1952:20; I.Zdanevich, 1966:58; V.Beridze, 1981:150,291-292; P.Zakaraia, 1992:105-106; I.Giviashvili, 2005:48-49), *Oshki* (I.Zdanevich, 1966:57; E.Takaishvili, 1952:45-67; D.Winfield, 1968:38-57; V.Beridze, 1981:297-299; A.Alpagno-Novello, 1980:302; P.Zakaraia, 1992:161-187; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:261-163,266-267; T.Sinclair, 1989:7-8; W.Djobadze, 1992: 92-141; F. Bayram, 2002:179-186, V.Silogava, 2006), *Tamruti* and *Ortui* (E.Takaishvili, 1938:77,38-39; V.Beridze, 1981:162; I.Giviashvili, 2005:4-50); one is in *Cyprus*, in *Yalia (Gialia)* (W.Djobadze, 1984:196-209) and one on the *Mount Athos in Iviron* (M.Castelfranchi, 1986:31-50; Th. Stepan, 1995:123-124), both in Georgian monasteries.

Tetraconches, of which the most distinguished examples of *the Mtskheta Holy Cross (Jvari)* and *Bana*. We know of twenty examples of this type. Of these twenty churches eleven are in Georgia: *Manglisi* (S. Slivickij, 1902; M. Dvali, 1974; W.Beridze, 1974:28; A.Alpagno-Novello, 1980:376; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:116,175-177), *Mtskheta Holy Cross, Jvari* (G.Chubinashvili, 1948; V.Beridze, 1974:103-107; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:115-120,131-137; A.Alpagno-Novello, 1980:248-249,420-428; D.Khoshtaria, 2008), *Ateni's Sioni* (G.Chubinashvili, 1948; V.Beridze, 1974:107-108 A.Alpagno-Novello, 1980:288-330; R.Mepisaschwili,

W.Zinzadse, 1986:115-120,138-139,) and *Tbilisi Qvashvet⁹* (V.Beridze, 1994:116) in Kartli region; *Zveli Gavazi* (G.Chubinashvili, 1959:216-231; V.Beridze, 1974:102; A. Alpago-Novello, 1980:325; R. Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:116,124,126-127), *Zveli Shuamta Jvari Type church and small domed church* (G.Chubinashvili, 1948; G.Chubinashvili, 1958:246-255; V.Beridze, 1974:109-110; A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:440; R.Mepisaschwili, 1986:118,120,242-243), *Kvetera* (G.Chubinashvili, 1959:411-416; A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:372; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:54,243-244), *Ninotsminda* (G.Chubinashvili, 1959:232-246, V.Beridze, 1974:102; A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:416-418; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:116,129) are in Kakheti region; *Martvili* (G.Chubinashvili, 1948; V.Beridze, 1974:108-109; A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:380; R.Mepisaschwili, 1986:118-120,140-141) and *Nojikhevi* (P. Zakaraia, 1991:236-241) in *Mengrelia*, western Georgia; nine in Turkey in: *Sukh'bechi* (E.Takaishvili, 1952:81; I.Zdanevich, 1966:45; V.Beridze, 1981:172-173,307; P.Zakaraia, 1990:17-19; I.Giviashvili, I.Koplatadze: 31-32,212; F.Bayram, 2007:62-63); *Muhlad'jigilisi* (E.Takaishvili, 1952:89; V.Beridze, 1981:157,297; F.Bayram, 2007:62), *Kineposi* (E.Takaishvili, 1938:74-76; I.Zdanevich, 1966:52; V.Beridze, 1981:295; P.Zakaraia, 1990; D.Khoshtaria, 1996:8-9; F.Bayram, 2007:64), *Chamhusi, Kamhis Kilisesi* (E.Takaishvili, 1909:84-85; E.Takaishvili, 1938:29; V.Beridze, 185,310; P.Zakaraia, 1992; R.Mepisaschwili, 1986:120; F.Bayram, 2007:65), *Bana Cathedral* (K.Kock, 243-248; E.Takaishvili, 1909:1-117, E.Takaishvili, 1938,19-28; N.,J.-M.Thierry, 1960:12-14; N.,D. Gutschow, 1971:240-241; V.Beridze, 1981:282-283; R.Edwards, 1985:27-32; D.Panayotova, 1985:297-300; T.Sinclair, 1989:25-29; R.Mepisaschwili, D.Tumanishvili, 1989; P.Zakaraia, 1992:43-55; W.Djobadze, 1992:78-85; A.Kazaryan, 2007:3-21, F.Bayram, 2007:63); *Bana chapel* (E.Takaishvili, 1938:28, V.Beridze, 1981:138,283; F.Bayram, 2007:64), *Sveti* (A.Pavlinov, 1893:60-62; Beridze, 1981:170-171,307-308; Khoshtaria, 2005:217-220; F.Bayram, 2007:61-62), *Bobosgiri (Bobosger)* (E.Takaishvili, 1938:43-45; I.Zdanevich, 1966:75; V.Beridze, 1981:139,283-284; F.Bayram, 2007:64-65) and *Itik* (F.Bayram, 2007:62); **There were presumably tetraconches in *Ishani*** (E.Takaishvili:1952:25, W.Djobadze, 1992:192-194, V.Beridze, 1981:150,289-291, T.Sinclair, 1989:9)²⁰ and *Gorijvari*.²¹

Five apsed churches: two of these are

known, *Kumurdo* (G.Chubinashvili, 1970:236-261, V.Beridze, 1974:129-131, V.Beridze, 1981:155-156,295-296; A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:248,358-359; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:222, 249-250) in Meskhety and *Nikortsinda* (Chubinashvili, 1970:236-261, V.Beridze, 1974:145, A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:248,416; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:222, 251-257) in Racha, both in Georgia.

Hexaconches (six apsed churches): two are in Georgia – *Botchorma* (G.Chubinashvili, 1959:416-437; V.Beridze, 1974:121-124, A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:300; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:221,245-246) in Kakheti and *Kachis Sveti* (V.Beridze, 1950:53-94, A.Alpago-Novello, 1980:352-353; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:245) in **Imereti and three in Turkey:** *Goguban, Gogiuba* (E.Takaishvili, 1909:73-75; V.Beridze, 1981:190,287; P.Zakaraia, 1992:109-119; D.Khoshtaria, 2005:191-195), *Oltisi* (E.Takaishvili, 1938:46-49; I.Zdanevich, 1966:68; V.Beridze, 1981:189,286-28; R.Edwards, 1985:16-23; T.Sinclair, 1989:24-25; P.Zakaraia, 1992:109-119) and *Kiaglis Altı, Kamhisi* (E.Takaishvili, 1909:85-88; V.Beridze, 1981:190-191,287; R.Mepisaschwili, W.Zinzadse, 1986:245; P.Zakaraia, 1992:109-119; D.Khoshtaria, 2005:179,193)

Eight armed churches: There is one with eight apses in Samegrelo in *Nojikhevi* (P.Zakaraia, 1991:241-254,84-89), and two others in Turkey – *Tbeti* (M. Kadiroglu, T.Yazar, 2003:1-16; D.Khoshtaria, 2003:77-99, D.Khoshtaria, 2005:233-248)²² and *Taoskari* (E.Takaishvili,1938:67; I.Zdanevich, 1966:41; V.Beridze, 1981:173-175; P.Zakaraia, 1992:119-125; D.Khoshtaria, 1996:8). They have only one apse on the east and seven rectangular arms around the central circle.

Notes:

1 Galaktion Tabidze, In Praise of Nikortsinda, *Poems*, Translation and commentary by I. Merabishvili, Tbilisi, 2005.

2 According to the chronicles, *Bishop John... left there the planks of the Lord* (R. Thomson, 1996:131).

3 Concerning the small niches of Manglisi once accessible from the outside and somehow transformed into side chambers at Ninotsminda, I would like to cite S. Čurčić: *During the period of the new standardization of church types combined with the canonization of the iconography of the decorative program, lateral chapels appear not only fully integrated into the body of the church, but also play a vital role in the shaping of its external form* (S. Čurčić, 1973:450).

4 Bana differs from the remaining aisled tetraconches as regards its type of construction; the space between the

cross arms is occupied vertically with three-story compartments, producing not only side chambers on the ground and at the gallery levels, but also a very strong system to support the dome and connect the round ambulatory. In Zuart'noc, and its 10th c copy in Ani, and also in Albanian Lekit in modern Azerbaijan the dome rested on W shaped pillars, placed in between the apses and surrounding ambulatory. The dome rested on these tall slim pillars, but the structure was too fragile to last over the centuries. In contrast Bana was the only aisled tetraconch to survive and was only destroyed in 1877-78 as a result of the Russian–Turkish wars. Bana had served as a fort for one side and was bombed by another.

5 Double-shell designs had been employed in church architecture since the time of Constantine's Golden Octagon at Antioch (R.Krautheimer, 1986:229).

6 Sumbat Davitis-dze in Georgian chronicles mentions cathedral in Bana while describing the events of the ninth to eleventh centuries. It tells, that King of Georgia Adarnase Bagrationi (888-923 I.G.) *built Bana by the hand of Kvirike Baneli, who become the first bishop of Bana*. See: R.W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History. The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles. The Original Georgian Texts and the Armenian Adaptation*, Oxford 1996: 372.

7 Within the framework of this paper it is impossible to discuss this issue even very briefly. However I must focus on a very recent publication. The Russian scholar of Armenian origin Dr A. Kazaryan in his recent publication argues that the outer walls of the first level were built by Armenian masons in the early 7th c but the entire inner core of the building, including part of ambulatory, tetraconch with exedras, supportive tower-pillars and the dome by Georgians in the early 10th c after the original walls of the tetraconch were destroyed (A. Kazaryan, 2007:3-21).

8 Information of the ongoing excavations at Gialia Monastery of the Virgin, conducted since 2006 as a joint project of the Department of Antiquities of the Ministry of Communications and Works of the Republic of Cyprus and the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia can be read in Dr G. Gagoshidze's contribution to this volume.

9 There was a tetraconch church dating from the 6th c which was replaced by a second tetraconch church built in 1753, which stood until 1904 when this third church was erected and can be visited in Rustaveli avenue, in the centre of Tbilisi.

10 Işhani is a cross-domed building with its exedra on the east. Archeological works have never been conducted at Işhani, and there are no chronicles indicating the presence of a tetraconch type building here. However Prof. E. Takaishvili believed that the eastern exedra was a remnant of an early tetraconch building. This conclusion was based on several factors. According to the *The Life of Saint Grigol Khantsteli*, written by Giorgi Merchule, the 10th century monk who describes the lives and works of St. Grigol from Khantsta and his monastic brotherhood in 9th century Tao-Klarjeti, it was the first church in Iskhan and was built by the Nerses Catholicos (640-661), who had come from Işhani and

later became the patriarch of Armenia (D. Lang, 1956:135-153). The second factor Işhani has an open exedra on its eastern side, the motif of which characterizes Zuart'noc Cathedral, a famous memorial building near Ejmiacin and one also built by Nerses; The third factor is that an aisled tetraconch is found in neighboring Bana. The established fact dating the eastern exedra of Işhani to the 7th c was correctly rejected by Dr M. Kadiroğlu in her monograph dedicated to Işhani (M. Kadiroğlu, 1991:55). Dr Kadiroğlu argues that the Işhani exedra comes from the second building period of late 9th and early 10th cc., though the pillars may have been re-used from the 7th c church. Here we should add that exedras were not used on the eastern side of Zuart'noc, which was instead bordered by a semicircular wall. For this reason it is inappropriate to use Zuart'noc as a point of comparison with Işhani. It would, however be interesting to discuss the eastern and north-western parts of the cathedral with a similar building technique and similar forms, as represented in the horseshoe-shaped arches.

11 In the late 20th c during the construction of a new church, remains of the north apse were discovered: presumably these remains belonged to an early tetraconch or triconch church.

12 Remains from the eight-armed church of 960-970ies were covered during the reconstruction of Tbeti Cathedral in early 11th c. In 1961 the monument was seriously damaged, though the structure of the early eight-armed church became visible.

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UNKNOWN AND LESS KNOWN GEORGIAN MONUMENTS IN NORTHEAST TURKEY

The exploration of Tao-Klarjeti, or better of Zemo Kartli (Upper Kartli) how the Georgians have called the provinces situated in the valley of the river Çoruh (Çoroxi) and in the upper reaches of the river Kura (Mtkvari) was dominated by its difficult position in the region between Turkey and Russia.

It's not the place here to speak about the merits of Georgian and Russian scholars as Bakradze, Pavlinov, Marr and especially Takaišvili creating the base of our knowledge about the historical monuments of Tao-Klarjeti¹.

After World War I we had a long break lasting till the early sixties of the last century, because our region was a prohibited area of the Turkish Republic.

Nicole and Jean-Michel Thierry have been the first foreign scholars, who were allowed to travel in the easternmost parts of Turkey, and they gave during more than 30 years important descriptions of many Georgian monuments².

Next to them Wakhtang Djobadze has made some excursions to Tao-Klarjeti and wrote in 1992 an excellent book about the monasteries³. In the late eighties the American Robert Edwards published three succeeding *Preliminary reports on the marchlands of northeast Turkey* with some excellent observations and discoveries, but he never kept his promise to write a conclusion of his researches⁴. Not to forget the late Vakhtang Beridze who wrote in 1981 his survey of the principal monuments of Tao-Klarjeti in Russian and French language⁵.

Now, after the liberation of Georgia from the reign of the Sovjets, the Georgians are also able to travel in Eastern Anatolia and some scholars as David Khoštarja, Valeri Silogava, Irene Giviašvili and Temur Chucišvili took the chance to make their researches in Tao-Klarjeti.

But even in some western countries we can also notice an increasing interest in this region. In 2006 at the big *International Congress of Byzantine Studies* in London Tao-Klarjeti was discussed in a Panel Discussion of its own, and some scholars as Markus Bogisch from Denmark and Mine Kadiroğlu published new researches about the monuments of Tao-Klarjeti.

My own researches began with a touristical jour-

ney to Eastern Anatolia in 1982 when I visited the first time some important monuments of Tao-Klarjeti as Oški, Işxani, Xaxuli, Dolisqana and Yeni Rabat. After my return I tried to find some literature about this subject but I discovered nearly nothing written in recent time. When I found the comprehensive list of Georgian monuments written by Ilja Zdanevitch, member of Takaišvili's last expedition in 1917⁶, I decided to search for all those places cited there. During the following years I undertook with a car of my own four journeys to Tao-Klarjeti. In 1985, 1986, 1988 and 1990 I could travel to nearly all places cited by Zdanevitch. Assisted by the aid of modern street maps and the Map of the Turkish Army (Harta Genel Müdürlüğü) I was able not only to locate nearly all Georgian monuments but also to measure and photograph most of them.

In 1989 at the *International Symposium of Georgian Art History* in Tbilisi I reported about my researches in Klarjeti. During the following years I published some articles in Austria and France, and in 1997 I finished at the University of Vienna my dissertation *Studies on the historical geography of Tao-Klarjeti*, where you can find new descriptions and photos of nearly all churches, monasteries and fortresses in Tao-Klarjeti⁷.

My following presentation doesn't want to show you the well-known monuments of Tao-Klarjeti as Oški, Işxani, Otxta Eklesia a. s. o. – What I want to do here is to show, how many Georgian monuments outside the territory of modern Georgia are still existing. – Many of them are not very spectacular and we must be afraid that they will soon be destroyed and the memory of the existence of Georgian people and culture in this region after a short time will also disappear.

I. THE VALLEY OF THE BARDIZ ÇAYI

At first I want to describe an interesting group of nearly unknown churches and monasteries situated in the valley of the Bardiz river, an important collateral valley of the Oltu-Penek river. The name of this river Bardiz was derived from the Armenian word partez "Garden", and the valley was the district Partizacpor of the former Armenian province Tayk (Fig. 1).

Here we can find:

Leksori:

From the entrance into the valley you have to go approximately one hour by foot to reach Leksori. The monastery, which was never mentioned in historical sources, is situated on two rocky outcrops of a mountain and was only visited by Takaišvili in 1907⁸.



Bardiz valley

On the northern outcrop we can see the *single-naved main church* with walls consisting of roughly surfaced blocks.

On the southern outcrop stands a better preserved *small chapel*. According to the masonry consisting of accurately surfaced stones we can date this chapel into the 10th or 11th century.

Kalkus:

Not far away from the main road to Şenkaya we discovered in the poor village İkizpınar the *remains of a small rectangular church* used by the peasants as a magazine for their hay.

Kop:

In the environment of the village Timurkişla exists a rather well preserved *single-naved church* only mentioned by Zdanevitch.

This church is standing on a terrace at the right bank of the Bardiz river and consists of relatively well squared great stones.

Fragments of sculptural decoration and an inscription are still visible.

Perhaps we can date this church in the 10th or 11th century Ortulis Vanki:

Here are the remains of an old monastery in a valley on the left side of the road from Şenkaya (Ortuli) down to the Bardiz river.

I. Gviašvili in her new book about Tao-Klarjeti

called this monastery Patar Vanki⁹. I don't know, where are the sources for this name ?

Only the eastern part of the *single-naved main church* of the monastery is well pre-served. The masonry consists of accurately squared blocks. Therefore V. Beridze dated this church in the second half of the 10th century.

Kotris:

In Teketaş, 6km above the Bardiz valley, on the way from Kop to Pertusi we could discover *the ruins of a small single-naved chapel*.

The inhabitants of this poor village are only Kurds.

Pertusi:

Pertusi is identical with the modern village Züm-rütköy 6km above the Bardiz valley.

The site of the single-naved church reported by Zdanevitch is now occupied by a newly erected school-building.

Bobisgeri:

Takaişvili discovered in 1907 this remarkable domed church and wrote a detailed description¹⁰, but he left much confusion about its location: Takaişvili only told that Bobisgeri was situated inferior of Pertusi.

Zdanevitch located it in the south of Pertusi and Thierry also mistakenly in the south of Şenkaya (Ortuli).

In 1990 I visited Pertusi, now Züm-rütköy, where the inhabitants showed me the way to Bobisgeri – After 45 minutes by foot we reached northeast of the village *the place of the old Georgian church*: But the church was totally destroyed !

But the great surprise came after it: The Turks showed me in Züm-rütköy a column of the church situated within a house of a peasant !

Bardiz:

Today the most important settlement in the Bardiz valley is called Gaziler.

The fortress erected by the Turks in the 12th century protected an important way from the Araxes to Oltu and the Black Sea Coast. On the walls we can find some re-employed decorative sculptures of the former Georgian church of Bardiz.

The place of the *Georgian church* is now totally destroyed.

Within a place surrounded by a rectangular wall I discovered *the frame of the door of the Georgian church*: The former Greek inhabitants of this village used it as a frame of her fountain. A Greek inscription from 1894 documents this fact.

Now I want to show you some churches in the upper region of the Kura/Mtkvari valley, the former Georgian provinces Kola, Artani and Javaxeti. The greatest

part of them was not visited by modern scholars since the days of Takaišvili at the beginning of the 20th century :

II THE PROVINCE OF KOLA

The highland of Kola, where Georgia's main river Kura/ Mtkvari is coming from, in former times by the Armenians was called a district of the province Tayk, but in the eyes of the Georgians Kola never has been a part of Tao (Fig. 2).

Here we could find only a small number of historical monuments, because this region in all times was sparsely populated :

Dörtkilise :

The modern village Uğurtaş. The former Turkish name Dörtkilise "Four Churches" – the Georgian Oxtasaqdari - is justified, though in this village are only two of the four churches.

Of a *Trikonchos* we could see only a few traces : a part of the north-arm and the eastern apse.

In the western part of the village exists a remarkable *Double Church*: The most interesting church in this region. A single-naved church connected with a kind of tetrakonchos.

West of the village are *two further churches*: small single-naved buildings.

Cicori:

Now Budakli, situated north-west of Göle in the upper valley of the Kura river.

Near the village exists a *single-naved church*: The gaps between the stones are filled with mortar. This construction-method seems to be typical for many churches in this region.

Kalecik:

This Georgian fortress on the right bank of the Kura river is called by T. Xucišvili Kumurluxis Cixe. The source for this name must be prince Vaxušti, who mentioned in his Geographical Description of Georgia the fortress Kumurlu/ Bečiscixe in Kola – But I think that it is better to identify Kumurlu with the village Kömürlü north of Bana.

Two phases of construction and the entrance door are still visible.

III. THE PROVINCE OF ARTANI

A Georgian province in the northern part of the highland of Armenia.

In the Armenian Geography (Ašxarhacoyc) Artahan was a district (gawar) of the province of Gugark (Fig. 3).

Alagöz:

Alagebi (Xucišvili).

I discovered the ruins in 1990 going by road from Ardahan 11km to the south.

A single-naved church: Only a part of the former Georgian church is preserved. You can see the core and some stones of the covering. The age of this church is uncertain.

Ölçek:

Orçoki (Xucišvili) ? , situated on the road Ardahan-Çıldır. No-one has described this place before me .

The ruins of a single-naved church: similar to Eski Beyrehatun and Sikirib (10th /11th century), both situated in the environment.

A fortress, called by the inhabitants "Tomb", situated on a hill above the village. To me it seems to be more a rather old church erected in the time before the 10th century, because the construction-method is typical for the so called "Transitional Period".

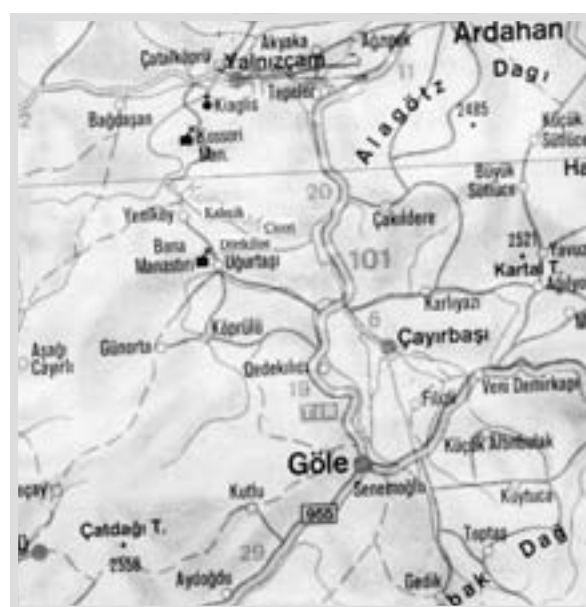
Near Ölçek you can read on my map the false localization of the Zegani church. But in reality this important cruciform domed building is situated in the west of Kurtkale. I did not visit this place, because M. Thierry had reported that the church in 1970 already was totally destroyed. But that was not true, because D. Xoštaria a few years ago rediscovered the remains of this remarkable church¹¹.

Eski Beyrehatun:

Begraxatuni (Xucišvili). This place is situated on the right side of the main-road Ardahan – Çıldır. Only described by Takaišvili in 1902¹².

A small part of the apse of a *single-naved church* is still remaining.

The date of the church is the 10th or 11th century as I assume.



Kola



Artani, Javakheti, Erusheti

IV. THE PROVINCE OF JAVAXETI

On the banks of the Kura/Mtkvari in the Georgian province of Javaxeti we discovered the remains of two Georgian churches :

Veli:

The modern village Sevimli situated high above the Kura valley.

Takaišvili reported in 1902 about a castle with the ruins of a single-naved church from the 10th century and a later palace of the Atabegs of Samcxé-Saatabago.

When I visited Veli in 1990, the inhabitants showed me in the village the *place of a church* – but no remains were visible!

It was not possible to me to visit the *important Georgian fortress* situated below the village. According to Thierry you can see there the ruins of a church and the palace of the Atabegs.

Sikirib:

Perhaps the Georgian name was Sakazrebi. The

Turks call the place now Kotanlı.

Today here are preserved the walls of a *single-naved church* used in former times as a mosque. Above the window you can realize a totally erased relief.

In 1902 Takaišvili identified this building with the Church of Saint Giorgi of Sakazrebi

V. THE REGION OF ERUŠETI

The region north of the Kura river was called by the Georgians Erušeti and has been a part of the province of Javaxeti.

Erušeti:

In 1990 we could identify this important Georgian place with the poor village Oğuzyolu near Hanak. In old times Erušeti was centre and bishopric of the region of Erušeti. Since the 6th century existed here a church with precious relics : a part of the cross and nails of Jesus Christ.

According to Takaišvili, who visited the place in 1902, existed here an important *three-naved basilica* without a dome¹⁴. But in 1990 we could discover only a poor part of the apse.

Börk:

Berki (Xucišvili)

In the east of Hanak we could discover the rather well preserved ruins of a further Georgian church :

A *single-naved church* with remains of a small annexed chapel. The style of this building is similar to Cigor and Dörtkilise in the province Kola

On behalf the window and the fragment of a relief at the western façade we are able to identify this building with a medieval Georgian church.

Gogubani or Gogjuba:

Today Binbaşak east of Börk

Takaišvili saw here in 1902 the badly damaged ruins of the *Church of Saint Giorgi*¹⁵.

According to his report and photo was it a remarkable church. A domed central building with six conchs and even some human sculptures.

Takaišvili dated this church in the 10th century, because it represents the same type of central-building as the churches in Kamhis Altı, Bojorma and Kacxi.

But in 1990 approximately one kilometre north of the village we could discover only the poor remains of this totally destroyed church.

Čaisi:

Now the village Kayabeyi situated on the eastern bank of the Mtkvari not far away from the Aktaş/Hazapın Gölü, the Georgian Karcaxis Tba. Takaišvili described the church in 1902 ¹⁶.

In 1990 we could find a well preserved *single-naved*

church, which is used now as a mosque. Some traces of ornaments are visible. We can date this church in the time of about 1000.

Not far away from Kayabeyi we could identify the village Öncül with Cqarostavi, where the inhabitants in 1986 showed me the place of the famous *Church of the Holy Mother of God* described by Takaišvili as a remarkable cruciform domed church, according to V. Beridze a building of the 10th century.

The people of the village told me, that this church was totally destroyed in 1960

Otxta Eklesia (Dörtkilise) :

Above the cathedral I discovered in 1990 a church unknown to all former investigators. A well preserved single-naved church in the style of the 10th century with triangular niches and inside a gallery.

Donor inscription: "In the name of God, I, Arseni, have erected this Holy Church under the reign of Davit, koronikon 204. Bless Giorgi....Petre".

984 = the date of erection, Arseni = Arseni Ninocmindeli, 965 in Otxta Eklesia, later in the Pontus Region; cf. Giorgi Mtacmindeli, Biography of Ioanne and Ekvtime, the founders of the Georgian Iviron – Monastery on Mount Athos.

A funeral church or perhaps a place for monks searching extreme loneliness.

Finally we can say that the old Georgian culture in Turkey even today is not only represented by better preserved monuments as Oški, Işxani, Otxta Eklesia, Parxali, Xaxuli and Yeni Rabat but also by a great number of smaller buildings documenting the former presence of the Georgians during the Middle Ages and the time after it. But now there must be the fear, that many of them will soon disappear destroyed by weather and wind or by human hands.

At last I think that I have done my work. – The political situation during the late 20th century gave me as a foreigner the chance to travel in Tao-Klarjeti and to collect many important facts about its monuments. But now it's your turn to make further investigations assisted by your knowledge of the Georgian language and the vicinity of your country to the former Georgian regions in Turkey. Future times perhaps will allow it even on Turkish territory to make archaeological excavations and to do something for the conservation of the cultural monuments of the Georgian people outside of the Republic of Georgia.

For us as scholars not living in Georgia it will be necessary to publish in the next years a comprehensive monography of the monuments of Tao-Klarjeti written

in English or German to tell the whole world about the greatness and importance of Georgian culture.

Notes :

¹ D.BAKRADZE, Kavkaz v drevnich pamjatnikach christianstva (Caucasus in ancient monuments of Christianity). Tbilisi 1875 (in Russian); A. M.PAVLINOV, Ekspedicija na Kavkaz 1888 goda. *Materialy po Archeologii Kavkaza I* (Expedition to Caucasus of 1888. Materials for the archaeology of Caucasus) II (1893) 1-80 (in Russian); N. MARR, Dnevnik poezdki v Shavshetiju i Klardjetiu. *Teksty i razyskanja po armjano-gruzinskoj filologii* (Diry of the journey to Shavshetia and Klarjetia. Texts for Armenian-georgian phylogoly) 7(1911)1-216 (in Russian); E. TAKAISHVILI, Christianskie pamiatniki. Ekskursia 1902 goda. *Materialy po Archeologii Kavkaza* (Christian monuments. Tour of 1902; Materials for archaeology of CAUCASUS) XII (1909) (in Russian) and Arkeologiuri ekspedicia Kola-Oltisshi da Changlishi (Archaeological expedition to Kola-Otishi and Changlishi). Paris 1937 (in Georgian)

² J. M. THIERRY, Topographie et état actuel des monuments Géorgiens en Turquie orientale. *Revue des Études Géorgiennes et Caucasiennes* 5 (1989) 129-167

³ W. DJOBADZE, Early medieval Georgian monasteries in historical Tao, Klarjet' i and Shavsheti (*Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie* 17).

Stuttgart 1992

⁴ R. W. EDWARDS, The vale of Kola: A final preliminary report on the marchlands of Northeast Turkey. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 42 (1988) 119-141

⁵ V. BERIDZE, Mesto pamjatnikov Tao-Klardžeti v istorii Gruzinskoj architekturi –

Monuments de Tao-Klardjetie dans l'histoire de l'architecture géorgienne. (The place of the monuments of Tao-klarjeti in the history of Georgia), Tbilisi, 1981 (in Russian)

⁶ I. ZDANÉVITCH, L'itinéraire géorgien de Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo et les églises aux confins de l'atabegat. *Bedi Kartlisa* 34 (1976) 143-149

⁷ B. BAUMGARTNER, Studien zur historischen Geographie von Tao-Klardžeti. Diss. Wien 1996

⁸ TAKAISHVILI, Kola-Oltisi 46

⁹ I. GIVIASHVILI – I. KOPLATADZE, Tao-Klarjeti. Tbilisi 2004, 112-115

¹⁰ TAKAISHVILI, Kola-Oltisi 43-45

¹¹ GIVIASHVILI-KOPLATADZE 88-91

¹² TAKAISHVILI, Ekskursija 76

¹³ TAKAISHVILI ib. 75

¹⁴ TAKAISHVILI ib. 69-70

¹⁵ TAKAISHVILI ib. 73-75

¹⁶ TAKAISHVILI ib. 51-52

¹⁷ B. BAUMGARTNER, Eine bisher unbekannte Kirche aus dem Jahr 984 im Tal von Dörtkilise (Otxta-ek'lesia), Nordosttürkei. *Revue des Études Géorgiennes et Caucasiennes* 8-9 (1992-1993) 223-232

SOME REMARKS ON GEORGIAN ART HISTORY AND THE CROSS-IN-SQUARE CHURCH AT OSHKI IN THE HISTORIC PROVINCE OF TAO IN NORTH-EASTERN TURKEY

One of the main tasks of Georgian art history is to inscribe medieval Georgian architecture into the framework of East Christian architecture, thereby giving it the place which it deserves within a universal history of art. This objective was already recognized by the founder of Georgian art history, Giorgi Chubinashvili (1885-1973),¹ who underscored its importance in connection with his review of Josef Strzygowski's book *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa* in 1922.²

As a Georgian scholar with a profound firsthand knowledge of the medieval monuments in the South Caucasus, Chubinashvili was able to understand the full scope of Strzygowski's work, and he correctly anticipated that it was allotted to be the main reference book on Armenian and to some extent even on Georgian architecture for a long time.³ Although he was aware of the theoretical shortcomings and methodological flaws that characterized Strzygowski's survey, Chubinashvili could not resist reacting to one of the main allegations put forward by the Austrian art historian, namely the postulated superiority of Armenian architecture.⁴ It gave Chubinashvili the impetus to work not only on medieval Georgian architecture, but also on Armenian architecture. Dismantling Strzygowski's theories became a lifelong obsession for him, and his last book, published in 1967, was entirely devoted to medieval Armenian architecture.⁵ Here, Chubinashvili argued again for a later dating of several key monuments of Armenian architecture,⁶ which many of his foreign colleagues understood as an advocacy of the primacy of Georgian architecture.⁷

Chubinashvili's apparent inversion of Strzygowski's assertion sparked off a major dispute between Armenian and Georgian scholars which did not conduce to the advancement of comparative and cross-cultural

studies on the medieval architecture of the South Caucasus.⁸ Instead, it led to the paradoxical situation where certain monuments of Georgian and Armenian architecture that share the same structural features were explained as the results of entirely independent developments.⁹ The conception of the evolution of Georgian architecture in splendid isolation from the architecture of the neighbouring countries became pre-eminent in Georgian art history writing.¹⁰

Another contested field of research is the ecclesiastical architecture of Tao, or Tayk. The controversy between Georgian and Armenian art historians about the national affiliation of the region's churches has to be seen against the shifting historical background of this marchland.

For Armenians, Tayk is an essential part of historic Armenia,¹¹ gaining further significance as the ancestral lands of the Mamikonean dynasty which dominated Armenian politics between the fourth and the eighth centuries.¹² During the 1970s and 1980s, Tiran Marutian repeatedly claimed that the tenth- and early eleventh-century churches in Tayk were built by Armenians, too.¹³ The almost complete lack of Armenian inscriptions on the monuments was explained in the following way: By this time the Armenian population of Tayk had converted to Orthodoxy, and, consequently, it had adopted the Georgian language for ecclesiastical matters.¹⁴

This hypothesis was and is vehemently rejected by Georgian art historians, who see the existence of numerous Georgian inscriptions on the church façades, mentioning Georgian princes and other high dignitaries, as a clear proof that the buildings belong to the Georgian cultural sphere.¹⁵ Tao also plays a significant role in the cultural memory of Georgia, where it figures as a synonym for the realm of David Kropalates (r. 966-1000). This outstanding ruler is widely regarded as the mastermind behind the unification of Georgia which became a reality in the beginning of the eleventh century.¹⁶ The churches and monasteries of Tao are thus conceived as the physical manifestations of Georgia's regained political power and cultural strength in the second half of the tenth century. Moreover, these monuments are seen as the immediate forerunners of the representative ecclesiastical

architecture of united Georgia. Claiming they are not Georgian is therefore considered a gross and deliberate distortion of Georgia's cultural history.

The above outlined issues of supposed cultural hierarchies in the South Caucasus have obstructed non-biased cross-cultural analyses of medieval Georgian architecture for a long time.¹⁷ Georgian architecture certainly has its own distinctive character, but, like Byzantine and Armenian architecture, it evolved out of a complex interplay between different cultural currents.¹⁸ Reducing it to a largely self-referential system that allegedly developed in seclusion from the surrounding world only means to misapprehend the true creativity of Georgian architecture. Imported ideas and concepts definitely played a decisive role in the formation and successive development of the Christian architecture in the South Caucasus, but the same did deliberate choices made by local patrons and builders whilst realizing these ideas.

Georgian architecture was therefore neither restricted to its own traditions, nor was it a passive recipient of foreign influences. The people who created it were undoubtedly capable of finding their own solutions. On the other side, this does not imply that there was no interest in taking over certain formal or spatial features in architecture that had a specific meaning. Ultimately, some of these appropriated building principles were common throughout the entire Christian *oikoumene*.¹⁹

In the following, I want to take a closer look at how a particular architectural concept was adapted in medieval Georgia. I will do so by taking outset in the architecture of the church in Oshki, located in the historic province of Tao, now in north-eastern Turkey.²⁰

THE MONASTERY CHURCH IN OSHKI

The main church of the medieval Georgian monastery in Oshki (fig. 1) is an imposing building, both in respect to its dimensions, spatial complexity and sculptural programme. The donors were the two brothers and Bagratid princes, Bagrat *eristavt eristavi* (d. 966), and David Magistros, the future David Kuropalates (r. 966-1000).²¹ According to an inscription, discovered by Wakhtang Djobadze in 1973, the construction of the church began on the 25th of March 963, on the feast day of the Annunciation.²² Djobadze

convincingly argued for that the building was completed within a period of ten years.²³ It was later re-roofed under the Byzantine Emperors Basil II and Constantine VIII shortly after the annexation of the southern part of Tao by Basil II following the death of David Kuropalates in 1000.²⁴ In 1036, after the Georgian re-conquest of southern Tao, the "church of the Holy Forerunner" was embellished with wall paintings by order of Jojik Patrikios.²⁵

Typologically, the church in Oshki combines features of a longitudinal and a centrally planned building (fig. 2). The eastern part is a spacious triconch crowned by a dome on four freestanding piers, while the western part consists of a barrel-vaulted nave divided into four bays. Together they form a free cross. Both the western nave and the triconch in the east are flanked by porches and side-chambers giving each cross arm a tripartite shape.

The spatial arrangement of the interior is clearly reflected by the masses of the exterior and the articulation of the façades, the latter being furnished with deep triangular niches that indicate the position of the main apses inside the building. Moreover, the north, south and east cross arms have marked basilical profiles. The hierarchical graduation of the volumes is best observed in the east (fig. 3), where the five stepped blind arches of the main façade are supplemented by the lower blind arches that appear on the east side of the southern and northern cross arm. Together, they underscore the pyramidal composition of the masses, and point towards the vertical axis in the middle of the façade. The dome functions as the general organizing principle, regardless from which position the building is seen. All masses are arranged around it. The pronounced verticality of the eastern part of the building is harmoniously counterbalanced by the longitudinal axis which is emphasized by the extended west arm.

Returning to the interior (fig. 2), it can be ascertained that the dome plays the same role here as it does on the exterior. All spatial units are grouped around it. The central bay with the dome is inscribed into a larger square which consists of the four barrel-vaulted rectangular bays on the axes and four square compartments in the diagonals that almost reach the same height as the adjoining piers.²⁶ In essence, this

is a cross-in-square structure, albeit on a monumental scale. Its stability can be observed in Oshki and in the structurally related Cathedral at Ishkhani²⁷ which has retained its dome although *all* vaults of cross arms have collapsed.

THE MIDDLE BYZANTINE CROSS-IN-SQUARE SYSTEM

The domes in Oshki and Ishkhani are obviously not supported by the four freestanding piers alone. In addition to them, a sophisticated system of what I want to term “inner buttressing” has been employed. This structural system, which is typical for the churches of the cross-in-square type, has been aptly described by the Russian art historian Nikolaj Brunov:

“Controlling the thrust of the dome was the main constructive problem. A dome on a drum does actually not exert thrust on the arches in the crossing since the thrust is absorbed by the thickness of the walls of the drum. However, the arches exert a thrust on the four freestanding piers in a *diagonal direction* [my emphasizing], which is counterbalanced with the help of the barrel vaults of the cross arms *and the vaults of the corner compartments* [my emphasizing]. Further buttressing is provided by the outer walls and the vaults of the adjacent annexes, if such exist.”²⁸

Brunov thus makes it very clear that the four vaulted corner compartments play a vital role in the static system of the cross-in-square church. Moreover, the stability of the structure is further improved if vaulted annexes exist.

The latter building principle applies not only for churches of the cross-in-square type, but to all churches with steeply proportioned interiors covered by a relatively wide vault. Vestibules or annexes enveloping the core of the church on two or three sides are very common in Georgian medieval architecture, and in combination with barrel-vaulted single nave churches they are so frequently represented in Kartli and Kakheti that Giorgi Chubinashvili coined a specific – if debatable – term for this architectural phenomenon. The so-called “basilicas of the three churches type” (*Dreikirchenbasilika*) do have a basilical elevation, but the core and the annexes typically constitute entirely separate spaces which are connected to each other only by means of doorways.²⁹ It is clear that the barrel-vaulted annexes, apart from their various functions as

vestibules, storage rooms and chapels, also served as abutments for the vaulted core spaces.

The symmetrical arrangement of porches and auxiliary rooms on both sides of the nave can be observed on a greater scale in the cross-in-square churches of Samshvilde and Mokvi (fig. 4, 5) which date from the eighth and tenth centuries respectively.³⁰ While the fully integrated secondary rooms that envelop the core of the church in Mokvi clearly have the structural function described by Brunov, another, more aesthetically motivated building principle can be discerned at the church in Samshvilde. Vestibules, annexes, and side-chambers are combined in such a way that they form two continuous unities which together with the core of the church form a perfect square. Seen in elevation, we encounter a gradual building up of the masses which add to the overall monumentality of the church. The result is a pyramidal composition culminating in the dome above the centre. A corresponding additive building principle leading to a hierarchical graduation of the masses was also employed in Mokvi.

While it is still debated what might have inspired the specific spatial design of the so-called “basilicas of the three churches type,” it is clear that the lay-outs of the cross-in-square churches in Samshvilde and Mokvi reflect an architectural trend which has close analogies in Middle Byzantine architecture.³¹ The same applies to the monastery church in Oshki.

ACCUMULATION OF SIDE-CHAPELS

The affinity between the church in Oshki and the imperial foundations in the Byzantine capital is further corroborated by its large number of side-chapels: eight out of the twelve rooms that flank the apses of the triconch in pairs of two are furnished with apsidioles and lateral niches that indicate a liturgical function.³²

In her study on the upper-story chapels in churches of the Christian East, the American Byzantinist and art historian Natalia Teteriatnikov argued for that the custom of celebrating the liturgy in private was widespread among the early monastic communities in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine, and that it was through the imitation of the practices of the monastic centres in the Christian East, and especially in Palestine, that this custom was adopted in the neighbouring Christian countries, among them Armenia and Georgia.³³ She

rightfully points out that the monastery of St.. Saba in particular must have played a significant role in this process.³⁴

One could thus assume that the small side- and upper-storey chapels in Oshki reflect a century old tradition of private oratories with roots in the liturgical practices of the monasteries in the Holy Land. Teteriatnikov correctly states that one of the brethren of the monastery of Khandzta in Klarjeti was sent to Jerusalem in order to copy and bring back home the typikon of St.. Saba.³⁵ But this is no proof of the adoption of private chapels in the monastery churches of Klarjeti.³⁶ In fact, quite the opposite seems to have been the case: according to Giorgi Merchule, who wrote the Life of St.. Grigol in the mid-tenth century, private oratories were strictly prohibited among the brethren of Khandzta.³⁷

On the other side, it has to be considered that Oshki was not an ordinary monastery church. Most of all, it was an ambitious princely foundation intended to withstand the comparison with even the most prestigious Middle Byzantine churches in Constantinople.

It is generally agreed upon that the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I, erected between 876 and 880 within the confines of the Great Palace, was a building that exerted a significant influence on the subsequent development of church architecture both within the Empire and beyond. According to the written sources,³⁸ it had several sanctuaries and chapels, and it had multiple dedications, to Christ, the Virgin, the archangel Michael, Elias, and Nicholas. The British Byzantinist Paul Magdalino pointed out that it housed a great collection of relics related to the Old Testament, which he interpreted as the wish of Basil I to be associated with Salomon, who built the First Temple in Jerusalem, and by this analogy to equal Justinian I, the builder of Hagia Sophia.³⁹

The German art historian Lioba Theis basically shares Magdalino's view, but at the same time she stressed that the Nea was an adaptation of the concept of Hagia Sophia to the contemporary requirements of the Middle Byzantine era.⁴⁰ These contemporary requirements apparently included the need for several side-chapels: on one side, in the sense of places intended for private liturgy,⁴¹ and on the other, as places where important relics were kept and venerated.⁴²

The side-chambers and upper-storey rooms in Oshki did obviously not exist for structural and aesthetic reasons alone. The majority of them had apses and niches showing that they were intended for liturgical use. Some of them could indeed have been private oratories, while others might have been chapels dedicated to the commemoration of a saint whose relics were kept in them. This could have been reflected by more than a single dedication. In accordance with the content of the inscription in the main apse, it is generally believed that Oshki was dedicated to St.. John the Baptist.⁴³ However, the often repeated invocations of Christ, the Mother of God, the Holy Trinity, the Holy Wood of Life, and All Saints that appear in numerous inscriptions might not only be standard formulas – they could as well point to the multiple dedications of the church.⁴⁴

There is no clear indication of what kinds of relics were kept at Oshki,⁴⁵ and it is doubtful that the patrons of Oshki had any intentions of being associated with King Salomon, as it has been suggested for Basil I. On the other side, it is a well-known fact that the Iberian Bagratids claimed to be descendants of the Biblical King David.⁴⁶ The myth of their Jewish ancestry was a perfect construction since it was compatible with the historical narrative of the introduction of Christianity in eastern Georgia, in which Jews played a significant role.⁴⁷ Not only did it add to the legitimacy of Bagratid kingship, but it also underscored the close ties between Georgia and the Holy Land which were an important factor of Georgian self-identification.

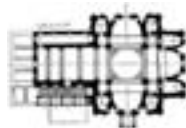
From the fourth until the tenth century the Georgian church followed the Jerusalem Rite,⁴⁸ and the cult of the Cross which had originated from Jerusalem found its close parallel in Georgia. This included the placing of crosses inside churches. The church of the Holy Cross near Mtskheta, a memorial building from the early seventh century sheltering the previously freestanding cross of St.. Nino, the Illuminatrix of Georgia, under its large stone baldachin, might have served as the prototype for this. Pre-altar crosses placed on a podium in the middle of the naos are still preserved in a number of churches in Zemo Svaneti, indicating that they were a fixed constituent of medieval Georgian church furniture.⁴⁹ Correspondingly, a large cross might have stood beneath the dome in

Oshki, where it would have played an important role in the liturgy.⁵⁰ The hypothetical existence of a cross also adds meaning to the bipartite lay-out of the church. Placed behind the nave and in front of the sanctuary, its position would have repeated the original position of the True Cross in Jerusalem between the Constantinian Basilica and the Anastasis Rotunda.

The church of Oshki thus shows some of the typical characteristics of Middle Byzantine architecture, but these principles were modified and supplemented in order to serve the specific requirements of the Georgian church. There are further analogies with the medi-



Oshki, seen from the south
(after E. Taqaishvili, *ekspedicia*, pl. 46)



Oshki, plan (after E. Taqaishvili, *ekspedicia*, pl. 39)



Oshki, elevation of the east façade (redrawn after R. Mepiaschwili and W. Zinzadse, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, Leipzig 1977, p. 138)



Samshvilde, axonometric projection and plan (redrawn after V. Beridze, *Monuments de Tao-Klardjetie*, fig. 25)



Mokvi, axonometric projection and plan (redrawn after V. Beridze, *Monuments de Tao-Klardjetie*, fig. 16)

eval architecture of Armenia and the art and architecture of the neighbouring Islamic countries, but these cannot be touched upon here. Important in this context of multiple cross-cultural inspirations is the fact that the builders of Oshki came up with a distinctive solution which rightfully earns its place within a universal history of art. Just like Giorgi Chubinashvili wanted it.

Notes:

1 For an appraisal of Chubinashvili and his work, see V. Bérizdé, "Guiorgui Tchoubinachvili et ses œuvres," *BK* 32 (1974), pp. 57-62; E. Neubauer, "Georg Tschubinaschwili – Porträt eines Kunsthistorikers," *Georgica* 8 (1985), pp. 56-59.

2 J. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, 2 vols., Vienna 1918; G. Tschubinaschwili, "Die christliche Kunst im Kaukasus und ihr Verhältnis zur allgemeinen Kunstgeschichte. (Eine kritische Würdigung von Josef Strzygowskis "Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa")," *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft* 15 (1922), pp. 217-237.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 236.

4 Cf. U. Bock, *Armenische Baukunst. Geschichte und Problematik ihrer Erforschung*, Cologne 1983, pp. 55-57. Chubinashvili's reaction, however, is quite understandable if we take the underlying racial implications of Strzygowski's theory into consideration. Following the Hegelian notion of "Volksgeist" and seeing the cultural and artistic achievements of a people or race as the natural outcome and reflection of their higher or lower developed collective spirit, Strzygowski, by advocating the primacy of Armenian over Georgian culture, denounced the creative potential of the Georgian people altogether. According to this logic, the Georgians – being a non-Aryan people – were deemed to be inferior artists than the Aryan Armenians.

For Strzygowski's ideological background and his problematic view of the relationship between Georgia and Armenia, see C. Maranci, *Medieval Armenian Architecture. Constructions of Race and Nation*, Louvain 2001, pp. 159-175, esp. pp. 161-163.

5 Chubinashvili G.N. *Raziskania po Armianskoi arkhitekte*. (Studies for Armenian Architecture). Tbilisi. 1967 (in Russian). The book has a comprehensive summary in German (pp. 177-201) which was also published as an article in the French periodical *Bedi Kartlisa*, see: G. Tschubinaschwili, "Forschungen zur armenischen Architektur," *BK* 25 (1968), pp. 147-184.

6 Chubinashvili's *Raziskania po Armianskoi arkhitekte* (Studies for Armenian Architecture) is mainly an anthology of previously published articles and chapters from earlier works: Chapter five and six are identical with the articles published in German in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* in 1928 and 1929 (see below), chapter two corresponds to a chapter from Chubinashvili's German-language publication on the church in Tsromi (G. Tschubinaschwili, *Die Kirche in Zromi und ihr Mosaik*, Tbilisi 1934), and chapter one is taken from Chubinashvili's book *Pamiatniki tipa Jvari* (Jvari type Monuments), Tbilisi. 1948 (in Russian)

7 Chubinashvili suggested already in his review from 1922 that the Georgian monuments of a certain building type (i.e. the tetraconch with diagonal niches and corner chambers) preceded their Armenian counterparts. See G.

Tschubinaschwili, "Die christliche Kunst im Kaukasus und ihr Verhältnis zur allgemeinen Kunstgeschichte," *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft* 15 (1922), p. 223. Towards the end of the 1920s, Chubinashvili published two articles in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, where he dealt with the domed churches at Aruch, Ptghni ("Kuppelhallen" in the terminology of Strzygowski), and Talin in Armenia, dating all three to the tenth century. See G. Tschubinaschwili, "Zur Frage der Kuppelhallen Armeniens," *BZ* 28 (1928), pp. 73-97; idem, "Die große Kirche von Talin in Armenien," *BZ* 29 (1929), pp. 260-270. Chubinashvili further elaborated his arguments concerning the priority of the Georgian monuments in the evolution of the Caucasian building type of the tetraconch with diagonal niches in *Pamiatniki tipa Jvari* (Jvari type Monuments) (translated into Italian and published as *I monumenti del tipo de Ćvari*, Milano 1974).

8 As expected, Chubinashvili's work was criticised by numerous Armenian scholars (Ter-Pogossian, S. Mnatsakanian, A. Eremian, B. Arakelian, V. Arutiunian, P. Murajian), but it was the critical review by the Russian archaeologist and architectural historian Anatolij L. Jakobson that bothered Chubinashvili the most. For Jakobson's review, see *Sovetskaia enciklopedia* (Soviet encyclopaedia) (1968/3) (in Russian), pp. 262-270; French translation in *REArm* 5 (1968), pp. 463-478. For Chubinashvili's refusal of Jakobson's criticism, see *Matsne* (1969/4) (in Georgian), pp. 203-216; French translation in *BK* 28 (1970), pp. 50-67. Chubinashvili's pupil Vakhtang Beridze also entered the row, defending the views of his teacher, see V. Bérizdé, "Une fois encore au sujet de l'église de Djvari," *BK* 28 (1971), pp. 122-132. Jakobson eventually attempted to settle the dispute with an article in which he advocated the equivalence of medieval Georgian and Armenian architecture by stressing their mutual correlations, see *Советская археология* (1970/4), pp. 41-53; French translation: A. L. Jakobson, "Les rapports et les corrélati- ons des architectures arménienne et géorgienne au Moyen Age," *REArm* 8 (1971), pp. 229-249.

9 This applies especially to the buildings of the "Jvari Hripsimé"-type (tetraconches with diagonal niches and corner chambers). See A. Plontke-Lüning, *Frühchristliche Architektur in Kaukasien. Die Entwicklung des christlichen Sakralbaus in Lazika, Iberien, Armenien, Albanien und den Grenzregionen vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert*, Vienna 2007, p. 69. Another example of how profoundly Strzygowski's thinking had influenced art history writing in Georgia and Armenia is his theory concerning the origin of the dome. Strzygowski believed that it derived from "the Aryan wooden dwelling" (*Die Baukunst*, pp. 615-625), and he persistently claimed that the dome was introduced in Armenia already in the early fourth century. This idea received a wide reception among Armenian art historians, who further elaborated it by stressing the importance of the so-called *glkhatun* (a building type found in Armenian folk architecture) for the formation of centrally planned domed churches. This was rejected by their Georgian colleagues, headed by Chubinashvili, who lanced an alternative hypothesis that sought to explain the origin of the dome out of a local Georgian building tradition, the so-called *darbazi*. See C. Maranci, *Medieval Armenian Architecture. Constructions of Race and Nation*, Louvain 2001, pp. 226-228, 231, 233-236, and A. Plontke-Lüning, *Frühchristliche Architektur in Kaukasien*, Vienna 2007, pp. 65-66, 68, 74, 81-82.

10 This view was further propagated in the semi-pop-

ular works on medieval Georgian art and architecture that appeared in the German Democratic Republic during the 1970s and 1980s. All of these were subsequently published under licence in West Germany, Austria, and Switzerland; one book (R. Mepisaschwili, W. Zinzadse, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, Leipzig 1977) also had French and English editions (*L'art de la Géorgie ancienne*, Paris 1978; *The Arts of Ancient Georgia*, London – New York 1979) which helped to transmit the official rendering of medieval Georgian art to an even greater circle of readers. For a critical review of Mepisashvili's and Tsintsadze's book see the comments by Klaus Wessel in *OrChr* 62 (1978), pp. 233-236.

11 In 387, when Armenia was divided between the Roman Empire and Sasanid Persia, Tayk became a part of Persarmenia. At the partition of Armenia in 591 it fell to the Byzantines under Emperor Maurice who renamed it "Inner Armenia" (*Armenia Profunda*). See Yovhannēs Draxanakert'ci, *History of Armenia*, translation and commentary by Krikor H. Maksoudian, Atlanta 1987, p. 94. Tayk was briefly regained by the Persians in the early seventh century.

12 For the Mamikoneans and their holdings in western Armenia, see C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Washington D.C. 1963, pp. 209-211.

13 T. Marutian, *Taiki tchartarapetakan hushar dzanner* (Architectural Monuments of Tayk) Erevan 1972; idem, *Khoraguin hayq* (Inner Haik) Erevan 1978; idem, *Arkhitekturnie pamiatniki* (Architectural monuments). Erevan 1989, pp. 144-237 (in Russian). For Marutian's *Architectural Monuments of Tayk* (1972), see Jean-Michel Thierry's review, "Les monuments du Tayk, de Tao-Klardjéti et des districts avoisinants," *Byzantion* 54 (1984), pp. 422-424.

14 Marutian propagated this theory already in 1972. See: J.-M. Thierry "Les monuments du Tayk, de Tao-Klardjéti et des districts avoisinants," *Byzantion* 54 (1984), pp. 422. One of the most influential voices in the on-going debate on the issues of Armenian Chalcedonians and Armeno-Byzantine contacts is the Russian-Armenian historian Viada Arutjunova-Fidanjan. See: Arutunova-Fidarian V. *Armenie-khalkidoniti na vostochnikh granitsakh Vizantiiskoi imperii* (Armenian-Khalkidonics on the eastern boundaries of Byzantine Empire). Erevan 1980 (in Russian); eadem, "The Ethno-confessional Self-awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians," *REArm* 21 (1988/89), pp. 345-363; eadem, *Armenio-vizantiiskaia kontantnaia zona (X-XI vv.) : Rezultati vzaimodeistvia kultur* (Armenia-Byzantine contact zone (10th-11th c): Results of cultural interaction) Moscow. 1994 (in Russian); eadem, « Vizantia n Armenia v X-XII vekakh. Zona kontakta » (Byzantine Armenia in 10th-11th c. : zone of contact) and Litavrin G. (Edit.), *Vizantia mejdu zapadom b vostokom. Opit istoricheskoi kharakteristiki* (Byzantine between the East and the West. Experience of Historic characteristic). Saint Petersburg. 1999, pp. 380-408 (in Russian).

15 See Vachtang Bérizdé, *Monuments de Tao-Klardjetie dans l'histoire de l'architecture géorgienne*, Tbilisi 1981, p. 215-216.

16 Cf. S. H. Rapp Jr., *Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts*, Louvain 2003, p. 415.

17 From a historiographical point of view, the past intentions in Georgian art history to create a narrative of a largely independent architectural development in medieval Georgia are quite understandable, as they were a reaction

to the unjustified allegations that medieval Georgian architecture is nothing more than a plagiarism of medieval Armenian architecture, a provincial variant of Byzantine architecture, or an uninspired mixture of both. For the assessment of medieval Georgian architecture in nineteenth century travel literature and early art historical surveys, see U. Bock, *Armenische Baukunst*, Cologne 1983, pp. 6-26, C. Maranci, *Medieval Armenian Architecture*, Louvain 2001, pp. 34-35, and A. Plontke-Lüning, *Frühchristliche Architektur in Kaukasien*, Vienna 2007, pp. 63-64.

18 Not only Byzantine architecture, but Byzantine culture as such has been described as a synthesis of occidental and oriental elements. See H. Hunger (ed.), *Byzantinische Geisteswelt. Von Konstantin dem Grossen bis zum Fall Konstantinopels*, Baden-Baden 1958, pp. 11-12. The compound nature of Armenian culture was the topic of several studies by Nina G. Garsoïan; see the compilation of her writings: *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians*, London 1985.

19 Richard Krautheimer discussed the practise of architectural "copying" in the Middle Ages in his classic essay "Introduction to an « Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture », " *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942), pp. 1-33. In the late 1980s, the British art historian Paul Crossley challenged Krautheimer's theory. He pointed out that the symbolism of medieval architecture was many-layered and therefore open to endless (re-)interpretation, rendering the contained meaning arbitrary. Crossley's critique was justified, but it did not affect the general art historical assumption that there are certain types of buildings which played a paradigmatic role in medieval church architecture. P. Crossley, "Medieval Architecture and Meaning: The Limits of Iconography," *The Burlington Magazine* 130, no. 1019 (Feb. 1988), pp. 116-121.

20 The modern Turkish name for the village that sprawls around the ruins of the medieval monastery is Çamlıyamaç (from Turkish *çamlı* = "pine-clad," and *yamaç* = "slope," "mountain side"). Its older name Öşkvank is a combination of the Turkish rendering of Oshki (Öşk) and the Armenian word for monastery (*vank*). The village is located six kilometres west of Lake Tortum, roughly halfway between the two provincial capitals Artvin and Erzurum.

21 The names of the donors appear in numerous inscriptions on the façades, inside the south porch and portico, and next to the relief sculptures representing them. See: W. Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjet'i, and Šavšet'i*, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 131-141, and Silogava V. *Oshki X s. memorialuri tadzari (Oshki 10th. c. memorial church)* Tbilisi. 2006, pp. 64-84, 168-171 (in Georgian), for the inscriptions on the two steles that were illegally removed from the south cross arm of the church in 2003.

22 The inscription was painted on the back of a stele that was reused in the east wall of the mosque which was built into the south cross arm of the church. Unfortunately, the inscription has completely vanished today. W. Djobadze, "The Donor Reliefs and the Date of the Church of Oški," *BZ* 69 (1976), pp. 58-61, pl. 8; idem, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjet'i, and Šavšet'i*, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 136-137. However, the date 963 for the beginning of the construction of the church is confirmed by another inscription which was discovered recently: 3. Silogava V. *Oshki X s. memorialuri tadzari (Oshki 10th. c. memorial church)* Tbilisi. 2006, pp. 72-73, 170. (in Georgian)

23 W. Djobadze, "The Donor Reliefs and the Date of the Church of Oški," *BZ* 69 (1976), pp. 59-60.

24 The re-roofing of Oshki was mentioned in a now badly faded inscription beneath the large window on the south façade, see: Takaishvili E., 1917 *tslis arkeologiuri ekspedicia samkhret sakartveloshi* (Archaeological expedition of 1917 in south Georgia) Tbilisi. 1960, pp. 53-54 (in Georgian). Most researches followed Takaishvili in his view that the restoration took place sometime between 1022 and 1025. The possibility that it already occurred shortly after 1000 has so far only been considered by the Austrian historian Bruno Baumgartner, see: B. Baumgartner, *Studien zur historischen Geographie von Tao-Klarjeti* (unpublished diss.), Vienna 1996, p. 523.

25 Takaishvili E., 1917 *tslis arkeologiuri ekspedicia samkhret sakartveloshi* (Archaeological expedition of 1917 in south Georgia) Tbilisi. 1960, pp. 56-57 (in Georgian). On the identity of Jojik Patrikios, see: N. Thierry, "Peintures historiques d'Ošk'i (T'ao)," *REGC* 2 (1986), pp. 150-152.

26 Taking the square bays of corner compartments as a module, the ratio of them, the rectangular bays, and the central crossing is approximately 1 : 4 : 16.

27 The building history of the cathedral in Ishkhani still needs further clarification. In 1917, Takaishvili could read the names of Adarnase Kuropalates, Bagrat Magistros, and Bagrat *eristavt eristavi* underneath the paintings representing the three princes in the west arm of the church. He suggested that the donor portraits and the accompanying inscriptions were executed either during the reign of Adarnase Kuropalates (958-961) or after his death by his son Bagrat *eristavt eristavi* (961-966). Takaishvili E., 1917 *tslis arkeologiuri ekspedicia samkhret sakartveloshi* (Archaeological expedition of 1917 in south Georgia) Tbilisi., pp. 21-22 (in Georgian). Nicole and Jean-Michel Thierry argued that the preserved wall paintings inside the drum and dome derived from the same period. See: N. and J.-M. Thierry, "Peintures du Xe siècle en Géorgie Méridionale et leurs rapports avec la peinture byzantine d'Asie Mineure," *CA* 24 (1975), pp. 87, 100. If this view can be sustained, it would provide us with *terminus ante quem* for the construction of the church, suggesting that the building campaign carried out under bishop Antoni in the first half of the eleventh century was only an extensive restoration. The parts of the cathedral in Ishkhani that interest us here could thus be tentatively dated to the early 960s. For a detailed discussion of the architecture of the cathedral in Ishkhani, see also M. Kadiroğlu, *The Architecture of the Georgian Church at Işhan*, Frankfurt a. M. 1991.

28 "Das konstruktive Problem bestand in der Beherrschung des Seitenschubs der Kuppel. Eine Kuppel auf Tambour übt eigentlich keinen Seitenschub auf die Kuppelbogen aus, da der Seitenschub durch die Dicke der Mauern des Tambours aufgefangen wird. Dennoch verursachen die Kuppelbogen einen Seitendruck auf die vier Freistützen in diagonalen Richtung, der mit Hilfe der Tonnengewölbe der Kreuzarme und der Gewölbe der Eckkompartimente ausgeglichen wird. Weitere Gegenstützen bilden die Außenwände und die Gewölbe anliegender Nebenräume, wenn solche vorhanden sind." N. Brunow, "Zum Problem des Kreuzkuppelsystems," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen byzantinischen Gesellschaft* 16 (1967), p. 247.

29 For examples of "basilicas of the three churches type," see: R. Mepisaschwili, W. Zinzadse, R. Schrade, *Georgien*.

Kirchen und Wehrbauten, Leipzig 1987, pp. 101-102, 106-110.

30 For the church in Samshvilde see: G. N. Chubnashvili, samshvildski sion: ego mesto v razvitii gruzinskoi arkhitekturi VIII-IX vekov (Samshvilde Sioni: its place in the development of Georgian architecture of VIII-IX c.) Tbilisi 1969; Mokvi: L. D. Rcheulishvili, kupolnaia arkhitektura VIII-X vekov v abkhazii (Domical architecture of VIII-X c in Abkhazia) Tbilisi 1988, pp. 46-66; L. Khroushkova, *Les monuments chrétiens de la côte orientale de la mer noire: Abkhazie, IVe – XVe siècles*, Turnhout 2006, pp. 104-106.

31 For the architectural principles of middle Byzantine architecture, see: L. Theis, *Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau*, Wiesbaden 2005, pp. 168-182.

32 Takaishvili E., 1917 tsli arkeologiuri ekspedicia samkhret sakartveloshi (Archaeological expedition of 1917 in south Georgia) Tbilisi., pls. 39, 40. (in Georgian)

33 N. Teteriatnikov, "Upper-Story Chapels in Churches of the Christian East," *DOP* 33 (1989), pp. 71-72.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

35 *Ibid.* See also: Giorgi Mertschule, *Das Leben des Grigol von Chandsta*, Deutsch von Surab Sardshweladse und Heinz Fähnrich, Jena 2000, pp. 22, 23.

36 For the medieval churches and monasteries in the historic province of Klarjeti (now Turkey) see: Khoshtaria D., Klarjetis eklesiebi da monastrebi (Churches and monasteries of Klarjeti) Tbilisi. 2005 (in Georgian).

37 Giorgi Mertschule, *Das Leben des Grigol von Chandsta*, pp. 72, 76.

38 Theophanes Continuatus, ed. Bekker, Bonn 1838, p. 326; Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De ceremoniis*, pp. 117, 120-121.

39 P. Magdalino, "Observations on the Nea Ekklesia of Basil I," *JÖB* 37 (1987), p. 58.

40 L. Theis, *Flankenräume im mittelbyzantinischen Kirchenbau*, Wiesbaden 2005, pp. 38-39.

41 On the use of upper-storey chapels for private liturgy, see: T. F. Mathews, " 'Private' Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture: Toward a Reappraisal," *CA* 30 (1982), pp. 125-138.

42 B. Schellewald, "Zur Typologie, Entwicklung und Funktion von Oberräumen in Syrien, Armenien und Byzanz," *JbAC* 27/28 (1984/1985), pp. 216-218.

43 See above, note 25. A testament from a manuscript written in Oshki in 978, now kept at the library of the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos (cod. 1, fol. 219 v), testifies the dedication of the monastery to St. John the Baptist, see: R. P. Blake, "Catalogue des manuscrits géorgiens de la bibliothèque de la laure d'Iviron au Mont Athos," *ROC* 8 (1931-1932), pp. 301-304.

44 W. Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjet'i, and Šavšet'i*, Stuttgart 1992, pp. 131-141; Silogava V. *Oshki X s. memorialuri tadzari (Oshki 10th c. memorial church)* Tbilisi. 2006, pp. 169-170 (in Georgian).

45 Judging from the painting programme of the south apse in Oshki, one could tentatively assume that a precious relic – a nail from the Holy Cross – was kept in Oshki. Cf. N. Thierry, "Peintures historiques d'Ošk'i (T'ao)," *REGC* 2 (1986), pp. 141, 144.

46 This claim sometimes even found its visual expression on the church façades in form of a Star of David. See: W. Djobadze, *Early Medieval Georgian Monasteries in Historic Tao, Klarjet'i, and Šavšet'i*, Stuttgart 1992, pls. 82 (Dolisqana), 182 (Oshki).

47 See: T. Mgaloblishvili, "Juden und Christen in Georgien in den ersten christlichen Jahrhunderten," *Juden und Christen in der Antike*, J. van Amersfoort, J. van Oort (eds.), Kampen 1990, pp. 94-100; T. Mgaloblishvili and I. Gagoshidze, "The Jewish Diaspora and Early Christianity in Georgia," *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus*, Tamila Mgaloblishvili (ed.), London 1998, pp. 39-58. For the historical source Mektsevai kartlisai (*The Conversion of Kartli*), see: C. B. Lerner, *The Wellspring of Georgian Historiography*, London 2004.

48 T. Mgaloblishvili, "Juden und Christen in Georgien in den ersten christlichen Jahrhunderten," *Juden und Christen in der Antike*, J. van Amersfoort, J. van Oort (eds.), Kampen 1990, p. 99.

49 B. Schrade, "Ad Crucem: Zum Jerusalemer Ursprung der Georgischen Voraltdarkreuzen anhand früherer Beispiele aus Svanetien," "Kristianobis otsi saukune sakartveloshi (*The Twenty Centuries of Christianity in Georgia*), Rismag Gordeziani (ed.), Tbilisi 2004, pp. 308-326, especially 315-317.

50 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 315.

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GEORGIAN CHURCHES PORCHES: EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIOD TO HIGH MIDDLE AGES

The history of Georgian architecture confirms that the entrance to a church was of particular importance throughout all stages of its development. This was expressed in the porch's artistic-architectural decoration. The importance of the entrance, which is highlighted by its artistic embellishment, is a feature common to Christian architecture in general. Of crucial importance here is the symbolic interpretation of an ecclesiastic building for worship as well as for its separate parts. As is known, a church symbolically represents a kind of image of the universe; a sacral space located on earth. The church walls are considered as a symbolic border between the two worlds – of the ordinary world and Lord's world. The windows and entrances are open spaces cut in the fence, linking two worlds. In this regard, a porch, which for the believer represents a means of encounter with God (D. Tumanishvili, 2002), takes on special significance. At the same time, it is identified with Christ himself, which is evidenced by Christ saying "I am the door of the sheepfold" (John 10, 7-9).

The form of the porch, its setting in relation to the whole body of the church, its orientation to the different quarters of the world, and the form of its artistic-architectural realization acquire particular importance – and require study from several viewpoints. It is known that from the very advent of Christianity, a technique of decorating porches with relief compositions was used in Georgia. In recent years, T. Khundadze has devoted studies to the analysis of early examples and to the importance of their connection with portals. This study deals with the variety of porch types and the peculiarities of their structure.

Naturally, architectural forms, which originated as a result of the conjunction of art and religion, changed in keeping with stylistic developments. The

same can be said about the means of artistic decoration of church entrances. As a result, different historical periods have revealed several types of porches in Georgian architecture.

A distinctive type of porch is found in nearly all stages of Georgian Christian architecture. There is, for example, a portico supported by four pillars, opened by arches on three sides. Among other forms of porches, two types are especially notable: first, the open arched entrance, as a part of the ambulatory, and the three-part stoa-porch existing as a separate volume. The history of Georgian architecture shows that in specific periods preference was given to one or other of the two types.

The principal feature of the early-period churches was the inclusion of an entrance porch in the center of an elongated façade. A typical feature of such a porch is a 2- or 3-span arcade form thrown over a pier or piers. This adds grandeur to the porch section and places the most important architectural emphasis on the building's façade structure. Such composition can be found in Old Shuamta basilica (5th century) and Bolnisi Sioni (5th century). In the following centuries, it became widespread and is also found in basilicas, as at Vazisubani (6th-7th centuries) (G. Chubinashvili, 1959) in single nave type churches with annexes, as at Oltisi (6th-7th centuries) (G. Chubinashvili, R. Schmerling, 1948) in two-nave churches, as at Tabakini (6th-7th centuries) (N. Gaprindashvili, G. Chubinashvili, 1969, 28), and especially in three-church basilicas as at Kvemo Bolnisi (first half of the 6th century), (G. Chubinashvili, 1970, 81-92) Kondamiani (6th century) (G. Chubinashvili, 1959, 150, 164) and Zegani (6th-7th centuries). Other examples could be cited.

In the 6th-7th centuries, the main technique of emphasizing the entrance to the church is to highlight it with an architectural element – the arch. The entrance forms a single structure with the annex or ambulatory and has a shared single-pitched roof. This type of entrance is also found later: in the 8th-9th centuries, as at the domed church at Nekresi (G. Chubinashvili, 1959, 321), in the 10th century, as at the Eredvi village churches (R. Mepisashvili, 1955), and in the beginning of the 11th century, as at Upper Vardzia (S. Gabashvili, 1985) though this was an exception.

Still later, the builder of the church at Zarzma used the same entrance type, at the transition from the 13th to 14th century.

The tradition of an arcade entrance appeared so strong that, in our view, it stimulated the search for new ways to decorate façades. Cases in point are the 9th-century churches at Kabeni and Tsirkoli (G. Chubinashvili 1970, 173). Arched niches appear on their façades as a means of artistic-decorative design. It is interesting to note that these arched niches are on the elongated façades. The entry porch to the church is placed in them. Thus, this time the concentration of decorative-relief arches already occurs at the entry. This fact gives us reason to suppose that in the above-mentioned churches the idea of designing the façades with arched niches is dictated by the theme of arched entrances. Its revised, reconsidered plane variant appears in these churches.

An arch introduced from early times became a necessary attribute of stoa-porches typical of the High Middle Ages. Manglisi Cathedral provides an example of this type of a porch: it has a tripartite architectural volume, in which the central part is elevated and crowned with pediment, while its sides are lower and covered with single-pitch roof. The entry porch is arched or represents a rectangle placed in an arch. The interior space is also tripartite: the central elevated part, covered with a richly decorated vault and two adjoining spaces to the east (where the apse ends) and west. Rich ornaments, a decorative arcade and finely executed artistic ornamented elements add to the impressive appearance of a porch.

Unlike the incorporated porches of the earlier period this type of porch is independent and is positioned as a separate addition to the church façade. Such porches adorn almost all the more or less important Georgian churches of the High Middle Ages . . . the porch dimensions, proportions and décor change, but the main composition of the masses remains unchanged (V. Beridze, 1959, 208). From the 11th century on, tripartite porches are found in churches both with and without domes. The single-nave type includes Zemo Krikhi and Maghalaant Eklesia, and the domed churches include Manglisi, Betania, Kvatakhevi, and Pitareti.

The tripartite porch belongs to those architectural forms which originated in Georgian architecture, and it is one of its original and peculiar elements. But the question remains: how did the tripartite porch originate? And what is its history?

The rethinking and transformation of old forms of church entrances must have been of decisive importance in the origination of the tripartite stoa-porch. In our view, investigations of the transitional period (from the second half of the 7th century through the 10th century) preconditioned the emergence of the popular tripartite porch. The transitional period reveals a new approach to church porches: some architects were no longer satisfied with the type of incorporated entrances subordinated to the ambulatory's horizontal line in a single sweep. This new approach is demonstrated by the structure of ambulatories, where church entrances are highlighted by their elevated height and separate roofing. The means of entrance highlighting varies from monument to monument. For instance, a well-known church of Vachnadziani Kvelatsminda (Most Saint Virgin, 9th century) the homogeneity of the ambulatory is partitioned by means of the three elevated and gable structures, which match the cross-arms in the interior of the church. As is known, in the church at Eredvi erected in 906, we are dealing with a unique phenomenon. Here the ambulatory runs round the church on all four sides. The central part of the ambulatory's east façade is emphasized by an elevated gable structure. The window arranged in the center of this gable structure matches the location of the chancel window in the interior and serves as an additional source of light. Presumably, it was the necessity of cutting this large window that led to the emergence of this elevated gable structure on the east façade.

In the 8th-9th centuries there were several attempts to apply the elevated gable design to entrance structures. Such examples are found in the three-church basilicas of the villages of Tskhvarichamia and Ambara, perhaps also in the excavated basilica at Areshi and in St. George's church at Dvani.

The arrangement of the west ambulatory in a "large church" (R. Mepisashvili, 1983) at Tskhvarichamia displays the novelty and peculiarity of the

Medieval Georgia



Bolnisi Sioni (5th century), southern porch.

design. Here the elevated entrance, i.e., has an inner dome which rests upon the squinches. However, the interior design of the porch cannot be seen on the exterior. This is due to two reasons: (1) the main artistic emphasis is made on the traditional arched porch on the south façade and (2) the western porch, highlighted in the interior by means of its elevation and inner dome, is under the double-pitched roof on the exterior, together with the main body of the church. Thus, though having a separated internal porch, the building retains the appearance of basilica from outside.

Consequently the design of the western porch at Tskhvarichamia church shows the new approach only partially, insofar as here artistic significance of highlighting the porch as a separate structure is not unveiled in the external view of the building.

The south porch of the three-church basilica at Ambara shows the path of the further evolution of tripartite porch design (L. Rcheulishvili, 1988, 73-74): an architect introduced changes on the exterior. Namely, the traditional entrance decorated with three-span arches on the south façade is covered by a double-pitched roof. Though separated, the porch remains subordinated to the horizontal line of the ambulatory, due to the fact that it is no higher than the entire annex. However, Ambara is an important monument; it is one of the earliest known examples that illustrates the change in the design of the southern façade.

Another example showing the development of tripartite porch design can be found in Areshi basilica (L. Chilashvili, 1991) (beginning of the 10th century):

Here southern entrance was opened with six arches. The preserved pillars and some unearthed archeological data serve as a source for reconstruction of the initial appearance of the structure. Here, the central part appears to have been elevated. Five arches were of the same size, while the central one must have been wide and elevated, thus "breaking" the horizontal line of the roof. Despite the tendency of highlighting the entrance on the exterior seen in the monument, the divergence of horizontal and vertical accents on the façade of Areshi basilica speaks to an earlier stage of development.

The contrast of the vertical line of the central, elevated entrance and the horizontal axis of the side wings can be observed in the domed church of St. George (8th century) at Dvani, located in Prone gorge in the Shida Kartli region. This is the third monument showing the development of a new design (N. Gengjuri, 2005, 11-24; 132-137). Its ambulatory, running around the church on two sides, must have been constructed in the 9th century. The entrance on the southern façade at Dvani church is tripartite, in terms of both the interior and the exterior. It has an elevat-



Nekresi. Southern Porch. (9th century).



Manglisi, Southern porch (11th century).

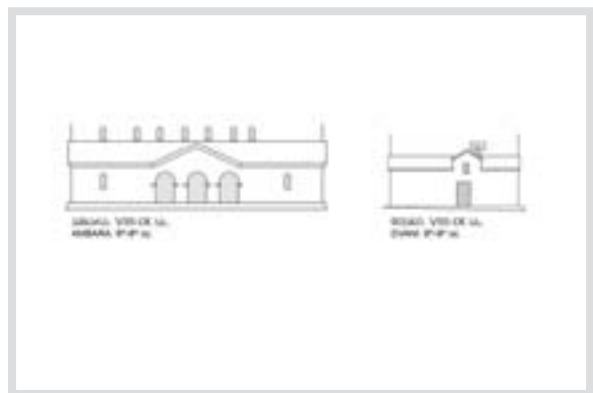
ed and gabled central part outside and a high vaulted ceiling inside. The side wings of the porch are lower. Unlike the Ambara and Areshi basilicas, here the central part of the façade is more emphasized by concentrating both openings, the door and the window, in the center, thus contrasting with the even walls of the side wings. However, vertical emphasis lacks consistency here too. The location of the window coincides with the central axis but the door doesn't match exactly. This fact speaks to the early stage of the development of the theme. However, clear separation of the side wings and the vertical center observed at Dvani church is rather important because this tendency finds its further development in the following period of the history of Georgian architecture.

The same design, though with more harmonious composition, is applied in Bodbe church (9th century). The narthex-porch found on the west façade represents one more original example of the architectural highlighting of a church entrance. The strict symmetry and balance characterize the tripartite porch, which consists of the central elevated gable structure and lower side wings, covered with single-pitched roofs. The recent restoration works (T. Chachkhunashvili, N. Zazunashvili, 2005, 64-80) on the church revealed that all three segments of the porch were opened with arches toward the western façade: the central arch was tall and wide, while the symmetrically arranged arches of the side wings were comparatively small. Unlike the abovementioned churches, where the porch was constructed on the south façade, the

porch at Bodbe church is arranged on the west façade. The latter might precondition the strictly symmetrical design of the porch which was to cohere with the basilica-style church's narrow western façade. The porch at Bodbe demonstrates the mixture of old and new tendencies, as it combined the new tripartite design of the porch with the old tradition of arched galleries, which declined later in the High Middle Ages. However, the porch at Bodbe demonstrates the formation and evolution of the particular design.

Thus, an analysis of the design of porches in the churches discussed above shows the development and gradual shaping of typical features, which ultimately lead to the formation of the tripartite porch structure, widespread throughout the High Middle Ages.

The reshaping of porch design throughout the transitional period might be the result of change in function, or it might be the answer to new stylistic tendencies. As is known, the transitional period is characterized by creative explorations toward dynamic, variable compositions. Accordingly, instead of the even horizontal line of a single pitched roof of earlier porches, the outline of contrasting vertical and horizontal lines on the façades seemed compatible with this new style. Despite the abundance of monuments with the traditional arched porches built during the 8th to 9th centuries, the monuments discussed above attest to the fact that the new stylistic tendency was also applied to porch design. In this regard V. Dolidze's observation is of special importance. According to this researcher, the tradition of arranging the western annexes declined throughout the 10th



Porches: 1. Ambara (8th-9th centuries),
2. Dvani (9th century).



Bodbe, view from the north-west (9th century).

century and thereafter (see Garbani, 10th century, and Khzisi, 1002), while the annex along the south façade remains, though with an old arched design, without a pediment. In the abovementioned Areshi and Dvani churches the ambulatory retains the old form and can be still found on the west side. Its design is only partially rearranged. This might be the reason of the elongated horizontal design of the southern annexes, which speak to the transitional character of architectural forms.

These developments, observed in different compositions of various monuments, formed the bases for shaping the design of stoa-porches frequently found throughout the High Middle Ages; this might be the result of merging the tradition of the early arched entrances and of later elevated gabled porch structures.

Finally, it should be mentioned that each of the examined monuments, which show the way of formation of tripartite porch design, are located in different regions of Georgia.

St. George's church at Dvani is located in Shida Kartli, Bodbe and Areshi churches are in Kakheti, and Ambara three-church basilica is in Abkhazia. It is known that during the transitional period each region of Georgia evolved separately. However, despite the fact that the monuments of each region have many other common features, the stylistic tendencies are general, as evidenced by the abovementioned monuments. The shared artistic tasks and stylistic trends are observed in the architecture throughout all regions of the country. Together they pave the way for the next stage of the development of Georgian architecture.

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THE ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE OF ABKHAZIA IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

The ecclesiastical architecture of the early Middle Ages in Abkhazia is mainly known from architectural monuments revealed by archaeological work. The spread of Christianity in this area was partly due to the fact that this region served as an asylum for early Christians persecuted by the Roman Empire. The existence of the Roman garrisons in Abkhazia played a significant role in the spread of Christianity; their purpose, on the one hand, was to keep the local population in submission; and on the other hand, to defend the borders of the Empire from invasion by nomadic tribes from the North.

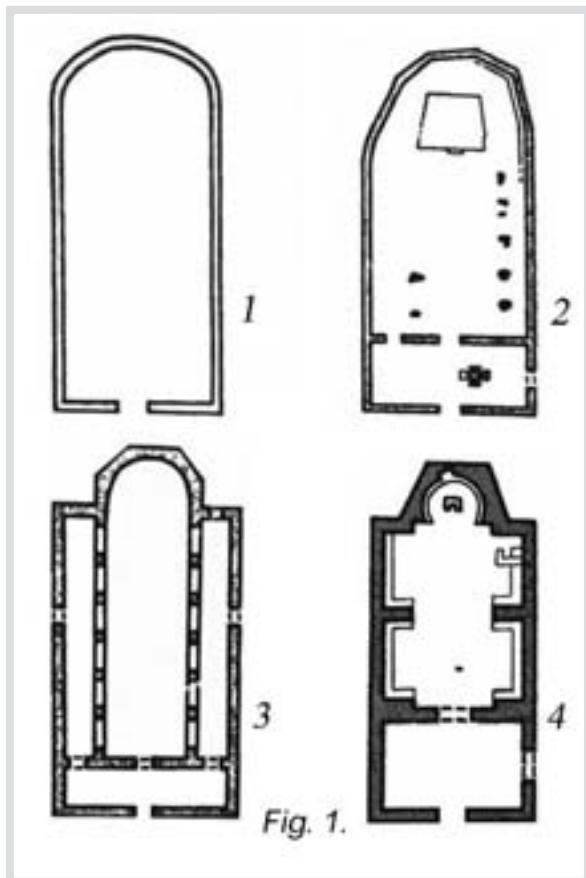
It is known that the troops garrisoned in Pitiunt (present-day Bichvinta) and Sebastopolis (present-day Sokhumi) were made up of people from Asia Minor. This is the region where Christian beliefs were first propagated, and many Roman soldiers can be assumed to have shared these beliefs. The garrisons are also considered to have given the local population an introduction to the new Christian world outlook. The ancient churches on the Black Sea's eastern littoral first appeared in the fortified places that existed on this coast. These places served as a basis for Roman-Byzantine policy in the region.

Today we know of about 26 4th- to 8th-century architectural monuments discovered on the territory of Abkhazia. Among these, the earliest and most valuable site is Bichvinta (Pitiunt), where the existence of a strong, organized Christian community, which dates to the late 3rd century, can be observed. This is also proven by archaeological finds and also by the written sources. Specifically, Stratophilus, bishop of Pitiunt, is cited in the list of the participants attending the first council of Nicaea, held in 325, along with the representatives of the contemporaneous eparchy of Pontus. Thus, in the first half of the 4th century, Pitiunt was a bishop's seat.

Bichvinta represents a complex of very complicated and interesting monuments. The placement of buildings extended quite far beyond the town wall, which surely suggests the definite concentration of the population on the town's hinterland. The number of churches revealed as a result of several years of archaeological excavations carried out on Cape Bichvinta supports this belief and suggests that the local population, together with the Roman soldiers and members of their families, formed the basic contingent of the parish there. The remains of four different churches constructed on top of one another have been identified in the immediate internal area of the enclosure wall, on the so-called Site III site located in the southeastern part of the remains of Bichvinta's citadel (A. Apakidze, 1972, 39-63). Their dates range from 4th to 6th century A.D.

The ancient church of Bichvinta was a single-nave structure with a semicircular apse extending across the whole width of the building (Fig.1, 1). Very similar to this church in type is the church that has been revealed in Nokalakevi (Western Georgia); it too is a single-nave structure with a semicircular apse. This building dates to the first half of 4th century (P. Zakaraia, T. Kapanadze, 1991, 166-167, 261). In R. Ramishvili's opinion, which is based on stratigraphic data and archaeological material, the ancient church of Bichvinta may date from the 270s to the 280s (R. Ramishvili, 1999, 4). It can be considered as the most ancient Christian structure in the territory of Georgia, together with the single-nave church in Nastakisi (Eastern Georgia), which dates to the second half of the 3rd century.

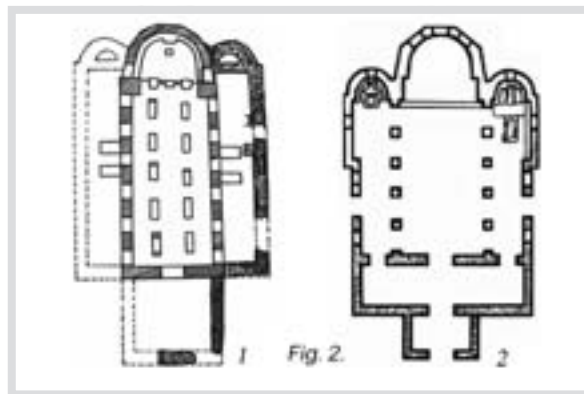
The Bichvinta cemetery (2nd to 4th centuries), where every fifth grave is arranged according to the Christian rite (G. Lortkipanidze, 1991, 113-117), provides us with significant information about the beliefs of the residents of ancient Pitiunt. The burial pits contain no grave goods and the deceased are buried in a stretched position, lying on the back with the head to the west. The stele with a concealed cross found in the Bichvinta cemetery represents a significant discovery (G. Lortkipanidze, 1991, 155-156). The stele is supposed to have been erected on the grave of a clandestine Christian.



1-4. Churches of Bichvinta fortress

In the 4th to 6th centuries, nine Christian churches were built on the territory of Bichvinta and its surroundings. From the 6th century onward, intensive ecclesiastical building activities spread throughout all Abkhazia, including its coastal area (Gantiadi, Gagra, Anakopia, Miusera, Sokhumi, Ochamchire and Gudava), as well as in the inland and mountainous regions (Khashupse, Likhni, Dranda, Jgerda, Tsebelda, Shapka and Mramba) (I. Berdzenishvili, 2006). Examples of Christian relief sculpture discovered in Mramba, Tsebelda, Anakopia, Sokhumi, Kulamba and Dranda are linked with this ongoing building activity. The features of relief sculpture found in Mramba, Tsebelda, Anakopia, Sokhumi, Kulamba and Dranda and decorated with Christian items (equal-armed cross, grapes, birds, bull, lion, peacock, fish, cypress, palm – or other tree-of-life motifs) are related to this ecclesiastical construction (I. Berdzenishvili, 2006, 146-160).

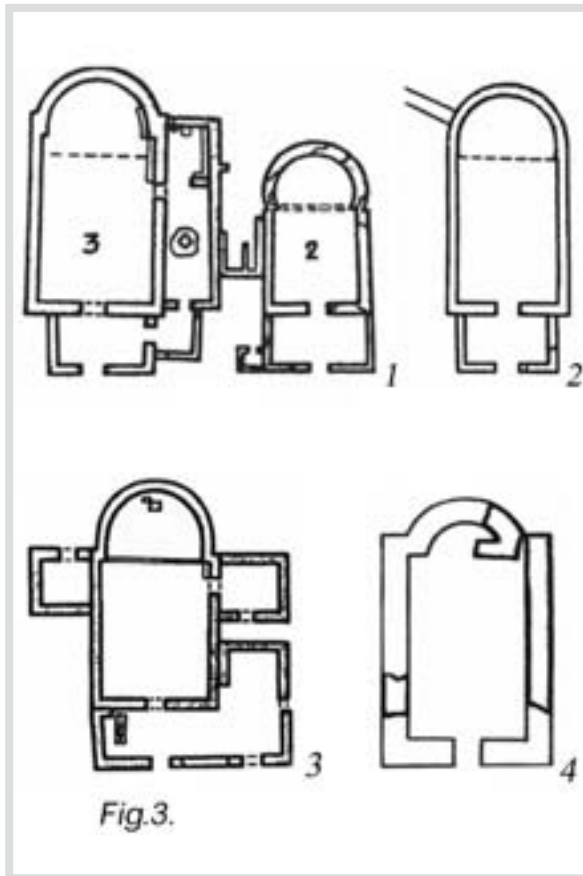
Early Christian ecclesiastical architecture in Abkhazia is represented mainly by basilica-type churches: two-nave (Bichvinta) and three-nave basilicas



1. Basilica of Alahadze; 2. Basilica of Gantiadi

(Bichvinta #2 and #3 churches, Alahadze, Gantiadi, and Sokhumi), and by three-church basilicas (Gagra, Miusera, Abaanta and Kiach-aba churches). Along with basilica structures are some single-nave churches (Bichvinta, Anakopia, Ochamchire, Tsebelda #2 and #3 churches, Mramba, Shapka and Kashupse), free-standing baptistery (Gudava), the cross-domed church (Dranda) and the octagonal church (Sokhumi).

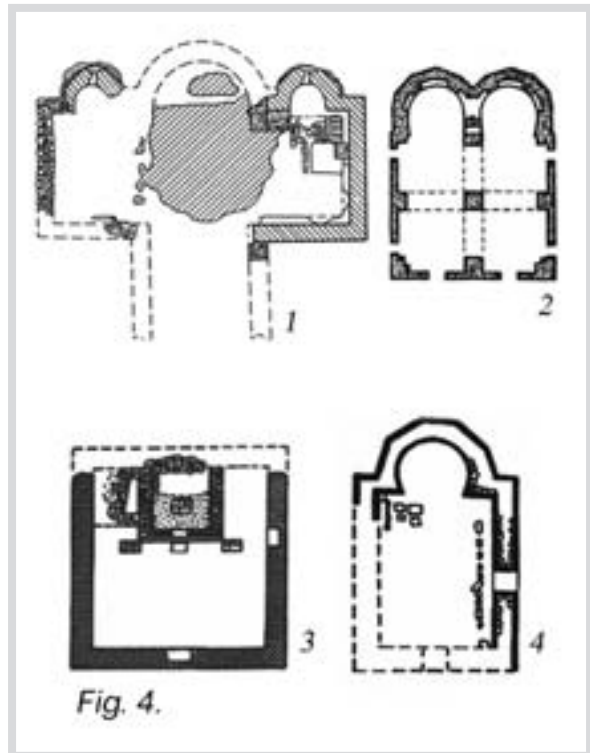
The early Christian ecclesiastical architecture of Abkhazia bears traces of the synthesis between eastern and western building traditions. On one hand, the building techniques that were used, which included mixed masonry (the so-called *opus mixtum*), the use of bricks in the arch and vault, amphorae in the vault (with the intention of lightening the construction), the use of decorative marble from Proconnesus, link the monuments of Abkhazia with those of Constantinople and the coastal area of Asia Minor. On the other hand, some features relate to the monuments of the inland regions of Asia Minor: these include the technique of hewn stone masonry, the use of right-angled or quadrated posts instead of columns, the rafter roofing of the basilicas, and the presence of pentahedral apses. To cite an example: the Mramba church that represents a single-nave structure with a protruded pentahedral apse (Fig. 4, 4) finds its closest analog in Cappadocian structures such as Anatepe church (first half of the 7th century) and Yedikapulu church (c. 600) (M. Restle, 1979, Fig. 3,7). Shapka church with the quadrated altar (Fig. 4, 3) discovered in the Tsebelda region might indicate interesting Syrian influences. The church is analogous to the 6th-century Nestorian churches in



1. Churches of Tsebelda Fortress; 2. Church of Kashupse; 3. Church of Otchamchire; 4. Baptistery of Gudava

northern Mesopotamia (A. Jacobson, 1983, 71, 81, fig. 43a, b). These churches, like Shapka church, are generally located in inaccessible mountain gorges.

The fact of the presence of the three-church basilica in Abkhazia is worth attention. This type of a basilica is not unknown in other countries, but as G. Chubinashvili explains: "These churches became a definite independent type only in our country." Kakheti is thought to be the basis of the creative development for this type of monument. Some 20 of the three-church basilicas are preserved here. Of more interest is the existence of this type of church in Abkhazian territory, the most ancient of which is the old Gagra church (Fig. 5, 1-2) dated from the 5th to 6th century and which finds its closest analogs in Kakheti (M. Didebulidze, 1977, 26). These are St. Evsate church in Bolniskhevi, near Gremi (6th century) and "Samkariani" church in Vazisubani (6th century) (G. Chubinashvili, 1959, 159, 161).



1-2. Basilicas of Bichvinta; 2. Church of "Shapka"; 3. Church of Mramba

The three-church basilicas in Abkhazia have their own characteristic traits in contrast to churches of the same type in Kakheti and Kartli. For example, we can consider the planning of the western part of these structures. In the three-church basilicas in Eastern Georgian, there is generally an open-arched stoa that links the neighboring "churches" with each other. In Musera and Abaanti the narthex is arranged in the west. But, as L. Rcheulishvili remarks, this element is not strange in Georgian architecture either (for example Tsromi), so the narthex mostly is the common Christian form rather than in a purely Byzantine one (L. Rcheulishvili, 1988, 77). The presence of these churches in Abkhazia does not definitely suggest the direct political influence of Kartli on Western Georgia, the more so because the role of Byzantium by that time is known. But this does not exclude the existence of the ecclesiastical-cultural integrity of Kartli and Egrisi in the 6th to 7th centuries that gave ground to the final unification of the eastern and western churches of Georgia in the 9th century.

Due to the current political situation, further investigation into the monuments of Abkhazia has

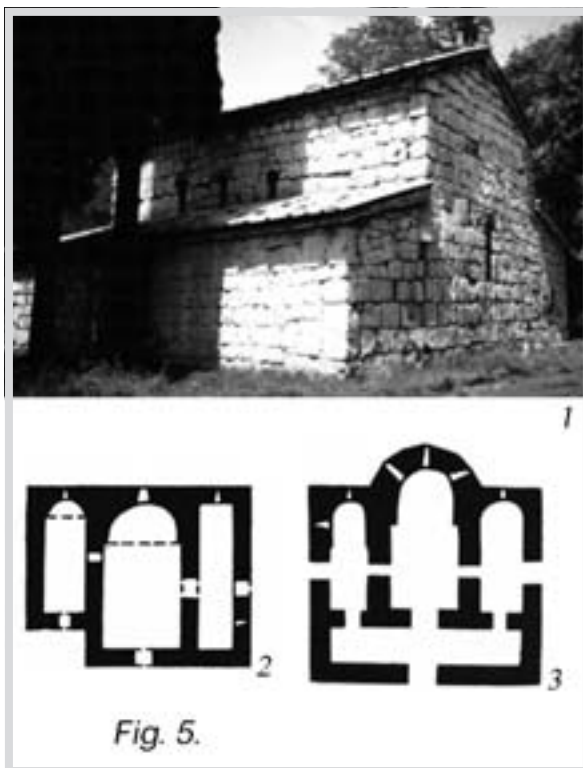


Fig. 5.

1-2. Church of Old Gagra; 3. Church of Abaanta

become difficult. However, a team of Russian-Abkhazian archaeologists has been undertaking research in the area for the last several years and has discovered many previously unknown archaeological sites. Most interesting for us is a recently discovered early Christian church in Lidzava, close to Bichvinta (excavated by R. Bartsits) (R. Bartsits, 2004, 223-227); a 4th- to 6th-century cemetery on Tsoukhua hill, in Atchandara (excavated by A. Skakov, A. Jobua, and O. Brilova); newly uncovered churches in Sokhumi fortress (excavated by M. Gunba and L. Khrushkova). During the excavation of these churches a tile fragment was uncovered which bore with stamp of Rome's XV *Legio Apollinaris* and gravestone with Greek inscription: "Here rests the soldier-legionary Orestus, in memory of whom we erected this church," (A. Gabelia, V. Vertogradova, 2004, 218-222) and so on. Though we regret the fact that the abovementioned investigation have occurred without the participation of Georgian scholars. It is clear that such recent discoveries have shed light on many not yet fully clarified issues, as well as raising many new and interesting questions about the study of antiquities in this region.

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GEORGIAN MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE AND THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN ROMANESQUE PERIOD

Georgia had adopted Christianity as state religion as early as in 337 AD. This has been an event of an enormous change in all spheres of life. In the field of art a gradual transition from late Antiquity to early Christian art took place. At that time there were no examples of Christian churches with relief sculptures to follow. From 4th to 7th centuries was the first cultural climax of Christian art in Georgia. The inventive mind of Georgian architects created numerous manifold forms of basilicas and domed cruciform churches and produced first attempts of relief sculpture. So this radical religious change was at the same time the native hour of carefully carved and coloured stone relief linked with exterior façades of churches. There is no doubt that in this respect the heritage of classical antique stone relief played a stimulating role but only in a very common sense. Absolutely new was the Christian iconography.

In the late 6th and early 7th centuries the Christian architecture achieved a classical perfection. The most outstanding monument is the Jvari church in Mtskheta, a domed centralized church from 586/87 to 604/05 of great artistic harmony. The most surprising fact for me was the polygonal east apse with three plates above the windows with monumental sculptured figures of Christ, angels and three Karthlian rulers in low relief. Like a triptych they adorn the eastern façade. In the middle plate there is Christ with Stepanoz I.

Never before I had seen such an early example of monumental relief sculpture on the exterior side of a church.

I knew that in Georgia the use of adorning architectural parts with ornamental relief is a distinguishing feature already since the 4th century. But now at Jvari church it was no longer without a fixed concept, applied by pure chance, rather exists for the first time an ideological program. The sculptured figures are let into the wall, they do not protrude. Inscriptions fill the

spaces within the plates, small traces of colour tell us that the relief sculptures originally have been painted like pictures.

The visual effect must have been more impressive than today. The linear style gives them a decorative character. The Jvari relief in connection with the façade of the building is an innovation, a first fundamental step for further development.

But let us remain in the 7th century. A second important variation of a centralized church is the Redeemer church of Tsromi from 626 -634, a domed cruciform church with four free standing pillars. This construction was hitherto unknown, like Jvari church unique in the early eastern Christian world. These both remarkable achievements manifest the political and cultural independence of Byzantium. As to the Redeemer church in Tsromi: The tympanum of the western portal shows a large Latin cross on a crepidoma. Salvation and overcoming of death by the crucifixion of Christ are expressed. So the coherence between Christ or symbols of Christ and the church portal was newly introduced and remained for centuries in East and West. The Redeemer called himself "ostium", the door, through which you can go directly to the Lord. Formerly a frame of double columns in the jambs adorned the western portal and gave it festivity. These double columns I still have seen in 1963 in fragmentary form.

The outside decoration of the apse is interesting. It is marked by two deep triangular niches, which are like a frame of a flat niche in between. In this way the impression of a monumental entrance with three arches like classical triumphal arches is formed. In the flat niche there is a window, in its left and right sides there are broad very fine cut interlaces. In the deep triangle niches double columns with capitals and bases are installed. Over the platform of the capitals vaulted fields of 1.5m height are located. They are now empty, but originally they presumably showed figural relief sculpture, may be of Christ and the founder of the church as we can see them at the eastern façade of the Jvari church. The sculpture of Tsromi is not so spectacular as the one of Jvari church, it is more simple but nevertheless very interesting. The investigation of all the relief sculpture of the exterior in this

wider aspect resulted in the conclusion that there is no accidental application at all. Points of emphasis of liturgical importance and of relief sculpture belong together. The concept is a triumphal one. Pictorially and in the mind of the architect apse and western portal of the Redeemer church in Tsromi form an east-west-axis connected with Christ.

A further significant field for using relief sculpture is the tympanum of a church portal. In the early Christian countries sculptured tympana in connection with the portal of a church can only be found in Georgia and Armenia, the other early Christian countries did not know them. The design of the portals is very different. Simple structures like the portal with jambs and tympanum or with lintel without protruding from the façade of the church you can find in Armenia, Georgia and Germany. The tympanum portal in this shape is a new medieval creation in these mentioned countries. Even in Byzantium you can not find it and in antique architecture it was also unknown. The correspondence of Georgian and German tympana and church portals is astonishing in regard to their measurements and frames, in the structure of the frames in the proportion between portal and façade. In both areas the portal represents a closed unit. Parallel solution or reception?

In the case of relationship between Georgian and German medieval art Vakhtang Beridze noticed a certain similarity in respect of the spiritual and functional solution and in respect of the form.

In 1993 I started to reflect on the figured monumental relief sculpture linked with façades of churches. Up to date this special topic has not yet been given any regard. Natela Aladashvili used this term for all kinds of relief sculpture of the 5th to the 11th centuries. I have to explain that I use the term only for the portrayal of large scale figures of a high religious or political importance such as Christ, angels, saints, founders and rulers. Such portrayals of ecclesiastical or worldly authorities are only reserved for a very few outstanding churches. To make it quite clear I do not include ornamental ribbons with vine leaves and small human figures, figured capitals or adorned bases of columns, arcades above windows, nothing of that kind! I only concentrate my interest on the fact that the earliest

appearance of a monumental human figure at the façade of Jvari church was a sensational invention of high social importance. The multitude roots for the beginning of the new style are not examined sufficiently. The experts have differing opinions on this point: Antiquity, Urartu-art or oriental influence. The large scale figures at the Jvari church, isolated and representative without any narrative details but with inscriptions, combined for the first time with the main façade of a Christian church rather shows the fact that Georgia at this early time is strong connected with the tradition of Antiquity and early Christianity in a broader sense. But you cannot find there any example where a monumental figure is used to adorn the façade of a church. This has been unknown so far. The eastern façade of the Jvari church with its figural plates is a Georgian innovation from about 600. This promising development was interrupted by a 200-year of Arabic rule.

In Georgia and Armenia appeared the heritage of Jvari in Aght'amar and Oshki in the early 10th century like a Renaissance. The church of the Holy Cross in Aght'amar (915 till 921) is famous for its rich architectural sculptures.

But there is a decisive difference between Jvari and Aght'amar. Now for the first time tall frontal figures protrude from the plane of the wall. They are not entirely incorporated into the wall like they were in the Jvari church. The relief sculpture of Aght'amar was of immense importance for the subsequent development. Of a special interest is the western façade. It shows two large scale figures Christ and King Gagik with the model of the church, both strongly frontal in low relief.

Their contours are very static without vivid movements. It is for the first time that a worldly ruler is portrayed in the same size like Christ. This is an expression of the mighty role of King Gagik Artzrouni of Vaspourakan. Scholars of art emphasized the influence of the Antique, early Christian, Islamic and Sassanidic sources, most of them agree that there is no Byzantine influence. These different meanings show that the phenomenon of the monumental style has not yet been a subject of common interest.

Friedrich Wilhelm Deichmann (1983) empha-

sized that Aght'amar shows an amazing prelude to Romanesque sculpture in the rich ornamental ribbon with vine leaves and human figures. All sculptures are characterized by a vivid sensualism. So much about Deichmann. I think that beside the narrative details especially the figures of Christ and King Gagik on the western façade show a strong reduction of the form. A mutation of form took place, that is very far from the antique style of sensualism. Giulio Jeni wrote in 1986 that the repertoire of the iconography of Aght'amar is of a blossoming popular imagination. I rather think that the relief sculpture of the Palace church of Aght'amar is more a result of a high theological-symbolic program as a whole. Even the frieze with human figures in the leaves has a symbolic background namely the reviving soul. All the figures are marked by inscriptions as we have already seen in the Jvari church.

The church of Aght'amar has been very famous for a long time. It was the Palace church in the residence of King Gagik of Vaspourakan, situated on the island of Van lake.

In the second part of the 10th century large-scale figures of a monumental style appear at the cathedral of Oshki in the historic region of Tao-Klardjethi which formerly belonged to Georgia and is now part of Turkey. Probably Oshki has been an administrative centre of the rulers of Tao. David III governed the country from 958 till 1001. During this period of prosperity a new architectural type was created: The triconchos. On the southern wall of the transept there is a badly weathered composition of five figures in life-size looking like icons.

These are Christ, the Mother of God, John and two founders with the model of the church. Each figure has its own monolith stone. Christ is standing in the centre on a crepidoma, the Mother of God is placed on his right side, Saint John the Baptist on his left. Two founders in equal size like the holy persons are included. These are Bagrat, Duke of Dukes and David Magistros. All persons are identified by inscriptions. The life-size of the founders reminds on the portrayal of King Gagik in Aght'amar. This equal size of worldly persons is unique in the medieval relief sculpture. I do not know other portrayals of this kind whether in Georgia nor in Germany.



Mtskheta, Jvari church, apse, middle plate Christ with Stephanos

In contrast to the equal iconography the relief styles of Aght'amar and Oshki are different. Scholars often emphasized a relationship between silver or gold chased works, wood carvings, ivory carvings, or other works of applied art with the stone sculptures of Oshki. I rather think that a monumental church needs the work of a skilled stonemason, who used special tools, who is deeply connected with the work of the architect, who thinks in monumental dimensions, who must be knowledgeable of the tradition of his profession. In the case of Oshki the monumental figures of 1.5m height remind me of the stone masonry of Jvari and Aght'amar: above all their posture like icons and the preference for founders.

If we are looking for other comparable examples in the 10th and 11th centuries we will find them in the Byzantine art: The so-called relief icons in stone in walls or pillars of churches. Sometimes they also adorned exterior façades of a church. Their characteristics are: Primary two dimensional relief, the body is flat, while the head is of strong plasticity.

Medieval Georgia



Aght'amar, Holy Cross church, western façade, 915 – 921



Oshki, cathedral, southern transept, tenth century

The front view, the lateral spaces of the figures are hardly accentuated. The lower part of the body including the legs is lengthened. These characteristics are common of the figures of the cathedral of Oshki as well as of the Byzantine relief icons.

During all the 11th century the use of relief icons can historically be proved, but unfortunately most of the material got lost in the year 1453, when Constantinople was conquered by the Turkish forces.

The notion of monumental architectural sculpture had also come to life in the early Romanesque areas in Germany and France. In important towns such as Regensburg and Toulouse single works have survived.

Regensburg is one of the oldest towns of Germany. The cloister of St.Emmeram was an ecclesiastically established priority complex with a mighty abbot. It was subordinated directly to the authority of the Pope. Here is the place where we find the oldest German monumental stone sculptures linked with the

architecture of a church. The Benedictine cloister St. Emmeram in Regensburg belonged to the most important cloisters in Europe during the Middle Ages. Its double niche portal is the oldest German church entrance with a pictorial program of the middle of the 11th century. Its iconography is devoted to a local cult.

Three monumental figures of approximately 1m height namely Christ, St.Emmeram and St. Dionys had been created for this church portal. The figure below Christ in a medal is abbot Reginward, the founder.

Scholars of art tried to trace this relief back to ivory carving and to goldsmiths work. It is hard to imagine that the strong monumentality of Christ's figure was created without knowledge of monumental architectural style in the early Christian countries in the East. The combination of Christ, two saints and one founder within the portal of a church follows eastern traditions.

Let us consider the situation in southern France. Toulouse is one of the oldest French towns. The ca-



Germany, Regensburg, cloister St. Emmeram, Christ, 11th century



France, Toulouse, St.Sernin, ambulatory sculpture, 11th century

thedral of St. Sernin is one of the largest pilgrimage churches of the Occident. One important route to Santiago de Compostela, where Saint Jacob was buried, led through Toulouse. Pilgrims from far-reaching countries went to the holy place of Santiago de Compostela via Toulouse.

Here in St Sernin we will find the first works of Romanesque monumental sculpture in France linked with the architecture of a church. The well known ambulatory sculptures date back to the end of the 11th century. They belong to the earliest works of art of an important regional school of stone masonry. The ambulatory sculptures, seven monumental marble figures, each on a monolithic block, have been preserved to this date.

Their original location has probably been the apse or an entrance-hall. The very majestic figure of Christ in the centre is flanked by two angels, Cherub, Seraph and two apostles. Scholars of art suspected that the ambulatory sculptures are influenced by con-

temporary ivory carving, goldsmiths works and even book painting. But tracing them back only to applied art is too limited.

Willibald Sauerländer explains 1981 these works as the beginning of a new down- to-earth imagery at a turning point of medieval civilization. But he judges only from a regional point of view. Things change if you are considering the connection with the other Christian countries.

Helga Möbius wrote 1987 that this monumental sculpture (of St. Sernin) was newly created almost without any precondition.

Nobody refers to the architecture and relief sculpture of the east Christian countries. Why should one not think in this direction. I spoke already of the pilgrimage road via Toulouse. The 11th century marks the beginning of the crusades and it is to suggest that quite a number of first explorers had been sent out via Constantinople and the Holy Land to collect information for the feudal Lords of Central Europe.

The figures of St. Emmeram at Regensburg and the ambulatory sculptures of St. Sernin at Toulouse would lose their isolated aspects and would appear as a logical process of productive reception. Parallel solution or reception that is always the question. These are the two opposite poles between which we have to decide. The sudden interest for the local antique sources of relief sculpture at Toulouse is a common feature at that time. But an international process of reducing the antique sensualism and development of a spiritual nature of art took place in both the eastern former border countries of the Roman Empire and Central Europe. The total phenomenon of the Central European or the Eastern stylistic notion is pretty different. Only single selected elements are similar in a broader sense. In Europe the Romanesque style is not homogeneous, it consists of regional separate forms in Italy, Spain, France and Germany. In addition to common antique roots and regional mutations of form there must have been contact between East and West, which favoured an exchange of artistic ideas. Such ways of transmitting ideas were among others commerce between the Orient and the Occident, the already mentioned pilgrimage roads and the crusades, clerical councils, admiration of relics, dynastic bonds, wars, seafaring, continuous floods of emigrants – all these factors brought people from far-away distances into contact and acted as catalysts. Of course, in detail we lack the exact documentary proof, but the works of art themselves give evidence of this fact.

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THE GEORGIAN ASPECTS OF MIEVEAL ARCHITECTURE AT ANI IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY: THE CHURCH OF TIGRAN HONENTS AND THE MOSQUE OF MINUCHIR

The spectacular ruins of Ani, located in north-eastern Turkey, provide a wealth of information for the study of medieval art and architecture of eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus. Beautifully situated on a triangular elevation above the river Arpa Çayı (Akhurian River), which now separates modern day Turkey and Armenia, the abandoned ghost-city is renowned in history. Although best known as the capital of the Armenian Baghratid kingdom of the tenth century, it also hosted a number of other ruling dynasties of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all of which left traces of their history in the architectural record of the site. According to the widely accepted chronology for Ani, King Ashot III (952-977) established the city in 961 as the capital of the Armenian Kingdom. During this time he built a citadel and a palace at the southern tip of the peninsula and a fortification wall across the narrowest point of the elevation. The following King Smbat II (977-989) extended the city toward the north with his famous double city walls that rank among the most memorable monuments in the history of medieval architecture. The tenth to eleventh century buildings of the succeeding King Gagik I (989-1020), attributed to the famous Armenian architect Trdat, include the Cathedral, the Church of St.. Gregory the Illuminator (also known as King Gagik's church) and the Church of St.. Gregory the Redeemer (also known as Prkitch) also among the impressive, yet crumbling ruins of the city.²

Toward the middle of the eleventh century Ani began to experience a period of decline and was even-

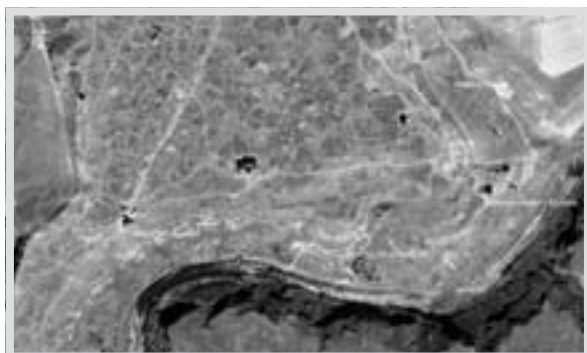
tu ally surrendered to the Byzantines in 1045. In 1064 the Seljuk Turks captured the city, and granted it to a Kurdish line of muslim emirs known as the Sheddadids, who intermarried with the Bagratid family, and who were also vassals of the Seljuks. The Sheddadids ruled Ani for a hundred years, from about 1072 to 1199, during which time Georgian leaders attacked the city on several occasions. A Georgian alliance of princes known as the Zakarids (referred to as the Mqargrdzeli in Georgian sources), with a combined Georgian and Armenian army, eventually took Ani and ruled there from 1199 to 1237. During this time the city experienced renewed prosperity, expansion, and the patronage of new monuments based on the revival of trade routes. Toward the middle of the thirteenth century the Ani endured its final decline with the Mongol invasions, followed by a devastating earthquake of 1319.³ The city's monuments testify to this long and tumultuous history, and two buildings in particular exemplify the rich, cross-cultural exchange of the later, more complex, and lesser-known period of Ani.

The Church of St.. Gregory of Tigran Honents, dated by an inscription in Armenian on the exterior of the church to 1215, and the Mosque of Minuchir, a far more enigmatic building in terms of chronology, style, and original function, were chosen by The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey as the first two monuments in Ani to be carefully surveyed for the purpose of assessing their building condition and for suggesting plans for their stabilization (Figures 1-9).⁴ They are among the handful of Ani's monuments that still have over two-thirds of their original elevations in tact, including almost the entire structure of their vaults, ceilings, and roofs, all of which, nonetheless, are badly damaged. Because they are mostly still standing and yet in ruinous condition, a comprehensive stabilization program could help to prevent any further partial or eventual full collapse in the future. The church was singled out as the most critical monument to be preserved at Ani because exposure to the elements and blatant vandalism has badly destroyed its valuable frescoes. The potential threat to the Minuchir mosque is also of great concern because of the major crack which runs through the

polychrome ceiling, in addition to a variety of losses to the structure over the years that continues to contribute to the building's increasing instability. The two projects commissioned by the Ministry are now complete and the work will begin in summer 2008. A brief summary of the results of the architectural survey is presented below.

THE PROJECT

The buildings were surveyed during the summer of 2006 using high definition, digital survey technology, otherwise known as three-dimensional laser scanning, from Leica Geosystems.⁵ The buildings were scanned from top to bottom, inside and out, and placed within their surrounding landscape. The scanner takes photographs of all visible surfaces and then shoots laser beams to record millions of points with x, y, and z coordinates within a five millimeter range of



Satellite Image of Ani, with major structures indicated.

accuracy. Software such as Cyclone and Cloudworks brings this data together to render three-dimensional models of the buildings, which can then be used to produce every type of traditional architectural line drawing in AutoCAD. From these "point clouds", any view of the building can be drawn, and the models can also be cut at any desired level and at any angle to produce whichever section or axonometric perspective is desired. Work on site lasted about ten days—four days devoted to the church and five days to the mosque. Two additional days were required for GPS coordination and the total station survey for the enclosed and constricted spaces of the buildings where the laser

scanner could not operate. Two small side chambers above the side apses of the church (enigmatic features of both Armenian and Georgian ecclesiastical architecture), the basement level of the mosque, and the spiral staircase of the mosque's octagonal minaret were surveyed separately using a total station and integrated into the models and drawings. Lisa Sardagna, a specialist in paints conservation, assessed the frescoes of the church, and provided a report on their condition. After the on-site survey, work at the office in Ankara lasted for about five months for each building to produce the models and the line drawings, the condition analysis of the structures, lab assessment of building materials, and the proposed interventions.

TIGRAN HONENTS

The church dedicated to St. Gregory the Illuminator, was founded by the wealthy merchant Tigran Honents in 1215, when the city was under the control of Zakarians.⁶ It is located at the southeast edge of the city, in the middle of a large monastic complex of which very little remains standing. The church, like all the buildings at Ani, is built out of finely cut stone masonry with a mortared rubble core characteristic of construction throughout the site. Soft local tufa stone in shades of red, brown, and charcoal were used for the walls and vaults of the structure. The domed hall design is compact with elegant proportions both inside and out. Barrel-vaulted cross arms on the interior are elevated with pitched roofs on the exterior, and all the roofs are capped by carefully arranged stone tiles. A continuous blind arcade resting on thin, engaged colonettes accentuates the facades of the church. A running hood molding filled with animal, plant, bird, and geometric motifs arranged within a scrollwork and interlace design accentuates the arcade and is repeated on the steep, polygonal drum of the dome. V-shaped niches capped by squinch-like shells are also filled with sculpted animal and geometric motifs. They are evenly spaced on the walls marking the location of the engaged corner piers on the inside where the cross arms meet the church walls on the north and south, and where the sides of the apse meets the



Church of Tigran Honents.
Exterior view toward the southeast.
Interior view toward the west, taken
from the window of the drum of the dome.

east wall on the east façade, and are believed to act as buttresses. The interior plan and elevation follows a precise and well-known geometric scheme for church architecture in this region. A dome and drum rest on pendentives on a square formed by four piers spanned by arches. The north and south arches lead into barrel-vaulted cross-arms; the west arch is extended, and the east arch leads to the apse at the east end. A double molding accentuates the wall surfaces at the springing of the arches, and engaged colonnettes create compound piers or clustered supports to further articulate the clear design.

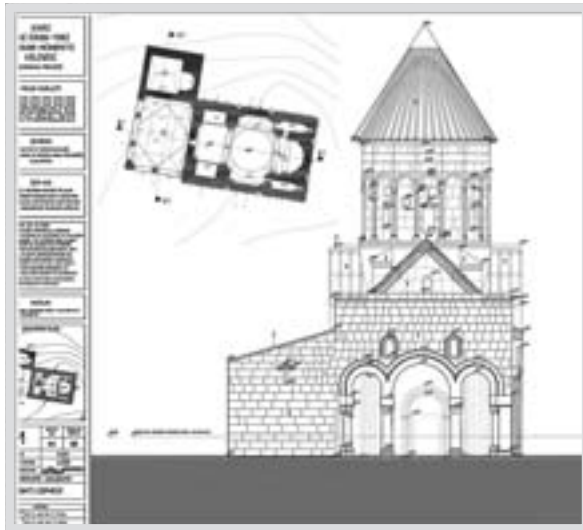
The elegant interior is fully painted with scenes from the life of Christ in the nave vaults and walls of the church. Additional paintings in the apse include standing bishops, Christ ministering to the Apostles, and an image of the Deesis. The four Evangelists appear on the pendentives and pairs of standing saints are in between the windows of the drum of the dome. Christ's Ascension barely still visible is painted in the dome. Standing saints on the piers and walls of the church complete the painted program. All of the images in the church and their placement are in keeping with Byzantinizing frescoes at this time, in both style and layout. The inscriptions identifying the various scenes and figures are painted in Greek and Georgian, with Armenian reserved for the exterior dedicatory inscription carved on the church walls. An unusual cycle of the Life of St. Gregory the Illuminator appears

on the extended west arm of the church. According to Anthony Eastmond, "this is the most developed monumental narrative of a saint to survive from the Orthodox world up to this period."⁷ Seventeen out of eighteen scenes are about St. Gregory's life. The last scene, however, is devoted to St. Nino, the evangelist of Georgia, and depicts the miracle of the life-giving pillar, one of the key events in the establishment of Christianity in Georgia. Eastmond argues: "although the donor of the church (Tigran Honents) was Armenian, the church served a larger community at Ani composed of both Armenians and Georgians."⁸

It appears that a small chapel with a barrel-vaulted crypt existed at the site before the building of the main church. The northwest corner of the church was attached to the southeast corner of the preexisting chapel. The chapel is difficult to date. A zamatun, or rectangular vaulted antechamber, was added later at some unknown date to connect the two structures, thereby creating a complex of interconnecting buildings consisting of a chapel, the church, and the zamatun. The chapel and the zamatun are the most structurally unstable parts of the complex. The frescoes that were originally protected inside the zamatun and are now entirely exposed to the elements are severely damaged by weathering.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS FOR THE CHURCH

The proposed preservation program for the church of Tigran Honents consists of three planned phases that apply to the mosque as well. Some basic reversible and detectable interventions are suggested for the first phase to reduce the ongoing problems mostly related to the exposed roofs and walls, and the problems of drainage, structural stability, and security. To separate the new intervention from the original building, we recommend a layer of geotextile and mortar to be placed on the existing and exposed mortar and rubble core. A new rubble core infill would follow, which would then be finished with a new tile roof made from local stone tufa over the original pitched roofs. The exact position and detail of every tile used on the roof has been recorded. Because stone tiles



Church of Tigran Honents.
Reconstruction plan.
Reconstruction elevation of west façade.

are characteristic of the building, and the roof of the church is the first part of the building seen when approaching the monument, tiles of local stone are proposed here. This is unlike the proposed shelter for the mosque, where the roof is flat and not visible from any angle except from the top of the adjoining minaret. For the church, we do not propose a reconstruction of its conical cap but rather a shelter-roof over the dome. Because security is one of the greatest concerns at the church, we also recommend raising the walls of the small side chapel and placing iron doors both at the entrance to the chapel and the church. Because it is not safe to walk inside the chapel, a glass floor over the crypt located beneath the chapel floor is also proposed. A new roof is proposed for the chapel, designed with steel beams and finished with tiles of local stone. A shelter roof for the west end of the church has also been proposed to protect the what is left of the wall paintings now completely exposed to the elements. This would be a partial roof resting on steel beams to form a stable frame modeled on the original ceiling design of the zamatun, which is reconstructed based on careful observation of the original building and evidence from old photographs. The steel frame will also support the partial remains of west wall of the zamatun, which is about to collapse. A stitch for the major crack on this remaining portion of the wall is also proposed.

The preservation program's second phase consists of continuous monitoring and research on the building while allowing the masonry of the walls and roofs of the church, chapel, and zamatun to slowly dry, having been protected by the proposed interventions. Because the structure is almost always wet during the entire year, especially the north wall and the dome, allowing the walls to dry naturally and slowly will not harm the original plaster and paintings on the interior. If the structure dries quickly, it would lead to the detachment and destruction of the frescoes. Because rainwater has mostly damaged the north wall, we recommend installing a French drain on the north side of the church to kick off the rainwater. A dry environment for the building is imperative for its preservation. The third phase is projected for the final interventions, which would be developed and based on the work of the first phase and ongoing study.

THE MOSQUE

The rectangular building known as the Mosque of Minuchir, stands on the original, tenth century city walls of Ashot III facing the Akhurian River and is positioned immediately within the main gate into the city before the city's later expansion under Smbat II. The original building was rectangular, divided into square bays symmetrically laid out but irregularly shaped on account of the preexisting structures in between which it was placed and on top of which it was constructed. Previous excavations demonstrate there



Mosque of Minuchir.
Interior view of columned hall looking west.
Exterior view toward the west.

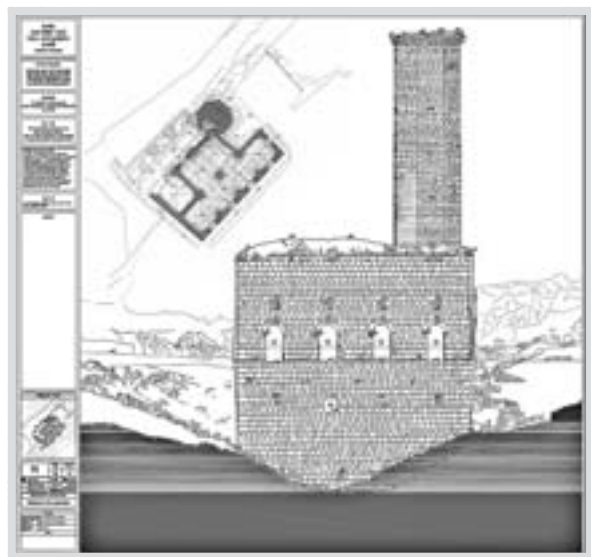
was yet another building attached to the southwest wall of the mosque.⁹ The building is spacious, elaborately designed and decorated, with the best views in town. The architectural study undertaken for the purpose of proposing a preservation program has revealed that the building's construction history, date, and original function require significant critical analysis to understand the architectural history of the region in general and of Ani in particular. The thick red tufa columns and highly decorative polychrome black and red stone tile ceilings with ornate patterns and muqarnas vaults exhibit a complex mixing of architectural styles that can date anywhere from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. Other buildings from this later period of Ani's history have similarly ornate ceiling decorations that are equally enigmatic to place in the chronology of the site. Because of this building's placement within the city and its design, we tentatively suggest that the building originally functioned as an elite residence or a type of palatial structure or public gathering place for the city.

In its original phase of use the building does not appear to have offered the proper orientation or the required a prayer niche and minaret in order to operate as a mosque. The northeast corner of the original structure appears to have been destroyed for construction of a tower or minaret, which was later also destroyed and replaced by the octagonal one seen today. Both were made to fit into the preexisting, multi-bay rectangular structure with thick red columns. In addition, on the now collapsed wall of the building facing the street there were three inscriptions carved into the finishing stones of the wall, as is evident from old photographs. It appears likely, however, that all three inscriptions could have been carved into the wall at any time after the wall's construction and they do not necessarily belong together with either the wall's construction or the building's function in its original phase. The first inscription mentions the name of Minuchir, the first Sheddadid emir of Ani (1075-1118). The inscription may have been placed there at the same time when the building was converted into a mosque; however, if Minuchir ruled Ani from 1075 onwards, it would be difficult to place the style of the

multi-bay rectangular building and its impressive ceiling decorations much earlier than that in the eleventh century. The second inscription is also carved on the wall of the building and above the Minuchir inscription, possibly at a time when the building had already been converted into a mosque. It dates to the period of the Ilkhanid rule of Ebu Sai'd Bahadir (1316-1335) and is a taxation edict (firman). A third, fragmentary inscription in Armenian appeared below the two others as was mentioned by early travelers to the site.²⁰ All three inscriptions are now lost.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS FOR THE MOSQUE

For the mosque, the basic interventions proposed for the first planned phase is a ventilated shelter over the existing roof to prevent leakage, and the monitoring of the main crack at the southwest corner, which runs through the ceiling and threatens to detach the main façade overlooking the river. The light frame shelter would be an almost flat roof with minimum visibility and would not dominate the mosque. A frame of steel beams placed over the exposed roof would be finished with a special stainless steel sheeting—namely standing seam sheets by Bemo Systems. Beams would be raised above the original structure



Mosque of Minuchir.
Plan.
Elevation of the southeast façade
facing the Arpa Çayı river.

to allow ventilation, which will help the walls and the structure to slowly dry.¹¹ This ventilated shelter would help to prevent further structural damage to the building as well as preserve the beautiful polychrome tiles and muqarnas that decorate the ceiling. These tiles are magnificent expressions of the rich cross-cultural and artistic exchange in architectural construction and style of the medieval period in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus.

Apart from the actual preservation program on site, we hope to continue to collaborate on the study of this extremely valuable documentation commissioned by Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The abandoned medieval Byzantine, Armenian, Georgian, and Seljuk ruins of the city of Ani offer some of the finest examples of medieval churches, fortifications, and civic infrastructures have never been fully documented and published. We plan to use the models and drawings as the basis for a critical analysis of the church and the mosque. This primary documentation from the field constitutes important research for a thorough study of the buildings and their place in the medieval architectural history of the region.

Notes:

1 Research consultant: Dr. Veronica Kalas, 587 Morgan CT., Northville, MI 48167, USA; vkalas@yahoo.com. Architectural restoration: Yavuz Özkaya, P R O M T Architecture & Restoration Ltd., Cinnah Caddesi 30/3, 06690 Çankaya, Ankara, TURKEY; yavuzozkaya@ttmail.com; prometproje@gmail.com.

2 Paolo Cuneo, et. al., *Ani Documents of Armenian Architecture 12* (Milan 1984).

3 Vladimir Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History* (London 1953).

4 Our team won the next tender to prepare the conservation projects for another two important monuments, namely the Church of the Redeemer or Prkitch, and the Church of Saint Gregory or Abughamrents, which began in 2008. Both buildings belong to the mostly Armenian, tenth to eleventh century phase of occupation at Ani and therefore will not be discussed in this paper.

5 HDS56000 is the new version known as "the next generation" of the ultra-high speed phase scanner; see leica-geosystems.com/hds/en/lgs-64228.htm.

6 Jean Michel Thierry and Nicole Thierry, *L'église Saint-Gregoire de Tigran Honenc' a Ani (1215)* (Leuven 1993).

7 Anthony Eastmond, "Local Saints, Art, and Regional Identity in the Orthodox World after the Fourth Crusade," *Speculum* 78 (2003) 725.

8 Eastmond, 726.

9 Nicolai Marr, *Ani Knizhnaia istoriia goroda i raspkopki na meste gorodishcha* (Ani: history of the city according to the literary sources and the excavations of the site of the ancient city) (Leningrad 1934) (in Russian); Beyhan Karamağları, "1991 Ani Kazıları," *Kazı Sonuçları Toplantısı* 14 (1992) 509-38; and Karamağları, "Ani Ulu Camii (Manucheyr Camii)," *9th International Congress of Turkish Art* (Ankara 1995) 323-38.

10 M. F. Brosset, *Les ruines d'Ani* (St.. Petersburg 1860-61) 2 vols., and H. F. B. Lynch, *Armenia: Travels and Studies* (London 1901)

11 For details, see: <http://www.bemousa.com/tech/panel.html>.

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GEORGIA AND CROATIA: A CASE OF COMMON SOURCE

Georgia is often depicted as “a crossroad between myth and history, between intellect and imagination, in cultural connection with surrounding peoples, and as an area of dynamic interchange of artistic ideas.”¹ This description may be easily identified with the part of Croatia known as Dalmatia. Similarly to Georgia, it was a crossroad between the West and East, transformed into a Greek and Roman colony, and later partially divided between the Byzantines and the Carolingians. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, it was a part of the Hungarian and Venetian empires. All these influences were embodied in its artistic production, including icons.

The small image of Mother of God with Child is kept in the Church of SS. Kvirke and Julita in Lagurka, one of the most honored churches in Upper Svane-tia (fig. 1).² The technical aspect of the icon is rather simple with tempera applied directly to the panel. It suggests provincial origin, a product of one of several local workshops in Mestia region. The iconographic type of the Virgin with Child is the variant of *Eleousa Glykophileusa*, a half-length figure of Mary holding Christ in her left hand and with her right hand pointing in a gesture of prayer (like *Hodegetria* type). His cheek is pressed against his mother’s for the caress, while gently looking at her. Christ is dressed in a dull orange robe patterned with mechanically applied linear folds, further suggestion of the artist’s emphasis on two-dimensional rendering of forms. Both figures have ornamented metal halos attached to the panel surface by visible nails, merging together at the side where their heads touch and occupying the entire upper section of the panel. Mary’s halo is decorated by punched double row of bolts, while Christ’s halo has arms of the cross executed in repousse technique. The fine drawing of both faces conveys the typology and stylistic elements of eleventh-century painting in accordance with the tradition of Asia Minor. The color

palette is rather limited and consists of predominately ochre with touches of red on necks, mouths, and cheeks. The Virgin’s gaze is directed to the space outside the picture plane, and it reveals sadness and melancholy. There is no doubt that this icon was executed by a master who was interested to represent human emotions and was less concerned with the overall result. Similar representations exist in numerous collections of Dalmatian cities in Croatia which were in close contact with Adriatic and eastern Mediterranean trading centers.

The icon of Mother of God with Child from the Church of St. Simeon in Zadar is commonly classified as a Byzantine–Adriatic work from the middle of the thirteenth century, executed in tempera on wood, with dimensions of 75 x 55 cm (fig. 2).³ The painting was a central part of a triptych (both wings missing today) and it is on permanent display in the collection of religious art in the Benedictine Church of Santa Maria in Zadar. The half-length figure of the Virgin is shown according to the iconographic scheme *Eleousa Glykophileusa*. Christ is standing upright with his right hand embracing Mary around her neck while his right cheek leans against hers. She holds the Child with her left hand while her right hand points to him. The modeling of the drapery and the rendering of the folds are delicate and skillful. Before its recent cleaning, the surface was covered with thick layers of paint during the Baroque period.

Both works reflect the combined iconography of the Virgin with Child placed on her left-hand side and pressing his right cheek on her face. The Virgin points with her right hand and has a somber expression on her face. Predominately linear execution of soft modeling of the drapery is juxtaposed with dynamic highlights spots on their faces, neck areas, and hands. Similar stylistic representation of the Virgin may be compared with the following example from the Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai, Egypt.⁴

This is the Virgin *Hodegetria* type, a Byzantine work from Cyprus, executed in the last quarter of the thirteenth century in tempera on wood with priming on textile, dimensions 94 x 74.7 cm. The relief ornaments are in gesso, and there are two inscriptions:



Mother of God with Child, Eleventh Century, tempera on panel. Church of Sts. Kvirke and Julita, Lagurka, Upper Svanetia, Georgia. Adapted from Lilia Evseyeva et al. *A History of Icon Painting, Sources, Tradition, Present Day*, fig. 2.

one in Latin "Mother of the Lord" and the other in Greek "Mother of God" (fig. 3).⁵ This depiction of the Virgin and Child follows the standard *Hodegetria* type, with the exception being the robe of the Child, commonly depicted in Cypriot painting from the end of the twelfth century.⁶ The compact, linearly modeled face of the Virgin is typical in many ways to icons of Mary and female saints in general, with her large almond-shaped eyes with black pupils, delicate red lips, and elegant slightly hooked nose. She is dressed in the purple *maphorion* covered by a rhomb-shaped pattern. The overall style of the icon is best described as a combination of features from the Byzantine Komnenian linear tradition and elements of the Romanesque style.



Mother of God with Child, Middle of the Thirteenth Century, tempera on panel. Benedictine Church of Santa Maria, Zadar, Croatia. Photo: Misha Nedeljkovich.

Works in this style may be dated safely to the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The ornamentation of Christ's neckline, the folds in the Virgin's robe, the type of scroll in Christ's hand, the emphasis on the linear, almost porcelain-like face of the Virgin, and her dreamy expression are all typical of a group of Sinai icons connected with Cyprus and attributed to Syrian masters working on the island.⁷ In addition to the island of Cyprus, Armenia and Georgia maintained close connection with Syria, from where they borrowed the greater number of their iconographic types.⁸ Most likely, the icon was produced for a Western patron as the Latin inscription suggests. As such, it reflects the complex social and cultural conditions in the Crusader States of the eastern Mediterranean. In general, relief



Virgin Hodegetria, Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century, tempera on panel. Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai, Egypt. Photo: Misha Nedeljkovich.



Virgin Hodegetria Dexiokratousa, First Quarter of the Thirteenth Century, mosaic on panel. Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai, Egypt. Photo: Misha Nedeljkovich.

gilt decoration of the halos and background was introduced as a cheaper substitute for embossed revetment in precious metals.⁹ The earliest such examples survived in Georgia, and the oldest are the Transfiguration icon of 886 and the Virgin of Zarzma from the tenth century.¹⁰ From Georgia, they spread to the eastern Mediterranean—mainly Cyprus—and over the next two centuries, with the help of traders, into the Adriatic area of Dalmatia. Furthermore, there is a strong possibility that the metal-covering tradition in Georgia was a counterpart of Byzantine contemporary models created predominantly in Constantinople under the influence of Syrian craftsmen.¹¹ Variant of these influences can be recognized in the icon with the Virgin *Hodegetria Dexiokratousa*, a Byzantine work

from Constantinople, now in the Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai, Egypt (fig. 4).¹²

This icon is from the first quarter of the thirteenth century, made in mosaic of gold, precious and semiprecious stones set in wax on a wooden panel. Its dimensions are 34 x 23 cm without frame, and 44.6 x 33 cm with frame. Inscribed in roundels flanking the Virgin is “Mother of God” in Greek, and there is no preserved inscription for Christ. Sections of mosaic are damaged, including areas of Christ’s chest, right hand, and halo, as well as a portion of the background; this segment has been partially overprinted. Unlike the traditional *Hodegetria*, the Virgin is represented supporting Christ with her right arm. She is dressed in a dark blue robe and brown maphorion, both cov-

Medieval Georgia

ered by a decorative pattern of chrysography. Christ has gold robe with brown folds over a white chiton, which is visible at the neck and left wrist. He holds a scroll in his left hand. The icon reflects the Komnenian linear style, but it is softened by elements of modeling, typical for the Palaeologan period. Its decorative background consists of series of roundels containing stylized plant ornament. Similar patterns appear in works with cloisonné enamel and metal revetments, and a number of Cypriot and crusader icons incorporate decoration in metal or gesso.

It is most likely that the iconography of the *El-eousa* type was developed in Byzantium proper and later spread to Italy, France, England, Germany, and Russia.³³ Among the most well-known examples is the Vladimir Virgin from the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century, now in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. This type was derived from the *Hodegetria* type by arranging the heads of the Virgin and the Child physically closer together. The Child, seated on the Virgin's knee or held in her arm, was positioned higher, embracing his mother's neck and leaning his cheek against hers. The earliest known examples must be dated in the tenth or eleventh century, and therefore the Georgian icon belongs to the early one.³⁴ Despite the simplicity of its overall style, the emotional bond between the Child and Mother is extraordinarily convincing. Both Sinai examples, regardless of obvious precision and clarity of technique, fall short in the evocation of feeling. The fact that they represent different iconographic types is important because of their intended formality, but there are numerous examples of *Hodegetria* that are much more emotionally expressive than the works mentioned here. On the other hand, the noble features of the figures in Dalmatian panel are similar to those in the Georgian image. The Child is depicted comforting the Mother by reaching for her with both hands and looking directly at her. In the Georgian example, Mary's gaze is lifted upward and outside the picture plane, whereas in the Dalmatian work, she looks directly at the spectator. The reason is that the icon was a part of the triptych intended to be displayed at the eye level of the faithful and therefore to create easy and

frequent contacts with the congregation during the service. As an arched central panel placed at the altar inside the sanctuary, it corresponded in its function to apse area.³⁵ The original function of the Georgian work was slightly different: it stood in the niche of the small altar and was carried out into the nave during Holy Week services.³⁶ The overall stylistic forms of Zadar figures reveal earthly sensual rounded features, comforting to worshipers, while the Georgian Virgin is ascetic, spiritual, belonging to the different realm. The angular mask-like features of her face put emphasis on her sorrow and sadness: sharp eyebrows pointed downward with the eyelids parallel to the eyebrows, a linear hooked nose, a small mouth with dark shadow under the lips—all echoes of the Christian version of the standard Greek drama mask worn by ancient performers. The Child physically resembles the Mother but less sad version. He represents the One who has already accepted the faith and is trying to convince her to do the same. Despite its heavily damaged surface, the expression overpowers its technical simplification and the almost primitive execution of the figures. Inclusion of ornamented metal halos further underlines the intention of the master to create the illusion of a fine and expensive work with limited financial and artistic resources. Furthermore, it seems that selection of elements seen in Cypriot examples and therefore mentioned Constantinopolitan icon is only a reflection of dynamic trade exchange with major European centers at the time. The Georgian masters were known to blend foreign ideas with local traditions, as was the case with the Dalmatian painters. Balancing the diverse and often opposed cultures, they successfully created a "formula" that could satisfy the tastes of refined patrons as well as general population. Complexity of contemporary political events occurring in and after the eleventh century created an artistic climate for exchange, appropriation, and assimilation of iconography, style, and emotional expressiveness at the geographic crossroads of Eurasia. In this particular case—Upper Svanetia in Georgia and Dalmatia in Croatia—two masters had drawn inspiration from the same sources, enhancing them with local traditions. Henceforth, the similar practice existed in faraway

parts of the world, intending “to absorb what was useful, resisting the imposition of what was unneeded, and continuing to maintain and evolve what can only be called its Georgian [Dalmatian] sense of self.”²⁷

Notes:

- 1 Ori Z. Soltes, ed., *National Treasures of Georgia*, London, Philip Wilson Publishers Limite, 1999. 21.
- 2 Lilia Evseyeva et al., *A History of Icon Painting, Sources, Tradition, Present Day*, trans. Kate Cook, Staffordshire, Orthodox Christian Books Ltd., 2005. 167-8.
- 3 For technical data on this work, see Igor Fiskovic, *Romanicko Slikarstvo u Hrvatskoj*, Zagreb, Muzej za umjetnost i obrt, 1087. 83; Ivo Petricioli, *The Permanent Exhibition of Religious Art in Zadar—The Catalogue of the Collection*, Zadar, Stalna Izložba Crkvene Umetnosti Zadar, 2004. 63.
- 4 The monastery has large collections of Cypriot and Georgian icons from the eleventh century on.
- 5 Helen C. Evans, *Byzantium, Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004. Cat. No. 213.
- 6 Evans, *Byzantium*, 354.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Victor Lasareff, “Studies in the Iconography of the Virgin,” *The Art Bulletin* 20, no. 1. 1938. 54.
- 9 Mojmir S. Frinta, “Raised Gilded Adornment of the Cypriot Icons, and the Occurrence of the Technique in the West,” *Gesta* 20, no. 2. 1981. 333.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid., 334.
- 12 Evans, *Byzantium*, Cat. No. 207.
- 13 Lasareff, “Studies in the Iconography of the Virgin,” 36-7.
- 14 Ibid., 38.
- 15 Nina Chichinadze, “Some Compositional Characteristics of Georgian Triptychs of the Thirteenth through Fifteenth Centuries,” *Gesta* 35, no. 1. 1996. 69.
- 16 Evseyeva et al., *A History of Icon Painting*, 168.
- 17 Soltes, ed., *National Treasures of Georgia*, 96.

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AN ORNAMENT IN MEDIEVAL GEORGIAN REPOUSSÉ ART

Ornamental decoration is the field of medieval Georgian art that best reflects decorative aspirations of Georgian artists. Along with exerting artistic and aesthetic influence, an ornament in medieval art served to convey a symbolic meaning. An ornament is an encompassing symbol-sign that provides a pictorial manifestation of abstract thinking. According to the Russian scholar L. Lelekov, "an ornament is both maximum and extremum in arbitrary presentation of the reality. It is most flexible, perfect and universal. It is in its drawing that a man found a trace of universal law".¹ Medieval Georgian ornamentation also fully reflects the worldview and spirit of its time. A Georgian ornament offers such a rich and diverse world that it could be created only by the people taking great delight in art and gifted with a rich artistic imagination. Architecture and chasing, the two fields of medieval Georgian art that are highly notable for their originality and continuity, offer valuable material thus enriching the history of world ornament. According to Giorgi Chubinashvili, "Georgian architectural ornament holds an outstanding place in the history of European architecture... Naturally, this also refers to the second field of art", which during the 10th-11th centuries displayed "a strive towards full independence – it was in chased sculpture that decorative aspect and namely, ornamentation must have acquired an important role and relevance".² Giorgi Chubinashvili made a great contribution towards the study of medieval chased ornament. Together with the evidence obtained by other Georgian scholars, the method of studying ornaments that he applied when considering each ornamented object and the issues he raised in respect with an ornament provided solid foundation for the monographic study of not only chased ornaments, but also of the entire history of Georgian ornament.

Georgian chased works are lavishly adorned with ornaments. The repertoire contains a particularly large number of vegetal ornaments, while purely geometrical ones are relatively uncommon. Among the

motifs of this kind special note should be made of the so-called "cuneiform" ornament, which found an especially wide spread in the 11th and 12th centuries and which embellishes a multitude of Georgian, mostly Svanetian, works. Many of these are icons of St. George. The motif must be taking roots in Georgian folk art in general and wood carving in particular – it is such objects that are widely used in every-day life in Svaneti. Decorated with the same ornament, objects of primitive art from New Zealand (e.g. a Maori paddle) are also wood-carved.³

Among vegetal ornaments the most widely spread were palmette, acanthus, oak and especially vine leaves. All of these motifs are standard and well-known in the history of world ornament, but neither the establishment of the origin nor the determination of external influences can define the nature of a Georgian ornament or that of any other country. The general trend of development of an ornament in time and space varied from country to country and from period to period despite its conservative character. It is not the origin of a motif that is interesting, but rather how it was adapted to a local cultural and historical soil. Taking roots in ancient civilizations and having evolved through various historical cultures, ornaments and forms underwent certain transformation in Georgian art, too. This was a complex process, during which Georgian, as well as other masters with a creative spark, used various sources, including the Graeco-Roman world, ancient East and Islam, Byzantium and western Europe. Under the influence of these cultures would a Georgian chased ornament, re-developed or even recreated thanks to a great force of imagination, take shape and evolve. Very often, standard forms, confined to the limits of medieval decorative system, are presented with such a force of inventiveness by Georgian goldsmiths that enable viewers to appreciate them from a new angle. This is primarily thanks to the diversity of drawings created by them. Even a subtle nuance may change an ornamental figure and result in a different kind of cohesion, a different rhythm and a different principle of structuring, not to mention the use of a wide range of motifs, especially within a single work. This enlivens a decorative surface and destroys a monotony caused by a recurring rhythm of ornamental elements. The use of



1. The Khakhuli triptych (when open)

such techniques in works of high standards (such as the Khakhuli triptych) points to the taste and craftsmanship of masters. However, the fact is that this is a general trend in Georgian chasing with artists trying to avoid a frequent use of ornaments of the same shape in one and the same work. The rule is followed even in works the level of technical execution of ornamentation and the expressiveness of a leaf of which is far from being high. This can be said, for example, of the Icon of the Saviour from Tsageri, dating from the early years of the first half of the 11th century, the hundred and twenty circles preserved on which contain, as noted by Giorgi Chubinashvili, “just forty different motifs”.⁴ It is also to be pointed out that it is not only the frame strips that are adorned with ornaments, but also the background around the Saviour. Yet, the rendering of ornaments differs according to the function: the frame ornaments, executed with some level of craftsmanship, have sharply drawn non-differentiated voluminous forms, and the background is decorated with the same ornamental motifs though non-voluminous and executed in a different technique – a circle and a leaf set within it are left in the silver area of the background and have a punched background around.

Distinguished by the diversity and originality of its ornaments, the icon of the Khakhuli triptych (first half of the 12th century) is a masterpiece of medieval Georgian decorative art. The entire surface of the icon is covered with chased ornaments, numerous enamels and jewels, all of which make a harmonious ensemble (ill. 1). The motifs known from early times are fragmented into elements and reassembled and sometimes made more complex to produce an absolutely

new effect. This extraordinary diversity, ornamental motifs and drawings displaying a refined taste and imagination, make an immense impression on viewers. The ornaments as they preserve on the chasing of the exterior of the side panels of the Khakhuli triptych are unique. This part of the chasing dates from the 10th century. The composition on both wings of the triptych featuring crosses in the centre with branching and foliated trees around them are notable not only for their artistic qualities, but also for very important semantics they bear. The idea of the Salvation which is the theme of the compositions is directly related to the composition of the triptych decoration as well as to the central enamelled Icon of the Virgin in supplication. The iconography of the Khakhuli triptych also offers another important theme.

The increased interest in ornament can be noted in later works of Georgian chasing too. Even when repoussé art was suffering downturn, Georgian masters continued using new motifs (e.g. absolutely new patterns of leaf and floral ornaments on 17th century icons from the workshop of Levan Dadiani).

Medieval Georgian chased ornamentation is a developing phenomenon. This implies not only time-related changes, which is common elsewhere, but also the ones that reveal its evolutionary nature at a specific stage and namely, in the period from the 10th through the 13th centuries. This certainly applies to a vegetal ornament, the structural composition or artistic rendering of the form of which is connected to its gradual evolution.

It is also important to note that the thread of development of ornamentation in Georgian chasing of



2. Icon of the Virgin from Tsageri



3. Icon of Symeon the Stylite from Laghami

the 10th through the 12th centuries is, according to G. Chubinashvili, directed “from geometrical rendering towards vegetal personification yet again within the limits of geometric structuring”.⁵ For instance, to a geometrical type belongs an early vegetal sample – a flower or a leaf on the Icon of the Virgin from Tsageri (late 10th-early 11th century), which offers an abstracted form clearly detached from reality (ill. 2). The vegetal aspect of an ornament is vividly manifested in a leaf adorning the Icon of Symeon the Stylite from Laghami, which is dated to the 1030s (ill. 3). Compared to Tsageri ornament, it is more life-like, though still arbitrary. The Laghami leaf is made “livelier” thanks to its rendering – moving, changing light and shade, petals arranged in planes, and as noted by Giorgi Chubinashvili, “the same feel for plasticity as seen on the figure of Anton, the Stylite or the column”.⁶ Rendered in this way, the leaf greatly differs from a frontally and linearly presented Tsageri flower or leaf. The Georgian masters’ aspiration for decorative and ornamental rendering became particularly strong when sculptural tasks, commonly related to figural representations, appeared in a deadlock. This can be illustrated by such brilliant works as the Khakhuli triptych, entirely covered with ornaments, and the frame of the Anchi Icon

executed by Beka Opizari (end of the 12th century), in which an ornament is of outstanding importance (ill. 4). Distinguished by a high level of craftsmanship, the ornament created by Beka Opizari is voluminous, neatly worked and rendered with mathematical exactness. The role of an ornament in the entire composition is vividly increased – set in a triple concentrated circle, a leaf exceeds in size a figure alternating with it. The same ornamental motif can be seen, for instance, on an 11th century Icon of the Saviour from Mghvimevi. Yet, the Icon of Anchi is rendered with exceptional plasticity, while the rings on the Icon of the Saviour from Mghvimevi are perceived as almost dry geometrical elements. A different trend is evident in the rendering of Mghvimevi Deesis consisting of three icons related to the aforementioned Icon of the Saviour from Mghvimevi (11th century). The ornamentation of these icons is set up so as to display an even rhythm and placidity, but yet it “skillfully demonstrates dynamism through a non-rigid arrangement and direction of branch tendrils”.⁷ The principles of dynamic building of ornamentation and pictorial-decorative tendency became more and more pronounced in most of the later works. The process can be traced through the 12th and 13th centuries – the Khakhuli Icon



4. Beka Opizari. Frame of the Anchi Icon



5. A bowl from Chkhorotsku

(first half of the 12th century), Pkhotreri (second half of the 12th century) and Gelati Saviour commissioned by King David Narin (second half of the 13th century). The ornamentation of the Gelati Icon contains such a multitude of small scrolls covering the background that the latter seems to have difficulty “breathing”, which leaves an impression of excessiveness and pettiness.

A medieval Georgian chased ornament certainly finds an affinity with a Byzantine one in many respects. This applies to the repertoire of ornamental motifs, and more generally, to carving, decorative rendering of the surface, symbolic importance of an ornament, etc. This ornament also reveals a connection with the Orient. However, it is also to be noted that gradual stylistic development of a Georgian chased ornament from the 10th to the 13th centuries invokes an association with the evolutionary processes noted in Graeco-Roman and western European (Roman and Gothic) ornamentation. A later, 16th century circle of works, namely gold icons from Kakheti and a bowl from Chkhorotsku, vividly shows Persian influences, which brought about novelties in terms of ornamental drawing as well as technical execution typical of Persia (ill. 5). That a Georgian chased ornament fell to Byzantine influences is without doubt, though the relative weight of these influences is questionable. Moreover, when reviewing a vegetal motif known as a “pomegranate flower”, Giorgi Chubinashvili formulated a question in the following way: could it be that a Georgian motif exerted influence over this Byzantine ornament considering that a Georgian specimen (the

icon of the Virgin from Tsageri, end of the 10th-beginning of the 11th century) is earlier than Byzantine, and the motif recurs on other Georgian chased works? In any case, the parallel development of Georgian and Byzantine ornament is without question. It is not only the diversity, number and high artistic level of a medieval Georgian ornament that are relevant, but also the fact that it sometimes allows scholars to establish closer chronological boundaries and identify artistic schools and workshops. It is also without doubt that in chasing, as well as in architecture, medieval Georgian ornament evolved independently, next to and in parallel with other leading countries.

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2. G. N. Chubinashvili, *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo* (Georgian Chasing Art), Tbilisi, 1959, pp. 536-537
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4. G. N. Chubinashvili, op. cit., pp. 185-186
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CREATING A LITURGICAL SPACE: THE SINAI COMPLEX OF ICONS BY IOANNES TOHABI

Georgian presence in the Monastery of St.. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt¹ has been testified since early Middle Ages. This presence finds ample proof in Georgian manuscripts preserved in the monastery library² and in numerous icons survived in Sinai collection³. Some of the icons can be assigned to Georgian painters solely due to their style, while others bear explicit indications of their direct connection with the Georgian world. A complex of six icons forming a unique group of panels that I would like to discuss here is perhaps the most intriguing case. Four of the images are calendar icons. A fifth represents the Last Judgment while the last one bears a unique combination of five miraculous icons of the Virgin and a narrative cycle dedicated to the miracles and Passions of Christ. The design of the reverse is characteristic of all the six. There is a cross against a bright red background in the centre of each, with an anagram to its sides, which consists of the initial letters of well-known liturgical lines. To the top and the bottom of the cross is a text written with Greek majuscule letters in white which stands out against the red background. (ill. 4) These icons were published all together for a first time in George and Maria Soteriou's catalogue in 1956-1958⁴. Since then a range of opinions has been proposed for their dating. K. Weitzmann, just as Soteriou, ascribed them to the latter half of the 11th century⁵, while D. Mouriki and N. Trahoulia attempted to date them to the first half of the 12th⁶.

The most peculiar characteristic of these icons is a man's thoroughly personal project realized in them. That man was a Georgian monk who lived in St.. Catherine's Monastery, most probably, in the late 11th century into the beginning of the 12th. His name, Ioannes Tohabi, and status of hieromonk came down to this day thanks to an epigram accompanying one of

the six iconic images. The provenance of the painter is revealed in the bilingual captions running near the figures of the depicted saints⁷. They are made in two languages, Greek and Georgian, and come as the most spectacular evidence of the icons belonging to a borderline of several cultures.

Byzantine art underwent thorough changes in the 11th-12th centuries. It was a time when the liturgical aspect acquired a decisive impact on the development of iconography. This process drew various fields of sacred art – illuminated manuscripts, icons and murals – into a dialogue in their infinite mutual influence as attempts were made to create a unified pictorial thesaurus. A secondary iconization of a kind took place, bringing forth new images. As a result narrative and plot compositions shed a major part of narrative dynamism to acquire a higher symbolic status instead. The same process brought fragmentation of images into a mosaic of mutually separated details. The resultant utmost itemizing, however, did not signify a loss of integrality. On the contrary, it came as a highly original device that allowed portrayal of the breathtaking complication of an integral picture of the world in a multitude of parts and details.

Multipart and polysynthetic iconic cycles appeared as the result. The composition of the Dodecaorton – the cycle of the Twelve Feasts – took final shape in the 11th century. The Feasts now came together in one or several icons, often these scenes were parts of *templa*, or even formed extensive programs of twelve panels⁸. Polysynthetic compositions saw a convergence of narrative and liturgical scenes. Images of saints accompanied by detailed hagiographic cycles appeared⁹. The decoration of Byzantine churches became more sophisticated, and was unified at the same time. Scenes and compositions in the various parts of the church space began to acquire gradually more and more complicated semantic unity as they interacted through subtle liturgical and theological associations.

The Sinai complex under consideration was an inalienable part of 11th-12th century Byzantine art. Within the mainstream of the contemporaneous quest, it followed numerous typological, iconographic

and often artistic innovations with amazing accuracy, while possessing a number of unique characteristics. An embodiment of an iconographic program of tremendous sophistication, it could have been created to be used for particular liturgical goals. At the same time, it was a thoroughly personal project, conceived and implemented by one man for his own salvation. The combination of various semantic and functional levels makes it rather hard for study with the necessity of singling each of these aspects out of a conceptually cemented whole.

Let us start describing the complex with four calendar icons forming a tetrptych. The plots portrayed are directly linked with *Vitae* texts – in particular but not only, with an updated complete version of the *Menologion*. Made by Symeon Metaphrastes in the end of the 10th century, it was a compendium of concise *Vitae* of the saints and martyrs for every day of the year. Its appearance was of tremendous significance. First, excerpts from it were daily recited in church in honor of the saint worshipped that day. Second, it promoted the emergence of a number of new iconographic cycles, in which the long and monotonous narration characteristic of the *Menologion*, that divided the liturgical year into independent semantic parts, received an unprecedented artistic embodiment²⁰. The most unconventional treatment of all was found for icons. It was determined by the necessity of creating an integral pictorial image that should bring numerous scenes together within a limited space²¹, scenes mostly placed on different pages in the illuminated manuscripts.

This treatment is also characteristic of the four calendar Sinai icons. (ill. 1) Every icon is divided in 9 horizontal stripes, each of which usually carries 10 small scenes. Each icon thus reflects the *Vitae* of three months of the year. The Sinai tetrptych represents all martyrs at the instant of their cruel death, while the other saints are represented frontally, standing full-size. The hagiographical scenes are arranged in a precise chronological order, eventually interrupted with representations of the Feasts. The first icon starts them with Simeon Stylites, whose feast falls on September the 1st, the start of the Byzantine liturgical year. Accom-

panying each saint is a caption bearing his name and specifying either his martyrdom or peaceful death.

The next icon of the complex is dedicated to the Last Judgment. (ill. 3) The iconography of Last Judgment²², just as of calendar icons, took final shape in Byzantine art as late as the 11th century, that is, shortly before the painting of the icon under consideration. This iconography immediately became widespread in church decoration to occupy the west wall. The iconographic treatment of the Second Coming we see on the Sinai icon bases on the vision of Daniel and fairly accurately reflects the Scriptural text, centered by the image of the fiery stream issued from the throne of the Ancient of days.

The stream compositionally divides the icon in two. To the right of the Savior are groups of righteous and saints arranged according to their status in the Church hierarchy. They include the Prophets, martyrs, bishops, monks and holy women. To the left of Christ are scenes of sinners' torments.

The last icon of the cycle is a unique combined representation of several subjects. (ill. 2) In the centre of the panel the miracles of Christ are represented, arranged in four horizontal rows. The two bottom rows continue narratives complementing the Passions cycle. The top row represents the five principal Byzantine miraculous icons of the Mother of God. All except the central image of the enthroned Virgin holding the Child Christ in her lap are inscribed in Greek with their names: Blachernitissa, Hodegetria, Hagiosoritissa and Chemevti²³. These icons of the Virgin are mutually contrasted, in a way. To the left are images of the two principal Constantinopolitan icons, which represent the Mother of God with the Child Christ in her arms and expressing the theme of Incarnation²⁴. Two other icons to the right embody another iconographic type, which discloses the role of Mary as the principal Advocate before the Lord. The contrast is also manifested in the color treatment of the vestments of the Theotokos – the icons to the left represent her in a red maphorion, while those to the right in a blue one.

This complex of six icons has often been divided in recent publications in three parts – the calendar cycle²⁵, the Last Judgment composition, which alone



1. Calendar Icon with the months of September, October and November.



2. Icon with five miraculous images of the Virgin.

takes up the entire panel, and the icon with five images of the Virgin¹⁶. This division is, however, not merely formal but partly forced as the icons were, doubtless, meant from the start to embody one well-pondered concept. They were parts of an integral theological and iconographic program whose reconstruction is one of the principal goals of the research discourse.

As I see it, visual expression of the liturgical time, pointed out for calendar images, was one the basic themes that connected all the six icons. The image of time is present in the Sinai icons in the several expressions possible for it¹⁷. This is the representation of the church year, fixed forever in dates, and depicted in the four calendar icons. This is the atemporal cyclic fragment of time, connected with Lent and services of the Holy Week and the end of days represented in the Last Judgment composition. Last but not least, this is the real earthly so to say liturgical time of Constantinople, expressed in the five icons of the Mother of God. Two of them, the Hodegetria and the Blachernitissa, were known far and wide due to the so called "usual" mir-

acles performed in the Byzantine capital every week, one on Tuesdays, and the other on Friday¹⁸. The two other icons of the Virgin, as far as we can judge by extant sources, also participated in the crucial annual liturgies connected with the Imperial family that were served on particular days of the church year in Constantinople¹⁹.

The theme of liturgical time might have been more visual if only we knew the arrangement of the icons in the church space and in the respect of each other. As K. Weitzmann assumed, they formed a hexptych with the four calendar panels framed, to one side, by the icon with the five miraculous images of the Mother of God and, to the other side, the Last Judgment. The presence of small "metal hinges" that are extant to the sides of the two extreme calendar icons²⁰ was Weitzmann's principal argument. Z. Skhirtladze on the contrary suggested that the polyptych consisted only of five icons: the central position was taken by the panel with the Miracles and Passions of Christ and four calendar icons were flanking it on both



3. Last Judgment.

sides²¹. But the holes from joints are visible only on the right edge of the icon with miraculous images of the Virgin which means that it could hardly serve as the central image of the polyptych.

Though we do not know if the icons made one whole structure it is nevertheless obvious that they were destined to be displayed together. Besides, it is quite probable that the complex made by Ioannes could have included more icons than the six we know. This assumption proceeds from an unprecedented element – the absence of the essential scene of the Crucifixion in the Passions cycle. Its absence is all the more spectacular as the icon represents moments immediately before and after the death of the Savior on the Cross – Via Dolorosa and the Deposition from the Cross. As I see it, the omission of the central event of Christian history can be explained only by the presence of another icon, wholly dedicated to the Crucifixion. If the icon really existed, it should have shared space with the six others to fill in the crying gap in the narrative. Obliquely proving this is the popularity of



4. Reverse side of Last Judgment icon.

the theme, which is portrayed on many icons from the Sinai monastery collection.

We thus do not know the exact original number of icons of the complex. So let us leave aside conjectures of their arrangement to turn to a much more important matter – the function of the panels. Already K. Weitzmann noted that the visual sequence represented in the icons offered evident parallels in liturgical book illuminations and images accompanying Gospel lectionaries²². Close to them was also the system of mid-Byzantine church decoration, which brought together the images of a great many saints, the Feasts, a monumental Last Judgment composition, and numerous icons present in the church. We cannot rule out that this was a deliberate similarity, which might have been one of the crucial aspects of Ioannes' concept. Possibly, as he was composing his sophisticated iconographic program, the learned monk expected that, collected together, the icons would substitute for the entire church decoration and not merely reflect its artistic perfection but also convey its theolog-



5 Fragment of ill. 2 with the self-portrait of Ioannes Tohabi.

ical and liturgical content. The smallness of Ioannes' icons as well as their relatively light weight allowed transfer them, if necessary, to any of the numerous churches round the Sinai monastery, where liturgies were compulsory from time to time.

As it was already mentioned, the Sinai complex, with its sophisticated theological content, was a profoundly personal project. Clearly testifying to the latter point were the five epigrams and two self-portraits of the artist²³. Four of the epigrams, in Greek, are on the reverse of all the six panels and have unified artistic treatment. The inscription on the four calendar panels is the most unconventional of all. Of eight lines, the epigram is between all the four icons, two lines to each. The text begins in the upper part of the icon of summer months, which chronologically finishes the cycle, next to pass from icon to icon. When the top of all the four panels is filled, the inscription gets back to the first icon to continue in the bottom of the tetrptych.

Translated from the Greek, the epigram runs: "The four-part phalanx of glorious martyrs together with a multitude of prophets and theologians, all priests and monks successfully painted Ioannes as he sent them as prompt mediators before the Lord in order to receive redemption from what he's sinful of."²⁴

It would be unreasonable to make this inscription travelling from icon to icon if the artist expected from the start that the panels would be divided in the church or hung on the wall forever to make the reverse invisible. It would be possible, on the contrary, to read the whole of the inscription and restore the epigram from beginning to end if the four icons were

placed close to each other. In that, they should be installed for the reverse to be as well seen as the obverse. To all appearances, that was part of the original concept, according to which the obverse of the chronologically arranged icons illustrated the entire events of the liturgical year, while the reverse allowed read the epigram, in which Ioannes prayed for grace and salvation to the infinite number of saints and martyrs he painted.

The reverse of the icon with five images of the Mother of God bears two epigrams, one of which concerns the icons of the Mother of God: "The humble monk Ioannes painted with desire these holy images which he gave to the famous Church where he found everlasting grace. O child, accept the maternal intercession and grant full redemption from sins to pitiable old man who asks for it."²⁵

The other epigram relates to the scenes of the miracles and Passions of Christ: "Thy salvific Passions, o Word, with miracles too great to be conceived by the mind and expressed by words, were beautifully painted in red by the monk Ioannes, who implores for forgiveness of his sins."²⁶

The Greek epigram extant on the reverse of the Last Judgments icon also runs above and below the cross. (ill. 4) It says: "As Daniel, who foresaw Thy terrible Last Judgment, o Almighty Abyss of Mercy, having it in mind and written on the tablets of his heart, the miserable among the monks Ioannes has reverentially painted Thy Second Advent, importunes Thee, o Maker of the Universe, to be merciful not wrathful Judge on that day."²⁷

All epigrams on the reverse of the icons are written in dodecasyllable meter and in exquisite Greek. Their character and content allow assume that Ioannes himself was their author. As the texts testify, he was also the painter of the images. His superb Greek and gift of making refined poetry show that Ioannes was an erudite intellectual who probably spent a long time in Constantinople.

No doubt, the epigrams were composed for the icons. They make precise references to the subjects of the panels. The text of the prayer echoes the painted image, and occasionally complements it. The epigram of the calendar icons clearly refers to a four-part

structure, the tetrptych. In the Last Judgment icon, the artist compares his painted image with Prophet Daniel's image created in text. All epigrams finish with loannes' traditional prayer to the saints he portrayed for forgiveness, intercession and mercy evidentially having always in mind the Last Judgment. As the iconic images represent practically the entire Church in Heaven and on earth, his supplication acquires a universal scope and the icons come as an effective instrument that loannes conceived and made in the hope to be saved.

The Last Judgment icon also bears a Georgian-language epigram of seven lines. (ill. 6) It is on the obverse, unlike the Greek texts. Placed under the throne of the Savior and running to the two sides of the fiery stream, it reads: "O Jesus Christ, the Everlasting King, grant me the lot of the righteous on Thy Second Coming in glory, me – who had remunerated for this icon in ardent waiting for Thy Second Coming with all Thy Saints. Humble hieromonk loane Tohabi. Amen."²⁸ The combination of several epigrams in different languages and mutually close in content might appear baffling at first sight. It is not unique, however, and has numerous parallels in other icons extant in Sinai²⁹. The Georgian epigram extends our information about the painter as it mentions not only his Christian name but also the surname, Tohabi, which the Greek texts omit.

The artist's two self-portraits are also parts of his personal concept³⁰. On one instance, he portrays himself before the image of the enthroned Mother of God, and at the gates of paradise on the other. Both images were programmatic and came as visual expression of prayer for salvation. True to himself, the painter here, too, chose a sophisticated artistic concept to combine several mutually echoing semantic accents. Portraying himself as kneeling worshipper at the foot of the enthroned Mother of God, loannes appears appealing to the Child Christ in her lap to forgive his sins. In that, his eyes are directed to the image of the Virgin Paraklesis (ill. 5) to produce another scene of prayer, in which loannes appeals for intercession to the miraculous icon of the Mother of God.

The example of the personal program of salvation discussed here is not unique in the Byzantine Art. Similar in goals with big enterprises undertaken by



6 Georgian epigram on Last Judgment icon.

prominent donor, that in the hope of redemption were constructing churches and commissioning monumental decoration throughout the Empire, the icon cycles represent their counterparts existing within monastic walls. This specific type of artistic creativity allowed to individuals to interweave their names in a broad history of salvation. The painted images themselves served as a silent prayer of the painter addressed to the portrayed saints whereas their names inscribed on the surface which often is the case for Sinai icons, guarantees the liturgical memory within the monastic community.

Three cultural milieus (Georgia, Constantinople, Sinai) determined the appearance of the Tohabi's complex of icons. For each one of them it can become an invaluable source of information. In this paper I tried to concentrate on its integrity and analyze the group of six icons as a single and coherent project, conceived and realized by one person, Georgian monk loannes Tohabi. The aim of this project was to recreate in several panels the decoration of the entire church and to reveal in images the uninterrupted continuity of liturgical time being. Most probably, the appearance of such multipart iconic complexes was closely related to the specific context of Sinai monastery, with its numerous churches and chapels dispersed in the area and the constant tradition of icon painting that served as a perfect substitute for an almost inexistent mural decoration. The united groups of icons of this sort might be direct predecessors of transportable iconostasis and small polyptychs destined to accompany priests and travelers in their journeys known from the later examples.

Notes:

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2 Garitte G. Catalogue des manuscrits littéraires géorgiens du Mont Sinai. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, vol. 165, sub. 9. Louvain, 1956; Marr N. Opisanie gruzinskih rukopisey Sinaiskogo monastiria. (Description of Georgian Manuscripts of the Sinai monastery). Moskva-Leningrad, 1940. For recent publications see: Alexidze Z. and others. Catalogue of Georgian Manuscripts discovered in 1975 at Saint Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. Athens, 2005.

3 See: N. Burchuladze's abstract "Georgian Icons at St.. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (To Georgian-Byzantine interrelations)", in Vakhtang Beridze International Symposium of Georgian Art: "Georgian Art in the Context of European and Asian Cultures", Abstracts, Tbilisi, 2008, pp. 89-90 and her article in this volume. See also: Mouriki D. La présence géorgienne au Sinai d'après le témoignage des icônes du monastère de Sainte-Catherine, in Bizantio ke Georgia. Kallitexnikes ke politistikis sxesis. Simposio. (Byzantium and Georgia. Artistic and Cultural Relationships. Symposium), Athens, pp. 39-40; Chichinadze N. Georgian Icons on mount Sinai, in International Symposium "Christianity: Past, Present, Future" (October 11-17, 2000, Tbilisi, Georgia). Short contents of the papers, ed. by M.Chkhartishvili and L.Mirianashvili. Tbilisi, 2000, p. 28 (the full version of this paper see in Dzeglis megobari, 2000, n. 2, pp. 3-9). On some particular icons commissioned by Georgian donors survived in the collection of St.. Catherine's monastery on Mount Sinai see, for example: Constantinides E. Une icône historiée de Saint Georges du 13e siècle au monastère de Sainte-Catherine du Mont Sinai, in Images from the Byzantine Periphery: Studies in Iconography and Style. Leiden, 2007, pp. 150-179; Beneshevič V. Izobrajenie Gruzinskogo zarja Davida Stroitelia na ikone Sinaiskogo monastirja (The Representation of the Georgian King David the Builder on the Icon from the Sinai Monastery), in Christianskiy Vostok, Vol. I, n. 1, 1912, pp. 62-64; K'Idiašvili C. D. L'icône de saint Georges du Mont Sinai avec le portrait de Davit Agmašenebeli, in Revue des Études Géorgiennes et Caucasiennes, n. 5, 1989, pp. 107-128.

4 Soteriou M. and G. Ikones tis monis Sina. (Icônes du mont Sinai), I-II, 1956-1958, pp. 121-123, 125-130, figs. 136-143, 146-150.

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6 Mouriki D. Sinai. Treasures of the Monastery of Saint Catherine. Athens, 1990, pp. 99-100; Eadem. La présence géorgienne., pp. 39-40; Trahoulia N. The Truth in Painting: a Refutation of Heresy in a Sinai Icon, in Jah-

rbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik, n. 52, 2002, pp. 271-285. The same dating has been proposed in Lidov A. Vizantijskie ikoni Sinaia (Byzantine Icons of Sinai). Athens, 1999, p. 60.

7 I would like to thank Prof. B. Fonkic for sharing with me his opinion on the paleography of the Greek inscriptions on the icons. From his point of view the manner of writing does not clash with the accepted dating of the images. At the same time, the inscriptions bear no specific characteristics that might help to narrow the broad margin of the 11th century's second half and the first half of the 12th to a particular decade.

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9 Ševčenko N.P. Vita Icons and "Decorated" Icons of the Komnenian Period, in Four Icons in the Menil Collection, ed. by B. Davezac. (The Menil Collection Monographs). Houston, 1992, pp. 56-69; Eadem. The Vita Icon and the Painter as Hagiographer, in Dumbarton Oaks Papers, vol. 53, 1999, pp. 149-165; Belting H. Likeness and Presence: a History of the Image before the Era of Art. Chicago, 1994, pp. 249-260; Constantinides E. Une icône historiée., pp. 150-179.

10 Weitzmann K. Byzantine Miniature., pp. 281-285; Ševčenko N.P. Illustrated Manuscripts of the Metaphrastian Menologion. Chicago, 1990; Mijović P. Menolog. Belgrade, 1973.

11 On Calendar icons see: Weitzmann K. Byzantine Miniature., pp. 296-304; Idem. Icon Programs of the 12th and 13th centuries at Sinai, in Deltion tis Christianikis Archaologikis Eterias, n. 12, 1986, pp. 107-112; Belting H. Likeness., pp. 249-256; Ševčenko N.P. Marking Holy Time: the Byzantine Calendar Icons, in Byzantine Icons: Art, Technique and Technology, ed. by M. Vassilaki. Heraklion, 2002, pp. 51-62.

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15 Ševčenko N.P. Marking Holy Time., pp. 51-62.

16 Trahoulia N. The Truth in Painting., pp. 271-285.

17 Ševčenko N.P. Marking Holy Time., pp. 51-62.

18 Weyl Carr A. Court Culture and Cult Icons in Middle Byzantine Constantinople, in Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204, ed. H. Maguire. Washington DC, 1997, pp. 81-98; Grumel V. Le 'miracle habituel' de Notre-Dame des Blachernes à Constantinople, in Echos d'Orient, n. 30, 1931, pp. 129-146; Papaioannou E.N. The "Usual Miracle"

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19 Constantinos Porphyrogeniti Imperatoris De ceremoniis aulae byzantinae, *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, ed. by Bonnae, vol. II, 1830, pp. 172-173; Jugie M. L'église de Chalkopratia et le culte de la ceinture de la Sainte Vierge à Constantinople, in *Echos d'Orient*, n. 16, 1913, pp. 309-310. For the thorough linguistic analysis of the Greek word χειμευτη see: Tsikarishvili L., Skhirtladze Z. Ghvtismshoblis ikonograpiisatvis Kimeuti, in *Sametsniero-sagvtismetqvelo shromebi I*, Tbilisi, 1999, gv. 46-63. (On the Iconography of Mother of God Cheumefti, in *Scientific Theological Works*, I, Tbilisi, 1999, pp. 46-63).

20 Weitzmann K. *Byzantine miniature.*, p. 297.

21 Skhirtladze Z. *Sinas mtis satselitsdo khatis shed-genilobisatvis*, in *Samecniero shromebis krebuli (Towards the Composition of the Calendar Icon of Mount Sinai)*, Tbilisi, 2000, pp. 197-221 (with the summary in English).

22 Weitzmann K. *Byzantine Miniature.*, pp. 296-304.

23 The presence of the epigrams and the self portraits on these icons was already analyzed in the following article: Kalopissi-Verti S. *Painter's portraits in Byzantine Art*, in *Deltion tis Christianikis Archaologikis Eterias*, n. 17, 1994, pp. 134-136.

24 A. Rhoby has just recently reconstructed the correct order of the lines of this epigram. After Soteriou these verses were often reproduced with the last two lines wrongly interchanged. I would like to thank A. Rhoby for sharing with me his ideas on the matter and allowing me to

consult of the unpublished chapters on the epigrams of the six icons by Ioannes Tohabi from the forthcoming second volume of the *Corpus on Byzantine Epigrams*. See: Rhoby A., *Byzantinische Epigramme auf Ikonen und Objekten der Kleinkunst (Byzantinische Epigramme in inschriftlicher Überlieferung*, vol. 2, ed. by W. Hörandner, A. Rhoby and A. Paul). Vienna (forthcoming).

Τετραμερῆ φάλαγγα κλεινῶν μαρτύρων
σὺν τῷ προφητῶν καὶ θεηγόρων στίφει
<πάν>των θυηπόλων τε καὶ μονοτρόπον
στυλογραφῆσας εὐστόχως Ἰω(άννης)
πρέσβεις ταχεῖς ἀφήκε πρὸς τὸν δεσπότην
τούτου λαβεῖν τὸ λύτρον ὧνπερ ἐσφάλη
(transcription by A. Rhoby).

25 [Πό]θω[μιον]αστῆς εὐτε(λή)ς Ἰω(άννης)
τὰς ἱερὰς ἔγραψε ταυτ[ας] εἰ[κ]όνας]
[ἄ]ς κ(αὶ) δόμῳ δέδωκε [τ]ῷ π[ρο]σθου]μέν[ω]
[εὐρῶν] ἀνεξάλειπτον ἐν τούτῳ χάριν
τ(ῆν) [μητ]ρικὴν ἔντευξιν. [ὦ] τέκ[νον, δέχου]
κ(αὶ) παντελῆ λύτρωσιν ἀμυλακη[μά]τ(ων)
[αἰτου]μένο βράβευσον οἰκτρῷ πρεσβύτ(η)
(transcription by W. Hörandner and A. Rhoby).

See: Rhoby A. and Hörandner W. Beobachtungen zu zwei inschriftlich erhaltenen Epigrammen, in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, n. 100, 2007, S. 162-167. For other transcriptions see Soteriou., p. 128, Kalopissi-Verti S. *Painter's portraits.*, pp. 134-135. The cited English translation of this epigram is by N. Trahoulia. See: Trahoulia N. *The Truth in Painting.*, pp. 272-273.

26 Τὰ κοσμοσωτήρια σου πάθ(η). Λόγε,
σὺν τοῖς ὑπὲρ νοῦν κ(αὶ) λόγον τερα[στ]ίῃς
[γρά]ψα[ς] μ[οναχ]ῶ(ς) εὐφωκῶς Ἰω(άννης)
ἐρυθροβαφῆ πταισμάτων αἰτεῖ λύ[σιν].

27 Ὡς Δανιὴλ προεῖδε φρικτὴ κρί(σιν),
ὦ παντάναξ ἄβυσσε τῆς εὐπλαχίας,
εἰς νοῦν βαλὼν γράψας τε πλαξὶ καρδίας
Ἰω(άννης) δύστηνος ἐν μονοτρόποις
σεπτῶς ἀνιστόρησε σὴν παρουσίαν
αἰτῶν δυσωπῶν σου τυχεῖν, παντεργάτα,
οἰκτίρμονος μάλιστα μὴ κριτοῦ τότε.

28 I would like to express my deep gratitude to M. Chkhartishvili for the help with the translation of this text. For Georgian translation of all Greek epigrams and the transcription of the Georgian verses on the Last Judgment icon see: Skhirtladze Z. Ioane Tokhabi – sinaze moghvats kartveli mkhatvari (John Tohabi the Georgian artist from Sinai), in *Literatura da Khelovneba (Literature and Art)*, n. 3, 1998, pp. 61-72.

29 See, for example: K'Idiašvili C. D. L'icône de saint Georges., pp. 107-128.

30 On the self portraits of painters and donors on the icons from the Sinai monastery see:

Kalopissi-Verti S. *Painter's portraits.*, pp. 129-142; Mouriki D. *Portraits de donateurs et invocations sur les icônes du XIIIe siècle au Sinaï*, in *Études Balkaniques*, n. 2, 1995, pp. 105-135.

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GEORGIAN ICONS AT ST. CATHERINE'S MONASTERY ON MOUNT SINAI (ON GEORGIAN - BYZANTINE CULTURAL INTERRELATIONS)

The Monastery of St.. Catherine on Mount Sinai is among the most important sites of the Georgian's spiritual life. Traces of our forefathers' cultural activities have been most explicitly preserved there. The monastery houses hundreds of manuscripts¹ and some icons, the exact number of which is still to be specified. However, on the basis of many known factors, their number is rather large. At present, however, we do not have much information about the Georgian icons in St.. Catherine's Monastery, though those ones that have already been published allow us to assume that they belonged (and still do) to the most distinguished icons in the monastery's treasury.

This research is our first attempt to collect all the available information about Georgian icons at St.. Catherine's Monastery. At the same time, we are trying to discover other icons in the monastery's treasury that were created by Georgian monks; this would prove that there was a Georgian icon-painting workshop in the monastery during the 11th - 13th centuries.

For a number of objective reasons, this paper is only a draft work on this very important topic, but the facts that have already come to light are so interesting that they merit the publication of a preliminary paper.

The first scientific records of the St.. Catherine's Monastery icons go back to the mid-19th century and are related to Russian ecclesiastic archaeologists P. Uspenski and A. Muraviev (P. Uspenski, 1856; A. Muravyev, 1872)

It should be mentioned, that in his very first publication Uspenski described some Georgian icons. Among them there was the 11th - to 12th -century icon depicting St.. George, with the great Georgian king David the Builder ("Agmashenebeli") standing by (P.Uspenski, 1856; V. Beneshevich, 1912, 62-64). It should be mentioned that Uspenski and Muravyev brought a certain number of manuscripts and icons

from St.. Catherine's to Russia. Today some of those icons are in Kiev, while the rest became lost during World War II. It is noteworthy that in Uspenski's description of his collection of St.. Catherine Monastery's sacred relics some icons were held to be Georgian. Fortunately, descriptions of the lost icons remain in Uspenski's archival materials, as well as in publications by some other Russian scholars.

A few years ago O. Etingof published this material, accompanied by scholarly comment (O. Etingof, 2005). She also published photographs of icons that used to belong to Muravyev's collection. Among them was a fragment with Georgian and Greek inscriptions. The fragment depicted a calendar line for the winter months with corresponding saints and feasts. It used to be a part of a four-wing menologion, the other parts of which are still kept at St.. Catherine's Monastery. Specifically, it is a calendar tetrptych (menologion) with two related icons, one of which depicts five Constantinople's holy images of the Virgin as well as Miracles and the Passion of Christ, while the other is "The Last Judgment".²

The icons' inscriptions and the donor's portraits prove to be painted by the Georgian monk Ioane Tokhabi, who served at St. Catherine's Monastery. He wrote his name on the backs of all four icons of the tetrptych. On the other two icons he portrayed himself on their front sides. (D. Mouriki, 1999, 100,103, 384; Z. Skhirtladze: 1998, 64-68; 2000, 197-22).

Those icons are considered to have been executed in the painting workshop at St.. Catherine's Monastery (Among all calendar icons, spared by time, the abovementioned one is the oldest and its painter's self portrait represents the earliest sample of donors' portraits on Sinai).

Uspenski considered several icons of his collection to be Georgian. Among them was a wing of a diptych with the Deesis (on the front side) and St. Peter and St. Paul on the back (O. Etingof, 2005, cat., #35, ill. 64, 65.) The other wing, still kept at St. Catherine's, depicts the Moses in front of the Burning Bush and his Receiving of the Law. We believe that these monuments are indeed of Georgian origin, based on the fact that close stylistic parallels to the diptych's Deesis can be found in the 12th -century illuminations of the Gelati and Vani Gospels. (O. Etingof, 2005, 400-401)

It is known that the miniatures of the manuscripts

were created in the same Constantinople scriptorium in which many other top-quality Georgian and Greek manuscripts were written and illustrated.³ Noteworthy is the fact that after having thoroughly researched that group of manuscripts, A. Saminski came up with a conclusion that in the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, a Georgian artist (or artists) played a leading role in the activity of that famous Constantinople scriptorium (A. Saminski: 1989, 184-216 ; 2000, 147-178; 2004, 245-261).

In Uspenski's collection there was also part of another diptych, which depicted a multi-figure composition of Christ's Baptism and His Temptation in the Desert by the Devil (O. Etingof, 2005, cat. # 27, ill. 5). The other part of the diptych is a well-known 12th century icon of the "Nativity of Christ" kept in St. Catherine's, also depicts a multi-figure Nativity scene (D. Mouriki, 100, ill. 18). According to Uspenski, the Baptism scene has Georgian inscriptions. Actually, there is no analogous information about the Nativity icon, but on the grounds of both icons' principles of iconographic setup and the stylistic features of the painting, they can be considered to be the work of the same artist.

Uspenski also thought that another small 13th century icon, depicting Sts. Theodore Stratelates and Theodore Teron, characterized by specific iconographic details, was of Georgian origin (O. Etingof, 2005, .cat. # 37, ill. 66-67).

According to D. Mouriki, the 13th century icon of Sts. Theodore Stratelates and Demetrios in the St. Catherine Monastery belongs to the artist who painted the icon of St. George with the Georgian king David Agmashenebeli standing by (D. Mouriki, 1999, 111-112).

Among the St. Catherine's Monastery icons is a 13th-century historical icon of St. George, which bears the name and the portrait of Georgian donor - the monk Ioane, and his prayer in Greek. This icon used to belong to the Georgian chapel of St. George, situated in the north part of the monastery's walled enclosure (E. Konstandinides, 1997, 77-104). This icon's style and iconography suggests that it was probably painted by a Georgian artist.

D. Mouriki also states that the 12th century historical icon of St. John the Baptist must also have been commissioned by a Georgian monk donor (D. Mouriki, 1999, 115-116, ill. 52).

Other Georgian icons at St. Catherine's include a

14th century polyptych depicting the "Deesis" and half-length figures of the saints with Georgian inscriptions (D. Mouriki, 1999, 384). Due to a length-wise break on one of the four wings, the icon lacks three saints' images. As has become known, Uspenski removed the missing fragment; today its whereabouts are unknown and it is considered missing.⁴

Among the well-known saints of several nations depicted on the polyptych, some Georgian ones are represented. They are St. David Garejeli, St. Shio Mgvimeli, Sts. Illarion and David Kartveli, Constantine Kakhi, Sts. Ioane, Ekvtime and George Mtatsmindeli plus other saints related to Georgia, such as Maxim the Confessor (buried in Georgia) and Bishop Peter, who was consecrated in the 5th and thought to be the first Georgian Patriarch.

Among the saints depicted on the icon we should note the rare presence of St. Ioane Caleviti and God's fool, St. Alex. Traditionally, monks have offered prayers to these saints in an effort to overcome their longing for their blood kin and loved ones. Taking into account that Georgian manuscripts at St. Catherine's often contained nostalgic inscriptions, it becomes clear why St. Ioane Caleviti and St. Alex were depicted on this icon.

Thus, in the first part of this paper we have considered those items in the treasury at St. Catherine's that the scientific literature attributes to Georgians. Nevertheless, it has been mentioned that a number of authors find it difficult to admit that a part of icon collection at St. Catherine's could have been painted by Georgian monks.⁵

Moreover, the actual possibility of the existence of Georgian icon-painting workshop at St. Catherine's Monastery has never been fully considered. In this connection it should be mentioned that the earliest evidence of the Georgians' presence at St. Catherine's dates to the 6th century. There were Georgian monasteries and churches both inside and outside the St. Catherine's monastic enclosure, and as early as in the 9th to 10th centuries, numerous Georgian manuscripts were written. In fact, in the 11th to 13th centuries, a catalogued library of Georgian manuscripts was functioning (L. Menabde, 1980, 44-69). Hence it appears logical to presume that at that time the Georgians had their own icon-painting workshop which provided icons not only for Georgian monks, but, if needed, for St. Cath-



1. The Virgin. Details of the “Annunciation” of the “Eshekopla’s” epistilion(Sinai) and icon of the Zarzma monastery (Georgia).

erine’s monastery international fraternity.

In fact, the existence of a Georgian icon-painting workshop is the topic of the second part of this paper. It will focus on a very special group of icons from the treasury of St. Catherine’s called epistilions. These are wooden architraves, placed above the altar screen. They depict the Dodekaorton (the Greatest Twelve Feasts) and the “Great Deesis.” (G. and M. Sotiriou, 1956-1958, 100; K. Weitzmann, 1984-1986, 64-86; D. Mouriki, 1999, 105-107).

According to K. Weitzmann, the majority of the epistilions at St. Catherine’s were created in one workshop, which presumably was set up there by Cypriot painters in the 12th century (K. Weitzmann, 1984-1986, 64-86).

But I want to advance a different opinion about origin of these icons. I believe that a large number of the epistilions were painted by Georgian artists and that by the 11th to 13th centuries Georgian monks could have had their own workshop at St. Catherine’s Monastery. This opinion is based on a number of iconographic and stylistic features, which are characteristic of Georgian art monuments of that period. But before getting down to considering the epistilions, the point should be made that one of them has a Georgian inscription.

Let us consider the 12th century epistilion K. Weitzmann examined on the altar screen of St. George’s Church at St. Catherine’s Monastery, which had belonged to Georgian brotherhood from XI century (L. Menabde, 1980, 47-48; D. Kldiashvili, 2008,

39-40). On the epistilion’s “Annunciation” scene there is one word written with old Georgian capital letters – “ESHEKOPLA.”⁶

The meaning of this word, written with beautiful calligraphy, is incomprehensible, but taking into account that in medieval Georgian manuscripts strange names can be found, we assume that the word might be a painter’s autograph.

There is no doubt that the painter of the epistilion was Georgian. This is proved by stylistic peculiarities characteristic of Georgian art of the 11th to 13th centuries, such as moderation, compositional simplicity, clear space organization, typical oriental faces with refined expressions, lyricism, refinement of postures and gestures, flexible outlines, and the elaborate modeling of faces and garments, etc.

From iconographic point of view “The Annunciation” of the epistilion is similar to the one of the 11th-century Georgian icon of Zarzma Monastery (G. Chubnashvili, 1957, 194-195, fig. 203).

The right sides of the two icons are very much alike. The Virgin’s posture, her silhouette, the position of her hands and feet, the hem pleat of her robe: these specifics look almost the same on both icons. (fig.1) Their architectural backgrounds are also very similar: tiered façade walls, a curtain draped around the left pillars and indented right slope of the roofs. Also fully identical is the way in which the cloth covers the Virgin’s throne and, what is particularly important, is that on both icons She holds two spindles in her left hand!

The Nativity scene of the epistilion also bears resemblance to the 11th-century masterpiece of Georgian monumental painting, “The Nativity” of the Ateni mural, which depicts branches of the Burning Bush – the holiest relic at St. Catherine’s – at the foot of a cave (T. Virsaladze, 1984, tab. 85).

The third scene of the epistilion, “The Presentation in the Temple of Christ,” closely resembles the composition of other two scenes of “The Presentation,” (fig. 2). one of which belongs to well-known St. Catherine’s monastery tetraptych depicting the Dodekaorton (D. Mouriki, 1999, 108, ill. 28), while the other adorns the Georgian Gospel at Gelati (The Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, 1985, ill. 142; A. Saminsky, 1989, 214).

The compositional set-up, the individual figures’ constitution and gestures, the color range, the reso-

lution of spatial and architectural backgrounds, ciborium and the delicate shapes of pillars – all indicate that the epistilion and the tetrptych were painted in one and the same workshop which closely cooperated with Constantinople scriptorium, where the Georgian Gospels of Gelati and Vani were created

The tetrptych under review here presents one very peculiar detail – the colored zigzags on the floor. This kind of floor design resembles the one on the Gelati Gospel as well as the floor design on the well-known 13th-century icon at St. Catherine's, the "Bematarissa." (D. Mouriki, 1999, 112; ill. 54, 55).

The central part of the icon depicts the Virgin and Child, while the wings contain twelve scenes of St. James' Protoevangelium. Such verbose narrative cycles placed on an icon are rather rare and another example can be found only on a 14th century triptych of The Virgin at the Ubisi Monastery in Georgia (N. Burchuladze, 2006, 73, 74, 112). We'd also like to mention that some Georgian monuments such as early 11th century gilded silver icon of the Virgin of Zarzma and late XI century Ateni mural belong to the earliest patterns of The Virgin's life apocryphal text cycles ((G. Chubinashvili, 1957, 194-195, ill. 203; T. Virsaladze, 1984).

The images depicted on the icon's central panel and the wings differ dramatically in style. All components of the wings must have been painted before the 13th century. It is noteworthy that the wings resemble those of the 12th century tetrptych depicting the Dodekaorton. We can also see that the bishop's robe and furniture on triptych, and the angel's red shoes on the tetrptych are equally adorned with rows of pearls. That makes us think that Eshekopla's epistilion, the triptych wings, and the tetrptych, all belong to the same time and the same workshop where the Gelati and Vani Gospels were made. Thus, we cannot rule out the possibility that the wings of the "Bematarissa" were painted by a Georgian artist, who served at St. Catherine's during the same period.⁷

According to K. Weitzmann there is another 12th century epistilion, the "Miracles of St. Eustratios," which he attributes to the same artist that painted the epistilion we have already considered (K. Weitzmann, 1984-1986, 67). Indeed, it cannot be ruled out that both epistilions were painted by one and the same painter, and according to his own autograph, he was not a Cypriot but a Georgian⁸.



2. "Presentation in the Temple of Christ". Fragments of the Sinaitic tetrptych, "Eshekopla's epistilion and Gelati Gospel. "Rejection of Joachim and Anne from the Temple"- fragment of the "Bematarissa" icon.

K. Weitzmann has paid special attention to several surviving fragments of an icon which he called the "The Three Masters' Epistilion." He attributed the central part of the epistilion to the "innovator" master, and characterized his stylistic peculiarities as follows: "The emphasis on the landscape is evident also in the encompassing pyramidal mountains in the Raising of Lazarus and the Entry into Jerusalem scenes, and the inner glow of the orange color has a strange emotional effect on the beholder." (K. Weitzmann, 1984-1986, 77).

An almost identical mountain can be seen in the scene of the Raising of Lazarus (fig. 3) of illuminated manuscript of the Baltimore collection (The Glory of Byzantium, 1997, 97). Miniatures of this codex have been attributed to one of the leading Constantinople painters of 12th century, who according to A. Saminski, was probably a Georgian. (A. Saminski, 1989, 184, 214) The mountain, and some other details (the shroud of Lazarus, the drawing of tomb, etc.) and general stylistic peculiarities bear evident resemblance to the images of the "Three Masters' Epistilion" and the tetrptych. (fig. 4).

In this connection it is worth recalling the beautiful redness of a twin-peaked mountain in the Greater Caucasus. The peaks are permanently snow-clad, which is why the mountain is called "Mkinvartsveri" (i.e., Icy Peak). There is a small 10th to 11th century cave-church on the mountain where Christ's cradle and Abraham's tent were kept. The Apostle Andrew erected a big cross and a large monastery near the cave (P.



3. “Raising of Lazarus” presented on the “Three Masters’ epistilion” and in Baltimor Museum Gospel.

Margvelashvili, 1979, 17-23). In this regard we consider it important to note the facts that Ice-peak Mountain is the only volcanic peak on earth that is composed of red-pink consisting lava (N. Skhirtladze, 1958, 269-288) and its cave-church, located at 4,100 m height is named “Bethlem”.

To identify the mountain of the epistilion it’s important to pay attention to a dark color bush with red berries on it. We suppose that it is the blackberry bush symbolically related to Dogmata of the Immaculate Conception, Sinai Mountain and Bethlem as well in this case.

Regrettably, space limitations prevent even a brief analysis of other icons at St. Catherine’s Monastery that we consider to be Georgian. But some very important statements can be made right now. Georgian monks were among the earliest dwellers at St. Catherine’s Monastery. As early as the 9th to 12th century, the Georgians creative activity at the monastery was very intensive. In addition, the Georgian monarchs – David the Builder and female King Tamar – used to provide extensive support for the monastery (Life of Kartli, 1955, 353) From late 10th to very early 13th century the political situation and ecclesiastical life of Georgia experienced astounding growth; Georgia became one of the most powerful states of Middle East, as has been emphasized by a number of European and Eastern historians.

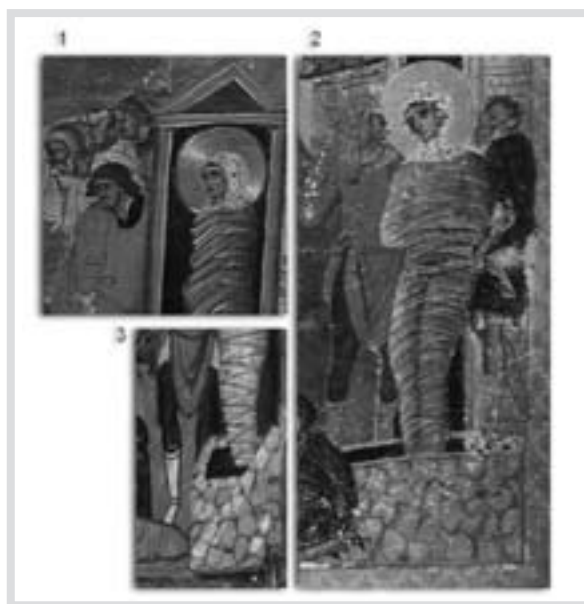
The same period was characterized by close contacts between Georgia and Byzantium in both the political and cultural spheres. Georgians used to serve at many of most significant Orthodox centers (Constantinople, Mount Athos, Cyprus, Cappadocia, Jerusalem, Bulgaria, Antioch , etc.), where they set up their own

monasteries with scriptoriums and workshops of various types. At the same time matrimonial alliances between Georgia and Byzantium became rather popular and the Georgians started playing a significant role at the Byzantine emperors’ court.⁹

Consider one such alliance. In 1071 Martha-Mariam, daughter of King Bagrat IV and aunt of David Agmashenebeli, who ruled later, became the Empress of Byzantium.

She ruled Byzantium for 10 years – first as wife of Michael VII Ducas and then as wife of Nicephorus III Botaniates. The beautiful and intelligent lady played a significant role in the accession of Alexius I Comnenus to the throne (Culture of Byzantium, 1989, c. 252, 341, 540, 597). According to Byzantine historical sources, Empress Mariam distinguished herself as an extremely religious and educated individual. At her request, the outstanding theologian Theophilaktos the Bulgarian wrote his commentary on St. Matthew’s Gospel (still valued by the Church) as well as an educative treatise for Crown Prince Constantine (I. Nodia, 1978, 143-153).

It is obvious that the empress would have patronized Georgians both at the emperor’s court and at the monasteries. She would also have supported them in their creative activities. As a result Georgian art monuments of the 11th and 12th centuries are closely connected to Byzantine and particularly to Constantinople art monuments, which can be best seen in book minia-



4. Details of the “Raising of Lazarus” from Sinaitic tetraptych and Baltimor Gospel.



5. A wing of Sinaiic tetraptych and the icon at Upper Svaneti.

tures, murals and icon paintings.

It is interesting that while studying Ioane Tokhab'i's menologia, N. Shevchenko came up with a supposition that it could have been related to the court of the Emperor of Byzantium. As already mentioned, at that time the Empress of Byzantium was Mariam.

It was Mariam who would encourage Georgian artists to put down roots at the Imperial Scriptorium in Constantinople. In her time as well as later, during the time of Queen Tamar (1184-1213), brilliant Georgian and Greek manuscripts were created in that very scriptorium (A. Saminski, 1989, 213-214). Therefore, the creative activities of Georgians in Constantinople and in St. Catherine's had a strong political background, which without any doubt had an influence on the development of art in Georgia proper.

It should be mentioned that while Martha-Mariam was reigning over Byzantium, her nephew, King David Agmashenebeli, reigned over Georgia (1189-1225). The King not only consolidated and united Georgia and liberated it from the Arabs' and Turk-Seljuks' century-old oppression, but also incredibly extended the country boundaries. His defeat of the Muslims coincided with the European's First Holy Land liberating Crusade, and that victory brought him a legendary glory among European knights, as well as among Muslims.

In this connection, I would like to present one yet unknown icon from Svaneti. Though badly damaged, it has such a detailed analogy to the tetraptych at St. Catherine's monastery that both can be claimed to have been painted by the same artist (fig. 5). We believe that this fact once again proves the Georgians' closely spiritual connection with St. Catherine's Monastery (N. Burchuladze, 2001, 68-78; 2002, 78-93).

In conclusion, I would like to remind you that this paper is just a first attempt to call attention to the facts related to the centuries-long artistic activities of Georgian monks in St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai. The topic is extremely significant and calls for an extensive and intensive study. To be able to undertake such research it is necessary to take a closer look at the connection between 11th to 13th century Byzantine and Georgian miniature paintings, as well as to obtain more information about icons deposited in the treasury of St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai.

Notes:

1 A big part of them have already been published (The new finds of Sinai, 2005)

2 At first they have been published by G. and M. Sotiriou in 1956-58 (See- G. and M. Sotiriou, 1956-1958, 121-123, 125-130, fig.136-143, 146-151)

3 For the bibliography of the XI-XIII cc Georgian illuminated manuscripts see: N. Kavtaria, 2007, 59-77

4 About the icon also see: Prof. N. Petrov, 1912, 11 and V. Beneshevich, 1925, 44-45, tab. 22-23.

5 For example, N. Shevchenko believes that the Georgian inscriptions on Ioane Tokhab'i's menologion were added afterwards (N. Shevchenko, 2000).

6 This unknown inscription can be found in _ The Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, 1985, fig. 114

7 According to D. Mouriki the "Bematarissa" was painted in Cretan style (D. Mouriki, 1999, 112). It's also believed that the icon's central panel was renovated in post-Byzantium era by a painter who was influenced by West-European art (A. Lidov, 1999, 102-105). Presumably the icon's Latin inscription was made during that renovation. We can also presume that Georgian painter could have been working on this icon together with his European colleague.

8 It's quite possible that he had professional relationships with Cyprus, because as early as in the X- XIII cc. there were several Georgian monasteries on the island (see G. Gagoshidze's publication in this collected papers).

9 Suffice is to think of the late 10th to early 11th century Byzantine military leaders of Georgian origin - Tornike Eristavi and Grigol Bakurianisdze, who with the Emperors' support could set up Georgian monasteries on Mount Athos and in Bachkovo, Bulgaria (L. Menabde, 1980, 178, 188-189, 255-258)

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THE MINIATURES AND ORIGIN OF THE BERTA GOSPELS*

The Georgian manuscript Q 906 at the National Centre of Manuscripts in Tbilisi is decorated with a silver-gilt cover and evangelist portraits. While the cover has been repeatedly published from the nineteenth century onwards,² the miniatures have been ignored, as if they did not exist. Indeed, being detached from the volume though still placed among its sheets, they may have not been originally integral to it.

The cover has the signature of silversmith Beshken from Opiza, one of the most important monasteries in the region of Klarjeti.³ Another book cover of 1195, also from Opiza,⁴ helped date the Berta cover to 10 to 20 years earlier, judging by the style.⁵

The Byzantine appearance of the miniatures in no way corresponds to the Georgian character of the cover. Their inscriptions are Greek, as distinct from those on the manuscript cover. Finally, the strong relief and classicism of these Evangelists indicates the turn of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries and certainly not 1170 to 1180, the presumed date of the cover.

Yet the pages with miniatures are commensurate with those of the manuscript.⁶ Traces of stitching still visible on one of them correspond to the stitching on the written pages.⁷ They must be identical to the evangelists' portraits mentioned in the ancient colophon on behalf of Opiza father-confessor John, who tells us that he inherited the Gospels from his brother and uncle and adorned it with images of the holy evangelists.⁸ John does not specify however, under which circumstances he acquired the miniatures. We are only informed that he donated the manuscript to the neighbouring Berta Monastery, hence the name by which we refer to the book. It can also be concluded from the John's colophon that before being donated to Berta, the Gospels belonged to a clan of noble ancestry called Mtavraidze, since the word 'Mtavari' means 'prince'.

A glimpse of the origin of the Berta Gospels miniatures is provided by Greek manuscript No. 4 at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington (fig. 1).⁹ St Luke here

follows a prototype of the tenth century, which occurs, for example, in codex 43 at Stavronikita Monastery, Mt Athos.¹⁰ In both manuscripts the attitude of the Evangelist is identical, but in the latter this is the result of coordinated movement of every part of the figure, whereas in the former movement envelops and subjugates the figure, sweeping separate parts of the body into one and even transmuting their appearance. Thus, the right hand divided at random by a clavus and drapery folds at the same time indiscernibly merges with the shoulder through the upper outline; the torso swells and assumes a spherical form. Moreover, movement breaks the figure's outlines coming outside by means of the loop of the himation on the left knee and the billowing cloth at the left shoulder. Precipitant fractured folds on the hip continue to the seat cushion and the lower contour of the hip is caught by the edge of the cushion intentionally detached from the jutting corner of the stool.

St Luke in the Berta Gospels (fig. 2) repeats nearly all these features: the swelling torso, the loop of the himation above the knee, the billows of the himation piled across the shoulder and the folds of the seat, particularly in the middle, covered with transverse dashes. This is evidently a direct or very close reflection of the Washington miniature. Consequently the various corrections seem all the more striking. The clavi have been moved up the sleeve, and, though undulating, continue uninterrupted, emphasising the shoulder relief, as in the Athos prototype. The folds on the sleeve resemble those at Dumbarton Oaks but appear softer: not only do they not affect the silhouette of the sleeve, but imply the volume of his arm. Luke's shoulder here is separated from the arm by the collar of the chiton at the breast, and the outline of the back sweeps sharply downwards so the body is no longer spherical, but simply voluminous. The billowing himation on the other shoulder is softened and the loop at the knee has subsided; folds of fabric at the hip are more rounded, no longer requiring continuation on the seat. The contour of the cushion no longer accelerates the leg movements; instead it goes down to the very edge of the seat making room for a figure firmly seated in the centre of an extended surface. The carved head added to the corner of the stool in



1) Washington, Dumbarton Oaks MS 4, fol. 4 v. St Luke, 158x115 mm

the foreground emphasises the distance separating the corner from the figure.

In the Washington image of St Luke the lower hem of the himation is smoothly rounded, while in the Berta version it is deliberately angular; the abrupt swing of himation from the waist to the back of the figure is halted in sharp curves, as in the Athos miniature; higher up new angles have been added that are not immediately obvious but successfully slow the pace, opposing the best endeavours of the model. As compared to the Washington miniature the Evangelist's body is larger, while the legs are so much shorter that they seem unable to carry him; the book has grown larger and now lies on his knees; the right hand has dropped in repose instead of flying towards the inkwell.

Everything around the Washington Luke is part of the movement. The roof ridge continues at a slant to nudge the Evangelist. The side wall of the edifice is divided by a coloured cornice that juts into his back. The narrow, unstable façade with a cleft instead of an entranceway turns round to the right. The pediment rises above the roof. The architectural background is glimpsed beneath the table and footstool, as if they rise above the ground. On the stool a slanting cross-



2) Tbilisi, National Center of Manuscripts, Q 906, fol. 160 v. St Luke, 136x110 mm

beam shoots upwards, aiming for the central rib of the arrow-like book rest.

All this vanishes in the Berta Gospels. On the contrary, the immobility of the setting is painstakingly provided by volume. A side partition has been added to the table, with the footstool directly in front, while the squat stool stands beside the footstool, forcefully thrusting forward at an angle. Luke now occupies a partitioned area, but nothing spurs him to movement. The building and the lectern with the heavy tome surround the Evangelist but do not propel him forward. Now the roof ridge and upper contour of the book rest slope gently. The pediment is held in position by the roof and for additional security is fastened by an acroterium. Although scarcely noticeable halfway down the side wall, a cornice gives it a reliable transverse axis. Another such axis is provided by the striking ribbed pleat on the seat of the stool. The small inkwell at the corner of the table halts the trajectory of Luke's right hand. The miniature is lower and heavier in format. The figure is shifted towards the centre, filling the space like a recess.

Thus a careful copy duplicating every detail becomes, as an artistic image, an almost complete con-

tradition to the miniature that inspired it. The flow is frozen. The preacher's pulpit turns into a hermit's cell.

The Washington manuscript is ascribed to the 1180s, the epoch of Monreale mosaics.¹¹ Evidently the copy was made during the next decade or the early thirteenth century. But this is by no means an old garment chosen at random and remade in the new fashion. The flickering of highlights and clavi, the tension of the contours show that the author was enthused by the source. His reworking however indicates his preference for concentration rather than an outburst of emotion. Luke's face is suffused with a peaceful expression of almost childlike simplicity, in striking contrast to the perturbed features of the Washington Evangelist. The artist clearly had to find another source for the face.

The other miniatures in the Berta Gospels have nothing in common with the Washington manuscript. However, judging from the image of St Matthew, they too are based on models: the unfortunate bonding of the right leg with the torso suggests an imitation of a more convincing arrangement, while the row of loops between the knees again brings to mind the style of Monreale.

Given the awkwardness of the Matthew figure from a modern perspective, Mark's magnificent proportions and arrangement in space seem remarkable. This is not due to a different source or style, nor is it the work of a different artist, but rather the expression of the Evangelist's ardour. The latter is expressed both through vigorous plasticity and the sharp geometric folds in the chiton. The colouring and chromatic repetition (violet himation – violet side wall of the edifice; dark-blue chiton – dark-blue façade; red cushion – red roof) are identical with those seen in the Matthew image, but the lighting contrasts are dramatically emphasised.

St Luke appears doubly striking when compared to the other miniatures of the series. The sparing but persistent colouring suddenly blossoms and softens, not only with the saturated bright blue and large areas of red, but also due to a departure from the rule of colour duplication: Luke's pale green himation has no echo in the side wall of the building. Forceful poses and perspectives are replaced by the flowing lines of a rounded silhouette; the severely sculptured illumina-

tion of garments by flickering highlights and the trembling clavus; ebullient activity by the clean parchment and the open book; heroic classicism of the faces by the iconic subtlety.

St John (fig. 5) is immediately distinguishable from the Synoptists in composition, colour and plasticity. Almost half the image is occupied by the chair, and the table and chair together provide him with a secluded corner. The edifice that was an unchanging feature of the previous miniatures has been removed so that his seclusion is complete. The red areas on the roof and seating are absent; moreover all the colours are mysteriously muted and the highlights shadowy. But it is a tense quietude. Like a coiled spring, the chair with curved legs and back propels the figure forward. Pressed almost tightly together, the parts of this image seem ready to collide and are sometimes deliberately exaggerated: the head and the lectern; the thick tome on John's knees and the spherical curvature of the encircling folds in his himation. The quiet figure is composed of apparently incongruous perspectives: he is seen from the front and side. Beside the soft knot of fabric peeping from behind his thighs the folds are suddenly stretched like the strings, or pucker in a series of sharp angles. As with Mark, the face is powerful and classical in form but with dramatic curves and protuberances beneath the right eye and along the brow.

The Byzantine models of the Berta miniatures apart from St Luke are unknown to this day. They nevertheless have counterparts that partly fill the lacuna: the miniatures in the Georgian Gospels E 45 at the St Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Although badly damaged they show not only a striking similarity to the Berta illustrations, but also notable differences.

In the Petersburg version St Matthew is more skilfully executed. Obviously it cannot be a copy of its inferior. But neither was there a need for the Berta artist to copy the Petersburg miniatures. (We know now that the illustrations of the Evangelists could be directly taken from Byzantine sources.) Probably both miniatures are different reflections of the same original. One miniature lays emphasis on vitality, hence the increased volume of the furniture, the more pronounced relief of the figure using lighting contrasts and even conflicting perspectives. In the other mini-



3) St Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies, E 45, fol. 150 v. St Luke, 145x103 mm

ature, on the contrary, significance is given to quiet concentration achieved through harmony of form.

St Mark in the Petersburg version also appears more faithful to the source than the Berta miniature, and he evidently favours tranquillity as much as Matthew, while the Berta miniature portrays a warrior and hero.

As for St Luke, the Petersburg miniature (fig. 3) followed the Berta copy of the original rather than the original itself in many respects. Hence the large rather than inflated body with small shins, the angularity of the himation on Luke's back, the closed volume on the book stand, the desk with a side partition and other obvious derivations. The billows of the himation on the left shoulder and loop on the knee have completely subsided here, once more indicating that the Berta miniature was an intermediary influence. However, the himation forms an unbroken deep arc across the legs, as seen in the Washington example; the outline of the seated figure is formed by yet another swift arc in exactly the same way. The seat is almost hidden behind the figure instead of jutting forward at an angle as in the Berta Luke. There are no sharp turns to halter the himation's curve from waist to back. The head is

turned at an unexpectedly acute angle, as if carried away by his writing. Although sharply bent, Luke's hand holding the pen is not resting on the book. In short, the mobility of the Petersburg Luke directly follows the Washington rather than the Berta version. Although the book on the lectern remains closed as in the Berta miniature, the parchment on the Washington Luke's knees bears the first line of script – evidence of the industrious character of this Evangelist.

Images of St John in the two Georgian manuscripts again differ radically in their interpretation of a common source (figs. 4, 5). The Petersburg miniature shows the Evangelist with his back completely engulfed in a chair. A pyramidal ink-well stands directly beside his knee, which protrudes above the desk. Just at the point where his legs are crossed a lock appears on the front partition of the writing desk. His feet are depicted one immediately behind the other. The bowed chair legs make a smooth transition to the backward curve of the arm rest. Everything is harmonised and put in place. The position of the figure is carefully consolidated by the surrounding boundary marks and is extremely concentrated. In the Berta manuscript, on the contrary, it is intentionally precarious and contradictory, with John sitting sideways in the chair. His legs almost obscure the desk, leaving no room for either the inkwell or the lock, and his feet are placed at an angle to one another, as though ready to step in different directions. The knees are parted by the restless end of the himation, coming from it is not clear where.

In the Petersburg miniature the knot of cloth showing under John's thighs fills the deep cavity between the chair legs and armrest; next to it a voluminous corner of the himation cascades concealing another inconvenient space between the knot and the Evangelist's shins. Both motifs secure the position of the figure on his flimsy seat, protecting John's tranquil state. In the Tbilisi version their function is the opposite. This same knot seems to spring from the top of the chair legs in a last effort to push the Evangelist off his perch. The hanging edge of the himation protruding from beneath the knot puckers in all directions with exertion. To the right, resisting the onslaught, a series of angles formed by stiff, deeply carved folds support John's haunches as a kind of substructure. Here it is



4) St Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies, E 45, fol. 246 v. St John, 145x102 mm

barely possible to recognise the convergence of the two streams of cloth, one cascading from under the hip and another falling from the knee, which is hardly emphasised in the Petersburg manuscript.

The Petersburg and Berta miniatures are clearly by two different artists. If they had no common sources, it would be difficult to see them working side by side. The Greek inscriptions in the miniatures, their style and the variety of Byzantine sources suggest that they were painted in a Georgian monastery in Byzantium. The Petersburg manuscript, where the miniatures are an integral part of the book, seems to support this theory. Following the Greek custom, headpieces in this manuscript precede the Gospels and tables of contents – a rather rare occurrence in manuscripts written in Georgia. Beneath the image of St Matthew there is an inscription in Greek by 19th-century owner.²² It is certainly easier to imagine the manuscript passing into Greek hands in Byzantine or former Byzantine territories.

The width of the Berta Gospels miniatures is identical to the script area in the book. It could hardly be so, if the painter of these postdated images had



5) Tbilisi, National Center of Manuscripts, Q 906, fol. 265 v. St John, 139x111 mm

no immediate access to the book. Furthermore, they are very close in format to the Petersburg Gospels and particularly the Washington Greek manuscript.²³ The number of lines per page in both the Berti and Washington manuscripts is unusually small: 18. Probably the Georgian version imitated the Greek manuscript in this respect too, so they are very likely to have been written not far from one another. Thus the Berti Gospels almost certainly arrived in Georgia containing the miniatures dating from the turn of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Therefore the Beshken Opizari's cover couldn't have been produced at any earlier date.

The high quality of the miniatures links the Washington manuscript with Constantinople,²⁴ where Georgian manuscript writing flourished from the early eleventh century.²⁵ At the end of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries the Georgian Vani Gospels (Tbilisi, A 1335) were written here, as was its copy in Yerevan (Matenadaran, Inv. 161) and probably the Gelati Gospels (Tbilisi, Q 908).²⁶ In these circumstances it is quite probable that another two Georgian illuminated manuscripts appeared in Constantinople.²⁷ Admittedly, the headpieces in the St Petersburg Gospels

painted by a scribe have nothing in common with the art of Constantinople but reveal a connection with the Greco-Georgian manuscript tradition of Antioch in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.¹⁸ The Mtavraidze family, former owners of the Berti Gospels, evidently had long-standing contacts with Antioch: in the late 11th century a priest by the name of John Mtavaraidze copied a manuscript there (now Tbilisi, Q-37).¹⁹ However, Georgian scribes often moved from one location to another, so these ornamental patterns from Antioch may have been brought to Constantinople by a travelling scribe.²⁰

Notes:

* The opportunity to research the Berta Gospels and photograph the cover and miniatures was granted by late Yelena Metreveli, former director of the Institute of Manuscripts at the Georgian SSR Academy of Science, recently reorganised as the National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi. I remember her with gratitude here and almost invariably in any reference to Georgian manuscript art. I was able to access the Georgian Gospels E 45 at the St Petersburg branch of the Institute for Oriental Studies, Russian Federation Academy of Sciences, with the kind permission of the director Irina Popova. The Dumbarton Oaks grant 2004-2005 provided me with the fortunate opportunity of viewing Greek manuscript No. 4 in their collection, which served as key evidence in my research. For their assistance in this and in obtaining a photograph of one of the manuscript miniatures published here I am deeply grateful to my colleagues: Gudrun Bühl, now director of the Dumbarton Oaks Museum; Stephen Zwirn, the museum's assistant curator; and of course the author of the photograph, Gunder Varinlioglu, another recipient of a Dumbarton Oaks grant in the same year as myself.

2 Kondakov N., Bakradze D., *Opis pamiatnikov drevnosti v nekotorykh khramakh i monastirakh Gruzii, sostavlennoi po visochoishemu poveleniu. (Inventory of the monuments of antiquity from the some churches and monasteries of Georgia, drawn by the highest command)* St.. Petersburg, 1890. (in Russian) p. 44-47. No 40. Fig. 32 erroneously combines the front cover of the Berti Gospels with the back cover of the Tskarostavi Gospels (Tbilisi, National Center of Manuscripts, Q907). Tsereteli G., *Polnoe sobranie nadpisei na stenakh i kamniakh i pripisok k rukopisiam Gelatskogo monastiria (The full collection of inscriptions from the walls, stones and conscripts to the manuscripts of Gelati Monastery)* (In Russian). In: *Drevnosti vostochnie. Trudi vostochnoi komisii Imperatorskogo Akheologicheskogo obshestva (Eastern antiquities. Works of the eastern commission of Royal Archaeological Society)* Edited by Nikolski M., Vol 1, part II. Moscow, 1891. p. 263-264. No. 5. (in Russian), Amiranashvili Sh., Opizari B. Tbilisi, 1939. P. 35-37. Chubinashvili G. *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo (Georgian embossing art)* Tbilisi, 1959. P. 617. (in Russian) Chubinashvili G. *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo (Georgian embossing art)* Album. Tbilisi, 1957. Table. 151. (in Russian)

3 Giorgi Merchule. Jitio sv. Grigoria Khandztiiskogo (Hagiography of Grigil Khandzveli) Georgian text, introduction, publishing and translation by Marr N. along with the diary of the journey to Shavshia and Klarjeti. St. Petersburg, 1911. (Published by faculty of eastern languages of Royal University of St.. Petersburg No 5.) P. XV, 86, 145, 158. (in Russian); Chubinashvili G., *Gruzinskoe chekannoe iskusstvo (Georgian embossing art)*. Tbilisi, 1959. P. 38-30. (in Russian). Beridze V. *Arkhitektura Tao-klarjeti (Architecture of Tao-Klarjeti)*. Tbilisi, 1981. P. 159-162. (in Russian)

4 **The cover of the Tskarostavi Gospels (Tbilisi, National Center of Manuscripts, Q907) is the work of Beka Opizari.** Kondakov N., Bakradze D., (see n. 1). P. 43-44. № 39. Tsereteli G., (see n. 1). P. 264-267, No 6. *Takaishvili E. Tbet-skoe chetveroevangelie (The Gospels of Tbeti)*. In: *Materiali po arkheologii Kavkaza (Materials for archaeology of Caucasus)*. Part XII. Moscow, 1909. P. 151-162. (in Russian). This cover, like the Gospel manuscript, is dated by the scribe's colophon, but **there have been diverse interpretations of the inscription: Kondakov and Bakradze – 1185-1186, Tsereteli and subsequently Takaishvili – 1190.**

Amiranashvili (as in n.1, p. 7), R.O. Shmerling (Obrazci dekorativnogo ubranstava gruzinskikh rukopisei (Examples of Decoration of Georgian manuscripts) Tbilisi, 1940. P. 57) and Chubinashvili (as in n. 1, p. 617) state that the Tskarostavi Gospels **date from 1195, without providing any explanation or references for their assumption.** According to David Khoshtaria, to whom I am indebted yet again, these authors follow the reading of K.S. Kekelidze that became generally accepted after his description of manuscripts preserved at Gelati Monastery, including the Tskarostavi Gospels.

5 Amiranashvili Sh. (see n. 1). P. 36. Chubinashvili G. (see n. 1). P. 570, 617.

6 The manuscript has been trimmed to the present measurements of 222x166 mm. Dimensions of the sheets with miniatures: fol. 1 (St. Matthew) – 222x166 mm, fol. 97 (St Mark) – 217x163 mm, fol. 160 (St Luke) – 217x164 mm, fol. 265 (St John) – 217x160 mm.

7 Fol. 160.

8 Strangely enough, this principle evidence about the miniatures has been omitted in Russian version of the John's colophon published by Kondakov and Bakradze (see n. 1). I benefited from a new and thorough translation generously made for me by Marine Kenia, of the G. N. Chubinashvili Research Center in Tbilisi, from the catalogue edited by E. Abuladze, The Institute for Manuscripts, the Description of Georgian Manuscripts in the New (Q) Collection, Tbilisi, 1958, Vol. 2, p. 319-320. I am very much obliged to Ketevan Asotiani of the National Center of Manuscripts for having attracted my attention to the catalogue.

9 Vican G. Ed. *Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections. An Exhibition in Honor of Kurt Weitzmann*. Princeton, 1973. No 42. At the time the manuscript belonged to the H.P. Kraus collection in New York.

10 The Washington image of St Luke has not been published. A colour illustration of the St Luke from the Staronikita Gospels can be found in the following publication: *Khristu P. K. Mavropulu-Tsiumi Khris., Kadas Sot. N., Ka-*

lamartzi-Katsaru Aik. *i thisavri tu agiu ous*. Vol. 4. Athens, 1991. P. 202. Fig. 352.

11 Vican G. Ed. Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections (as in n. 9). N. Kavrus-Hoffman suggests that “the end of the thirteenth and maybe even the beginning of the thirteenth century is a probable date for miniatures”, which seems to me inappropriate. N. Kavrus-Hoffman, “Greek Manuscripts at Dumbarton Oaks: Codicological and Paleographic Description and Analysis,” in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 50 (1996) p. 305–306.

12 *Ktima Georgiu Thitu Z(...)* tufidi // 1832

13 The Berti and Washington Gospels have been trimmed. The original measurements of the Berti manuscript can be deduced from the ancient binding: **239x172mm**. Present dimensions of the Washington example are only slightly less than the original format: **239x165 mm**. The St. Petersburg manuscript measures 224x172 mm.

14 Vican. Ed. Illuminated Greek Manuscripts from American Collections. (As in n. 9.) No 42.

15 Shmerling R. *Khudojestvennoe oformlenie gruzinskoj rukopisnoi knigi IX-X stoletii* (Artistic decoration of Georgian manuscript books of 9th-10th c.). Tbilisi, 1979. P. 143–147. (in Russian). Menabde L. *Dzveli kartuli mtserlobis dzeglebi* (Seats of Ancient Georgian Literature). Tbilisi, 1980. T. II. Pp.183–185, 247–252, 427–428, 439–440. (In Georgian, with English summary).

16 Kondakov N., Bakradze D., (see n. 1). P. 47–50. Takaishvili E. *Tserkov v Vane, v Imerii I io drevnosti* (Church in Vani, in Imerii and its antiquities) In: *Izvestia Kavkazskogo istoriko-arkheologicheskogo instituta v Tiflise* (News of Caucasian historical-archaeological institute in Tbilisi). Leningrad, 1927. V. II. P. 94–108. (in Russian). Idem. “L’Évangile de Vani.” In: *Byzantion. Bruxelles, 1935. V. X. P. 655–663*. Machavariani E.M. Vanis otkhtavis dekoraciuli mortuloba (The Illumination of the Vani Gospels) *Khelnatserta Institutis Moambe* (Proceedings of the Institute of Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of Georgian SSR) Tbilisi, 1960. Part II. P. 135–144. (In Georgian.) Edam. “The Discovered Paraphrase of the So Called Vani Gospels (A-1335).” Proceedings of the Institute of Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of Georgian SSR. Tbilisi, 1961. Part III. P. 141–154. (In Georgian). Bushkhauzev Kh. *Anakhronicheskie tendencii v dekore Echmiadzinskogo Evangelia* (Anachronistic trends in the décor of Echmiadzin Gospels) In: 4th International Symposium of Georgian Art. Tbilisi, 1983 (In Russian). Bushkhauzen Kh. *Liturgicheskie osnovi skhemi ilustracii Echmiadzinskogo Evangelia* (Liturgical bases of the illustration scheme of Echmiadzin Gospels) In: 4th International Symposium of Georgian Art. Tbilisi, 1983 (In Russian). Saminski A. *Masterskaia gruzinskoj I grecheskoj knigi v Konstantinopole XII – nachala XIII veka* (Workshop of Georgian and Greek books in Constantinople in 12th – beginning of 13th c.) In: *Muzei* (Museum) 10. Moscow, 1989. P. 184–216. (in Russian)

17 The Yerevan, Berti and St Petersburg Gospels use the **same system of rulings, Leroy 2, which is found according to the author of this codification in oldest Greek majuscule manuscripts, in minuscule manuscripts of exclusively Southern Italian origin, and also in Latin manuscripts from Italy.** (Leroy J., Quelques systèmes de réglure des manuscrits

greco. In: *Studia Codicologica. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur*, 124. Berlin, 1977. S. 291-312.) Yet system 2 distinguishes one more Georgian manuscript that must have been produced in Constantinople around 1030 – the Synaxarion A 648 in Tbilisi National Center of manuscripts.

18 Saminski A. *Gruzinskie I Grecheskie rukopisi tretei chetverti XI v. iz oblasti Antiokhii* (Georgian and Greek manuscripts of the last quarter of 11th c. from the Atiochia region) In: *Drevnerusskoe iskusstvo* (Ancient Russian art). St. Petersburg, 2004. P. 129–148. (In Russian with English summary). Saminsky A. Georgian and Greek Illuminated Manuscripts from Antioch. In: *Orientalia Lovanensia Anakecta*, 147. East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean, I. Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of Crusader Principality. Leuven –Paris–Dudley, MA, 2006. P. 17–78. The pattern of the headpiece in the Gospel according to St Luke from the St Petersburg manuscript is almost the same as in the Greek Gospels from the Sinai monastery of St Catherine No. 158, painted in the vicinity of Antioch in the mid-11th century; the headpiece from the St Matthew Gospel is close to the Georgian manuscript H 2806 at the National Centre of Manuscripts in Tbilisi which repeated in the early 13th century the characteristics of Antioch manuscripts known since the 11th century, and the headpiece for Mark’s Gospel in manuscript № 76 at the National Library in Athens (Marava-Chatzinikolaou A., Touvexi-Paschou Chr., Catalogue of the Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts of the National Library of Greece. Athens, 1978. Fig. 213). The Athens manuscript also comes from Antioch and dates from the mid-11th century.

19 Djobadze W.Z. Materials for the Study of Georgian Monasteries in the Western Environs of Antioch on the Orontes. / *Editum consilio Universitatis Catholicae Americae et Universitatis Catholicae Lovaniensis*. Vol. 372. Subsidia. Tomus 48. Louvain, 1976. P. 38–41. I have to thank David Khoshtaria for pointing out that the surnames Mtavraidze and Mtavaraidsze are one and the same.

20 The Gospels in the Moscow History Museum, Shchuk. 760, compiled in 1070 at the Georgian Monastery of St Romanus near Constantinople, repeat after their own fashion certain characteristics of Antioch ornamentation. The colophon of this manuscript was kindly translated at my request by Irma Karaulashvili, while the complexities of dating the manuscript were clarified with the help of George Gagoshidze. The manuscript was published by E.N. Dobrynina, who erroneously attributed it to late 11th- or early 12th-century Antioch: Shchuk, 760, *Neizvestaia gruzinskaia illustrativnaia rukopis iz gosudarstvennogo istoricheskogo muzeia* (Unknow Georgian illustrated manuscript from the State History Museum). In: *Khrizograph*. Collection of articles dedicated to the Anniversary of Bikova G. Moscow, 2003. P. 259-307. Now see also D. Kldiashvili, *Gareja-konstantinopoli, Theodore garejelis mier Romanas monastris kartul skriptoriumshi 1070 cels gadacerili otkhtavi* (Gareja – Constantinople. Gospel Copied in 1070 in the Georgian Scriptorium of the Romana Monastery by Theodore Garejeli), in *Georgian Antiquities*, Nos. 7–8, Tbilisi, 2005, p. 143–167 (in Georgian, with brief English summary).

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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARTISTIC DECORATION OF GEORGIAN LITURGICAL SCROLLS, (12TH TO 16TH CENTURIES)

Liturgical scrolls, which contain the text of the Liturgy, are an 11th-century innovation. On an 11th-century parchment scroll, preserved at the National Centre of Manuscripts, the text is written in a single column in *nuskhuri* and has no decoration. This is the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great (H-531). From the 12th century on, the system of rich ornamentation of scrolls developed; it assumed the following form: frontispiece, images of the holy fathers, headpiece, and initial letters. As a result of the analysis of Georgian manuscript scrolls from the 12th to the 16th century, a very interesting picture resulted. Artists mostly follow established traditions. Each manuscript has its unique charm, and the viewer finds diversity in the artistic decoration.

I have selected five manuscripts for consideration. On the basis of my study of these five, I present the variety of development among them. Individual elements of decoration will be analyzed separately, with the frontispiece considered first. As is known, a frontispiece presents a symbolic composition or author; if the manuscript is the Gospel, the Evangelists; if a text of the Liturgy, St. John Chrysostom or St Basil the Great; if a Psalter, King David the Psalmist, etc.

In the 12th-century manuscript (S-4980) a symbolic composition is represented – the *Sveti-tskhoveli*, i.e., the Life-Giving Pillar flanked by two archangels. The 13th-century manuscript (A-922) is the liturgical scroll of St. John Chrysostom; it shows St. John as the author of the Liturgy. He is in the pose of respect and reverence, as are the holy fathers depicted in the altar conch of churches. (Fig. 1).

As is known, O. Demus has identified three types of representation of St. John Chrysostom: the “iconic

type,” the “ascetic type,” and “the humanist type” ((O. Demus, 1960, 113; 118-119). The frontispiece of A-922 shows St. John Chrysostom as the “humanistic” type. As regards the pose, this is also confirmed by the literary source. In the main part of the Liturgy, in the blessing of the holy offering, the deacon calls upon the faithful to prepare with fear and respect for the performance of the holy sacrament: “Let us stand well. Let us stand in awe. Let us be attentive, that we may present the holy offering in peace,” and he immediately enters the sanctuary.

According to St. John Chrysostom, we must stand as a man standing before God – in awe, trembling, with vigilance of soul; as Nicholas Cabasilas explains, “We must stand fast in the faith not to be overpowered by heretical temptations” (Archimandrite Cyprian (Kern), 1999, 185-186)

In this scroll, according to the cited text, the holy father is depicted in the similar way as in the altar conch, in the composition of the “veneration of the sacrifice,” when the holy fathers hasten with reverence to the Amnos (Child Christ) placed on the diskos. This is confirmed by the text accompanying the miniature. The initial letter I (*doni*) consists of two swans with their necks intertwined and begins the text: “Sacrificed is the Lamb”... Page I of the 15th-century manuscript H-510 shows the grandiose Cross of Calvary flanked by the holy fathers. Thus, in the 12th-century manuscript a symbolic composition was represented, on that of the 13th century the author was shown, whereas the 15th-century manuscript is a synthesis; authors are depicted with the Cross i.e., the symbolic composition. This must have its reason. Interest attaches to one circumstance – the artist does not try to use colors to execute the composition. He paints the miniature only in sepia, the artistic effect results mainly from the processing of ornamental motifs – the stem of the Cross, frame, vestments of the holy fathers (notably, this is a painter of a folk background, and not a craftsman from a high-class workshop). He fails to construct figures correctly. In order to convey folds on the vestments, he shows wavy lines schematically, dryly. Although the manner of execution is low-quality to an extent, the impression is

strong nevertheless. The painter weaves the composition with pure spirit, expends all his spiritual energy and creates a certain filigree composition. However, as noted above, the artistic effect is achieved not by means of the color gamut, where the color of the parchment does not play a lesser role, but by the clear calligraphic execution of ornamental motifs, even the incorrectly constructed figures are filled with the charge of spirituality.

The other two manuscripts contain no frontispieces.

The second element of the decoration of scrolls is the images of the holy fathers. As is known, the role of the holy fathers in the ritual of "the bloodless sacrifice" is great. In S-4980 (the 12th-century manuscript) the holy fathers are represented in the iconic type manner. A band-like headpiece is found under them. They resemble to an extent icons placed on the templon. Here we find the images of St. Gregory the Great, St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Nicholas. The colors are faded. *Asomtavruli* inscriptions are discernible. The fathers are dressed in small omophorions.

If, in the manuscript of the 12th century, the representation of the holy fathers is iconic-type, which disposes the viewer to prayer; in the 13th-century manuscript St. John is himself in the pose of reverence and respect and makes us too co-participants of the Liturgy.

The holy fathers represented at the Cross in the 15th-century manuscript are shown in the frame, whereas the Cross, as it were, separates them from one another. The fathers are depicted frontally in full length, with a rolled-up scroll in one hand, and with the palm of the other hand turned to the viewer. On the scrolls of the 12th century and the 15th century, the holy fathers wear omophorions and draped, wavy phelonions, and on those of the 13th-century St. John wears a polystavrion ("many crosses").

The third element of the decoration of scrolls is the headpiece, which is present only in two manuscripts. The 12th-century manuscript has a band-like headpiece. The inner area is filled with a red and azure braid. In H-511 (the 16th century) it is triangular in form. It is also filled with a braid of shoots and is ex-

ecuted so skillfully that it calls to mind a domed roof – it is convex to a certain extent. The impression is produced as if the painter interpreted the scroll as a church, where the Liturgy is celebrated, and crowned it with the dome as well. In general, symbolism is the expressive language of the Middle Ages. It has rich contents. The ornament has deep theological content. In the Middle Ages a painter would not draw even a line without weaving some idea into it.

The fourth element of the decoration of scrolls is their initial letters. *Asomtavruli* letters executed in cinnabar are placed not only on marginal areas, but sometimes they follow down the text like an acrostic, and sometimes are found in the text too. For example, in H-510 the initials written in sepia make the combination of colors very impressive. Only the parchment of the 12th-century (S-4980) manuscript is ivory. Other manuscripts are darker. On the one hand this is due to its age or other technology used. A dark parchment does not require many colors. Therefore, the initial letters are outlined only in two or three colors – cinnabar, passing into light brick-colored, and sepia, sometimes light green is also found. This occurs in manuscripts of a later period; as regards the scroll of the 12th century, in my view, two painters are identifiable in it. On the frontispiece and in the Liturgy of Catechumens on page IV Archangel Michael, the initial letter *v* (*mani*) is created in the painterly manner, which together with the ivory color of the parchment produces an impressive combination of colors. It is colored red, azure and sepia, whereas the angels wearing festive garments and the initials are executed in the graphic manner. Colors are frugal here. Nevertheless, this does not weaken the impression. (Fig. 2).

The initial letters of a complex structure, in my observation, are based on a same motivation in all manuscripts. They are not compact, as, for instance, in manuscripts of other character, e.g. the Alaverdi Four Gospels (A-484), the Vani Four Gospels (A-1335), etc. The free marginal area enables the painter to extend the length of the initial letters. The elegant and elongated letters, outlined in sepia and cinnabar, create the sense of hurrying upwards and make us, as it were, grasp transcendence. Each initial is written cal-



1. A-922, 13th century. St. John Chrysostom

ligraphically and is decorated with geometrical and vegetable motifs.

During the consideration of thematic initial letters I shall try to draw a parallel with the decoration of initial letters of a complex structure, for thematic initial letters occur only in two manuscripts: S-4980 and H-511. As the text of the scroll is mostly prayers and does not contain illustrations and miniatures, the ornamental initial letters carry the entire burden of meaning.

Examination of the initial letters of S-4980 shows that in the ornamental initials the motif is constructed on the variation of two ceramics. At the same time, the stems of the elongated initial letters produce the impression of a branching vine and, by association, the sense of the leafed vine on the façade of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral is created (L. Osepashvili, 2002-2003, 122). The study of these initials and the scenes of the "Communion" shown on page IX has led to the conclu-

sion that even the ornamental motifs are linked with the demonstration of the relation between the Sacrifice of the Calvary and the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In the combination of ornamental motifs we are not dealing with an accidental, purposeless pursuit.

The initial letters of the parts of the Anaphora are decorated in a highly impressive way and represent certain illustrations of the Liturgy.

Of initial letters of a complex structure found in S-4980, I have identified the initial letter of the Anaphora. As is known, this part of the Liturgy consists of the following sections: I. Praefatio – devoted to the Creator; II. Sanctus – glorifies the redemption of sins by the Incarnated God; III. Anamnesis – prayers on the redemption; as is known, the Anaphora is the nucleus of the Divine Liturgy; IV. Epiclesis – the prayers for calling down the Holy Spirit, and V. Intercessio – prayers of intercession. Thus, the Anaphora is a part of the "Great Entrance," which according to the troparion cited by Uspenski, is the "Mystical Supper" of the New Testament – the Eucharist (N.Uspenski, 21 (1980), 22 (1981), 23 (1982), 24 (1983), 26 (1985), #21, 189).

Ornamental motifs decorate the Cherubic Hymn as well as the first initial letter *f* (*ani*) in the secret prayer of the priest. (Fig. 3). If we compare them, a different picture will result. The decoration of the initial letter *h* (*rae*) is close to the well-known branching vine of the western façade of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. Here one finds an analogy in the representation of branches, shoots and stylized trefoil leaves with twigs. The painter of the scroll tries to outline the leaves by means of hatching, whereas on the façade they are deeply carved. Why did the painter resort to the complex and, at the same time, meaningful language of ornament exactly at the beginning of the Anaphora? This is the ornament similar to, for instance, *f* in "No one bound by worldly desires and pleasures is worthy..." or *v* in the "Dismissal," etc. They are based on the artistic effect and even strengthen the impression visually. For example, see H-511, H-521, etc.

The painter of the Svetitskhoveli scroll creates original compositions. Probably, he follows the scrolls copied at the Studios Monastery, Constantinople (Manuscript Greek.1 from the Library of the Russian

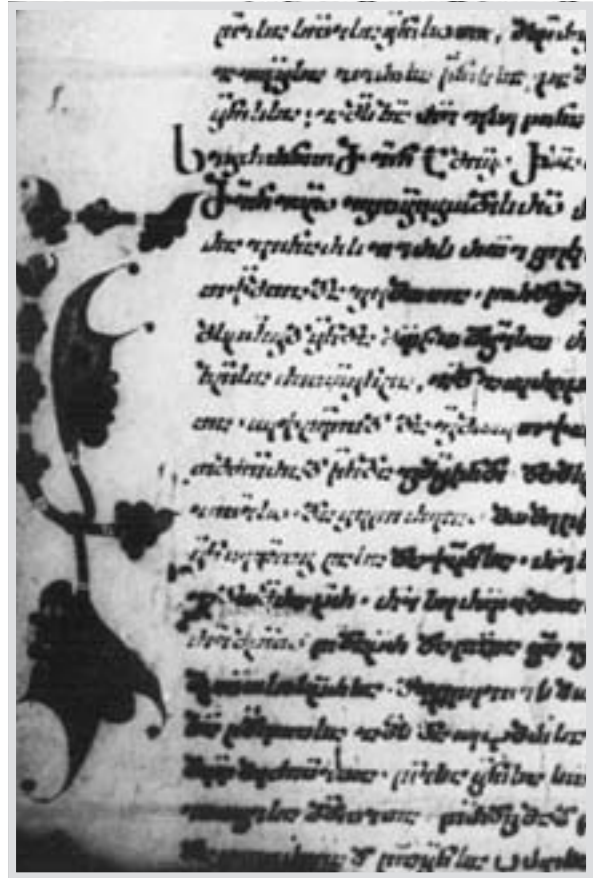


2. S-4980, 12th century. Initial letter v

Academy of Sciences, Scroll №109 from the Jerusalem Patriarchal Library, Scroll greek.672 from St. Petersburg Public Library) and transforms them in keeping with Georgian practice.

The scrolls from the Jerusalem Patriarchal Library and Svetitskhoveli also have the following in common – the last miniature on them is the scene of the “Eucharist.” The frontispiece of the former shows Christ Pantocrator and the “Deesis.” A. Gabar, the specialist on this manuscript, rightly expresses the opinion that the “artistic décor” of the scroll “finds analogies in wall painting and namely, mosaics from Daphne” (A. Gabar, 1982, 474).

In my opinion, the decoration of the Svetitskhoveli western façade is related in certain ways to the ideological-philosophical program of the scroll of St. Basil the Great. Each theme on the church façade is dictated by the text of the Anaphora. The relation of monumental art – sculpture and miniature – is obvious.



3. S-4980, 12th century. Initial letter f

It is characteristic of sacred objects from Svetitskhoveli to be included in various branches of art. For example, the *Ienashi Gospels*, preserved at present in Svaneti (E. Taqaishvili, 1991, 76), was created for Svetitskhoveli. The chased binding shows Svetitskhoveli, i.e., *dzeli tskhoveli* (“the Life-Giving Pillar”). It is erected on a low pedestal and Catholicos Epiphane is standing in front of it. The pillar is decorated with the scenes from the *Conversion of Kartli*. The thematic initial letters are mostly *j (oni)*, i.e., these are prayers to the Lord. (Fig. 4).

The decoration of the initial letters is interesting. It seems to correspond to Byzantine O. In Byzantine manuscripts in similar cases the image of the Lord is placed inside the letter, and it represents a medallion. The Georgian painter gives it an oval shape. It is interesting to trace the decoration of the initial letter *j*. In S-4980 (the 12th century) it is oval. The inner area is empty and an image of the Lord is found above. A sim-



4. S-4980, 12th century. Initial letter j

ilar ornamental letter occurs three times. In one place one finds Emmanuel; in the second, Christ the Savior; and in the third, a full-length Christ. An oval occurs in H-521 too. The inner area is filled with ornament, on the lower as well as the upper sides, in H-511 shoots are added on the right and the left sides and the ornamental initial letter is formed. An oval medallion results in this case. The initial v in H-511 and H-521 are created in the same way. One gets an impression that these two manuscripts derive from a single artistic school. This is indicated by the identical decoration of the initial letters, the color gamut, and the artistic skill, etc.

As regards the representation of Christ the Savior, full-length images occur in S-4980 and H-511. A full-length image of Christ is shown below, with an unfolded scroll in His hand. *I am the light of the world* is written in *asomtavruli* on the scroll.

Interestingly, the decoration of this manuscript begins with the initial letter q (*ghani*), symbolizing the gate of heaven.

Both Byzantine and west-European miniature painting are characterized by the inclusion of the Christological scenes in initial letters. They serve as illustrations. For example, in the Dionisios lectionary cod. 587 (S. Pelekanidis, Ch. Tsiomi, P.C.Christoi, S.N. Kades, 1973, Tab. 247), from the Studios Monastery,

numerous initial letters are used.

The Georgian painter never uses the initial letter as a frame for a scene or a major personage. One might say that for him an initial letter is a specimen of calligraphic art. The décor in it is always executed either by pen or by a multicolored ornamental motif of a complex structure or zoomorphic representations. It is to some extent in filigree.

As the analysis of the manuscripts shows, mostly vegetable and geometrical ornaments developed, zoomorphic initial letters also occur. For example, in A-922 the Liturgy begins with: "Sacrificed is the Lamb"... The initial letter l is formed by two swans with intertwined necks. In H-521 initial letter i (*hoe*) has the form of a coiled snake.

Interestingly, the scrolls actually contain no miniatures, their function is performed by the initial letters. In 4980, on page IX, in the passage of the Liturgy of the Faithful dealing with the Communion, "Christ with the Apostles" and the "Communion of the Apostles" with communion bread and wine are shown. Unfortunately, two scenes are cut out and only one scene – the "Communion" with wine has survived (L. Osepaishvili, 2002, 52-58).

These themes are created in the painterly manner. Thick, opaque blue and dark violet colors are used for the garments of Christ. As theologians note, thick color indicates firmness, equilibrium, stability and sometimes, the energetic center (Archimandrite Rafail (Karelin), 1998, 49). Thus, thick, opaque blue and dark violet in the scene of the "Communion of the Apostles" acquires a meaningful content. The scene placed in the middle of the manuscript unites the composition of the entire scroll. It is the nucleus of the Liturgy, which is also emphasized by artistic performance.

According to the Byzantine tradition, ornamental knots embody the brilliance of Paradise, the existence of God and the saints in Paradise. According to A. Uvarov, for every Christian vine and its shoots are symbolically linked with the sacrament of the "Eucharist" (A. Uvarov, 1908). The garments of Christ are unusual in H-511. He is wearing a chiton-himation and a band descends from it, resembling an epitachelion. In S-4980 His right blessing hand is raised above,

here He is holding it at the chest, again giving a blessing. Christ has a cruciform nimbus around his head.

Attention attaches to the semantics of the scroll held in the hand by Christ, the saints, and the holy fathers. The painter compares the scroll to a church where the Liturgy is celebrated. The Liturgy of the Faithful is identified with the altar conch in which enthroned Christ the Savior is depicted, on His knee an opened book is shown, in which the same text is written. We compared it to the Liturgy of the Faithful because Christ is represented on the scroll in this part.

Christ's figure is not constructed correctly on the scroll either. The painter has fewer professional skills. Although a comparatively low quality of painting is found here, the initial letters are notable for a high level of execution. Here a scene-painter is working, who has chosen the best specimens of initial letters. A high level of performance is observable, but unfortunately he cannot manage to construct figures. The artistic decoration of the letter q is interesting – usually in it two parallel lines are connected in a semicircle. However, painters offer certain variations. In R. Siradze's view, "It is a widespread form in Georgian architecture... Two parallel lines with an arc-shaped connection above is a sign of the door of God. Therefore it is not accidental that the gates and windows of churches have such a form... The outline of the main open interior and the plan of the altar apse also correspond to it"(R. Siradze, 1987). In S-4980 q begins the prayer "Holy God", whereas in H-521 it occurs in the prayer to the Lord. The evolution of this letter assumes the following form: in the 12th-century manuscript two parallel lines are connected in a straight way, in that of the 16th-century manuscript these lines are not connected, they are directed to one another, but then move upwards and enrich the ornamental motifs.

Thus, the analysis of Georgian manuscript liturgical scrolls has shown that in the specific character of their decoration, a steady tradition of adornment was established from the 12th century. Of course, variations are found later, but one could say that Georgian art is characterized by adherence to long established traditions. Still, the development of motifs and themes is obvious.

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Posters

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GEORGIAN MONASTERY IN GIALIA (CYPRUS)

The ruins of the Georgian monastery of the Virgin in Gialia (or Zhalia), mentioned in Georgian written sources of the 11th to 13th centuries are situated in the western part of the island of Cyprus. They are on the slope of a hill covered with pine trees, at several miles from the city of Polis, at 280 m (920 ft) above sea level. The monastery was identified by the late prominent Georgian architectural historian Vakhtang Djobadze, living in America, who properly estimated the architectural type of the main church of Gialia – a triconch, and the date of its building – the 10th century in his publication in 1984 (V.Djobadze, 1984, pp.196-209).

In 2006-2008, under an agreement with the Antiquities Department of Communications Ministry of the Republic of Cyprus, the Georgian Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport and the Georgian National Museum arranged for four expeditions of specialists to visit Cyprus for archaeological investigations of Gialia Monastery. I. Gagoshidze led the first three archaeological expeditions; D. Mindorashvili (an architect) and T. Gabunia led the fourth. As a result of the four field campaigns the area of the monastery

was cleaned (the excavated area = 45 x 35 m / 150 x 115 ft), the plan of the main and the oldest of the monastery's buildings – a triconch-type domed church – was completely revealed (size: 13.5 x 9.5 m / 44.2 x 31.1 ft); it has an elongated altar apse at the east end and relatively smaller north and south apses. The church's short western arm has a big entrance gate attached to its west front (size: 6.57 x 6.5 m / 21.5 x 21.3 ft), which opens to a five-step parade stairs at the west. A one-nave chapel (size: 7.5 m x 4.5 m / 24.6 x 14.7) is annexed to the north of the church. Ancient Georgian capital-letter inscriptions preserved on its walls and also the mural representation of the knight St. George on the wall of the bell-tower gate attached to the west of the same chapel enabled us to estimate that the chapel was consecrated to St. George. This chapel, which originally had been a hall-type room, was later altered to a domed construction.

The main church of the Virgin in Gialia, built in keeping with Cyprian construction techniques, is the only construction of a triconch plan in all Cyprus; it was undoubtedly built according to this plan at the request of the Georgian monks, although some features of local architecture must also be mentioned – the significantly increased altar apse at the east and circular outline of the three apses of the triconch. The solution of the volume of the domed church of Saint George, attached to the main domed church of Gialia, is also a characteristic feature of Cyprian architecture.

The will-inscription of one of the Georgian manuscripts on Mount Sinai (Sin.GeoN19), dated to 980, which mentions bringing manuscript books, newly translated into Georgian, from Cyprus to Mount Sinai (Z. Aleksidze, 2005, p.265), dates the building of Gialia Monastery (where a productive scriptorium functioned) indirectly to earlier than 980. This excludes the possibility of the Gialia church being built by monks from the Georgian monasteries on Mt Athos or at Antioch. Presumably, Gialia Monastery was founded on the initiative of David III Kuropalates (†1001) in the 960s-970, and choosing the triconch plan for the main church must also have been conditioned by the popularity of this kind of building in Tao-Klarjeti, as exemplified by the church complexes of Ortuli, Bakhchalo Qishla, Dort Kilisa, Isi, Zaki, and Oshki (I. Giviashvili, 2004, p. 30).

The study of the Church of the Virgin at Gialia has made it possible to define the chronology of several building layers of the monastery; it was estimated that extensive building activity was carried out here on the initiative of Queen Tamar. In particular, a big gate was annexed to the west of the church and the water pipe coming in from far away and filling the huge grout reservoir (10 x 3 m/32.8 x 9.8 ft) at the south of the monastery is apparently from the same period. The walls of the church were decorated with sophisticated mural painting of the 12th century (the Comnenian period).

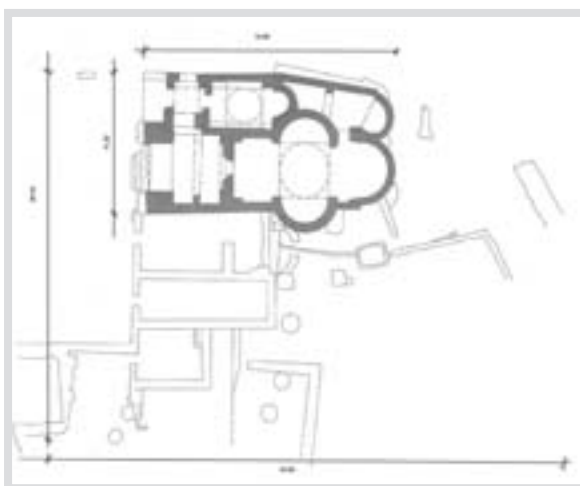
In the monastery's environs, the Church of St. Nikoloz and a hermit's cell have survived. They require study during further research.

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1. Ruins of the Georgian monastery at Ghalia (Cyprus). View from above.



2. Georgian monastery at Ghalia (Cyprus). Plan.



3. Georgian monastery at Ghalia (Cyprus). Fragment of mural painting found during archaeological excavations. Bust of a saint martyr (12th c).

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RECONSTRUCTION OF THE 11TH-CENTURY EXTERIOR DECORATION SYSTEM OF SVETITSKHOVELI CATHEDRAL IN MTSKHETA

Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta has been renovated many times since its foundation. It was designed and constructed in the 1020s-1030s by the architect Arsukisdze, during the Catholicosate of Melkisedek. It has been destroyed more than once by the natural disasters and by enemy invasions. However, Svetitskhoveli, where the greatest relic – the Robe of Christ – is buried has always been the recipient of care from Georgia's kings and Catholicos-Patriarchs. Architects of each period, according to their skills and resources, tried to preserve the 11th-century system of exterior decoration, which comprised blind arcade on all the façades. Our aim in this paper is to describe the possible reconstruction of the façades of the 11th-century church.

Firstly, the 11th-century stonework should be singled out; it differs distinctly from later one and is linked with such undisputable 11th-century elements as the east façade's large "fan", with the inscription of Catholicos Melkisedek, and the main windows of the north and south façades. This stonework is distinguished by even courses and a polychromatic effect, created by the chessboard-like alternation of light green stone (Tedzami tuff) and light and relatively darker brownish-rose sandstones; the stonework of the later date is monochromatic and less regular.

The east façade is erected on a three-stepped, vigorous socle, of which only the lowest step is original.

The central arch fan with the donor inscription is obviously 11th century. The same masonry continues down including the ornament frieze. There are also short sections of the same masonry on both sides of the central arch – including the niches. Nothing is left from the 11th century in the part above the arch.

Less 11th-century stonework is left on the south façade. Similar to the east façade, here sections of

this chronological layer are preserved in the area of the large central arch, comprising a group of three windows.

The 11th-century layer on the north façade is mainly visible inside the central arch, though only in its upper part. The middle arch is set up of green Tedzami tuff. The base of the main window and its supporting orants are outside the 11th-century century layer; it is likely they were inserted here during a later restoration. Some 11th-century stonework is also found around the windows.

On the west façade, no even courses are seen, and the area inside the arch is entirely filled with dark grey stone, which is quite unusual for the 11th-century. Thus, we believe that the facing of this façade (whose inner wall is 11th century, with fragments of contemporary painting) has been totally rebuilt, using undamaged fragments 11th-century stonework, and we can assume that the restorers had old drawings or at least would have gained some idea of the façade's composition from local oral tradition. The vine motive – "Trees of Life" on both sides of the façade – definitely belongs to the 11th century, although the authenticity of their current location is very doubtful; there are traces of later cut-off lines on the ornamented plaques, testifying to the efforts to fit the carvings to this location.

Thus, very little is left of the façades of the original Svetitskhoveli constructed by Arsukisdze.

According to the surviving 11th-century elements and taking into account later restorations, we offer – as far as possible – a propose reconstruction of the façades.

The arches of the east façade are almost unchanged. On the northern façade only the side arches are to be reconstructed – shafts cut off in the Late Middle Ages should be prolonged down to the socle.

The general picture of the south facade is more complicated. In the center, there is a large arch, to its left, there is a wide arch, separated from the central one by a niche. On the east side of the façade, the central arch is followed by one narrow arch and three lower arches of equal height. According to our reconstruction, only the arcade of this east section of the façade has been changed – the central arch is followed by two narrow arches of equal height and by two lower arches of equal height. As for the west side

of this façade, due to the fact that there are no traces of the original masonry here, we can only assume that the arches were connected with the larger arch in the east and also to one another.

On the west façade, according to our supposition, the central arch must still be in its original position; however, another pair of small arches should have been constructed in the lateral wings, creating a balanced composition of five arches.

We also offer a possible reconstruction of the original distribution of architectural sculpture on the façades, as well as new dating for some of the reliefs. We think that Christ in Majesty now represented in the west façade's gable initially occupied the east façade's gable. This is confirmed by the fact that, at present, the wings of the Angels and part of Christ's halo is cut off. There is enough room for the placement of this entire composition in the gable of the east façade.

According to our reconstruction, the eagle represented on the east façade, between the central arch and large window, was initially placed on the south façade.

As for the lion figure, it seems likely that in the 11th century it was placed not in the gable but in the lateral, basilica-like section of any one of the façades (supposedly, the north).

According to parallel churches, such as the 10th-century Nikozi Cathedral and 13th-century Gandzasar Cathedral in Armenia, we think that two "little orants," now placed on the north façade, initially formed part of the dome's sculptural decoration.

As for the angels placed on both sides of the window in the east façade, based on their style, they have been dated to the 11th century. Comparing these angels with those of Christ in Majesty, undoubtedly ascribable to the 11th century, it becomes obvious that the former were made in the Late Middle Ages, imitating the reliefs of the west façade.

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Reconstruction of Eastern façade



Reconstruction of Southern façade



Reconstruction of Northern façade

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SAPARA: THE CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE INNER SPACE AS A MEANS OF DETERMINING CONSTRUCTION DATES

Sapara Monastery is located in the Akhaltsikhe region in Southern Georgia. The main building of the complex is the domed St. Saba's church (13th to 14th centuries), but the oldest church still standing is the

10th-century Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.¹ However, we should underline that several details of this church, such as the relief composition "The Raising of the Cross" and the embellishments of the windows on the south façade, reflect the 7th century (N. Aladashvili, 1977, 41).

In Georgian "Sapara" means "a hidden place or shelter," and as this monastery is surrounded by rocks and forest, the literature mostly mentions it by the name Sapara, which reflects its geographical location. But we think that the etymology of this name goes deeper and is associated with the name of the Holy Virgin. One of the most remarkable links for historians is the history of the icon known as "Theotokos the Protectress." The subject of this icon is based on an event in the life of a 10th-century Byzantine saint, Andrew the Fool-for-Christ, who witnessed the appearance of the Theotokos (the Mother of Christ) in a church at Constantinople, where a small part of her garment was kept. He had a vision of the Theotokos placing her veil over Constantinople during an attack by the Turks. So the message of this icon is the glorification of the Theotokos as our protector and interceder. These details give us reasons to think that the name of this monastery, which has been known from 10th century, is more closely linked with "Theotokos the Protectress."

Sapara Monastery has played great role in Georgian history. For centuries many important original writings, translations and calligraphically rewritten works of Christian literature were undertaken here. It continues its mission today, and now houses a theological seminary.

As we have already mentioned, the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is the monastery's oldest surviving building. Its plan is an elongated square, which is divided by two pairs of two stepped pilasters. In the western section of the building a gallery serves as a second floor. Its character, the harmonious elements, which create a unified space, reflect the design tendencies of the 10th century. This dating is also confirmed both by the interior and exterior decorations. All the architectural elements are of high quality, and the design indicates an architect who could take ex-

amples from older churches. One such church is clearly the "Beris Sakdari" (Eredvi, Tskhinvali), which dates to the 920s-930s (R. Mepisashvili, 1971, 98). In comparing these two churches we see development in the technique of arranging the inner space. We can therefore conclude that the earliest date for the construction of the Church of the Assumption is after the 930s.

According to our study, all of the ornamentation of the interior, which is found on the capitals of the pilasters, represents 10th-century practices, when the style of ornamentation throughout Georgia was graphical. The ornamentation does not involve difficult shapes, but is very simple and mostly based on geometrical figures. This fact reflects the transition from the pre-plastic to the plastic period, before the famous churches of Kumurdo, Oshki, Khakhuli and similar ones were built. This is why, in by our opinion, the Church of the Assumption dates to the 940s-950s – later than Beris Sakdari but before Kumurdo (964).

In conclusion, we want to emphasize that the architect of the Church of the Assumption is a remarkable master of his craft: he created an absolutely harmonious, monumental and representative church which clearly shows the evolution of Georgian architecture.

Notes:

1 Other churches of this complex were built from XIII-XIV centuries up to XVI.

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Sapara Monastery, view from south-west.



Church of the assumption of Virgin, interior, view from East.



Church of the assumption of Virgin, interior, decoration of the pilaster (second on south wall).

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FAÇADE SCULPTURE OF NADARBAZEVI “TRIPLE-CHURCH BASILICA” (RECONSTRUCTION OF THE PROGRAM)

The ruins of the 10th-century triple-church basilica of Nadarbazevi are situated in the Java region, Shida Kartli, near the village of Nadarbazevi on the River Gromula. The church is in ruins and the only preserved parts are the window headpieces with images of two-headed dragon and angels, a stone tile decorated with a cross in a circle and birds, and tympanum stones with compositions of a flourished cross and “Glory of the Virgin,” a cornice fragment decorated with the image of a lion, and parts of two window headpieces (R. Mepisashvili, 1972).

Today, of these relics, only the window headpieces with the images of angels and the stone tile decorated with cross in a circle and birds still exist.

The 10th century is one of the prominent periods of Georgian relief art; it is the period when stone carvings adorning façades were widespread. The Nadarbazevi church reliefs carry the most outstanding compositions both in style and in iconography. Their particular richness gives clues as to the entire system of decoration.

By reference to nearest parallels, we have tried to reconstruct the system of façade decoration at Nadarbazevi. The reconstruction of the initial architectural view of the building has great importance in the reconstruction of the church’s façade-decoration system. Taking into account similar churches, such as St. George’s Church at Eredvi (906) (R. Mepisashvili, 1955) and “Beris Sakdari” (mid-10th century), (R. Mepisashvili, 1971) Nadarbazevi might have had similar external proportions but with relatively higher and wider side wings and a central nave of lesser height and smaller volume. Overall the church was of lofty proportions.

The south façade had three-arched aperture giv-

ing it an imposing appearance. The main entrance and windows were moved to the west. The church’s eastern façade must have been constructed as follows: a central, higher section and lower side wings, with the windows in the chancel and side sections. On the western façade, in the center, was the church door, with a symmetrically placed window above it. The northern façade must have been unadorned.

Overall, the church was apparently richly decorated. The entrances, tympanum and windows must have been decorated with figurative and ornamental tiles. The iconographic program presents the main themes of Christianity. The composition – “Glory of Virgin” – is widespread both in monumental sculpture (Edzani, 6th century, Kvemo Bolnisi, 6th century, and others), (N. Aladashvili, 1977) and on stone crosses (K. Machabeli, 1998) The composition simultaneously emphasizes the ideas of the embodiment of the Savior, the salvation of mankind through Christ’s crucifixion, and the Second Coming. The latter is unveiled by means of depicting the Virgin with flying angels, which follows the iconography of the Ascension and the “Glory of God,” implying the idea of the Second Coming. (N. Aladashvili, 1988, 22) The scenes of “Glory” by their content reflect the triumph of Christianity. Consequently, their importance was always highlighted by their solemn character and special location.

The themes of salvation and the Second Coming were also expressed by the iconography of a flourished cross on the tympanum – a right-angled cross with extended arms terminating in balls; this cross is associated with the votive cross placed on Calvary and implies the images of both Paradise and Calvary crosses. (D. Aynalov, 1908, 7-11) Such crosses are widespread both in Georgian and in Byzantine art, particularly in stone carvings, repoussé work (processional crosses) and manuscripts (e.g., the 11th-century Mestia Gospels). The “Tree of Life” is itself a salvation tree, as is the “Life-giving Pillar,” that gives everlasting life. Similarly, being the means of the salvation of mankind through Christ’s crucifixion and the return to a lost Paradise, the Cross of Calvary has the same implication.

The composition of the cross and birds in the circle directly reflects the image of Paradise. The cross inscribed in the circle also can be compared to the

“Ascension of Christ” that expresses the Triumph of Christianity.

The Garden of Eden is symbolically shown through the images of the birds (pigeons) placed in the cross (The “Life-giving Pillar”). The birds bear the meaning of faithful souls, peace and love. These scenes as well as separate images unveil Christianity’s main idea, which is salvation through suffering and sacrifice in this life, thus obtaining the Everlasting Kingdom. (P. Uvarova, 1908, 204)

The angels depicted on the frame of the Nadarvazevi window must be the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. As the protectors of Christ’s Church, the iconography depicts them specifically as guardians.

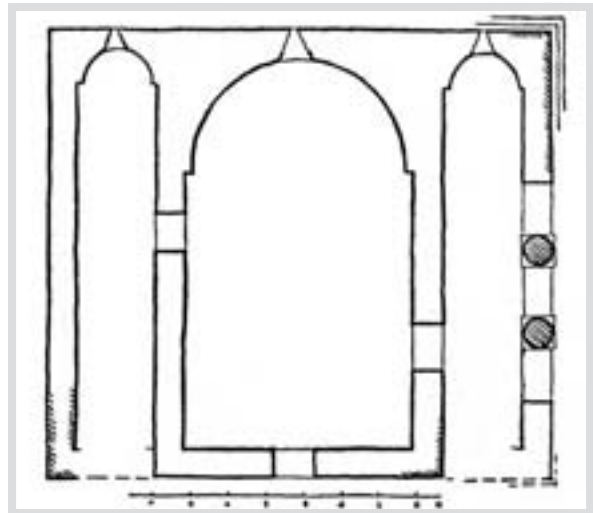
The figure of a lion is carved on a fragment of the cornice. Images of lions are widespread on the façades of churches (Katskhi, 10th century; Kasagina, beginning of the 10th century; Savane, 11th century), on capitals (Bolnisi Sioni, 5th century), and on window headpieces or cornices (Vale, 10th century). The lion used to be granted the character of a noble soul, a guardian, as well as a dangerous beast, a devil. (Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie, 1998, 262.). We consider that the lion’s placement on the highest part of the church indicates it is the powerful guardian of the holy place.

The image of two-headed dragon, depicted on the window headpiece in Nadarbazevi is quite rare in the Early Middle Ages. This image exists on one of the craved stones from Kvaisa-Jvari (where the history of Jonah is depicted). Despite the association of snakes and dragons with wicked force, they also symbolize generosity and witness; it is also thought of as a defender of a place. (A. L. Jakobson, 1950, 79)

The main emphasis of the iconographic program of the Nadarbazevi façade decoration is the idea of salvation and obtaining the Everlasting Kingdom.

In terms of stylistic features the Nadarbazevi reliefs are among the interesting examples of 10th-century Georgian stone carved monuments. Judging by the resemblance in style revealed in flat, frontal figures with enlarged heads and hands and tiny feet, the closest parallel to Nadarbazevi carvings are the reliefs of Kvaisa-Jvari.

Our attempt of reconstruction of Nadarbazevi façade decoration program is based on our observa-



Nadarvazevi, 10th century, Plan



Nadarvazevi, 10th century, window headpiece with angels



Nadarvazevi, 10th century, stone tile decorated with a cross in a circle and birds

tion and on the analyses of existing parallels. In this regard, the analyses of the images' iconographic features, as well as the biblical-exegetical meaning of the four quarters of the world and the implication of ecclesiastic architecture, have a special importance.

Being in supplication before God on behalf of humanity and thus being "the bridge between God and Man," the image of Virgin in the scene of the "Glory of Virgin" must have been depicted above the church's main entrance on the south façade. Thus the icon of the Virgin welcomed the believers, opened the "Gate of the Lord," and led them to the Lord's House.

In Christian belief the south is considered to be the side of divine good and blessing. In addition to this, the southern side has an eschatological meaning. (Giorgi Alibegashvili, 1993, 21)

Apparently, the second tympanum with the image of the flourished cross was above the church's western entrance. Being the opposite of the east, the west in Christian belief was associated with sin. Hence the cross on the top of the western door must have been a herald of Christ's Crucifixion, and thus it opened the way to the east – to Paradise and salvation.

Iconographic analysis of the cross in a circle with birds unveils the symbolic meaning of the composition, which is associated with the image of Paradise. Paradise in turn is related to the eastern side, the side of the Ascension, from where we expect the "Second Coming" of Christ. (Giorgi Alibegashvili, 1993, 11-12) Consequently, this composition was apparently adorning the upper part of the eastern façade, emphasizing the location of the church's chancel.

The images of Archangels, which are meant to be the guardians of Paradise, should have been displayed on the southern façade. The latter should also bear the image of a dragon, which has apotropaic meaning.

Owing to the lack of confirming evidence, the placement of the lion image on the cornice tile seems impossible. The northern façade of the church must have been unadorned. According to the Christian belief the northern side, thought as the "dark side," was apocalyptic. (Giorgi Alibegashvili, 1993, 18)

According to R. Mepisashvili the stone with the basket-like wickerwork is a fragment of church's chancel window. Parallels found at the Beris Sakdari of Eredvi and Dodoti's Tskhrakara support this assumption.

The second window headpiece adorned with figure-of-eight ornamentation was on the western façade, decorating the window above the tympanum with a cross.

In conclusion, the Nadarbazevi church reliefs represent an interesting example of a façade decoration program which shows the attempt to unify the compositions under a coalesced theological idea in correspondence with the general principles that already existed in Christian architecture and façade decoration.

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THE MITRE OF ARCHBISHOP MITROPHAN

Among the mitres which are preserved in the Embroidery Department of the National Art Museum of Georgia by its original shape and content is distinguished a mitre, which we will discuss in this article .

A mitre is a crown for a bishop or an archbishop, thus it was determined by David Chubinashvili. (D. Chubinashvili, 1984, 751). From the 11th century on, the mitre has been considered as the crown of thorns placed on Christ's head, which thereby designates Christ as "King of Kings." (N. Chikhladze, 2000, 86)

The Mitrophan's mitre which is preserved in the collection of the embroidery department, by its shape reminds us of the cap of the Old Testament prophet. The mitre itself is a four-sided hat, with gold-embroidered material stuck onto metal plates. The girdle consists of plates arranged in the form of a trapeze. The most important part of the bishop's mitre is the crown, with its decorated upper sides. The creator of the mitre knew very well the girdle's symbolic importance, and that is why he depicted the Sacraments on it. The girdle consists of six parts, and on each is embroidered a composition with many figures. The compositions on the mitre are chosen with the purpose of underlining specific theological subjects, which are represented separately on the two parts; below on plates are represented scenes from Christ's earthly life, above-his heavenly existence. Through its semantic and theological meanings the Holy Mass has a special importance and that is why it takes the same amount of space as three other compositions: The Washing of the Feet, The Last Supper, and The Virgin with Emmanuel.

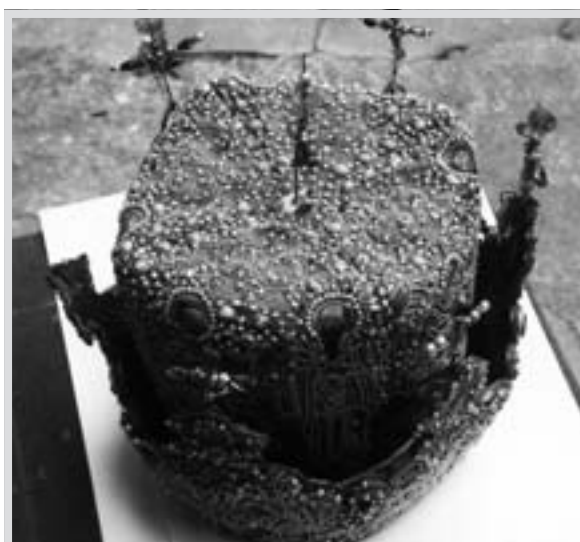
The composition illustrating the breaking of bread in the Holy Mass is being examined by a frontal figure of St., George the Great Martyr; and this is unusual for this subject. We could find no parallel examples, and that is why we believe this composition was worked especially for this mitre. On the mitre next to the Holy Mass are compositions of the Last Supper and the Washing of the Feet. These compositions each take up one plate. The Washing of the Feet is a many-



The Savior



Virgin with the child Christ



"Sky" of the mitre

figured composition spreading over a vaulted architectural background.

The Washing of the Feet before the Last Supper is chosen not only to underline service. We have never met The Washing of the Feet on any other garment, and we think that the craftswoman is emphasizing here the profound humility which a bishop must have.

On the sixth plate, opposite the Holy Mass is represented the Holy Virgin with Emmanuel, wearing gold and blue apparel. On her shoulders and forehead are marked stars with small turquoises which underline the glory of the Virgin. The action then moves above the crown. Here we see a scene represented on each side of the mitre, a seated evangelist and a standing saint in front of him.

1. Matthew and the St Paul the Apostle
2. Mark and St Gregory the Theologian
3. Luke and St Basil the Great
4. John and St Prohor standing by John the Baptist. (I. Chichinadze, 2004, 5)

Such a depicting of evangelists one can never meet in Georgian embroidery. we see such scenes only in miniatures and wall paintings. In Byzantine and Georgian art, the image of the seated Evangelist dominates from the 11th century both in miniatures and in wall paintings. Shalva Amiranashvili expresses the opinion that this iconographical type of writing Evangelist belongs to the Alexandrian tradition. (Sh. Amiranashvili, 1966, 27)

As we have noted already, by each evangelist stands a saint: Matthew with St.. Paul the Apostle; Luke with St.. Basil the Great, Mark with St.. Gregory the Theologian, John and St. Prohor standing by John the Baptist. On the mitre's four separate sides are depicted saints John the Baptist; Paul, the leading disciple; Basil the Great; and Gregory the Theologian, all four of whom were preachers on whose words stands the earthly Church (E. Khintibidze, 1962, 25). So, the quadrangular shape is the face of the earthly Church. After the earthly pictures, attention moves towards the "heavenly zone" – where we find the figures who God established as heavenly guardians:

Above the Holy Virgin is God the Father. Above Christ is the dove representing the Holy Ghost. On other festoons are cherubs. The mitre is crowned with the "sky," which represents heaven, and is confirmed

by seven crosses made of precious stones (turquoises, rubies and half-moon-shaped green glass). The crown of the mitre is of gold brocade covered with pearls and adorned with precious gems. Small crosses consisting of light-blue turquoises and red rubies fill the free spaces among the figures and decoratively unite all into a single ensemble. The haloes of Christ, the Virgin, the Evangelists and the saints are bordered with medieval-sized pearls. These seed pearls are found everywhere: on furniture, apparel, and Georgian and Greek inscriptions. The pearls are used for filling the background. In Christian symbolism the pearl is a symbol of heavenly thought and constancy. In the New Testament the pearl is first of all the symbol of Paradise.

The mitre has seven crosses, six of which are attached to festoons, and the seventh is in the middle of the "sky," The seven crosses on the mitre mean the seven sacraments, which a bishop is able to grant.

According to the inscription inside the crown, engraved in the old Georgian Nuskhuri script, the mitre belonged to Bishop Mitrophan (E. Takaishvili, 1914, 227). "O, God remember your slave Bishop Mitrophan to whom this crown and my vestments belong and who adorned them." From the inscription we learn that the mitre was made personally for Mitrophan, together with some other articles of apparel. Mitrophan's mitre is stylistically and iconographically a unique example of 17th- century embroidery, with individually chosen liturgical scenes, carried out by artists working in a most masterly fashion.

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THE WALL PAINTINGS OF MKHERI CHURCH, SVANETI

Among examples of Georgian wall paintings from the feudal age, the most important are those executed in the Palaeologan style. Nonetheless, some of these paintings remain unknown to most scholars. Among monuments possessing Palaeologan-style paintings is Mkheri church in Upper Svaneti, located 1.9 miles (3 km) from Mestia, in the village of Lashtkheri, in the Lenjeri area. In particular, the small chapel of the Archangel Gabriel attracts attention because its frescoes were executed on a high artistic level and have survived in their original form.

The frescoes are especially fascinating because of the donor portraits depicted on the western part of the northern and southern walls. The portraits are accompanied by inscriptions, which bear no date. Michael Iveldiani, his son and their spouses (pics 1,2) are represented. The identification of the donors is of great importance in determining the date of the frescoes. The Iveldianis are mentioned in Svanetian written sources, although opinion about the date differs (14th century, late 14th to early 15th century, or the 15th century) (P. Ingorokva, 1941, Nos. 24, 41, 44, 88, 95, 101, and 105; M. Berdznishvili, 1968, 108-111).

The donors of the Lekhtagi church wall paintings are from the Japaridze family. Their names are Pirnateli, Ivane, Dodili, and Aslan. They too are mentioned in Svanetian historical certificates. The dating of these documents to the 15th-century is based on the preliminary dating of the wall paintings, and in order to specify the date of documents we have studied the Lekhtagi wall paintings. Our research has established that the upper chronological limit for their execution is the first half of the 14th century (E. Kavelashvili, 1980, 175-191).

The date of the documents is further confirmed by the inscription on the copper lid of a coffin found by chance in 1918 in the courtyard of St. Giorgi's Church



Mkheri, North wall: Michael Iveldiani and his wife.



Mkheri, South wall: Michael Iveldiani's son and his wife Nateli.

in Seti. This inscription narrates that the four sons of the priest Fillip Setieli had placed him in the coffin. Fillip's birth and death dates (1281-1350) are represented here (E. Kavlelashvili, 1996. 72-86).

The Setielis, together with the Iveldianis, are mentioned in Svanetian historical certificates. Among written sources maintained until the present in which the families are mentioned, the only exactly dated source is the coffin-lid inscription. Thus, it holds an essential place in dating other documents. The latter is possible **only through finding the name of Fillip Setieli**, who had four sons named in these documents. A study of the Svanetian records has shown that seven Setielis were mentioned, all representatives of one house. Its head, Fillip Setieli, was the father of Ivane, Michael, Arjevan and Jacob and grandfather of Demetre and Giorgi. Thus, according to these historical certificates, the existence of Fillip Setieli, father of four sons as named in the inscription on the coffin lid, is proved to be true. Such identification enables us to define precisely the period of Setielis' activity and that of the Iveldianis, who are mentioned together with them. In view of date specified on the Setieli coffin lid (1350), documents that mention the Setielis can be dated to the period of the 1330s to the 1380s (E. Kavlelashvili, 2004, 54-67).

Thorough study of the historical documents of Svaneti has shown that the Iveldianis were in service with Giorgi V (1314-1346) after his victory over the Mongol forces. Specifically, they were the first viziers (a royal official), dependants of the mtsignobartukhutsesi-chkondideli (royal chancellor). Michale Iveldiani, the first donor shown in the Mkheri frescoes, is the mtsignobartmodzgvani (chancellor of the region) of Svaneti. The feudal house of the Iveldianis had been raised to power not later than the 1340s. The Iveldianis gained significant power in 1360s when King Bagrat V the Great (1360-1393) again reunited Svaneti with the Georgian kingdom (1362), the act that provided for an even greater deepening and strengthening of the feudal order in Svaneti. During this period Michael Iveldiani built Mkheri church and decorated it with crosses and icons. Beneath the church he built a burial vault for the House of Iveldiani (E. Kavlelashvili, 2004, 67-90).

On a badly preserved and discolored inscription of the lower panel of the sanctuary barrier of Mkheri there is name of the master – David – in capital letters (E. Kavlelashvili, 1999, 96-100). David chose nine scenes from the Cycle of Twelve Feasts, for the painting program: the Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation in the Temple, Baptism, Transfiguration, Entry into Jerusalem, Crucifixion, Descent into Hell, Ascension of Christ and the Archangels' Council. These scenes are arranged in three registers. As a result of the abundance of depicted scenes, the interior of the small church is "overfilled" with figures. Instead of being arranged in the previously used ornamental strips, the tiers are divided by narrow red strips. The different sized compositions framed within these red strips create a dynamic "exposition" on the wall, reaching the floor level. The bottom strip imitates marble.

The size of figures is reduced in accordance with the small size of the Mkheri church, thus diminishing the impression of monumentality. The only exception is the central figure of the Christ in the Deesis, which is depicted in apse conch (pic. 3). The head and blessing right hand are especially enlarged. It is noteworthy that the head of Christ is more than twice the size of the head of the Mother of God, which might be considered as an archaic element.

The altar composition, divided in two registers, depicts frontal images of archbishops: St. John Chrisostom, St Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Thaumaturge, and one archdeacon, St. Stefan. In the row presenting the Holy Fathers, "The Adoration of the Lamb" is included. The Cross of Calvary placed on the altar symbolizes Christ's sacrifice. Juxtaposed to the scene on both sides are the figures of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, with liturgical fans.

The artist has chosen the scenes specific for 14th century. However, they are so enriched with Antique-Hellenistic and early Eastern Christian traditions that dating these paintings to the second half of 14th century would seem impossible, if not the details of schemes which indicate the above-mentioned date.

The "Glory of Christ" depicted in the conch of the chancel is thematically linked with the "Ascension of Christ" on the opposite western

wall. The choice of these two scenes implies the theological idea of the "Glory of Christ" and consequently the idea of the "Last Judgment." The same idea is further emphasized by the depiction of the "Adoration of the Lamb," which is typical for this period.

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Mkheri, Apse: Deesis.

(Tables is made by E. Kavlelashvili)

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THE 16TH - 18TH CENTURIES SECULAR ARCHITECTURE IN THE GEORGIA. INFLUENCE OF PERSIAN STYLISTIC OR GEORGIAN AUTHENTICITY?

The first mention of Gori, one of the oldest towns in Georgia, in historical records is in the chronicles of the historian Juansher (11th century) in relation to 7th-century events. However, there is sufficient archaeological evidence to assume that an urban settlement had existed well before then, at edge of BC and AD era. Some historical records attribute the foundation of the town to King David Aghmashenebeli (12th century), under whose reign Gori must have been a royal town (Description of Georgian Historical and Cultural Monuments, 1990, 31).

Located at the junction of strategic and trade routes, from the 13th century onward the town was

a site of rivalry between Georgian kings and invaders. Despite this, under King Vakhtang VI (reigned 1716 to 1724), it was one of the principal trade towns, and later in the 1740s, under King Teimuraz II, it was Georgia's second town after Tbilisi.

Fundamental reconstruction of the town of Gori was undertaken in the second half of the 20th century in keeping with two master plans. The first was developed in the 1950s (the architects were B. Lortkipanidze and L. Sumbadze), and the second was developed in 1971 (the architect was L. Sumbadze and the co-designer L. Gigolashvili). This led to the widening of streets, the building of new squares, and the construction of new public and residential buildings (Description of Georgian Historical and Cultural Monuments, 1990, 35). The history of the medieval town gradually fell into oblivion, and vast amounts of material, most possibly including architectural treasure, remains under the ground waiting for scholars and archaeologists.

The inventory work conducted by the Ministry of Culture, Monument Protection and Sport of Georgia in the historic core of Gori during 2006-2007 revealed numerous residential houses, the cellars of which establish an affinity with the stylistic features of Georgian secular architecture from the 16th through the 18th centuries. It is certainly impossible to address each of the features within this presentation. We will therefore consider only three cellars, namely, those at 3 Chitadze Str., 18 Shartava Street (intersection of Shartava and Kakhniashvili streets) and 7 Akhali (new Jerusalem Street).

At first glance, these houses, located in the oldest part of the city, apart from being constructed of the same material and having identical functions, do not seem to have anything in common. Two of the three buildings are residential. A two-story house in Akhali Jerusalem Street must have had the same function, though at present it is damaged and neglected. Each of the three buildings is chiefly built of brick.

Even if it weren't true, there is something else that is important. To my mind, the aforementioned buildings have something main in common: all of them have fairly large, with the high ceiling and spacious cellars stretching along the entire perimeter.

Each of these cellars is divided into parts, is adorned with arches and fitted with shelves, and each has an individual source of light.

The cellars have no trace of dampness; on the contrary, they are well preserved. This logically leads to a question concerning the original function of these structures at present half buried in the ground. Is it possible that the underground chambers, which are just as well lit as the main story of the buildings, served only as subsidiary structures and had no residential function?

To answer the question, it is necessary to first trace buildings of this type in Gori and other towns and then conduct a comparative analysis. The latter could not be addressed in an article as brief as the present one and is therefore considered as a task for the future. However, I will now try, by bringing three examples, to present the reality which remained hidden throughout the recent decades.

The brick residential house at 3 Chitadze Street is single-storied. The house has its central entrance from the side of the street. The steps leading down to the cellar are on the same side, though it is also possible to reach the house as well as its cellar from the courtyard opening onto Kherkheulidze Street.

The house cellar contains three large rooms. Most of the walls of each room are plastered, though brickwork is clearly visible at some locations where the plaster had fallen off. Two rooms are connected to each other, while the third one only shares a wall with the two other rooms and has a separate door.

The third, isolated room appears particularly interesting for the purposes of the present article. According to the present owner of the house, the room used to serve as a pharmacy. The spacious and well-lit space (the height of the ceiling being 16.4 ft/5 m) was divided into two levels by means of a partition. It is therefore that in order to walk into the interior, one would first go through a medium-size door leading to a small platform and only after walking down a few steps reach the cellar. The room has three niches on each of the four sides, some of which are pointed (like Persian stylistic feature) and some oval. Only the fourth wall, which has only one niche as there is a door next to it, is an exception. The room is lit by three

large windows on the side within the façade through the street. The light coming from the rectangular windows creates sharp accents in the interior.

The remaining two rooms, which are directly connected to each other, are lower and are lit through a rectangular window and a door on the side of the street.

The cellar at 18 Shartava Street, similar to that at 3 Chitadze Street, also has walls articulated with niches. The cellar of this house, too, has two entrances: one from the side of the street and another from the courtyard. Those coming from the courtyard will first reach the gallery-corridor and only through the latter reach the central space, which is divided from the gallery by means of two windows and a door letting additional (secondary) light into the room. Most of the light comes from the rectangular windows, which are located above numerous niches. Despite this, it is next to impossible to see anything in the cellar without artificial lighting; this fairly large room is half dark.

The niches on the walls are of two sorts: some of them are tall (almost reaching the ceiling), of medium width and rectangular, while others are relatively less pointed and also rectangular. In both cases, the strict geometric pattern of the rectangle is made less obvious through the decorative brickwork: the wide corners are slightly slanting, while the central part is elevated, creating a curved shape. The roof is made of timber. The room is spacious and wide.

These two buildings establish direct parallels with the third building, at 7 Akhali (new) Ierusalimi Street. Like the cellar at 3 Chitadze Street, the cellar of this house is also divided into rooms. There is a multitude of pointed and rectangular niches, above which are openings elongated in width, which let light into the chambers. Like the cellar at 18 Shartava Street, it also has a flat timber covering.

It is natural that among named buildings apart from the similarities there are variations as well. These are reflected in the number of pointed and oval niches and rectangular openings and the intensity of their distribution. Also, the house at 7 Akhali (new) Ierusalimi Street, which is chiefly built of brick, also has rubble insertions.

Despite the aforementioned, it is obvious that each of the three cellars was created with the same



T. Gori, Chitadze Str. #3; façade



T. Gori, Chitadze Str. #3; Interior



T. Gori, Shartava Str. #18 Interior

architectural and stylistic (maybe even functional!) vision. This raises the two following questions: (1) were the cellars originally considered as subsidiary structures or can they be regarded as remains of centuries-old dwellings? (2) did the mason or the builder, when producing an artistic and spatial solution, take into account stylistic features typical of the Persian art of the late Middle Ages or embraced the stylistic evolution of Georgian secular architecture?

To my mind, the research and analysis of Georgian secular buildings in this regard will cast light upon many important facts from Georgia's medieval history and culture that remain unknown to the present day.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF MONASTERIES LOCATED IN THE FRONTIER PROVINCES OF MEDIEVAL GEORGIA

Medieval churches and monasteries were the centers of culture and education, and the building of monasteries was widespread throughout the territory of Medieval Georgia. The foundation of cultural-educational centers in Georgia's separate historical provinces was of great importance for the state, both from the political and social viewpoints. The monasteries were the image of the country, reflecting its political and cultural strength. The great Georgian monasteries were of enormous importance for spiritual life of the country, its ongoing cultural development and the strengthening of national self-consciousness. In Medieval Georgia, great attention was attached to

strengthening the power and religious influence exercised by the spiritual and secular authorities in the outlying regions of the country.

The main source of Christianity in Hereti in the 4th century was Kartli; from Kartli state arrangements were conducted and missionaries entered Hereti. Later, in the 6th century, the Armenian Church rivaled Kartli. In 608 a religious split took place between Georgia and Armenia. Kartli favored the Diophysite creed, while Armenia favored the Monophysite creed. Hereti-Albania supported the Armenian Church's anti-Chalcedonian (i.e., anti-Diophysite) doctrine. In the 7th-10th centuries an intensive struggle was ongoing in this territory between these two nations that had different historical traditions and religious creeds, but Kartli finally prevailed in this struggle in the 10th century. In Hereti, the Georgian Orthodox Church was a powerful feudal organization throughout the whole of the Middle Ages; in fact, the historical record confirms the existence of eight bishoprics in Hereti in the 6th-7th and following centuries. They were Bodbe, Cheremi, Khornabuji, Gishi, Katsareti, Nekresi, Bakhalati and Leketi (i.e., Lekarti).

The Hereti episcopate was subject to the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Kartli as the leading language was Georgian and, in political terms, Hereti was considered to be part of Kartli.

In the second and third quarters of the 6th century the Syrian fathers, who adhered to the Diophysite creed, arrived in Eastern Georgia. Some of them started religious activities in Hereti. Those Syrian fathers who settled in Hereti promoted the strengthening of Christianity and the establishment of monastic life. The monastery centers the fathers founded were valuable not only for Hereti, but for the entire Georgian nation.

Through their work David of Gareja, Abibos of Nekresi and Stepane of Khirsa were closely connected with Hereti. The monasteries and episcopal churches founded in Gareja, Nekresi and Khirsa were points of support for the rulers of Kartli in strengthening relations with Hereti. St. Abibos founded a monastery in Nekresi in 571 in Hereti. Nekresi was located in the northern part of Hereti and was an important stra-

tegic area, as the as the lowland zone governed the highland zone and played an important role in spreading Christianity here. The foundation of monasteries in Hereti by the Syrian fathers on the instruction of the authorities reflected a territorial principle: Christianity should embrace all parts of the country to make outlying regions, in this case Hereti, subject to the Catholics of Mtskheta.

According to T. Papuashvili, during the transitional period (i.e., the drive for national unification in the 8th to 10th centuries), which politically most difficult for Georgia, none of the other feudal principalities was characterized by such abundance of monuments of material culture as Hereti possessed. In fact, the abundance of architectural examples in Hereti in the 8th-9th centuries reflected its advanced cultural, political and economic development.

I would like to specially mention Lekarti, a medieval monastery complex preserved in the present-day Saingilo territory, once being historical Hereti. It is located in northeastern part of Lekarti village, in Kakhi. Saingilo is now within Azerbaijan but historically was part of Hereti. The monastery has not been properly studied yet. There are about twelve buildings within the big monastery complex, which was encircled in old times by a defensive wall, traces of which have been preserved up today. One example of these traces is an entrance gate.

Due to its location the monastery was divided in two sections: the "upper" and "lower" churches" and should have designated white and black clergy. The first architectural examinations in Zemo (Upper) Lekarti were conducted by G. Marjanishvili and the buildings were dated to the 10th-14th centuries. Kvemo (Lower) Lekarti has been studied by G. Chubinashvili and he dated the tetraconch to the 8th-9th centuries. The documentation I have obtained indicates that the complex could have likely been built in the transitional period, the 8th-10th centuries. In its size, the Lekarti complex resembles the Gelati monastery ensemble. Lekarti was probably one of the educational centers of Eastern Kakheti in the Middle Ages. The large monastery complex contains two big cupola churches of the Bana (Tao) type, with an inscribed cross, and small



Zemo Lekarti



Zemo Lekarti



Zemo Lekarti

single nave buildings. The remains of farming terraces, other facilities dug in the earth, and a wine cellar are preserved on the neighboring hills.

All three main churches of Lekarti, according to a stylistic analysis, can probably be dated to the transitional period and can be compared with other medieval Georgian examples. In the Middle Ages there existed a single national architectural school. Structures similar to Lekarti's three main churches can be found not only in Kakheti and Shida (Inner) Kartli, but among the monuments of the historical Tao-Klarjeti region as well. The closest parallel to one Zemo Lekarti church with an inscribed cross is the 10th-century church at Vale, in Tao-Klarjeti (10th c); another church, as typified by its plan, has its closest parallels in churches in Abkhazeti, at Mokvi, Likhne, and Anakopia (9th-10th centuries).

The tetraconch preserved in the Kvemo Lekarti monastery complex is close to Bana Cathedral, in Tao-Klarjeti. G. Chubinashvili dates the Kvemo Lekarti tetraconch to the 8th century, as noted above. Construction of all three big churches in the two-part Lekarti grand complex was probably conducted in one period. I consider that the interval between the building of the Zemo and Kvemo Lekarti monasteries within the single grand complex was probably six or seven centuries.

Thus, Georgian secular power and the Georgian Orthodox Church, with the aim of intensifying and establishing their influence in the initial stage of their fight for Georgia's unification probably built the grand monastery complex of Lekarti in the outlying frontier region for a specific purpose. In that the Monophysite and Duophysite churches were in a confrontation, which ended in the 10th century with the victory of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Lekarti would have become a center of education and culture, a so-called support for political and religious power. The similarities between the Zemo Lekarti and Vale churches points to historic cultural and political relations between Hereti and Georgia's southern province and, proceeding from this, to the wish for the unification of the country.

Proceeding from the foregoing remarks, the ancient historical part of our country known as Hereti

had close relations with all regions of Georgia, being an organic integral part. In the Middle Ages, the secular and spiritual leaders did their best to reinforce positions in the frontier regions. For these political reasons, cultural influence was also used. Hereti participated actively in historical, political and cultural events in Georgia. Construction of such a grand monastery was in Georgia's political, cultural, religious interests. In the transitional period ecclesiastic building was widespread throughout Georgia; Lekarti monastery is but one example. The Foundation of Georgian centers of culture and education in the nation's easternmost province was of great importance from the political and social viewpoints.

The monasteries of the Middle Ages were centers of education, letters and art. They were the image of the country and pointed to its political and cultural strength, being a visible guarantee for the spiritual strength of the nation. Lekarti monastery complex was not built by chance during the first stage of the fight for Georgia's unification. It was a guarantee of united and powerful, politically and religiously single, culturally developed Georgian state.

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A RECENTLY DISCOVERED MANUSCRIPT BINDING BY THE GEORGIAN MASTER IOANE-ZOSIME

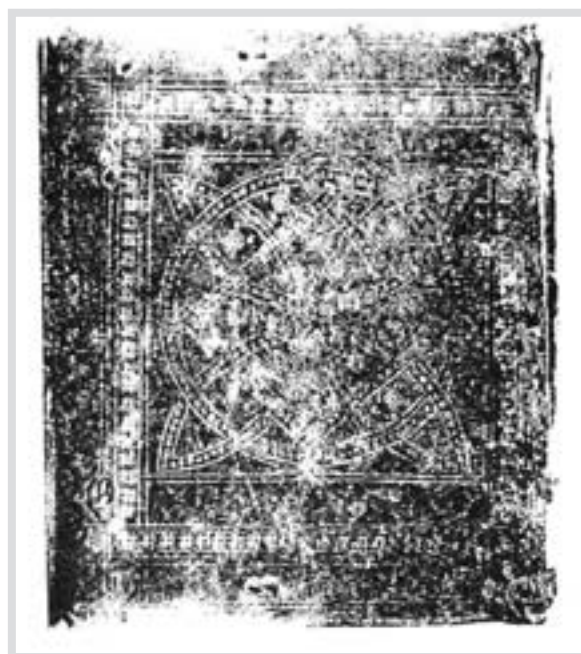
The original covers of manuscripts copied in the 9th-10th centuries did not survive because of their frequent use. The contents of wills and comments added to texts are a clear proof to this. For this reason, information about the covers of manuscripts from early periods is scarce. This is the case not only in Georgia but also in the early history of manuscripts in other locations, and has been confirmed by studies of Byzantine manuscript covers. Therefore, we think every single newly discovered cover, or even a fragment of one that can be an important clue describing the history of a cover, should receive the attention it needs and deserves.

Consequently, our attention was caught by the cover of one of the manuscripts from the newly discovered collection in St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai (N/Sin. Geor. 26, illustr. I). The manuscript is rather thick, is missing the ending, is written in a small format, and contains liturgical collections. At this point we would like to note that the format of the manuscript we are about to discuss is especially noteworthy as the technological-decorative aspects of the cover to some extent determine both the importance of the collection and its creator's mastery of artistic skills. It is also undeniable that ornamenting and maintaining geometrical symmetry or artistic asymmetry on a small scale is much more difficult and requires more experience than it would do on the cover of a manuscript on a bigger scale.

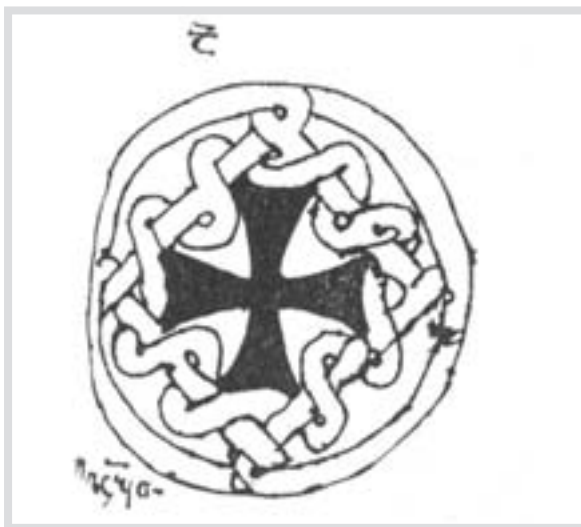
The manuscript is placed in rather thick leather-clad wooden cover which has engraved ornaments. To protect the cover, a page from a different manuscript has been used, which has Greek text inscribed on it. On palaeographic grounds it can be dated to 8th century (Z. Aleksidze, M. Shanidze, L. Khevsuriani, M. Kavtaria, 2005, 271. The wooden boards of the cover are massive and were trimmed to match the page edge. Over the entire length of one cover, vertically,



1. N/Sin. Geor. #26



2. Sin. Geor.32-57-33 (Lower wing of the cover)



3. Sin. Geor.47, 1r.

right where the leather is damaged (ripped), three knots are visible (these must be from the sewing), which connects the wooden boards to the block of the bound book (illus. I). Unfortunately, we have not been able to use the photographs and research of the Belgian scientist Bert Van Regemorter, who has studied the techniques of Georgian bindings. However, we consider it necessary to pay special attention to the tradition established in St. Catherine's Monastery and its direct or indirect influences on methods (techniques) of book binding which he calls "Georgian sewing" (*couture géorgienne*) (B. Van Regemorter, 1969, 122-124).

The decoration on this manuscript from the new collection found at St. Catherine's Monastery is created by floral and nail-shaped stamps (slightly bent ornament in the form of a cross), consisting of different kinds of small ornaments which fill up the free space on the cover. The cover is adorned with repeating lacelike "filling" stamps on the edges (thus there are only two kinds of stamps used on the cover) and no "edging" stamp which, as is known, is considered a sign of a later date in the chronological development of manuscript covers. The pattern created with "filling" stamps is outlined with frames created by single lines made by a special ruler. The same technique is used on the spine of the book for engraving horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines. There is also a headband preserved on the spine, which was woven from rather thick yarn.

On the surface of the cover there is a stamp of an equilateral cross accompanied by a circle and a square; all were executed using compasses and a special sharpened object which, in this case, seems to have been rather blunt.

From the point of the development of symbolism in ornamentation, the idea of equalizing a circle and a square derives from the concept of a rotating square, found in scientific literature. The interrelation of a square and a circle is connected to the unity of the two biggest cosmic symbols: the earth and the sky. The square symbolizes earth, and according to this concept, the circle symbolizes the sky (J. Cirlot, 1973, 307).

Symbols such as the square and a circle are often represented in Eastern Christianity. This is confirmed not only by materials published by E. Testa (E. Testa,

1981, 283-299), but also by more recent publications describing stone crosses, bas-reliefs from churches and decorations adorning patriarchs' thrones, preserved on the territory of modern day Iraq (S. de Courtois, 2004, 80, 107, 109).

Based on materials that we currently have, one of the characteristics of Eastern Christianity is an equilateral cross in a circle, or a segment of a circle constituting part of the drawing. This symbol can mainly be seen in Georgian manuscripts copied and adorned by an outstanding Georgian from Mount Sinai, namely, the man of letters Ioane Zosime. We should note this symbol in the following: Sin. Geor. 47, 1r-v, 81r, 91r; Sin. 26, 1r; in a Georgian manuscript Sin. Geor. 34 preserved in St. Petersburg (Gr. XLI 2r-v 16/1 20r), N/Sin. Georg. 20, 1r; in Paschalions copied by Ioane Zosime himself in Sin. Georg. 38, f. 284; Sin. Georg. 34; in fragments from St. Petersburg, 16/1 27v; and on the engraved covers of manuscripts, specifically Sin. 32-57-33 (ix.sur.4), Sin. 46 and N/Sin. Georg. 26 (illus. I, II, III). Crosses of the same outline occur not only on the covers of manuscripts but also several times at different places in them. In fact, this symbol is often found in the work of Ioane Zosime.

As became clear, the cover of the manuscript Sin. Geor. 26 from the new collection at St. Catherine's is identical with the lower part of the cover of the Sinai Polycephalon (Sin. Geor. 32-57-33). This fact points to the hand of a single executor; he is considered to be Ioane Zosime (M. Karanadze, 2002, 9-18).

It is known that in his book-binding work Ioane Zosime followed the traditions, which Georgian scribes and the copiers at Mount Sinai inherited from the Monastery of St. Saba.

So what can be said about such a closeness in ornament on this cover to those of the Syrian traditions? As it turns out, the answers can primarily be found in the influence of early connections with Syrian traditions that became deeply rooted in Mount Sinai's cultural life, and which later found a large-scale expression in the form of the Bolnisi Cross, in southern Georgia.

In researching the manuscript cover from Mount Sinai we of course do not imply a direct connection with Syrian manuscripts, but in this case we would merely like to underline the ancient Georgian relation-

ships with some of the most important Eastern Christian centers. These are now dormant in our cultural life, but clearly existed in the 5th and 6th centuries of Christianity.

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ARTISTIC TRADITION OF MOUNT ATHOS AND PICTORIAL ENSEMBLE CREATED BY LEVAN, KING OF KAKHETI

The Church of the Archangels in Gremi and its mural paintings date to the medieval period, about which construction and painting data are well documented in the narrative and epigraphic sources.

According to the Greek dedicatory inscription placed in the interior, above the west entrance, King Levan of Kakheti ordered the church to be built. His image inside the church, where he is depicted as builder, with a model of the church in his hands, confirms this. The murals were executed by Chartualrios and Protosynkellos, two monks from Thessalonica. This fact is of interest, but given the close relationship between the kingdoms of Kakheti and Kartli

and Mount Athos and the artistic circle of Northern Greece, it seems quite natural.

The common features characterizing the murals executed under King Levan's patronage are well-known. Therefore, a study of the iconographic program of the Gremi murals, as well as the compositions and the individual images, makes clear the compositional and stylistic differences that had become part of the artistic formulations of the Post-Byzantine Orthodox world, namely the Athonite school of painting.

Gremi church belongs to the central cupola type of building. Its interior is spacious, its proportions are narrow and high, and it is also quite light within, which provides one with the opportunity to see the paintings clearly (V. Beridze, 1974, 171-173; P. Zakaraia, 1975, 27-30). In King Levan's time the church was fully ornamented, though the original pictorial ensemble was partially lost in the 17th century, when the paintings were being restored. The specialist literature provides little information about the paintings. D. Gordeev visited Kakheti in 1917 in order to study the frescoes. He thoroughly evaluated the Gremi frescoes, mentioning that they bore signs characteristic not of monumental painting but of icon painting (D.P. Gordiev, 1919, 9). Sh. Amiranashvili also made a brief survey of the architecture of Gremi church and its paintings (Sh. Amiranashvili, 1961, 392, 396-397). The work of M. Vachnadze gives more detailed data in which a general survey of the pictorial ensembles are provided. These were created in the 16th century as a result of King Levan's role as a donor. M. Vachnadze also discusses the relationship of these ensembles with the pictorial school of Mount Athos (M. Vachnadze, 1977).

The paintings are now considerably damaged. Many separate scenes and figures are completely erased, and some of them can be seen only as fragments. As a result of these limitations, it is impossible to restore fully the iconographic program. Despite this, research on frescoes confirms that the iconographic program of paintings in Gremi church mostly follows the system established on Mount Athos.

The theme of asceticism and passion is displayed with special force in the paintings. When entering the church, one's attention is attracted by the numerous images of saints in individual frames. In the interior, they are given the most prominent place after the al-



Gremi. Church of Archangels. Southern wall



Gremi. Church of Archangels. Southern wall. Warrior Saints

tar – on the eastern end of the south and north walls. The greater part of the paintings is dedicated to the scenes of holy days placed mostly in the western part of the church, in the area between the arms. The images connected with the origins of Christianity are distinct in the paintings. Along with numerous images of other prophets, presented here are: St Paul of Thebaida, St Anthony the Great, St Bartholomew, St Onopre, all among the founders of the Eastern monastic movement; St Romanoz the Sweet Chanter, who was one of the authors of Christian hymnography; the Church Fathers – St John Chrysostom, St Gregory the Theologian, and St Basil the Great; and other martyr-saints of the early centuries.

The paintings on the cupola are now almost fully erased, though the image of the Virgin encircled with the heavenly choir is preserved in the drum, giving rise to the assumption that there was an image of Christ Pantocrator in the dome. This assumption is further supported by the content of the texts of the scrolls in the hands of the prophets, who are standing in two lines in the drum.

At the bottom of the drum, in the eastern part, is “the holy image” of Christ juxtaposed with the symbols of the Four Evangelists and the figures of archangels. The pendants traditionally bear symbolic images of the Evangelists, but here only the figure of St Matthew the Apostle has been preserved.

The altar paintings are divided in five registers. The conch preserves fragments which point to the existence of the image the Virgin and archangels, below there are scenes dedicated to the Holy Eucharist – The Last Supper, the heavenly liturgy, the Eucharist of the apostles and the worship of holy sacrifice.

The remaining space of the church, according to the compositional order, may be conventionally divided into two parts – the eastern and western parts. Despite this, no strict limit is felt between separate sections of the interior. The artist unites the interior through various means: by repeatedly displaying separate images, the artist puts definite accents and unites the paintings through composition and idea. For example, the south and north wall paintings are united by the image of Our Savior represented in the conch. In the lower register of the eastern end of the south wall, by placing St George beside the Holy Fa-

thers, a certain link is formed with the images of the holy warriors represented in the western section of the same wall. The placement of the composition of "The Eucharist of St Mary of Egypt," on the western facets under the cupola, serves to unify interior space.

The composition on the interior parallel walls are alike, though the similarity is not exactly the same or monotonous. If the painter places images of the Holy Fathers in a specific register of one wall, the in the same register on the opposite wall appear images of Holy Martyr Mothers. The separate figures of saints, to some extent, correspond to the figures in the scenes or alongside. For example, on the wall above the southern chapel are painted three of the forty martyrs of Sebastia – St Klaudi, St Erekle and St Sisisnia. Along with them, on the eastern section of the south wall, are painted three father-martyrs – St Guri, St Abibos and St Simon, whose commemoration day falls on the same date. Each scene of the Great Feasts is followed by the figures of prophets; the contents of their scrolls correspond to these scenes, and present some additional explanatory text. In some cases, the date of a saint's commemoration day is close to the date of a Great Feasts.

The sequence of Great Feasts starts with the painting of the "Annunciation," covering the pilasters of the altar. The narration is continued with the paintings of "Nativity" and "Candlemas" and is painted on the space existing over the arch connecting the columns and western wall. The initial scenes of the extensive holy days' cycle are placed on the area between the cathedral's south-western arms; then the narration passes to the northeastern part of the church. The scene of "Assumption of Our Lady," completing the cycle of Great Feasts, is placed by the artist, according to the tradition, on the western wall.

The closeness of the basic program of Gremi church the archangel paintings, as well as of iconography of individual scenes, to the artistic traditions of Mount Athos is evident. The choice of the images of individual saints and their relationship to the scenes of Great Feasts perhaps results from the wish of those who commission paintings and from local artistic tradition. However, a comprehensive study of these topics requires further research.

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MARTVILI CATHEDRAL: FRAGMENTS OF MURALS IN THE PALAEOLOGAN ARTISTIC STYLE

Martvili (Chkondidi) Cathedral, a domed 7th-century tetraconch church in Western Georgia is a monument of ancient Georgia; it is traditionally related to St. Andrew's sermon, the erection of the cross by him, as well as to the most ancient accounts of the conversion of the Georgians to Christianity (G. Chubinashvili, 1948, 51-59). The church has preserved several layers of wall painting. Small fragments of the earliest layers, which date from the 10th through the 13th centuries, are scattered over the bema, the west arm and the porch. All of these fragments became visible after the destruction of later layers of paintings. However,

the mid-14th century layer featuring decoration in the Palaeologan artistic style, preserved in the sanctuary apse, bema, and west arm conch (I. Lordkipanidze, 1990, 155, 158, 165) was deliberately left untouched in the 16th century, when the church's main spaces were repainted. That may be explained by the exceptional devotion and honor paid to the icon-image of the Virgin with Child represented in the sanctuary apse. This is also clearly expressed in the texts of additions in the Gulani of Martvili (a polycephalon manuscript from Martvili) dated between the years 1578 and 1605 (V. Silogava, 2006, 15). The donor was a member of the noble Katsia Chikvani family, and his inscription is preserved in the north arm of Martvili Cathedral; it is also addressed to the same "Virgin of Martvili" (E. Takai-shvili, 1913-1914, 121). We think that the tradition of adoration and homage paid to the Virgin of Martvili took root in the 14th century, when the church was repainted and reconsecrated, this time to the Dormition of the Virgin. The textual sources and epigraphic material confirm that until this period (at least up to the middle of 13th century), the church had been consecrated to the Holy Martyrs (N. Chikhladze, 2008, 40-45).

The Palaeologan-style painting that remains on the church's west-east axis is centered on the basic theological conception of the "Glorification of the Virgin." The three main images have been aligned on the same axis: on the first image, above the church entrance, is a mosaic icon of the Virgin with Child given, where only the golden background and the Greek letters are visible. The second image, located in the west arm conch, presents a multi-figure scene of the main feast of this church: the Dormition of the Virgin. Today, however, this scene exists only as fragments. The third image, located in the conch of the sanctuary apse, features the Adoration of the Virgin with Child by the Archangels. According to the ancient Orthodox tradition (as attested in the 12th-century Tipicon text in the monastery of the Pantocrator in Constantinople), some portrayals painted on a church wall used to be venerated as miraculous icons (H. Belting, 1994, 227-228). We can assume that for this reason these representations in Martvili Cathedral were saved and were retained within the cathedral's 16th-century re-decoration.

The widely attested compositional scheme in this period emphasized the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, dressed not in royal garb but in a chiton and himation, posing with a deep bow toward the Virgin Kiriotissa with Child. Similar compositions have been found in the conch of the sanctuary apse of Likhne church, (mid-14th century; Western Georgia), in Abkhazia; in Zarzma (mid-14th century; Samtskhe, Southern Georgia); and in Nabakhtevi (1430s; Kartli, Eastern Georgia). The figures of full-length prophets with the Biblical symbols of the Virgin seen in the bema of Martvili Cathedral are part of the main theme of the Glorification of the Virgin, as developed in the sanctuary apse. (The preserved figure of the Prophet David with the closed door in his hand, illustrated the words of Psalms (117. 20), which are read during the feasts of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, and the Presentation of Mary in the Temple) (O. Etinhof, 2000, 24).

Other scenes in the apse are the Communion of the Apostles and Christ Anapeson (Christ Emmanuel asleep) as the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The latter scene, illustrating the divine scheme of human salvation through the Incarnation and Sacrifice, appeared in the wall paintings of the monasteries of Mount Athos at the end of the 13th century. The scene also appeared on monuments of the Byzantine circle and on some of the Georgian mural paintings from the 14th century (Zarzma, Martvili, and Nabakhtevi).

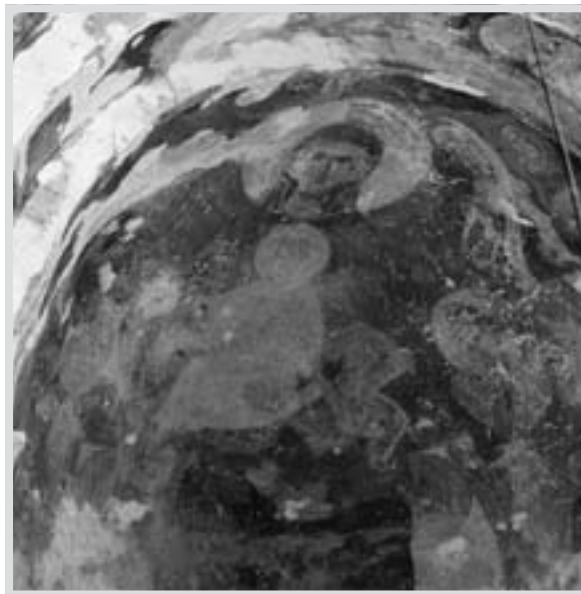
The Palaeologan artistic style that emerged in Georgia at the end of the 13th century became widespread during the 14th century. The developed iconographic cycles and symbolic compositions of a theological-didactical type appear in Georgian monuments as well as in wall paintings in Orthodox countries of the Byzantine area (E. Konstantinides, 1990, 29-30).

It is worth mentioning that the theological conception of the Glorification of the Virgin, which was rendered by Biblical symbols and scenes of the Virgin's childhood and her life based on the Proto-evangelium of James, has enjoyed a long tradition in Georgia (take, for example, the silver icon of Virgin from Zarzma (11th century); the murals of Ateni Sioni (11th century); the Betania church wall painting (12th century); and the mural painting of the main church of Bertubani (early 13th century) (G. Gagoshidze, N.

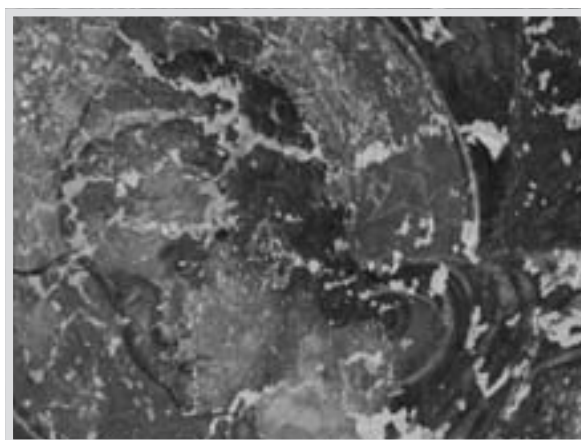
Chikhladze, 2006, 130-136). The tradition, which was partly based on the idea that Georgia came under the special protection of the Mother of God, found its way into Georgian art of the 14th century. The strengthening of the Virgin's cult in Byzantine art of the same period fully revealed itself in the group of Georgian wall painting and icons (Likhne, Zarzma, Dirbi, triptychs from Ubisi). The 14th-century wall painting layer of Martvili Cathedral also belongs to the highly artistic group of monuments mentioned above. The artistic treatment of these monuments is the undoubtedly evidence of the close relationship between 14th-century Georgia with the Orthodox Christian cultural centers (D. Mouriki, 1978, 55-83).

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Martvili. The Conch of the Sanctuary Apse. Adoration of the Virgin with Child by Archangels



Martvili. The Conch of the Sanctuary Apse. The Archangel Michael (detail)



Martvili. The Conch of the Western Arm. The Dormition of the Virgin. The Holy Woman.

Modernism in Georgia

Modernism
in
Georgia

Modernism

in
Georgia

Modernism

in
Georgia



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GEORGIAN PAINTING IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT: NIKO PIROSMANI, LADO GUDIASHVILI, AND DAVID KAKABADZE

Together with Kiril and Ilia Zdanevich, an artist of French origin – Michel Le Dentu – participated in the “discovery” of Pirosmani. On his first glance at Nikala’s paintings, Le Dentu exclaimed, “This is the Georgian Giotto.” Thus a natural bridge between Georgia and Europe was erected on the basis of the very first impression.

Followed in Michel Le Dentu’s footsteps, Louis Aragon and other art critics confirmed this connection between the creations of these two artists (Pirosmani and Giotto), which has proved to be more stable than the frequent parallel between Pirosmani and Henri Rousseau.

In 1969, on the initiative of André Malraux, the well-known French writer and then active Minister of Culture, an exhibition of Pirosmani’s works was installed at the Museum of Decorative Art, Paris. Presumably “The Actress Margarita” visited the exhibition and enjoyed the look of her portrait and sweet memories. We should note here that Pablo Picasso painted a portrait of Pirosmani. Then in 1999 it was the turn of Nantes, Tbilisi’s twin city, to exhibit 45 of Pirosmani’s paintings and publish a catalogue. The exhibition attracted the great press interest.

The catalogue’s first section was my article, “Pirosmani, A Life with the Colors of A Legend.” We will speak below about the two articles by the well-known art critic Régis Gayraud; “Primitivism in the Avant-garde: A Modernist Among Primitivists,” and “Pirosmani – Iliazd – Picasso.” In addition, Eter Shelia, the restorer at the Georgian State Museum of Art, with the assistance of Nino Okrostvaridze and Izolda Kurdadze, published the article “Pirosmani and His

Universe.” We should not forget that even earlier, in 1962, Jean Keim, had introduced the Georgian artist to the international readers of the magazine “UNESCO Courier.”

During the Pirosmani exhibition in Paris, the writer Armand Lanoux published a newspaper essay titled “Exchanging Matisse for Pirosmashvili,” dedicated to the exhibitions of Matisse in Moscow and Pirosmani in Paris. According to Armand Lanoux, this was the first “significant dialogue” between the two capitals.

By the chance, Louis Aragon, the author of *Henri Matisse, roman*, addressed these two “exchanged” artists. His long, unfinished article “The Stranger from Georgia” was published in the newspaper “Lettres Françaises” on March 5, 1969. Correlation between the two artists became the starting point for Aragon: “Newly-arrived Pirosmani appeared to reopen the debate between the possible and impossible in painting. The circumstance that Georgia offers the lesson is as surprising as the explanation received from Japan at the time of Matisse.” This means that there is no boundary between spiritual and aesthetic ties either in time or in space, and nobody can predict the exact time of their manifestation.

Aragon raises a question of aesthetic values. After mentioning Courbet, Cézanne and Gauguin, he continues: “Naïvety has come into fashion. It would be the most simple to place the incomparable characteristics of Pirosmani under this etiquette. But I would say that Pirosmani is the opposite of the phenomenon of naïvety, as he is an artist who invented all of the components of his paintings. . . .”

This gives us the chance to understand how France perceived Pirosmani at the end of the 20th century – in the beginning of which he vanished. The first conclusion has been confirmed by history: “Pirosmani forestalled the different tendencies of European art.” As Régis Gayraud says, by his imitation of nature and the rejection of the effects of perspective, the work of Pirosmani is related to the Renaissance and paves the way to avant-gardism (Catalogue, Pirosmani Exhibition, Nantes 1999, 71-72). This is also confirmed by Iliazd: “Pirosmashvili left us the will to support his ideas and theories.” (Catalogue, Piro-

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smani Exhibition, Nantes 1999, 73). The final conclusion of Régis Gayraud: "Pirosmani is not a primitive, to be more exact, he is the modernist among primitives" (Catalogue, Pirosmani Exhibition, Nantes 1999, 91).

Distance in space and time often helps us to improve our knowledge of facts and perceive them more deeply. To be more confident, it's enough to observe the portrait of Pirosmani drawn by Pablo Picasso: "Picasso has neither met the Georgian artist, nor heard his voice and looked into his warm, passionate eyes. But did the innkeepers and people whom Pirosmani accidentally met during his life really know him?" (*Toast with Fish*)

In 1982, between the exhibitions held in Paris in 1969 and in Nantes in 1999, the Khelovneba publishing house in Tbilisi issued my Russian-language book *Pirosmani, or The Stroll of the Reindeer*. Nikala, who paved his way to Europe and the world, was followed by two more Georgian artists: Lado Gudiashvili and David Kakabadze. The second volume of my trilogy of novels on Georgian painting, dedicated to their art, was *Lado Gudiashvili, or The Vision of the Fresco*, fragments of which were first published in Georgian and Russian. My theme was "What does the art of Gudiashvili tell the East and the West?"

To return to the second volume. In the 1920s Lado Gudiashvili and David Kakabadze became the members of so-called "school of Paris" and participated in many exhibitions held in the French capital. Both appraised the art of Pirosmani and Gudiashvili was closely tied to the former's *Weltanschauung*.

The art of Gudiashvili blossoms in the heart of the school of Paris. In 1925 *Au Sans Pareil* publishing house issued Maurice Raynal's monograph on the artist. In 1969, Pierre Vorms, a famous art critic and organizer of many exhibitions, who hosted me in Paris, told me that "Lado Gudiashvili became one of the dearest persons for me. Being very frank, he was always ready to tell me the things that I thought were the secrets of the "birth" of a painting. He let me into the power of the conception of his art."

The quest of Lado Gudiashvili was the result of both Eastern and Western perceptions, which spread their wings from Japan to Spain, passing through Poland and Italy, as well as his closeness to his contem-

porary artists and his attachment to some of his favorite classics. That is why one of the chapters of *Toast with Fish* is inspired by the "shadow of Goya." In opposing the cruelty of the universe, the conception of Georgian and Spanish paintings is alike. In the recordings I made, Lado Gudiashvili recalls his private relationships with the Japanese artist Tsuguharu Foujita, with Amadeo Modigliani, the Polish artist Zigmund Waliszewski, and Ignacio Zuloaga.

There are many signs that Georgians and Poles are close. The Polish art critic Jerzy Madejski perceives "the untroubled and joyful life typical of Georgia in the art of Waliszewski, who had a Polish name and origin, but was spiritually Georgian. Consequently, my chapter "Half-Georgian, Half-Polish Spirit" is dedicated to this person: "Lado Gudiashvili met Zygmunt Waliszewski again in Paris: his health has been shaken, but not his love of life. At one time, in Tbilisi, one of the first works of Gudiashvili's brush was Waliszewski's portrait. During the years they spent together, Waliszewski worked a lot with oil-colours and a pencil, and he often signed his paintings with his shortened name "Ziga." Thus, new schools of Georgian and Polish paintings were born under the same sky.

Common tones can be "heard" in the works of Georgian and Japanese artists. In their art, faces from locations scattered across the world are united by a delicate and life-giving aestheticism. With tireless delight, Foujita perfects carpets, china trinkets, table-cloths, furniture. . . His expressive graphic lines of women's bodies and Gudiashvili's black-and-white graphics are closely related. In the chapter "Memories," Gudiashvili shares his own perception of Foujita's personality and art.

In 1977 fragments from my book *The Vision of the Fresco*, with a preface by Vakhtang Beridze, were published in the magazine "Literaturnaia Gruzia" ("Literaturnaia Gruzia," 1977, #9 and #10). My warm-hearted relationship with Mr Beridze is unforgettable for me.

Sometimes, I go through the answers to the questions about France that I had asked Lado Gudiashvili. Here are some of them:

"Why did you go to France?"

"In 1919, the paintings of Georgian artists were

exhibited in the building now housing the art gallery. There were many of my paintings too – “The Discovery of Tbilisi,” “Khashi,” “Live Fish,” “The Friends’ Feast” and others.”

“I was sent to Paris because my paintings were presented at this exhibition.”

“One day, when I was painting on one of the walls of “Kimerioni,” Titsian Tabidze told me that I was going to France.”

“At the end of 1919, I departed to France from Batumi and arrived in Paris. I fall in love and temporarily became a son of this great city.

“At that time, Paris had 40,000 native artists and 30,000 more arrived from different countries. There was struggle for existence, respect and place. Exhibitions were held in galleries, cafés, and there was great interest in society.”

“Tell us about your talks with Marie Laurencin.”

“I recall our talks with great pleasure. At that time, she was already a famous artist. We sat in the café “Rotonda,” drank delicious coffee, and I told her that seeing her paintings made me believe in her strength, that she handles the brush perfectly and her tonality and ideas are extraordinary.”

“What memories have you left from Paris?”

“I love Paris very much; it has got a magical aura. Despite all the praise I have heard of Paris, I still think that the main fact goes unsaid – the reason why this Mecca of art and poetry attracts everybody. Paris is my life, part of my soul. I want to thank it for the happiness it brought to me.”

And, at last, *Toast with Fish* introduces us to “David Kakabadze, or the squares of Imereti.”

David Kakabadze published two collections of articles which were written in Georgian (“Paris, 1920-1923,” “Art and Space,” 1924-25) and a book in French – *Du Tableau constructif*, published by Chêne Vert” in 1921 (“About Constructivist Painting”).

David Kakabadze made his choice in time and space and chose European art as his main landmark, art which was established by Leonardo da Vinci. In 1915-1929 David Kakabadze kept an eye on the main tendencies of modern art, however, he felt that the great Italian artist was the closest to him in many aspects: like him, Kakabadze perceives himself at the

same time as an artist, a thinker, a scientist – and an inventor of new methods in cinematography. Kakabadze respected Leonardo da Vinci for being attracted to harmony and synthesis: the creator of “La Gioconda” attempted to render his ideas in his works and created “philosophical painting.”

Kakabadze carefully thought about Leonardo da Vinci’s experience and writings. Sharing his teacher’s thoughts, the Georgian artist borrowed most of his epigraphs from da Vinci: among them were “Painting is nearly the philosophy of nature,” “Art and science is painting,” “Painting should seek to become universal,” “First theory, then the practice,” “It’s impossible to create an artwork without mind and nature,” and “Relief is the soul of painting.”

Kakabadze’s conception naturally inscribed his art into the European and world contexts and opened the fan of his observations: “The Futurism of Italy influenced the way of modern life.” It is the cognition of our lives. It tried to renovate, transform all fields of art” (D. Kakabadze, 1983, 97). And then: “German Expressionism, which is against the direct imitation of nature, searches for the methods to express the inner face of life. [...] Expressionism attempts to show the real face of humanity in universal forms, without any temporal and accidental conditions.”

David Kakabadze is somehow linked to Expressionism. The references cited above emphasize the achievements of modernism and addresses the notion of “the new human.” The artist avoids imitation of nature and casts away all kinds of temporal and accidental conditions.

In August 1973, in Paris, Michel Seuphor, the famous expert on Abstractionism, shared with me his memories and thoughts about the art of David Kakabadze.

“The host, who is already over seventy, meets me cheerfully. There is a wonderful and expensive collection of paintings of different famous artists on the walls of a quite simple study. You can find creations of Picasso, Kandinsky, Delaunay. I can’t recognize the painting near the door, so I ask who the painter is.

“I am,” answers my host, smiling.

Then we start talking about the main reason for my visit.

"I respect Lado Gudiashvili and his creations very much," says Michel Seuphor. "He definitely has an honorable place in history."

"On a shelf behind a table, I saw three wonderful volumes. This was Michel Seuphor's fundamental work, *Abstract Art*, which was printed by the publishing house Maeght. The host opened the second volume (which was dedicated to 1918-1938 years) on page 200: "Could you read it and tell me if there are any mistakes?" he said.

I started reading: "David Kakabadze was born in Kutaisi, Georgia, in 1889 and died in 1952. [...]" We found the text of the manifesto published by the artist in 1925 in Paris. He participated in the exhibition of the anonymous society of Brooklyn Museum held in 1926 with his paintings and statues. Starting from any specific shape (a flower, a ship), he tried to recall the illusion of space by a simple geometrical figure. By a lucky coincidence the lost manifesto and other important writings will be restored. I will pass on to Michel Seuphor the books published in Paris by Kakabadze, sent to Michel by Kakabadze's widow.

In 1982, collective work of Luigi Magarotto and his colleagues about David Kakabadze and Lado Gudiashvili is published under the title "L'avanguardia a Tiflis." My essay is dedicated to this publication.

In David Kakabadze's opinion, true national painting takes part in creation of universal art. Of the three mentioned artists, only Kakabadze's paintings have not come back to Paris since they left the city. I hope that an exhibition of his work will be held there in the near future. His watercolor landscapes encompass the space between his homeland of Imereti and Bretagne.

I want to finish my paper with a quote from *Toast with Fish*: "An eye exposed to great impressions continues feeling them even while, resting gazing in the space. The intensity of the light rambling from the leaf to leaf continuously changes and makes new stresses. Unexpected visions accumulate in the each drop of paint. [...] Beneath the handful of blue water the breath of the sea can be heard. The tender brush saves you from the vain talk."

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Georgia

THE ART OF PIROSMANI IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Paris was the center of international art. At this time, a drastic change occurred in the circle of creative youth – the old stereotypes and rules were neglected, the urge for free self-expression increased, and young artists started seeking means to express what they knew and felt rather than what they saw. A certain circle of artists accepted the purity of thought, the so-called "naïveté" as the main criteria of the true art. As Gauguin did, Matisse, Picasso and Derain also applied to the art of primitive peoples, such as the Polynesians, Sudanese, Dogomelians. Interest in primitivism grew among French and other European artists (in 1904 a special exhibition was dedicated to it). Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Vlaminck, and Van Dongen became close to the self-taught Rousseau. They saw a revival of French national art in his work.

A similar process was occurring in Russia as well. Larionov and Goncharova, who left the "Bubnovi Vallet" union, in 1911 organized several exhibitions – "Oslini khvost," "Mishen," and "4." Icons, city signs, luboks (broadside), photos, national art, children's art and the work of "fence painting" fell into their sphere of interest. Unlike the French artists, Russian neo-primitivists did not draw from the artistic forms of primitive people. The Russian avant-gardists set national goals and directed their interest toward the East. Members of the Larionov Group discussed these tasks in their disputes and in the press. Larionov wrote: "The East inspires the West." The interest of the Russian avant-gardists in the East and in primitivism turned out to be important in respect to Pirosmani's work and in setting the direction of the development of Georgian art.

As the 20th century opened, Pirosmani's paint-

ings were exhibited not only in Tbilisi's cafes, where Georgian artists could have missed them, but also in the windows and on the façades of the cafes as well. However, his pictures were "not an art" for the older generation of artists, while the younger ones were not yet ready to assess and accept them. Due to a lucky encounter with the Russian avant-gardist Michel Le Dentu Pirosmani's masterpieces got the chance of moving from the cellars to the exhibition halls and to the sphere of interest of Georgian and Russian professional art.

Le Dentu and Kirill Zdanevich arrived in Tbilisi in March of 1912. Ledantiu's goal was exploring Georgian nature, architecture and national art. Ledantiu shared the interest of the Larionov group in the city's signs and immediately distinguished Pirosmani's signs from numerous others. He was excited by Pirosmani's work. "He is a true genius. If we get a chance of getting acquainted with him, we will by all means invite him to our exhibition next year," Le Dentue wrote.

Michel Le Dentu and the Zdanevich brothers were the first among the artistic "intelligentsia" to start collecting Pirosmani's paintings. They were also the first to compare Pirosmani's works to the work of Rousseau. Zdanevich wrote that in 1912 he and Ledantiu "remembered French painter Henri Rousseau, compared him to other primitivists, but considered Pirosmani to be the best among such artists." Upon getting back to Moscow, Le Dentue showed Pirosmani's pictures to Larionov and they decided to exhibit them. Before the exhibition, the newspaper *Moskovskaia Gazeta* (1914, 4.1), published Larionov's interview. It was noted that "the exhibition will present artists who did not study, were not influenced by anyone else and achieved great expressiveness through their own talent. The Georgian Permenoshvili (sic) lives in Tbilisi and is very popular among local population as a master of the wall painting; he mainly decorates café walls. His peculiar manner, Oriental motifs, and limited artistic means which achieve so much, are awesome."

Preceding the "Mishen" exhibition in Moscow, the Larionov group's rival team "Bubnovi Valet" also organized an exhibition. Here, along with the Rus-

sian artists new works by France's Braque, Derains, Van Dongen, Picasso and Siniak were exhibited. Henri Rousseau's "Muse" was also shown. The decision by "Bubnovi Valet" to exhibit Rousseau served as conceptual counterargument against the exhibiting of Pirosmani by "Mishen." Thus, the until-then unknown Georgian artist turned out to be as appealing for the Russian avant-gardists as the well-known and recognized French artists. Comparison of Rousseau and Pirosmani by the Russian artists also continued afterwards.

These two artists' depiction of women's figures is especially similar. For example, if we compare a woman's figure by Rousseau (from Picasso's collection) with the "The Woman" by Pirosmani (1908), the similarity is obvious. There is a clear first impression that both women are posing in front of a camera; the compositional and iconographic details are similar. Both are posing in the strict frontal position, and the figures are moved toward, the front, to the frame. We can also see also that their outfits are similar. Both pictures have birds. Rousseau's curtain, drawn in red, yellow and black, provides the same decorative accent as the cushion in Pirosmani's picture. However, there are also differences. Thus, Pirosmani adheres to his own style of artistic provisionality in all parts of his picture. The intensive blue background is not something concrete. It is neither sky nor a wall, but just a background. It is flat and places the figure in the front of the picture. The intensive color provides the picture with a strong decorative force and wholeness.

In his picture, Henri Rousseau, by contrast, draws a realistic background. He shows the perspective of the floor and achieves the airiness of the sky with half tones, which is not keeping with the decorativeness of the artist's initial plan for his painting.

The essence of the Rousseau and Pirosmani works is alike, while the reality that is presented is interpreted by their creators' personal knowledge and feelings. Pirosmani acknowledged the originality and advantages of his artistic method: "I work in a way different from other artists." . . . "In order to see, your eyes should not be blinded by superstitions." It is amazing that in most cases the subjects of Pirosmani's

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pictures are the same as those of the Russian, German and French artists. Pirosmiani painted his "Beauties of Ortachala" in 1905; three years later Picasso painted his "The Whores in the Bar," which shows similar personalities. Pirosmiani painted his "The Ortachalian Beauty with a Fan" in 1905, one year before Picasso painted his "The Woman with a Fan" (1906). Like Toulouse-Lautrec, Rousseau and Van Dongen, Dix, and Macke, Pirosmiani also drew fallen women and actresses; like Goncharova he painted roosters, lions, and pictures of harvesting and grape pressing; like Larionov he painted the vegetarian "dukhangs," reclining women with flowers and birds, a wounded soldier and a hairdresser. Pirosmiani's "The Cleaner" (1909) looks amazingly like Chagall's "The Newspaper Seller" (1914) – and we can add to the list.

We will not provide a deep analysis of differences in artistic forms, but I stress that the themes that used to be traditional for Europe and up to date for Russia were unknown in Georgian art of the beginning of 20th century. Pirosmiani was the first to process these themes, and thus brought Georgian art close to the newest trends in Europe and Russia.

It is interesting to compare Shevchenko's "Portrait of a Poet" (1913) with Pirosmiani's art. Shevchenko's works were among those shown in the "Mishen" exhibition. Undoubtedly he would have seen Pirosmiani's "Portrait of Ilia Zdanevich" exhibited there. Shevchenko's composition is constructed as a mirror reflection of "Portrait of Ilia Zdanevich." Everything is reversed here. Whatever Pirosmiani shows on the right side, Shevchenko places on the left side. Details of the composition details are also changed – the little table replaces the stool, trees replace the drapery.

"Portrait of Ilia Zdanevich" is not a typical of Pirosmiani's art. He worked using a photo and apparently was restricted by the existence of an existing portrait. That is probably why in this case Pirosmiani abandoned his typical consequence of showing the details and wholeness. The provisionality of the torso exists along with the somewhat realistic face and background.

Shevchenko demonstrates a professional peculiarity in depicting the pose of his hero. It is obvious

that he "plays" with primitivism when he makes the form rough and "improperly" shows the hand placed on a table. As in Pirosmiani's pictures, the flat forms (a vase, a hand, table details) in his compositions are placed next to the dimensional ones. However, if Pirosmiani's "mistakes" in this case are based on the artist's ambition to transcend his originality and his self-taught manner and to create a professional portrait, then Shevchenko's case is the opposite, like the mirror effect discussed above. He tries to present himself as a primitive rather than as a professional. While in most cases there is no direct evidence that Pirosmiani inspired the work of some of the neo-primitivists, Ledantiu's case is a different one.

Le Dentu has left an interesting document – "Caucasian Album" – a very important one for Georgia. The album comprises of around 130 pages of aquarelles, sketches and transcripts. The pictures show lively the scenes of city and village life; the album also shows the motif of Georgian architectural décor. The last two are assigned to a listing of 14 of Pirosmiani's paintings, in some cases indicating their locations. Probably, this list represents the first statement of where Pirosmiani's pictures actually were.

Two pictures in Le Dentu's album are reproductions of Pirosmiani's works. One shows a fisherman standing between the rocky banks of a river. Compositionally and iconographically, this picture exactly repeats Pirosmiani's "Fisherman Among the Rocks." In Ledantiu's list this picture is No. 5 and is called "The Fisherman." Another picture shows a man with a sack over his shoulders; it repeats Pirosmiani's "A Man with a Barrel"; the compositional structure, pose, and outfit are very Pirosmianian, only the barrel is replaced by a sack. The picture "A Worker with a Barrel" is part of a diptych – on its left hand side the worker's figure points in the opposite direction, but the sack's form is almost identical. Ledantiu retains his own individual identity: he works in a free and lively form, but in a somewhat segregated manner, in between Cubism and Luchism.

Two famous Le Dentu pictures – "A Man with a Horse" and "Sazandari" (i.e., a street singer), which are in the Russian Museum, are based on the sketches

from this album. These pictures also reflect Georgian motifs. In this case it is difficult to claim exactly how Pirosmiani influenced Ledantiu. We can assume that Ledantiu knew some unknown (or lost) picture of Pirosmiani's and he based his "Sazandari" on it. In the letter that Le Dentu's friend E. Sagaidachni sent to him in Caucasia, he advised Ledantiu "to make exact copies of the works of others." Erast Kuznetsov described in his book a case when a wall painted by Pirosmiani was being repainted and Ledantiu rushed to make a copy. There are two "Sazandari" pictures in the "Caucasian Album"; one is an aquarelle and the other a pencil sketch.

Judging from its character, the pencil version, which shows some signs of correction, could have been done in a café from Pirosmiani's picture. "Sazandari" is written on the picture in Russian. The mistake in the spelling of these words could also indicate that the picture belonged to the non Russian-speaking author. Russian markings on Pirosmiani's pictures often contain mistakes. It is doubtful that Le Dentu would make such a mistake. The character of the picture also has indications of the Pirosmianian version. The figure, like in other Pirosmiani pictures, wholly occupies the space; it is brought up maximally to the front and the space is flat. The figure's static pose is clumsy; the feet point in opposite directions, which could be the result of Le Dentu's attempt at showing a pose and restriction typical of Pirosmiani's figures. (Other sketches in the album are dynamic; they move and stand "correctly.")

Le Dentu's hero's outfit is analogical to the outfits of typical Pirosmiani heroes. Pirosmiani often painted people with musical instruments: "Ashugi", "A Woman with a Cup" and "Organ Player," and two pictures and canvas painting on the "Sazandari" theme, as well as two paintings, "The Fisherman" and "The Worker," are executed in an avant-garde manner typical of Ledantiu.

Le Dentu, unlike Shevchenko, did not stress primitivism. The painting is close to Cubism, but also shows signs of Luchism, which Ledantiu worked on in 1912-1913. If our version of the Pirosmianian origin of Ledantiu's works is correct, it would be an additional

argument for demonstrating the major influence of Pirosmiani's art has not only for neo-primitivism, but also for other directions of the Russian avant-garde. A lot of features of Pirosmiani's art – its laconism, the monumental character of his forms and the color spots, and his understanding of the space – are in many aspects in line with the general goals that European art had.

At the same time Pirosmiani is a national artist. The roots of his art spring from Georgian national art, from the traditions of the nation's painting, and also from its city culture.

In conclusion, Pirosmiani is a phenomenon on such a scale that, according to David Kakabadze, "It goes beyond the national environment to the international."

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EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE – ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECTURE IN GEORGIA

The fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453 caused the ancient Christian country of Georgia to lose its close contacts with Europe for several centuries. Having grown weak because of continuous defensive wars, in 1801 Georgia allied herself with Russia. Due to strong and developed historical status in the Caucasus, as well as its central geographical location, Georgia became the political-administrative center of Transcaucasia, the southern part of the Russian Empire. For centuries Georgia had been known as strategic area and the crossroads of the main trade routes joining Europe with Asia. If this significant location had been the reason for frequent invasions and destruction, at the same this time, this location contributed to Georgia's economic development and cultural progress. The Black Sea, which was the shortest route to Europe and to the Mediterranean countries, played a major part in the process.

The 19th century was a turning point in Georgia's economic and cultural life. Some essential events took place in architecture: the Tbilisi apartment house became established, which "like other apartment houses in the rest of Georgia of that time can be regarded as a certain developmental stage of Georgian architecture" (Beridze V, I, 1960, 127). In the middle of the 19th century buildings of mixed European styles with eclectic façades were widespread and in the last decade of the century several houses in the so-called "Georgian style" were built. The façades of the latter were adorned with ornamental elements characteristic of Georgian architecture of the Middle Ages. In these cases, more important and essential was that fact itself rather than the building; on the one hand, "it was a statement made to show the national existence, national impulse and what is more significant such statement was made in the capital city, where the Georgians didn't feel like

hosts any more for a long time"(Beridze V, II, 1963, 45). On the other hand, it showed that local professionals and skilled workmen were ready to begin a true creative process, which was very soon proved through the establishment of Art Nouveau architecture.

Some prerequisites for establishment of Art Nouveau in Europe were created by the English "Arts and Crafts Movement," which occurred in the middle of 19th century. The poet and architect William Morris headed the movement (Cumming E, Kaplan W., 1995, 12). He was against total industrialization and intended to make craftsmanship one of the art fields.

Because of late arrival of capitalism and the weak economy of Georgia, the art of skilled workers and craftsmen continued to be needed for a longer period of time than in Europe. These workers, according to their qualifications, used to join to different guilds (*amqari*) of craftspeople. Because of the intensity of the building process and the growth in demand for skilled workers, the guilds for building craftsmen survived for an especially for a long time, up to the first decade of the 20th century (Beridze V, II, 1963, 41). William Morris, alarmed at rapid modern industrialization in the middle of 19th century, could only just would have dreamed of the situation which existed in Georgia at that time.

The new style established in Europe by the late 19th century went under various names in various nations: Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Sezession, Liberty, etc. In Georgia the style was called "Modern." Information about Art Nouveau arrived in Georgia from Russia and Europe via the shortest route, the Black Sea. Art Nouveau expanded rapidly through different kind of publications: professional, popular and fashion magazines, and photos and through people who came to work or to study in the country.

In Georgia Art Nouveau buildings were constructed not only in the capital but also in many towns, among them Sokhumi, Batumi, Poti, Kutaisi, Gagra, Akhali Atoni, Kobuleti, and Dusheti. The first three were ports; the fourth, an industrial town; and the last three were resorts. But Dusheti, the small administrative center of a mountainous region in Eastern Georgia, with its Art Nouveau-style buildings, proved that

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this style really was very popular in our country. One illustration of this popularity is the Art Nouveau décor used to adorn wooden balconies of the houses in Racha, one of the mountainous regions of Western Georgia, which is famous for its folk architecture (Lejava S., Kiladze M., Giorgobiani K., 2007. 33, 47, 62). Here and there, in Kutaisi, among monotonous façades with strict and symmetric right-angled door and window-frames, we quite unexpectedly find a house at 25 Newport Street which, reflecting the wishes of an owner enamored of Art Nouveau, is adorned with an Art Nouveau window.

In Tbilisi various international and regional exhibitions were often held. In the exhibition of 1901, Art Nouveau building showed up for the first time. It was exemplified in the Nobel brothers' Community Pavilion, which was adorned with Jacob Nikoladze's sculptures. Unfortunately, the building does not exist anymore. The style was so popular in the Georgian capital that it was used not only in the construction of new buildings but also in reconstructions. The former Artstruni caravanserai can be considered one of the best Art Nouveau-style reconstructions and a unique phenomenon in general. The original building was constructed in the 17th century but was destroyed and rebuilt many times. Finally, in 1912 it was adorned with an Art Nouveau façade. Noteworthy too is the architect Simon Kldiashvili's design for the reconstruction of the Kartvelishvili's house on Vartsikhe Street and for the bank building in Pushkin Street. The latter is a former building of Tbilisi Municipal Credit Society built in late the 1870s, which was reconstructed in Art Nouveau-style in 1903.

A European eclectic building having Art Nouveau details is a common enough phenomenon in itself, but when 19th-century Tbilisi traditional apartment houses in the oldest district reflect Art Nouveau constructive or decorative elements, it shows another important and distinctive feature of our Art Nouveau. Such houses are at 3 Ingorokva St., 7 Mari Brosse St., 1 Tabukashvili St., 2/7 Lado Gudiashvili Sq., 19 Ovanes Tumanian St., and 6 Abo Tbileli St. We meet some interesting samples of Art Nouveau reconstructions in Batumi – the houses at 30 Melikishvili St. and at 38

Zubalashvili St. In Kutaisi, there is 9 St Nino St., and the house at the corner of Tamar Mepe Street and Agmashenebeli Square.

From the point of view of Art Nouveau functional diversity, Georgia is rather distinguished. In addition to apartment blocks, Art Nouveau designs were used in many types of buildings: banks, colleges, shops, movie theaters, hospitals, workshops, canteens and factories. It should be mentioned too that Tbilisi also had in Art Nouveau style a tobacco factory, printing facility, and thermal power plant (which is being destroyed by the owner). Poti, small city in Western Georgia, has a library and carriage house in Art Nouveau style. There are also wonderful memorial monuments in this style preserved in historical cemeteries.

The most significant Art Nouveau style buildings are movie theaters. The arrival and then the spread of Art Nouveau and cinema took place simultaneously, and the coincidental success of these two innovations is very important in Georgia. A good



Tbilisi, Giorgi Leonidze str. 7/2. The Atelier of Gloves. Unknown architect, 1902

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Batumi, 9 April str. 12, House, Unknown architect, Early 20th century

example of this is the Apollo Cinema in Tbilisi, an Art Nouveau movie theater built in 1909. Today it is in grave technical condition and is no longer functioning. The Palace Cinema is not operational today either. It was built in Tbilisi in 1914, and only the entrance hall and small fragments of the facade have survived to the present. In the middle of the 20th century the Art Nouveau-style movie theaters Mon Plaisir in Kutaisi and Apollo in Batumi were destroyed. Today in Georgia only the Apollo Cinema in Tbilisi has been preserved in its original form.

The establishment of Art Nouveau features in the construction high-class apartment houses, while taking into consideration local traditions, made the buildings more suitable and convenient. Modern conditions and facilities required more comfortable individual houses, and these needs were met very successfully. Because most of Georgia's Art Nouveau buildings incorporated very sound functional planning that met international norms, most of these buildings have preserved their initial functions up to the present.

Art Nouveau introduced and applied modern

building materials, methods, and technologies and initiated completely new, complex engineering and constructional solutions in architecture, which is clearly expressed in Art Nouveau-style buildings of Georgia's banks. A good example of this is the glass ceiling supported by a metal framework in the banking hall of the former State Bank at 7 Gudiashvili Street. In Kutaisi, the buildings housing banks at 9 St. Nino Street (now a puppet theater) and at 35 Paliashvili Street, with their wide-span halls, are also worthy of notice.

In terms of their exteriors, Art Nouveau buildings substituted varied forms of asymmetry and "broken" space for the established composition of 19th-century buildings with their symmetry and equal distribution of right-angled openings. The façades of Art Nouveau buildings were decorated with bay windows and attics of different height and image, openings of various forms, closed and open tympanums, towers and domes, high pediments and massive parapets. The forms and frames of façade openings were different – right-angled, rhythmical, curved and wavy.

In Georgia the décor of Art Nouveau architectural façades, as well as interiors, are rather varied; they offer sculptures, archivolts and conventionalized bas-reliefs, mascarons, sculpture or plaster plant or geometric ornaments and bas-reliefs, vases and acroterions, garlands, friezes and anthemias, majolica and mosaics, and wall painting.

The sculptures of Art Nouveau architecture are notable for their high professionalism and produce the effect of real sculpture. In this regard, the bank at 3 Leonidze Street is very interesting. The emphasis is placed on the decorated central entrance with symmetrically placed figures of Mercury and Pluto above it. Other wonderful samples of realistic sculptures can be seen in the hall of the Palace movie. Noteworthy also are Art Nouveau reliefs which were not only executed by skilled professionals but are also thematically rich. The big figure-reliefs on the façade of the former K. Zabalashvili "People's House" and Apollo movie theater deserve attention.

Outside Tbilisi, one can find brilliant reliefs on the façades as well as in the interiors of No. 12, 9th of

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April St. in Batumi and at 568 Agmashenebeli Street in Kobuleti.

One of the main characteristics of Art Nouveau architecture in Georgia is mascarón decoration (sculptured human or mythical faces) – a general form of sculptural-ornamental décor that has a very long history. Art Nouveau developed quite a new form of it: the images of women are presented more vividly and descriptively; monsters and magic creatures become more horrific and grotesque. In Art Nouveau buildings we often meet mascarons on façades as well as in interiors. It is very important to note that in some cases they are sculptured and not molded. Noteworthy are the symmetrical molded mascarons of two women on the entrance of the house at 3a Kargareli Street. There are also good samples of mascarons and sculptures in the interiors at 3 Pushkin St., 8 Griboedov St., and 21 Rustaveli Avenue. Outside Tbilisi, there are interesting mascarons in Batumi at 12 9th of April Street and at 1 Gamsakhurdia Street; in Poti at 5 Agmashenebeli St.; and in Kutaisi at 1 Newport Street.

As in European Art Nouveau buildings, those in Georgia with sculptured or plastered décor present both plant and geometric forms. Like other Art Nouveau craftsmen Georgian ones like to use conventionalized or realistic forms of the following plants: the sunflower, rose, clover, lily, iris, oak, plane, chestnut and also the violet and bigger leaved vine and water-plants and narrow-leaved curved rods, and branches with buds, etc. These appeared on façades as well as in interiors and are presented in different forms: molded and sculptured, in mosaic or majolica, on wood or metal, in wall-papers and wall paintings.

Even in the period of eclectic façades in the entrances before the doors and behind them on mosaic floors we often meet the Latin inscription SALVE, which is rather characteristic of Art Nouveau buildings. After reconstruction of the Simon Kldiashvili house at Vartsikhe St. in Art Nouveau style, on the floor of the entrance the Georgian translation of the word appeared – SALAMI. In Tbilisi we have also a Russian translation of SALVE in the Didube District at 5 Kereselidze St. and Armenian ones in Zemo Kala at 3/7 Akhospireli St. and at 3 Akopian St..



Kobuleti, David Agmashenebeli str. 568, House Unknown architect, Early 20th century

Along with spread of eclecticism in Tbilisi since the 1870s “the tradition of city life’s ‘domestication,’ ‘humanization,’ turned out to be so strong that it gave the form to “another” type of yard – the image or the actual structure of the yard, which behind the urban front of a house, behind the ‘European’ façade, creates old, traditional environment. The desire to create an architecturally decorated environment, which the inhabitants of Tbilisi had even in 17th and 18th centuries, was realized in the lay-out of the yard. The yard was enclosed with balconies as it used to be in the past. The traditional was the refinement of individual elements” (Marjanishvili G., 1992. 164-165). When discussing Georgian Art Nouveau it is very important to mention the balconies in the yards behind the houses, which were decorated and harmonized with the house



Kutaisi, Tamar Mepe str. 57, House, Unknown architect, Early 20th century

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Poti, David Agmashenebeli str. 568, House
Unknown architect, Early 20th century

itself by means this style. These wooden balconies are the best examples of the coexistence of European and traditional styles and are another interesting feature of Georgian Art Nouveau. By means of these balconies the professional specialists and artisans added Georgian national and traditional features to Art Nouveau that had, in general, an international character.

Unfortunately, we cannot discuss in detail the Art Nouveau architecture found in Abkhazeti, but according to archival and bibliographic sources the region has many wonderful Art Nouveau buildings. In this regard the history of Gagra is very interesting. In 1901, Prince Alexander Oldenburg, the son-in-law of Czar Nicholas II of Russia began building the Chaika Palace and the Gagripski Hotel in Gagra. Both buildings were constructed in Art Nouveau style. In 1903 the Prince celebrated the completion of the buildings (Gokieli V, 1954; Danelia Z., 1876. Jojua V., 1977).

As regards the architect, it is known that even during his first expedition the Prince was accompa-

nied by one Lutsedarski, who is regarded as the designer of the buildings.

The example of Art Nouveau in Gagra can be considered as an "import" of Art Nouveau architectural buildings: the owner, architect, builders and part of the material were from abroad, imported so speedily that it is very difficult to imagine any active use of local resources. In fact, as far as we know the greater part of the Gagripski Hotel was made of wood, ordered in Norway, shipped to Gagra, and constructed without using nails. However, we also have some examples of so-called Art Nouveau "export." It is apparent that some architects from Tbilisi made their contribution to the spreading of Art Nouveau in the Caucasus. As is well known some important buildings in Baku, with Art Nouveau ones among them, were designed by Georgian architects (Patulaev S., 1963).

In Georgia people from different parts of the country and of different social origin were the customers of Art Nouveau, but who were the executors of it? We know that in Tbilisi before the 1917 Revolution the workshops of A. Novak, A. Andreoletti, Reish and Wills worked on façade and interior decors. The Budnika building company was among them. The comparatively small company of Villa, Debras and Ritz were busy with with sculptural decoration of cemeteries. At that time F. Auch's carpentry and Bepel's ironworks shop were in existence (Morreti K., 1971, 10-13). Large number of Art Nouveau buildings in Tbilisi and other cities of Georgia show that lots of artists, smiths, masons, carpenters, stone dressers, skilled artists in majolica, terrazzo, stained-glass window and mosaic were working. Unfortunately, except for the above-mentioned companies, the sculptor Iakob Nikoladze and the wonderful master Ilia Mamatsashvili, who worked on David Sarajishvili's house, the names of other local artisans are completely unknown.

As regards the professional specialists – architects, engineers and technicians, due to V. Beridze and other researchers their names are known. However, it is very important to admit that according to the information we have, only three foreign architects have been identified: K. Zaar, architect of David Sarajishvili's house, was from Germany; and N. Obolowski

and S. Krichinski were from St. Petersburg. Among the specialist working in Georgia many of them belonged to other nations, but almost all of them were born in Georgia or had lived here for a long time.

The rich heritage of Art Nouveau architecture preserved up to the present day in Georgia is evidence of its successful development here along with its progress in leading European countries. This natural process was stopped by the Communist invasion of Georgia in 1921; the nation as well as its architecture came under the supervision of a totalitarian system.

Research into Art Nouveau architecture is being carried on and we hope to reveal more and more examples in different parts of Georgia. In conclusion, we can say that fundamentally international Art Nouveau acquired traditional, local features in Georgia and revealed varied and completely different examples of the style. First of all, these were traditional, wooden balconies on yard façades of the buildings, decorated in Art Nouveau style. Typical for Georgia is also the large number of buildings, which according to V. Beridze "are of different style," though Art Nouveau seems scarcely, by accident "lightly touches" them (Beridze V., II, 1963, 83). Noteworthy are the existence of Art Nouveau details on the 19th-century buildings in Tbilisi oldest districts. An additional important feature of our Art Nouveau buildings is their functional diversity and the large number of reconstructions executed in this style.

Recently Art Nouveau architecture in Georgia attracted the attention of the following well-known international organizations: New York "World Monuments Watch" (New York); "Reseau Art Nouveau Network" (Brussels) and "Art Nouveau European Route" (Barcelona). Today these organizations display materials representing Georgian Art Nouveau on the Internet and in different international editions.

The European cultural heritage – Georgian Art Nouveau architecture – has been properly valued in Europe and given an appropriate place. Now it is Georgia's turn because Art Nouveau has been neither completely researched nor properly valued and protected; it is not protected from either from total destruction or from frequent wrong and non-scientific restora-

tions. The Georgian Art Nouveau heritage deserves its place not only in scientific research into Georgian culture, art and architecture but also in textbooks and other educational literature as well as in tourist guidebooks and routes.

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**FROM EXPRESSIONISM TO
DADA: GEORGIAN PAINTING
FROM 1910 TO THE 1930S
(BASED ON RECENT DISCOVERIES)**

Those who have ever attempted to study the largely unknown phenomenon of the Georgian avant-garde of the period between 1910 and 1930 would be so astonished by its refined expressiveness, extraordinary, as if hidden tension, plain simplicity, diversity and originality that would rather define it as a random occurrence (L. Magarotto, 2005, 46). All of these features, which distinguished the Georgian art of the first thirty years of the 20th century from contemporary European art, remained dominant throughout its existence. This can be chiefly explained by the readiness of the country of ancient traditions, characterized by predilection for art, to accept, interpret and create artwork responding to contemporary challenges, despite political circumstances. The activity of Georgian artists in the early 20th century and their desire to create something new was aroused by the nation's long cultural memory, which was further intensified by the changed historical reality.

It was fairly logical that Georgian artists took keen interest in contemporary European art and created highly original works responding to the time. They considered themselves as part of the European cultural milieu and attempted to produce art of their own and even rival European artists (P. Margvelashvili, 2002, 36, 48; I. Abesadze, K. Bagratishvili, 2005, 30, 36, 102...). It is therefore not surprising that in the early 20th century, when avant-garde sentiments became increasingly widespread in many European cities and towns, Tbilisi found itself engaged in the leading international movement thanks to its traditional openness and readiness to accept the new.

Scholars and artists interested in Georgian art of the period 1910 through the 1930s often assign an outstanding role in creating Georgian avant-garde art to the first wave of avant-garde artists, who emigrated from Russia after the October Revolution and stayed

in Tbilisi for several years. Indeed, the importance of the avant-garde atmosphere created by them, as well as their influence on Georgian art and the Georgian public in general should not be underestimated.

However, the choosing of Tbilisi by extreme avant-garde artists was purposeful. It demonstrates that the Russian poets and artists knew that apart from a more favorable political and economic situation in Tbilisi they would find the aristocracy looking for novelty, as well as a vibrant, exotic, multinational and mixed atmosphere, which they considered conducive to creating contemporary art.

It is also natural that the Zdanevitch brothers, who created avant-garde art themselves while studying in Russia, were the most prolific of the Georgian artists engaged in the avant-garde life in Tbilisi between 1916 and 1919. Apart from them, Valerian Sidamon-Eristavi, Davit Kakabadze and Shalva Kikodze received their arts education in Russia. While the influence of Russian art is hardly noticeable in the works of Davit Kakabadze and Shalva Kikodze, Sidamon-Eristavi's paintings, made in Russia and then in Tbilisi, vividly display the features of the Russian artistic tradition. However, the influence becomes weaker in his later works, which can be accounted for by the lively interest he developed in the history of Georgia. This theme found reflection in almost all forms of his art. Being a man of a noble origin and a patriot with a high sense of responsibility, Sidamon-Eristavi interpreted the past as well as the present of his country in a highly creative way, employing national forms of expression. It is also of note that compared to highly original canvases devoted to the past, those depicting the establishment of Bolshevism are rendered with more intense forms conveying the bitter experiences of the artist. A strong determination and aspirations led the artist to reject his fairly refined Russian Realistic-Impressionist style and embrace Expressionism.

Disputes and heated debates held in the artistic cafés of Tbilisi were indeed the phenomenon exported into the Georgian reality from the Russian avant-garde and more specifically, Futurist art milieu. This trend was characterized by shocking behavior, including cardinal innovations, anti-traditionalism, absurdity and an intense desire to express innovation using a scan-

dal as a premeditated method for attracting the public (S. Yurkov, 2003 p. 51). Georgian artists also attended the disputes, but most of them, despite their lively interest in contemporary art, acted as observers rather than participants. However, there were a few people, especially young writers, who agitated in the streets of Tbilisi: 'They would rush into the streets of Tbilisi like crazy, astounding the 'decent' public with their appearance and behavior. Nigola (Nikolay) Chachava had his necktie knotted onto his feet, another Nikolay Shengelaia (later to become a film director) recited poetry usually swaying on a branch of the tallest tree in Golovin (what is now Rustaveli) Avenue. They say it was in this position that Kote Marjanishvili saw him when passing by and told the mischief-maker to climb down the tree and follow him to the shooting scene and that it was from this moment that the career of one of the most talented Georgian film directors began' (G. Asatiani, G. Margvelashvili, 1983, p. 9)

The graphical series *Circus* by Irakli Gamrekeli, which is composed of ten leaves, was designed for the second issue of *H₂SO₄* magazine, which never saw the light. It was this graphical cycle, discovered only very recently, that inspired me to write this article and also the fact that, unlike the case with literature, hardly anything has been written about Georgian Futurist painting.

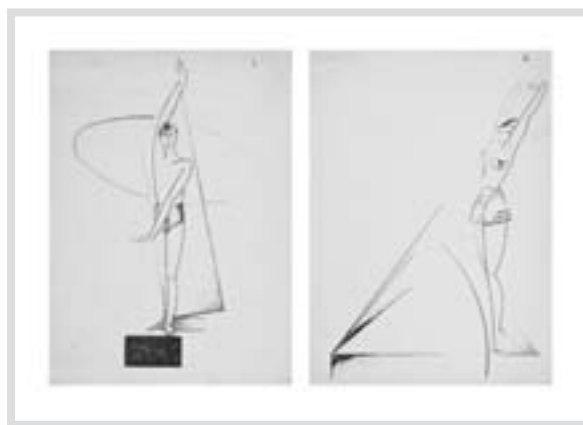
The series present a highly gifted artist in constant search for new forms of artistic expression, who had an extraordinary feeling for the art of the first thirty years of the 20th century. I. Gamrekeli became an artist slightly later and unlike other Georgian painters of his time, had not received training in Europe.

The *Circus* series made in 1924 carries essential features of avant-garde. Although the Futurist movement, which arose in Italy before the First World War, had lost relevance in Europe by 1924, it continued its existence in Russia. Apart from containing the typical characteristics of the Cubist and Constructivist movements, separate leaves as well as the entire series illustrate the 'beauty of speed,' characteristic of Futurist art. The series, like the works by the founders of Italian Futurist art, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini, Umberto Boccioni and Luigi Rusolo, shows the desire of the artist to create a so-called 'dynamic sensation'

or 'the movement of feelings.'

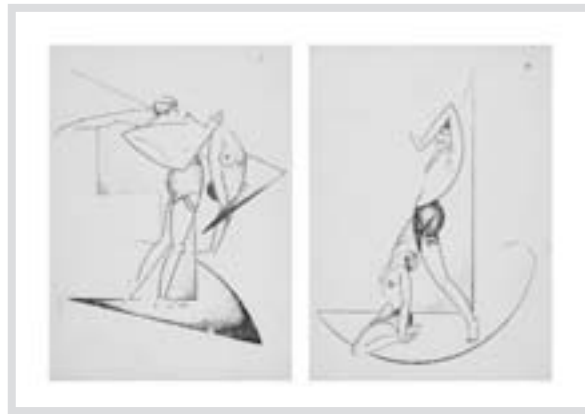
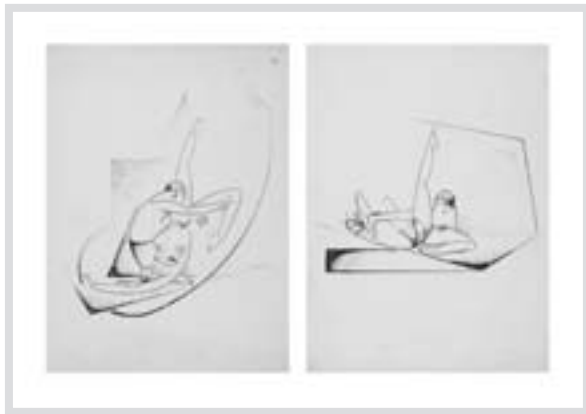
Displaying the movements of an acrobat, the graphical series *Circus* is formed with an expressive line, which chiefly serves to carry energy, but sometimes also depicts a truly attractive pattern. This was atypical of Russian Futurism, one of the pronounced characteristics of which was anti-aestheticism. The Italians, on the contrary, highlighted the aesthetic elements in Futurist art. 'We wish to intensify aesthetic perception as the souls of the picture and the viewer are to merge with each other...' (K. Thomas, 2004, 77). A line, like color, must have aesthetically appealed to the viewer. The technique of arranging deformed, vibrating lines and principal outlines into rows characteristic of the early stage of Futurist art appears redeveloped in the series. More precisely, the approach is different. Irakli Gamrekeli used ten leaves to portray what Russian and especially Italian Futurists fitted into a single picture. 'The deformation and multiplication of objects occur in imagination. They acquire transparency thanks to the visual force, which can yield almost similar results as Roentgen rays... Simultaneity is achieved through the distribution of numerous images in rows and the rendering of various phases of movements in the form of interrupted shots' (K. Thomas, 2004, 79).

Although each leaf of the *H₂SO₄* journal is self-contained, it generates the feeling of 'fast movement' and simultaneity of movements. The artist also applies the principle of shots as each page-shot, implied during turning over the leaves by the spectator, intensifies the endless rhythm of anticipation. In addition to subjectively, futuristically perceived dynamic mo-



Gamrekeli, *Circus*, 1924

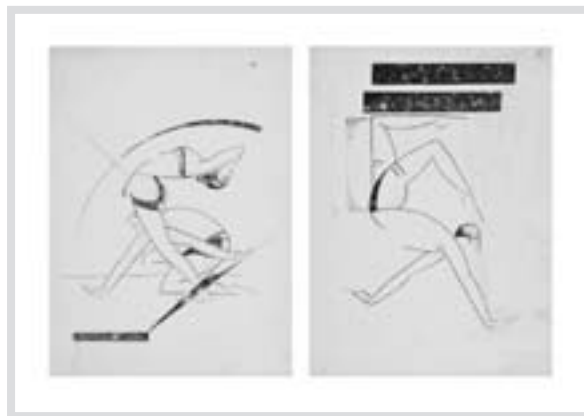
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tion seen in a seemingly plain, light composition also demonstrates other features of avant-garde movements, such as apparent eroticism, which catches the viewer's eye from the very beginning and intensifies the shocking impact. It is remarkable that in Russian Futurism one can hardly find works in which eroticism would be so emphasized. A line is also rendered differently. Marking the features and movements of figures as if outlined by a ruler, the lines remind us of contemporary Constructivism, while the undulating lines with which transient forms or soft, elastic movements are rendered, are associated with Art Nouveau style of the earlier period. Mannerism, which characterizes some of the figures, must be related to Jugendstil or absurdity typical of extreme avant-garde movements. It is well known that Marinetti maintained close ties with the representatives of Symbolism and Jugendstil which emerged in literary-revolutionary Paris. The theme itself – the circus with acrobats, gymnastic steps and risky jumps – was highly popular in avant-garde art in general and in Futurist painting in particular due to the dynamic movement it depicted.

Also of note are elements typical of European fashion and new Socialist art, which came into evidence in the 1920s and were very much in line with Futurist, revolutionary sentiments. What also made this style original was the maintenance of form despite deformation or an intact form, as well as a generalized, smiling, slightly ironical and a mask-like face taking its origins in Expressionism. It is important to note that a mask-like, simplified face which had emerged in Shalva Kikodze's art years before, recurs in Georgian fine arts throughout the 20th century (in the works of M. Berdzenishvili, R. Tarkhan-Mouravi, D. Eristavi and others).

The series also responds to the principal objective of Futurism, i.e., it demonstrates a specific event or activity. Some of the original compositions reveal several notable features: the positions of different complexities of the two acrobats shown in the center and the supple forms inside are simultaneously outlined by a contour, which, depending on the poses of the figures themselves, is rendered through a rigid, extremely geometrical line creating right-angled rhythms or a more flexible, energetic and mobile line pointing to the next leaf. On most leaves, fairly broad, right-angled black stripes and corners of outlines regulate Futurist composition in a Constructivist fashion. The facial features, wrinkles and other details are rendered with straight, short, rhythmical lines, which also serve a decorative function. The rhythm of the lines, as compared with dynamic Futurist rhythm, is modest, though it is still employed by the artist. The sense of incompleteness, as caused by light compositions, further emphasizes its continuation and the unity of the series. It may well be that Irakli Gamrekeli refused to use colors because of the fact that the *Circus* series was produced for a magazine, while color was ascribed huge importance by Russian, as well as Italian Futurists. In all compositions, the black points turning lighter toward the center only serve to fill and soften geometric forms and have a decorative function, while at the initial stage of Futurism, the technique originating from Pointillism and Divisionism, fragmented the material aspect of an object into small-size energies. With such fragmented color and vibrating, recurring contour the object would lose material essence and gain spiritual dimension. Hence color and contour expressed creative force in Futurist art.



Alogism, characteristic of European and especially of Russian Futurism, which defined the formation of the aesthetics of the absurd and later laid grounds for the emergence of Dadaism and Surrealism in Western Europe, is also evident in Gamrekeli's *Circus* series containing clear features of absurdity.

There is another aspect which distinguishes Russian Futurism from the western version. The difference lies in the themes displayed. Along with reflecting new aspects of human experience, urban vision, rebellious anti-aestheticism, stunning behavior, demonstrated the destruction of artistic traditions, Russian Futurist artists paid tribute to historical and cultural reminiscences, folklore and archaisms, intimacy and purely lyrical emotionality. The art of Georgian Futurist artists (I. Gamrekeli and B. Gordeziani) contains works presenting only urban themes, similar to the case in Italian art.

The Futurist magazine *H₂SO₄* was a slightly belated obsession, but a short-lived obsession of a group which included more poets and writers than artists. That the magazine was founded slightly late should not be surprising. The establishment of such a group in Tbilisi required the bringing together of young, extremely avant-garde poets and artists, which took years. Regrettably, only few works by Beno Gordeziani have survived. Yet, some new discoveries may be made in future, which will considerably change our understanding of this phenomenon.

Irakli Gamrekeli left an indelible mark on every field of art. His rich artistic legacy, including canvases, illustrations for *H₂SO₄*, film and stage designs and the avant-garde film *My Grandmother*, points to a highly original, bold-thinking artist.

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FROM GEORGIAN MODERNISM TO TRANSAVANTGARDISM, A DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is well known that the establishment of terminology and giving the name of a cultural phenomenon is difficult. But, it is necessary to choose a definition of terms, the exact explanation of events for proper conduct of scientific research, for disclose the nature of any artifact, for proper reading the values of certain artistic currents. This concern is of immediate relevance to our topic "Modernism in Georgia". This term, was mostly used in Soviet Union scholarly literature, in a negative way. This explained by the existence of Soviet ideological culture, which had been isolated from any kinds of Western European values. Moreover, it was considered that the New Western artistic currents were full with internal contradictions which generally could not be accepted by Soviet public facilities. The negative attitude of Soviet ideological institutions to the nascent arts stream were continued after, in the next stage of its development, called "Postmodernism". It should be noted that in modern Russian culturelogical dictionaries literature indicates the parity between the concepts of "Postmodernism" and "Trans Avant-gardism". This was due to the fact that from the outset, the notion of previous trends "Modernism" and "Avant-gardism" were equated to one another (Culturology, 1998). Despite the apparent similarities, these concepts differ significantly among themselves. It is given that "Modernism" consists of a mix of avant-garde artistic currents, but, in fact, in terms of philosophical thinking by perception ways they polar differ from each other, therefore, in our opinion, it is not organic to bring them together under one roof of "Modernism". The same can be said about the relationship between a pair of terms - "Postmodernism" and "Trans Avant-gardism". In encyclopedic literature (especially the Soviet period) "Trans Avant-gardism" is considered synonymous with "Postmodernism", which was self-

sustaining in war with "Neo Avant-gardism" (Culturology, 1998, II, 89-92). It should accept that the above does not give rise to notions of identity shown. On the contrary, this confusion in terminology is a cause of entanglement uninformed recipient. In this context it should be noted that at the junction of the 19th and 20th centuries, like foreign countries, in Georgia had been penetrate "Modern Style" that in Western European countries, has been named differently ("Art Nouveau", "Modernista", "Seccesion", etc.).

This style reminded about itself in the decorations of Georgian luxury houses facades , as well as in the ornamental stylized organic forms of the paintings of Evgenie Lancere and Joseph Sharleman. Born in Britain the style "Modern" was so common in European countries and except the root in a word, has little resemblance to "modernism". Despite that, in the scientific literature they are mixed up, as it is indicated by art critic Dimitri Sarapyanov in his case studies about "Art Nouveau"(Moscow, 1997).

If to consider the term "Modernism", which etymological means "new", in a context of the Georgian creative realities of the beginning of 20th century, we will see aspiration to updating of the artists who have appeared in a field of activity in 20-s' years of last century. They have begun the activity, also as well as their European colleagues, in an antagonism with previous generation of artists. They have turned away not from last universal heritage, but from academism, characteristic for creativity of the senior generation of artists, from their smoothed art.

As a result of it has arisen from Avant-garde art, motivated to find a national art form. In the first quarter of 20th century the Georgian culture was penetrated, by aspiration to a reconstruction of the monumental art forms. It was epoch of Revolution changes, which needed adequate art products.

The specified tendency was reflected in the fine arts. Searches of artists have been directed to comprehension and inculcation of the monumental principles to an easel picture. Artists of 20-s' years of 20th century have made considerable effort for achievement of a monumental system in easel products. They, first of all, have addressed to traditions of medieval architecture, murals, sculptural reliefs and gold-chiselled images. As it is known, the "Georgian society

of artsmen" led by Dimitri Shevardnadze arranged expeditions for copying from Georgian frescos. Besides, artists on a place got acquainted with main principles of achievement of a monumental system, a moderate decorativism and synthesis of different kinds of arts. The second basic problem facing to the Georgian culture, meant clearing for itself cultural orientation between the East and the West. This point in question, naturally, eternally existed for the country located on a joint of these two regions.

"A rose of Gafiz I place in Prudon's vase,
In a garden of Besiki I put Baudlaire's Malicious
Flowers"
-will tell Titsian Tabidze in a poem of "City of
Chalde".

Thus, the Iranian illuminations used in the background by David Kakabadze in "the Self-portrait with a pomegranate" looks absolutely natural.

Like David Kakabadze, the hobby for east art characterized products of an early stage of creativity of Lado Gudiashvili and Shalva Kikodze. But here it is necessary to make a notice that later these artists will overestimate the priority position concerning East values. Certain cosmopolitanism - balancing between "Europeanization" and "Orientalism" to a peculiar that epoch, in creativity of artists of 20-s' years, unlike the Georgian poets of "symbolists", seems in a more equal balance thanks to assistance of national traditions. Thereupon it is necessary to mention the polemic developed on pages of magazine "Shvidi Mnatobi" (1919, N1), between the artist David Kakabadze with poets symbolists. Thus he has loudly declared that for the Georgian traditional paintings are alien masks, twins, as well as phantoms and chimeras, that new Georgian painting will not have blue coloring (favorite color of symbolists) and it will go another direction. On this way the basic reference point was except medieval Georgian art, creativity of their senior contemporary - Niko Pirosmiani. "The revelation" of Niko Pirosmianashvili was that beam which has shined a way not only to young Georgian artists, but also as a whole all cultural public of the country facing obligatory updating. His name (Pirosmiani) has been identified with national energy. The ideological inspirer of the Georgian Avant-garde of Grigol Robakidze will tell "You look at pictures of Pirosmiani and you trust to

Georgia". Later David Kakabadze will add - "From no other artist did I receive a perception of Georgia similar to Pirosmiani's." It was promoted by the impulse received by the artist from perception of the national folklore, those legends for which were not alien to pantheism and harmony. Boris Pasternak wrote that these fantastic visions full mystics promote enrichment of human imagination. It is necessary to carry Evgenie Lansere's one archival note to 20th years of 20th century addressed to Joseph Sharleman. In the letter, little-known for the wide public, the well known master, the professor of Art academy of Georgia E. Lansere was against predilection of students for greenish colour, characteristic creativity of Pirosmiani. The creative intelligentsia in search of so-called "the New Georgian art form", provoked by revolutions, did not limit itself to only internal impulses. Told it was well reflected in innovation and courageous creative actions, at times radical, with touch of shocking of the public opinion, sounding in a unison with the European cultural process. Young artists understood that to the Georgian art is not good to be limited in national frames as the senior generation of artists had already introduced ideas "europeanisation". Thus, in an agenda there was a problem of finding-out of mutual relations between terms "national" and "supranational (international)" and also a question of a finding of equality between them. A national art form lifted to level of universal sounding, meant synthesis of traditions with innovative vision which has come to light in different art directions: in an expressionism, a cubism, futurism etc. To the beginning of 30-s' years of last century, before the totalitarian ideological press would erect "a socialist realism" board as a barrier to prevent free transmental exercises of adherents of avant-gardism, in the Georgian reality occurred a lot of unusual and mutually exclusive. The different art unions replaced each other. There were demarches of "Proletculturists". The State, on the one hand - forbade, and with another - conceded to free thoughts of creative intelligentsia. In spite of the fact that there was a gradual devaluation of quality of perception of creative freedom, in Georgia that was not traced nihilism which was inherent in Europe the beginnings of the first decade of 20th century. The apocalyptic visions preaching about a decline of Europe, are marked

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at first in Nikolai Berdiaev's philosophical works, and then in Oscar Spengler's. In Georgia the famous writers, producers and painters: Grigol Robakidze, Micheil Dzhavakhishvili, Pavle Ingorokva, Geronti Kikodze, Kote Marjanishvili, Sandro Akhmeteli, Dimitri Shevardnadze, David Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili, Shalva Kikodze, Irakli Gamrekeli, Petre Otskheli were trusted in idea of possibility of revival from ashes like a phoenix, by the beginnings of world chronology from the universe end.

When in 20-s' years of last century Valerian Gaprindashvili has compared the Georgian poetry with "Night of Dionysus", which meant spontaneous aspiration to freedom. It's given a special sharpness of intuition of the creator who has reflected triumph and tragedy of an epoch. In the first quarter of 20th century the aspiration to national identification of creativity was expressed in a self-reflection, an introversion, the review of own soul of the creator. At this time the set of self-portraits both in poetry, and in painting is created. Interest to own "Alter" was reflected in series of self-portraits of David Kakabadze and Shalva Kikodze, and also in creativity of poets of symbolists - "Tsisperi kantcelebi (Blue Horns)" ("I - in a mirror" Valerian Gaprindashvili, "Duel with the Double "Titsian Tabidze and Paolo Iashvili's "Self-portrait"). At comparison of these products the various approaches to the relation of tradition to innovation in painting and poetry is accurately traced. By means of a word and a rhyme, a contour and colour, poets and artists reached a variety in treatment of the same plan.

If "Tsisperi kantcelebi (Blue Horns)" leant against symbolical thinking, causing on duel of the doubles and own shades artists by means of expressive lines and color scale reached revealing of the psychological characteristic of the thinnest nuances of soul. One is accurately traced that over the Georgian creators the unique plan supervised - to find ways of national self-expression adequate to innovative vision of the form. The geographical factor and the hot southern sun as in that time producer Kote Marjanishvili neatly marked, promoted "children of the sun" from national positions to couple tradition to innovation for creation of such cultural wealth about which will write special works as in Georgia, and abroad. It is necessary to notice that the Georgian aesthetic thought,

after West European, will designate painting of the beginning of 20th century the term "Modernism". Considering that fact that the specified term is more organic to the literature and architecture of that time, in our opinion, to the characteristic of a certain direction of the Georgian painting of the beginning of 20th century the term "Avant-garde" is more comprehensible. As to the term "Postmodernism", for the first time it was used for the characteristic of the European architecture of the end of 20th century by the scientist from Italy Paolo Portogezzi. Proceeding from the above-stated, I consider that for a designation of the process occurring in the Georgian visual art after "Avant-garde" instead of the term of "Postmodernism", more lawful is the term "Trans Avant-garde". In favor of the told says that fact that in the Georgian validity the dominant role was played by the creator, bearing own creative credo in a close connection with national traditions. That it was in Avant-garde. While the author of the concept of "Simulacr", the known French culturologist Jean Bodriar named "the Apostle of a postmodernism", with alarm has specified in that tendency of the West European art of a postmodernism when "object" prevailed over "subject" (the creator), that in turn promoted stratification of art structures. As it is known, critic Achel Bonito Oliva in 1982 in the review to Venetian Bienale for the first time has used the term "Trans Avant-garde" to creativity of artists: Entso Kuk, Sandro Kiya, Paladino and Klimente.

Soon "the Trans Avant-garde" confirming "Neofigurativizm", counter to abstractionism, has left borders of Italy and has extended worldwide with specifically national lines and, frequently, under other name. Approximately two ten years ago, the Trans Avant-garde has crossed borders of the former USSR, including territories of Georgia in which already were favorable preconditions for its distribution. It is necessary to notice that despite existence of "doctrine" of a method of the "Socialist Realism". The Georgian artists in 30-s' years of 20th century furtively "tasted" different western formalistic art currents. In this short interval of time (30-s' years) the Georgian culture represented an eclectic mix of several art currents. Like medieval theatre it was characterized simultaneous. This simultaneous, with harmonization of contrasts underlined in creativity of artists Petre Otskheli, Irakli

Gamrekeli, Michail Gotsiridze, Beno Gordeziani, etc. as the tendency of creation of synthetic images. Then, there has come the hegemony period of "The Strict Censor", suspended free creativity. Soon throughout the whole decades in Georgia has come the time of cultural stagnation. Despite restriction by ideology of the Soviet Unitary State, the Georgian artists showed boldness to experiment, once again confirming that degree of perception of creative freedom in Georgia was higher than in other republics of Soviet Union. It is necessary to notice that it was possible to them till 1937 when the reprisal wave has overflowed creative intelligentsia of the country. In a consequence, having felt comparative liberalization, generation of artists of 50-60-s' years of the last century have started to fill existing vacuum. The stages of development of art directions passed by then Europe and America imposed young creators of Georgia the stylistic metamorphoses. The young generation of the country aspired to fill the missed.

Owing to what exercises in Pointillism, a Fauvism, a Cubism, Surrealism, Abstractionism etc. kaleidoscopically replaced each other. Then, for some time, again there has come calm, and already from the end of 70-s' years of 20th century when on all the USSR dissident movement became more active, in Georgia "the Underground Art" began to bulk up. Here it instead of "vault" has risen on 10th floor of the Tbilisi Academy of arts. Grouping, under the name "Artists of 10th floor" in structure: Mamuka Tsetskhladze, Niko Tsetskhladze, Oleg Timchenko, Mamuka Dzhaparidze, Karlo Kacharava, Gia Dolidze, Temur Iakobashvili, Gia Loria, Zurab Sumbadze, Akaki Ramishvili, etc., has soon replenished with new members: Guram Tsibakhashvili, David Chikhladze, Gia Edzgeradze, Lia Shvelidze, etc. Non-conformism of these artists, uncooperative attitude to an existing system, was expressed by means of irony and grotesque. These artists by means of nonconventional materials (an economic paint, iron and wooden inserts) tried to create the "Trans Avant-garde" art forms, with a romantic elation and mood.

In comparison with "Trans Avant-garde" products of Russian artists, their Georgian colleagues differed with more moderate treatment. Thereupon it is necessary to note creativity of artists independently

laying a way to "Trans Avant-garde", without being united in any creative organization. These artists were: Esmā Oniani, Irakli Parjiani, Merab Abramishvili, and also, nowadays well Levan Chogoshvili, Gia Bugadze, Levan Margiani, etc. which without rejecting a past cultural heritage (both national and universal), carefully, by selection creatively comprehended it. It is necessary to note feeling of tolerance of the Georgian artists in relation to the past so-as almost everywhere "Trans Avant-garde" aggressively opposed itself to previous "Avant-garde". Thus it is not necessary to deny that is veiled nevertheless certain ideological opposition with directly previous group of abstract artists (Ilia Zautashvili, Gela Zautashvili, Luka Lasareishvili, Soso Tsereteli) was observed. Political properties of 90-s' years of 20th century (revolution, civil war, ethno conflicts), caused political and an economic crisis in Georgia, have created favorable circumstances for a Trans Avant-garde inoculation.

Considering that begun in Georgia in the end of 20th century Trans Avant-garde formation for the present is not ended, and without presence of a certain time distance it is impossible to estimate to the full an event it is clear that this business of the near future. At the given stage we will be limited only to ascertaining of those tendencies which are available. It, first of all: 1. Introduction neofiguration, instead of abstract nonfiguration; 2. Application of grotesque and irony in the form of the basic means of expression; 3. Introduction intertextuality in art structure, result of that is stylistic eclecticism; 4. Presence of motivation of a mythological and religious order; 5. Nostalgia on the historical past; 6. The tendency of the double coding. The above-stated tendencies give to the modern Georgian fine arts that originality which was always inherent in it, that was promoted by the strong national base and the cultural heritage of the past refracted in a modern prism. To us remains only at agreement level to consider feature of the cultural environment for a finding of appropriate terms to the current art phenomena.

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**FOR THE DEFINITION OF
CERTAIN FEATURES OF
MODERNIST ARTISTIC CAFES.
ON IDEOLOGICAL
CONCEPTUAL LANGUAGE
OF "QIMERIONI" PAINTINGS**

Artistic café Qimerioni was founded in Tbilisi in 1919. The very same year Sergey Sudeikin, Lado Gudishvili and David Kakabadze decorated it with murals. This paper addresses only - conceptual expression - of Qimerioni painting. We believe that considering the specific, artistic-social structural typology of Qimerioni, it is possible, and even important, to single out and accentuate this particular aspect.

The history of artistic cabaret/club/café begins in the 80s of XIX century, when in Paris, Monmartre, in 1881, Rodolphe Salis founded the first cabaret "Le Chat Noir" (Black Cat). From this very period the so-called "Cabaret Epidemics" begins. By 1920-30s it spread to almost every big city in Europe.-It was this specific period, namely the end of XIX and beginning of XX centuries, when cabaret movement, cabaret style and "Café Culture" was frequently debated in Europe and Russia.

It is interesting that the café "Black Cat" was initially named "Artistic Cabaret". It is also noteworthy that scholars, while discussing cabarets of that period, usually referred to them as "Artistic Cabarets". It has never been explained why the term "Artistic Cabaret", and not simply "Cabaret", was used in reference to this phenomenon. We are left with impression that in this particular case, the preceding term "Artistic", was not simply, an adjective, but a general term that identified specific characteristics of cabaret of that period, and differentiated it from the modern perception of genre and form of the phenomenon.

According to the authors of the study "Artistic Cabaret "Shelter of Comedians", "Cabaret Art" (unlike Café Chantant, Variete and a Review) is an art

of "high-stage" art, i.e. "Meta-theatre", "Theatre about Theatre"(A. Konechni, V. Morderer, A. Parnis, R. Timenchik, 1988, 100). As drama critic A. Kugel explains in his article published in 1910: "Cabaret is a theatre of smile... undertone of smile – that's the difference between cultural and non-cultural cheery theatres... humorous is more important than comic effect. " (A.R. Kugel, 1910, 221)

Thus cabaret is a somewhat parodic form of the theatrical art. Consequently, grotesque-carnival expressions, both visual and verbal, represent its principal aesthetic norm. It liberally engages various forms of the given aesthetics: masks, dolls and marionettes, free-spirited, unceremonious relationships and remarks interactions abolishes socially accepted behavioral etiquettes and hierarchical norms, and establishes the laughter, parodic-humorous precedence.

It is also noteworthy that the emergence of unconnected, incoherent or absurd art salon (salon de art incoherent), "Theatre of Shadows" and comic monologues is connected with the first cabaret "The Black Cat". Manifestations of Dadaist Cabaret Voltaire demonstrated the extreme, rather aggressive forms of grotesque, that is cynicism and sarcasm, defined as "harlequinade made of nothingness" (Hugo Ball) (Art in Theory 1900-1990, 246) even by the participants of the performances.

The chronology of establishment of artistic cabarets in Europe and Russia indicates that their creation was determined by a concrete cultural-aesthetic, modernist context, in conjunction with a political, social and psychological disposition of the public. This amalgamate commenced a desire and rationale of public unity and togetherness, and delineated the social-aesthetic function of these organizations.

For this reason, artistic cabarets of every country and city had their own unique features, distinct environment, and a personal "theme": end of 19th century in France was the period of escalation of anti-bourgeois feelings, the era of aggravated social protest. After about 15-20 years Berlin and Munich cabarets are founded, ("Eleven Hangmen", "Simplicium", "Smoke and Noise"), famous for satirical songs, endorsing Fronde aspirations, and skits ridiculing imperial claims of Wilhelm II. The aspiration for opening of

Dadaist Cabaret Voltaire in respectable Zurich during the World War I, in 1916, was, as explained by Hugo Ball, "to remind the world that there are independent men "beyond the war and Nationalism" who live for other ideals". Dadaist manifestations were "extremely pacifistic reaction to the mess of this idiotic war, direct attack on "the civilizations that produced it" (Max Ernst). While in Russia it is a period which entered into the history with two, radically different definitions – "Silver Age" and "Damned decade", then period between the two revolutions (1905 – 1917), when on one hand exceptional concentration of energy occurs and at the same time the feeling of the expiration of personal time, as the end of history, is present: "The objects are dead, wrote V. Shklovski, - we have lost the perception of the universe.... And say farewell to life with much ease, the life we fail to feel" (L.Tikhvinskaia, 1995, 19).

Thus cabaret culture, is of distinctively confrontational nature, not only by its etiquette but its ethical–moral stand as well, it is active and reactionary, often rather acute and aggressive. It contradicts reality, established political and moral norms, values and bans, officially sanctioned culture, and their establishment, as a rule, occurs at the time of social and political crises, during changes and turning points.

We believe that this particular phenomenon and the feature of cabaret art determines the parodic form of the genre its grotesque-ironical aesthetics. As M. Bakhtin points out, the beginning of laughter and carnivalesque perception of the universe, being the basis of grotesque, brings the liberation from the prevailing view upon the universe, conventionality, established truth, universally accepted norms, allows to look at it from another, new angle...liberates the human mind, perception and thinking for new opportunities."For this particular reason, certain carnivalization of the mind precedes great upheavals, even in the scientific sphere, and in a certain way prepares it for the forthcoming events."(M. Bakhtin, 1986, 327, 343).

But the mentioned contradiction is at the same time parodic reflection of a given reality. Cabaret is not only a parody on theatre, but it also represents a "micro-face" of the life, reality, its mirror, although a crooked one (Tikhvinskaia L., 1995, 19).

For this reason the existence and functionality of these institutions becomes dependant on political and social conditions of the country: In Germany it gets activated by the end of the first World War and the following period, gets banned as the Nazi regime begins (to be more precise the Nazi regime allows the existence of the cabaret in a "benign", patriotism–encouraging humorous form), in Russia and Georgia it stops existence after the establishment of Bolshevik dictatorship, while under relatively neutral and peaceful conditions it actually acquires features of the regular restaurant, losing its specific identity and nature.

The statement above suggests that it was not an ordinary gathering place for artists, poets, drama and literary people. What is more important, it was not incidental that the visiting audience typically represented exceptional, intellectual and artistic part of society. Cabaret was a specific space, where modernistic outlook was establish and disseminated. It was the period when the historic process of art differentiation and self-determination was carried out with full self-regulation and secularism, when art gets shaped into the subjective, self-sufficient form of perception and expression, while on the other hand tendency for art unification and synthesis strongly shows through, being one of the central aesthetic idea of the epoch. Artistic cabaret-clubs are one of the reflectors of the given tendency, one of the attempts of its realization.

The cabaret is a synthesized structure, and not only for the simple reason, that, within its space, the different fields of art and various representatives of art used to merge. Similar environmental spaces used to get structured on the basis of certain outlook values. For instance, Petersburg cabarets are based upon the Yevreinov idea of the life's theatricalization; the last project of De Stile, café De L'Aubette, was based on the idea of unification of art and universe/reality, and the creation of its universal flexible model. These examples show that conceptual undercurrent of cabaret was not just a reaction or confrontation, neither was it solely parody of reality, or merely a gathering place. This kind of active attitude is definitely a position that is oriented on alteration of consciousness, change of reality. Artistic cabaret/club is one more immersive space, one more "Gesamkunstwerk". We believe that

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“Qimerioni” Hall

this was the reason why these spaces gets painted (“Pitoresk’ – in Moscow, “Stray Dog” and “Shelter of Comedians” in Petersburg, Café De L’Aubette” in Strasburgh, “La Coupole” in Paris): ritualized space, synthesized structure, naturally, logically “requires” paintings, not only as a mere decoration for the space, but also as art, as one of the synthesizing factors. As art, when it is a part of the ritual space and synthesized structure, becomes reflective of contemporary historic, social and ideological interactions. The factors that represent the foundation for the non-artistic basis of synthesis, although a reason for and around which architecture (environment–space) and art merge.

This, specific context is created in Tbilisi by 1910s, and that is when the so called “Cabaret Epidemics” spreads here as well (“Brotherly Comfort”, “Peacock’s Tail”, “Fantastic Tavern”, “Argonaut’s Boat”, “Qimerioni”). Their establishment coincides with the active immigration of artistic society from Russia, and they all seem to be founded by modernists of different nationalities residing in Tbilisi at that period. It is noteworthy to consider that as the tradition of artistic café-clubs comes from Russia, tradi-

tion of their decoration should also be connected with artistic clubs of Moscow and Petersburg. (“Fantastic Tavern” is painted by Lado Gudiashvili, Alexander Petrakovsky, Niko Nikoladze, Yuri Degen, Ilia Zdanovich, “Argonaut’s Boat” by Kyril Zdanevich, Lado Gudiashvili, Bazhbeuk-Melikov, “Qimerioni” – by Sergey Sudeikin, Lado Gudiashvili, David Kakabadze). Although, the number and diversity of activities of similar artistic cafes in Tbilisi, by the 1910s is indicative that artistic cafes of the period became a logical and natural part of Tbilisi cultural space of the period (they were shaped after the environmental, spiritual, aesthetic/ethical worldview and strivings of the society, within which it sprung to existence). The objective circumstances of its creation, cause and consequence regularity (whether social or artistic) suggest that the given phenomenon, and the Georgian art in general, is a part of early modernism discourse.

By that period Tbilisi had already grown into a city of the capitalist type, and a new modern culture is being created.

The artistic environment is characterized with an unparalleled diversity; having received education in Petersburg and Moscow, Paris and Munich, the new generation returns home, world renowned artists, writers, Drama experts arrive to Georgia fleeing War and Revolutions in Russia. These are the years of Georgia’s short lived independence, plagued by contradictions, and aggravated political and economic conditions, although blended with optimism and striving for freedom, when the country and society try to find a way to create their own future, and have drive for self-affirmation.

We believe that there are following factors determining the character of Tbilisi artistic cafes and “Qimerioni” in particular:

1. Political situation of the country, which very much ascertained the sound, positive psychological disposition that differed from those of western and Russian;
2. The city of Tbilisi itself, tinted with the universal, historically established synthesis of Western and Eastern cultures. Unique openness of the Georgian culture, which used to be expressed equally in the city’s material body, laws and habitual co-existence.

3. The characteristics of Tbilisi modern culture and features of art: although its "multi-cultural" nature was contingent of concrete historical conditions, Tbilisi phenomenon, drawing from the general attributes of Georgian culture, became a carrier of major characteristics of Georgian art of 1910-20s. Modernistic art of the period is not demonstratively oppositionist, and/or negatively denying everything. Aggressive, revolutionary pathos appears only after the Bolshevik occupation, in the second part of 1920s, mostly in literature and poetry e.g. Dadaistic grouping H₂SO₄ (H₂SO₄ is an acid, aggressive substance destroying material). More to the contrary - the aesthetics of Georgian artists, certainly share general modernistic principles, referred as Greenbergian formalism, which entails research and display the inherent features of artistic medium, such as surface/plane, line, colour, but during the pursuit, national artistic tradition becomes the initial point. It should be stressed, however, that this process is not a radical and aggressive "revolution" in aesthetics either, because as it has been noted by a number of researchers (I. Arsenishvili, D. Tumanishvili, L. Antelava, S. Leghava), starting from the end of XVIII century, even after appearance and development of secular tendencies in Georgian art, medieval aesthetics and world view remains as strong as ever, and it continuous to be present even in professional art even until the end of XIX century. It is imperative to stress, that this special attitude towards the national art is connected not only with the artistic-formalistic pursuit, but it is, at the same time a completely acknowledged socially stand: the definition of art – that art should be both "national and universal" is the determinant in terms of the desired aesthetic quality of form as well as recognized duty to the country: "Any art of any country is created within the national framework, and only then it acquires value and justification"- wrote Shalva Kikodze - . . . exhibition of our paintings here (in Paris - T.T) should inevitably have two necessary justifications. First, it has to be artistic, i.e. it should be devoid of elements of dilettantism, and second, it should be different, as it should be Georgian." Dimitri Arakishvili: "...The music, composed, should be derived from national music, that will be accepted with ease by both Georgians and Eu-



Lado Gudiashvili "Stepko's Tavern"

ropeans"; Tizian Tabidze: "As Europe steps in through the open doors, we shall all be clad in the amour of our national awareness, buttoned up in our national culture, so it shall be the core, around which other, new ideas shall be spun.". It is also noteworthy that the entire society is unanimous in its standpoint not only with respect of artistic, but in any other endeavor. It was not coincidental that articles about Georgian-Armenian War, grave political and economic conditions are coupled with ones endorsing the development and support of culture and art, as the ultimate way to safeguard the country's welfare.

4. Artistic cafes in Tbilisi had certain "predecessors". They had their own roots in the form of various literary salons and Drama circles, which existed in abundance in Tbilisi of that period; however, most important cultural predecessor admittedly was "Dukhan", Caucasian Tavern. Its connection with artistic cafes of Tbilisi, Qimerioni in particular, was considerable: Dukhan was a gathering place for "Blue Horns" and Tbilisi artistic society members in general, and its feasts and poetry soirées, were not much different from "Qimerioni" gatherings, in their nature and disposition. Besides, ~~the nature~~ characteristics of Tbilisi Dukhan, the function of which – as Erast Kuznetsov stated – was much wider, than its actual purpose -- was a certain type of club, with an open, sincere environment, where Dukhan was home and its owner an artistic, patriarchal host; Tbilisi Dukhans – painted by Pirosmanni, or adorned with his paintings, where an act of feast -- a group of people, sharing the

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social standing, interests, tastes and lifestyle, united around the table and accompanied by songs, speech-making and art, acquired ritualistic form and developed into aesthetic act (E. Kuznetsov, 1975, 47).

"Qimerioni", an article by literary critic Davit Kasradze, published in a newspaper "Sakartvelo" in 1920, highly praises the café art, which in our opinion is neither driven by personal considerations of the author, nor is incidental: "I do not even know what I am dealing with, is this a restaurant or a knew shrine of art? We view a fact that can not be denied. This fact is "Qimerioni", which should be regarded as one of the most splendid monuments of our art of the era, when the architects of new politics of liberated Georgia be-

gan the construction of a state. "

"Shrine of Art", "Finest monument of our art", "monument of the period of liberated Georgia"- these epithets are highly significant, as they do not convey just an impressions. These emotional appraisals are the very same criteria that not only define the quality of the murals of café Qimerioni, but also characterize the nature and functionality of its space, and determine ideological and conceptual characteristics of the paintings. It is true that "Qimerioni" is a restaurant, but at the same time it is an universe, bonding the society in accordance with certain functions and goals; it is a ritual space – "a shrine" – decorated with wall paintings, that brings together different spheres of art – poetry, fine arts, theatre, music and an entire artistic society of Tbilisi of that period – citizens , as well as visitors, frequenting Tbilisi in those days.

This co-existence or shared existence created a particularly extraordinary ambience evolved into a ritual space, the nature of which was determined by the spiritual–aesthetic strivings, norms of behavior of the gathered society. Still to what degree these relations and values extended over "Qimerioni" paintings. According to the same David Kasradze, is "Qimerioni" a monument to Liberated Georgia or a cultural mark of that particular period?

The question becomes even more relevant, if we consider that one of the painters is a major representative of Russian modernism, who created the largest part of the paintings, and should be regarded as mastermind of the wall paintings.

Gudiashvili, Sudeikin, and Kakabadze are the three artistic individualities. Consequently, each of them carries out the given task by utilizing his artistic principles. Artistic vision, style, principles of expression each one of these artists are vividly seen in these works. The topic of the paintings, chosen by these artists, are corroborative of their interests in terms of genre and thematic motives and are just as distinctive – for Gudiashvili (Stepko's tavern") it is Tbilisi, its way of life. In that particular period he creates his famous paintings, on the theme of Karachokheli and Kintos. For Sudeikin – it is an element of masquerade and passion for theatre, as well as reminiscence of his life and work in Petersburg, where he was both, a painter

/decorator and founder of artistic clubs, continuation of those evenings spent there, which according to Boris Pronin were: "Merry and devilish". For Kakabadze (Artist and a Muse") it is a matter of a pressing problem of that particular period - juxtaposition of a portrait and a landscape in one work, and figure/background interaction. It is another thematic work created after "Imereti – Mother", in which the motherland is presented as the source of inspiration, and represents artistic metaphor for the artist's role. Still, notwithstanding the compositional, conceptual, and thematic disparity, "Qimerioni" murals are not just a simple collection of solitary paintings, but a comprehensive system – a program, with a distinct artistic and conceptual content.

A major part of Qimerioni wall paintings had been preserved to this day. One composition by Lado Gudiashvili and three by Sudeikin are lost, as well as stained glass compositions by the latter; however, preserved archival material, memoirs and restoration-related documentation allows us reinstate an initial compositional schema of the murals. "Stepko's Tavern" by Gudiashvili is situated on the right side of the staircase. Right, next to it, according to the memoirs of Gudiashvili, was his "Warder Fox". On the left side of the staircase was Sudeikin's perished mural "Georgian Poets" depicting Sudeikin's wife Vera, Paolo Iashvili, Tizian Tabidze, Lado Gudiashvili, Iakob Nikoladze, Nina Makashvili and Sergey Sudeikin (T. Tabidze, 1922). The arch left of the staircase leads to a main hall of Qimerioni. The walls of the hall and columns were painted by Sudeikin. There are fifty compositions on the column edges. As for wall compositions, the only survived one is located in the niche of the left wall, which is shaped as a triptych. It shows flowers in the centre, and the men and women supposedly standing on the stage and holding flower buckets on the sides. "Cracked Mirror", it seems, was depicted on the right side of the entrance, on the space encircled with semi-circled arch, and the scene depicting women in national dresses dancing to the sound of duduki, had to be right next to the "Cracked Mirror", also on the arch shaped wall. On the opposite side, on the south wall, the niches were divided by stained glass. Cross shaped circles were entirely covered with the floral



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and geometric ornaments. "Artist and the Muse" by David Kakabadze was situated on the South wall under the semi-circled arch, in the back of the stage.

The style of arrangement of "Qimerioni" compositions on the walls of the hall, echoing that of the architecture, is tectonic, vivid. Compositions occupy strictly delineated space of a single architectural element. Each has its own area. The well-balanced, accurate compositional order is consistent with distinctly outlined space.

Rectangular column edge and semicircle architectural elements could be perceived both as a natural framing and their own formal structure. Thus, despite the individual style of the artists, all paintings are per-

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David Kakabadze. "Artist and a Muse"

ceived formally as a unique adornment, part of architecture.

At the same time, scheme of certain compositions and their interaction with the space determine the trajectory and rhythm of the spectator movement, as well as dictate the sequence of composition's visual appreciation.

Composition scheme of "Stepkos Tavern", prompts movement leading downstairs, towards the main hall, where the visitor finds herself/himself surrounded by the work of Sudeikin, spread on "Qimerioni" columns and walls. Some of the compositions are neutral in terms of dictating movement direction, while others clearly "prompt" to cross the hall, walk in-between the columns, walk around them or just stop. However, these maneuvers, to a certain extent, are regulated by wall compositions -- thematic homogeneity and emotional relaxation of mid section of the hall, depicting still-lives, force one to go around the it, or cross it straight, and finally turn to the stage, behind of which David Kakabadze's "Artist and a Muse" is located. The stage is the most important part of the space. It is a certain epicenter, to which the attention of the visitors of café is directed, where the entire energy of the space is concentrated, and on which the gaze, having passed through diverse faces created by Sudeikin, finally stops.

Thus, formalistic concurrence of the architecture of the interior and the compositional layout of the murals, as well as, the juxtaposition of the space of the hall with the location and counter-interaction of standalone paintings in the given space, present "Qimerioni" paintings, as an accomplished, stylistically consistent system. The formalistic unity of the

compositions set a background for the conceptual involvement of murals, but since these paintings are compatible with a given system, their thematic and visual/stylistic diversity and dissimilarity, gets integrated into consistent, focused "narrative", creating comprehensive conceptual pattern of Qimerioni paintings. Paintings bordering the entrance serve as a kind of introduction, Qimerioni "visit card" if you will. "Stepko's Tavern", on one side, is a reminder of Tbilisi tavern, lifestyle, and couleur, indicating that the "event" takes place in Tbilisi. On the other side, the painting with the poets and artists dressed up in fancy masquerade costumes -- introduces Qimerioni aspirators/"main heroes" to visitors, and prepare for the atmosphere of Qimerioni.

The visitors entered the main hall, with a certain emotional disposition, and there, as unfolding plot, with an immense force and diversity, the universe of theatre, masks, and a masquerade would unveil--sometimes poetic, sometimes grotesque; sometimes theatrical, and sometimes as mysterious as a fairy tale. The universe that drags you into a headspinning night life. But, then suddenly this emotion becomes more peaceful, and quiet. It happens when in the backstage, in a place where the mystery, unfolded in real performances and events, reaches climax, David Kakabadze's "Artist and the Muse" appears as a metaphor of the purpose of an artist, the one, whose country is his inspiration, and no matter how exciting and attractive is this masquerade, no matter how ephemeral and mysterious is this world, the reality for an artist is still something that made Titsian Tabidze say: "Was I was born a slave to carry a yoke with Georgia as its name."

All these themes, vehemently and artistically impersonated in various faces and different compositions, acquire common conceptual personification only within the general system of paintings, where their artistic quality and characteristics lose independent meaning. It is this unity, this synthesis that gives them voice, enables them to be visual metaphors for "Blue Horns", café visitors and Qimerioni itself, world view and ideology of artistic structure, function and predominance of an artistic café.

The fusion of milieu/action and art, functionality and its symbolic representation of the given period is certainly not the type of unity that characterized the monuments of ancient and medieval Eras, when art was considered a product of worldview, world perception, and consequently universality of artistic deliberation, when the part was a symbolic manifestation of the whole, encompassing an ideological thought of the whole. It is not the case with Qimerioni – paintings here represent three different themes, subjective vision of the three artists, who perceive the café walls as a new ambience, new terms, for the resolution of their tasks. It could not have been otherwise, and in this respect, Qimerioni is a subjective, individualistic offspring of modernist art.

The unification of the conceptual discourses and artistic articulation was premeditated and methodically pursued. The quality of the whole was contingent of the immense talent of the painters, as well as their ability to materialize a task at hand. The social stand and ethical deliberations of Lado Gudiashvili and David Kakabadze in particular, and the Georgian artistic society in general, become determinant factors. Although the largest part of the murals are attributed to Sudeikin, and actually his paintings set the mood for the main hall, the conceptual axis of the system of paintings passes through the compositions of Lado Gudiashvili and David Kakabadze -- "Stepko's Tavern" begins and "Artist and the muse" ends the visual narrative. Furthermore, two considerable features of 1910s modernist art, as well as the modernist milieu in general, determine the "technology" according to which "Qimerioni" compositions, paintings are organized into a program – system: namely, the nature of co-operation of the artists of various nationalities in

Tbilisi of that particular period, counterinteraction of different cultures. The album dedicated to Sofia Melnikova, as well as architecture of Tbilisi itself could be regarded as the closest analogy, in the first place. And the second: the self-identity of Georgian artists within the "modernist milieu": the avant-garde "Us" is not characteristic for them – authoritarian and aggressive unity confronting reality and aesthetics, neither self-confinement – autism into esthetic universe – certain type of modernist "self". They certainly are artistic individualists, but their unity is determined by the values that are beyond the aesthetic sphere, representing national and citizens' responsibilities and values.

For these reasons, we believe that Qimerioni is indeed a monument to Georgia of 1910-20s – cultural mark of its historical time and milieu.

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THE FUTURIST BOOK, TBILISI 1917-1919

At the beginning of 20th century the whole world became obsessed with a desire – conditioned by social-political-psychological factors – for renovation, destruction, and invention. This tendency could not be held back in art, an integral and necessary part of social life. Revolutionary character, the desire for the change, the search for the new, the creation of a new language of art - all are features of that period in art. In the process of searching for the new and different, modern art movements were changing each other; the most audacious ones wholly rejected the past way of the art and claimed to be creating an absolutely new artistic language. Such was Futurism: its “Slap in the Face of Social Taste” and its shattering and revolutionary character were not only merged with modern, mechanical, breathtakingly fast life, but even outstripped it and appeared in its vanguard. In this development, Russian Futurism was the most “aggressive” and “brave.” At the start of 1910 decade, Russian Futurists were already involved in avant-garde experiments that were clearly portrayed in the art of the Futurist book. From 1917 on, the Russians advanced their artistic creed together with their Georgian counterparts in Tbilisi. The Futurist books of 1917-1919 became one of the most important artistic events in Tbilisi’s cultural life. The Futurist brochures of that period are art objects and they present an example of the intercultural, international cooperation of artists and poets. The Tbilisi of that period fully opened the door to the new art movements. One group of avant-garde artists, founded by the brothers Ilya and Kirill Zdanevich, was notably strong proponent of Futurist ideas. Futurism opposed “boring academism” and tried to overcome the “immobility” in painting and literature. In the Manifesto of the Blue Horns, Paolo Iashvili wrote: “We want to transform Georgia into unlimited, dreaming

city, where emerald flowering fields will be changed by the noise of living streets...” (P. Iashvili, 1916). So, the ideology of the Futurists was close to that of the Blue Horners, whose creations tended more toward symbolism than to any other movement. The general desire at the beginning of the 20th century for renovation and energetic activity appeared also quite topical for Georgian artistic circles.

At the end of 1910s there were Futurists among Russia’s creative forces and intelligentsia who fled from the Russian Revolution and sought shelter in Tbilisi. Vasilli Kamenski, Alexei Kruchenykh, Velimir Khlebnikov, Igor Terentiev and others, together with the brothers Zdanevich, became actively involved in Tbilisi’s artistic life. Ilya Zdanevich is mentioned by almost all researchers as a Russian Futurist artist and poet. It is noteworthy that Zdanevich, whose father was a Pole and whose mother was a Georgian, was born in Tbilisi in 1894. In 1911 he moved to Russia where he became swept along by Russian avant-garde movements. Although in that period Zdanevich’s art was feeding on Russian avant-garde ideas, his artistic and stylistic thinking blossomed in the Georgian cultural environment. He created his best works in this environment, i.e., after he returned to his motherland (in 1918-1921). Georgian artistic traditions and art were very important for him. Suffice it to say that Zdanevich, together with Mikhail Le Dantue, was the first to discover the creative works of the self-taught Georgian artist Niko Pirosmiani, and spared no efforts to collect and save his works. Zdanevich was actively involved in all the events of Georgian art of the period; it should be mentioned, however, that interculturalism and striving to remove boundaries between various kinds of art was generally common for avant-gardists of that period, but even when moving toward interculturalism they were always seeking “purely ethnic and zoomorphic roots” (<http://cotati.sjsu.edu/spoetry/folder6/ng64.html>) on which they wished to found their own “transnational” art.

Ilya Zdanevich’s art also fed on Marinetti’s Futurism. Experiments with the Italian Futurist language known as “*Parole Libera*,” or “Free Words,” served as a basis for Zdanevich’s poetic creations, where the

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“mimic thinking of the words is more important than the meaning they are transmitting.” In his creative activities he was trying to revive a poetic language, and as he has written himself he dreamed to bring poetry to “*zaum* (senselessness) and abstraction.” Marinetti’s book *Les mots en liberté futurists* (The Futurist Words-In-Freedom) (1919) was the result of 15 years’ research by the author on the renovation of poetic and literary language. The book included several typographic compositions on folded sheets of paper – typed and handwritten letters of varied size and styles, upside-down letters, letters heading in different directions, etc. are all used there. Iliadz’s¹ Futurist compositions were often built on similar principles. For example, his *Asiol Na Prakat* (Donkey for Hire) from the miscellany in honor of the actress Sofia Melnikova shows evident contact with Marinetti’s creations, despite essential differences.

Russian Futurism, together with Italian Futurism, was the most important event in the world of Modernist Art. In Russia, the term “Futurism” was used from 1911, when a group of avant-gardists named themselves Ego-Futurists. Later they were replaced by the “Hylea” group, a more radical literary movement which developed Cubo-Futurist artistic ideas. Representatives of that group were Velimir Khlebnikov, the so-called “Father of Russian Futurism,” who worked out the theoretical foundations for Zaum poetry, and Alexei Kruchenykh who put Khlebnikov’s artistic ideas into practice. Khlebnikov’s Zaum² tended to use the Russian language, stripped of any Western influences and to create a pure Russian language free from any meaning and any illusory elements; it would be expressed only by plastic sound. For that reason Kruchenykh returned to non-rational, primitive language, where the words had no meaning and the poetic system was built on irregularity and diversity. Technically it was expressed by chopping up the words, using their separate fractions, by unconscious conjunction of different words, by playing with half words, and by the lack of any punctuation and so on. Also found here was the “anarchist typographic experiment,” i.e., when the same text included letters of different fonts and point sizes, small and capital let-

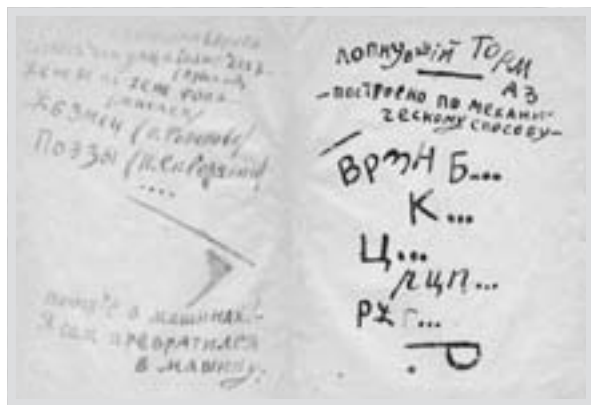
ters included in the same word, typed letters followed by handwritten ones, and all the poems marked by simplicity and rough primitivism from the viewpoint of visual-textual format and its artistic representation. Kruchenykh himself attributed this kind of attitude to “the influence of African Art” (<http://cotati.sjsu.edu/spoetry/folder6/ng64.html>) though Russian Futurism often appealed to Lubok³ art traditions. Russian Futurist poetry was close to Dadaism in its artistic and theoretical attitudes.

Although Russian Futurism was born out Italian Futurism, the difference in between them was quite essential. Russian Futurism is often described by the term Cubo-Futurism, which already speaks about that difference; in fact, Russian Futurism was nourished by both Futurist artistic means and Cubism. The two sources were almost equally joined for Russian Cubo-Futurism created a synthesis of visual and verbal languages, which was alien to Italian Futurism. From the very beginning, Italian Futurism rejected all previous artistic movements; moreover, it denied cubist forms



Futurist books issued in Tbilisi, 1917-1919

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A. Kruchenykh (drawings of Kirill Zdanevich), *Malokholia v kapote*, Tbilisi 1918

and the visual movement of those forms. Its strongest imprint was on establishment of a new language in poetry, in which a new typographical concept was based, and which meant the destruction of the existing syntaxes of literature. In examining Italian Futurist books it is obvious that the main accent is on poetic or literary novelty and change, and this is reflected in typographic experiments as well. A good example of this is Francesco Cangiullo's Futurist book *Caffè-Concerto - Alfabeto a sorpresa (Café-Chantant - Surprising Alphabet)*, completed in 1916 and printed in 1919. The author expressed his linguistic searching with regard to letters; it drew upon typographical experiments, where Cangiullo worked by means of choosing different shapes of letters and representing the diversities of those shapes – sometimes he presented single letters, sometimes a union of letters. Cangiullo created elegant theatrical images and his typographic design present a unique example of the artist's Futurist-Dadaist vision. As for the Russian Futurist book, Maurizio Scudiero stated that it originated from "...the philosophy from which the Russian avant-garde was born. This ideology was characterized by the revival of the Russian cultural heritage... as a mystical image linking them [i.e., Futurists] to their roots, and a state of closure toward the West, which was seen as potentially threatening to their old traditions" (M. Scudiero, 1986) while those traditions were refused by Marinetti and Italian Futurism.

The freedom and breaking of academic frames typical of Futurism in general were well reflected in the art of design of Futurist books first in Russia and then

in Tbilisi. As we have already mentioned, Ilya Zdanevich, who played an important role in the development of Georgian avant-garde, and particularly in the development of Futurism, was one of the founders of the organization "41 Degrees," and was also a very active member of it. He is also considered to be the founder of "Georgian Dadaism" in 1917-1921. Though Dada itself was unknown in Georgia until 1920, Ilya Zdanevich's radical typographical experiments conducted in the publications of "41 Degrees" provide the basis for discussion of Dadaism in Tbilisi.⁴

The publishing activity of the "41 Degrees" group was a very interesting phenomenon in Tbilisi's cultural life. Under the leadership and participation of Kruchenykh, Terentiev, Zdanevich and Valishevski, the organization published many interesting books through various publishing houses. These were second editions (1917-1918) of the books published in St. Petersburg and Moscow in 1912-1913, namely: *Uchites, Khudogi, Ojirenie Roz,* and *Malokholia v Kapote* by Khruchenykh; *O Sploshnim Neprilichii* by Terentiev; and *Janko – Krul Albanski* by I. Zdanevich; in 1919 the group published *Milliork* and *Lakirovannoe Triko* by Kruchenykh, *Record Nejnosti* by Terentiev, *Ostrof Paskhi, Zga Jakobi* by Zdanevich and other works. . . . The books were issued in very small editions (approximately 50-60 copies).

The books of this new type were issued in the form of brochures; they were lithographed, and the texts were often written handwritten by the artists or authors themselves. In these books the narrative character of the illustrations was moved to the background and the major role was played by their plastic and graphic expression. The *Zaum* language of Futurist poetry was built on the play of words, while the words themselves had no meaning and improvisation was the main tool. Actually, "Futurist book" was an experiment, probing the ways to create new art and for this reason the Futurists were playing with words and artistic forms. Futurist artists and poets considered that a handwritten text could express the character of the poetry and that that mood was lost in simply printed verses. To overcome the "boring straightforwardness" of monotonous lines of printed words members of "41

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Degrees" were using various fonts, different-sized letters and handwritten texts, where the words and illustrations often are interlaced, creating united artistic-and-plastic pictures. Sometimes they used wall-paper instead of writing paper. The appearance of the books was characterized by an emphasized primitivism; the covers were made of cardboard, the drawings were hand-made, and the whole book was characterized by simplicity in which one could find a kind of effortless and artistic-aesthetic entity.

It is noteworthy that Futurist books published in Tbilisi, though sticking to Russian Futurist book traditions, still had their own peculiarities – these books are versatile from the viewpoint of the artistic approaches taken. In other words, the different poetic samples were processed in particular ways and in every individual case the artistic solution was specific. From this viewpoint, we can distinguish between brochures of several types: those which contained only a text, and thus letters and words, worked through most of the manipulations. Presented in this form, the text was never stripped of versatility and originality. Often in such text letters resembled drawings, which was particularly true when the letters were handwritten and were perceived as live organisms, a plastic image of a word; in other words, the entire text was alive and mobile. There were brochures in which the texts and drawings created a united integrated form, and it was nearly impossible to separate the text and drawings from each other. In such cases we are dealing with a unified graphic concept in which words, letters and drawings represented the visual and plastic expression of a poetic work. In another type of brochure the text and drawings were more or less separated; in other words, the images illustrating the text were predominantly included on separate pages, but even though they were perceived as a continuation of a text and the graphic decoration of the book.

It might be mentioned that in the books printed in Tbilisi, Georgian themes were revealed. The authors sometimes used Georgian words in the texts; in some cases they used Georgian names, and in one brochure there even appeared an artistic representation of the map of Tbilisi (*Jelezobetonnia poemi*, Kamenskii,

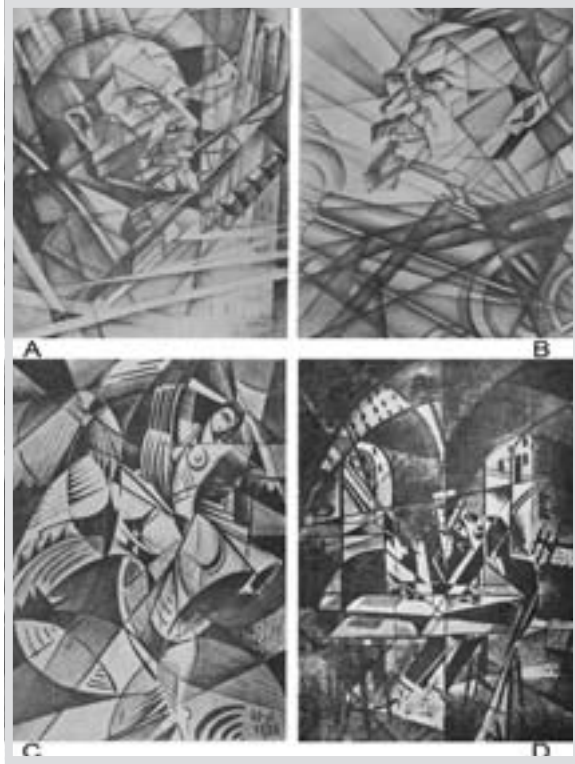


(a) Ilya Zdanevich, *Asiol na prakat* (Drawing of N. Goncharova); (b) Poetry of Kara-Darvish (Armenian poet Akop Ganjian); (c) A. Kruchenykh (drawing of Kirill. Zdanevich); (d) G. Robakidze, *Splini* (Drawing of V. Gudiyashvili), from the miscellany in honor of the actress Sofia Melnikova, Tbilisi 1919

Kruchenykh and K. Zdanevich, Tbilisi 1918).

The finale of the Futurist books was a collection of works issued in Tbilisi in September 1919, dedicated to the actress Sofia Melnikova. This book became

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(a) I. Gamrekeli, Portrait of Lenin, 1924;
(b) I. Gamrekeli, Portrait of Trotsky, 1924;
(c) M. Gotsiridze, Dance, 1924;
(d) M. Gotsiridze, Conspiracy, 1924

an established anthology of Futurist poetry and art. The book contained samples of Russian, Armenian, and Georgian poetry. The illustrations were printed on separate sheets and then bound into a collection. In the end of the book was a list of speeches and articles read in artistic cafe "Fantastic Tavern" in 1917, 1918, 1919. This miscellany mainly is distinguished by the fact that we are dealing with union of poets: Russian, Kruchenykh, Igor Terentiev, Tatiana Vechorka and Nina Vasilieva; Georgian, Ilya Zdanevich, Titsian Tabidze, Paolo Iashvili and Grigol Robakidze; Armenian Kara Darvish and the Ukrainian Vasili Katanian. A union of artists also; Georgian, Kirill Zdanevich, Lado Gudiashvili; Polish, Ziga Valishevski and Kolau Cherniavski; Armenian Alexander Bashbeuk Melikov; Russian, Natalia Goncharova and Igor Terentiev; as well as others. The special characteristic of this book is that it is a significant achievement not only in Georgian and Russian but also in European contemporary graphic art as well.

The book united the works of the poets of various nationalities in the way that the entire collection was perceived as a unified artistic organism. Characteristic of such a synthesis is the fact that the peculiarities of various textual and artistic solutions only make the book more versatile, "revives" the book, making its structure and architectonics more mobile and flexible, and the book itself is represented as a visual art object. It is also noteworthy that poetic works written in various languages were illustrated by the artists of different nationalities, for example, Kirill Zdanevich illustrated Nina Vasilieva's poem; Ziga Valishevski illustrated Tatiana Vechorka's; Küne that of Gordeev; Ilya Zdanevich and Natalia Goncharova that of Ilya Zdanevich; Ziga Valishevski that of Kara Darvish and Katanian; Kirill Zdanevich and Bajbeuk-Melikov that of Kruchenykh; Lado Gudiashvili that of Grigol Robakidze; Terentiev that of Titsian Tabidze and Paolo Iashvili; Terentiev illustrated his own poems; Bajbeuk-Melikov that of Alexander Chachikov; Mikheil Kalashnikov that of Kolau Cherniavski and Kirill Zdanevich that of Grigol Shaikevich. In summary, here again is the certain synthesis and unity of poetry and drawing, bearing different national features.

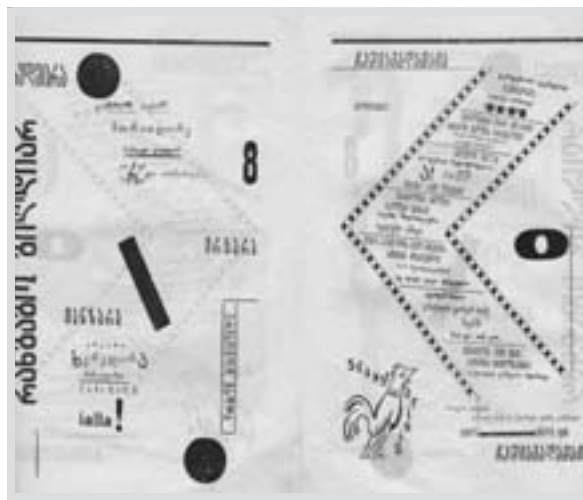
The literary and artistic aspects of this book are of great interest as well. From the viewpoint of poetic language, the samples of Russian poetry have more expressed signs of Futurism than do the Georgian ones. The Georgian poetic works tend more toward symbolism. Their contextual aspect is also stronger, the imagery and visual expression are achieved mainly through words and their logical links with more pronounced contents and Futurist-Dadaist absurdity is absent. It should also be mentioned that the words are not "chopped" and the letters are of the same size, printed in one font. In this way the authors of this collection wished to stress the striving of the Georgian poets toward symbolic thinking and picturesqueness. However, notwithstanding such approaches, the Georgian poetic works were perfectly integrated with the general body of the book and, as has already been mentioned, even contributed to its variety. One can say that "Sofia Melnikova's Miscellany" is a unique phenomenon in the history of the art of the Futurist

book, where poetic works of absolutely different artistic styles and varied artistic forms alternated with each other and combined in one integral unity.

Such intensive creative activities of the Futurists left their impact on Georgian art of that time. There were individual artists and poets who rather actively were trying themselves in this direction of avant-garde art. I. Gamrekeli ("Portrait of Lev Trotsky," "Portrait of Lenin"), M. Gotsiridze ("Dance"), Z. Valishevski ("Compositions for the Miscellany in Honor of Sofia Melnikova"), B. Gordeziani ("Revolution") and others were carried out by in the style of Futurist art. Some of the artists remained true to this passion and the quest for Futurism for rather a long time – up to the middle of the 1930s, though it was a temporary event continuing through a specific period. Being of a fragmentary nature, Futurism failed to develop into a more important phenomenon in Georgian art because of certain objective historical circumstances (namely, the intervention of the Soviet army in independent Georgia and because of the social-political dictates of the Soviet state and its pressure on art).

Of interest also is the fact that for a while the artistic processes that started at the beginning of the century continued under their own momentum, till the end of the 1920s. In 1924, Georgian writers, poets and artists, like their Russian colleagues, issued the Futurist-Dadaist almanac H_2SO_4 . Among the editors were Beno Gordeziani, Akaki Beliashvili, Simon Chikovani, Irakli Gamrekeli, Nikoloz Shengelaia, Shalva Alkhashvili and others. This was one more attempt to break through the canonical frames of literature, poetry and art and create a new artistic "reality" where experiments and play had leading roles, while artistic language shifted from Futurism to Dada, where the authors' creative thoughts were hidden behind nearly childish primitivism and, at the first sight, behind disordered, absurd artistic images.

The phenomenon of the Futurist book in Tbilisi was also very important for the further development of the Russian Futurist book, which became more diverse due to the involvement of local artistic forces in the abovementioned processes. The Futurist book gained a more multicultural and multinational charac-



Dadaist magazine, H_2SO_4 , Tbilisi 1924

ter that was appropriate for the cosmopolitan nature of the ideology of Futuristic philosophy.

The Tbilisi Futurist book is an important achievement in book design art. Its compounding components, such as text (which itself became an artistic element due to above-described attitude, when each letter, segment of the word or whole word had graphical-representational meaning) or artistic image/drawing, (which was an integral part of the text and was included in its artistic-aesthetic body), together create the whole inseparable representational system of the book.

Notes:

- 1 Ilya Zdanevich's pseudonym after his flight to Paris
- 2 "The so-called "Zaum" implies words the word empty of any meaning and content. The best Georgian equivalent might be "litoni"... as this word purely comes out of Russian Futurism and as it is a discovery of this school, we use it in Russian..." (L. Asatiani, 1928, 21)
- 3 a variety of Russian folk art such as prints in woodcut characterized by simple graphics and narratives derived from oral and written folklore
- 4 The abovementioned play (Dra) of Ilya Zdanevich "Donkey for Hire" from "The Miscellany in Honor of the Actress Sofia Melnikova" is the best example of "Zaumni" poetry, where the author goes to extreme lengths to achieve a coincidence of poetic sound and its artistic representation. The artist creates a special form of graphic image, where the words for simultaneous reading are combined together (as in musical partiture for the instruments and voices for being sounded in unison). Here the words and the parts of the words (for simultaneous reading) are written one above other and include capital letters within the words, so that they are part of the words. The chopped-up words and parts

of the words for simultaneous reading and their strange sounds create a peculiar verbal-musical and artistic expressiveness, which is close to Dadaist absurdity and to the Dadaists' extreme artistic experiments.

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TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN THE ART OF NIKO PIROSMANASHVILI

The art of Niko Pirosmashvili (Pirosmani) (1862-1918), the famous self-taught Georgian painter, for whom due appreciation came only after his death, has been repeatedly addressed by different authors - his contemporary artists, poets, as well as art critics, historians and others. Among the core and persistent features of Pirosmashvili's art, which strike the viewer with its naïve *Weltanschauung*, with its particular depth and profundity, the majority of commentators emphasize the deep connection with the time-honored traditions of Georgian art, clearly revealed in the paintings. Pirosmashvili's pictorial means included the restrained palette, the clarity and monumentality of forms, which characterized Georgian art throughout the centuries. All are clearly reflected in the work of the painter.

On the other hand, the paintings of Pirosmashvili, unveil traits that link him to different artistic movements of late 19th-early 20th century European art. Known as a self-taught artist, Pirosmashvili is often interpreted as a "Naïve" or "Primitive" artist; he is often compared to the world-famous Henri Rousseau, however, the majority of scholars acknowledge a particular depth that distinguish this Georgian artist from other naïves. The Pirosmashvili exhibition held in Paris in 1969 was followed by extensive discussion in the French media. He was compared to Marc Chagall, Fernand Léger and Henri Matisse. Pablo Picasso, deeply touched, by Pirosmashvili's naïve *Weltanschauung*, painted a portrait of him. Despite the variety of assessments, nobody doubts the exceptional place the Georgian painter holds among other self-taught painters. Pirosmashvili's imagery, which reflects the aesthetic values and humanism of the artist, leave a profound impression on the spectator. The art of Piro-

smani is simultaneously traditional and innovative. Being the successor to the traditions of Georgian medieval art, he independently and intuitively felt the spirit of the time and, due to his innovatory approach, he opened new avenues for the following generation of artists.

“What seemed authentic for yesterday’s painting, appeared as false today” – declared the Futurists in their Manifesto in 1912 (L. Esakia, 1927, 45).

Indeed, society’s worldview has changed greatly since Paul Gauguin discovered the “primitive” as a new quality and established it in contemporary art. In the last decade of 19th century, the fascinating aspects of children’s painting and the qualities of folk art were appreciated. The contemporary painters – Pablo Picasso, Paul Klee, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and others rapidly captured the new wave. While artists with classical tastes referred to the art of ancient Greece as the origin of artistic evolution, Picasso explored the mystical art of black tribes, Rousseau promoted the “return to nature,” whereas Gauguin searched for a flash of inspiration in the virgin nature of the island of Tahiti.

The notion of the “primitive” acquired the new meaning of a mystical unity of humankind with nature; it became a symbol of the archetypal, virginal and unsullied. This new trend promoted a return to the roots, to the origins, which in turn rejuvenated some partially forgotten names: while Romantic Symbolism gave a new lease of life to the world of the Gothic, this time, the new wave revived the names of Giotto, Ucello, and Piero della Francesca.

“I want to be as though newborn, knowing absolutely nothing about Europe, ignoring facts and fashions, to be almost primitive,” declared Paul Klee (A. Bowness, 1972, 169).

Artists and poets are keen to reach the quality of such “purity,” when the creator explores not the external depiction of the object, but explores its essence, its idea.

“The artistic vision is exhausted with filigreeing, elaborateness, intricate ornamentation and detailed finishing,” wrote a certain Garry Golland in the newspaper *Kavkaz* in 1916 (Kavkaz, 1916, 16, IV).

“In order to feel the new aesthetics of the picture, it is necessary to clear the eyes from atavism and the layers of culture,” declared the Futurists (L. Esakia, 1927, 46).

“In order to see, the eye should not be shaded with prejudices,” in these words the same idea was reiterated in Tbilisi of that time by Niko Pirosmashvili.

Niko Pirosmani had not received training in any school of painting. Nobody taught him composition or color combinations. Instead, the artist, blessed with inborn talent, drew upon the local artistic tradition i.e. medieval Georgian mural painting, stone carvings and old Georgian gravestone decoration. However, according to Vakhtang Beridze, “He continued traditional art not on the basis of exploration or deep analysis; instead, he was a natural inheritor of it, and while working he followed the same set of aesthetic patterns as the old artists did” (V. Beridze, 2007, 89). Pirosmani’s easel works strike with the same “laconism”, simplicity and naïve expressionism that throughout the centuries distinguished Georgian art from the refined and elaborate Byzantine imagery. The features that link Pirosmani with traditional medieval art are his monumental, flat, hieratic, frontal and simplified images. However, some of these qualities can be simultaneously considered as traits of Pirosmani’s contemporaries in Western European art. The fact that Pirosmani independently and intuitively came to the key principles of modern painting, elaborated by different painting schools and artistic movements in contemporaneous Europe, gives greater importance to his work.

The Georgian artist was distinguished by a unique, intuitive, inherited sense of the simultaneous comprehension of the whole and the detail, primary and secondary. In order to represent his subjects in a greater context, the painter often neglected details, thus transforming the subject of his painting into a monumental and even “abstract” image. The composition always considers the character of the depicted object, i.e., sometimes the sitting figures in Pirosmani’s “feasts” are portrayed without a chair underneath them, or depicted objects lack parts that were to encroach upon the essential elements. So too, only

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a few essential features are depicted in Pirosmani portraits and animal images. His deer, bears, lions, cows, etc., often attributed with anthropomorphic sensitivity and sometimes symbolic meaning, strike us with their genuine expression.

Pirosmani's still lifes are similarly simple and "laconic". The composition is simple and clear; in some cases the frontal objects are depicted on a flat surface, which on one hand, can be interpreted as a definite space, e.g., a spread table, while on the other hand, the objects seem to be outlined on a neutral, even abstract picture plane. Pirosmani's attraction to simple, "laconic" forms is one of the principles which connects him to different artistic movements of European modern art. It's widely known that the desire for "pure plastic" and to achieve simplicity of form became one of the major issues of modern painting. "If we will learn to use the simple shapes in painting, we will be able to attain anything desired" – declared Paul Cézanne (L. Esakia, 1927, 27), one of the most important figures in the history of development of modern art. He was the first artist, to define the problem of the "purity of the form." Thereafter, the idea of unveiling the form became one of the main objectives of modern art. Central to these tenets was the exploration of essence, revealed through the neglect of superfluous details in order not to encroach upon the essential elements and alteration or simplification of natural forms instead of their naturalistic depiction. This idea, which can be clearly observed in the art of Pirosmani, forms a basis for the majority of artistic movements of modern art, such as Expressionism, Cubism, Abstractionism, etc.

Pirosmani's technique is another feature that links his art of to artistic movements of modern Europe: His free, swift manner of painting and use of wide brushstrokes resemble the styles of Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse and Andre Derain. "The resemblance of Pirosmani's painting methods to those of Cézanne, Matisse and Derain is astonishing. Free technique and deliberate execution speaks to the maturity of the painter" – writes Kiril Zdanevich, one of the first discoverers of Pirosmani's art (K. Zdanevich, 1965, 15).

Brushstroke as a separate pictorial means has a long history in Western European art. However, its final unveiling and establishment is connected with the art of the Impressionists. Wide brush mark and quick deliberate manner of painting became the feature of modern art. "The method of my work is the thorough examination of a model and afterwards, quick execution of a picture," declared Henri Matisse (Matisse, *Paintings, Sculpture, Graphics, Letters*, 1969, 140).

Pirosmani's unique skill as a painter in finishing a composition with just a few brushstrokes is repeatedly mentioned by the artist's contemporaries, friends and customers. "He brought the paints with him, spread them in the kitchen, applied on the brush, made few movements with it and the picture was ready," recalled Alex Chichinadze, a friend of the artist (*Memoirs on Pirosmani*, 1986, 67). Kiril Zdanevich describes Pirosmani's method of painting in more details: "He was very thorough in his preparations to paint a picture. Then, very quickly he sketched the area with chalk or coal and after that he outlined all points of the composition with a brush. In a moment, the picture plane was painted so that shifting of a single detail within it would completely destroy its harmonious structure" (K. Zdanevich, 1965, 15).

Pirosmani used a peculiar technique of painting on black oilcloth. With this technique he succeeded in achieving a very special effect: when he needed black, he simply left that part of the oilcloth bare. It's widely known that the same method was also applied in modern European art, e.g., Cézanne used white canvas in the same manner as Pirosmani used black oilcloth. "Cézanne was leaving bare patches of white canvas that a painter of an earlier generation would have found quite unacceptable" – wrote Alan Bowness in his book *Modern European Art*.

Even a glimpse at the Pirosmani's paintings demonstrates that his technique was refined through years of work: in 1895-1903 the artist was searching for ways of expression. In this period he applied yellow-greenish paint over nearly the entire surface of the picture plane. However, afterwards when Pirosmani became more experienced, he began to leave the patches of black oilcloth background bare. In the

period 1905-1915 Pirosmiani achieved the highest degree of refinement in his painting technique. He used the brush freely, and seldom returned to any part he had already painted. In the last years of his life, as recalled by his contemporary Vaso Chachanidze, Niko was painting without any outlining, "directly with the brush and paint." (Memoirs on Pirosmiani, 1986, 114).

Despite the fact that his pictures never leave a monochromatic impression with the viewer, Pirosmiani's palette is not rich in colors. He had a liking for black, cream, yellow, dark blue, white, claret and red paints. The effect of colorfulness is achieved by means of the painter's exquisite artistic intuition. In this regard, Pirosmiani's use of three primary colors: blue, yellow and red is worth mentioning. Although he frequently used them just for small details, the three primary colors served to revitalize the composition: by means of the balanced color highlights the picture plane retains its integrity. The colors are unmodified, local and intensive. "The color is inscribed in form; it illuminates and fills the form from inside, the red color of fisher's garment and the dress of a woman with the glass of beer, comprises the shape, intentionally destroys and simplifies it. So, that this red, as one may say about the colors of Matisse or Léger, itself becomes the object of Pirosmiani's painting," wrote French art critic R. G. Moulen (R. J. Moulen, 1969).

Purifying and intensifying colors was another important objective of modern artistic movements. As a result, modern art turned away from a realistic palette toward a fantastic, mystic and impressive world of colors.

Furthermore, realizing that certain colors and color combinations may have different impact on the human psyche, artists began to use certain color combinations to express different moods and feelings.

The Post-Impressionists were the first to make important discoveries in term of colors: Georges Seurat (1859-1891), who systematically examined the role of color in painting, developed theories on colors and color combinations. He wrote a guidebook for painters describing how a distinct mood could be expressed with different color combinations: "Dark tones, cool colors suggest sadness and despair; light

tones, warm colors suggest gaiety and excitement," he wrote (A. Bowness, 1972, 55). Gauguin also had comments: "Color has an important emotional impact on eye. There are some tonalities that are quiet and cozy, whilst other extremely provoking with their darkness" (A. Bowness, 1972, 56).

The same principle of attribution of symbolic meaning to different colors formed the basis for the Symbolists' artistic movement. For Dante Gabriel Rossetti, each color had an explicit meaning: e.g., red was associated with death, white with sleep, whereas purple was associated with suffering and hope (A. Bowness, 1972, 75). Consequently, colors acquired symbolic meaning: Vincent Van Gogh wrote: "I am always in the hope of making a discovery – to express the love of two lovers by marriage of two complementaries, their mingling and their opposition, the mysterious vibration of kindred loves" (A. Bowness, 1972, 68). This kind of approach formed the basis for Abstract art, in which blue was considered a heavenly color, green was restful, lacking any undertone of joy, grief and passion, while white was associated with virginal purity (A. Bowness, 1972, 136).

The symbolic meaning that Pirosmiani attributed to different colors is another feature that relates his painting to modern European art. He expressed his thoughts just as genuinely as he painted. "Life is a contrast," the artist stated, "I understand it clearly, rich and poor, black and white. In life everything has two sides: good and evil; here is a white cow a symbol of peace and love. The white color is the color of love. The black bull fights, roars, it's a war... While painting *The Beauties of Ortachala*, I placed them on the background of "black life". However, they also have their love for life, which is illustrated through flowers and birds around them, I paint them covered with white sheets. I pity them and with white color I remit their sins..." (K. Zdanevich, 1963, 38)

While bearing these words in mind, Pirosmiani's black oilcloth may also acquire a certain symbolic meaning... White birds and flowers surround the portrait of actress Margarita. Her clothing and the inscriptions by her feet are also executed in white ...

Pirosmiani quite often introduces inscriptions

into his compositions. Here the inscriptions, as in a traditional fresco or icon, help to unveil the idea of the painting and simultaneously play an important role in the structure of the composition. In some cases, incorporation of inscriptions was the preference of customers, as Pirosmiani was mainly painting his works for *dukhans* (taverns). Yet, the painter managed to interpret inscriptions as important thematic and also compositional elements.

In 1911 the Cubists began to include the inscriptions and separate letters in their works. These unusual elements in painting create a new imaginary world of associations on the picture plane. These signs provoke the new kind vision in the spectator that seemed inexpressible for the old means of painting. In 1912 the Cubists began to incorporate pieces of printed materials, e.g., newspaper or magazine pages in their work, which found its further development in a specific painting technique – collage.

“These entities – inscriptions – act as quotations which evoke objective memories in the consciousness of a spectator and help him/her to understand the idea of the picture” - wrote Werner Haftmann in his monograph on the 20th-century European painting (W. Haftmann, 2000)

Indeed, the inscriptions in Pirosmiani's works often help to unveil the essence of the picture. In particular, they are tightly connected with the theme of the picture, completely cohere with the mood of the scene, and also play an important role in the alignment of the composition. The choice of color for the inscription also demonstrates Pirosmiani's artistic approach toward this pictorial mean. Differently colored Georgian or Russian letters always corresponded with the palette of the composition. This aspect of Pirosmiani's painting also reflects his inborn sense of the simultaneous comprehension of the whole and the detail.

Such qualities as a free manner of painting, simplicity of composition and pictorial means, the symbolic language of colors and, finally, the use of inscriptions in composition unveil the connections of Pirosmiani's painting with the overall pioneering artistic tendencies of contemporaneous Europe. “Niko

Pirosmanashvili is the vivid example of new art” – wrote David Kakabadze, one of the of the greatest Georgian modernist artists, “He never aimed at reproducing any methods of painting, but to express the life he lived and suffered in the artistic means... his art is extremely national and, at the same time, universal ... The way of Niko Pirosmiani is a brilliant pattern for our new art” (D. Kakabadze, 1926, 24). Indeed, on one hand being undoubtedly traditional and at the same time strikingly “modern,” Pirosmiani independently came to the key principles of modern European art that establishes him among the greatest artists of his time.

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SETTING PRINCIPLES IN GEORGIAN SET DESIGN IN THE 1920S

The functioning of set design systems in the beginning of the 20th century was determined by the new "aesthetic discoveries." The theatrical art of the first third of the century was directly connected with avant-gardist explorations. The new intellectual approaches transformed the means of expression and changed the fundamentals of traditional set design principles as well, resulting in the substitution of the object of expression: scenic action became dominant over the arrangement of the action environment as laid down by a play.

In the parallel case of cubist explorations, innovative tendencies emerged in the Russian theater in the 1910s – a particular action environment design created through painted decorations and built in keeping with the rules of perspective was changed into dimensional constructions. Sets for chamber theater created by Aleksandra Ekter and Aleksandr Vesnin offered for the spectator a simultaneous, aggregated, concentrated image of the whole period, instead of a particular landscape or interior setting, as in *Tamiris* (1916); *Salomé* (1917), by the artist Ekter; *Evangel* (1920); and *Phaedra* (1922), by the artist Vesnin. In the process of the exploration of the essence of a subject or event, its dimensional scenic elements underwent deconstruction, becoming decomposed into numerous geometric elements under the painter's analytical view, these elements thus representing an architectural version of not only the physical, but also the spiritual "world" of the characters as well. "I am an architect of the scene. I try to capture the depth of an event and reach creative harmony through the fundamental crystals of the beautiful universe" – said chamber theater director Aleksandr Tairov (A. Tairov, 1970, p.165).

In the 1920s, Georgian set designers became interested in principles of cubism. The scenery in the plays *Londa* (1923), *Mallstem* (1924), *Spiegel-*

man (1925), and *Anzor* (1928) was designed by Irakli Gamrekeli. The stage set was built using dimensional shapes and planes that created an abstract, vaguely defined acting area for the characters in a play. Petre Otskheli's decorations for the plays *Uriel Acosta* (1929), *Othello* (1930), and *Beatrice Cenci* (1930), directed by Kote Marjanishvili, represented compact, briefly expressed set design structures, based on pillars, stairs and arcs. Thus the artist depicted a "new reality," instead of copying historical realities as an illustration to a play. The stage floor obtained its shape through the architectural ensemble in three-dimensional space. "Such an arrangement was a reaction to the painted, static decorations similar to the cubist, abstract explorations by the Russian artists, guided by the desire to find maximally changeable shapes, increase the number of acting fields and abolish the boring horizontality of the scene" (G. V. Alibegashvili, 1974, p.36). In parallel with Otskheli's work, which was based on the arrangements of the architectural details, Elena Akhvlediani's set design for the play *Whites* (1929) in the Kutaisi-Batumi State Drama Theatre, represented a unity of deconstructed reality "fragments" (a ship's bow, deck, mast, blocks, ropes, etc).

The essence of the principle of constructing the abovementioned set design work was a radically new interdependence in space-time between the images, objects, or the scene as a whole. Very much like the early examples of cubist collage settings (which actually was a renaissance of the original bricolage method), it represented a new approach by directors and set designers to the space problem – an artist tried to fully "load" the composition with meaning, thus subduing the space and making it absorb more.

In the 1910-1920s period montage principles reached almost every genre of art: painting, sculpture,



1. Hoopla, we are alive (1928) D.Kakabadze

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2. How? (1929) H.Akhvlediani

theater, cinema, drama (consider the vertical setting principles in Velimir Khlebnikov's plays, expressionist dramaturgy, Sergei Eisenstein's conception of the attraction montage in his theater plays, the rhythmic montage of household items, and close-ups in Leuge's experimental movie *The Mechanical Ballet*). However, the most privileged sphere for montage is cinema. At the beginning of the 20th century, this genre was considered as a new stage in the progress of art, continuing the achievements of the past. The montage principle always existed latently, however each period differed in the "quality of the montage." The main feature of cinema – the principle of the "show" – originated in theater's most ancient forms and was expressed differently in each stage of development of theatrical art: the Classical "theater of images," oriental shows (illustration of the story by pictures), shadow theater, German folk shows, "live pictures" in medieval morality plays, so-called "perspectives" in Italian court theater, "artists' theater" in the 18th-19th centuries, and the 20th century's political theater, which, as director Erwin Piscator believed, brought the tradition of the painted backdrops and coulisses.

Specific means of cinema actively emerged in the works of the innovative directors and set designers of the 1920s. The montage principle coincided with the consciousness of the new generation of the spectators, influenced by their access to diverse information. They expected more frequent changes in artistic influence and informs, also in visual and audio impressions.

In plays that Vsevolod Meyerhold directed in Russian theaters, a projector and movie screen were directly integrated in the decoration system, thus becoming

an effective mean for this propagandic art. In addition, theatrical experiments by the director Erwin Piscator and Dadaist artists in Germany in projective decoration were significant event in the theatrical world.

New developments in world theatrical-decorative art soon echoed in the Georgian theater productions as well. Following the German and Russian set designers, Georgian painters such as David Kakabadze and Elena Akhvlediani worked in the Kutaisi-Batumi State Drama Theatre under Marjanishvili and by the end of the 1920s had adopted cinema-projection as a resource in scenic decoration.

Marjanishvili became interested in particular cinema methods as early as in 1910s. His joint project with the painter Viktor Simov – the drama *Tears* (1913), with its original, structural cinematographic solution – sparked great interest in society and in the movie industry. A motion picture called *Tears* was made. "The play amazed us with its closeness to cinema. I made the pantomime *Tears* into a film without any alteration. It brought great fame and profit to our company" – wrote Konstantin Khanzhokov, who directed the film (K.A. Khanzhokov, 1934, p. 70). In 1916 Marjanishvili was invited by Drakonov & Co as the chief director of the Petrograd branch of a film studio. His *Almighty Love* had become the season's main event. Marjanishvili continued activities in the same direction in Georgia in the films *Before the Storm*, *Gogi*, *Amock*, *Wasp*, and *Communar's Pipe*.

The play *The Rails Are Rumbling*, produced in the Kutaisi-Batumi State Drama Theatre in the 1928-29 season, directed by Marjanishvili (with the artist Elena Akhvlediani), is another interesting example of implementing movie methods in the Georgian theater. The action takes place behind the factory's main gates in different spaces (the manager's office, factory yard, inspector's room, boiler room, club, etc). Small platforms, depicting the place of action by just a few signs, were separated from the rest of the space by lighting. The play's actions were split into separate episodes, just like movie takes, and the montage story parts were presented on the stage in parallel, like in a movie. The characters' main dialogues were staged on the spot in front of the gates, in the foreground."

The Kutaisi-Batumi State Drama Theatre, established by Marjanishvili, opened in 1928 with Ernst

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Toller's piece *Hoopla, We Are Alive!* (pic.1). The painter David Kakabadze integrated the movie projector into the play's sets. The screen showed a film, made especially for the play. An action, started by an actor on the screen, was continued by the same actor on the stage, and vice-versa, thus reinforcing the dynamic development of the action. Different action locations, like the jail, the minister's office, hotel, restaurant, street, etc., interchanging on the stage and screen with cinematic speed. In the first scene, the screen showed Lenin's address and the popular uprising (from Eisenstein's *October*). Other movie episodes (Carl Thomas in the street, entry to the ministry, quarrel with the courier, inspection in Eva Berge's room, etc.) were directly linked with the events in the play, serving as their expansion. Radio was also included in the play, in parallel with the cinema shots, as a full-fledged member of the action. Marjanishvili wrote the screen play; Sergei Zabolaev was the camera man.

The core of Kakabadze's composition was a multistory construction, split into separate rectangular "interiors" (some sections had mirrors that gave an effect of an expansion of space). Lighting divided the scene into separate movie frames. The lighting system was an effective way of rapid change of the episodes and the parallel development of the action: "During the whole play, the single construction stood unmoved. However, with very simple alterations, it would change from a jail cell to a doctor's office and then to the luxurious hotel, or police station and then jail cell again," wrote Dodo Antadze (D. Antadze, 1966. p 122).

Kakabadze's decorations for *Hoopla! We are Alive* were followed by Akhvlediani's interesting set design works for *How?*, *Khatije*, and *The Old Enthusiast*. In the play *How?* (1929), Akhvlediani adopted the shadow-theater principle, which has become one of the most original and expressive mean of decoration for modern theatrical plays (pic. 2, 3). Action developed against the background of the main character's memories, thus determining the play's compositional characteristics. Overcoming the space problem caused, for example, by a radical change of the scene of action (from a factory to a village road, from a railway station to a room interior) was a major difficulty in the contemporary Georgian theater. Akhvlediani adopted the projected scenery method, which was



3. *How?* (1929) H.Akhvlediani

integrated with other means of set design. A fabric on a black frame – the screen – served as the expressive bottom line and structured the stage space. The artist arranged specific details for every action behind the screen. Unreal shadows from beyond came to life on the stage and the continued action in the real environment. Such an original and expressive method coincided with the episode-style storytelling, suggested by the author and facilitated to the rapid change of the action.

The artist included movie episodes in the climax scenes to expand the stage space. The same actors were on the scene and the screen. They entered the stage from the screen and returned to the shadow world again. Thus action on the screen and the stage integrated organically. For instance, in the train-robbing scene, the train sounds appeared with the first shots on the screen. After the fight with the Whites, the partisans stop the train and check it. Gocha takes passenger's golden cross. Then the action continued on the scene. Beglar entered the action. After Gocha's deed had become apparent, the action continues on the screen again: Gocha runs between the rails, jumping over the fence and falling dead, hit by Beglar's shot.

As the movie episodes end, the screen is covered with black velvet fabric. According to the play's storyline, the scene space represents a room interior. The artist also solved this problem in a very original way. She depicted the room's corners, door, windows and stairs with the contrast of white wooden slats on the black velvet (the same method Akhvlediani used to depict the view of a modern factory).

Synthesis of the traditional (the shadow play) and the innovative (cinema projection) methods in

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4. a) In spite of all (1925) D. Hartfield
b) What that soldier, what this (1931) C. Neher

the play *How?* Was interesting achievement of the director and the artist, and provided an impressive show for the spectators. Marjanishvili and Akhvlediani employed projective decorations several times in inter joint projects. In the 1930-31 season, Marjanishvili produced Karlo Kaladze's piece *Khatije*. Akhvlediani richly used cinematic methods again to create the artistic image of the play. Unlike *How?*, where the director and the artist used the movie screen to extend and develop the action, in *Khatije* the movie scenes were chosen to contrast *with* the play, to emphasize the idea of the piece. In this case too, images on the screen were envisaged in the story and connected to specific events in the drama.

A comparative analysis of the work of both Georgian and other renowned set designers' projected scenery reveals the particular features of the set design works of Kakabadze and Akhvlediani.

In the Russian theater, Meyerhold was the first director to take serious steps toward implementation of specific cinematic methods. In 1923 he presents Sergei Tretiakov's play *Earth standing on the end* designed by Lubov Popova. The screen above the stage showed agitative slogans on revolutionary and civil war episodes and topics. Actors moved on the stage in a manner that was thought to be possible only in the movies – they used cars, bicycles, bikes, tractors, etc. The next season, in the play *Giving Europe*, the constructivist artist Ilia Shlepianov used three screens simultaneously to display characters' names, critical remarks, political slogans, telegrams, and maps, etc.

Often the director modified a drama script to rearrange the essential accents. The director's version of the play would then supersede the original, as it envisaged the confirmation of the director's ideas through the projection of posters, texts or chronicle

of events. Meyerhold added new elements to the scenario of *Giving Europe* to emphasize the progressive character of the revolutionary movement, and the main part of Boris Barnett's "cinema decoration" for Vladimer Bezimyansky's *The Shot* was dedicated to the short films on civil war although the action in the piece took place in a tram depot.

While in Meyerhold's plays set design embodied the imagery while in Piscator's directing the screen became the most important component of the scene action, becoming an imagery actor or, as Bertolt Brecht said "a theatre star." Documentary or historic material, shown on the screen, was also effective propaganda to promote political ideas and the director's vision (pic. 4a). Hartfield used the photo overlay method to decorate Piscator's production of *Russia's Day*, using political posters, caricatures, slogans etc. Projected material for *Despite Everything* (1925) consisted of grand collage of newspaper cutouts, photos, texts, slogans, which depicted history of the revolutionary movement, from Spartacus' Revolt to the 1917 Revolution. In his productions of *Raging Stream* and *Storm Over Gotland* (1926), Piscator emphasized the documentalism principle and scenic action was accompanied by the short chronicle films specially made to accompany the plays. In directing *Hoopla, We Are Alive!*, T. Müller used a curtain in front of the scene to imitate the screen. The film showed the European reality of inflation, with queues, ballet dancers, music halls, cars, refugees, tanks and election campaigns as seen by the main hero after his release from jail.

Müller used the complex projection system to influence the audience with contemporary news in *Rasputin, the Romanovs, the War and the People Who Revolted Against Them* (1907). The screen was used as the mean of teaching, imaging and commenting. The scene and screen actions differed radically, to stress the piece's idea. Life in Russia under the Czarist régime was depicted by historical shots (for example, the Empress laughs when she learns about the revolt; at the same moment the screen shows the execution of the royal family).

Brecht called the projected material in Piscator's productions "photographic reality." Brecht's "element separation" theory aimed at reaching an "alienation effect," that put the spectator in the ob-

server's position and invoked analytical and critical attitude toward the events (pic. 4b). Capture of the illusion was achieved through the montage of the projected material; the screen demonstrated headlines, subtitles, grotesque graphic illustrations, short texts and phrases.

Projected decoration was used in avant-gardist set-design experiments and Bauhaus projects in the 1920s. In Shavinsky's spectro-drama *The Game, the Life and the Illusion*, movement of geometric shapes and colored planes was interlinked with the projection onto the screen of famous art pieces (works by El Greco, Rubens, Giotto, Picasso, Michelangelo, Naum Gabo, and others). For the 1924 anti-review *Bad and Good* in Berlin, Kurt Schwitters's design represented a collage of technical and industrial-functional elements. In Fransis Picabia's *Sigh* (also known as *No Play Today*), objects, actors, colored shapes, music and movie projection had equal roles as components. An illogical kaleidoscope of different images preceded the show. The first act was followed by René Clair's *Entr'acte* and a Dadaistic cinema-collage of various visual materials (numbers, commercials, names, provocative phrases, etc).

Examination of productions directed by Meyerhold and Piscator clearly shows the specific approach the directors and artists took to the piece, when the story and the details of an individual character's life, created by the author, was regarded as an inseparable part of mankind's history and the play's particular propagandistic facts were presented against the background of world-scale events. In some cases, decoration of the stage with cinema images was suggested by the director and served for generalizing the play's content (as in Aleksandr Barbius's *Jesus Against God*, a project by the Meyerhold Theatre), or for initiating an analytical attitude in the spectators (as in Brecht's *The Threppenny Opera* and in *This Soldier, or That*), or to probe innovative set design methods (Pickabia's *Sigh*, Shavinsky's *The Game, the Life and the Illusion*).

Unlike in the plays decorated by artists in Russia and Europe, projection in Marjanishvili's joint works with Georgian set designers bore a different meaning. Their main objective was not to promote the propagandistic direction of a play or propagate political ideas. Instead of demonstrating unrelated visual ma-

terial, the projected images were directly linked with the play's particular story and served as the expressive and effective mean of solving space problems, accenting or enhancing the action, and enriching the artistic image.

The work of the Russian and German set designers was built on the canonic principle of collage which emphasized discreteness and the existence of "seams" between the elements. The decoration of Georgian plays, despite their diverse structure, used the principle of homogeneity, where the screen images served as an uninterrupted continuation of the stage action, although the collage method itself inseparably includes the principle of heterogeneity. Hence, the combined artistic decoration technique, employed in the Georgian theatre by the end of 1920s, can be regarded as a non-standard, transforming stage of the montage, determined by the director's concept: "The Theatre is a synthetic art. It incorporates all other art forms, including the cinema, using it in the spots, where expansion of the stage is impossible due to the technical restraints" (K. Marjanishvili, 1947, p.95).

In the 1920s, integration of the two genres of the art – the theater and the cinema, the introduction of innovative set design methods, inspired by avant-garde art, became an important progressive step for the further development of the theatrical art and it determined the formation of the new system of "active set design" in the second half of the 20th century.

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CONSTRUCTIVISM PECULIARITY IN GEORGIAN THEATRICAL SCENERY ART

Scenography has a centuries-old history and each milestone of its development process is marked with significant changes. Very complex processes of innovation occurring in the early 20th century, processes inspired by the new drama that was shaped by the pronounced struggle between the ideological and artistic trends.

The appearance of dramatic new art work in the theater played a significant role by contributing to development of new concepts in production and putting forward new requirements for totally different plastic approaches and innovative spatial visions. These advances in turn opened up broad new opportunities for artists working in stage and scenery design to show individual initiative, demonstrate high skills, and use versatile artistic and creative forms and styles to reveal new facets of the genre.

The process of demolishing old and outdated traditions in the theater started in parallel with establishment of the innovative production concepts of Gordon Craig, Adolph Appia, Max Reinhardt and many others - all of whom paved new paths for the theater.

In the synthesizing theater art of the 20th century the process began of uniting different artistic means, characterized by complex mutually influential processes of perception.

Every kind of art involved in this process was seeking unique ways for its development and achievement of high standards and well-established specifics were the only pre-requisites for integrating new artistic means into the body of theater. The art of theater and scenery was also changing in very complex and interesting ways, with its development experiencing dramatic changes under the impact of the processes occurring in fine arts, in new drama, and in producer's concepts. These forces eventually led to the gradual

acquisition of the characteristic features that dramatically changed the dominant function of design and scenery in theatrical synthesis.

The early 20th century was a period in which the avant-garde movement was gaining Europe. Scenography also experienced the impact of avant-gardism, which contributed to the development of a new aesthetics in the theater.

Practically every trust of avant-garde art introduced and established significant innovations in the reorganization of stage space and its decoration, e.g. Cubism created the place for applied use of new forms, Dadaism – allowed for the use of the first ever photomontages, which gave shades of meaning to the objects of everyday life; and Futurism implanted a living dynamism to the stage and provided the basis for the principles of artist' theater.

However, it was the Constructivist developments that can be considered to be the peak of these achievements; Constructivism made fundamental changes, redirected the development of the scenographic art, introduced the construction stage space, and gave a new meaning to the world of objects. In addition to all existing changes Constructivism also introduced a basic theoretical concept, the principle of functionalism in staging, which is actively operating in the present day.

Initially, Constructivism established two major principles of staging. The first one was the unitary set installation –an installation that did not change during the entire course of the performance. The second was functional scenography, which envisaged adding functional loading to the moving elements linked to the major stage set. Hence, the functional principle represented compositional unity. Therefore, each element of the stage set served both as "a story teller" for the materials of drama art i.e., the play and as the creator of its plastic forms.

It is also noteworthy, that Constructivism in the theater played a significant role in the introduction of new methods and means into subject-and-artistic space, whereas the stylistic treatment of constructivist stage sets affected the form and type of every object used by the artist for designing the set.

In the beginning of the 20th century V. Mayakovski wrote in one of his essays: "It was from Russia not from France that a new term "constructivism" was established in the terminology of art" (V. Mayakovski, 1989, 49). The term "constructivism" was established in the terminology of art. The term constructivism per se was used for the first time in 1920, by Russian architects, and in 1922 it was finally officially accepted as a term in A. Gun' s book Constructivism. Considering Russia's political and ideological situation in this period Constructivism found a place where its theoretical grounding and practical implementation then found their manifestations in nearly in all spheres of art. Georgia also participated in these processes. The process of self-renovation in Georgian culture started in parallel with the ongoing events in Europe and Russia. Georgian society followed in the steps of the processes taking place in European and Russian fine art, music and theater, and with time these processes in Georgia acquired their own characteristics.

The formation of Georgian theater started from the process of quest. Theater artists were facing the major challenge of developments of Georgian theater aesthetics. This issue triggered a barrage of intensive polemics in all directions, whereas in the theater outstanding producers A. Akhmeteli and K. Marjanishvili were solving these problems directly on stage. The art of staging plays was also developing. Constructivism played a significant role in the productions of Akhmeteli and Marjanishvili, contributing to creation of many interesting stage images. In fact today we can stress, that Constructivism in the Georgian theater manifested itself in absolutely different manner, in keeping with the principle of conditionality characteristic of Georgian artists.

From this viewpoint in the history of Georgian staging art Constructivism represents a noteworthy segment of its development. As early as the beginning of the 20th century Grigol Robakidze published his very interesting ideas about the aesthetics and principles of theater: "The phenomenon should be perceived as a whole rather than in atomistic way. It should be manifested in certain lines and colors, and the visual impression should by all means echo the aural percep-

tion. Two lines shall intercept at one point– only this allows us fully perceive the phenomenon. Hence, the architectural and artistic principle of the present day scene cannot be decorative. One should use another principle here: the principle's lines resulting from life's rhythms shall be quiet and straight making economy basis for theater architecture. And that is exactly what the principle of "constructivism" is. And the modern theater cannot avoid it."(G. Robakidze, 1987, 36). It is noteworthy that Constructivist direction is a general phenomenon in the staging art of the theater of those days, but increased interest toward its aesthetics in our days has a deep, not fully realized importance, since in the process of their reappraisal with regard to Georgian scenography, Constructivist ideas maintain and show real potential for further development. Artists present in the infancy production design such as Irakli Gamrekeli, David Kakabadze, Petre Otskheli, Elena Akhvlediani and others readily accepted significant aspects of Constructivism, and used and developed them in a masterly ways in reorganization of the stage space, the functionality of the inserted stage sets, the principles of opening up the stage, meaningful conditionality, intensive effect of color-light interaction, laconism in artistic language and- what is very important for Georgian scenography – in giving to this system a historic specificity and meaning. Thus Constructivism on the Georgian stage significantly changed the objects space, created a new environment, introduced a new vision of the universe, contributed to the origination of features bearing the signs of many styles, (and their transformation into artistic forms) and provided the deep ideological basis, which in subsequent years eventually determined the image of Georgian production design.

Georgian production design followed an interesting path of development: in the 1920-30s the many-faceted art of theater artists provided a significant foundation for the staging art, which was always characterized by versatility of artistic means. For example, under the circumstances of the Soviet ideological framework, when the active quest and introduction of innovative approaches slowed down and the old illusory-and-fine art system was revived

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in the staging of plays, Georgian artists tried to interweave Constructivist elements in their work in a different way presenting background scenery through compact, interesting foreshortening, not overloading the place of action, and fruitfully using the fine arts palette in combination with light effects.

Interesting events developed in 1960-1980s. Producers' concepts went through dramatic changes as well as attitudes toward drama; a modernistic expressive style was gaining ground in the theater. Since the stage and set were always closely connected to the processes taking place in the theater, they too experienced a rapid change of artistic expression.

Within a short period of time Georgian artists were trying to revive significant achievements of the past; however their values were too associated with the past, and the changes discussed above required new artistic means of expression. That was true both for the space embedded between high walls and the system of its arrangement, which had to determine the entire plastic structure of the play. To meet this requirement it was necessary to utilize the space in both and height, to transform it in a new way. As a result, the ideas of Constructivism found their own varied ways of development in the art of each individual artist.

In the work of modern designers, whether experienced or novice, the Constructionist style together with conditionality, and symbolic decorative expression powerfully demonstrates itself with various signs manifested not only in the transformation of the stage and set, but also in integration of various parts of the staging, which are not permanent, equal and unidirectional. While selecting the types of the objects and their forms to be used in the process of staging, the set designers are trying to make them effective. The use of such objects enabled them to achieve more pronounced manifestation of the characters and create a certain rhythm of action, as a result of which the environment became mobile and plastic transformations began to serve the culminatory moments of dramatic action.

The designers were in fact introducing the principle of purposefulness into Georgian scenography which resulted in a rather specific expression of con-

struction ideas.

The clearly acknowledged coexistence of the synthesis of various directions can be clearly seen in united scenographic decisions, where construction motives play a significant role. The organization of the stage and set for action is determined through using the construction elements, that are regulating the action taking place around these elements; thus, the elements became active themselves. In the course of action taking place on the stage, the artists transform various parts of the staging; the elements composing them are moving, thus acquiring different meanings. Therefore, the space of the performance is transformed not only into the place of action, but it also becomes a component of that action.

"Naked" sets (i. e. totally unadorned space) are very seldom used in modern Georgian scenography. Instead there are installations of geometrical configuration, vertically allocated stairs, and small-size playing grounds located at different levels organically embedded into a characteristic colorful palette with the space appearing as a total, united action place, where the action of the actors is closely merged with the given construction. The stage and set for the actor is determined as a real-life environment, a spiritual world interacting with the performance. This task is specifically resolved by a plastic environment, which either can be developed in the course of performance or remain static; however, its major purpose is to be psychologically saturated and accumulate the atmosphere of entire performance.

The characteristic signs of Constructivism are well cut in their application to small stage (as in both the "Dungeon" theaters, the Free Theater, Royal Theater, etc.). The artists clearly realize the possibilities of such space limited space they understand their proportions and by employing fast displacement of the objects they create new place of action simultaneously increasing the emotional effect through use of the relevant color gamut.

Currently, the basic elements of constructivism are enjoying a revival, acquiring a new quality. This is a qualitative transfer to a new artistic system, or to put it more precisely – a qualitative jump, an innovation

in Georgian scenography rather than the process of simple development of traditions. This forward leap is the best sign of further evolution of the traditions of Georgian scenography.

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THE QUESTION OF ORGANIC FORM IN THE ART OF SHALVA KIKODZE

Georgian Modernist art of the 1910s and 1920s is a highly interesting phenomenon, congruous with contemporary European Avant-garde art and, at the same time, utterly distinct.

At the beginning of the 20th century Tbilisi turned into a new international cultural center, living a creatively active life, with a multicultural space where several European Avant-garde art movements harmoniously co-existed.

Georgian artists were educated abroad. They appear to be not only students of European Avant-garde experience, but participants in its formation, the creators of a new artistic reality by transforming

this experience and combining it with their own. And these processes were not violent, nor were they a mechanical attempt at being congruous with the times. Georgian Modernist art was a requirement for the further development stage organically derived from centuries-old national traditions. Other than this acceptable basis, there existed a centuries-old experience of sharing and transforming different cultures within the boundaries of Georgia's national culture. Despite many influences, Georgian art never lost its character and was never in danger of ceasing its development. A strong sense of his own roots and a distinct value system made the Georgian artist capable of being ready to share everything new, and gave him courage to receive new ideas without losing his own. Presumably, this mental peculiarity, this definite genetic talent, stipulated a special attitude of Georgian art toward other cultures and defined its character over the centuries.

The art of Shalva Kikodze, one of the Georgian Modernists, clearly reveals the period's trends, its

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main methods and principles and also its contradictions. All these factors are vehemently reflected in the works that Kikodze created in Paris. One part of them is dedicated to the life of Paris and its bohemia; another is a cycle dedicated to Adjara and Guria.

A strong individual perception is reflected in the works dedicated to the everyday life of Paris. A very vibrant life of Parisian bohemia is represented in a distinctly individual way in "City" and "Artists' Coffee-House in Paris." Unlike other contemporary artists, Kikodze doesn't represent this easy, careless environment in an ideal way. This place was depressing, unacceptable, false and immoral for him. Disappointment, which the artist felt during his stay in Paris, became manifested in his letters: "Nowadays Paris is somewhat desperate. The lack of taste and thoughtlessness prevails everywhere. There are no feelings and thought ... we're watching the beginning of the end of Europe. We're listening to its last breathing..." (I.Abesadze, 2001).

This sense of crisis and emptiness is reflected in Kikodze's work. The characters in "City" have a sad, even desperate look. The grotesque expressions and exaggerated gestures make the scene theatrical; this is Kikodze's means of showing the nonsense of these events and the emptiness of these people's purposeless lives. Kikodze mostly uses dark colors; his pure black is in contrast with surfaces modeled by light and shade. The volumes of figures and the planes of the background are mixed. Deepness develops only conditionally and figures are executed almost academically, though the theatrical character of their gestures and expressions and a conditional space balance these contradictions and thus wholeness is reached.

In "Artists' Coffee-House in Paris" exaggerated smiling faces are reminiscent of theatrical masks. Their eyes are cold, fastened, or very sad and it becomes hard to clear up whether they look out smiling or with faces wrinkled by pain and despair.

Here as well, pure color and light and shades, as the space and planes create a contrast with each other. Such grades of opposition is a typical means of expression in Modern art. Contrasting colors strengthen the expressive character of the scene. However, this is not

an event identical to European Expressionism. Georgian artists did not apply extreme means of representation. The inner condition of the artist is utterly different; he doesn't consider himself as a participant in these events; instead distancing himself from what is unacceptable to him, he assumes the role of an observer. He just expresses his ironic opinion; ironic but not cynical, as cynicism has never been a feature of Georgian art, and presumably the Georgian artist was capable of being restrained, balanced, and could look from faraway at a world unacceptable (but not incomprehensible) for him, bearing the consciousness of this art.

Kikodze's Adjara and Guria cycles have an atmosphere absolutely different from that of his Paris paintings. The artist creates a general icon of historical Georgia, with significantly executed characters. Aesthetic oppositions are more evident here, contrasts and their organization are more bold. According to the degree of contrast, the means of their organization become stronger, in order to create an organic wholeness.

In the works "Guria" and "Gurian Woman" the composition is built according to plane principles by modeling vivid colorful spots, combinations of serpentine, undulating lines, and overhanging planes, where



"Artists' Coffee House in Paris." 1920



“Guria.” 1921



“Gurian Woman. 1921

the connection with the representational methods of some Avant-garde movements are revealed. Thus, a dynamic space is created where general portrait-types of Georgian women revealing their melancholy are presented. These images are reminiscent of the patterns of old Georgian wall paintings. The figures are modeled conditionally, using stylized lines and concision that stipulates a connection of the image with the background, resulting in the wholeness of different images and their harmonious combinations and organization within one space.

A higher degree of generalization is seen in “Adjara” – a scene from the same cycle. The same plane-spot-like principles are developed here. The background is defined by moving, almost rolling forms, by tensile rhythmic and deep colority. The region’s hard historical fortunes are concentrated in the faces. The wholeness of colority, strong generalization, conditionality and laconism are used as the means to unite this dramatism with the vivid character of the whole composition. Thus, mechanical combinations are excluded and contradictions are overcome in these works while uniting opposing European and Georgian origins. This feat is not always achieved by other Modernist artists.

Thus, while the art of Shalva Kikodze reveals trends generally typical for modern art, his work constitutes an absolutely original, whole world, subordinated to his deeply individual vision and a consciousness that reveals a different culture together with new experience obtained. Kikodze’s work is substantially congruous with the European Avant-garde of his period, but at the same time reveals concrete signs of his Georgian heritage.

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AN ASPECT OF CLARA KVEES'S CREATIVE WORK (GEORGIAN PAINTING OF THE 1920S)

The beginning of the 20th century – from 1910 to the 1930s – is one of the most interesting and significant periods in Georgian Art. Cultural life became very creatively loaded and “alert”; this can be explained primarily by the political situation then existing in Georgia. This was, of course, the short-lived period of independence and active contacts with Europe.

“In 1917-1921 the capital of Georgia became some kind of a cultural oasis, [...] that supported a concentration of creative intelligences and the flourishing of every sphere of art.” According to Luigi Magarotto’s accurate remark “these years can be considered as the most fruitful years of the Russian and, of course, of the Georgian Avant-garde” (L. Magarotto, 2006, 57). At this time every sphere of art was filled with new creative energy, fine arts among them. Together with mastering and assimilating the achievements of Western and Russian Modernism, in their painting Georgian artists from the beginning brought to the front issues of nationalism. At the same time they intensively absorbed the new trends in world art. As a result of organic syntheses of the old and new, extremely interesting and original painting appeared, conventionally named as “1920s art.”

This stage of Georgian painting has been rather thoroughly studied but one can still come across partly or totally unknown artists with really remarkable heritages. One example is Clara Kvees – a painter of Latvian origin who lived in Georgia and worked in Tbilisi, and who was practically unknown to the wider society.

In Clara Kvees’ creative work several genres can be singled out: nudes, still lifes, landscapes and portraits. However, at this time we will consider only one aspect of Clara Kvees’ creative work, her still lifes and, correspondingly, will review only a small part of her creative heritage

In briefly describing Clara Kvees’s creative work we can boldly state that it carries signs of Classicism; in her flawless expertise in drawing and composition she is a Classic type of a painter. Nonetheless, this does not interfere with her ability to work with the same intensity in every area of Modernism characteristic of her artistic period. Clara Kvees demonstrates vivid interest in Constructivism and Cubism, but unlike other “leftist” avant-garde artists of the period, Kvees’s art is not at all aggressive; moreover, any Modernist manner acquires any “academic” flavor in her works. For Clara Kvees this is in the first place a “declaration” of bold experimentalism and creative liberty. A seeker by temperament she naturally shows an interest in the experimental art typical of the period, but never dives into oblivion in the bohemian fire fueled by artists of the avant-garde.

From this point of view, it is remarkable that Clara Kvees’ artistic inclinations reveal remarkable ties to Postimpressionism and among them to its most classic author – Paul Cézanne, a painter on whom 20th-century art is practically based. In fact, for Clara Kvees he occupies an outstanding and distinguished place among other leaders in world art. Echoes of Cézanne’s works, not to say influence, is obvious in her compositions as an “answering dialogue” inspired by his creative work. This can hardly be called direct influence; it is more an attempt by Clara Kvees of comprehending and assimilating Cézanne’s artistic methods. Clara Kvees is a follower of a similar creative credo and aesthetic. The first thing that brings her close to Cézanne and the Post-impressionists is a desire to return back to the “lost rights” of an image after the “uncontrolled originality” of Impressionism, a striving to express the spaciousness of the material world and objective nature.

First of all, one feels this in the still lifes. Clara Kvees still lifes really “owe” a lot to Cézanne, though a gentle difference on the margins serves to condition the originality of Clara Kvees’ art and reveals differences which are not only formal but also clearly reflect the character of her emotional experience of the world.

Clara Kvees chooses objects from the environment; mostly these are everyday things, like a bottle,



Still life, oil/canvas, 39 x 50 cm, 1926

glass, mug, milk jug, apple, quince etc. In painting these objects, Kvees first of all tries to express convincingly their material essence, their material nature, and at the same time by generalization of the forms to “clean” the object from its everyday utilitarian purpose – and by these means to confer upon it a special meaning. Kvees achieves this by following means: for a still life she chooses only a few objects and never overloads the composition with too many details. Normally, she paints one or two things that are brought as close as possible to the spectator, almost jamming the painted space, so that nothing disturbs our attention and concentration. The format of the painting also helps fix our gaze; for her still lifes Kvees almost always chooses a small, almost square or very nearly square canvas.

The square form “adjusted” to the image in itself ensures the stability of the composition; deprived of any extra details, the given image plastically captures our eyes and we can say that it moves the spectators into scrutinizing it. The objects become mute having lost their functions, caught in time and space, as if to indicate vanity of all things and offer their own selves cleansed from everyday life, creating the needed conditions for this.

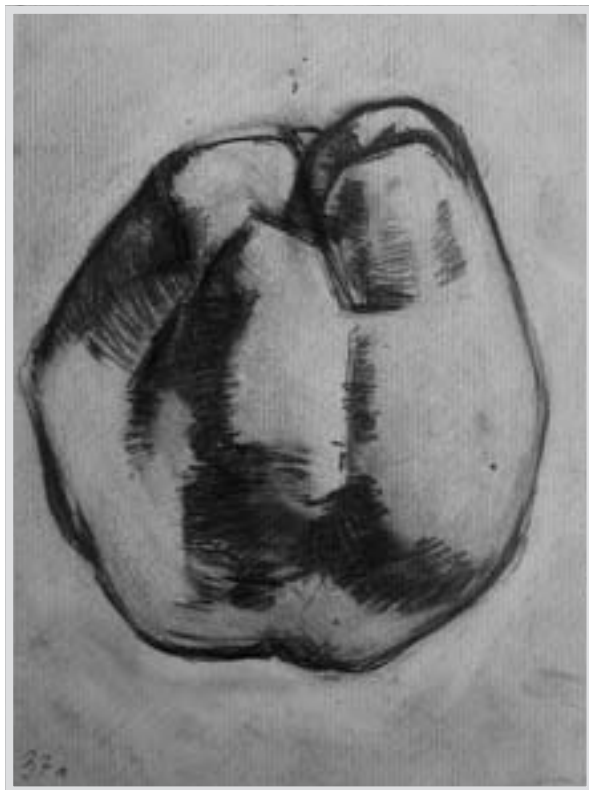


Still life with bottle, oil/canvas, 40 x 39 cm, 1926

Unlike Cézanne, who lets the spectators see the unseen “spiritual life” of objects as existing independently from us only from afar, Clara Kvees involves the spectators themselves in the process of the reanimation-reviving of objects; she helps them and in particular makes them “wind” themselves in to feel the miraculous transformation together with these objects.

Clara Kvees’ still lifes are also characterized by their emotional charge. Most notably, one can feel this from pencil-sketches of apples and quinces. These are some studies where the artist seems to be exercising herself in delivering plastic forms and their generalization. At the same time, in such sketches one can feel even more strongly stronger the artist’s temper. In strong opposition to the white background of a sheet of paper are shadows forming the plasticity of the object, drawn with quick, energetic strokes and frames made in vivid, flexible and seemingly vibrant contours that animates the object in front of our eyes.

Kvees offers forms that are plastically amazingly impressive; light and shadow are in dramatic contrast, and highlights made by masterfully used rubber provide strong animated effects and give special tension and strain to her compositions, which by genre and theme are completely non-aggressive. In



Quince, paper/pencil, 24 x 12 cm, 1925

these abovementioned characteristics Clara Kvees is completely different from Paul Cezanne, whose compositions are always quiet, rationally thought out and orderly. In the case of Clara Kvees' still lifes, the tangible primacy of rationalism existing in Cézanne's works is "balanced" by her uncontrolled temperament and the feeling of tenseness "enslaved in the objects." Though on the other hand, Kvees' strong temperament never casts shadows on her rational beginning and systematic approach to artistic methods. Both of these methods are equally readable in her creative work (perhaps because of this rationalist method on the one hand and the energetic, intuitive artist on the other hand and thus Kvees easily finds herself at home in archaeology, where one should see antiquity distanced from oneself by the ages and with gentle and sensitive eyes).

Thus Clara Kvees is distinguished for her strong energetic, temperament, but at the same time for her rationalist starting point, the high culture of her painting, and her exquisite taste. For Kvees, her main task

as an artist was to demonstrate essence of an object, to reveal its structure (this is even more strongly expressed in Kvees' series of nudes executed in a Constructivist manner), and by means of this to find the real essence of a subject that is hidden behind reality and showing and releasing its inherent inner energy. Her high degree of generalization assisted Kvees in dressing her creations in special shades beyond time.

In summary, I think that Clara Kvees created an interesting chapter in the "Georgian version" of Avant-garde art, version that was marked by moderation and self-control. A thoughtful introduction to such work helps us to see better and think over more fully the phenomenon of Clara Kvees.

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Restoration/Conservation



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A SHARED PROJECT

At various times and with various funding between 1996 and 2008, we worked with a number of institutions and groups on preserving the monumental cultural heritage of Georgia at the churches of Kintsvisi, Timotesubani and Martvili. In each case the individual problems specific to each building were examined, and in each case further knowledge was acquired which was then fruitfully applied to other situations. Further, with each meeting, the Georgian experts developed greater professional independence and confidence. An examination of the cardinal aspects and the consequent development of these three different projects will give some idea of the complexity of the situations which had to be faced and how the selected treatment options were arrived at.

Our group of Italian trained conservation specialists had our first contact with Georgian culture and heritage when the World Bank - Italian Trust Fund proposed a project of cooperation with the NGU the then Georgian Arts and Culture Center.

The aim was to employ our experience and the methodology we had trained with to develop a project for the conservation of the wall paintings in the church of St Nicholas at Kintsvisi. These paintings date to between the 12th and the 13th centuries, and their Annunciating Angel is an emblem of Georgian painting. (Fig. 1)

This first experience was extremely valuable for us: not only did it provide the basis for an understanding of the principal problems affecting the Georgian monumental heritage, but it also saw the start of a fruitful exchange of views and the creation of a common language and tools.

The development of the project for the conservation of the paintings at Kintsvisi proceeded through a series of phases which were progressively defined with our Georgian colleagues during our various missions. A initial reconnaissance was followed by a more detailed study and a sample treatment of a small area of the paintings to trial treatment methodologies. This led

to the drawing of a complete project which included a budget proposal. The various stages of the development of the project can be summarised as follows:

C.B.C.	GACC and Georgian Conservators
Study of the monument and its geographical context	Collection of historical data, documentation of earlier conservations and scientific analyses.
Study of the forms of deterioration	
Devising a graphic base map and documentation of the principal forms of deterioration and their extent	
Selection of representative areas containing what were identified as the highest priority problems to be solved.	
Carrying out of test treatments to resolve these technical problems. Specific materials were tested and the results recorded.	
Planning of follow-up scientific analyses and documentation of the problems encountered and the treatments carried out	
Chemical, physical and biological analyses	Non-destructive scientific analyses
	Follow-up checks on the results of the treatment trials
Identification of the priorities for the general conservation treatment	
Setting out the project, listing the various phases of treatment, documentation and spending.	
	Validation of the project
	Search for funding

The aspect which we would like to bring out here, and which we hope is clearly illustrated in the table above, is how there was constant exchange and contributions from both parties involved, including key moments when various vital factors were identified collaboratively and the principal objectives of the project were arrived at together. For us it was vital to understand the intrinsic diversity within a culture with such a long history, and to empathise with the way our colleagues, whose training and background were different from ours, approached the various problems, and how we could best provide valid assistance, both from a methodological point of view and in terms of the providing conservation materials which were re-



1 Transept at Kintsvisi, with the Annunciating Angel at centre.

ally effective in this context. On the other hand, the Georgian experts had to get to grips with out methods of evaluating and resolving problems, and test the methods and materials to ensure the our proposed solutions were indeed valid.

In essence, the project identified three high priority objectives:

1. Establishing the procedures for documentation, so there would be a permanent record for the future of what had been learned, what treatments were carried out, and the results obtained.

2. Pinpointing the causes of the various forms of degradation identified, so that solutions could be proposed which brought the paintings back to a state of equilibrium, both in terms of the architectural structure and the environmental conditions.

3. Identifying the most minimally invasive treatments, aimed just at stabilising the materials the art works were made of.

The World Bank provided a second piece of funding on the basis of this project, which enabled the work to be carried out and completed. The work was executed by Georgian conservators and a team of trainee conservators from the Restoration Academy in Tbilisi and the treatment was structured as a training worksite. At the same time, it proved possible to go more thoroughly into the causes of deterioration and their solution (paragraph 2 above) thanks to the involvement of the engineer Ippolito Massari, perhaps greatest living authority on the problems in architecture which result from humidity, whether it be due to the structure itself, or environmental factors. Thus, parallel to our role as consultants on the conservation of the wall paintings, there was created a new source of input to the project, opening up new possibilities of research and collaboration with experts from several science departments at the university of Tbilisi. This led to the development of a study on the internal and external microclimate of the site, which led directly to repairs and modifications to the roof, the entrances and windows of the church as well as to the drainage of the surrounding land, all of which has improved notably the stability of the environment with significant benefit to the conservation of the church of St Nicholas and its paintings.

As will be discussed in the contributions of Giulia Caneva and Mark Gittins, the overriding concerns in this first project were the questions of biological deterioration and the loss of the paint layer due to flaking and powdering. However, the whole scale treatment of the paintings both verified the efficacy of the materials we had recommended, and at the same time allowed the Georgian conservators to become familiar with their use, so they became integrated into Georgian working methods and applied with the notable manual dexterity common to the local conservators.

After the success of this first, arduous enterprise, the GACC undertook a second initiative, involving once again the CBC and Ippolito Massari, but developing with its own resources a project for the conservation of the wall paintings in the church of the Virgin at Timotesubani. (Fig. 2)

The general treatment project was devised and implemented by Georgian experts, with a team of



2 Exterior view of the Church of the Mother of God, Timotesubani.

conservators led by Guram Cheishvili, and was funded with contributions by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, World Monument Found, Foundation of Rescue and Preservation of Historical monuments of Georgia, MMF-Wilson Challenge.

The principal objectives of the project were similar to those of Kintsvisi, with the addition of a new technical problem due to a serious and extensive form of damage in the church: the detachment of plasters from the brick wall support. This problem required the widespread consolidation and anchoring of the plasters to the wall, principally either through injections of hydraulic lime or the use of supporting borders and fillings made of lime-sand mortars, materials which are fully compatible with the original materials and which do not contain undesirable substances such as soluble salts.

This project occupied us from 2000 to 2003; and the worksite was once again used for training students of conservation.

Given the success of these treatments and the functionality of their procedural model, work was started on another project with a phase of diagnostic studies leading to a treatment proposal, funded by the Getty Grant Program of the Getty foundation. The site chosen was the church of the Virgin in Martvili. Episcopal seat of the Georgian Orthodox church from the tenth century, it contains various cycles of wall paintings, in some cases in a series of layers on top of each other. The paintings cover the entire surface of the nave of the church right up to the dome. (Fig. 3)

The problems of flaking and powdering of the paint were here strictly linked to the presence of soluble salts arising from the infiltration of water through the walls, but a far more extensive and alarming problem was the detachment of the plasters, either from the underlying walls or indeed the separation between the various overlying layers of plaster. Furthermore, the atrium of the church was suffering from massive and complex biological degradation which



3 The centre of the church at Martvili.

was difficult to interpret. As a consequence, another member was added to the team of external consultants, one of the foremost experts in microbiological and botanical issues in conservation, Giulia Caneva of the Terza università di Roma.

The organisational and operational aspects of the project for Martvili – involving both the conservation treatment of the paintings and the repair and stabilising of the structure – was carried out exclusively by the Georgian experts, essentially completing the road to autonomy in planning which had been initiated in the first stage of work at Kintsvisi. In addition to this, the external consultants undertook training of the local conservation team and local scientists through meetings and discussions, firstly to examine methods for the recording of data, through means of analytical identification, to testing of materials for resolving technical problems.

At the end of these twelve years of collaboration, we could perhaps try to sum up what has been achieved as follows:

- the presence of external experts, and above all, specialised funding for the conservation of the cultural heritage helped to reactivate exchanges between conservators, art historians, as well as public institutes handling training and protection for the cultural heritage, leading firstly to appreciation and awareness of such interdisciplinary matters such as scientific analyses and technical documentation, as well as, as we so clearly see in this international conference, stimulating international communication

- there has been a broadening and deepening of understanding in the field of conservation, in particular between Italy and Georgia, two countries with a vast heritage of wall paintings

- the combined work to involve diverse specialists and institutions in the multidisciplinary tasks that are conservation planning and studies into the problems of conservation

- the opening of the field to the new generation of conservators, through the creation of new important opportunities for training and work.

Finally, while these can to a certain extent be counted as achievements, the time is now ripe to open up further avenues for progress in the technical, scientific and organisational fields.

As far as technical matters are concerned, there is the need to study historical construction techniques and the usage by builders and artists of materials throughout history. This is a field which could see the involvement, with useful exchanges, of the Universities of both countries. In part such an opportunity may already exist, as thanks to the initiative of the Italian Ambassador in Georgia, there are scholarships enabling Georgian professionals to follow courses of study in Italy, which hopefully will aid in the transmission of useful information between the two countries. The same sort of initiatives have already been undertaken in the fields of science and conservation with Georgian professionals studying in England, Germany and the United States.

Another possible question to be approached in the technical sphere is the relationship between the recovery of the substance of a painting and possible further treatment of its image, an area which is at the core of much conservation work in Italy, but which is very distant from the Georgian approach.

Finally, in terms of progress with regard to organisational matters, it has become increasingly evident that there is urgent need for dialogue at the institutional level between Church and State concerning the day to day handling of the cultural heritage – but this last, fortunately, does not concern us!

Mark Gittins

C.B.C. Conservazione Beni Culturali, Italy

METHODOLOGICAL AND PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO THE CONSERVATION OF THREE GEORGIAN WALL PAINTINGS

This paper is a review of the emergency conservation treatments applied in the period 1996-2008 on the wall paintings in three churches in the Republic of Georgia: the Church of St Nicholas, Kintsvisi, the Church of the Mother of God, Timotesubani and the Church of the Virgin, Martvili. The treatments were planned and tested by joint teams of Georgian- and Italian-trained conservators, though the actual implementation was carried out by the Georgians, with technical and logistical support by the Italian group.

Obviously, these treatments of the paintings were the final step in much further reaching projects aimed at repairing the buildings as a whole and eliminating the root cause of damage to the paintings, and were carried out at the same time as a comprehensive programme of photographic and graphic documentation of the paintings and their treatment.

1. General principals underlying the treatments.

Before examining in detail the actual methods and materials involved in the treatments, and discussing the factors governing their choice, I would like to briefly look at some of the key methodological concepts underlying all the work discussed here.

The overriding concept which guided the choice of treatment methods and materials was that of respecting the original work of art and its history and the task of conservators was seen as – to paraphrase the conservation theorist Cesare Brandi – to pass onto future generations the work of art, both as a physical object and also as an aesthetic and historical document¹.

Thus the members of both teams agreed that treatments should be minimal in nature, restricted to conserving and stabilising the work essentially as it was found while respecting the losses it had suffered

over time, and there should be no attempt to “renew” or reconstruct the works, for example, by retouching.

Such a minimal, respectful approach in any case is a well established tradition in the conservation of Georgian wall paintings.

At the same time these paintings were selected as they were in urgent need of emergency treatment, thus they had to be stabilised, degradation processes had to be halted and sources of damage and deterioration had to be removed.

However, in line with this minimalist approach, it was clear that no materials or treatments employed should put the works at risk in the future; therefore all materials chosen had to be stable over time, and physically and chemically compatible with the original materials used in the paintings and the context in which they were found. These last criteria had a fundamental bearing on the choice of materials to be employed, for, as we shall see, errors in the past in such choices had indeed led to unintended damage to the paintings.

Another factor which had to be taken into consideration in discussions on treatment methods and materials was the safety of the conservators working on the paintings. Thanks to the diligence of members of the Georgian team, the scaffoldings employed became safer and sturdier in each successive treatment campaign, and with the help of the Biological consultant, Dr Giulia Caneva, a less toxic biocide was introduced in the work at the church at Martvili.

2. General condition of the paintings and the problems faced

While obviously the paintings in each church had a unique set of problems, there was also much common ground in the conservation issues which had to be faced.

Factors and problems which had to be taken into account included:

Artistic techniques: In all the churches the principal artistic technique employed was that of paint made with pigments in an organic binder (probably casein) applied directly onto a dry plaster of lime and sand. The plaster varies in thickness from a millimetre or less to (more commonly) several centimetres. At Timotesubani and Kintsvisi, the walls are made of



1 Transept at Kintsvisi, showing losses, staining of plaster and white fillings.

brick, while at Maretvili, the building is constructed of a limestone.

The condition of the support. In all churches there were localised cracks in the wall support, at times several centimetres wide. In some cases, the bricks or stone blocks of the support were damaged or detached.

The condition of the plaster. In all three churches there were extensive areas of losses in the plaster, numerous zones of the plaster were detached and cracked, and salt efflorescence and staining and whitening caused by water infiltration was common. The broken edges of the plaster had been generally covered by thick, highly visible borders, often in cement or gypsum, added in previous treatments

The condition of the paint layer was generally quite poor – there were large areas where the paint had been totally lost, and the surviving paint was often badly abraded, flaking or powdering. It was generally covered in grime, and in some areas streaked with

bat and bird excrement, with other areas affected by salt efflorescence. In localised areas there were black and green patinas due to biological attack, and at Timotesubani and Kintsvisi there was a highly extensive pink biological patina, while there was a more localised attack at Martvili. (Fig. 1)

Previous conservation treatments: as noted above, inappropriate materials had been used in earlier conservation treatments, in particular gypsum and cement for fillings, both of which are chemically and physically incompatible with the lime plasters. It is also possible that traditional organic fixatives (products such as glues, egg or gum) probably used in the past may have provided a nutrient source for the biological agents attacking the paintings.

3 Essential treatment methods and materials

3.1 Surface cleaning

The surface cleaning of the paintings was aimed at removing non-original material such as dust and grime, bat or bird excrement, spider webs, traces of non original plaster, biological agents etc.

There are two reasons for this treatment: firstly, to improve the visibility of the original works of art, and secondly, to remove potentially or actively damaging materials.

The choice of cleaning method is determined above all by compatibility with original painting materials, and the condition of the paintings. Prior to cleaning, the work must be checked to see if preventative conservation work is necessary, such as the readhesion of flaking paint or detached plaster (see Sections 3.2 and 3.5 below).

The materials used for cleaning must be chosen so that all cleaning is easily controllable and can be applied gradually. General cleaning can only proceed after a series of tests have been carried out to establish both the method and the level of cleaning.

In the cases examined here, the fact that most of these paintings were carried out using a fragile *secco* technique meant that aggressive chemical solutions could not be used.

In general, for removing light surface deposits the following methods were used: soft brushes, Wisab cleaning sponges – which have a soft abrasive

action like the traditional method of breadcrumbs, without the risk of leaving nutrients for microorganisms – and natural sponges moistened in water, avoiding excessive wetting of the surfaces.

Bat and bird excrement, which has a corrosive affect on the paint layer, was very carefully removed mechanically with scalpels.

The removal of non original plasters and biological organisms is discussed later.

3.2 Readhesion of flaking or detaching paint

For a variety of reasons such as environmental conditions, the presence of salts, biological agents, mechanical damage or water infiltration, the paint layer may separate from the underlying plaster substrate. (Fig. 2)

Frequently, the reestablishment of adhesion between the paint layer and the plaster is a necessary to conserve the work, and is indeed a precondition for other treatments.

To obtain this readhesion, a product was needed which acts as an adhesive. Ideally however the material should also have the following characteristics:

a) The material should penetrate between the paint and the substrate, but not penetrate inside either;

b) it should not alter the appearance of the paint, nor interfere with other phases of the conservation treatment.

c) it should be stable, and chemically inert with regard to the paint and the plaster

d) it should be physically compatible with the materials, not being stronger nor more rigid than the paint layer itself when it is in good condition, nor too weak to hold the paint in place, and it should not form a barrier-film preventing the movement of water vapour.

e) it should not contribute to further degradation of the painting.²

Some traditional materials such as egg, glue or casein, if used in minimal quantities, respond quite well to several of these requisites, but unfortunately are not stable over time and can act as sources of nutrients for microorganisms.

For these reasons it was decided to use emulsions of acrylic resins in water as adhesives for the paint layers. There are many such materials available

on the market and they have been in wide use for well over thirty years.³ Consequently, while they are not perfect, conservators have come to terms with their limitations and learnt to use them well: in general they only create problems for the paint layer – such as altering the colour of the paint, reducing its permeability to water vapour etc. – if used in excess. The Georgian conservators however showed great sensitivity in the use of the materials, employing differing concentrations on the basis of the adhesive power required in a given context. Any excess of fixative remaining on the paint surface was removed using a low toxic solvent such as acetone.

The fixative was applied either directly by syringe or brush, or through sheets of Japanese paper, applying light surface pressure if necessary, cleaning the area with water afterward.

3.3 Consolidation of powdering paint

Another form of degradation of the paint film is when the paint particles lose their adhesion to each other and to the substrate, becoming a powder.

Once again an adhesive must be chosen which is capable of rebinding the particles together, and attaching the resulting film to the plaster.

The criteria to be met are essentially the same as those discussed in the preceding section, and similar materials can be used, though the method of application and the concentration of the products may vary slightly.



2. Flaking paint in raked light. Apse, Kintsvisi.



3. Biological infestation with green algae and pink bacteria, atrium, Martvili.

3.4 Disinfestation to stop biological deterioration

Microorganisms such as algae, fungi and bacteria can damage paintings in several ways: *chemically*, by the corrosive action of their metabolites, *physically* by their growth causing detachment and losses in the paint or *aesthetically* by covering or staining paints and plasters. Additionally their presence may lead to water retention on the surface, or their cells may provide nutrients for other, more aggressive microorganisms. (Fig. 3)

The product chosen for disinfestation should be as far as possible specific to the organism to be treated, should not react or damage the original artistic materials and should be of low toxicity. The product may be applied by spray, brush or in case of resistant infestation, with poultices.

Several days after treatment, the surface should be cleaned to remove dead microorganisms and excess of the product. The treatment should then be repeated.

In the earlier treatments at Kintsvisi and Timotesubani, as the actual biological agent causing the pink patina was unknown, it was decided to use a wide spectrum biocide which had been extensively tested on mural paintings, Acima Metatin 58-10/101. After preliminary testing showed it to be effective, with no damaging effects to the paintings, it was used successfully at both churches: indeed no further reinfestation was noted at Kintsvisi 6 years after treatment.

For the paintings at Martvili, under the guidance of Dr Giulia Caneva, a lower toxic alternative, Lanxess Preventol RI 80, which has also been extensively test-

ed on wall paintings, was tested and chosen.

Obviously such treatments should be combined with modification and stabilisation of the microclimate to prevent reoccurrence of the infestation.

3.5 Readhesion of detached plaster

When the plaster of a wall painting detaches, either from the wall or between different layers of the plaster itself, the voids and areas of detachment can be quite large. For this reason, if the voids are to be filled, the ideal material would be a porous, inorganic material which imitates as much as possible the physical and chemical behaviour of the original plaster itself. (Fig. 4)

At the same time, to penetrate and fill the voids, the material must be reasonably but not excessively fluid, to avoid damage to the paint layer it must not contain soluble salts, and it must set and harden inside the wall.

Normal slaked lime, for example, cannot be used as it requires direct contact with the carbon dioxide in the air to set properly.

Other more traditional materials also are not appropriate: *casein* is often too fluid, forms impermeable layers, and is stronger than most old plasters as well as being subject to biological attack; *cement* is far too strong and contains large quantities of soluble salts.

Consequently, over the last thirty or more years a series of products made up principally of *hydraulic lime* have been developed for this purpose. These are lime based, but only require the presence of water to react, have little or no salts and have similar physical strength to the original plasters used in wall paintings. These products are all mixed with water and then injected under the plaster where they set, filling the voids and adhering the detached surfaces. The actual product chosen for use was Ledan TB-1, which has been extensively used for over twenty five years.

Another method used, particularly where detachment is not particularly severe, is to re-anchor the borders of damaged plaster to the wall, or fill smaller losses which then act as anchor points for the plaster using traditional slaked lime and sand mixtures. This method was extensively used at Martvili where often there were two layers of painted plaster, one over the

other, thus avoiding covering the painted surface lying underneath with hydraulic lime. This method is discussed in more detail below (Section 3.7).

3.6 Removal of old fillings

In previous restorations, losses in the plaster and the broken borders of the plaster had generally been repaired with material such as gypsum or cement. These are highly incompatible with the original lime plaster, both physically (being harder than the original material, and more resistant to the movement of water vapour) and chemically (they act as sources for soluble salts).

Further, as these reinforcing fillings were often left in their natural colour they generally create highly visually disturbing borders or patches within the paintings.

The removal of these borders must not cause loss or damage to original material, and usually requires preliminary fixing of the paint layer, reattachment of detached plasters and even the use of temporary replacement borders or facing the plaster (see 3.2, 3.3, 3.5 and 3.7).

The borders and fillings were removed mechanically, with hammers, chisels and scalpels and drills. Residues of the materials on stone or brick were removed with hard brushes, fibreglass abrasive pens and damp sponges – water had to be used very sparingly due to contamination by salts which had leached from the old mortars.

3.7 Filling of losses in the plaster and along the borders.

Filling of the losses in the plaster and along the borders re-establishes a continuous surface to the plaster, helps to stabilise cracks and damaged areas and helps to anchor the plaster to the wall.

The materials used must be fully chemically compatible with the original material, should not contain soluble salts and ideally should be slightly physically weaker and more porous than the original plasters. The obvious choice of material is lime plaster with an aggregate such as river sand, added in proportions so as to reduce the strength of the mortar.

As mentioned above, in earlier treatments the



4. Plaster deformed and detached 2 cm from the wall. The paint layer and edges of the plaster have been faced temporarily with Japanese paper to prevent losses. Narthex, Martvili.

fillings and borders were not only too strong, too impermeable and contained salts and but they also interfered significantly with the observation of the paintings by creating light coloured “frames” around the paintings or patches within the paintings. As noted by Paolo and Laura Mora and Paul Philippot, “these losses make it difficult to perceive the image because ... they have the tendency to become the *pattern*, while the painting as a whole becomes the *ground*”⁴. Losses thus should be treated so that *they* become part of the ground, “thereby restoring the image’s pre-eminence as a figure”⁵ (Fig. 5)

This problem was addressed at Martvili, firstly by reducing the size of the reinforcing borders (wide borders add nothing to the anchoring properties of the plaster) and secondly by working on the colour of the mortar used: coloured aggregates were added to the mortar used for the fillings and borders so that they had a “neutral” tone, similar to that of a zone of abraded plaster, and no longer appeared to stand out optically “in front” of the paintings.

4 Conclusion

As can be seen by the discussions above, at every point in the physical treatment of the paintings, the conservators attempted to approach the problems from a consistent methodological point of view. Methods and materials were selected which were felt were best suited to conserve and stabilise the paint-



5. White fillings distracting from the reading of the original paint layer. Narthex, Kintsvisi.

ings while at the same time limiting the risk of possible future deterioration. At the same time, such innovations introduced, such as the use of modern materials and the latest attempts to reduce the optically disturbing effect of fillings and borders, have all been implemented using minimally invasive techniques and placing first priority on respect for the work, both as a piece of art and as a historical and religious document.

Notes:

1 C. Brandi, *Theory of restoration*. Ed. G. Basile, trans. C. Rockwell, Florence, Nardini, 2005, pp.48-49.

2 Istituto Centrale di Restauro, Opificio delle Pietre Dure, *I capitoli speciali d'appalto per i beni storico artistici: Linee guida per il restauro dei dipinti su tela su tavola e dei dipinti murali*. Rome, DEI, 2007, *passim* and Horie, C.V. *Materials for conservation*, London, Butterworth-Heinemann, 1987 pp.76-82.

3 For example see Horie, *op.cit.*. 103-112.

4 P. Mora, L. Mora, P. Philippot, *Conservation of wall paintings*. London, Butterworths, 1984, p.302.

5 *Ibid.* p. 303.

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THE ORIGINAL TECHNIQUES OF THE 12TH-CENTURY PAINTINGS AT GELATI CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN

Medieval Georgian wall painting has been the subject of scholarly interest for several decades, though knowledge of the technical peculiarities of Georgian murals, including even the most eminent ones, remains negligible. Moreover, we are largely unaware of this aspect of Byzantine and Eastern Christian art in general. So, studies on original techniques seem to be of priority nowadays, since knowledge of painting technique contributes much to our understanding of an epoch, as well as to the style of artworks. A technique, like a style, changes with time and can be linked to an artist's skill. Also of note is the fact that a technique, environmental factors apart, is of great importance for the state of preservation of paintings. Numerous Georgian murals that are preserved in an altered shape confirm this. Usually, if a painting is executed in a mixed technique (fresco-secco), it is just the underdrawing that survives. This is the case with the paintings adorning the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin at Gelati.

It is well known that the Church of the Virgin at Gelati was erected, together with the foundation of the monastery, in the reign of Davit Aghmashenebeli (David the Builder) and his son, Demetre, in the 12th century. In the same century, the church conch was adorned with mosaics. The renowned art historian, Tinatin Virsaladze, dated the church narthex and the first painting layer of the southeastern chapel to the same period (T. Virsaladze, 1959).

The fragmented painting in the narthex, of which almost nothing but an underdrawing survives, is distinguished by its high artistic value and the use of a mixed technique.

When using a mixed technique, an artist begins with freshly laid plaster (i.e., fresco technique) and fin-

ishes with a dried surface (i.e., secco technique), employing lime plaster only.¹ An outline underdrawing is prepared on fresh plaster. Figures and compositions are sometimes marked by color spots. Plaster joints usually coincide with the boundaries of the registers. After drying, images are further treated with tempera. Paintings executed in this technique develop specific damage: dry plaster portions are less stable and easily flake off, while drawings applied on fresh plaster usually remain on walls and may collapse only if the plaster itself is deteriorated and detached. According to contemporary knowledge, painting on dry plaster, i.e., a secco technique had been common in Georgia until the 12th century. The technique is used in the Ateni and Zemo Krikhi paintings. An exception is a painting adorning the 11th-century Church of the Archangel at Iprari (I. Iakobashvili, 1989, 59), which makes use of a mixed technique. Further, in the 12th and 13th centuries both secco and mixed techniques were in evidence: the Vardzia (1184-1186) and Timote-subani (early 13th century) paintings were created using the secco technique, while 13th-century paintings in the churches of St. Nicholas and the Virgin at Kintsvisi, as well as Rkoni, Mami and Mtsdi are executed in a mixed technique. Beginning in the 14th century, the mixed technique found a broader application in Georgian wall painting.

The tonality of the plaster in the narthex at Gelati is grey due to the inclusion of a fairly large amount of sand in the mortar, the main component of which is lime. Analysis has shown that the sand includes particles of red clay and green earth, which appeared to be identical to the sand samples collected in the village of Gelati, in the vicinity of the Church.

The underdrawing is executed in red ocher that is essentially the same as sinopia underdrawings used in Europe for fresco paintings.² Initially laid on fresh plaster, the drawing became visible as a result of the flaking off of the paint layer. An outline drawing is unfettered and expressive. The painter marks off figures with an unbroken line, and at times, as if without interruption, applies the same line to make a general, yet highly precise outline of certain details: in this regard the figure of a bishop on the south wall is no-



Gelati. Church of the Virgin. Narthex. Bishops, detail.

table, with the slanting line of the attire flowing into the drawing of the hand; only three lines are applied to depict the hand brought up to the breast. Even without detailed rendering of the fingers, the artist succeeds in creating a lively, natural impression of characteristic gestures.

At some locations, facial features are executed on fresh plaster, which, as confirmed by plaster joints, must be due to the fact that a master had plastered a large area and wished to apply a composition before the plaster dried. Where plaster is applied in relatively small portions, a master had more time before it dried, e.g., on the southwestern slope, even small details are marked.

At some locations, the underdrawings display spots of different colors, which served as underpaint



Gelati. Church of the Virgin. Narthex. Bishops, detail.

in some areas. Where plaster is applied in small portions, spots, like drawings, are relatively more numerous and colors more intensive.

The underdrawing of the paintings is mostly executed with earth pigments, while fragments surviving in full contain expensive pigments, such as ultramarine and cinnabar. Research has shown that ultramarine was used widely throughout the Middle Ages in Georgia. This pigment is in evidence beginning from a fairly early period, e.g., it is applied in the paintings at Dodos Rka (9th century), Udabno Monastery (10th century), Otkhta Eklesia (10th century) and Ateni (11th century). The use of red lead on the wings and the facial crimson of the archangel's half-figure depicted in the tympanum of the south door of the narthex is of note. Crimson was commonly obtained with cinnabar or a mixture of cinnabar and white lead, which produced the effect of sharp red or pink; the application of red lead was rare and therefore must have produced a distinctive artistic effect in its time. The now black pigment must have originally had orange hues. For achieving more intensity, red lead was mixed with ocher. Red ocher was used also for the underpaint.³ Other instances of the use of red lead can be seen in the paintings surviving in a 13th-century Church of the Virgin at Kintsvisi and in a late 17th-century northeastern chapel of Gelati.

The first layer of the southeastern chapel of the Church of the Virgin at Gelati, which can be observed at certain locations, was dated to the 12th century by Tinatin Virsaladze. Judging by stylistic similarities and thin plaster layers, the scholar considered the paintings of the chapel and of the church narthex to date from the same period (T. Virsaladze, 1959, 165-166).

The initial painting fragments in the southeastern chapel reveal outline drawings and spots of various colors laid on wet plaster; small traces of a painting layer are visible only at a few locations: e.g., on the front of the dress of the figure in the jamb of the south wall window – the cinnabar and sheet gold applied point to the prosperity of the commissioner.

Technical studies have been enlightening with regard to the dating of the chapel paintings. The analysis has shown differences between the chapel and

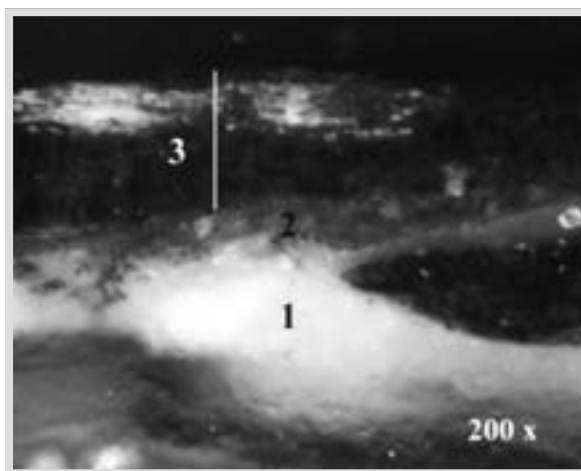


Gelati. Church of the Virgin. Narthex. South wall tympanum. Archbishop.

narthex plasters in terms of composition, as well as thickness. The chapel plaster is composed of lime and sand – 1/1 and is 1.5-2 cm thick. The narthex plaster is also composed of lime and sand though the proportions are different – 0.5 cm; the thickness of the plaster is also less – 1/1.5 cm. In terms of its composition, identical to the narthex plaster is the plaster from the south porch of the church (no traces of a painting are visible). It appears that the narthex and the south porch were covered with paintings simultaneously, in the 12th century, while the first layer in the south-eastern chapel was applied slightly later. The consideration is supported by the style in which the narthex and chapel paintings are rendered. The types of the figures represented in the chapel are slightly different and the drawing of features also lacks the virtuoso mastery of the narthex drawing.

The group of early paintings at Gelati also includes the figures of three holy women surviving in the shape of an underdrawing in the arch of the south wall of the northwestern chapel, where the present 17th-century paintings are deteriorated and de-

tached. What is obvious from the first glance is the characteristic type of the figures. Their faces are so broad that the head appears almost circular. The facial proportions are also characteristic: the distance between the eyes and the chin substantially exceeds the distance between the eyes and the upper border



Gelati. Church of the Virgin. Narthex. South wall tympanum. Archangel. Cross-section of a darkened sample (red lead)



Gelati. Church of the Virgin. Northwestern chapel. Painting fragment. South wall.

(i.e., the forehead is very low), due to which the lower part of the face is longer and larger. Such a facial type is not characteristic of a metropolitan painting tradition, but is imprinted with a 'provincial' tint.⁴

The underdrawing of the figures is also executed in red ocher. The analysis of the painting plaster revealed interesting findings: the plaster is identical with that of the first layer in the southeastern chapel. The plaster here is also composed of lime and sand, 1/1, and its thickness is also 1.5-2 cm. It is remarkable that the renowned art historian Rusudan Mepisashvili dated the chapel to the 13th century (R. Mepisashvili, T. Virsaladze, 1982, 8).

Thus, the results of the analysis of the early paintings at Gelati allow us to assume that the first paintings at Gelati were made between 1125-1130, in the narthex and the south porch. Presumably, it was slightly later that the southeastern and northwestern chapels of the church were adorned with paintings.

And lastly, of note is the fact that all the paintings of the 12th-century at Gelati are executed in a mixed technique that was not traditional in Georgia. According to the observation of David Winfield, this technique was in wide use in Byzantium. Bearing in mind that the conch of the sanctuary of the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin at Gelati is executed in a mosaic technique, common in Byzantium and very rare in Georgia, this peculiarity of the early paintings of Gelati appears highly noteworthy.

Notes:

1 In case of gypsum plaster, only secco technique is applied for painting. The paintings at Ortkhta Eklesia, Ishkhani and Ateni (11th century) can serve as examples.

2 Sinoper – 'sinopsis terra', also called the Land of Demnos or sealed earth (terra sigillata) is a dark red earth pigment found on the isle of Lemnos and in Cappadocia. It is referred to in *De rubica Sinopica*. *De rubica fabrilli* – chapter 112 and by Vitruvius in book 7, chapter 7.

3 The analysis was conducted at the Privalova Centre Betania for Scientific Research of Paintings

4 Despite being very different from the so-called metropolitan image, this type of face can neither be described as vernacular and is best defined as an intermediary type.

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BIODETERIORATION OF MURAL PAINTINGS IN THE CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN IN MARTVILI (GEORGIA)

ABSTRACT

The biological attack of the mural paintings of the church of the Virgin in Martvili was analysed, with a floristic and ecological approach. This problem was particularly relevant in the case of the western porch of the church, where diffuse growths of blackish, green and pink patinas, due to cyanobacteria (*Chroococcales*) and other bacterial forms were detected. These biological colonisations were studied through optical microscopy and SEM, and differences between the different phenomenologies appeared mainly quantitative, with exception of the pink ones. These latter seem in fact to be referred to other bacterial forms, with carotenoid pigments, linked to high light input and lower values of humidity. In general, the changes in biodeterioration appear to be correlated mainly to light and air circulation, especially to the direction of humid air and fog during winter. Considering the porosity of the materials (mortars and stone) and the different environmental conditions in the porch, a map of the humidity level of the walls has been developed, using these organisms and their distribution as bioindicators.

Some conservative treatments were carried out with preliminary tests of efficiency, using two biocides (Rocima 110 and Preventol R80, quaternary ammonium salts, in the first case plus an organotin compound) widely tested and used in the past. Further interventions of environmental conditioning were also suggested, in order to limit the ecological ability of these organisms to grow, and solve this problem in a long lasting way.

HISTORICAL NOTES

The Church of the Virgin in Martvili (7th- 19th century) is one of the most significant monuments in Georgia and one of the oldest and most important centres in Western Georgia. It served as the Episcopal Chair of the Georgian Orthodox Church from the 10th Century until its abrogation by Russian governors at the beginning of the 19th Century. At one time, the interior of the church was almost entirely decorated with paintings made in various periods from the 14th to the 17th Centuries. The frescos are executed in a combination of both fresco and secco methods, and are depicted with a distinctly Georgian combination of Byzantine style and unique individual details.

Climatic analysis of the site MARTVILI (Samegrelo Region, Georgia)

In order to better understand the ecological relationships between the biodeterioration problems, a general climatic analysis of the site was carried out, and for the definition of the microclimate, we also utilised the data previously collected by Ing. I. Massari (Massari, 2004).

The elaborated data (collected from 2001 to 2005, including monthly precipitation, temperature and humidity) show that rainfalls have a quite homogenous distribution (Autumn = 278.9 mm; Spring = 291.1mm), with an increase during Summer (300.1mm) and a reduction in Winter (154.7 mm).

The rainiest month is June (131,4 mm), while the least one is January (41,2 mm), with average rainfall of 1024,8 mm per year. The medium monthly humidity is very relevant and the values are always higher than 70%, with a maximum in February (80,4%) (60-65% are threshold values for the spore's germination).

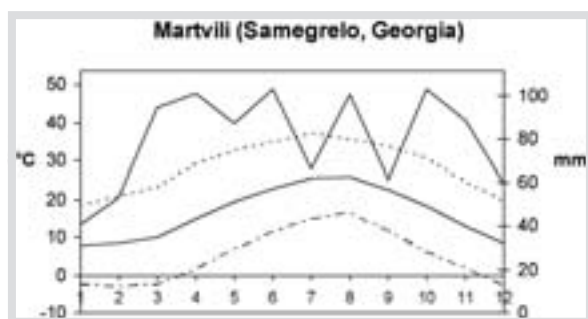
The average minimum monthly temperatures are under 0°C during the winter period and also in March (all these months are characterized, in fact, by a strong Cold Stress), while they are little warmer in November (1,6°C) and during April (1,3°C). The coldest month is February with an average minimum temperature of - 3,1°C. The higher temperatures instead are the summery ones, with values higher than 30°C for May and from June to October. The month with the higher maximum temperature is July (36,7°C).

From the analysis of these data (Tab. 1) it has been possible to characterize the climatic station of Martvili according to the Rivas Martinez classification (Rivas Martinez, 1995), which, on the basis of bioclimatic indexes, subdivides the world-wide climate into five macrobioclimates (Tropical, Mediterranean, Temperate, Boreal and Polar).

The Samegrelo Region is in the West part of Georgia and in part it stands along the Black Sea coast, where subtropical climate features are dominant: high humidity and heavy precipitation. This influence decreases going into the interior part of the Region and in the Martvili station it seems not relevant. Data of the Martvili climate show, indeed, that the Macrobioclimate is Temperate- boreal, and the Bioclimate is oceanic - semicontinental, with superior *Thermo- moderate Thermicity index* and *inferior Humid Ombrothermic index*.

Tab. 1 – Resume of climatic data, Martvili station.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Precipitation of the months (mm)													
Average	41,2	53,7	94,5	109,2	87,4	131,4	65,8	102,9	61,4	128,9	88,5	59,8	1024,8
The average temperature of the months (0° C)													
Average	6,6	6,1	8,4	12,7	18,3	21,8	24,4	25,1	22,8	17,3	11,8	6,9	15,2
The max. temperature of the months (0° C)													
Average	17,8	20,4	22,8	28,7	32,3	34,6	36,7	35,3	33,5	30,3	24,2	19,5	28,0
The min. temperature of the months (0° C)													
Average	-2,7	-3,1	-2,8	1,3	6,6	11,0	14,6	16,1	11,7	6,0	1,6	-2,7	4,8
Average relative humidity of the months (%)													
Average	79,2	80,4	78,2	74,8	75,8	76,8	73,4	75,2	75,8	79,4	77,6	79,2	77,2
max. relative humidity of the months (%)													
Average	94,2	95,6	95,8	96,2	92,6	96	89,4	89,4	91,8	95,4	94	94,4	93,7
min. relative humidity of the months (%)													
Average	62,6	56,4	53,4	43,2	56,4	53,8	55,8	58	54	60,2	51,6	54,6	55



1 Thermopluviometric diagram of Martvili (Samegrelo Region).

Biodeterioration problems of mural paintings

Literature describes wall paintings as frequently subject to biodeterioration, whether as a result of their high porosity, or because in their indoor environments, conditions favoring biological growth are of-

ten found (high RH, phenomena of capillarity and/or condensation) (Ciferri, 1999; Nugari et al. 2005).

The previous investigation carried out in Georgian churches confirmed the relevance of the biological colonization in the deterioration of these substrata (Meggiolaro et al., 1998; Gittins et al., 2002). In fact, during the restoration activities in the churches of Kintsvisi and Timotesubani, supported by the World Bank and the Getty Conservation Institute, the biological attack to the mural paintings was observed to be one of the most relevant conservative problems (Vedovello & Gittins, 2006).

In the case of the Martvili church, the biodeterioration problem looked particularly heavy on the mural paintings in the western porch, where diffuse growths of blackish, green and pink patinas of biological origin were easily detectable (Fig. 2). According with the literature, the degradation of frescoes was greater in ar-

eas adjoining windows and doors, and in proximity to the ground. In these areas microorganisms are found in greater quantities, evidence of the importance of air-flow either because of the easier deposition of spores linked to air movement, or the greater degree of humidity linked to a fall in temperature (Nugari et al. 2005).

In the other part of the mural paintings and of the walls inside the church, the biological problems were located only in parts where a certain water input from rising damp and sufficient light occur.

To establish the nature of the various forms of biodeterioration of the mural paintings different samples were collected, considering at least one sample for each phenomenology of alteration, and using a sterile scalpel or brushing some powder of the patinas from the surfaces.

These biological colonisations were studied in laboratory through optical microscopy and SEM, in order to define at least the main etiological agent of the alteration. In particular Raman spectroscopy was utilized to identify the nature of the pigments giving rise to the pink coloration.

RESULTS

The samples coming from the green and especially from black patinas showed a not negligible presence of cyanobacteria belonging to *Chroococcus* sp. (Fig. 3).

Chroococcus cyanobacteria are photosynthesising organisms that need light and a certain water input. They have a gelatinous sheath and black melanins (which explains the black patinas that they can form) for protecting themselves from dryness and from too high solar radiations. They have also chlorophylls (which explains the green patinas that they can also form in other ecological conditions) associated with other photosynthetic pigments.

These organisms have been also detected from the pink alterations, but in lower quantity.

The scanning electron microscopy showed in fact the presence of coccoid forms, of bacterial nature, widely diffused in all the samples. The floristic composition of the different phenomenologies of alteration looked quite similar (especially for the green and black patinas) and the quantitative differences appeared more relevant with respect to the qualitative ones (that means changes in the optimality values of the same species due to ecological gradients).

The scarce information obtained only from morphological observation did not allow, however, reaching a satisfactory taxonomical identification. In this case, such as for the pink alteration, a PCR amplification with specific primers should be needed, as underlined by different Authors (Schabereiter-Gurtner et al., 2001; Imperi et al., in press in this same volume). On the contrary, cultural analysis in these cases appeared not very useful, due to the difficulty of some species to grow on the usual cultural media used in laboratory. This problem explains the isolation, after cultural analysis, only of *Mycelia sterilia* in similar cases of biodeterioration of mural paintings in Georgia.

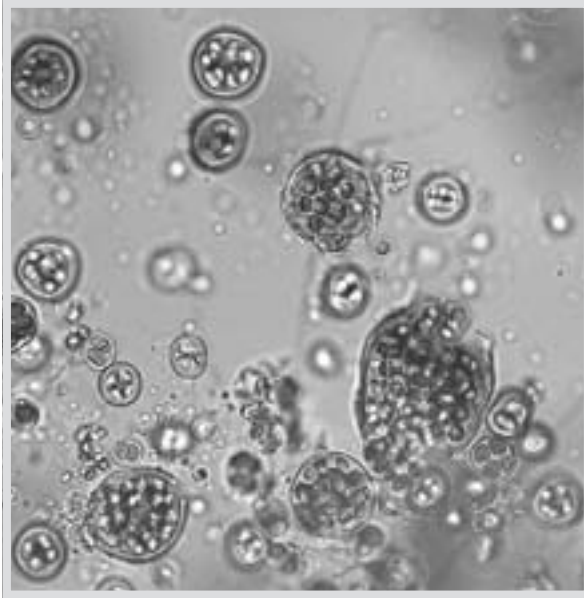
In the case of the pink alteration, however, the



2 Different biodeterioration pattern in the western porch (left with respect to the entrance).

presence of other bacterial species besides cyanobacteria can be supposed. Raman spectroscopy permitted to identify the presence of carotenoids of biological origin, similar to those detected in other cases of biodeterioration of mural paintings (see Matera's, in Imperi et al., in press). In the case of the Crypt of the Original Sin (Matera), the species responsible of the alteration was a *Rubrobacter*, a heterotrophic bacteria containing carotenoids, ecologically linked to light, but preferring a lower level of humidity with respect to cyanobacteria and algae. This species was present in a complex microbiological ecosystem and it was favoured by an increase of dryness, due to climatic variations. The ecology of the bacteria responsible for pink patinas of Georgia appears similar with respect to those of Matera, and the presence of these patinas are limited to areas with sufficient light, but lower humidity.

In the case of Martvili, the residual presence of cyanobacteria we observed in the pink samples can be explained considering the great fluctuation in the composition of the community in relation with local environmental variations.



3 Sample observed under optical microscopy, showing a great growth of cyanobacteria belonging to Chroococcales.

Indirect information on the environmental characteristic of the various parts of the mural paintings in the porch, which appears very relevant for suggesting conservative treatments, arises from the typical distribution of the various phenomenologies of alteration, related to a differential ecology of the species.

Taking into account the supposed ecological requirements, the humidity gradients occurring in the walls can be assumed, together with direction of air circulation.

In fact, the changes between green and black patinas appear to be related to a different water input, and when it is higher the cover of these organisms looks higher. When it is reduced, but in conditions of lighting, the pink bacteria take advantage and become prevalent. This finds an explanation considering the distribution of these organisms, limited to the entrance of the church (being the only position with a sufficient lighting).

The distribution of the biological patinas (always connected to situations with a sufficient lighting) in the porch appears to be linked to air circulation and to the direction of humid air and fog, that should be very relevant in the cold winter periods. Considering the very high values of air humidity in winter, the very high risk of condense in such months and the presence of dense fogs arriving from the outside, the entrance

room is very exposed to biodeteriorative phenomena. At the same time, rising damp is also relevant, but especially the permanence of fogs, seems to be a discriminating factor (the lower parts are often less colonised than the higher ones), with exception of few points where rising damp occurs. The differential porosity of the stone with respect to the plaster explains also the differential cover of the different patinas. It is interesting to note that the plaster appears to have, in this case, a lower value of porosity with respect to the old ones.

Concluding, the phenomenology of alteration seems to be the resultant between air humidity entering from the door and carrying humidity to the walls, the porosity of the surfaces that condition the water content of the substrate and a sufficient lighting.

These ecological hypotheses are reconstructed in Figs. 4 and 5, elaborated from the photographs of the different kinds of biological colonisation, considering both qualitative and quantitative data.

Conservative treatments

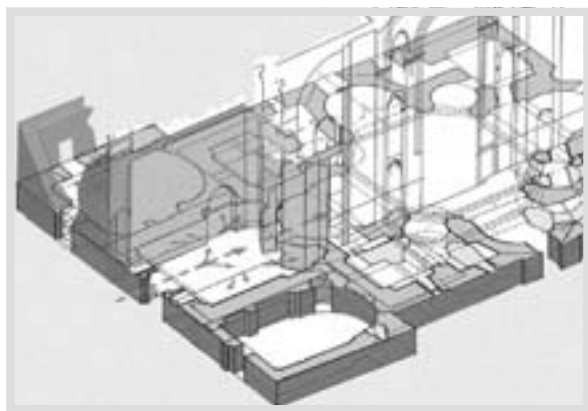
A correct methodology in carrying out a treatment considers various aspects such as (Caneva et al., 2005):

- Efficacy in relation to detriogenic macro- and micro-organisms of the various materials;
- Possible interactions with the substrate;
- The best method of application in relation to the different kinds of biological colonisation, the nature of the materials and the state of conservation of the work;
- The long term effects and the possible interactions with other products utilised during restoration;
- Innovative and alternative methods as opposed to the traditional methods of disinfection and disinfestations.

In this case, after the identification of the biodeteriogens, some biocide tests (Preliminary tests of efficiency) were performed, considering the following products:

- Rocima 110 (*quaternary ammonium salt + tin naphthenate*) – Acima;
- Preventol R80 (*benzalkonium chloride*) – Bayer.

Preventol R80 was widely tested and used in the past, also for the treatments of mural paintings, and us-



4 Main directions of air circulation in the western porch.

ing the product in a sufficient concentration the results of efficiency were satisfactory (with more than one application) (Caneva et al., 1996; Nugari & Salvadori, 2002). It is a product with not high toxicological problem.

Biocides containing quaternary ammonium salt with organostannic component (such as Rocima 110, or Metatin 58-10) look generally more efficient but the toxicological problems cannot be neglected. Some restriction in the use of those products is now present in many European countries. The new formulation of Metatin 906 (containing isotiazolinone) is more toxicologically safe with respect to the old ones, but it is not yet sufficiently tested. It is a new product, which will substitute the previous ones, but very few data exist on efficiency against these organisms and on the potential interference on these materials. Collections of data are in progress by scientific laboratories of restoration.

The tests were carried out on 4 sampling zones, in order to cover all the phenomenology of alteration. For each one the 2 products were tested at 2 concentrations, using distilled water as solvent, according to the following scheme: TOP right TOP left Preventol R80 2%4% DOWN right DOWN left Rocima 110 2%3%

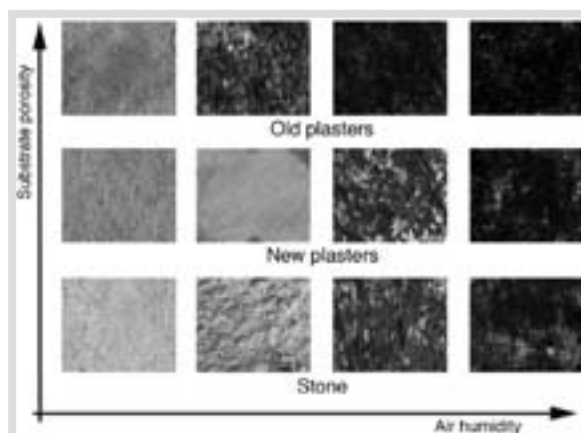
A total of 4 tests x 5 sampling areas (20 tests) were therefore carried out, applying the products by brushing. The tests were carried out on August 2007, and the efficiency was evaluated over time, taking photographs in the following days, and watching the changes in the phenomenology of the biological alteration.

The two products showed a similar activity: while Rocima 110 resulted to have a bit slower activity with respect to Preventol R80, in some cases the ef-

iciency of the first one appeared to be only a bit more higher (for example in the case of the green patinas), but not with significant differences. Also, the different concentrations used appeared not so relevant and sometimes the comparison between them resulted difficult because of the application methodology. In fact the brushing systems of application don't permit indeed to dose exactly the quantity of product to lay on the surfaces. Moreover, no treatment have been completely sufficient to remove the biological patinas and more than one application appeared to be necessary to have a complete biocide activity. Furthermore, the black patinas appeared to be the most resistant ones to the biocidal treatment. Finally, laboratory tests observing the changes in fluorescence should be necessary to better evaluate the biocidal activity.

Considering this, we suggested the use of Preventol R80 at 2%, diluted in distilled water for all the alteration forms (taking into consideration that the presence of salts in the normal water can reduce the biocidal activity), as the best compromise in terms of efficiency/safety. The results indicated the need to repeat the treatments (two or sometimes three times), staggered with one week, and finally cleaning with distilled water. In the case of dense patinas, especially the black ones, a partial mechanical removal was also suggested, eventually using a compress for favouring the contact.

In parallel to any biocide treatment, which will function only for a short time if the environmental conditions do not change, it appears urgent to project a



5 Ecological gradient in conditions of sufficient lighting as in the western porch.

system for protecting the porch from the external humidity. In this case the reduction of lighting appears also useful, but not sufficient to eliminate the biological growths, if the humidity remains in such high values.

As it was made in other critical situations (hypogeans, crypts e.g.), a new system of isolation of the entrance door, reducing the direct income of humidity especially in cold winters, without stopping completely ventilation, seems to be necessary.

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UNDERSTANDING THE ETIOLOGY OF ROSY DISCOLORATION ON ANCIENT WALL PAINTINGS: A MOLECULAR APPROACH

SUMMARY

The inventory of microorganisms responsible for biological deterioration of ancient paintings has become an integral part of restoration activities. Here, the microbial agent of rosy discoloration on medieval frescoes in the Crypt of the Original Sin (Matera, Italy) was identified by a combination of microscopic, molecular, and spectroscopic approaches. The bacterial community from three rosy-discolored painting sites was characterized by 16S rRNA gene-based techniques. The eubacterial population was prevalently composed of *Actinobacteria*, among which *Rubrobacter radiotolerans*-related bacteria accounted for 63–87% of the 16S rRNA gene pool per sampled site. Archaea, with prevalence of Haloarchaea-related species, were detected in one of the three sites where archaeal 16S rRNA genes represented less than 0.1% of the entire 16S rRNA gene pool. Raman spectroscopy confirmed the identity between *R. radiotolerans* carotenoids (bacterioruberins) and pigments responsible for color alteration of frescoes. This investigation provides the first evidence of a causal relationship be-

tween heavy contamination by *Rubrobacter*-related bacterioruberin-producing bacteria and rosy discoloration of ancient wall paintings.

INTRODUCTION

The microbial colonization of masonry and historic wall paintings by fungi, algae and bacteria may result in structural and/or aesthetic deterioration of the art work (Ciferri, 1999). It is now well established that the identification of the whole microbial diversity present on art objects is an essential requirement for the rational design of prevention and restoration strategies. Because of the limitations of culture-based methods, molecular approaches involving amplification of the 16S rRNA gene as universal phylogenetic marker are widely used to retrieve essential information on the structure of microbial communities (Amann, 2000; Theron and Cloete, 2004). In this study we took advantage from combining 16S rRNA-based molecular techniques with micro-Raman spectroscopy for the confident identification of the etiological agent(s) of a specific type of alteration frequently affecting ancient frescoes.

The Crypt of the Original Sin was discovered near Matera (Italy) in 1963 and contains an important 9th-century composition of Byzantine paintings. In 2001, an extensive restoration project was instituted and, concurrently, an investigation was carried out with the aim of characterizing the microflora implicated in biodegradation of paintings. Microscopy and culture-based methods detected microbial populations mainly composed of cyanobacteria and green algae in association with a number of different morphologies of alteration (G. Caneva, unpublished). In 2003 a sudden and widespread change in the color of frescoes to a dominant pink was observed (Fig. 1A–B), consequent to a particularly dry and hot spring-summer season. The rosy pigmentation affected the most superficial layer of the painting, forming a patina which covered almost the whole painted area (Fig. 1B). However, culture-based microbiological investigations failed to identify the etiological agent of this alteration (G. Caneva, unpublished). The aim of this work was to exploit present-day techniques to define the etiology of the rosy discoloration of paintings in

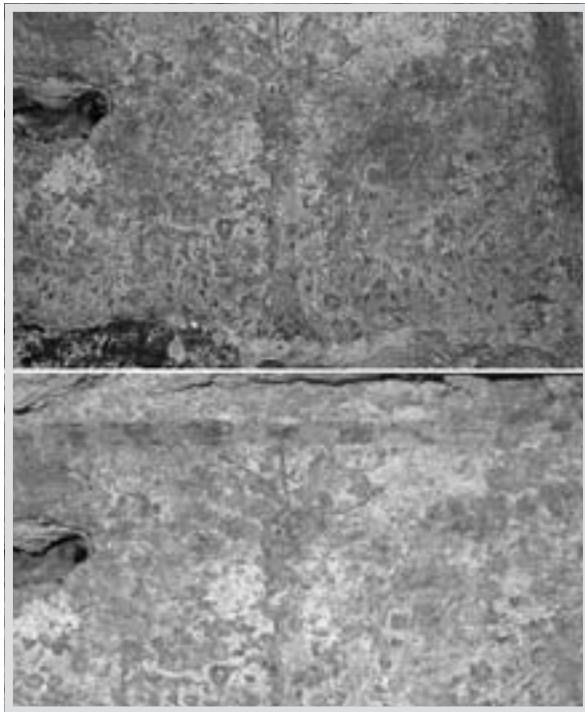


Figure 1. Photo-composite showing a portion of the Byzantine cycle of paintings in the Crypt of the Original Sin (A) before the beginning of restoration works in 2001 and (B) after the development of rosy discoloration in 2003.

the Crypt of the Original Sin, and provide a causal relationship between bacterial contamination and pigment emergence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sampling sites and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) analysis

Samples for investigation were aseptically collected by scraping off surface material with sterile scalpels, and stored at 4°C for no longer than 2 days prior to microbiological analysis. A total of three samples, named S₁ to S₃, were taken from three distinct wall painting sites, all showing the characteristic pink or reddish pink color (Fig. 1B). Small chips of surface material were also taken at each site for SEM and Raman spectroscopy analyses.

To assess the presence of microorganisms associated with the rosy-dicolored painting sites, mural chips were coated with gold and examined and photographed with a Philips XL30 scanning electron microscope. A single bacterial morphotype predominated in all samples, suggestive of the presence of a homog-

enous microbial community (Fig. 2). Cells were coccoid shaped and ca. 1 μm in length. This coccoid morphotype was mainly associated with the painting surface, near or inside clefts and pores. Different morphotypes were sporadically detected, especially upon examination of deeper layers of the painting (data not shown).

Characterization of the eubacterial community associated with rosy discoloration

Genomic DNA was extracted from ca. 100 mg of sample scraped off from the three different rosy-discolored sites (S₁ to S₃) and the 16S rRNA gene pool was amplified by PCR with a *Bacteria*-specific primer set (Lane, 1991). Amplicons of ca. 1500 bp were obtained for all three samples (data not shown). Three independent 16S rRNA gene libraries, one for each sample, were generated in *Escherichia coli* DH5αF' using the pDRIVE vector. The cloned DNA fragments were reamplified from 30 clones per library and amplicons were screened by amplified ribosomal DNA restriction analysis (ARDRA) with two different endonucleases (*CfoI* and *Sau3A*). We found 18 distinct operational taxonomic units (OTUs) showing identical restriction profile with both enzyme (designated A₁ to A₁₈). Only 3 OTUs (A₆, A₇ and A₈) were common to all 16S rRNA gene libraries, while 5 were present in two and 10 in one out of the three libraries (Fig. 3A). A less restrictive analysis was performed assuming that a correlation exists between clones sharing one of the two restriction patterns. The same *Sau3A* profile was observed for ARDRA OTUs A₃, A₄, A₆, A₇, A₈, A₁₄ and A₁₆, defining a major group of correlated OTUs composed of 7 of the 18 previously established ARDRA OTUs. Moreover, OTUs A₁ and A₈ displayed the same *CfoI* profile, raising up to 8 the number of related OTUs. On the whole, this group of 8 presumptively related OTUs covered ca. 45% of the diversity inferred by ARDRA and ca. 73% of 16S rRNA gene sequences amplified from all three rosy-discolored painting sites.

Sequencing of the 16S rRNA for each ARDRA OTU was performed and closest identities were retrieved. Then, 16S rRNA gene sequences were aligned with representative sequences to determine phylogenetic relationships. On the whole, 16S rRNA gene sequences were related to the phyla *Actinobacteria*

(82.2% of all analyzed clones), *Gemmatimonadetes* (6.7%), *Cyanobacteria* (1.1%), *Proteobacteria* (7.8%) and *Bacteroidetes* (2.2%), with identity values between 88.8 and 98.4%. Eight sequences were assigned to the high-G+C Gram-positive bacterium *Rubrobacter radiotolerans* based on a combination of BLAST searches and phylogenetic analysis (Fig. 3B), with identity values between 92.5 and 96.9%. Overall, *Rubrobacter*-related ARDRA OTUs included ca. 63, 87 and 70% of clones analyzed by ARDRA for sample S₁, S₂ and S₃, respectively (Fig. 3A). Moreover, 3 sequences referable to *R. radiotolerans* (A6-A8) were the only common to all sampling sites, suggestive of a direct correlation between the presence of this organism and the development of rosy color on mural paintings.

To substantiate our observations on the eubacterial community structure and species richness in the three sites, the denaturing gradient gel electrophoresis (DGGE) was performed on the 16S rRNA gene pools previously analyzed. The DGGE profiles of samples S₁, S₂ and S₃ revealed overall higher molecular diversity than that inferred by ARDRA analysis of libraries (data not shown). The number of discernible bands per sample was 17 for both S₁ and S₂, and 14 for S₃. On the whole, 27 apparently different molecular species were detected. By comparing the DGGE profiles of each ARDRA OTU with the DGGE community profiles, we found that each ARDRA OTU exactly matched a definite DGGE band, indicating that the total number (18) of different OTUs detected by ARDRA covered ca. 67% of the whole diversity observed by DGGE (27 bands).

Characterization of the archaeal community associated with rosy discoloration

To assess the possible contribution of archaeal populations to the deterioration process affecting medieval frescoes in the Crypt of the Original Sin, archaeal 16S rRNA genes were PCR-amplified with an *Archaea*-specific primer set (Nakagawa *et al.*, 2006). PCR products were obtained only from sample S₃, while amplification repeatedly failed with DNA extracted from samples S₁ and S₂ (data not shown). The archaeal diversity in site S₃ was directly investigated by library

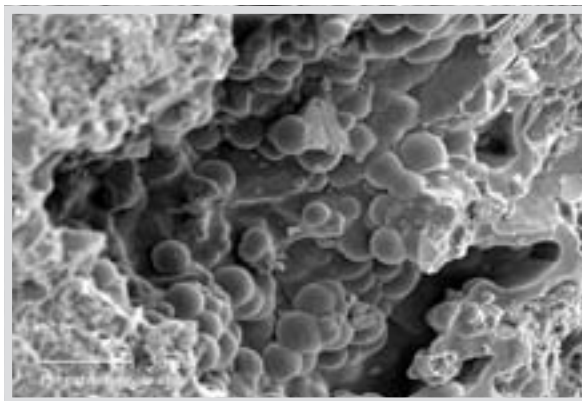


Figure 2. A representative SEM image captured from the surface of rosy-discolored painting sediment particles, showing the prevalence of coccoid-shaped bacteria attached on the wall painting surface. The width of the scale bar is reported.

construction and DNA sequencing of 16S rRNA genes from a representative number of clones ($n = 40$). Partial 16S rRNA gene sequences (ca. 610 bp) were obtained, and phylogenetically related to relevant type species of the *Archaea* domain. Six different archaeal phylotypes (designated Arch₁ to Arch₆) were identified, with a marked predominance (clonal frequency, 57%) of one (Arch₁) over the others. Four of these archaeal phylotypes (Arch₁ to Arch₄) were related to the genus *Halococcus* and one (Arch₅) to the genus *Haloferax*, all belonging to the class Haloarchaea within the phylum *Euryarchaeota* (Fig. 4). One sequence (Arch₆) formed a discrete branch within the phylum *Crenarchaeota* and could provisionally be related to the genus *Nitrosopumilus*. On the whole, sequences referable to the Haloarchaea lineage exceeded 80% coverage of the archaeal 16S rRNA gene library.

Quantification of Bacteria and Archaea on rosy-discolored painting sites

To get an insight into the relative proportion of eubacterial and archaeal populations in painting sites affected by rosy discoloration, a quantitative PCR approach was performed on the genomic DNA extracted from samples S₁, S₂ and S₃. The copy number of eubacterial 16S rRNA genes per gram of painting sample was 1.0×10^6 , 1.6×10^5 and 1.9×10^7 for samples S₁, S₂ and S₃, respectively. Again, archaeal 16S rRNA genes were detected only in sample S₃ where reached $2.5 \times$

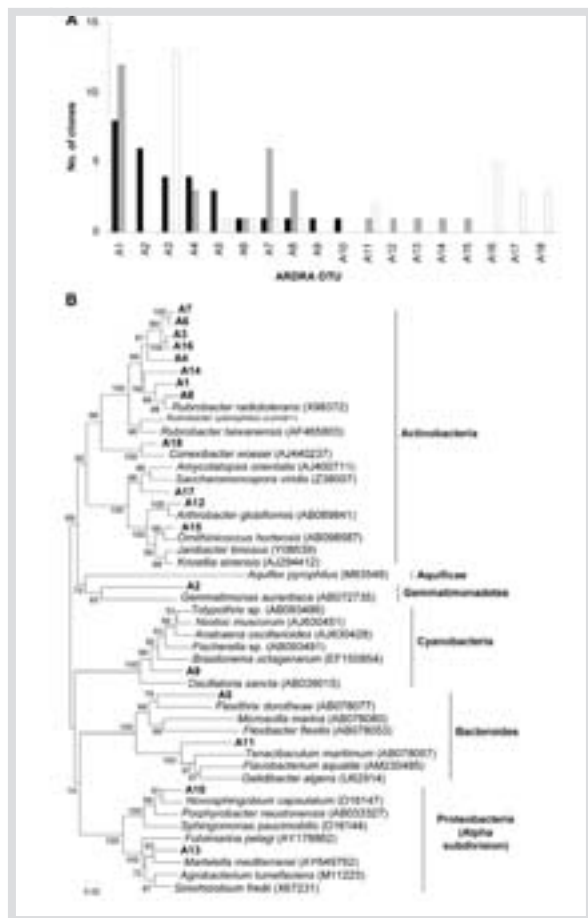


Figure 3. 16S rRNA-based analysis of the eubacterial community in rosy-discolored painting sites. (A) Analysis of ARDRA profiles from eubacterial 16S rRNA gene libraries representative of the sampling sites S1, S2, and S3. The x-axis of the histograms represents unique ARDRA profiles while the y-axis represents the abundance of clones showing identical ARDRA profile in each library. (B) Unrooted neighbour-joining tree showing the phylogenetic position of the eubacterial 16S rRNA gene sequences relative to closest type species of the Bacteria domain. Statistical evaluation of the tree topology was performed by bootstrap analysis (bootstrap values are reported as percentage of 1000 replications). Sequences referable to the same phylum were grouped by vertical lines.

10^3 copies per gram of painting material, corresponding to less than 0.1% of the whole 16S rRNA gene pool. In conclusion, quantitative PCR suggested a marginal role for *Archaea* in the colonization of painting surfaces, thus proposing *R. radiotolerans*-related bacteria as the main cause for rosy discoloration of paintings.

Raman spectroscopy-based identification of bacterial pigments responsible for rosy discoloration

R. radiotolerans-related bacteria were the only prokaryotes common to all samples analyzed, with a marked predominance over other eubacterial and archaeal species. To confirm this bacterial etiology of rosy deterioration, Raman spectroscopy was used to compare pigments produced by *R. radiotolerans* with those present on mural paintings. Raman spectra were collected from rosy-colored chips and compared with the spectrum obtained under the same experimental conditions from a lawn of the *R. radiotolerans* type strain DSM 5868 grown *in vitro* on TSA plates. As shown in Fig. 5, the typical Raman spectrum collected from a rosy-discolored painting sample fully matched the spectrum obtained for *R. radiotolerans* cells. The three major bands centered at 1000, 1150 and 1503 cm^{-1} in the collected spectra indicated the occurrence of carotenoid pigments (Koyama *et al.*, 1988). Moreover, less intense bands laying at 954, 1193, 1284, 1353, 1389, 1446, 1568 cm^{-1} were common to both spectra, indicating that *R. radiotolerans*-related bacteria on paintings were able to produce the same pigments of the *R. radiotolerans* type strain. *R. radiotolerans* shows the characteristic reddish pigmentation due to the presence of two main C-50 carotenoids, namely bacterioruberin and monoanhydrobacterioruberin, both of which have 13 conjugated double bonds and tertiary OH groups (Saito *et al.*, 1994). Bacterioruberins constitute a group of bacterial pigments produced by few other eubacterial genera, namely *Arthrobacter* and *Micrococcus* (Fong *et al.*, 2001), and typical of some haloarchaeal genera (D'Souza *et al.*, 1997; Stan-Lotter *et al.*, 2002), including those identified in this study (e.g. *Haloferax* and *Halococcus*). Remarkably, eubacterial and archaeal species capable of producing bacterioruberin-type carotenoids have previously been detected on wall paintings suffering from reddish- or rosy-discoloration processes (Rolleke *et al.*, 1998; Urzi and Realini, 1998; Oltmanns *et al.*, 1999; Schabereiter-Gurtner *et al.*, 2001). Although in our setting the sporadic detection of haloarchaea reasonably excludes a cause-effect relationship between the presence of archaea and rosy discoloration, it is worth emphasizing that both eubacterial and archaeal com-

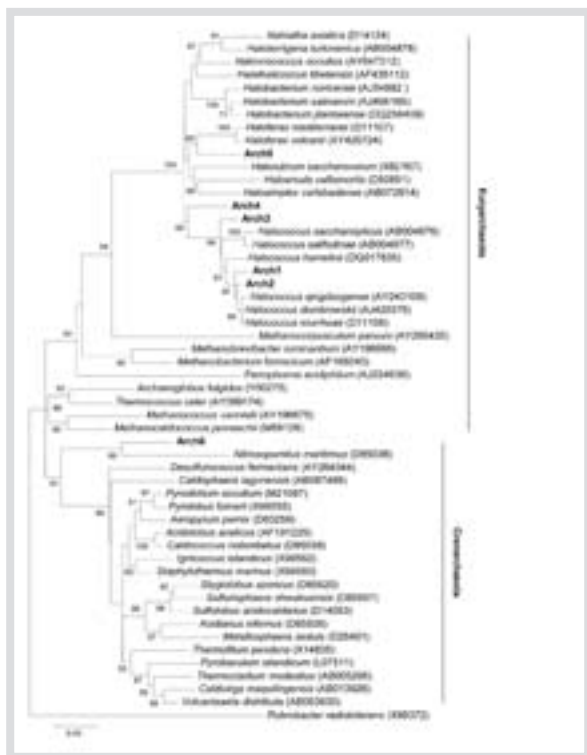


Figure 4. 16S rRNA-based analysis of the archaeal community in the rosy-discolored painting site S3. Neighbour-joining tree based on the alignment of ca. 610 bp (from positions 156 to 802 relative to the *E. coli* *rrnB* gene) showing the phylogenetic position of the archaeal 16S rRNA gene sequences relative to closest type species of the Archaea domain. Statistical evaluation of the tree topology was performed by bootstrap analysis of 1000 replicates (only bootstrap values above 50% are shown). Sequences referable to the same phylum were grouped by vertical lines. The 16S rRNA gene sequence of the *R. radiotolerans* type strain was used as outgroup.

communities in the Crypt of the Original Sin were characterized by the prevalence of bacterioruberin-producing genera (*Rubrobacter*, *Arthrobacter*, *Halococcus* and *Haloferax*) suggesting that local environmental conditions might have favored the overgrowth of these over other organisms.

At present, the functional role of bacterioruberin-like carotenoids remains ill-defined. Under laboratory conditions, production of these pigments is enhanced by light exposure, low temperature and low osmolarity (D'Souza *et al.*, 1997; Fong *et al.*, 2001; El-Sayed *et al.*, 2002). The increased production of bacterioruberin-type carotenoids under condition

of low salinity seems to be linked to their ability to scavenge hydroxyl radicals and/or absorb UV light, substituting for the free radical scavenging effect of high intracellular salt concentrations (Shahmohammadi *et al.*, 1998). Moreover, a direct role of bacterioruberins in resistance to radiations and DNA damage has been established (Saito *et al.*, 1997; Shahmohammadi *et al.*, 1998). Since wall paintings in the Crypt of the Original Sin were not exposed to significant irradiation (data not shown), selection of bacterioruberin-producing species may have been driven by other factor(s). Several works have highlighted a tight correlation between the bacterial response to irradiation and desiccation, both of which lead to induction of DNA double-strand breaks (Mattimore and Battista, 1996; DiRuggiero *et al.*, 1997; Kotteman *et al.*, 2005). Notably, the rosy discoloration of mural paintings in the Crypt of Original Sin, i.e. the outgrowth of bacterioruberin-producing species, appeared in consequence of a particularly hot and dry spring-summer period and in concomitance with structural repairs aimed at reducing water infiltrations and removing invasive vegetation. Plausibly, the humidity decrease and temperature increase resulting from local climatic changes, combined with enhanced daylight irradiation, may have promoted the growth of xerotolerant heterotrophic bacteria, primarily *Rubrobacter* spp., at expenses of the preexisting microbial community.

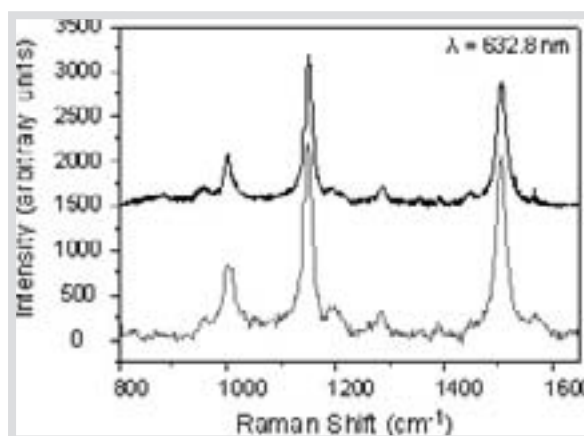


Figure 5. Background subtracted micro-Raman spectra in the 800-1650 cm^{-1} region of a rosy-discolored sediment from the site S3 (grey line) and of the *R. radiotolerans* DSM 5868 biomass from a TSA plate (black line).

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Nino Kitovani

Georgian National Museum. Georgia

INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION AND CONSERVATION OF THE CENTRAL ICON OF THE MAJOR UBISI TRIPTYCH

Georgian painted and chased icons have been a major source of technical interest for a long period of time. There are many monographs and article* devoted to this topic, but principally from the point of art history and less commonly from the point of view of artistic techniques/technology (N. Burchuladze, 2006, 184-188). Owing to the fact that in Georgia the scientific study of easel paintings using analytical methods is underdeveloped, up till now, except in a few particular cases, icon painting techniques and technology have not been the subject of coordinated interdisciplinary studies. It is therefore very important to develop this field in Georgia, together with the development of conservation methods based on the scientific analyses of samples and envisioning the results of their complex study.

This complex study, besides resolving problems linked to conservation, will help to identify technological and artistic characteristics of Georgian icon painting, to obtain more precise information on the Georgian schools and their links with eastern Christian ecclesiastic centers. It will be necessary to create a data base on the materials which are found in the samples and from the results of technical studies. In many cases, technological characteristics have served as the basis for more precise attribution and dating of works.

This work is aimed at describing the damage to the painting of the icon and its wooden support, the causes of the damage, its restoration history, as well as to study the materials used in previous restoration treatments and to describe the results of the technical/ technological research on the Ubisi icon.

The icon, together with the Ubisi wall paintings is the part of Ubisi Monastery treasures created through-

out the centuries (N. Burchuladze, 2006, 20, 29-49).

In the 1980s, some scientific analyses and conservation treatments were carried out on some icons of the Ubisi group. The results were presented in the article: "The group of icons of Ubisi monastery. Investigation and restoration" (N. Kitovani, N. Burchuladze, 1987), though further study is still needed on these works.

The scientific analysis and further conservation treatment of the Ubisi icon of The Virgin with Child is the first stage of urgent research activity.

The icon of The Virgin with Child (seg.N657. AMM 225/a; 33/27cm. wood, canvas, gesso preparation or "levkas", sheet gold, tempera, chasing) is the central icon of the principal triptych from Ubisi. From archive materials at the museum and inventory books it was discovered that the icon from Ubisi monastery, together with other icons from the church were transferred to the National Gallery of Georgia by Professor Shalva Amiranashvili in 1925. The group contained: major and minor triptychs with central icons, an icon of St. George and nine icons of the iconostasis with Deesis. From 1933 the icons belonged to the Metekhi Museum, and since 1952 to the Georgian State Museum of Arts (today, the Georgian National Museum and Sh. Amiranashvili Art Museum). The icon of The Virgin, like the other icons of the group, had suffered serious damage by that time (Archive of Sh. Amiranashvili Art Museum. Fund 4. 37,41 Museum inventory books).

The conservation history of the icons transferred from Ubisi is interesting. It reflects the stages of development of professional restoration of icons in Georgia. The first stage is associated with restorers invited from Russia, and answers many interesting questions.

Owing to the lack of professional icon restorers in Georgia, from 1928 to the 1930s, George Chubinashvili invited the Russian restorers: Chesnokov, Chirikov and Mishukov from The Petersburg Russian Museum, The Tretyakov Gallery and Stroganov School to the museum of a newly founded Tbilisi State University, to restore icons moved from Georgian churches and monasteries. These three were the greatest experts in the techniques of icon painting and icon restoration used in the "Old Believers" tradition. They



Ubisi Icon, Photo 1925

applied these techniques in the restoration of great many Georgian chase-work and painted icons. The Georgian painter David Tsitsishvili also participated in the restoration of some icons with chased decoration.

The restoration techniques employed at the University Museum were the following:

1. Removing the chased metal ("removal of metal") from the icon
2. Readhering the paint layer using egg yolk emulsion. For this process, owing to the lack of the usual paper employed as a protective facing on the surface of the icon, a coarse, acid containing printing paper (known as "tram ticket" paper) was used. This paper was removed after 5-6 months.
3. Saturating of the wood damaged with worm-holes with drying oil
4. Restoration of the chased decoration and its replacement on the panel.

(Only Theodor Mishukov among those restorers worked on the metal restoration)²

In 1939, Sh. Amiranashvili invited Dmitry Tyulin, icon painter-restorer, and follower of the "Old Believers" (Staroobryadtsy) traditional methods, to restore the Metekhi museum icons. He worked in the Museum for several years and restored many icons.

Tyulin's restoration reports on work, carried out in the Metekhi Museum are kept in the archive of the museum. In these he lists not only the name of the work, its size, and a short description of the basic damage, but also describes the treatments employed. The methods and materials used by him basically coincide with the techniques described above by D.Tsitsishvili, but Tyulin also mentions some additional processes:

1. Removing the canvas from the board
2. Washing the board surface with drying oil
3. Suppressing the pictorial loses, though he mentions nothing about the restoration of the metal parts (Archive of Sh. Amiranashvili Art Museum. Fund 3. 61, Fund 2. 61).

In Tyulin's reports nothing is said about the Ubisi icons. But the materials and techniques listed by Tyulin, together with present observation of the previous restorations used on the icons, leads us to conclude that Tyulin was the restorer of Ubisi icons.

For many decades, unsuitable conservation conditions (multiple changes in location, in inappropriate depositories with unstable environmental conditions) caused a worsening of icons' condition, and after 50 years from their first restoration, in the 1980s most of them (both the major and minor triptychs, and icons of Deisis) needed restoration and were restored anew (Restorers: N.Kitovani, I.Tvaradze, T.Bakuradze, J.Akhobadze; Documentation on conservation is kept at the Art Museum);

Though, there is no documentation about the restoration of the icon of "The Virgin with Child," there is no doubt that its restoration was started in Metekhi at this same period of time. This supposition is corroborated by the fact that the same methods and materials were employed. For some reason unknown for us, the treatment was not finished.

It is likely that the work was carried out in the following order

1. The chased plates were removed from the worm-holed, cracked wooden support.
2. The painting was faced with the above mentioned ("tram ticket") paper.
3. The painting's canvas was removed from the panel.

The processes that should have followed - fixing of the paint layer, restoration of the panel and resto-

ration of the damaged parts (or preparation of a new panel) and readhesion of the painting and chasing on the panel - were not carried out. It can only be supposed that of the halt in the of restoration processes was due to the fact, that the canvas of the painting and chased parts were difficult to fix on the very badly damaged panel support. It seems that restoration of the chased decoration was also problematic.²The icon came down to us in this condition.

In a photo taken in 1925 the initial or pre-restoration condition is striking. Strong bio-deterioration is visible: wormholes, cracks in the middle board, wormholes in the canvas; the panel has a split, loosened and deformed ground and paint layer while the image is barely visible. The board, canvas and painting have significant losses. The chased decoration is loosened and damaged. On the surface of the icon broken fragments of paint and the ground layer are visible.

There is little doubt that the above-mentioned damage was induced by centuries-long exposure to humidity and bio-deterioration agents. Also, several other factors like, the materials applied in earlier restorations and the suspension of the restoration treatment for a long period of time played a significant role in worsening the degradation of the work. Today, complex damage of both organic and inorganic materials is evident. They lack mechanical stability. The binders are suffering from degradation, and thus there are problems with cohesion of the levkas and the paint. The layers lack adhesion. More than one third of the painting has flaked off. Detachment and fragmenting of the painted background is especially relevant in the areas covered by the chasing. Deterioration of the chasing would have started with the effects of humidity on the metal. The wood of the panel is full of wormholes, powdery and with extensive losses. Gray blots on the canvas and paper point to fungal disease. The canvas is fragile, lacks density and is incomplete. The glue used for sticking the paper facing on the surface of the painting is also degraded. Some fragments of the paint ground are stuck to the paper. Many micro fragments are flaked off into the cardboard paper-case in which the icon was kept. The chased metal plates are fragile and cracked and split, with parts missing.

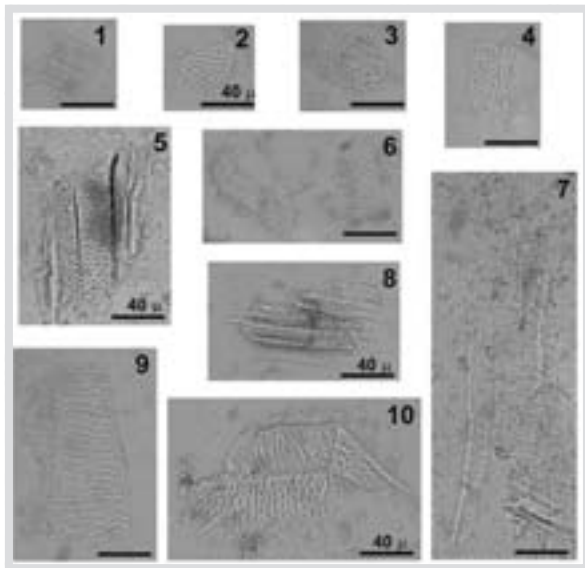


Current Conditions of the Icon

Generally, in icon restoration, paintings are faced only with thin paper, and only for a maximum of a few months, as the use of thick paper and long term facing can lead to mechanical damage to the painting, and the tearing away of some parts. Thick paper reacts greatly to environmental changes. Its movement can induce damage to the painting under it. The painting loosens, breaks up into particles and flakes off. This damage occurred in the painting described here.

There are many examples of Russian icons restored in the museum in the 1930s and 1940s, where using egg emulsion for preventative facing which was applied for prolonged periods have caused the breakdown of many icon paintings.³

It was believed that in our case egg emulsion was used for applying the facing to the painting. This was confirmed via infra red spectroscopic analyses. It seems that initially the emulsion was not distributed evenly on painting. Consequently, the paper adhered unevenly to the surface, as can be seen on recent photos. Further, due to the affect of bio-agents, the cohesive substrate between painting and paper was



The parenchymal cells of the wood, X 400

greatly weakened. Ground painting fragments were stuck to the paper in the places where greater concentrations of the egg emulsion had been applied.

Nowadays the paper is very poorly attached to the painting. It is unevenly fixed on different sections of the surface. At some places there is no link between paper and the painting.

Several micro destructive research methods were applied to define conservation methods and get further information on icon techniques and technology. Micro fragments from the cardboard box were selected as samples.

Due to the lack of a centralized research center, research activities were accomplished by several organizations.

-Micro chemical analysis of ground and pigments and stratigraphical sections were carried out by Nana Kuprashvili at the Tbilisi Art Academy, in the laboratory of the Restoration Department

- Photo-spectroscopic analysis (infra red spectrometry) of binders and adhesives was carried out by Zaza Iashvili in the laboratory of the Mineralogy department of the Technical University of Georgia, using a Specord M80.

- Mycological analyses were carried out by Tamar Iashvili at the Durmishidze Institute of Biochemistry and Biotechnology.

- Microbiological analyses of the wood panel, canvas and wax paste were carried out by Eliso Kva-

vadze at the laboratory of Palynology at the Institute of Paleobiology in the National Museum.

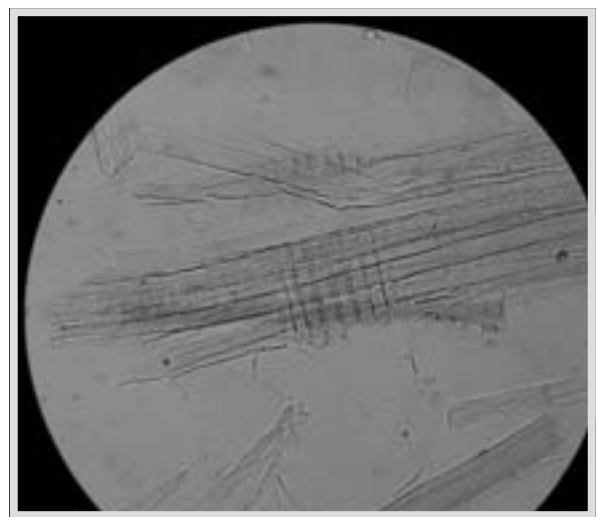
I would like to express my gratitude here to all researchers who participated in this work.

Due to technical problems we were not able to carry out physical-optical (ultra violet and infra red spectra, radiography) analyses.

Due to limited experience in spectral analyses of materials of easel paintings, in particular in the case of binders and adhesives, also due to significant variations among the data in the specialist literature, and the fact that the samples were very small in size, there was a risk of error. In order to avoid mistakes, for the analysis of applied astringents we used the method of infra red optical spectrometry. Initially, spectral analysis of the standards for adhesive/binder substrates (oil, pitch, glue) were carried out, followed by micro assays of the icon.

Elaboration of non-palynological palynomorphs (in our case samples of wood and textile) by palynological methods enables desirable results to be obtained via micro assays, even when the sample is biologically dissociated, and to identify the type of wood parenchymal cell. Therefore, in comparison with traditional dendrological analysis (where it is almost impossible to identify the type of wood from biologically destroyed samples), its application was expedient.

In this research, we initially studied standard patterns of different sorts of wood, then the icon cross sections.



Linen fiber, X 400

In archeological research, palynological methods are actively applied and give interesting results. The application of similar methods for painting, and in general, in the study of non-archeological materials seems promising.

The complex study of Ubisi icon led to the following conclusions:

Biodegradation: the canvas (with ground and paint) is infected with mould fungi of penicillin and mucor. The panel is infected with spores too.

Technical characteristics:

1. Panel:

- Lime wood, tangential section, cut by an axe (the traces are clearly visible under raked light). The board has "arc" with two hollows.

- Internal face of the arc is gilded red solely with pure cinnabar.

- The upper and lower diametrical parts of the panel were cut separately and are inserted into obliquely cut canals and fixed to the panel with wooden wedges.

- The upper and lower diametrical parts had keys inserted. These keys effectively worked against the deformation of the panel⁴.

2. Canvas:

- Made of linen fiber woven purely in linen shape (Weave count 10x10/square cm.)

- The canvas was originally applied only to the central area of the board. The edges were from the start intended to mount chased decoration and there were no traces either of canvas or paint there.

3. Ground/Levkass:

- Gypsum with very small quantities of red ochre

- the binder is fish glue.

4. Gilding:

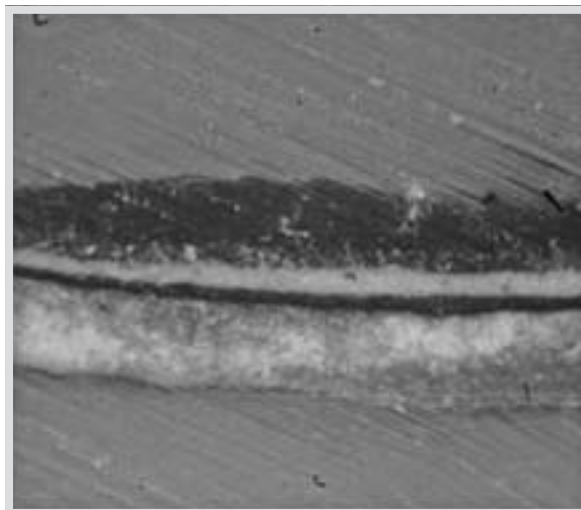
- The background is covered with high trial sheet gold, glazed with an organic red varnish (composition not yet determined).

- Some details of clothes of the figures: the lace on the Virgin's maphorion and the infant Jesus's tunic assist are decorated with gold.

- The gold is layed directly on the ground with glue, without polymer (bole).

5. The paint layer and, pigments:

- A rich palette for that time, employing the best



Stratigraphic micro cross section X 250
Layers: 1) Gypsum ground, 2) Layer of glue, 3. White lead, 4) Lazurite, 5) Lacquer

mineral paints such as: white lead, orpiment, cinnabar, ultramarine, malachite, bitumen

- The pigments are pure powders

-Pigment binder: egg yolk.

In general, it can be concluded that:

- the pigments differ from other Ubisi triptych icons and Deesis icons which use simple palettes, employing basically ochres and very small quantities of precious pigments and gold .

- stratigraphical cross-sections and all other newly obtained data show that the icon The Virgin with Child differs from above mentioned group both stylistically as well as on technical/technological grounds. This is probably due to chronological differences.

- the painting and the chased metal of the icon are from the same period. The chasing was planned as decoration for the painted icon and is part of the whole artistic concept.

-the icon materials are authentic: they were not changed during later restoration treatments.

Examining the obtained technical data, it can be concluded that to treat the following methods should be employed:

1. Initially the canvas and painting must be disinfested using a solution of ethylene and alkyl dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride (Katamine AB).

2. The paper stuck to the surface must be removed where possible without recourse to liquids. Where the paper still strongly adheres, the adhesive must be softened by a diluted solution of egg emulsion;

3. During the consolidation of the levkas and paint layer, the location of each micro fragments must be found; then each fragment must be fixed individually in place using micro drops of glue under the fragment. This process will have to be carried out using a binocular microscope, an electric dosimeter, a Teflon micro spatula and membrane. Paper must be removed simultaneously

4. It will be necessary to maintain the old varnish layer which was applied to the background;

5. To increase the mechanical resistance of the canvas, it must be reinforced with material of a suitable density, such as Japanese paper, which will both reinforce the canvas and is easily removable if necessary.

6. The panel will be disinfested by the anoxia method, and weakened areas will be consolidated acrylic resin (Paraloid B-72 in acetone).

7. To restore the authentic shape of the icon it will be important to save all of its composite parts, including the old panel, and replace the surviving structural elements on it. For this it will be necessary to fill the losses with fillings made of low density wood (balsa) to enable the chased metal decoration to be reapplied, though it may prove necessary to replace the original panel with an identical copy.

8. Fixation the canvas of the painting canvas on the wooden support;

For further protection of the work, it will be necessary to plan for its preventive conservation, such as the provision of a special glass case with a stabile microclimate.

In conclusion, we see that understanding the techniques used in creating the icon allows us to answer many interesting questions, which is the sphere of a new topic, although final conclusions can be made only after completing the conservation of the icon.

Notes:

¹ Information on history and technique of icons conservation was given by D. Tsitsishvili in 1985

² In Tulin's reports only conservation of painting is mentioned

³ Tulin in his reports often mentions destructed painting under the paper stuck earlier; Sh Amiranashvili... Fund 2. 119,61;

⁴ Boards of the similar construction are typical for Georgian icons and are spread in X-XIV centuries

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SEVERAL ISSUES ON THE CONSERVATION OF THE PAPYRUS COLLECTION AT THE NATIONAL CENTRE OF MANUSCRIPTS

The National Centre of Manuscripts holds approximately 160 papyrus fragments, including astrological and medical treatises, legal documents, psalms, a variety of receipts, and fragments of epistolary and literary texts, which range in date from the 3rd century BC to the 8th century AD¹. Papyrus was a very important and popular writing material in the ancient world. Sheets of papyrus were made from the papyrus plant (*Cyperus papyrus* L), which was grown in Egypt, in the marshes of the Nile region. The crust was removed from the triangular shaped papyrus stems and the peeled inner pith of papyrus was cut into thin strips of equal thickness, width and length. Then they were moistened with water. The soaked, softened strips were placed in two layers, perpendicular to each other, such that each strip slightly overlapped the previous one. The strips were then pressed together, to form a single laminate sheet of papyrus. Finally, the thoroughly dried and pressed laminate sheet was polished with stone or shell, in order to obtain a smooth surface useful for writing.

There are various theories about the manufacturing of papyrus as a writing material. According to one source, in the process of pressing, the "Nile's mystical muddy water" was poured onto the papyrus sheet's strips, which was the bond between the layers. There is a second theory, according to which, starch adhesive was used in the older papyrus, manufactured before 300 BC. According to another theory, sap from the pith played the role of glue, as the fibers of the plant's stem contains vegetable gums arabinos and galactans. There is another argument, that the bond between the layers is physical rather than chemical and occurs in the process of pressing, when the strips of papyrus are pressed together.

Papyrus in Georgian is known as "Wili" ("Chili"). It was not used in Georgia as a writing material. There are only two Georgian manuscripts and both of them have a Palestinian origin: the Collection of Songs (9th century) and the Psalm (9th-10th centuries). The Psalm is from the Georgian monastery of Mount Sinai², while the Collection of Songs (H-2123) is from "Lawra of St.. Sabas" and is kept at the National Center of Manuscripts. This manuscript is in the form of a Codex in three volumes and contains alternating sheets of papyrus (194 p) and parchment (129p)..

As we have mentioned, about 160 Papyrus fragments are kept in the National Center of Manuscripts, though some of them survive only as very small fragments. In the 1950s, many artifacts were mounted between two sheets of glass. Now some of the glass is broken, most of the papyrus sheets easily move between their glass plates, most of the papyruses are very fragile and brittle, some sheets are broken with very small piece of fragments separated from the main piece. There are many instances of stratification and deformation of vertical and horizontal stripes and fibers and fragments may have various folds. Earth, dirt, dust and deposited salt crystals can be seen on the folio surface. Such damage can be explained by the technologies used in producing papyrus as writing material, the form the manuscripts take (a scroll or codex) and environmental factors where the papyrus artifacts were found (the majority had been buried in earth).

Some of the papyruses also preserve paper fragments that have been glued to them.

The texts were executed primarily in carbon, and occasionally in iron gall ink.

Papyrus, which is mounted between two layers of glass, leaves an impression. This impression has the same shape as the papyrus itself. There are small crystals over the entire surface of the glass. Precipitated crystals are also seen on the papyrus's surface. (fig. 1, fig. 2,).

Research samples (#223, #333) were prepared for salt identification. Qualitative analysis was used to detect Na⁺, K⁺, Fe²⁺, Cl⁻, SO₄²⁻ ions.³ The content of sodium (Na⁺) and potassium (K⁺) ions was determined using an atomic absorption spectrometer, Perkin Elmer 300. Potassium rhodante was used for the detec-

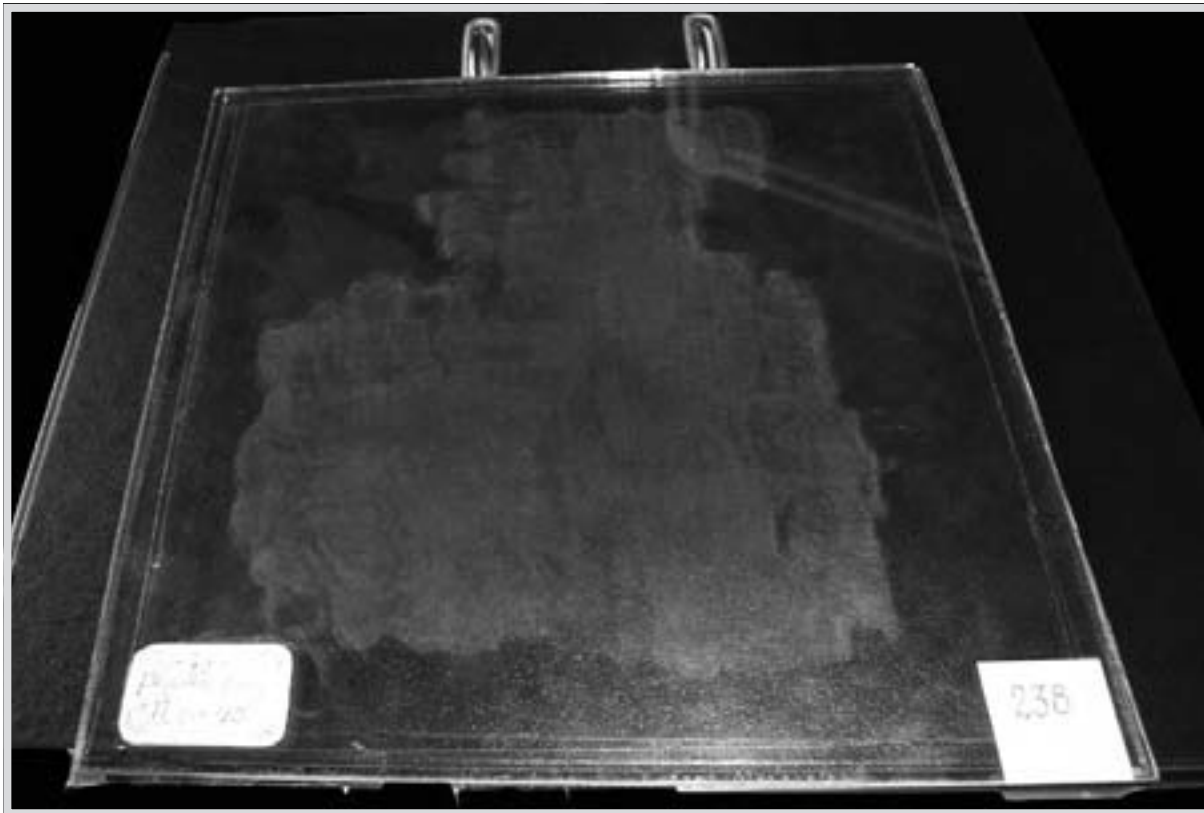


Figure 1. Impression on the glass surface

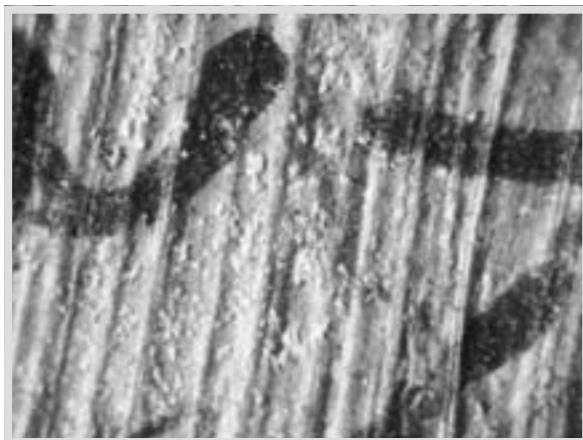


Figure 2. Salt crystals on the papyrus surface as viewed through a microscope.

tion of iron (Fe^{2+}) ions, and silver nitrate (AgNO_3)-for detection of chlorine (Cl^-) ions, while the presence of SO_4^{2-} ions content was determined by means of barium chloride (BaCl_2). Analysis showed the existence of sodium (Na^+) and chloride (Cl^-) ions in the solution examined.

Thus, the salt in the samples is NaCl, sodium chloride or common salt. Sodium chloride has an ionic bond, and contains sodium ions (Na^+) and chloride

ions (Cl^-) in equal numbers, held together by ionic forces. Sodium chloride has a crystalline structure. The crystals are cubic in form, each ion is surrounded by six ions of the other kind, bounded together with an ionic bond between the Na^+ and Cl^- ions

The precipitation of NaCl is a permanent, gradual process caused by fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity. The movement of salt from within the sheets provokes the destruction and delamination of fibers and strips, causing damage to the surface of the papyrus and the writing ink (fig.3).

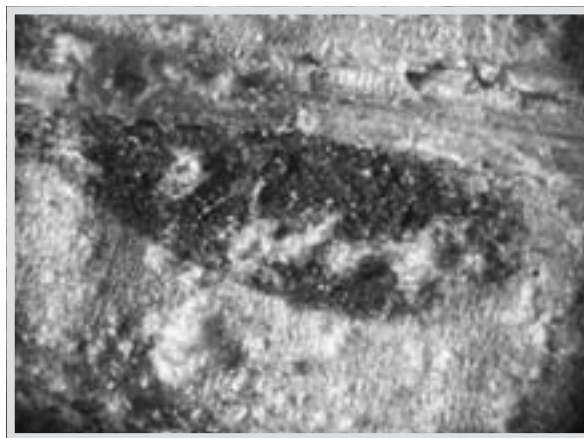


Figure 3. The papyrus surface and writing are damaged by salt as viewed through a microscope.

Polar solvents are good for dissolving ionic compound such as sodium chloride. When the salt dissolves in a polar solvent, the crystal lattice dissociates into individual cations (Na^+) and anions (Cl^-) which are surrounded by the molecules of the polar solvent.

Thus, it is possible to remove NaCl from a papyrus, by placing the fragment of papyrus between blotter paper moistened by pH neutral water or an ethanol/ water solution: the sodium chloride dissolves in water and the hydrated ions migrate into the blotting paper.⁴

This method must be used carefully and depends on the degree of damage suffered by the papyrus and ink. It also depends on the types of ink used. The papyrus artifacts, in the National Centre of Manuscripts, are written in two different types of ink, primarily, in water soluble carbon black ink, which was made from lampblack or soot bound with gum arabic⁵, and occasionally in iron gall ink, made from iron salts (ferrous sulfate FeSO_4) and tannin⁶, by adding a binder such as gum arabic.⁷

Removing the salt from the surface is also possible by mechanical cleaning, if the papyrus is not damaged, weak, fragile, delaminated, or when the ink is flaking off. This method can also be, used to clean papyrus from dirt and dust.

There is one more interesting fact: the impression found on the surface of the glass sometimes has a light blue huet. For example, this kind of colorful reflection is seen on the surface of the papyrus or glass. (fig. 4,5)



Figure 4. Blue reflection on the surface of the glass as viewed through a microscope.



Figure 5. Colored reflection on the papyrus surface as viewed through a microscope.

The lack of any detailed studies⁸ makes hard to reach an exact conclusion, but it is possible that the hydrolysis of polysaccharides' is taking place. As is well known, plant cell wall material is composed of following principal constituents: cellulose, lignin, hemicellulose, starch, and other materials.

Cellulose is a linear polysaccharide, its molecule consists of a long chain of glucose rings, hemicelluloses and starch, which are also polysaccharides. Their presence may promote the growth of micro-organisms. Under their influence polysaccharides may be hydrolyzed into monosaccharides⁹. During this process of hydrolyze disruption, intermediate substances such as: dextrin, sucrose and maltose are produced. Glucose is the final product of a hydrolysis reaction. It has a crystalline structure and is readily soluble in water¹⁰. These factors all suggest that the colored reflection is a product of the hydrolysis of polysaccharides.

As we have mentioned, the majority of the papyruses are fragile and brittle, with large folds, and many instances of delamination and deformation of the vertical and horizontal stripes and fibers. The methods used to produce the papyrus, and the type of ink used, exert considerable influence on the degradation of the artefact. A papyrus sheet is made from the stem of the plant that has a laminate structure composed of stripes and fibers. The stem mainly consists of cellulose (54-68%), but the existence of lignin (24-32%) and other materials decreases papyrus' flexibility and makes the sheet fragile. This causes the delamination and deformation of the papyrus and damage to its writing. In such cases each stripe and consistent fiber

must be treated very carefully, and cautiously softened with an ethanol-water mixture. Once the material has become flexible it can be returned to its initial form without damage.

Overall, as was mentioned above, the selection of methods and conservation materials depends on each papyrus and the composition of its ink, its condition, type of damage, possible interaction with conservation materials, and many other factors.

Notes:

1 The National center of Manuscripts, is one of the most important depositories of heritage written works in Georgia, holding Georgian and foreign (Latin, German, French, Italian, Polish, Greek, Czech, Ethiopian, Russian, Armenian, Jewish, Persian, Turkish and other) manuscripts of the 5th – 19th centuries, It also holds Georgian, Arabian, Persian and Armenian documents from the 10th to the 19th centuries and personal archives of Georgian writers, public figures and others.

2 Two pages of manuscript held in Sankt-Petersburg, at the Saltikov-Shchedrin National Library

3 Qualitative analyze was carried out in the scientific center "GAMA", with the Dr. Nino Machitadze

4 Salts consist of cations and anions, water (H⁺OH⁻), as a polar solvent has a positive end and a negative end. When a salt dissolves in water the cations and anions are attracted to the positive and negative poles of the water

5 Gum arabic, also called acacia gum, is the hardened sap taken from the acacia plant (Acacia seyal and Acacia senegal). and is a complex mixture of saccharides and glycoproteins

6 Tannin was usually extracted from oak galls.

7 Examples of deterioration of the papyrus from the corrosive action of iron gall ink have not been found in the NCM collection.

8 Unfortunately reports on detailed research was not available.

9 Monosaccharides include glucose, fructose, galactose, xylose, ribose

10 The crystals on the surface of Papyrus #222nd have a different shape similar to sugar crystals.

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PRESERVING & RESTORING: WHAT FOR?

For long, restorers were expected to reconstruct artefacts as they originally were ; however, since the passing of time is apt to alter, deface and destroy, such an exhilarating quest is indeed illusive. While today's art market still has such demands, the scientific and cultural world expects both less and much more from restorers. Through preservation, the treatment allows for study of the artefact, research and museum exhibiting.

Legibility, stability, reversibility : three goals for restorers to reach

During the 2005 and 2007 stays in Tbilissi, the work with local students was aimed at handing down preservation and restoration techniques but also, above all, at the deontological way to approach a work to be restored.

When elaborating any treatment, *diagnosis* is of paramount importance. Prior to undertaking any operation, the restorer has to examine the shape, the material, traces of wear, which shed light on use, and the defacement, which may provide clues to age.

All these data must be carefully recorded in a *Conservation Report* which should include a photographic or, if the case arises, X-ray survey and, possibly still, a graphic account of the restoration phases : before, during and after completion.

Written proposals for restoration operations will take into account the artefact requirements and the restorer's own skills. He/she must bear in mind the complexity of the challenges involved : the costs, risks, and ethics of preservation-restoration ; he/she must not leave any personal stamp on the work. In giving the work a new and fixed shape, the one which will be on display in exhibitions and on which some of our knowledge of the past will be based, his/her responsibility is, technically and critically, involved .

Therefore the restorer must question the legitimacy of his/her action and he/she, sometimes, is led to favour preventive preservation.

Once these prerequisites are respected, the process of restoration may begin, provided that the great deontological principles, *legibility, stability and reversibility* are being observed.

In 2005 : The Kovle Glasses

Faced with such outstanding works, any restorer must be fully aware that no mistake can be made . Should he/she feel doubtful about the rightfulness of his/her intervention, he/she must either seek advice from senior fellow-restorers or simply refrain from doing anything at all.

The value of these artefacts lies primarily in their decorative designs, whose legibility needs to be enhanced and, in the process, fix them for the purpose of protection : opting for a reversible reinforcing product is essential.

Meticulous hand-cleaning of the designs should be halted as soon as one realizes that they might be endangered. Let us leave to future restorers the opportunity of resuming the task with possible new methods.

The second challenge lies in the integral reconstruction of the works.

Two different types of adhesives are in current use for glass reassembly :

1 - an acrylic one, Polaroid B.72, whose implementation is simple, which is very reversible but whose resistance is low in hot weather conditions.

2 - an epoxy one, Araldite 2020, very resistant but poorly reversible and which requires, to begin with, a provisional reassembly including the setting up of fragments by means of adhesive tape and staples, a traumatic operation when dealing with fragile surfaces as it is the case with the Kovle Glasses.

When using epoxy, which is applied through capillarity, the risk of smears is not unlikely : it would be indeed quite difficult to remove them without endangering the decorative designs. On the ground of these reasons, we opted for using the Polaroid adhesive.

The various stages of the restoration process were photograph



Restoring the Kovle Glasses; Tbilisi laboratory, 2005.

The successive operations were recorded in a *Restoration Report* together with the names and components of the products used, as well as their solvent.

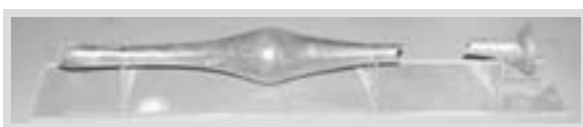
Every observation made while restoration was in process is described and documented, especially in the case of stains or smears that had to be removed.

Storing or exposure conditions (rate of humidity, temperature, light...) are noted down at the end of the Report.

In 2007, preservation-restoration of ancient glasses & ceramics.

Following an invitation from the Dean of the National Arts Academy in Tbilissi, a training course for six postgraduate students was set up.

It gave the opportunity to put into practice the above-mentioned principles with a batch of ancient ceramics and glasses. The items whose profile was complete were filled in strict compliance with *reversibility* and *legibility*. The reconstructed parts of the ceramics show a 1-millimetre shrinking from the remaining surface ; the hue of the fillings is well-matched though slightly different from the original one. As for the glasses, the filling, which requires the use of costly materials, was reserved for objects that needed some strengthening and for those whose shape could not possibly be understood without reconstructing the missing parts. In some instances, a base-setting turned out to be the most appropriate alternative.



Glass phial with incomplete profile displayed on a pedestal

Understanding the issues of restoration: the M.A.N. bronze sword-belts as an example.

In February 2008, an exhibition was being held at the M.A.N. (National Archaeology Museum) at St Germain-en-Laye, France, to commemorate Jacques de Morgan's 150th birthday.

As I was visiting, it dawned on me to draw a parallel between the bronze belts dating to the turn of the First Millennium B.C. and the ones that I had been able to view in Georgia, thanks to the Curator of Mskheta Museum. The similarity of those belts struck me as a good example to make one understand the *issues relevant to restoration*.



Bronze belts displayed at the M.A.N. Exhibition dedicated to Jacques de Morgan in 2008.

The M.A.N. Department of Comparative Archaeology currently keeps several specimens of bronze-sheet belts from the Transcaucasus. These artefacts were brought back by Jacques de Morgan circa 1886-1888 at the outcome of a prospection near Alaverdi, in N-W Armenia, close to the border of Georgia. The similarity of those belts with the ones stored at the Mskheta Museum, their common unfortunate restorations and derestorations provide a typical example to illustrate the problems that can be generated by inadequate and irreversible restorations, as well as the lack, or poorness, of any documentation pertaining to the numerous restoration attempts. The mishaps which occurred along the various technical stages of restoration of four of these bronze belts with decorative engravings, from the day they were uncovered to their latest restoration - between 1997 and 2000 were described by Françoise Douau, a M.A.N. restorer, on

the event of the French Restorers Days in 2000.

The first belts to be brought back by Jacques de Morgan originated from an exploration of the Transcaucasus (1886-88) during which 210 and 582 burial places in the Akthala and Mouçi Yeri necropolis were uncovered. In his 2-volume publication, *A scientific mission in the Caucasus : historical & archaeological studies* (Paris, 1889), J. de Morgan gives little detail about the funerary material found in the tombs. Those objects were shipped to France and, according to J. de Morgan's *Memoirs*, a set of them was offered to the Tbilissi Museum. As early as 1889, J. de Morgan is again granted the opportunity to go on assignment to Asia Anterior to explore the Linkoran region (then a Russian province in today's Southern Azerbaijan) where he excavates nearly one thousand tombs. Numerous crates holding archaeological pieces pile up at his home in the Ministry of Education and in the Ethnography Museum at Trocadéro Palace in Paris. In the absence of their finder the objects remained for very long in the containers without being sorted out and listed in an inventory ; as a result, some of the observations regarding the background were lost.

The treatment and display of the material at the Guimet Museum (Autumn 1892 through to Spring 1893)

After special funds amounting to 500 Francs were allocated by the Ministry of Education to renovate the Collections, J. de Morgan entrusts Salomon Reinach, Deputy Curator of the M.A.N., with the supervision of the task and the restoration of the engraved belts could begin. According to the excavator's information, these artefacts come from tombs built with small-size rubble stones and covered with basalt slabs, or vaulted with rubble stones. With time, this type of construction eventually collapsed and crushed the material underneath. It is most unfortunate that, after the excavation, any sort of treatment was delayed ; also, the manifold successive handlings are to be deplored : all this resulted in a loss of valuable information.

The conservation report only amounts to the following : the artefacts show more problems of mechanical conservation than corrosion attacks.

In June 1883 the belts were transferred to the M.A.N. under the supervision of Abel Maître, Head of the restoration workshop.

The 1920's interventions.

These artefacts were eventually listed down in the Inventory of the St Germain-en-Laye Museum in 1915. For the following ten years or so, the restoration attempts led by B. Champion were not conclusive, as we can infer from J. de Morgan's repeatedly wondering whether "he (Champion) was able at all to get anywhere..." (quote).

In order to study and sketch them, they had to be reconstructed. In the 1921 catalogue, Salomon Reinach hints at the lengthy and strenuous work of reconstruction of the belts, still uncompleted.

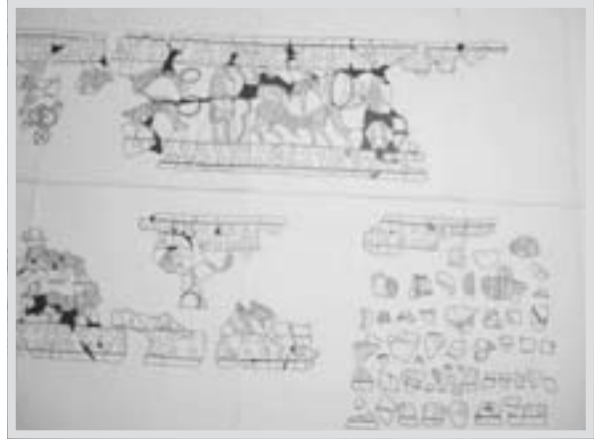
At the turn of the 20th century, the restorer made use of tin solder for reassembly, including over the decorated side, and, on the back, shellac-pasted cloth together with inserted metal rods for strengthening; all of this yielded a very incomplete and inadequate result.

The reassembly concerned a few fragments only and the processes resorted to were, at times, drastic or, worse still, irreversible: acid pickling of the metallic surface of a fragment and sheer disregard of the original curvature of the objects. On J. de Morgan's death in 1924 the restoration of the belts is still unsuccessful.

The rediscovery of the funerary material and the new restorations in 1978-1979 prior to the Exhibition «*The Scythians, Prehistory of the U.S.S.R.*» are to be credited for the reassembly of numerous belt fragments through resorting to reversible products. However, some gluings proved afterwards to be inaccurate. The adhesives which had in some cases, grown old disgracefully, have left quite a lot of smudges which hamper a good legibility of the chiselled designs.

The resumption of restorations between 1997 and 2000.

On the occasion of the 1997 Exhibition at the Louvre Museum celebrating the Centenary of the French Excavations in Persia, the restoration of the belts was resumed. To improve the legibility of the decorative designs, the filling of the gaps as well as the



Detailed chart record, kept at the M.A.N.

thickening-out caused by the 1978 intervention were mechanically reduced ; equally, improvements were effected in the surface cleaning and in the fillings colour ; besides, the inner lining was made thicker so as to strengthen the still fragile artefacts. The making of a stand now makes it possible to exhibit the belts safely and to keep them in reserve in their initial curvature.

After the 1997 Exhibition, it was decided to systematically X-ray the previous gluings and check their accuracy. It appeared that many mistakes had been made which rendered the decorative designs incomprehensible. Some fragments were placed back to their former position, as far as their distorted shapes made it feasible.

The latter interventions also gave the opportunity to upgrade the documentation related to the artefacts thanks to high precision plotting performed on a 1/1 scale.

From the day of their discovery to year 1997 and year 2000, the inadequate and irreversible restorations/derestorations as well as the insufficiency of documentation simultaneously conserved and destroyed part of the information that the bronze belts contained.

- No conservation -report except for a few scraps from J. de Morgan's correspondence.

- The successive interventions in the 1920's and in 1978-1979 did not abide by the indispensable reversibility and failed to make the chiselled designs more legible.

- No restoration report mentioned what products were employed.

The resumption of restorations between 1997 and 2000 gave rise to a systematic X-ray campaign which enabled -for the first time to establish a sound diagnosis .

The Mskheta Museum is fortunate enough of possessing several specimens of those bronze belts. One of them underwent a previous restoration with the effect of flattening it out over a wooden board. Such contact endangers its preservation and it gives a distorted view of the object. The other ones will, hopefully, enjoy a more appropriate treatment from more experienced restorers. The latest restorations of the pieces kept at the M.A.N. made it possible to save and to document the objects; however the fact is they were defaced for ever and it is also a fact that some pieces of information were lost for ever.

Conclusion

Though one can understand our predecessors' eagerness to get those pieces restored we now know that, in some difficult cases, it is best to resort to preventive preservation with sound conditions of storing. In such cases, one has just to wait and appeal to scientists to develop new techniques that will make it possible to fathom those artefacts so they can testify to their distant past, without fearing of altering them or of causing some irreversible change of their matter, which would be detrimental to future analyses.

Surely, millenniums of history are worth being patient for a few years.

THE CONSERVATION AND TECHNICAL STUDY OF TWO POLYCHROME BUCKLES

This paper focuses on the conservation and technical study of two polychrome buckles with Heracles-knot, from Vani. The examinations and conservation were carried out at the Freer-Sackler Gallery and Museum Conservation Institute of the Smithsonian Institution.

The two polychrome buckles with Heracles-knot found by chance at Vani are ornaments from different diadems, sewn on to a textile ribbon by their hooks. Bearing in mind the specificity of the jeweler's art in the Hellenistic period, it has proved impossible to establish where the buckles were made. Stylistically the buckles are close to Thessalian relics and, according to M. Ruxer's classification, they must belong to phase III of the development of Heracles-knot (3rd century B.C.) (A Chkonia, 1981, 152)

The buckles, including ten decorative elements, were deformed. The attachment points were precisely identified after visual examination and photo documentation. The elements were fixed using Paraloid B 48. and Japanese paper. Three elements could not be reattached due to the buckles' deformation and probably the loss of other elements (Photo #1). The overall goal of this study was to define the buckle together with the detached three elements. We performed an



1. Buckles after conservation

identification study of the details and the buckles' chemical composition.

XRF analysis was carried out on the back of the two main gold elements of the buckles. Since the first applications of X-ray fluorescence to museum objects in the 1960s, XRF has emerged as an important analytical tool for determining the chemical compositions of a variety of archaeological material. In this case, analysis was carried out using the Bruker handheld XRF analyzer at 40 KV and 1.20µA and showed that the bucklers have different compositions as follows (table 1) (L. G., Cecil, M. D. Moriarty, R. J. Speakman, M. D. Glascock, 2007, 506–521):

Table 1

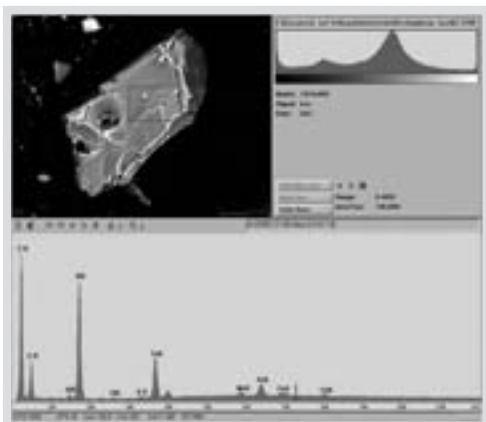
	Au	Ag	Cu	Ni	Zn
Buckle # 1	85.61	9.51	2.41	0.03	0.07
Buckle # 2	92.02	3.35	0.93	0.01	0.16

Visual examination showed that the red stones are in excellent condition and contain no bubbles (of the type typically in glass) and very few inclusions. Three red stones were analyzed using the Bruker handheld XRF at 40 KV and 1.20 µA. Each contain Fe and small amounts of Mn and Ca, suggesting that they are garnets (variety: almandine).

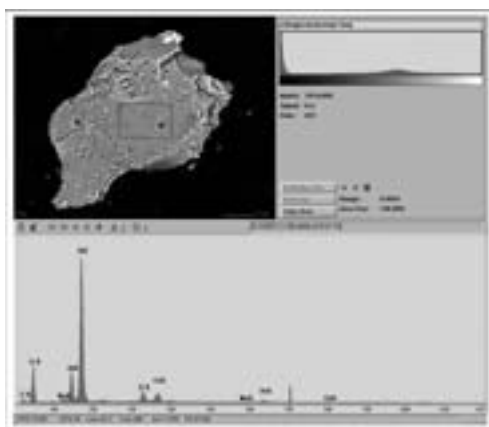
The area containing green and blue enamel on buckle #1 was analyzed by XRF. In addition to the elements associated with the gold, the enamel in this area contains Pb, Cu, and Fe. The elements may be associated mostly with the green color.

The blue and white enamels on the fragment associated with buckle #2 were analyzed by XRF (see drawing). This fragment shows no (or a small trace) Pb, and less Cu and Fe.

Samples of the blue and white enamels were examined using SEM/EDS at 30 KV. The results of this study may be affected by the heavily degraded (and dirty) condition of the samples. The blue was found to contain O, Al, Si, Cl, K, Ca, Mn, Fe, Co and Cu. Cobalt is likely to be the main colorant in this blue enamel. The white contained O, Mg, Al, Si, K, Ca, Mn, Fe and Cu.(Photo #2-3)



2. The results of the study of samples of the blue and white enamels using SEM/EDS.



3. The results of the study of samples of the blue and white enamels using SEM/EDS.

Multiple XRF analyses were performed on Gold buckle 1, Gold buckle 2, the rear of the gem bezel and the two associated gold fragments (Table 2).

Table 2

	Cu	Ag	Au
Buckle-1 #1	1.9	8.0	90.1
Buckle-1 #2	2.0	7.7	90.3
Buckle-1 #3	1,8	7,5	90,6
Buckle-2 #1	0,5	2,5	97,0
Buckle-2 #2	0,7	3,0	96,3
Buckle-2 #3 (dangle)	0,7	3,2	96,0
Buckle-2 #4	1,0	4,1	96,7
Fragment 1	0.9	2,4 96,7	96,7
Fragment 2	0,6	2,4	97,0

Posterior of gem bezel	2,3	3,9	94.4
Quality Control -BCR8077	Cu	Ag	Au
Observed Values	4.8	15.5	79.7
Expected Value	5	15	80

From the concentrations of the silver and gold in these objects (table 3), we were able to determine the individual buckles were not manufactured together. In addition, the measured data suggests the gold fragments and gem bezel were once components of buckle 2.

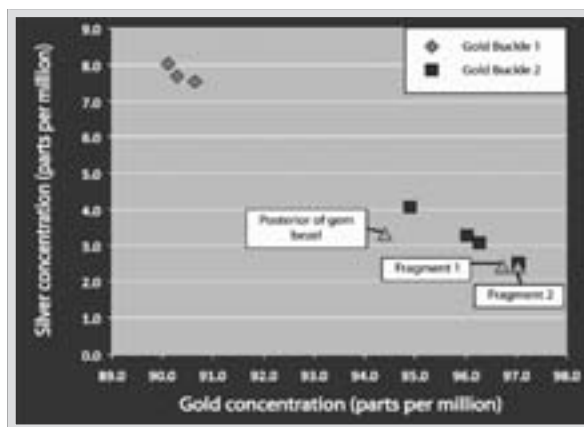


Table 3. Plot of gold and silver concentrations comparing data generated for Gold Buckle 1, Gold Buckle 2, posterior section of the gem bezel and gold fragments.

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SCANNING GLASSWARE FROM VANI BY MEANS OF ELECTRONIC MICRISCOPE-ENERGY DISPERSIVE ANALYSIS: ITS STUDY BY X-RAY FLUORESCENCE, RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION

Information obtained from studying the chemical composition and production technology of ancient glassware, together with archaeological data, can be decisive for attributing glass artifacts to a certain region and for evaluating the level of cultural development of that region.

Glass artefacts unearthed in abundance in the south Caucasus region, namely in Georgia, which lies at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, carry information on glass manufacturing processes which may be characteristic of not only of the region, but of the entire ancient world in general.

Georgia is one of those regions which produced glass throughout ancient times. The most ancient glass and glass-like artefacts unearthed in the territory of Georgia are dated to the third millennium B.C. These findings enable us to identify Georgia as the most ancient site of glass production, from where the technology spread to regions in the north.

The objective of our study concerns glassware dating to the fifth-fourth century B.C. excavated in Vani. This paper deals with: the restoration and conservation of the glass artifacts; the determination of dye-stuffs used in the process of manufacturing by means of X-ray fluorescence technology; collecting information on the components used in the artifacts production by means of electron microscope-Energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence technology; electron microscope-energy dispersive scanning analysis of the composition; and establishing the provenance of the pieces. This last issue is of particular importance, as in the period under consideration, apart from lo-

cally produced glass, there was also much imported and exported glassware.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fragments from five core-formed glass amphorae in the Vani collection were analyzed by laser ablation inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS) and scanning electron microscopy coupled to an energy dispersive spectrometer (SEM-EDS). Samples were obtained from objects on loan for the exhibition "Wine, Worship and Sacrifice: The Golden Graves of Ancient Vani" at the Smithsonian's Sackler Gallery.

LA-ICP-MS and SEM-EDS were used for this study to determine both the surface characteristics as well as the major colorants used in the manufacture of the glass vessels. In addition to determining the major colorants used, generated data suggest that three of the objects are consistent with previously analyzed Hellenistic glass. The remaining two objects appear unique in composition, especially on the basis of rare earth elements suggesting a secondary production locale.

For this analysis, ablation parameters were identical for all unknowns and standards analyzed. The laser was operated using a 100-micron-wide beam, operating at 20 Hz, scanning along a line at a speed of 30 microns per second. The laser beam was permitted to pass over the ablation area twice prior to analysis to minimize the effects of surface contaminants. To allow sufficient time for sample uptake and to permit the argon gas plasma to stabilize after the introduction of the ablated material, data acquisition was started after 30 seconds of sample ablation. Each sample was analyzed for Na, Mg, Al, Si, K, Ca, Ti, Cr, Mn, Fe, Cu, Co, Zn, As, Rb, Sr, Y, Zr, Nb, Cd, Sn, Ba, Cs, La, Ce, Nd, Sm, Eu, Tb, Dy, Yb, Lu, Hf, Ta, Th, and U.

ICP-MS Results

Four blue glass samples (from Phoenician vessels) and one fragment from a purple glass cup (Lender # 10-975:125) were analyzed by ICP-MS. The major colorants for the dark blue glass samples (LRN6674–6676) are a combination of CoO, CuO and Fe₂O₃. LRN6673, a light blue Phoenician glass, is enriched in CuO, SnO₂ and MgO, while the purple cup fragment

has elevated levels of MnO and MgO (Figure 1). Aside from the colorants, most major elemental compositions are similar among the glass samples. However, there are key variations in both major and minor elemental concentrations (Table 2). Notably, LRN6673 is chemically distinct from the darker blue LRN6674–LRN6676 glasses, particularly in rare earth elements (Figures 1 and 2). This suggests LRN6674–LRN6676 were manufactured at the same production locale, with LRN6673

being produced with different raw materials, likely at a different production site. This study demonstrates the importance of ICP-MS in its ability to recognize significant differences in rare earth element concentrations, making it an invaluable tool for the provenancing of historic glasses.

In order to better understand how these glasses contrast with those being manufactured throughout the Mediterranean, generated data were compared with Hellenistic and Roman glasses characterized by Robert H. Brill (1999). Hellenistic glasses include samples from the following locations: Rhodes bead factory (late 3rd–2nd century B.C.), Vergina (ca. 340 B.C.), Morgantina (3rd–1st century B.C.), Tel Anafa (ca. 150–75 B.C.), and those described as miscellaneous Hellenistic glass fragments (no date available). Roman glasses include samples from: Jalame (ca. 360 A.D.), Kafr Yasif (no date available), Beth She'arim (4th–7th century), and Bet Eli'ezer/Hadera (6th–7th century). Comparative samples include those of varying colours, including amber, blue, aqua, white, and purple. Although the trace elements are inconsistently reported by Brill for these samples, differences in major element concentrations consistently show that LRN6674–LRN6676 are compositionally similar to the Hellenistic glasses from these regions (Figure 3). In contrast, both the purple glass fragment and LRN6673 are compositionally dissimilar to all Hellenistic and Roman glasses used in this study. This further suggests that these samples were manufactured at a unique production locale. Additional research is required to better understand how rare earth and other trace elemental concentrations can be used in the determination of raw material utilization and trade of glasses from this region.

Oxide	SRM612 Expected	SRM612 Observed
Na2O	139799.7	142623.3
MgO	128.4	178.7
Al2O3	21094.4	21236.2
SiO2	718461.9	722423.4
K2O	79.8	79.9
CaO	119316.8	112005.8
TiO2	80.3	80.5
Cr2O3	58.3	58.7
MnO	49.6	51.5
Fe2O3	80.5	80.5
CoO	48.9	40.5
CuO	46.0	52.4
ZnO	47.2	47.3
As2O3	49.3	47.4
Rb2O	34.6	35.2
SrO	90.1	85.3
Y2O3	48.6	48.5
ZrO2	48.6	46.0
NbO2	51.2	51.3
CdO	32.3	32.1
SnO2	48.3	48.5
BaO	42.1	42.6
Cs2O	44.1	44.7
La2O3	42.0	42.4
Ce2O3	44.9	44.7
Nd2O3	41.1	41.0
Sm2O3	42.6	43.1
Eu2O3	39.9	39.6
Tb2O3	41.3	41.6
Dy2O3	41.3	41.5
Yb2O3	45.5	45.8
Lu2O3	42.9	43.4
HfO2	41.0	41.5
Ta2O5	48.6	49.1
ThO2	42.4	42.3
U3O8	43.8	43.8

* n.d. denotes no certified data available.

Oxide	SRM621 Expected	SRM621 Observed
Na2O	127393.2	129217.5
MgO	2699.9	2581.0
Al2O3	27597.9	28905.1
SiO2	711268.4	722686.1
K2O	20101.2	11292.1
CaO	107100.9	104280.0
TiO2	140.0	162.6
Fe2O3	400.0	220.5
As2O3	300.0	315.2

Table 1. Data generated for glass standard SRM612 and quality control sample SRM621. Results given in parts per million for both expected and observed concentrations.

SEM results

Five glass shards were placed onto a 26 mm SEM stub using double sided carbon tape and examined at a pressure of 30 Pa and an accelerating voltage of 15kV.

The samples discussed here were examined using backscatter imaging (see Figures 4–9), which revealed the presence of conservation materials (the lower atomic numbers of the elements making up the material showing up darker than the glass, which is composed of heavier and therefore brighter elements). On sample number LRN6676 (Figure 8), the area in the top left is paler than the rest of the shard due to the presence of lead as a colorant.

Quantitative analysis by energy dispersive spectrometry was not performed on these samples, as they were introduced into the chamber as whole fragments and not prepared as polished and coated samples. In addition, because destructive sampling was possible, far greater resolution analyses were possible by LA-ICP-MS, as reported above. SEMEDS was used to confirm the presence of lead in the yellow area of sample LRN6676, which was not analyzed by LA-ICP-MS (the focus of which was the blue area of that shard).

LA-ICP-MS Analyses of Vani Glass

WT %	LRN6673	LRN6674	LRN6675	LRN6676	PURPLE
Na2O	22.94	21.04	22.96	20.07	27.23
MgO	3.73	0.44	0.41	0.49	4.11
Al2O3	0.90	2.85	2.58	2.52	1.55
SiO2	65.32	65.60	65.04	66.30	60.76
K2O	1.11	0.46	0.44	0.64	0.74
CaO	4.23	8.30	7.84	8.95	4.81
TiO2	0.046	0.083	0.079	0.071	0.114
Cr2O3	0.010	0.017	0.015	0.016	0.024
MnO	0.150	0.013	0.012	0.013	0.364
Fe2O3	0.17	0.86	0.37	0.53	0.25
CuO	1.34	0.22	0.06	0.20	0.01

PPM-Oxide	LRN6673	LRN6674	LRN6675	LRN6676	PURPLE
CoO	7	406	110	1079	6
ZnO	70	182	65	155	56
As2O3	38	7	5	7	11
Rb2O	25	15	15	18	19
SrO	213	534	531	635	276
Y2O3	3	9	9	10	6
ZrO2	20	47	45	41	72
Nb2O5	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.8	4.1
CeO	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
SnO2	78.0	5.6	2.2	4.9	0.4
BaO	1.4	5	4	4	50
Cu2O	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5
La2O3	2.5	7.9	7.9	8.4	6.9
Gd2O3	5.0	14.5	14.7	15.2	13.4
Nd2O3	2.3	8.1	7.4	8.4	5.7
Sm2O3	0.5	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.2
Eu2O3	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.2
Tb2O3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Dy2O3	0.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.0
Yb2O3	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Lu2O3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
HfO2	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.5
Ta2O5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3
ThO2	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	2.5
U3O8	1.3	6.8	6.3	1.1	1.5

Table 2. Data generated for Vani glass samples. Results given in weight % and parts per million oxide where noted. Similar oxide compositions are highlighted in yellow.

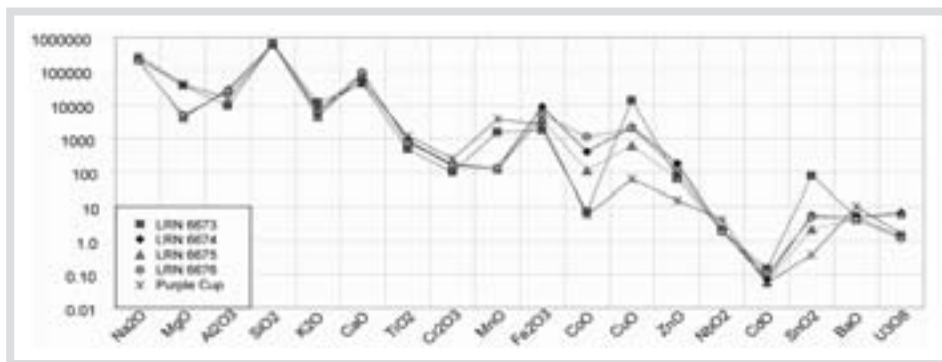


Figure 1. Logged concentrations of major oxide compositions for the five Vani glass samples.

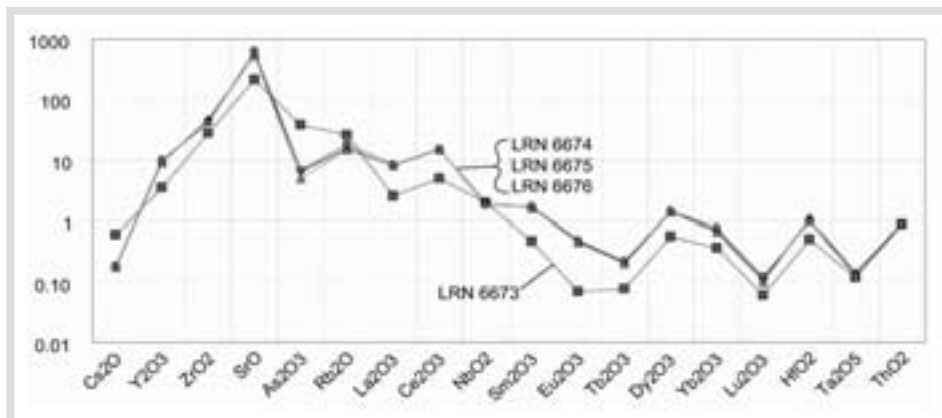


Figure 2. Logged concentrations of trace oxide compositions for the blue Vani glass samples.

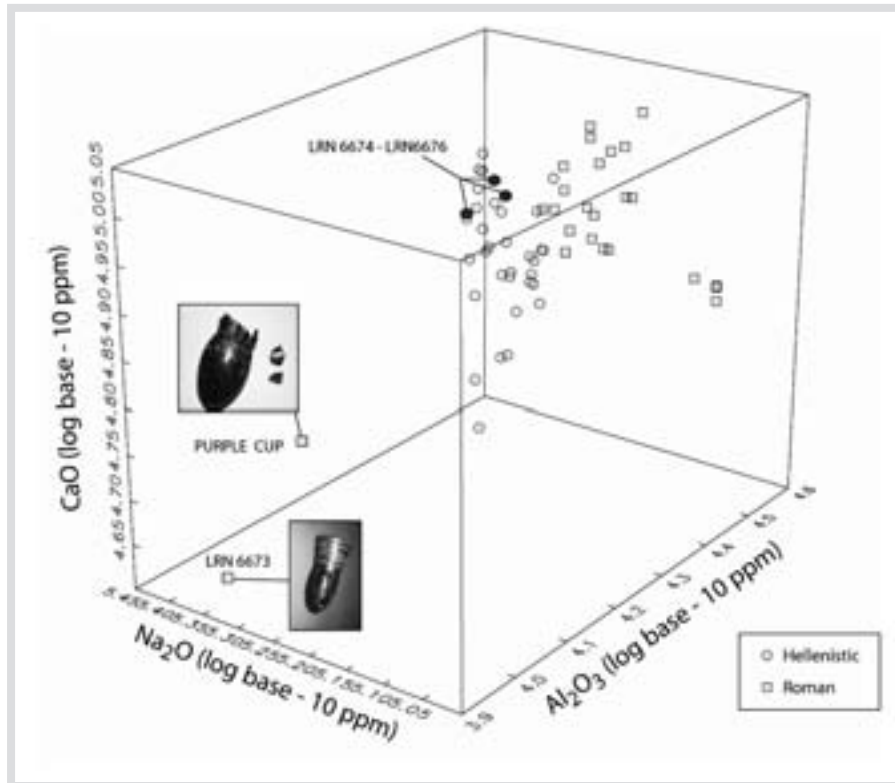


Figure 3. Log base-10 ppm plot of Al_2O_3 , Na_2O and CaO concentrations comparing Phoenician glasses with Hellenistic and Roman glasses previously characterized by Robert H. Brill.



Figure 4. The topmost image is of LRN6673, a pale blue vessel before treatment. On the lower left is an electron micrograph of sample LRN6673. Notice the pitting on the surface. The darker areas are most likely conservation materials. The lower right hand image shows the sample after laser ablation.



Figure 5. The topmost image is of LRN6674, a blue vessel, before treatment. On the left is an electron micrograph of sample LRN6674b, half of a large, clear-blue shard. The darker areas are most likely conservation materials. The lower right hand image shows the sample after laser ablation.



Figure 6. . The topmost image is of LRN6675, a blue vessel, before treatment. On the lower left is an electron micrograph of sample LRN6675, a pale blue shard. The darker areas are most likely conservation materials. The lower right hand image shows the sample after laser ablation.



Figure 7. The topmost image is of LRN6676, a dark blue vessel, before treatment. On the lower left is an electron micrograph of sample LRN6676, a dark blue shard with yellow areas. The pale area in the upper left hand corner is a yellow portion of the glass, which as a heavier element looks brighter in comparison to the areas composed of lighter elements. The lower right hand image shows the sample after laser ablation, which was performed on the opposite side of the shard to that in the SEM image, as it presented a flatter surface.

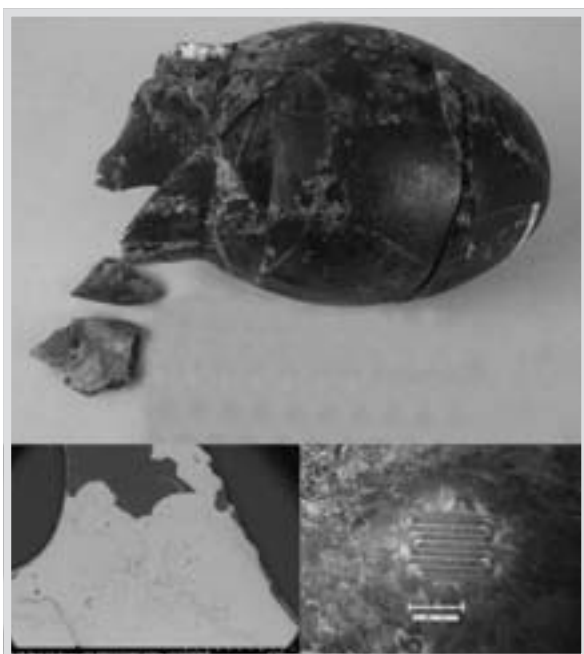


Figure 8. The topmost image is of LRN6676 (Lender # 10-975:125), a purple vessel, before treatment. On the lower left is an electron micrograph of a sample from the purple cup. The darker areas are most likely conservation materials. The lower right hand image shows the sample after laser ablation.

Posters

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METHODS OF INVESTIGATION AND PREVENTION OF MICROBIOLOGICAL DAMAGE

SUMMARY

Methods for studying the causes inducing microbiological damage to exhibits of various types (books, icons, frescos, etc.) from libraries, museums and cultural monuments are presented. It has been shown that in most cases microscopic fungi – micromycetes – are the main damaging agents. The growth of these microorganisms is provoked, on the one hand, by an easily accessible substrate – the material content of the exhibits, and on the other hand, by high relative humidity induced by defects in waterproofing of depository buildings and walls, and/or insufficient ventilation. Some physical-chemical methods for cleaning the damaged exhibits are elaborated. Recommendations for prevention of microbiological damage are presented.

The damage of many museum exhibits is due to the action of microorganisms that exist in the environment and are visually unnoticeable. Among the most hazardous are microscopic fungi, e.g. micromycetes (mould fungi). Their spores are abundant in air, water and soil. The materials of the exhibits (paper, canvas, leather, glue, wood, paints, etc.) contain carbohydrates and proteins that are the best medium for fungi. Therefore, in suitable conditions of temper-

ature and humidity, micromycetes rapidly grow and deteriorate the exhibits. Their spores spread rapidly and cause risk of damage to other exhibits.

From the foregoing it emerges that it is reasonable prior to taking measures against exhibit damage and restoration work, to make a chemical and microbiological analysis targeted to the following:

- Ascertaining the causes of damage
- Planning the work for abatement of damage,
- Estimation of the type and efforts of safety

precautions

The general scheme of microbiological and chemical assessments are as follows:

- I. Taking of microbiological and chemical samples from the damaged depository
- II. Identification of strains of damage-inducing microorganisms, ascertaining the scope of their spread, and evaluating of microbiological pollution degree
- III. Choice of antimicrobial means for the identified strains (e.g. determination of concentrations of chemical preparations, radiation doses, etc.)
- IV. Elaboration of a method for elimination of the damage bearing in mind the particularities of the exhibit (e.g. affect of chemical preparation or radiation on the dye pigments, paper, canvas, etc.)
- V. Determination of the work needed for disinfection of exhibits depository.

In general to prevent microbiological pollution, chemical preparations are used which specifically inhibit growth of one or another microorganism. It is effective to disinfect with high temperature, ultra-violet or gamma-rays. It should be pointed out that there is

no universal steady protection against microbiological damage. Even the most potent antimicrobial means in time are rendered innocuous (USELESS is a better word here - more commonly used) **against microorganisms**. Therefore, for the security of exhibits the necessary provision is to **not allow growth and propagation** of microorganisms, which can be achieved only by satisfying the relevant environmental conditions (temperature, humidity).

Upon exploration of some of the exhibits of the Georgian National Museum, visually unnoticeable mould fungi spores were found. From this it follows that permanent microbiological control of depositories and the strict observance of an optimal regimen of humidity are necessary.

In the case of **open sky exhibits, where maintenance** of optimal climatic regimen is impossible, the material used during restoration conservation should contain special antimicrobial additives while regularly conducting periodic **microbiological control of exhibits**. In needed cases, a special preventive regimen should be done (mechanical cleaning, radiation or chemical treatments, etc).

EXAMPLE 1

As a result inspection of the National Scientific Library it was revealed that in the Book Depository Departments there are microbiological pollution sources (damaged books, walls) which in respective climatic conditions (humidity more than 60%, temperature 25-30°C) will result in a substantial damage of books.

Analysis has revealed that the cause of microbiological pollution is the existence of spores of mould fungi of *Cladosporium*, *Aspergillus*, *Penicillium* and *Mucor* species. Microbiological pollution was considered to be of medium degree.

Below is given identified strains as a result of exploration of one of the damaged copy, as well as photos of the damaged and cleaned book (Fig. 1).



The image of the book treated after the deterioration by the fungi and the strains causing the damage

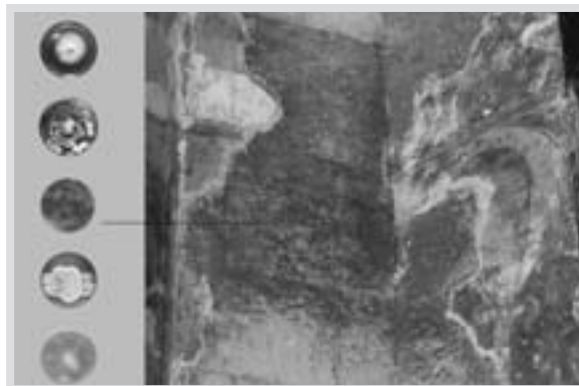
For the reasons of correction of the situation and prevention of dramatic results the board was given recommendations for taking precautions and preventive actions:

- 1 To undertake disinfection work in the depositories which were or are damp and for this reason has become the source of microbiological pollution.
- 2 To provide stability of standard climatic conditions in book depositories (temperature 18-20°C humidity no more than 50-55%)
- 3 Cleaning and disinfection of the damaged copies. In recommendations are indicated concrete methods for cleaning and disinfection, a list of required material and equipments is provided.

EXAMPLE 2

Martvili Monastery is located in high-humid climatic zone that promoted its diverse biological affliction. Here damages are caused by higher plants, as well as microorganisms.

The gate of Martvili Monastery is greened because of biological damage. Analysis of the sample from a fragment of the mural paintings has shown that the reason for greening is a fungus of *Trichoderma* (Fig. 2). Presented here are also mould fungi of other species, which were cultured during analysis from different damaged sites of the Monastery.



The biological deterioration of mural paintings of Martvili Church of the Virgin and the strains identified during the study

Development of microorganisms in addition to high humidity was stipulated by chemical composition of lime and paints which eventually provided beneficial medium for their growth.

Cultural Tourism

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TENDENCIES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN GEORGIA

Tourism is one of the dynamically developed and high-income fields in the world economy. In 2006 some 842 million people worldwide traveled worldwide, and the tourism industry's income totaled some \$750 billion.

In Georgia the tourism industry is regarded as one of the priorities for the country's economic development. Traditionally, our country always has had the image of an attractive tourist destination. The year 1988 was a peak for the Georgian tourism industry: the country welcomed 5 million tourists, and some 624 hotels and a total of 152,000 thousand beds were available.

In 2007 more than 1 million tourists visited Georgia, the first time the total had been so high since the country gained independence. Today, however, the number of hotels and beds available at them is far lower than it was in 1988. In spite of this fact, the tourism industry shows the signs of developing, and the trend is supported by relevant statistical data. Among the several forms of tourism, cultural tourism is the most traditional and well studied form in Georgia.

Since the 1980s, cultural tourism can be characterized as a rapidly developing sphere. The stimulus of this worldwide development is, on the one hand, numerous conferences and congresses and, on the other hand, the introduction of recommendations published after scientific research had been carried out on the tourism industry. For example, offers from different tour operators were defined according to the attractiveness of specific tourist destinations and sights.

Several different trends can be seen in the development of the tourism industry, particularly changes in the forms of tourism. These changes are reflected in the increase of business travel as well as by the increase of active forms of tourism such as bicycle tours

and eco-tourism, but still the most widely spread form of tourism is going on vacation to the seaside.

There are shifts in the respective numbers of individual and group travelers: the number of individual travelers has increased and, therefore, the number of group travelers has decreased. Family tours are gaining its popularity – and many people with their families choose “nature-oriented” or countryside vacations.

The number of women working in tourism as vacation planners has increased significantly; this change has influenced the conception of the preparation and selling of a wide range of tourism choices. Women have become more independent and many earn as much income as men, so they actively and decisively take part in the process of choosing the destinations and conditions for the holidays. Thus advertising in tourism must correspondingly be designed according the needs and preferences of women.

Worldwide, more and more elderly people now travel; a major reason is that in developed countries retired people get high pensions and life spans have increased. There must be tours oriented toward this segment of society.

The length of tours has shortened. During last decade, 21-day tours have become very rare; the number of 14-day tours has also decreased, and the share of 7-day or 10-day holidays has increased.

There have also been changes in the number of tourists with narrow interests. For example, many tourists are not interested in cultural tourism on the whole, but are interested in one of its forms, for example, an archaeological tour, etc.

The length of itineraries has also increased. In winter Europeans go to the southern hemisphere to spend their holidays in summer resorts while people from the southern hemisphere go to Europe to spend their holidays in winter resorts.

Cultural tourism also includes special forms of tourism such as humanitarian and business tourism. Overall, cultural tourism is an attractive sector for promoting the cultural and economic development of a nation's various regional units. For many countries cultural tourism is a priority for the development. Georgia is among such nations. Our country has great

potential for development of cultural tourism. An attractive natural environment, climate, landscapes, national parks, resorts, mountain resorts offering mineral waters, historical monuments, and more – all these attractions have great potential for development of cultural tourism. Georgia has 12,000 historical monuments in Georgia, of them 5000 are protected by the Georgian government, and UNESCO has designated three of these monuments as World Heritage sites.

It is very important for government to be active in the transition stages of the development of tourism. It is vital to improve legislation. For these reasons, the relevant government department should be granted higher status. Currently, the department is part of the Ministry of Economic Development; thus, it does not have enough governmental status to execute all its strategic responsibilities. To ensure it can do so, the department should be represented in the cabinet/council of ministers.

Countries in which tourism is one of the priorities must have appropriate legislation. There must be basic law and legal provisions that regulate relationships and cooperation in the field. The objective of such legislation is to define precisely the operating principles so that there is no possibility for interpreting them in different ways.

In most European countries there are two kinds of guides: local guides and country guides. Thus, the preparation courses for these two kinds of guides are different. Country guides need more time to become trained; they need to know more about the country than do local guides, though there is great demand for the service of local guides.

In Georgia there are principles that regulate activities in tourism field, but there is no law about guides and their services. More attention must be paid to human resources and training; indeed, this matter is as important for the development of tourism as the planning and building of infrastructure. Let us now consider some specific topics.

(1) Human resources: Though the tourism industry largely depends on the availability of lodgings and the accessibility of sightseeing, human resources

are also very important. Georgia has great potential to meet the demands of the tourism market and to attract investment in it, especially in the field of cultural tourism (wine tourism), urban and ecotourism.

(2) Sightseeing and choosing the product: In Georgia archaeological, natural and historical sites are not protected. As an American expert said: "Our group visited the cave town in Vardzia. We arrived at the site late, as the road was bumpy. It was 6:30 pm, but the ticket seller had already gone home. There was someone at the entrance, who happily took 10 Gel we paid for parking and entry."

Bagrati Cathedral and Gelati Monastery were just recently designated as endangered sites. One reason was lack of resources.

American experts have analyzed the comments tourists have made. Several

comments are given:

- "The [Georgians] are very bad guides. They will lose their way in the mountains and they will not show you anything, in spite of prior agreement."
- "There must be guides who speak English know much about the sites and are available when needed."
- "Guides must know local residents of the site introduce them to the tourists. For example for tourists it is very interesting when carpet and sock knitters, folk-singers, wine producers and bakers are introduced to them."
- The Ilia Chavchavadze house-museum very interesting, but it is very desirable that there is a poet who will narrate to the visitors about the Communist period or the Persians invasions of Kakheti."
- "There are many interesting places, but most of the guides at Stalin museum, in Mtskheta and Uplistsikhe do not speak English, this of course is a big problem for the tourists."
- "There is nothing to visit, but churches! It is too much to see more than 5 churches during 2 weeks."
- "There must be the signs on the road to have the possibility of independent travel. Alongside the narrative explanation, there is a need of printed information available for tourists. By the way, we had an excellent guide!"

The same American experts offered the following main recommendation: It is vital to build a central highway, or so-called "Georgian Way," so that the main destinations are easy accessible. This highway will also connect Georgia to the countries in the region."

In considering this recommendation, there are 6 destinations that must be available from the "Way." They are:

1. Signagi and Telavi (with Lagodekhi and TuSheti)
2. Tbilisi and Mtskheta (with Gudauri and Kazbegi and, to the south, David Gareji);
3. Gori
4. Kutaisi (with Svaneti and Mestia and Tskaltubo);
5. Borjomi and Bakuriani (Vardzia, Abastumani)
6. Batumi and Kobuleti.

There are several destinations linked to every key place: Gudauri and Kazbegi are linked to Tbilisi; David Gareji is linked also to Tbilisi or to Signagi, Telavi or Borjomi; Mestia/Svaneti and Tskaltubo are linked to Kutaisi. Each destination may be the part of the main itinerary (<http://www.investmentguide.ge>).

As historical monuments are a main attraction for Georgians and foreign visitors, the protection of Georgia's cultural heritage is one a priority for the cultural tourism. Currently, the Department of Tourism and Resorts is doing its best to protect such heritage as the endangered icons in the 12-century Gelati Monastery.

According the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) cultural tourism comprises 10% of the tourism industry – includes wine tours, historical and archaeological tours, and music and art festivals. Cultural tourism is growing very fast and has high standing among other kinds of tourism. Recent research carried out in several countries indicates that as the number of visitors to a country rises, the more popular that county's culture and art become.

In 2008 American experts elaborated the concept in which the historic town of town Signagi (in Kakheti) is the important Georgian locus for the development of tourism. In keeping with the conception that "tourism promotes more tourism," Signagi became a model for the rapid development of tourism. It may well become a significant center for visitors coming to the Land of Wine.

There are many wine producers, painters, masters of wood carving, musicians, and weavers in Signagi. In 2007, with financial assistance from the American government, 10 Georgian experts in wine tourism were invited to America for further training.

There are historic buildings with excellent façades in Signagi's central area, but there are no shops, restaurants, cafés and public toilets. There is only one hotel, with 18 beds available, in the town, but in the Signagi region there are 27 guest houses with 152 beds available.

In 2007 IPM carried out a survey for the Department of Tourism and Resorts. A total of 800 people were interviewed in different cities and towns such as Tbilisi, Gori, Telavi, Poti, Zugdidi, Batumi and Kutaisi. The main goal of this survey was to define national interest in Kakheti and Signagi. The first question was: Is Signagi for you a place where one can spend holiday? On the whole Signagi is favorable place for development historical, cultural and wine tourism. It is place that attracts foreigners with its charm and exotic environment (<http://www.ipm.ge>).

(3) Increasing demands of participators in cultural tourism

"Tourists who purchase cultural tours know the technology of tourism very well, they have their demands and are sensitive toward the prices of tours." So were described European tourists in the 1990s.

Albrecht Steinecke identified motivations and attitudes of tourists toward traveling:

- Tourists nowadays know the technologies of national and international traveling very well. They apply their knowledge to different informational sources.
- They have demands toward offers by tourism agencies (e.g. service, infrastructure, etc.)
- They express interest in impressions experienced during the tours. They also express emotional interest in extra service.
- They prefer traditional itineraries and have a great desire to gain exclusive and individual rights on the tourism market.
- Tourists are very flexible and they quickly make

decisions to purchase tours offered to them.

- They favor diversity of offers and freedom of choice. There is a close connection between their free time and travel motivations (A. Steinecke, 2000).

(4) Emergence of new competitors in the field of cultural tourism:

The end of 20th century is characterized as the period of the formation of a new economic model – the global economy. This process stimulated formation of one more form of tourism – business travel. Business travel is surely the result of the process of globalization and intensive exchanges in the field of science, business and culture.

It is characteristic of globalization is that every kind of economic and business activities occurs throughout the globe. "This is the economy that is able to work as a whole system throughout the planet, but in correspondence with the existing situation and time." Thus the whole world is being developed according one main system, but with regional varieties. Georgia is trying to cope with the ongoing changes. It appears that Georgia is rapidly introducing the trends of globalization; this is apparent in the fields of culture, economy and politics.

The Marriot and Sheraton hotels operating in Georgia are of American origin: Marriot Hotel owns 898 hotels with 186,656 rooms in 27 countries. These corporations are doing their best to impose and maintain the same standards and style of service in every country.

Business tourism is also known as MICE – Meeting, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions. According to WTO statistical data, business travel is one of the most important trend of the tourism industry. According to these data, in 2006 the number of tourists traveling from one country to another exceeded 842 million; 135 million (16%) of these people were business travelers. Statements made by experts reinforce these statistical data; they estimate that total spending by business travelers is three times more than that of all other kinds of tourists together. Unfortunately, it is impossible to get this kind of information about Georgia, though according to data published by the Department of Tourism and Resorts, among 983 000

tourists visiting Georgia during 2006, 56% were business travelers. It is also very interesting how the number of tourists was distributed between the countries and the cities. In 2004, BBT On-line published the data about these distributions, and this information was very important for Georgian organizations engaged in business travel.

According to these data, during 2003 the USA arranged 232 congresses; Spain arranged 220; Britain, 177; Germany, 167;. Among cities, the leading position for the number of congresses held is occupied by Vienna with 89; Barcelona with 78; Singapore with 75; Stockholm and Lisbon with 70 and 67 respectively (BBT On-line, 2004).

Congress tourism is one of the most important kinds of business travel. According to international classification this segment of the business market is referred to as the Meetings' Market. It includes not only international congresses, but also small-scale seminars and conferences. To attract this business, regional/city noncommercial marketing organizations are formed. They are called 'congress offices' and are mediators between the city and international associations. The goals of these organizations include:

- To disseminate information about the abilities of the region/city to arrange congresses and conferences.
- To participate in the tenders held for arranging congresses.
- To consult organizations arranging congresses free of charge.

Within the structure of city tourism, congress tourism has its significant role for is economic affect. Compared to other kinds of tourism it is the field with the highest revenue. For example:

- In Stockholm, income from congress tourism comprises 20% of the total income of Sweden's tourism industry.
- The daily spending of participatants in congress tourism averages \$346 According to experts, the ordinary tourist spends from \$100 to \$200 a day
- Congresses with 700 participators increase the city's income by \$1 million.

International congresses and conferences are as

a rule organized by congress bureaus. How profitable the marketing activity of congress is can be seen in the example of Goteborg. The city's congress bureau has budget of €900 000 and increases the city's revenue budget by €35-50 million annually (The Association Market Worldwide, 2003, 18, 28).

In Tbilisi congress tourism is just starting to develop; however, several factors hinder this process:

- Lack of international flights and limited capacity of the airport
- Underdeveloped urban infrastructure
- Hotels and congress halls can accommodate only small congresses. There is no facility to arrange congresses and conferences of more than 1000 participants
- Tbilisi has no congress bureau that can represent the city in the international market and obtain the right to organize international meetings.

A government initiative is needed to encourage development of business travel and MICE (Meeting, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) and to create a special program that includes cooperation with professional entities and branch associations. Professional entities include MPI (Meeting Professionals International) and SITE (Society of Incentive and Travel Executives). It is also essential to cooperate with three main branch associations:

1. ICCA – International Congress and Convention Association (Founded in 1963 in Amsterdam, it has more than 80 member states).
2. IAPCO – International Association of Professional Congress Organizers. (Founded in 1968 in Brussels, it has 30 member states).
3. EFCT – The European Federation of Conference Towns. (Founded in Brussels, it has 30 member states).

In Georgia, there is currently no government conception and action plan for tourism development; the nation lacks relationships and cooperative agreements with international professional entities and associations. This cooperation is essential in order to arrange international meetings and conferences in Georgia. Globalization encourages the development of business travel, but business travel will not develop itself, with the help of only the private sector: coop-

eration from government is vital. The government can play a positive role in the process of developing the market for business travel. In addition, several recommendations are advisable for development of the tourism industry in Georgia:

1. In Georgia, as a rule, cultural tour destinations, once chosen, are included in the itineraries offered by several different tour operators. Nobody tries to introduce added attractions or offer innovative methods. Many impressive historic monuments remain outside the attention range of tour operators and tourists.

2. Government does not carry out market research, thus cannot give any recommendations to tour operators; it cannot provide them with a comprehensive list of historic monuments and information about them.

3. Professional entities for business travel development must be founded. The government must more actively lobby congress tourism.

4. Tour operators do not carry out professional activities to create new itineraries, as it is not profitable for them.

5. No one cares about the quality of souvenirs. No-one researches demand and supply, so there is no confirmation that tourists can find and buy what they most want to.

6. Regional museums are not included in the cultural tourism. There is no program or action plan about including museums in regions and villages in itineraries.

7. Government should create special informational program about cultural tourism that will develop the plan of activities.

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GEORGIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE AS AN ECONOMIC RESOURCE

INTRODUCTION

Georgian cultural heritage is an irreplaceable yet powerful resource for the continued growth and development of the Georgian economy. Cultural heritage policies should be re-examined by governing bodies to focus on stewardship and legal protection of Georgian cultural heritage to fully take advantage of its direct benefits as a resource for local economic development.

While the protection of local cultural heritage is vital for the preservation of national history and identity for generations to come- it also comprises a myriad of resources from Old Tbilisi, Rustaveli Avenue, the cave monastery of Davit Gareja, the medieval frescoes surviving from Byzantine era churches such as Martvilli and others throughout the country, the precedent-setting archeological finds at Vani and Dmanisi, the towers of Svaneti, and more recently recognized Modernist heritage such as the Ministry of Roads- among countless other sites of the same caliber- that are imbued with great possibilities for Georgia's future economic growth.

The value of Georgian cultural heritage has been acknowledged internationally by the inscription of three UNESCO World Heritage Sites- and has the potential for many more sites to be nominated. Most recently, the restoration of the Virgin Church of Timote-subani received a Gold Medal in 2006 by the European Union's Europa Nostra.

This international stature was further illustrated by Georgia being the first country ever to be awarded an economic development loan on the basis of its exceptional cultural heritage by the World Bank in 1998.

With the significance and value of Georgia heritage firmly established in its own right, locally and international, it is possible to look at it in a new light. Georgian cultural heritage, in addition to its intrinsic

and irreplaceable values, also represents an important economic resource. International case studies have emerged in the past two decades with supporting financial data illustrating how cultural heritage is both an economically viable and sustainable resource. It is important to note however, that this does not propose the exploitation of resources or the promotion of unsustainable tourism.

Georgian cultural heritage represents economic potential in the following areas: 1.) for the promotion of heritage tourism, 2.) support of local businesses, 3.) urban revitalization, 4.) increased employment opportunities, 5.) enhanced property values and 6.) The encouragement of foreign investment. Foreign investment in turn creates a vital tax base for the country in its continued economic development. To illustrate the potential of heritage resources, references to international corroborating statistics and a case study of New York City's the successful 'heritage protection-economic benefit model' are included for comparison to Georgia's potential.

HERITAGE TOURISM AND JOB CREATION

Internationally, tourism accounts for billions in state revenues. It is an economic force in itself and should not be underestimated. For example, in Cyprus tourism accounts for 25% percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). In France, the world's most popular tourism destination, it accounts for 7 % GDP. The United States however earns the most in tourist revenues at an incredible \$80 billion in 2007.

However, these figures fail to differentiate between recreational or other type of tourists. Specifically, the tourists that would drive heritage tourism and involve the patronage of cultural heritage. But what motivates tourists? More often than not-- the opportunity for a unique, individual experience that they cannot find at home. Cultural heritage embodies what makes each place unique and individual. The Director of the Macau Government Tourist Office highlighted this point in his annual marketing meeting on June 25, 2007 when he stated:

"The uniqueness of Macau's historic centre and world heritage will continue to be paramount to the success of promoting the invaluable cultural heritage of Macau as a unique tourism product. MGTO will fur-

ther enrich the existing cultural and historic tours, and steps are being taken to strengthen the knowledge an awareness of the local residents in projecting Macau as a cultural city and to work close knitted for the future sustainable and positive development of Macau's tourism industry.¹

If cultural heritage provides a unique travel experience, then it also provides the economic benefits. This was further substantiated by a study commissioned in the United States in the State of Virginia in 1993. The State of Virginia has both miles of ocean-front beaches as well as Colonial Williamsburg and other many sites of early American history. With the draw of both leisure and historic sites, Virginia enjoys large annual revenue from tourism. However, the 1993 state study found that heritage tourist spent an average of 2 ½ times more money than other recreational tourists.

In a comparison of top country destinations and UNESCO World Heritage listed sites, reveals that there is a direct correlation between officially recognized cultural heritage and tourism revenues. France and Spain were the top two global destinations in 2007, earning \$42 billion and \$48 billion respectively. What is interesting is that France has 31 World Heritage sites and Spain has 41 sites. Italy earned \$21 billion with 41 World Heritage sites, the most sites in any single country. Italy's income however, is considered low despite its large number of sites because of the restrictions it places on foreign ownership. Georgia's neighbor, Turkey, had the world's eighth largest tourist revenues at \$18 billion dollars and has 9 sites on the World Heritage List.

Georgia has three sites on the list but has potentially for many more. For example, the Old Tbilisi nomination has preliminary approval. Undoubtedly the publicity and international acknowledgment of local heritage would lead to greater tourism revenues. It also emphasizes the importance of conservation for existing Georgian historic fabric and monuments as economic resources.

But cultural heritage provides many economic benefits beyond that of tourism revenues. Cultural heritage stimulates urban revitalization which in turn supports local business and provides greater employ-

ment opportunities in both the service sector and the skilled restoration and conservation trades. For example, 60% of Macau's retail revenue is generated in the country's heritage conservation zones.²

In Georgia consider the revival that has grown up around Tbilisi's Old Town and successful shops and restaurants. The success in Old Town Tbilisi was due to the historic architecture and streetscape which attract both local residents and out of town tourist. To restore these building required restoration specialists, craftsmen and laborers. In comparison, in Norway historic restoration projects create on average 20% more jobs than comparably budgeted new construction projects. France is also worthy of comparison to see the actual employment created by cultural heritage where 40,000 craftspeople are employed full-time in restoration work.³

ENHANCED PROPERTY VALUES AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Again consider the success of Old Town Tbilisi which in the center of local nightlife. Ten years ago many of the buildings were abandoned and vacant, and the majority of which were desperately in need of restoration. Today these properties are coveted real estate investments which in turn have provided tax revenue for the city in addition to the other benefits outlined above. The restoration of the cultural heritage in the area has had a direct effect on property values and real estate investment. Foreign investment also is attracted to a stable healthy real estate environment.

Provided that the foreign investors are required to adhere to local cultural heritage laws and ordinances they can provide investment capital to help further stabilize the historic neighborhood which encourages the cycle of local business support, job creation and spurs more local restoration. In the case of potential foreign investment it is vitally important that these investors not be given any exemptions for preservation compliance. In New York, as will be discussed in the following case study, the city government undertook a study on property values in historic districts and found them considerably higher for a comparable property outside the district.

Cultural Tourism

NEWYORK CITY CASE STUDY

The benefits of cultural heritage and preservation in New York City had long been taken for granted before the dramatic events that lead to New York City Landmarks Law in 1965. Today the Landmarks law and the Landmarks Commission which govern that law have been in place for over 40 years. The significance in the law is not its breadth and scope since many other American cities have similar laws, but what makes the New York city law so significant is



Grand Central Terminal, Main Façade on 42nd Street

that it co-exists with the United State's most competitive and robust real estate markets, where demand for space and height are paramount. The fact that the strictest preservation law in the country can co-exist with the most demanding real estate market-- and still be economically viable makes a worthy case study for Georgia's capital city Tbilisi.

Much like New York, Tbilisi has a wealth or architectural and built heritage which tells the story of Georgian history and culture. While at the same time, it is facing unprecedented economic growth and foreign investment in real estate. As such, it is vital time

for government to recognize the economic benefits of cultural heritage.

The New York Landmarks law and Commission came into being after the incredible loss of the historic Pennsylvania Train Station. The critically acclaimed Beaux Arts train station had been built by New York's preeminent architects McKim Mead and White completed in 1910. In 1963, it was decided by the owner, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company that the site would be more valuable as a sports arena and office tower. They proposed full demolition of the station which was met by vigorous opposition by the public, press and the architectural community in New York. However, despite protests and strong public oppositions, including Jackie Kennedy as a spokesperson, there was no legal way to stop the demolition of the building. Demolition began in 1963 and was complete a year later.

Galvanized by their fight and their bitter loss, a demand for future accountability over the demolition of Penn Station prompted the city government to create the Landmarks Commission and the Landmarks Law of 1965. The law was designed to create designated individual buildings as protected "landmarks" and historic districts for legal protection and a subsequent system of regulation. The Commission spent the next decade surveying the city to identify significant buildings and sites, performed the supporting archival research and designating individual landmarks and historic districts- while enjoying popular and governmental support.

Although it had public support, it was often at odds with the development community who wanted to build unrestricted by design and height limitations. the first major test of the Landmarks law was a legal case brought against the Landmarks Commission in 1978 by Penn Central Railroad. Penn Central claimed that the value of their property, Grand Central Station, had been significantly limited by being a designated landmark (Illustration 1). They wanted to build a high rise tower on top of the Grand Central, a 1906 landmark building, which would destroy the interior and significantly alter the façade (Illustration 2). The case was fought by the Landmarks Commission and was closely watched by private developers.

If the court sided with the Penn Central and the development community, it would nullify all the existing landmarks protection in New York City. The case was strongly argued on both sides and went all the way to the United States Supreme Court.

In a momentous decision, the Supreme Court upheld the Landmarks law citing aesthetic reasons and the need to protect the past for the future. But most importantly, it stated that heritage resources benefited the economy of the city directly. In summary, the court found that protecting individual buildings and districts with the Landmarks law 1.) protected city attractions for tourist and visitors, 2.) supported and stimulated business and industry, and 3.) strengthened the economy of the city.⁴ The Supreme Court also found that the compensation offered by the Landmarks to transfer their development rights (TDR's) to neighboring buildings was just compensation.⁵ Ultimately, this decision paved the way for the economic justification of cultural heritage preservation in New York City.

In the end, because heritage was found to be economically viable, the character of New York has been preserved by the Landmarks law. As discussed, New York's annual tourism revenue in 2007 was \$27 billion dollars. The potential profit margin would not be attainable without the attraction of the diverse historic neighborhood districts and individual buildings such as the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building. These buildings, both protected by the Landmarks law, while typical of New York City because of their skyscraper status have also become historic city icons. For example, the Chrysler Building completed in 1930, known for its stainless steel Art Deco spire has had its value continually driven up by its cache as a New York icon (Illustration 3). In 1997 the New York Times reported that 20 bidders were vying for the property:

*"An unprecedented number of investors, real estate moguls and foreign companies have joined the bidding for the Chrysler Building, the landmark Art deco skyscraper on Lexington Avenue at 42nd Street that serves as monument to the industrial age. They see the Chrysler Building as trophy worth having."*⁶

In June 2008 the building was sold again to a

group of investors from Abu Dhabi making the building worth more than one billion US dollars. This is now one of the most valuable buildings in New York, and it is still a protected landmark and is required by law to comply with all regulations of the Commission. It is important to note that the foreign investors bought the billion dollar building with full understanding that the building was protected landmark. Foreign ownership does not exempt landmarks protection.



Grand Central Terminal, Interior View

Where buildings are not as high profile and valuable as the Chrysler, but are historically and architecturally significant, the state and federal government have implemented a tax credit program for owners who restore the properties. The federal tax program provides a 20% tax credit for the overall cost of the restoration. Individual state programs can provide additional credits to the federal program up to 25%. For example, the Ralph Lauren Store in the exclusive shopping area of the Upper East Side spent \$20 million on the restoration of a turn-of-the-century mansion into a retail store received a \$4 million tax credit (Illustration 4). The tax credit program is an important

Cultural Tourism



Chrysler Building

tool because it gives incentives to private owners to restore their buildings, which in turn creates more benefits for the city.

Before the Ralph Lauren converted the mansion, it was vacant and discouraged other small businesses and further development in the area, now business vie for shops close to the store and property values of neighboring buildings have risen. The restoration work created jobs for skilled artisans and laborers and new retail positions. The city now has an additional tourist attraction in the unique store and the business it houses is paying local taxes. The owners have significantly raised the value of the property itself, while saving \$4 million dollars. Hundreds of other such examples exist in New York City where private owners used tax credits to restore their building which contribute to the overall historic landscape while stabilizing and improving property values for generations to come.

Equally as stabilizing, while contributing to the city's character, has been the creation of historic districts. Today there are 92 different Landmarks historic districts distributed through the five boroughs of the city. The 92 districts include over 25,000 buildings that

are regulated by the Landmarks Commission. The creation of historic districts has many benefits in addition to those of an individual landmark. It has been found that historic districts preserve neighborhood character and ambience and that property values are higher due to the neighboring building restorations and the regulatory process of the Landmarks Commission.

The phenomenon of higher property values within historic districts was examined by the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) in 2003.⁷ The IBO found that buildings in the historic districts had consistently higher properties values then those outside the districts. In a study comparing sale prices per square foot, prices within historic districts were nearly double the price.

To illustrate the desire for property owners to be in a designated district, one can consider the ten year campaign undertaken by the residents of the formerly industrial Dumbo neighborhood in Brooklyn (Illustration 5). Seeking to stabilize their properties values against demolition and inappropriate new construction, a group of local residents lobbied the Landmarks Commission to declare their neighborhood a city historic district. Against the wishes of potential developers in the neighborhood who did not to want to comply to landmark regulation, the district was finally approved and the residents were successful after their decade long campaign in December 2007.

New York City's districts and individual landmarks collectively create and ambience that engag-



Ralph Lauren Store in former Beaux-Arts mansion in the Upper East Side



Dumbo Historic District: stone streets and turn-of-the-century industrial buildings, now residential, at the foot of the Brooklyn Bridge

ing to the tourist. Interestingly that includes approximately 1,200 individual landmarks and 92 districts that would only be considered significant on the local and national level, as opposed to the international level. In that respect, it is important to note that New York City has only one World Heritage Site, i.e. an internationally significance site, which is the Statute of Liberty.

This is important for two reasons: it illustrates that the strength of the local vernacular architecture is enough to preserve for its own sake, and that local historical resources are enough to help contribute towards the \$28 billion dollars in tourism revenue. In comparison, internationally, the highest tourism revenues typically are also the countries with the most World Heritage Sites.

PROPOSED INCENTIVES FOR THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN GEORGIA

Unlike New York City, Old Tbilisi has been found worthy of World Heritage status. The UNESCO World Heritage Commission approved the preliminary des-

ignation pending the approval of a management plan. Unfortunately, as of today, the management plan and listing is not complete. In addition to Old Tbilisi and the three sites already listed, Georgia has many more sites that would eligible for World Heritage status. The most effective means to raising international awareness of Georgia's resources would be to nominate more sites and to complete the Old Tbilisi nomination to the World heritage List.

International recognition by UNESCO provides powerful tourism marketing of its own. In addition, many international grant programs will not support a site unless it is on the World Heritage List, thus offering further its economic advantages.

After international recognition of the resources is attained, it is vitally important to have comprehensive cultural heritage protection laws in place at the national and local level. Unfortunately, movements had made recently by the municipality of Tbilisi and Parliament to weaken these laws and reduce the number of protected buildings. The economic benefits that these building are irreplaceable. Much like forests, lake and rivers within the natural world- these cultural heritage resources cannot be recreated.

Local tax legislation should also be proposed in Georgia to create financial incentives for private owners, including foreign investors, to restore their historic properties. In this way the country will have all the economic benefits of cultural heritage with a minimal investment that is shared with the owner. The owner then ultimately will be more likely to choose restoration and also will raise their property's value at the same time.

In conjunction with financial incentives for owners, it is also important in Georgia to create more historic conservation districts in Tbilisi and in other cities to stabilize property values, create jobs, support of local businesses and to encourage more preservation of Georgia's unique historic resources.

In summary, recommendations for Georgia's cultural heritage to be economically viable and self-supporting:

1. Nominate more Georgian sites to the UNESCO World Heritage List, complete Old Tbilisi nomination management plan.

2. Protect and uphold the national and local laws protecting and regulating Georgian cultural heritage.

3. Create a beneficiary tax incentive program for the rehabilitation of historic properties by private owners.

4. Establish and maintain more protected urban historic districts.

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4 *Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City* (No.77-444), Brennan, J. Opinion of the Court Supreme Court of the United States. No. 77-444 Argued: April 17, 1978-Decided: June 26, 1978. Supreme Court Collection, Legal Information Institute (LII).

5 A *transfer of development rights (TDR)* allows for the transfer of unused development rights from one zoning lot to another in special circumstances, usually to promote the preservation of historic buildings, open space or unique cultural resources. For such purposes, a TDR is permitted where the transfer could not be accomplished through a zoning lot merger because certain conditions, such as intervening streets, separate the zoning lots. In the case of a landmark building, for example, a transfer may be made by CPC special permit from the zoning lot containing the designated landmark to an adjacent zoning lot or one that is directly across a street or, if the landmark is on a corner lot, diagonally across an intersection.

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CULTURAL TOURISM AND THE OPEN MUSEUM

Tourism is an industry based on difference. Cultural tourism engages the visitor by making difference and diversity intelligible through narrative. The key to great museography is telling engaging and convincing stories about real people and real events. And the best way to do this is to give all the characters a voice, because any story worth telling always has more than one side.

The fact that we are talking about the role of the museum in the development of cultural tourism at this symposium on Georgian Art and Culture highlights a significant historical trend in the role of the museum in society. Museums everywhere are increasingly called upon to demonstrate an economic return on investment either by increasing their profitability through increased visitorship and ticket revenues, or by justifying their expense indirectly through contributions to the tourist economy. These pressures are not simply reducible to national or institutional budgetary constraints, but are driven by a changing understanding of the role of museum in society, as well as evolving conceptions of culture, education, and entertainment as consumer products.

Like it or not, the museum of today competes for visitors with a wide variety of leisure and entertainment providers including sporting events, shopping centers, amusement parks, and the Internet. To put it in marketing terms: cultural tourism is a leisure product: and consumers of cultural tourism expect and demand levels of quality and satisfaction comparable with competing offerings in adjacent markets.

There are no simple off-the-shelf solutions to the needs and interests of tourists in search of "new and deep cultural experiences, whether aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, or psychological" (R. Stebbins, 1996, 948-950). The desire for newness is easily satisfied, temporarily anyway, by an exotic or merely unfamiliar cultural milieu. But the authentic depth of

experience sought by the cultural tourist requires a comprehension of at least the basic contours of that culture, its history, and its dynamics. And since the tourist is, after all, traveling for enjoyment, it must be done in terms that are at once engaging, comprehensible and convincing.



The Three Principles of the Open Museum Concept by Heritage

HERITANCE AND THE OPEN MUSEUM PROJECT

At Heritage, we've been working for the last year and a half to identify and promote principles and practices that lead to more open and inclusive, and appealing museums. Heritage's vision of the Open Museum is based on three principles:

Open Museography. All individuals and societies tell stories to explain who they are, where they have come from, and where they are going. Understanding others depends on listening to their stories and seeing things from their point of view. Open Museums are more interesting, engaging and rewarding to their visitors because they display objects and organize exhibits that tell stories from multiple and contrasting perspectives.



Looking at the Museum through the Eyes of a Young Visitor.

Open Access. Open Museums create an environment that is welcoming and accessible to the entire range of museum stakeholders. This means planning exhibits and telling stories with a disparate audience in mind, as well as bringing the museum to the people through traveling exhibits, school outreach, performances, celebrations, and, of course, the internet.

Open Governance. Heritance believes that only museums that practice transparent, inclusive and open governance can consistently and reliably represent the diversity of their subject matter and respond to the diversity of their audience.

Heritance works with selected partner museums to improve their exhibits and programs through the adoption of Open Museum best practices. We don't advocate these practices simply because we believe that Open Museums strengthen civil society and help make the world a better place (though we do believe that). We developed the vision of the Open Museum specifically to inspire museums to create captivating and compelling programs for wider and more diverse audiences. In short, we believe that Open Museum practices lead to better exhibits and more viable museums.

Some of these practices are obvious, many of them are well known, and most can be found somewhere in the existing literature – though there are a few that are better known in business and marketing circles and are not yet quite as familiar in the non-profit sector. None of the practices are particularly revolutionary. In fact, one museum professional recently asked us, *"Isn't this just what any good museum does already?"* To a certain extent, it is. Though Heritance places particular emphasis on inclusive governance and the impact of organizational processes on outcomes and museography.

Detailed lists of best practices for museums have been elaborated by organizations such as the American Association of Museums and its counterparts elsewhere in the world. But while there is a certain consensus about best practices in countries that have formal accreditation processes and strong national museum associations, there remains a distinct need for cost effective and reproducible strategies for assisting museums to adopt these practices.

Heritance is working to bring best practices to

museums outside of those geographical areas, who may not be seeking accreditation, or don't have the money to hire experts and consultants to help implement them. We don't think that it has to cost a lot of money. It's mostly a question of getting the people who are involved to put their heads together and consciously choose how to deploy the resources at hand to develop a mission-driven strategy with clear goals and transparent decision-making. And when specific technical skills or expertise are required, we think they can often be provided at low cost with a little bit of imagination and cooperation.

HERITANCE PROGRAMS

Heritance provides management training, mentoring and technical support to partner museums in the form of on-site workshops, consultations, seed grants and online project management support. To qualify for these services, museums must demonstrate a willingness to adopt the principles and practices of an open museum:

Workshops. Heritance organizes on-site workshops for museum stakeholders to teach museum best practices, strategic planning and outreach techniques.

Consultations. Professionally trained and qualified members of the Heritance Participating Professionals Network provide technical consultations and assistance to partner museums for targeted projects or to meet specific needs.

Seed Grants. Heritance awards seed grants to selected partner museums for the completion of projects that further their missions as open museums. Seed grants provide the opportunity to give a little boost in a specific area so that a museum can achieve some concrete goal that's part of a larger mission and plan.

Ongoing support. Heritance provides online project management support because the devil is always in the details. We believe it takes time, practice and support to become an Open Museum.

OPEN GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP STRATEGY AND ONGOING SUPPORT

Mission-based strategic planning, transparent decision-making, and inclusive governance are all frequently-cited best practices for any non-profit organization and you would be hard-pressed to find a

museum that doesn't aspire to adopt or follow them, in principle anyway. But it isn't easy to effect governance changes because every museum has an organizational culture, and cultures often resist change.

We believe that museums are more effective (and creative) if they choose their governance structure consciously and collectively, with the involvement of the widest group of stakeholders and with the most transparency about how things will go forward. We work to create an open culture in the museum, not by imposing changes, but by acting as a mirror so that the organization as a whole can become aware of the way that it works, and choose how to work more effectively. Essentially, we are encouraging museums to be consciously self-organizing institutions.

Starting with the first workshop, we encourage museums to ensure that the maximum number of people are included in the planning and goal-setting process, to ensure that all of the people who are included are aware of what is going on, to set a baseline of inclusiveness and transparency, and then within the context of that inclusive and transparent frame work, we ask the museum: What is your mission? What are your specific milestones? What are your responsibilities? How are decisions made and how do people find out about them? How do you measure success?

Museums are often able to reach consensus surprisingly quickly on the desired communication and decision-making processes and metrics. What takes time is establishing the corresponding habits.

We help by providing the platform, the model and the opportunity to establish those habits by participating in the process and acting as a clearinghouse for information about what is happening in the organizational process. We insist on being kept in the loop – and by informing us, they are informing everyone. Since we aren't on-site for much of the process, we do this primarily through email, online project management tools, and by establishing recognized reporting protocols. This actually turns out to be quite helpful because the electronic record makes it easier for the participants to have a clearer view of where the desired processes are breaking down.

As a partner and stakeholder, Heritance insists on visibility of the process and can thus act as a referee and say, for example, *"It looks like a press release was*

sent out announcing a new exhibit, but the board wasn't aware that a decision had been made to go ahead with the exhibit. What was the process?" At which point people will often back up and say *"Whoops! We didn't handle that very transparently and openly. We did it the way we used to do it. But now we're actually having a meeting and making a plan that will posted."* Heritance doesn't dictate how decisions should be made and communicated, though we insist on a transparent and inclusive process.

You may be wondering at this point what all this has to do with Cultural Tourism. At the outset of this talk, I proposed to you that I would share some practices that I claimed would help museums tell engaging and convincing stories about real people and real events. But so far all I have done is describe how Heritance seeks to change the corporate culture of the museums it works with. How exactly does this help inspire museums to create captivating and compelling programs for wider and more diverse audiences?

The short answer, pulled verbatim from our strategic plan, is that Heritance believes that only museums that practice transparent, inclusive and open governance can consistently and reliably represent the diversity of their subject matter and respond to the diversity of their audience. This could be viewed as a corollary of Conway's Law (M. E. Conway, 1968, 28-31), which states that organizations tend to design systems whose structure mirrors the organization's communication structure. I hope the reasons for this will become clearer as I explain a little bit more about how we approach the challenges of Open Museography and Open Access.

OPEN MUSEOGRAPHY WORKSHOP EXERCISES

Heritance speaks of open museography as the practice of presenting objects and telling stories from multiple and contrasting perspectives or points of view. Technically, this is something of a simplification. Certain perspectives don't always reduce to any specific individual's "point of view". We have chosen to describe open museography in this way because it addresses the most common and obvious – and dangerous – kind of omission, where the perspective of an actor in the drama is written right out of the script.

You might say that the mantra associated with

Open Museography is “Who are the actors in this narrative and have I responsibly and accurately conveyed their point of view?” And the corresponding mantra of Open Access is “Who are the various members of the audience of this exhibit, and have I reached out and communicated to them in a welcoming and engaging fashion?” In practice, however, the distinction between open museography and open access breaks down in light of the similarity and simultaneity of the issue of “actor perspective” and “visitor perspective.”

Heritage uses a variety of different exercises to help museums engage with the diversity of their audiences and subject matter. Normally, we begin the museographical phase of our initial workshop with a traditional SWOT analysis (which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of one of the museum’s existing exhibits. The exercise is conducted with the entire group of workshop participants who have already participated in the mission and strategic planning sessions. Thus they will typically be a fairly diverse group representing the all museums stakeholders. The goal is to critically but constructively assess the current state of the exhibit and identify areas that need to be addressed.

The value of the SWOT exercise derives as much from the diversity of the group as from the specific methodology employed. This is an important point that ties into the relationship between Open Governance and Open Museography. Diversity is not a skill. Diversity is an asset. And one of the best ways to respond to the diversity of a museum’s subject matter and audience is to cultivate an inclusive organizational culture, and to leverage that diversity in the museum’s museographical practices.

The value of diversity and inclusion is equally evident in the next exercise, a highlight of the workshop for many participants, which involves an imaginary visit to the museum. Or, rather, a real visit, with an imaginary twist.

This exercise is designed to help the participants look at the exhibit through new eyes. This is particularly helpful to insiders, like the curator or tour guides. We ask them to look at the entire museum experience from the point of a child, or a visitor from out of town, or a member of an ethnic group that doesn’t usually come to the museum, or from the perspective of one

of the actors in the exhibit’s narrative. (Even if in many cases those actors may no longer be around – as for example in an exhibit of medieval art.) We then ask the participants how good a job the museum is doing either in representing that person’s point of view or addressing that person’s needs and interests as a visitor, which leads into a brainstorming session focusing on the kinds of changes that could be made, both short and long term to improve the exhibit. One frequent, and very welcome, outcome of the follow-up discussion is the realization that the perspective of a particular group has been ignored or omitted from the exhibit.

In fairness, no discussion of Open Museography can avoid acknowledging the pitfalls of any public discussion of contentious topics. We can all think of ‘hot button’ topics that our respective communities are simply not ready to confront dispassionately. In the United States the two words “Enola Gay” are enough to send most curators scurrying for cover. And any attempt to address such issues teeters perilously between politics and diplomacy. And yet, we also know that peaceful coexistence depends upon truth and reconciliation. Perhaps the most that can be said is that this is a delicate area in which an exhibit is judged by results, not by intentions.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS AND SEED GRANTS

Heritage also provides technical consultations and seed grants to museum partners. Since our primary goal is to promote open museum practices, we deliver consultations and services primarily to our active partners. Ordinarily, these museums will have already identified a mission, constructed a strategic plan, and be following that plan, because we expect a higher success rate working with those organizations.

Heritage consultations are designed to assist the museum in achieving a specific targeted goal, usually in the area of museography. We coordinate a network of consultants and museum professionals from around the world who make themselves available to provide expert advice and services in technical fields such as restoration, exhibit design, educational programming, and architectural assessment.

For instance, our technical director, who is an architect by training, as well as an exhibit designer,

assisted with the lighting plan for the Kochersberg Museum during a recent renovation. He went with the specific goal of reviewing the plan they had drawn up and the materials that they had chosen. At the end of a day's visit, he proposed modifications to their plan reduced capital expenditure and ongoing operating costs. Heritance also worked with the Sergio Castro Foundation in Chiapas, Mexico. They needed to temporarily house a collection of fragile Mayan textiles while they sought a permanent storage and exhibition space for this unique collection of traditional clothing and fabrics. Our technical director designed a traveling exhibit and storage case to safely and securely store, transport, and exhibit the fragile textiles.

However Heritance doesn't view its partners as passive recipients of technical services. We encourage the professionals in our partner museums to become participating professionals in their own right and provide consultations and technical assistance to other museums in fields in which they have experience and expertise. Our long-term goal is to establish autonomous regional networks of museum professionals providing assistance between museums. Such regional networks would not only save money by sharing expertise and resources, but also proved invaluable opportunities for professional growth, collaboration, and creative cross-fertilization between museums.

CONCLUSION

We all know that history is multi-faceted, nuanced, contradictory, and complex. Tourists know it too, as a quick peek into the culture and history sections of any decent tourist guidebook will quickly con-



Open Museography: Creating Exhibits that tell Rich and Complex Stories

firm. As a matter of fact, cultural tourists are probably more open to the public exploration of contentious issues and divergent perspectives than the domestic public (or the government) in most countries.

At the same time, the inclusive narrative that makes a museum interesting and engaging for tourists is also beneficial to society at large, and not just because of increased tourist revenues: the atmosphere of an open museum fosters the constructive and inclusive dialog that is the bedrock of any enduring pluralistic society.

Heritance believes that only museums that practice transparent, inclusive and open governance can consistently and reliably represent the diversity of any community. Moreover, we believe that the most compelling strategy for representing that diversity is to create exhibits that tell engaging and convincing stories about real people and real events. And these are precisely the sort of narratives best suited to cultural and heritage tourism.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL PROJECT: THE ECONOMICS OF CULTURE IN GEORGIA

Throughout history Culture (and in particular Art) has been considered as a field of creativity and consumption of the “noble” and “extraordinary” strata of society. Art and culture has always been the field where humankind best expressed the many facets of creativity. However, alongside its historical and aesthetic values, which form the cultural consciousness and identity of different nations, Art has provided employment for artists and artisans, and thus has been a source for economic development throughout the centuries.

It is obvious today that Georgia with its political, economic and cultural strategy aspires to cope with the contemporary trends of the West’s market economy. Therefore, in terms of a market economy, the notion of **culture** acquires an important role for economic development. The Western European and the U.S. experience can serve as evidence that the income from cultural goods, cultural tourism, crafts-based enterprises, and movie or musical industries equals and in some cases exceeds the profits gained from other fields of business.

Despite the fact that the general direction that Georgia’s cultural strategy has adopted in recent years, the nation’s cultural policy still has strong ties with the socio-economic past – the socialist system – both mentally and structurally. This is especially evident in case of cultural economics. Since policymakers are still in the process of forming the new system, many problematic issues persist with institutional development, regulations, legislation, etc. When speaking about the economics of culture, we must emphasize the most valid fields, such as applied art, particularly such sectors as cultural industries (crafts, cultural gifts, etc.), and cultural tourism (heritage tourism,

ethnotourism, cultural districts, etc.).

Georgia is a country with a very rich history and culture, going back to the dawn of human civilization. Simultaneously, with roots in several ancient civilizations, Georgia was throughout the centuries forming its own ethnicity. Deep historical roots, a rich cultural heritage, and long-lasting traditions play an important part in the formation of Georgia’s national identity. The nation’s historical and cultural past strongly influences the attitude of contemporary Georgians and can be used as a source for the country’s potential development, both culturally and economically.

As is widely known, in contrast to Western countries, in the Soviet Union culture was subsidized by the government and was almost never regarded as an economically beneficial activity or business. The exception was crafts artisanship, which represented a big, centralized industry with a high-value output capacity, its own infrastructure, lots of work places, huge production, and access to both the internal USSR market and also the international market. Similar approaches to culture can still be observed in post-Soviet countries, where the role of culture remains reduced to an aesthetic rather than an economic value/function.

Given the fact that the field of art and culture was subsidized by the government, it was one of the hardest hit sectors when the old system collapsed. In the new environment the loss of infrastructure, business skills, market knowledge, and access to buyers provided in the previous environment has impeded the growth of the cultural sector. This is especially true in the case cultural industries, as government agencies, which used to provide market access and employment, are no longer functioning. Further, with the development of new standards of cultural production, access to local and international markets became significantly reduced. As a result, isolated from the course of development of the country’s business sector, the cultural industries in Georgia underwent serious decline.

The availability of raw materials, the cultural roots of designs and techniques, the skills and motivation of the producers and the market potential of craft

production, ceramics, textiles, woodcarving, etc., and also cultural gifts, such as museum reproductions, artisan reproductions of popular motifs, etc., create the basis for the development of this sector in Georgia.

The economic need for the development of craft enterprises in Georgia parallels a cultural need to revitalize traditions and skills that historically have been passed down from generation to generation, and that are in danger of dying out in a rapidly modernizing world. In order to transform the crafts and cultural industries sector into an economic resource for Georgia it is necessary to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of craft-based enterprises to design and develop high-quality, innovative, market-driven products, to improve their businesses and customer service, and develop local, regional and international markets for their products.

At the same time tourism is becoming increasingly important for Georgia's economic development. The country – famous for the warmth of its hospitality, its rich cultural heritage, enchanting villages and folkloric traditions, the variety of wines, its unique cuisine, the harmony of polyphonic songs, and elegant dances – has a big potential for developing and expanding tourism. Alongside Georgia's **tangible** cultural heritage such as its historical monuments, museum collections, cultural landscapes, etc., tourism and particularly ethnotourism can be developed around Georgia's **intangible** heritage, such as oral and artistic traditions, tacit knowledge, etc., preserved in different regions of the country. Given this fact, the development of the tourism industry can have a great positive impact on the livelihood and economic wellbeing of local people and can also help preserve indigenous traditions and ways of living.

However, despite the overall positive impact of tourism in the improvement of local economic conditions, the drawbacks that might follow must also be considered. Therefore, when planning cultural tourism activities it is important to take into the consideration the experience of some world-famous tourist destinations which today suffer from chaotic tourist flows and from the problem known as "Loss of the Genius Loci" ("Loss of the Spirit of the Place"). This

problem raises the importance of planning and tourism management, which should ensure the preservation of the local cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. The transformation of culture into a profitable product should not threaten the aesthetic value of the underlying art. Consequently, the tools for the protection of artistic values should be determined and worked out in advance.

The idea of the renewal of a nation's cultural heritage, and specifically the use of that heritage as a resource for economic development, is already well established in the sphere of cultural tourism, combining the chain of its components. The fields of cultural tourism have been already intensively studied, planned and utilized in practice; in western countries in particular we can experience some of the most effective examples of the reuse of cultural heritage. "Cultural Districts," the popular tourist destinations in western countries, built either around a thematic or territorial unit, can also serve as the sources for the development of cultural tourism in the region.

There are, as we can point out, two aspects: (1) The development of the concept of the Cultural District, and (2) benefit options from this concept that should be applied to Georgian reality. To be more comprehensive, I would like to indicate several components of the development of the Cultural District.

The concept of the Cultural District can be built around the **Core**, which can be (a) **Thematic**, emerging from a cultural and historical background, artistic achievements, traditions, artistic mainstreams, or traditional technologies, stories, etc., or (b) **Territorial**, defined by the boundaries of a city, or district in a city, village, or neighborhood, etc.

In addition to the **Core** I would like to indicate several functions of Cultural Districts: *Educational*, *Cultural*, *Economic*, with benefits from *Cultural Tourism*, *Creative Industries*, and finally *Entertainment*. Clearly, a methodology of implementation is needed: it might be Museum(s) Management, Tourist Route Planning, Functional Reorganization of Related Units (cafés, hotels, cinemas, shops, etc.), Restoration Activities, Promotion and Marketing, or it might have another appropriate focus.

Cultural Tourism

The suggestion is to build the concept of the Core of the Cultural District in cooperation with local museums as the function of the Cultural District will advance the museum's mission, as well as broaden its sphere of activities. The following should be considered:

- The Museum's management serving as the agent for all tours of the particular district that will also be the source of its economic benefit. In keeping with its mission, the Museum, in conjunction with the Cultural District, should also establish a Thematic Tour within in the Museum.

- Cultural District packages that include (for example) a Thematic walking tour in the city; Cultural tours with visits to theaters, film screenings, visits to the collections of other Museums (National Museums, House Museums/Artists' Studios, etc.).

- Also to be considered are entertainment tours and souvenir shop visits. A network of shops can offer visitors a diversity of thematically inspired souvenirs. Reproductions of historical art (a cultural industries' product), can serve as a perfect remembrance of the tour, also generating local economic benefits.

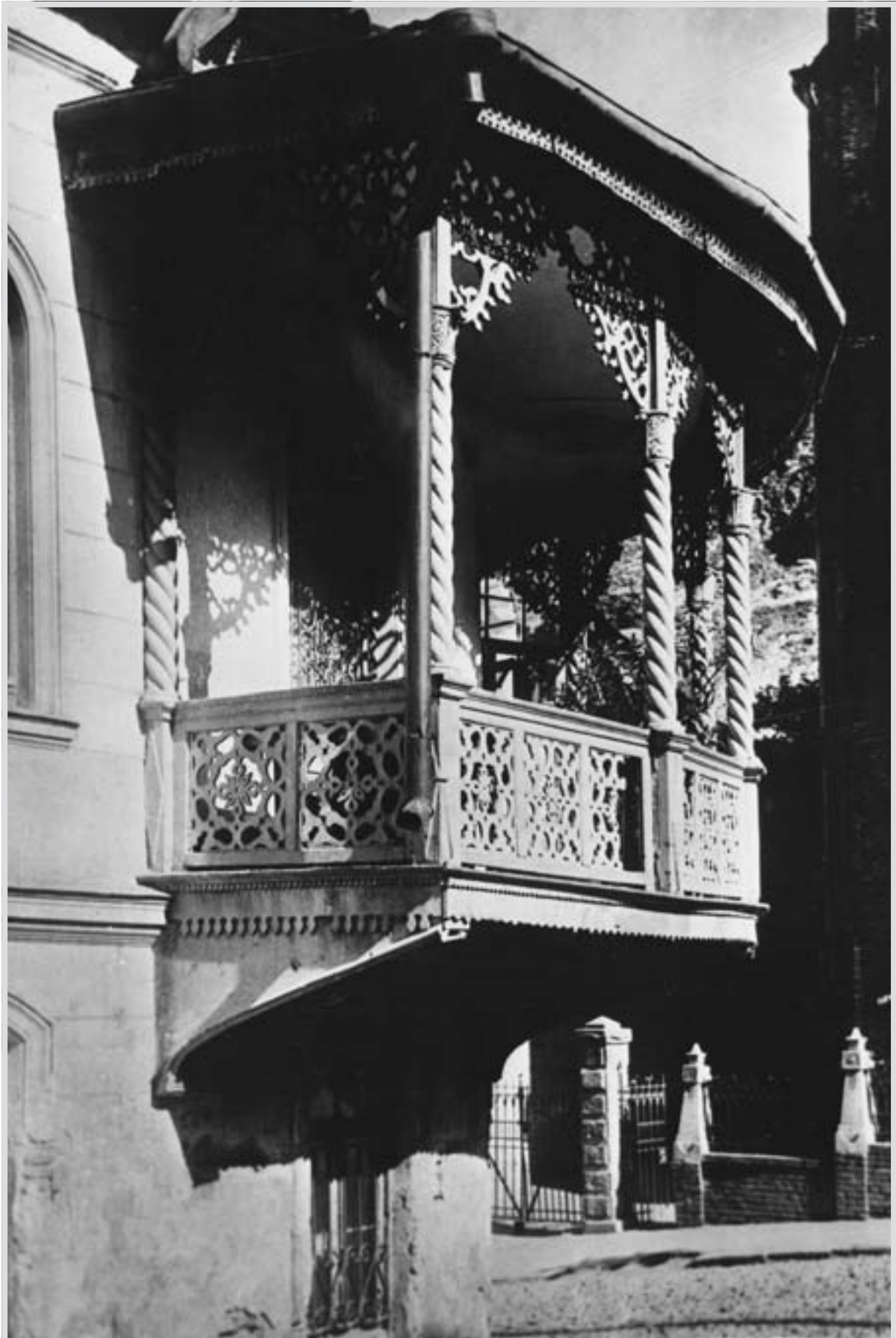
In summary: economic benefits can be generated by means of **Cultural and Educational Tourism**, designed to attract significant numbers of tourists to a given cultural district, and by **Creative Industries**, the network of crafts and souvenir shops within the district that will create a fruitful environment for job creation and income generation for the local community.

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Notes



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