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Cover: St. Mamai, Gelati Tondo (silver, gilt silver), 11th century

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PECULIARITIES OF THE TAO-KLARJETI ARTISTIC SCHOOL OF THE MINIATURES FROM TSAISHI GOSPEL

by Darejan Gogashvili

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The Tsaishi Gospel, preserved at Dadiani Palaces History and Architectural Museum in Zugdidi, earned its name according to its recent place of survival. Before moving to Zugdidi Museum, it was kept at Tsaishi Dormition Cathedral which served as cathedral church of Zugdidi and Tsaishi Eparchy and represented one of the oldest episcopal seats of Georgia. Tsaishi Dormition Cathedral is located 10 km, south-west of Zugdidi.

The only catalogued data of the manuscript along with colophons was done by E. Takaishvili in the summer of 1913 while travelling under the aegis of Historic-Ethnographic Society of Georgia; the scholar catalogued and described the antiquities preserved at Tsaishi and among them this manuscript.¹ He dated the manuscript back to the 17th century. E. Takaishvili was accompanied by expressly invited photographer Theodor Kühne, who captured gilded and chased silver cover of MS for the first time. The cover was decorated with compositions of Descent into the Hell, on the front, and the Crucifixion on the back cover. Corresponding Georgian inscriptions serve as the part of the decoration (fig.1)².

According to the colophons the Gospels was written under the order of Archbishop of Tsaishi Maxime: "... and was written this Holy

¹ E. T a q a i s h v i l i, ძველი საქართველო, საქართველოს საისტორიო და საეთნოგრაფიო სამოგალოების კრებული, III, Tiflis, 1913-1914, pp.187-189.

² Photo preserved at the archive of K. Kekelidze Georgian National Center of Manuscripts, E. Takaishvili's private archive, №417.

Gospels under the order of Archbishop of Tsaishi Maxime. ... Lord and Virgin of Tsaishi, give long life and glorify him in both lives and in further centuries and may Maxime of Tsaishi, Your slave and glorifier rest in Abraham's bosom."³ On several pages of the manuscript the name of Anika, "the daughter of the lord the Great Rostom Kortodze" is mentioned. "And this Holy Gospels from Tsaishi is of the Virgin of Tsaishi and is restored by me, the daughter of Kortodze the Great lady Anika."⁴ Today it is impossible to find these colophons in the manuscripts. The scholar did not indicated the exact pages, causing difficulty in finding them because of the unfair condition of the manuscript itself.

Until 2007 the manuscript was not explored and studied. Only after the partial separation of the book and applying the special conservation treatment, the study of the gospel became possible. The pages glued to each other were separated, treated and consolidated, and only after this procedure the miniatures and small sized fragments were depicted, the degree of damage of the parchment and painted layer were determined, the conservation method and materials were worked out and selected. Distorted and damaged pieces were flattened and temporarily fixed. The place of each fragment in the common frame was defined by the comparative analysis of miniature paintings inserted in illuminated Georgian Gospels.⁵

Based on the textual, iconographic and artistic analysis the studied material revealed that:

1. Gospel's text is written on paper in calligraphic Nuskhuri script, in two columns, accompanied by the annual readings of the Gospel and edited by George the Hagiorite. Paleographic analysis has proved that the book is a compilation of two different manuscripts, supposedly dated between the 13th and 17th centuries (paper size 22x17,5 cm).

2. Two out of three miniatures inserted in the text represent the portraits of seating Evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke. The earliest chronological date of creation may be the second half of the 11th century, and the possible time of completion - 11th-12th centuries.

3. According to the painting technique, artistic level and style, the miniatures should belong to a richly decorated manuscript executed on parchment.

³ E. T a q a i s h v i l i, ძველი საქართველო, III, 1913-1914, p. 188.

⁴ E. T a q a i s h v i l i, p.188.

⁵ D. G o g a s h v i l i, *Unknown miniatures from Tsaishi Gospels (conservation, identification)*, Proceedings of the International Conference "Tao-Klarjeti", Tbilisi, 2010, pp.87-90,101.

4. On the basis of artistic-stylistic analysis it is evident, that the painter of the miniatures accompanying the Tsaishi Gospel used the illustrations from the Mestia Gospels as an authentic model.⁶

From four portraits of the Evangelists listed in E. Taqashvili's catalogue nowadays only two exist. It is unknown whether the scholar wrote about these miniatures or there existed original authentic series of the Evangelists in the manuscript. The point is that, the portraits of the Evangelists are made on parchment, different from the Gospels material. Moreover, a third miniature made on paper was discovered. After a comparative iconographic analysis of the reconstructed scheme of preserved, small-sized fragments it was determined that the person depicted is John Chrysostom.⁷

One of the miniatures executed on parchment is severely damaged and distorted by microorganisms; the other was completely covered by small-size paper fragments glued to each other. From cleaned seven fragments three were determined to be from the portraits of St. Mark (fig.2), and the remaining four – from the portraits of St. Luke (fig. 6)⁸

On one of the fragments from St. Luke's miniature (1.3x1cm) the detail of the Evangelist's chair leg and piece of the frame was drawn in cinnabar, so it was placed in left bottom corner; the second (2.9x9.1 cm) and the third (3x3.8 cm) fragments are without a painted layer and thus, represent parts of the parchment page. The shapes of the fragments determine their original place (fig. 2,3,4,5).⁹

From St. Luke's miniature only the Evangelist's table leg and the details of frame lines in cinnabar, along with stylized leaves are preserved, therefore it was placed in right bottom corner. The second (0.7x2.1 cm) and the third (0.5x0.9 cm) fragments represent the details of the Evangelist's foot rest; one is covered with gold, another imitates the footrest decorated with precious stones. On the fourth (1.2x2.2 cm) fragment, though damaged severely, the horizontal line

⁶ D. G o g a s h v i l i, *Unknown miniatures from Tsaishi Gospels (conservation, identification)*, pp.89-92.

⁷ D. G o g a s h v i l i, *Unknown miniature of John the Chrysostom (conservation, identification, reconstruction)*, 2nd International Symposium "Georgian Manuscript," Abstracts of Papers, Tbilisi, 2013, pp.154-155, 308-309.

⁸ D. G o g a s h v i l i, *Unknown miniatures from Tsaishi Gospels (conservation, identification)*, p.90.

⁹ The third fragment (3x3.8 cm) could serve as a part of the bottom of the miniature (Gogashvili 2010: fig.9, fig.10). though we support the above mentioned place.

of the frame is vivid, the upper part of which is covered with green paint (fig. 6,7,8,9).

After reconstruction¹⁰ the similarity of the Tsaishi Gospel to other Georgian illuminated books of the 11th century was evident.¹¹ These are: the portraits of the Evangelists inserted in Mestia Gospels and the miniatures of the Evangelists from the different manuscript of the Black Mountain Georgian scriptoria (H-2806, K 76).¹² Here should also be mentioned that the sizes of the illustrated pages of the miniatures (of St. Mark and St. Luke) are almost the same of the Evangelists' portraits from H-2806.¹³

Dimension	Tsaishi Gospels	H-2806 Four Gospels
I	St. Matthew the Evangelist	St. Matthew the Evangelist
Folia size		20x15cm
Miniature size		13.8x10.3 cm
Margins: top, bottom, right, left		3.5 cm; 4 cm; 2.2 cm; 2.5 cm
II	St. Mark the Evangelist	St. Mark the Evangelist
Folia size	19.4 (19.2)x14.1 (14.3) cm	20.2x16 cm
Miniature size	14.2x 10.3 (10.4) cm	14.2x10 cm
Margins: top, bottom, right, left	2 (1.8) cm; 3.2 cm; 0.7 cm; 3.1 (3.2) cm	2.5 cm; 3.5 cm; 2.2 cm; 3.5 cm
III	St. Luke the Evangelist	St. Luke the Evangelist
Folia size	18.6 (18.8) x 14.3 (14.5) cm	20x16.5 cm
Miniature size	14.4 (14.5) x 10.3 (10.4) cm	14 x 10 cm
Margins: top, bottom, right, left	1.5 cm; 2.7 (2.8) cm;	

¹⁰ Reconstruction and relative schematic drawings is done by Darejan Gogashvili (fig. 3,4,5,7,8,9)

¹¹ Tsaishi Gospel (№14) survived at Dadiani Palaces Historical and Architectural Museum in Zugdidi; Mestia I(3-70) preserved at Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography in Mestia (Georgian National Museum), H-2806 kept at K.Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, K-76 at Kutaisi Historical Museum.

¹² D. G o g a s h v i l i, *Unknown miniatures from Tsaishi Gospels (conservation, identification)*, pp. 92, 93, 96.

¹³ The left edges of Tsaishi miniatures are a bit cut off, presumably slightly, but (of St. Mark) it still gives the difference in folia sizes from the following table.

0.7 (0.8) cm; 3.3 cm	2.5 cm; 4 cm; 2.2 cm; 4.5 cm	
IV	St. John and Prochorus	St. John and Prochorus
Folia size		20 x 16.5 cm
Miniature size		14 x 10 cm
Margins: upper, bottom, right, left		2.5 cm; 4 cm; 2.4 cm; 4 cm

It is accepted that among decorated manuscripts the Gospel is distinguished for its principles and specific character of illumination that evolved and from the 11th century has adopted a well developed artistic pattern. According to this pattern Eusebius's Letter and Canon Tables are inserted on the opening pages of the manuscript, while the text of the Gospel itself is divided into four volumes and each volume is opened with a portrait of the corresponding author – the Evangelist. Each Evangelist is placed on verso page and borders the beginning of the text.¹⁴

The place of the portraits of the authors from Tsaishi Gospel does not correspond to the text from the codex (e.g.: St. Luke's portrait was placed at the beginning of St. Mark's Gospel, and the correspondence between the Evangelist's portrait and the text was violated). Even the writing material and sizes are different. This leads us to conclude that the given miniatures are not the part of the Tsaishi Gospel illumination, but were placed between the pages in order to save and preserve them. This idea is further supported by the fact that St. John Chrysostom's portrait belonged to a completely different genre from the Gospel context – Liturgy.¹⁵

The portraits of the Evangelists on the title page of the corresponding gospel are an essential and widely accepted pattern, and often the only one for the given epoch.

Inserting the miniatures in the décor of the Gospel-manuscripts was aimed to present the portraits of the authors. As a result all four

¹⁴ Р. Ш м е р л и н г, *Художественное оформление грузинской рукописной книги IX-XI столетии*, кн.1, Тб., 1967, p.189, E. M a c h a v a r i a n i, *გადამწერსა და მხატვარს შორის შრომის განაწილების საკითხისათვის ხელნაწერი წიგნის მხატვრული კომპოზიციის შექმნის დროს, მრავალთავი*, IV, Tbilisi, 1975, p.16.

¹⁵ D. G o g a s h v i l i, *Unknown miniature of John the Chrysostom (conservation, identification, reconstruction)*, pp. 154-155, 308-309.

portraits of the Evangelists were inserted in the text. These figures created a more or less well-developed, stable cycle and more or less precisely were copied from one manuscript into another.

The Tsaishi Gospel miniatures offer traditional approach to an old theme: St. Mark is a middle-aged man who is represented thoughtful. With his right hand he holds a paper on his knee, while his left hand is directed to his face. Dark hair and beard, face with a bit added tone, expressive eyes give individuality to the Evangelist. Blue chiton and rosy himation flows down in triangle folds. On the low table writing equipment is placed, on the book stand a quite large codex in Asomtavruli script lies open.

St. Luke is the youngest among the Evangelists. He is portrayed while writing. On the high lectern Codex is opened and writing equipment is placed on arch shaped writing table. He wears purple chiton and blue himation. We face an individual portrait of the Evangelist with mustache and live eyes (for detailed description of the portraits of the Evangelists see Gogashvili 2010: 90-91).

The portraits of Evangelists from the Tsaishi Gospel follow the established patterns of Georgian-Byzantine art, though an already developed or accepted tradition did not exist. Georgian manuscripts offer a very specific realization of the theme and details differ from Byzantine "classical" portraits. Some of the details are brand new along with old ones.

The first Georgian illuminated manuscripts belong to Tao-Klarjeti artistic school. If the artistic pattern of the 9th-10th centuries reveals the influence of different traditions (Hellenistic, late antique), the 11th century samples of this school, with specific characteristics of the scriptoria developed under the Byzantine influence become distinguished. Most vividly this process is observed in the illumination of Mestia Four Gospels (1033) written and illustrated at Oshki Monastery scriptorium.¹⁶

While comparing the Tsaishi and Mestia Gospel common artistic tendencies were revealed. On the basis of artistic-stylistic analysis it is determined that the illuminator of the Tsaishi Gospel was well aware of the Mestia Gospel miniatures and treated it as a manual.

¹⁶ Р. Ш м е р л и н г, *Художественное оформление грузинской рукописной книги IX-XI столетии*, кн. II, Тб., 1979, pp.133-139, A. S a m i n s k y, *A Reference to Jerusalem in a Georgian Gospel Book*, *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art*, *Jewish Art* 23/24, 1997/98, pp.354-369 (Saminsky dated the manuscript by the end of the XII century).

According to another opinion, it is quite possible that the manuscript to which these miniatures belonged was produced in Oshki or in any other scriptorium of Tao-Klarjeti.¹⁷

As mentioned above the portraits of the Evangelists (fig. 5, 9) from The Tsaishi Gospel along with the Mestia manuscript written in Oshki reveal characteristic similarities to the Evangelists' portraits from Black Mountain manuscripts (K-76, H-2806).

According to the colophon on K-76, the manuscript presents the sample of Black Mountain School¹⁸, as for H-2806 until recently it was dated back by the 16th century¹⁹ and only comparing and studying its artistic characteristics gave the scholars the opportunity to date it precisely to the second half of the 11th century.²⁰

Among the miniature schools of the 11th century the scriptoria of Tao-Klarjeti and Black Mountain were closely connected. It is well known that the monks from Tao-Klarjeti established the first Georgian monasteries on Black Mount.²¹

In the décor of these manuscripts the types of the Evangelists create the following patterns (in codices the complete series of the Evangelists are survived and we catered all of them): **St. Matthew** in all of manuscripts (Mestia Gospels -სიემ Mestia I (კ-70), K-76, H-2806) is portrayed thoughtful, with his left hand on the book rack; with right hand holding a paper in his lap (fig. 10, 14, 18); **St. Mark** in the pose of a philosopher is seated thoughtful in K-76, H-2806 and in Tsaishi Gospel miniature (fig. 5, 15, 19); but in Mestia Gospels he is writing and iconographically repeats the characteristics of **St. Luke**

¹⁷ D. G o g a s h v i l i, *Unknown miniatures from Tsaishi Gospels*, pp.91-92.

¹⁸ I. C h i c h i n a d z e, 1060 წლის ქართული სხარეგბა (*The Georgian Gospels of 1060*), ძეგლის მეგობარი, v.84, № 2, Tbilisi, 1989, p.29-33, N. K a v t a r i a, *Georgian Scriptorium of Kalipos Monastery in the 11th century: Illuminations of Gospel-Books*, abstract of PhD thesis, Tbilisi, 2004, pp.50-53, N. K a v t a r i a, *Die künstlerische Gestaltung der im Skriptorium des Klosters Kalipos bebilderten Evangelienhandschriften*, GEORGICA, № 28, Aachen, 2005, pp.197-200.

¹⁹ *Description of H collection*, manuscripts from State Museum of Georgia, manuscripts from former museum of Georgian Historical and Ethnographical Society, v.IV, Tbilisi, 1950, p.218.

²⁰ A. S a m i n s k y, *Georgian and Greek Illuminated Manuscripts from Antioch*, East and West in the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean, I, Antioch from the Byzantine Reconquest until the End of the Crusader Principality, Leuven-Paris-Dudley, MA, 2006, pp.28-29, N. K a v t a r i a, *From Tao-Klarjeti to Antioch: Traditions of Decoration of the Georgian Manuscript Book in the 11th century*, Proceedings of the International Conference "Tao- Klarjeti", Tbilisi, 2010 pp.43-45.

²¹ L. M e n a b d e, *Centers of Ancient Georgian Literature*, Tbilisi, 1980, p.283, W. D j o b a d z e, *Materials for the study of Georgian monasteries in the Western environs of Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, Louvain, 1976, W. D j o b a d z e, *Archaeological Investigations in the Region West of Antioch on-the-Orontes*, Stuttgart, 1986.

(fig. 11, 9, 16, 20). The common iconographic model distinguishes St. Luke in all three manuscripts: the Evangelist is writing (fig 9, 16, 20), but in Mestia Gospel St. Luke repeats St. Mark's iconographic patterns. He is presented thoughtful (fig. 12, 5, 15, 19). Posed writing St. Luke is presented in the décor of Alaverdi Gospels (A-484). As for **St. John** (ბოჯთ Mestia I (3-70), K-76, H-2806) he is portrayed in the most commonly adopted pattern – an inspired elderly person dictating St. Prochorus (fig. 13, 17, 21).

Looking through the Georgian manuscripts of the 11th century creates an interesting picture. Special attention should be paid to the tradition that existed before in the décor of the Georgian manuscripts. The iconographic types of manuscript illustration of previous epochs (9th-10th cc.) – standing Evangelists, mixed and in some codices (Adishi Gospels, A-98, S-391)²² organizing them at the beginning of the manuscript – from the 11th century being replaced by the portraits of seated Evangelists, working. This tradition became the ultimate model for presenting the Evangelists in Georgian manuscripts, except in definitely rare examples.

Iconographic analysis of the Evangelists' portraits provide lots of materials for further study. The fact that their figures are inserted in gospel decoration proves their extension and existence of various traditions.

The iconographic type of the Evangelists in Christian art underwent a long process of evolution and established its refined form in the 11th century. The Mestia Gospel is the first from Georgian tradition where we meet the Evangelists in “classical” (seated) poses, with figures turned from left to the right side.

The Evangelists' figures from the Tsaishi Gospel create another seated group of Ephesus. The iconographic pattern is quite diverse, though based on common features they are refined to the thoughtful face or writing pose. The first explorer of the Evangelists' iconography A. Friend distinguishes so called “classical” demonstrative group, that is headed by Stavronikita Cod.43, the best example of the Constantinopolitan school of the 10th c.; it is followed by the manuscripts Coislin 195 (National Library of Paris), Cod.Gr.364 (Vatican Library), греч.

²² Adishi Gospels – ბოჯთ Mestia 478 (3-82) preserved at Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography in Mestia (Georgian National Museum), A-98 kept and S-391 kept at K.Kekelidze Georgian National Center of Manuscripts.

21 (S.-Petersbourg National Library). Based on these manuscripts six iconographic groups are distinguished and all of them are somehow connected with the sculptural portraits and reliefs of a philosopher or a poet from the ancient world.²³

So portraits of thoughtful or of the Evangelists in writing pose are developed from the ancient sources. Christian aesthetics borrowed the characteristics of the Hellenistic world and adopted them. Iconographic novelty was the idea of transforming the ancient philosopher into “the writer” of the Middle Ages, with opened Codex and writing accessories. This process started in artistic thought in the 9th century and ended in the 11th century. Classical architectural background with elements of scenery was replaced by neutral golden background.

The artist of the Tsaishi miniatures strictly follows the characteristics, writing manner, and tendencies of shaping faces and forms, colourly details, framing the miniatures, decorating the corners with palmetts accepted in the epoch. He never forgets to draw characterizing physiognomy for each Evangelist.

The scholars have collated the statistics of the Evangelist types survived in Byzantine manuscripts. It appeared that in 47 out of 50 manuscripts St. Luke is writing or dips his pen ink; in 15 out of 40 manuscripts St. Mark is writing; in 15 out of 26, St. John imitates the replicas of an ancient philosopher; only a small percent show St. John dictating.²⁴

Similar statistic research based on Georgian manuscripts has not yet been held. From known samples of the 11th century we can say that (we enrolled Mestia Gospel, Tsaishi miniatures, Evangelists from Black Mount), in all cases except Mestia Gospel, St. Luke is always portrayed writing, St. Matthew is thoughtful, St. Mark is presented as a thoughtful philosopher and St. John is always dictating. As for the Mestia Gospel St. Mark is writing and St. Luke is thoughtful (fig. 11, 12).

While studying the iconography of the Evangelists we face the issue of how the forms of depicting the Evangelists in the beginning of their volume are connected to the gospel text. Only after comparing gospel text with iconographic types of the Evangelists we can judge the text's

²³ A. F r i e n d, *The Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts*, part I, Art Studies 5, 1927, p.137.

²⁴ W. L o e r k e, *Incipits and Author Portraits in Greek Gospel Books: Some observation, Byzantine East, Latin West*, Art-historian Studies in honor of K. Weitzmann, Princeton, 1996, p.379.

influence on the depicted forms. The most pervasive influence of the text on the portrait is observed on St. Luke and St. John's portraits. At the beginning of St. Luke's text it is mentioned that He is writing to Theophilus (Luke I, 14) and that is why He is painted always writing.²⁵

Here should be mentioned, that this group of manuscripts, along with iconographic similarities reveal the common features of stylistic resemblance. For them Mestia Gospel serves as a model. It is presented in refined, perfectly-shaped forms and well-realized artistic patterns. Written and decorated in the scriptorium of Oshki Monastery the manuscript is the recorder of the advanced artistic traditions of the epoch.

The artist of Tsaishi Gospels follows these traditions; though he is less skilled than the artists of Mestia Gospels, K-76 and H-2806. Hidden inner expression is strengthened by the peculiarities of painting the garment patterns. Streaming drawing freely contour the figures, though in K-76 and H-2806 relatively more schematized and dry context is felt. Slightly visible contour lines are lost in the main tone. Except of light whitening the effect of the shapes and drapes is achieved by the various gradation of the primary color. One more detail unites the miniatures in one system: for the Evangelists from these series shirred/goffered folds, collected in the folds of the short sleeves of himation and in the folds of cloth between the knees are characteristic.

So based on iconographic analysis of these manuscripts (Mestia MS I (3-70) - 1033, K-76 - 1060, H-2806 - the second half of the 11th century, Tsaishi Gospels miniatures - turn of 11th -12th cc.) poses that the Evangelists are portrayed, gestic, garment draping, working environment, writing accessories allow us to assume that: a) Mestia Four Gospel, written at Oshki, serves as an undoubtful iconographic source for Tsaishi miniatures; b) the artist of H-2806 uses not only K-76 artistic forms but those of Tsaishi as well; c) after reconstruction it became obvious that the illuminated pages from the Tsaishi Gospel miniatures (of St. Mark and St. Luke) coincide in size, illustration details, ornamental décor with the Evangelists' portraits from H-2806. All these give us the opportunity to conclude that the manuscript to which the miniatures of the Tsaishi Gospel belonged to and manuscript H-2806, should be identical in size and as for the date of execution should be considered from the turn of the 11th-12th centuries.

²⁵ N. K a v t a r i a, Portraits of Evangelists of Georgian Gospels from Kalipos (Black Mountain) Monastery, In: *Study of Art*, Collected Paper of the Chair of Art History and Theory of Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University, N4, p.125. (in Georgian, summary in English).

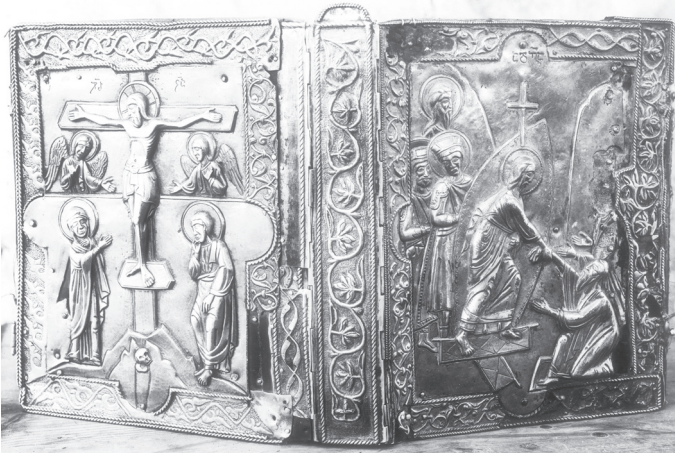


Fig. 1. The upper and lower part of Tsiaishi Gospel silver cover
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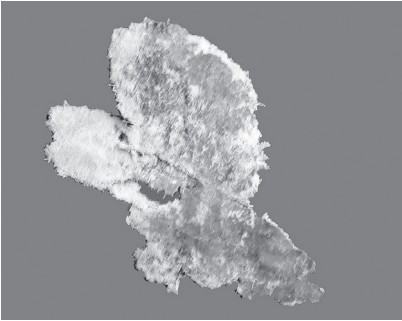


Fig. 2. Fragment 1

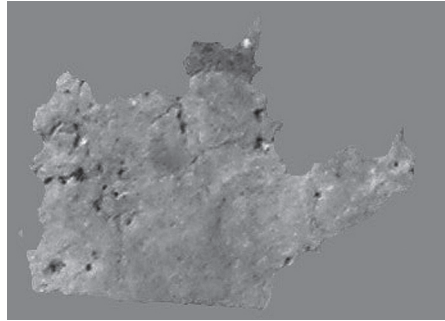


Fig. 2. Fragment 3

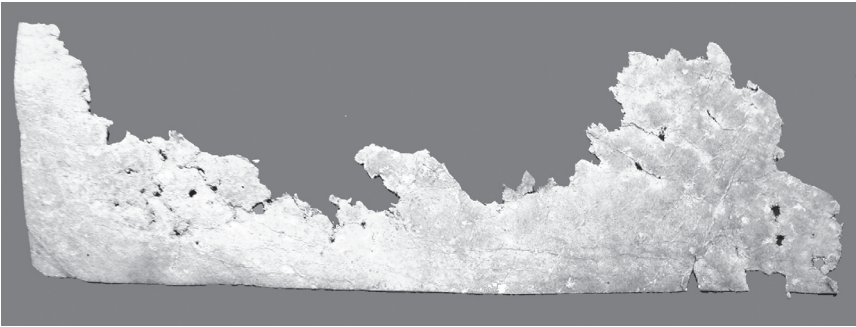


Fig. 2. Fragment 2

Fig. 2. Fragments from St. Mark's miniature: fragment 1. Size 1.3 x 1 cm; fragment 2. Size: 2.9 x 9.1 cm; fragment 3. Size: 3 x 3.8 cm. © Darejan Gogashvili



Fig.3. St. Mark the Evangelist. Schematic drawing of the miniature and its fragments.

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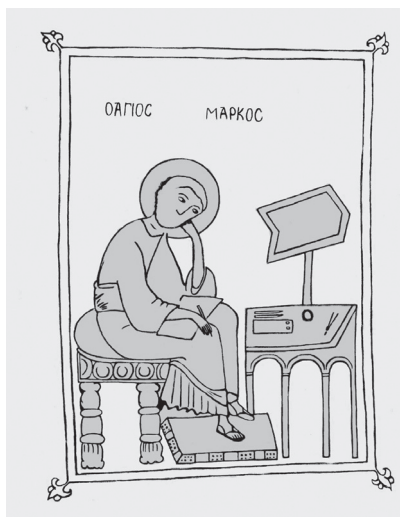


Fig. 4. St. Mark the Evangelist. Drawing, reconstruction.

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Fig. 5. St. Mark the Evangelist. Miniature with fragments, reconstruction. © Darejan Gogashvili

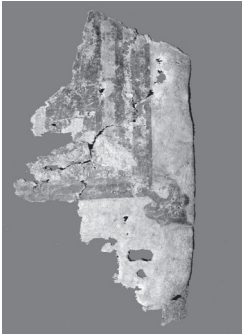


Fig. 6. Fragment 1

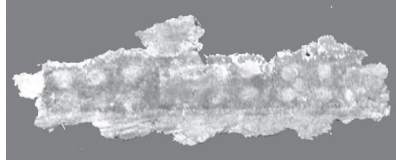


Fig. 6. Fragment 2

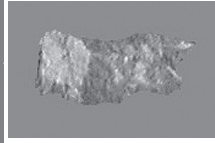


Fig. 6. Fragment 3

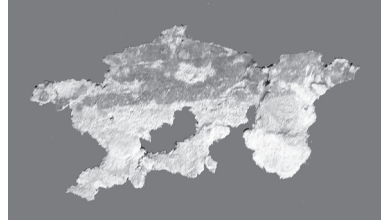


Fig. 6. Fragment 4

Fig. 6. Fragments from St. Luke's miniature: fragment 1. Size: 5.6 x 3.2 cm; fragment 2. Size: 0.7 x 2.1cm; fragment 3. Size: 0.5 x 0.9 cm; fragment: 4. Size: 1.2 x 2.2 cm.
© Darejan Gogashvili

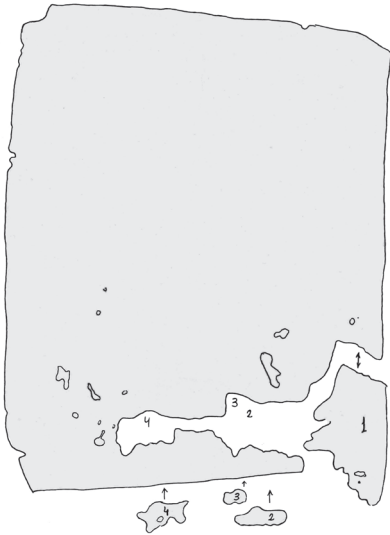


Fig. 7. St. Luke the Evangelist. Schematic drawing of the miniature and its fragments. © Darejan Gogashvili

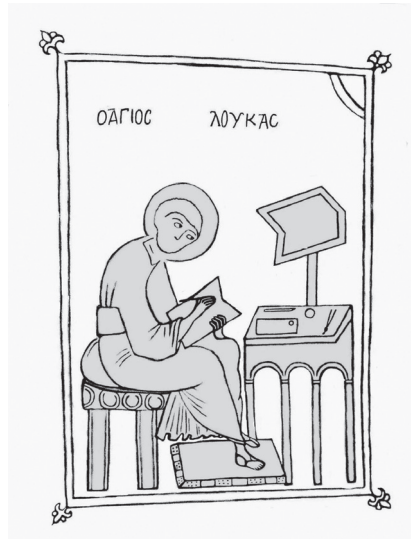


Fig.8. St.Luke the Evangelist. Drawing, reconstruction
© Darejan Gogashvili



Fig. 9. St. Luke the Evangelist. Miniature with fragments, reconstruction. © Darejan Gogashvili

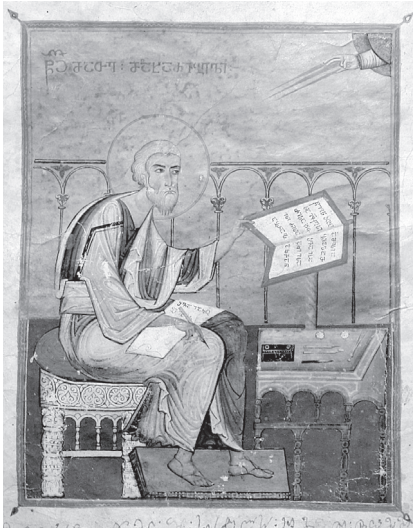


Fig. 10. Mestia Four Gospels.
St. Matthew the Evangelist.
© Georgian National Museum



Fig. 11. Mestia Four Gospels.
St. Mark the Evangelist.
© Georgian National Museum



Fig. 12. Mestia Four Gospels.
St. Luke the Evangelist.
© Georgian National Museum



Fig. 13. Mestia Four Gospels.
St John the Evangelist and St. Prochorus.
© Georgian National Museum



Fig. 14. K-76. St. Matthew the Evangelist.
©Kutaisi State Historical Museum



Fig. 15. K-76. St. Mark the Evangelist.
© Kutaisi State Historical Museum



Fig. 16. K-76. St. Luke the Evangelist.
© Kutaisi State Historical Museum



Fig. 17. K-76. St. John the Evangelist
and St. Prochorus.
© Kutaisi State Historical Museum



Fig. 18. H-2806. St. Matthew the Evangelist.
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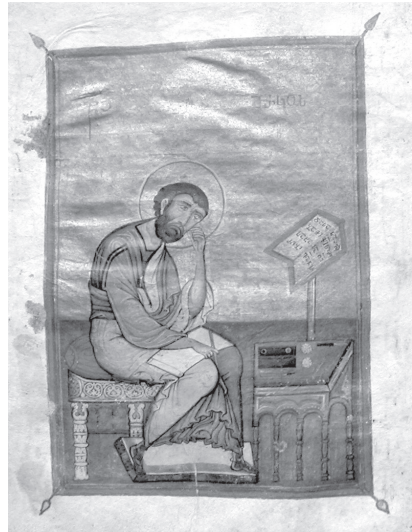


Fig. 19. H-2806. St. Mark the Evangelist.
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Fig. 20. H-2806. St. Luke the Evangelist.
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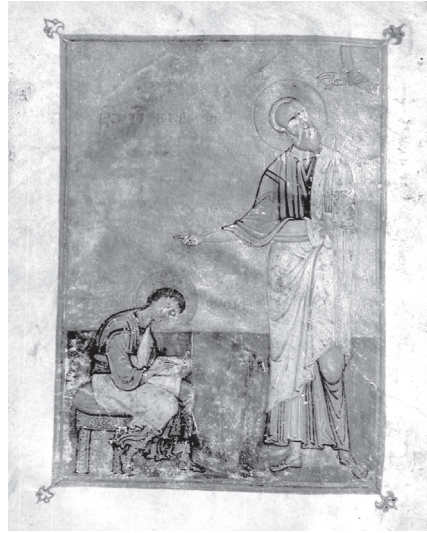


Fig. 21. H-2806. St. John the Evangelist
and St. Prochorus.
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Peculiarities of the Tao-Klarjeti Artistic School of Miniatures from the Tsaishi Gospel

The Tsaishi Gospels, preserved at Dadiani Palaces History and Architectural Museum in Zugdidi, gained its name according to its present place of survival. Before moving to Zugdidi Museum, it was kept at Tsaishi Dormition Cathedral.

The only one catalogued data of the manuscript, along with colophons was done by E. Takaishvili in summer 1913 while travelling under the aegis of Historic-Ethnographic Society of Georgia; the scholar catalogued and described the antiquities survived at Tsaishi and among them this manuscript. He dated the manuscript back to the 17th century.

Until 2007 the manuscript did not construe exploration and study. Only after taking the book partially apart and special conservation treatment was held the study of the gospel became possible. After reconstruction the similarity of the Tsaishi Gospel with other Georgian illuminated books of the 11th century was evident. They are: the portraits of the Evangelists inserted in the Mestia Gospel and the miniatures of the Evangelists from the different manuscript of the Black Mountain Georgian scriptoria (H-2806, K 76). Here should also be mentioned that the sizes of the illustrated pages of the miniatures (of St. Mark and St. Luke) are almost the same of the Evangelists' portraits from H-2806.

So based on iconographic analysis of these manuscripts (Mestia MS I (3-70) - 1033, K-76 – 1060, H-2806 – the second half of the 11th century, the Tsaishi Gospel miniatures - turn of 11th -12th cc.) poses that the Evangelists are portrayed, gestures, garment draping, working environment, writing accessories help us to assume that: a) Mestia Four Gospels, written at Oshki, serves as an undoubted iconographic source for Tsaishi miniatures; b) the artist of H-2806 uses not only K-76 artistic forms but of Tsaishi as well; c) after reconstruction it became obvious that illuminated pages from the Tsaishi Gospel miniatures (of St. Mark and St. Luke) coincide in size, illustration details, ornamental décor with the Evangelists' portraits from H-2806. All these gives us the right to conclude, that the manuscript to which the miniatures from the Tsaishi Gospel belonged to and the manuscript H-2806, should be identical in size and as for the date of execution should be considered the turn of the 11th-12th centuries.