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THE DIVERSITY OF ARTISTIC TRADITIONS IN THE DECORATION OF GEORGIAN-GREEK LITURGICAL MANUSCRIPTS OF THE 15th CENTURY (РАЗНОЯЗ. 0.I.58)

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Georgian-Greek manuscripts represent a unique element of the diverse and multiform cultural relations in the Georgian book culture and fine arts of the 15th century. The composition of manuscripts and the principles of their artistic decoration reveal the rich traditions of Georgian literature and book art, on the one hand, and the new aesthetics and artistic processes developed from the intellectual environment of the epoch, on the other. Moreover, it reflects the Greek-Georgian artistic relations developed through complicated historical realities.¹

¹ See, e. g., the Georgian manuscript preserved at the National Library of Russia in Sankt-Petersburg: F. 956, разнояз. 0.I. 58, Инв. N 44, discussed in L. Shervashidze, "Miniaturebi Kutaisi Khelnatserisa N 115 da Leningradis Khelnatserisa O.I. N58" ("The Miniatures of the Kutaisi Manuscript N 115 and the Manuscript O.I. N58 from Leningrad"), *Revue of the Academy of Science of Georgian SSSR*, XIV, 1953, 1, p. 55-62; Ш. Амиранашвили, *Грузинская Миниатюра*, Moscow, 1966, p. 34-35; В. Лихачёва, "Отношение к образцам грузинских миниатюристов XIV столетия (на примере рукописи ГПБ)", *Византийский временник*, 38, Moscow, 1977, p. 136-140; В. Лихачёва, "Художественное оформление Менология грузинскими художниками конца XIV века", *II Международный симпозиум по грузинскому искусству*, Tbilisi, 1977; П. Мийович, "Грузинские менологии с XI по XIV век", *Зограф*, 8, Belgrade, 1977, p.17-23; Л. Евсева, "Греко-грузинская рукопись из собраний Гос. Публичной библиотеки им. М. А. Салтыкова-Щедрина", *Древнерусская искусство. Рукописная книга*, 3, Moscow, 1983, p. 342-367; Z. Skhirtladze, "The Original Cladding of the Portaitissa Icon", *Oriens Christianus*, 89, 2005, p. 148-219; Л. Евсева, *Афонская книга образов XV века. О методе работы и моделях средневекового художника*, Moscow, 1998; H. Evans (ed.), *Byzantium. Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, New York, 2004, p. 290-292; E. Dugashvili, N. Kavtaria, *The Story of a Manuscript. Georgian-Greek Illuminated Manuscript of the Saint Petersburg Collection*, Tbilisi, 2012; *The Facsimile Edition of the Georgian-Greek Manuscript from the National Library of Russia*, St Petersburg, 2012; N. Kavtaria, "A Georgian-Greek Manuscript (F. 956, разнояз.0.I.58): Artistic Tradition and the 15th Century", *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU*, vol. 20, 2014, p. 147-164; E. Dughashvili, "Sankt Peterburgis Kolektsiis Kartul-berznuli Khelnatseri: Berznuli Tekstebi" ("Georgian-Greek Manuscript from Saint-Petersburg Collection: Greek Texts"), *Mravaltavi*, 25, 2017, p. 85-97; L. Kiknadze, "Berznul-Kartuli Khelnatseris Kartuli Teksebi" ("The Georgian Texts of the Greek-Georgian Manuscript"), *Mravaltavi*, 26, 2019, p. 31-51.

A small bilingual manuscript, Georgian and Greek, 12.4 x 8.2 cm, covers 146 pages, 88 of which are occupied by miniatures. The texts of the collection are different and consist of Gospel readings, selected troparia, prayers, a complete Menologion, and the apocryphal story of the correspondence between the Saviour and King Abgar. The main body of the text is written in Georgian and placed on two columns; troparia, prayers, and separate readings are in Greek; colophons are also in both languages. There are 385 miniatures in the manuscript, 165 of which are multi-figure and 220 mono-figure. The text is written on thin paper of Oriental origin; the Georgian text is presented in delicate Nuskhuri script, and the handwriting style of two scribes is discernible. The text is written with black ink, certain parts are in gold ink and cinnabar; as for the Greek text, it is written in Greek minuscule script. In this text only titles and initial letters are done in cinnabar.

A restoration of the manuscript was possibly completed in the 17th century. The edges of the pages were cut off, the book was re-folded and assembled with a new pagination. Some of the miniatures were also renewed. The silver book-case is of a later period. We can consider that the colophon in Asomtavruli (uncial) script on folio 146r belongs to this period: "Written and decorated here help and protect Jacob from Sameba." It is possible that Jacob was the Bishop of Sameba – Katsareti, a famous ecclesiastical figure of the 17th century, who is thought to be the initiator of the manuscript restoration (Fig. 1). His name is mentioned in many historical documents and sources of that period.

The small manuscript became interesting to the public when its anonymous owner (i.e., Dolaberidze) asked N. Marr to identify the book. N. Marr and V. Beneshevich (who read the Greek text) dated the manuscript back to the 14th-15th centuries. A brief description published in 1912 by N. Okunev and, later, one by D. Abramovich argued, based on its style, painting technique, and iconographic peculiarities, that the manuscript belonged to the 14th century. The authors repeated, to a certain extent, the paleographic description-attribution made by N. Marr and V. Beneshevich.² They concluded that the manuscript had served as a liturgical book in late Palaiologan period. Based on several miniatures, Jules Mourier dated the manuscript to the 17th-18th centuries.³ The Russian artist and art connoisseur Prince Gr. Gagarin was familiar with the manuscript, as he served in the Caucasus for several years, and in Georgia as well. Graphic copies of miniatures in the manuscript done by Gr. Gagarin were included in Rohault de Fleury's research for *La Messa* (Fig. 2).⁴ He was the first

² Н. Окунев, "О грузино-греческой рукописи с миниатюрами", *Христианский Восток*, 1, 1912, p. 43-44; Д. Абрамович, "Сведения о приобретении отдельных рукописей 1913 года", *Сборник Российской Публичной библиотеки*, 1, 1920, p. 21.

³ J. Mourier, *L'art au Caucase*, Odessa, 1883, p. 65.

⁴ Ch. Rohault de Fleury, *La Messe. Études archéologiques sur les monuments*, II, Paris, 1883, pl. CI, CII, CXVI; VI, Paris, 1888, pl. CDLXXXIX.

who suggested that the manuscript was a manual for painters; he also noted that the manuscript belonged to the family of Ekaterina Dadiani, Queen of Samegrelo. After this, the trace of the manuscript was lost and it reappeared again only in 1911. In 1913 the manuscript was purchased by the Public Library of Russia and it has been preserved there ever since.

Among Georgian art historians, S. Amiranashvili was the first who was interested in the manuscript and connected it to the artistic school of the Holy Mount of Athos, dating it back to the 15th century. It is also important to note that several illustrated pages in the manuscript (f. 155r-v, f. 157r-v) turned up inserted in a *Gulani* from the 17th century (K-115) that survives at the Kutaisi Historical Museum. L. Shervashidze confirmed that these pages belonged to the manuscript, as described by N. Okunev. This scholar indicated its date and placed it in the group of Georgian Manuscripts (A-351 and Q-920) connected with the Atabag Court Scriptorium. The scholar suggested that Jacob of Sameba could be the famous ecclesiastical figure of the 17th-18th centuries Jacob of Sameba-Shemokmedi. Appointed Bishop of Sameba-Shemokmedi in 1646, he visited the Pope in Rome, travelled to Donskoi Monastery in Russia, and to Jerusalem, where he passed away in 1713. His contemporaries considered him a great intellectual, "The Scholar".⁵

The next person to study the manuscript was V. Likhachova, in the '70s of the last century. According to her observations, the manuscript belongs to the artistic school of Mount Athos of the 14th century and represents a manual for painting.⁶ Like V. Likhachova, P. Mijović considers the manuscript to be a Menologion. As he notes, the codex is a collection of various fragments of old Menologia and iconographic models of liturgical illustrations, which enhances its importance.⁷ The manuscript was also discussed in studies dedicated to the Georgian-Byzantine art of the post-Byzantine period (V. Lazarev, E. Granstrom, etc.).

A fundamental study of the manuscript was carried out by L. Evseeva. She analysed in-depth its iconographic and artistic-stylistic features and concluded that it was a manual for painters dating from the 15th century. The Georgian and Greek texts of the manuscript used by L. Evseeva were based on verbal consultations with Elene Metreveli and Boris Fonkich. She did not connect the texts, especially the Georgian ones, with the illustrations.⁸

⁵ L. Shervashidze, "Miniaturebi Kutaisi Khelnatserisa N 115 da Leningradis Khelnatserisa O.I. N58" ("The miniatures of the Kutaisi Manuscript N 115 and the Manuscript O.I. N58 of Leningrad"), *Review of the Academy of Science of Georgian SSSR*, XIV, 1953, 1, p. 55-62.

⁶ В. Лихачёва, "Отношение к образцам грузинских миниатюристов XIV столетия (на примере рукописи ГПБ)," *Византийский временник*, 38, Moscow, 1977, p. 136-140; В. Лихачёва, "Художественное оформление Менология грузинскими художниками конца XIV века", *II Международный симпозиум по грузинскому искусству*, Tbilisi, 1977.

⁷ П. Мийович, "Грузинские менологии с XI по XIV век", *Зограф*, 8, Belgrade, 1977, p. 17-23.

⁸ Л. Евсева, "Греко-грузинская рукопись из собраний Гос. Публичной библиотеки им. М. А. Салтыкова-Щедрина", *Древнерусская искусство, Рукописная книга*, 3, Moscow, 1983,

Recently, an album of the miniatures in the manuscript and a facsimile edition of the codex were published.⁹ The identity of the Georgian and the Greek texts, their content, the names of the commissioner and the scribe, the date, and the possible origin were clarified.¹⁰

As it turned out, the manuscript was connected to the scriptorium of the Jakeli family of Atabags, rulers of South Georgia, and one of the representatives of the family, Kaikhosro, is noted several times in both the Georgian and the Greek prayers (f. 66v, 67r-v).¹¹ Kaikhosro was a famous figure of the 15th century who inherited the Principality of Samtskhe-Saatabago in 1498-1500, after his father Qvarqvar the Great died.

The most important events of the 15th century became critical not only for Georgia, but for the whole Orthodox Christian world. The division of Georgia into separate kingdom – domains, to which the separatist aspiration of the Atabags had a huge contribution, the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and consequently the fall of the Trebizond Empire in 1463, intensified the political and cultural life in the neighbouring Samtskhe-Saatabago Principality.

It is interesting that in the history of Georgian miniature a special importance is given to the group of manuscripts connected to the Atabag family, or done under their patronage.¹² In her study, L. Evseeva compares the Georgian-Greek collection to this group of manuscripts. However, without the textual sources, she could not make a precise attribution.

р. 342-367; Л. Евсева, *Афонская книга образцов XV века. О методе работы и моделях средневекового художника*, Moscow, 1998.

⁹ E. Dugashvili, N. Kavtaria, *The Story of a Manuscript. Georgian-Greek Illuminated Manuscript of the Saint Petersburg Collection*, Tbilisi, 2012; ead., *The Facsimile edition of the Georgian-Greek Manuscript from the National Library of Russia*, St Petersburg, 2012.

¹⁰ E. Dugashvili, “Sankt Peterburgis Kolektsiis Kartul-berznuli Khelnatseri: Berznuli Tekstebi” (“The Georgian-Greek Manuscript in the St Petersburg Collection: Greek Texts”), *Mravaltavi*, 25, 2017, p. 85-97; L. Kiknadze, “Berznul-Kartuli Khelnatseris Kartuli Teksebi” (“The Georgian Texts of the Greek-Georgian Manuscript”), *Mravaltavi*, 26, 2019, p. 31-51.

¹¹ E. Dugashvili, “Sankt Peterburgis Kolektsiis...”, p. 88-89; L. Kiknadze, “Berznul-Kartuli Khelnatseris...”, p. 38.

¹² Z. Skhirtladze, *Iveriis Gmrtismshoblis khatis motchediloba* (“Framing the Portaitissa Icon of Iviron”), Tbilisi, 1994, p. 20-26; Z. Skhirtladze, “The Original Framing of the Portaitissa Icon”, *Oriens Christianus*, 89, 2005, p. 148-219; N. Kavtaria, “Atabagta Karis Skriptoriumi XV-XVI saukuneebshi” (“The Atabag Court Scriptorium of the 15th-16th Centuries”), in *Proceedings of the First International Symposium “The Georgian Manuscript”*, Tbilisi, 2009, p. 174-176; N. Kavtaria, “Post-Byzantine and Ottoman Artistic Peculiarities in the Georgian Miniature Painting of the 15th-16th Centuries”, *Proceedings of the International Symposium “The Byzantine and Ottoman Civilizations in World History”*, Istanbul, 2010, p. 80-81; D. Kldiashvili, “Jaqelta kidev erti Sagvareulo Matiane Kutaisi Istoriuli Muzeumidan” (“The Commemorative Chronicles of the Atabags of Samtskhe in the Kutaisi Museum”), in *Materials of the International Conference “Tao-Klarjeti”*, Tbilisi, 2010, 216-233; N. Kavtaria, “The Atabag Court and the Georgian Miniature Painting of the 15th-16th centuries”, in *Le Symposium International Le Livre. La Roumanie. L’Europe*, Bucharest, 2012, p. 178-190.

In the obituaries of the Jaqeli (Atabag) family attached to different manuscripts of the period that survived to this day, their Christian spirit and dedication are highlighted. In the South Georgian historical documents collected by K. Sharashidze, the commemorative chronicles of this family define Atabag Kaikhosro, the ruler of Samtskhe and son of Qvarqvar the Great, as the “seeker of wisdom”, “a highly educated person and a great lover of God.”¹³ Their close ties and material support to the Christian centers – the Holy Mount Athos, Jerusalem, and Antioch –, their charitable deeds towards the Western and Eastern Patriarchates should also be mentioned.¹⁴ The Atabags’ obituaries are listed in the Synodyka (commemorative chronicles) from Jerusalem and Mount Athos.¹⁵

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the tense political situation, considering the particularities of the Jaqeli family, the amount of manuscripts connected with them should not look unusual. These manuscripts have various contents. Among them, the Georgian-Greek manuscript is distinguished by its textual and artistic diversity. The varied Georgian and Greek texts and illustrations are an indicator of the intellectual level, Christian thought, artistic-literary taste, and knowledge of the contemporary artistic tendencies of its owner. Undoubtedly, the book was conceived and created for the private use of the Jaqeli family members (namely, for Atabag Kaikhosro).

The manuscript opens with the Georgian text of some typologically different Gospel readings (f. 1r-29r). Today no one disputes the fact that this is an example of the so-called Tatian’s Diatessarion-type Gospel, which is unique for Georgian tradition.¹⁶ The first group of illustrations follows the Georgian text. The Christological cycle (f. 30r-43v) develops the theme of the earthly life of Christ from Annunciation to Resurrection, in the chronological order.

The sources of the illustration are the Gospel of Nicodemus, as well as the canonical Gospels. Besides the Great Feasts, the Passion cycle offers a detailed illustrations of the New Testament text: “The Last Supper” (f. 35v, see Fig. 3), “The Washing of the Feet” (f. 36r), “The Agony in the Garden” (f. 36v), “Judas’s Kiss, with Peter cutting off the ear of Malchus, and Christ before Caiaphas” (f. 37r), “Peter’s Denial and Christ before Pilates” (f. 37v). The scenes of the Crucifixion are also accurately rendered: “The Mocking of Christ,

¹³ K. Sharashidze, *Samkhret Sakartvelos istoriis masalebi, XV-XVI cc. (Materials on the History of South Georgia, 15th-16th c.)*, Tbilisi, 1961, p. 95.

¹⁴ E. Metreveli, *Masalebi Ierusalimis Kartuli Koloniis Istoriisatvis (Materials for the History of the Georgian Colony at Jerusalem)*, Tbilisi, 1962, p.77; L. Menabde, *Zveli Kartuli Mtsignobrobis Kerebi (Seats of Ancient Georgian Literature)*, vol. II, Tbilisi, 1980, p. 112, 226.

¹⁵ E. Metreveli, *Masalebi Ierusalimis...*, p. 90-96, 150-161; ead., *Atonis Kartvela Monastris Saagape Tsigni (The Synodykon of the Georgian Monastery of Mount Athos)*, Tbilisi, 1998, p. 184-187.

¹⁶ Л. Евсева, *Афонская книга образцов...*, p. 40-41; L. Kiknadze, “Berznul-Kartuli Khelnatseris...”, p. 33-37.

Christ before Herod, Jesus Carrying the Cross” (f. 38r), “The Road to Calvary”, “The Preparation of the Cross” (f. 38v), “The Dividing of Christ’s Clothes by the Soldiers” (f. 39r), “Ascent on the Cross” (f. 39v), two compositions with “The Crucifixion” (f. 40r-v), “The Descent from the Cross” (f. 41r), “The Lamentation” (f. 41v), “The Entombment” (f. 42r), “Descent into Hell/Anastasis” (f. 42v). The pages with miniatures in the manuscript of the Kutaisi Museum (N 115) – “Transfiguration” and “Raising of Lazarus” – are presumed to be part of this series in the Georgian-Greek manuscript (see Fig. 4 and 5). The distribution of some of the miniatures of “The Divine Liturgy” and “Communion of the Apostles”, on several pages (“The Divine Liturgy – Procession of Angels”, “The Divine Liturgy – Procession of Angels and Tetramorphs”, and “The Divine Liturgy”, on f. 32v – 33r-v, then “Procession of the Apostles” and “Communion of the Apostles”, on f. 34r-v – 35r), were quite rare and a novelty for book-illumination (see Fig. 6 and 7). The Divine Liturgy was a common theme of liturgical scrolls and was widespread in the murals of Palaiologan epoch (e.g., the painting of the prothesis at the Perivleptos monastery in Mistra and the frescoes of St Nicholas Monastery at the Great Lavra of Mount Athos).¹⁷ We may assume that the Divine Liturgy, along with the Communion of the Apostles, were created under the influence of wall-painting. An equivalent to the Communion theme can be found only in the illustrations of the Rossano Gospels. Here as well the composition is placed on several pages (f. 3v-4r).

It is obvious that the iconographic and artistic design of this series is tightly attached to the mural paintings of the 14th-15th centuries, in close connection with the monumental decoration traditions of that epoch. The multi-figure images, picture areas overfilled with architecture and landscape, with fractured contours, the figures’ poses and gestures, symmetrical and balanced compositions, long proportional figures, dynamics of the movement, basic colouring (greenish grey and violet, light pink with violet shades), clear lines and general dryness evoke the monuments of Palaiologan style of the same period in Mistra, Thessaloniki, and Mount Athos.¹⁸ The arrangement of all miniatures after the text offers an opportunity for their continual reading.

Presumably, the author of these miniatures should be Georgian, educated in the Balkans, possibly at the artistic school of the Holy Mount Athos, and well aware of the traditions of the Athonite-Macedonian art of the 15th century. The second artist entirely depends on the provincial school, and his style is

¹⁷ S. Dufrenne, *Les programmes iconographiques des églises byzantines de Mistra*, Paris, 1970, p. 14-15, fig. 62; J. Stefanescu, *L’illustration de la liturgie dans l’art de Byzance et de l’Orient*, Burssels, 1936, p. 1, 2, ill. XXI.

¹⁸ S. Dufrenne, *Les programmes iconographiques...*; M. Ασπρα-Βαρδαβακη, M. Εμμανηλ, *Η Μονη της Παντανασσα ς στον Μυστρα*, Athens, 2005; P. Vocotopoulos, “Monumental Painting on Mount Athos, 11th-19th Century”, in *Treasures of Mount Athos*, Thessaloniki, 1997, p. 33-47.

distinguished by its colourful nuances, monotonous images, rough drawing, and compositional schemes.

A liturgical character is conveyed in the illustrations of the Greek texts that represent an iconographic and a stylistic composition different from the traditional one (f. 44r-62v). The peculiarities of miniature distribution and the division of pictorial space into horizontal and vertical areas make the composition and the half-figures of the Saints appear in medallions or full-length figures, symmetrically placed in the text. One should also mention here that the Greek text and inscriptions are somehow lost among the numerous figures and thematic miniatures. The Greek text opens with the Lord's Prayer and is followed by the corresponding troparia of the feast.

Along with the Great Feasts – Baptism (f. 45r), Transfiguration (f. 45r), Entry into Jerusalem (f. 46r), Crucifixion (f. 46r), Anastasis (f. 46v), Ascension (f. 47r), and Pentecost (f. 47r) – in this group of miniatures one can find the icon of the “Man of Sorrows” and a miniature of the “Incredulity of St Thomas”. The importance of the Passions cycle is intensified further by the representation of the “Man of Sorrows”, the symbol of sacrifice and salvation in this cycle of miniatures. The figure of the Holy Virgin and its artistic features (the similitudes with Gothic art) shows a close relationship with the icon of Cretan origin, which survives in the collection of Patmos Monastery.¹⁹ A bluish background distinguishes this composition from others and somehow draws a parallel with the liturgical fabrics of the “Lamentation.” Such compositions of the “Man of Sorrows” from the 15th century reveal close connections with the Cretan icons.

The Twelve Great Feasts would be represented here altogether only if we also include the two additional illuminated pages (“Annunciation” and “Nativity”, “Presentation at the Temple”) in the Kutaisi manuscript (N 115) as a part of the Greek-Georgian manuscript (see Fig. 8 and 9).

Such a composition of the cycle – an illustration of the major feasts of the year – indicates their connections with the Divine Service, which is established by the texts of the accompanying stichera and troparia.

The Mariological cycle is presented by two miniatures in the codex: “The Birth of the Virgin” (f. 44v) and “The Dormition” (f. 48r). Two compositions from the Old Testament open the Greek part of the book: “Abraham's Meeting with the Angels” (f. 44r₁) and “The Hospitality of Abraham” (f. 44r₂). Among manuscript illustrations, the Old Testament Trinity miniature is quite rare, and probably a wall fresco served as a prototype. Nevertheless, one of the interesting examples of the 13th century is enclosed in a Byzantine manuscript at the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos (Cod. 5, f. 457v).²⁰

¹⁹ M. Chatzidakis, *Icons of Patmos*, Athens, 1985, p. 28-32; M. Chatzidakis, *Études sur la peinture post-byzantine*, 1976, p. 206-211, 335-337, pl. IV, 1.

²⁰ S. Pelekanidis, P. Christou, Ch. Tsioumis, and S. Kadas, *Die Buchmalereien des Berg Athos. Aus den Schatzkammern Byzantinischer Miniaturenmalerei*, Athens, 1979, p. 297.

Supposedly, the miniatures in the Greek text reveal a close connection with the miniatures of the Great Feasts of Palaiologan icon painting (e.g., the 14th-century mosaic diptych at the Duomo Museum of Florence,²¹ the Hermitage diptych²², or the 14th-century polyptych of Mount Sinai²³). In the manuscripts of the 14th-15th centuries there was a certain tradition of representing the Great Feasts based on icon painting. Miniatures of the Bright Week also find their iconographic sources in the icons used during Easter Week and the Pentecostarion services.

Generally, the Greek part of the manuscript is not homogeneous either. Moreover, the model or prototype that the author followed is not known.

Thus, the following manuscript illustrations can be divided into two parts: 1) Saints and personifications of the respective months (f. 48v-52r) and 2) half-length representations of Saints, inserted in medallions arranged in two rows, with their respective troparia (f. 52v-59v).

The Saints' icons and the personifications of months are followed by epigrams and the prayer of Nicolas Kalikle, a famous Byzantine doctor and court poet. Here are also comprised epigrams of Theodore Prodromos, without illustrations. Personifications are involved in seasonal activities: September is a hunter with a sparrow-hawk, October catches birds, November tills the soil, December hunts rabbits, January tastes the wine, February sits by the fire, March is a warrior, April is a shepherd holding a lamb (in analogy with the Good Shepherd), May gathers flowers, June is mowing, July harvests, August plants (Fig. 10).

Such allegoric images were transferred to Byzantine art from the Hellenistic traditions and were widely spread in the 12th century. The Vani Gospel (A-1335) also belongs to this period, where allegoric figures of the months decorate the Cannon tables.²⁴ In the Greek-Georgian manuscript, the common influence of the folk (or secular) trend of West European art is quite obvious, especially in garments. Probably in this case the illustrator used a ready model common for late Palaiologan period. The month figures also indicate the liturgical year and distinguish two series of Saints. From September, half-year is dedicated to the Prophets, and from March, the rest of the year – to the martyrs. It is interesting that traditionally in the series of the Prophets the first ones are not the Biblical Kings David and Solomon, but the icons of St John the Forerunner's parents – Zechariah and Elisabeth. The second row of Saints represents all important figures of the Christian Church. In total, this chapter

²¹ Π. Βοκοτοπουλος, *Βυζαντινες Εικονες*, Athens, 1995, p. 106-107.

²² Y. Piatnitsky, O. Baddeley, E. Brunner, and M. Mundell Mango (eds.), *Sinai, Byzantium, Russia*, St Petersburg, 2000, p. 155-156.

²³ Π. Βοκοτοπουλος, *Βυζαντινες...*, p. 126-129.

²⁴ E. Machavariani, *Kartuli Khelnacerebi. Damtserlobisa da Shemkulobis Sakitkhebi (Georgian Manuscripts. Issues of the Georgian Alphabet and Book Decoration)*, Tbilisi, 2012, p. 17-28.

includes half-figures of 12 apostles, 24 bishops, 30 Saints, 29 prophets, 6 biblical fathers, 113 martyrs, 5 holy *anargyroi* and 24 holy women. The Georgian Saint Nino is also represented (f. 58r), looking more Western than expected (Fig. 11). In the manuscript the hierarchical levels established in the Liturgy are altered and they do not follow the accepted rules.

Considering their stylistic features, the miniatures of this group, with their sophisticated appearance, compositional arrangement, and colouring, are close to the art of the first half of the 15th century, and, despite some Constantinopolitan influences, they are closer to Thessaloniki art.

The iconography of these illustrations is unique. The miniature representing St John the Baptist winged, as Angel of the Desert, with his head cut off and placed on a platter, inspired by the Cretan icon painting. In post-Byzantine Cretan painting, introducing the new iconographic model of St John the Baptist as an angel is connected with the name of the leading Cretan artist Angelos, of whose works only two signed ones survived.²⁵ The importance of this illuminated page is enhanced by the presence of Georgian Saints. By including the icons of Georgian Saints, the creators of the Georgian-Greek codex tried to show the origin of the manuscript, on one hand, and the equal importance of Georgian Saints, on the other:

The representation of the Georgian and the Orthodox Saints in a manuscript that contains Greek and Georgian texts indicates that it is compiled for a certain purpose: to underline the equality of rights of Georgian Saints. This idea, undoubtedly, originated and was implemented on Mount Athos, at the famous Iviron Monastery, which disseminated these ideas both in literature and in art, from the day of its foundation. It was necessary to prove to the Greeks that the Georgians had their own national Saints, and that Greeks could become familiar with the iconographic types of these Saints, according to the miniatures presented. At the same time, it was necessary for the Georgians to be acquainted with the iconographic types of Saints worshipped by the Church worldwide.²⁶

The fact is that the first monastery of the Georgians on Mount Athos was dedicated to St John the Baptist,²⁷ and placing in this miniature Georgian Saints (St John of Ivir, f. 59v, St Euthimius and St George the Athonites, f. 59v, Hilarion the Georgian, f. 59v, and Peter of Ivir, twice in the manuscript, on f. 47r and 59v) around his figure in the miniature indicates that the compiler and the creator were acquainted with history quite well and reflected this on the pages of

²⁵ A. Lymberopoulou, "A Winged St John the Baptist in an Icon of the British Museum", *Apollo*, CLVIII, 2003, 501, p. 19-24; M. Vassilaki (ed.), *The Hand of Angelos. An Icon Painter in Venetian Crete*, Athens, 2011, p. 178-179.

²⁶ Ш. Амиранашвили, *Грузинская миниатюра*, Moscow, 1966, p. 34.

²⁷ L. Menabde, *Zveli Kartuli Mtsignobrobis Kerebi*, p. 189.

the manuscript (Fig. 12). In the troparia we read: “From the Earthly kingdom of the mortals, Peter moved to Heaven, where his brothers rest...”²⁸ From this point of view, it is remarkable that the series of Saints opens with the icons of John the Baptist’s parents (Zechariah and Elisabeth) and it is completed with the Angel of the Desert, which underlines the symbolic essence of the miniature.

According to Evseeva, the style of these miniatures reveals a connection to the Thessaloniki art of the first half of the 15th century and it was produced by Thessaloniki artists on Mount Athos, using as models the Cretan iconography, which was less known there.

In the Greek part of the manuscript, compositions of warrior Saints are followed by the figure of “St Mamas riding a Lion”. The miniature of “St George slaying the Dragon” replicates an icon by the Cretan artist Andreas Ritzos in 1447. “St George tortured on a spiked wheel” (f. 61r), “Saint Demetrius”, and the “Elevation of the Cross” (f. 63r) derive from the Byzantine tradition. Their style is close to the art of the Cretan painter of Constantinopolitan origin Angelos Akotantos. Recent studies have proved that the Cretan artists Angelos and Angelos Akotantos are one and the same person.²⁹ “St Theodore Tyron slaying the Dragon” is the exact copy of an icon of Akotantos, and its iconography follows Western models³⁰ (Fig. 13). It is thought that the dragon’s face in Akotantos’s icon was inspired by Paolo Uccello’s paintings.

Such representations of warrior Saints (St George, St Theodore Stratelates, St Demetrius, and St Theodore Tyron) were characteristic for the Crusader art; since the 14th-15th centuries, they appear and spread in Cretan artistic workshops.³¹ An official document of 1499 reveals that the Mount Athos monasteries purchased lots of icons from Crete.³²

This series of miniatures is completed by the scene of the “Deisis”. This composition differs in that the Saviour is presented on the entire page and the Theotokos and St John the Baptist are half-figures, while the Apostles Peter and Paul are seen full-length. Such a mixed composition was uncommon, and as L. Evseeva presumes, the iconographic version is the artist’s choice of half- and

²⁸ Л. Евсева, *Афонская книга образцов...*, p. 224.

²⁹ M. Vassilaki, *The Painter Angelos and Icon Painting in Venetian Crete*, Farnham, 2009, p. 3-15; ead., “The Art of Angelos”, in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *The Hand of Angelos...* p. 114-123; K. Milanou, Ch. Vourvopoulou, L. Vranopoulou, A. Kalliga (eds.), *Icons by the Hand of Angelos. The Painting Method of a Fifteenth-Century Cretan Painter*, Athens, 2008.

³⁰ M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *Icons of the Byzantine Museum of Athens*, Athens, 1998, p. 112-113; M. Vassilaki, “The Art of Angelos...”, p. 168-69; N. Chatzidakis, “The Legacy of Angelos”, in M. Vassilaki (ed.), *The Hand of Angelos...*, p. 124-133.

³¹ K. Weitzmann, “Icon Painting in the Crusader Kingdom”, in id. (ed.), *Studies in the Art at Sinai*, Princeton, 1981, p. 353-355.

³² Th. Gouma-Peterson, *The Icon as Cultural Presence After 1453*, Washington, 1988, p. 54.

full-length representations.³³ With its artistic variety, the Greek part of the manuscript reveals the refined hand of a Greek artist who was well acquainted with the advanced artistic tendencies of his epoch (the art of Andreas Ritzos, Angelos Akotantos, and Cretan art in general), the history of Mount Athos, and the Georgian Fathers' works.

The next group of miniatures, inserted in the Georgian part of the book, represents the cycle of the illustrated Menologion, chronologically arranged (Fig. 14). The row of Saints arranged according to the liturgical year, and the movable and immovable feasts are the largest part of the Greek-Georgian manuscript. By its content, it is close to the Synaxaria of the 11th-13th centuries. The Menologion is not accompanied by the relevant texts, hence it looks like the icons of the liturgical year (e.g., the Menologion icons of Mount Sinai of the 11th-12th centuries).³⁴ An analogy to this can be found in the Menologion dedicated to Demitrios Palaiologos (14th c.):³⁵ similarly, the Greek-Georgian manuscript is not accompanied by text or synaxarion. Commissioned by the despot of Thessaloniki Demetrios Palaiologos, the manuscript represents the most significant example of an illustrated Byzantine codex of this type. It comprises more than 430 miniatures, arranged according to the liturgical year, from September to February.

According to the typological classification of the cycles, the Menologion of the manuscript falls into the "B" group, as suggested by P. Mijović. It does not contain scenes of Saints' martyrdom, but it includes the Great Feast scenes characteristic for the Constantinople-oriented manuscripts of the earlier period. Such a typological division is equally acceptable for Byzantine and post-Byzantine Menologia, as well as for the Georgian, Bulgarian, and Serbian ones.³⁶

The artistic features of the Menologion are underlined by the month personifications and zodiacal signs placed at the beginning of each month (Fig. 15). The iconographic and stylistic characteristics of the Menologion evoke the artistic challenge of Comnen times, as repeated in the 15th century.

The next group of miniatures comprises 14 scenes of healing and miracles. They are collected from various parts of the Gospels. The sequence of

³³ Л. Евсева, *Афонская...*, p. 70.

³⁴ G. A. Sotiriou and M. G. Sotiriou, *Icons of Mount Sinai*, vol. I, Athens, 1956, p. 126-152, and vol. II, Athens, 1958, p. 115-132; Π. Βοκοτόπουλος, *Βυζαντινές...*, p. 42-44, 74; Z. Skhirtladze, "Sinai's mts satselitsado khatis shedgenilobisatvis" ("About the Structure of the Calendar Icon from Sinai"), in *Collected Papers of the Department of Art History and Theory of the I. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University*, I, 2000, p. 197-221; R. Nelson and K. Collens (eds.), *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai*, Los Angeles, 2006, p. 194-199.

³⁵ I. Hutter, *Corpus der Byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften, Oxford Bodleian Library*, vol. II, Stuttgart, 1991, p. 1-33, 89-114; id., "Der Despot Demetrios Palaiologos und sein 'Bildmenologion' in Oxford", *JÖB*, 57, 2007, p. 183-214.

³⁶ П. Мийович, *Грузинские...*, p. 18.

the compositions does not correspond to the chronological order of the Biblical story: “Christ and the Samaritan Woman”, “Healing of the Blind-Born Man”, “Healing of the Man with Dropsy”, “Healing of the Leper”, “Healing of the Man with a Withered Hand”, “Healing of the Paralytic in Capernaum”, “Healing of the Paralytic in Bethesda”, “Christ Walking on Water”, “Christ and the Adulteress”, “Healing of a Man Possessed by a demon”, “Raising of Jairus’s Daughter”, “Raising of the Only Son of the Widow in Nain”, “Appearance on the Road to Emmaus”, “Appearance of Christ at the Sea of Tiberias.” Miniatures are accompanied with texts selected from the Gospel of John. Selected readings from this Gospel are characteristic for the Triodion. However, the structure of the Triodion miniatures differs from the one of the liturgical book: they are mixed with narrative scenes and show parallels with the Palaiologan mural paintings.

If we glimpse through the history of Georgian miniature painting, we observe a relationship between the calligraphy and artistic style of the Greek-Georgian manuscript and those of the Atabag’s Court scriptorium.³⁷ Books that survived from this scriptorium have preserved the names of two outstanding calligraphers: Ambrose and Akaki. The Greek-Georgian manuscript is illuminated by four painters; their names are unknown. The two calligraphers stood out not only for their literary activity, but they were quite influential persons, who enjoyed the trust of the Atabag Family. Unsurprisingly, they travelled to the Holy Places and delivered gifts to the Mount Athos and Jerusalem monasteries on behalf of this family. Ambrose’s name is mentioned in the frame inscription of the Portaitissa Icon of the Iviron Monastery.³⁸ Both scribes belong to the artistic-literary school in the Atabag’s Court scriptorium. Along with Ambrose and Akaki, sources also mention a Greek monk called Simeon, who presumably moved from Pontos after the fall of Trebizond. Most probably, he took part in the writing of the Greek text.³⁹

Thus, the calligraphic hand, the prayers and troparia dedicated to Atabag Kaikhosro, as well as the structure of the miniatures, their stylistic features, the diversity of their iconographic and literary sources prove without doubt that the manuscript belonged to the Atabag’s Court scriptorium. The miniatures in this manuscript book reflect the intellectual traditions, spiritual and cultural ties of the Atabag family with the literary-artistic environment of the Christian world of the 15th century.

³⁷ N. Kavtaria, “The Atabag Court and Georgian...”, p. 178-190.

³⁸ Z. Skhirtladze, *Iveriis Gmrtismshoblis khatis...*, p. 20-26; id., “The Original Frame...”, p. 180-210.

³⁹ D. Kldiashvili, “Jaqelta kidev erti Sagvareulo...”, p. 228-230; E. Dughashvili, “Sankt Peterburgis Kolektsiis...”, p. 89; L. Kiknadze, “Berznul-Kartuli Khelnatseris...”, p. 38-42.



Fig. 1 – Colophon of Jacob of Sameba, f. 146r, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 2 – *The Divine Liturgy*, Prince G. Gagarin’s drawing in Ch. Rohault de Fleury’s book *La Messe (Études archéologiques sur les monuments, II, Paris, 1883, Pl. CI)*.



Fig. 3 – *The Last Supper*, f. 35v, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 4 – *The Raising of Lazarus*, f. 156r, Ms. Gulani K-115, Kutaisi Historical Museum (photo courtesy of the Kutaisi Historical Museum).



Fig. 5 – *The Transfiguration*, f. 156v, Ms. Gulani K-115, Kutaisi Historical Museum (photo courtesy of the Kutaisi Historical Museum).



Fig. 6 – *The Divine Liturgy. Procession of the Angels and Tetramorphs*, f. 33r, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 7 – *The Angelic Liturgy*, f. 33v, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 8 – *Annunciation and Nativity*, f. 157r, Ms. Gulani K-115, Kutaisi Historical Museum (photo courtesy of the Kutaisi Historical Museum).



Fig. 9 – *Presentation at the Temple*, f. 157v, Ms. Gulani K-115, Kutaisi Historical Museum (photo courtesy of the Kutaisi Historical Museum).



Fig. 10 – *Month personification and its Saints*, f. 52r, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 11 – *The Saints – St Nino*, f. 58r, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 12 – *St John the Baptist as the Angel of the Desert*, Georgian Saints: *St Peter of Iberia*, *St Hilarion of Iberia*, *St George of Iberia*, *St John of Iberia*, *St Euthimius of Iberia*, f. 59v, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia, St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 13 – *St Theodore Tyron Slaying the Dragon*, f. 61v, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 14 – Illustrated page from the Menologion, f. 113r, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).



Fig. 15 – *October and Zodiacal Signs*, f. 80r, Georgian-Greek Ms. 0.I.58, National Library of Russia in St Petersburg (photo courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).