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NATIONAL CENTRE OF MANUSCRIPTS

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V-XIX საუკუნეები

ალბომი

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GEORGIAN MANUSCRIPT BOOK

5th-19th CENTURIES

ALBUM

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This album presents the 5th-19th cc. Georgian manuscript books preserved in the fonds of the National Centre of Manuscripts and photocopies of Georgian collections abroad (Mount Sinai, the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem) the right of whose use is owned by the National Centre of Manuscripts. The artistic copy of the Adishi Four Gospels, entered in the collection, is executed on the basis of the description and instructions of the authors. All these manuscripts graphically reflect the history of the origin and development of book as a cultural-historical phenomenon.

The album is comprised of four parts. The subject matter is accompanied by an informative text of general content and relevant photo-specimens, with annotations. A general bibliography is appended.

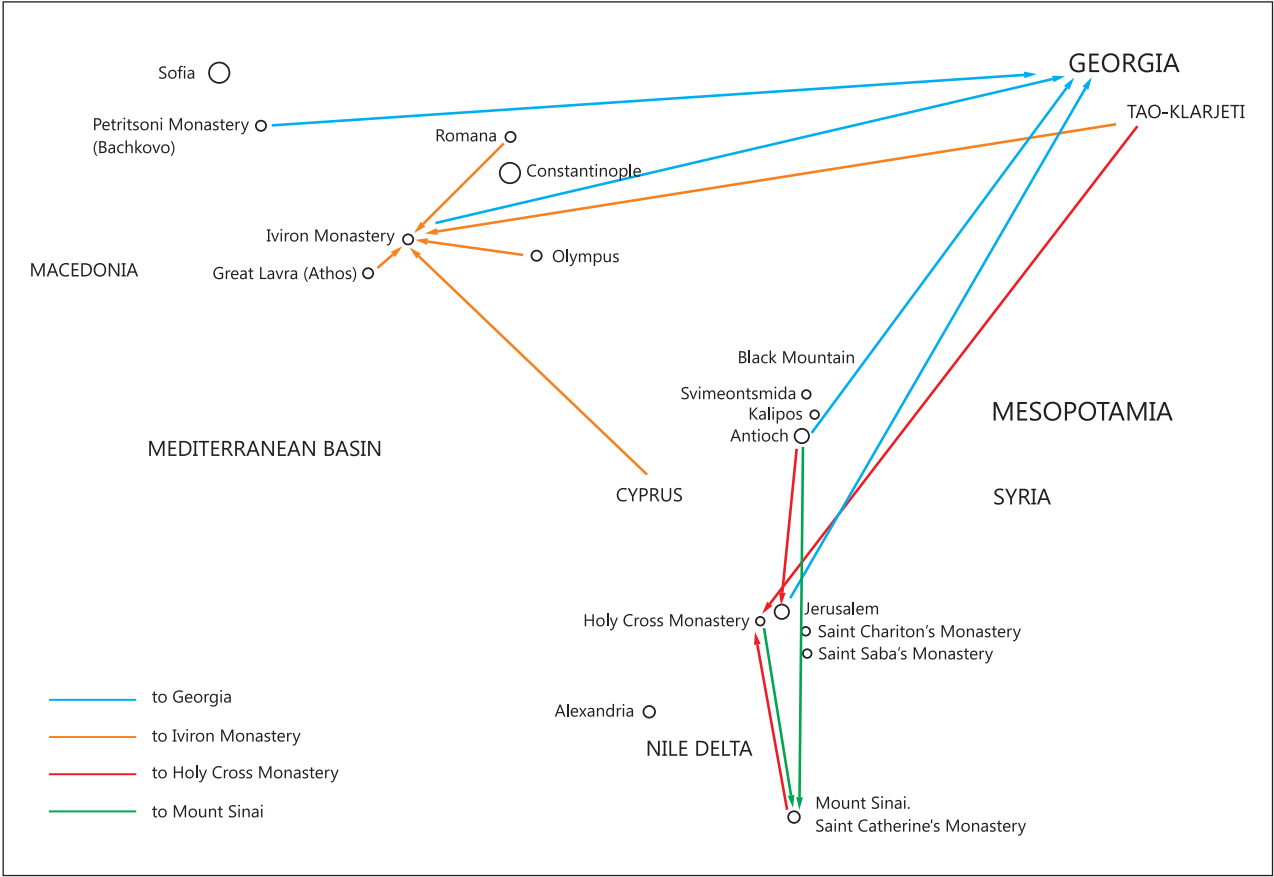
The album is designed for readers interested in the history of Georgian written culture.

წინამდებარე ალბომში წარმოდგენილია ხელნაწერთა ეროვნული ცენტრის ფონდებში (A, H, S, Q) დაცული V-XIX საუკუნეების ქართული ხელნაწერი წიგნები და უცხოეთის (სინის მთა, იერუსალიმის ბერძნული საპატრიარქო) ქართული კოლექციების ის ფოტოასლები, რომელთა გამოყენების უფლებასაც ფლობს ხელნაწერთა ეროვნული ცენტრი. ალბომში შესული ადრეული ოთხთავის მხატვრული ასლი შესრულებულია ავტორთა მიერ შედგენილი აღწერილობისა და მითითებების საფუძველზე. ყველა ეს ხელნაწერი თვალნათლივ ასახავს წიგნის, როგორც კულტურულ-ისტორიული ფენომენის, წარმოშობისა და განვითარების ისტორიას.

ალბომი შედგება ოთხი თავისგან. მასში თავმოყრილ მასალას ახლავს ზოგადი შინაარსის საინფორმაციო ტექსტი და სათანადო ფოტონიმუშები ანოტაციების თანხლებით. ალბომს ერთვის ძირითადი ბიბლიოგრაფია.

ალბომი გამიზნულია ქართული წერილობითი კულტურის ისტორიით დაინტერესებული მკითხველისთვის.

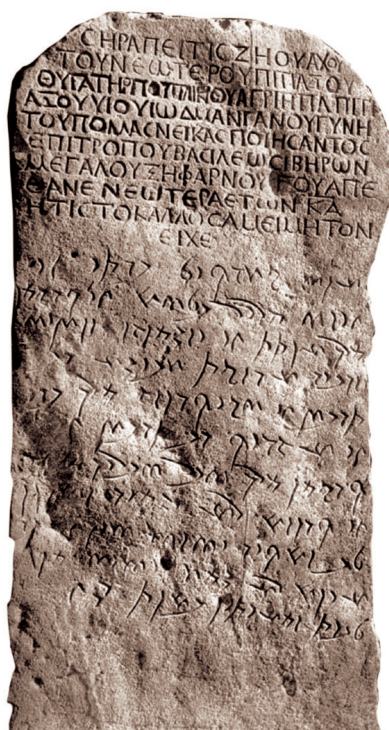
THE MAP OF CREATION AND SHIFTING OF GEORGIAN MANUSCRIPTS AND MOVEMENT (5TH-17TH CC.)



THE BEGINNING OF GEORGIAN WRITTEN CULTURE. THE ORIGIN OF THE SCRIPT

The Georgian manuscript is an interesting document of Georgian writing tradition, which has a history of 16 centuries. Starting from the 5th century it shows an interesting process of development of intellectual life, artistic thinking and material culture of different ages in Georgia. Georgian manuscript book originated in tight relations with Mediterranean countries and it was facilitated by necessity of protecting cultural and political identity. The origin of the Georgian script was one of the important elements of this identity.

When and under what circumstances was the Georgian script created? Scholarship has been looking for an answer to this question for a long time. The roots of the Georgian alphabet are being linked to Phoenician, Aramaic and Greek scripts. The time of its origin is also a most question. Some researchers consider the Georgian alphabet a product of the pre-Christian period, while others take it for a system formed after the advent of Christianity. This difference of opinions stems from the Greek sources of the Classical period (Apollonius Rhodius, 295-215 Bc.,



Armazi bilingual script, 150 AD.



The Armazi stele of Vespasian with ancient Greek inscriptions. 75 AD.

the Lexicon of Suita, 10th c.) according to which in Colchis of the period of the Argonauts there existed books written on skin. The Georgian Chronicler Leonti Mroveli (11th c.) links the origin of the Georgian script to King Parnavaz of Kartli (3rd c. BC). "This Parnavaz was the first king in Kartli from among the descendants of Kartlos. He extended the Georgian language, and no more was a different language spoken in Kartli except Georgian. And created the Georgian Script".

But, as noted above, the oldest specimens of Georgian script are confirmed only from the 5th century. Then on what ground did the chronicler have to date the writing culture in Georgia to the 3rd c. BC.¹ This question is echoed in a certain way by the archaeological material found on Georgian territory. Attested here are dated Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions of the 3rd c. BC- 3rd c. AD. These inscriptions occur both on cultic-ritual and everyday life objects – adornment, signet rings, clayware, glassware, silverware, gravestones and stelae. These facts should be considered to be quite natural, for Georgia – a country of the South Caucasus – had ancient close cultural and trade and economic relations with Classical Greece, Asia Minor and Near Eastern countries. On the basis of these relations, apart from specimens of material culture, the knowledge and experience characteristic of this cultural space entered this country. Bearing in mind the fact that in the history of the development of scripts countries of the Mediterranean basin played a special role, it would not be surprising for Georgia – closely linked with these countries – received and made use of this experience, using the existing alphabetic systems. As seen from archaeological material, in Georgia in the 3rd c. BC-3rd c. AD Greek and Aramaic scripts were used in parallel. A clear example of this is a bilingual epitaph, discovered in Armaziskhevi and known in the scholarly literature as the Armazi bilingual inscription. It should be noted that the Aramaic alphabet of the bilingual represents an

¹ Translation by R.W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History*, Oxford, 1996, pp. 37-38.

independent branch of the North Mesopotamian Aramaic – so-called Armazic script. This must have apparently been Kartli's state official language and alphabet as well. As for Hebrew, it was the script of the Jewish ethnos compactly settled in Kartli.

The use of these alphabetic systems did not result in the creation of either a literature or a manuscript tradition. However, the existence of the Armazic script suggests that Georgian state and social thought needed only an impetus to develop its own alphabetic system of written documentary culture. Christianity proved such an impetus.

Christianity came to Georgia from the East. According to historical tradition, Christianity was preached among the Georgians in the 1st century by Simeon the Canaanite and Andrew the First Called. It is conceivable that the arrival of the apostles led to the initial creation of a small Christian commune that so far could not determine the country's cultural and intellectual life, but no doubt paved the way for great changes. Adoption of the new teaching must have become the basis of new knowledge. The strong pagan mythological oral tradition must come into confrontation with a bookish written tradition. This was probably why early Christianity recorded in written form the incarnation of Christ and all the stories connected with his early life on earth, all traditions preserved in Christian community, of which some entered the canonical codex of the Bible and some took shape as a parallel collection of the so-called apocryphal texts. This literature reflected well the religious notions of the first Christians. Hence today, it holds a significant place in the research into the history of Christianity. Naturally enough, the first Christian community, set up in Georgia, would create such an apocryphal story, which would reflect the religious and cultural identity of Georgia, as one of the earliest Christianized nation with a world of a new outlook. And indeed, the tradition of bringing to Georgia the tunic of the Saviour and safeguarding it, points to the history of the first, Christian community. The Georgians considered this oral tradition to be a cornerstone of their own conversion and statehood.



The remains of the mosaic of Dzalisi, 3rd c. AD.



The stele with Jewish inscriptions in Samtavro tomb, 4th-5th cc.



The tunic of the Saviour in heraldry

Christianity became a supporting column for cultural and intellectual life, Georgian nationhood and mentality. Moreover, special attention was paid to the new literary tendencies of Europe as the medieval Islamic East and the Europe of modern history, taking into account political relationships.

THE GEORGIAN ALPHABET. In 326 Georgia adopted Christianity as the state religion. Subsequently, Georgian culture renounced the use of the alphabet systems already well-known to her, and herself created her own alphabet, the Greek alphabet being its prototype.

The Georgian alphabet is one of the perfect systems of writing, for the number of graphic symbols (letters) corresponds exactly the number of the phonemic units (speech sounds) of the Georgian language. The Georgian alphabet, in particular its outline underwent three stages of development. Its oldest variety is *asomtavruli* (the same *mtavruli*) or *mrgvlovani* alphabet (majuscule). Epigraphic and manuscript texts of the 5th-9th centuries are done in this alphabet.

From the 9th century in parallel to *mtavruli*, angular or *nuskhuri*, the same *khutsuri* script occurs (cursive). In texts copied in *nuskhuri* the titles and capital letters are written in *mtavruli*, which combines a certain decoration function and is used to single out accentuated sections in the text. This was probably why the *mrgvlovani* alphabet was called *mtavruli*. As to the name *nuskhuri*, which is related to the word *nuskha*, which, as defined by the Georgian writer and lexicographer Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani, means "described rapidly". And indeed, if we follow Georgian manuscripts copied in *mtavruli* in the 10th-11th centuries, we shall notice the angularity of some rapidly drawn letters.

Accordingly to the manuscript tradition, from the 10th-11th century in parallel to these two alphabets, *mkhedruli* or modern Georgian alphabet develops. The writing received the name *mkhedruli* on the basis of its use predominantly in secular sources.

Thus, the three varieties of Georgian writing developed back in the 10th century. It should be noted that these three graphic forms of the Georgian alphabet came into being on the basis of the development of writing technique, and is not the result of a systemic change of the Georgian alphabet.

And finally, if we recall the 5th-6th c. Georgian written texts clone in *mtavruli* (majuscule), the main basis of the origin of Georgian script will become clear. The palimpsest sheets of the 5th-8th centuries, bearing biblical as well as apocryphal and hagiographic texts, existing in parallel with epigraphic sources,

Svetitskhoveli

The resting place of Jesus Christ's tunic. Georgia's principal praying place – the Patriarchal Cathedral. The first church was built in the 4th century. In the second half of the 5th century, following the demolition of the first church, King Vakhtang Gorgasali built a basilica. In 1010-1033 a cross-domed church was built on the initiative of Catholicos Melkisedek.





Building inscription

Bolnisi Sioni Cathedral, (492/3-502). A three-nave building of a basilica type. South-East Georgia.



The fresco fragment from the Church of the Dormition of the Virgin. Ushguli.

clearly point out that script from the beginning took shape as an office alphabet but a literary one. Old Georgian palimpsests that are preserved today in Georgia – in the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts and Mestia Museum of Local Lore, as well as at the Oxford, Cambridge, Vienna National Library, the refined outline of letters, proportional arrangement of the written lines and the manner of execution, the repertory of the texts they bear, point unequivocally to the existence of a stable written culture in the 5th-6th centuries.

ECCLESIASTICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Georgian manuscript tradition begins with the translation and copying of ecclesiastical books. It follows in the wake of the process of adoption by the Georgians of Christian culture and consolidation of the new knowledge. The literate Christianity brought to Georgia both a new vision of the world, the desire for insight into it, as well as radical changes in everyday life and material well-being; it naturally led to the broadening of the nation's creative potentialities.

The initiative of the development of Georgian written culture came from the Church. At the beginning of its existence the Georgian Church had to overcome many obstacles against the surviving pagan memory, on the one hand, and Mazdaic ideology gaining a foothold under Persian political pressure. Written culture was a strong weapon in overcoming these obstacles. Therefore, initially, the attention of Georgian manuscript tradition was directed to those literary texts that were to create ground for the study of the real history of Christianity, cognition of the confessional moral, and publish worship or liturgy.

At the beginning of the spread of Christianity and the tradition of Georgian manuscript Georgian liturgy was of parish-cathedral



Genesis

The ancient translation of the Book of Genesis (9,11-13) appears in the undertext of the palimpsest. The text contains the khanmeti linguistic features of the 5th-6th cc. The text from the Book of Genesis is written on pages 85-87 of the manuscript. The undertext reveals texts if the different periods. The Psalm is written on the upper layer.

Undertext: 5th-6th cc. Overtext: 13th-14th cc.

Parchment, 162 folios, size of the folded sheet: 15,2x11,5 cm;

H-999

character. Accordingly, public worship was primarily called in to educate the parish and involve it in book knowledge. Therefore, special attention of the creators of manuscripts in the Georgian Church was attracted by the Bible; of the books of the New Testament – primarily by the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles and of the Old Testaments – the Psalms, and readings from the Book of Genesis, the Book of Proverbs and the books of the Prophets, included in the ancient Lectionaries, the Genesis, the books of the Prophets. In parallel to these, some early Apocrypha were



Four Gospels

The earliest Khanmeti recension of the Gospel; preserved on the lower level of the palimpsest. The is divided into selections, with marks of division: dot, colon. Inscribed on the upper layer is John Chrysostom's "Translation of chapter according to Matthew".

Undertext: 6th-7th, overtext: 11th c.

Parchment, 443 f., size: 32,5×16 cm

A-89

translated and copied. In conditions of bitter confrontation with Mazdaic Iran original hagiographic literature developed; the first Georgian translations of the same genre appeared. Accordingly to the original work "The Passion of Shushanik", dated to 476-482, in the 470s Georgia already possessed the Gospel, the Letters of Paul, the Psalms and books of holy martyrs or hagiographic books.

The Gospel was one of the first biblical books translated by the Georgians immediately after the adoption of Christianity. Its earliest translations occur on palimpsest sheets dated to the 5th-7th

centuries. These first texts are copied in mtavruli alphabet. They bear evidence of the linguistic peculiarity of the epoch: derivation of the forms of the subjection and objective person of the verb and degree through the Khan prefix. Hence such texts are called Khanmeti recensions. The Four Gospels, copied on palimpsest sheets, are so far not designed with capital letters and other ornamental elements. In such books the function of décor is performed by monumental capital letters used at beginning of a paragraph. Adornment of Gospels with artistic elements began later – from the 9th-10th centuries.

Along with the translation of separate texts liturgical collections were compiled.

Lectionary – rites and rules set for various church festivals to let followed in parish and monastic service, containing texts of the Old and New Testaments. It should be noted that the oldest specimen of a collection of this type, which had belonged to the library of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, is now preserved in fragments in the University of Graz (Austria, 27 leaves), Birmingham, (Britain 2 leaves), and at the Bibliotheque National (Paris, 1 leaf). This is the only early manuscript whose leaves were not reused as writing material. The lectionary, as a liturgical collection, remained in active use till the end of the 10th century, though a fragment of a book dated to the 11th century survives.

Iadgari – texts for the church year, comprising lections from the Psalms and other books of the Bible. Iadgari continued to exist till the end of the 10th century. Later they gave rise to collections of liturgical content (tveni (months), markhvani (hymns for Lent), parakliton, etc. The oldest specimens of iadgari are preserved in the Library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai.



Jerusalem Lectionary

Preserved on the lower layer of the palimpsest; reflects the early, Jerusalem rule of divine service. Done in the 8th century linguistic *haemeti* norm. The primary Greek source of this book is lost. The manuscript has come down to us in a fragmentary form. Its second, complementary part, is preserved in another manuscript (Q-333). In the upper layer represented is a later divine service collection – paracliton.

Undertext: 8th c.; overtext: 14th-15th cc.;

Parchment, 97 folios, size: 16x13cm

H-1329

[illegible][illegible][illegible]



Lectionary

One of the later copies of lectionary; copied at a monastic centre that showed interest in traditional service books in the 11th c. too. Done in *mtavruli* and *nuskhuri*, in dark brown ink. The titles are done in cinnabar. Mention is made of the well-known feudal lord of the 11th c. Liparit Baghwashi.

1049

Parchment, 43 f., size: 30.5×22.8 cm

Copyist: Mikael Inchukhi

Q-1376

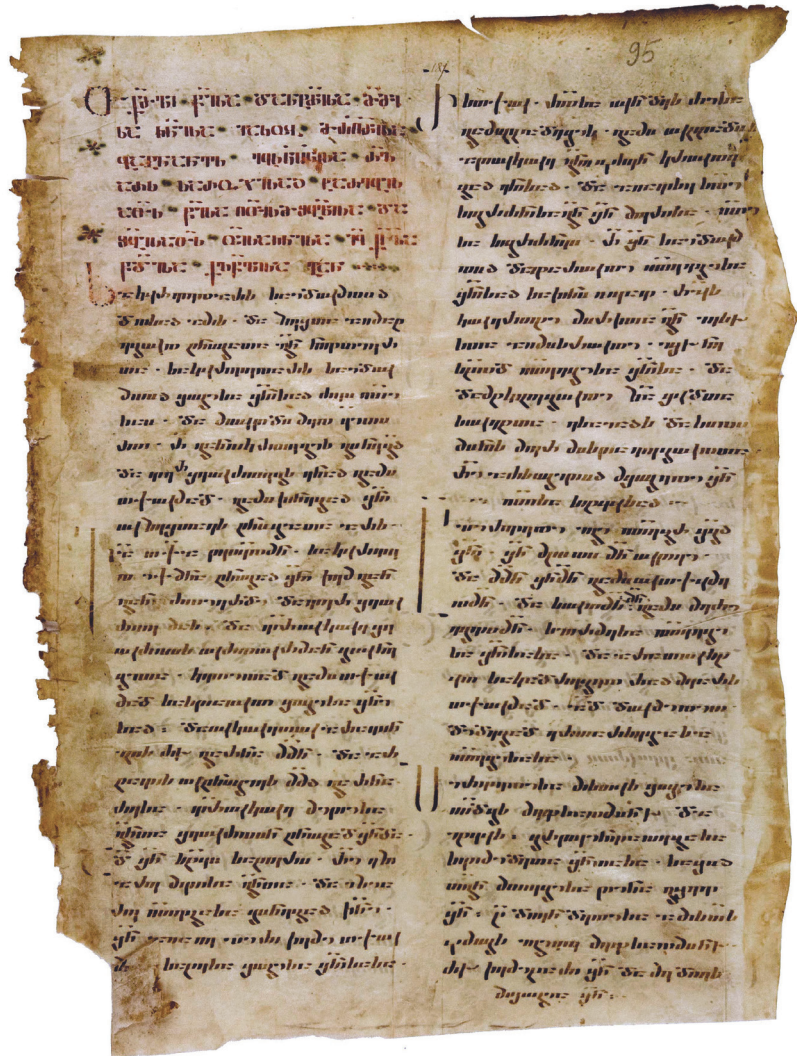
**Tbeti (Svan) Mravaltavi
(Polycephalon)**

Collection of monastic purpose.
Contains translations of 74 early
Palestinian homiletic, hagiographic
exegetic and apocryphal texts.
The main part of the manuscript
is done in *mrgvlovani* (majuscule);
chapter I is copied in *nuskhuri*
(minjuscule). The capital letters
done in ink and cinnabar in the
text serve to illuminate the text;
various figures are presented on
the margins of separate pages.

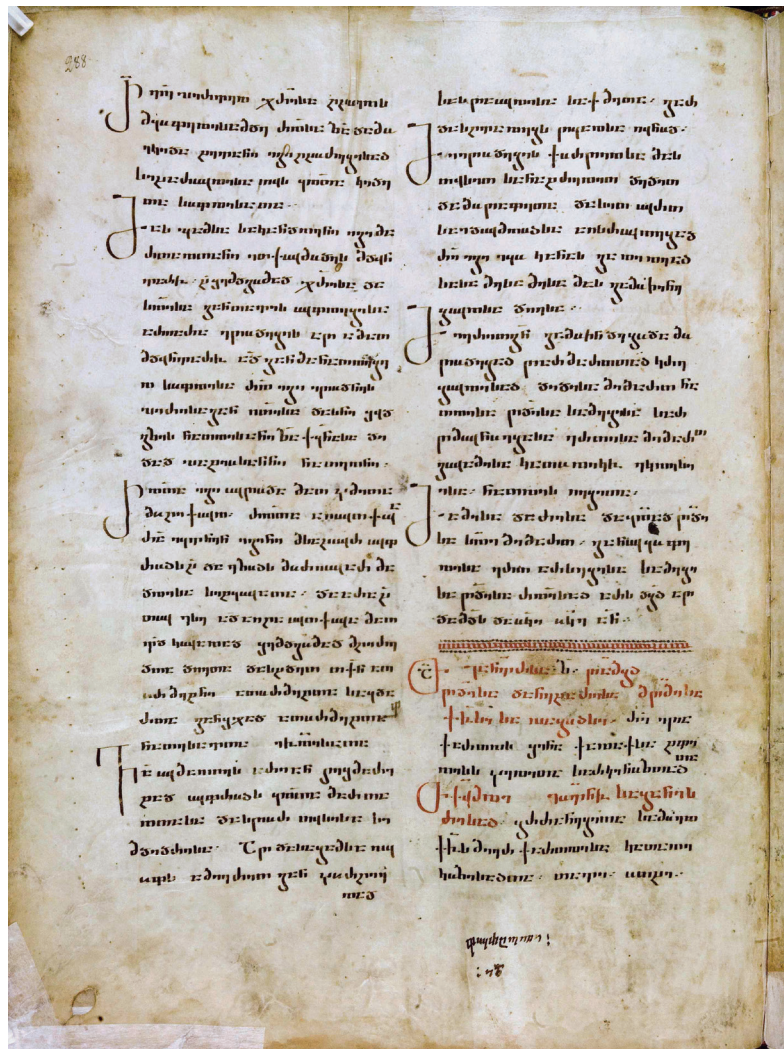
10th c.

Parchment, 242 f., size: 38.5×30 cm
Donors: Iovane Mtbevari and Father
Teodore

Venue of copying: Tao-Klarjeti
A-19



Mravaltavi – collection of sermons of Holy Fathers, hagiographic works and apocrypha arranged on a church calendar. In Byzantine writings its analogue is *panegyricon*. *Mravaltavis* are early collections. Their compilation was connected with the period of setting up separate festivals of the Lord, as indicated by accentuation of festivals on the margins of the manuscript. To date both Klarjeti-Palestinian and Athonite-Georgian *Mravaltavis* of the 9th-11th c. are known.



Parkhali Mravaltavi

The name of the collection stems from the venue of its compilation. Among Georgian manuscript books it stands out for its size. It is executed on high quality parchment; the text is written in handsome clear *nuskhuri*, in brown ink. The text has almost no ornament. Most of the capital letters are written in brown ink, very few in cinnabar. It contains translated and original works. The texts of the "Passion of Shushaniki" and the "Martyrdom of Abo" have come down to us by this manuscript.

At the turn of 10th -11th centuries.

Parchment, 655 f., size: 45.5×33.5 cm

Copyist: Gabriel Pataray

Venue of copying: Parkhali monastery

A-95



Psalter

Known under the name of "Mtskheta Davitni". Conjecturally, it is the early, pre-Athonian recension of Psalms. Copied in *asomtavruli*, with brown ink and in cinnabar. along with the principal text, the book contains commentaries to the Psalms and paschalistic texts with tables and the canons of the Psalms. The book is adorned with image of Processional cross on the pedestal, decorated initials and canon tables; stylized Arabic numbers are written at the end of the paschal tables; the composition, artistic and decorative system of the manuscript follow the books written in Tao-Klarjeti at the end of the 10th c. The miscellaneous is dated according to the calendric text included in it.

10th-11th c.

Parchment, 261 f., size: 19.8×15.3 cm

Venue of copying: Tao-Klarjeti

A-38

The writings brought together in the Mravaltavis are presently preserved mostly in the form of Georgian translations. They are early Christian texts of special significance in research into the history of Christian literature. Mravaltavi continued to exist up to the turn of the 10th-11th centuries. Then it transformed into a miscleany, without reference to the church calendar; it was no longer used for divine service but turned into a reader for parish and monastic education.

The development of the manuscript tradition, arisen in the Georgian church naturally became closely linked to the organization of monastic life in Georgia. Monasteries constituted

the main scriptoria, whose activity developed on the basis of cultural-confessional contacts with the contemporaneous Christian world. The Georgian state, having naturally the written culture too, was always open to the reception of the intellectual and cultural experience of the multi-ethnic Christian space. The Georgian church had such contacts with churchmen arriving in Georgia proper and directly through close contacts with Syria and Palestine – the Christian bosom of Georgian monastics, which commenced back in the 5th-6th c., when Georgian monks addressed the Laura of St. Sabas in Palestine as well as the monastery of Symeon the Stylite, near Antioch, in Northern Syria. Nor is it surprising that in the 6th c. the Syrian Fathers came to Georgia from Mesopotamia and established themselves here (the Georgian tradition refers to them as the Thirteen Syrian Fathers). Their experience appreciably contributed to the organization of monastic life and the development of manuscript tradition in Georgia, especially in her eastern regions where Georgian manuscript tradition, as noted above, developed first in conditions of heavy pressure of Mazdaic Iran, and subsequently of Muslim Arabs.



St. Shio Mghvimeli, the Assyrian Father

18th-century miniature
Paper S-3269 – mixed collection

St. David of Gareji

18th-century miniature
S-3269



A special role in the development of Georgian written culture of the period under discussion devolved on Georgian monasticism flourishing in Palestinian seats, especially the monastery of St. Sabas, engaged in intensive scholarly activity up to the 970s-80s.

The Georgian Manuscripts of St. Sabas are the best proof of the scholarly tradition of this Laura. It was here that the St. Sabas recensions of the Four Gospels, the monastic regulations or typicon and divine service collections were created, spreading to Georgian church and monastic centres. The Georgian monk Ioane Zosime, flourishing there, compiled a most important liturgical collection

of encyclopedic character: Sin.Geo.O.34; he also translated one of the oldest astrological treatises: "Kalanday" by Ezra the prophet. In Zosime's manuscript we find his work "Glory and Praise of the Georgian Language", known as one of the cornerstones of national world view. Today these manuscripts are preserved in the library of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, for by the end of the 10th c., following the increased presence of Muslim Arabs at

Papyrus-parchment Iadgari

Deserves special attention firstly from the viewpoint of writing material, for simultaneous use of leaves of papyrus and parchment is made in it. The text reflects the 7th-8th c. Jerusalem practice. Its Greek model is lost today. It is copied in angular *mrghlovani*, with marginal signs. In one note mention is made of Iovane – presumably the copyist.

10th c.

Parchment, papyrus 313 f., 194 papyrus, 123 parchment. size: 11.2×10 cm

Copyist: Iovane

Venue of copying: Monastery of St. Sabas

H-2123

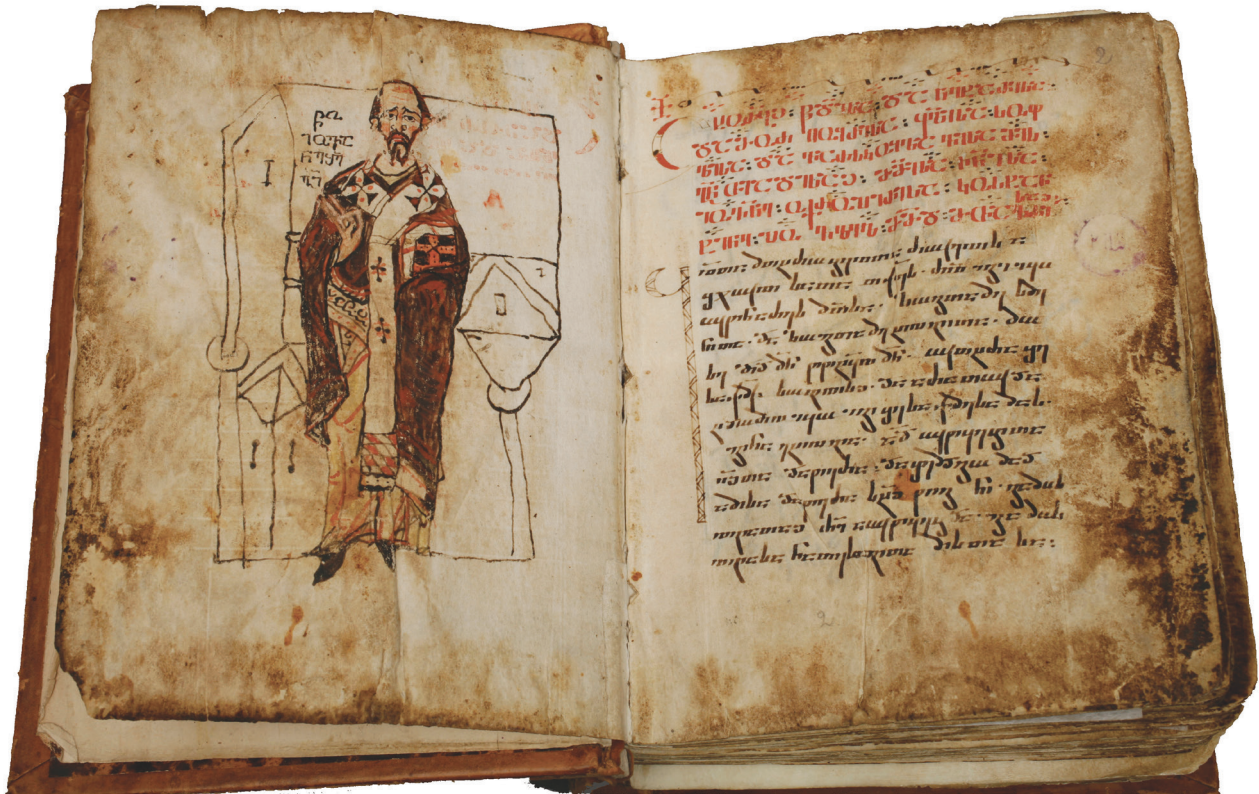


St. Sabas, the Georgian colony moved to Mount Sinai to continue its activity here. The library of the monastery of St. Catherine houses 229 Georgian manuscripts and fragments. It is one of the oldest and richest collections.

It should be noted also that the Klarjetian and Sinaitic-Palestinian Georgian manuscripts reflect well the major role not only of Greek but Christian Arabic and Syrian cultures in early Christian writings and general culture. The literature of this period is free from the dictate from any particular centre. It receives and reflects equally the most important trends of the artistic and symbolic-allegorical thought of the traditional cultures united in the Christian area.

In the 8th-10th centuries, apart from the Laura of St. Sabas, the Georgians were active in Palestine the Laura of Chariton or Palavra.

From the 8th c. Georgia's political and cultural centre moved to Tao-Klarjeti, in the south-west of the country. From this period the monastic centres of Tao-Klarjeti turned into a major seat of Georgian written tradition that had close contacts with the Laura of St. Sabas. In drawing up to the statute of the Khantsta monastery, Father Grigol, the inspirer of the monastic colonization of Tao-Klarjeti, took into account the Typicon of St. Sabas as well. The repertory of manuscript books broadened, embracing all fields of church writings. Whereas in early Georgian manuscripts we come across separate books of the Old Testament, the full text of the Georgian recension of the Pentateuch was copied at Oshki – one of the lauras of Tao-Klarjeti. In parallel to translated sources, original Georgian writings found their place in hymnographic and hagiographic collections. Mixed-type cognitive-educational collections were compiled. Systems of symbols of art-decorative design of manuscript took shape, as well as marginal and liturgical purpose. The existence of copies of illustrated Georgian manuscript book was due to the growth of material or financial means. It was in Tao-Klarjeti that the foundation was laid for the royal dynasty and great feudal houses to provide means to support scholars materially. The words of the great noble Gabriel Dapanchuli, said to Grigol Khandzteli, "now with



"Life of St. John Chrysostom"

Georgian translation of the text of George of Alexandria, done by monastics gone from Tao-Klarjeti to Palestine. The book was copied specially. Written in calligraphic *nuskhuri*, in brown ink, the title in *mtavruli* and cinnabar. The Georgian and Greek used for fascicular numbering, are decorated with black and red ink. The text is prefaced with a miniature of John Chrysostom.

968

Parchment, 257 f., size: 15×12 cm

Donor: Mikael Panaskerteli

Venue of copying: Khariton Laura

H-2124



St. Grigol Khandzteli

A prominent Georgian churchman, initiator of building a monastic complex in Tao-Klarjeti. An 18th-century miniature. Paper S-3269

us is the fleshly good and with you the spiritual good, and let us mix these two" found manifestation not only in the construction of churches and monasteries but in book creation as well. From the 9th-10th c. the art of the Georgian manuscript book took the road of progress. The mastery and remarking the art motifs existing in the Byzantine space resulted in the refinement of the system of the decorated capital letters of the text; special attention was given to the illumination of the Four Gospels. Special – "celebratory" – adorned with colourful, multi-figure composition lavish miniatures were created, while copies of monastic purpose were decorated with ornamental processional crosses.

At the same time the movement started here of the Georgian church and monastic tradition to take the orientation to the Constantinople rule. This process was of course a concomitant development of the political orientation of the Georgian state. The kingdom of Tao-Klarjeti, formed in the 8th c. in the south-west of Georgia, through uniting kingdoms and principalities in the 980s, laid the foundation of a single Georgian state. The state unity was followed by consolidation of church unity. The Caliphate's policy of conquests lasting for two centuries and the strong pressure of Muslim ideology led to the shaping of the national trends of Georgian written culture, a messianistic idea arose. Ioane Sabanisdze, the author of an 8th c. hagiographic work "The Martyrdom of Abo", preaches about Kartli as a bastion defending Christianity from the Muslim world and a country giving birth to holy martyrs whose natives are equal to the Greek in the true faith: they are equal, like Martha and Mariam. As noted above, a eulogistic work was created in the 10th c. "The Praise and Glory of the Georgian Language", which

in the 970s the chronicle of the Christianization of the Georgians “The Conversion of Kartli” appears in manuscript tradition. In parallel the need for the existence of a powerful Christian ally becomes clear. The Byzantine Empire was such an ally, which for its part attained advance and hegemony in the Eastern Christian world.

The Shatberdi Collection

The first mixed collection with educational function containing important compositions of ecclesiastic writing which includes the history of Christianization of Georgians “Moktsevai Kartlisai” (“Conversion of Kartli”). The text is written in *mtavruli* and *nuskhuri*, in brown ink, the titles – in cinnabar, has no ornaments. An indicator to the beginning of the text is a letter “qani”, i. e. “qantsili” extended along several lines or sometimes half page and star-shaped signs.

973-976

Parchment, 286 f., size: 28-22 cm

Copyists: Iovane Beray, two anonyms,

Venue of copying: Shatberdi

S-1141



Handwritten text in Georgian script, likely a liturgical or historical document. The text is written in a cursive style with some red ink used for initials or headings. The page is numbered 168 at the top center.

ladgari

Hymnographic collection of the 10th century, specially compiled in the early Byzantine period. This collection has preserved all Georgian original and translated hymns known in the 10th century. In the text the old musical notes are written in red ink above and beneath the lines. The manuscript is rewritten in classical nukshuri, without traditional rule of word abbreviations or titlo, in black ink and cinnabar; illuminated with colored capital letters and linear ornamental headpieces.

978-998

Parchment, 272 f., size: 26×21 cm

Venue of copying: Shatberdi

Copyists: Mikael Modrekili and two anonymous copyists.

St. Basil of Caesaria and Ioane Mtbvari

S-425



St. Basil of Caesarea and Ioane Mtbvari

From the 980s Georgian culture and the manuscript tradition are on the upgrade. In parallel to liturgical and monastic writings original literature of different genres developed, in particular church poetry, exegetic texts, book on church law, dogmatic collection or Dogmaticon. From the 12th c. the Gelati and Iqalto Academies became stronger as scholarly-educational centres. Libraries attached to them with manuscripts copied at various monastic centres are gathered there; the cognitive function of manuscript book broadens; mixed collections are compiled.

Works of church literature, translated earlier, are translated anew and they are brought closer to the original. The national character of Georgian church writings began to take shape: the trend of a kind of rivalry with the Greek world appeared, determined by Constantinople's dominance with respect to the Christian East, including Georgia. It was the experience of rivalry excited the interest of Georgian literary society to become interested in and master Byzantine culture, now the attention turned to the monastic



Hymnographic collection

Hymnographic collection in which declamatory-liturgical signs are clearly marked, an earlier equivalent of the notation system from the viewpoint of contemporarily. Such signs attested in the manuscripts indicate stable system of the development of the 10th-century church music. Written in *nuskhuri*, the initial letters, titles, designations of certain group of Dzlispirni are done in cinnabar.

10th c.

Parchment, 229 f., size: 17.2x11.3 cm

Copyists: Iordane and Iovane

A-603



Parkhali Four Gospels

Copied at Shatberdi and donated to the newly built Parkhali monastery. The text is done in *mtavruli*, in brown ink; the capital letters and titles in cinnabar. The manuscript has sample adscripts, forming a clear picture of its subsequent movement. In the 18th c. the manuscript was renewed and the missing passages filled with a text copied on paper archdeacon Nikoloz Abashidze, grand son of Vakhtang VI, King of Kartli.

973

Parchment, paper, 260 f. (238 f. parchment, 22 f. paper)

Size: 22.9×19.9 cm

Copyist: Iovane Bera; restorer: Nikoloz Abashidze

Venue of copying: Shatberdi

A-1453



Healing the possessed with a devil

St. Luke the Evangelist



Processional cross – Quadrifolium

Jrutchi I Four Gospels

The oldest recension of the Georgian Four Gospels, one of the first classically illustrated manuscripts. Written in *mtavruli*, in black ink, the titles and capital letters in cinnabar. The endings of the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark, that invade the leaves with miniatures, were completed by the artist. It is the only manuscript in which the artist Tevdore Kamaratmtserali is mentioned. The illustration of the manuscript comprises: crosses, vaults, 8 canons, the same number of illustrations. It is prefaced with a processional cross in the shape of quadrifolium, Virgin with child, placed in an arched frame, and the Evangelist and scenes of healing.

936-940

Parchment, 297 f., size: 26×21 cm

Donor: Grigol Mirdatis dze

Copyist: Gabriel

Illustrator: Tevdore

Venue of copying: Shatberdi

H-1660

Ts qarostavi I Four Gospels

One of the prominent books of the Tao-Klarjeti literary school. The text of the Four Gospels belongs to an old Opiza recension. The manuscript is adorned with arched canons and miniatures, done in the so-called folk manner – similar graphic forms occur on the early icons preserved in Svaneti.

End of the 10th c.

Parchment, 226 f., size: 22×19 cm

Copyist: Gabriel Patarai

Venue of copying: Tao-Klarjeti

A-98



The Canons



Saints Matthew and Mark the Evangelists

Saints Luke and Ioane the Evangelists

centres in the centre of the Empire. It was from the 9th century that the Greeks set themselves up, first in Greek, and subsequently in Georgian proper monasteries.

Initially the attention of the Georgians was attracted by Mount Ulumbo or Olympus, in the 860s the Georgian monastic Ilarion established himself. He attracted other monks and laid the foundation of Georgian colonization. On the Olympus Georgians



Gelati Bible

Called also catenated Bible, as the text is accompanied by catenes or commentaries. Done in *nuskhuri* of the transitional period to *mkhedruli*, in ... brown ink. High quality oriental paper is used as writing material. The manuscript was presumably copied at the Gelati monastery, in which theological activity started in the 12th c. and Gelati Academy was founded.

12th c.

Paper, 302 f., size: 37×27.6 cm

A-1108





David the Builder

1089-1125

Gelati fresco

flourished at several monasteries: in the church of the Virgin – “in a cave where the Georgians dwelt”, in the Crania Laura, in the village of the saints Cosmas and Damian”.

In 876 on the Emperor Basil’s order, Ilarion the Georgian’s pupils founded the monastery of Romana (Hromana) at the centre of the European shore of the Bosphorus, near Constantinople. The Jalia or the same Georgian Ghalia monastery on the island of Cyprus was the subject of the care of the Georgian royal court, namely Queen Tamar and later Erekle II.

In 980-983 the Iverion monastery on Mount Athos was founded – one of the most important monastic centres in the history of Georgian written culture, in which a special scholarly-translational and calligraphic school took shape. It was precisely this school – its directors Euthymius and Giorgi the Athonites, and a group of scholarly monks rallied round them: Iovane Grdzelisdze, Arsen Ninotsmindeli, Iovane Khakhuleli and others, in the 10th-11th centuries carried on broad enlightenment and cognitive work in the field of Georgian church writings. They introduced and established all significant gains of Byzantine culture, preserving and developing at the same time the national content of Georgian literature. Georgian church manuscript of the Athonite period stands out for its genre diversity, novel regulation of church and monastic life and tendency towards establishing scholarly knowledge. No branch of church writing was left without the attention given by Euthymius and Giorgi. The establishment of new recensions of the Four Gospels, through comparison with Greek is linked to their names, the renewal of the liturgical life of the Georgian church, or the process of translation to the Constantinople rule. Collections of encyclopedic character are compiled under the direction of Euthymius the Athonite. Today the Iviron library boasts 86 Georgian manuscripts.



"Libra called in Arabic *Mizan*"

Mixed collection

The first dated manuscript book preserved on paper, claiming attention by its composition. In parallel to texts important for church life, it contains an astrological work translated from the Arabic and illustrated. The illustration: the moon with its phases drawn in a dish, diagram reflecting the large and small stars, representation of Zodiacs – are added to the text not for the purpose of adorning it artistically but to give graphic astrological knowledge. Artistically executed kufic script is placed in front of the Zodiacs; the composition of the Crucifixion is also given in the manuscript. Later the book belonged to the king of Kartli Vakhtang VI.

1188-1210

Paper, 214 f., size: 23×30.5 cm

Copyist of one part: Esaia

A-65



St. Matthew the Evangelist

Martvili Four Gospels

The manuscript is adorned with ornamented capital letters and miniatures of Saints Matthew and Mark the Evangelists. The text is written in brown ink, the titles and significant passages in cinnabar. It has two copyists.



St. Mark the Evangelist

1050

Parchment, 186 f., size: 23×19 cm

Commissioned by Ivane Parjaniani

Copyist: Ioane Mesvete and Arsen Erhisdze

Venue of copying: Martvili



Blossoming cross

Four Gospels

Copied in calligraphic *mtavruli* on high quality parchment, in brown ink, capital letters in cinnabar. The book is adorned with arches, coloured capital letters and headpieces. An illuminated cross with a Greek inscription serves as an endpiece. Accompanied by images of St. Mark and St. Luka the Evangelists. The illumination is presumably executed in the manner characteristic of the literary school of the Black Mountain.

1054

Parchment, 266 l., size: 14.55x4.4 cm

S-962



Jrutchi II Four Gospels

Known under the name of new Jrutchi (Jrutchi II). By the peculiarities and the abundance of miniatures it holds one of the prominent places among Georgian illustrated Four Gospels. The 334 miniatures and other elements of the decorative system of the book are based on the principles of original Georgian tradition of painting. The compositions are given in two or three tiers. At some places the framed space is violated and the figures invade the text. The illuminator of the book who is at the same time the copyist of the book is known.

12th c.

Parchment, 278 f., size: 24.5×18.6 cm

Copyist: Mikael

H-1667



The Crucifixion



The Transfiguration

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The Ascension



St. Luke and St. John the Evangelists

St. Maximus the Confessor, The Life of the Virgin Mary

The most comprehensive work that describes the life of the Virgin. The work was translated at the Georgian scriptorium on Mount Athos by Euthymius the Athonite. It is copied on parchment, in calligraphic *nuskhuri*; the titles and capital letters are in *mtavruli*, in gold ink. Adorned with some ornaments the text is prefaced by a miniature of the Evangelists St. Luke and St. John.

10th-11th c.

Parchment, 332 f., size: 16.5×11.4 cm

Copyist: Benedikte

Venue of copying: Iviron Monastery

A-40



St. John the Evangelist and theologian

**"The visitation of the St. John the Evangelist and the Theologian",
translated by Andrew of Caesaria-Cappadocia**

The first Georgian translation of the Revelation. As this book of the New Testament was the latest to be entered in the Gospel, in Georgian tradition it was translated in the 10th c. The translation was made by Euthymius the Athonite, founder of the Mount Athos school. The book is interesting for the additional reason that it is the earliest dated collection among the manuscripts copied in *nuskhuri*. The colophon of the manuscript contains information on the rebellion of Bardas Sclerus against the emperors Basil and Constantine.

978

Parchment, 210 f., size: 17.5×12.5 cm

Copyist: Saba Kuti

Venue of copying: Laura of Crania, Olympus

H-1346



St. Anania the Apostle and St. John the Prophet

Minor Synaxarion

The collection laid the foundation for the introduction of the Constantinople Typicon in the Georgian church and calendar system and determination of a new plan and composition of the movable cycles. The manuscript is done on parchment, in *nuskhuri*, in brown ink, the capital letters and titles in cinnabar. It is the most widely illustrated collection of a book of 400 pages, only 144 leaves survive, adorned with 72 miniatures featuring both plots from the Gospel and saints. The creation of the book



The Healing of a Paralytic

was funded by Zakaria, bishop of Bana.

1030

Parchment, 144 f., size: 27×21 cm

Commissioned by Zakaria of Bana

Venue of copying: Monastery of Khora, Constantinople

A-648

Vani Four Gospels

A distinguished specimen of book art, acquires special value because it was created for Queen Tamar, on her order. By the quality of its design and execution it is one of the first among "celebratory" manuscripts. It is copied on high quality white parchment in *nuskhuri*, with lavish use of gold ink. It is adorned with rich vaults, headpieces. There are two-tiered miniatures of the beginning of the Gospel chapters. The organizer of the manuscript and its copyist was monk Iovane of Romana monastery in Constantinople. The illuminator: Byzantine Mikael Koreseli.

12th-13th c.

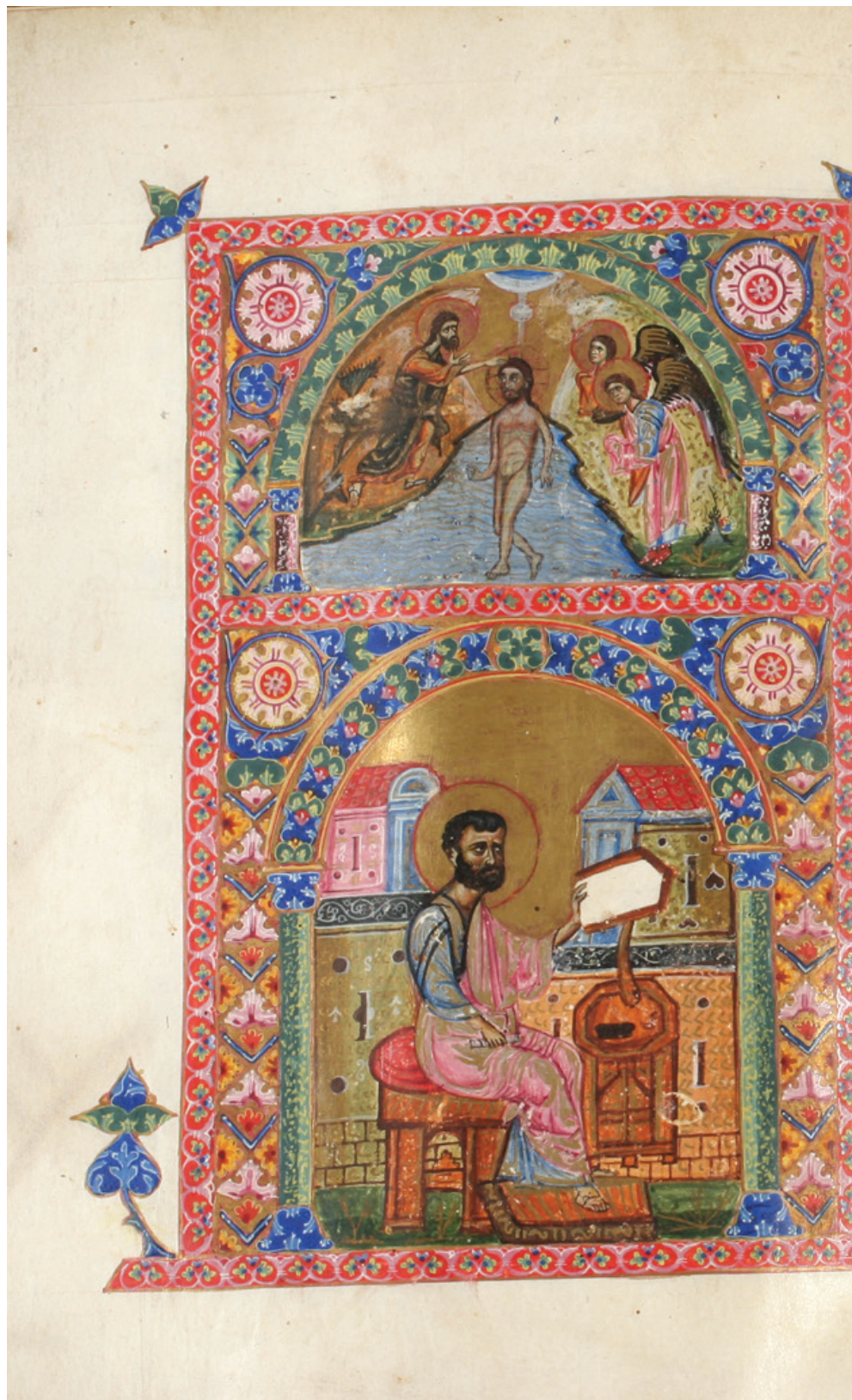
Parchment, 274 f.

Size: 29×21 cm

Copyist: Iovane

Painter: Mikael Koreseli

Venue of copying: Romana Monastery
A-1335



Baptism
St. Mark the Evangelist



Minor Nomocanon

Translated by Euthymius the Athonite. It is the first Georgian translation done in the heyday of the autocephalous Georgian church. It combines the text material of various canonical manuscript books, including Georgian. Copied by well-known calligraphers.

1031

Parchment, 204 f., size: 19×15.5 cm

Donor: Zakaria of Bana

Copyist: Basil

S-143



Great Synaxarion

Arranged according to the church calendar, this liturgical book brings together the brief Lives and Martyrdoms of Saints of ecumenical and Georgian churches. Through it we acquaint ourselves with liturgical practice of St. Sophia, Monastery of Stoudios and the Iviron monastery on Mount Athos. The great Synaxarion was translated in 1042-1044 from the Greek and supplemented with Georgian material by Giorgi the Hagiorite. The manuscript was financed and copied by David and Iovane Jibisdzes, well-known calligraphists flourishing in the 11th c. on the Black Mountains. It is written in *nuskhuri*, in brown ink; the titles in *asomtavruli* and cinnabar. It is adorned with rectilinear headpieces and capital letters.

11th c.

Parchment, 452 f., size: 22×17 cm

Copyists and funders: Iovane and David Jibisdze

Venue of copying: Black Mountain, Romantsminda

H-2211

Georgian monastic colonization of the Black Mountain near Antioch which had intensively functioned since the thirties of the 11th century deserves special attention.

Georgians lived and worked in the monasteries of St.Simeon, Kelipo, Kastana, Barlaamtsminda, Romanos, Lerts miskhevi, Ezra and Tvali. Georgians book activity was led by well-known translators and editors of the 11th century : Giorgi Athonite, Giorgi Shekenebuli, Giorgi Mtsire, catholicoses Ioane and Mikael Dvalis. Georgian scribes had rather close contacts with local Greek-Syrian-Arabic circles. They made use of a rich library founded by Theodore patriarch in St. Simeon. It is in Georgian manuscripts of the Black Mountain that the principles of the theological and scholarly commentaries to the texts were formed. In the same manuscripts in parallel to Constantinopolitan tradition the trace of the ancient Syrian culture was reflected.

In the same period the Georgian nobleman from the Tao region Grigol Bakurianisdze, who was close to the Byzantine court, founded Georgian monastery for Petritsoni seminarists in Bulgaria. Here under the leadership of Ioane Petritsi an important philosophic-theological school was established.

From the 11th century Georgians attention was again focused on Palestine where monastic-educational activity exploded with new force. The leader of this activity was Georgian Cross monastery and its founder Giorgi Prokhore, whose concern was compilation and dissemination of new manuscript collections. It is under his leadership that the collection of "Lives" of Palestine prominent figures was released, known under the name of Palestine Paterikon. Currently, this collection is in British Museum in London (Addit 1181). The Cross depository was rapidly filled with participation of scribe working in Georgia, at the same time the manuscripts rewritten there were sent in other Georgian monastic centers. The monastery deserved particular attention of Georgian royal court and feudal aristocracy. In Georgia, there was created a rival to the Cross, i.e. protector ecclesiastic centers which financially supported Georgian monasteries existing abroad. Georgians also lived and worked in Golgotha- Christ's tomb – the monasteries of - Resurrection, Kap-



Alaverdi Four Gospels. Canons.



St. Matthew the Evangelist





Baptism of Abgarus

Alaverdi Four Gospels

(The Saviour's icon not done by human hand, or Mandilion)

One of the distinguished examples of the classical period Georgian manuscript book. Created at the Calipos Laura, Black Mountain. It belongs to the rare Four Gospels to which the story of the Saviour's icon, not made by human hand, the "Epistle of Abgarus" is attached. The book is copied on high quality parchment, in *nuskhuri* and *mtavruli* by well-known 11th century calligraphists. It is adorned with ornamental capital letters, processional cross and canons, and nine miniatures



The image of the Saviour not done by human hand, or Mandilion

executed on sheet gold. This is the only Georgian Ms in which we find the image of the Saviour, not done by human hand, or Mandilion imprinted on cloth. This special book was brought to Georgia in 1059 by Ivane, son of Liparit Baghvashi as a token of submission to Bagrat IV.

1054

Parchment, 328 f., size: 24×19 cm

Copyists: Giorgi and Ioane Dvali

Venue of copying: Calipos, Laura of the Virgin, Black Mountain

A-484



Baptism

Works of Gregory the Theologian

A philosophical-theological collection, containing 19 texts. The Georgian translation belongs to Eprem Mtsire. It is one of the best copies of a commented manuscript. Copied on in *nuskhuri*, in brown ink, the titles and beginnings in cinnabar; adorned with ornamental capital letters, marginal signs



The Supplication

and artistic compositions. In the 18th c. it belonged to Prince David, grandson of Erekle II.

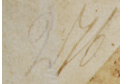
12th c.

Paper, 280 f., size: 42.5×31 cm

A-109



Saint Mamai, Spring



GEORGIAN MANUSCRIPT BOOK 63



The Gelati Four Gospels

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The Healing scenes



The Saviour and the Pharisees

Gelati Four Gospels

Unique specimen of 12th century book art – celebratory Four Gospels. Copied on specially-treated parchment in *nuskhuri*, in brown ink, cinnabar and gold ink. Stands out for artistic execution and composition. The text of the Gospel is accompanied by explanations of declamation and liturgical signs on Greek and Georgian and the "Epistle of Abgarus". Is adorned with columnar vaults, 254 miniatures and refined capital letters done in gold ink. Sheet gold is used as ground for each miniature. Each chapter is prefaced by portraits of the Evangelists. The titles of the Four Gospels are placed in a frame adorned with a carpet-like ornament. The Gospel is the specimen containing Giorgi the Hagiorite's translation.

12th c.

Parchment, III, 293 f., size: 26×18.8 cm

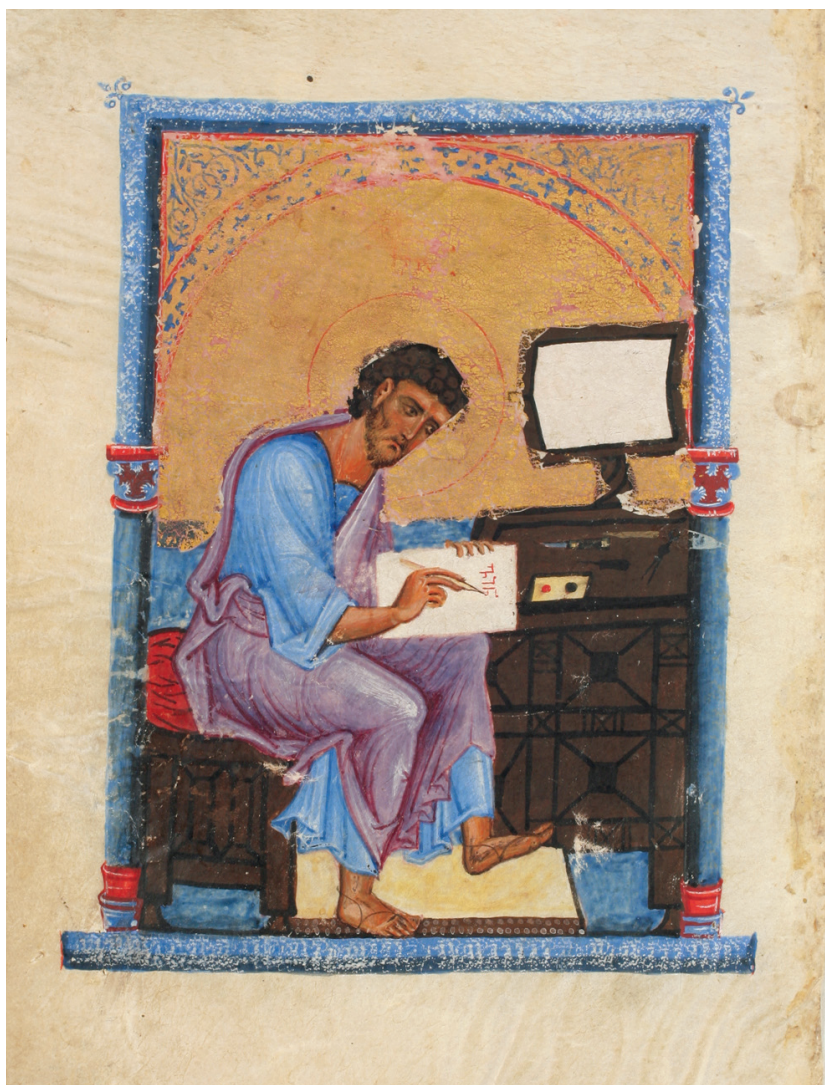
Q-908



Saviour's Preaching



Christ and St. John the Baptist



St. Luke the Evangelist

Tsqarostavi Gospel II

The manuscript book was copied in the reign of Queen Tamar written on parchment in classic *nuskhuri*, in brown ink and cinnabar. It is adorned with four portraits of the Evangelists. The book was copied on the order of Ioanne, bishop of Sapara and Tbeti. The master of the cover is Beka Opizari.

1295

Parchment, 277 f., size 25×18 cm

Copyists: Ioane Pukaralisdze, Giorgi Seataisdze

Q-907



St. Luke the Evangelist

Bichvinta Four Gospels

The manuscript was created in the 12th c., in western Georgia. Later it was transformed to Bichvinta church of the Virgin. It is copied on parchment in *nuskhuri*. The text of the Gospel is written in brown ink, and the *asomtavruli* titles are done in gold ink and cinnabar. Two miniatures of the holy Evangelists Mark and Luke survive in the manuscript. The illumination of the book points to the original character of Georgian miniature painting.

12th c.

Parchment, 230 f., size: 31×23 cm

Venue of copying: Western Georgia

H-2120

pata, Dertuba, Dertavi nunnery, Gethsemane, Ghali, Basil, Theodore, Nicholas, Samouel, Shahani.

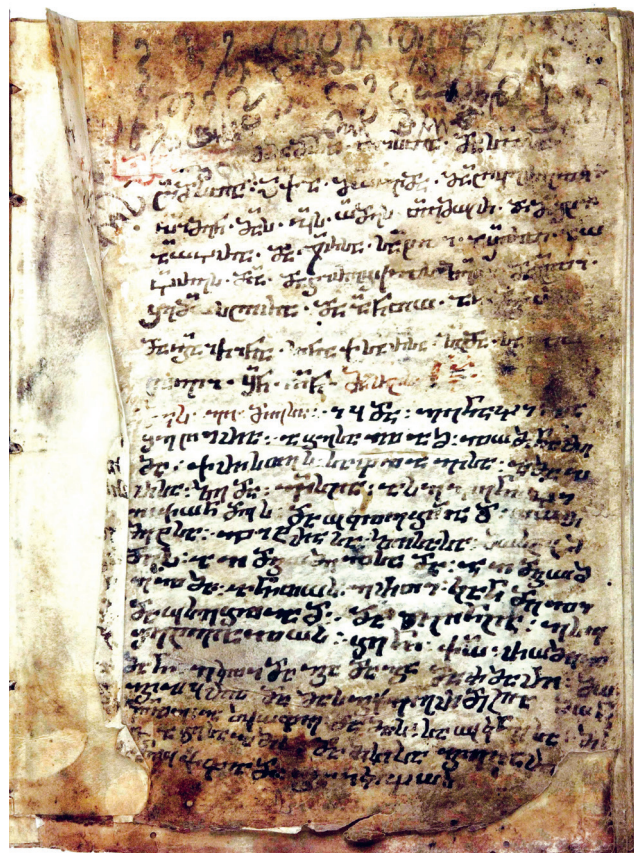
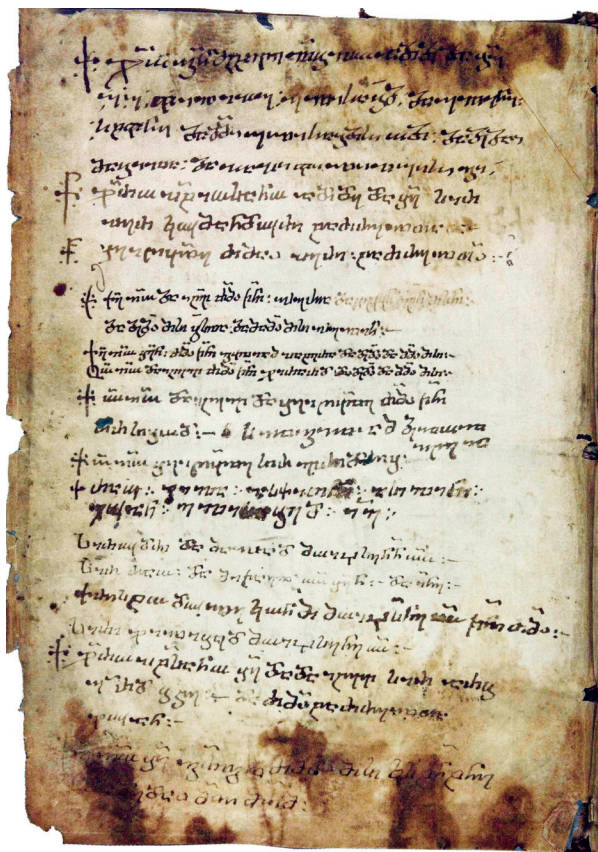
Today, a total of 161 manuscripts of Jerusalemite Georgian collection are known.

In parallel, Georgian manuscript book is created in churches and monasteries existing in Georgia. The book activity comprised both large monastic centers in Georgia and individual churches and monasteries. The possession of a book richly illuminated and diverse in content had become a matter of dignity both spiritual and secular rank.

Georgian manuscript of the 13th-16th centuries follows traditional path of development which has to be protected by written culture of that period as well as Georgian state in conditions of political oppression from the Mongols, Ottomans and Iran.

Beginning from the 17th-18th centuries the stratum of Georgians cultural relations expanded. Georgian writing culture directed its attention to European knowledge and experience which was favored by political relations of that period. On the one hand, the appearance of catholic missionaries in Georgia and, on the other hand, an attempt to establish political unity with Russia was naturally followed by the entering of book experience characteristic of these spaces. The books of Catholic content were recopied, the monuments spread in Latin world of spiritual writing and church history were translated from Russian, the first printing house was established. The tradition of compilation and decoration of Georgian manuscript books initially was transferred to the printing book. The increase of printing products somehow suppressed the range of spreading of Georgian manuscript which was limited by small form books of personal ownership.

With more or less intensity Georgian manuscript book preserved its existence till the beginning of the 20th century.



Synaxarion

One of the ancient manuscripts of the Great Synaxarion by George the Hagiorite. It is copied in the Monastery of the Cross in Jerusalem for the Monastery of Calvary. The manuscript is executed in calligraphic nuskhuri script. A number of agapes and commemorations are attached to the text of Synaxarion, including those of noble members of Templars.

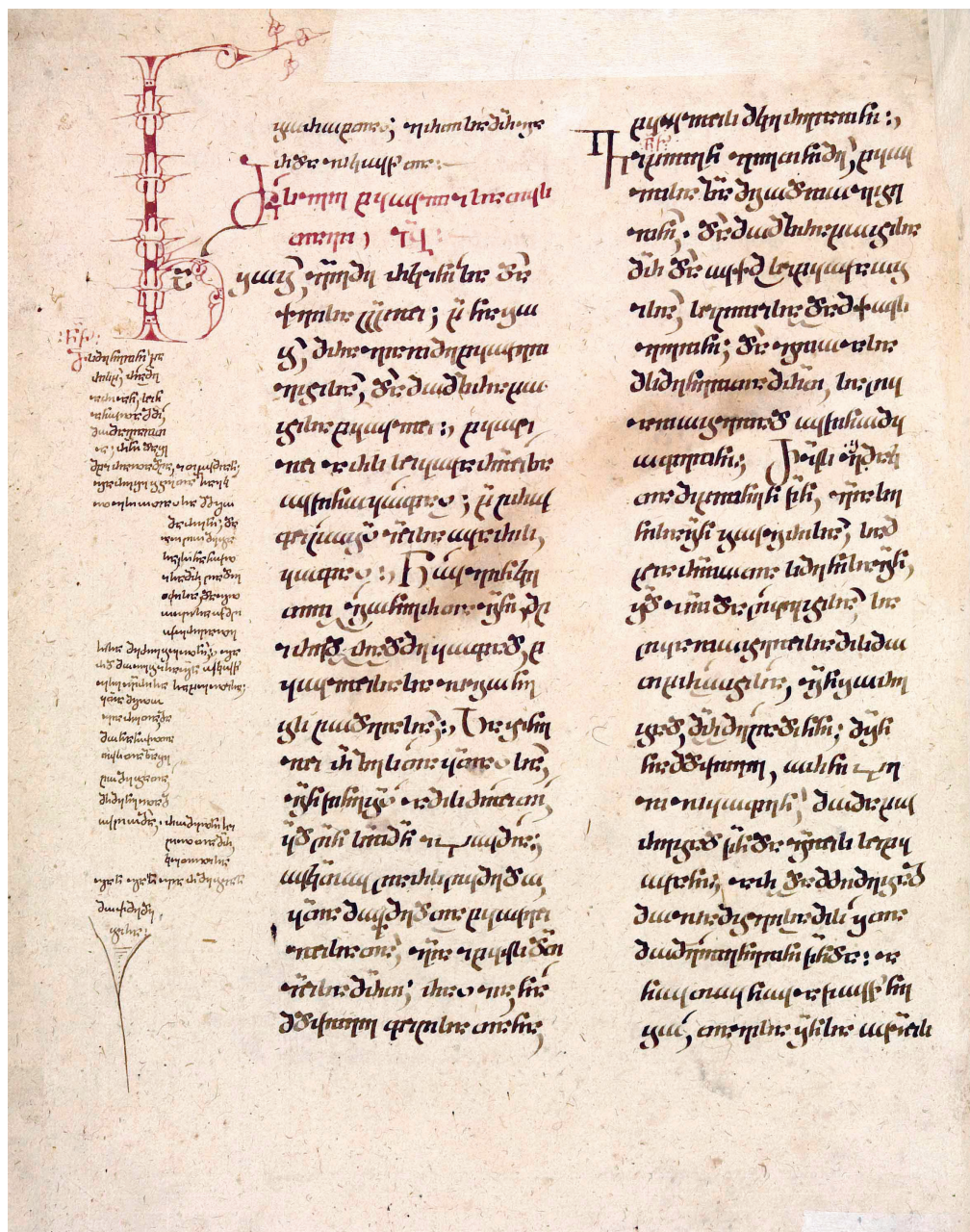
1156 AD

Parchment, 340 f; size: 25x18 cm

Scribe: Monk Giorgi Dodisi

Venue of copying: Jerusalem, the Monastery of the Cross.

H-1661



John of Sinai, Climacus

The outstanding spacemen of the medieval book culture, i.e. two Georgian translations of Climacus or The Ladder of Divine Ascent by Euthymius the Athonite and Ioane Petritsi. The translation by Petritsi is copied by the renowned calligrapher Nikrai (12th c.). The text is adorned by the ornamental initials written in black and red ink and graphical images. The initials are incorporated in the text, they are embellished with decorative images of leaves. The comments by Patriarch Photi are written in the wide margins. The text is full of system



of declamation and liturgical signs. Sometimes the arrangement of comment lines creates figures or they are written in the graphical images. The translation by Euthymius the Athonite is copied by an anonymous scribe.

12th c.

Paper, 223 f., size: 36.5×29 cm

Copyists: Nikrai and an anonymous scribe.

H-1669



St. John the Evangelist

Four Gospels

An interesting specimen of a manuscript book of the transition from the classic to later traditions. The venue of copying is unknown, but the book was created in Georgia on the order of Glonistavisdzes, one of the feudal families. The art and decorative system immitates specimens of classic period Georgian book. However, use is made of a palette of different colours, namely glaring red.

12th-13th c.

Parchment, 316 f., size: 24×17 cm

Copyist: Iakob

A-516



St. Matthew the Evangelist

Vardzia Four Gospels

The manuscript book, done on high quality white parchment, claims attention for its lavish, refined original design and classic calligraphic *nuskhuri*, the titles are in cinnabar and *mtavruli*. The capital letters and important passages of the text are done in gold ink and colours. The images of the Evangelists are done on leaves with text, taking up small space. The miniatures are adorned with original ornaments. The Vardzia Gospel is a manuscript of "Celebratory" character, probably belonging to Queen Tamar. Till the 16th century the book was kept at Vardzia. Following the pillage of Vardzia by the Persians, it was redeemed by Leon, son of the Kakhetian king, who donated it again to Vardzia. The book had a silver cover with an enamel icon of the Virgin, which was stolen.

12th-13th c.

Parchment, 289 f., size: 23×18 cm

Q-899



St. Mark the Evangelist

Four Gospels

Copied and illuminated in the 13th c. It is one of the few Gospels, accompanied by the "Epistle of Abgarus" – a translation of Late Byzantine Hellenophilic tradition, accompanied by declamation-liturgical signs. The Gospel is illuminated. The beginning of each chapter is adorned with images of the Evangelists on gold ground, covered with fabric for protection. The text is The text is embellished with head-piece decorated in a strange way and capital letters. Later the book was renovated and donated to the Tskhaoti head Virgin by the spouse of the Ksani Eristavi Rodam.

13th c.

Parchment, 190 f., size: 25.5×20 cm

Painter: Mathe

A-496



Descent of the Holy Spirit



Annunciation

Four Gospels

One of the best calligraphic specimens of the 13th century – apparently done specially for a representative of the noble feudal circles. It is written in *nuskhuri* – the title on red ground in gold ink. Separate elements of ornamentation form the adornment of the Four Gospels: canon tables, capital letters, miniatures done in gold ink with images of the Saints Mark and Luka, and compositions of the Annunciation, the Nativity and entry into Jerusalem.

13th c.

Parchment, 268 f., 23.5×17.5 cm

Copyist: Nikoloz Kataratsisdze

A-26

644

64



4



卅



78 GEORGIAN MANUSCRIPT BOOK



Mokvi Four Gospels

Among Georgian Four Gospels, this is one of the last illustrated book in which elements of Byzantine iconography of the palaeogian Christian art (1261-1361) and pre-Renaissance European painting are manifested. This book of celebratory character was copied in Mokvi monastery, Abkhazia, Western Georgia. It was commissioned by the archbishop of Mokvi eparchy. It is written on parchment in bold *nuskhuri*, in brown ink. Represented are: 10 canon tables 152 subject miniatures, among which interest attaches to Mokvi archbishop Daniel standing in the pasture supplication in front of the Virgin with Child. There 531 capital letters in the manuscript.

1300

Parchment, 329 f., size: 30×23.5 cm

Commissioned by: Archbishop Daniel

Copyist: Eprem

Venue of copying: Mokvi

Q-902

St. John Chrysostom's Liturgy

13th-14th century scroll, comprising three parchment leaves or Kspis sewn together. Written in *nuskhuri*, in brown ink. The title is in colour paints; the handsomely drawn capital letters are in *mtavruli*. Some parts are enlivened with blank ink. The scroll is written on both sides. John Chrysostom's liturgy or contakion is folded round a wooden stick – condaca. The image of John Chrysostom is prefaced to the text, placed in a frame.

13th-14th c.

Parchment, 3 leaves

Sizes: 64.5×20.1 cm; 74×20.1 cm;

70.5×20.1 cm

Copyist: Gabriel

A-922



St. John Chrysostom



Euchologion

The collection is comprised of various types of prayers, including many of medicinal content. Among old Georgian collections the cited book should be assigned to the so-called transition type, meant for the broad public. The copyist and venue of copying is unknown, but it is presumably a copy of a very old original. The texts are close to Klarjeti translation. The text is written on oriental paper. The script is *nuskhuri*, chapters and capital letters are in cinnabar. The manuscript is amply adorned with headpieces and tailpieces, images of humans, birds, animals and flowers and plants, artistically designed capital letters and rosettes.

14th-15th c.

118 f., of these paper 116 f., Parchment 2 f., size: 24.5×20.15

A-1110



Women bringing spices and Joseph of Arimathea

Pentecostarion of Largvisi

A book containing liturgical hymns for the Easter period. Written in *nuskhuri*, the titles in cinnabar. Illuminated with a headpiece, capital letters and miniatures depicting scenes from the Lord's festivals.

15th c.

Parchment, 175 f., size: 25.6×20.2 cm

Commissioned by: Shalva Eristavi

Copyist: Barnaba

A-25



The Saviour and the Samaritan Woman

The Psalms

Copied in Samtskhe. The small-sized manuscript was created for a family library. Written on parchment in *nuskhuri*, capital letters in *asomtavruli*; done in gold ink. The Psalms is prefaced by a miniature of David the Prophet done in colours and the beginning of the text is adorned with a headpiece with an original ornament.

1494

Parchment, 168 f., size: 9.8×7.6 cm

Commissioned by Qvarqvare and Mzechabuk II Atabages

Copyist: Ambrosi

Venue of copying: Samtskhe, South Georgia

A-351



St. David the Prophet with a harp



The Meeting of David and Saul



The Wedding of King David and Abigail

The Psalms

This manuscript book must have been specially adorned for high rank aristocratic family. Contains the texts of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli's redaction. Stands before David the prophet's representation earlier artistic miniatures are attached to the text.

17th c.

Paper, 236 f., size: 25×17.5 cm

Commissioner: Prince Zilikhan

H-1665



The battle between King David and Adrazar

The Psalms

The book was rewritten in the western Georgia, in the village of Ghvara in the church known under the name of Tetrosani, commissioned by Kaikhosro Gurieli and his mother, Queen Tamar and financial support. Adorned on the text with 55 miniatures.



Battle scene

16th century

Paper, 144 f., 23×17.5 cm

Commissioned by Kaikhosro Gurieli and Queen Tamar

Copyist: Germanoz

Venue of copying: Ghvara Tetrosani church

H-75



The Bible

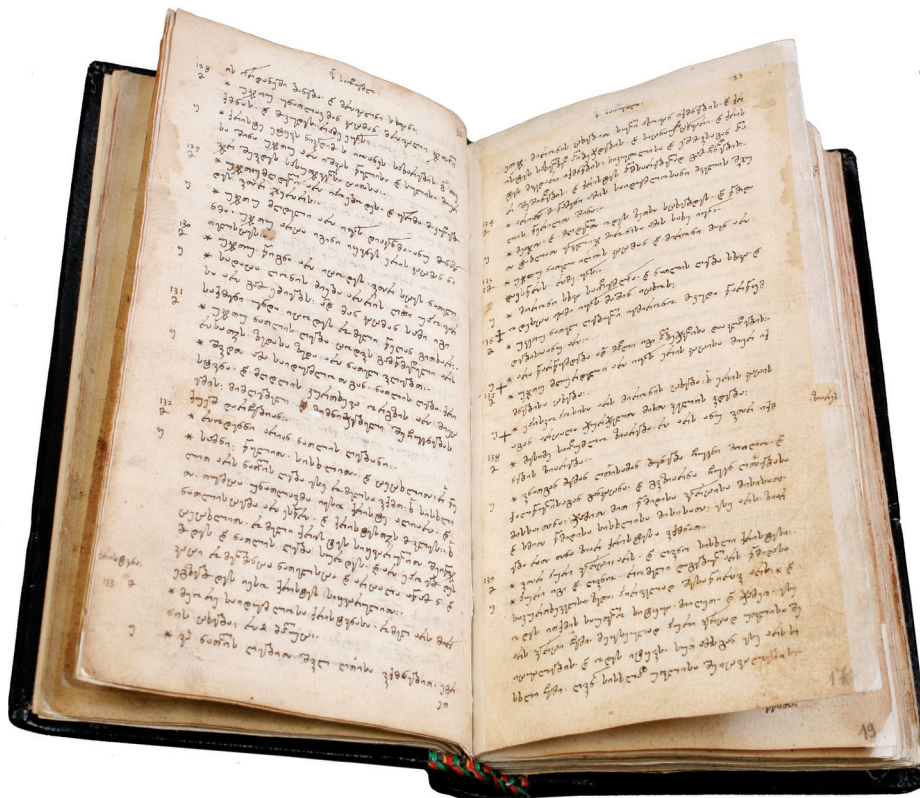
The book which is called "Mtskhethuri Manuscript" is the most complete Georgian manuscript of the Bible. The monument clearly evidences significant knowledge and experience in the field of bibliology or scientific-philology. The Bible is written on the paper with black ink, in *nuskuri*. Several hands can be discerned. The titles are done with *mtavruli*, sometimes with red ink. Edited in *mkhedruli* and has indexes performed in the same hand which belong to the editor, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani. The text "The Books of Prophets" printed in the printing house of King Vakhtang VI is included in the manuscript.

17th-18th c.

Paper, 668 f., size: 21×29.5 cm

The copyists: Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, Lazare.

A-51



The Gate of Paradise

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's *The Gates of Paradise* is a composition written as doctrinal and moral teaching. It is an autobiographical record and dates 1701. In this manuscript which must have been the author's pocket book, other material is included in his hand, which contains prayers, the issues related to divine service. The book is written on the paper in *mkhedruli*. In some places the text must have been corrected by the author, which is evidenced by narrow paper pieces glued in the book.

Paper, 90 f., size: 20.8×11 cm

Copyist: Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani

The group of Archangels

A-303



Group of Archangels

Gulani

By its composition it is an original Georgian collection which unites all books of divine service; Gospel, Acts of Apostles, To Paul, Tveni, Zhamni, Davitni, Markhvani, Zatiki, Svinacsar. It was read all the year round in the church. Written on paper in *nuskhuri*, with brown ink. Capital letters and titles with *mtavruli* and cinnabar. The manuscript is painted, the images of the saints may be found in abundance on the margins of the text and manuscript, as well as the scenes from God's holydays.

1681

Paper, 345 f., size 35×24 cm

Commissioned by Catholicos Nikoloz Amilakhvrishvili

Copyists: Mikaeli, Saba, Abeli

A-30

GEORGIAN SECULAR MANUSCRIPTS

The medieval Georgian secular manuscripts present the examples of writing diverse in genre and content, compositions of literary and scholarly content. These manuscripts by their composition and artistic design were created in accordance with spiritual interests and needs of the society at that time and reflected main trends and directions of the Near East common cultural area. Their artistic image and creation technique was based on the traditions of old Georgian manuscript book which were formed in spiritual circles, Georgian and foreign scriptoria.

The formation of secular manuscripts of Georgian written culture started in conditions of independent and powerful feudal monarchy, politically and economically advanced Georgian state and existence of brilliant royal court. Later, in the time of the disintegration of Georgia and political troubles, in the period of weakening of Georgian monastic centers, took on the burden of expanding the range of scientific books and function of the introduction and spread of progressive knowledge. Although it is worth noting here that centers which financially supported Georgian monasteries existing abroad. Georgians also lived and worked in the monaster-

**Shota Rustaveli “The Man in
the Panther’s Skin”**

Known under the name of
the Begtabegi copy, done in
mkhedruli; titles and first words
of the strophes are written
in cinnabar. Each page of the
text is placed in the frame;
the margins are adorned with
various herbal decorations.
The manuscript stands out for
its ornamentation: each page
of the text is framed, and the
margins are ornamented.

1680

Paper, 263 f., size 44.5×30 cm

Copyist: Secretary Begtabegi

H-54







Avtandil slays Chashnagir

Shota Rustaveli "The Man in the Panther's Skin"

"Avalishvili" copy. Done in calligraphic *mkhedruli* in black ink; the margin of each page is adorned lavishly. The initial words of stanzas are written in gold; the margins are designed with zoomorphic elements, landscape, various types of



composition. The text has three subject miniatures. A trace of Persian miniature art is in evidence.

16th-17th c.

Paper, 260 f., size: 37×24 cm

H-2074

ies of Golgotha - the Lord's tomb, Resurrection, Kappata, Dertupa, Dertavi nunnery, Gethsemane, Ghali, Basyl, Theodore, Nicholas, Samouel, Shehani.

At present, a total of 161 manuscripts of Georgian Jerusalemite collection are known.

In parallel, a Georgian manuscript book is created in churches and monasteries existing in Georgia. Book making covered large Georgian monastic centers as well as separate churches and monasteries. The possession of richly adorned and diverse in content book turned to be the merit of both spiritual and secular titles.

In parallel, Georgian manuscript book is created in churches and monasteries existing in Georgia. That the basis of the development of the subject matter of secular manuscript should be sought in ecclesiastical books. In the course of time, texts established for the purpose of supporting the autocephality of the Georgian church or creating the pantheon of national saints laid the foundation for historical works, establishing their place among non-monastic books. Broad political and cultural contacts, the thematic diversity of collections copied at monastic centres, the active involvement of secular aristocracy in the creation of Georgian literature and book gave an impetus to the origin to separate books of secular content as well as anthological collections.

Shota Rustaveli "The Man in the Panther's Skin"

"Tsereteli" copy. Done in *mkhedruli*, in black ink; titles and beginnings of stanzas in cinnabar; the manuscript is illustrated by two masters. Some miniatures are done under the influence of Isfahan miniature painting, and part reflects national Georgian tendencies.

18th c.

Paper, 289 f. size: 33×22 cm

S-5006



The Enthronement of Tinatin



Seeing the stranger knight



Nestan-Darejan captured by Kaji slaves

Observation of the chronology of secular collections sheds light on one important point: their majority date from the late Middle Ages. It transpires that works of eulogistic or heroic-knightly theme, which supplied the Georgian reader over the centuries, found their place in private, family manuscripts. This, from a definite point of view narrowed the area of their preservation. Care for such books did not go beyond the sphere of family interest in conditions of acute political opposition to the Muslim environment. The entire attention of the Georgian State, church and society was directed to the preservation of manuscripts of ecclesiastic content. Probably this is the reason that the unique specimens of Georgian secular literature have survived in the form of later manuscripts. Take for example the high literary specimens of eulogistic poetry "Tamariani" and "Abulmesia", which are preserved in later period copies, together with poetic specimen of the revival period.

The poetic masterpiece of the classic period "The man in the Panther's Skin" has survived in over 100 manuscripts. The source is a general cultural phenomenon, fed by various periods and cultures, which is manifested in the artistic design of distinguished manuscripts. Created by special order and funding, copied under the care of royal houses or feudal lords, these manuscripts present both decorative and miniature painting of "folk" trend and Islamic art influence.

Shota Rustaveli "The Man in the Panther's Skin"

"Tavakarashvili" copy. Done in *mkhedruli*, black ink; the titles – in cinnabar. The text represents the so-called "extend redaction" of the poem. The illumination of the manuscript is considered to be an example of Georgian national art. The self-portraits of the copyist and illustrator are given.

1646

Paper, 267 f., size: 27×19 cm

Ordered by Levan II Dadiani

Copyist and illustrator: Mamuka Tavakarashvili

H-599



Avtandil



Upper area: Levan Dadiani with family

Lower area: Shota Rustaveli and Mamuka Tavakarashvili



Avtandil in prayer

Amirandarejaniani

Copied in *mkhedruli*, with headpieces, a list of arms (33 items with names), a table with representations of arms, as well as illustrations with explanations are appended.

1824

Paper, 113 f., size: 32.5×20 cm

Copyist: David Tumanov

Venue of copying: Tbilisi

H-384



Amiran Darejanis-dze slays the dragon



David Guramishvili

"Davitiani"

Autographic manuscript, written in mkhedruli, the titles and beginnings of lines in cinnabar. Added to the text are Guramishvili's self-portrait, plan of irrigation and mill. At the top: an engraving of the Akhtirka Virgin.

1787

Paper, 155 f., size: 32.5×19.5 cm

Venue of copying: Ukraine

S-1598

"Amirandarejaniani", one of the earliest and noteworthy texts of secular Georgian literature in many respects survives in manuscripts of the period of revival and later times. Being a collection of separate stories in the work are united around the adventures of a mighty hero Amiran Darejanisdze. The illustrations of some copies of the work bear impression of folk art; they stress physical force and heroic attributes becoming a kind of cult in the Georgia of the period.

To the same period belongs the original of the Georgian poet David Guramishvili's monumental poem "Davitiani" who lived in exile. The poem is a chronicle of 18th century. Georgia and her hapless son's turbulent life, preserved in a single autograph manuscript.

In the Middle Ages Georgia maintained close contacts with the Hellenistic Byzantine world as well as the Islamic East, which enabled the country lying at the crossroads of civilizations to assimilate and transform the spiritual gains of these cultures. Georgian manuscript book reflects these influences both from the viewpoint of subject-matter and artistic design of manuscript book.

From the 11th century contacts with our cultural neighbor Iran were especially intensive. Notwithstanding the political and national-confessional antagonism, the translations and adaptations from Persian originals organically merge with Georgian writing, due to the high literary standards of these sources and the existence of related motifs in Georgian literary thinking.

"Visramiani"

The manuscript presents the *beyt* system of the Persian *Vis o Ramin*, being highly important for the establishment and making precise of the Persian text. The illustrator follows the Muslim oriental tradition and adorns the manuscript with Iranizing miniatures, created under this influence. Copied in *mkhedruli* in black ink; the titles and beginning of paragraphs are in cinnabar.

1729

Paper, 274 f., size: 29×20 cm

S-3702

Vis o ramin, one of the brilliant monuments of Classical Persian literature, was translated into Georgian at this time. It follows the original with great precision, being a remarkable specimen of Georgian literature by its high artistic value. This source, as well as other translations and adaptations of heroic and romantic love works, are preserved in later manuscripts.

“Rostomiani”

Part of Firdausi's *Shah-nameh* (“Book of the Kings”).

Copied in callygraphic *mkhedruli*, with black ink; the titles and the beginnings are written in cinnabar; the manuscript is adorned with headpieces; some of the folios is watermarked.

The second part of the manuscript is illustrated.

17th century

Paper, 487 f.

Size: 39.5×25.5 cm

S-1588



Rostom sets off on a campaign

From the 15th century the prose and poetic Georgian versions of Shanuma, Iranian heroic-epic and mathless specimen of Persian classic poetry began to appear in Georgian prose and poetic versions. The Georgian manuscript legacy reflects the whole process of creation of these versions, as well as the then trends of illustrating Georgian of secular manuscript, and development secular miniature.



Enthronement of Navzar



Battle scene

1647

Paper, 148 f., size: 31×20.5 cm

Commissioned by Levan Dadiani

Copyist and illustrator: Mamuka Tavakarashvili

Venue of copying: Samegrelo

S-1594

The illumination of secular manuscript took shape as a single line in this period – from the 16th century. It is based on the experience of church book and fresco painting created in the monasteries. The so-called folk stream also exerted special influence on its development. However, manuscripts of this group of Georgian manuscripts come within the sphere of influence of the illustration of Persian manuscript book, which was due to the country's political and cultural bearings.

“Iosebzikhaniani”

The manuscript is a compilation book. Lavishly illuminated. The copy contains 12 miniatures, of which some have vegetable or geometric ornament. The miniatures, showing resemblance to specimens of the early Isfahan school and Shiraz miniature, are taken from another manuscript and stuck into a large-size



Wedding of King Aziz and Zilikhan

The trend in question is clearly reflected in manuscripts of *The Man in the Panther's Skin*, as well as in copies, containing literary adaptations of Persian works built on popular oriental love-romantic plots (*Leil-Majnuniani*, *Vardbulbuliani*, *Shamiparvaniani*, *Iosebzikhaniani*).

Besides fiction, the secular manuscript attracted particular attention to the compositions of historical content; by the commis-



folios of the copy free from the text. The text is copied in *mkhedruli*, in black ink; the titles and beginnings of stanzas are written in cinnabar.

16th-17th c.

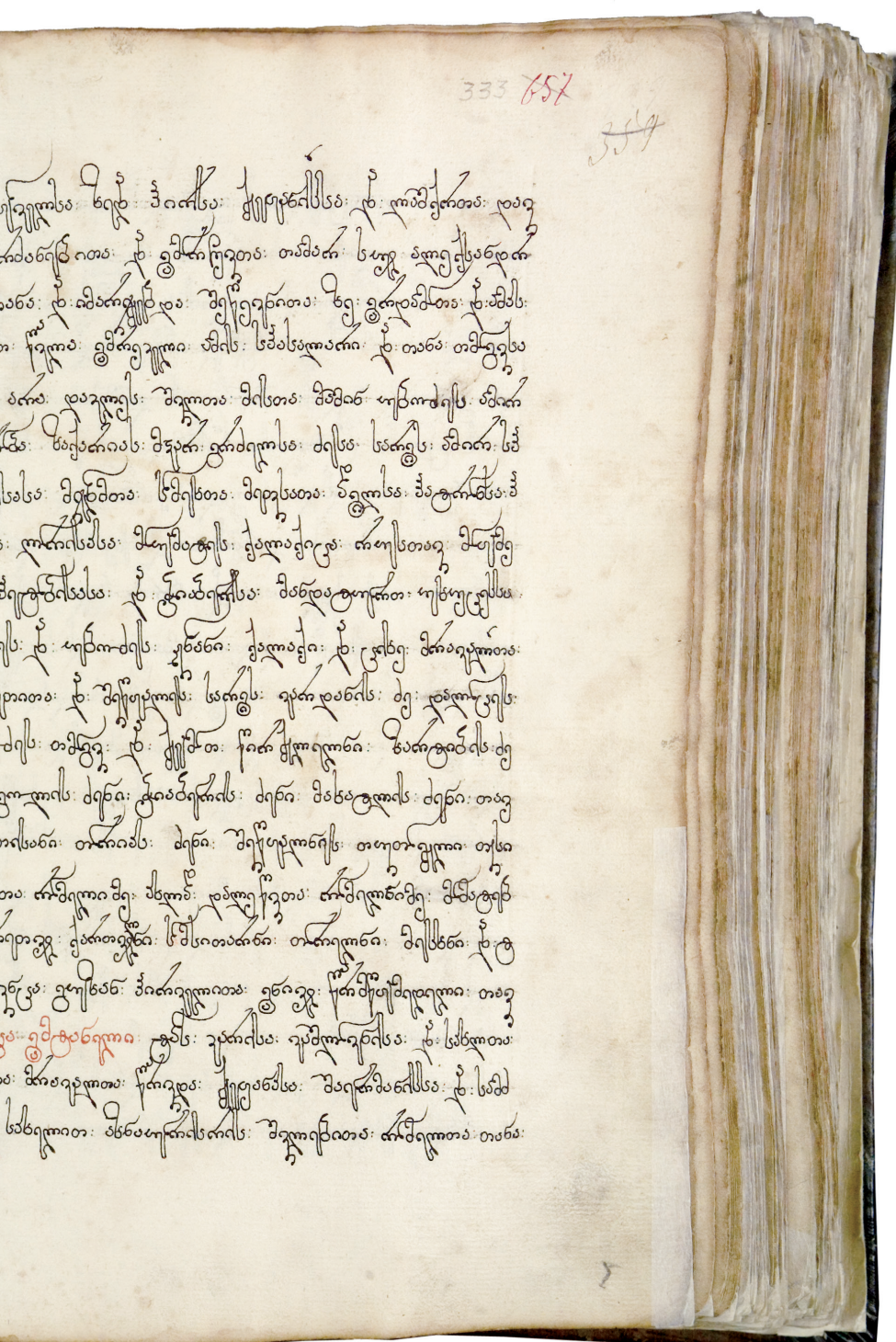
Paper, 120 f.

Size: 21.5×15.5 cm

S-1283

Mourning Baziqa

ଶିବରାତ୍ରି: ✓



"Kartlis Tskhovreba"

The Queen Mariam's copy, containing the oldest text of the source. Copied in Mkhedruli script, with black ink. The titles are written in cinnabar; with watermarks with various images. Vakhtang VI's notes are present. The book was compiled by the order of Queen Mariam, spouse of Rostom, King of Kartli.

1633-1646

Paper, 470 f.

Commissioner: Queen Mariam of Kartli

Size: 32.5×23 cm

S-30

History of the Eristavi's of Ksani

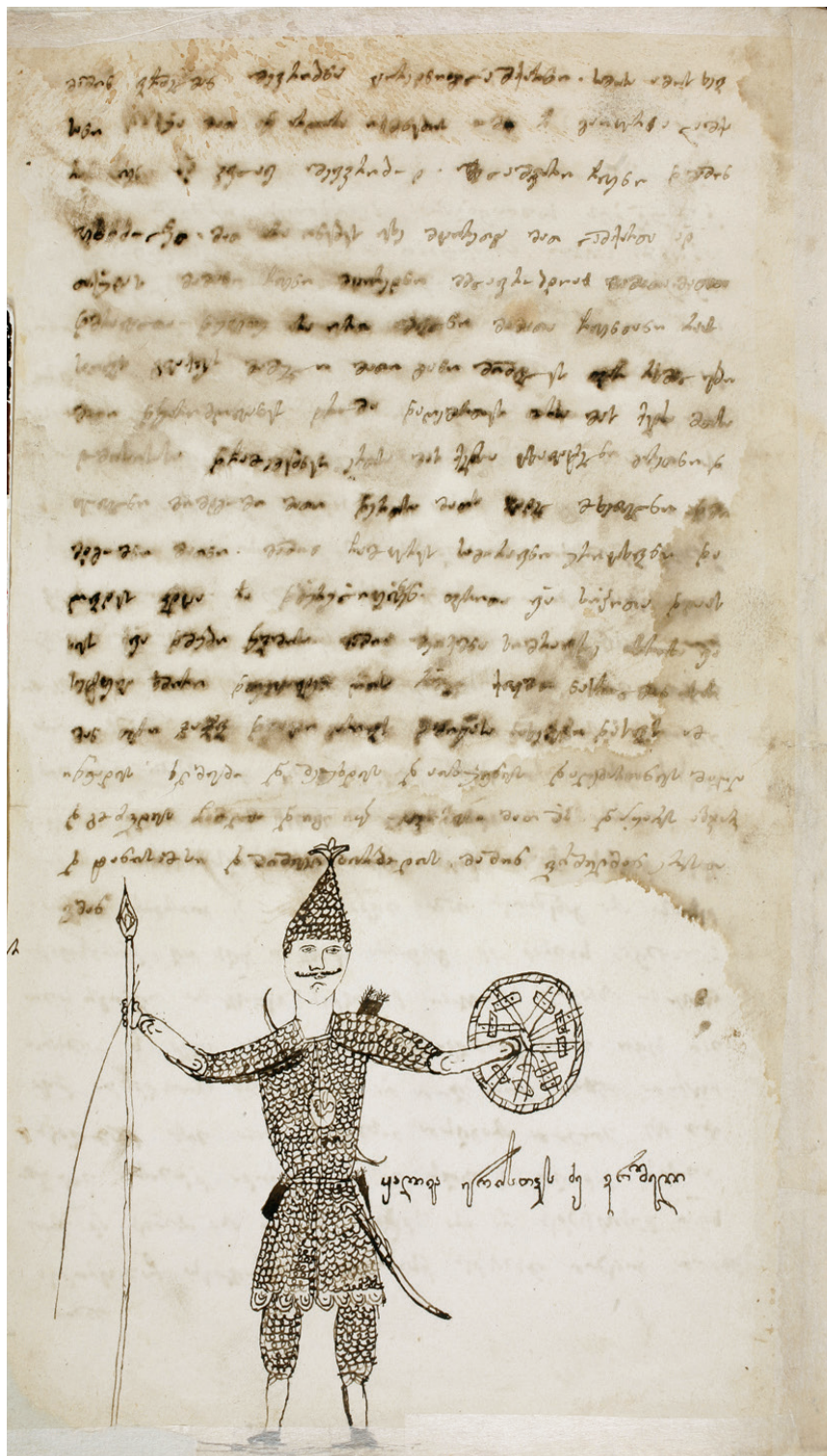
The initial version of the manuscript must have been compiled for the private library of one of the feudal houses. According to the colophon of the manuscript, this history was found copied again in the 19th century. The manuscript is copied in *mkhedruli*, in black ink. The book contains a specimen of primitive painting.

1828

Paper, 8 f., size: 35×23 cm

Copyists: Princess Mariam Eristavi and Giorgi, son of the Eristavi of Ksani.

H-2496



sions of royal families or representatives of the feudal houses the books reflecting the history of Georgia as well as the history of individual families were recopied. Especially precious for Georgians was a unique monument of historical writing "Kartlis Tskhovreba" ("The Life of Georgia") which contains the history of Georgian nation from the ancient times till the 18th century. The monument unites the works of Leonti Mroveli, Juansher, Chronicle of a Hundred Years, Tamar and David's chronicles and other works. The records (16 records) existing for today reflect the process of correction-renovation, addition-filling by generations in different epochs.

Among secular manuscripts of the 17th-18th centuries there are numerous books on Georgian law, being text compiled through in-depth scholarly study and collation of sources. The collection of book on law, compiled by Vakhtang VI, surnamed "law-maker", united biblical, Greek and Armenian law, the laws of the Catholicoi, books of Beka-Aghbuga and Giorgi the Brilliant, article compiled by Vakhtang himself, resulting in a law code that reflects his contemporary juridical life and national legal consciousness. It shows the broad erudition and national purposefulness.

Late medieval Georgian scholars made a major contribution to the compilation and spread of scholarly and scientific books. Quite a few lexicographic, encyclopedic, legal, travel, geographic-cartographic, astronomic-astrological, medical books were copied.

From this point of view Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's *Sitqviskona* should be singled out an explanatory dictionary of the Georgian language—a special event in the history of Georgian culture, language and scholarly thought. Recorded in it is the vocabulary of old Georgian, called from old Georgian texts, date of his contemporary language, including folklore, as well as "foreign words". Fonds of Georgian manuscripts boast several redactions of the "Georgian Dictionary": 50 manuscripts, of which 9 are autographic.

The striving of part of Georgian society to Catholic Europe determined by the onslaught of Islam and the grave political situation in the country – broadened the area of diplomatic relations and created opportunities for closer contacts with Europe. A clear example of this is Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's journey to Italy and France, which is described in an interesting and original way in his



Vakhtang VI, The Code of Laws.

Compiled by Vakhtang VI. Prefaced by an article index placed in frames, copied in the hand of Maghaladze, and a colour miniature of Doomsday; copied in *mkhedruli*, in black ink, the titles in cinnabar.

1708

Paper, 336 f., size: 30x21 cm

Copyists: Maghaladze and anonymous scribe

S-3683



Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, "The Georgian Dictionary"

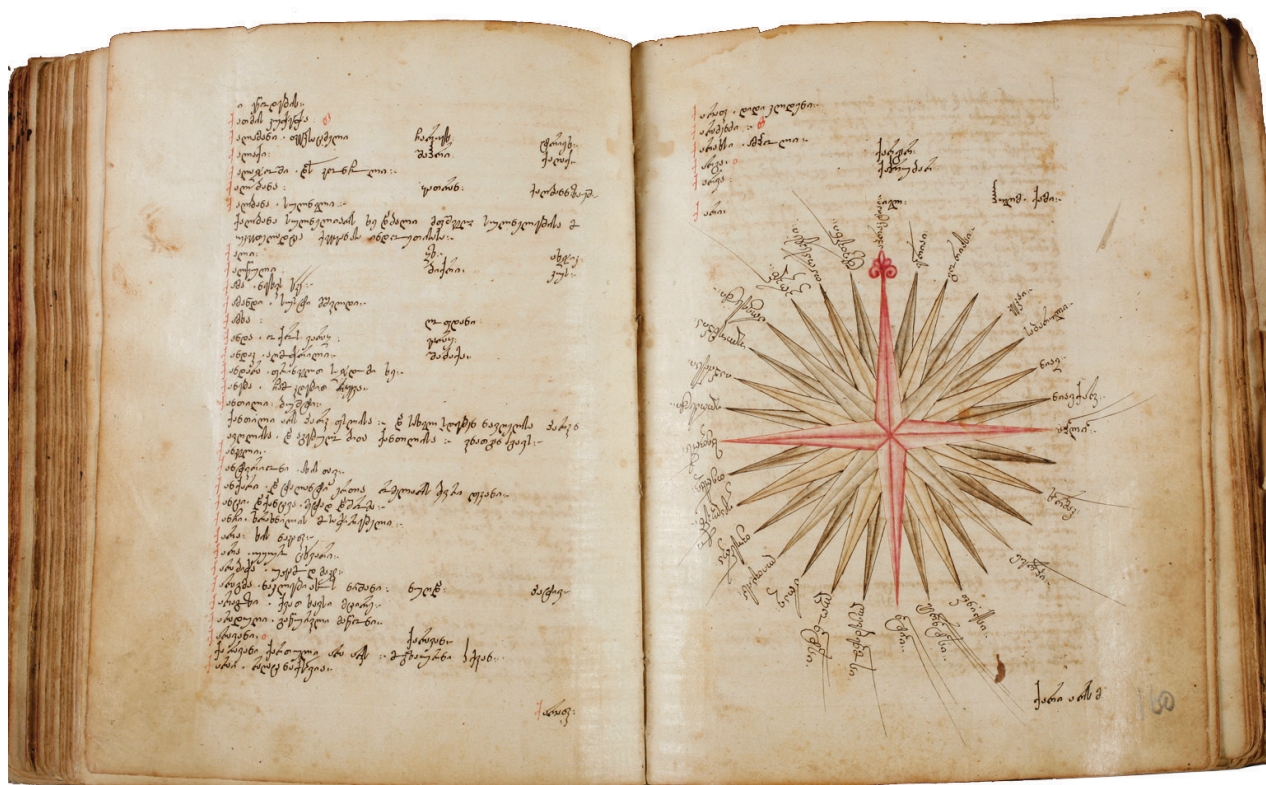
Autographic copy. The manuscript contains the author's drawings and diagrams, as well as his colophon.

1716

Venue of copying: Constantinople

Paper, 305 f, size: 23×16 cm

H-1658



Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, Georgian Dictionary

The manuscript is prefaced with the statement: "Alphabet for children to learn, of the five letters, the names of twelve zodiacs", etc. A monk's (probably Saba's) miniature image.

1730

Copyist: Alexi (Meskhishvili), the son of the artist.

Paper, 242 f., size: 22×16.5 cm

S-4847

work of memoir genre "Travel to Europe". It was this text that paved the way to the creation of the Georgian manuscripts of well-known travelogue-memoir genre in European Enlightenment and scholarly tradition.

While Sulikhan-Saba deemed it important to gather information about Europe, the 19th century authors working in this genre: Timote Gabashvili and Giorgi Avalishvili directed their attention to the Christian East – the most important space of Georgia's historical past. Their works form important sources, giving the story of the activity of the Georgians and their cultural-political contacts in the East.

Georgian manuscript legacy reflects contemporary scholarly and scientific knowledge and general tendencies of common cultural area. In this respect works of natural science character deserve attention – original, translated or adapted, demonstrating the role of Georgian thinkers, translators and "expositors" in shaping of medieval scientific thought and their enlightenment purpose.

To this class belongs manuscript A-65 of the National Centre of Manuscripts. It is an early, multifaceted miscellany containing various church writings and a text of astrological content, entitled: "On the Stars and Seven Luminaries". It is adapted from an oriental language (Arabic Persian) source and deals with a description of heavenly bodies, the movement of the Moon, teaching on the seven planets. The text is one of the oldest dated work (1188-1210) even in the oriental tradition. The manuscript is highly notable from the viewpoint of illumination as well, evincing great resemblance to Persian miniature art. In the period of revival (17th-18th c.) it was an object of interest of the Georgian enlighteners: Vakhtang VI, King of Kartli and King Archil.

Manuscripts containing numerous scientific works are preserved at the National Centre of Manuscripts. These works belong to the following fields: astronomy-astrology, calendar subject matter and cosmogony, mineralogy, chemistry, mathematics, medicine. A distinguished role in the translation, compilation and adaptation of these texts was performed by Georgian scholars, primarily the major cultural figure Vakhtang VI. Some texts translated or "adapted" by him have survived in brilliant



Monastery of Athos

Timote Gabashvili, "Journey to the Holy and other Places of the East".

The manuscript contains the compositions by Timote Gabashvili. It is noteworthy that the history of the Iviron Monastery, based on documental sources, is especially important.

18th c.

Paper, 168 f., size: 19×14 cm

H-842

Giorgi Avalishvili "Journey"

Autograph copy; the work is written in the shape of a diary, covering the period from 6 July 1819 to 17 July 1820: it is divided into 2 parts: travel from Tbilisi to Jerusalem and back – from Jerusalem to Tbilisi. It is written in *nuskhuri* and small calligraphic *mkhedruli*, in black ink. Appended map of travel, plans of structures, engravings and colour copies of drawings.

1819-1820

Paper, 201 f., size: 30×24 cm

S-450





Vakhushti Bagrationi **Geography**

Autograph copy of the manuscript; deals with the question of world geography and is an attempt to introduce European geographic-cartographic knowledge. Written in *mkhedruli*, in black ink.

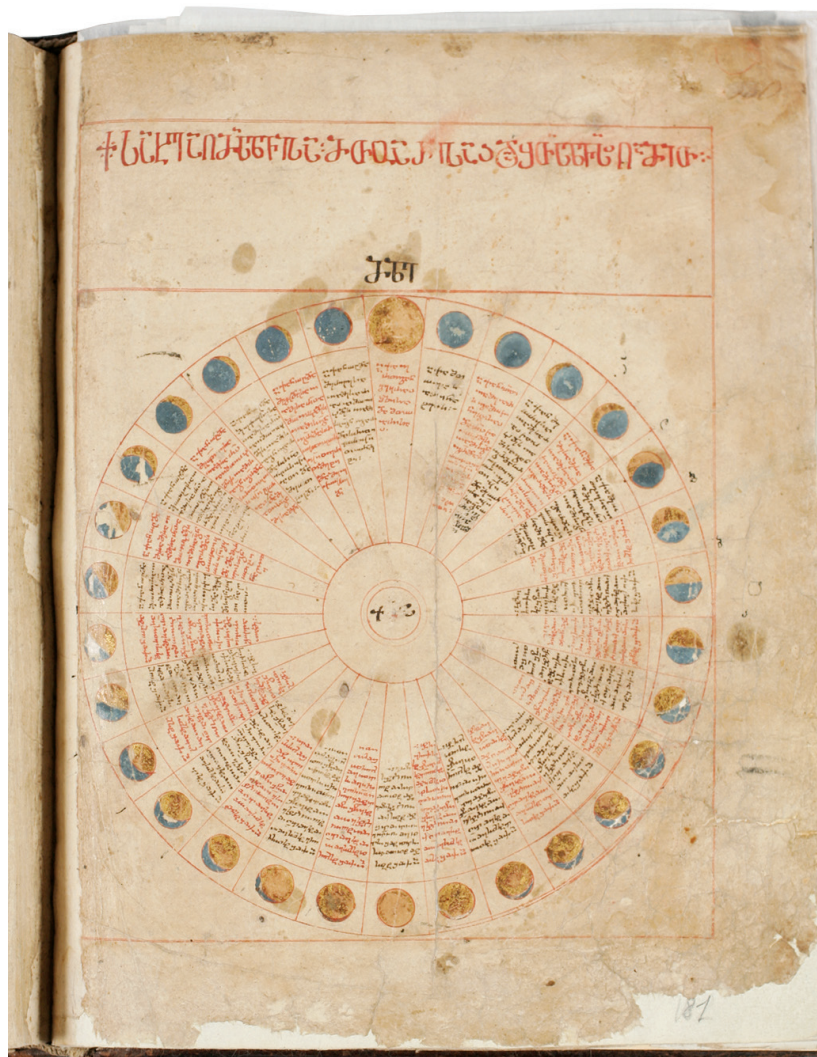
1752

European paper, 144 f., size: 17×21 cm

Venue of copying: Russia

A-717





On chariots and the seven planets

The work forms part of a miscellany. A kufic inscription at the beginning of the manuscript is illuminated. The phases of the moon, the representation and diagram of its rise and setting, description of the signs of the zodiac.

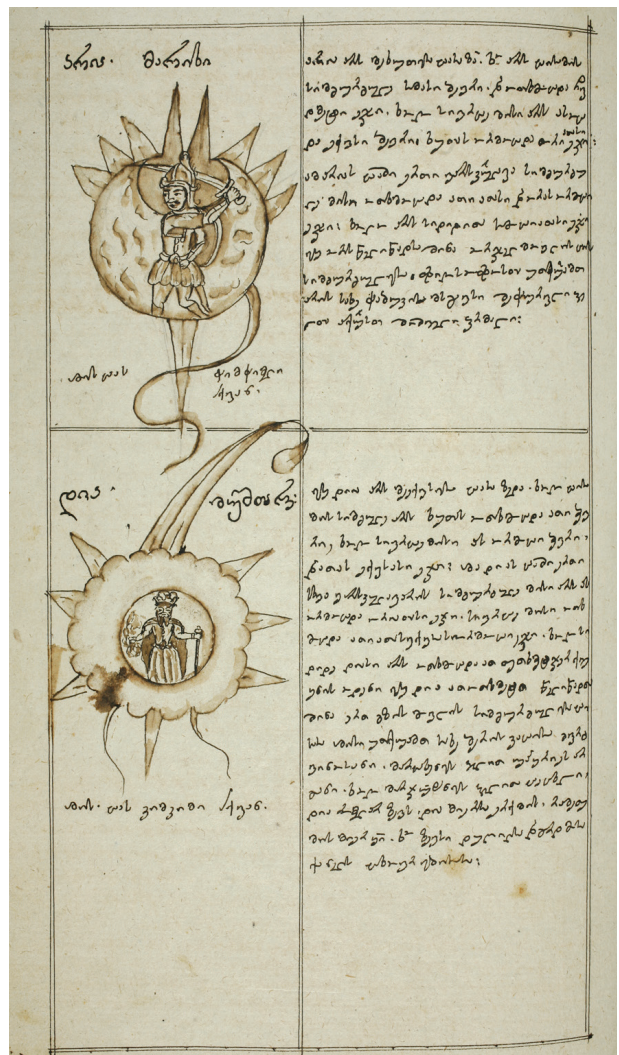
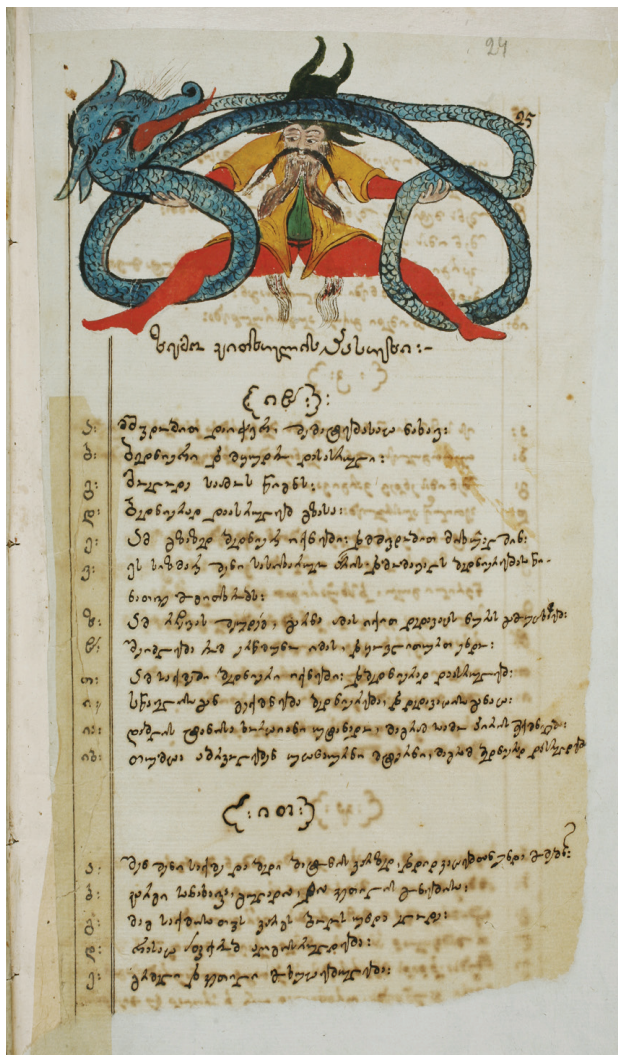
Then comes a miniature executed in hair pen, with an exquisite clear flexible and refined contour. The illumination evinces great resemblance to specimens of Persian miniature art. Written in *nuskhuri* and *mkhedruli*, in brownish ink, the titles in cinnabar.

1188-1210

Paper, 214 f., size: 23×30.5 cm

Copyists: Esaia and an anonymous scribe

A-65



Georgian manuscripts – often supplied with scholarly apparatus: Georgians made significant contributions, in composing and editing of the texts, first of all we should mention king Vakhtang VI. Some of his translated or edited compositions are kept in an outstanding Georgian manuscripts. These texts at the end have scientific apparatus: indexes, explanations of the terms, special kinds of dictionaries, etc., which facilitated those texts for understanding and being available for wider community.

Later Astrological Collection

1814
Paper, 100 f.
Size: 31.5×19.5 cm
A-1580

300

GEORGIAN MANUSCRIPT BOOK 131

Mathematics

The collection of works which includes two parts; Mathematics and book of Artillery. The first part is composed by King Vakhtang VI in cooperation with a certain Mikhail Elivich. The work comprised of mathematics, geometry and trigonometry. A number of drawings are also included in the text. Some excerpts are made personally by King Vakhtang VI. The text is written in Mkhedruli script and the titles in cinnabar.

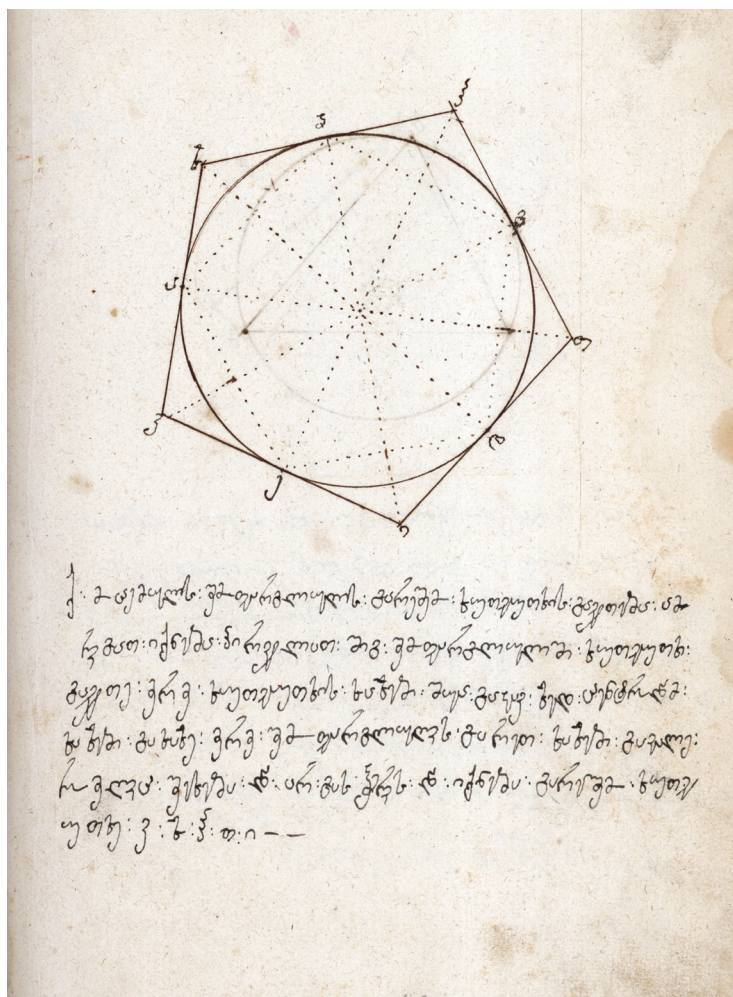
1725

paper: 247 f.

size: 31×20 cm

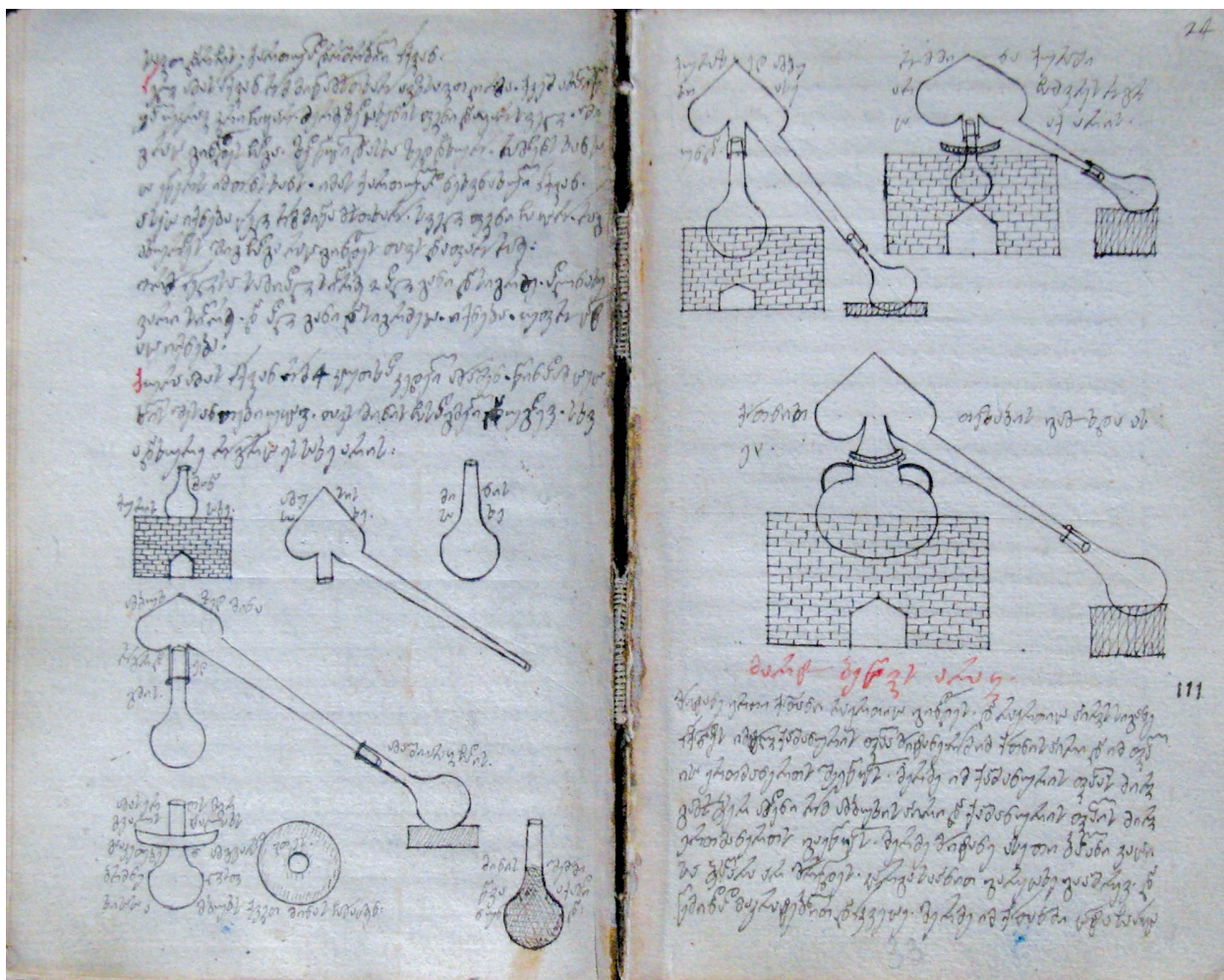
Venue of copying: Moscow

S-167



The funds of the National Centre of Manuscripts boast a rich amount collection of medical content, including popular medical books used for centuries by Georgian society, e.g. the Ustoro Karabadini, Tsigni Saakimoi (Physician's book) called by E. Taqaishvili an "encyclopedia medical book", "IadigarDaud", compiled by David Bagrationi. These are compilatory works based on Georgian and oriental medical works known at that time (Zakariaar-Razi, Avicenna).

Veterinary manuscript books occur in Georgia from the 17th century. Vakhtang VI and the sons of Giorgi XII Princes Ioane and Bagrat made a considerable contribution to their translation and adaptation. Some manuscripts containing the Karabadini's of the



Vakhtang VI, "Book of Chemistry"

The text compiled by Vakhtang VI reflects traces of Persian and Russian sources: original paragraphs are also present. The manuscript is copied by Vakhushti Bagrationi; the drawings of special tools used in physics and chemistry also belong to him. Copied in *mkhedruli*, in black ink, titles in cinnabar.

1740

Paper, 72 f., size: 16×10 cm

Copyist: Prince Vakhushti (Bagrationi)

Venue of copying: Russia

S-3721



Amulet

Manuscript with a function of amulet was widespread and popular in the broad society. Around 200 sick kind of amulets are dated back from the 18th -19th cc. This specimen given as an example is an interrelated 24 round pieces cut out of a single sheet of paper, of which the first two bear the image of Christ. The remaining 22 pieces are assigned to the text is written in round, colour circles and placed in specially embroidered old-fashioned cloth bag, sized: 6×7 cm, it has a silk lining; the bag is a noteworthy specimen of embroidery.

19th c.

Paper, size: 35×23 cm

Q-283

horse, dog and fowls, may be considered clear examples of Georgian calligraphy and in general, book culture.

Finally among secular manuscripts we should mention small books – amulets – differing in their purpose and outward appearance, popular, household use, having the function of talisman, some of which contain an "amulet-epistle", prayers of St. George parts of the Gospel and various prayers for healing.

WRITING MATERIAL

In talking about Georgian manuscript tradition, in parallel to the content of a document, form and artistic diversity we should touch upon the writing material. It is the latter that constitutes one of the most important bases of the longevity and art design of a book.

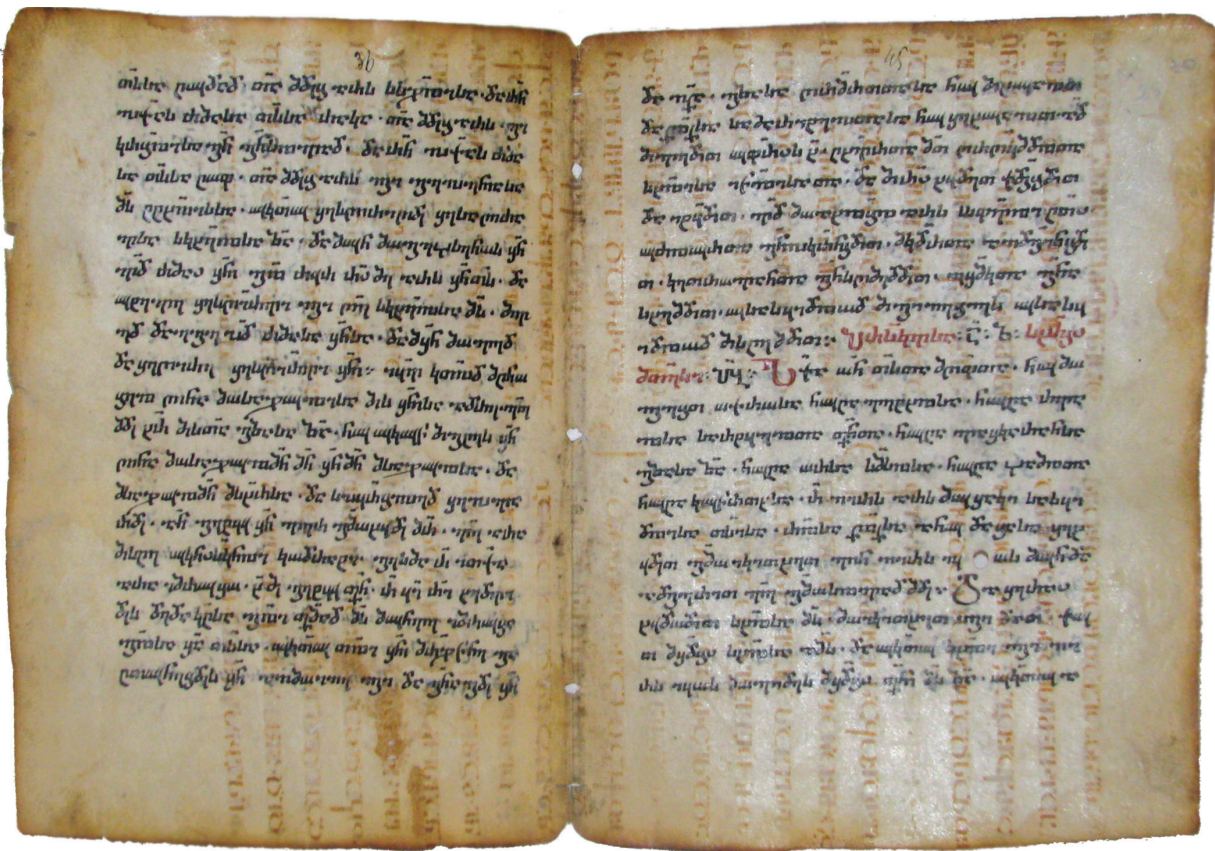
Georgian scholarship commenced synchronously both in Georgia and beyond her borders – in the Christian East. The striving of Georgian scholastic monks towards foreign Christian centres was primarily due to the desire of coexistence with the single confessional and cultural space. It was this desire that made them adopt the cultural experience of historical Syria and Palestine and Byzantium. At the same time it facilitated further development of national, traditional branches. As book creation is a productive process, Georgian manuscript culture must have received the already existing, approved experience of book creation. Although by the commencement of Georgian manuscript tradition (5th c.) two varieties of writing material: papyrus (rush) and parchment, Georgian scholarship gave priority to skin or parchment. This choice

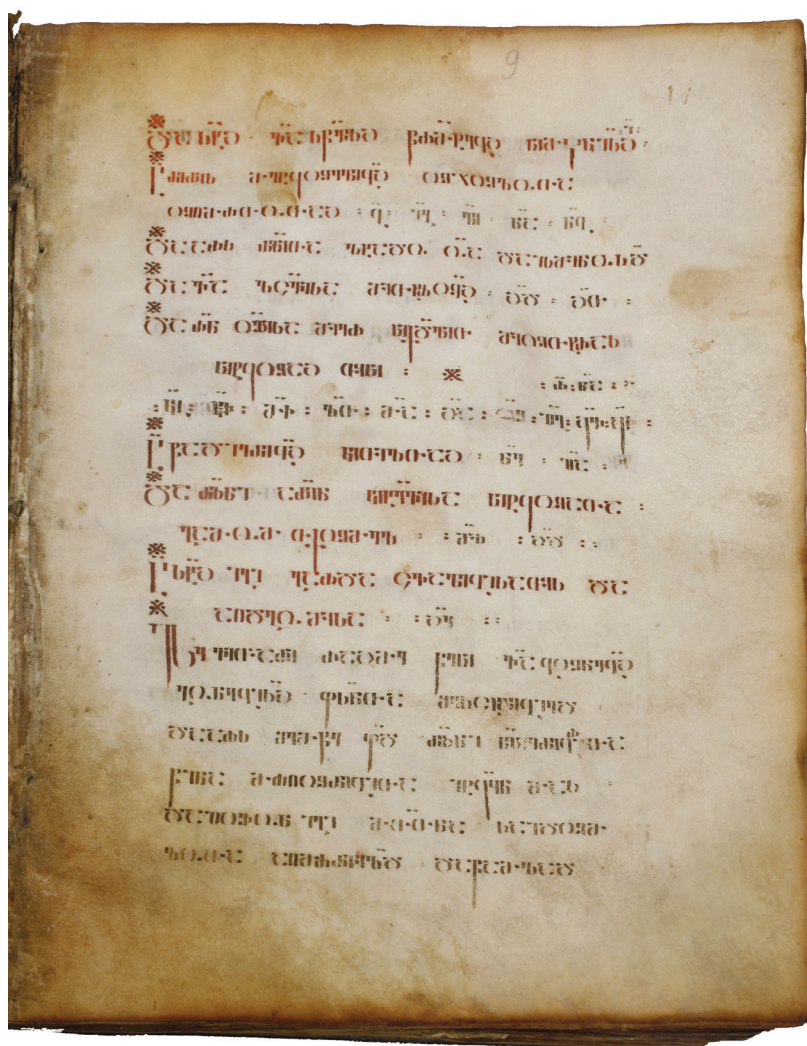
naturally had an economic basis as well. Import of papyrus from abroad must have been costly, whereas production and treatment of skin in Georgia was a traditional branch in Georgia. This proved by the discovery of Middle Bronze Age triangular stamped leather flags among the archeological materials from Sabudara field, Kakheti, Eastern Georgia. However, it should be said here that the tradition of converting skin into writing must have been borrowed by Georgian culture from the Mediterranean basin book tradition. This is suggested by the Georgian term *etrati*, stemming from the Greek *tetradion*, whose original meaning was a "fascicle formed of four leaves", as well as the Georgian *karta* introduced from the Greek analogy *kharte*, denoting a leaf. Incidentally, the spread of Christianity, the beginning literacy served as an impetus to the manufacture of parchment in Georgia. The technological process of manufacturing parchment had been mastered by the beginning of writing: soaking the hide in lime water to remove coat and fleshy parts, scraping with a sharp tool, placing the hide again in limy water to obtain a smooth surface, stretching-drying-whetting, again treating with lime and chalk in order to whiten the leaf. For Georgian palimpsests of the 5th-6th cc. are copied on broad leaves of well-processed high quality parchment, the text is written generously, without economy of the leaf, which shows that in old Georgia it was not difficult to obtain skin writing material. The early rule of placing the text on the leaf did not change neither after the expansion of the book repertory and its volume. In the 9th-10th cc. in Georgia the manuscripts of monastic or special purpose copied on high quality parchment are written broadly, generously, without sparing the leaf, proving ones more that production of skin writing material in Georgia had attained an appropriate level.

The situation differs with respect to Georgian books created at foreign domestic centres. Their copyists used skin leaves sparingly often copying even on cut off pages. Such economizing was due to the circumstance that Georgian monks active abroad were obliged to buy writing material or use the stock found in the scriptorium,

which was assigned not only for Georgian manuscript books. We owe the existence of the only two Georgian manuscripts copied on rush to the obligation forced on Georgian scholarly monks either to purchase or use the stock of writing material found in the scriptorium. These are books compiled in Palestine in the 12th c. – the *iadgari* – collection of annual hymns for holidays and a fragment of the Psalms. The latter is today preserved in the National Library of Russia, in St. Petersburg, and the former, copied in the Monastery of St. Sabas, is kept at the K. Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts. Interestingly enough, in the latter book it is not only papyrus that is used as writing material but parchment as well. This is why this collection is known as rush-parchment

Parchment. Palimpsest. Lower layer.
5th-7th c.
The size of double-spread leaf:
16×25 cm
H-1329





Parchment. 10th c.
Size: 19.8×15.3 cm
A-38

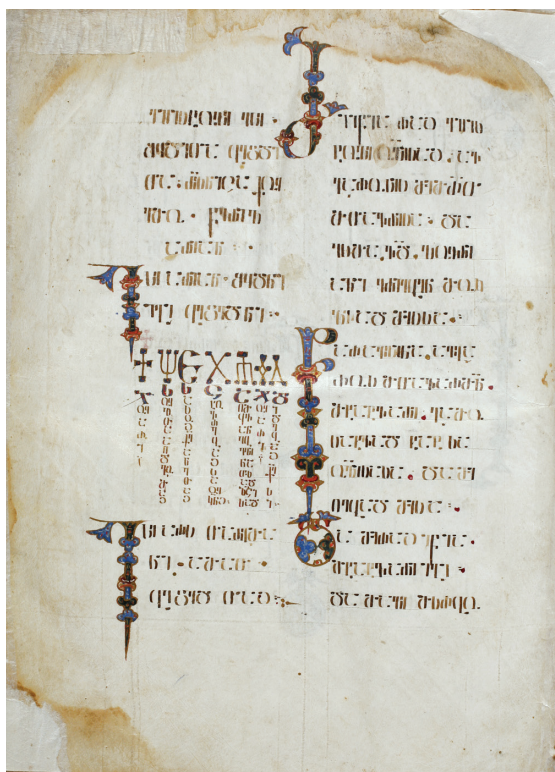
iadgari. Synchronous, mixed use of these two materials leads us to believe that by the 10th century rush in Palestine itself was a rare and perhaps costly material. The copyist made use of the stock of the monastery scriptorium and in a number of cases was forced to use a parchment once used and washed off. That is why several leaves of the rush-parchment are a palimpsest, of which the first layer is Georgian and of some – Greek.

Generally speaking, the scholarly activity of Georgian monks in foreign scriptoria was often financially supported by Georgian kings and nobles and the Georgian church. Men of letters received



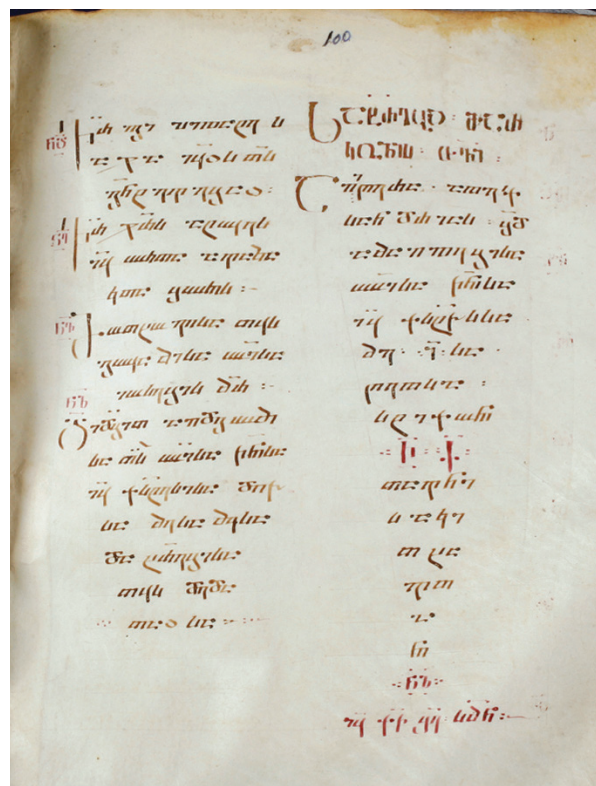
Parchment or papyrus. 10th c.
Size: 11.2×10 cm
H-2123

donations either in monetary terms or in the shape of the material needed for the book. Such donations became especially prominent in the case of copying the so-called “celebratory” books and on the occasion of special orders. In this case the copyist gave themselves the liberty of using the available writing material, freely choose high quality leaf, as well as ink of various colour, and occasionally gold ink. For example, the material needed for producing a book containing John Chrysostom’s “Translations of the Gospel according to Matthew” was donated by the well-known men of letters Giorgi and Mikael; the binding of Alaverdi Four Gospels in a single gilt



Gold ink. The color of ink dye prepared from natural minerals. 1054.

A-484



The main body of the text is written in brown ink, the important places – with cinabar. 1054.

A-484

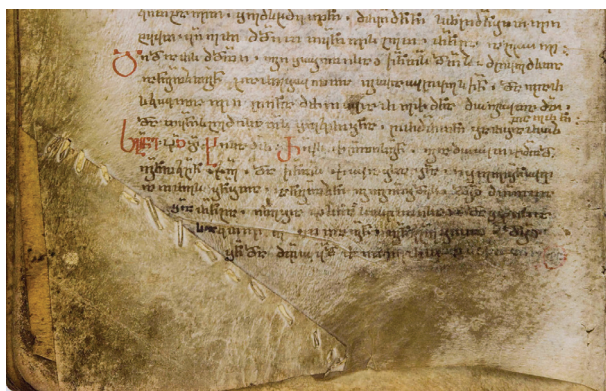
silver rovetting was financed and funded by Ivane Liparitsdze, representative of the 11th century big feudal family of the Baghvashi. Adducing such examples will take us far afield.

Yet, notwithstanding the unity of the technological process, the parchment used in different manuscripts differ in quality. Apparently, here of decisive importance was the texture of the skin of the animal (goat, sheep, calf) used as raw material and, of course, the treatment of the leaf for writing in the process of creating the book. This duty devolved on the workshop existing at the scholarly centres and persons skilled in the art. Accordingly, scholarly activity taught monks individual arts. Side by side with the copying calligraphists were persons who had mastered the art of preparing the leaf for writing. This art is denoted in colophons by a special phrase: "creating the parchment" or "treatment of parchment".

The 14th century calligrapher Avgaroz Bandaisdze says that the “creation of the parchment” was one of the crafts connected with book production. It was so important that masters of the parchment are mentioned in the colophons. In one colophon of the Georgian collection of Mount Athos we read: “God have mercy on our soul, who fully prepared the parchment of this book”. It should be noted that among Georgian monks there are some who were masters in several crafts. Thus, the 10th century Georgian scholar, Ioane Zosime active first at St. Sabas and later on Mount Sinai, was not only a redactor and copyist but a master of binding as well. It is also interesting that one well-known Georgian calligraphist Basili Malushis-dze, active in the monastery of Chora, near Constantinople, had adopted *etratai* (parchment) as a nickname. In the small nomocanon, copied by him in 1031, he calls himself “Basilietratai Malushisdzisaï”.

Preparation of parchment for writing implied covering it with an emulsion obtained from the white of an egg to make it soft, then drawing with a ruler, *dakabadoneba* of a leaf (a written page was called *Kabadoni*, while half of a page written in two columns, i.e. one column was called *gverdi* (page), symmetric separation of equal intervals and free space or margins. It should be noted that the quality of the parchment and the skill of the master were manifested in how imperceptibly for the reader he drew the lines designed for

The parchment stitched for restoration purpose



the first quarter of the 12th century.
S-4999



978-988. S-425



Damaged leaves from parchment. 10th c.
H-2065



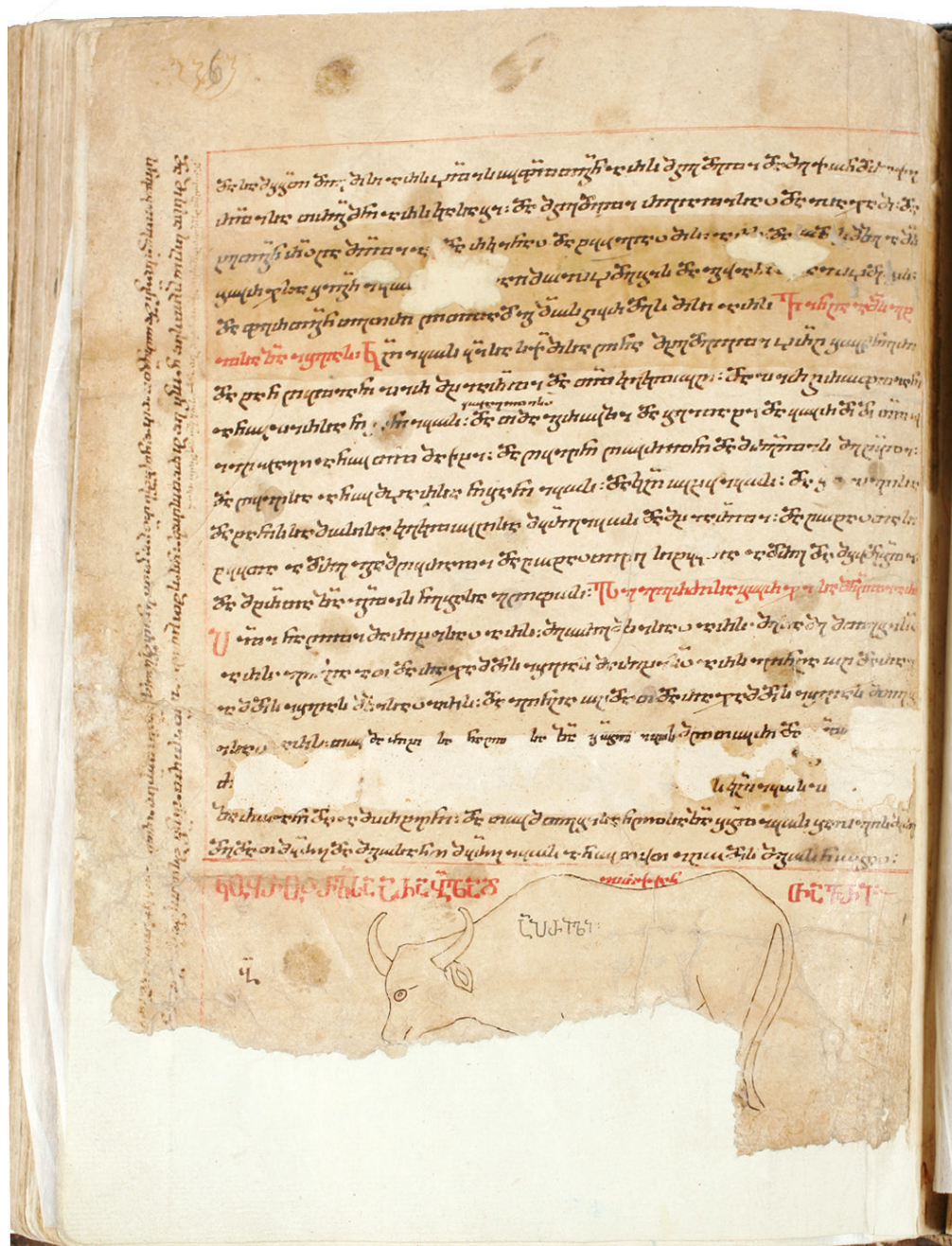
Damaged miniatures painted on the parchment.
12th c.
Q-84

the straightness of the written line. In Georgian manuscript books such drawing becomes clearly visible only on leaves faded with time. Tanned and soft writing material or parchment was used not only for books but for scrolls as well. The quality of the parchment was of special importance, the skill in restoring the wholeness of a scroll in the case of joining equally cut leaves and their separation. This work seems to have devolved on the copyist.

The parchment lasted fairly long in Georgian tradition. It retained a leading position to the 14th century. Later too, - in the 17th-18th centuries books designed for private use were written on parchment. This was presumably dictated by the devotion to tradition. The quality of the writing material used in these books drops appreciably. The manufacture of parchment appears to have exhausted itself, becoming restricted to the sphere of activity of individual persons.



Parchment. Scroll. 13th c.
"Vahanis Kvabta Gangeba"
 A total of 13 kefis.
 Single size: 562×19 (27.5)
 Ad-933



Arabic leaf. 1188-1210

size: 23×30.5

A-65

From the 10th-11th c. it is gradually rivaled by *paper*. The first Georgian manuscript books copied on this material, were created at the centres of the Christian East: Mount Sinai (Sin.O.Geo-34) and on the Black Mountain (Q-37).

From this period on this writing material gradually enters the field of the creation of Georgian manuscript. At the turn of the 11th-12th cc. it appears not only in manuscripts copied in foreign centers but in Georgia.

The story of the import of this writing material in Georgia reflects well the trade and political relations against the backdrop of which the Georgian scholarly tradition developed. Originally paper came to Georgia from the East, as indicated by its name *Kaghadi*//*Kaghaldi* are terms corresponding to the Arabic *Kaghid*//*Kaghad*. No evidence is available on the manufacture of paper in Georgia. We only know that it was imported as semi-finished product. The preparation as writing leaf or covering it with emulsion obtained from starch or the white of an egg, placing it on a whetstone and whiting it with an animals tusk or tooth was the duty of a person taking part expert in the art. In the process of preparing the paper he had to determine the degree of starching according to the texture of the original material, the composition of the ink-dye and its peculiarities, even the technique of writing. The quality of the writing material depended on his skill. The copyist often received paper as ready product, and occasionally he complained about its low quality. "Such paper is called poor... He the ink seeped through..." Occasionally, the copyist had to re-starch or whet it again: "Oh! the trouble I have with this paper. If I starch it, it will not accept the ink, if not accept the ink, if not it will go through. Have pity on me, kind worker, for God's sake, do not curse me."

The available knowledge of the starching and whetting the paper, preparation of the egg-white emulsion and dies found its way into the chemistry book compiled by Vakhtang VI in the 18th century. In this work the King who organized the first printing-press and initiated printing in Georgia, brings together in this book the traditional, as well as his contemporary knowledge in European space.



Watermark. European paper.

1735.

Q-1493

Writing instruments on
miniatures. 1054.
A-484



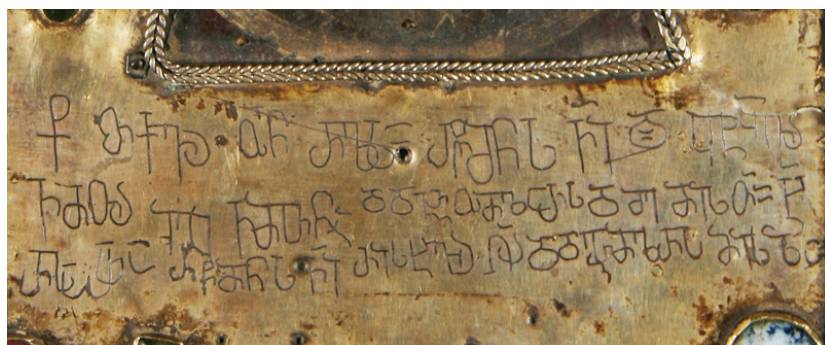
Later to arrive was Persian (turn of the 15th-16th c.; early 17th c.), Italian (15th c.), so-called oriental, of unknown provenance (15th-16th c.), French (18th c.) and Russian coloured (from the end of the 18th c.) paper, including watermarked.

A couple of words should be said about writing materials and ink writing tools in old Georgian tradition were called "tools for writing a book". Thus, initially – in the 5th-6th c. – the term *Satsereli* was used to denote a slate-pencil for writing on wax, but it acquired a generalized meaning of a whole set of pen and ink. According to 17th-18th c. records of dowry contents contained a box, occasionally silvered, made of fishbone or mother-of-pearl, several read pens, *qalamtarshi* (from the Persian *qalamdan*), or a sharp knife for the pen and a pair of scissors. An inkpot also belonged to the set. To the end of the 18th c. only reed pens were used in Georgia for writing on parchment and paper.

From the 18th c. quills gradually came into use. Metal writing materials should also be singled out. Till this 18th c. they were used for writing on metal surface.

As to ink, mainly black, brown, red, green, rarely blue ink and gold ink occur. In parallel to the Georgian term *melani*, introduced through the Greek *to melan* (black writing material) *shemgbari* and *tsamali*, denoting writing liquid, obtained through boiling, are also attested in Georgian. The term *shavi* is used to denote dark ink, and for red ink – “red” and “cinnabar”.

The stability and colour of ink depended on its constituent minerals and chemical compounds, its production and the technology of attachment to paper. As for its composition, it is known that in the 5th-6th cc. the ink used in Georgian palimpsests contained iron. For its manufacture ink use was made of walnuts or oak additives, black cypress and gumi-arabic – solid gum resin substance, obtained from some varieties of acacia. As for cinnabar, it was dual composition: natural-mineral, and artificial-obtained through interaction of sulphur and quick silver. “Red” and “Cinnabar” were used to single out capital letters, title and beginnings. Often, in order to create a different has cinnabar occurs in the lower layer of gold ink.



Book cover of Alaverdi Four Gospels. The specimen of scratching the metal.

17th c.
A-484



Sheet gold. 1054. A-484



12th c. Q-908

Special mention should be made of gold ink made from sheet gold, used both in writing and illumination and adornment. This in, obtained through mixing gold powder with adhesive substance, occurs largely in specially copied and adorned manuscripts for capital letters, titles – and occasionally for colophons and artistic-decorative elements. In later tradition gold ink is not used.

COVER

In assessing the cultural-historical value of a book its binding is of special importance of all the components (writing material and ink textual-recentional peculiarities and the art-decorative system) the bind is the least durable and needs renovation. Ancient manuscripts have lost their covers – not only because of their being moved from place but because of the frequent use. In the course of time, a single copy may have been bound and set in a new cover several times. Accordingly, it is the binding that reflects an extensive period of development of the artistic-aesthetic peculiarities of a book – from the creation of a single copy to the last stage of its renovation. A large majority of the skin covers of books at our disposal today are dated to the 17th-19th centuries.

Today it is hard to talk of the technological processes of producing early book binding, artistic peculiarities and skill. Some information is supplied about the identity of the master and scant historical evidence by the colophons added to the manuscript. On their basis it can be safely said that the book was created by men of

letters divided into groups of artisans, including masters of binding. The trade was so stable that even special terms as *mosva*, *kazmva*, *shekvra* to denote binding existed. The process itself implied binding the book, adorning the cover with designs, as well as renovation of a damaged cover. Discourse of the creation of binding and its art, based only on the colophons and notes, would not go beyond theoretical speculation and conjectures had, fortunately, 9th-10th c. cover net survived. Until recently three specimens of an early

Cover combining leather and metal: thick, straightly cut wooden boards, with two layers of leather observable: layer I (9th c.), fragmentary estampé; preserved only in the central part of the upper wing. A stylized cross is stamped on much damaged leather – shomboid plated ornaments with folded ends, designed with small decorative pins, filling stamps. Fixed to the surface of the stamped cross is a medium-sized, engraved, equal-armed cross (10th c.). A leaf and flower ornament forms the image of a drawing cut in silver. The layer II of thick leather (16th c.) at present torn off, survives on the side of the back.

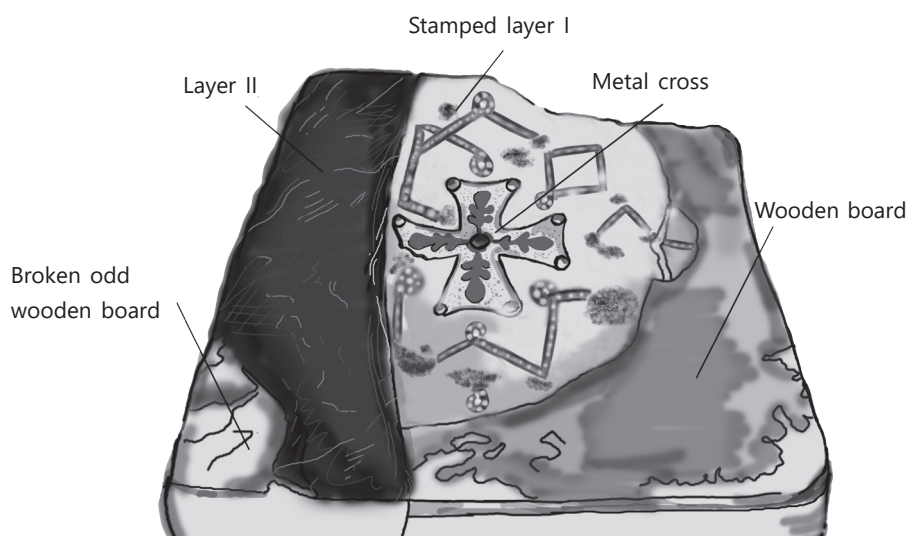
Adishi Four Gospels. 897

Cover: 9th c; 14th-16th c; size: 30×27 cm

Master of the 9th c. cover: Mikael

Preserved in the Svaneti Historical-Ethnographic Museum

Art copy of 2008: M. Ebralidze





Light brown leather-bound cover: massive wooden boards are cut off at the edge of the manuscript sheets. Depicted on the surface of the cover is a stylized equal-armed cross inscribed in an equal-armed square, using technique of linear stamping, framed in three lines each. The contours are designed with small-sized decorative balls. Square-shaped filling decorative stamp is also used.

Liturgical Collection. 9th-10th c.

Cover 10th c, size: 13×14.5 cm

Master of the cover: Ioanne Zosime

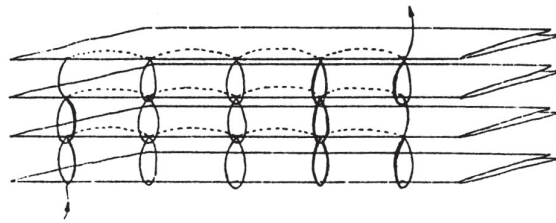
Sin.Geo.N.26, photocopy preserved at the National Centre of Manuscripts.

cover were known, preserved in the Library of the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. In 2008, two important manuscripts in the Historical-Ethnographic Museum of Svaneti – the Adishi Four Gospels and Adishi Iadgari – were found to bear fragments of 9th-10th c. binding.

Today we speak safely about the technological and artistic aspects of 9th-10th c. binding. The early type of the ornament of the Georgian manuscript leather cover was built on the basis of stylization of the oriental type equilateral cross. The covers were stamped on wet leather by the method of puncturing. Crosses inscribed in a circle were drawn on leather with compasses and a

special sharp pointed tool, as well as a rhomboid plated ornaments with folded ends, stamps of various forms for filling or bordering: the technique of linear stamping was used. Owing to the small number of stamps, the inner space of diversity, or on the contrary, filling stamps were used to design the borders.

In the history of binding special attention is given to the body of the book, implying the stitching of the written leaves folded into fascicles, attachment of wooden boards. This manufacturing process often reveals the original creativity of Georgian masters.



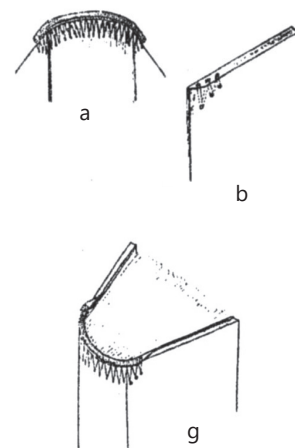
"Chain stitching" obtained by the technique of a single needle

This technique starts in the 5th c., which is by a trace of fascicular numeration surviving on palimpsest leaves dated to the 5th-8th cc.

"Chain stitching" obtained by the technique of a single needle. The wooden boards of the early Georgian manuscript book are



- a) a band attached to the book block stitched as a notebook
- b) massive straightly-cut wooden board
- c) straightly-cut wooden boards on the edge of the cut off the manuscript



massive and cut at the edges of the manuscript, with a groove running along three edges. The book was bound by a combined technique, implying simultaneous chain stitching of fascicles and attachment of wooden boards.

Masters of the cover of the Georgian manuscript books made V-shaped notches on the folded edges of the fascicles to fasten the boards, allowing the stitching thread not to become prominent on the back and not to damage the leather.

Lightbrown leather-bound stamped cover; straightly cut wooden boards coincide with the cut off the manuscript; has two leather thongs; the surface is bordered with three lines. The inner area is occupied by a cross placed a triangular pedestal. Both the cross and pedestal are executed by linear stamp. Free spaces on the surface of the cover are filled with diagonal lines, as well as small-sized pin-type filling stamps.

Tskarostavi Four Gospels. 10th c.

Cover: 1070, size: 22.5×19 cm

Master of the cover: Iovane

Restored at the National Centre of Manuscripts

A-98





Brown leather-bound stamped cover. Thick, straightly-cut wooden boards; edges have grooves. A trace of secondary binding is visible. Rectilinear technique of fascinating is used. The image of the stamp on the leather surface is almost erased: there is a trace of decorative balls on the border, small-sized crosses, oval filling stamps. The back rounded, unstamped. A small fragment of a motly capital survives. Fly-leaves are lost.

Basil the Great. Homilies on the Psalms. 1035

Cover: 11th-13th c., size: 20×13.5 cm

11th c. cover master: Davit Jibisdze

A-135



Darkbrown leather-bound cover: the technique of fastening double wooden boards is used. A fragment of chasing survives on the lower wing of the cover; metal balls, pins are attached to the surface of the much damaged manuscript. The manuscript is bound with the *grekaj* technique, a trace of secondary binding of the book is noticeable; a fragment of a disintegrated capital survives, on the upper wing massive metal, pointed, wodge-shaped fasteners survive; the thongs are lost.

Four Gospels. 1048

Cover: 13th-14th c., size: 21.5×13.5 cm

H-1741





Dark-brown leather-bound, stamped cover; the wooden boards are slightly thinned; the surface of the cover is entirely filled with a medium-sized, right-angled, decorative border stamp, three sites of sewing are visible in relief on the back – a trace of restoration in the 18th century. Leather of differing colour and quality is used. Capital made of yellow treads is noticeable. The inner surface of the cover is lined with striped faded fabric. The cover must have had three fasteners, lost at present. The manuscript belonged to Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani.

Minor Nomocanon. 1031

Corner: 16th c. restored in the 18th c.

Size: 21×16.5 cm

A-96

The cover of a book bound by this technique is smooth. This method, known under the name grekash, is typical of the binding of the Byzantine circle of early manuscripts. The wooden boards of the cover, on which later the leather surface will be put, has horizontal grooves in which cords are placed. The grooves correspond to the level of grekash. The combined technique of stitching is characteristic only of Georgian manuscripts.

Thus, earlier methods of book-binding occur on manuscripts namely rectilinear, when the grooves on wooden boards are cut vertically. Double wooden boards are attached to the block of the bound book. In this case the cords left as a result of bindings are hidden in the wooden boards. Despite the repeated binding of manuscript books, earlier elements of binding still occur on the

cover, which should be accounted for by the tradition of working with the cover: technique, tools and décor remain unchanged.

The inner (back) side of the wooden boards may be covered with a piece of silk, parchment or paper. Apart from practical purpose, the fly-leaf has a purely aesthetic side as well. It covers all the defects left by the book-binder. (156) One part of the fly-leaf was bound together with the manuscript, and the other was stuck to the wooden boards. The fabric, parchment or paper used as fly-leaf is of major importance in studying the book cover and dating. The manuscript book was fastened with two or three metal-headed leather thongs, called ghilo-kiloni. The number of fasteners on the cover depended on the size of the manuscript. There also were such book covers that had no ghilo-kiloni and leather thongs with perforated ends were directly fastened to wedge-shaped metal.

Certain changes are noticeable on covers of 17th c. manuscripts: leather-bound wooden boards are similar in shape and design to



Dark wine-red leather-bound wooden cover. Boarder cut straightly to the edge of the manuscript sheets are slightly thin; on the surface of the cover border stamps containing a right-angle form mesh-like drawing are used as margin. Depicted in the centre is a cross comprised of small border stamps of rectangular shape. Three sites of sewing take shape in relied on the back.

Collection. 1669

Cover: 17th c., size: 21×15 cm

A-179



Brown leather-bound stamped wooden cover. The wooden boards coincide with the cut-off of the sheets, slightly rounded; the surface of the cover is cut by diagonal lines, adorned with medium-sized rosettes and oval decorative filling stamps. A stamp containing a trefail-type leaf ornament also occurs. The lower wing differs little from the upper. The back is fallen off, a trace of the "graced" technique and chain binding is evident. Notably, at relief sites, cloth, specially twisted like cord are placed in advance. The binder has artificially filled the hollows obtained as a result of grekash. The back is old and restored. The capital is damaged. The cover is lined from inside with printed fabric. The fasteners are lost.

Shatberdi collection. 973-976

Cover: 16th-17th c., restored in the 18th c.

Size: 28.3×23 cm

S-1141

Leather-bound stamped cover, straightly-cut wooden boards; placed in a gilt, inlaid oriental leather cover. The inner parts of the upper and lower wings designed in the oriental style. A large central rectangular vegetable ornamental stamp is used. Oval border and corner stamps form the margins. The inner border is inlaid. Leather of various colours is used. The cover must have been made in some country of the East. Restored at the National Centre of Manuscripts.

"The Man in the Panther's Skin". 16th-17th c.

Cover: 17th c., size: 37.2×24 cm

H-2074





Cover by Beshken Opizari

those of 16th c. covers, only relief places of stitching appear on the back, the grekash technique is no longer used, a grekash depression may occur on the back, but this doubtless superficial. 17th century covers constitute a transitional stage between the early (10th-16th c.) and late (18th-19th c.) covers.

Following the involvement of lay aristocracy in the creation of the manuscript book lavishly adorned chased covers were created. This process commenced in the 11th century. An manuscript of this period with a chased cover, copied in the Laura of Calipos on Black Mountain, is at present preserved in the Shchukin collection of Moscow Public Library. Regrettably, the chased cover of Alaverdi Four Gospels, copied at the same centre by the financial support of the Baghvashe feudal house, has not survived. Its precise description is known from the colophon appended to the manuscript itself in 1059. It was on the basis of this colophon that in the 17th c. the restoration of the manuscript book cover was undertaken by Levan Dadiania, Prince of Samegrelo-Odishi. He had the book bound in a combined cover of leather and gilt silver.

Unique specimens of Georgians chased cover were created in the 12th c. The chased covers of the Gospels of Berta, Tbeti and

Gilt silver chased cover; damaged; the Crucifixion depicted in the centre of the upper wing is traditionally against the background of the Virgin, John the Evangelist and John the Baptist and the Angels; on the lower wing Deesis in company with the Virgin and the Baptist. Explanatory inscriptions occur: the central part of the chasing has a frame of thin twisted ornament; the corners are adorned with a leaf-flower relief ornament. One inscription forms the border of the upper wing referring to Ioane Mtvaraisdze, Giorgi and the deacon Mikael Kvirikaidze; in the inscriptions of the lower wing mention is made of the donors Okropir and his son Demetre. The cover is adorned with semi-precious stones. Below Christ's church the inscription reads: "Chased by the hand of Beshken Opizari". The back is lost. Cloth fabric survives: the book had four clasps, surviving in fragments.

Berta Four Gospels. 12th c.

Cover: 12th c., size: 24×17cm

Master of cover: Beshken Opizari

Q-906



Cover by Beshken Opizari

Gilt silver cover. In the centre of the upper wing a scene of Crucifixion is depicted against the background of the Virgin, John the Evangelist and the Angels; on the lower wing Deisis in the company of Virgin and the Baptist. The explanatory inscriptions occur. The central part of the chasing has a frame of thin twisted ornament; the corners are adorned with a leaf-flower relief ornaments; in the inscriptions of the lower wing mention is made of the donor Ioane Mtbevari. The cover is adorned with semi-precious stones; on the left side of Christ's church the inscription written in *asomtavruli* reads: "Christ, have mercy on the chasing master Beka Opizari".



Cover by Beshken Opizari

Brown leather cover adorned with small-size silver decorative plates. The majority of them have been lost.

The book was fastened with four clasps which have been survived as fragments.

Tskarostavi Four Gospels. 1195

Cover: 12th c., size: 25×18 cm

Master of the cover: Beka Opizari

Q-907



Embossed cover with gold-plates

The fragments of chased cover are stamped on gold-plated cover. Light brown leather. Wooden boards are cut slantwise, advance and cover the whole corpus of the manuscript. Gold embossing cover, four sites of stitching are stamped. On the upper wing of the cover is depicted a scene of Crucifixion, traditionally against the background of the Virgin, John the Evangelist and the Angels; on the lower wing we can see the figure of Christ set in medallion, prayer St. Peter and St. Paul Apostles; floral and foliated ornament covers the edges and inner space, on the lower wing in one of the inscriptions the commissioner Ioane Mtbevari is mentioned. The cased cover must have been done by Beka Opizari; the fragments of the 18th century restoration are glued on the leather layer. The cover is renovated on the initiative of the spouse of Solomon I, Queen Mariam.

Tbeti Gospels. 12th c.

Cover: 12th, 18th cc., size: 28×20.5 cm

The master of chasing cover: Beka Opizari

Q-929



Silver-chased cover. Stamped skin under the chasing. Massive wooden boards. A bordure rectangle, containing flower ornaments and oval, small-sized stamps is used as borders. The upper wing is broken; the chasing is damaged. Crucifixion is depicted on the lower wing. The following words are near the cross: "This is Jesus – the king of the Jews". The images of the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Evangelist have Greek inscriptions. The upper register features images of the Archangels – Michael and Gabriel. A vegetable ornament is used as border across the chased cover. The upper and lower wings have asomtavruli inscriptions. The metal cover was restored in the 17-18 cc. The chased cover has four fasteners – two on the front edge, one – on each side of edges. The manuscript has a colophon of a later restorer.

Four Gospels. 12th-13th c.

Cover: 14th-15th, restored 17th-18th c.

Size: 24×17 cm

A-516



Silver-chased skin cover; damaged; Crucifixion is depicted on the upper wing traditionally against the background of the Virgin Mary, John the Evangelist and Angels. The subject of the Resurrection occurs on the lower wing. The four evangelists are depicted on the back. Two massive metal hasps are used as fasteners with angels represented on them. Flower ornament is used as a border designed with precious stones. The hallmarks of jeweler Mamajana (18th c. – 20-ies 19th c.) are engraved on each of the details of the cover. The cover is dated according to the hallmark.

Four Gospels of Gelati. 12th c.

Cover: 18th-19th cc., size: 26.8×18.5 cm

Q-908



Setting of pure gold decorated with precious stones (emerald, sapphire, ruby). The savior is depicted on the upper wing and Saint George – on the lower one. A straight row of borders consisting of emeralds and complicated flower-vegetable ornaments runs along the edge of the upper wing. Also leaf and flower ornaments are used on the back of the book and on the border of the lower wing. The front side of the book is covered with chased metal. Under the chasing a brown leather covering the wood can be seen. The wooden boards are lined with red-wine silk tissue from inside. This setting has a marker adorned with turquoise and pearls.

Four Gospels. 16th c.

Cover: 17th-18th c., size: 12.5×9.5 cm

A-482



Silver-chased cover; Crucifixion is depicted on the upper wing and the Virgin with child – on the lower one. The four Evangelists in the corners. Inscriptions done in Mtavruli, are readable.

Four Gospels. 1543

Cover: 16th-17th cc., size: 20.5×15 cm

H-2806



Silver-chased leather cover; Also page cuttings (from all the three sides) covered with silver plates – bound with cogs. On the surface of the cover is a traditional compositional theme – Crucifixion. Above Christ is an explanatory inscription in Asomtavruli letters: “Our Lord. Son”. On the lower wing is Anastasis with leaf ornaments. On gilt silver cover some inscriptions were carved in the 1820s and Zurab Tsereteli, his spouse Tamar – the daughter of Dadiani, their son – Grigol with his own wife, son and daughter are mentioned in these inscriptions.

Four Gospels. 1687

Cover: 17th c., size: 15.5×10.6 cm

Q-911



Silver chased cover; on the upper wing – the scene of Crucifixion with Georgian explanatory inscription („ი~ბ ღ~ბ“: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews") accompanied with the Virgin, John the Evangelist and on the lower wing the scene of the hell /// The plot is against the background of the palm branches; the cover has explanatory inscriptions in Georgian; as a frame chain ornament is used, and on the cover floral accents; one metal clasp is preserved. Under the chasing we can see thin, leather wooden boards, as a flyleaf manuscript paper is used.

Four Gospels. 17th-18th cc.

Cover: 17th-18th cc., size: 6×5 cm

H-2266



Gold-chased cover adorned with cloisonné. On the upper wing is a plot of the Resurrection. Four Evangelists in the corners. On the lower wing – a locket with the image of the crucifixion. The metal cover has explanatory inscriptions. The manuscript is kept in the purse embroidered with precious beads.

Four Gospels. 18th c.

Cover: 18th c., size: 6×4.5 cm

H-1693



Silver-chased cover adorned with stones, brocaded. The upper wing is decorated with emeralds and rubies. inlaid with gems on the cover surface. On the lower wing is crucifixion with the images of the Virgin and the woman-bringer of myrrh. The back is decorated with rosettes and leaf-accented metal. The manuscript has woven fabric with light colours, is covered with metal. The cover is lined with blue fabric from inside. Cutting of the pages is gold-stamped. The donor of the manuscript is Domenti the Catholicos.



Four Gospels. 1714

Cover: 18th c., size: 6.5×5.5 cm

A-1097



Gilt silver crypt. In the center is a composition of praying. Above the locket is a crown with relief images of the Evangelists in the corners. On the lower side the crucifixion and the Evangelists having Russian explanatory inscriptions: Peter, Paul, Jacob, Andrew. On the front edge is carved an inscription dated in 1776. The crypt is bound with two silver fasteners. Typical Russian cover. The manuscript belonged to Solomon the First.

Four Gospels. 17th-18th cc.

Cover: 1776. Size: 8.5×13 cm

Q-901



Gilt silver cover. In the center of the upper wing is a plot of the Resurrection, images of the Evangelists – in the corners. The technique of painting enamel is used on the cover. On the lower wing is a composition of crucifixion done in niello. The silver socket has a fastener with images of St. Peter and Paul. Biblical symbols occur on the back. Edge-cuttings are gold-stamped. The metal cover was made in Russia.

Four Gospels. 1792

Cover: 19th c., size: 9×6 cm

H-1689



Gilt silver cover embellished with turquoise; both sides of the chased cover is adorned with ornaments and figured representations. The cross composed of different shape and size turquoises in the central part of the upper wing stands out; on the upper and lower sides of the cover the edge composed of floral and foliated ornament follows; in four corners of the inner space the representations of the angels are set in medallions. They are separated from the form of cross by a wavy row of small turquoise stones fixed by nails. On the back side we can see medium-sized gilded figure of Christ. Over it a cross comprised of five turquoise stones is fixed. Gold leaf is observed here and there on leaf cuttings too. On the low wing an engraved inscription written in *mkhedruli* dated from 1873 can be read. The manuscript belonged to the Dadiani family. The cover is subjected to European influence.

First printed Gospel.

Cover: 1873, size: 27.5×20 cm

RAR-57 (Q-912)



Chased cover of gilt silver; on the upper wing of the cover: Anastasis, on the lower wing: the Crucifixion. The Chased small case has a fragment of Stamped leather (the image of the stamp is almost erased, much damaged. Leather is dark brown; a tracer of binding found on the back. Also surviving fragment of silk and gold brackads. The cut of the leaves on three sides covered with gilt metal, with a leaf and flower ornament.

Chasing of Four Gospels. 19th c.

Cover: 19th c., size: 8.5×5.5 cm

Q-926

Tsqarostavi, dating from the 12th-13th c., have survived. Done to special order, the authors of these covers are Beka and Beshken Opizaris. The compositions of the crucifixion and the Decsis occur traditionally on these covers. In this respect, interest attaches to the chased cover of the Gelati Four Gospels, copied in the 12th century. The subject of the Resurrection is depicted on its lower wing. A differing interpretation of the Resurrection (p. 173) is presented on the Gelati cover: it depicts not the coming out of the Hell but the resurrection of the Saviour from his tomb (the cover is dated to the 16th c.). The subject represented is characteristic of later period chased covers of manuscripts.



Combined cover of leather and metal; on the front edge it has a cover designed with dark brown stamps, a variegated capital. Lines are stamped on the back. Has the grekash technique, relief site of stitching are noticeable. Fastened with two handicraft thongs, contemporaneous are lost.

Four Gospels. 12th-13th cc.

Cover: 14th-15th cc. (renewed with metal details in 17th-18th cc.), size: 20×15 cm

A-499



Stamped cover of combined metal and leather. On the upper wing of the cover is a cross on a pedestal depicted. Border and rectangular filling stamp of plaited ornament is distinguished. On the lower wing the inner space is filled with stamps of several types. On the upper with a cross formed of silver pins was placed with the aim of renovation. Use was made of semi-precious coral stones (only one stone survives). In the lower two corners metal crosses are lost; capital is worn, a pink fabric lines the inner side of the boards.

Jrutchi I Four Gospels. 936-940

Cover: 16th c. (renovated in the 17th c.) size: 25.5×20 cm

H-1660



Brown, leather-bound stamped cover (the wooden boards are thin, cut at the edge of the manuscript sheet); the front edge is covered with a stamped leather cover; on the surface of the cover use is made of a square filling stamp containing a plaited drawing; also a flowery drawing is formed of a combination of decorative balls and oval stamps; the back is stamped, it is smooth; white paper is used as flyleaf; later (in the 17th c.) metal icons, crosses, plaques were attached to the stamped leather cover, hung to it are small-sized bells and hand-shaped plaques.

Four Gospels. 16th c.

Cover: 16th c. (renovated in the 17th-18th cc.); size: 21.5×16.5 cm

A-502



Combined cover of leather and metal. On the upper wing Christ's fresco image is placed in a chased silver frame adorned with precious stones. On the upper wing is the image of St. George done in 11th-12th c. cloisonné-enamel. An *asomtavruli* inscription from the Gospel is carved on the upper side of the cover. On the lower wing is the Virgin with child. The fresco is almost erased (here and there gold foil survives); the cover a fastener; by all indications it is dated to the 17th c.; it follows the iconography practiced in Levan Dadiani's workshop.

Alaverdi Four Gospels. 1054

Cover: 17th c., size: 24×19 cm

A-484

The tradition of adorning the leather surface with chased elements began from the 14th c. (Four Gospels A-499, Jrutchi I H-1660) it is especially frequent in the 16th-17th c., when representatives of feudal houses became actively involved in the protection and restoration of specially illuminated old manuscript books. Incidentally, these re-chases covers were in a number of cases adorned with old elements as well. It is with a case that we are dealing with on the Alaverdi Four Gospels cover, which must have been created under the patronage of Levan Dadiani, Prince of Samegrelo in his own workshop. An 11th c. enamel image is used as one of the ornaments.

The covers of manuscript books copied in the 18th c. and in the 1930s differ absolutely on their development from the early (10th-16th cc.) and transitional period (17th c.) covers.

In the 18th century the outward appearance of the book cover changes fully. The thinning of wooden boards and the oblique whittling of the edges made the cover more refined. The back becomes more relieved and acquires the purpose of adornment, along with other elements of the book. There are cases when the binder's name appears on the stamp. Letters, for their part, perform the role of ornament. The merging of ornaments depicted on the medallion and Georgian letters, points to the stamp having been made in Georgia, and its author is a Georgian engraver. Georgian manuscript and old printed books of this period are characterized by a plain design of the cover. As a rule, in designing the cover of a Georgian book attention is given to the central area of the cover, the corners, edges, while a large part of the inner space (leather) remains free, with filling stamps occurring here and there, the stamp being plain or of combined type. In all cases the binder tries not to overload the surface of the leather. Cases occur when two or three combinations are used on the cover, but the binder manages to arrange the stamps on the surface of the cover in such a way that the view experiences diversity. These changes on the covers of Georgian books were brought by time, caused by the influence of European art on Georgian culture.

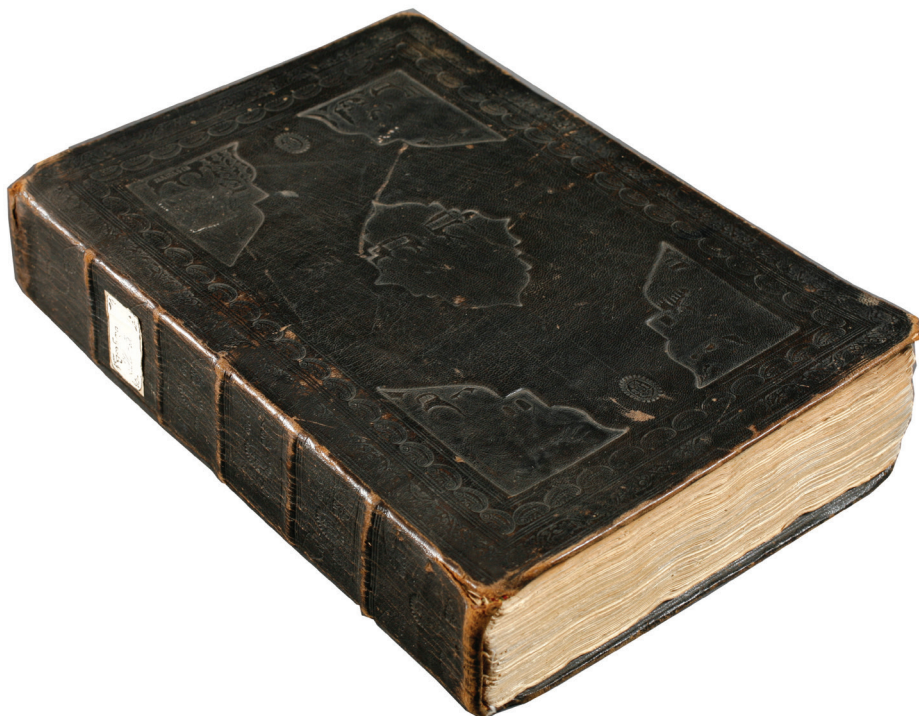


Light-brown leather-bound stamped wooden cover (the wooden boards are cut obliquely). The upper wing resembles the lower one. Used is a decorative semi-ark, leaf and flower and a central stamp comprised of leaf-and flower and arrow. Shaped vegetable ornament; has two metal fasteners; the cut-off edges of the sheets are dyed red, on the back the site of stitching is relieved flower accents are stamped. Blue paper is used as flyleaf, has a plaited capital.

Book of Hours. 1738

Cover: 18th c., size: 16×11 cm

H-15



Black-coloured leather-bound cover; wooden boards cut obliquely are covered with leather; double bordered (containing vegetable and decorative semi-arc), in the centre of the upper wing is the crucifixion, and on the lower wing the Virgin with Child, The evangelists are depicted at the corners. On the back the places of sewing are relieved: designed with leaf accents and oval brand; inscription; SHI; white water-marked paper is used as a thyleaf.

John Chrysostom, translation of the Gospel according to John. 1768

Cover: 18th c., size: 32.5×22.3 cm

Donor: Prince Giorgi

H-3



Black-coloured gold stamped wooden cover (the wooden boards are cut obliquely; a decorative semi-arc runs as a boarder rounded the cover; the Saviour's image in the centre, in the corners the four evangelists; the free space is filled with leaf-flowers and rosette stamps. The cut of the leaves is gilt. The book was fastened with two metal-headed hasps. From the colophon to the manuscript we learn that the book was bound twice till the 18th c.

Four Gospels. 12th-13th c.

Cover: 1760, size: 25.4×18.8 cm

Q-883



Dark brown gilt embossed cover (wooden boards are thin, cut slantwise: on the cover surface floral and foliated ornaments are used; in the centre of the lower wing a medallion of rosette type is engraved where the word "Zosime" written in *mkhedruli* on the surface 4 sites of sewing are engraved, embossed; headbands woven from threads are covered by leather protruding from the cover.

Four Gospels. 17th c.

Cover: 18th c., size: 12×8.5 cm

H-2127



Brown leather-bound cardboard gilt embossed cover; on the upper wing the scene of Crucifixion set in the oval medallion is embossed and on the lower wing – the figure of two standing men is represented in the oval medallion, one of them has a halo. In the corners cherubs are embossed. Has no headband. Cut-off of the sheets is speckled; small size book is put in a case made from cloth. The cover is subjected to European influence.

The Akathist. 1747

Cover: 10th c., size: 5×3.5 cm

Q-369



White leather-bound gilt embossed cover (wooden boards are cut slantwise); border is accompanied with lace-like soft ornament. The centre of the upper wing shows Crucifixion scene and the lower wing: the Virgin and Child; on the cover the sites of sewing are embossed stamps in the shape of rhombus and angular, with flower ornaments in it (there is a explanatory incscription with Latin letters); marbled paper dated to the 19th century is used as a fly leaf; the book has two leather clasps designed with metal; outside on the edge it is gilded.

Four Gospels. 1719

Cover: 19th c. II part, size: 14.5×10 cm

Q-85



Light color leather-bound gilt embossed wooden cover. In the upper wing the cross is engraved, in the lower wing – the Communion cup. Explanatory inscription engraved with Latin letters occurs on the cover.

Collection of Hymns.

Parchment, 10th c.

Cover: 19th c., size: 12×10 cm

H-2123



Red leather-bound gilt embossed cardboard cover; on the edge of the cover surface double lace follows: 1. Represents continuous series of vegetation ornaments, II. Lace-like. In the corners decorative filling stamps are used, in the centre the cross is embossed with a crown on the head on which small size decorative balls are attached. On the lower wing the laces are the same, in the centre a crown is depicted, the cover is embossed; the headband is absent; as a flyleaf 19-th century blue paper is used; cut ends of the leaves are gilt embossed. Typical European cover.

Wedding guest attention. 18th c.

Cover: 19th c., size: 16.5×10.7 cm

Q-1484



The manuscript is placed in dark-green gilt embossed carton cover; a decorative chain-like ornament follows as a lace, in the corners one by one floral-vegetation accent, the cover is embossed, red leather is found on the cover on which the inscription in Russian interpretation is red; has deeply set headband; as a leaflet is used as a flyleaf 19th century parti-colored paper, cut ends of the leaves are gilt embossed; the manuscript was restored in the 19th century; a typical European cover. The book is placed in leather-bound gilt embossed cardboard case; as a border lace-like ornament is followed.

Festive. 18th c.

Cover: 19th c., size: 20×15 cm

A-1491

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