2ND INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF GEORGIAN CULTURE

ქართული კულტურის საერთაშორისო სიმპოზიუმი

The Iternational Symposium of Georgian Culture

The Caucasus: Georgia on the Crossroads

CULTURAL EXCHANGES ACROSS THE EUROPE AND BEYOND

Proceedings

November 2-9, 2009
Florence, Italy

The International Symposium of Georgian Culture

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The Caucasus: Georgia on the Crossroads.
Cultural exchanges across the Europe and Beyond

PROCEEDINGS

TBILISI 2011

The Proceedings of the 2nd international Symposium of Georgian Culture "The Caucasus - Georgia on the Crossroads" are dedicated with great respect to the memory of Professor Nino Kaukchishvili, noted Georgian scholar.

I am very thankful to all organizers of this informational conference, which I consider the continuation of the conferences we organized in 1974 for the first time. Later there were further conferences every three years one in Georgia and one in Italy: in Bari, Lecce, in Pavia and in Northern Italy – there was also a photo exhibition of Georgian architecture which we presented in different Italian towns with a roundtable talk on Georgian History, Art and Literature.
I do hope that this is the beginning of revive of Georgian culture in Italy and other European countries.

With thousand thanks,
Gratitude

Nino Kaukhchishvili
Florence , November 7, 2009

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The Symposium was organized by Georgian Arts and Culture Center (GACC) through International Initiative for Georgian Cultural Studies in cooperation with Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco (Florence) under the patronage of Tbilisi City Hall and Florence City Hall.

Co-organizers: George Chubinashvili National Research Center for Georgian Art History and heritage Preservation; Ilia Chavchavadze State University, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University; Tbilisi State Academy of Arts.

Hosting organizations in Florence: Florence City Hall at Palazzo Vecchio, Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz Max-Planck-Institut

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Foreword

The 2009 Florence symposium "The Caucasus: Georgia on the Crossroads. Cultural exchanges across Europe and beyond" is bound to become a milestone in the cultural relations between Italy and Georgia, based on centuries of commercial and social interaction reflected in many examples of art and culture.

The effort made by the organizers, in particular the Municipality of Florence, the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation and the Georgian Arts and Culture Center, is therefore highly commendable.

The event – opened in the Palazzo Vecchio, a symbolic site of culture and civilization in the world – not only extended a long tradition of cooperation in presenting and promoting the Georgian culture, but paved the way for a renewed and mindful understanding in Italy of the Georgian reality.

Time has come to spread a more comprehensive knowledge of Georgia, in order to revitalize those contacts which made the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and therefore our two countries, parts of the same reality and components of the same European family.

A better knowledge of this reality may result in mutual benefits, as several joint initiatives have already proved. Initially, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted another significant event, the country presentation of the Georgian economy, a forum where relevant operators were informed on the opportunities in Georgia and which resulted in several fruitful contacts. Later, the Italian Government financed a data base for young Italian-speaking Georgians and decided to increase the number of scholarships in Italy as well as to support four Italian archeological missions in Georgia.

A specific outcome of such a favourable environment is represented by a new wave of mutual visits of Georgian and Italian artistic groups, often supported by Italian local governments and civil organizations. Moreover, a broader knowledge of the Georgian cultural attractions has already resulted in an increased number of Italian tourists.

Being one of the few Italians who took part at the Florence Symposium coming from Tbilisi – the fascinating capital of Georgia where I have the honor to represent Italy – these examples of cooperation are indeed encouraging. Once again, in fact, the approach based on common values, aimed in this case at promoting the rich and precious cultural heritage of Georgia, has proved to be the better choice to enrich and expand the occasions of interaction between our civil societies

Vittorio Sandalli
Ambassador of Italy to Georgia

The 2nd International Symposium of Georgian Culture, "The Caucasus: Georgia on the Crossroads: Cultural Exchanges across Europe and Beyond," held in the framework of the Georgian Cultural Week in Florence in (2-9 November 2009) was an important milestone in the study and promotion of Georgian culture and the further integration of Georgian and international scholarly circles.

The theme of the symposium was comprehensive. It included art history research and cultural studies together with cultural preservation and conservation issues focusing on international restoration practices and cutting-edge methodologies. These elements brought additional value to the symposium and played a significant role in stimulating international interest in Georgia's artistic and cultural heritage. This interest in turn creates a common platform for the implementation of joint initiatives between Georgia and other nations.

The publication of the Symposium Proceedings aims to highlight the uniqueness and special features of Georgian culture and is intended to intensify international scholarly interest in the past and present of Georgia – and to serve as one more step toward a successful future.

Nikoloz Vacheishvili
Director General
National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia

Preface

The forthcoming Proceedings of the International Symposium titled "The Caucasus: Georgia on the Crossroads. Cultural Exchange Across the Europe and Beyond" is our second anthology of studies by various scholars and investigators assembled by the Georgian Arts and Culture Center. It includes the contributions that were presented at the Symposium held in Florence, Italy, during the week November 2-9, 2009.

The Symposium was organized by GACC International Initiative for Georgian Cultural Studies in cooperation with the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco. The Symposium was the leading event of the Georgian Cultural week in Florence, also headed by the Fondazione and GACC under the patronage of the Florence and Tbilisi Municipalities. In addition to the Symposium itself, the Georgian Cultural Week presented four exhibitions of Georgian art and Georgian folk-music concerts. It also highlighted the cultural cooperation that the two nations maintain with the delivery of papers on ancient history and through performances of Georgian culture in such unique historical locations as the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio, the Opera Del Duomo, and other venues.

This second Symposium on Georgian Arts and Culture follows the first Symposium, held in Tbilisi, Georgia, in June 2008. The alternate convening of the symposia in Georgia and Italy maintains the tradition established by the George Chubinashvili Institute of Georgian Art History from 1974 to 1989, under leadership of its Director, Academician Vakhtang Beridze.

One of the organizers of the symposia of those days was Dr. Nino Kaukchishvili, a professor of Georgian Cultural studies and long a Georgian immigrant living and working in Italy. Despite her age and frail health Dr. Kaukchishvili actively participated in the Florence Symposium. With sorrow we have to acknowledge that this Symposium was her last contribution to Georgian culture, as shortly after the event she passed away. It is with pride and gratitude that we dedicate these Proceedings to the memory of the esteemed Dr. Nina Kaukchishvili.

The upcoming Proceedings offer the outcomes of the investigative and scholarly work of leading Georgian and international scholars; their papers explore many specialized fields. In all, the Proceedings present the papers of some 50 scholars from Georgia, Italy, other European countries and the United States. Thematically they cover many periods of Georgian culture from Ancient Art to Medieval Georgia and Modernism, as well as addressing topics relevant to contemporary concerns, including cultural tourism and the preservation of the material cultural heritage.

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

As my final note, I must take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Vittorio Sandalli, Italy's ambassador to Georgia, and Dr. Paolo Del Bianco, President of Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco, for their generous support of the Symposium; to express my appreciation to all the members of the Organizational Committee and the Symposium Project Team for their advisement, creativity and hard work in assembling the program. I also thank the local and international donor and sponsor organizations for their support in making Symposium a success.

Maka Dvalishvili, Project Leader
GACC International Initiative for Georgian Cultural Studies
President, Georgian Arts and Culture Center

The Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco was pleased to contribute to the success of the Georgian Cultural Week and to the Second International Symposium of Georgian Culture in Florence. The idea of the activity for intercultural dialogue was born in 1991, and the idea of the creation of the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco was born right in Georgia in May 1996 during a memorable week in Tbilisi and its surroundings, a week that was very well organised by the Tbilisi State University, by Rector Prof. Roin Metreveli. I still have a nice memory from that week of every moment, a tangible vivid memory of those feelings, atmosphere and sensations, that, as said, contributed to the birth of the idea of the Foundation.

I would like to underline that the opening of Second International Symposium of Georgian Culture in Florence occurred just the 3rd of November 2009 the same day as the 11th anniversary of the constitution of the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation! Not easy, for me, to believe it as a mere coincidence!

Since then, the partnerships with Georgian Institutions have grown in quantity and quality, and reached very satisfying results: 11 co-operation agreements with universities and institutions, more than 300 Georgian students and teachers involved in our cultural and educational initiatives, two honorary degrees received by Georgian universities, and also many cultural initiatives conceived in Florence and in Tbilisi; Georgian young students awarded by our Foundation and others examples of meetings and friendships between our cultures.

The Georgian Cultural Week, thanks to the tireless co-operation of the GACC International Initiative for Georgian Cultural Studies in Tbilisi, has been able to attract the involvement of many other Georgian and Italian institutions and people in Florence, by offering to Florence culture and citizenship the chance to discover the main aspects and facets of the millenary and fascinating Georgian Culture and Traditions; embassies, consulates, universities, institutes, both Georgian and Florentine, gave all together their contribution for the success of that initiatives, by representing an effective contribution in the process of mutual knowledge between our cultures. From that time on, those efforts are still producing new fruitful co-operation and events, as witnessed by the other initiatives that – consequently – are still blossoming up, either in Florence and in Tbilisi, and where our Foundation is proud to be engaged.

Dialogue between cultures is the mission of the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco and like the fusion of two metals that leads to an "alloy," in our experience, we have experienced for a long time how culture, combined with tourism, can contribute greatly to intercultural dialogue. The ethos 'Life Beyond Tourism' that our Foundation defined thanks to the direct experiences shared with docents and students during these activities for intercultural dialogue in Florence, the ethos that guides our action, would like to raise the worldwide attention on that, on the numerous opportunities beyond merely consumerism and services, how the tourism combined with values is useful in leaving indelible memories and give witness of intercultural meetings for posterity. The Georgian Cultural Week represents one of the brightest examples of it.

Paolo Del Bianco
President of Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco

If we look through the works of the 20th-century Georgian artist Sergo Kobuladze, among his masterpieces we will find his portrait of the 12th-century Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli, and also a portrait of the great Italian poet Dante Alighieri. I do not know why this Georgian graphic artist decided to portray the Italian poet; however, it is indeed true that while one is speaking about Rustaveli's poem "The Knight in the Panther Skin" one recalls Dante Alighieri's "Divine Comedy," and when considering the Weltanschauung of Rustaveli's period epoch, one calls to mind the 15th-century Florentine Neo-Platonist . . . and this is one of the reasons why Italy is so familiar to many Georgians. However, this is not the only case: there are also the remarkable drawings of Italian monk Cristoforo Castelli that provide us with information on the appearance of Georgian kings, great men and ordinary people of the 17th century. Moreover, the first book printed in Georgian type was published in Rome, and Georgian folk fairy tales were first recorded in Italian. . . .

We are not surprised to find the names of Michelangelo, Botticelli and Titian in the works of Georgian poets. One of the poems of the 19th-century Georgian poet Akaki Tsereteli was inspired by Rafael's "Sistine Madonna." Furthermore, the melody of Tsereteli's famous song "Tsitsinatela" (The Firefly), is a paraphrase of an aria from Verdi's La Traviata.

All the abovementioned (and much more) consciously prompt Georgians to link their homeland with geographically distant Italy – and that's why we have such an enthusiasm for promoting our cultural achievements and our historical and contemporary art in Italian venues. In the period 1970-1990 this eagerness for building cultural relationships between Georgia and Italy was supported by a number of Italian and Georgian scientists. Among these was Professor Nino Kaukchishvili, who had close ties with both countries.

Today, when the dissemination and popularization of Georgian culture in Europe, and particularly in Italy, is on an upswing, the organization in Florence of a symposium for educational and promotional purposes is indeed a great event. It is made significantly more important by the participation of Professor Kaukchishvili, a uniquely accomplished person distinguished by her vibrant nature and willingness to support any positive cultural movement at any time, despite her age. It is a due appreciation and honor that the proceedings of this symposium are dedicated to her memory.

If the dissemination and appreciation of all aspects of Georgian culture could develop in the way Professor Nino Kaukchishvili would wish, there would be nothing left for us to dream about and hope for . . .

Dimitri Tumanishvili
George Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation
Tbilisi State Academy of Arts

CULTURAL STUDIES

Giuli Alasania
International Black Sea University;
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
University of Georgia

THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION OF GEORGIA: A DREAM OR A CHANCE?

Past Experience

Thanks to its location, the territory of Georgia can be considered as a cradle of European civilization. Several years ago, the 1.8- million-year-old Dmanisi hominids were discovered in the foothills of the Lesser Caucasus.

Traditions of statehood on Georgian territory can be traced back to the mid-2nd millennium B.C. Preconditions for the creation of a unified state started to form in the beginning of the 3rd century BC, when the western part of the country submitted to the eastern part, resulting in the creation of the Kingdom of the Kartvels (the Georgians).

Being located at the crossroads of East and West, Georgia attracted frequent invasions. In some cases, an invasion led to the establishment of foreign rule over Georgian lands. These divideinto two main regions: western and eastern. Whereas the eastern and the western parts fell to the Romans in the first centuries, in later times the eastern part was controlled in turn by Persians, Arabs, Seljuk Turks, Mongols, Khorezmians, and Turkmen tribes; while the western part was mostly controlled and influenced by Rome or Byzantium. The western part was partially occupied by the Ottomans just before Russia annexed all of Georgia in the early 19th century, and interrupted longstanding traditions of statehood in all regions.

Proceeding from the above-stated facts, the orientation issue has always been topical for Georgians. In most typical situations, when two superpowers contended for Georgian lands, people inside Georgia possessed different outlooks regarding the political orientation of the country. Any perception, even wrong, served the Georgian desire for territorial integrity and the aspiration towards sovereignty.

Early contacts between Georgia and the West were reflected in the popular myth about the Argonauts. In the mid-2nd millennium B.C. Greeks from Iolkos (on the Balkan peninsular) came to the country of Eguri (Egrisi) in search of the Golden Fleece. Their ship was called the Argo, and the participants in that expedition were known as the Argonauts. Eguri (called Colchis by the Greeks) emerged as a wealthy state in the mid-2nd millennium B.C.

In the 6th-5th centuries B.C. Greek migrants from Miletus founded trade factories on the coast of Egrisi (Colchis): Phasis (Poti), Dioscuria (Sokhumi), Pityus (Bichvinta), and Gyenos (Ochamchire) among them. Greek written sources of the 6th century B.C. provide us with detailed information about ancient Georgian state formations, filling some gaps in local chronicles of later periods.

As a result of the expedition of the Roman commander Pompeius (65 B.C.) Kartli (i.e., Iberia or Eastern Georgia) fell to Rome, while Western Georgia (Egrisi), then a province of Pontus, was included in the Empire in A.D. 63.

Christianity spread to Georgia in the 1st century. Simon the Canaanite and Mattei came to Georgia together with Andrew the First-Called. The first bishop's seat in Georgia was established by Andrew in Atskuri; he also assigned the first bishop, several priests and a deacon.

In 298, under the treaty concluded by Rome and Sassanid Persia in Nisibis, the Kingdom of Kartli came under Roman political control, enabling the authorities to acknowledge Christianity.

Kartli declared Christianity the state religion in 326, and about that time the same decision was made in Egrisi (now also known as Lazica) (G. Alasania, 2005, 34-35). This decision for Georgia, situated at the crossroads between the West and the East, implied taking a political orientation towards the West, while two superpowers, Rome and Sassanid Persia, were fighting for for world domination. The decision determined Georgia's further fate and strongly tied the Georgian people and culture to Western civilization, even though after that Georgia (as stated above), was mostly controlled by Persians or (for shorter times) by Arabs, Seljuk Turks, Mongols, Khorezmians, Turkmen peoples and, in the late Middle Ages, by the Ottoman Turks.

In 482, the powerful Georgian King Vakhtang Gorgasali broke with Persia, turned to Byzantium, married the Byzantine princess Helena, achieved independence for the Georgian Church, and expressed his loyalty to Byzantium, adhering to this course till

his death. His last words to his people were: "Never abandon love for the Greeks" (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 1996, 182), which was a confirmation of Western orientation.

In 596 Kiryon, the Catholicos of Kartli, corresponding with the Pope Gregory the Great (590-604), firmly turned the Georgian Church to Diophysitism, which meant a Western orientation.

Georgia's location at the crossroads of East and West was revealed in different ways. Georgians were familiar with the poems of Homer, and medical, philosophical and philological anthologies, written in Medieval Georgia, were influenced by Greek thought. "Philosophers such as Democritus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Philo are represented." (F. Tremmel, 1973, 4, 1974,3) via the thinking of the Corpus Dionysiacum, Neoplatonic ideas also were introduced into Georgian culture (F. Tremmel, 1973, 4, 1974,3).

Primarily deriving from Roman-Byzantine traditions Georgian law was based on liberal, democratic and tolerant principles. However, since Georgia had an almost continuous tradition of statehood, the purpose of ancient and medieval Georgian law was primarily to defend the interests of the state.

At the top of the political hierarchy was the king, who personified the state. As in all states in ancient times, the king was commander-in-chief, high priest and supreme judge. Later on, the spiritual and civil powers were divided and the institution of kingship turned into a hereditary tradition. However, the rights of the monarch were not unlimited and his authority was not untouchable. Important decisions were made by the king together with the "darbazi" (state council).

In the early 12th century a Supreme Court was established in Georgia. Any person could submit a complaint, regardless of ethnicity or social status, even a lowly peasant against a senior official. The court was headed by the prime minister (mtsignobartukhutsesi). One can see some rudiments of a jury system in Georgian justice, and decisions were made on the basis of testimony; twelve specially chosen men rendered a verdict of guilty or not guilty, made under an oath of honest judgment. In England, a similar system had come into being at the same time.

Georgian law defended private property. Private property (land), unlike in the East, remained the dominant element in Georgia throughout the centuries. Private property could be inherited; however,

each new king had to confirm the rights to private property by issuing corresponding documents. Medieval Georgian society was based on a blood-money system. In most cases Georgian law did not classify crime based on the social status of the criminal. There was no discrimination on ethnic or religious grounds either. The jurisdiction of law outside the Church – "lay jurisdiction" – did not resort to the death penalty, or to extreme forms of mutilation in punishment.

Georgian law protected women's rights, and emphasized their significance. Women, like men, could inherit property and could participate in governance and in diplomacy. One can trace the concept of gender equality in Georgian literature, as well as in legal and historic documents. The kidnapping of women was forbidden, at least on paper.

The splitting up of the Rome-based Church into the Catholic and Orthodox churches was not immediately recognized by Georgians and despite the schism of Christendom in 1054 A.D., the Georgian Church retained contacts with the Catholic Church. Georgia did not formally participate in the Crusades; however, 200 crusaders joined forces with the Georgians in defeating the invading Muslim coalition at the battle of Didgori in 1121. The Georgian King Giorgi IV Lasha (1207-1223) was invited to participate in the 5th Crusade, supposedly in early 1221. However, the Georgians could not respond since the Mongols thrice invaded Georgia in 1220-1221.

In 1318 a Catholic bishopric was founded in Sokhumi (T. Beradze, 1989, 97; J. Richard, 1977, 178). In 1328 (according to a Papal Bull) a bishop's seat – previously located in Smyrna, was transferred to Tbilisi. From that time on Roman Catholic missionaries and envoys from Europe visited Georgia, and these contacts contributed greatly to the survival of the country throughout the Middle Ages. Contacts with the missionaries were attractive for the Georgian side as a means of establishing trade and cultural links between Georgia and Christian Europe – a challenge at that time.

At the beginning of the 14th century the prince of Odishi granted the Genoese permission to found a trade factory in Georgia (T. Beradze, 1989, 99). However, Genoa founded a trade factory in Sokhumi (Sebastopolis) only after defeating the Venetian fleet in 1354. In those years not only Georgian goods but also silk from Shirvan and Persia were exported via Georgia to Europe. The attempt to establish trade relations

with Western Europe can also be traced later, for instance, Levan II Dadiani (1611-1657), who invited European merchants to Mingrelia to found a company to export Persian silk to Europe via Georgia (T. Beradze, 1989, 150-152; M. Peyssonel, 1787, 41-42, 48-50). The same project was revived in 1714 in the agreement that was to be concluded between Georgia and France, some paragraphs of which envisaged Franco-Persian the trade via Georgia and Black Sea (T. Beradze, 1989, 151; Documents from the history of French-Georgian Relations. (March 1707-December 1714), Trans. and commentary by I. Tabaghua, 1975, 276).

Among the distinguished guests of the Ferrara-Florence Council (1438-45) were the Georgian Metropolitan and a noble from Iberia (Eastern Georgia), who clandestinely left the Council. Despite attending the Council, Georgians did not join the Florentine Union (1439), avoiding surrender of the independence of the Georgian Church. However, the Georgia still participated in various European attempts to organize an anti-Ottoman coalition, since the increasing power of the neighboring Ottoman Empire also threatened the independence of Georgia (M. Makharadze, 2005, 80-84; J. Vateishvili, 2003, 179-210).

In the 1490s Georgian ambassadors met Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain, as well as Pope Alexander VI and gave them letters from the Georgian king, appealing to Europeans to rise against the Muslims – who had now gained more power. However, they declined the request to participate in the anti-Ottoman coalition.

The dissolution of Georgia towards the end of the 15th century made its partition by the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia in the mid-16th century easier. Since then, the aspiration toward unification and independence was an impetus for the further activities of Georgian civil as well as ecclesiastical figures. The Georgian leaders considered Western Europe as a potential ally with whom they tried to establish contacts in all ways possible. In some cases, the Georgians were even ready to grant concessions in matters of religious affinity. During 17th and 18th centuries, the Georgian kings sent many envoys to Europe to establish an anti-Ottoman coalition, but all of these attempts failed.

The difficulties that Persia faced in the early 18th century raised hopes in Georgia for regaining national independence. The first move to gain help was again an appeal to the West. This time Vakhtang VI, the King of Kartli, sent his ambassador Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani to France to plead with Louis XIV. Orbeliani visited Italy and other European countries during his trip of 1714-1716. After Vakhtang's attempt to protect his country from the Persians and Ottomans failed (David Marshall Lang, 1957, 100-115) he was forced to make overtures to Russia, which turned into a tragedy for Georgia. The country was occupied by the Persian and Turkish invaders – and the Georgian king was forced to emigrate to Russia, accompanied by the greater part of the educated élite.

In 1750s, long after Kakheti had been detached from the rest of Georgia, King Erekle II of Kakheti managed to unite his kingdom and Kartli into Eastern Georgia – and the unification of Eastern and Western Georgia came back onto the agenda. King Erekle appealed to Europe and also established close relations with the missionaries. But King Erekle's appeals to the courts of Western Europe did not meet with any response. The vain quest for an ally in the West, which had lasted throughout the 18th century, came to an end with Georgia's political orientation towards Orthodox Russia. In 1783 the Treaty of Georgievsk, signed between Russia and Georgia, actually laid the foundation for the abolition of the independence of the Georgian Church, followed by the abolition of statehood. According to the treaty the Georgian Church, occupied the eighth place in the Russian Orthodox Church hierarchy (The Georgievsk Treaty, Introduction and Comments, G.Paichadze, 1983, 34,74). By other clauses of the same document, sympathy and tolerance toward Roman Catholicism would no longer be tolerated. In 1801, Alexander I, Tsar of Russia, abolished by decree Georgia's centuries-old statehood in Eastern Georgia. Soon thereafter the Western Georgian kingdom and principalities were also abolished.

Throughout the 19th century, Georgians rebelled many times: once during Napoleon's invasion of Russia (1811-12) and then – inspired by the Polish Rebellion of 1830-31, Georgians attempted to organize a plot in 1832. It was betrayed, and all participants were arrested and punished. A letter Solomon II, the last king of Western Georgia, sent to Napoleon, was the final desperate attempt to attract the attention of the West.

Russia exercised its hegemony in many areas. In 1845, by Russian decree, the activities of the Catholic missionaries in Georgia were suspended. Also during the mid-century years Georgia became a home for

Europeans, settled there by Russians. In 1817-1819, during Commander-in-Chief Ermolov's term of office, more than 500 German families were brought to the Caucasus, mostly to Georgia, and after Polish uprising of 1830-31 most of the 3000 Poles who were exiled were sent to the Caucasus. During the 19th century Greeks were also settled in Georgia. After the 1863 uprising in Poland, money was collected in Tbilisi to support the exiled rebels (M. Natmeladze, 2002, 3-12).

In the second half of the 19th century, many Georgians studied in European universities, becoming involved in political activities, founding political parties, and editing a variety of newspapers and journals. Many Europeans visited Georgia to satisfy different interests. However, cultural as well as commercial interactions between Georgia and the West were mainly realized via Russia – and were under Russian control.

A new range type of relationship was connected with Georgia's short period of independence from 1918 to 1921. Since proclaiming independence on 26 May 1918, Georgia ended her Russian orientation and opened relations with Europe. The Georgian delegation that visited Paris in 1919-1920, during the period WW I peace negotiations, tried to cast light upon Russia's political goals. The only thing that was achieved in Paris was the recognition of the de facto independence of Georgia in January 1920. The struggle to win recognition by the League of Nations (founded 28 April 1919), became pivotal to Georgia's foreign policy. However, the end of WWI did not put the independence of Georgia on the political agenda. This was confirmed by the League of Nations: it did not recognize the independence of Georgia. Just 10 of the League's 23 members voted for the membership of Georgia. This non-recognition resulted in 70 years of Bolshevik rule in Georgia. On 23 February 1921, the Bolsheviks' Red Army annexed Georgia.

Georgia as a Bridge between the West and the East

Georgia never felt at ease under the Soviet regime. In 1991, the country once again regained its political independence and historical role – bridging East and West. Georgia's independence has been recognized by the international community and Georgia is a member of a number of international organizations. After the "Rose Revolution" in November 2003, Georgia firmly adopted the following strategic goals: a strong, united and stable democracy, and Euro-At-

lantic integration. To implement of these policies, the country has accepted related documents, specifying a number of obligations and duties that the country is fulfilling.

Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Georgia is a bridge connecting several important economic regions, including the EU, the CIS, Turkey and the Caucasus Region. The nation is a key link in the shortest route between Central Asia and Western Europe for the transport of oil and gas, as well as dry cargo, and also plays an important role as a strategic crossroads for oil and gas transit from the Caspian basin to the West. In the last decade, consortia led by British Petroleum have invested approximately U.S. $5 billion to build three oil and gas pipelines through Georgian territory. These include the BTC Pipeline, the SC (South Caucasus) Pipeline, and the Western Route Export Pipeline (WREP) also known as Baku-Supsa pipeline. Kulevi Oil Terminal (Black Sea Terminal) began operation to transport the crude oil and oil products to the West. The State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) began the implementation of this great investment project in Georgia.

Georgia's oil and gas pipelines, Black Sea ports, railway systems and airports are playing an increasingly important role in linking East and West. The Georgian railway system serves as a shortcut between Europe and Central Asia; it also directly links up with the railway systems of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. On 21 November 2007 the presidents of Georgia, Turkey and Azerbaijan officially announced the beginning of construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad.

The opening of new international airports in Tbilisi and Batumi has increased air traffic to Georgia

Georgia – U.S.A. relations

On 9 January 2009 the United States and Georgia signed a Charter of Strategic Partnership, stressing a mutual desire to strengthen relationships across the economic, energy, diplomatic, scientific, cultural and security fields. This Charter affirms the importance of the relationship between the two countries as friends and strategic partners. The Partnership will benefit both nations and will expand cooperation across a broad spectrum of mutual priorities. The Charter emphasizes that cooperation between the two democracies is based on shared values and common interests that include expanding democracy and economic freedom, protecting security and territorial

integrity, strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights (including the right of dignified, secure and voluntary return of all internally displaced persons and refugees), supporting innovation and technological advances, and bolstering Eurasian energy security

Georgia's relations with NATO[1]

NATO-Georgian relations date back to 1992, when Georgia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (in 1997 renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council), upon gaining independence with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Cooperation deepened and broadened after Georgia joined the Partnership for Peace program in 1994 and the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 1999.

After the "Rose Revolution" in 2003, the focus on supporting Georgia's domestic reform process intensified, in particular through the development of Georgia's first IPAP with NATO in 2004. In September 2006 Georgia was granted an Intensified Dialogue on membership aspirations. At their Summit in Bucharest in April 2008, NATO leaders agreed that Georgia would become a member of the Alliance.

Another important area of cooperation is Georgia's support for NATO-led operations. Georgia is actively contributing to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and supports Operation Active Endeavour – NATO's anti-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean Sea.

In September 2008, NATO and Georgia inaugurated the NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC), which now oversees all aspects of the NATO-Georgia relationship. In December 2008, Allied foreign ministers agreed to the development of an Annual National Program (ANP) under the NGC.

Current EU–Georgia Relationships
Legal Bases

In 1996 the EU and Georgia signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Since July 2004 Georgia has been included in European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) discussions. The European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan (ENP AP) was jointly endorsed in November 2006.

The existing PCA will be replaced by modern legal framework better reflecting the current level of the EU-Georgian relations.

European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)

Since endorsement of the European Neighborhood Policy Action Plan in November 2006, Georgia continues the successful implementation of the Action Plan, with progress positively assessed by the European Commission.

ENP priorities focus on peaceful resolution of conflicts: strengthening the rule of law (especially through reform of the judicial system, including the penitentiary system, and through rebuilding state institutions); strengthening democratic institutions and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in compliance with Georgia's international commitments; improving the business and investment climate (including a transparent privatization process and continuation of the fight against corruption); encouraging economic development and enhancing poverty-reduction efforts and social cohesion; promoting sustainable development including the protection of the environment; ensuring further convergence of economic legislation and administrative practices; enhancing cooperation in the fields of justice, freedom and security, including border management; strengthening regional cooperation and cooperation on Foreign and Security Policy; development of Transport and Energy; and expanding people-to-people contacts, including cooperation in science and education with special emphasis on adjusting Georgia's educational system to meet the Bologna requirements.

Eastern Partnership

The year 2009 was remarkable for the launching in Prague of the Eastern Partnership on 7 May.

The initiative's main principles and perspectives are basically in line with Georgia's priorities, such as gradual visa liberalization, creation of a free trade area, conclusion of an Association Agreement, etc.

Prospects of enhanced EU-Georgia relationships

Visa Issues

The official negotiations on the EU-Georgia visa facilitation and readmission agreements were launched on 2 April 2009, based on the EU Council decision of 27 November 2008

Mobility

Georgia was among the first countries that expressed readiness to test the concept of "circular migration" and actively cooperate with the EU on the mobility of people. The "Partnership for Mobility" joint declaration was signed in Brussels on 30 November 2009. The Mobility Partnership covers such important issues as migration management, labour migration, reintegration, diasporas, document protection, a united data base on migration, and the sharing information with the EU, labour markets, and recognition of professional qualifications.

FTA (Free Trade Agreement)

Georgia already expressed its strong political commitment to have a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) as part of the Association Agreement with the EU. A special inter-ministerial task force was created according to the European Commission's recommendation to work on the DCFTA preparation process.

GSP+ (General System of Preferences)

Georgia was granted Special Incentive Arrangements for sustainable development and good governance (GSP+) for the period 2009-2011. For this Georgia has fulfilled all the necessary obligations.

Overview of the EU Assistance Programs for 2009

Activities related to EU assistance coordination have been conducted in two directions: assistance covered by the National Indicative Program; and financial assistance up to €500 million pledged by EC at the donor conference in October 2008, following the Russian aggression.

In the framework of the National Indicative Program (NIP), the Georgian Government`s efforts are mainly focused on the utilization of new Instruments, from which Budgetary support is of the utmost importance.

European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instruments (ENPI): Twinning, TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange), SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Governance and Management):

The Georgian government has successfully started utilization of new instruments: Twinning, TAIEX and SIGMA.

Since availability of the TAIEX instrument, the State Ministers' Office has received some 62 applications covering following areas: border and migration issues, visa facilitation, trade issues, agriculture, education, and environment.

Black Sea Cross Border Cooperation:

The Government of Georgia signed the Black Sea CBC Financing Agreement on 31 July 2009 and thereby confirmed its readiness to play an active part in the program. For the time being, potential Georgian beneficiaries have submitted project applications together with other partners from the Black Sea region. On the other hand, Georgia actively cooperates with the Romanian side (Joint Managing Authority of the Program) to finalize on a timely basis all remaining procedures and set up selection committee that will identify the most successful projects.

INOGATE; TRACECA

The INOGATE Program (international energy co-operation programme between the European Union) represents an important instrument for energy cooperation in the region. For the time being, three projects in line with the policies and strategies of the European Neighborhood Policy have been implemented in the framework of the INOGATE program.

In accordance with new challenges and international requirements TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) has renewed its role. Georgia has decided to join the Trans European Network (TEN) and also to use Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for the implementation of infrastructure projects.

TEMPUS Program:

The TEMPUS (The Trans-European mobility scheme for university studies) program focuses on the modernization of the higher education (HE) system in Georgia in keeping with the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna process. Since 1995 up to €11 million has been allocated to Georgia. 12 Georgian HEIs have established partnerships in the framework of 26 projects (JEP/SM).

Erasmus Mundus External Co-operation Window:

Program aims at achieving better understanding and mutual enrichment between the European Union and third countries co-operation in the field of higher

education through promoting the exchange of persons, knowledge and skills at higher education levels.

South Caucasus Integrated Border Management (SCIBM)

The project aims to facilitate the movement of persons and goods in the South Caucasus, while at the same time maintaining secure borders through enhancing inter-agency, bilateral and regional border management cooperation both within and among the countries of the South Caucasus region as well as between the countries, EU Member States and other international actors. The Project's overall budget is €6 million and is implemented by UNDP in cooperation with the Lithuanian, Polish, Latvian, Estonian, and Czech border agencies, ICMPD, and the French government. Project started in December 2009 and will continue 30 moths.

EU involvement in the conflict resolution process in Georgia

Russia is violating every provision of the 12 August 2008 Six-Point Ceasefire Agreement Instead of withdrawing, Russia is continuing a military build-up in these occupied Georgian territories, has refused to allow return of IDPs and refugees, and is blocking international organizations from entering the occupied territories.

In this situation, EU's role is indispensable. It is essential that the whole civilized world maintain the non-recognition policy of Georgia's occupied territories.

After Russia has blocked the UN and OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe) missions in Georgia, the only international presence that remains is EUMM (European Union's Monitoring Mission). The Georgian side believes that the EUMM should monitor the situation in the occupied territories as well.

The EU have not chosen the way of confrontation with Russia in response to the aggression but instead promised to step up its relations with Georgia and bring the nation closer to the EU orbit.

End Notes

[1] Information about EU-Georgia relations was submitted by Tamar Beruchashvili, Vice Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Georgia.

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Cultural Studies

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GEORGIA: EUROPE OR ASIA?

This question is asked frequently and persistently so in connection with the growing tendency of Georgia's integration into European structures.

From the view point of physical geography, Europe and Asia form a single continent, subsumed under the name 'Eurasia.' The division of this single continent is largely conditional, due rather to geopolitical factors and based mainly on cultural historical traditions.

EUROPAE ORTELIUS 1575

The geographical names Europe and Asia stem from the Classical World, being Greek proper names widespread in Greek mythology. According to a well-known Greek myth, Eurōpē was a Phoenician princess who inspired the love of Zeus and was carried away by him in the form of a white bull from Phoenicia to Crete. There she became mother of Minos, the legendary King of Crete. The building of the Labyrinth in the renowned palace is linked to this king, as well as Theseus' killing of the Minotaur in the Labyrinth and his subsequent tracking his way out with the clue supplied by Ariadne.

The Greek geographic terms Europe and Asia are related to words of Semitic provenance, respectively with the meanings of 'evening' or 'sunset' and of 'coming out' ('emergence') or 'sunrise.' It is probably not accidental that in Greek mythology Eurōpē was a Phoenician (i.e., a Semitic) princess.

For the ancient Greeks the boundary between Europe and Asia ran along the River Phasis (identified with modern Georgia's Rioni river). However, in the Greek world 'Phasis' was used in reference to other rivers as well, perhaps to the River Chorokhi, farther southwest. Thus, according to traditional conceptions, the Rioni or Chorokhi should be taken as Europe's southern boundary, drawing the line between Europe and Asia not along the Caucasus Range, but rather along the course of the rivers found in southwestern Georgia.

From this point of view, for the Greeks Colchis and the Kingdom of Colchis were located wholly in Europe, belonging to the properly "European" part of the "Eurasian Continent." The Zan language – the ancestor of modern Megrel-Laz – was the language of the Colchian State, presumably spoken by Ayetes, king of the "Land of Aya", i.e., Colchis. It is from this language that the Greek Argonauts borrowed the Colchian word *t'q'ovi / *t'k'ovi to express the "golden fleece" (Homeric Gk. kō[v]as, Mycenaean Gk. ko-vo "hide, skin") in quest of which they set out for Colchis in those far-off days.

The trimillennial anniversary of Georgian statehood, observed by all Georgia at the end of the last century, derives from the recognition of Colchis as a Georgian-Kartvelian state. Ancient Georgian statehood dates precisely from Colchis, i.e., from Colchian statehood.

According to the latest studies, the existence of Colchian statehood should be assumed to date back to the 15th century B.C., since many names known to us from the myth of the Argonauts, including "(the land of) Aya," Colchis, Jason, etc., are recorded in Greek inscriptions of the Mycenaean period (15th/14th cent. B.C.).

It may be assumed from the foregoing that according to ancient beliefs, a major part of Georgia, and in general of the Southern Caucasus, lay in the European part of the Eurasian continent, unlike the regions lying to the south of the Rioni and Chorokhi rivers, including Anatolia, the Iranian highlands and Mesopotamia. These regions, according to the same beliefs, belonged to the Asian part of the Continent and modern geographical nomenclature terms them Southwest Asia or, in German, Vorderasien. The same area is often called the "Near East" (Russian: Ближний Восток). Thus, Georgia, and "South Caucasus" in general (a geopolitical term we proposed more than a decade ago to replace the term "Transcaucasia") should be considered a region lying in the European part proper, which we propose should be called "South East Europe," in analogy with South East Asia.

Therefore, the European part of the "Eurasian Continent" comprises "Western Europe," "Eastern Europe" (with boundaries running along the Urals and the Caspian Sea) and "South East Europe," comprising Georgia and the other countries of "South Caucasus." This situation is more or less reflected in the 1575 "Map of Europe" created by the famous cartographer Ortelius.

But how "purely" European is Georgian civilization and culture? To which world does Georgia belong cultural historically – to the West or to the East? What cultural-historical relations does the Georgian State evince from its trimillennial history?

Inasmuch as Georgia lies in the extreme south-eastern part of Europe, bordering on the Asian part of the Continent, Georgian culture and civilization should naturally constitute a synthesis and symbiosis of Western and Eastern cultures, arising as a result of a merger of these cultures.

Classical Greek culture is rightly considered to be the cradle of European culture and civilization. This Greek, or "Hellenic," culture itself is closely linked by its roots to the Ancient Eastern civilizations.

The so-called "Hellenistic" civilization and culture (the term was coined by German scholars) took shape after Alexander the Great's campaign in the East, being a merger of Greek, or Hellenic, culture with Oriental cultural traditions. Pre-Christian Georgian cultural traditions must also have contributed to some extent to this process. These Eastern cultural impulses and influences on Western culture and civilization are reflected in the well-known Latin maxim: Ex Oriente Lux.

Byzantine cultural traditions took shape through a merger of this symbiotic culture with Eastern Christianity, embracing the countries exposed to Eastern Christendom, including Georgia. Based on Hellenistic cultural tendencies, new cultural centers came into being in the bosom of Eastern Christendom, with their own national scripts and national cultural traditions, based on East-West civilizations. Herein lies the uniqueness of Georgia's material and spiritual culture and its attractiveness both to the West and to the East.

Georgia developed into one of the major Christian states and cultural centers, suffering many advances and reversals throughout its centuries-old history before attaining today's sovereignty and independence. We are now given a unique historical chance of opening up this culture and demonstrating it to the rest of the world. History was such that in the 1990s political forces came to power in Georgia that extricated Georgian statehood

from a then total international isolation and, thanks to these forces' chiefly Western orientation, brought Georgia into the wider international arena. This shift was facilitated, in the first place, by Georgia's geopolitical situation and that of the entire South Caucasus as a region at the crossroads of East and West, linking the Asian and European parts of the continent.

These events have given birth to the idea of turning Georgia into the main artery linking the East and the West, into the principal transit corridor between East and West. As is known, historically the Silk Route performed this function, and Chinese silk together with other goods and products was transported along the route from the East to the West. The question of the restoration of the Silk Route is now being placed on the agenda.

The term "Silk Route" was coined at the end of the 19th century by German scholars to designate the ancient trade route from China to the West as in ancient times silk was the most valuable fabric and desirable luxury imported from China. Like oil today, silk in the past was not only one of the most important commodities, but was one of the chief items of tender in the East.

Thus, given its history, it is fully justified to metaphorically name the restored trade and transit route linking the East and the West the "Silk Route." But whereas the historical Silk Route ran much to the south of Georgia, but with a peripheral branch reaching the South Caucasian region, today we conceive of the main artery of the New Silk Route as crossing Georgia, since Georgia is at the center of the region linking the East and the West. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to speak not of the restoration and revival of the historical Silk Route, but of creating a "New Silk Route" whose principal East-West artery will run through Georgia. This concept fully corresponds to Georgia's historical mission of culturally merging and uniting the Western and Eastern civilizations and cultural streams. And all this is taking place today, before our very eyes, within very short time periods – in a country burdened by wars and conflicts.

By acquiring a new geopolitical function as the link between East and West (which at present certainly has practical as well as political significance and value), Georgia has entered the sphere of world strategic interests, thus creating additional guarantees for the country's sovereignty and independence. On the other hand, this evokes bitter opposition on the part of forces opposed to this latest geopolitical function of Georgia. This resistance will probably cease only when

the aforementioned forces become convinced of the irreversibility of this geopolitical function of Georgia and accept that nothing can change Georgia's current major cultural-historical and political-economic trend.

Throughout its trimillennial history of statehood, Georgia has never been so widely represented in the international arena as it is today, and all this is occurring with unprecedented speed – over a period of only a few years.

The implementation of these large-scale geopolitical plans naturally calls for an establishment of lasting peace and stabilization of the situation in Georgia, as well as the entire Caucasus. To this end, the idea of a "Peaceful Caucasus" has been advanced and also that of a "Dialogue of Cultures in the Caucasus," supported by international conferences held in Tbilisi dedicated to addressing these concepts. These concepts are, of course, basically opposed to the widespread concept of the "Clash of Civilizations," promulgated by Professor Samuel Huntington of Harvard University.

According to Dr. Huntington, future wars will occur not between individual states and political unions but between different civilizations. And these wars will occur in zones of confronting civilizations, at "fault lines" between civilizations – and the Caucasus is named as being one of these zones. The idea of the "Peaceful Caucasus" and of the "Dialogue of cultures and harmonious coexistence in the Caucasus" is thus opposed, in a sense, to Samuel Huntington's concept of the "Clash of Civilizations." Thus, the idea of the "Peaceful Caucasus" as an antithesis to the concept of the "Clash of Civilizations" acquires an international resonance, securing its proper place in the world system of modern geopolitical concepts.

All this testifies to the international prestige and reputation of Georgia as a European State and as a country lying at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, linking East and West culturally, in the sense of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's quatrain from "Ost-Westlicher Diwan":

"Wer sich selbst und andre kennt,
Wird auch hier erkennen,
Orient und Okzident
Sind nicht mehr zu trennen."

How different it is from the mood reigning in Rudyard Kipling's poetry:

"O, East is East and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet…"

Frank Tremmel
Lile e.V. German-Caucasian Society. Germany

GEORGIAN ANTHROPOLOGY BETWEEN PRIMORDIAL PICTURE AND CREATIVE ACT

In search for the origins of the European idea of man

If we ask for the topography of Georgian thinking about man this is in a spiritual manner not primarily a question of geographical localisation, which could be answered relatively effortless. Georgia, by the way, was already registered on the "Ebstorfer map of the world" (H. Kugler, 2007)) in the 13th century, the largest "mappa mundi" of Western European Middle Ages. It's rather a question for the "genius loci", from which Georgian philosophy arose. In contrast to Hegel, who has postulated, that philosophy has to keep itself away from „common sense ", which is characterised by „the local and temporary limitedness of mankind" (G.W.F. Hegel, 1986, 182), we will ask for „the place of Philosophy." (R.A. Mall/H. Hülsmann, 1989, 11ff.) Places presuppose however always paths, at whose crossing they will be formed. In this sense Georgia can be understood as a place at the interface of highly opposite mental trajectories, as a country, in which thinking knew to mediate already very early between „Platonism" and "creative thinking", between thinking in terms of eternity and a philosophy of creativity. Especially reflections about „the position of man in the cosmos " (M. Scheler 1991) are not characterized by the irreconcilable arguments, which raved in western philosophy. In Georgia „primordial picture and creative act" (M. Landmann, 1966) are in a continuing dialogue.

Georgia was occasionally ascribed to the Eastern Christian civilization as far as the discussion of the cultural identity of the country was concerned. However little the cultural identity of a country can be defined in terms of religious affiliation, the more so the Byzantine culture has influenced the religious life in Georgia. Nikolos Baratashvili illustrated this conflict in an exemplary manner in his poem „The Destiny of Georgia." (N. Baratashvili 2005, 81-95) The Georgians did not consider themselves as unquestionable part of an "Orthodox Commonwealth" as Dimitri Obolensky (D. Obolensky 2000) understood it, but they also do not defend the rejecting position in the sense of the poet Joseph Brodsky, for whom Byzanz (J. Brodsky 1991, 340-389) was a synonym for authoritarian restoration per se. It was the humanization of the cosmos in the pictures besides transcending the everyday life in the ecclesiastic cult, that was sedimented in the thinking of Georgian poets and philosophers. "Byzanz" is, above all, a synonym for the power of pictures. It is a thinking based on pictures which manifests itself in the cult and iconostasis which entered Georgian culture and philosophy. In this respect ancient sources are to be presupposed. Greek philosophy was present for the Georgian philosophers of the Middle Ages in a very original way. Georgian theologians were often more familiar with the Greek texts (G. Tevzadze 2003, 166) than many of their western contemporaries. Poets like Ioane Chakhrukhadse, who referred on the epic poems of Homer and also medical, philosophical and philological anthologies, written at that time, show the influence of the Greek thought. In the philosophical compilations of this time philosophers such as Democritus, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Philon are represented. Thus in the first half of the 11th century in the monastery of Athoni extensive translations were performed. In particular Eqwtime Athoneli translated many Greek works into Georgian and in reverse. At the beginning of the 11th Century Ephrem Mzire translated the Corpus Dionysiacum and the Dialectic of Johannes of Damascus. In particular Neoplatonic ideas were obtained into Georgian culture via the thinking of Dionysus Areopagita (T. Iremadze, 2004, 161ff.). Already in the philosophy of Plotin can be ascertained a strong revaluation of fantasy. Thinking (noesis) is bound to the fantasy, i.e. the logos moves inside of imaginative philosophy. The logos is contained in imagination. This creative and imaginative moment is of special relevance for the Georgian thinking about man. The sophia, understood as theological category of creativity, was displaced from Christianity of the protestant or catholic coining from the institutional category of the ecclesia and in the Aristotelian sense by the concept logos. In the orthodoxy, which remained unspoiled by the scholastic thinking, its value remained. The orthodox thinkers did not found the unit of faith and thought in the thorough logic (as in the West). The divine wisdom is the personalized „aloneness" that is in a relationship

of tension between world soul, the materia prima and the cosmogonic artist, who, in turn, is in a continuous dialogue with God. The perceivable incarnation of sophia in nature and history is beauty, its symbol is the eternal feminine in the sense of Vladimir Solowjow (A. Gulyga, 1985, 87-104). In the West, on the contrary, the creative is increasingly opposed to logic. Art and knowledge are strictly separated. The modern creativity-thought opposed against objectivity. The modern expression of this development is found in Nietzsche's philosophy (T. Iremadze 2006, 218-227) and it culminates in postmodernism. A separation between cult and culture took place in the western development. In ancient times, the picture was eternal idea, archetype, in other words, the primordial picture. The latter approach of the subject oriented creative school was increasingly opposed. Even Nicolaus Cusanus understood mankind as multiplicity and Pico della Mirandolas as „potentia". One finds the beginnings of the philosophy of creativity in their work and also „the link between Herder and Fichte, Marx and Nietzsche, Bergson and Sartre." (M. Landmann, 1966, 9) This thinking left its traces also in Georgia. So for example Nikolos Chavchavadze suggested to define culture not only by its artifacts, but rather as the creative process anticipating this objects. Merab Mamardashvili (1930-1990), another representative of modern Georgian philosophy, understands the phenomenological thought as creative process. However the Georgian philosophical anthropology differs substantially from the postmodern subjectivism. In this connection the inheritance of the Christian Neoplatonism plays certainly a large role. In this regard the Georgian view on the creative person corresponds rather more with the views of Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949) and Nicolai Berdyaev (1874-1948), the most European and cultivated thinkers of modern Russian Christian culture, as with those of western existentialism or present forms of radical subjectivism. For Iwanow „the cultural-historical contrast of antiquity and Christianity " is by any means not waived „in the synthesis of the newer European culture". He is rather assuming that „both are still existing as alive forces " and „always bring forth new synthetic forms in mutual taking and giving " (W. Iwanow, o.J., 164), which express creative becoming of the person. Berdjajews work, however it reflects modern search for a philosophy of the creative person (Berdjajew N., 1927), will be inconceivable without Greek Patristik (L.G. Benakis 1986, 56-75; K. Oehler

1969). Also in Georgia, different from Western Europe, we can proceed from an unbroken continuity of the ancient traditions of the 4th century, which is the time of Christianisation. To that extent the Georgian Renaissance developed from the beginning in another cultural-historical constellation than for example Italian Renaissance. Thus Georgian philosophers, as also some Russian thinkers like Aleksei Losev (A. Losev, 1978, 33, 37) confirmed, could develop much earlier advanced Neoplatonic and Neoareopagitic ideas for a philosophy of man as in Western Renaissance. So in Shota Rustavelis "The Man in the Panther's Skin" (1196-1207) we could also find the creative man, whom we know from the works of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) or Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) and other protagonists of western Renaissance philosophy (M. Bloch/B. Mojsisch, 2003). Nevertheless freedom and creativity remain connected with the areopagitic view of a well arranged cosmos. Humans are compared with sun and moon, with planets and stars, which illuminate the universe not only in a symbolic sense.

The fact that this mental current is not only of historical meaning could be proved by the work of Shalva Nutsubidze (1888-1969), who also was an important historian of this ideas. His Aletheiology, which shows a lot of parallels to the thinking of Martin Heidegger, developed its fundamental ideas as for instance the Prelogical and the Over-opposite following Neoplatonism. His criticism of anthropocentric consciousness (Sch. Nuzubidze 1926) opens perspectives on a new form of anthropology, which was developed later by Angia Bochorishvili in the time after 1960.

Michael Landmann, who is not unknown to the Georgian philosophical anthropology of the 20th century, had noted that Plotin was the archeget of the teaching, which underlines the creativity of knowledge. In this sense Plotin plays a central role in Georgian philosophy. In the 11th and 12th century the Neoplatonism advanced eventually to the most important intellectual stream of Georgian culture due to the translation of the Corpus Dionysiacum by Ephrem Mzire and the Elementatio theologica by Ioanne Petrizi into Georgian. Shalva Nutsubidze and the Belgian scholar Ernest Honigmann even contend that the Bishop of Majumi, Petre Iberi (405-491) was the real author of the Corpus Dionysiacum. In any case, the influence of Neoplatonism can be regarded as very strong. This movement of thinking awarded

the conception of subjectivity in Georgian philosophy a special note. Although Plotin underlined creative character of subjectivity, he cannot be considered as an early representative of the modern subjectivism. This scholar aimed to discover „the highest and eternal in every human being". In Neoplatonism the whole emanated world, in other words, all beings that are composed, tends back towards God as the only One either consciously or unconsciously. The subjectivity domain involves the target of knowledge. It prepares the unity with God by means of ecstasy. The perceiving subject in terms of self consciousness tries to determine the path of the mentioned striving. This is neither subject nor object. It stands over all oppositions and understands (on its own) all in an ununderstandable way for knowledge." (G. Tewsadse 2002, 134) Guram Tewsadse underlines Plotin's attempt "to conceive the parasensitive value and meaning of mankind so that the individual human being benefits from it" (ibid.). The Pagan and more so the Christian Neoplatonism located the place of the human subjectivity in the transcending, in other words, in God. In this vein Joane Petrizi stresses the priority of the One in his Proklos-commentary (I. Petrizi 2009) which confers the Being to the great variety of phenomenon's. The specific subjectivity concept of Petrizi, which is paradigmatic to the Georgian philosophy, „attempts to prove that the relationship between the One (God) and the world exists only as a necessary one-sided link both in ontological and gnoseological sense. In other words, only the beings strive to the One as the Cause which gives them the Being in which they try to find their own place. This requires the absolute freedom from the worldly subjectivity which is only the temporal and mortal cover of the next world. The subjectivity of the next world is located in all beings [...]. The One is not being in itself, but rather over-being, to which the being and the nothing are subordinated. Therefore, the One as the good is to be seen as the cause of the substanceless of the evil." (G. Tevzadse, ibid., 139) The scholar Landmann emphasized, that the theory of constitution in the sense of production, which goes back to Plotin, has its common denominator in the fact, that the constitution starts off with a pre- and extramundane point, which, in turn, does neither transform, nor pay back, nor build up the process of constitution. So to say, the constitution of the world takes place, but not the self constitution: „The otherworldly gives the world, but does not take from

her." (M. Landmann 1984, 260) And thus, it is not the same at the end as it was at the beginning. „Hence, there is no qualitative change in its inventory, but it changes in so far as a second dimension arises. It reflects now, it becomes full of light about itself." (ibid.) Thus Plotin leads up to a certain extent to the idealistic constitution teachings: Explication becomes self-production. With the formation of expressive anthropology in the 18th century, the precursor of philosophical cultural anthropology, a philosophy of the creative comes to its complete breakthrough. But also the question about the measure of man and thus after the sense of culture as a whole arises within this framework. To that extent the question about the One returns at the end in a philosophy of pluralism. Here also the question about the connection of Axiology and creativity, of Pluralism and Monism arises. The way of Neoplatonism via German idealism to phenomenology and the philosophy of life further to the modern philosophical anthropology in Georgia and in Germany certainly is not examined sufficiently. In connection to Johann Gottfried Hegel and particular motives of the philosophy of life for example Tamas Buatschidze developed a philosophy of the creative. Buachidze (T. Buachidze 2003) emphasized again and again that it is the straight mental activity, which differentiates humans from other organisms. The problem of the determination of humans can be solved neither by an Ontology of the Platonic type, which is characterized by an assumption of the extramundane world of ideas, nor by a reduction of the human life on material-sensuous conditions. Similarly to the German philosopher Rudolf Eucken (1846-1926) Buachidze regards the mental as a form of objectivity, which is brought out by cognitive, aesthetic and ethical actions, which exceed the direct vital, utilitarian needs of the individual. It is above all the creative structure of culture, which gives humans the character of a genuine subject (T. Buachidze 1977).

In our connection it remains to emphasize above all that in the Georgian idea of man the dualistic dividing of Anthropos and Cosmos was not coining in such high measure as in Western Europe. To this view on man and being correspond certain Neoplatonic figures of thinking, which are of crucial importance for Georgian philosophy. A worldview developed, in which the cosmic feeling of an affiliation to the whole one of nature knows itself connected with Greek creative consciousness. The latter is however not identical with the mod-

ern thought about work and production. Rather the modification of the poietic motive (the motive of feasibility) in European history of ideas is the specific of the Georgian idea of man. This course of the Georgian idea of man appears also in the modern philosophical anthropology. Thus Zurab Kakabadse stated the exhaustion of the modern subject-object-conception for the understanding of the present social and cultural processes and instead, following phenomenological motives of thinking, he posed a philosophy „of being in nature". In addition modern Georgian philosophy owes Kakabadse also the first modern discussions about the protection of nature (Z. Kakabadse 1988). He created his own conception of intersubjectivity, which insist on the unmistakable individuality of each individual humans (Z. Kakabadse 1982, 417-425). Individuality is realized by an activity directed toward the absolute, which overcomes the inertia of the everyday life. Also Kakabadse overcomes the utilitarian dimension of poietic thinking and arrives at a theory of action, which brings man and cosmos into a new relationship. To that extent his work reminds opinions of Hannah Arendt, the famous pupil of Martin Heidegger, which she elaborated in „Vita Activa or about active life ". Quite similar Kakabadses urgent descriptions of our modern contradictions shows the problem of man under the conditions of present civilization (Z. Kakabadse 1970). He saw the principal reason for our loss of confidence into individual being in the predominance of a naturalistic and empiricist way of thinking.

The American-Georgian philosopher Ash Gobar (A. Gobar 1978, 173-196) considered Georgian philosophy in the 20th Century as a crystallization of the realistic tendencies of Eastern European thinking. Certainly this thinking was characterized by a strong reaction to the predominating gnoseologism and scientism in former Soviet philosophy. In this regard the thinking of Shalva Nuzubidse is of central importance, because in his philosophy Neoplatonic thoughts found its modern advancement. In its continuation of Neoplatonic ideas and in the processing of German beginnings to the problem of knowledge he created with "The Truth and the Structure of the Knowledge " (1926) and with „Philosophy and Wisdom " (1931) conditions for a non-anthropocentric anthropology. In his argument with Neokantianism, with Martin Heidegger and Nicolai Hartmann he developed a philosophy, which avoided the one-sidedness of idealism and materialism. Nu-

zubidse presupposes a specific sphere of truth (aletheia), settled between being and thinking . He called the practical application of philosophy as knowledge of the world wisdom. In this connection his criticism of anthropologism created conditions for a phenomenological anthropology, which avoided empiricist and positivistic reifications of human nature.

In the sixties of the past century the first and only department for „philosophical anthropology" could be created in the entire Eastern European area in Tbilisi at the Philosophical Institute of the Academy of Sciences under the somewhat loosened ideological conditions after the time of Stalin. Angia Bochorishvili (1902-1982) and his coworkers created a very independent variant of this direction of thinking with constant reference to the German „Philosophical Anthropology ". Bochorishvili, following the work of his teacher Dimitri Uznadze, discovers „attitude" or "set" as a specific sphere of reality. This intermediate range, which characterizes a readiness for activity and in which subject and object build an integral unit, connect the physical and the psychological moments of reality. Including phenomenological methods Bochorishvili tried to overcome the empiricism within the study of man. In the view of Uznadze and Bochorishvili the psychological life of humans is not only connected with the outside world by simple need impulses. The orientation of the animal in its environment takes place via the direct guidance of attitude. The human psyche has a second, more complicated layer, which goes beyond the direct impulse of the attitude and qualified it for an objectification of its action situation. At the establishment of the department for philosophical anthropology also the director of the institute, Niko Chavchavadze (1923-1997) and his deputy Tamas Buachidze (1930-2001) considerably takes part. Important was also the mentioned contribution of Zurab Kakabadze (1927-1984). In these years in the Zereteli Institute alone nine volumes were edited to "Questions of philosophical anthropology". In addition many articles and monographs could be published. In the center above all the creative, meaning- and worthful acting of man as a mental nature was located. It is this mental nature, which connect man and cosmos. In this sense Georgian thinking about man is an evolving unity of eastern cosmological Christianity and creative thinking, of primordial picture and creative act.

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ON COSMOLOGICAL CONCEPTS AND ARCHAIC SYMBOLS IN THE GEORGIAN MYTHIC-RITUAL SYSTEM

Georgian tradition has not preserved the Enuma Elish type creation myth and therefore the main source under scrutiny is ritual as a means of expression of symbolic activity. In the cosmic dimension of the Georgians every deity had a cult place and thus a cultic/local dimension of the unfolding of his or her essence. Rituals with special offerings and sacrifices performed for particular goals were opposed to each other according to the archaic principle of time and space classification and constituted definite structures of the worldview in its vertical and horizontal dimensions.

Thus the cosmogonic scenario of the creation myth directly and explicitly was not preserved, but the Georgian word samqaro (which literally means the place of firmament, the universe) itself alludes to the creation amidst the waters (cf. Genesis I, 6,7) and the world unfolds in time and space.

The aspects of time and space are also expressed by the ritual formula at the beginning of Georgian tales – iqo da ara iqo ra – (literally, something-that-was and nothing-that-was-not). This sheer riddle ritually transfers the listener to the other level, i.e., "in the beginning"... the formula also conceals and implies the existence of the cosmogony and the creation of the world.

We have reconstructed the cosmological pattern of the Georgians on the basis of religious beliefs and rituals, and its vertical plane comprises: (i) the upper, celestial world of supreme deities (at first represented by the Sky God, who in the course of religious development was replaced by the Weather God (whose name as preserved in oral tradition, is Zhini Antari, i.e., "the one who is above") and who, after the spread of Christianity, was substituted by the Christian allomorphic personages of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, St George, Elijah, and others; (ii) the underworld, which was represented at first by pre-Christian female deities, personifications of natural elements (earth and

water) which after the conversion to Christianity coexist and partially exist in the image of St Mary; and (iii) the world of the living, the societal community with its cultivated plants and domestic animals.

But the cosmology in question also implies the horizontal plane in which outer/inner spaces, non-cultivated/cultivated lands, microcosm/macrocosm, nature/culture are opposed to each other through the correlated personages. Also, the outer world was stretched on the horizontal plane, though at the same time it implied the vertical dimension, whereas the cultivated inner world of the living was perceived as surrounded from all sides (above, under and from outside) by the dangerous world of the unknown (N. Abakelia,1991, 83-116). According to the native beliefs these worlds, these zones, were enclosed by invisible borders. Humans constantly attached to these boundaries could recognize kind, evil or neutral spirits which moved from the sacred sphere to the profane and vice versa, especially in liminal periods of the year.

In such situations, built environment and built forms, in this case house (dwelling or habitat), which to Bourdieu's definition represents a metaphor of the organized world structured by the gender principle, generally receive particular meaning and importance (cited in Lawrence & Low, 1990, 453-505). The built forms imply or reveal communicative role not among the groups or inside the groups but also between the representatives of different spheres at different levels. So on the mythological plane which unfolds, e.g., on the New Year's festival, the metaphorical and mnemonic functions of the built forms are revealed (N. Abakelia, 2009, 101-117).

As is known, the different modal levels separating one world from another are not hermetically sealed from one another, though imaginary boundaries are built between the cultivated and non-cultivated (woods, cliffs, sea, etc.) culture/nature areas. In the topography of the "inner world" the borderlines of different realms extend along farmsteads, dwellings, temples, and so on. In the "outer world" they run across the woods, cliffs, seas, lakes, rivers, mountains, etc. (C. Lévi-Strauss, 1985, 64-76). According to local beliefs, there are various passages in the imaginary and built form boundaries (holes, gates, doors, windows, chimneys, etc., which weaken their tightness) and transition from one sphere to another becomes quite possible.

Thus fenced with and limited by temporal, spatial and causal factors, the community was surrounded by the so-called "outer sphere" which included in itself the kingdoms (worlds, realms) arranged around and on the vertical and horizontal planes (the netherworld, the upper world and on the horizontal plane all the unexplored, uncultivated and unknown places inhabited by dangerous and harmful forces (N. Abakelia, 1991; 2008; 151-167; I. Surguladze, 2003,36-84).

The New Year is thus a liminal phenomenon (in van Gennep's and Turner's sense) from the perspective of both space and time. This is a period of the year when the thresholds of the inner and outer worlds become vulnerable and, as a result, open for the various undesirable and desirable powers and forces which can penetrate through these passages. In order to prevent such accidents from happening or to protect one against them, particular precautions were taken. The ritual performed in the spatial structure perspective on the horizontal plane is intended to adjust to a broad spectrum of attitudes between the world of the living and the world of the dead and between the past and the present. Visitations from the land of the deceased to the world of the living, or from the outer to the inner world, respectively, are well known among many peoples (the Ancient Greek, Old Germans, Balts, Caucasians, Slavs, etc.) and are associated with the cosmological symbolism of outer/inner and nature/culture, respectively. The boundaries of the inner world are constantly changing: it might be a dwelling but also a country, cultivated land, etc. The "center," consecrated through rituals, chants and prayers, was the place from where the communication with the supernatural beings (powers) was possible.

The protective center of the cultivated area, the house, turns into the scene on which different kinds of mythic-ritual scenarios unfold.

In the complex morphology of house symbolism we will turn our attention to the ritual of "sending off the spirits," which suggests the visitation of ancestral spirits to their immediate descendants in the family during the period of winter solstice festivals. It occurred annually on the Epiphany and lasted for about a week. During this period, tables were covered for the souls in houses and the ancestral chair of the head of the kin was placed at the table; the oldest man who was the head of the family was to serve them with his head uncovered (as an expression of respect).

Of all the rituals this was the most mysterious. It was performed in absolute silence. Nobody was allowed to be present during the secret prayer in which

only the spirits of the dead ancestors and the head of the family participated. After the "prescribed time," the "guests" had to leave their living relatives by performing a ritual. The head of the family prepared for this day a glass of wine, a piece of cooked meat and a slice of bread. Holding all these in his hands, partially bent, he "accompanied" the invisible guests and saw them off through the gate. During the walk he poured wine libation on the ground and by the time he reached the gate the glass would be empty. Then he opened the gate and placed the bread and meat on a stone nearby. After that he would hasten home without looking back (reciting traditional taboos with regard to the deceased and the netherworld). (Here might be recalled Lot's history from the Bible, or Orpheus's descent to the underworld in search for his wife Eurydice)

The departure was graphically depicted in the pictures drawn with primitive paint made from the blessed Epiphany water and soot by women on different (mostly wooden) objects (V. Bardavelidze, 1957, 135-139). The primitive pictures painted with the fingers for the spirits the depicted how the spirits of the deceased urged on the souls of the sacrificial animals to the netherworld.

Border traversals are also revealed in various mortuary customs and rituals. In traditional culture they represent mythologized relations between the living and the dead, between descendents and their ancestors, between the world of the living and the world of the deceased. In these mythologized customs of the mortuary rituals the sacred tree has its definite place and role.

In this paper a ritual object, called kelaptari (i.e., artificial waxen tree), made by close relatives or nurses of the deceased and brought to the funeral after forty days, or at the annual commemorative ceremonies, is considered to be a variation of the sacred tree.

According to the local mortuary customs, relatives of the deceased dressed in mourning clothes riding horses and on foot moved in procession from the distant villages. They carried a big kelaptari in front of them, which was held by the grief-stricken woman. Passing through villages, the lamenting women screamed loudly so that everybody guessed that somebody had died, and the procession moved on toward the village of the deceased.

Surviving, complementary ethnographic data from different parts of Georgia reveal an artificially made waxen tree (surviving under several names) as an

essential offering for the dead, made by a close relative woman.

A special note must be made that this offering, was equal in value to a sacrificial bull. It is noteworthy that these candles could be brought together with the sacrificial bull additionally or the mourner could limit herself only with the torch.

The name of the treelike candle aschamaka (a variant of the name of kelaptari, from Abkhazia – N.A.) was related to the sacrificial animal, which also was called aschamaka. According to Abkhazian custom, this ritual object could substitute for a sacrificial animal itself. (Another variant of the name of the ritual candle was akilantar aokum) (E. Malia, 2003, 240-255.)

For us, it is of special interest that kelaptari/kilantari/akilantari was used in funeral competitions in which the horse or the soul of the deceased also participated. Thus after a year from death, at the ritual gathering of close friends and relatives to commemorate the deceased person, several customs used to be performed: the horse of the deceased covered with a black mourning material was tied to the house pillar; on the other hand, sacrificial bulls with the candles on their horns and tree-torches, equal in value with them, were brought on this day (both comprising the cosmological symbols and signs).

The sacrificial bulls had the lit candles on their horns, which introduces here the well-known relationship between branches and horns. The custom makes us think that candles lit on the horns of the sacrificial

Depictions of the spirits of the deceased driving forward the souls of the sacrificial animals to the netherworld (Svaneti, the village of Lakhamula, 1935. from V.V. Bardavelidze's Monograph: Ancient Religious beliefs and Ritual Graphic Art of the Georgian Tribes, Tbilisi 1957).

animal and candles lit on the kelaptari (artificial waxen tree) are isofunctional variants and that the several threads of chestnuts hung on the necks of the bulls refer to the same idea. The bulls were untied (set free) in the yard, and people tried to tear the chestnuts from them. The bulls were sacrificed on that day and served the people for dinner. According to the local beliefs, the souls of the sacrificed animals were transferred to the netherworld.

It appears that in the mortuary and mourning rituals a deceased person was in some degree heroized, though he did not become the subject of the cult. I believe that the competitions inserted and performed in the mortuary and mourning customs serve to illustrate this idea.

There was a custom of horse racing after bewailing the sign (i.e., his/her clothes) of the dead throughout Georgia (the custom now survives only in the mountainous parts of the country) in which the relatives and close friends of the deceased could participate in honor of the departed (S. Makalatia, 2006, 350-360).

In the horse racing, the participation of the soul of the dead was also implied, which is revealed by the so-called "soul's horse." The riders with the "soul's horse" in front of them would go round the clothes (the sign) of the deceased from the left side (the netherworld direction) and would rush in a sudden gallop. The route was particular. The participating riders first visited the brothers of the mother of the departed (if he was a male) and then would go to the other kinfolk. If the deceased was a woman, they would visit first her father's house, then mother's brothers and after this they would go to her husband's relatives. It is noteworthy that at the commemorative feast a special toast was proposed for the so-called mgebrebi (literally "those who meet"), i.e., "meeting souls" after the appraisal of the deceased and his relatives' blessings. According to our investigations the horse racing is directly associated with the "threshold passing" rituals, which show that the souls of the dead were accompanied not only by the "meeting souls" (mgebrni), but by the living as well. Eventually, the horse racing on the day of the funeral or on the annual commemorative celebration of the death illustrates the route of the journey of the soul in the netherworld performed in the world of the living.

The ritual form becomes leading and important. The ritual repeats the route preserved in the religious beliefs (in myths) and (the accompanying) "seeing off" the soul of the dead in that manner guaranteed the soul of the departed in resting in peace in the netherworld, among the ancestral society of the dead.

According to the old Georgian custom certain trees were pulled up at funerals and replanted on the graves, which together with the sacrificial animals, form the religious complex: "grave-tree-sacrificial animal."

The planted tree in the tomb and sacrificed horse near to it repeats the picture of the well-known image of the axis mundi and the horse.

The sacrificed horse, which was believed to accompany and follow the deceased patron to the netherworld, could not have a divine addressee, as he, in this particular case, was the companion, psychopomp and the means of transportation and transition of the departed.

But horse symbolism is associated not only with the tree of the world (arbor mundi), but in a series of cases itself represents the tree of the world. A late antique Georgian bronze openwork buckle, on which a horse is "crowned" with a stag's branched horns, might serve for the visual illustration of this.

As we suggest, here the horse is identified with a tree, to which the branched horns refer. "Crowning" the horse with a stag's horns reveals double information. On the one hand, it represents the tree under which a sacrifice had to be performed; and on the other, the sacrificial animal itself. The custom of gilding animal horns (which is attested among many ancient and living peoples) or marking them in some other way must be identical to the crowning. Placing a crown on the head of a human being or an animal during the sacrifice is characteristic to many (old and new) religious systems.

The sacrificial horse or horse-tree (as it is on the bronze openwork buckle) marks the space and, in the sacred language of symbolism, represents the center and its axis, on which the transition into different spheres is possible (N. Abakelia, 2009, 31-41).

According to our research the tomb, which differed with its structure from the profane space, represented the transcendent space on which different cosmic levels and spheres met and crossed each other. As for the horse, it used to be the means of mystical transcendence in different spheres and elements. The planted tree in the tomb and the horse standing beneath it, as well as the horse with a stag's antlers on the bronze openwork buckle, are the signs of the infinite reality. A deep cosmological idea underlies this,

A horse with stag's horns as an allomorphic variation of the arbor mundi on a late antique Georgian bronze openwork buckle (from the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

which implies the crossing of all cosmic zones, and consequently, at the same time defines and marks the "center" and the "axis" of the world, i.e., the tomb, as the cosmic space has its own center in the face of the deceased and the axis represented by the tree (or the horse with a stag's antlers) which is the isomorphic variant of the previous one.

The horse tied to the tree or the pillar by means of the ritual achieves a high semiotic significance and that is why in the symbolic language it is associated with the world tree. It is not merely connected with the arbor mundi, but even more, it itself represents the world tree. The same can be said about the bull with the gilded horns.

Thus, according to our investigations, if the sacred tree planted immediately after childbirth implied the creation of the sacred center in the world of the living, with the newborn child's fate associated with the tree's blossoming and withering, after the death of a human being it was pulled up with its roots and transplanted in the tomb (by our determination this is a center-shifting ritual), which constructs the transcendental space where different cosmic levels meet and cross each other. The transplanted tree used to be at the same time the symbol of the arbor mundi and axis mundi.

The religious complex: tomb – tree – sacrificial animal (horse, bull), or their supplementary waxen tree – kelaptari as a sign of the infinite reality reveals the symbolism of the "center" and the "axis of the world" as posited by Mircea Eliade. That means that the tomb as a cosmic space has its center (the deceased) and its axis (the pillar) that can be represented by the allomorphic variations (horse-tree, bull-tree, artificial waxen tree, etc.) of the sacred tree. Thus, as religious symbols the above-mentioned animals on one hand reveal themselves as "imago mundi" and on the other hand as "axis mundi" or "arbor mundi"; hence, they support the universe and practically reveal diverse realities which can be fitted together, or even integrated into the unified mythic-ritual system of the old Georgians.

All these archaic symbols imply ontology and reveal the correspondence of a mystical order between various (cosmological, anthropological, and psychical) levels of cosmic reality.

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YOUTH CULTURE IN MODERN GEORGIA – A CASE OF WESTERNIZATION OR INVENTION OF A NEW TRADITION?

Project Aim. In the modern era of rapid socio-cultural transformations, various subgroups or subcultures, especially the youth ones, are becoming increasingly numerous, and as social researchers state, "They show marked independence from the models that govern the larger society ... Knowledge of the culture at the level of the society is no longer sufficient to predict and interpret the representations of these subgroups" (C. Camilleri & H. Malewska-Peyre, 1997, 45). Furthermore, being exposed to the values and lifestyles of different subcultures gives individuals the opportunity to make a conscious choice among them, along with "the power of a personal manipulation of the diversified materials provided by their society ... Under these conditions, the culture that is experienced differs notably from the culture that is given" (46).

The aim of the research reported here was to study this "experienced culture" of youth in modern Georgia, to demonstrate how youth manipulate "the diversified materials" provided not only by their local society but also by the global culture, and to find out whether this manipulation results in the invention of a new tradition.

The target group was youth aged 16-21, a transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood. The research has focused on youth's leisure activities as the ways of representing their life style and expressing their creativity, with the emphasis on two areas: music – traditionally considered one of the most common ways of spending leisure in Georgia, and cyberspace – a relatively recent but increasingly favorite means of spending leisure for Georgian youth.

Project Methodology. Being obsessed with K. Narayan's words that while researching a culture we should keep in mind "the need for dismantling objective distance to acknowledge our shared presence in the cultural worlds that we describe" (1993, 680), I recalled Wendy Griswold's arguments about four essen-

tial aspects of cultural sociological research: Meaning, Power, Action, and Hegemony (1992, 324-326). It seemed to me that the more the "objective distance" between a researcher and the research subjects could be dismantled, based on these four parameters, then the more the boundaries between "the world of engaged scholarship and the world of everyday life" would be wiped out (K. Narayan, 1993, 672). This was one of the main rationales for involving my students as co-researchers in the study of youth culture and attempting to view it from their perspective; there was in fact a shorter "objective distance" in terms of all four parameters between my target group and my students than between my target group and me.

For this purpose, after conducting 25 in-depth interviews, making observations at a few of the most popular music clubs in Tbilisi, and analyzing some popular youth internet forums (at www.forum.ge, www.boke.ge, www.anime.ge), I chose 12 of my students (both males and females, from different levels of study and different socioeconomic backgrounds) and asked each to conduct in-depth interviews with two representatives of their social circle aged 16-21. In addition, the students were asked to make observations at the music clubs and to reflect on the discussions held at popular youth internet forums. Finally, I randomly divided these 12 students in two groups and conducted two focus groups with them in order to become familiar with their immediate reflections on one another's interpretations. The data gathered and interpreted by the students have enabled me to model the interpreted reality, which I have submitted to a secondary interpretation as a means of gaining a "thick description" (C. Geertz, 2000). Thus, I have analyzed two kinds of material: the "raw" material gathered by my students and me on the basis of interviews and observations, and the material interpreted by the interviewers and observers, who represented a group of young people of the same age with a similar phenomenology of feelings as the target group.

Project Results. So, how did my students as co-researchers help me "dismantle objective distance" between the scholarly world and the research subjects' cultural worlds, and what did I find out from their interpretations that could not be traced otherwise?

The first topic capturing my attention in this direction was the youths' opinions about visiting music clubs. It's not a secret that visiting music clubs is quite

an expensive pleasure in Tbilisi and even those with rather high incomes cannot afford to visit them systematically. What do young people say about the reasons for not visiting music clubs to their peers (my co-researchers) vs the researcher (me)? In regard to this question an interesting trend was revealed, namely, in the interviews with their peers the respondents usually said they visited music clubs either about once a month or even less frequently and wished they could have afforded visiting them more frequently (in order to be up-to-date as nowadays clubbing is considered as one of the fashionable trends), while in the interviews with me an absolutely different reason for not visiting music clubs was indicated – it was considered "a bad tone" to visit music clubs and could "not be perceived seriously as young people mostly go there to get to know each other and even to establish short-term relationships" (Natalia, 18), which, according to Georgian traditions, is perceived as shameful.1. The young people's votes at www.forum.ge confirm that only 1% of them go to music clubs in order to listen to music (November 20, 2007). What is the motivation of the rest? I guess it's perfectly illustrated by Nina's (20) words: "I was at the music club a few days ago and felt a guy was persistently glancing at me. However, when he approached me, I frowned and turned my back to him as I did like him and was afraid he might consider me as one of those unserious girls coming to the club to get to know the guys there."

Thus, it is evident that young people produce two kinds of narratives – in one case they try to look fashionable and in another they try to look traditional. Here we can refer to two types of the research subjects' narratives, divided in "cultural stories" – "told from the point of view of the ruling interests and the normative order" and "collective stories" – told from the perspective of those "who are silenced or marginalized in the cultural story" (Richardson in J. Miller & B. Glassner, 2004, 130). This division between cultural (I would rather call them "subcultural") and collective stories highlights the relationship between codes and actions, and illustrates how "telling the code" can influence the production of different versions of social reality (J. B. Jimerson & M. K. Oware, 2006). In our case, these two distinct narratives illustrated the research subjects' contradictory aspirations toward tradition (told to me from the perspective of "cultural story") and modernity (told to their peers/my co-researchers from the perspective of "collective story"),

and it is their contextualization in a larger cultural scene that can help us trace a real picture.

This contextualization tells us that it is obviously not in fashion to be traditional. Then what is considered as fashionable among Georgian youth? I will emphasize the three most "fashionable" trends revealed by the research – being distinctive (individual), being intellectual (or rather having an intellectual image), and being "national" (as the youth themselves call it). It is noteworthy that although being traditional in sense of possessing old-fashioned views and not being up-to-date is negatively perceived by the contemporary youth, being "national" as retaining those characteristics that distinguish Georgian culture from others, such as Georgian polyphony, Georgian folk songs and dances, Georgian table traditions, etc. is considered to be especially fashionable by them.

The importance of being distinctive/individual for youth has been underlined both in classical and modern research on youth cultures and subcultures. How is "being distinctive" perceived by Georgian youth and how close are the perceptions of the respondents, their peers (my co-researchers) and the researcher (me)? In the respondents' words, a distinctive youth does not resemble "a typical one, who can be easily influenced by anyone as it's convenient for him/her to be a conformist… Typical guys have the same taste, wear the same clothes, and listen to the same music as others. They don't try to be different from the mass, don't aspire to be more intellectual and advanced, rather they have a panic fear they might be different" (Tina, 19). Contrary to this, a distinctive youth "is not ordinary and standard like 'a mass type.' He/she is characterized by multifarious interests and heterogeneous tastes… he/she is much more thoughtful and creative than others…" (Davit, 19). And it's amazing how all the respondents similarly assess distinctive vs non-distinctive youth and even label them identically as "individuals" and "mass types." A quantitative content analysis reveals that in the assessment of the former, one can usually come across such concepts as heterogeneous, non-standard, multifarious, intellectual, creative, advanced, etc., while in the assessment of the latter such words as ordinary, standard, homogeneous, imitative, conformist, etc. dominate.

Realizing that their peers aspire to be distinctive while being quite homogeneous in their attempts and understanding they can be assumed to have similar as-

pirations, my co-researchers developed an interesting strategy to place themselves above this homogeneous mass with individualistic ambitions. This strategy was evident during the focus group interviews with the students: "In fact these young people are not different from others and distinctiveness is not their real but desirable state (Mariam, 21); "Everyone attempts to be distinctive, while it does not make sense… Now I understand what makes my friends and me different from our peers – we never aim to be distinctive" (Tako, 20).

Thus, we could clearly see how auto- and hetero-stereotypes are formed and how young people are stigmatized based on in-group/out-group division. The respondents state that it is a circle of their close friends (in-group) that is characterized by heterogeneous tastes, multifarious interests, and intellectual abilities, thus claiming to be distinctive, and it is "others" (out-group) that are characterized by homogeneous taste, conformist orientation, and lack of intellectual aspirations and creativeness. My co-researchers also claim their distinctiveness though in a different way – their in-group ("we") is distinct from their peers (out-group) in that they even don't attempt to look distinctive.

Based on the young people's words, they usually perceive distinctiveness as inseparable from intellectuality and, as a rule, they consider their in-group as distinctive and intellectual (no matter what cultural capital they actually possess). Here my co-researchers provided me with invaluable information revealing essential details: Because of the ongoing events in the country.2 it is "in fashion to be intellectual," though it is rather an image then a true aspiration. My co-researchers told me that in order to look intellectual lots of young people went to the literary cafés, where they would sit at the table with a cup of coffee or tea in one hand and the latest popular fiction in the other, and could stay there all day long (though staring at the same page) just to show others they were getting familiar with the most recent fiction. One of my co-researchers even confessed to me she usually went to the university library with her comics and pretended she was reading science fiction. And it turned out, this was a widespread practice among Georgian youth, which no one talked about but everyone knew very well. This kind of information, hardly accessible to the researcher being a source of "cultural intimacy" (M. Herzfeld, 2005) for Georgian youth, corresponds to David Muggleton's statement that it is image and not values that matter for contemporary youth cultures (2002). Thus, intellectuality and distinctiveness represent those desirable qualities that for Georgian youth remain merely external attributes without their authentic implication.

One of the indicators of intellectuality for contemporary Georgian youth is their argot. Through providing me with lots of examples of the youth argot and interpreting the meaning of the phrases applied by their peers, my co-researchers have fostered the following finding: it has turned out that when they intend to insult someone or mock their peer for his/her provincialism, young people usually use "Russian-Georgian slang" that is actually Russian words transformed into Georgian, resulting in a strange hybrid of these two languages. There are plenty of such hybrids popular with Georgian youth such as "nu blataob" (meaning "don't try to be self-important") derived from the Russian word "blatnoi" (self-important), "ra rojaa" (making fun of someone) derived from the Russian phrase "nu i roja" (meaning "what a [horrible] face!"), "magari prativnia" (meaning "someone is disgusting") derived from the Russian word "protivnii" (disgusting, terrible), "dapadiezdeba" (meaning "waiting for someone at his house entrance in order to beat him") derived from the Russian word "podezd" (house entrance), etc. While trying to sound "intellectual" or "cool" Georgian youth mainly use "English-Georgian slang" that is well evidenced by such expressions as "magari coolia" (meaning "how cool!"), "es musika laitia" (meaning "this music is light"), "damimesije" (meaning "send me a message"), "promousheni gauketes" (meaning "he/she was promoted"), etc. Apparently, youth argot reflects the dominant political discourse of the country and Georgia's attitude to its mighty neighbor; therefore, it should not sound surprising at a time when Russia is considered to be Georgia's major enemy, while the U.S. is seen as Georgia's major protector, to say nothing about the fact that English itself is the language of globalization.

Another trait in fashion today is "being national" (Tina, 19), though, as in case of distinctiveness and intellectuality, "national" is also often retained as a façade. In young people's understanding, "being national" means to listen to Georgian folk music, to sing Georgian songs (especially polyphony), and to retain "Georgian relations," mostly implying emotional interdependency and support among in-group members. More than 2/3rds of the respondents state they listen to Georgian folk (and not pop) music and themselves sing Georgian songs. Why should "national" have become so fashionable among the contemporary Geor-

gian youth and how authentic is the passion for "national"? Based on the respondents' ideas, we can infer that accentuating "national" is the means of retaining "cultural intimacy" in the modern globalized world. In young people's words, it is not only the main strategy for youth to preserve their "cultural spirit" in the conditions when there is "a danger of being occupied by the powerful neighbor," but also to resist certain westernization trends that are absorbed by the local environment in "an extremely distorted way" (Keti, 18). The young people's main concern relates to the western concept of freedom, which, in their opinion, is perceived by their peers as "unrestraint." "Despite the fact that they want to be free, they don't understand what this freedom means... It is probably caused by our mentality. The line between freedom and unrestraint is erased" (Salome, 20). And as always, such a distortion is ascribed to merely out-group and never to in-group members.

My co-researchers provided wonderful reflections on this issue. They openly confessed that despite attributing it to others, their in-group and they themselves superficially imitated to western practices. However, their main concern was not the fact of "distortion" but of imitation itself. "The epoch of imitating to others and being either pro-Russian or pro-American or something else hasn't yet ended in Georgia and the epoch of being pro-Georgian hasn't started by now... America can teach us how to create democracy but not culture. And we should take as examples only those principles of democracy that are concurrent to the Georgian culture and reality" (Anano, 19).

Although my co-researchers recognized that it was not only impossible but also irrational to remain uninvolved in the conditions of ongoing globalization, they emphasized that for small countries such as Georgia that have had the experience of being occupied by large states, it was absolutely vital to retain their "national spirit," though in a modernized form. That is why many young people they interviewed still follow Georgian table traditions though adapting the old system of toast-making, listen to Georgian folk music, though mostly to its modernized versions (based on the interviews, "Shin," creating modernized versions of Georgian folk songs and "Assa-Party," performing Georgian folk dances in a modernized way, are recognized by the youth as the most popular Georgian performers), and refuse to listen to Georgian pop, which, in their words, is "a tasteless imitation of western pop"

(Sandro, 16). All of this reminds us of the forms of contemporary subcultural practices suggested by Martin Roberts that describe the place of the subcultural within globalization, and vice versa. The fashionable trend of "being native" widespread among Georgian youth, represents the form of subcultural practice that is "characterized by... an embracing of cultural otherness which ultimately involves becoming the other ('going native')" and is called the "primitivist imaginary" by Roberts (2004, 579), though because of bearing a negative evaluative connotation the term itself seems questionable to me.

Finally, how do young people themselves assess the interrelation of local/global and eastern/western in the Georgian youth culture? According to the respondents, because of the fact that Georgia has been traditionally considered as a "bridge" between Europe and Asia, both its mainstream and youth cultures combine the elements of the western and eastern cultures. The list of the qualities characteristic of western cultures provided by the respondents consists of such items as individualism, youth's material independence from parents, freedom of choice, free sexual relations, gender equality, etc., while the list of the qualities characteristic to the eastern cultures usually contains the following three items: youth's material dependency on their parents, traditional relations between males and females stressing gender inequality, and a strict regulation of the sphere of sexual relations.

Reflecting on the lists of cultural traits provided by their peers and realizing that according to them, Georgian youth culture would definitely belong to the eastern one, my co-researchers attempt to "balance" the proportion of the eastern and westerns qualities and state that although Georgian culture possesses some characteristics of the eastern ones, currently the western influences are even stronger as is reflected in the "style and fashion, musical tastes, the changing attitude to sexual relations, etc." (Maia, 17). "Certainly, in the conditions of globalization the western influences are much stronger; however our youth culture is neither western nor eastern, but purely Georgian... The innovations are synthesized with Georgian traditions. It seems there is certain freedom but it still implies dependency on others... This is the Georgian reality" (Mary, 20).

Thus, although young people have not been familiar with Friedman's statement that "global cultural

objects are nearly always 'localized' – used in novel ways by local people" (1999, 481) and probably they have never heard of the concept of bricolage (to simplify - fiddling around, mixing up), widely applied in the work of Clarke, Hebdige, Willis, Kaiser and others, their ideas clearly demonstrate the importance of localization as well as the role of bricolage in the Georgian youth culture: "No one could absorb and localize European culture so as it has been done in Georgia. Consequently, Georgian youth culture has formed as an amorphous mixture of different consisting parts that have been remade Georgian (the word "gadmokartulebuli" is derived from the word "kartuli," meaning Georgian, and the prefix "gadmo," meaning remaking something)" (Tina, 19). Thus, the young people emphasize the uniqueness of Georgian youth culture as the combination of world innovations with Georgian traditions makes a unique synthesis that cannot be reproduced elsewhere, and even the concept of freedom has its culture-specific connotation among Georgian youth. And whatever the "consisting parts" of Georgian youth culture –western, eastern or even "an amorphous mixture" of both – it is still Georgian as these parts or elements are always "remade Georgian."

I would like to end this discussion with a wonderful example of bricolage by a DJ himself a composer of music: "I may use the western cover to decorate my Georgian sketch, but it always remains Georgian – and I am extremely proud of it!" (Irakli, 21).

Notes

1. In Georgia, sexual behavior is generally viewed from the religious-ethical perspective. This sphere is under special pressure, strictly regulated, and its display is perceived as an immoral act. Simultaneously, a magical value is ascribed to virginity and it is perceived as a gift of God. Presumably, I was expected to reprove the youth's visits to music clubs for this very reason (especially being a representative of the older generation).

2. It is one of the state priorities to raise the intellectual level of the country, and this is well evidenced by the current educational reform which starts with primary schools and ends with higher educational institutions. One of the government's ongoing projects is to build "a City of Knowledge" for youth.

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Cultural Studies

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KNUT HAMSUN AND GEORGIA

During 2009 the 150th anniversary of the famous Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun, a Nobel Prize laureate, was celebrated worldwide. Knut Hamsun is also held to be one of the most significant figures in Georgian-European cultural relations.

Exactly 110 years ago, in 1899 Hamsun and Bergljot Beck (his first wife) traveled in Georgia and the Caucasus. For the writer the trip turned out to be unforgettable ". . . I will never experience a greater and nicer fairy tale than this. Especially traveling in the mountains from Vladikavkaz to Tbilisi. . . . This is an absolutely different planet, more beautiful people, redder wine, higher mountains. And I think that God is near Kazbegi the whole year through. . . ." (K. Hamsun, 1995, 165). Hamsun wrote this in December 1900 to his friend Dagny Kristensen, the sister of the famous Orientalist, Professor William Brede Kristensen. We find the same attitude expressed in Hamsun's letter to his Finnish friend and book seller, Wentzel Hagelstam: "And the Caucasus! I could not imagine such a superior thing, even in my fantasies. Sometimes it effected on me in such a way that I started crying" (K. Hamsun, 1995, 138-139).

During his trip the writer kept a diary; he observed people and nature with a great interest and tried to learn about different historical details. And as a result of this effort, Hamsun created two extremely interesting works that were published in sequence in 1903. The first book, In Wonderland, was based on the travel itself, while the second book, Queen Tamara, is a three-act play that was first staged in 1904 at the National Theatre in Kristiania (as Oslo was then called).

Queen Tamara is undoubtedly based on Georgian historical reality, as is indicated in the title of the play. At the same time we see a free improvisation on a historical theme and the writer gives a wide dimension to his imagination. For example, Hamsun describes Queen Tamara and her husband's war against the Tovinians. However, it's evident that there never was such a war in Georgia's history: it derives holly from Hamsun's pure artistic imagination. Also it is difficult to guess which tribe Hamsun means by his "Muslim Tovinians," although, in my opinion, when talking about Hamsun's play these kinds of "ethnological investigations" don't have any validity.

Tamara's spouse – Prince Giorgi – is undoubtedly associated with David Soslan; it is repeated several times in the play that he is the descendant of the Bagrations, but of another branch (this opinion is well known in Georgian historical thinking). Furthermore, in the play Tamara and her spouse have children – Giorgi (presumably the historical Lasha-Giorgi) and Rusudan. We should also note that the fact that David Soslan isn't given his own name in the play is not accidental; we should perceive it as a part of Hamsun's conception, according to which the writer is particularly interested in the legendary Queen of Georgia. All other things in the play are a kind pure decoration that should fully show on the one hand the unforgettable greatness of Tamara, and on the other hand, Hamsun's phenomenal ability to completely penetrate the depth of spiritual world of his heroes.

We should agree with Akaki Gelovani (who first translated the play into Georgian, using Russian and German translations) when he says: "It is true that Hamsun often transcends historical reality. The writer has the right to do that and it should not be considered as ignorance of history. Hamsun needed people with a strong, demon-like character and Tamara appeared to be an interesting personality for him, opposed by her husband who is as proud as she is herself.... Despite some her womanly weaknesses and simplicity, the true Tamara stands in front of us: a good-natured, attractive, polite, gracious queen, who with her philanthropic nature and tact makes a great contrast with the sovereigns of the East.

The historical situation and vividness is mainly shown exactly through the stories presented in the play – the prosperity of Tamara, the size and strength of Georgia, the subordination of the Khans and Atabegs, the conquest of Kars (which actually took place in 1204) and many other events give the play the importance of creative writing based on Georgian historical reality" (A. Gelovani, 1991, 136).

The fact that generally Hamsun painted a historically real image of Tamara in a very positive way did not prevent him from placing the central figure of the drama in acute and conflicting situations, where her love, faith and womanliness (in their broadest and best sense) were tested. Tamara's behavior is often full of resistance but as Emmy Van Marken once noted, "Though she can sometimes be hesitant, lies

and betrayal are absolutely unfamiliar to her ... For her people she is a wise monarch, for her children she is a caring mother, and for her spouse, she wants to be just a woman, a woman who wants to love and to be loved" (A. V. Marken, 1964, 38).

When talking about Queen Tamara as a psychologically "correct" creative work, "the struggle between the sexes" should be taken into the consideration. It is the very thing that Monika Zagar (a professor at the University of Minnesota) notes concerning the play (M. Zagar, 1998, 346). Hamsun had his own outlook about the rôle of women in the universe as well as in society. He depicted this outlook in his artistic and creative works and probably even more acutely in his popular-journalistic works.

Hamsun wrote Queen Tamara during the period when "gender anarchy" arose in Europe, and Hamsun, as an ultra-conservative in these issues, fought with drawn saber in hand against these trends. However, his Tamara, as Monika Zagar writes, "is a modern woman wrapped in clothes of the Middle Ages" (M. Zagar, 1998, 353). She is a powerful and extremely successful person, while her husband, as seen from different angles, seems to be only her shadow. In spite of the fact that it is impossible to specify the sources on which Hamsun relied, in my opinion, the play vividly reflects the fact that the writer studied Tamara and her epoch more or less successfully. Presumably, Hamsun knew very well that Tamara has always been called a king in Georgian reality, but the author uses this circumstance with a literary elegance, to add a measure of the grotesque to the situation. And truly, what else can express "gender anarchy" more vividly than the fact that one day the queen was called "king" because of her army's military success.

In connection with this, Prince Giorgi says with a dissatisfaction and self-irony in the play: "Earlier I used to be a husband of the Queen, but now I'll become a wife of the king" (K. Hamsun, 1934, 69). But later the story develops in the following way: Tamara will learn the news about the kidnapping of her son by the enemy, an event that she associates with the incident of receiving the title of king. At the same time, Tamara considers that this is a kind of punishment for her light flirtation with a captive young Tovinian khan. And coming out of this, the queen realizes that she is, first of all, a mother (the most suitable condition for a woman, according to Hamsun) and only after this is she a monarch or a sexual creature. Thus, by a careful

analysis of the text, we can see that Hamsun purposefully and sequentially tried to realize some of the main principles of his ideology.

Concerning his other book (finally titled In Wonderland - Experienced and Dreamed in the Caucasus), Hamsun remarked while working on: "This will be the best thing I have ever created." In Wonderland is in many ways a very interesting book though a single unified idea around it still does not exist. The difficulty of defining a literary perception of this work is derived by mainly the relationship between empirical reality and artistic invention. Hamsun – the "Norwegian Dostoevsky" – was preparing to write a documentary book. But time was passing and while working on the book Hamsun more and more separated from the traditional form and rules of the genre. Little by little the book turned from "documentary-actual to eternal-existential" (Martin Nag) and took final form as Hamsun's "Caucasian Mystery."

It is not accidental how Hamsun improved the title of his literary work. The so-called "first draft" ("Caucasian book") was of neutral character and was far from being any kind of mystery. But according to this, Hamsun's final choice is of broad dimensions. Hamsun provides intrigue even in the title: he directly hints at the high level of fantasy in the book.

Given the characteristics of the book's interesting composition, it is inappropriate to discuss any kind of meaningful or aesthetic aspect without taking into full consideration Hamsun's whole creative method. We should start with Hamsun's first but really amazing (according to the literary viewpoint) novel Hunger ending with the masterpiece On Overgrown Paths that is of artistic-biographical style and was written in 1949, during his old age. In Wonderland was published in 1903, and the deep individualism and vividly expressed neoromanticist-modernist style characteristic for his novel cycle of 1890s (Hunger, Mysteries, Pan, etc.) can still be clearly noticed. At the same time, the social-utopian world-view that reached its final formulation in the novel The Growth of the Soil (awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature) is vividly recognizable in this book.

Generally, it can be remarked that Hamsun not only mastered the art of literary puzzles but he very much liked creating them. His life itself (where travels in the Caucasus make up an important part of his biography) was so turbulent, strange and full of contradictory moments that numerous articles and books have

been written about it. One out of the many books of this kind which turned out to be particularly successful was named "Enigma – Knut Hamsun" by its author, Robert Ferguson. In this context Konstantin Gamsakhurdia's incomparable essay on the great Norwegian should be mentioned as well; here the Georgian classic writer declares with his usual artistry: "Nagel (referring to the hero of Hamsun's brilliant novel Mysteries – K.L.) was called an apostle of mystery and Hamsun himself is obsessed with this wonderful whim" (K. Gamsakhurdia, 1967, 134).

As we have already noted, the title and subtitle of the composition In Wonderland prepares us for a lot of strange things. The book, supposed to be of a documentary style, appeared to be of much more mystical character than could be imagined from the title or even from the first pages. The fact is that from the very beginning Hamsun, but more specifically, the narrator, tries to create a feeling that he travels for a certain project or pre-planned idea. But nobody knows what kind of project it is. This issue, like number of other ones, is not resolved in the book. Moreover, the narrator "fits" newer and newer roles while traveling, and he presented himself in this way to the people he encountered. It is true that the narration is accompanied by a masterfully chosen humorous mood, but one thing is of vital importance: Why does Hamsun pass himself off as a missionary, nobleman, ethnologist, general, historian, watch repairer, geographer, etc. but never as a writer?

The fact that according to this "literary game," the narrator is and at the same time is not the famous Knut Hamsun is recognizable because neither the exact date of traveling, nor the narrator's identity, or who accompanies him while traveling, is mentioned in the composition. Only once, on the first pages, is there a hint that the traveling companion is the narrator's wife, but of course, nobody tells us her name or surname. Later, the latter is mentioned quite scornfully, as a "friend on the journey" who "naturally" has nothing in common with things "felt" and even more with things "dreamed"; these elements are within the exclusive sphere of the "anonymous" narrator. In order to make the "literary puzzle" more vague, the narrator gives the people he encountered his friends' visiting cards instead of his own, as if he had left his at home. It doesn't matter that sometimes there are women's cards among them, the recipients don't know the Latin alphabet anyway.

A number of strange people live in Hamsun's Wonderland. The people Hamsun generally referred to as Caucasians are never hurrying or sleeping. In Caucasus, time has stopped. In this context the author masterfully manages to artificially polarize the dichotomy of Orient-Occident. The writer tries to hide everything that connects the Caucasus to the West and intensifies the contrasting colors of the West-East perspective to the utmost: The West – this is "America" – and accordingly, it is bad. The East and Asia are on the contrary good. This is the way Hamsun creates an aesthetic mystery about the Caucasus and this is the way the book, full of positive superstitions, was created. But the author needs these superstitions to create "literary puzzles/strangeness" and this does not mean, that Hamsun knew their unreality less than others did.

Together with all kinds of strangeness, a mysterious illness – "Caucasian Fever" – is mentioned several times in this in many ways peculiar book. The Norwegian "treats" the "sickness" with cognac (Hamsun is an ironist of rare taste). The author was infected as soon as he stepped on Georgia's blessèd soil. "Caucasian Fever" appears to be a mysterious phenomenon with a special connection to the foreign landscape: the Caucasus is a "wonderland" and its greatness can be perceived in an environment in which the rational dimension is partially cancelled. According to this point of view it would be appropriate to notice the analogy with the novel Hunger, where the first-person narrator – the main character – perceived the magic or mysterious side of reality against the background of an abnormal physical condition (starvation).

There are a number of "lyrical turnings" in the composition that makes the textual material more diverse. According to this point of view – not to mention others – this time Hamsun episodically but still successfully uses a literary technique that, if not absolutely identical to it, still looks like "stream of consciousness" (we should note that a number of Scandinavian researchers consider Hunger to be written completely in "stream-of-consciousness" method). At the same time a police-detective "mini-novel" wrapped in mystery was being developed alongside the travel account; on one hand a person actually encountered participates; on the other hand, one can clearly feel the increased level of artistic mystification. Although "Caucasian fever" reaches its highest temperature during a mysterious night in Kobi, it is difficult to say whether

it is (as Hamsun later thinks about the Persian dervish he met in Batumi) a "simulating craziness" or only a dream, where the narrator imagines himself to be the knight riding a white horse, and who should introduce the freedom-based ideals of community to Caucasian women. In this respect, we should note that at the time when Hamsun was traveling (1899), only one year had passed since broad right to vote for men had been legislated in Norway, and there was a fight both in society and in the press for gaining the same rights for women. And Hamsun as a passionate publicist took an active part in this disorder.

It is difficult to say what the narrator is specially looking for in the "Wonderland," but he still finds the way to God and home. Traveling in new places becomes traveling in one's own spirit and memory, and accordingly, an extremely strong nostalgic stream enters the text. It should be remarked that this is one of the most important aspects and dimensions of the book, one which draws a rarely available portrait of the writer, but the background of the intensifying feelings and emotions the author ("obsessed with an amazing whim for mystery") still turns his eyes and pen towards artistic wordplay and mystification. It is true that the author misses his native Norland abnormally (after finishing his trip in the Caucasus, Hamsun rushed to his native places of Northern Norway, where he had not been for 20 years), but soon after his departure, being bewitched by the wonderful nature of the Caucasus, he greatly misses the country.

On the one hand, coming out of the inner logic of the composition and at the same time out of a psychologically motivated feeling, Hamsun heightens his (upcoming) nostalgia introducing a mysterious nuance – characteristic of him: "... and I drank water, the water of the River Mtkvari and that was the greatest craziness, as one having drunk the water of the Mtkvari even once will always miss the Caucasus and have a strong desire to come back." By the way, the Norwegian apostle of mystery will once again draw his attention to this "magic characteristic" of the water of the Mtkvari: "Tomorrow we are leaving again for Baku and then for the East. Thus, we will be out of the country soon. But I'll always miss this place and shall have a great wish to come back here as I am a person who has drunk the water of the Mtkvari."

This is the ending of this strange book. Though, in reality, instead of leaving for Baku, Hamsun left for Constantinople by ship from Batumi. But how impor-

tant it is that the great creator doesn't give up playing a really artistic-aesthetic game and mystical skills until the last word of the text. This is the reason why when one finishes reading In Wonderland an interesting question emerges: might Hamsun's book even conditionally be called a travel narrative or is it a novel, in which the narrator is the main hero? This might be a kind of Mysteries, but now a Mysteries from the Caucasus.

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Cultural Studies

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GEORGIA ON THE CROSSROAD OF THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS

Georgia is situated on the crossroads of the geopolitical and sociocultural boundaries of Eurasian civilization and on the bipolar West-East and North-South axes: historically, it has been the political and cultural center of the region. Representatives of various ethnic and religious groups have long lived in Georgia and a tolerant attitude to "others" was generated. The various religious communities always had normal conditions for existence within the state. Differing ideas and worldviews were familiar in Georgian society. In the pre-Christian era period different indigenous cults and religious beliefs existed as well as ones practiced in Asia Minor and the Caucasus, including Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, Manichaeism, Judaism and others. The remains of Zoroastrian temples from ancient times are still preserved in Georgia at Dedoplis Mindori, Bagineti, Tsikhia Gora and other sites.

Christianity was first introduced into Georgia in the 1st century, and was declared the state religion in 326. Thus Georgia has been a Christian country since the 4th century, with its population historically adhering to Orthodoxy. During the early centuries of its existence the Georgian Church was part of Eastern Christendom, but in the 5th century the Georgian Church became autocephalous. It accepted the rulings of the Council of Chalcedon (451) and adopted the diophysite position on the nature of Christ. As the Church's liturgical language was Georgian, Orthodox Christianity had a great input in the formation and development of the Georgian nation and its culture. The nation's educational and cultural centers were located in monasteries and churches (e.g., the Gelati and Ikalto academies, and centers such as Shiomgvime, David-Gareja, Alaverdi, etc.) (R. Topchishvili, 2008, 55).

Orthodoxy's powerful consolidative function did not hinder the spread of ideas from different cultures. Take, for example the 10th-century hagiographic-didactic novel Balavariani, based on the eastern story of an Indian prince. The Georgian version was the first Christianized version of the Arabic one and it appeared as a key link in the chain between the Eastern versions (in Sanskrit and Arabic) and the western version (in Greek). The Georgian version is considered to be the keystone of the very popular European versions of the Middle Ages.

Judaism had been known in Georgia since the 6th century B.C. According to the historical sources, Jews who had escaped from Babylon had settled in Mtskheta (the former capital of Georgia) and other parts of the country. Since the arrival of this first wave of Jews and throughout their 26 centuries of living in Georgia, Jews have had complete freedom of belief; they had synagogues in their compact settlements in Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Batumi, Sukhumi, Kareli, Oni and other places.

Reciprocal relations between the traditional religious communities (Georgian Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Gregorian Church, and the Jewish and Islamic groups) developed over the centuries. In conditions of positive or negative stereotypes, reciprocal acceptance basically proceeded peacefully. Despite that fact that over the course of the centuries, several religious wars have been fought in territories adjoining Georgia, Georgia herself proved to be an example of the peaceful coexistence of different religious groups. As globalization advances Georgia's main task is to create relevant conditions for the peaceful coexistence and integration of peoples, civilizations and religious faiths in the region. The future of Georgia and the stable development of the Georgian society depends substantially on the formation of a safe religious environment in the country.

In Georgia, the religious affiliations of the population were determined in 2002. According to the census, 88.6% percent of the total population is Christian; 9.9% is Muslim; 0.1% is Jewish; 0.8% belong to other religions; and 0.6% of the population belongs to no faith. We should note that no ethnic group living in Georgia is mono-religious; in addition to those adhering to a traditional religion, in each ethnic group there are followers of other new or old worldviews.

The majority of ethnic Georgians have historically been Orthodox Christians, but there are also Georgian Catholics, Muslims and members of other religious groups. The traditional religious affiliations of the ethnic groups living in Georgia are as follow: Azerbaijanis – Imamate Shia Muslim; Armenians – Gregorian Christian and Catholic; Jews – Judaism; Kurds – Yezid; Kists – followers of Sufi Islam; Abkhazians – Sunni Muslim and Orthodox Christian; Ossetians –Orthodox Christian; Russians – Orthodox Christian or Russian "Spiritual Christian" adhering to creeds such as Dukhobor, Molokan, Starover, etc.

Catholicism has had a six-century history in Georgia, while Lutherans appeared in Georgia in 19th century with the settlement of German colonists. The Russian sectarians (Dukhobors, Molokans, Starovers, etc.), formerly Russian subjects, are today passive subjects of Georgian religious space.

Of necessity, Georgia developed reciprocal relationships with Islam and the Islamic states after the foundation of the Islamic faith and the conquests of the early 600s. Despite constant confrontations with the Islamic world, a high level of tolerance was maintained over the centuries. Several factors explain this. For long periods the Georgian state was under the influence of Islamic overlords and a basic concern of Georgian state policy was maintaining an acceptable reciprocal relationship. In addition, and no less important, Georgia was the political, economic and cultural center of the Caucasus and naturally, in light of this fact, it served the national good to have practical working relationships with the various ethnic and religious groups or settled within Georgia, adjoining Georgia, or close to Tbilisi and its region.

The campaign of Habib ibn Maslama (643-645) marked the first appearance of Arabs on Georgian territory. The Georgians chose to conclude a treaty (Juansher, 1975, 198) as Arabs were not punitive to non-Islamic peoples, especially to those of the Abrahamian tradition ("People of the Book"). Nonetheless, from this time onward, periods of peace and war were continually alternating. From the 8th century on, the Arab yoke became very grievous, especially after the campaigns of Murvan Kru in 735-38. Georgia, then situated within an Islamic world, had to fight for her physical survival, and the mechanism of self-defense required consideration of the "Islamic other" as an enemy. But nonetheless, in parallel to this, in daily life the level of tolerance between Christians and Muslims was reasonably high.

Georgian kings were well acquainted with the Islam and displayed honorable conduct toward Muslims, and the reign of King David the Builder (1089-1125) strongly displays the tolerant attitude. King David used to discuss the theological problems of Islam with Muslim theologians, notably the Kadi of Ganja, among others. David visited mosques and used to attend Islamic rituals; he offered privileges to Muslim traders and artisans. After David's period, the Islamic world became more active. But in spite of permanent wars, King Demetre I continued his father's tolerant policies. The 12th-century Arab historian Al-Fakiri noted that he had seen a respect for Muslims in Georgia which was not usual even in Baghdad (I. Javakhishvili, 1979, 249). King Demetre's character deeply inspired Khakan, a noted poet from Shirvan. Christians and Muslims alike mourned for King Demetre as he died; we can take for an example the ode written by Falak.

The successors of King David the Builder were equally tolerant to both their Christian and Muslim subjects; for political and economic reasons (clearly pragmatic) they protected Muslims and offered privileges to Muslim traders. Politically inspired marriages to Muslim were also frequent in the Georgian Court and among the aristocracy. In the late Middle Ages, the Islamic faith began to win converts among ethnic Georgians and in the 17th and 18th centuries in Tao, Klarjeti, Shavsheti, Erusheti, Kola, Artaani, Samtskhe, Javakheti, and Ajara (territories the Turks had conquered) many Georgians converted to the prevailing Sunni creed of Islam. In Eastern Georgia, much of the population of eastern Kakheti (the Ingilos) converted to Islam (R. Topchishvili, 2008, 56). Georgian traditions and rites helped to influence this process.

The aggressive politics of the Islamic states – especially Turkey – during the 15th and 16th centuries resulted in the establishment of an anti-Islamic ideology. One example is Bagrat Mukhranbatoni's polemical work "Dialogue of the Muslims and Christians," which Jakob Dumbadze made into a poem. Nonetheless, a high level of tolerance still existed. The reason lay not only in state policy. First, during the centuries in which the Georgian kingdom was under the governance of Islamic states, the key concern was to maintain a working relationship and, second, as Georgia was the political, economic and cultural center of the Caucasus, there was need to maintain conditions in which Caucasian peoples of different religions could live, work and trade in the Tbilisi region and elsewhere. It is a well-known fact that King Erekle II punished his favorite servant for insulting a Muslim.

In 17th and 18th centuries, when the weakened and disordered Georgian kingdom suffered from military raids of the North Caucasian Moslems, culminating in the "Didi Lekianoba" (the term was used to describe the permanent invasions of small military groups from the North Caucasus, robbing and depriving population) there was a negative attitude toward Muslims in all levels of the Christian population. After Russia's annexation of Georgia in 1801, Georgians were fighting on the Russian side against the North Caucasians Muslims, and the memory of historic injustices suffered from Muslim

overlords forged an emotional motivation. Nonetheless, basic working relationships had to be maintained between the two faiths in daily civilian life.

During the Soviet period state policy was based on internationalism, and religion was completely ignored. Under the atheistic state, all religious faiths and populations coexisted in more or less identical conditions. But at the household level the historical stereotypes were still maintained. Disintegration of the USSR has provided an impetus for the freeing-up of latent religious energy, which in a number of cases has caused the re-occurrence of centers of opposition and given the old stereotypes new meanings. It is necessary to note, however, that the religious changes have not broken the centuries-old tradition of peaceful coexistence and cooperation among traditional religions. It has enabled the poly-ethnic society of Georgia to avoid open civil collisions and ethno-religious crises.

We have noted that the 2002 census recorded that the majority of Georgians are Orthodox but that 9.9% (433,784 persons) are Muslims. Let us examine this Muslim minority. Within the 433,784 Muslims, the largest group is resident Azerbaijanis subscribing to the Imamate Shia creed; they number 184,761. Ethnic Georgian Muslims number 134,124 persons (3.8% of the total Georgian population). The majority of Muslims in Georgia are settled in the Kvemo Kartli region, of whose population 225,657 persons are ethnic Azerbaijanis. In Ajara, 115,161 ethnic Georgians are Muslim, and in Kakheti 51,256 persons (ethnic Vainakhs, Avarians, and Azerbaijanis) are Muslim.

Given these data, it is interesting to consider the relation of Christian Georgians to their Islamic neighbors living in Georgia; namely, ethnic Azerbaijanis and Chechens (called Kists in Georgia). We can trace historic differences in these relationships and, of course, the present geopolitical situation plays an important part in formation of Georgian policy and relations with both Azerbaijan and Chechnya.

In the case of Azerbaijan, Georgian-Azerbaijani religious differences do not seem to be very important; geopolitical and economic interests receive higher stronger emphasis. The attitude of the population does not differ from that of state policy. This can be explained by the mode of life of Azerbaijanis in Georgia: despite amplified religiosity, they are legal and peaceful citizens of the state. Historically, resident Azerbaijanis have always supported the Georgian rulers (e.g., the loyalty of the Borchalo population to King Erekle.

In the case of Chechnya, the Russian Federa-

tion's geopolitical interests and goals in the Caucasus are calling forth variable state policies on the part of Georgia. On the public level, attitudes to the Chechens are influenced by their role in the Georgian-Abkhazian war, the great number of refugees in the Pankisi gorge and the current criminal situation there, etc. Thus, on the popular level together with general tolerance, there exists a certain distance and sense of mistrust.

In 1990-ies there was great compassion for the North Caucasian peoples. The idea of Caucasian unity was very active. The old 12th-century ideology of promoting a strong Georgian state received new motivation. It was supported by the Georgian as well as by northern and southern Caucasian leaders and experts. But the activities were carried out from the Russian side and as a result Confederation of Caucasian Peoples was established, the organization pretending to be a council of Caucasian people. Instead of harmonizing relations, the situation in the Caucasus became dangerous and was reflected in the Georgian-North Caucasian relations.

Georgians and Vainakhs (Chechens and Ingushes) have had long-term cultural, economic and political relations and this fact influenced their religious relations. In Chechnya and Ingushetia Christianity was spread from Georgia and has left a deep track (Christian terminology, architectural monuments, and religious cults) even if canonic Christianity did not become rooted. But there are numerous examples of syncretization. In Chechenya and Ingushetia there are several "holy" places – Christian churches built during the 9th to 13th centuries (Tkhaba-Erdi, Gali-Erdi, Albi-Erdi, etc.). Together with historical sources ethnographic data also prove the existence of the strong connections between Vainakhs and Georgians. They had common holy places: in Khevsureti, Chechens from the Melkhista and Maista communities and Georgians (Khevsurs) jointly celebrated common holidays (L. Margoshvili, 1989, 81-82). In Maista community, holidays were attended by Georgians from the eastern Georgian highlands (Tushes, Pshavs and Khevsurs). Their common divinities were Gudani, Iakhsari, etc., who are pre-Christian deities. They used to sacrifice and pray together in St George's place of worship and celebrate New Year, Easter, and holidays of St George, etc. (N. Velikaia, 1989, 45; V. Elanidze, 1988, 206)

Islam become of great importance during the national movement and Russian-Caucasian war (E. Shiling, 1931, 10). In this same period a group of Vainakhs (Kists) migrated into the Pankisi Gorge, in to Georgia. Most of these Kists were from regions where

Islam was not yet rooted and as they were partly pagan, it was easy for them to adopt the local Christian churches and places of worship. Ancient Georgian holy places become theirs too. Kists celebrated Christian holidays such as Christmas, and Easter and used to visit Christian Churches together with Georgians and Ossetians, e.g., Atskuri White George Church and Alaverdi. They sat apart in the churchyard though invitations to each other were usual (L. Khutsishvili, 1999, 80). At the same time these religious holidays were opportunities for trade. In addition to providing economic benefits, these bazaars also played a great part in establishment of peaceful and friendly relations between the various ethnic and religious groups. These holidays and bazaars were held until the mid-1990s.

Today's Islam is rooted among the population of the Pankisi Gorge. Some 7110 Kists living in Georgia professing the Sufi form of Islam, in particular the Kadiria and Nakshbandi trends. The general tendency of returning to religion has also been reflected in activity within Islam. Some kind of tension arose after the diffusion of Sallafi ideas among Muslims (in all Muslim ethnic groups). But cultural-historical bonds are strong and the representatives of different ethnic groups are willing to reestablish changed or broken relations

Among Georgian Muslims consciousness and lifestyle is rather syncretic (M. Gegeshidze, 2002, 182). Religious rites are considered as ethnographic features of the living culture and traditions, and must be carried out. So the religious difference is not a ground for establishment of distance. It must also be mentioned that the Tbilisi mosque was a unique place, where Shia und Sunni Moslems prayed together.

The last decades have seen some tension between the representatives of "traditional" and "non-conventional" religious trends. Georgia – where the difficulties of the transitional period have been clearly presented, and which during the last decade has gone through two open conflicts, civil war, economic disruptions, and harsh processes of social breakdown and rising criminality – is not an exception. In Georgia of the last years the religious factor has become a determining element of public stability and security. It is natural, as the Georgian civil society is a mosaic of different groups with different cultural traditions. The stability of such a society appreciably depends on an opportunity for dialogue, on mutual respect and cooperation between religions.

The processes occurring in the post-Soviet space confirm that in a poly-ethnic society mutual relations between ethno-religious groups and even between the separate members of these groups, the traditions of cooperation and public-legal practice depend on factors such as tolerance – or intolerance. From this point of view, for Georgian society, as for other post-Soviet societies, a variety of ways of development of processes is characteristic. On the one hand, means are available to strengthen policies for mutual cooperation and dialogue for the development of united state interests. On the other hand, the weight of negative attitudes displays disintegration and religious intolerance. Thus, the high level of tolerance coexists with a lack of trust and with distancing.

This situation is often exploited by different interest groups – and the integrational processes are sometimes interrupted and latent tensions come to light.

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Cultural Studies

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VITALITY AND VISION: GEORGIAN MUSIC AS A PARTICULAR PHENOMENON OF CAUCASIAN-EURASIAN CULTURE

The history of culture shows that every culture is shaped in the process of ethnogeny, developing in contact with other cultures. The inevitability of intercultural process is confirmed also by the proposition that a culture cannot be viewed as a closed system (O. Jyoev, 1982). There is no sterile culture in nature, the more so if it has such a distinguished geopolitical situation as Georgian culture. At first sight, the musical culture of the Georgians – a people settled at the crossroads of Europe and Asia – should have been of a symbiotic character. Nevertheless, as Ilia Chavchavadze asked in 1880s: "Georgian song does not resemble European at all. But does it resemble Asian?" – meaning by 'song' three-part Georgian song. After discussion of the question he concludes that it is a self-originated and self-perpetuating phenomenon (I. Chavchavadze, 1986,141) He perceived exactly the stylistic difference of Georgian music from European and Asian music.

The first thing I must argue in this present paper is what even a non-musician will easily perceive, namely that Georgian traditional polyphony is a special phenomenon which has only its own characteristic intonational and mode-harmonic features; the second is to show the traces of the intercultural relations of Georgian music; and the third is to answer the question of how Georgian musical culture managed to preserve its distinctiveness over such a long period of intensive intercultural processes.

Among numerous paradigms most advantageous for the study of Georgian musical culture is the so-called "synthetic paradigm" (I. Zemtsovsky, 1997) which reflects a post-modernist world view, and instead of aggressive confrontation between differing scientific approaches of research, proposes their juxtaposition. This methodology allows me to demonstrate the distinctiveness of Georgian music against the background of a permanent dialogue of cultures.

Zurab Kakabadze, an outstanding Georgian philosopher of the last century the consider dialogue as the most distinctive peculiarity of the contemporary art (Kakabadze, 1988;50). Moreover scholars consider the dialogue as a mode of existence, the universal form of relations. Everything has a dialogic structure – language, thinking, relations, activity, etc. (I. Zemtsovsky, 2006, 167). I believe that culture also has a dialogic structure. On the one hand, it is itself the fruit of the dialogic relations of inner elements, on the other hand, dialogue is its form of relations with the outer world.

The specific peculiarities of Georgian music began to emerge at the time when the Kartvelian tribes (Georgian, Megrel-Chan and Svan) were not yet separated (I. Javakhishvili, et al., 1943:6). At this early stage of development man perceived the world unfragmented and reflects it as a whole by syncretic action. There are no independent fields of art – where there is music, there is word and movement as well. The singing of speech tones surviving from non-articulate speech takes shape as the simplest formulas and in the verbal text of the song, as Nietzsche put it "the highest tension of language occurs seeking to imitate music" (F. Nietzsche, 1990, 77). Such archaic elements of musical thinking are found in the Georgian mountains and especially in Khevsureti where the simplest songs are mostly emotional declamations (S. Aslanishvili, 1956, 17).

It is in the intoning of this "emotionality", or singing articulation that primitive man's thinking is realized, "the first experience", "the archetype, originating in the depth of the collective subconscious of the ethnos" (Yung) and ensuring an uninterrupted succession of traditional musical culture.

Lack of space prevents, the provision of a detailed analysis of the road traversed by Georgian ethnic-national musical thinking. I shall note in brief that Georgian traditional music belongs to the rarest phenomena, that by means of notations and audio recordings made by Georgian and foreign musicians in the 20th century, enables us to restore a picture of historical development of at least 5000 years.

Schematically, this path of evolution may be conceptualized thus: the polyphonic type of musical thinking characteristic of the Georgian ethnos is implemented in the simplest single-part, simple two-part and in developed three-part songs. In the

long process of evolution it created diverse forms and subforms of polyphony and in whole – an original musical system whose dual – fifth-fourth orientation (N. Mamisashvili, 1992,188-189) defined the peculiarities of its musical grammar: morphology and syntax, specific cadence formulas and chord structures, modulation principles, texture and scale. Taken together, all these create an inimitable phenomenon called Georgian traditional polyphony. Although these specimens contain forms of polyphony characteristic of various regions of Georgia, it is not hard to perceive in their conclusive structures the specifically Georgian archetypal ending .

One of the most important factors of the inimitability of Georgian traditional music is the Caucasian origin of the ethnos that created it. By their two principal essentials – anthropologic and linguistic – the Georgians are Caucasians. Following Georgian linguists, Georgian ethnomusicologists consider their native musical culture to be a Caucasian substrate, therefore studying Georgian and Abkhazian, Georgian and North-Caucasian musical inter-influences (S.Aslanishvili, 1956; V. Akhobadze,1957; N.Maisuradze, 1989; M. Shilakadze, 2007).

That the highland Georgians and Abkhazians, Circassians, Kabardins, Karachays, various peoples of Dagestan, and the Chechen-Ingush have close historical relations and similar beliefs is well known. It is also known, that there exist archetypes of common Caucasian musical instruments (M. Shilakadze, 2007,265).

As to the type of musical thinking of the Abkhazians and the autochthonous population of North-Caucasians – like the Georgians, they are characterized by polyphony (Jordania, 1989). Furthermore, we find homogeneous forms of polyphony. In eastern part of the North Caucasus, bourdon polyphony is widespread as in Eastern Georgia, whereas in the western part of the North Caucasus – we find synchronous polyphony as in Western Georgia (M. Gelashvili, 2007). The traditional songs of Caucasian highlanders are brought close to one another by their performance manner and the peculiarities of sound formation, determined by the severe geo-climatic conditions of their habitat and the resulting ethno-psychics.

Georgian musical culture is Caucasian substrate, but Georgian traditional music is a special phenomenon of Caucasian culture, for in it the Caucasian archetype of musical thinking has reached its an utmost degree, reflecting the musical thinking peculiarities of the Georgian ethnos. I mean not only the thematic content and genre-dialectal wealth of traditional music, but the diversity of forms of polyphony and structural perfection. It is because of the latter factor that any Georgian or foreign scholar begins research into Georgian traditional music by studying its structure. This is the case with Siegfried Nadel's Georgische Gesange (1933, Berlin). The practice is the same today too – the well-known ethnomusicologists Prof. Simha Arom (France) and Prof. Polo Vallejo (Spain) began to study the grammar of Georgian Polyphonic musical structure from 2004 and made their first presentation on this topic in 2008, at the Tbilisi Fourth International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony (S. Arom & P. Vallejo, 2010). The next presentation on this topic is planned for the Fifth Symposium in 4-8 October 2010.

The versatile and long intercultural contacts that Georgian culture has had at least over five thousand years of its existence have failed to do any harm to the special character of this phenomenon. On the contrary, the experience gained by these relations served as an impulse for enriching its worldview, art and style.

In my view, one more important source of the originality of Georgian musical culture, along with its Caucasian provenance, was the intensive dialogue of the Georgian people with Asia Minor cultures during the process of ethnogeny.

Ancestors of Georgians are believed to have constituted an indigenous population not only of the Caucasus, but of the Near East as well (I. Javakhishvili, et al., 1943,12).

Historical Sources attest that the cultural development of the numerous Kartvelian tribes was linked to the general course of cultural development of the peoples, inhabiting this territory. In my book 20th century Georgian Music: Originality and Value Orientations (Tbilisi, 2005,57-69), I consider ancient Georgian musical culture as the model for the realization of the universal model of Mesopotamian civilization (R. Gordeziani, 1988,10-15).

The closest links between the ancient Kartvelian tribes (Macrones, Mossynoeci, Tibareni, Scythinians, Chalybes, Chaldeans, Taochoi, Moskhoi, Mushki, Manaeans,etc.) and the non-Georgian ethnoses (Subars, Babilonians, Hittites, Urartians and others) inhabiting this territory made for the unity of world perception and basic peculiarities of their mode of life.

According to the evidence concerning the musi-

cal cultures of the ancient peoples of the Near East, Georgian musical culture comes close to them in the outward forms of depicting the artistic-musical picture of the world. For example, great significance attached to syncretic mysteries of religious cults, cult rituals and round-dance traditions with huge crowds attending, is common knowledge in Sumer and Babylon, Syria, Judea, Palestine and Greece (F.Losev, 1974,140-142; R. Gruber, 1941,253-254; K. Saks, 1937). The existence of this tradition in the 2nd millennium B.C. is attested by a unique specimen of metal work, discovered in Georgia as a result of archaeological excavations – the so-called Trialeti silver cup. According to Shalva Amiranashvili (1961, 50), a ritual round dance linked with the cult of Melia-telepia ("fox- telepia") is depicted on the cup. The ritual of Melia-telepia surviving in Svaneti until the 20th century, points to links with both the Hittite culture (Telepinu is the name of the Hittite god of fertility – (I. Javakhishvili, et al., 1943,16; N. Bendukidze, 1987, 455) and later, with the Greek world (the Greeks often represented Dionysus as a fox or basarios). The fact that the Melia-telepia ritual survived in Svaneti until the 20th century reveals one more basic specific characteristic of the Mesopotamian model realized in the continuity of Georgian culture, and hence to tradition, which made for such viability of Georgian traditional culture since ancient times to the present day.

One more fact of the Asian dialogue of Georgian musical culture is connected with the ancient period, namely, the intercultural links between Georgian polyphony and Central Asian-South Caucasian (Armenian-Azerbaijanian) monophony. On the basis of a comparative analysis Nino Tsitsishvili considers the "long" table songs of Kartli and Kakheti as an intermediate phenomenon between these cultures. In this way we obtained a polyphony based on bourdon/drone bass (local substrate) with two ornamentally improvised, metrically free upper voices (the influence of monodic culture (N. Tsitsishvili, 2010).

This influence is considered on the one hand in the context of the northward migration of the Indo-European peoples through Georgia, in the prehistoric period and, on the other hand, in the context of later (17th century) Persian-Georgian contacts. However, in my view, in discussing this phenomenon the Asia Minor influences on the Kartli-Kakhetian musical dialect should not be ruled out. This is indicated, for example, by ethno-linguistic parallels with Urartian culture and

the name of the Urartuian god Arale surviving to the present day in the glossolalias of Kartli-Kakhetian songs :"ivri arale", ("God arale"), "tari arale" ("Grand arale"), "ari arale" ("Grant us arale!").

Purely musical parallels are undoubtedly to be presumed alongside ethno-linguistic ones, but the former cannot be proved today due to absence of Urartian musical specimens. We should not forget that the monodic culture of Asia Minor inhabitants is of a diatonic character, which renders the system of melody of Kartli-Kakhetian "long" songs essentially different from the Central Asian-South Caucasian monodic chromatized melody system.

And finally regarding Georgian-European musical-cultural contacts: these contacts (not only musical) have always been of a purposeful character, for the Caucasian provenance and polyphonic nature of Georgian musical culture brought it closer to European thinking than to Oriental. The idea of agreement of Georgian traditional and Western musical thinking systems throughout Georgian history twice proved topical and in both cases served as the basis of a qualitatively new development for Georgian culture. First it followed the proclamation of Christianity as the state religion of Georgia (4th century A.D.). As Christian doctrine was the ideological basis for the future development of European culture, its recognition as the main ideology of Georgia assumed the implementation of the European Georgian consciousness. These principles were spread in all fields of artistic thinking, including musical.

The monophonic Jewish-Greek chanting, introduced alongside official divine service was soon "changed according to their own taste" by the Georgians (I. Javakhishvili, 1990, 5), i.e., was made polyphonic and by the 11th century they had established three-part chanting in the Georgian church, distinguished from the practice of the rest of the Christian world of that time. The musical structure resulting of the synthesis of early Christian and Georgian musical thinking was nurtured by Georgian national musical consciousness and attested to the dominance of the "host" culture in this phenomenon.

Quite different was the outcome of the synthesis of Georgian and European musical cultures in the 19th century, leading to the creation of European-style Georgian composers' school by the early 20th century. The highly developed European musical system made for the predominance of a European logic

of musical development in the operas and symphonies of Georgian composers, although their musical languages was closely linked with Georgian traditional musical thinking. The result of this synthesis was the first specimen of Georgian national classical opera – Abesalom and Eteri by Zakaria Paliashvili, which expressed the orientation toward European and Georgian values of the 20th century Georgians.

In the 20th century the new Georgian music made a great leap by mastering, over several decades, first classical-romantic European music and from the 1960s its latest techniques. The integrative processes always characteristic of music as a universal language, have acquired an irreversible character at the present time and, because of this, the problem of imprinting the composer's language in the national style has lost its topicality, though musical practice shows the opposite. I shall cite only one example. A civilized listener needs a definite benchmark to identify an unknown modern musical artifact. For him this role may be played by the national cultural clarity of the composer's musical language. In the early 1980s, when the European listener had no knowledge either of Giya Kancheli's music or of the determinants of his ethno-cultural physiognomy, namely Georgian polyphonic singing and chanting, European musical criticism perceived his symphony as performed in European technology, though differing from European by the affective-psychological and language structure – a work of "some other cultural circle". That the Georgian compositional style is interpreted by non-Georgian listener as "other", i.e., unknown and distinct, amounts to its acknowledgment as a special artistic-aesthetic fact, which in the present situation is not to be brushed aside.

Today Georgian musical culture is a non-homogeneous phenomenon. It is represented by traditional (secular and sacred) music, professional composers' works, jazz and various types of popular music, including new ethno-music. Under the conditions of the integration processes, characteristic of globalization, cultural diffusion has reached an unprecedented extent; apart from Eurasian, especially in popular music African and American musical-cultural influences are strong. Nevertheless, Georgian musical culture again emerges as a special phenomenon of Caucasian-Eurasian musical cultures and, I hope, it will always remain such.

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FILM AND FOLKLORE: CONCEPTIONS ABOUT BUILDING RITUALS IN THE CAUCASUS AND THE CARPATHIANS

Found throughout all archaic civilizations and branching out until the Late Middle Ages and Romanticism, building rituals were based on the fundamental moment of the divine sacrifice, completed at the Creation of the World. Mircea Eliade dedicated two studies1 to building rituals. We will use these as our starting point in order to sustain a self-contained analysis of the spiritual mechanisms of the founding myth.

The divine sacrifice of an originator god was well known in all religions and mythical cosmogonies, including totemic beliefs. But, as the great historian of religions observes, in spite of their extensive spread, these myths have produced self-contained literary works only in South-Eastern Europe, which is a sign that the Balkan-Carpathian groups of peoples had resonated in the best way with the message of the archaic myth. The belief in the immortality of the soul was a premise for the fact that the sacrificial act, undertaken for the benefit of the collectivity, should not be disclaimed, but accepted as an act of liberation, generating ethnicity and everlastingness, exalted by collective memory and polished into literary works of unique artistry. Eliade's argument asserting the masterpiece status of the Romanian ballad The Legend of Argesh Monastery, based on a comparative study of all of Medieval Europe's thematic literature, relies on this fact.

The Romanian Ballad

The Legend of Argesh Monastery, also called Master Manole is one of the most appreciated Romanian popular epic poems; one of the "trademarks" of Romanian spirituality. It was published in 19th century and immediately included in the most important international folklore compendia.

The epic poem describes the legend of the bu-

ilding of Argesh Monastery (1517), a masterwork of Romanian Late-Medieval architecture and the most famous edifice of Neagoe Basarab, The Voivode of Wallachia (1512-1521).

Nine stonemasons and their master Manole had found a place to build a monastery, ordered by the Wallachian Prince Negru Voda for his memorial. For an unknown reason, the walls of the new building were continuously collapsing. In a prophetic dream, Manole was advised to brick up into the wall the first woman coming to them. It happened that Manole's wife Anna showed up. So the craftsmen had to keep their vow and immure her alive within the church walls. Thus the monastery could be finished. Prince Negru Voda was pleased by the beauty of the monastery, but he ordered his men to remove the ladders, and so Manole and his craftsmen remained blocked on the roof. In an attempt to escape, they made themselves pairs of wings from shingles and tried to fly from the roof, but all of them crashed to the ground and were transformed into stones. On the place where Manole crashed, a fountain "with bitter and saline water, watered by tears" (as the ballad states) sprang up.

In one of the versions of the epic poem Manole nails the wooden shingles to his arms, prefiguring the Crucifixion and revealing the Christlike essence of the hero. "As well as Jesus, Manole has a sacerdotal role: he sacrifices and is sacrificed for the sins of the others" (S. Ispas, 2001, 161).

The Legend of Argesh Monastery is the most prolific from all Romanian folk literature; it has inspired generations of littérateurs and artists and has been studied by numerous specialists.2 Its exceptional value among other building legends from other cultures, as specialists assert,3 consists in the sacred character of the edifice – a church – and the Christian meaning of the sacrifice, as suggested by the poetic text.

The Georgian Legend

The building myth had also achieved literary crystallization in the Transcaucasian area, another crucible of races and religions that had preserved their ancient heritage. The Legend of Surami Fortress is a definitng literary work of the Georgian ethnos. Its absence from the worldwide folklore compendia is evidently a consequence of the phenomenon of "small cultures".

In the Georgian legend, the action takes place in the end of the Middle Ages, when, after centuries of resistance, the lands of South Georgia were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire and many Georgians

were forcibly converted to Islam. The Muslims continued to press upon the country. Apostasy was perceived as a collective tragedy, eroding the foundations of the nation, and the folkloric productions of the times were sorrowfully expressing this feeling.

Inspired by the patriotic and religious message of the legend and starting from the literary transcriptions of Daniel Chonkadze, Niko Lordkipanidze and David Suliashvili, the Armenian film-maker Serge Parajanov transcribed the legend into a cinematic ballad: The Legend of Surami Fortress,4 a heroic-poetic drama, produced by Gruzia Film in 1984. The film is dedicated "To the memory of Georgian soldiers of all the times who gave their lives for the freedom of their fatherland."

The Legend of Surami Fortress synthesizes the socio-historical scene of the era in the framework of an epic poem spanning three generations. The tragedies of an unfulfilled love and of two lives fallen into apostasy are woven around the main plot: the raising of Surami Fortress. The fortress defends the city of Surami and ensures the security of the fatherland. But for unknown reasons the fortress cannot be erected. The feeling of collective damnation is hovering over everyone. What should be done in order to regain God's favor? From the ashes of great disasters, after three generations, a savior will rise.

We will briefly relate the subject of the movie in order to emphasize the spiritual benchmarks of the plot.

In Tbilisi the Great Prince orders the building of Surami Fortress. Young Durmishkhan loves Vardo and wants to marry her, but both are serfs, dependent on the benevolence of their lord. He liberates Durmishkhan, who journeys into the world to gain money to redeem his beloved. Vardo has the gift of foresight and has a foreboding that Durmishkhan will never return. Reaching Turkish territory, Durmishkhan befriends the merchant Osman-Aga, a renegade Georgian, who tells him how he ran away from the Tatars and slavery, changed his faith and his speech and became a merchant. But he cannot forgive himself for his renunciation of the law of his ancestors. Under his protection, Durmishkhan also becomes a merchant, marries a Turkish woman and has a son: Zurab.

Vardo leaves home to find her beloved. Her prayers for his return are not granted. A fortune-teller shows her Durmishkhan's actual state. After the fortune-teller's death, Vardo takes her place. Osman-Aga leaves his trading business and baptizes again in order to go back to Georgia, but the Muslims assassinate him.

Familiarized by his teacher with his ancestors' spirituality, young Zurab enters into the service of the Great Prince of Georgia. From the fortune-teller Vardo, Zurab finds out what the price will be for the successful building of Surami Fortress: he must let himself bricked up within the citadel's wall. The young man happily fulfills the prophecy. The fortress is finished and the Great Prince orders the people to prostrate themselves before Vardo, the spiritual mother of the martyr.

We shall not touch upon all the variants of the Georgian legend or the Romanian ballad. Our task is to reveal the Christian essence of the founding myth and its corresponding rituals and literary productions, which are mostly considered to belong exclusively to the pagan-totemic culture and Weltanschauung. Therefore, it is not important whether the two paradigmatic examples chosen here belong to the popular, anonymous literature or to the cultivated one, subsequently rearranged by the cinematic art: both have suffered certain more or less long and more or less complex stylisation processes in order to reveal the essence of the myth.

Spiritual Landmarks of the Georgian Legend[5]

All the heroes of the legend seem to lie under a curse. All their lives suffer from bad luck. Their prayers are not accepted; even God seems to have turned His face away from them. And so it is: apostasy attracts God's curse. In a country convulsed by aggressive pagans, the weakest surrender, but the sin of apostasy spreads over the entire community. That is why people's prayers are not accepted, why loves and destinies come to nothing, and why the fortress cannot be raised.

The curse hovering over Vardo is part of the collective curse on the whole nation. Renouncing her destiny, Vardo will guide other people's fortunes until her road will meet that of her alter-ego (her ex-fiancé's child) and through him the destiny of the nation. Prophets and fortune-tellers have no personal destiny, they are devoted to God or to the Devil: whom will Vardo finally choose?

Endorsing his teacher's lessons of patriotism and faith taught him in his childhood, Zurab is prepared for the supreme sacrifice. The leitmotif of the unfinished wall has been torturing the country for two generations: the curse must be overcome. Zurab fulfills his task with serenity.

Under the wall concealing the young man's body his spiritual mother Vardo lays a patch of blue tissue: a piece of heaven – here is the sign that the divine order has been fulfilled. The sacrificer is also sacrificed, her destiny, broken on earth, fructifies through the Cross, according to the Marial archetype. The martyr's love thaws out the silence of Heaven and eventually opens the windows of the country toward God. As in a new day of Creation, the Great Prince orders "There shall be light!", proclaims the cessation of mourning and orders the beginning of the great feast.

A comparative glance at the building rituals of the Caucasus and the Carpathians

The Legend of Surami Fortress, as read by Parajanov, fortunately stands out from the alterations of the creationist archetype present in most of the building rituals. It is not the sacrificed body of young Zurab that automatically offers perennially to the fortress, but his voluntary and total participation (moral and physical) to the fortress's erection and the salvation of his nation. This idea is clearly emphasized by the filmmakers, who quote an aphorism of a maximal limpidity and sharpness: "If a nation has a young man who is capable to voluntarily immure himself in the walls of a fortress, that country and its people are invincible" (Niko Lordkipanidze).

The exceptional quality of the legend cinematically transposed by Parajanov is the voluntariness of self-sacrifice. That's what distinguishes it from most of the other legends on the same topic and elevates it from the stage of pagan rituals to the altitude of Christianity. It is true that the filmmakers adapted the best known version, that of Niko Lordkipanidze, in which Zurab's sacrifice is voluntary; in other versions the immurement is decided by another person or is a matter of revenge. Parajanov had chosen the most ethically elevated version, the only one falling under the Christian paradigm and, ultimately, the only one capable of giving birth to a masterwork.

In most of the building legends – Mircea Eliade asserts – the subject of immolation is chosen by the craftsmen's team after a visionary dream or a premonition and is sacrificed either without its (his) willingness, by cheating or by force. The individual is therefore a victim and not a martyr; the human being, while not voluntarily participating in the sacrificial act, or even opposing it, is treated at its primary, animalic level and at the same level is the result. The building stands, but does not receive Divine benediction; not

being the fruit of devotion and love, it doesn't become a vessel for Grace. An offering that is not motivated by love does not penetrate into eternity. "And though I bestow all my goods, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Cor. 13, 3).

Mircea Eliade's explanation, irrespective of the cultural field to which it is applied (Christian Europe or totemic civilizations), is retrieved from the mechanisms of magic and animism: in order to last, the building has to "absorb" into itself a soul (M. Eliade, 1991, 416). But "soul theft" is a matter of... black magic. From this approach, restricted to "magic techniques" and rigid initiating rituals, the building rite looses all its original elevation, becoming a simple empty form, a tribute to Satanism.

Only the Divine Word builds for eternity, and all that is done in synergy with God. The Creation of the World is an act of God's self-offering, issuing from love. By consequence, the archetype of Creation (lying at the origin of all building myths) is based on God's self-conscious and voluntary self-sacrifice. Any good and lasting human creation is made "with the will of the Father, the aid of the Son and the accomplishment of the Holy Spirit" – as is written on the façades of our East-Christian churches. Christianity has substituted the ritual blood sacrifice with the spiritual sacrifice of the humble heart; the only accepted human sacrifice is martyrdom, the supreme measure of love and the confessing imitation of Christ. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15, 13).

The builder's sacrifice begins with his conscious co-operation with God, with the supplication of the Divine blessing. This is the divine-human restoration of the primary archetype of creation. From a Christian perspective, most of the legends based on founding myths have been suffered alterations of the original archetype, by the ritualistic-mechanical substitution of the offering. When the stonemason is asked for his own life for the lastingness of the building (which means his total spiritual devotion), he answers "by cheating," substituting the offering with that of another being, one not consciously involved in the construction work, therefore with a simple victim. Hence, he declines a part of his responsibility and spiritual authorship of the edifice, which will also become, from a spiritual point of view, a surrogate edifice.

In Eliade's vision the mechanism of founding rituals derives from the privileged post-mortem status, automatically conferred (as Eliade considers) by a violent death.

The heroes of Ancient Greece, for instance, are spending eternity in the sunny Elysian Fields, not in Hades, the kingdom of shadows and forgetfulness, like ordinary mortals. Eliade often reiterates the motif of violent death, however without mentioning the condition of the "victim's" mental participation in his sacrificial act. Nevertheless, a mechanically executed ritual is nothing more than a vain substitute for an authentic and self-conscious sacrifice; therefore it is a simple act of magic and not an act of faith. Its beneficiary is the Devil, not God.

Self-sacrifice in the name of God (or for a superior moral principle) is the only one that takes "the victim" out from bloodthirsty arbitrariness and places him together with the heroes and martyrs: having agreed to shed his blood for others, the hero overcomes death and therefore no longer dies.

On the contrary, a violent death of an unprepared man – as folk beliefs, Gothic literature and parapsychology handbooks maintain – conserves post-mortem the state of horror, shock and revolt in which death had caught the victim, which also imprints on the location of the accident or crime. Purifying rituals from all religions (Christian, non-Christian and pagan), carried out by priests or shamans on the "malefic sets" where violent deaths have occurred are determined by this very belief. This is why understanding the founding sacrifice only from a pagan perspective dramatically reduces its dimension and meaning.

The mystery of martyrdom

Only the martyr – an essential figure in all religions – who consciously assumes death or (bodily) suffering in the name of an elevated ideal can overcome the horror caused by violence.

By the trial of a violent death, accepted in God's name, the martyr "consumes his death" during his live time and therefore no longer has to die. While for most people (including Christians) death means sleep and forgetfulness (the popular expression "to fall asleep in the Lord" confirms it) and, in the best case, resting (in a place "without pain, sorrow and tears"6), in the case of the martyr, cognition, affect and volition7 stay active, even being streightened by the intimacy with God, expressed during his earthly ordeals.

Offering his flesh to the torture, overcoming pain and horror by patience and faith, he overwhelms the bounds of nature, gaining a body of glory. In truth, the martyr is no longer a slave, but a friend and bridegroom

of God. Like to one who has given everything for Him, Christ will fulfill all his prayers. A prototype of the founding hero, the saint-martyr has the power to protect the city, the people, the Church Militant8. He becomes invincible. Like Saint George, his prototype because of his virtues, the self-sacrificing hero is also The Victory-Bearer.

It is said that "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church"9, while martyrdom has always became an occasion of massive conversions and is an extraordinary catalyst of faith. It is eloquent (and apparently paradoxical) that the Church associates martyrs (many of them, virgin-like) with wedding and fertility.

In the tradition of ecclesiastical architecture, churches are always built on sites sanctified by the blood of heroes and martyrs or bear within their masonry parts of the bodies of these men. But never can the blood of some no account victims of chance, persuasion or cheating become the sustaining matter of the Holy Sacrifice.

Notes

1. Comentarii la Legenda Meşterului Manole // Mircea Eliade, Drumul spre centru, Editura Univers, Bucureşti, 1991; and chap. V - Meşterul Manole şi Mănăstirea Argeşului // Mircea Eliade, De La Zalmoxis la Genghiz-Han, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, Bucureşti, 1980.
2. Including Bogdan Petriceicu Haşdeu, V. Bogrea, Dumitru Caracostea, P. Caraman, Mircea Eliade, Nicolae Iorga, Ion Taloş, Sabina Ispas, and Adrian Harghel.
3. Ion Taloş, Sabina Ispas, Adrian Harghel, etc.
4. Screenplay: Vaja Gigashvili. Directors: Serge Parajanov, Dodo Abashidze. Gruzia-Film, USSR, 1984.
5. In its cinematic version.
6. As the Christian-Orthodox burial ceremonial states.
7. The three attributes of the psychic.
8. The Christian Church on earth, comprising the collective body of living Christians, which is engaged in the warfare against the forces of Evil and is thus distinguished from the Church Triumphant, in Heaven.
9. Tertullian.

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RUSTAVELI AND DANTE: TWO POETS AND THEIR PATH-BREAKING POEMS

It is a truism of great poets that they create bridges from the personal to the universal. Great poets also often transcend pre-shaped categories.

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) offers universal focus with a distinct sense of the personal by being both the author and the hero of his Divine Comedy. Beatrice, who guides Dante through the Paradiso and embodies his goal, was also an actual person, contemporary with the poet in his youth. The object of his young love, she died early—making her available for a role in a time and place beyond our everyday world. She became the love-object of Dante's early writing, articulating a chivalric, unrequited love felt by fideli d'amore like himself, serving the loved one in an idealized, distant manner that remains spiritual.

She whose death set Dante toward a life of writing poetry, in this poem sends Virgil to bring the hero on the journey that the poet describes. She awaits them at journey's end: seeking the return of the hero's soul to its divine source, like Homer's Penelope awaiting the return of Odysseus to Ithaca.

Virgil—Dante's poet hero and his guide for the first two thirds of the adventure—is a historical figure. He is the poet whose own hero, Aeneas visited the underworld in his adventure. Virgil is, like Beatrice, transposed out of ordinary time and space by Dante the poet to coincide with Dante the hero in a transcendent space and time.

Unlike Aeneas' journey to the underworld, in Dante's poem that journey is the entirety of the adventure. So Virgil and Aeneas are embraced but ultimately exceeded—as paganism was exceeded by Christianity, and as reason, for which Virgil is the symbol, is exceeded by faith, for which Beatrice is the symbol.

The personal context of the poem is also the story of Dante within the history of Florentine success and failure against her Italian city-state neighbors, the French, and the Papacy. It is the story of Guelph vs Ghibelline factions both beyond and within Florence; and the story of Blacks versus Whites within Florence's internal politics.

Within the cultural and political intensity of the late 13th century, Dante had served (in 1289) in the Florentine (Guelph) cavalry in the city's success against Ghibelline Arezzo and its allies in the Battle of Campaldino. That success led to Florentine Guelph in-fighting. While the White Guelphs, (including Dante), had the upper hand, he served his city, as a diplomat. But in 1300 Pope Boniface excommunicated the Whites, and when the Blacks took power, Dante was among those sent into an exile from which he would never return. Dante's father-in-law was a leader of the Blacks—and it seems that the poet's wife and their four children never joined him in exile.

The poem transcends categories. It is inspired by and is itself both epic and lyric poetry. Epic poetry has strife at its heart—from the Mahabharata to Virgil's Aeneid. War and conflict dominate, even as a range of other issues pertaining to human experience are centripetally drawn into it. Conversely, lyric poetry offers love as its ostensive subject.

Dante's poem is certainly about conflict. The Inferno revolves around strife, from the first Canto, in which the hero shrinks away from aggressively approaching wild beasts—a leopard, a lion and a she-wolf (symbolizing his enemies: Florence, France and the Papacy). Canto III reminds us that the infernal doorway is "the way into the City of Woe," at the entrance to which everyone "abandons all hope." We are shown all the intense punishments and sufferings meted out to hell's inhabitants as we burrow deeper into its rings.

He recounts much of his adventure in bitterness—toward any and all of those directly or indirectly responsible for his exile. Moreover, not only does the mountain of Purgatory constitute a vehement (if positive) struggle, even Paradise is part of a struggle, for the preservation the human soul.

But Dante's epic poem is also his lyric poem. Spiritual love undergirds the narrative from beginning to end, and every inch of the Paradiso is blanketed by it. Love causes the Virgin Mary to permit Beatrice, in her love for Dante, to send Virgil to help pull Dante up through the journey's first stages. The poem is focused toward the woman who abandoned him in death but "returns" to him in Paradise.

If Virgil is Dante's epic model, his lyric models are certain other Roman poets—Catullus, Propertius, Horace, and Tibullus. Thus the Divine Comedy focuses toward an idealized beloved. But due to spiritual rather than physical emphases, she remains idealized to the end, rather than becoming subject to the poet's

eventual disappointment and damnation, as inevitably happens with these Roman lyric poets.

The poem is also about lyric love and epic hate for the city that rejected him and with which he forever after has a love-hate relationship. But, as with the Roman poets, it is ultimately a song of himself—a song of self-love. Still, differently, it is also a universal song: of loving hope for humankind; its ultimate purpose is to lift us up toward the petals of the great mystical rose at the heart of Paradise.

Thus for Dante, epic and lyric, and strife and love, interweave within the poem, as politics and love met in his life, which together made the poem possible—he may not have written it were it not for both Beatrice and his exile. His words are a tribute to his loves (and hates) and a review of his life and of the lives of those around him, living and dead—and a universal allegory of love and life.

Dante sets his adventure phantasmagorically. The description in Canto 1, ls 38-9—"… as the sun was climbing Aries… to light the new creation…"—is based on a medieval tradition that the sun was moving through the zodiacal constellation of Aries at the time when God created the universe. This offers an allegorical backdrop to the pre-dawn Good Friday of the year 1300, when "midway on life's journey" (since, based on the biblical "norm" of "three score years plus ten" in that year the poet was 35 years old), he awakens at the edge of the wood.

Thus his new life begins with these elements in alignment with the Easter season—the season of resurrection—when the moon is full and the sun at the equinox. But these astronomical conditions did not fall together on any Friday of that year, much less on Good Friday. So his idealized Easter weekend falls outside ordinary time, just as the woods that prove to be the edge of deeper woods—that provide the entryway into the Inferno—is a place outside of everyday place.

Shota Rustaveli lived exactly a century before Dante (1166?-??). We know less about his life than we do about the life of Dante—he was court treasurer to Queen Tamar, (r. 1178/84-1210/13), the incomparable figure who presided over the most golden period within the Golden Age of medieval Georgia. While Rustaveli does not insert himself within his poem as Dante does himself, Queen Tamar—with whom the poet is said to have been desperately in love—is present, as Beatrice is for Dante.

But her presence is indirect. She was arguably the model for Nestan-Darejan—the beloved sought by the knight in the panther's skin, which search initially drives

the poem. One might argue that Rustaveli intends for himself to be understood as the model for Avtandil. But more complexly, Tariel—the knight in the panther's skin—is himself a stand-in for Queen Tamar, who is likened to a "merciless panther" in quatrain 19.

Rustaveli offers epic strife from the opening scene—in which Tariel casually slays the retainers in King Rostevan's retinue, provoking Avtandil to pursue him—through the final battle scene in which Nestan-Darejan is rescued by her captors. The poem is a complex epic within an epic with a number of digressive tales within the main double tale. The quest established at the outset is Avtandil's pursuit of Tariel. But once Avtandil finds Tariel, this quest turns out to have been a prelude to Avtandil's undertaking the search for Nestan-Derajan, as Tariel's surrogate—in which search Tariel had been engaged when he came upon King Rostevan's hunting party.

Indeed, the adventure is comprised of the love-driven adventures of no less than three heroes, each of whom possesses a true love. Love encompasses Avtandil and his fiancé Tinatin, (King Rostevan's daughter, who sends Avtandil in pursuit of the knight in the panther's skin); Tariel and Nestar-Derajan (to whose story we don't arrive until Avtandil's pursuit of Tariel achieves success); and Nuradin Pridon (whom Avtandil encounters while he is seeking Nestar-Darejan on behalf of Tariel, and who offers to help him out) and his Lady Love.

Rustaveli's poem is therefore a lyric poem, with love as its motivating force. The women-as-goals wait at home for the outcome (Tinatin) or are held captive, waiting to be rescued (Nestan-Darejan). But Tinatin does not merely wait passively, she emphatically sends Avtandil forth. And when Avtandil accomplishes his initial goal, Tariel, presumably the greatest warrior within the epic, waits at home (in his temporary cave-home) while Avtandil goes forth on his second, Tariel-initiated, quest.

Gender roles are thus interestingly mixed: there is a comfortable femaleness to the quintessential male figure (Tariel) that parallels the initial invocation of Queen Tamar in which she is associated with Tariel—appropriate to the queen who ruled as a king and led her troops into battle on several occasions. Women and romantic love are treated not as a sideline for the Great Adventure, but as central to and on an equal footing with it, and on an equal footing with collegial love.

For there is, besides romantic love, the collegial love of loyal friend to friend, not only among the trio of heroes, but between Nestar-Darejan and her handmaid, Asmat—and between Tariel and Asmat. There is a singular chasteness to the descriptions of all of the love relationships, even as they are charged with passion: the spiritual—but without the specific theocentric spirituality found in Dante's poem—and the material merge.

As in Dante—but differently—politics and love may be said to meet the poet's self in a time and place setting that is both recognizable and yet entirely carved out of the poet's imagination. The Georgian royal court of which Rustaveli was part (analogous to yet different from the Florentine priory of which Dante was a member by 1295) had its enemies, as Florence did (and within Florence, Dante's political party). Tamar's victories that coincide with the time of Rustaveli's role as court treasurer and author of the poem were against the Seljuks at Shamkhor (in 1195) and at Basiani (in 1205)—and possibly (assuming that she and he were both still alive and active then), against the Khwarezmian Persians in 1210-11.

The entirety of the narrative is set in the other-world reality of Arabia, Persia and India—as exotically other to Rustaveli's audience as Hell, Purgatory and Paradise are to Dante's. For the Muslim world would have been beyond both the audience's and the poet's actual familiarity. Conversely, whereas Dante damns those who hurt him to eternal punishments in his Inferno, Rustaveli's characters, all of them from heartlands of the culture that had been at war with Georgia for 200 years, are treated with sympathy. His poem is no verbal revenge against his enemies.

Dante's poem bridges eras, not just genres. It reflects medieval thought, with its emphasis on cosmic Christological numerology; the very structure of the poem is an exercise in this. Each exposition of the three realms is subdivided into thirty-three cantos—33 = 3 x 11; 11 is (3 [Trinity] x 3) + 2, which latter number symbolizes Christ's dual (human and divine) nature—with an additional introductory canto at the outset of the Inferno. Thus the totality offers 100 cantos—the ultimate spiritually significant number in medieval thinking. For 3 x 3 plus the affirming, unifying "1" equals 10, a perfect number—the only number more perfect than which is ten times ten: 100. Moreover, each canto is comprised of three-line rhyming triplets: the terza rima form that Dante elevates within Italian poetry.

Each of the three realms is similarly divided according to symbolically significant numerology, dominated by nines (3x3) and sevens (the number of perfection and completion in a tradition that may be traced back thousands of years before Dante). At the center of this com-

plex weave is God. The adventure is one in which reason is ultimately trumped by faith and by grace. The culminating image of the White Rose is an articulation of the process of mystical transcendence—of the search for the innermost, hiddenmost center of God—where ecstasy and enstasy (being outside oneself and within the innermost recesses of one's soul) are one.

But Dante's poem is also a product of emerging renaissance thought, offering a reality in which our actions receive their reactions in the afterlife. Good works are essential to the human role in shaping the world—and one's position in the afterworld. Deeds are the key to grace and thus to paradise. From a medieval emphasis on a metaphysical superstructure that adjudicates good and evil we are lifted toward a modernist emphasis on human freedom and moral responsibility.

The structure of the poem offers the organic and arithmetic relationships of a medieval cathedral, and the words that are the cathedral stones—the language itself—offer the elevation of Italian from its position as late-Latin street dialect to that of fine-tuned literary instrument. Moreover, that fine tuning articulates a subtle series of shifts in metrical and tonal qualities; the words and their syntax carry from heavier to lighter sounds, as we move from Inferno to Purgatorio to Paradiso. The Divine Comedy is quintessentially Italian in its mood—simultaneously heavenward and earthbound. (One thinks of Italian Gothic cathedrals, which rather than offering attenuated verticality like their French and Spanish and English counterparts, offer a solid horizontality).

Rustaveli, like Dante, is a language specialist. He revels in hyperbolic similes. The meter and rhyme scheme that he employs are new to Georgian poetry—so he is reshaping his language instrument to his purposes—but more complex, with a four-rhyme scheme of double, triple and quadrisyllabic endings, than Dante's bi-syllabic terza rima schema.

The Knight in the Panther's Skin is medievalist. God is at its center, invoked at the outset for help against Satan. It reflects the world of Queen Tamar's court and the interest in Muslim culture that one would expect in a country on the cutting edge of Christian-Muslim relations in the era of the Crusades.

But everything about its sensibilities transcends expectations for a mind shaped in that age and under those conditions. Beyond the initial invocation, there is very little reference to God, and on the other hand there are references to pagan gods, to the seven planetary deities (especially in quatrains 946-52) who are a

reference point back through the Romans and Greeks to ancient Egypt and Sumer; to good and bad beings, kajis and devis—and to magic.

One finds here, then, a Neo-Platonic sensibility—an interest in synthesizing Christian and pagan thought that suggests influence from the great 11th-12th-century Georgian Neo-Platonist, Ioane Petritsi (which sensibility will be expressed in the Florentine Accademia 150 years after Dante). The poet even mentions Plato specifically in quatrain 780.

Good and evil are not associated with the prescriptions of a metaphysical superstructure but with human action—free-willed but governed by the responsibility that comes with freedom. And above all, in spite of the historical era out of which the poem grows, far from being presented as enemies of Christendom—the poet could easily have turned his heroes into Sir Lancelot Christians and the bad guys whom they defeat into Muslims—Muslims are presented as glorious and heroic.

Rustaveli's poem is as quintessentially Georgian as The Divine Comedy is quintessentially Italian. Its sensibilities echo those found in the topography of Old Tbilisi, where within a few blocks of each other reside a Georgian church, an Armenian church, a synagogue and a mosque—for when Queen Tamar and (earlier) David the Builder defeated the Muslims, Islam was not driven out or persecuted.

The ultimate goal in both poems is to bring back the elixir of immortality—to use Joseph Campbell's phrase in Hero With a Thousand Faces. That elixir assumes various guises in heroic literature. Gilgamesh seeks the flower that will save Enkidu's life; Odysseus seeks the answer to the question of who he is and the meaning of his name.

For Dante, the elixir is Beatrice and the secret of spiritual immortality, and for Rustaveli it is Tamar—who is both Tariel and Nestan-Darejan—and the union of three different virtuous heroes with their lady-loves. Both poets straddle personal and universal concerns, epic and lyric poetry, medieval and modern sensibilities. Their works symbolize the bridge-building of which this Symposium is symptomatic.

Notes

1. The fideli d'amore saw themselves as serving love itself; the beloved offered a means toward that end.
2. The Guelphs and the Ghibellines were political factions that ultimately supported the Pope and the Holy Roman

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Emperor respectively during the late 11th through early 14th centuries. Florence was Guelph when it faced off against Ghibelline Siena, in the battle of Montaperti in 1260. By Dante's time, within a given city there were often such factions. In 1300 Florence was divided between Black Guelphs and White Guelphs; the Blacks supported the Pope and the Whites opposed papal influence—or at least that of Pope Boniface VIII.

3. Queen Tamar's father, Giorgi III, made her his co-ruler in 1178; when he died six years later she became sole ruler. She is usually said to have died in 1213, but some Georgian historiographers claim that she died in 1210 or even 1207. See the discussion of the Giorgi IV Lashi coin in my article on medieval Georgian iconography elsewhere in this volume.

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BERNARDO DA NAPOLI'S ACTIVITIES IN GEORGIA

In European-Georgian relations one of the major role had been played by Missionary, that was manifested in activities of diplomatic relations with European countries. The Catholic Church's missionary activity in the East originates from the Crusade and still in progress until the 19th century. This time, our interest goes to the second half of the 17th century, when Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667) On the 13th June in 1661 issued a decree in Georgia, eight-member Capuchin (lat. Capucino (Capuchin), ital. Cappuccino) monks. the person to whose personality we are interested in was representative of the order of Capuchin- Bernardo Maria da Napoli (1629-1707); His secular name was Antonio Cioffi. On his way back to Italy, he took from Georgia a lot of Georgian manuscript, which he collected in libraries, the material which he rewrote and compiled during his journey.

At the end of 19th century the manuscripts taken by Bernardo Maria da Napoli were found by Hugo Schuchardt, an Austrian researcher of Georgian culture and Georgian historians Aleksandre Tsagareli and Michel Tamarati. These manuscripts were stored in Torre del Greco settlement, located in the Naples region, not far from Vesuvius.

We know little about Bernardo Maria da Napoli's life. He was born in Italy in 1629; in 1653 he began missionary activities. For this mission he arrived in Georgia twice: the first time - 1661 years and the same year he returned back, and the second time in 1670 and 1679. When he came back to Italy, he studied philosophy and theology; until 1686 worked as a minister of the province, on February 2, 1707, at the age of 78 he died. Our scientific concerns are related to Bernardo's activities in Georgia. On 13th May in 1661 Pope Alexander VII selected eight men of the Capuchin order for the mission to Georgia that he authorized by decree a month later, on 13 June. Bernardo was a member of this group. We should note that the Capuchins were a Roman Catholic monastic order established by a Franciscan named Matte de Bascio (Ital. Matteo da Bascio). "Capuchin" derives from the word capuche (hood); monks of this

1. Fragment "Life of Kartli", Bernardo da Napolis rewritten in 17 th part II. The National Center of Manuscripts. Georgia.

order wore hooded robes, and the order was named the Capuchins. The Italian coffee – the cappuccino – derives its name from the same source.

The Capuchin order was strictly organized. They worked with special diligence and care. They rendered significant help to needy people and preached the catechism to them. Capuchins greatly influenced commoners by their personal poverty and strict way of life. As noted above, in 1661 the first Capuchin mission arrived in Georgia after passing through Constantinople which was the capital of Osmalia at that time, because of the threat of capture Christian, in the Muslim capital the missionaries divided into two groups: the first - three planned to reach Kartli by passing through Persia; the second - five man planned to visit Samegrelo (Region of the West Georgia) and then to Kartli (Region of the East Georgia). Bernardo da Napoli was a member of the five-man group. Before reaching to Georgia the group lost a monk named Father Cipriane Kvali, who died in Smyrna. The now-

reduced group that arrived in Samegrelo turned out to be unlucky. They planed to go to Kartli but the leader of the first Capuchin's mission, Father Bonaventura Sorrento, fell into a river with the horse he was riding – and died. After that the ship that brought Father Bernardo da Napoli to Georgia with the same ship he arrived to Constantinople. Other two Capuchins remained in Samegrelo with the Theatine . (Catholic missionaries which lived in Samegrelo).

In 1670 Father Bernardo returned to Georgia. Commenting on his arrival, M. Tamarashvili remarked: "Propaganda, on 7 July 1670 wrote... to Padre Serafino (the Capuchin who was resident at that time in Tbilisi-G.K.) That, two young Georgian sent to Propaganda's college for studying. Their passage money 50 scude had the Capuchins who were going to Georgia from Rome. Among this was perfect Father Bernardo da Napoli."

With regard to Bernardo da Napoli's good knowledge of the Georgian language, N. K. Orlovskaya states that he studied Georgian when he lived in Italy because yet in 1629 a Georgian-Italian dictionary and alphabet was published in Italy, printed with a Georgian standard font created by Niciphores Irbachi. In 1643 Francesco Maria Maggo published a Georgian
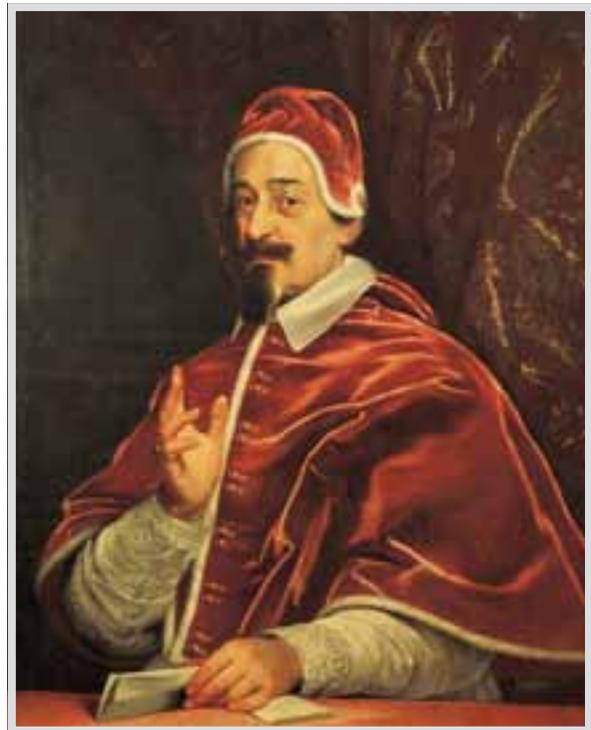
2. Pope Alexander VII

3. Hugo Schuchardt

language grammar. When Bernardo arrived to Georgia he very soon managed to complete some translations.

The main goals of the Capuchin order's mission in Georgia were: knowing Georgian people and Spreading Catholicism. The Capuchin missionaries had positive relationships with Georgian Orthodox Church despite their confessional differences. As to relationships between Georgian royal authorities and the Georgians, the Capuchins did their best to establish good relationships with both groups according to their aims frame. They saved many people from death caused by diseases that were widespread all over the world in those times. Owing to the missionaries' teaching activities, Georgian society became better educated.

Bernardo da Napoli contributed greatly to the establishment of the Capuchin order in Georgia; as it known for as he was the first member of Capuchin and after despite the fiasco of the first mission he came back to Georgia and resumed his educational efforts. He studied Georgian language thoroughly, as is testified by his dictionaries and manuscripts. As to the historical importance of Bernardo da Napoli's activities, in addition to providing us with data about Georgian society of 17th century, descriptions of the Georgian people, and language studies, we may consider him Kartvelologi (researcher of Georgian People and Language). He saved many manuscripts for us. We hope that Georgian manuscripts made by Bernando in Italy, which are not yet studded, will be able for Georgian scientists to learn them thoroughly.

Bernardo da Napoli's Georgian Manuscripts

1. Georgian fairytale book consisting of 12 fairytales.
2. Georgian-Italian dictionary (626 pages).
3. Italian-Georgian dictionary (360 pages).
4. Letters written to Bernardo da Napoli by Georgians and other people (including Popes Clement (1670-76 and Innocent X (1676-89)).
5. Bernardo da Napoli's rewritten "Life of Kartli" (Jamtaagmtsereli ("Timeportrayer"-anonymous-G.K.) author "Chronicle of a Hundred Years" for the period 1235-1303).
6. Georgian version of "Shahname" (Shāhnāmeh) by Firdowsi, the abstracts from "Rustamian".
7. Spiritual book: in trained God's will.
8. Small spiritual book of purpose translated into Georgian by Bernardo da Napoli.
9. Spiritual book "Philothea".

4. Michel Tamarashvili (Tamarati)

5. Aleksandre Tsagareli

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12. A Catechism translated into Georgian by Bernardo da Napoli (printed in 1671).
13. Religious discussion on Catholic belief written into Georgian by Bernardo da Napoli.

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6. Capuchin

ANCIENT HISTORY
&
ARCHAEOLOGY

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AIMS AND FIRST RESULTS OF THE GEORGIAN-ITALIAN *SHIDA KARTLI* ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

The Georgian-Italian Shida Kartli Archaeological project is a new endeavour of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice in collaboration with the Georgian National Museum, the aim of which is to investigate the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age cultures of Georgia and their connections with the contemporary cultures of the Ancient Near East, in particular with those of Upper Mesopotamia and Eastern Anatolia.

The 4th and 3rd millennia B.C. represent a period of deep cultural transformation in the Transcaucasian region, when the communities of this metal-rich area were progressively involved into a complex network of relations with the regions of the Near East located to the South, where the first urban civilizations were developing since the first half of the 4th millennium. The exact dynamics and timing[2] of this process are still uncertain; it is however clear that it involved different phases, characterized by different, and at times contrasting features, which can be provisionally summarized as stated below.

(1) During the first half and around the mid-4th millennium there appeared, at different sites of the Transcaucasian region – e.g., at Berikldeebi in Georgia (Z. Makharadze, 2007), at Leilatepe, Boyuk Kesik, Soyuk Bulaq in Azerbaijan (T. Akhundov, 2007; see also B. Lyonnet et al., 2008) – a distinctive ceramic assemblage, characterized by heavy vegetal tempering, which shows evident north-Mesopotamian affinities,[3] accompanied, at Berikldeebi for instance (A. Javakhishvili, 1998), by architectural elements of probable Mesopotamian origin. This suggests that the region was invested by a penetration of southern influences, the interpretation of which is however still debated (for different opinions, see T. Akhundov, 2007; C. Marro, 2005, 2007; B. Lyonnet, 2006).

(2) During the 2nd half of the 4th millennium a new cultural complex, the Kura-Araxes, developed in Transcaucasia and in the neighboring regions of Eastern Anatolia (T. Kiguradze, A. Sagona, 2003; G. Palumbi, 2003), approximately at the same time as Upper Mesopotamia was invested by the so-called "Uruk colonization" of south-Mesopotamian origin. The Turkish Upper Euphrates area, as represented by the site of Arslantepe/Malatya, period VII, VIA-B1 (M. Frangipane, G. Palumbi, 2007), was witness to the interaction of these two different cultures, which is probably to be connected to the circulation of metal ores and metal objects.

(3) Between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C., contemporary with the collapse of the Uruk culture and with the development in Upper Mesopotamia of regional cultures characterized by distinctive pottery assemblages – Ninevite 5, Reserved Slip ware – (E. Rova, H. Weiss, 2003; E. Rova, 1996, 19-22), the Kura-Araxes cultural complex showed a remarkable expansion in southern direction, both toward the East, in western Iran, and toward the West, in western Syria and Palestine, as shown by the distribution not only of the distinctive red-black burnished pottery, but also of other equally distinctive categories of objects with clear Transcaucasian affinities (fixed and mobile hearths and andirons, metal pins, weapons, crucibles and molds for casting metal objects, etc.).[4]

(4) Finally, around the end of the 2nd quarter of the 3rd millennium, while Upper Mesopotamia and Syria witnessed a new wave of urbanization (the so-called "2nd urban revolution") and fully developed city states appeared everywhere in the region, from Ebla in western Syria to Nineveh and Ashur in Northern Iraq, Transcaucasian elements disappear from the area while, in the territory of Transcaucasia, the Kura-Araxes culture is superseded by the so-called Early Kurgan (Martkopi, Bedeni) cultures (O. Japaridze, 1995; C. Edens, 1995). These are especially characterized by monumental barrow graves (kurgans), the burial goods of which show a considerable accumulation of wealth. Though barrow graves in themselves were not a typical Near Eastern feature, it is certainly not casual that similar forms of wealth accumulation in burial contexts appeared, approximately at the same time, in several regions of the Near East – the "Royal Cemetery of Ur" (C.L. Woolley, 1934) being only the most sensational example – in the framework of a renewed net of interregional exchanges where the

trade in metals undoubtedly played a significant role. This suggests that the Transcaucasian region was also involved in this general phenomenon, and that this set into motion a trend in the area toward social stratification and more complex forms of socio-political organization.

None of this is new knowledge; all of it is well known to the specialists of both Near Eastern and Transcaucasian archaeology. However, only in the last decades has a strong interest arisen to analyze these development in a specifically comparative perspective. In spite of this recent

Map of Georgia with approximate location of the research area and of the Khashuri Natsargora site (modified from A. Sagona, M. Abramishvili, 2008).

scholarly interest, available data are still insufficient for a comprehensive interpretation of the historical phenomena involved, and numerous uncertainties remain.

Especially controversial points concern the relative and absolute chronology of the period (14C data are few and not always reliable); the relations between the local Late Chalcolithic/Eneolithic cultures and the Late Chalcolithic/Uruk cultures of Mesopotamia; the origin, diffusion and regional/local variants of the Kura-Araxes culture; and the relation of the latter with the following Early Kurgan cultures, as well as the relation between the Martkopi/Early Trialeti and Bedeni cultures.

The general aim of our project is to clarify some of these issues by means of new investigations by Georgian and Italians scholars and students made in the very center of Transcaucasia, with collaborative work in each step from the preparatory stage to the publication of results. We thus hope to be able to overcome one of the main difficulties of this research

field; namely, the problems in communication between specialists of the different areas due to different scholarly traditions and languages of publication.

More specifically, our research will focus on the Shida (Inner) Kartli region of Georgia (Fig. 1), which for several reasons appears to be an especially promising area. First of all, its central position within Georgia makes it an area of contacts between Western and Eastern Georgia and between the Caucasus to the North and the regions located to the South of Georgia. Secondly, the presence of the Mtkvari (Kura) river plain allows the existence in the region of permanent settlements of relatively large size, which could play the role of "central places" in the ancient settlement pattern. Thirdly, there is a large number of already excavated archaeological sites of these periods in the region, which can provide important comparative study material.

From the chronological point of view, in the first stage of the project special attention will be paid to the transition between the Kura-Araxes and the Early Kurgan cultures, a transition which is still far from clear both in its chronology and in its general historical meaning.[5]

The first field season took place from 26 August to 2 October 2009.[6] The first aim of the 2009 season was the study of the material from the EBA settlement and cemetery of the site of Natsargora in the Khashuri district. The site, which is located near the present village of this name (Fig. 2) had been excavated in 1984-1992 by the late Alexander Ramishvili of the Khashuri Archaeological Expedition, but its EBA levels and graves have been the subject of only very preliminary reports by the excavator (A. Ramishvili, 1991, 1995). The importance of this material lies in the fact that Natsargora is one of the few sites in the region (together with Tsikhiagora, published by Zurab Makharadze (Z. Makharadze, 1994, 2008, 64-67), and Berikldeebi, in course of publication by Mindia Jalabadze) where not only Bedeni ceramics have been discovered in a settlement context,[7] but also where a certain degree of continuity is supposed to have existed between the Kura-Araxes and the Bedeni horizons.

The site is a 20-25 m-high oval-shaped mound (Fig. 3), oriented in NW-SE direction, which measures ca 90 x 50 m. According to the information derived from drill-cores taken by our geologist at the site,

it was originally a low natural hill, the isolation of which from the surrounding plain had been artificially augmented, and the height of which increased in the course of time (from the EBA to the LBA) through the accumulation of anthropic debris.

The cemetery was located in the flat area to the South-East of the mound. It was in use, with interruptions, from the Early Bronze until the Classical period. Out of ca 500 excavated graves (A. Ramishvili, 1991, 1995), 26 were EBA in date. Our work consisted first of all in reconstructing their location within the cemetery, and in translating into English and digitalizing the original excavation documentation. All burial goods were measured, restored and described anew; digital photos and, when necessary, new drawings were made of them. All relevant data were inserted into a database, which will represent the basis for the final publication (M. Puturidze, E. Rova, in prep.), which we hope to be able to complete in the near future.

All the EBA graves belong to the Kura-Araxes culture (more specifically to its Shida Kartli variant), and can be tentatively dated to a relatively advanced stage of the culture. Most of the graves were simple pits of rectangular shape, oriented in a N-S direction, occasionally lined with stones or covered by a group of stones. A grave almost always contained only a single corpse in contracted position, with the head to the South (Fig. 4). One grave (no. 240) contained the remains of an adult and a child. The only other significant exception was grave no. 355, a multiple

Satellite image of Natsargora village, with location of the ancient settlement and cemetery (from Google Earth).

grave covered by a large circle of stones with a stone chamber inside, which contained the remains of seven different individuals.

Burial goods were rather modest on the whole (see Fig. 4). They mostly consisted of pottery vessels (generally from 1 to 3 in number, all of them of very well-known Kura-Araxes types) occasionally associated with a few copper objects (pins, bracelets and hair-rings) and a few carnelian or paste beads. Grave no. 355, the multiple grave, contained 6 pottery vessels, 4 flint arrow-heads, a copper bracelet and the remains of a toggle pin. Both burial customs and burial goods find numerous parallels in Kura-Araxes graves of different areas (see A. Sagona, 2004, 480), but especially of the Shida Kartli region, as represented, among others, by examples from Takhtidziri (M. Jalabadze, G. Palumbi, 2008), Aradetis Orgora (I. Koridze, G. Palumbi, 2008), and Kvatskelebi (L. Glonti, M. Ketskhoveli, G. Palumbi, 2008). All this confirms the strong homogeneity, in this field at least, of the Kura-Araxes culture over its distribution area, as well as its nature of a weakly stratified society.

As for the settlement, we completed the translation and digitalization of the original excavation documentation (plans, photos, drawings, etc.), finished the re-study of the artifacts (pottery and small finds) from the 1984 campaign, and organized the study of palaeobotanical and archaeozoological materials from the site, which is at present underway. We also began working on the 1985 season artifacts, the re-study of which we plan to complete next year, together with that of the 1986 campaign finds.

Since this work is still in progress, we will not describe its results in detail here. Suffice it to say that, in spite of a rather poor preservation of the archaeological layers, it is clear that the investigator is dealing with a sequence of domestic occupation layers with remains of wattle-and daub-architecture (post-holes), floors with in situ fixed and mobile hearths and other installations, and pits. As for ceramics, the most interesting feature is the co-existence – in all levels with the exception of the deepest one, according to the final description by the excavator (A. Ramishvili, n.d.) – of Kura-Araxes and Bedeni pottery (Fig. 5). The former is generally undecorated. At first sight at least, it does not differ significantly in its repertory from the pottery discovered in the Kura-Araxes graves at the site, except for the presence of shapes (e.g., lids), which are not represented there. Bedeni
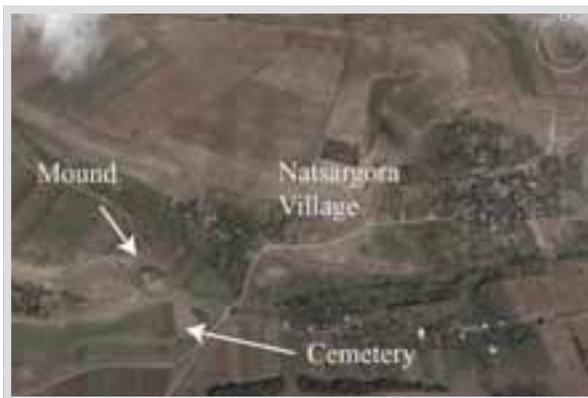
View of the Natsargora mound from S-E (photo E. Rova 2008).
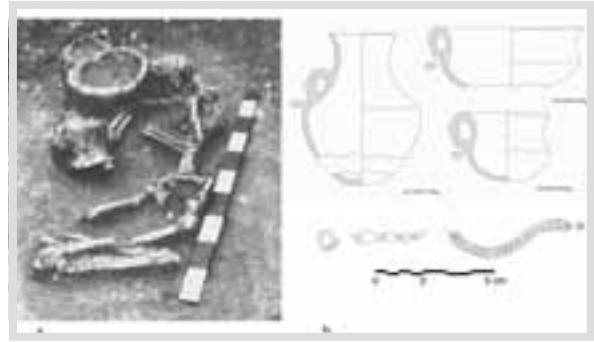
Natsargora cemetery, grave no. 244: view of the burial during excavation, from N, and burial goods.

pottery is represented both by fine and by coarser wares. The former, in particular, are generally of a remarkably high quality: vessels are often provided with elaborate handles[8] and decorated with incised, grooved or relief decoration (knobs, cannelures); their surface is carefully burnished/polished.[9] We hope that a complete re-evaluation of the different contexts of discovery will allow us to better clarify the stratigraphical relation between these two pottery groups.

After a preliminary binocular-microscope-assisted classification of the main fabric types (both Kura-Araxes and Bedeni) attested at the site of Natsargora, we selected ca 50 sherds for archaeometric analyses to be carried out in Italy. For comparative purposes, ceramics samples were also collected from the contemporary sites of Tsikhiagora in the Kaspi district (21 sherds) and Berikldeebi in the Kareli district (15 sherds).

The most significant find from the Natsargora settlement is a cultic terracotta relief depicting an anthropomorphic image with large obsidian-inlayed eyes (illustrated in G. Mirtskhulava, 2005, pl. III, 1), different fragments of which were found, out of context, in various parts of the site. In spite of the presence of parallels for some of its features at other Kura-Araxes and Early Kurgan period sites of Georgia,[10] the Natsargora relief is by many respects unique.

In addition to the work on the Natsargora material, we devoted one week of the 2009 season to a preliminary survey of the Kaspi, Gori, Kareli and Khashuri districts, as a first step of a project aimed at reconstructing the ancient landscape and settlement distribution in Shida Kartli province

during the 4th and 3rd millennia B.C. Some 30 known Early Bronze Age sites were visited and their exact positions were mapped with the aid of a GPS instrument in order to insert the relevant data in the G.I.S. database under preparation at Ca' Foscari University. We also mapped the position of a number of archaeological sites of different periods, with the purpose of testing the reliability of the preliminary study of satellite images carried out in Italy during last year. At selected locations, Dott. Bertoldi undertook a preliminary geological and geomorphological study through the analysis of selected exposed sections and took drill core samples for checking the sites' stratigraphy and for soil analysis and/or radiocarbon dating.

Further work is in progress. One element, based on the study of satellite images, aerophotos and on autoptic observation, concerns the reconstruction of the region's ancient hydrographical system. A second element, based on ASTER satellite images, is a study of the sites' locations as a function of the terrain topography relief. Preliminary observations suggest that sites were generally located on high fluvial terraces or low natural hills in the flat alluvial plain formed by the braided River Mtkvari (Kura) and its tributaries, with the exception of the Khashuri district, where the majority of them was situated in the neighboring hilly zone.

The next field season, which is foreseen for September 2010, will be devoted to the completion of the study of the Natsargora material and to the continuation of the survey activities. In addition, we plan to carry out stratigraphical soundings at one or two selected sites, in order to collect additional
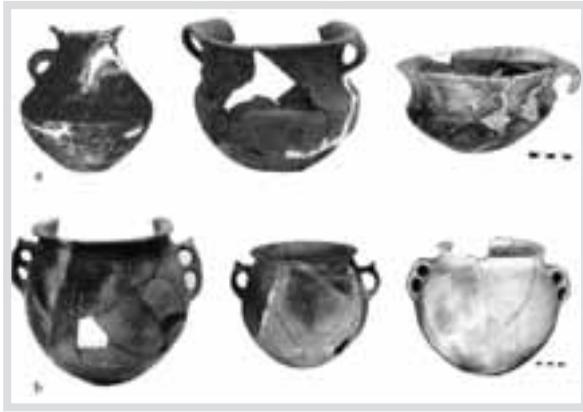
Kura-Araxes (a) and Bedeni (b) pottery from the Natsargora settlement.

material for a comparative stratigraphy of the Shida Kartli region.

Notes:

1. Acknowledgments. The author wishes to express her gratitude to Prof. David Lordkipanidze, General Director of the Georgian National Museum, who granted us permission to publish the Natsargora material and to undertake the survey of the Shida Kartli province, and to the Italian Ambassador, H.E. Dr. Vittorio Sandalli, for his support to our expedition. Special thanks are due to Mr. David Makhatadze (International Expedition Logistic Manager of the GNM) who greatly helped us during our stay in Georgia. The 2009 field season was funded by Ca' Foscari University.

2. For an updated chronological scheme, the reader is referred to B. Lyonnet, 2007, 13, Table 1.

3. See especially C. Marro, 2005, 2007. On the North-Mesopotamian Late Chalcolithic ceramic assemblages and their relative date, see E. Rova, 1999-2000; more in general on the Late Chalcolithic period in the Near East, M. Rothman, 2001.

4. The literature on the Near Eastern expansion of the "Early Transcaucasian Culture" is too large to be mentioned here. For a recent synthesis, the reader is referred to S. Batiuk, 2005.

5. For a synthesis of the problems involved, see C. Edens, 2005; A. Sagona, 2004.

6. The team from Ca' Foscari University was directed by the author and was composed of: Dott. Luca Bertoldi (Padua University), geologist, and three Ca' Foscari students (Eleonora Carminati, Giulia De Nobili, and Mirko Furlanetto). The Georgian team consisted of: Prof. Marina Puturidze (Tbilisi State University), co-director, Dr. Zurab Makharadze (representative of the Georgian National Museum), and five students of Tbilisi State University (Nikoloz Chaduneli, Nikoloz Gobejishvili, Giorgi Khaburzania, Nino Kobalia, Tamar Meladze, and Joseb Papuashvili). The expedition was based at the dig-house at Kavtiskhevi in the Kaspi district kindly provided by the Georgian National Museum.

7. Outside of the Shida Kartli province, Bedeni ceramics in a settlement context are also known from Zhinvali in the Aragvi gorge (G. Gogochuri, 2008), and from Badaani in the Tianeti highland district of northern Georgia (G. Mirtskhulava, 2008).

8. Close parallels can be mentioned, for instance, from Berikldeebi (A. Miron, W. Orthmann, 1995, 225, n. 54; Sagona 2004, fig. 27, 2) and Modinache (G. Lomtadze, 2000, fig. 1).

9. Interestingly enough, the surface of these vessels can be black (as is most often the case at other Bedeni sites), but in numerous cases it is light (i.e. grey to pinkish) in color.

10. For the obsidian-inlaid eyes, see, for instance, an anthropomorphic andiron from Zveli in Javakheti province, Southern Georgia (Ph. L. Kohl, 2007, fig. 3.20); for the stylization of the eyes, a clay, prism-shaped "sculpture" from Akhali Zhinvali (G. Gogochuri, 2008, 37-38, figs. 11-12; cf. also G. Mirtskhulava, 2005, pl. III, 2).

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CULTURAL RELATIONS IN CENTRAL TRANSCAUCASIA

Cultural Relations in Central Transcaucasia

The Grakliani Hill settlement and necropolis are located in Central Transcaucasia, in Georgia (pl. 1), in the territory of Igoeti village, on a hill that rises between two small rivers and the Lekhura and the Tortla. In 2008 road works began and the excavations that took place on the southern slope resulted in interesting discoveries. The lower level of the hill is located at 680 meters above sea level; though the unexcavated upper terraces and hill surface – rather open ground – are at the 720- to 723-meter level (pl.I). This article is a preliminary report on the archaeological excavations.

The excavations of the settlement on the hill's eastern slope and the necropolis on the southwestern part of the hill suggest that the site had been occupied between the Chalcolithic Age and the Late Hellenistic Period.

Analyses of imported (or imitated import) artifacts, and the directions of cultural and commercial relations.

Mesopotamia

The Mesopotamian seals discovered at the Grakliani Hill site are unique for this region. In a pot, used in a sacrifice in the monumental sanctuary(pl.II), a cylinder seal was found: 5.2 cm in height; lower diameter 2.8.cm, and upper surface diameter 1.6 cm. The seal's iconography is identical to that of cylinder seals from the first stage of glyptic art – the so-called Uruk and Jemdet-Nasr stage, developed during the transition from the 4th to the 3rd millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia, from where it spread throughout Asia. Mesopotamian seals of this period have been discovered in Southern Mesopotamia, the Dyala region of Syria, and in different regions of Persia and Anatolia. It should be noted that Uruk stamp seals usually were discovered during excavations on the territory of temples.

Stamp seals (pl.III) are thought to have been used as sacrifices to the temple, as items of worship rather than as stamp seals. The iconography of the Grakliani Hill stamp seal corresponds totally with ornamented samples of the first stage of glyptic art (3000-2800 B.C). The stamp seal's shape (cylinder, with conic sign – slightly narrowing upwards) and the material (fired clay) presuppose an earlier date (possibly Middle Uruk period). The fourth group of Mesopotamian seals includes stamp seals with ornaments. Icons on the seal discovered on Grakliani Hill are close to the "chevron" group. Images on the Grakliani Hill limestone cone-shaped seal represent mythological motifs of ancient Mesopotamia. They depict the "House of God" – the Temple – which, according to
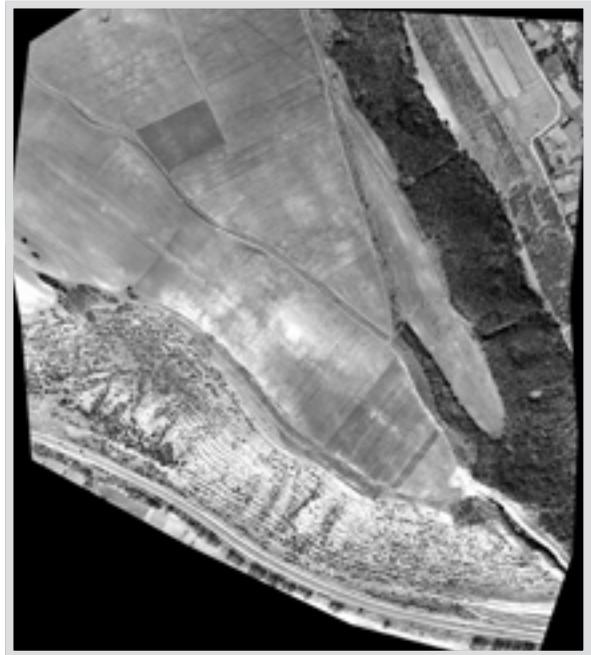
Grakliani Hill: aerial photo

Mesopotamian mythology, was irradiated, and its icons depicted rays. The temple representation on the Grakliani Hill seal contains two items, presumably fish, or two vases of different sizes related to ancient gods of water. Similarly, they could be images of a bird or other living being, which were prevalent motifs on conical or cylinder seals.

The Grakliani Hill conical seal is a typical example of a prehistoric Mesopotamian conical seal of the 4th millennium B.C. This identification is supported by the form, material and images on the seal. It is noteworthy that a large number of seals with different decorations dated to Late Bronze–Early Iron Age have been discovered on the territory of the settlement.

The Colchian Area

(a) Chronologically, the next stage of relations between Central Transcaucasus and adjacent areas was the 8th to 7th centuries B.C. A terracotta figurine of a horse's head has clear parallels in Western Georgia. Colchian collective graves contain large numbers of deceased; in fact the recently excavated grave near Tsaishi village contained 1000 individuals. In one such grave a bronze statuette of a mounted woman was found. Such representations are common in the Colchian and Aegean worlds, but in Colchis were always accompanied by bronze statues of different animals, mostly bulls, as well as a rather large number of gold items. A statue of a mounted woman, found on the island Samos, is considered to be a possible Colchian production. But in the East, beyond the borders of Colchis, in the Caucasian-Anatolian region, no statues of Colchian mounted women have been found; We might consider that the appearance of this figure on the island Samos is the result of some relation with Colchis — even though contact might have taken place only once.

However, in the case of the Grakliani Hill seal, what should be explained is the thematic identity with the same kind of statues discovered in mainland Greece. But it is absolutely obvious that the figures of the mounted women were produced in different regional workshops. In this respect I have to mention the painted terracotta figurine of mounted woman in Heraklion Museum (1450-1100 BC; Hall X), which seems to be earliest among such type of representation. I think that the Grakliani Hill terracotta figurine of a mounted woman is the only such terracotta replica of a Colchian i mounted woman n Transcaucasia.

(b) More intensive relations of Central Transcaucasus with Colchis are obvious in the Classical and early Hellenistic periods. I will give only a few examples from the Grakliani Hill excavations, first of all, silver pendants. Such material is typical on Colchian grave goods of the 5th to the 3rd centuries B.C. As usual, in Colchis they are made of gold. Most typical among Colchian jewelry of 5th-4th cc BC are temple- pendants with rays.
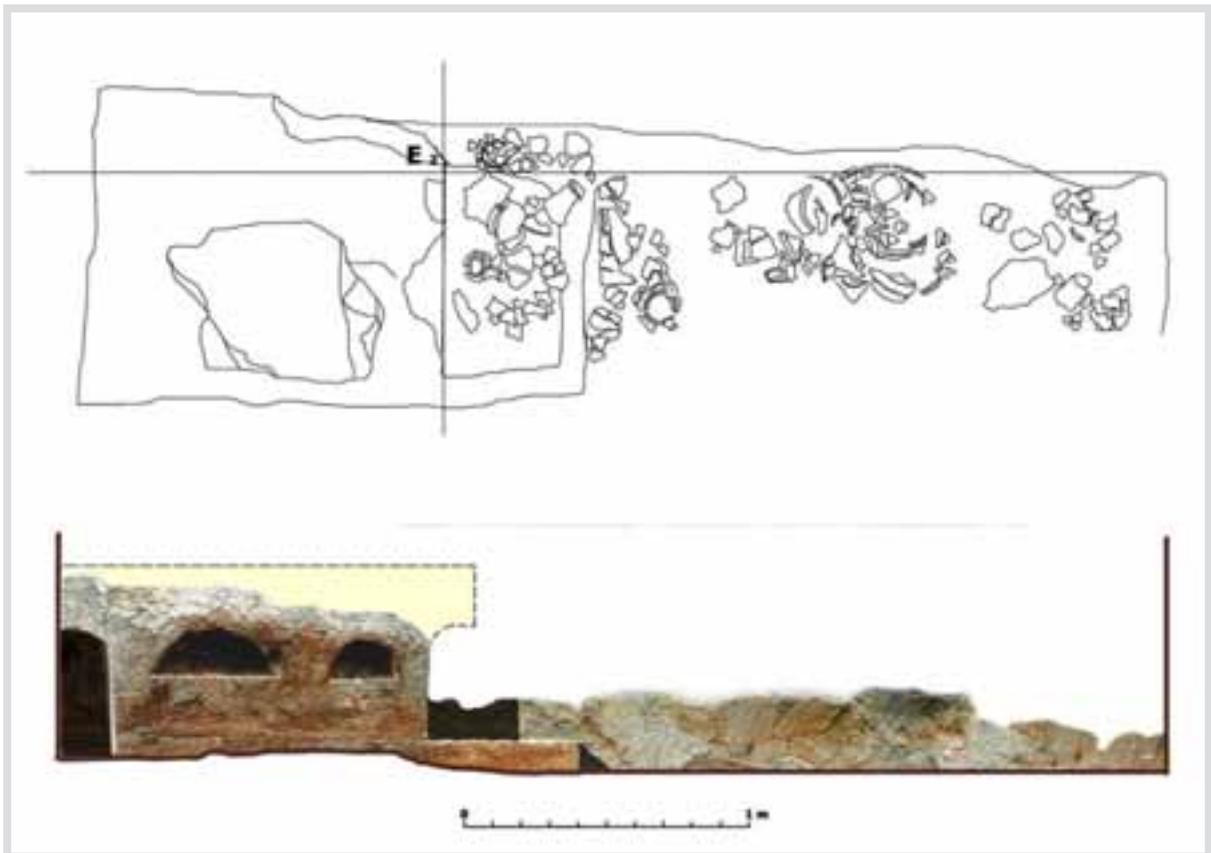
Monumental Altar (1100 – 900 B).

Gold pendants of this type have been found only on the territory of Western Georgia, and they are always accompanied by very rich material such as Achaemenid-style cups or different types of temple pendants.

The richness of Colchian gold treasures has been clearly confirmed by the excavations at Vani. We can note the results of the excavation of grave No. 24, in which the principal deceased person was buried with 4 servants or slaves. The great diversity of gold items is clear evidence of the Colchis' richness in terms of gold, as has been described in Greek literary sources. In grave No. 24 there were gold tubular decorations, a head-dress ornament, a gold pin-brooch, gold appliqués, triangular and temple pendants, etc. Most items bore the typical granulation as a decorative finish.

The Achaemenid World

Achaemenid activity is clear in the establishment of important administrative centers, the remnants of which have been discovered in Gumbati, Qarajamirli, Sari-Tepe, Draskhanakerti, Arin-Berdi, and Ervandashat. There is an assumption that the builders of Gumbati and other Achaemenid palaces were supposedly invited to these places from Persia or Anatolia.

The exported items from Achaemenid Persia were rich, diverse and included jewelry. In the end of 5th c BC and 4th c BC Achaemenid type painted pottery was the primary category(pl. IV). At the same time Achaemenid glass kohl-tubes were rare in Transcaucasia. Most kohl-tube type of vessels (44 of 47) published by Dan Barag were found outside of archaeological context. The date of the Pichvnari kohl-tube (Barag's Group I) is the second quarter of the 5th century B.C. The same type of vessel from Vani was dated to the 5th century BC. According to Barag's classification, the Vani vessel dates to the 5th or early 4th century B.C. Other vessels found on the territory of Georgia (Enagheti, Takhtidziri) generally are dated to the 5th or early 4th century B.C. According to its similarities of shape the Grakliani Hill kohl-tube dates to the 5th or the very beginning of the 4th century B.C. Rod-formed glass vessels of this type are thought to be of Persian provenance on the ground of their geographical diffusion.

Rather strong Achaemenid influence was observed near the Grakliani Hill site, on the Tsikhia-gora site, which is located on the small hill on the right bank of the River Mtkvari. Inside the fortification wall several structures were found, among them a temple built of stone and mud brick. There is a rather long building behind the main temple (length 18 m, width 4.5 m), on which the representation of bulls has been found. Of the other buildings on this site, a wine store with 48 pithoi and 30 hand–mills should be mentioned. Similar influence – on a rather small scale – is observed in East Colchis during this period. During the Vani excavations a monumental wall dating from the 4th to the 3rd century B.C. was found, and supports this presumption. It is to be supposed that
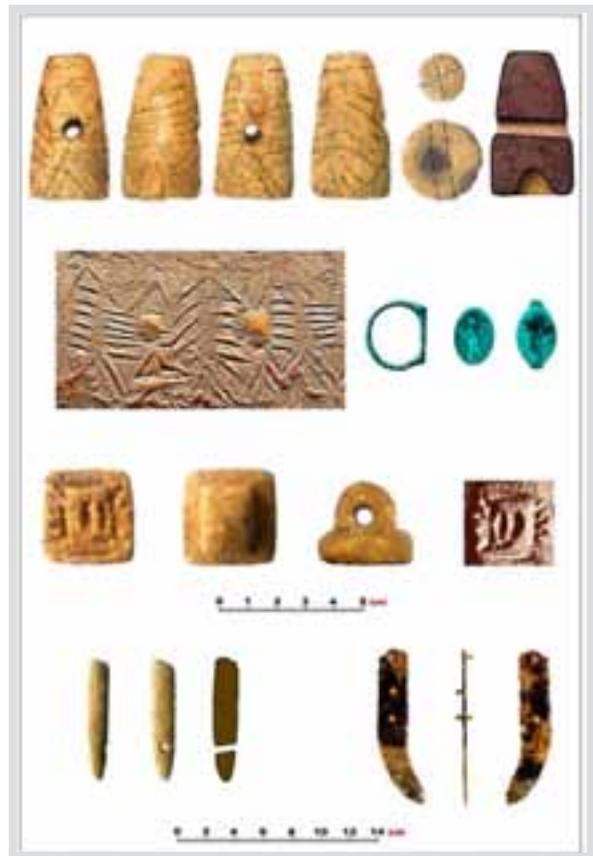
Mesopotamian Seals (4th mill. BC). Bronze finger ring (4th c BC). Iron knife (5th -4th cc BC).

in Vani architecture of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. still dominates Achaemenid cultural tradition. The synthesis of these two cultures is obvious in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C.

In respect to Achaemenid cultural influence, the fragment of a limestone frieze found at

Vani may be important. It preserves the image of charioteer and a part of chariot in relief. The wheel of the chariot has rim-studs similar to those found in the Achaemenid world; e.g., the chariot wheels with rim-studs incised on the seal rings of Darius. One of the chariots of the gold treasure (in the British Museum) has similar wheels, and in one of the Apadana reliefs, a chariot drawn by two ponies, has similar wheels. Thus, Vani architectural detail, presumably part of the frieze of a monumental structure, is evidence that in Vani Achaemenid influence survived until the beginning of Hellenistic period. This part of the frieze is a remarkable example of the synthesis of Greek and Achaemenid elements. Therefore, the frieze and the monumental wall indicate the existence of Achaemenid traditions in Vani during the 4th to the 3rd centuries B.C. Further excavations evidence this viewpoint: a double-protome capital was discovered on Vani's central terrace.

The graves of Grakliani Hill contain gold, silver and bronze discs with Achaemenid-style decoration, similar to the decoration of the bases of Achaemenid cups from the Akhalgori Hoard of the 4th century B.C. and from different areas of the Black Sea littoral and Western Anatolia.

Greco/Phrygian Imports.

The fourth direction of trade/cultural connections from Grakliani Hill was to the southwest –to Anatolia. Early connections with this region have been confirmed by different archaeological finds, including bronze fibulae and statue dating to the 8th to 7th centuries B.C. A grave excavated on Grakliani Hill yielded a finger ring with a representation of Pan(pl.III).

Egyptian item.

An Egyptian scarab found in Grakliani grave No. 217 appears to be reasonably explicable: it seems that in the 5th - 4th cc BC scarabs were used as one type of bead – in all cases scarabs were found with beads, near the breast or on the hand.

Phoenician items.

Eye-beads, probably imported from the Phoenician area after the 4th century B.C., seem to have been one of the most popular type of beads, appearing throughout Georgian territory as a result of Greek commercial operations
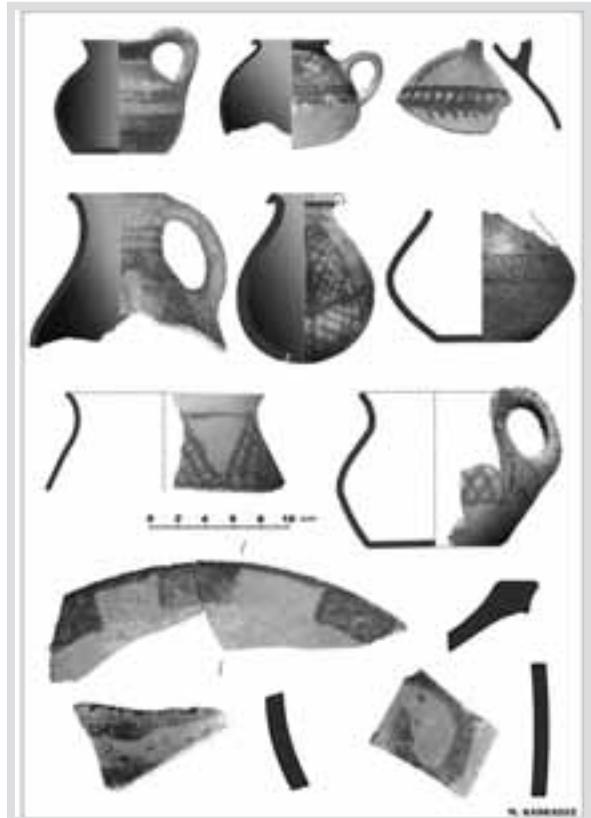
"Achaemenid" and "Samado" type pottery(4th -3rd cc BC)

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THE 4TH-CENTURY BC GREEK CEMETERY AT PICHVNARI: ASPECTS OF INTERCULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

The 4th-century BC Greek cemetery is a part of the Pichnvari archaeological complex which occupies an area of 100 ha on the Black Sea coast in south-western Georgia (Adjara, Kobuleti district), at the confluence of the Choloki and Ochkhamuri rivers some 10 km north of the town of Kobuleti.

The middle decades and the second half of the 5th century BC are marked by the rise of the Greek settlement at Pichvnari, thanks to which it became a significant zone of contact between Colchians and Greeks (M. Vickers, A. Kakhidze, 2004, 166; A. Kakhidze, 2007, 225-227). There are not many sites in the Black Sea area where natives and colonists co-existed so closely with each other, and few cemeteries are comparable in terms of the wealth of grave goods.

The later Greek necropolis of Pichvnari, which was in use between the early 4th century and circa 330 BC, was also productive, and in many respects continued the traditions of the earlier necropolis. Like Panticapaeum (present day Kerch, in the Crimea), rich and the poor were interred in the same cemetery in the 5th century BC and the same is true at Pichvnari. From the 4th century BC onwards, the rich inhabitants of Panticapaeum were buried in a separate area and it is not out of the question that this was also the case at Pichvnari.

The grave goods are greatly inferior to those of the earlier Greek cemetery; however, a few gold objects and painted pots have been brought to light in recent years. Imported goods are largely Attic black-gloss pottery and a single polychrome glass vessel has been found. By the 4th century BC the Greeks of Pichvnari are to be found using local pottery, jewellery and even coins as grave goods (M. Vickers, A. Kakhidze, 2004, 188-192). Their number is greater than those were found at the Pichvnari 5th-century BC Greek necropolis.

A total of 110 graves have been studied since 1967 (A. Kakhidze, 1974; 1979; M. Vickers, A. Kakhidze, 2004). It is important to note that burials and ritual platforms are well preserved; no graves overlap. This creates ideal conditions for the determination of burial types, funerary customs, orientation, deposition patterns, social and ethnic composition, or chronology (M. Vickers, A. Kakhidze, 2004, 192-193). Nowhere else, to our knowledge, is there another cemetery in the Black Sea area that is so well preserved. Another distinguishing feature is that Pichvnari is of special interest since it is the only site in the eastern Black Sea area with what are in all likelihood ethnically Greek burials. Individual inhumation burials predominate. Only a single cremation burial was attested.

Rich burials are accompanied by ritual platforms covering large areas. Burials of persons of apparently middle fortune are the most numerous. Some corpses are buried in wooden coffins, others in roofed or plain pit-burials. Burial pits were of different size and the corpses were laid in a supine position. Ritual platforms are encountered frequently, but they are not as productive as those designed for the funeral feasts of the wealthier members of the community.

Tubular-handled jug
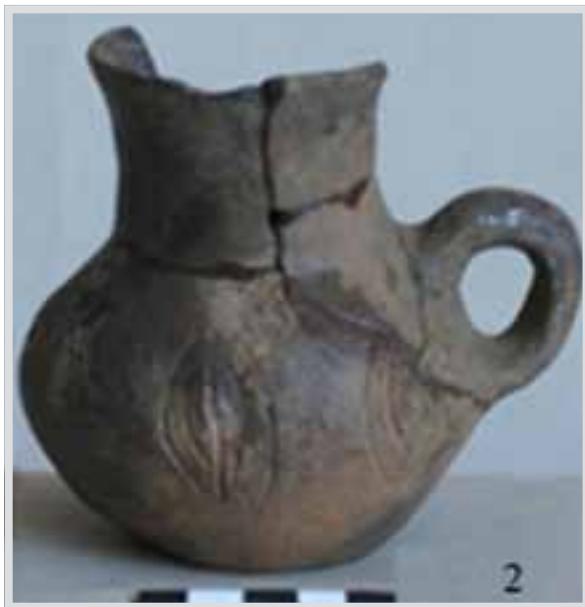
"Pichvnari" type jug

There are many burials belonging to representatives of the relatively poor strata of the Greek population of Pichvnari. Funeral feasts were the exception here. Then there are numerous burials containing no grave goods at all. This is especially the case with burials of the middle decades of the 2nd quarter of the 5th century BC and of the 4th century BC.

Thoughout the Classical period, Greeks in Pichvnari strictly adhered to such purely Greek burial customs as an eastern orientation, occasional cremation, or funeral feasts. The few exceptions at Pichvnari, which are perhaps due to Colchian influence, are only known among the earliest burials of the middle decades of the 5th century BC. We should note that:

(1) By the 4th century BC local clay vessels were used quite often as grave goods in burials of the Greeks. Plain pots and jugs predominate. The manufacture of traditional forms of tubular-handled jugs (fig. 1) continues.

(2) Jugs of the "Pichvnari" type were still being produced in the 4th century BC. One of them, with vertical eyes on the body (fig. 2) is very similar to earlier specimens.

(3) To imitations of oinochoi of the 5th century BC since the 4th century BC were added imitations of skyphoi (fig. 3), kantharoi, lekythoi and ichtiai.

In the Burial 92 an iron mattock (fig. 4) was found. This form is known in Colchis from the late Bronze Age. It seems that Greeks actively used Colchian tools for cultivating the fields of Pichvnari.

Fine products of the Colchian jeweller's art apparently enjoyed popularity among the Greeks at Pichvnari. Other large-scale Greek cemeteries, including those at Olbia and Panticapaeum, have not produced such large quantities of gold objects as Pichvnari has. This may perhaps be explained by the influence of Colchian culture. The local Greeks were hardly indifferent to gold of the kind known from Pichvnari, Vani or Sairkhe. Noteworthy among the jewellery was a gold necklace, made up of 106 small, plain, spherical hollow beads of gold, and a small gold pendants decorated with vertical flutes (fig. 5). Similar beads have been frequently found in the 5th century BC Colchian and Greek cemeteries at Pichvnari (A. Kakhidze, 2007, 222, fig. 93.1). They are known from other sites of western Georgia (G. Gobejischvili, 1959, 198; M. Trapsh, 1969; J. Nadiradze, 1975, 31, fig. 3; 1990: 58-9, 61-2, 94, pls 6.2, 8.2-3, 34.3; A. Chqonia, 1981, 39, figs 21-2) and also from the northern Black Sea area (L. Silantieva, 1959, 42, fig. 19.1; I. Marchenko, 1960, 22-23; M. Skrzhinskaya, 1986, 126, fig. 5.2). There are flat gold pendants with hooked ends and crescent-shaped silver ones, round in section.

Earlier specimens have been discovered in the earlier Greek necropolis at Pichvnari (A. Kakhidze, 2007, 222, fig. 91.9) and one of the rich burials at Sairkhe (J. Nadiradze, 1990, fig. 44). They occur at Vani from the 3rd quarter of the 4th century BC, and are also encountered in necklaces of a later period (A. Chqonia, 1981). The crescent may be associated with the moon cult and have its origin in Mesopotamia (A. Chqonia, 1981: 70). Similar pendants of gold, silver and bronze have been found in the Pichvnari cemetery of the Hellenistic period (A. Kakhidze and

Local imitation of skyphos

Iron mattock

N. Vashakidze, 1977, 45, pl. 20.5; N. Vashakidze and A. Kakhidze, 1978, 52, pls 37-38.1), and other sites of western and eastern Georgia (B. Kuftin, 1950, 34, pl. 15.6; N. Kighuradze, 1974, 34, pl. 11; S. Margishvili, 1992, 37-38; M. Dzneladze, 2001, 159-161). Crescent-shaped pendants of bronze, lead, glass, Egyptian faïence and amber are also known from the northern Black Sea area (E. Alekseeva, 1975, 93, pl. 4). They are also common in the Sarmatian burials of Elizavetinski and the Volga area (B. Kuftin, 1950, 48). Numbers of silver, bronze and iron bracelets were found. There are also bronze bracelets with stylized snakes' head finials, as well as simple iron ones. Many specimens, iron bracelets in particular are partly preserved. Two silver fibulae have plain springs and catch plates. Iron fibulae of the same form occur too. A silver buckle was found for the first time at Pichvnari: it is made of a single thin, twisted, wire, but unfortunately the catch has not survived. There is an iron clasp of the same form as well. No parallels are as yet known. Two bronze bells occur. They have slit sides, and an iron clapper has survived in one of them.

Beads occur frequently among the grave goods, and the picture in the later Greek cemetery is almost the same as in the earlier. Again small colored conical or biconical polychrome beads of glass or paste predominate. In the 4th century BC pear-shaped beads of yellow, black, light and dark blue opaque glass, with a conical hole, begin to appear and continue into the early Hellenistic period (N. Vashakidze, A. Kakhidze, 2010).

Local Colchian coins, used as "Charon's obols," occur frequently among the later Greek burials. Pichvnari is the only site in the Black Sea area where the dead were buried with the 'Charon's obol' from as early as the mid-5th century BC. In other areas this custom is recorded only in 4th-century burials.

The Pichvnari discoveries make it possible to arrive at some conclusions. Greek interest in the eastern Black Sea area became ever more apparent from the Periclean period onwards and was reflected in developments at Pichvnari. It would appear that Colchian leaders considered it reasonable to establish close trade, economic and cultural relations with an influential foreign power. This would explain why

Gold pendant

Greek settlers apparently lived in a close and peaceful relationship nearly over a century and a half. The scanty group assemblages of the late 5th and early 4th centuries might be held to reflect the reduced condition of the Athenians and their weakened international standing after the Peloponnesian War. We still do not know what kind of settlement functioned at Pichvnari, but whatever it was, we can perhaps begin to see the Greeks of Pichvnari in the role of middlemen between Colchis and other centers of the Greek world.

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"WELL-BUILT" IOLKOS AND THE GOLDEN FLEECE: MYTH AND REALITY

Aegean Sea people sailed for hundreds of centuries in the deep, "wine-dark sea" (οίνωπας πόντος; Homer, Iliad, 23, 146; Odyssey, 2, 421), spurred by a drive to experience the unknown. They were laden with beliefs, ideas and materials goods, thus creating the first international network of cultural exchanges and interactions (Cosmopoulos, 1991, 155-169; Michailidou & Voutsa, 2005, 17-28).

Excavation data attest that the first artefacts ever brought from the Aegean to the Black Sea coast were bone bracelets made of Spondylus gaederopus, which in the 4th millennium travelled across this region through exchanges (Séfèriadès, 2000, 423-437). However, the first attempt of Aegean people to penetrate into the Black Sea by sea is lost in the misty landscape of myth, while not until the 8th and 7th centuries BC do we have the first scientific evidence about the relationships of the Aegean region with the Black Sea. This was the time when the first wave of Greek immigrants and colonists expanded into this area (Tsetskhladze, 1998; Lévêque, 1997, 11-23; Grammenos & Petropoulos, 2007).

One of the earliest Greek legends that link the Aegean Sea to the Caucasus and the Black Sea area is the myth of Prometheus, sentenced by Zeus to be tortured in the Caucasus for stealing fire from Olympus and giving it to mankind (Hesiod, Theogony, 507, 526-533; Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, 115; cf. Dougherty, 2006, 4-24). The archetype of Prometheus in the primitive myth describes the need for fire and consequently metalworking in the Caucasus (Kerényi, 1963, 113-121). The Caucasus mountains, consistently inhabited since the 8th millennium, have proved to be of recent origin, with rich mineral resources leading to very early metallurgy (Tchernykh, 1985, 43ff; Craddock, 1999, 177-182). This resulted in today's belief that Caucasus is the birthplace of metallurgy (Doumas, 1991, 38). The first metal known in the Aegean region was alluvial gold (Muhly, 1985). One

early source of this gold in the Aegean may have been the Caucasus (Mongait, 1961, 128) and especially the Colchian region, where the existence of gold has also been scientifically documented (Muhly, 1985, 109; Tsetskhladze & Treister, 1995, 1-32). Strabo mentions the placement of sheep fleeces in the streams of Colchis to gather particles of gold (Strabo, XI, 2, 19; cf. Appianus, Mithridatic Wars, 103). This practice is also known to have been used in Colchis in modern times, and since small particles of gold become caught in the wool of the sheepskin, the myth of the Golden Fleece is perfectly explained (Lordkipanidze, 2001, 1-38).

The word "gold" in Linear B texts is "ku-ru-so" and its symbol is a stretched hide (Chadwick 1976, 144). Since the Hittite word "kursa" means skin, it has been suggested that perhaps the Mycenaean word "ku-ru-so" came from the Hittites and designated the skin used to collect the gold (Hoffner, 1989, 137-145; Doumas, 2008, 121-122). In fact, gold used to arrive in the Aegean as it was originally collected: in the fleece (Doumas, 1991, 38; Doumas, 2008, 122). Perhaps this is how the myth of the Argonauts developed.

The core of this myth developed in eastern coastal Thessaly, in Alos, whence Phrixos and Helle departed from Iolkos for Colchis riding a golden ram (Aeschylus, Athamas, fr. 1-4a; Sophocles, Athamas, fr. 1-10; Sophocles, Phrixos, fr. 721-723). When Phrixos died in the foreign land of Colchis the need arose to have his remains transported back to Iolkos, together with the Golden Fleece, so that Iolkos could regain its prosperity.

This second mission to Colchis was undertaken by Jason – the son of anax Aeson – by order of his uncle, anax Pelias, usurper of the throne of Iolkos. So Jason, along with his fellow Argonauts – sons of the great houses of Mycenae – sailed from the safe Gulf of Pagasitikos to the distant land of Aia, the country of the rising sun (Apollonius, Argonautica; Dräger, 1993; 2002).

My paper aims to investigate whether there are actually within the myth core elements of a possible historical event that was carefully kept alive in the memory of the Greeks, and whether these elements could be connected with the advance of the Mycenaean world into the North East and with the first efforts of the Bronze Age pioneer sailors to approach areas beyond the northern Aegean over to "extremely rich" (πολύχρυσος) Colchis (Strabo, I, 2, 39; Vickers, 2009; Chqonia, 2009). This land was inhabited by the Qulha or Kolkha, people with a rich metallurgical tradition,

living where numerous reports had placed endless sources of copper and rich deposits of gold (Melikishvili, 1962, 319-326; Lordkipanidze, 1968, 16; Braund, 1996; Gordeziani, 2008; Lordkipanidze, 2009, 28-29).

References to the Argonauts had already been made in both in the Homeric Odyssey and the Iliad (West, 2007, 199-203). The famous Argo, the "one who we all have in mind" (πᾶσι μέλουσαν), is mentioned in the Odyssey by Circe, sister of Aeetes, the king of Colchis. Circe was a witch, like her niece Medea (Homer, Odyssey, M, 70-72). Homer also knew and described the famous Iolkos as "well-built," "spacious" and "owner of numerous flocks of sheep" (Homer, Odyssey, Λ, 256-257; Iliad B, 712). The expedition was regarded in Antiquity as a historical fact, an incident in the opening up of the Black Sea to Greek commerce and colonization. Later on, Apollonius of Rhodes gave us the fullest version of the Argonauts' expedition in his 3rd-century BC Argonautica (Wray, 2000, 236-265; Barnes, 2003, 55-58). Thus, it is obvious that the long Greek oral tradition, as well as Greek poets and historians, have kept alive in the memory of the Greeks the adventures of the Argonauts, who departed from Iolkos, a city close to coast of Pagasitikos, at the foot of Mount Pelion. We can now safely identify Iolkos, this powerful Mycenaean center built around an inlet of the Pagasetic gulf that controlled the largest natural harbour in Thessaly, from where all maritime communications and trade with the rest of the known world of the Aegean and of the whole Mediterranean occurred (Bakhuizen, 1996, 89-95; Decourt & alii, 2004, 711). The geologist Zännger has proved that this center was built around a deep-sea channel, an "iolka," and was probably named after it (Zännger, 1991, 1-7).

The excavations conducted in this area indicate that three Mycenaean settlements (Dimini – Palia/Kastro of Volos- Pefkakia) were founded around this "iolka" at the end of the 16th century BC, on the top of rich older deposits; they were located very close to each other and constituted – in our opinion – a single political, economic and social power, the "well-built" and "wealthy" Iolkos, since all of the sites were ruled by the members (brothers) of the same Aiolidai family (Adrymi-Sismani, 2007a, 322-343; 2007b, 24).

The organization of the "well-built" Iolkos with its "well-constructed roads" is demonstrated by the

Figure 1. Plan of the Mycenaean settlement in Dimini / Iolkos.
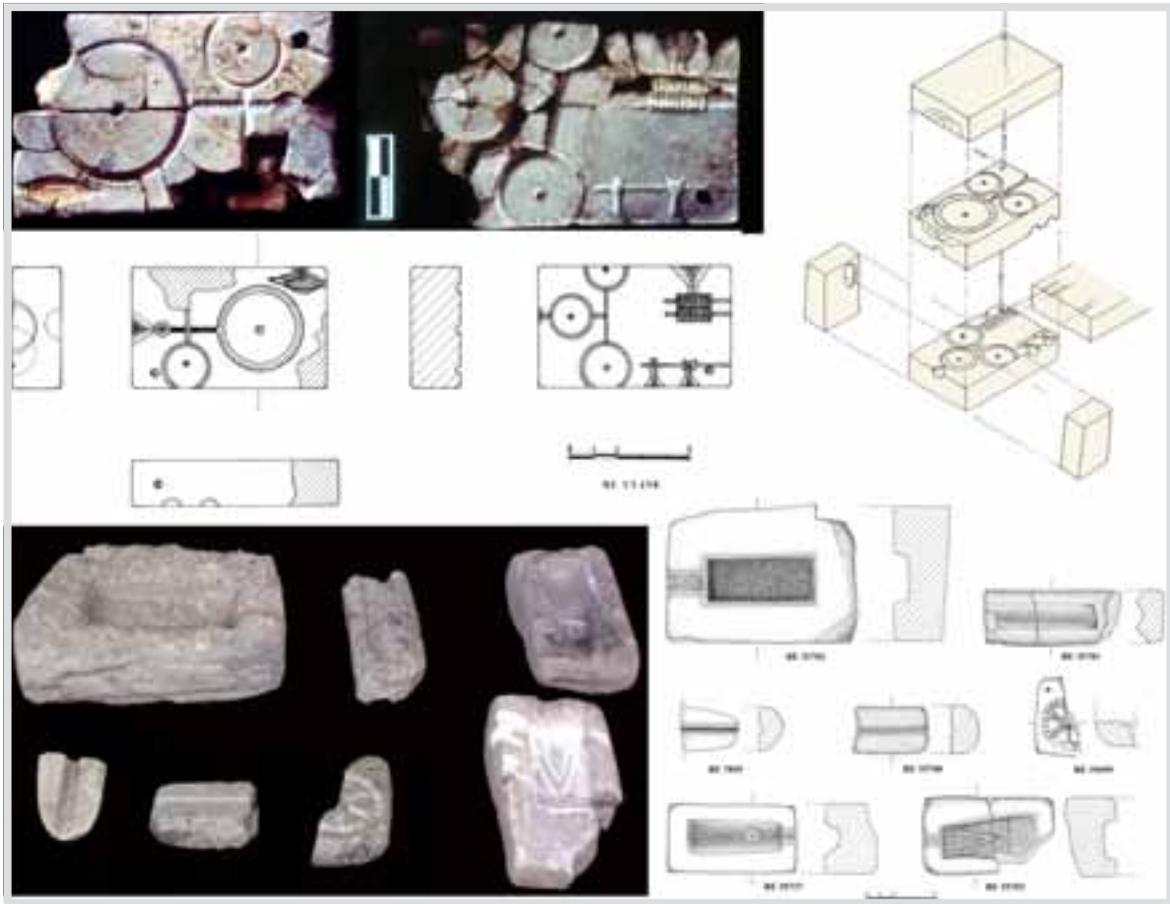
Figure 2. Mycenaean settlement in Dimini / Iolkos. Stone molds for the fabrication of gold jewelry.

Mycenaean settlement in Dimini (Fig. 1), where during the last decades a large Mycenaean city has been investigated, a city organized according to a well-established urban plan that took into account the main roads to which all the other buildings were oriented. A large palatial building complex of two parallel Megara (A and B) with well defined cult places was brought to light, framed by courts and wings housing storerooms and specialized workshops for craft production activities and for the manufacture of jewelry and metal objects, since stone molds were found (Fig. 2) and also large lead vessels (Adrymi-Sismani, 1994, 272-278; 2000; 2004-2005a, 1-54; 2007a, 325-339; 2007b, 25-29; 2008, 62-71). In the 13th century BC, Iolkos constituted the administrative, economic and religious center of the area, since there was use of Linear B script, as well as seals and clay nodulae and seal rings serving at the control of the craft production set up in this palatial center (Adrymi-Sismani & Godart, 2005; Adrymi-Sismani, in press). The small finds suggest that this center had contacts with both Anatolia and the other palatial centers of southern Greece.

Nevertheless, the image of the powerful and wealthy Iolkos is strengthened by the rich content of the four large tholos tombs investigated around the inlet on the Pagasetic Gulf, which undoubtedly received the remains of the anaktes of Iolkos (Lolling & Wolters, 1886, 435–443; 1887, 435–443; Michaud, 1971, 936–937; Pelon, 1976, 243-247, 267, 273, Avila, 1983, 5-60).

The newly investigated 14th c. BC Mycenaean tholos tomb (LH III A2), on the Volos ring road provided us with numerous grave offerings that accompanied the dead on their long journey (Adrymi-Sismani, 2005b, 59-61; Adrymi-Sismani & Alexandrou, 2009, 133-149). There were tinned, painted and plain vases; gold, glass-made and faïence necklaces (Fig. 3); gold rings including one fabricated by the cloisonnée technique (Fig. 4), gold and glass plates bearing the figure of a bearded prince of Iolkos (Fig. 5), as well as copper daggers, clay figurines and precious seal stones. The dead were placed on wooden coffins decorated with ivory rosettes and plates, wearing precious clothes decorated with gold disks and gold bands. The impressive contents of

this tomb - and also of the others - mainly in the form of gold jewelry, gave us the idea of investigating the origin of this gold, as well as its likely connection with the myth of the Golden Fleece.

Perhaps it is unrealistic for someone to dare to investigate myths and to describe a world so distant in time, when no written texts existed. However, the innate tendency of humans to investigate and learn provided the motivation, even if we know that the time of a mythical narrative cannot easily be connected to the time of the historical events.

We know that gold had widespread use among the Mycenaeans (πολύχρυσαι Μυκῆναι) and was traded in the Aegean, mainly from Egypt (Stos-Gale & MacDonald, 1991, 249-288). However, the myth of the Argonauts clearly suggests a trade in gold with the region of Colchis, where there is scientific evidence demonstrating its existence (Vickers, 2009; Chqonia, 2009). Since the grave goods of Volos excavations were not manufactured from Egyptian gold, the trade with Colchis could have been launched by Iolkos during the height of the Mycenaean civilization, when gold was

necessary to validate the power of the Mycenaean palaces (Lordkipanidze, 1968, 15-43). Modern studies on the maritime communications of the prehistoric Aegean based on the ocean currents and the geomorphology of the Aegean area, as well as experimental journeys, have shown that the maritime route was feasible, attesting that the Argonauts' expedition to the Black Sea was not a literary tale but was a synthetic report on maritime routes and the stations used primarily by the residents of the Aegean in prehistoric times (Severin, 1985; Papageorgiou, 2003).

The Mycenaeans inherited a great naval tradition from the Minoans and, as shown by the Thera frescoes; they conducted an organized network of long-distance trade (Doumas, 1991, 35-36; Leonard, 1998, 99-104; Knapp, 1998, 193-207). The shipwreck of Ulu-Burum, on the coast of Asia Minor (14th cent. BC) of a vessel carrying raw gold and faïence, and the Point Iria shipwreck, where Mycenaean objects were found (seals, swords), both attest the Mycenaean presence and the seaborne trade in the Aegean (Bass, 1997, 153-170; Phelps & alii, 1999). In addition, representations of ships

Figure 3. Mycenaean tholos tomb on Volos ring-road. Gold necklaces with rosette and ivy leaf shaped bends.

on vases from Iolkos dating to the Middle Bronze Age indicate that the Iolkians were using ships with elevated keels as a means of transport and trade (Adrymi-Sismani, 2007b, fig. 17). In addition, the first part of the expedition's course up to the straits of the Dardanelles is somewhat scientifically documented as a significant quantity of Mycenaean pottery has been found in Troy VIIa (Mountjoy, 1997, 259-267; Wachsmann, 1998, 123-158). Also Professor Mommsen's recent clay analysis showed that pottery from the Mycenaean Dimini-Iolkos has also been found in Troy (Mountjoy & Mommsen, 2006, 116). Furthermore, the Canaanite amphorae, Syro-Phoenician tripod mortars and handmade burnished ware from Tell Kazel indicated that contacts had been established between Dimini-Iolkos and Western Asia (Adrymi-Sismani, 2004-2005a, 33-37). Certainly the pottery itself cannot prove the identity of the traders who brought it to Troy; but one can hardly deny that the Mycenaeans arrived in Troy, since – according to Niemeier – they were already established from the 14th c. BC, in a narrow area of Western Asia's coast, in Miletus, which city later founded 90 colonies around the Black Sea (Niemeier, 1999, 65-77).

Farther to the north, the Mycenaeans were most probably traders who lived in the ports, as minorities, along with the local population. Moreover, the Mycenaeans in Asia Minor have always been associated with the kingdom of the Ahhijawa, as it is accepted that the Mycenaean Achaians are mentioned in the Hittite texts (Muhly, 1974; Müller Celca, 2005, 257). Korfmann supports the belief that Troy served as a naval station for ships during their stay awaiting appropriate weather for safe passage through the straits of the Dardanelles and thereafter through the entrance to the Black Sea (Korfmann, 1995, 173-183). Therefore, the presence of Iolkian sailors in the straits of the Dardanelles is somewhat documented, but their entrance via the Bosporus into the Black Sea is problematic, although the presence of the Mycenaeans there is not lacking. Only in Masat Hüyük, a site located 150 km from ancient Colchis, has Mycenaean pottery been found together with Hittite examples. Also, in the so-called Trialeti culture area near Colchis swords and spearheads of the Aegean type have been found, similar to those exhibited in the University of Tbilisi collection. Among them are bronze spearheads comparable to those
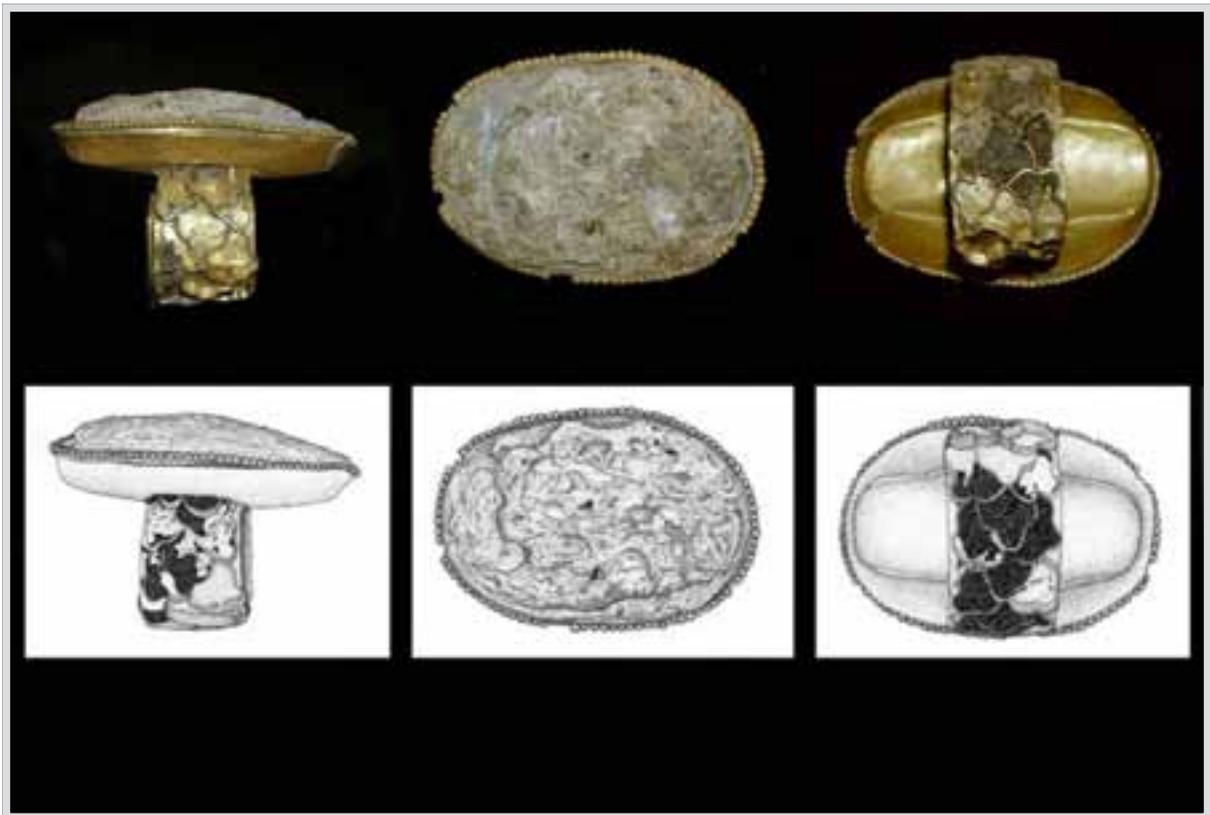
Figure 4. Mycenaean tholos tomb on Volos ring-road. Gold ring with ellipsoid bezel with dots and hoop made according to the cloisonée technique.

found in the graves of the cemetery of ancient Iolkos (Hiller, 1991, 207-216).

According to Hiller, although the evidence for the penetration of the Mycenaeans in the Black Sea is relatively rare, it nevertheless indicates – along with the finds located around the Black Sea (Bulgarovo, Rojak, Kozorezovo, Kerc, Cerkovo, capes Kaliakra, Nessebar and Sozopol, and the North Black Sea region) – the limited but real Mycenaean presence in the Black Sea (Hiller, 1991, 209-213). The evidence consists of Mycenaean pottery, long bronze swords, spearheads, and double axes, around 200 stone anchors of the Aegean type, and harness accessories. Hiller proposed that we should first investigate the possibility of the maritime transport of these items into that area, which – according to the Argonautic myth – was possible in practical terms (Hiller, 1991, 208-209; also Lordkipanidze, 1996, 36). However, I think that the question whether sailors from Iolkos once sailed to the Black Sea, where the legendary Aia is placed, is still an open matter. Otar Lordkipanidze identified the now submerged town alongside the River Phasis with Aia (Lordkipanidze, 2000).

This settlement was founded during the Middle Bronze Age and in the second half of the 2nd millennium it already had a developed society with highly developed metalwork and pottery production. But, in the absence of systematic excavations, this site cannot be identified safely with Aia. Excavations have been carried out only nearby, at Vani, a site at the foot of the Lesser Caucasus, south of the River Rioni (the ancient Phasis), where 6th-5th century BC and later tombs, remarkably rich in gold grave goods, attest the presence of the Greeks in the area (Lordkipanidze, 1991, 151-195; Licheli, 2007, 109-115; Vichers, 2009, 33-53; Kacharava & Kvirkvelia, 2009, 55-83). In addition, surveys indicate the presence of numerous mineral resources, such as the Sakridisi mine, in operation in the Late Bronze Age. Generally, in the 2nd millennium there was a culture concentrated in this area later known as the Qulha or Kolkha, a people mentioned in the 8th-century BC Urartian texts, as well as in earlier 13th- and 12th-century Assyrian texts, attesting that at the end of the 2nd millennium BC, the period during which the Greek mythological tradition places the Argonauts' expedition to Colchis, this country already existed in the historical arena (Melikishvili 1962; Muhly, 1974; Braund, 1996, 127-128; Gordeziani, 2008; Chqonia, 2009; Lordkipanidze, 2009, 28-29; Vickers, 2009). Nevertheless, in the light of the evidence attested so far, there is nothing specific evidence

to confirm the contacts between the Mycenaeans and the Colchians. So, we planned to proceed in an archaeometrical investigation, in search of the possible relationship of the Mycenaean golden jewellery from Iolkos with the gold that came from Colchis.

For these reasons, we contacted the laboratories of

Figure 5. Mycenaean tholos tomb on Volos ring-road. Gold plates bearing the figure of a bearded prince.

the Center for Research and Restoration of the Museums of France, located in the Louvre. We initially performed chemical analyses of 23 gold items from Iolkos and 4 items from Georgia in collaboration with Prof. Licheli, under the auspices of AGLAE, an international interdisciplinary program (Guerra & alii, 2009).

The analysis, using non-destructive methods on a number of gold leaves, small disks and necklace beads, revealed the presence of tin (Sn), platinum (Pt) and palladium (Pd), the characteristic features of alluvial gold, and confirmed that most of the samples from Iolkos and Georgia were made of gold that could have been searched for and gathered in a river, using sheep fleeces. Then in October 2008 it was revealed with great surprise that one sample, a gold item from Georgia, appeared to correspond in composition to a sample from Iolkos. This result certainly encourages us to continue our research. Unfortunately, a single example is not enough to answer the key question of the origin of the gold used in Iolkos, especially since there is also a lack of further geochemical data on the gold-bearing rivers in Greece and Georgia. So, we must analyze more items from within a close chronological framework – the middle of the 2nd millennium BC – from Iolkos and other Mycenaean sites in Greece, but mostly from Georgia and from the region of Colchis in particular.

Looking ahead, we expect that the upcoming analysis will confirm whether or not the alluvial gold of the items from Mycenaean Iolkos were actually made from the alluvial gold of a river in Colchis. Naturally, more analyses will be required to confirm such a conclusion, which would in turn confirm a myth of worldwide renown that for millennia has influenced world civilization, inspiring many generations of artists, writers and scientists.

A positive finding would also certify that the myth of the Argonauts' expedition actually constitutes a memory of a historic event and recounts a successful naval mission that took place during the Mycenaean period, when audacious sailors from Iolkos with their ships, surpassing all difficulties, crossed the Aegean, entered into the Black Sea, inaugurating the navigation route to the northeast, to areas beyond the North Aegean, and actually bringing two most ancient cultures into contact.

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MEDIEVAL ART

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BETWEEN WORLDS: UNIQUENESS IN MEDIEVAL GEORGIAN ART AND ICONOGRAPHY

Uniqueness in medieval Georgian art and iconography is visible in both symbolic content and elements of style and material. One might begin by noting that the metallurgical skill that is so significant in the continuum of Georgian art from the pre-historical period is reflected in an unparalleled volume of medieval work contrived of metals.

There is not only oklad art, but numerous icons are completely composed of metal. Moreover, while many icons throughout the eastern Christian world—and occasional painted images in the western Christian world—have inscriptions on them, Georgian icons are often overrun with writing. They marry image and text; the message of the image and that of its patronage and provenance.

Both features are visible in the 11th-century icon of St. Simeon Stylites, with Anthony, Bishop of Tsagheri shown gesturing to the viewer from the left side of the column. Completely contrived of metal, the work is overrun on the right side with an extensive inscription recounting the icon's history and praising God. Master Phillip identified himself, as well, on the threefold (trinity-symbolizing) base of the column.

The St. Simeon icon is one of many entirely contrived of metalwork. A 10th-century Virgin Mary Hodigitria from Martvili, (within a later frame) offers other uniquely Georgian elements. Among its inset precious stones and enamels are sardoliques—stones that come from the Caucasus Mountains. Moreover, while the figure of the Virgin and Child follows 10th-century Byzantine models, the complex, freely-flowing folds of Mary's clothing, delicately adorned with embroidery, as well as the supple handling of the faces reflects distinctly Georgian sensibilities [FIG 1].

One feels that suppleness all across the renowned Bedia cup of 999—a jewel in the crown of medieval Georgian metallurgy. The composition includes a representation of the Virgin and Child. Her knees push out against her garment, creating a genuine sense of lap, on which the Child sits, smiling, the edges of his mouth subtly turned upwards—in contrast to the subtle downward turn of the edges of his Mother's mouth [FIG 2]. The artist has contrasted the human mother—who intuits the future fate of her son and the grief that such intuition brings her—with her Divine Son, who transcends human suffering with a glowing pleasure at the gift of self-sacrifice that he will offer to humankind.

Moreover, whereas the head of the Child is typically proportioned to present a miniature adult in the language of medieval art, here it is enlarged and shaped in a plump, rounded manner to suggest the body-head configuration of a small child. This masterpiece variously anticipates the humanistic emphases that will arrive in Europe many centuries later.

Unique handling of the material is differently evident in the high relief tondo from Gelati of St Mamas of Caesarea [FIG 3]. St Mamas holds a cross in his right hand and gestures in both greeting and entreaty with his left. Aside from the extraordinarily high relief of the head in particular—it offers the effect of practically full sculpture, rather than the low relief style found in Byzantium and elsewhere—the anonymous artist has produced an unusual and effective combination of metals.

Moreover, the saint is seated on the lion, an uncommon mode of depiction: there are no representations of him this way in Byzantine or Eastern Christian art—and but a handful of times elsewhere in Georgian art of the 11th and 12th centuries. He is shown seated on icons in the church of Morphou, Cyprus, but these are much later, painted wood images not comparable to the metalwork of the Gelati image.

A more familiar figure, found in many places across Christendom, is St George. Standard renderings show him on horseback, usually engaged with a serpent/dragon—or standing frontally, like a soldier at attention. The serpent/dragon alludes in part to the creature in the Garden of Eden who induced Adam and Eve to abrogate God's gastronomic commandment to them.

But uniquely Georgian are images like the silver icon from Tsvirli-Tchobeni, dated to the late 10th–early 11th centuries [FIG 4]. Here, instead of a dragon it is the Emperor Diocletian—who is associated with the last, severest Roman persecutions of Christians and specifically with the martyrdom of St George—who serves as the symbol of defeated evil. That Diocletian personifies evil itself is underscored by the way in which the saint looks, not at the adversary whom he impales, but straight out at the viewer—from a tradition that asserts that one ought not to look evil in the face.

Moreover, the artist has attired Diocletian in the

military garb that would have been familiar to him at the time when the icon was created—either Byzantine or Seljuk. If, as it seems, the helmet is a twisted torque characteristic of a Seljuk soldier, then the work must actually date from the mid-11th century or a bit later, since the Seljuks became a problem for Georgia by mid-century (they began extracting tribute after 1072). If we interpret Diocletian's garb as Byzantine, then the earlier date usually asserted for this work makes sense, since Byzantium was putting political and religious pressure on Georgia at that time.

The image presents Diocletian's sword and shield as fallen from his grasp. The sword, in low-relief, lies parallel to the picture plane, but the shield is positioned just over and behind his head, so that one might easily mistake it for a halo. While that was surely not the artist's intention, the idea of a halo around the head of one's defeated enemy somehow resonates with the long history of religious tolerance found within Georgia: when David IV drove out the Muslim Seljuks, he did not drive out (or persecute) Islam.

There are several iterations of this mode of representing St George defeating Diocletian. A silver icon from Labechina from the early 11th century presents the emperor still holding his sword and crawling along the ground as the saint's very long spear impales him from the back—and once again the saint stares, with enormous eyes, out (but beyond, not at, the viewer), rather than at the one he is skewering [FIG 5]. While many early icons use significance perspective—where the more important figures are larger than those less important—the Labechina icon does this emphatically. Saint George is gigantic compared with the small figure of Diocletian.

Figure 1. Bedia Chalice, 999 AD.

The Nakipari icon, also from the 11th century, signed by Asat Gvazavaidze, offers far less extreme significance perspective. But the physical proportions of the saint are more stylized: his head is enormous relative to his body—the head is understood to be the location of the soul (the eyes, too, are enlarged, as "windows" to the soul)—and the halo is gigantic relative to the head.

As for Diocletian, he falls, without a sword, impaled through the neck by the saint's spear. His crown—the crown of a Byzantine emperor, rather than the helmet of a soldier—is still on his head, his shield rolling away toward the edge of the image. Extensive textual material across the entire surface of the image in the space between the belly of St George's horse and the fallen enemy identifies the artist.

Given Georgia's position for millennia as a crossroads among diverse cultures, medieval Georgian iconography not surprisingly offers an ongoing process of absorption, adaptation, combination, emulation and innovation. This we may observe in another St George image—a silver, gold-plated 12th-century icon from Soudjouna on which the saint stands before us, shield in one hand and spear in the other—on which the intricate foliated scroll decoration that forms the background reflects both Islamic influence and the unusual metallurgical skills of Georgian craftsmen.

Such patterning embellishes the background of the ca 1525-50 icon depicting the Virgin and Child from Akhti Shuamta monastery—in Eastern Georgia, close to the Middle Eastern and Persian worlds. The figures are set within a carpet-style decoration of floral patterns that are recognizable as drawn from the vocabulary of Safavid Persian décor [FIG 6]. That is: a complex vine motif surrounds them, punctuated by stones that echo those in the haloes, but this entirety is then framed in an even more complexly worked vegetal motif.

The result offers a layered symbolic dialogue between human and divine realms. The contrasting field and frame, the one embedded with the Virgin and Child, the other bordering the world outside the image, offer a simple opposition, but interwoven with this is a complex statement of divine-human interface. A frame, that limits and stops and starts, corner by corner—in four directions—symbolizes humanity, while the pattern without beginning and end that overruns the frame, symbolizes God. But the pattern is made up of tiny details that, in their minuteness, symbolize humanity, against the monumental God-symbolizing background. This sort of a symbolic vocabulary, familiar from the aniconic Muslim world is wedded to

the stylized figurative imagery of Christendom.

From sacred to profane medieval Georgian metalwork, this wedding is full of surprises—none more interesting than the bi-lingual, shoe-shaped coin perhaps intended to convey in graphic terms the success of the monarch who struck it at subduing Georgia's enemies [FIG 7]. The sole is inscribed in Georgian to identify that ruler—Giorgi Lasha, son of Tamar—as well as the date in which "in the name of God this copper piece was struck… [the year] 430" (which = the year 1210 in the Georgian Kronikon). On the heel, the inscription repeats the date and expands the identification of Giorgi—in Arabic letters—as "King of kings/Glory of the world and Faith/ Giorgi Son of Tamar/Champion of the Messiah."

The bilingualism and shape of the coin would make sense in the context of Queen Tamar's victory against the Seljuks at Shamkhor (in 1195) or at Basiani (in 1205)—but given the year, more sense in the context of her campaign in Azerbaijan against the Khwarezmian Persians in 1210-11. Those beneath the heel of the conqueror are, as it were, informed in their own language of their newly subordinate status. It is odd, however, that Giorgi referred to himself as king while his mother, the renowned Queen Tamar, was still alive; she would die in 1213.

Perhaps she did what her father, Giorgi III had done, making her co-ruler in 1178—she succeeded him as sole ruler six years later. Giorgi would have been 19 by 1210 and might have been elevated by his mother the previous year—and/or maybe he led the Georgian forces against the Persians, particularly if his mother were already ill of the "terrible disease" mentioned by the chroniclers that would take her life. But some historians assert that Tamar died in 1210 or even as early as 1207, in which case Giorgi Lasha was already King Giorgi IV at the time this coin was struck—perhaps this coin can serve as evidence to corroborate the claim for such an earlier death for Tamar.

Georgian iconographic uniqueness may also be seen in non-metallic media. Elsewhere, "The Last Supper" appears in an unusual early 14th-century wall-painting in the Ubisi Monastery, painted by Gerasime and his workshop [FIG 8]. Distinguishing features include the depiction of Jesus as the only figure endowed with a halo—an idea that will be rarely seen elsewhere for nearly two centuries.

Jesus is shown holding the scroll of his New Covenant. This is common in other contexts but rare in representations of The Last Supper. More important, Judas stands out by his gesture: he reaches for the bread on the table—the sop….—as he seems to point
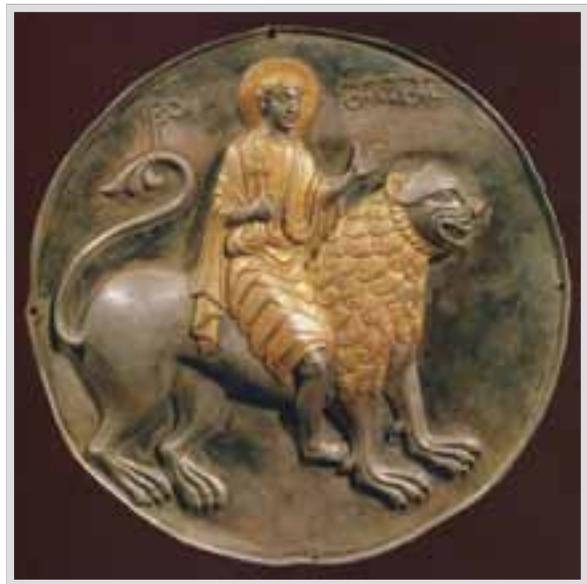
Figure 2. Tondo from Gelati, 11th century AD

to the fish that sits at the center. The fish is an early Christian symbol for Jesus in his soteriological capacity: the Greek word for fish, ikhthys, serves as an acronym for "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior." Thus in a manner typical of Georgian sensibilities, Judas the villain reminds the viewer that, without his act of betrayal, Jesus could not complete his salvational mission.

Judas' bent-over body echoes that of John, leaning over on Jesus' protective lap. The artist has offered us a kind of conceptual contraposto between these two figures—loyalty and betrayal on the grandest scale—as he offers a visual balance between the two apostles who sit opposite each other on our side of the table. These serve as a visual bridge between us and the John-Christ-Judas-centered action taking place on the other side of the table.

Traditionally, there is one figure on the viewer's side of the table: Judas. We can see this in myriad works— from Giotto's depiction in the Arena Chapel in Padua (1304) to Pietro Lorenzetti's in the Franciscan Church in Assisi (1320); from Andrea del Castagno's depiction at Sta Apollonia in Florence (1447) to Domenico del Ghirlandaio's in the Ognissanti in Florence (1480).

In the Eastern Church we occasionally see a configuration similar to that at Ubisi, as in the 14th-century frescoes at the Zica monastery in Serbia. There, too, Jesus alone is crowned with a halo. But there the table is a rounded oval, so that the distinction between the viewer's side and Jesus' side is less pronounced—and Judas reaches deeply

into the enormous bowl that sits there; he is neither "balanced" by John nor reaching in a manner offering the double message suggested by the Ubisi Judas. The Zica frescoes are also a bit later than those at Ubisi.

Otherwise, we don't see a change in the standard format outside this highly original Georgian effort and its emulation at Zica—at least in western Christian art—until "The Last Supper" of Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo places Judas on the same side of the table where Jesus and the other disciples sit, marking him out by his recoiling gestural language and by the shadow that envelops him.

Later artists experiment with varied ways in which to convey this scene, from Tintoretto in 1592-4 to Salvador Dali in 1955. But the Georgian image may be the earliest to offer a new way of conceiving Judas within the scene.

There are, of course, also saints who are unique to Georgia. Thus St. Nino, most obviously—credited with converting King Mirian III, effectively bringing Christianity to Georgia. Oddly, she is rarely depicted—there's a late 10th-century depiction of her, arms upraised in the orans position at the Oshki Monastery—but perhaps often implied. Her attribute is a cross made of a grapevine. So the many icons with backgrounds or frames elaborated as grape vines may offer a treble symbolism particular to Georgia. Grape-vines are a standard reference,

elsewhere, to Jesus as self-sacrificing, supreme vintner, but in Georgian iconography they may also refer to St. Nino. Perhaps they also allude to the extensive historical relationship between Georgia and viticulture.

Other saints unique to Georgia are part of Georgian medieval art. Among these are early translator monks who established the Iviron monastery on Mt Athos—specifically to produce Georgian-language translations of important theological works. The best known of these are Ekvtime and Giorgi Mtatsmindeli. The illuminated texts that they created helped to modernize the Georgian Church after the 11th century, shaping a manuscript tradition with its own unique elements—such as a focus on exotic animalia.

This fauna-rich sensibility continued to evolve along stylistically complex lines through the 13th- and 14th-century Mongol invasions toward the arrival of strong Safavid influence from the east and post-Byzantine, Ottoman influence from the west. The ongoing Georgian passion for synthesis and the interweave of new ideas with familiar ones yielded further ways of visual thinking—part of a passionate awareness, reflected from icons and coins to wall-paintings and manuscripts, of the importance of visual art as a window between worlds.

Notes:

Figure 3. Icon of The Virgin from Martvili, 10th century AD; 9th-12th century AD (cloisonné Enamel); 17th-18th century AD (frame)

1. He is depicted thusly in the wall paintings within the 11th-century churches of Manglisi and Ishkani, and in the 12th-century manuscript of The Homilies of St Gregory Nazianseni (The Theologian).

2. Our sense of Seljuk arms and armor is derived from others' depictions of them, since none that may be identified definitively has survived. It might be remembered that King Bagrat V (1027-72) experienced growing difficulties with both the Seljuks and the Byzantines during his reign—he was part of a Byzantine-led coalition defeated in 1071 at the Battle of Manzikert by the Seljuks. Two generations after his rule, David IV ("The Builder"—r. 1089-1125) initiated the Georgian medieval golden age when he drove out the Seljuks and expanded Georgian political and cultural influence south into Armenia and east as far as the Caspian Sea.

3. There is also some irony in the fact that the saint's garment can be recognized as in the style of a Komnenian Byzantine cavalryman (the Komnenian Dynasty ruled ca 1081-1185, restoring Byzantine fortunes after Manzikert): he wears a lamellar klivanion cuirass with tubular splint defenses for he upper arms

and the splinted skirt kremasmata to protect the lower body and upper legs, together with knee-length boots typical of Komnenian Byzantine cavalrymen.

4. Painted wooden faces, in this case, are islands within a substantial and extremely well-worked oklad.

5. Conversely, this coin reminds us of a fairly uniquely Georgian historical relationship with non-Christian groups. Not only do we find little or no persecution of Jews across these centuries but Islam was not driven out and Muslims were not persecuted either when the Seljuks were defeated or earlier, in the 9th century, when the Arab Muslims were defeated by the Bagratid leader, Ashot Kouropalate.

6. Ivane Javakhishvivli asserts this in his History of the Georgian Nation, (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1983), Vol 2, 280, 291-2 (in Georgian). The assertion is repeated by Dzhvansher Levanovich Vateishvili in his Georgia and the European Countries: Studies of Interrelationship in the 13th-19th centuries, (Nauka, 2003), Vol 1, Book 1, 135, fn 3 (in Russian). Queen Tamar herself stuck several irregularly-shaped, bilingual coins, but none with as distinctive a shoe configuration as this one.

7. The patron saint of the monastery is, incidentally, St. George, and there is a handsome late 13th-century icon there depicting him.

8. See Patrick McGovern's concise and excellent essay, "Georgia as Homeland of Wine-making and Viticulture," in Soltes, National Treasures of Georgia.

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Medieval Art

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SCULPTURAL IMAGES OF MEDIEVAL GEORGIAN MASONS

In the last decades, international scholarship has displayed growing interest in medieval architects and masons. Recent studies have challenged traditional opinion according to which medieval architects differed in kind from those of earlier and later times. At present, nobody disputes that professional skills and artistic vision of the medieval architect were on par with those of the architects of classical antiquity and the Renaissance. This equally concerns medieval architects of both western and eastern Christendom, including Georgia. Medieval Georgian architecture, which is one of the greatest achievements of Georgian culture, provides clear evidence of the professional training and creative power of its builders. Though the majority of them are nameless to us, some of them have left their names and some of them even left their images on the walls of churches.

Sculptural images of masons are to be found in dozens of Medieval Georgian churches. A sculpture of a kneeling layman in the Church of the Holy Cross at Mtskheta, or Jvari Church, built between 586 and 607, is regarded as being the architect of the church (G. Chubinashvili, 1948, 148, pl. 22-23). If this supposition is correct, it would be the earliest sculptural image of a church builder in Georgia. Apparently, the sculpture was originally placed above the window of the drum and was reused during the 10th-century restoration.

In most cases, masons are represented with their tools. Identification of the builder by means of a square is typical to Georgia. Sometimes he is also shown with a hammer or both a square and a hammer. It is noteworthy that compasses are never depicted in Georgia – unlike medieval Western Europe where compasses were the main attribute of the architect.

As a rule, no difference is made between architect and mason. The sculpture above the window in the Cathedral of Ruisi is a typical example of the double representation of builders. It shows two masons, one on the left with a square and a small block of stone, and the other on the right with a hammer (G. Chubinashvili, 1970, 191-192, pl. 70). Some images presumably contain indications to the particular speciality of a builder. A master on the slab from the church of Kalota is represented with a pointed hammer, standing by a large framed cross, which may suggest that he specialized in carving. A man lifting a block of stone sculpted in King Bagrat's cathedral in Kutaisi is a laborer engaged in the hard work of carrying building materials (M. Bulia and M. Janjalia, 2006, 20).

Strangely enough, the church that offers the richest array of images of masons is a small humble building located near the remote mountain village of Korogo. It dates from the late 10th century. On its eastern façade, the church has a high cornice completely covered with sculptural images of builders performing various tasks (R. Mepisashvili, 1969, 219-233; N. Aladashvili, 1977, 106, 109; N. Thierry, 1987, 321-329; R. Ousterhout, 1999, 138-139).

In the first scene on the left, a quarryman gets a block of stone out of the quarry. He cuts a rectangular channel around the block with a pick. The next image illustrates transportation process: a block of stone lies on a sledge to which a pair of oxen is yoked. One worker leads the oxen while the other retains the block in a proper position, using a lever to do so. Oxen were widely used in Medieval Georgia for the transportation of building materials. According to the inscription above the southern entrance of the church of St John the Baptist in Oshki, thirty oxen were carrying the stone during the construction of the church (Djobadze, 1978, 127). The regular shape of the block reminds us of the practice of partly finishing stones at the quarry to reduce the weight that had to be carried to a building site (J. Harvey, 1975, 111).

The third scene shows two workers preparing mortar at ground level, using a special tub for mixing lime with water. In the fourth scene, workers carry mortar and water. This scene looks like a sequel of the previous one, as if the two workers took the mortar tub and the jug to transport them to a building site. The fifth scene displays two workers carrying a stone on a sledge. The method is similar to that of workers shown in the second scene, but here they manage without oxen because the stone block is much smaller.

A further sequence continues on the opposite side. The first scene carved in the lower end of the cornice shows a woman bringing food and drink to the workers. She holds a tray in her right hand and a pitcher

in the left. This is the only female personage in these sculptures – except of course for the Virgin. Construction was a purely male domain in the Middle Ages (and not only in the Middle Ages but actually until the recent times); medieval depictions of construction never contain female images. Therefore, the fact that in Korogo church a woman is represented among builders is interesting itself even if she has a marginal role.

In the second scene on the right side, two workers labor at a huge block of stone. They can be identified as roughmasons engaged in the rough-hewing of stone. The workers hold big hammer-axes with both

1. Korogo. Left part of the cornice.

hands. Their postures are different. One of them has already struck the stone while the other has raised his hammer up to strike the stone.

The next image shows three workers carrying smaller blocks on their backs. One of them simply holds it in his hands while the other bears the stone, which is tied to his back with a belt. Judging by this image one may conclude that the latter method was less safe, for the sculptor depicted one more worker who helps his workmate, supporting a burden from behind. This scene calls up words of the 10h-century Georgian hagiographer George Merchule, who described the construction process of the church of St George in Khandzta: "stone and lime were brought by men on their backs from faraway places, on very difficult trails" (Djobadze, 1992, 25).

The following two scenes are not directly connected with the construction process. One of them represents the dedication of the church; the other the presentation of a model of the building to the Virgin. At the top of the gable, there is an image of the Virgin and Child.

Thus, on the cornice of Korogo Church, there is a whole cycle of sculptures depicting construction.

But this "story" doesn't include the scenes of the building process itself. We do not see here masons laying stones or spreading mortar on their surface. We do not see the church under construction, with its half-built walls. Images of workers shaping and carrying stone blocks are followed, rather abruptly, by the scene of the dedication of the church, which has evidently has been completed. In the scenes showing work in process emphasis is on the transportation of building materials. Taking into account the location of the church on the top of the mountain that would be a major effort.

Apart from those at Korogo, there are few sculptures in Georgia showing builders at work. One of them is the image of mason sculpted on the cornice of the Church of the Dormition in Sapara Monastery. He is depicted shaping stone with a hammer. Thematically, this image recalls Romanesque sculptures from Poitiers and Tournus, though stylistic difference is obvious.

2. Korogo. Right part of the cornice

Important sculptural images are preserved in Svetitskhoveli Cathedral in Mtskheta, which is the main church of Georgia. It was first built in around 330 and rebuilt or restored several times during the centuries. The architect who reconstructed the cathedral in the early 11th century is commemorated on the northern façade by the image of his hand holding a square. The inscription carved on the both sides of the relief states: "The hand of the servant Arsukisdze, forgive him." Furthermore, Arsukisdze is mentioned together with the donor of the cathedral, the Catholicos Melchisedek, in another inscription carved on the eastern façade (L. Muskhelishvili, 1942, 136-137).

The way in which Arsukisdze is immortalized in Svetitskhoveli Cathedral is exceptional for Georgia. Moreover, it has no parallels in the Middle Byzantine and Romanesque art as well. Such combination of two inscriptions mentioning the name of the architect and

3. Sapara, Church of the Dormition. Sculpture on the cornice.

the image of his hand with a square can be considered as the extraordinary exaltation of the medieval architect, which is explainable only in the context of the early history of the cathedral. The particular respect for its builder derives from the tradition that identifies St Nino, the Illuminatrix of Georgia, as the architect of the first church on the site of Svetitskhoveli. Due to this tradition, working in Svetitskhoveli was both special honor and special responsibility. Each master mason contributing to the construction or restoration of the cathedral was considered as a "successor" of the first architect of the church, that is of St Nino, and therefore was awarded with a privilege. This lineage caused the special honor offered to 11th-century architect Arsukisdze. It is also reflected in the late Medieval sculpture on the drum of the Cathedral. Its dome fell down in 1656 and was restored in the same year, as indicated in the inscription on the cornice of the drum. Lower there is a sculpted slab representing five masons who rebuilt the dome (D. Khoshtaria, 2006, 112-127). On the right, there is a master mason, presumably a royal architect. His figure is bigger than the other four. He holds traditional tools of the builder, a square and a pointed stone hammer, while the masons are represented on both sides of a huge tool, a T-shaped boom crane. This is the only sculptural image in Georgia that shows a special mechanical device for lifting building materials. What makes this image particularly interesting is the gesture of the architect who hands a square, a sign of the architect's craft, over one of the masons. This action symbolizes the recognition of professional skills of the masons and charging them with an important mission.

There are two early 15th-century sculptures that merit special attention as they are very different from those discussed above. That period was the most difficult time in Georgian history, the period of deep demographic, economic, and cultural crisis caused by Tamerlane's seven devastating invasions of the country. Georgian literature of that period is filled with the sense of despair. Masons' sculptures also reflect changed attitude toward the world, life and death, introducing a new theme – death of a mason in a professional accident. It is known that in the Middle Ages, accidents often happened during construction. At Canterbury Cathedral (England), for example, the master mason William of Sens was inspecting the high vaults in 1178 when he fell from the scaffolding and was paralyzed (J. Harvey, 1972, 212). The 13th-century Georgian author Abuserisdze Tbeli describes three accidents that occurred to the master mason Bolok-Basil (Abuserisdze Tbeli, 1941, 59, 60, 62). He survived all three accidents but many of his colleagues did not have the same luck. A sculpture on the eastern façade of the church at Argveti shows a group of masons: an old master in the center and two younger masters, one on each side of him, grieving for their dead fellow worker (N. Vacheishvili, 2004, 18-19). The square in the hand of the old mason is lowered as a sign of mourning. It has the same meaning as the lowered flag.

The other sculpture is even more emotional. though being more primitive in treatment. It was made by masons who in early 15th-century restored the Ca-
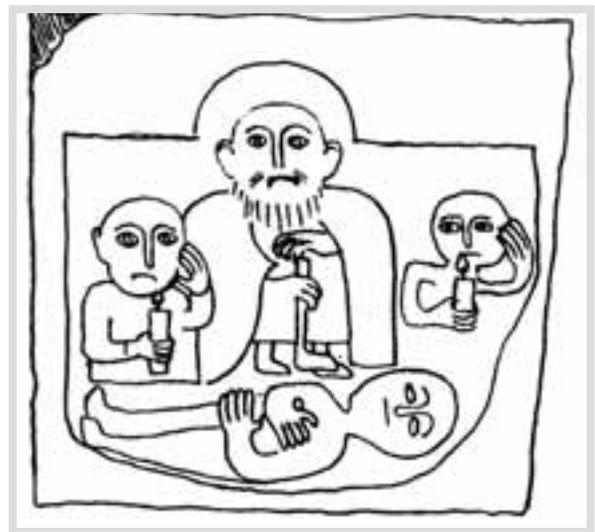
4. Argveti. Sculpture on the eastern façade.

5. Ruisi Cathedral. Sculpture on the northern façade.

thedral of Ruisi, which Tamerlane had destroyed. The sculpture consists of two parts. On the lower part there is a man holding a square on the left side. This is a sign just to make clear that depicted characters are masons. To the right there are two men, one standing and the other kneeling, who extend hands to each other. Since they have nothing in their hands the scene may be interpreted as the fall of the mason from the scaffolding and other masons' unsuccessful attempt to help him. Presumably this unfortunate man might be the foreman mason Shalva, who is mentioned as dead in the inscription of the church (G. Chubinashvili, 1970, 204). Accordingly, the damaged upper part of the sculpture should depict his funeral.

Sculptural images of masons provide a valuable source of information concerning their life and work, troubles and problems, social status and corporate hierarchy. These images are especially important when we take into consideration the fact that they have no parallels in Byzantine art. On the other hand, numerous more or less close analogues of these sculptures can be found in Western Europe. Further study of Georgian masons' sculptural representations with a comparative examination of Romanesque art may be fruitful in providing a better understanding of the iconography as well as of social and cultural implications of these images.

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Medieval Art

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THE ORIENTAL AND THE EUROPEAN IN 17TH-18TH CENTURY GEORGIAN ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE (WINDOWS AND PORTALS)

During the Late Middle Ages Georgia suffered political, economic and cultural decline. Left without ties to Christendom and Europe after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Georgia became culturally isolated, surrounded by aggressive Muslim powers. Hence, relations with the Muslim world appeared inevitable. Georgia adopted Asian elements, but the question is what Georgian culture found acceptable and to what degree. A large number of ecclesiastical buildings surviving from the Late Middle Ages (14th-18th cc.) attest that the creative endeavors were characterized one one hand by the desire to maintain local tradition and, on the other hand, to adopt and reproduce Oriental-Islamic motifs. The penetration of European features was also evident. These trends are visible in architectural details, namely in window and portal decoration.

Ecclesiastical architecture of the Late Middle Ages reveals the same trend that characterized each stage of Georgian architecture: particular emphasis on the decoration of church doors, which was due to the functional and conceptual importance of this element.

The decoration of late medieval portals offers two distinct compositional schemes, with the difference lying in the combination of the forms of a door section and the geometry of its framing: the first typical scheme combines a right-angled door with an arched frame (traditional), while another locates a projecting frame of the door in a right-angled framing (Oriental).

The arch in a rectangle is a late medieval phenomenon taking its roots in Islamic-Muslim art. It was first used in brick churches in Kakheti (east Georgian province) in the 16th century. A combination of flat niches – a pointed arch set in a rectangle

– became one of the leading motifs in the decoration of clerestory windows (Akhali Shuamta and Gremi Church of the Archangels), but they can also be found in portal decoration (e.g., at Gremi, 1595). It is not only for a pointed shape of arches that this element takes a distinctly Islamic-Oriental character, but rather a compositional unity of a pointed shape and a rectangular frame. It was not until the 17th century that a pointed arched portal set in a rectangular frame came into evidence in Kartli. The composition of a minor church at Khatissopeli reveals weak signs of this trend.

A more obvious and redeveloped version of such a portal design can be found on the north façade of Ananuri Church of the Virgin, dating from the 17th century. The south portal offers a second type of composition and lacks a rectangular frame. The portal is provided with arched, recurring frames. The artistic appearance of the south portal combines two trends: traditional Georgian and Oriental Islamic. On one hand, all that we see is very typical of the decoration of Georgian façade decoration: a complicated frame profile, recurring blind arches and a variety of ornamented frames. Traditional are details (ornamental motifs) and an entire composition of a portal, including a right-angled section, an arched tympanum and arched frames which are in evidence in Georgian architecture beginning from the 11th century and characterized by a rhythm and form harmonious with the tympanum.

Despite all the foregoing, the south portal at Ananuri appears Islamic. This is first of all due to separate details (e.g., sharply pointed arches and a single ornamental motif) and an overall principle of embellishment (carpet-like decoration). Traditional Georgian portals are characterized by a distinct compositional structure: a frame profile was less articulated, while ornaments were bordered with flat surfaces which served the purpose of adding emphasis; a protruding frame often alternated with a deeply set tympanum. This defined the tectonic character of the structure and plasticity of forms. Despite a multitude of details, Ananuri south portal was perceived as a distinct ornament, a flat 'carpet' spread around the doorway.

It is of note that this Oriental-Islamic artistic principle, present on the south portal at Ananuri, gave birth to only one trend in Georgian art. Simulta-

neously with it churches were designed in which the compositional system of the portals reveals a more local influence in terms of artistic form and shows a relatively innovative approach. The portals of these churches are redolent of perspective portals of medieval European churches. This group of churches is centered on the same theme of door decoration and sparks a separate artistic movement in the second half of the 17th century. It is distinguished by an innovative design and has a composition which relies on the traditions of old Georgian art, but also uses Oriental elements and creates a new composition that finds no direct parallels. Thanks to perspective and stepped designs, these portals remind us of forms typical of European architecture. It also appears probable that that the group of masters worked under the influence of European architecture.

The structures that we affiliated with this trend cover a chronological period from the second half of the 17th century to the early 18th century, showing a thread of development. It was within this period that the task of revising a traditional Georgian portal was undertaken. This is a composition that is based on a general scheme – a right-angled door set in an arched frame. This scheme took root in the advanced Middle Ages and can be seen at a later date as well. The aforementioned portal of Ananuri repeats this scheme. However, as noted above, it has an Oriental appearance due to some aspects of artistic rendering.

Another group of portals shows a deviation from Oriental art despite the use of separate Islamic motifs and aspires to create a different artistic effect, thus revealing new trends. Early examples of this trend include Goruli and Tbisi church portals. The south portal of Goruli Church (1660-1670s) is distinguished by a trefoil arch outlining Islamic ornamental motifs, but it also offers an attempt of a perspective rendering of a portal: the vertical sides of the outer arched frame are double-stepped, and the door ornament is placed on a plane directed inside to emphasize the portal. The west portal at Tbisi is also distinguished by plasticity. This trend is made more obvious by the west portal of St Nicholas Church at Nichbisi (1670-80s), which contains
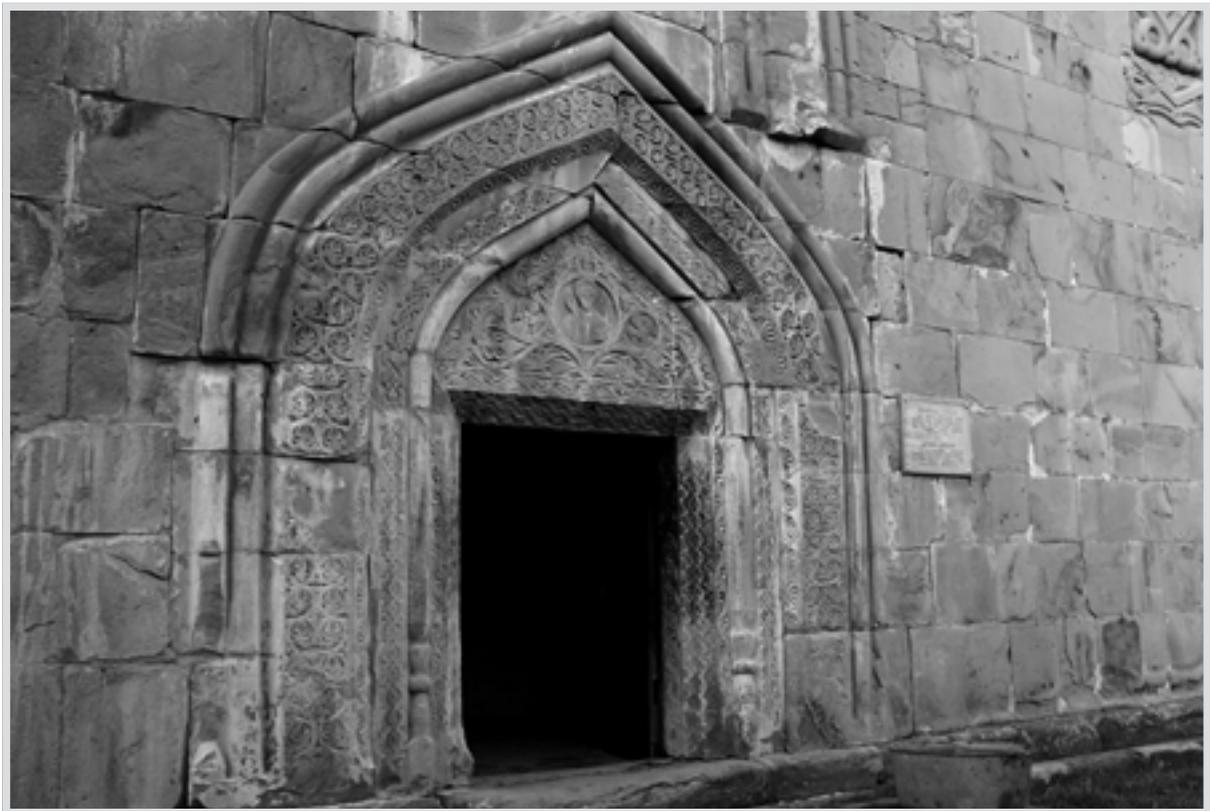
1. The Church of the Dormition of the Virgin at Ananuri (17th century), south portal.

2. St Nicholas Church at Nichbisi (1670-80s), west portal.

two building layers. Characterized by plasticity and tectonic features, a perspective, three-stepped portal belongs to the first layer (1670s). At the second stage, two more steps were added to the portal. It is noteworthy that here too we see a combination of Georgian ornament and Islamic motifs. However, Islamic elements are rendered in a different way: usually, Islamic motifs (a 'carpet' formed of interlaced ornament) lack a common axis and may extend in four directions. Flanked by shafts, this motif at Nichbisi outlines a door like a flat strip and together with a neighboring Georgian ornament creates a harmonious whole.

Another vivid example of a perspective portal survives on the west façade of Church of Sts Peter and Paul at Sagarejo (end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century). The perspective, richly adorned portals disappeared in the 18th century. It appears that they were created by a single group of masters of the same generation. However, it is also of note that a general scheme typical of these portals can be found later, for example, in the brick churches of Gurjaani Kvashveti and Melaani Sameba in Kakheti, dating from the late 18th century, with their three-stepped portals without ornamental decoration. The adornment of clerestory windows offers the same trend: perspective

3. St Nicholas Church at Nichbisi (1670-80s), ornaments of west portal.

4. The Church of Sts Peter and Paul at Sagarejo (end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century), west portal.

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arched steps are to be found around the windows of the drums of Bodorna (1717) and Manavi (1794) churches.

As concerns European architectural forms, they took a new shape towards the end of the 18th century. The west façade of Manavi Church, built in 1794, was adorned with right-angled pilasters with an arch above them. The use of right-angled pilasters in façade decoration had not been evidenced before that time. European style of decoration is highlighted not only by pilasters and their capitals, but also by dome windows, which are also bordered with pilasters and steps projecting into the depth. The overall composition of the structure and the principles of distribution of decorative elements are in harmony with the typical forms of Georgian architecture. It is obvious that nothing Islamic remained. There are new details that enable us to feel the 'breath' of approaching Europe.

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GEORGIAN ICONS ON HOLY MOUNT ATHOS

Mount Athos was one of the important centres of spiritual activity of the Georgians in the middle Ages. At the end of the 10th c. they founded there the famous Iviron Monastery, which from the very beginning occupied a significant, the second place among the monasteries of the Holy Mountain after the Great Lavra of St. Athanasius Athonite (N. Ekonomidis, 1997, 5). The special authority of the Georgian Athonites and their monastery was also due to the fact that the icon of the Theotokos Portaitissa (Our Lady the Gatekeeper) having reached the Mount Athos miraculously by sea, wished to be placed exactly in Iviron by the hands of the Georgian monk Gabriel. Portaitissa, which is the especially venerated icon on the Mount (E.Tsigaridas, 1997, 49), is regarded as one of the major sacred objects in entire Orthodox Christendom to the present day.

Information concerning the establishment of the Iviron is offered in a work of Old Georgian literature - Life of Ioane and Euthymius, composed in the 11th c. in the same monastery by Giorgi Mtatsmindeli (e.g. Hagiorite or Athonite).

This work represents a valuable source not only about the life of the Georgian monks and Iviron, but it also provides information as to what monastic life was like on Mount Athos.

As it becomes clear from Georgian, Greek, Armenian and European historical sources, Iviron was founded by Georgian noblemen Ioane and Tornike Chordvaneli, who moved from Mount Olympus of Bithynia (Asia Minor) to Mount Athos (L. Menabde, 1980, 187). "In 978-979 Tornike afforded Basil II such vigorous and such successful support in putting down the revolt led by Bardas Skleros that he returned to Athos laden with the spoils of a war: his grateful Emperor also showered him with lands and privileges, granted him subsidies and exemption from taxes, and permitted him to found the monastery of Iviron, a large establishment, also with his own ship" (N. Ekonomidis, 1997, 6).

Ioane was accompanied by his son Euthymius, educated in Constantinople, who succeeded his father as the abbot of Iviron and translated from Greek into Georgian numerous texts necessary for the divine service. It was exactly him who laid on Mount Athos the foundation of the Georgian literary centre, the most productive one for Georgian culture throughout the Middle Ages.

The Life relates that the Georgians arriving on Mount Athos were greeted cordially by Athanasius the Great (through his mother a Georgian, a Laz), who lodged them in his lavra. They spent there two years. As soon other Georgians also visited Mount Athos for spiritual activities, by the blessing of Athanasius they founded first the Monastery of St. John the Theologian, and then Iviron with the Churches of the Theotokos and St. John the Baptist (in past _ St. Clement's church), with all necessary buildings, cells, farm lands, inventory, etc.

This information demonstrates the condition of the Georgians on the Holy Mountain in the initial period of the monastic life there (10th-11th cc.). Their monastery was the second by its significance after the Lavra of Athanasius the Great, whereas the Vatopedi Monastery was the third one (N. Ekonomidis, 1997, 5-6).

It is noteworthy that the privileged position of the Georgians on Mount Athos is also obvious from Greek sources. In this respect the deed of "Gratitude" towards pious Ioane, monk and abbot, the Iberian", drawn up in 984 by Athanasius the Great himself is especially significant Venerable father greatly praises the Georgian monk, who with remarkable diligence served on Mount Athos not only the Lord, but the Great Lavra as well (Αξιορσιτου μοναχου Νικοδημου Μπιλαλη, 2000, 257-270). Athanasius relates that Ioane showed constant care for the great Lavra and "granted to the monastery everything that was necessary for it. Venerable Ioane asked and received from Byzantine Emperors Nicephorus Phocas and Basil II deeds of grant for the Greek monastery, as a result of which it income increased and the territory extended.

It becomes clear from the deed of gratitude that St. Athanasius on his part gave presents to the Georgians (lands and churches not only on Holy mount, but also in other places) end expressed his respect for them in a special way. The fact is noteworthy that the above-mentioned deed granted to Ioane the Iberian contains Greek and Latin signatures of outstanding monks from other monasteries, which is the "sign of spiritual brotherhood of Georgian, Greek and Latin Orthodox" monks, serving on Holy Mount Athos (see – E. Chelidze, 2004, 6).

The authority of the Georgians on Mount Athos remained the same after Euthymius succeeded his father as the abbot. As is known, Protos (person who served as governor of the monasteric states of Athos) did not

take an important decision without Father Euthymius. The special respect shown to Euthymius by the monks of the Holy Mountain was also due to the fact that they saw with their own eyes the miracles worked by this venerable father (G. Mtatsmindeli, 1946, 32-36).

St. Euthymius was entrusted with the care for the Great Lavra too after the repose of St. Athanasius. Due to the unrest in the Lavra, Euthymius was summoned by the Emperor to Constantinople, where he got into trouble, causing his death.

It is noteworthy that he was injured mortally when he was going to see the icon of St. John the Theologian commissioned to a certain icon-painter in Constantinople (G. Mtatsmindeli, 1946, 48-49)

According to G. Mtatsmindeli, in the end of 10th –beginning of 11th cc. the Georgian Athonite fathers filled the churches of the Iviron monastery "with divinely inspired books and illumined them by sacred icons". (G. Mtatsmindeli, 1946, 14)

Along with this, they donated icons, together with other treasure (patens and chalices, a cross decorated with enamel, a gilded silver stavrothèque, the Gospel decorated with brocade and silver, chrysobuls, embroidered fabrics, money, houses, a vineyard, boats) to the Lavra of Athana-sius the Great, the Monastery of Karia (e.g. Protaton) and other small monasteries. It is noteworthy that the list of the icons includes their title, material and sometimes even the price. These are as follows: icons of the Crucifixion, St. John the Baptist and St. Eustratious painted with encaustic technique (costing 10 gold coins Drahkhans); icons of the Deesis, the Deposition from the Cross, Holy Martyrs; altar beams (epistyles) with the images the Twelve Apostles and the Twelve Great Feasts (Dodekaorton) and three large icons of the Deeses. It is also noted in the Life that all the 300 dwellers of the Georgians' monastery had an icon in their cells (G. Mtatsmindeli, 1946, 23, 40).

As we see, icons occupied a significant place in the life of the Georgian Athonites, similar as in the Orthodox Church in general.

Exactly due to these reasons, it is doubtless that along with the literary activities, the Georgians must have also painted icons at Iviron. It may be stated with confidence that on Mount Athos there must have been a workshop of the Georgians, where along with icons miniatures of original and translated manuscripts must have also been made.

This viewpoint is supported by the circumstance

1. Fragments of Wall Painting with the Images of the Great Georgian Athonites : St. Euthymius and St. Georgi Mtatsmindeli. 13th Century. Main Church of Akhtala Monastery
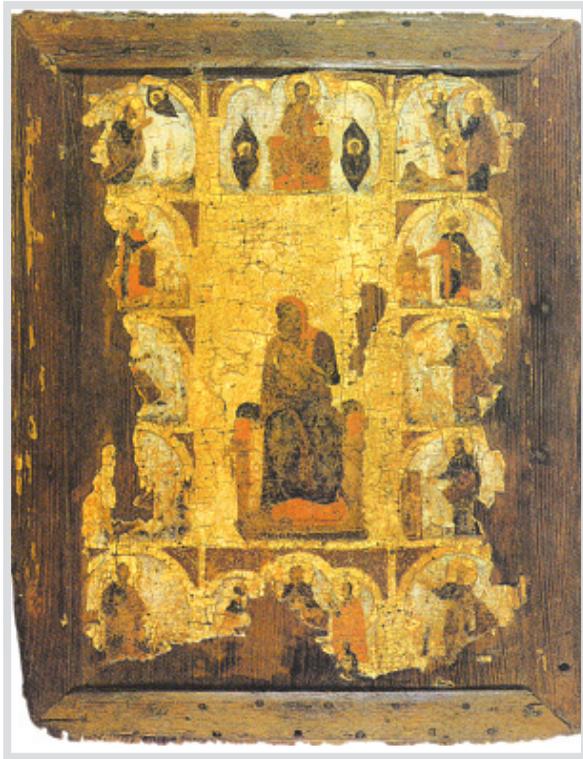
2. Icon of the Virgin with the Child and the Prophets from the Mount Athos, 12th-13th centuries, the Hermitage Museum; b)Fragment of the Sinaitic Triptych with the Virgin and the Scenes of St. Nicholas' Life. The 12th-13th centuries. Mount Sinai. St. Catherine Monastery.

that Georgian monks had a similar workshops on Mount Sinai (N. Burtchuladze, 2009, 235-236) and in other places where they served as well. For example, according to the typikon of the Petritsoni Georgian monastery in Bulgaria (A. Shanidze, 1971, 61-129) by 1083 there were several icons adorned with precious stones (chased of gold and silver, made in cloisonné enamel, painted) there, among which stavrothèques, polyptychs and altar beams with representations of the Deesis and the Great Feasts are named.

Proceeding from this and taking into account the fact that many divinely inspired icons of the middle Byzantine period have survived in Georgia, it may be said with confidence that icons painted by the Georgians must have existed on Mount Athos too. The more so as, according to literature sources, including Georgian manuscripts of Mount Athos in the 10th -13th cc. Iviron was under special care of Byzantine and Georgian kings and nobles, such as Byzantine Emperors _ Nicephorus Phocas, Basil II, Constantin IX; Empress Mariam - a Georgian by birth, the wife of Michael VII Ducas and Nicephoros Botaneiate; Georgian kings - David Kuropalates, David the Builder,

Tamar and others (Life of Qartli, 1955 _353, 1959 _141; L. Menabde, 1980, 209, 217, 220-222).

This was the golden period in the history of Georgia which witnessed the closest political and cultural contacts of Georgia with Byzantium (Sh. Badridze, 1975, 162-190). At that time the Georgians actively laboured at well-known educational centres of the empire, such as Monasteries of Constantinople - Khora, Triantaphyllou, Mangana, Romana , Olympus (Asia Minor), etc. Naturally, the Georgians in Byzantium not only mastered theology and different branches of science, but gained significant experience in church art as well, which afterwards proved very useful in their activity in Georgia. But it should be noted that the activity of the Georgians in Byzantium and Constantinople was not one-sided - they also made their own considerable contribution to the development of Byzantine culture.

Obviously, this was a favorable circumstance for the creative activity, including icon-painting, of the Georgian monks on Mount Athos.

I believe, bringing to light the "Athonian-Georgian" icons is an urgent matter for the history of

Georgian as well as Byzantine culture. This calls for the study of the ancient specimens of icon-painting preserved at the monasteries of Mount Athos, which, unfortunately, are not accessible for everyone. Still, I think it is possible to express my opinion concerning the Georgian origin of several icons from Mount Athos, some of which are today preserved at different monasteries, museums and private collections.

In this regard, first of all, attention attaches to icon of the Komnenos period – The Virgin with the Child and Prophets (12th c.), preserved at the Hermitage , which in my opinion, must have been a work of a Georgian painter (N. Burtchuladze, 2002, 92-93).

As it known this icon repeats a well-known Sinai one of the Constantinople origin of the same title, dating to the 11th-12th cc., but with eastern Christian "provincial" features (O. Etingof, 1988, 141, 147)

Indeed, the similarity of these icons is quite obvious. They resemble one another according to their content as well as form. However, there are certain differences between them, which have indicated that the painter working at Mt. Athos was inspired by the Sinai icon, but he creatively adapted the original.

The talent of the Athonian painter is evident from the fact that he more specifically adjusted the generalized plan of the domed church of the iconographic scheme of the original (O. Etingof, 1997, 37-54) to the dome less basilica of St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai.

At this stage of study it is especially significant that the icon of Athos claims the attention by the original construction of the board. Y. Piatnitski notes specially that horizontal parts of its setting are cut out separately and attached to the board from above by wooden nails (Y. Piatnitski, 1992, 24-25).

It should be noted that icon boards made in this way occur in large numbers in medieval Georgian art, whereas the existence of similar constructions is unknown elsewhere (N. Burtchuladze, 2006, 52-53). The advantage of this method is that together with the back fasteners it additionally strengthens the board and better protects it from deformation.

Thus, the Athonian icon of the Virgin too, painted on a board of the above-described construction, must be executed by a Georgian monk, who was well aware of the original existing on Mount Sinai, and who, in my opinion, must have painted the triptych with the Life of St. Nicholas at the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai.

The closeness of the Athonian painter to Sinai is also indicated by the circumstance that in his work
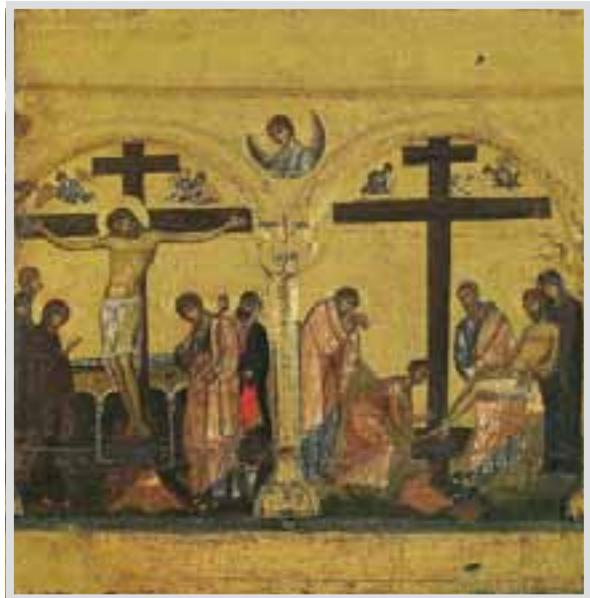
3. Fragment of the Epistyle with "Crucifixion" and "Deposition from the Cross", 12th-13thcc, Vatopedi Monastery. Mount Athos. Icon of "Crucifixion", 11th -12th cc. Georgian National Museum (Upper Svaneti, Mestia); Icon with "Deposition from the Cross and Lamentation of Christ". 11th -12th cc. Georgian National Museum (Upper Svaneti, Mestia)

gold backgrounds on icon nimbuses and in large, circular arches are polished as is characteristic of specimens of Sinai icon-painting of the Middle Byzantine Period. Moreover, the slim figure of the Theotokos – with the elongated, S-shaped silhouette, angular shoulders and elbows, the knees on unequal levels, the head sharply bent to the side and the arrangement of folds of garments (especially the headscarf) – bear strong resemblance with the image of the Theotokos (fragment of the Annunciation scene) shown in the upper part of the right wing of the triptych of
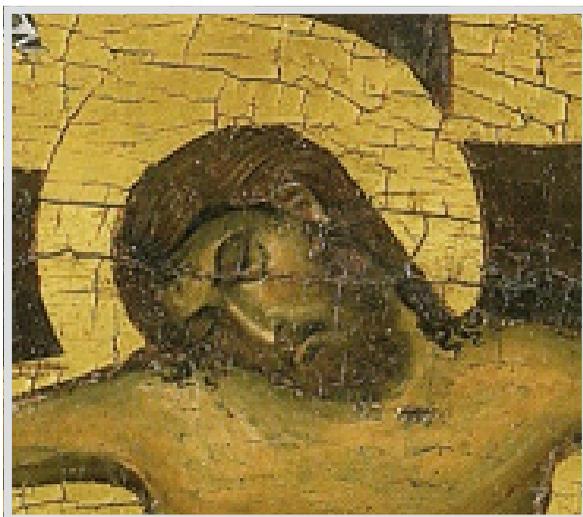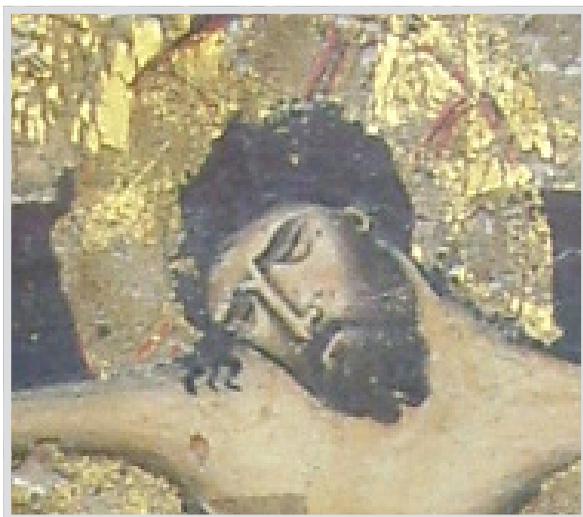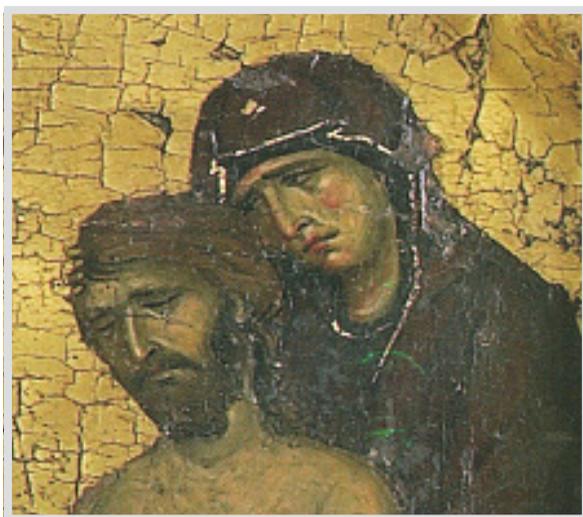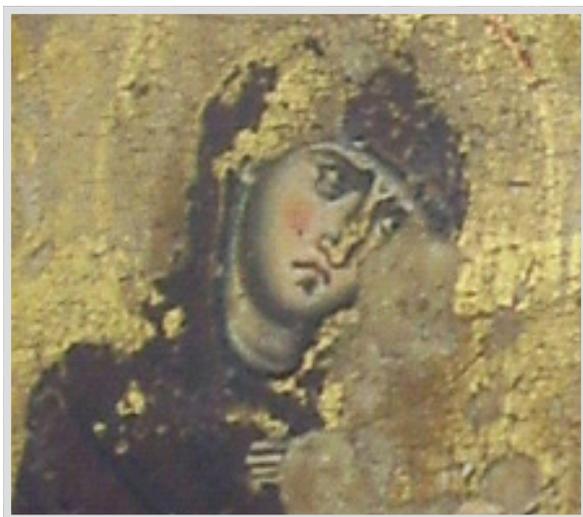
4. a) c) Fragments of the Icon of "Crucifixion" (11th -12th centuries) Georgian National Museum (Upper Svaneti, Mestia); b) d) Fragments of the Vatopedi Monastery Epistyle (12th-13th centuries).

St. Nicholas preserved in the Sinai collection (K. Waitzmann, 1966, 1-23). In these icons, the seats without a back, foot supports, fabric covering and other details are identical both as to the drawing and the colouring (except for that in the Athonite icon there are two bolsters – red and purple, and in the Sinai – one).

The type of the face of the Theotokos in the Athonian icon and the Sinai triptych is also very close. The elongated oval, very low forehead, long, almond-shaped eyes, eyebrows with downward ends, sizeable aquiline nose and biggish lips – impart a characteristic air to both images and make them so similar that the question arises naturally as to their belonging to the hand of a single painter. This view is also supported by the resemblance of the drawing and colour modeling of the faces and

folds of garments, as well as by how extensive and "airy" the space surrounding the figures is – the brilliance gold background symbolizing the Paradise, against which representations of a relatively smaller scale are arranged quite loosely. Other figures and the environment of their action are also similar in these icons. So, the icons of the present interest have in common not only general features of the style of the specific period, but peculiarities of the individual manner of the painter as well.

In my view, further detailed, parallel analysis of these icons will demonstrate even more common features between them and will give additional arguments to substantiate that they belong to a single author.

This confirms that there were close spiritual and creative contacts between the Georgians laboring on

Mt. Athos and Mt. Sinai which is confirmed by the manuscripts preserved on those Holy Mountains (Z. Aleqsidze,1998, 6-7).

The close link between Holy Mounts Athos and Sinai is also indicated by the fact that icons of a special type – altar beams (e.g. epistyles) with scenes of the Twelve Great Feasts, seem to have been widespread in both places.

I should be noted from the outset that, apart from Constantinople, Mt. Sinai and Mt. Athos, early, the 12th-13th-centuries icons of this type occur only in Georgia. Some of them have survived fragmentarily, and some are found in situ in old churches in Svaneti (mountain region in western Georgia). They are referred too in Georgian historical sources of the 10th-13th cc., including the deed of the Svetitskhoveli cathedral (1033), in the typikon (1083) of the Petritsoni monastery (A. Shanidze, 1971, 90, 119) and the above-mentioned Life of the Athonite fathers – Ioane and Euthymius (in the present text this place has already been stressed – see p.3). Interestingly, representations of such long icons have also survived on the façades of Svaneti churches, difficult of access, which means that altar beams were widespread in Georgia.

It should be noted here too that on the oldest of the altar beams existing on Mount Sinai (K. Weitzmann, 1984, 66-67; D. Mouriki, 1999, 105-107; Sh. Gerstel, 2007, 170-173) recently has "discovered" the painter's name – "Eshekopla" written in the Old Georgian script (N. Burtchuladze, 2009, 236). This word in the Annunciation scene is inscribed in a hidden place, in the lower part of the building, depicted behind the back of the Theotokos, but it is quite legible. Noteworthy, researchers assign to the author of this icon one more unique altar beam of the Sinai treasure – with scenes of life of St. Eustratious (K. Weitzmann, 1984-1986, 67-68; D. Mouriki, 1999, 106, 152, 153;   N. Ševčenko, 2007, 174-177) as a result of which it follows that this icon too belongs to the Georgian painter, the same "Eshekopla". Along with this, by my identification, one more brilliant icon of Mount Sinai must be executed by the Georgian painter as well. This is the central part of the altar beam (so-called three masters' beam), showing orange, snow covered mountains, the prototype of which, it may be noted with confidence, is the holy mountain of Georgia – Mqinvartsveri located on the southern slope of the Caucasus Mountains, with the cave church of Bethlehem (N. Burtchuladze, 2009, 237-238).

Proceeding from this, the question arises as to whether other, the 12th-13th-centuries altar beams of Mount Sinai were also made by Georgian monks engaged in intensive activities there at that time (of course, this question does not imply all the altar beams preserved there).

Why could not we suppose that on Mount Sinai there may have existed a Georgian workshop, where our ancestors painted icons, among them altar beams? Especially as it is known that the most ancient Menologia icon - tetraptych of Mount Sinai, dating to the turn of the 11th-12th cc., and two more icons related to it (icons of Last Judgment and Passions and miracles of Christ with the five Constantinopolitan miraculous images of the Virgin), were created by the Georgian monk Ioane Tokhabi.

Along with this, the question also arises as to whether altar beams of Mount Athos of the same period were made in the "workshop" of the Athonite Georgians.

We know that Ioane and Euthymius Athonites in the 10th-11th cc. donated altar beams with the Great Deesis and Dodecaorton to the Great Lavra, Protaton and other monasteries.

May it be supposed that Georgian fathers could have donated icons to the Vatopedi monastery as well?

The reason of posing this question is that the closets stylistic parallels of the two well-known altar beams from the Vatopedi are preserved exactly in Georgian art treasuries.

Here I imply the altar beams of Vatopedi monastery showing the Great Deesis, Dodecaorton and the Deposition of Christ from the Cross depicted on gold background (N. Tsigaridas, 1977, 59-61) and another one of the 12th c, on which compositions are executed on a red, cinnabar ground (E. Tsigaridas, K. Loberdoy-Tsigarida, 2006, 40-75)15.

The first of these two altar beams finds parallels among the icons of the Crucifixion and the Deposition of Christ from the Cross and Lamentation from the Upper Svaneti collection (G. Alibegashvili and A. Volskaia 1982, 91-125; N. Burchuladze, 2001, 72, 74, 75) and the 12th-13th cc. wall paintings of the churches at Vardzia, Betania, Kintsvisi, Timotesubani; whereas parallels of the second are found in the Tbeti Gospel miniatures and mural of Saphara St. Saba's church of this period.16 In fact, if we compare at least several images, taken from Vatopedi altar beams and specimens of their contemporary Georgian painting, it will be obvious that they have strong resemblance to each other. On this end, another very important thing is that as Y. Piatnitski thinks, the closest parallel to this altar-beam is the above-mentioned icon of the Virgin with the Child and the Prophets from the Hermitage
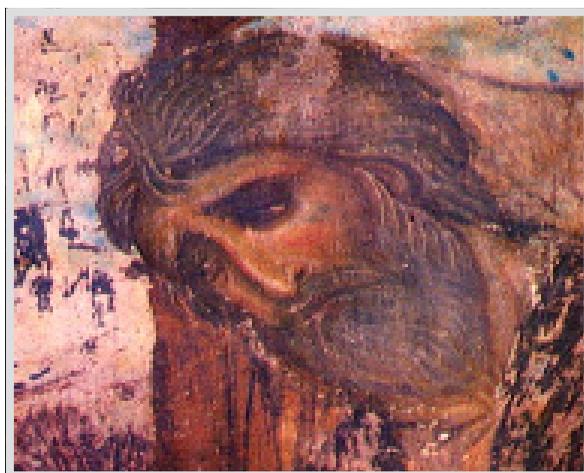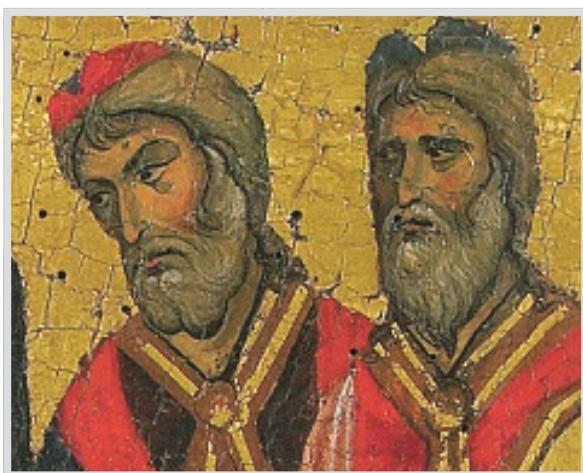
5. a) St. Bishops. Detail of the Vatopedi Epistyle. Mount Athos (12th -13th centuries); b) St. Apostle. Detail of Vardzia Mural (end of the 12th century); c) Icon of "Raising of Lazarus" from Mount Athos (12th century, The Byzantine Museum of Athens); d) Icon of "Decent into the Hell" from Mount Athos (12th century, Sevastianov's Athonian collection - The Hermitage Museum)

collection (Y. Piatnitski, 2000, 112) that, I believe, belongs to the Georgian-Athonite master.

In near future I intend to devote a special study to this preliminary declaration, in which several other icons preserved at the Hermitage will be discussed in the context of Georgian art; e.g. the altar beam icons with the scenes of the Resurrection and the Pentecost (turn of the 12th-13th cc.), which have found their way into the Hermitage from Sevastianov's Athonian collection17 and which are notable for the oriental air of the faces and resemblance with specimens of contemporary Georgian miniature painting (see for example: Gelati and Jruchi 2nd Four Gospels). 18

In this connection, miniatures of the manuscripts created on Mount Athos and Mount Sinai (10th-13th cc.), a considerable part of which must belong to local Georgian monks, also call for further special study.

Of course, more detailed comparative analysis is necessary to substantiate my views concerning Georgian icons from Mount Athos, which, I think, will demonstrate more clearly its correctness. And what is more, it may be noted with confidence that further study will bring to light other Georgian icons preserved in different treasuries as well.

Finally, it should be noted that the time has come to search for and study the trace of artistic creation of the Georgians at the spiritual centres where they were engaged in activities for a long time. And participation of foreign colleagues in research in this direction will also be desirable.19 This is necessary in order to have a clearer idea of the processes oc-

curring in church art of the Middle Byzantine period and also to evaluate in reality the role of Georgia - an ancient Christian country, in the development of Orthodox culture.

Notes:

1. The text (G. Mtatsmindeli, 1946) was issued in Georgian several times. In the 19th -20th cc. it was also translated into Russian (M. Sabinin, 1872, 127-160), Latin (P. Peeters, 1923, 8-68) and English (D. Lang, 1956, 155-165)

2. A foreign scholar R. Blake wrote about this as well (R. Blake, 11-33)

3. 3 About the contribution of the Georgian nobleman in revolt of Bardas Skleros see: M. Tarchnischvili, 1964, 95-97; E. Tsagareishvili, 1973, 157-209; Ch. Badridze, 1975, 162-190.

4. Presently Vatopedi is on the second and Iviron is on the third place in the hierarchy of Athos monasteries (B. Atsalos, 1977, 584)

5. Translation of the text into the Georgian language and comments by Professor Edisher Chelidze (E. Chelidze, 2004, 6-7). The memory of the Athonite Georgian fathers serving in the 10th-11th cc. is not forgotten on the Holy Mount to the present day. In the book depository of the Iviron Monastery a Greek text of the 18th c. is preserved, in which a Greek monk praises the activity of the founders of this monastery.

6. It should be taken into account that a confirmation of such international brotherhood is found in the Georgian source as well. One learns from the Life of Ioane and Euthymius the Athonites that the earliest monastery of the Latins on Mount Athos was built by their assistance (G. Mtatsmindeli, 1946, 31)

7. The typicon is written in the Georgian and the Greek languages. The Greek text was published in the 19th c., and the Georgian one with the Latin translation – in the mid-20th c. (A. Shanidze , 1086, 9-10).

8. About Empress Mariam see: I. Tzetzes. Historiae. Napoli, 1968, epistles 9 (21) _ 10 (6); I. Nodia, 1978, 143-153; Culture of Byzantium,1989, 252, 341, 540, 597. Her name includes one of the 11th c. Georgian manuscripts from the Iviron library (A. Tachiaos, 1997, 624)

9. Giorgi the Hagiorite himself, who succeeded Euthymius as the abbot of Iviron, had great authority with the Athonite monks. With the aid of Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus and Georgian King Bagrat IV he further enlarged and strengthened Iviron and started extensive literary activities there (L.Menabde, 1980, 209).

10. The latter was founded in Constantinople by St. Ilarion the Georgian as early as in the 9th c. (L.Menabde, 2004, 247-252)

11. This and some other Athonian icons and manuscripts were brought from Athos to Russia in 1860 by the well-known collector P. Sevastianov (O. Etingof, 2005, 243-252, 610-613)

12. They were used for both painted and chased works in parallel (other wooden supports made by the "usual technique" also co-existed)

13. Georgian monasteries existing in Georgia (e.g. Tao-Klarjeti, David Gareji, etc.) as well as abroad (e.g. Cyprus) had close physical and spiritual contacts with Holy Mountains of Sinai and Athos (L. Menabde, 1980, 44-69, 185-247; G. Gagoshidze, 2009, 255).

14. Thanks are due to the icon-painter Mr. Irakli Tsintsadze, who showed me this inscription in The Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai. 1985,.fig. 114.

15. Part of the red beam with the Last Supper is kept at the Vatopedi monastery, the Transfiguration preserved at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg; two other ones with the Nativity of Christ and the Raising of Lazarus are preserved in Greece - at the Byzantine Museum of Athens and in a private collection.

16. The existence of the painting of this period in Saphara St. Saba's church has been identified recently by restorers headed by M.Buchukuri.

17. They were brought to Russia from the Great Lavra (Y. Piatnitski, 1997,120) where two more fragments of the same altar beam with the icons of the Epiphany and the Dormition of the Virgin are preserved to the present day (V. Lazarev, 1971, 110, 115, 131; O. Etingof, 2005, 605-609).

18. Noteworthy, according to the technique of painting, faces of Saints and almost all other details of compositions, restorer A. Avchinnikov links these icons with the icons kept in the treasury of Mount Sinai (O. Etingof, 2005, 608).

19. The precondition for this is already obvious in works of such authors as A. Saminski, O. Etingof, M. Lidova. Of these: Saminski thinks that in the 11th-13th cc. the Georgians occupied the leading position at the imperial scriptorium of Constantinople, who wrote and painted Georgian as well as Greek codices (this is confirmed by codicological signs, e.g. Georgian pagination on leaves of Greek manuscripts - see A. Saminski, 1989, 184-216); Etingof notes the significance and originality of medi-

eval Georgian icons and considers their best part as created by the influence of Constantinopolitan art (O. Etingof, 2005, 388-391); Lidova poses the question on the existence of direct links between Sinai-Constantinople-Georgia (M. Lidova, 2009, 231).

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Medieval Art

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BUILDING OF 'PICTURE SPACE' IN ARGOKHI CHURCH DECORATION

Not far from the village Argokhi, in the highland region in Eastern Georgia, is to be found a small church of roughly cut stone dating back to the 8th-9th centuries (ill. 1). This tiny one- nave church (measuring 5,7/5,7 including an annex), is located on a hill slope in a lush wood where hardly anyone would expect the presence of a building; Equally surprising are the murals of high artistic merit adorning the walls of this crudely built church.

There is only a single reference to the Argokhi church in scholarly literature. A brief description of the Argokhi murals is given in the Inventory book of Georgian monuments of culture were on the basis of preliminary studying, both the architecture and murals of the church are dated (Description of the Monuments of Georgian History and Culture 2004, 56-57) , I have dedicated a special paper to the Argokhi murals to suggest a more precise dating namely the first half of the 13th century (E. Gedevanisshvili, 2007,105-122).

The present paper aims at presenting the interrelationship of space and iconographic programme; to be more precise, it attempts to explain the way the programme of the murals with its context can 'transform' and influence the inner space of the church.

At present, when the murals are badly damaged, entering the church one needs time to properly make out the wall painting. This is not only due to the damage of the paintings, but also to a lack of light in the interior. The church built in so called the "transitional period" of the history of Georgian medieval architecture, is rather dark inside.

The entrance to the building was through the porch with double-arched doorway piercing the southern facade of the annex, leading to the lower entrance of the church. In addition to the east wall, the south and west facades had a simple narrow window each, through which the inner space of the church received dim light.

The murals are divided into two registers. The Christological scenes are presented in a chronological order and are displayed clockwise. The focal image of the church is the Deesis in the apse, traditional theme of Georgian medieval wall painting. At present, only the scenes of the vault and partly of lateral walls can be seen (ill. 1) : the Annunciation and the Nativity appear on the south slope of the arch, while the Baptism, the Raising of Lazarus, the Ascension and the Pentecost are on the north part. The west wall is almost bare, but the remnants of the scene of the Presentation at the temple of Christ are still visible. According to the aforementioned book dedicated to Georgian heritage, it also contained the Descent to the Hell.

What is noteworthy is that entering the almost dark space one is immediately encountered by the scenes symbolically connected with light. The church space being small, the visitor fails to fully perceive the sequential order of the Christological scenes upon stepping into the church. Entering the sole entrance to the south part, the visitor immediately faces the north wall. Thus, the cycle for the beholder 'starts' from the left corner of the north wall representing four Christological scenes, while the scenes on the opposite wall remain in 'shade'.

First comes the Baptism which is represented on the west part of the north wall (scheme 1). The latter is followed by the scene of the Raising of Lazarus. As mentioned above, the lower register presents the Ascension and the Pentecost. The location of these particular scenes symbolically associated with light in such a poorly lit space cannot be accidental. As I suggest, the symbolic context of these scenes is further highlighted by the lack of light in the space they are located.

It is the Baptism, the image of Theophany and the Revelation of Trinity that meets the viewer entering the building. Apart from the theological context, it is the symbolism of language that also matters in this case: in Georgian, Baptism literally means "receiving light", which further highlights the symbolic context. Next is the Raising of Lazarus, the scene which represents the prefiguration of the Resurrection. Thematically it even evokes the idea of contrast between the darkness and light.

Noteworthy is that the Argokhi painter seems to have 'omitted' the scene of the Transfiguration, which in the "classical system" of Byzantine church

1.Argokhi Church .General view

decoration usually, follows the scene of the Baptism. This substitution, the pairing of the Epiphany and the Resurrection of Lazarus ads, to my mind, a physical dimension to the idea of the Salvation: the Baptism symbolizes burial and spiritual rebirth and the Raising of Lazarus, refers to the victory of light over darkness.

Next appears the representation of the Ascension, the festival of light, scene which is almost lost today. The Ascension Homilies place much emphasis on the context of light in this feast (L. James, 1996, 97). The same applies to the Pentecost, which was regarded as the feast of light in Patrology. It tangibly recalls the memory of the enlightenment of the world by the light of fire. It should also be noted, that both Eschatological scenes were located at eye level, which further emphasized the symbolic context.

Aesthetic changes from the 11th century onwards in Byzantine art have recently been extensively addressed in scholarly literature. There has been a new desire to visualize and explain the traditional concepts, 'in a new style', as contemporaries put it (A. Kazdan, 1990, 15). I will not enter in this complex issue, as it goes beyond the purpose of this paper. I would just note, that in this 'encyclopedic' epoch, the perception of art becomes more elaborated: beholders are invited to engage in a complex process of contemplation (H. Beting, 1994, 265).

The concept of light was of crucial importance in the change of the perception of paintings – the manipulation with external and depicted light vividly reflects aesthetic, as well as stylistic developments of Byzantine art. The correlation between the real and depicted light became one of the most important means of changing the church space into, as Otto De-

mus would put it, a" picture space" or "spatial icons" (O. Demus, 1953, 15), the terms which reflect the integrity and unity of the depicted image and the real space of the church.

The concern with operation of external light in the perception of the work of art is discussed in Liz James' book Light and Color in Byzantium. In this contributing work, the British scholar presents classical examples of the system of light distribution in Byzantine church decoration (L. James , 1996, 5-9).

In the most typical cases, scenes are structured according or on the basis of the lighting system (L. James , 1996, 6-7). In this context, it would be appropriate to draw an example of the Last Judgment from the murals of Timotesubani church (E. Privalova, 1980, scheme 7), where the scene of the Deesis is presented just beneath the wide window of the west arm. The intense light entering through the window is echoed in the mandorla of Christ rendered through red and gray circles artistically unifying the depicted scene and the light coming through the window. The artist seems to have chosen the composition and colorings by taking into account the direction of external light. What makes this combination even more active is the location of the curing scenes on the jambs of the windows - the northern jamb presents the scene of the curing of the blind by Christ, scene, giving a spiritual dimension to the light entering through the window. Thus, the beholder loses, as Hans Belting put it, the feeling of the so-called "aesthetic boundary" that usually contrasts the reality of the picture with the viewers' own reality (H. Belting, 1994, 173). Similar solutions can be found in many works from

2. The General View of the Vault painting
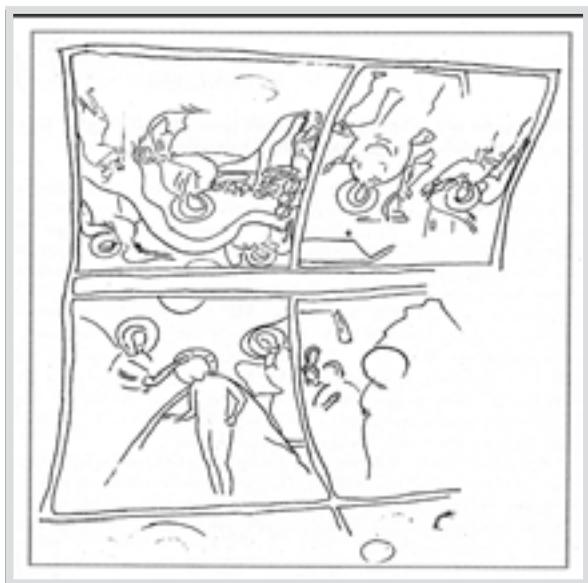
3. The Scheme of the Vault Painting

the same and even later periods. Especially contributing is Georgian Medieval Art in this context, thanks to the tradition of the placing of the representation of the Saints on the jambs of the widows, the tradition which becomes widely spread in Georgia from the 12th century onwards. These figural representations on the background of the sunlight perfectly reflect the unity of the image and light.

But the Argokhi murals present a somewhat different example. Here the union of the space and the context of the programme are based on antithesis, juxtaposition of darkness and symbolic light. Consequently, the process of perception becomes more 'dramatic' because the perception of this unity is based not so much on the visual effect but is rather activated in the mind of the viewer. It even reminds of the concept of negative theology of Pseudo Dionysius – the integrity of divine darkness and the unapproachable light of God. The poorly lit space and the 'feasts of light' compensating the lack of real light through the symbolic meaning of the scenes.

What makes this impression even more vivid at Argokhi is a peculiar color gamut: even now, when the wall paintings are so badly damaged, the leading role of red is obvious – the painter uses it as a principal color in his palette. In the complex symbolism of color in Christian art and culture red color has a very special meaning – one of the most 'universal' symbolic meanings of red is light and divine glory (for symbolism of red: L. James; A.Okropiridze, Faith and Knowledge,

2000, 29-31). At Argokhi the primary function of the red reflects the inner symbolism of the murals and the whole context of the programme: red with its warmness giving a tangible association of light in this dim space.

A word remains to be said about the especially emphasized scene of the Annunciation. What attracts attention is that the figures of this 'opening scene' of Christological cycle are much larger than other figures. The pose of the angel with its 'expansive' gesture and those of Virgin with her outstretched arm alongside with increased scale of the figures in this tiny space, serves as an invitation to the viewer to co-join the history of the Salvation, once more highlighting the unity of the two levels of reality, so vividly reflected in the antithesis of dark space and light.

I would recall very similar analogy to the Argokhi murals, namely the murals at the Church of John the Theologian in Bobnevi, which display a very similar approach to the interrelationship of the space and programme. What is important here is that the murals and architecture of the church date from the same period, i.e from the 17th century. If at Argokhi the painter had to fit 13th century murals to the earlier building, here, it seems that it was the donor himself, Joseph Archbishop of Tbilisi who was privileged to build space of his own, to be painted. Thus, the idea of Antithesis seems to have been planned from the very outset. Here the lack of light was compensated not through a special selection of the Christological scenes, but rather by the way in which the Prophets were presented – the walls along its width have the

4. Bobnevi Church. The Representation of The Prophets

5. Svetitskhoveli Cathedral. The Copy of the Holy Sepulchre

half-figures of saints which are enclosed in spherical mandorla-like light (ill.4). This iconographic motive is rather popular in Post- Byzantine wall painting, but in Bobnevi church it 'works' quite differently – because the size of these circles in comparison with the church space, is fairly big. What makes this representation even more alive is the changing sequence of the red and blue spheres; this continuity of colorful circles creates an impression of the emanation of light into a dark space, even 'glittering' on the background of the dark blue 'sky' of the painting.

It is also instructive to draw another indirect parallel from medieval Georgian architecture, the copy of the Holy Sepulchre, which was built in the 15th century inside the famous Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (ill. 5). The location of this edifice has always surprised me. It is set in the depth of the south arm of Svetitskhoveli, creating an impression of being in shade. One of the most important symbols which proof the connection of Svetitskhoveli with Jerusalem is partially 'hidden' here. But during the daytime, when external light comes from the back window of Svetitskhoveli, illuminated dome of the Sepulcher building creating contrast between the lower parts of the edifice. Light functions as a symbolical 'crescendo' of this building – real light stands for 'memoria' of dazzling light of the Resurrection. Thus, thanks to the stream of the sunlight the viewer tangibly feels how the building, the copy of Anastasis church is becoming eloquent evidence of the Resurrection.

Returning back to the Argoki murals, the standard inscription of the Deesis scene, - "I am the light of the world... ", which is totally damaged and illegible today, must have conveyed the main message of the programme – physical presence of the sacred space in the real one.

Notes:

1. In the Inventory book of Georgian monuments of culture the architecture is dated back to 8th-9th centuries, while the murals to the 13th century.
2. Like Argokhi the space of the Bobnevi church is quite dark.

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Medieval Art

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IMAGE OF THE THREE YOUTHS IN THE FURNACE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF ANTI-HERETICAL DISPUTES AT THE END OF THE 12TH CENTURY

It is well known that medieval Christian painting was very sensitive towards various events and processes taking place in contemporary political or religious life. The impact of liturgical practice and current theological disputes on the programs of mural paintings and iconography of images is apparent (H. Maguire, 1981; Sh.E.J. Gerstel, 1999).

The peculiarity and unique character of wall painting, as well as its difference from other paintings, is manifested in the content and structure of the program rather than in the iconography of separate scenes (O. Demus, 1948, 5). Indeed, we can hardly find two exactly similar programs, though we can see many similar iconographical renderings of the separate scenes.

The reasoning for including particular images in painting programs may not only be of a purely religious, but also of political and social character. A political background and aspirations sometimes tend to be overestimated (Maguire H., 1992; A. Wharton Epstein, 1980), but it is important not to ignore them when trying to reconstruct the genuine meaning and the message of the painting program in question.

Georgian medieval art in general, and wall paintings in particular, developed mostly in the mainstream of Byzantine art. At the same time, Georgian medieval art has a specific character and peculiar traits that are more clearly revealed in the stylistic aspects of paintings. The theological and religious problems affecting the entire Orthodox world at different times, were equally reflected in Georgian art. At the same time, local political, religious and social events as well as personal experiences also had had an effect on the content of programs.

The Georgian Church and Georgian Christian art shared the main concerns of Orthodox Christendom, including the confrontation over heretical teachings. In this respect, of particular note is an early 13th-century painting program in St Nicholas's Church at Kintsvisi.

During the 12th century, various heretical teachings spread widely throughout the Byzantine world. Several Church Councils were summoned to condemn these teachings, especially those denouncing the Eucharist, Trinity and the Incarnation (C. Walter, 1982, 110, 198; J.M. Hussey, 1986, 156-166; A.P. Kazhdan, A.Wharton Epstein, 1985, 158-163; C. Walter, 1982, 198; G. Babić, 1968, 368-386), which, in turn, found a reflection in the content of wall paintings, including those in Georgia.

The aforementioned may serve to explain some of the peculiarities of Georgian wall painting programs of the period in question. Among other Biblical scenes, particular interest was shown in the depiction of "Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace." This is one of the oldest images in Christian art, first represented in catacombs as a paradigm of the Salvation. Several iconographic schemes had already been elaborated at this early stage, e.g., the Priscilla Catacombs (A. Grabar, 1961 105; ill. 102), a wall painting in Meskendir, Cappadocia (N. Thierry, 1994, 307. ill. 91), a Coptic painting from Wadi Sarga (Dalton, 1921, 70), sarcophagi from the Vatican and St Trofim in Arles, the Sinai icon, etc. (Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie, 1968, 463-466; Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst, 1978, 671).

Along with many other meanings – the Baptism, the Salvation, the Last Judgment, etc., (LCI, 1968, 464-466; Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst, 1978, 668-676; L. Réau, 1957, 398-401) – this image reveals strongly projected ideas of the Incarnation and the Eucharist (J.D. Ştefânescu, 1936, 148; S. Dufrenne, 1970, 52; A. Wharton Epstein, 1980, 319), and is often represented in the prothesis of the churches (e.g., in the 11th-century mosaics of Hosios Lukas, in the church at Tirnovo, in the Stratilate church at Novgorod, etc.). It is also represented in the sanctuaries next to the Communion of the Apostles (e.g., in St Sophia at Ohrid and in Peribleptos Church at Mistra, where it is depicted vis-à-vis the Sacrifice of Abraham, etc.). It is also shown on the second floor of St Sophia Church in Kiev with other scenes related to the Eucharist, such as the Last Supper and the Wedding at Cana. Moreover, the connotation of the Holy Trinity is clearly visible

in this scene, which also was an issue of confrontation with heresies (A. Wharton Epstein, 1980, 319; Shatberdis krebuli, 1979; 408)

As the chant of the Three Youths of Babylon (Daniel, III, 52-90) became part of the liturgy, the image became closely related to liturgical themes. The theme of the Three Youths of Babylon is mentioned several times in the Eucharistic prayers.

Besides, it carries the meaning of Christ's Sacrifice and Resurrection (Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie, 1968; 463-466).

In Byzantium, the Church arranged for personified performances representing the story of the Three Hebrew Youths of Babylon (M. Velimirović (1962, 351-355) during the liturgy. Their martyrdom in the "seventy times heated furnace" is equated to the three days that Christ spent in the tomb. It is noteworthy that the Book of Daniel is read on Good Saturday (Father Dimitri Rostovski 1997, 458)

This image is often included in the representation of the Tree of Jesse (e.g., in façade paintings on the Romanian churches) as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception and the Incarnation, as well as the prefiguration of St Mary – it is often compared to the Burning Bush on Mount Sinai. (A. Watson, The early iconography 1934, 51, Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie, 1968, 556; L. Réau, 1957. 130; G. Schiller, 1972, 15-22 ; M. D. Taylor, 1980-81, 143; 165; P.Henry, 1928)

Another important meaning is the Baptism that is related to the dew with which an angel put out the fire. It was said to have been displayed on fonts, e.g., one of the earliest examples of this image, though very schematic, can be found on a painted font decorating a 5th-century floor mosaic from Bichvinta Church in Abkhazia, Western Georgia (T.Velmans 2002, 434). It appears to be one of the earliest examples in Georgian art.

Along with Bichvinta the image of the Three Youths in the Furnace may be found in many Georgian mural paintings, including those at Kintsvisi, Timotesubani, Ani, Betania, Tsalendjikha (I. Lordkipanidze, 1992, 86-87), Zarzma, Nikordstaminda (I. Khuskivadze, 2003, 125), and at Khobi, etc., as well as in book illumination, e. g., in an 11th-century synaxarion (G. Alibegashvili, Tbilisi, 1973, ill. 35) and a 16th-century liturgical book - gulani (F. Devdariani, 1990, tab. XV).

An interesting rendering of this theme is found in the murals of St George's Church at Gelati; in the sanctuary, under the conch, three half-figures are represented set in a curved stem with inscribed names (Gelati, 2007, ill. 178). A similar rendering can be found in St Sofia at Trebizond, although in the drum of the dome (A. Eastmond, 2004, 16). Such a rendering of the theme indicates a close connection with the Tree of Jesse. Besides, this iconographic version of the image may be helpful for identification of the 9th-century representation on the chancel barrier of Armazi Church, which depicts three young men en bust without haloes surrounded by red spots (T. Khundadze, 2001, 84).

Yet, in general, the theme of The Three Youths in the Furnace does not seem to have spread widely. Thus, its inclusion in several important mural paintings of the late 12th and early 13th centuries, in the so-called Golden Age of Queen Tamar, attracts our attention and calls for explanation.

In addition to Kintsvisi Church, the scene is represented in the churches of the Virgin at Betania and Timotesubani, all of these paintings being closely related to the person of Queen Tamar. The image can also be found in early 13th-century painting adorning the narthex of the rock-hewn Ananauri Church at Vardzia and in a church of Tigrahn Honenc at Ani.

In Betania church this image is presented on the north wall, next to the window, right below the Annunciation and in the same tier where the Passion Cycle starts, i.e., where the Incarnation and Two Natures of Christ are highlighted. In Timotesubani the image does not occupy a very important place, but rather is included in the Old Testament images in the northwest chamber, next to the Ascension of Elijah, referring to the Resurrection of Christ. In Ananauri it is depicted in a narthex niche, under the Annunciation and the Council of Archangels, and in Ani cathedral it is depicted above the Communion of St Mary of Egypt – again, a reference to the Eucharist. But in Kintsvisi church this scene is deliberately highlighted in every possible way: it is represented on the central tier of the west wall above the opening leading to the second floor of the narthex, right in the center, and is accentuated by a blind arch. Compared to other images on this wall that are small in size and more disintegrated than those in the south and north transepts, the scene of the Three Youths is fairly large, more monumental and emphasized.

Small figures of the three Babylon youths are
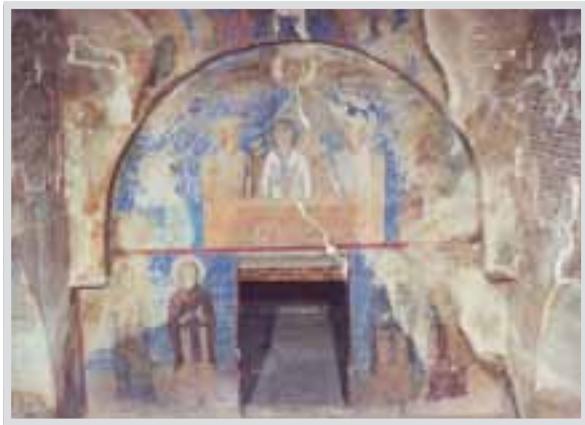
1. Kintsvisi, church of St. Nicholas. Three Youths in Fiery Furnace.

represented as standing in the large furnace with flames and a large half-figure of an angel above them protecting them with wings and hands widely out-spread. The two large half-figures of the prophets Sophonia and Daniel flank the composition, forming a sort of a triangle with the angel's figure and high-light the idea of the Second Coming and Salvation. Al-though the angel's figure in green and blue garments does not stand out from the lazuli blue background as distinctly as the white garments of the Babylon youths, it plays a key role and "embraces" the whole scene, thanks to its size and gesture. According to the Scriptures, an angel is a prefiguration of Christ, "Son of God," as Nebuchadnezzar named him (Daniel, III, 49) (Udzvelesi iadgari, 1980, 17).

The scene of the Three Youths of Babylon in the Furnace holds an accentuated position in the Kintsvisi wall painting, and it should be considered against the background of the entire program. While discussing the Kintsvisi wall painting pro-gram, the majority of scholars have paid particu-lar attention to the royal portraits (King Giorgi III, Queen Tamar, Giorgi Lasha) and the issues of pa-tronage, considering the whole program, includ-ing the selection of particular scenes and saints, against the background of these portraits (G. Alibe-gashvili, 1979, 23-25; A. Eastmond, 1998, 93-184). Indeed, the royal portraits play an important role in the program. However, the program also con-tains other equally important and topical themes that may serve as a cornerstone of the theological message of the Kintsvisi wall painting. The latter is more concerned with the veneration and glorifica-tion of the priesthood and the Church Triumphant, purified from heresies and faithful to the Orthodox Creed established by the Ecumenical Councils, than with the praising of royal power.

I have argued that the key for the correct read-ing of the Kintsvisi wall painting program is a pair por-trait of St Nicholas and St Sylvester in the upper tier of the sanctuary that bears a clearly pronounced anti-heretical message (M. Didebulidze, 2007, 61-77). This assumption is enhanced by the representation of the First Nicaean Ecumenical Council in the vault of the northwest bay of the church. It is further supported by other images, among them the Three Youths in the Furnace.

In the period in question a strong confrontation arose throughout Christendom between the Ortho-dox and the heretics with respect to the Eucharist and the Sacraments. The Kintsvisi murals reflect this conflict with the entire Orthodox world. (J.M. Hussey,

2. Kintsvisi, church of St. Nicholas. Wall painting of the west wall. Scheme.

1986, 151-152; G. Babić, 1968, 368-386).

The whole program demonstrates a strongly pronounced anti-heretical and anti-monophysite spirit (M. Didebulidze, 2007, 61-77) as the ideas of the Incarnation (i.e., the Two Natures of Christ), the Resurrection and the Eucharist are especially highlighted by adding to the Christological cycle the Nativity of the Virgin, the Presentation in the Temple of the Virgin, the Last Supper, the Lamentation and the Myrophores at the Tomb, and the Doubting of Thomas. The theme of the Eucharist is strongly accentuated in the sanctuary and on the west wall by means of a large composition of the Three Youths in the Furnace, thus connecting these two parts of the church with another "axis of meaning." The narrative shifts from south transept to the north transept and then back, ending with the Lat Supper (i.e., the Eucharist). It is noteworthy that in the south transept are grouped all the scenes with the Virgin and the Twelve Apostles (i.e., the Terrestrial Church), and in the north transept the scenes related to the Two Natures of Christ (i.e., the Incarnation), Salvation and Resurrection.

It is remarkable that the layout of the program makes the viewer keep moving in the church space. The main ideological emphasis – the Incarnation, the Eucharist, the Salvation and the Second Coming – are placed on the spatial (vertical and horizontal) axis and the viewer finds himself at the junction of these axes, i.e., becomes part of the sacred space. This device creates a special feeling in a viewer as being situated at the center of the dynamic holy space at the junction of the various networks of meanings, both vertical and horizontal – the Incarnation, the Eucharist, the Salvation and the Second Coming in the dome. Besides, this makes him turn around several times, survey the interior in toto and feel himself part of the events and processions, etc.

Thus, based on the dogmas of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, the Kintsvisi wall-painting's theological program reflects a strong anti-heretical and anti-monophysite spirit. Let us try to analyze against this background the implications of including the Three Youths in the Furnace in the Kintsvisi wall-painting program.

The image is directly linked to the Communion of the Apostles in the sanctuary, thanks to its Eucharistic meaning. Besides, it is placed vis-à-vis the pair portrait of St Nicholas and St Sylvester in the first tier

3. Kintsvisi, church of St. Nicholas. Three Youths in Fiery Furnace.

of the Sanctuary, thus underlining the anti-heretical spirit of the painting.

The dogma of Salvation through the Incarnation is strongly emphasized by placing the three scenes – the Myrophores at the Tomb, the Doubting of Thomas and Three Youths in the Furnace – on one and the same level in the central parts of the south, north and west walls, thus creating a kind of a "spatial triangle of meaning" – as all three of them symbolize the Incarnation and the Salvation (E. Privalova, 1979, 140-141). Moreover, there are the scenes from the Life of St Nicholas – again the Salvation of Three Generals – on the left, and the Three Innocent Men on the right, above the blind arch that frames this scene,

Another important theological link is the "Tree of Jesse" on the south wall of the space. It is a direct indication to the Incarnation and Two Natures of Christ. Here in Kintsvisi, we see one of the earliest examples of this image in Orthodox art (O. Demus, The Mosaics of Norman Sicily, 1949, 350; A. Watson, 1934, 1-2; M.D. Taylor, 1980-81, 128).

Being related to the program of the dome featuring the Second Coming, the image of the Three Youths in the Furnace seems to be representing the idea of the Last Judgment that commonly appears on the west wall in Georgian churches, underlined by figures of the prophets Sophonia and Daniel. Both prophets preached about the Second Coming, and Daniel was closely related to the history of the Three

4. Kintsvisi, church of St. Nicholas. Three Youths in Fiery Furnace. Fragment.

Hebrew Youths (Daniel, III, 52-90). Very often the image of the Three Hebrew Youths in the Furnace is represented next to the scenes from the life of the prophet Daniel (T. Khundadze, 2001, 83).

On the background of the theological content of the Kintsvisi painting still one more meaning of this scene should be pointed out, namely the priority of ecclesiastical power over royal power that had already been attested in early Christian art. Indeed, representation of the Three Hebrew Youths refusing to worship the statue of King Nebuchadnezzar, is usually interpreted in this way (T. F. Mathews, 1993, 78-80). Hence we see several ideological axes that penetrate the space of the interior and link separate parts of the church painting to each other.

The increased significance of this image in the late 12th and early 13th centuries must by all means be related to the confrontation with the Monophysites as the Incarnation (Two Natures of Christ) and the Eucharist were the main issues of this conflict (J. Meyendorf, 1989, 165; Ch. Walter, 1982, 198; J.M. Hussey, 1986, 151-152; G. Babić, 1968, 368-386). Thus it fits into the leading anti-heretical message of the Kintsvisi paintings.

The confrontation with the Monophysites was vital both for the Georgian state and the Georgian Church throughout the 12th century and in the period in question. Historical sources inform us of several theological disputations between the Diophysites and Monophysites, summoned by King David the Builder in 1123 and attended by prominent theologians of the time; the Code of the Ruis-Urbnisi Church council (1103), making numerous references to heresies and Monophysites, ends with the condemnation of heresies (Didi sjuliskanoni, 1975, 553).

Historical sources also state that Queen Tamar called a Church council in 1186 in order to "refresh" the Canons of the Ecumenical Councils and purify the Orthodox faith from heretical evil (Kartlis Tskhovreba 1959, 117-118). There is a fairly long passage in Kartlis Tskhovreba (a collection of old Georgian chronicles) concerning the dispute between an Orthodox priest and a monophysite courtier of Queen Tamar over the Eucharist, etc. (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 1959, 81-90). In addition, in the 12th century, many important orthodox anti-heretical treatises were translated into Georgian.

The anti-heretical content of painting programs could already be clearly seen in Georgian art in the wall painting of the narthex of the Church of the Virgin at Gelati Monastery (1124-26), with the representations of the Seven Ecumenical Councils (T. Virsaladze, 1959, 163-203.) The same anti-heretical content is demonstrated in painting programs at Betania (late 12th c.) (A Okropiridze, 2005, 198) and Timotesubani (early 13th c.). We may argue that the increased interest in this scene is based on the anti-heretical feeling of the time, i.e., on a purely religious reasoning.

However, we may also note other motivations, namely the highly disputed issue regarding a passage in the historical treatise praising Queen Tamar as being fourth to the Trinity. The real message of this passage and the issue of "Isotheism" and the fourth Hypostasis require special historical and theological research. There are a lot of arguments as to its true meaning. However, what is interesting in this particular case is that the Three Youths are mentioned in the following context in regard to Queen Tamar: "If then Nebuchadnezzar saw with the three youths the fourth being one of the Trinity, here also Tamar is seen equal to the Trinity and praised" (Kartlis Tskhovreba, 1959, 25; translated by author). This is just a hypothesis, and the religious lining seems to be more plausible, but we may for sake of argument assume that this famous passage

also gave a slight impulse to a widespread depiction of the scene in three major churches related to Queen Tamar.

Thus, the theological thinking and problems, including the confrontation with heresies, are generic to the entire Orthodox world. However, the connotations and rendering of these common themes and problems varied across different cultural milieus.

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THE GELATI GOSPEL (Q-908) ILLUSTRATIONS AND 12TH-CENTURY GEORGIAN AND BYZANTINE BOOK ART

The so-called Gelati Gospel (kept in National Center of Manuscripts of Georgia, Codex Q-908) is among the nation's most distinguished 12th-century manuscripts, and marks the most significant stage in the history of Georgian book arts. The Gospel has attracted scholarly attention since the 1870s and has become the subject of comprehensive study (N. Kondakov, 1876, 280; N. Kondakov, D. Bakradze, 1890, 50-51; N. Pokrovsky (i) 1887, 255-311; (ii) 1890, XXVI-XXVII; (iii) 1910, 152-155; N. Petrov, 1887, 170-179; A. Baumstark, 1916, 152-161; G. Millet, 1916, 588-589; D. Gordeev, 1918, 84, 92; R. Shmerling, 1940, 54-55; Description, 1958, 327-332; R. Shmerling, 1967, 196-200; Sh. Amiranashvili, 1966, 23-24; G. Alibegashvili, 1977, 11; I. Imnaishvili, 1979; E. Machavariani (i) 1980, 50-61; (ii) 1985, 85-98; and (iii) 2001, 47-56; O. Podobedova, 1977; A. Saminsky, 1989, 190-216; Z. Skhirtladze, 1998, 69-93; E. Gedevanishvili, 2006, 12-14; N. Kavtaria, 2007, 59-72). The manuscript lacks colophons and the proposed 12th-century date is based on comparison of data provided by its text, calligraphy and miniatures. At the present stage of research it is difficult to ascertain the place of the manuscript's creation, presumably Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos or some Georgian-Greek scriptorium in Constantinople.

The manuscript's name, the Gelati Gospel, derives from Gelati Monastery, its earlier place of preservation. It is also unknown when and how it found its place in the monastery's treasury, from whence it was taken to France in 1921 (together with other Georgian cultural treasures), and returned to Georgia in 1945. It has been kept in the National Center of Manuscripts since that year.

The manuscript, which comprises 293 pages (27 x 19.5 cm), was written by a single scribe in a one-column format. The chased book-cover is of a later date.

The Gospel's text represents an editorial version of George the Hagiorite and is prefaced by his acrostic: Giorgi. At the end of the book there is an extensive testament of the great Athonite father.

The specifics of the Gelati Gospel's illumination and the system of decoration and compositions are akin to that of Byzantine and Georgian manuscripts dated to ca. 12th century, and through investigating the illustrations one can identify their characteristic features and ways of solving the artistic problems they present.

In keeping with tradition the Gospel's text is prefaced by the Epistle of Eusebius to Carpianus (on four pages), the Canon Tables, the Table of Contents, and finally the Annual Calendar of Pericopes.

The program of illumination starts with Eusebius' Letter with its modest decoration (Π-type head-piece filled with floral motifs). Thus, valuable illumination appears only in the decoration of the Canon Tables. The tables occupy 14 pages (ff. 3r-10r). At the end of the Canon Tables there occurs a three-figure composition of the Deesis (f. 11r). Each chapter is preceded by a full-page image of the author – the Evangelist (St Matthew – 15v; St Mark – 91v; St Luke – 144r; St John – 223v). The first page of each gospel is decorated with square-form head-pieces and inserted into them quadrifolia containing the gospel's title in gold-ink. There are also impressive initial letters and one miniature crown in the decoration of the initial pages.

The whole text is interspersed with initials and miniatures. The principle of placing the miniature on the right side of the page, in the special area left by the scribe, is always rigorously preserved. The character of the text is also determined by numerous initial letters (there is no logic in the distribution of initials). There is only one historical initial letter; it appears at the beginning of St John's Gospel. The initials are characterized by their exquisite form, the moderate use of gold, and a colorful palette and flexible line.

Miniatures inserted in special places in the Gospel help to provide a visual narration of the text and represent the tradition of a full system of illustration. To achieve this, St Matthew's gospel includes 75 images in the text; St Mark's 62; St Luke's 71; and St John's 43 scenes.

The Canon Tables occupy a special place in the Gelati Gospel's illumination. They determine the artistic face of the books and together with the Epistle of Eusebius to Carpianus establish the program of the Gospel's decoration. The Canon Tables

and the Epistle, as distinctive elements of Gospel illumination, were an inescapable element of Christian book art since the Early Middle Ages and are represented in the most richly decorated pages of manuscripts.

Thus, the Gospel became not only the source for the liturgical texts, but also played an important role in the development of the characteristic features of artistic illumination. The Canon Tables' index system was created specifically for the Gospel text; it arranged the coincidence of the same places in four canonic texts during the liturgical year. Preceding the New Testament, these tables contain the concordance of Gospel passages as worked out by Eusebius (260-340). The Canon Tables later acquired a decorative function; along with their practical use they also assumed an aesthetic and symbolic meaning.

The series of Canon Tables occupying 14 pages and the Eusebius Epistle precede the main text. They are placed face to face with one another. Such a layout was adopted as standard in the 11th-12th centuries and became a tradition thereafter. The Canon Tables are inscribed in frames with columns and entablatures and form decorative triumphal arches.

In general, the triumphal arch is the main artistic-architectural structure in the Gelati Gospel's Canon Tables. Each arch consists of knotted or ordinary columns carrying a rectangular entablature. For the decoration of the column bases animal-heads and various types of bowls are widely used. Various images adorn the capitals. The heads of bulls, fantastic creatures with trunks, interlaced lions and deals, different masks, and atlantes featuring men or women facing each other are all present.

It is clear that such an approach to the decoration of the Canon Tables derives from the spiritual values and potential of the Komnenian period and the painter's fascination with the traditions of the ancient world. The illumination shows that artistic interpretation based on ancient Hellenistic motifs and traditions found its reflection in book illumination.

Thus the architectonical decisions in the Gelati Gospel's Canon Tables, their structure, ornamental motif of the architrave are one and the same, and follow the traditions of Greek and Georgian manuscripts of the 11th-12th centuries.

The 14-page series echoes the traditions of the Black Mountain artistic school. This number of pages is found only in Georgian manuscripts from scriptoria of the Black Mountain and orientated on them Greek codices (A-484, S-962, A-845, A-516, Iberico I, Shuk. 760, Sinai, Gr. 158).

According to the suppositions held in theological circles during the Middle Ages, Canon Tables can be explained as a preparation, as a self-purification, for reaching the essence of Christian thought. The reader is spiritually prepared for the vision which follows the Canon Tables.

At the same time the explanation of the 14-paged series can perhaps be found in the 'Fourteen Generations,' which preceded the birth of Jesus Christ. They somehow prepared the World for His birth (St Matthew 1:17). The 14-page series should be considered as an achievement of the Black Mountain artistic school, and is connected with the local symbolic mentality (N. Kavtaria, 2003, 246).

Medallions placed above the entablature bear Old Testament scenes (the Sacrifice of Abraham – f.5v; the Burning Bush – f.6v), images of the Prophets (Isaiah – f.6v; Jeremiah – f.7r; Ezekiel – f.7v; Daniel – f.8r; David – f.8v; Solomon – f.9r); St John Chrysostom (f.9v) and the Deesis (f.10r), with the Angels performing the liturgy. This last is also linked to the Deesis on the frontispiece; the selection of images reflects the theological dispute that occurred in Constantinople in the 1150s-1160s concerning the Eucharistic Offering (O. Podobedova, 1977; G. Babic, 1968, 368-386; J. Meyendorf, 1987).
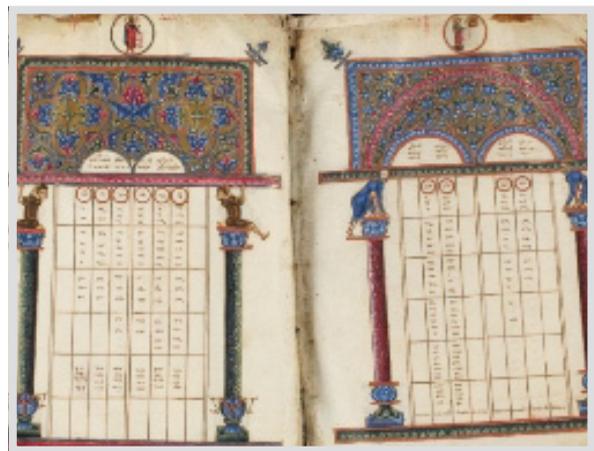
1. The Canon Tables
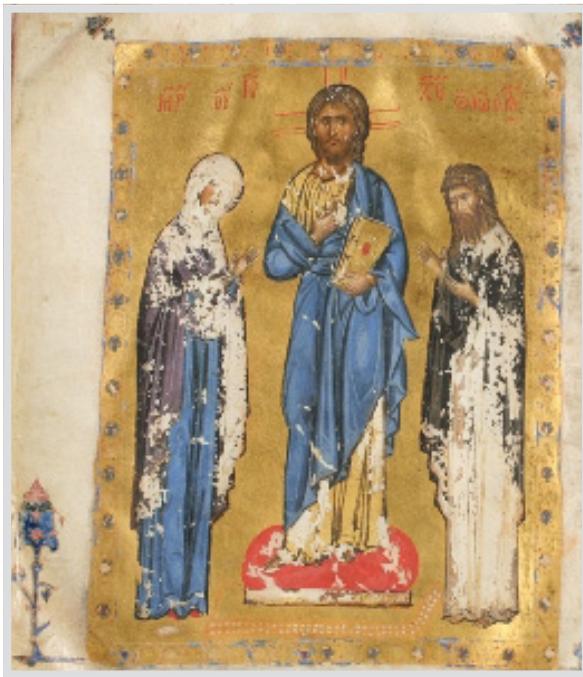
2. Deesis

The ideological connections of the presented compositions are clear. Thus, Abraham's sacrifice is the ancestor of the Eucharistic Offering; the Burning Bush relates to the idea of the Incarnation, the Prophets relate to the prophecy of the Eucharistic Offering, the Biblical kings with the coming of the Messiah and with the prophecy of the Virgin's theme. At the end St John Chrysostom, as one of the creator of the Holy Liturgy, appears as the connecting link in this very complicated, but ideologically organized visual illustration.

Effigies in the medallions with their iconography and sequence are linked with the scenes in the headpieces of Byzantine manuscripts (such as the compositions inserted in the headpieces of Codex 74 (National Library, Paris) and Codex Melenikou Cod. 2645 (Athens, The National Library of Greece).

Thus the Canon Tables, pierced with the prophecy of Eucharistic Offering and the two Deesis (the medallion and the frontispiece) together with their eschatological meaning also take on a liturgical meaning. The composition of the frontispiece Deesis reflects the ideological line of development launched in the iconography of the Tables and begins the visual presentation of the Gospel's main message. The Deesis is represented in a brief version, and includes full-figure representations of Christ, the Virgin, and St John the Baptist.

The frontispiece of the Gelati Gospel shows the incarnated Divine Logos and, preceding Him, pierced with the idea of Salvation, the Virgin and John the Baptist.

The monumental character of the composition underlines its content and differs from the calligraphic scenes of the medallions. The laconism and monumental shape increase the meaning of the festive – and at the same time liturgical miniature.

The depiction of the Deesis is a rarity in medieval book illustration. In a few cases it is related to the frontispieces of liturgical books. It first appeared as a full-figured effigy in a Byzantine lectionary of the 11th century, and is recorded as Codex 15 in the Panagia Chozoviotissa Monastery on Amorgos (I. Spatarakis, G. Bartholf, 2003, 217-220, fig. 1); then follows the 12th-century Tetraevangelion from Greek Patriarchate of Istanbul (Codex 3) (Ch. Walter, 1977, 324-325, fig. 4); the 12th-century Georgian Jruchi II Gospel (H-1667); the Greek Psalter of 1105 (R. Nees, 1975, 209-214, fig. 1), manuscript 3807 from Berlin Theological Seminary (G. Stuhfauth, 1933, 311); and we should also note the enthroned Christ, the centerpiece of a 12th-century lectionary (Gr. 208) in the Mount Sinai collection (K. Weitzmann, G. Galavaris, 1990, 166-170, fig. 647). The Deesis in medallions and half-figured (bust) compositions from the 10th century also occurs in various locations; Codex 92, from the Great Lavra, Mount Athos, Codices 326 and 418 from the Mount Sinai collection, Codex 133 from Athens National Library, and others.

3. St.John and the first page of His Gospel text

4. Noli me tangere

The eschatological, soterological and typological aspects of the Deesis are reflections of the Christological debates that took place in the 12th century.

Each gospel begins with the image of an Evangelist. Seated Evangelists are presented in the process of working or thinking; they are surrounded by an ornamental frame and an inscription in asomtavruli (uncial) script. The Evangelists are depicted with rotated nimbi (a unique case for Georgia), without a contour line. The rotated nimbi are common only for manuscripts and icons executed at Mount Sinai, and their use in the decoration of 12th-century Georgian manuscripts reflects the existence of some additional artistic influence.

The portrait of St Luke with a tonsure is also a unique case for Georgian miniature painting of that time.

The Evangelists are accompanied by apocalyptic living creatures: an angel accompanies St Matthew, a calf (ox) inspires St Mark; St Luke has his lion and St John his eagle. The literary prototype for these four living creatures is based on the vision of the prophet Ezekiel ("As for the appearance of their faces: the four had the face of a human being, the face of a lion on the right side, the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle; such were their faces. Their wings were spread out above; each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. Each moved straight ahead; wherever the spirit led them, they went, without turning as they went (Ezekiel 1:10-13); and "In front of the throne and on each side of it there were four living

things. The first living thing was like a lion, the second was like a cow, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying angel." (The Revelation to St John, 4:7). In the early Middle Ages the Holy Fathers interpreted these beings and connected them to the Evangelists (G. Galavaris, 1979, 47).

It is well known that in the Byzantine tradition the portraits of the Evangelists were influenced by hypotheses (ὑπόθεσις) enclosed to the text; a hypothesis was a brief biography of an Evangelist. In Byzantine manuscripts the notes that survived in the hypotheses explain the identification of the Evangelist, with separate figures and symbols. We can count as hypotheses the inscriptions around the portraits in Georgian manuscripts, but their influence on the visual image of the Evangelists is less reliable.

It is obvious that Georgian manuscripts reflect an approach that differs from the Byzantine tradition. Undoubtedly, the painters used Byzantine iconographic models (without knowing the hypothesis) and transferred this very important iconographic theme to Georgian artistic thought.

In the Gelati Gospel manuscript these apocalyptic living beings occupy the right upper corner of the miniatures, in the sky segment; they represent half or full figures. This compositional scheme represents (as has been noted) a different tradition of illustration, when an image depicts a half-figure or bust, with the intention of inspirer. (G.Galavaris, 1979, 57). In the Georgian iconographic version both symbol and inspiration are equally assimilated.

In Greek manuscripts there are several variations of inserted symbols: on a separate page in front of the Evangelist's portrait, on the top of the headpieces, and in one composition together with the Evangelist. Similarly, in the Gelati Gospel, the symbols on the upper right corner can also be seen in a 14th-century Greek manuscript (Codex Add. 11838) preserved in London (G. Galavaris, 1979, 41).

Over time, the sequence of correspondence between symbol and Evangelist altered; this depended on the writings of the Holy Fathers used by the scribe and then on the artist's interpretation of that text. In the Byzantine interpretations of Irenaeus of Lyons, St Jerome, St Augustine of Hippo, Andrew of Caesarea, Anastasius of Sinai, Sophronius of Jerusalem, Theophylact of Ochrid, Epiphanes, Pseudo-Athanasius, and Hippolytus of Rome were commonly adopted (G. Galavaris, 1979, 36; R. Nelson, 1980, 17-33).

The sequence of the Gelati Gospel's symbols (angel, calf (ox), lion, eagle) was indicated by Pseudo-Athanasius. This model is known from the 11th-century Codex 57 from Athens National Library and is its earliest example (G. Galavaris, 1979, 43). A second exceptional version also exists, and according to it there is existed 6 types of Evangelist, to whom it connects with symbols (R. Nelson, 1980, 17-20).

From the beginning the living creatures were depicted without nimbi, but gradually wings, nimbi and codices were added to them. In the Gelati Gospel manuscript only the angel was adorned with a nimbus, but codices are the indivisible attribute of each one. The living beings are the symbols of the Gospel and each has a specific importance and meaning. Thus the lion indicates the royal conception of the Gelati Gospel; the calf (ox) underlines its hieratical aspects, the angel depicts the incarnated Logos, and the eagle the origin of the Holy Ghost. In Georgian miniature painting the portraits of the Evangelists with their symbols is reiterated only in the manuscripts of the 16th century (Q-920). Thus the symbolic loading begun in the Canon Tables finds its peculiar continuation in the Evangelists' portraits.

The bases and the principles of the Gelati Gospel illustrations can be deduced from about 250 miniatures. Like the Byzantine artistic thought of the late 11th-12th century (Paris. gr.115, Paris gr.74, Parma, Palat 5, Vienna Theol.gr.154, Laurenciana, Plut. VI23), Georgian miniature painting of the 12th century reflected the tradition of a fully illustrated version with illumination of initial letters of the text.

The Gelati Gospel miniatures were painted on gold leaf and framed with red lines; they depicted the life of Christ, including His infancy, and abundantly represented healing and miracles, major feasts, the Passion cycle and events after the Resurrection, as well as the life cycle of St John the Baptist. The parables and sermons of Christ are illustrated in only 2 or 3 miniatures. Symmetrical and centric compositions formed narrative illustrations and are marked by the diversity of the iconographic versions.

The main feature of the Gelati Gospel illustrations is their narrative character; often one miniature comprises several passages from the text, and the same tendency is underlined in two-story miniatures. Also we should notice the iconic appearance of the plot miniatures (especially of the Crucifixion, the Deposition, the Entombment, the Myrophories and the Anastasis).

The main ascent of the compositional arrangement is emphasized on the gold backgrounds. Here it is easier to observe separate figures or groups of figures. The grouping of the figures by sinciput provides the effect of multiplicity. The figures never touch the red line of the frame. In the case of need, the painter easily cuts the figure standing at the edge or makes spatial intervals between architectural buildings, the composition and the frame. The spatial pauses are always underlined in case of Christ and represent His motions and His gesticulations.

Very often the artists use different compositional solutions for the same scenes (for instance, the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes or the Crucifixion). One the one hand the underlined regularizations, the rhythmic equality, the symmetry and to some extent the emotional discretion in the images leave an impression of monotony.

On the other hand, we face bold figures with free motions, bold figures with big heads, and among them, by contrast, weightless, elongated, decorative figures. The portraits of the Evangelists, executed with drastic line, show the hand of a skillful master.

The Gelati Gospel manuscript was illustrated by three or four painters, whose individual mannerisms are easily discernible although they follow common principles. The Gelati miniatures bear traces of Byzantine influence; they show a certain iconographic and stylistic affinity to the 12th-century manuscript (Cod.93) in the Athens National Library. It is true that the principle determining the choice of subjects for the miniatures here is quite different from the narrative cycle of the Gelati Gospel and follows the liturgical sequence (it consists of 24 miniatures only, three of these are images of the Evangelists: St Mark, St Luke and St John with Prochorus; St Matthew is missing). It is plausible that this manuscript is also connected with the Mount Athos or Constantinopolitan artistic schools, and thus can be considered to be one of the best examples of Komnenian book art (E. Constantinides, 1977-79, 185-215; A. Marava-Chatzinikolaou, C. Toufexi-Paschou, 1978, 224-244, ill. 630-654).

The decorative style of Georgian book art observed from the end of the 11th century became deeper in the 12th century and found its realization in the miniatures of the Gelati Gospel manuscript. The main peculiarities of the style are emphasized in the intensive colorful solution, in mild tonal transitions

and gradations, to some extend in the contrasting juxtaposition of the backgrounds and figures, in the rendering of garments, and in the developed decorative features.

The limitation on the length of this paper precludes discussion of the details of the many artistic features of the Gelati Gospel illustrations, but I should mention the miniatures of Abgar's story inserted at the end of the book (ff.287r-292r). The Epistle of Abgar is illustrated by ten miniatures which follow the narration and are of the same character as the miniatures in the Gospel (especially those in the Gospel of St Luke). The increased number of figures, the architectural and gold backgrounds, the landscape, and the principles of unification of plot scenes follow the general artistic tendency of the Gelati Gospel illustrations. The miniatures illustrating Abgar's story are also distinguished by their different iconographic depictions of the king (young and beardless; older and bearded) that show his almost generalized, collective, apotropaic function.

The Gelati Gospel is the outstanding example of Georgian miniature painting. Created against the background of Georgian-Byzantine interrelations and traditions, the Gospel's illustrations reflect the high quality of Georgian book art, the advanced artistic ideas of the Komnenian period, its ideological, iconographic and stylistic tendencies, the influence of the cultural environment, the skillfulness of the painters and the refined taste of the patrons.

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Medieval Art

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THE GEORGIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH: AN ATTEMPT TO INTERPRET IT AS AN ICON OF THE UNIVERSE

G. Chubinashvili identified five periods in the history of medieval Georgian Christian architecture. They are: (1) early period (4th through 6th centuries), (2) classical period (late 6th to early 7th century), transitional period (second half of 7th to mid-10th century), "baroque" or "picturesque" period (second half of 10th to mid-13th century) and late period (second half of 13th through 18th century) (G. Chubinashvili, 1990, 17). Chubinashvili considered Georgian classical and "baroque" motifs as the main points of reference on the evolutionary path of Georgian architecture (D. Tumanishvili, 2001, 39).

Having applied the "main concepts" and categories suggested by H. Wölfflin, G.Chubinashvili used the terms conventionally. He presented the "classical" and "baroque" features of Georgian churches following the analysis of the "formal substrates" of a form or a unity of forms of Georgian churches of the respective period, as D. Tumanishvili has noted. The scholar also considered the worldview manifested in these works as well as the level at which it was reflected in forms (D. Tumanishvili, 2001, 32).

Centrally-planned religious structures acquired great importance in medieval Georgian architecture.1 The nucleus of such buildings is a square, which supports a dome resting on wall projections or piers. The square itself forms the center of a cruciform plan (other types make an exception or are assigned to a transitional stage).

A dome resting on a square is genetically related to centrally-planned structures found in the ancient architecture of countries of the Near East (e.g., Sassanid palaces in Iran). What is especially notable is that it is linked to Georgian dwelling-place architecture, namely the Georgian darbazi, which had been designed well before the spread of Christianity (V. Beridze, 1974, 19) and had been preceded by a several-thousand-year history of centrally-planned residential architecture.2 Having played an essential role in the

evolution of Eastern Christian religious architecture, the theme of a dome set on a square was very natural for Georgia and it is no surprise that Georgia's domed buildings are viewed as the nation's masterpieces.

Another important feature of medieval architecture that Chubinashvili identifies is the peculiar interior space of Georgian churches. The inner space in Georgian churches is perceived simultaneously, in its entirety, rather than through a consecutive interpretation of rhythmically recurring elements as is the case in Roman and Gothic architecture. Integral perception precedes the interpretation and assessment of separate components; the observation and interpretation of details only deepens the impression of unity.3

All of these peculiar features became apparent in Georgia at the early stage of the evolution of Georgian Christian architecture.4 Yet they became particularly evident in the so-called classical period (late 6th-early 7th centuries), namely in the Holy Cross Church at Mtskheta. Built between 586 and 604, this church is tetraconch in plan. "A pure, complete and harmoniously finished classic" – is how Chubinashvili describes Holy Cross Church at Mtskheta, a monument built in the tradition of classical architecture (G. Chubinashvili, 1990, 17). Each part of this church is self-sufficient, with a crystallized and independent form. "The interrelation and interconnection of these parts is so strong that any change or dislocation may lead to the destruction of the whole" (G. Chubinashvili, 1990, 19). In other words, each self-sufficient form is at the same time an organic part of the whole; such unity of forms creates a harmonious, artistic integrity. This applies both to the outer masses and the inner space of the cross. A bulky, wide dome, set on an octagonal drum, is a dominant feature of the inner space of Holy Cross Church at Mtskheta. It is the dome that defines and unites the space. The visitor to the church finds him-/herself in an integral, solid space (G. Chubinashvili, 1948, 49).

The axis, elongated at the expense of chancel-bay, fails to affect the impression of an equal distribution of forms that the space leaves on the observer upon entering the church from the south.

The classical period was followed by the so-called transitional period (second half of 7th to mid-10th century). This period was characterized by a search for new forms of expression, during which "here and there new architectural types, forms and details would emerge, but they failed to find a firm soil

and disappeared shortly" (V. Beridze, 1974, 38) (e.g., two-dome church structure or a drumless dome under a gable roof). However, the period also saw the emergence of some motifs and compositions that found a further development and created a stock of major architectural and decorative patterns. "The architecture of the transitional period gradually deviated from that of the classical period, the latter being characterized by a perfect balance and clear shapes. This prepared the way for the emergence of the patterns of the 'picturesque' type, which offered a dynamic unity of its transitional parts" (D. Tumanishvili, 2001, 36).

Thus, classical style naturally gave way to the "baroque" style.5 Architectural monuments of different types dating from various times, be it kuppelhalles (Vachnadziani Kvelatsminda, from the 8th-9th century), two-domed churche (Gurjaani Kvelatsminda, 8th century) or cruciform-domed churches of the 8th-10th centuries (Opiza, Oshki and Khakhuli), display, among other features, an elongated east-west axis.

The creative searches of the transitional period at the end of the 10th and beginning of the 11th century were crowned by three great cathedrals, namely those of Bagrati (end of 10th-beginning of 11th century), Alaverdi (first quarter of 11th century) and Svetitskhoveli (1010-1029). Each of these is a typical representative of the "baroque" style. Although being characterized by highly individual and distinctive external appearances, these cathedrals share the common features of the period. Alaverdi and Bagrati cathedrals are of the triconch type, while Svetitskhoveli is a cross within a square, in which straight-angled south and north arms are set. All three churches are capped with a dome having a tall drum rising above the intersection of the cross arms and supported by four free-standing piers. What is especially essential is that the E-W axis is visibly outlined at the expense of a pair of piers inserted in the west arm, which markedly elongates the arms and highlights the direction from the west and to the east. Having emerged in the transitional period, this trend became even more apparent in these monuments. At Alaverdi, this trend is highlighted by two high-rise arches over major piers of the west arm, while at Svetitskhoveli to this is added the west arm, widened towards the dome by means of the under-dome piers. In both cases, these techniques served to prepare the visitor for entering the under-dome space. Such a compositional treatment offers a space different from that of classical-period buildings. A solid space united by the dome as at Mtskheta was no

more in evidence. Instead, these cathedrals feature spatial accents set on a longitudinal axis. As the entrances to these buildings are from the west, the chancel was identified as a major bay, while the dome was perceived as a second accent, but the eye did not register it immediately upon entering the cathedral. Due to the elongation of the west arm, the visitor had to walk some distance before being able to observe the dome. However, lit by numerous windows piercing the dome, the under-dome space immediately captures the attention of the visitor in order for the latter to perceive it before observing it "through" the dome. These two spatial accents appear to attract the visitor, making him or her move in the space and interpret it accordingly.6

Thus, what we have in Georgian cathedrals is a dynamic space compelling one to keep moving as opposed to a unified, placid and balanced space. Together with other features, it is this dynamism that reflects the "baroque" character of these monuments.

Without doubt this particular characteristic of the interior space is not accidental. From the transitional period onward, the structure of the inner space
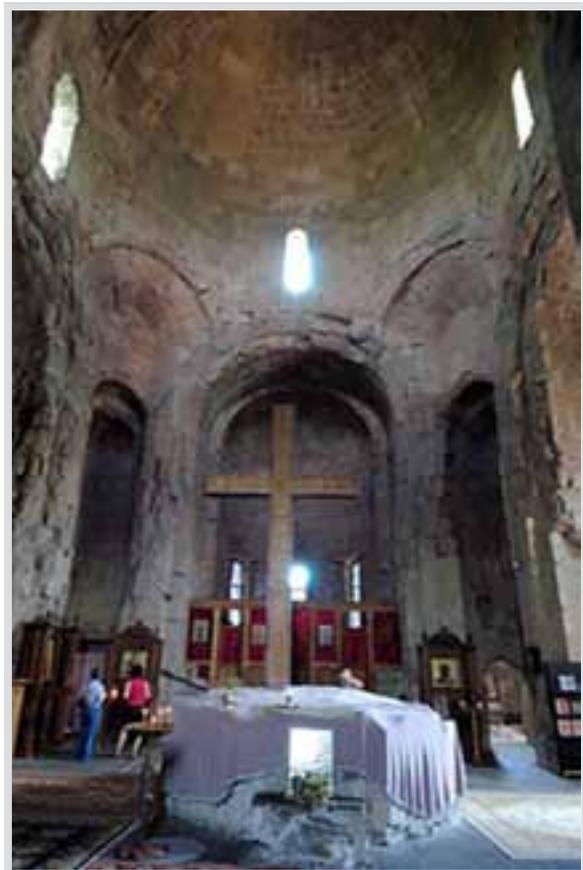
1. Mtskheta Holy Cross Church. (586-604)

has evolved to take on a form featured by the three cathedrals.

"Every form always carries a certain "secret." It "speaks" a language of its own. The content rendered by the churches vary from epoch to epoch (and not only in Georgia – A.K.). Both the content and rendering are different" (D. Tumanishvili, 1993, N 2, p. 22).

That the ways of rendering are different appears obvious judging by the inner spaces of the aforementioned Georgian monuments of the classical and the so-called "baroque" periods. Now let us try to gain an insight into the essence of the content. In this regard it is important to note that the major difference between the monuments of these periods will be explained by the different Weltanschauungen characteristic of the two periods. The clearer presentation of two different worldviews is possible, based on the interpretation of the general principles of the Christian Church.
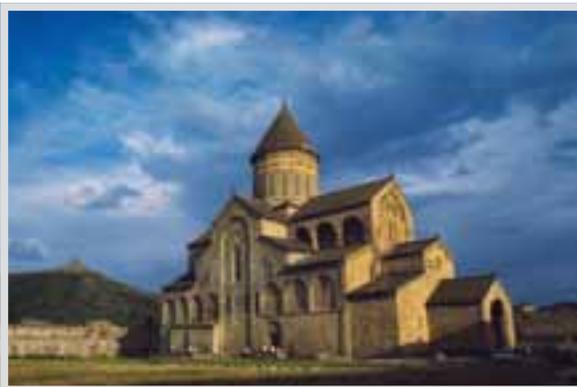
2. Svetickhoveli (1010-1029)

The Christian Church is perceived as an icon of the universe (O. Demus, 2001, 31; G. Vagner, v. 17, 163-168).7 When defining liturgy, St Simeon of Thessalonica noted: a church is "a particular image of the world visible and invisible." It is without doubt that the orders of the heaven and earth find a reflection in the general principle of structuring forms in a church and in a cruciform church in particular, as a common icon representing the world. The main parts of the church, such as the chancel, the dome, the central cube, the vaults, the piers and the walls carry a symbolic importance of their own (O. Demus, 2001, 31-32; N. Troitski, N 17, 22-46).

Located to the east, the chancel was considered as the holy of holies. It contained several meanings. According to one, it symbolized a paradise, which was separated from the worshippers by means of a chancel barrier that would open toward them through the holy doors in special moments of the liturgy (N. Troitski, N 17, 28-29). In that case, the heavenly Queen Mary, as one of the symbols of paradise and an intercessor for its establishment, would be represented.

The dome, another important spatial accent of a cruciform-domed church, was perceived as a mystical sky, set above the earth (N. Troitski, N 17, 40-41). Yet, it was heaven rather than a visible sky featured in pagan temples.8 This explains the reason of representing Christ Pantocrator with his right hand raised in blessing,9 or a cross according to the Georgian tradition (E. Privalova, 1980, 15-16) here in the semi-spherical part, but difficult to see because of the height.

The middle cube-shaped part represented the earth (N. Troitski, N 17, 35-36).

However, the hierarchy was still maintained. The vaults and the upper segments of walls were regarded as the Holy Land and featured the earthly life of the Savior, starting with the Immaculate Conception and ending with the Ascension (O. Demus, 2001, 31-32). It was here that the Gospel was illustrated to the worshipper, who would trace sacred history by observing the scenes as if on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The lower parts were taken up by the scenes of the lives of saints, by representations of them and occasionally of historical characters or donors who contributed to the construction or decoration of the church.

Thus a church entailed heaven, paradise and earthly life. The transition from the heavenly (the domical semi-circle) to the earthly world was effected by means of a drum and pendentives. Therefore, these parts were adorned with the representations of those who, according to Holy Scripture, were directly responsible for this connection: the prophets, who heralded the sending of Messiah, were shown between the clerestory windows, while the evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John),10 who informed mankind on the incarnated God, were shown in the pendentives; the under-the-dome piers, perceived as the "supports" of the heavens, were given to saints, the bulwarks of the Christian faith.

Thus the eastern Christian cruciform-domed church and the unity of its parts represented the divine cosmography: the heaven and the holy land, the heavenly and earthly worlds and the connection between them.

The aforementioned symbolic meanings of the

church's component parts, as well as a painting system designed according to these meaningful accents, reflect a very general principle. The principle varied across countries, periods and schools and presented itself in an original way in every particular case.11

Considering this general principle, the solid, placid spaces of the Holy Cross Church at Mtskheta and other Georgian churches of the classical period, such as Tsromi and Samtsevrisi reflect the integrity of the earth and the heavens and prompt man to perceive himself as part of this unity. They also instill in a human being the feeling of placidity and harmony. The three cathedrals addressed above reflect an absolutely different worldview, which is a result of a different artistic impression created by the inner space; the impression, which together with other arches, is created owing to the elongation of the E-W axis, a main entrance from the west and a coordination of forms. The visitor entering the cathedral finds a "path" leading from the entrance to the chancel. The chancel is a final point of this path. Considering the symbolic importance of the chancel, one perceives this path as the one to be taken by a human being whose final aim is to abide in paradise. The way he must establish his place in heaven is indicated by the scenes depicting the life of Christ on the vaults and the walls in the main space of the church. These scenes are also perceived as an example of a right path. They show that living according to this example enables a human being to establish himself in heaven. This longitudinal axis of the cathedral incarnates the life and the path to be taken by a man, which can be named as a path of morality. As noted above, one encounters the dome, another architectural accent, at a certain point of this path. The light entering the space from the clerestory window seems to be bringing with it, from above below, the divine wisdom ('Sophia'), first put into words by the prophets, later written down by the apostles and finally "stamped" by the saints with their own lives. This movement from upward to downward is met by man with an opposite direction; through the lives of saints, the Gospels and the books of the prophets one communes with heaven, which is too high above for the eye to see. This vertical axis of the cathedral symbolizes the path of perceiving divine wisdom. Only by taking both paths, those of morality and perception, simultaneously will one find himself in the center of the cross, i.e., the universe. In other words, only in such case will he be filled with mercy

3. Alaverdi. Interior. (first quarter of the 11th century)

and be in full harmony and balance. However, this is only attainable through self-development.

Thus, for the visitor to Mtskheta's Holy Cross Church and other Georgian churches of the classical period, a church is an icon of the universe, of which the visitor perceives himself to be a part by experiencing the unity with the other members of the congregation.12 In the three cathedrals, however, it is a personal path that is matters most; in fact, in this light, these cathedrals can be considered as the temples of the Grail. It is not accidental that the north façade of Svetitskhoveli Cathedral features a relief image of a hand holding a carpenter's square, an ancient building tool. Neither is the inscription informing us on the name of the architect, supporting this representation, accidental.13

The emergence of personalism heralded the beginning of the Renaissance. Yet, this path of the evolution of Georgian architecture came to an abrupt end. Almost in parallel with the building of the cathedrals were constructed the churches at Samtavisi (1030) and Samtavro (first half of 11th century) which feature a more compact space at the expense of shortening

4. Alaverdi. Interior. (first quarter of the 11th century)

the longitudinal axis. Later, the canonical design of a Georgian church received a final shape based on the examples of Samtavisi and Samtavro churches and remained unchanged across the centuries that came after. The E-W axis turned shorter to form a shape similar to a square; four free-standing piers were reduced to two and a pair of east pillars became attached to the chancel walls. The same formula was applied to the plan and the structure of churches (V. Beridze, 1974, 60).

Although the church space still seemed to be unified, it was a unity of a different quality. The space became more compact, but at the same time more intimate. Despite being compact, it lacked the former solidity and grandeur, characteristic of the Holy Cross Church at Mtskheta.

A similar process was evidenced in medieval Georgian plastic art, when the centuries-old path of evolution almost led to sculpture in the round in the 10th century. This is manifested by an image of an eagle on the south façade at Khakhuli and donor reliefs on the south façade at Oshki which, thanks to their large sizes, their differentiated and distinctive forms and volumes, are more redolent of sculptures in the round attached to a wall rather than of haut-relief. One step was left before the "birth" of sculpture in the round, but this path too came to an abrupt end. Since then Georgian church façades again came to be lavishly adorned with decorative elements and flat figural images (N. Aladashvili, 1977, 45).

Having identified and solved similar objectives, Western culture arrived at the Renaissance. The reasons for the breaking of this thread of evolution in Georgian culture have not been addressed yet; they remain a subject of needed future research.

Notes:

1. The round or polyhedral plan, which the West and some countries of the Near East, had inherited from Pre-Christian Roman architecture, was almost unknown in Georgia (V. Beridze, 1974, 19).

2. The oldest samples of dwellings with a central plan discovered on the territory of Georgia are dated to the V-VI mill. B.C. (O. Japaridze, Al. Javakhishvili, 1971).

3. In this respect medieval Georgian architecture drastically differs from Romanesque and Gothic architecture, where the perception of the space, first of all, is based on the successive, rhythmic and gradually increasing perception of separate parts (G. Chubinashvili, 1990, 113).

4. Even in the Bolnisi basilica, due to the fact that entrances were arranged from the North and South (the west door was made only later, in the 17th c.),the longitudinal axis was imperceptible and the basilican space unfolded before the visitor evenly on both sides, similar to the case of structures with a central plan; thus, longitudinal axis was, actually, levelled out. (G. Chubinashvili, 1940, 34)

5. G. Chubinashvili had shown this natural process of transition on the example of Vachnadziani Kvelatsminda (All Holy Virgin) church, as an intermediate monument. (G. Chubinashvili, 1990, 29-31; D. Tumanishvili, 2001, 35-36).

6. Although consistent interpretation of space is characteristic of Roman and Gothic architecture, the space, and the artistic effect it creates respectively, in these churches is absolutely different. We do see the space developing along both longitudinal and vertical axes, but unlike Georgian cathedrals, Roman and Gothic churches lack spatial accents: they have no dome, due to which neither the central bay is demarcated clearly nor the chancel is separated from the central space. This striving is permanent and strong. Entering a Gothic church, one is "driven" in both directions, along the E-W axis and vertically, owing to rhythmically recurring forms. This difference in the treatment of space is primarily due to the typological difference between these churches: Gothic churches are basilicas, while Georgian cathedrals are cruciform-domed.

7. Not only Christian churches, temples of all epochs (Solomon's temple, Egyptian, Antique and other pagan temples) were images of the universe.

8. As is known, in Egyptian and Greek temples the ceiling was often painted blue and stars were depicted on it, creating an impression of the real night sky.

9. In certain cases the dome bore the Ascension or Descent of the Holy Ghost (O. Demus, 2001, 34-35).

10. Evangelists are mostly depicted seating at their desks, while in some cases pendentives bore their symbols – an ox, a lion, an eagle and an angle.

11. This system was mainly formed in Byzantium during 9th to 11th cc. (O. Demus, 2001, p. 15)

12. This contents revealed in the form, might not had been perceived, but taking into account general way of the mankind development, this direction seems quite logical and natural.

13. "The hand of Thy slave Arsukidze: forgive his sins." (Arkusidze was the architect of the 11th-century rebuilding of Svetitskhoveli   C a t h e - dral, Mtskheta)

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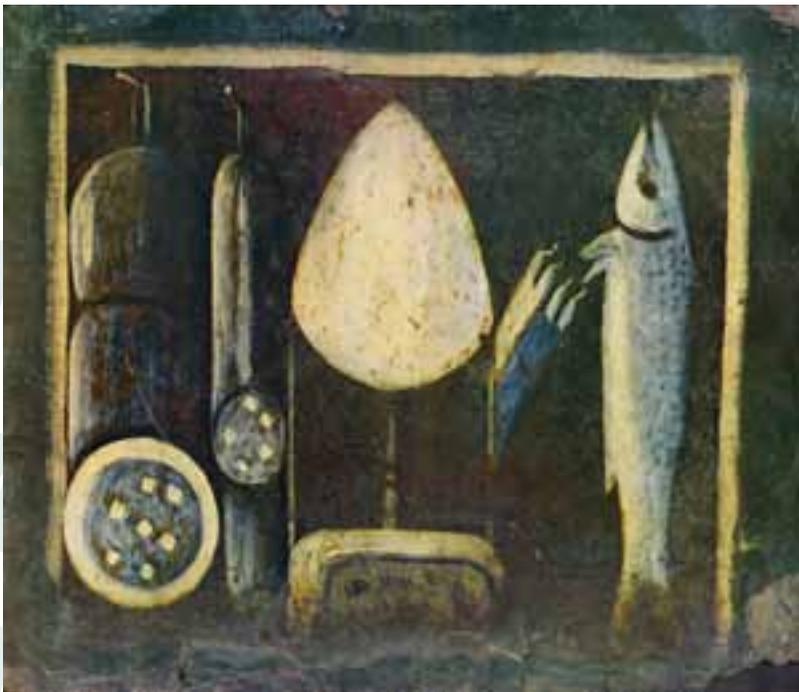
MODERNISM
IN
GEORGIA

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NIKOLAI PIROSMANISHVILI AND MODERNISM

"Modernism" might be defined as that which sees itself as new in relationship to what has come before—applicable to any era in which a self-consciousness of having made strides beyond the previous era is expressed. The term was taken up with particular passion toward the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. After the publication in 1900 of Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams, "Modernism" came to refer to patterns of thought that put a certain emphasis on stream of consciousness; on dreams and the symbolic language that dreams speak: indirect references to events and personages; and circumlocutionary "messages" regarding the dreamer's relationship to reality.

In the aftermath of the trauma of World War I, the term underwent a partial shift in nuance. The sense of liberation occasioned by the scientific and industrial advances that had been in process since the late eighteenth century yielded to the horrified recognition of what humans can and will do with those advances: the Great War offered proof of our species' unremitting destructive capacity.

Thus Modernism acquired a positive-negative ambiguity. Modernist art encompassed a re-visioning of the world from within the mind as opposed to reproducing it from without. The intense pigments of Fauvism, growing out of the coloristic subjectivity explored by Gauguin; or the Cubism developed by Braque and Picasso that reduces the nature's irregular forms to stylized cubes, triangles and cylinders; to say nothing of Surrealism's engagement of the unconscious and dream worlds and Dadaism's chaotic craziness—such movements derived their imagery from within the human mind, not from the objective reality of the world, and often suggested doubts as to where the world is going.

In late Romanov Russia, Modernism encompassed an array of artists and artistic associations. Among these, the "Jack of Diamonds" group was particularly successful. Michael Larionov, Natalia Goncharova and their associates combined elements of Post-Impressionism, Symbolism, Fauvist coloration, Cezannesque pre-Cubist handling of the palette-knife, Russian folk art and the "primitive" style of signboards and billboards and advertisements in their work.

Nikolai (Niko) Pirosmanishvili was born in 1862 in the village of Mirzaani in Kakheti province. Orphaned early on, taken to Tbilisi by his sisters, he soon returned, (with the younger of his two sisters, after the death of the older one), to the countryside, where he was a shepherd for a time. His desire to know about the world—he taught himself both to read and to paint—led him back to the city where he eventually emerged as a Modernist, reinventing the world from within, seeing reality as much psychologically as visually.

He was fascinated from childhood by sign-painters—in fact he became one, often exchanging work for food and a place to sleep. Many of Pirosmani's distinctive shop signs have survived. "Zakataly Pub," as much as it is a shop sign, is really a complex scene of country life, with people in diverse conveyances coming and going every which way, the scene bifurcated by a triple-trunked tree the upper branches of which lead the eye in toward the river flowing out of and into the image. The stream and the path that runs parallel to it "ends" in the distance at a church with its steeple, the entirety suffused with a kind of dark light that, together with the sky and the glowing orb within it, presents a dynamic ambiguity: is the scene is set by day or by night?

Pirosmani developed a unique style. Within his non-sign work, he painted on inexpensive black oil cloth, to which he added lightening pigments—rather than working on light canvas to which darkening pigments might get added. The result is a scintillating blackness—almost a visual oxymoron—that emanates from works like "Kakheti Train" (1913) [FIG 1]. Moreover, he generally limited the number of his pigments: often only three or four are in evidence. He again and again created his color nuances from within his own sensibilities, as opposed to emulating nature's hues with some imagined commitment to its objective qualities. We can see this in "Kakheti Train."

Kazimir Malevich—and much later on, Piet Mondrian—would, in different modes, experiment with ways of reducing the palette on the canvas to three or four colors (or no color at all), but both of them were doing so within abstract imagery, so that their reductionism of pigment was consistent with and parallel to their reductionism of form into a limited vocabulary of shapes. But Pirosmani applies this principle to figurative representation. Whether he arrived at this simply through the necessity dictated by poverty or through a leap into a new, subjective vision we cannot know for sure. Appositely, it is arguable that the stylization to which he subjects his imagery creates a form of non-naturalistic—and therefore effectively abstract—expression.

Pirosmani arrived into the vanguard of Modernist

Modernism in Georgia

Georgian painting at a time when the world was in transition—moving from one century to the next against the backdrop of an upsurge in industrialization. He produced most of the two hundred or so works that have survived (we do not know how many more he painted) during the epoch leading from the time of the "Third Industrial Revolution" toward World War I and the Russian Revolution.

The old world may be seen to be in a state of some shock at being overrun by the new in "Kakheti Train." We recognize Pirosmani as a "Primitivist" in this work–an anti-industrial Modernist. The painting calls to mind the poem by Evgeny Essenin. The poet asks rhetorically—and perhaps desperately—in "The Colt and the Train" from his Prayers for the Dead:

Did you see,
How the train
Rushes through the steppes
On its cast-iron feet...,
Hiding in the mists of the lakes,
Snorting through its iron nostrils?
And in its wake,
Over the high-growing grass,
As though in a desperate high-school race,
Flinging its slender legs as high as its head,
A red-maned colt gallops?
The sweet, sweet, funny little fool,
Where, oh where is he racing like this?
Doesn't he know that his gallop along the somber plain
Will not bring back the days when
The Pecheneg would give a few beautiful Russian girls from the steppe
In exchange for a horse? [1]

In Pirosmani's painting, the train track begins right here—this is the literalized meeting point between the pre-industrial, rural past (the "ploughed fields... of provincial Russia" about which Essenin writes) and the new, industrialized world that threatens to swallow up that wondrous past as surely as the train can outrun the horses of yesteryear.

The artist's unique yellow light suffuses the im-
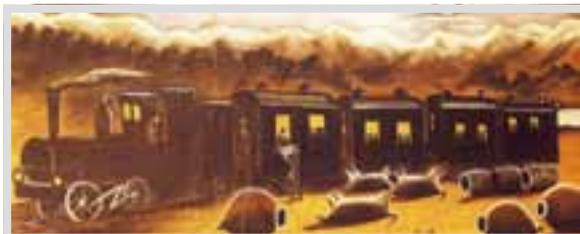
1. Niko Pirosmanashvili, Kakheti Train

age. This is a glowing yellow—its glow a result, in part, of his handling of pigments layered over a base color of black. But yellow is, in the history of Christian art, the color of betrayal, associated with Judas (and with Peter in his three-time denial of his Master). Could he have in mind—consciously or unconsciously—the notion of how the old world and its old ways are being corrupted and betrayed by the new industrial reality? The rectilinear form of the train offers a strong visual contrast to the curvilinear form of the barrels, the large marani, and three dead, swollen farm animals.

Each of these three types of object occurs in a group of three. Perhaps this is mere coincidence, but in the symbolic language, imposed—consciously or unconsciously—on his image by the artist, that number has a profound Trinity-signifying meaning. In the context of a work that alludes to the tension between the old ways of life and new realities, it may speak of traditional Christian sensibilities of that past, competing with contemporary secularist ideas that will soon carry away from the Romanov period (in particular, the evolving Marxist-Socialist ideas that are pulling the industrialized, urban peasantry—the "proletariat"—into its ambit) through the Socialist Revolution a few years away.

Pirosmani's relationship to a simpler rural past—his love of pious Georgian village life—is often in evidence in his paintings. One might compare his work, however different in particularities of style, to that of previously-mentioned Paul Gauguin—specifically Gauguin's interest in pious Breton life and his taste for unnatural colors, based on emotion rather than the objective reality of nature. His "After the Sermon" (1888) bears comparison with Pirosmani's "Lamb and Easter Table with Angels" (ND) [FIG 2].

Gauguin's pious Breton women have been so inspired by a sermon on Genesis 32:25-31—where Jacob wrestles all night long with God in the form of an angel—that they envision the event on the lawn outside the church. Eyes closed, they see with the inner, spiritual eye, not the outer eye. The grass where the vision takes place is a bright red color—the color of sacrifice, passion, and love.

Jacob in his wrestling with God through the night becomes, in Christian thought, a forerunner of Christ wrestling all night long in the Garden of Gethsemane. The passion and love of that Golgotha-culminating sequence reverberates in the passion and piety of the Breton women.

Pirosmani's work offers a direct allusion to the aftermath of Christ's Passion: the Resurrection celebrated annually in the rebirth of nature. His image

2. Niko Pirosmanashvili, At the Threshing Place

combines natural elements with spiritual symbolism and supernatural elements as astonishing in their context as those in Gauguin's painting. Thus cherub-angels hover over the entire scene: otherworldly creatures almost indistinguishable from the birds fluttering in the woods. The lamb is an everyday animal—except that in this context it symbolizes the self-sacrificing Christ. The artist has followed a history that begins in early Christian art, in which the lamb suggests innocence and purity in both its nature and the hue of its fleece.

Pirosmani's lamb sips from the stream's flowing water—a source of life. The collar around its neck is blood-red—the color of sacrifice and of the eggs resting on the white-clothed table, and of blood-red Eucharistic wine in a clear, cross-crowned container. The center of the composition is occupied by a small road-side statue of the Crucified Christ. Pirosmani has rendered the figure as if the stone is becoming flesh and the figure of the Savior is coming alive—being resurrected from the stone—at this moment in which the cause for the Easter celebration is expressed through faith, witnessed by the artist and the viewer. One recalls other Gauguin images, in which pious Breton women kneel before a large stone roadside image of the Crucified Christ that seems to be transformed out of rock through their piety.

Pirosmani remained very much a spiritual and psychological inhabitant of the older, pious, rural world, even after he left it behind. He came to the city but retained a connection to and nostalgia for the countryside, the village and its simpler life. We can observe this in "Wedding in Old-Time Georgia" (1916), with its subtle contraposto of two stately lines of people approaching each other from the two sides and its hilly horizon line dominated by churches.

We can feel it in a very different way with the un-

characteristically light-hued "Kalooba" ("On the Threshing Floor;" 1916) [FIG 3]. Here the stately rhythms of men and beasts punctuate the confined space of a gentle grey and tawny landscape—all the pale coloristic elements of which blend together in contrast with the rainbow-like tent to which the eye is inevitably drawn, and within it, the small child and calm dog.

One might be reminded of Modernist works a generation earlier by the Paris-based Primitivist, Henri Rousseau. The progression and shapes of Pirosmani's stacks of hay recall the progression and shapes of trees in Rousseau's "View of the Ile St. Louis in the Evening" (ca 1888). The striped shelter in Pirosmani's painting recalls the striped garment in Rousseau's renowned "Sleeping Gypsy" (1897).

There is more. The epic of everyday life—the transformation of everyday people, peasants and proletariat, into heroic figures—has a long history of transformation in Western art of the four hundred years leading up to the Modernist era. Thus, from Breughel's sixteenth-century scenes of peasant harvests and hunts, weddings and celebrations to images like Francois Millet's "The Sower" (ca 1850), we traverse a territory that moves from interested focus to idealized aggrandizement of rural life and those who live it.

In Pirosmani's work there is a particular connection to this mode of visual thinking in the series entitled "Kakhetian Saga: Alazan Valley." These paintings share in common a sense of something epic about the everyday activities of the world in which the artist spent his early childhood. We can see this in a more personalized manner in "Feast at Vintage Time" ("Grape Harvest Feast;" ND) [FIG 4]. In one concise sweep, he presents the viewer with

3. Niko Pirosmanashvili, The Lamb on the Graveyard

4. Niko Pirosmanashvili, The Family Feast

a range of activities from grape-picking to grape-stomping to the feast that inundates the participants with fine food and excellent wine—and even a dancing bear.

We are reminded that the region from which the artist came, Kakheti, is Georgia's best-known wine region—and furthermore, that viticulture was among the activities in which his family had been engaged before his parents died. Thus the innermost world of the artist—memory—and the reality of the world outside his mind meet here. Moreover, Pirosmani has turned to a millennia-old device—significance perspective—to underscore the heroic stature of the underclass shaper of the feast. In the center of the image four stately, formal noblemen dine. But the largest figure in the composition is the peasant to the viewer's left, who crushes the grapes that produce the wine. Thus he is the real center of the action—the significance center—even as he stands to the side of the central dining activity.

The artist celebrates what Georgians have long celebrated: the sacred importance of feasts—particularly, for Old Georgia: outdoor feasts. This we observe in "Feast at Vintage Time"—or in the relatively intimate setting of "Family Feast" (ND) [FIG 5]. With stylized, flattened figures cast with minimal perspective; a static quality that suggests eternal, unchanging realities; the carefully worked out contraposto—the boy and waiter balancing the man with his arm upraised in a toast—feasting is treated by the artist as a spiritual and not just a physical event. Indeed, Georgian culture designates the one who oversees toasts throughout the meal—the tamada—as the virtual equivalent of a priest supervising a ritual, for every feast is a ceremony and a ritual.

The idea of art serving and expressing overt and indirect spiritual purposes carries back to distant antiquity, from the Egyptians to the archaic Greeks—and

into Europe, Asia and Africa. Indeed, from Africa, it captured the Modernists' eye, from the cubism of Braque and Picasso to Brancusi. Pirosmani captured that idea—but applied it not to developing a vocabulary of abstraction but of stylized figurative representation.

Pirosmani frequently portrayed animals in his images—particularly deer, both individually and, in his "Three Deer at a Spring" (1913) as a trio. Deer, like the lamb, have a long history in Christian art, often shown drinking at a stream. This alludes to Psalm 42:1, where the soul is likened to a deer eager to drink from God's love. But once again, the artist's choice of three might suggest Trinitarian symbolism, even as the trio before us are father, mother and child—in symbolic terms, more like the Father, the Son and the Virgin Mother (who stands and drinks between the other two) than the Father, Son and Holy spirit. Moreover, in the context of specifically Georgian piety, the deer is associated with Saint David Garejeti, who lived on Mount Mtatsminda near Tbilisi and subsequently in the desert of Gareja where God sent a deer to offer him its milk every morning.

Cityscapes are rare for Pirosmani; besides rural landscapes and images of animals he favored figures in isolation—everyday figures heroicized like Millet's peasants, but without Millet's idealization. On the contrary, Pirosmani seems to have recognized and identified with an existential aloneness in many of the figures that he portrayed—particularly the urban characters. "Janitor" (1914-15) anticipates the coining of the phrase "existential aloneness"—and its first articulation by Robert Musil in his novel, Man without Qualities, (1930-42). Musil was reflecting back to a time when those like his central character felt a need to preserve order in a world being shaken by chaos. That pre-World War I Habsburg world was Pirosmani's world—in a different place, addressed in a different medium. Pirosmani's Modernist sensibilities observe visually what Musil and other existentialists articulated verbally a generation or more after Pirosmani was gone.

The impoverished Georgian painter never left the country of his birth, but his work was noticed by the "young Russian Futurists"—the "Jack of Diamonds" group headed by Larianov and Goncharova. In 1912 Larianov in particular was taken with Pirosmani's Modernist sensibilities: his unusual use of color and line, his intuitive "Primitivist" genius. A year later, four of Pirosmani's paintings were included in the "Target" exhibition organized by Larianov in Moscow. Exhibitions organized in other cities included his work, but he never changed from being a simply pious—and ma-

terially impoverished—observer of the world.

He died in 1918, alone, like the existentially alone characters that often appear in his work. Like most details of his life, his burial site remains unknown. His legacy is both to Georgia entering the new post-Romanov age, with all of its Soviet complications; and to a Modernist world still trying to define itself today, nearly a century after the artist's death.

5. Niko Pirosmanashvili, The Janitor

Notes:

1. The Pecheneg, a semi-nomadic Turkic people from the Central Asian steppe, was in the process of being conquered by the Romanovs in the nineteenth century.

2. See the brief essay by Ernst Kuznetsov on "The Life and Art of Niko Pirosmani," in Soltes, ed., National Treasures of Georgia, 128-30—but that Pirsomani was thusly inspired is self-evident from his work.

3. For example, Gauguin's 1889 "Yellow Christ."

4. "As a deer longs for flowing streams, so does my soul long for you, Oh Lord."

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Modernism in Georgia

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TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN 20TH CENTURY GEORGIAN ART

The history of 20th-century Georgian fine art was full of diverse, interesting and sometimes contradictory events. Certainly the same applies to easel painting in particular, which – if we consider the second half of the 17th century as the beginning of its conception and development – is much "younger" compared to monumental art. Possibly, for this reason, its development rate could be characterised as an extraordinary tension. Since the beginning of the 20th century both general and specific artistic problems, including the issue of traditionality and innovation, were exposed in easel painting. Based on the contradictory nature of the period itself, quite frequently the art processes occurring within a period of only 10- to 20-year intervals were in opposition to each other. However, it cannot be stated decisively that the processes of development were always advancing through the destruction of old traditions, though in the overall picture the principle of heredity, but with a new meaning, was obvious. Surely, only this century accommodated so much that at an earlier time would have required centuries to develop, although such an acceleration of the development rate and rhythm represented common features of the age rather than being only a Georgian characteristic. Given the fact that the history of Georgia and 20th-century Georgian art was developing in a specific historical context, it would not be surprising that the issue of choosing the right path was arising repeatedly, implying in itself problems of self-identification and integration.

Generally, in each historical period, art is a field of activity in which the common spiritual state of the society is reflected most clearly, along with the whole range of national traditions underlying the nations development. Therefore, it was inevitable that the eternal hesitation between the Eastern or a Western alignment (almost a keystone of Georgian history, politics, statehood, mentality and culture), similar to the country's real geopolitical position, was most explicitly presented in the art. Historical excursions in our art, where the feature of synthesis determined not only by historical factors is clearly depicted, will take us too far. It should be noted that signs of oriental and western art were found in Georgian art not only when the country was focused on Byzantium or the East. Most important is that such signs go beyond superficial influence and indicate a deeper propinquity of cultural values.

Given these circumstances, Georgian art greeted the 20th century with various, rich and distinctive tradition, and, as is obvious now, was internally ready to share new artistic searches that would be accepted and reconsidered.

Remarkably, the specifics of easel painting itself imply strengthening the subjective factor in the process of an artistic search. Meantime the subjective principle has been the major driving force in 20th-century Georgian art. This is probably why the pleiad of brilliant young Georgian artists – David Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili, Elene Akhvlediani, Shalva Kikodze – through their joint efforts, established contemporary Georgian art, though each of these artists had not only an individual style but was also dramatically different from the others in the above mentioned group.

Young artists who arrived in Paris in the beginning of the 1920s found themselves in the center of those artistic movements that for decades fed 20th-century culture. They were facing the most complex problem: art – uncommon in form and content – was being created in front of them, art that was fascinating due to different artistic thinking and new horizons. The scope and aesthetics of a new age were certainly a challenge which consciously or subconsciously required a response from them, on one hand posing the problem of self-identification and on the other hand the problem of integration with the contemporary world art. It should be mentioned that to resolve this problem, each Georgian artist had to consider the interrelation between artistic traditions and new artistic forms.

Each of these artists provided a response to the challenge not only through their work of the 1920s, but also through their entire creative output. Retrospective exhibitions of the work of David Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili, Elene Akhvlediani or Shalva Kikodze are sufficient to show how individual each artist's style was and how different was the synthesis of traditional, classic form and new aesthetics in it. Art of the 20th century, distinctive because of the signs of clear individualism, became the background against which

Georgian art, just emerging into the world, did not get lost or fade. In fact, due to its mixed artistic aesthetics of oriental and western art, Georgian art became interesting for the world. David Kakabadze's abstract and decorative compositions were easily holding a leading position in that period, and even today have not lost their significance. However, in the late 1920s and the 1930s all spheres of Soviet culture and art suffered equally from the intense pressure of ideology. Above mentioned Georgian artists experienced this upon their return to their homeland. Artificially- created socialist realism surely could not accommodate to the scope of their creative potential as well as for the other Georgian artists. The most painful and undoubtedly damaging result was the forced isolation into which the entire Soviet empire sank.

For many decades Georgian art was imprisoned by artificial barriers. Only at the end of the century, from the mid-1980s, did the historical situation change dramatically. The breaking of political and ideological barriers made it feasible to return to a natural state, where culture and art did not recognize artificial boundaries and instead surrendered to internal laws of development.

The generation of the 1980s and its art was in the vanguard of a new historical or cultural environment. Naturally, the changes that occurred equally affected them and their senior colleagues, but the artists of the 1980s, who commenced their creative activities at that time and were attempting to find their place, strongly felt the need for a new stage. Artists of this generation were the first to be given the opportunity – after a long hiatus – to see the art of the modern world themselves, to get closely acquainted with it, and to present themselves to the world. It is noteworthy that for the second time during the 20th century the problem of self-identification and integration arose. Of course, it is impossible to directly compare the 1920s and 1980s, or even to define them fully, though it is obvious that these two periods of contemporary art was influenced by the same tendencies at the beginning and at the end of the century.

Explicit signs of a new reality first emerged in the work of Gia Bughadze, Irakli Parjiani and Levan Tchogoshvili. First of all, it was the process of searching for the function of art, considering themes and subjects in a new light, and looking for a new artistic form. The conventional reference point of this pro-

1. G. Bughadze, Kartlis tskhovreba (History of Georgia), 1984

cess was the exhibition held in 1985, in which Gia Bughadze and Levan Tchogoshvili took part. The title of the exhibition was "From History." Today it takes a certain effort to imagine the striking impression of scenes revived from Georgian history or from portraits of Georgian kings. For decades Georgian art had been either completely avoiding historical themes or was applying stylization of the medieval art. Naturally, this situation was not producing either creative discoveries or working out high artistic value. Everything was novel in the pictures exhibited in "From History" – both the form and the content. But most important was the fact that the visitors to the exhibition were perceiving these paintings not as illustrations of stories that had occurred in the past,

2. I. Parjiani, Last supper, Gospel, 1982

but were becoming participants and contemporaries in them.

Bughadze and Tchogoshvili did not attempt to achieve historical accuracy through landscape, costume or other details. Far more important was disposition created by works of artists who had absolutely different – and highly individual – styles. Tchogoshvili's portraits resembled images of medieval churchwardens; however, unlike their historic models, they appeared to the viewers to be burdened with earthly and live thoughts. Bughadze's paintings illustrated episodes from the Georgian Chronicles (the Kartlis Tskhovreba) and were both romantic and realistic. When looking at these works the viewer unintentionally (subconsciously) began to think about the destiny of the Georgian State and to feel connected to events that occurred ages ago. It should be noted that these paintings of Bughadze, created in the still "peaceful" 1980s, were awakening national and state self-consciousness, while being pertinent to the cardinal problems the Georgian state had been facing for two decades.

In addition to artistic value, the public acceptance and discussion of the art works were unprecedented and represented an innovation for the 1980s. Indeed, it became obvious that the process of the sterilization of art and culture at large that had been going on for decades had been in vain. Neither censorship, isolation, nor other obstacles could not obstruct the natural process of artistic development. It became also clear that the art of the 20th century, despite the permanent control of the Soviet ideology, had followed its own path of development and was still attempting to make a synthesis of rich traditions of art and customized new artistic forms.

Irakli Parjiani, another leading artist of this generation, did not take part in the "From History" exhibition, though by that time he already had written and illustrated his work The Gospel. It should be emphasized that religious themes acquired importance during that period. The Gospel illustrated by Irakli Parjiani shows that the artist was well aware of the art of medieval manuscripts, though did not use the medieval method of stylization. He created art based on rich traditions; sometimes he himself innovated the iconography of this or that scene and tried to make synthesis of the text (written in modern Georgian) and the miniatures in order to make it   clear and interesting as it was possible. It is absolutely obvious that for Irakli Parjiani, in the context of modern art, the tradition of making manuscripts was important and attractive.

The special attitude of Georgian artists toward the fine arts has been determined by many factors. First of all, it was a common response to
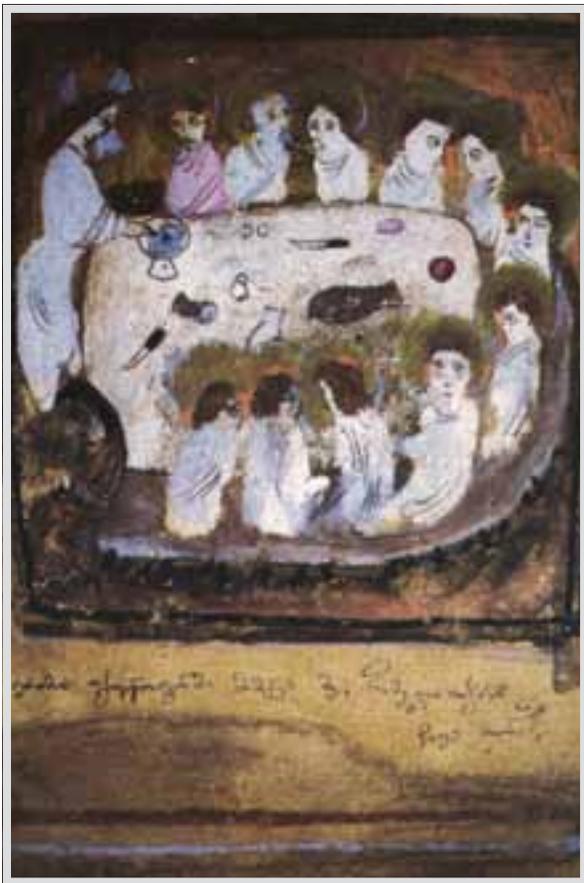
3. L. Chogoshvili, Tumanishvili's family, 1982

topics or national traditions tabooed by Soviet ideology, and this response was more or less expressed throughout the entire post-Soviet territory. In addition, artistic tradition has been a spoken language developed during many centuries; it is understandable for the entire public, even at the instinctive level. But the major and the most important factor of this tradition was its viability, the variety of its artistic impulses and richness. The 20th century and part of the 19th century represented periods of the not-so-natural development of the Georgian State and its culture. The country, increasingly dependent on external political factors, was living and developing in an unnatural, inadequate environment, which was reflected in its art. Notably, artists acquainted with European culture in the early 20th century – notably Dimitri Shevardnadze, David Kakabadze and Lado Gudiashvili – were actively involved in research and rescue activities for works of medieval Georgian architecture and art.

Presumably it was not just patriotic devotion that fueled this effort. The artists were seeking the roots of Georgian art within a national artistic tradi-

ic exhibitions of various types were succeeding each other with great frequency. In the light of the newly acquired creative freedom exhibitions of abstract, naïve or religious works were being organized. Despite the colorful overall picture, a number of artists were identifiable, for whom the problem of the interrelation between the artistic tradition and contemporary artistic form was important. In Merab Abramishvili's paintings the evidence track of the influence of the Georgian wall painting is obvious, as well as the familiar motifs of the oriental miniature – calligraphically rewritten ornament, flexible drawing and exotic colors. However, the overall artistic concept of these paintings implies such interrelation of the plane and space, where the area completely covered with images and ornament does not turn into a carpet. This feature was equally common in the monumental and manuscript art of Georgia of the late medieval centuries, when the nation was politically and culturally influenced by the East. It can be said that this factor determined the character of Georgian art.

At first sight the objects that Keti Matabeli makes by means of a collage technique resemble icons; however, their artistic form accurately dis-

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plays the idea of cultural layers presented in the artwork. Here are placed traditional images of Oriental Christian art and easily recognizable symbols of Western culture. The targeted eclecticism of time and style is one of postmodern art's basic features, and in this regard modern Georgian art is captured within its boundaries. However, it is impossible not to ask what internal impulses determine "citing the old," attempting to place it in a new context, and what purpose is served by it. To answer this question we have to review the work of two more Georgian artists – Irakli Sutidze and

4. M. Abramishvili, Black panther, 1987

Goga Maghlakelidze.

In Sutidze's painting the image of a saint against a golden background is a modern reminiscence of a Byzantine icon, though emphasizing color, ornament, and the disproportion of the figure strengthens the impression of decorativeness and transfers attention from an internal concentration on the features of the icon to the overall artistic effect of the painting. Substantially the same artistic impression is made by images of exotic animals accompanied by oriental décor and accessories. It is clear that various themes within the general concept of the artist's aesthetics play only the role of motif and the pure artistic value of such aesthetics is very high for the artist.

The creative works of Goga Maghlakelidze provide examples of a different perception of the traditions of monumental art. When creating a cycle of paintings for a church, the artist naturally and accurately observes "scene iconography", though the manner of painting and overall style of work disclose a

view of the modern human being in addition to traditional simplicity. First of all, it implies use of clear and bright color, as if the light is poured out from the frescos, which is an artistic metaphor of joy determined by faith.

As discussed above, the creative works of several Georgian artists of one generation differ from each other in style as well as in the general manner of working. Each painter creates the artistic aesthetics that reflect his/her creative potential and taste. However, in the process of creating a personal artistic world, each artist reflects tradition in this or that form and uses it as a building material, though in each separate case the outcome is different. This is not surprising as the multi-age tradition of Georgian art itself is not homogenous and originated on the basis of a synthesis of the diverse Oriental or Western art styles. Throughout the centuries Georgian culture never sought isolation; it was always familiarizing itself with and assimilating everything attractive and related. Such flexibility and readiness for the assimilation of new forms or aesthetics constantly enriched Georgian art, urging it to rework creatively various artistic impulses. This feature fortunately characterizes modern Georgian art. Furthermore, it is currently open not only to the classic methods of traditional art but also to completely new innovations and technologies. Gia Bughadze's latest works may be used as an example. They are being printed according to paintings made by the artist and the imprint so made becomes the canvas for the future painting, on which the artist starts working with oil or acrylic paints and creates an artistic palimpsest, which may be used as a symbol, just as consciousness stores everything in itself from the very beginning to date.

The purpose of this present introductory paper is to present one of the major problems of Georgian art: its attitude toward tradition. Naturally, in-depth research of this problem requires much time, though in my opinion large-scale exhibition of old and modern Georgian fine art will be effective experiment, where the viewer can make his/her own judgment as to which works pass the test of time and true art.

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Modernism in Georgia

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TBILISI: FROM A CITY OF BALCONIES TO POST-SOVIET DREAM TOWNS

Epigraph

Tbilisi does not know whether the western winds took it to the East or the Eastern winds took it to the West. It knows only one thing: It cannot be uprooted. When it moves forward, something pulls it back, and when it moves back, something pushes it forward.... A thousand winds wrestle with it, as though it stands at the crossroad of the world. It sailed from the East but did not reach the West –- it stopped somewhere between the two.... Is she the desired maiden? If so, she has had many suitors: Greeks, Romans, Turks, Persians, Khoresmians, Saracens, Arabs, Mongols, Russians. She did not yield to any of them. Grigol Robakidze

"... to rethink architecture though the concept of region ... and design the architecture of identity, sustaining diversity while benefiting from universality." Liane Lefaivre, Alexander Tzonis

Preface

A blend of cultures, a smell of spices on the air, different nations meeting on the street corner, different faiths sharing the same courtyard ... this is Tbilisi, the city that has been dominated in turn by traders, warriors, tyrants and dictators. Take a walk around the Old Town, and breathe in the living past. Visit the bustling markets, the ancient sulfur baths, the dazzling treasury and the magnificent churches, and gain a sense of the crossroads of the Caucasus. Tbilisi is a town that conquers you with a slow fascination and lodges in your heart forever.

Introduction: A City of Balconies? A short summary of Tbilisi's recent historical development

One finds the image of Tbilisi in its narrow medieval streets and its small balconied houses. The city's image also grows out of its art nouveau elements and its eastern details, but its eclecticism is always imbued with a harmonious simplicity and elegance. The history of the city has been difficult – it was destroyed and rebuilt more than 29 times and yet it preserved the structure of its narrow streets throughout the centuries. Most of Tbilisi's expansion since medieval times occurred in the 19th and early 20th centuries: like many cities in Europe, Tbilisi industrialized at the end of the 19th century.

By the early 1890s Georgian society was being transformed by the new demands of a market economy (R. G. Suny, 2009, 48). and as a result parts of the city like Sololaki and Chugureti were built in the modern style. The structures of Tbilisi functioned as arenas of cultural and socioeconomic life but tsarist legislation favoring large landowners prevented ordinary Georgians from participating in the government of their city, which they had viewed as their national capital since the early Middle Ages.

At the turn of the century a small group of Georgian intellectuals who had been educated in Europe and Russia returned home and brought back with them an alternative vision of Georgia's future – ideas of accelerated economic development and a democratic society, ideas which were associated with the Menshevik wing of the Social Democrats. Up until 1921, when the Red Army Invaded Georgia, and the new leaders of Soviets and the new institutions of city government began the arduous task of modernizing an antiquated administration, Georgian culture flourished during this period, but within the limits of Soviet-Style socialism (R. G. Suny, 2009, 55)

The Soviet Period

While not widely recognized in the West, it is certainly true that the artistic and architectural concepts developed in Russia during the early 20th century affected not only Soviet architecture but also the development of European and American contemporary art. One of the period's most important contributions was the creation of a multifunctional art institute, VKHUTEMAS – a research institute for the systematic study of the perception of form. Together with the Bauhaus, this school became legendary. Concepts developed at VKHUTEMAS formed the basis of Constructivism, the architectural movement that took a leading role in the Russian avant garde of

the early 1920s. It was a period of searching for a new language in architecture and art. Malevich, Lisitszky, Melnikov, the Vesnins brothers and many others were seeking a new vocabulary by working in new directions (E. Kiladze, 2009, p.17). In fact, this movement influenced generations of architects in Russia, Europe and America, even inspiring the work of contemporary designers today.

In Georgia, Constructivist ideas were implemented in fewer buildings than in Russia. However, the movement's innovative concepts profoundly influenced Georgian poetry, literature and art. By this means, futurist ideas inspired the development of Georgian modernism a leading role in the cultural life of early 20th-century Tbilisi.

According to Ikonnikov, in 1919 and 1920, Soviet architects made their first attempts to create new types of living spaces (A. Ikonnikov, 1988, 79). They created new residential designs for workers and new types of buildings for power stations as well as a number of textile mills and an automobile plant (A. Ikon-

nikov, 1988, 83). Soviet architecture's highest priority at the time was to develop rational city and regional planning. A creative search for new and experimental designs more than compensated for a lack of practical accomplishments during these years. Unfortunately, this artistic freedom did not last long. The totalitarian ambitions and gigantomania of the Soviet political system obliged Soviet architecture to align with the power of the state. In 1932, after Stalin came to power, the course of the country changed and the Communist party declared a new strategy – "to create architecture which will carry a national façade and an international-socialist interior" – national from the outside and socialist from the inside. This directive completely changed the country's approach to architecture. It was important to present the power of a newborn state and so architecture became monumental while the pursuit of the avant garde was abandoned. As a result most of the country's well-known artists moved to Europe and for those who stayed behind, connection with the West was cut off.

1. Tbilisi, 19th century

Modernism in Georgia

2. Old Tbilisi; one of the typical balconies (photo E. Kiladze)

Soviet art and architecture thus began its development in total isolation from Western ideas. This seclusion led to the creation of entirely new architectural structures – based on specific Soviet norms as well as mandatory zoning and planning codes. Widespread construction in the country ended during World War II but resumed in the 1950s when the power of a victorious Soviet Union was reflected in its monumental buildings and in its new cities. The 1960s saw the culmination of "master plan"-based architecture, which was typically designed in Moscow and then transferred outwards. Almost all types of buildings were affected, including homes, schools, hospitals and city halls.

Later the economic and political capacity of the 1970s served to strengthen this statesponsored normative scheme in architecture. Projects were implemented according to the method of "parachute" construction, based on orders from the Center, a process which almost completely excluded individual artistic expression. Centralized state control produced a typical style of building and planning which was duplicated across all the Soviet republics. Housing

districts designed as simple units – were nicknamed "kruschevki," after the Soviet leader who disseminated them. Under such circumstances the only way to express one's individuality was through conceptual work, or the creation of architectural fantasies – which allowed architects to be creative and gave them a certain freedom" (E. Kiladze, 2009, 134).

Urban planning and architectural development in Georgia followed a similar progression. Of course, there were some exceptions like the Ministry of Highway Construction building (arch. Chakhava, 1974) and a few buildings designed by the architect Victor Jorbenadze, such as his Wedding Palace and his Cemetery at Mukhatgverdi. However, these expressions of local and individual style were rare.

It must be noted, that during the Soviet period there were "dreams of freedom" in architecture but those dreams were realized only on paper. In Georgia, the architect George Leshava created a series of sketches representing his vision of Georgian architecture. On reading Leshava's graphical series "Dwelling of Mossins," or "The Future of Tbilisi," it is obvious that these are forbidden dreams – simple and naïve on the one hand, but very important for the development of contemporary architecture. The significance of the sketches is that they reveal the continued existence of the country's indigenous creative spirit searching for a specifically Georgian architectural language. Later, in the 1980s, though strictly prohibited from doing so, young Soviet architects continued in this tradition by actively participating in international architectural competitions. This movement was named "paper architecture" and it was a unique, creative form of relief for the architects of those periods.

Dream Towns

In the Soviet Union, the state defined land development in all areas and all levels of planning were based on internally devised economic programs, as well as normative instructions. Since all development and construction was the exclusive domain of the state there were no building or planning laws responsive to the needs of local citizens. (K. Zigler, 2009, 142). Unfortunately, abandoning centralized planning during the post-Soviet transition has had dubious consequences and efforts at successful local control have been crippled by the Soviet legacy.

As Zigler describes in his essay, although Geor-

3. New construction in the Vera district (photo E. Kiladze)

gia descended into civil war and economic decline after declaring independence in 1991, gradual recovery in the mid-1990s enabled municipal authorities to implement the systematic management of private property in the capital by means of land registration and zoning. (K. Zigler, 2009, 143). However, despite assistance from the German Society of Technical Co-operation the new regulations proved inadequate in the face of unscrupulous foreign investors. Moreover, a lack of local professional knowledge in architecture, urban planning and historic preservation has left serious deficiencies.

Today, without a master plan to preserve the historic city and develop the town's center, Tbilisi is losing its characteristic image. The poorly regulated transformation of existing structures has led to overcrowding and insufficient parking. Unfortunately, some of the damage sustained since the collapse of the Soviet Union will be almost impossible to reverse. Tbilisi has lost the Alexander Garden – a 19th-century landmark of landscape architecture, designed by German architect Otto Simonson. Moreover, many attractive residential areas – primarily in the Vera and Vake districts – have seen the arrival of oversized

building complexes. Finally, years of isolation from contemporary strategies in town planning and preservation have left several important buildings and urban districts in the city center either disintegrating or poorly renovated without regard to their historic character.

In addition, the post-Socialist period has witnessed an unprecedented rural immigration into the city. In some cases villages have lost their entire population, while at the same time, particular city neighborhoods are almost entirely populated with recent ex-villagers. The villagers bring into the city cultures and behaviors once associated only with rural life (Z. Shatirishvili, 2009, 82).

During the 1990s large numbers of internally displaced persons, primarily refugees from Abkhazia, resided in all of Tbilisi's available Socialist-period hotels. The complaint became that Tbilisi had simply become a large village and that faceless "new balconies" had been grafted onto existing houses. This was a semiotic transfomation which profoundly changed the city because many of its inhabitants lacked any knowledge of urban culture.

After the Rose Revolution of 2003, there were new efforts to regulate construction in the Western manner, taking inspiration from foreign examples of proven of value, but today the situation in Tbilisi is still desperate. Recent Georgian housing, shopping malls, high-rise buildings and flashy glass towers proposed for uptown Tbilisi and other locations (with no contextual meaning at all) are impossible to judge on their architectural merits. We cannot define their style, their conceptual approach, or their architectural value. Since architecture reflects society at its social,

4. Dream Town (E. Kiladze)

4. Dream Town (E. Kiladze)

economic and cultural level, this is a sadly accurate picture of a chaotic present.

The move from a socialist economy with a state-controlled market to a capitalist economy with a free market is by no means a success story and the newly established democracy in Tbilisi has had its own difficulties. Moreover, two decades of freedom have broken the barriers once separating Soviet Georgia from the West, revealing a thirst for all things Western. In this transitional period (which in a sense still continues today) there have been many imitations of what perhaps was not the very best in Western architecture. This situation, typical of many post-Soviet countries, has been best summarized by the distinguished Hungarian architectural historian Akos Moravansky: ... the recent architecture is an adequate picture of the destructive aspects of this process. In the new wild East, state regulations have been abandoned for no regulation at all local administrations are too weak to negotiate with foreign investors and developers and as a result we are facing: gated communities, "dwelling parks,""townlets," [which are] corroding the public texture of the cities (A. Moravansky, 2000, 34).

In addition, Tbilisi is succumbing to the homogenizing influences of globalization. Today-as the world

is facing the loss of small individual cultures in the face of globalization – Tbilisi is losing its architectural character. New "Dream Towns" are simply replacing original structures and they have nothing in common with characteristic Georgian design – unfortunately they are often just examples of plagiarism and are not even good examples of Western architecture.

Questioning the new development of the city

In Steven Holl's "Urbanisms" there is a description of 'urban porosity,' which refers to a paragraph from Walter Benjamin's "Reflections," which describes the city of Naples. Benjamin observes a porous pattern in which "buildings and action interpenetrate in courtyards, arcades and stairways ... to become a theater of new unforeseen constellations.... Porosity is an inexhaustible law of the life of the city, reappearing everywhere. Rather then a preoccupation with solid, independent object-like forms, it is the experiential phenomena of spatial sequences with around, and between which emotions are trigged (S. Holl, 2009, 11). I found Walter Benjamin's description an extraordinarily accurate description of Tbilisi's architectural environment.

Since architecture is a visible index of civilization, according to Ruskin and others, a city is supposed to change. The question is How? Valéry said, "we hope vaguely".... (C. Jenks, 2007, p. 102) but it is more appropriate and creative to discuss new development explicitly and to define the important ideas behind it. Architecture and identity in a global world are important issues for a country like Georgia. Not every culture can sustain and absorb the shock of modern civilization. A paradoxical task arises: how to become modern and yet return to sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and at the same time take part in a new universal civilization." (K. Frampton, 2002, 22).

As we move into the unknown territories of the 21st century, the unresolved conflict between globalization and diversity becomes vital. What do we want? Can we turn the choice of style into a matter of ideology? Do we want an "archipelago of gated communities, "dwelling parks," and "townlets" which are corroding the public texture of the city? Or do we want architecture based on a strong concept of critical regionalism – an architecture of identity, which recog-

nizes the value of the singular and circumscribes projects within the physical, social and cultural constraints of the particular? (L. Lefaivre, A. Tzonis, 2003, 20).

Such an architecture would not only be based on indigenous traditions of culture, myths and crafts making but also on local climate and geography. It would avoid centralized consensus and it would rely on critical analysis of the past. Finally, it would be based on the cultural, economic and political desire for independence.

Let us imagine that we will choose it.

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Modernism in Georgia

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MEDIEVAL ARTISTIC PRINCIPLES IN THE ART OF NIKO PIROSMANASHVILI

"To write the biography of Niko Pirosmanashvili (Pirosmani) (1862-1918) is as hard as those of ancient masters, who spread their creations throughout Georgia ...As though he was ready to be like his ancestors and similarly, be distanced from contemporary life" – wrote the famous Georgian poet Titzian Tabidze.

Indeed, in the same way that Pirosmani's fragmentary biography resembles the life of unknown, humble medieval masters, so too the "iconography" and style of his works unveils undoubted ties with the traditions of medieval art.

Among the most vivid and frequently mentioned "medieval" features of Pirosmani's pictures are their monumentality, flatness, simplicity and hieratic character (K. Zdanevich 1963, E. Kuznetsov 1975, 1980, G. Khoshtaria 1985, V. Beridze 2006, D. Tumanishvili 2001, 170-196, S. Lejava 2005 et al.).

The monumentality of his images, which in turn recalls the same quality in ancient Georgian mural paintings, might be connected with the artist's experience as a wall painter. As is known from the scarce biographical sources, Pirosmani painted pictures on the walls of dukhans (taverns) and wine cellars, but unfortunately none of them have survived. However, his easel paintings, not just the large-scale compositions, but also the moderate-sized pictures, leave a profound impression of monumentality. In order to represent his subjects in a greater context, the painter often neglected details, thus transforming the subject of his painting into a monumental image. The simplicity or "laconism" of Pirosmani's pictorial language, revealed through the omission of secondary details in favor of emphasizing the essential, and the simplicity of his artistic means, through which he succeeds in achieving powerful effects, can be compared with the "laconism" of medieval Georgian art, distinguished by its monumental, laconic imagery and restrained palette.

As is widely known, Pirosmani used a peculiar technique of painting on black oilcloth. With this technique he succeeded in achieving a very special effect: when he needed black, he simply left that part of the oilcloth unpainted.

"The black background cuts off the objects from the real environment," writes Erast Kuznetsov (E. Kuznetsov, 1984, 85) in his monograph on Pirosmani.

Sometimes simply left unpainted, sometimes partially painted, the black oilcloth background plays an important role in creating the imagery peculiar to Pirosmani. In particular, the darkness and solidity of the background creates the effect, which is somehow similar to the "reverse-perspective" achieved by means of a neutral background of gold, applied in Eastern Christian art. Being a symbol of divine light, it creates an impression of an unreal, illusory world, while glimmering on the background, with its opaqueness it builds a "reverse perspective," leading to the impression that "the image is not separated from the beholder by the 'imaginary glass pane' of the picture plane behind which the illusionistic picture begins: it opens into the real space in front, where the beholder lives and moves." (O. Demus, 1948, 13)

So too, placed on the black background, the portrayed person (or object) in Pirosmani's pictures is pushed forward in the real space in front, thus forming a special space, where the image interacts with the beholder. Moreover, depicted frontally, in the foreground of the picture, Pirosmani's images most often are in eye contact with the spectator.

The depiction of eyes has great importance in Eastern Christian art, as the eye is considered to be the "mirror of the soul," and thus, the symbol of life after death. That is why in Christian murals and icons the eyes of the saints are always specially emphasized. Eyes are means to reach the sacred meaning and help to unveil the essence of the icon. "The contemplation of the holy image put one in the immediate presence of the angel, and the reciprocal gaze of the figure – the direct eye contact – allowed one to send forth prayers to him."(Th. Mathews, 1997, 26)

"Pirosmani's pictures are icons" – said Baiadze, one of the owners of a tavern in which Pirosmani used to work, "In these I see kindness and genuineness. Our Niko's pictures are blessed by the god of love." Baiadze's perception of Niko's works can speak to the fact that though differing from icon images in their spiritual level, Pirosmani's pictures recalled medieval icons in the consciousness of his contemporaries.

His portraits such as "The Cook," "The Fisherman in a Red Shirt," "The Nurse with the Child," among others gaze intently out of the picture plane, with their wistful eyes on the beholder, leaving an unforgettable impression with their genuine expression and solemn character. Pirosmani's portraits are less individual as they depict the idealized images of common people. In the words of Kuznetsov "[Pirosmani's] portraits lift the portrayed to the world of noble feelings, thoughts and deeds" (E. Kuznetsov, 1984, 128).

Even in those compositions in which Pirosmani places the figures in a specific environment, mainly in the "feast" scenes, e.g., "The Family Picnic," The Feast with Organ-Player Datiko Zemeli," "The Three Feasting Nobleman," etc., or in the "epic" compositions such as "Wedding in Old-time Georgia," "Feast of St George in Bolnisi," "Sviri," "Vintage Feast" etc., which are meant to reflect the vibrant life of the village, or in his cheerful groups of partying people, the images are static, still and similarly solemn, as though they exist beyond the dimensions of time and space. In fact, Pirosmani's static, hieratic images generally repeat the same poses as seen in medieval icons, frescoes and stone carvings. Human figures with raised hands bent at the elbow, which mostly hold horns filled with wine, remind us of medieval images of donors approaching different saints with gestures of supplication.

The artist often repeats the same gestures and compositional alignments in his pictures. "These schemes are like set formulas," and indeed they play the same role in Pirosmani's works as do the set iconographic attributes and schemes in medieval art.

"Like the medieval artists, who painted "The Annunciation," "The Dormition" and "The Ascension" following set rules, Pirosmanashvili was not afraid of constant themes and scenes... However, he never repeated them directly, as though he enjoyed returning to the same compositions, again and again, to enrich the set schemes with subtle nuances." (E. Kuznetsov, 1984, 78)

Among artist's most reiterated motifs are: the above-mentioned "gesture of veneration," the table alignment in the scenes of feasting people, the wine jars littering the ground, the cart with horses or bulls, the flying birds, the flowers in women portraits, etc.

Just as the figures with the gesture of "veneration" recall medieval donor portraits, so are the compositional alignments of Pirosmani's "feasts" close to the way in which the table scenes were represented in medieval art.

The spread table in Pirosmani's paintings is depicted in the foreground, in the center of the composition. The human figures, which are usually presented frontally and are only rarely profiled, are sitting at one side of the table, in clearly a organized alignment. Thus, each of the portrayed persons is always clearly observable to the eye of the beholder. The table is arranged loosely: plates, traditional Georgian breads, fish, wine bottles and jars, etc. do not overlap each other. The composition is simple and clear; in fact, freely arranged tables in Pirosmani's pictures differ from the reality of the overburdened traditional Georgian table, which is famous for its abundance of food and drink. This difference speaks to the fact that instead of a naturalistic depiction, Pirosmani exposed simplified "image-symbols," emphasizing the idea of the table, representing it in a greater context.

On the contrary, being unlike to Georgian tables in reality, Pirosmani's "feasts" resemble the table scenes found in medieval iconography, e.g., "The Last Supper," "The Hospitality of Abraham," "The Holy Trinity," "Wedding at Cana," etc., where the personages are always depicted from one/three side of the table, and where the "still lifes" on the spread sheet are always extremely restrained.

Quite often Pirosmani's "epic" pictures combine different scenes in a single composition, displaying the exquisite skill of the master, distinguished with a unique intuitive, inherited sense of the simultaneous comprehension of the whole and the detail, the primary and secondary. In such pictures as "The Kakhetian Epos," "Feast of St George in Bolnisi," "Vintage Feast," etc. the separate episodes of village life such as the vintage, wine making and the "feast" are depicted as simultaneous events. Here the viewpoint follows the pictorial narrative, as in a medieval relief frieze or fresco, often incorporating separate episodes of the story in one scene.

In these "epic" compositions we observe most vividly how the painter neglects the rules of perspective in the favor of focusing on the thematically important objects. For example, in the picture "At the Threshing Place," the figures in the background, instead of diminishing as in linear perspective, are of the same size as the figures placed in the foreground; in the picture "The Large Marani (Wine Cellar) in the Forest," the large ceramic wine jar (kvevri) in the cen-

ter of the composition is especially exaggerated, alluding to the content of the picture. Thus Pirosmani applies the rules of perspective to his pictures in accordance with the importance of the depicted object, as did medieval artists, whose work was meant to be read as a group of symbols rather than seen as a coherent picture, where the artist typically sized objects and characters according to their spiritual or thematic importance, not in relation to distance.

The "medieval" symbolism penetrating the art of Pirosmani is also clearly demonstrated by the animal images, which form an important part of his work. The animals, painted as simply as his portrait subjects, "feasts," "epic" compositions, or still lifes, are often attributed with anthropomorphic sensitivity and sometimes symbolic meaning, as was the case in medieval art.

Among the beloved animals of Pirosmani are lambs. As is widely known, the lamb is a widespread Christian symbol. The Lamb of God (Agnus Dei) is one of the titles given to Christ in the New Testament and consequently in Christian tradition (G. Schiller A. Uvarov, 2001 p. 224-225). It refers to Jesus' role in Christian theology as a sacrificial lamb atoning for the sins of man. Judging by the titles of the compositions of Pirosmani's three pictures incorporating the same name – "The Easter Lamb," and also "The Lamb in the Graveyard," the lamb has a similar "medieval" implication, representing the sacrificial offering and thus bearing Christian symbolism.

Considering the great number of pictures incorporating it, the deer/stag is one of Pirosmani's most loved animals, which for the artist apparently symbolized purity and innocence. In addition to the separate deer or stag pictures, the painter, as confirmed by the compositions "Roe Deer with Fawn by Water," "Three Deer at a Stream," "Deer at a Stream," and others, quite often paints them while they are drinking water. In the Christian tradition, deer are considered to be symbols of believers; the water alludes to the sacred implication of baptism (A. Uvarov, 2001, p. 61). Thus the deer drinking water is the symbol of the human soul desiring to embrace Christianity (A. Uvarov, 2001, pp. 244-245).

Pirosmani often painted lions ("The Lion and the Sun," "The Sitting Lion," "The Persian Lion" "The Black Lion"), which exemplify strength, power and sometimes fury, just as medieval lion images did, where they were considered as the vigorous guard-

ians of a place and as symbols of power (A. Uvarov, 2001, p. 243-244), which simultaneously embodied the idea of the triumph of Christianity (N. Aladashvili, 1977, p. 218-219).

Among the widespread Christian symbols of the power and victory are also eagles with a seized hare in their claws (N. Aladashvili, 1977, p. 233-234). Pirosmani's picture "The Eagle with the Seized Hare" directly follows the "medieval" pattern, found in the iconographic programs of church facade decoration.

Taking into consideration Pirosmani's preference in the choice of animals, and the symbolic meaning the artist attributed to his lambs, deer, lions, eagles, etc., and the fact that in depicting them the painter followed the visual pattern established in medieval art, it is clear that his art is deeply penetrated by Christian thinking.

Pirosmani's symbolic approach to his images is additionally demonstrated by his words, recalled in the memoirs of Lado Gudiashvili: "Life is a contrast," Pirosmani stated, "I understand it clearly, rich and poor, black and white. In life everything has two sides: good and evil; here is a white cow, a symbol of peace and love. The white color is the color of love. The black bull fights, roars, it's a war... While painting the Beauties of Ortachala, I placed them on the background of 'black life.' However, they also have their love for life, which is illustrated through flowers and birds around them, I paint them covered with white sheets. I pity them and with white color I remit their sins..." (K. Zdanevich, 1963, p. 38)

The symbolic meaning that Pirosmani attributed to different colors and different reiterating details in his pictures is another feature that relates his painting to medieval art, where each color and individual detail had its deep symbolic implication and sacred meaning.

Finally, among the "medieval" features of Pirosmani's art are the accompanying inscriptions incorporated in the majority of his works. In such pictures as "The Family Picnic," "Still Life (Cheers for a Hospitable Man)," "The Childless Millionaire and the Poor Woman with the Children," etc., the inscriptions have an explanatory function. In the scenes of "feasts" we often observe the names of the depicted persons alongside their heads. The inscriptions are an inseparable part of the sign-boards painted by the artist. Overall, the inscriptions in Pirosmani's works, as in a traditional medieval fresco or icon, help to unveil the idea of the

painting, engage the beholder and simultaneously play an important role in the structure of the composition.

Such qualities as the "laconism" of composition, monumentality, flatness, the symbolic meaning attributed to different images and colors, the constant "iconographic schemes," the use of inscriptions, and finally, the deep humanism and unsullied nature of the artist revealed through his naïve images, which may recall in one's mind the childish innocence moralized in Christian belief, all demonstrate the deeply rooted medieval traditions in Pirosmani's art.

The profundity and complexity of the ways in which different artistic patterns, epoch styles and layers of culture intermingle with each other in the works of this great self-taught Georgian painter, make the art of Niko Pirosmanashvili a fascinating and inexhaustible object of study.

Notes

1. Born in a village Mirzaani in Kakheti (eastern Georgia), the artist spent most of his life in the capital, working as a painter of taverns and wine cellars. In 1912 he was "discovered" by the professional artists - students of St. Petersburg Academy and thereafter was enthusiastically praised by the generation of Georgian modernist painters and poets. However, despite this recognition the artist died in severe poverty and his due appreciation came only after his death.

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Modernism in Georgia

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METAPHOR VARIATION IN TV THEATER

Communist ideologues called the 1970-80s a period of "developed socialism." In reality, this period is recorded in history as "the epoch of stagnation." According to mass media of that time, "life was wonderful" and thinking artists could express the sorrows of the nation only through works of art. But at that time the truth could not expressed directly and therefore "metaphorical thinking," allowing one to express one's opinions using artistic tools, became of great importance.

The stage director Temur Chkheidze's creative activity was always distinguished by conceptual thinking in which the suffering of the conquered nation was reflected. To express this suffering, the director drew upon Mikheil Javakhishvili's prose and in those years two highly artistic theatrical productions – Jaqo's Dispossessed and The White Bunny – were created. Society's aggressive reaction to the TV theatrical version of Jaqo's Dispossessed was nearly the same as it had been previously to Javakhishvili's novel. In a private interview Chkheidze noted that if it were 1937, he would not have escaped a death sentence. It should be mentioned that a TV theater version, like every kind of audiovisual creation, is a synthetic product where different methods of expression are united into one structure, and many means of expressing the idea are combined.

The creative activity of the artists Javakhishvili and Chkheidze are distinguished by a philosophic perception of being, by deep penetration into the human soul, and by metaphorical thinking. It should be noted that Chkheidze is Javakhishvili's ally, his like-minded colleague

Transformation of prose into an audiovisual work and the embodiment of the text on the screen is realized by use of all possible means of expressiveness available in synthetic art. A scenographer creates a visual environment where characters act and transfer the author's ideas into visual images, and the symbolic environment that allows the director to create a metaphorical line and express it by means of TV frames. The setting of Jaqo's Dispossesed, in which there are three main characters, is entirely natural green grass. In the artistic décor natural and conventional details are combined. The arba (bullock-cart), bed or shop things in the TV theatrical version are arranged against a background of extremely symbolic frescoes and "family portraits." The black-and-white frescoes, here and there torn and faded, bear witness to the past grandeur of Teimuraz Khevistavi. And the whole setting and the color range of the characters' costumes create a visual image of the inner state of the characters.

The ideas Teimuraz expresses do not hide the process of his spiritual degradation. The bitter fate of Georgia and the historical role of Kartli is shown on the background of pumpkins, baskets and chests. Teimuraz, with an enthusiastic voice and expression and with eyes turned to the West, is waiting for somebody else to return him everything he has lost. Chkheidze and Mirian Shvelidze create a screen version to express Javakhishvili's ideas. Following Teimuraz's look, Nodar Mgaloblishvili's camera reaches the frescoes and the image of St George appears as a symbol of the victory of good over evil.

The portraits in their frames are loaded with a special function. In the TV theatrical version the portrait of Teimuraz's wife Margo (played by Nana Pachuashvili) appears in an oval frame. Here, Margo resembles the medallion that she wore on her bosom and that was so mercilessly torn off its owner.

Javakhishvili's three characters are concrete figures: in the novel Margo is a symbol of the Georgia that the helpless Georgians could not protect. Teimuraz Khevistavi is specifically a collective bearer of this helplessness which led to the occupation of his motherland by others. Jaqo Jivashvili is also a collective figure of forced capture. Jaqo, Ossetian by nationality, is in the novel a symbol of Russia's predatory force. It is obvious that Jaqo's nationality is not accidental. The Ossetian uprising was a very important factor in the sovietization of Georgia. Even today, Russian imperialistic forces unleash Ossetian separatism and in this way capture Georgian territory.

In the novel, the symbol of the conquered, distressed and injured motherland is personified in Margo Kaplanishvili. Her transformation into a mistress carries a special weight and requires a relevant visual variation of the literary symbolism. The episode of Margo's seduction begins with the frame decorated

1. Avto Maxaradze as Jaqo.

with pigeons. Margo, dressed in grey, lifeless, neutral colors, seems to find here a missing family idyll. Margo's seduction by Jaqo, who is seized by a violent passion, occurs in a tented arba. Jaqo turns the arba, an eternal symbol of the labor of the Georgian people and their link with the land, into a shelter for the satisfaction of his bestial lust. Margo's seduction by Jaqo on the grass, in their native land, is however an act of mutual desire. Now, Margo, as a mistress, is placed within a clear-cut frame. In the company of Jaqo and his relations Margo Khevistavi becomes equal to them. The invariance of the ideas transferred into a synthesis of the creative work of three authors – Javakhishvili, Chkheidze and Shvelidze – and the audiovisual text created in the TV theatrical version by metaphorical variations was transferred into an innovative metaphor system relevant to the invariant metaphors of the original literary text.

The idea of the TV theatrical presentations is realized in the psychological portraits created by the actors. In fact, it is precisely in the synthesis of the portraits that the colorful metaphor flow is born that determines the uniformity of the conception and perception. The actors' costumes and make-up acquire a symbolic load. In the first episodes of the TV presentations Teimuraz Khevistavi still preserved an old ribbon from the good old days. Dressed in a sheepskin coat with a papakha (Caucasian fur hat) pulled over his head, Jaqo wears a garnet-colored shirt on his dirty body. As the plot develops, Jaqo, already in the role of Margo Khevistavi's master, begins "ennobling" himself, and his exterior features are reflected in Teimuraz Khevistavi. Teimuraz's face is covered with disheveled beard; from Jaqo's sheepskin coat there peeps out the well-groomed body of Teimuraz. The logic of this behavior is similar to that of Jaqo. Teimuraz, working now as a shop-assistant, has settled in the Jaqo's dwelling and Jaqo's entourage has become his entourage too. Teimuraz spouts his political preaching in Jaqo's den – and they therefore become an act of immorality.

In Teimuraz Khevistavi (performed by the actor Nodar Mgaloblishvili) the soul of Jaqo has settled, as if Khevistavi is holding on to the place of his ruined dwelling, like Jaqo. In the scene of Margo's seduction by Jaqo, her assailant, crawling on all fours, occupies the whole screen space. Jaqo's coming was interpreted as a symbol of approaching evil. In contrast to the Jaqo closeup, Teimuraz's return to his dwelling is shown from a distance. In the same yard Teimuraz, dressed in Jaqo's reddish jacket, is creeping worm-like, as if leaving a bloody trace. The visual narration of the director and the stage-designer was embodied

2. "Jaqo's Dispossessed"

3. Nana Pachashvili as Margo.

in the actor's performance and turned into an expressive metaphor.

The scene of the funeral of Teimuraz's soul was reproduced through a figurative metaphor. Teimuraz, the witness of his own funeral, is lying on the grass. An enormous grave stone-like post occupies the back-space of the TV frame Teimuraz's burial takes place in front of his own eyes; he himself is the witness of his own interment. In the TV play the metamorphosis of the literary text was transferred into a visual symbol and the author's idea was embodied into the innovative metaphoric audiovisual text of the authors of the TV theatrical version.

In the TV theatrical presentations the conventionally shown environment allowed the authors to ruin Jaqo's den by direct destruction of the scenery. All over the ground profaned by Jaqo are traces of his violence. The metaphor is so strong that it fully expresses Javakhishvili's idea.

The work of Shvelidze enabled the director to create an audiovisual line relevant to Javakhishvili's ideas and to render the most significant sufferings of the oppressed people through a consistent metaphorical system.

The White Bunny, which is based on the principles of psychological TV theater, deals with painful problems of our society – the relaxing of vigilance and our submersion in our fantasies does not allow us to do our duty to our country and to the future generation.

Javakhishvili's story The White Bunny is based on a real event. The prototype of Dr Fridon Dorashvili is Mikheil Asatiani, a famous Georgian psychiatrist and psychotherapist. He was the first specialist

to introduce the Freud's method of psychoanalysis to Georgia. In the story, Freud's method of analysis is used to treat Sidonia. In the literary text a big role is naturally given to dialogues – the plot successively develops at the hypnotherapy séances, and characters are formed. Chkheidze is a great expert of psychological theater. The stage designer faced a much more difficult problem – to create an environment adequate to a classic text written by a literary great, and for dialogues staged by the unsurpassed master of psychological theater.

In The White Bunny Shvelidze focuses his attention on the search for ways of colorful representation using the means of expressiveness. The scenery Shvelidze created – objects and stage-properties – are as expressive as the actors' gesticulation, eye movements, and the variations in their intonation.

In the Stavrishvili family environment created by Shvelidze lifeless things "settled" once and for all, frame-bordered photo-portraits on the wall, tarnished, faded, saffron-color variations of paints represent Sidonia's unsightly shelter. In the scenery the cause-and-effect relationship of the character's transfer into the world of dreams is reflected. The literary text is transformed into the audiovisual system and is embodied in the colorful metaphorical variations.

Sidonia's inner shift is projected into her dialogues with the doctor. A repast in Chkheidze's creative activity always bears a symbolic load. In his theatricals the repeatedly modulated repast is transferred into the struggle between unreality and sensible perception, between false consolation and duty.

4. Mari Janashia as Sidonia and Rezo Chhikvishvili as Bidzina "The White Bunny"

Sidonia's husband is clearly inscribed in the sequence of frames of different shape and size. The photos of ancestors placed in these frames show the milestones of Elizbar's life. After murdering Bidzina, Sidonia's lover, Elizbar, is impudently looking into the eyes of the portraits of the ancestors. In the TV theater version the real facts transformed into a literary metaphor bear a visual metaphorical function in the line variation.

In Shvelidze's scenery "nature" is represented by a single decorative palm-tree – and in this palm tree's leaves the aspirations of two human beings toward each other seem to be interlaced.

Each episode showing Bidzina and Sidonia's relations is extremely esthetic. The stage designer and the director show us the conventional details of the Bakuriani landscapes. The couple is all alone against a background of dry leaves covering the studio floor; no dialogue takes place between them; they are plunged into a wave of happiness. For Sidonia only this environment is appropriate. In fact, the remarkable environment seems to exist only for Sidonia and Bidzna – and because of them.

The visual beauty of the scenes associated with Bidzina is opposed to the everyday monotony of the Stavrishvili house interior. Against the background of the lifeless objects of Elizbar's life and the abundance of countervailing frames, the fascination of Bidzina's episodes clearly expresses the author's idea. Bidzina brings beauty into Sidonia's life; it is part of Sidonia's inner world, of her illusions.

In the scene of the doctor and Bidzina's meeting, the wooden exterior of the Stavrishvili house, the smoothness of its walls and the prevailing grey colors create a dramatic impression. At the staircase, diagonally, are two silhouettes. In the scene of the conversation with the doctor, the authors of the TV theater version placed Bidzina one step lower. The idea was reflected in the plastic conception of the episode. According to the director's and the stage designer's idea, Bidzina becomes smaller in size because of his moral crime. Against the background of the doctor's lines - words of admiration for the landscape – the director surrounded the characters by rough walls and staircase.

Chkheidze and Shvelidze placed the scene of Bidzina's murder in the garden as an expressive metaphor. In the background of the TV frame composition there is an icon of the Sistine Madonna, the symbol

5. Nodar Mgaloblishvili as Teimutaz Xevistavi "Jaqo's Dispossessed"

of eternal motherhood. The candles burning in front of the icon form a bound space on which Bidzina has fixed his tear-stained eyes. On the floor, his body lies prostrate. Bidzina's death takes away the beauty from Sidonia's life and the monotony of the everyday existence absorbs her fantasy.

Within Shvelidze's scenery, Chkheidze shows us the conflict turned into the moral aspect in soft, warm half-tones and represents it by very concise means of expressiveness.

In the literary and audio-visual texts a coincidence of the conceptions of the three creators – author, director and stage designer – occurs, resulting in the staged presentation of the idea shared by all three authors. And this common creative work is eventually formed into the three authors' common civic stand, which is transformed into an identical methodology of the struggle against the Soviet ideological-colonial aggression that has occurred against Georgia in various epochs.

Jaqo's Dispossessed and The White Bunny, created on the basis of Mikheil Javakhishvili's prose, are TV models of this great writer's ideas and are perfect examples of successful interpretation of his work. The invariance of ideas and their metamorphosis in the systems of various means of expressiveness have turned the TV theater version into audiovisual art relevant and responsive to the classical literary text.

Modernism in Georgia

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MODERN GEORGIAN PAINTING – A CREATIVE GUARDIAN OF CULTURAL VALUES

The concept of national heritage is often limited to material culture alone, especially when we speak of its preservation. Georgia always took seriously the importance of preserving ancient churches and frescoes, while the most challenging part was reconstructing their authentic image. Conservation and preservation of the material heritage became even more important at the time of invasions and conflicts, when the threat to the country's territorial integrity automatically threatened its material culture. At the same time the existence of ancient churches bears witness to the presence of the Georgian history disuted and lately occupied territories. However, Georgian artists never ceased to be creative in producing new treasures that enriched and broadened the understanding of cultural identity as well as the means for its preservation.

Protecting a cultural heritage necessarily involves maintaining the values together with their embodiment. The most noticeable specific feature of Georgian identity – as foreign visitors often observe – is that the Georgians have naturally inherited sense of religious devotion and commitment to their cultural heritage associated with Christian values. (See Paolo Pellegrin, Telegraph Magazine, 10 October 2009, 26). Artistic responses to this devotion varied in artists' outward expression throughout the centuries.

This paper can present only a few brief and general points about the continuity in the life of modern Georgian painting that reveal its links with the spirit of traditional Georgian art. Georgian painting remained exclusively medieval and closely tied to strictly liturgical boundaries until the end of the 18th century when secular portraits gained popularity among noble families. Liturgical art still remains part of modern Georgian culture but modern secular Georgian art is also not opposed to or even detached from the Church in terms of motivation and mission. I shall make a few points about cultural heritage being conveyed through a religious sense and its transformation in modern Georgian painting from Niko Pirosmani to the art of the early 21st century.

Niko Pirosmani (1862-1918) may clearly be regarded as the first Georgian artist whose natural talent combined individual artistic expression with deep spirituality. Pirosmani, who had no knowledge of Western art and had no artistic education, appeared like a revelation to the Georgian cultural tradition. The images of his animals or portraits and even his genre paintings reveal something very iconic through their stillness, through the thoughtful and innocent expression of the faces. The faces of his animals and human beings portray their personal characters and even their humanity with equal honesty; behind the still and frontal representations one can notice the Georgian spirit with its devotion and openness to the sacred.

The prophetic message of Pirosmani's art lies in the fact that it involuntarily envisaged the future mission of secular art as a messenger of eternal values in the enforced absence of the Church under the Soviet régime. Under Pirosmani's influence conventional perception of religious art transcended the canonical boundaries of the Church and offered something not simply profane but deeply Christian in its essence. Christian consciousness moved to secular space through religious sensibility even if the sacred content of art was not always deliberately and consciously chosen.

The beginning of the 20th century witnessed a rather vital change in the life of Georgian art. A group of young artists brought back from Paris their experience of Western European art and adapted their knowledge to their own cultural values. All of them – David Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili, Elena Akhvlediani, Ketevan Magalashvili and Shalva Kikodze – developed their own unique styles, yet they remained faithful to their national identity based on Christian spirituality. David Kakabadze (1889-1952) may be regarded as the most remarkable in this respect. In his art he studied and modified the basic principles of cubism and abstract art. His endless experiments led him to convey a profoundly religious meaning through his artistic manner of expression. It would be superficial to discuss Kakabadze's abstract paintings only from an aesthetic perspective. His decorative motifs create an exceptionally peaceful and thoughtful atmosphere that usually gives an impression of depth and the sense of air. The combination of smoothly transparent and solid-color spots creates the impression of their

location in space, and gives the space itself a three-dimensional visual appearance without a need for linear perspective. The transparent colors stay behind the clouds and create an illusion of depth while the solid-color spots leave the space behind and appear in front of us as if they are floating on the surface of the space. This painting with blurred and solid-color spots and the combination of dark and bright cloudy space may unconsciously provoke an association with the picture of the creation from Genesis, the cosmos at the moment when God created it.

David Kakabadze, a biologist by profession, admired every tiny cell of all the living creatures he studied. His abstract paintings are illustrations of living organisms seen under a microscope, which themselves portray a wider image of the universe. They may often recall a landscape or a still life but all these associations are provoked in the observer's mind through visually experiencing the deep and profound space, which is free yet harmonically organized and well balanced. Kakabadze's paintings offer an artistic way of praising the Creator of the world through his Creation. This attitude is particularly well revealed by his frequent use of the form of an embryo as a symbol of the beginning and conception of new life. His constructive decorative motifs (collages), which were made long before kinetic art emerged in the West, create a sense of beauty despite the metal objects, mirrors and lights he uses. Elegance of form and the depth of space are enriched with another type of depth that is opened inside the collage by the use of mirrors where observers themselves appear as a living part of the picture and animate it visually. Technology is employed here for the sense of beauty and profundity. The obvious experience of a greater reality transcends the materialistic and prosaic nature of industrialized objects.

The role of secular painting in Soviet Georgia together with other forms of art was not merely aesthetic. In the enforced absence of the Church art conveyed the Christian message through sense perception and communicated Christian values under the cover of aesthetic beauty and national identity. Next to the Soviet art that preached the official ideology, there was another type of art that through the sense of beauty and truth appeared as a glimmer of hope that brought the rays of light and life into the dark and lifeless space of the time.

After many years of concealing the Christian message Georgian art faced a new movement at the
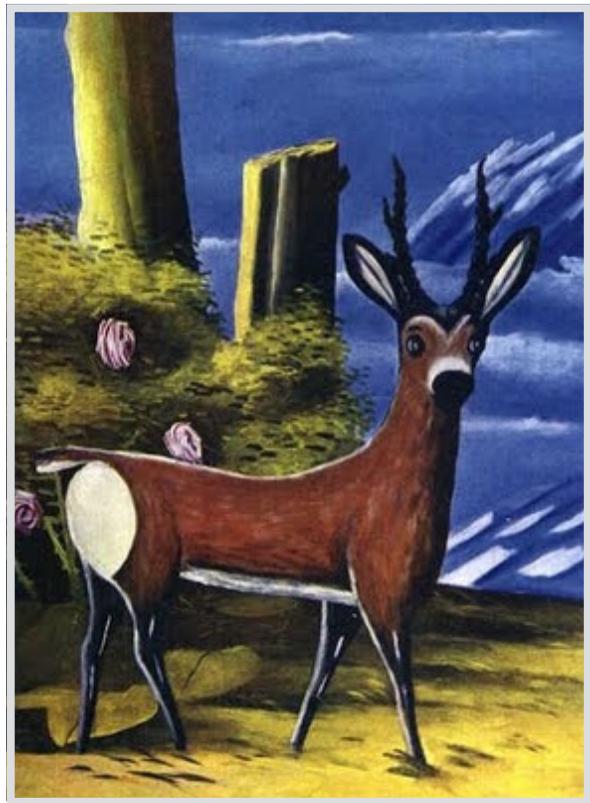
1. Niko Pirosmani, "Roe Deer with a Landscape in the Background", Oil on oilcloth, 72 x 99 cm (28.35 x 38.98 inches), 1913, The State Museum of Fine Arts of Georgia, Tbilisi.

beginning of 1980s. The forerunner of the movement was Irakli Parjiani (1950-1991), whose work offered a model of Christian art outside the physical boundaries of the Church and had an individual expression. The religious motif in Parjiani's paintings is by no means limited to the images of saints or the depictions of religious subjects, but the whole atmosphere in his paintings is charged with a religious sense of eternity and infinity, which moves one's spiritual senses beyond the boundaries of the visible world. The concept of the eternal in Parjiani's paintings is divided into two parts, which particularly reveals in his famous series of boats with and without Jesus. An image of a boat as a means of transferring from one shore of the sea to the other can be interpreted as a meditation about the end of this life when one's soul is going to be transferred to the other 'shore' of eternal life. However, considering the historical circumstances, it might also be symbolizing a subconscious thirst for the Church as a true mediator between people and God, linking the

2. Irakli Parjiani, Boats, 57,5 x 37 cm, paper, pastel, 1982-83, private collection.

human and divine, the earthly and eternal.

It has to be mentioned that Irakli Parjiani was introduced to theosophical thought while living in Germany. This often provokes a certain uneasiness in the minds of some conservative Orthodox believers in Georgia and sometimes even makes them doubt his religious identity. Yet, the roots of Christian consciousness in Parjiani's artistic expression must be found in his first encounter with the Christian culture in his native land, where he was raised in the presence of the beautiful frescoes in the Svanetian churches. Although the religious imagery in Parjiani's painting became more obvious in the later period of his artistic activity, the spirit of the tradition and the sense of the eternal are unconsciously present in all of his paintings. His abstract paintings of the Annunciation are as convincing as the figurative imagery can convey the theme. Parjiani's iconic sensibility is a unique example of the religious art that moves beyond the canonical boundaries of iconography and even beyond the norms of figurative art.

It would be totally unfair to suggest that the artists of the younger generation blindly followed his path, but it is clear that they creatively used Irakli Parjiani's experience in developing their own unique styles. The late Merab Abramishvili (d. 2007) is one of the contemporary Georgian artists who emphasized the link with the cultural heritage. The fresco-like imagery in his paintings is made even more obvious by the use of the Leukas technique, which creates a visual impression of a wall painting. His angels, Annunciations and religious motifs particularly recall the famous 12th century fresco images in the Sioni church

in Ateni. The transparent figures on the blurred white background can by no means be regarded as copies of the frescos but rather represent an impression of them and of his own perception.

Abramishvili's link with liturgical painting is equally obvious in both his religious and non-religious paintings, such as animals, flowers or the tree of life. Abramishvili's paintings have a clear association with Georgian icons; he often uses the characteristic ornaments featured on their frames. The impression of an icon awakens an iconic perception in the viewer and even increases the illusion of immateriality originally created by the transparency of the subjects. Generalization gives his images an almost abstract appearance.

Selecting only four artists from different generations by no means diminishes the importance of other great artists, whose unique styles and perceptions may be expressing the national character to an even greater degree. However, the artists we have mentioned obviously have much in common despite their uniqueness. The technique of generalization together with the religious themes essentially connects them. The roots of their deep spiritual perception can be found within Georgian liturgical art. The presence of an eternal reality is prevalent in their paintings either consciously or unconsciously. Pirosmani reveals a naturally inherited iconic perception through presenting an outward stillness and the depth of inner life. Kakabadze offers a different type of generalization: his abstract space gives a profound outlook on the creation. Parjiani's personal search for

3. David Kakabadze, Decorative Motif, 45 x 60 cm, oil on cardboard, 1927, private collection.

the spiritual and eternal is expressed through his dramatic yet thoughtful gaze towards the world beyond. Abramishvili finds the divine presence in the material world among God's creatures and imbues them with an iconic atmosphere. In this sense he projects his link with the past more directly and clearly.

The art of the these four painters shows that what makes art religious is never the religious fig-

4. Merab Abramishvili, *Paradise*

ures, images or angels alone, but is the presence of an eternal and authentic reality, which may be shared and experienced through the spiritual senses beyond the basic visual depiction. Georgian modern art offers specific ways of producing Christian non-canonical art through abstraction, generalization, and thinking creatively in global terms rather than merely copying the old artworks or making claims of religiosity by using religious objects or imagery. Georgian modern art manages to harmonize the Georgian sense of devotion with the western principles of individual expression. Georgian Christian art avoided the westernization of 17th to 19th centuries, which affected Russian and Geek liturgical art. Despite today's forces of globalization Georgian cultural values still remain unchanged in their essence, yet can be enriched and beautified by sharing the experience of Western artistic principles. Georgian artists, whose spiritual sensibility brought the search for the divine into their art,

managed to guard the spiritual values that are the key element of the Georgian cultural tradition.

As David Kakabadze believed, it may be damaging to focus on the past alone, if caring for the past does not also encourage us to advance and create new treasures, which would combine the sprit of our past with the progress of modern civilization (David Kakabadze, Art and Space, Tbilisi, 1983, 118). Such an art that links the past with the future turns itself into a cultural heritage and requires the care and preservation of the future generations.

Modernism in Georgia

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FUTURISM IN GEORGIAN CULTURAL LIFE AND PAINTING

The 20th century is a multifarious age. The theoretical treatment of the century's art, which covers about 20 schools and movements, creates an aesthetic picture of the newest development in art. Georgian art culture followed the events and movements that occurred in European and in Russia's aesthetic thinking before the domination of the Soviet régime. The life of the Georgian intelligentsia in the first third of the 20th century was characterized by a serious readiness to adopt and use the processes that had developed in European and Russian aesthetic thinking. This is how "the Georgian avant-garde" broke into Georgian consciousness and being.

The enormous progress of the 20th-century material culture, the outstanding technical achievement, and the growth of cities entirely changed mankind. The century's extraordinary rhythm, the development of industry, the rapid growth of cities and city life, the divisive formation of social classes and their confrontations with each other led to the revolution in spiritual culture. Early analyses of science, the norms and types of art, literary movements and forms turned out to be out of date all of a sudden. They could not meet the demands of the time. There was a need for poetry expressing the hurried life of the city and its related thinking and action. A new literary movement – "futurism" – took on the responsibility of fulfilling the above-mentioned task (T. Begiashvili, 1963, 66).

This new artistic and cultural avant-garde movement came into being with the appearance of a "Futurist Manifesto," published by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in 1909 in the French magazine Le Figaro. The movement aimed to transform the world. With its manifesto, futurism affirmed 'the beauty of speed' to be the ideal of grace (S. Sigua, 2008, 76).

Futurists were radical from the very beginning. They rejected the past traditions of art, literary authorities, and representatives of science. With their slogans they did not address literary circles, but spoke to the masses. Their speeches had a revolutionary, social and confrontational character (T. Begiashvili, 1963, 66).

Quite soon the movement extended throughout Europe, then entered Russia and created several unions that were led by Vladimir Mayakovsky, a former pupil of Kutaisi gymnasium – Mayakovsky lived in Georgia until the age of 14. The most prominent representatives of Russian futurism were V. Khlebnikov, N. Burlyuk, A. Kruchenykh, and B. Pasternak, who visited Georgia with cultural, creative and social purposes and supported the development of the new movement there (S. Sigua, 2008, 76). On 27 March 1914 Vladimir Mayakovsky, visiting Tbilisi together with Burlyuk and Kamenski, delivered a speech in Georgian at the Treasure Theatre, Tbilisi, and remarked: "Tbilisi is the only city where I was met in a friendly manner, where new poets are admired and guests are properly greeted."

Thus, in the 1910-1920 decade, following the establishment of Soviet rule, Georgian artists created a union influenced by Italian and Russian futurism as well as Russian. This Georgian union took the name "LEF" (Left Front of the Arts). In 1922 the Russian futurists Kruchenykh and Terentiev arranged a "futurist evening" that had a significant effect on Georgian symbolists. Titsian Tabidze wrote about it in his letter "Dadaism and The Blue Horns," which was published in Dreaming Gazelles, the journal of the Blue Horns movement. On 23 April 1922, the Georgian Futurist-LEF group arranged their first futurist evening, held in the Georgian State Conservatory building. A month later they issued a manifesto, a compilation of Italian and Russian futurists' manifestos, which began as follows: "We have passed many centuries barefoot, staring at an impoverished Georgian soul, just like babies. With a blind and motley past, Georgians looked back and had no desire to progress...."

"A delightful scene unfolded as we looked towards Georgia's future. Trains chuff on the roofs of hundred-story houses lit by the sun, and airplanes swarm like locusts in sky full of factory smoke...." "We've gathered a city by making noise – arsenals at night with sparkling eyes...." "And we believe in Georgia, as a perpertuum mobile; we recognize the Georgians as the world's rescuers. We establish futurism." Such was the aspiration of Georgian futurists....

Georgian futurist-LEFers who joined this revolutionary-intellectual movement attempted to influence Georgian art, like the October Revolution had. They broke into Georgian reality with noise and tried to change philology, aesthetics, psychology, and language; to make a so-called "formal revolution" (N.

Jahi, 1980, 60 - 65). Georgian critics responded to the futurist movement with strict criticism, with Mikheil Tsulukidze, Geronti Kikodze, Vasil Tsereteli, David Kasradze among those joining the debate.

By this time, the symbolism was developing in Georgia. Representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia and artists, who were educated in Paris, encouraged the process. Grigol Robakidze, Valerian Gaprindashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Ivane Kipiani, Nikoloz Mitsishvili and their colleagues named their group "The Blue Horns." The Georgian futurist movement, like the Italian opposed the traditional commitment to symbolic spirits, the moon and the silence of night. By means of their aesthetics, Georgian futurists struggled against this movement as well as its representatives. "The Blue Horns" took over elements of futurism; however, these artists soon became symbolists. In spite of the fact that futurism seemed irritating with its anti-aestheticism, the Georgian symbolists did not lose interests in it. One of them, Titsian Tabidze, wrote the following about the situation:

"Literary Moscow was still enslaved by symbolism in 1914-1915. The crisis of symbolism could already be felt. Andrei Biely, who had arrived from Switzerland, brought together with him mystical confusion, bitter debates on Goethe and lectures about gesture-mimic theater. I remember Scriabin's death and his funeral, the cult of his music, countless evenings of Igor Severyanin's poetry, meetings of religious and philosophical society, the formula: from Kant to Prudhon, Russia's army on Germany's front, Marinetti's and Emile Verhaeren's arrival in Moscow, meetings of "The Free Aesthetics Society" in literary-artistic circles and the speech made by Valeri Briusov, Acmeists' and "Adamists'" attacks on symbolists, acquaintance with Ballmont, who was then translating Rustaveli's "The Knight in the Tiger Skin," fascination with Blok and Innokenti Annenski, and finally, the appearance of Vladimir Mayakovsky, Khlebnikov and other Russian futurists in streets of Moscow. All this fascinated me and was more or less reflected in my further work" (S. Sigua, 2008, 77).

Futurism covered number of fields including literature, art, painting, architecture, theater, drama, etc. The group called H2SO4 (the formula for sulfuric acid), led the dissemination and establishment of futurism. It united principles of dadaism and constructivism as well as futurism and announced itself to be the only art of the socialist revolution. The H2SO4 group united B. Gordeziani, N. Chachava, I. Gamrekeli, P. Nozadze, Zh. Ghoghoberidze, A. Beliashvili, B. Abuladze, S. Chikovani, N. Shengelaia and Sh. Alkhazishvili. The group published a manifesto, three journals and one newspaper between 1922 and 1928.

On 25 May 1924 the group issued the strangest of all Georgian short-lived journals, a single issue, which included vague poems, unusual theoretical articles, and cubist pictures. Various and mixed fonts were used in the journal. The Georgian futurists implemented the idea of a "typographic revolution" with the help of the above-mentioned fonts, colors and graphical schemes for the texts. They influenced thinking by means of a new printing method. Irakli Gamrekeli was responsible for the cover design, as well as the reproduction of number of cubist pictures.

In 1924-1925 a journal Literatura da skhva (Literature and the Rest) was issued. N. Chachava was the editor, and Kirill Zdanevich was in charge of production. The edition used ordinary fonts and offered "figurative poems" (lyrics with figures) as well, laid out according to special graphic schemes.

In 1925 another short-lived newspaper Drouli (Timely) was issued, edited by Zhango Ghoghoberidze. Two more issues came out in 1927. In April 1927 the journal Memartskheneoba (Leftness) began production; Ghoghoberidze was the editor, with the first issue listing B. Zhgenti, D. Shengelaia and N. Chachava as the editorial staff. Simon Chikovani was the editor of the second issue, assisted by S. Dolidze, S. Kasradze, A. Gatserelia, D. Kakabadze, N. Ghoghoberidze, L. Asatiani, V. Zhuruli and S. Tretiakov. The painter Irakli Gamrekeli designed the covers of the journal (Cultural Studies: " 20th-century; Movements of Artistic Aesthetics," 2003).

1. D. Kakabadze, Composition

Modernism in Georgia

The H2SO4 group members had discussions regarding artistic issues. They were especially interested in technologized fields, namely, cinema. They therefore demanded that the whole culture be "electrified." The director M. Kalatozishvili was a prominent representative of the Georgian futurist movement. The artistic work of Georgian painters who practiced cubo-futurism is noteworthy, and this movement's followers included Irakli Gamrekeli, B. Gordeziani, M. Gotsiridze, P. Otskheli and Kirill Zdanevich.

The Georgian futurist painters practiced in many fields. They created works of art, designed journals, decorated cafés, and created theater decorations. Irakli Gamrekeli executed several absorbing paintings in 1924, including "Moment of Ecstasy," "Dynamics," and "The Swimmer." Besides, Otskheli was very productive, with "Sketch" (1920), "Flying Painter" (1936), the sketches for scenic design of the play "Robbers" (1920) and "Beatrice Cenci" (1929), while Kiril Zdanevich produces his "Orchestrated Painting" (1917) and his 1920s nature painting. Georgian futurist painting was founded on national traditions and had modernist as well as dynamic characteristics.

Despite its shortness, the futurist movement notably influenced Georgian social and cultural life during the first two decades of 20th century. The then-flourishing Georgian lifestyle attracted and persuaded everyone to visit the country. Tbilisi, Georgia's multilingual heart, turned into an international city that hosted great variety of foreign visitors, among them Sergey Esenin, Vladimir Mayakovsky (the founding father of Russian futurism), Boris Pasternak, Mikhail Vrubel, Sergey Yurievich Sudeikin, and Ilia and Kirill Zdanevich.

Ilia and Kirill Zdanevich made a significant contribution to the development of Georgian culture. They discovered the great Georgian painter Niko Pirosmani, and arranged his first exhibition in December 1916 in their own house; they also undertook to issue his book. Due to the poetic and artistic atmosphere in Georgia, Russian futurists such as Kirill Zdanevich, Sergei Gorodetski and A. kruchenykh chose Tbilisi as their place of residence. They created "Group 41°" (a name generally assumed to refer to Tbilisi's location on the 41st parallel) and greatly contributed to the development of Georgian futurism, publishing Georgian futurist books as well as brochures in the years 1917 to 1928.

It is widely accepted that foundation of artistic cabarets and cafés was typical for early modernism. From Russia "cabaret epidemics" reached Georgia in the 1910s and became an integrated part of Georgian cultural life. Georgian modernists, together with foreign modernists staying in Georgia, established several cafés – the Cabaret Chimaera [Khimerioni], The Fantastic Tavern, and The Argonauts' Boat. The tradition of decorating taverns with wallpaintings grew rapidly. In Khimerioni, which hosted futurist and symbolist artists of various nationalities, the wall paintings and decorations were executed by Georgian and foreign futurist and symbolist painters: S. Sudeikin, D. Kakabadze, L. Gudiashvili, K. Zdanevich and Z. Valishevski. Evenings at Khimerioni, with lectures, debates, exhibitions, banquets, and meetings with actors, directors and artists, greatly contributed to the formation of the Georgian intelligentsia of that period. The above-mentioned cafés brought together the Georgian and foreign artistic communities.

The famous Georgian philosopher Grigol Ro-

2. D. Kakabadze, Decorativr Motives

bakidze described The Fantastic Tavern in these words in his novel "Palestra": "Tbilisi turned into a fantastic city, which needed fantastic corners – and one day the same poets and painters created a small room Fantasticheski kabachok (The Fantastic Tavern), at 12 Rustaveli Avenue, right inside a yard, which could comfortably hold only 10 to15 people, but could mysteriously host 50 people. Here were more drinking women than men. The walls were painted so that fantasy characters stared out from them (the slogan of "41°" degrees" is justified here). The "Fantasticheski kabachok" was open nearly every evening, with a regular group poets and painters reading poems and es-

says." Lado Gudiashvili wrote: "Everything appeared unreal and fantastic" (R. Daushvili, 2005, 121 -123).

The Georgian futurists' periodic publications ended in the 1920s, and Georgian members of LEF stopped publishing in 1928, while Georgian futurism disappeared in the 1930s: poets, artists, and theorists had rejected its aesthetics. B. Zghenti, the greatest supporter of futurist values, became one of the founders of Soviet literary studies, and the poet S. Chikovani appears in the list of Soviet poets.

All of the foregoing account shows that Georgian culture of the period 1910 to 1930 became part of the united discourse of modernism. Society's psychological attitude during that period is noteworthy in spite of its aggressive character and the Georgian futurists' relation toward past and ongoing art. Tbilisi became an international city: its features, lifestyle, and the character of its modernist culture and art was due to its multinational nature.

Certain of the Georgian futurists' views and desires were important; namely, those regarding attempts to raise the level of Georgia's culture. Tbilisi in

those days was full of intensive artistic life. The rich and progressive experience of European and Russian culture merged with local Georgian culture that already possessed its own heritage derived from a local renaissance. Georgia was a bridge between Asia and Europe, connecting their civilizations. Thus, the avant-garde, with its extreme nihilism and inspiration, attracted part of Georgian society.

The Georgian futurist movement existed until the 1930s but could neither establish itself nor influence Georgian art and culture. However, it introduced certain impulses to seek and develop new ways in artistic culture.

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3. P. Otskeli, sketch for the film "Flying Dyar"

Modernism in Georgia

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THE PROBLEM OF SPACE/TIME TRANSFORMATION IN THE 20TH CENTURY GEORGIAN PAINTING

Plastic (fine) art is a spatial art. Its work does not alter in time. However, it conveys movement, sequence of events, hence their pictorial system inevitably involves conception of time. Physical space transformed into artistic space serves the creation of artistic images. In other words, an artistic image exists immediately in space, while temporal conceptions are here of mediatory, associative character, i.e. space is articulated by spatial metaphor (Appolon, 1997).

The present study is denoted to the problem of space/time transformation in the works of Georgian artists. Through observation of the works of Georgian artists of different generations, I shall try to shed light on such an elusive task as differing perception of the experience of time within a single aesthetic system, i.e. single cultural mentality.

Niko Pirosmanishvili lived and painted in Tbilisi at the end of the 19th and early 20th century (1862?-1918). He is considered to be the beginner of new Georgian art. The attitude of Georgian artists to him is special – they sought ground in him, "like in worked gold ore. Here is the force of our life – wrote Mose Toidze (V. Beridze, 2007, 40). – if we do not want Georgian painting to be fully swallowed up in the reflection of the European art, and not become an insignificant, belated tenth or twentieth copy of the art of other nations". "Niko Pirosmani's road is a fine example for our art. […] He created organically, naturally, "from within", as through naturally growing out of his native soil" (D. Kakabadze, 1926, 24).

The experience of time in Pirosmani's pictures is a topic of a special discussion for all researchers of his art. Pirosmani's "time is endless and majestic in this endlessness... his feats have neither beginning nor end – they are eternal; their heroes are disconnected from the real course of time; they do not live, do not act, but exist eternal and unchangeable... In "Eposes" external dynamics is neutralized by the whole immovable endlessness. What had been happening – had already occurred and it has been repeating end-lessly. This is an apparent motion, a circular motion" (E. Kuznetsov, 1983). This is how Erast Kuznetsov describes "Pirosmani's Time", which may be defined as a concept of time conceived back in the Neolithic Period: An indefinite duration of epic narration. In Pirosmani's pictures the present, past and future participate at the same time. It is a supra-temporal world, where "behind" the concrete is the general, and beyond the changeable and transient – the permanence of the eternal.

Such experience of time is created by the image of artistic space; as if it is filled with fine art information "pressed" into it. Various systems take part in the building of Pirosmani's "contracted", "pressed" space. In other words, his method of reflection is synthesized. Elements of two systems of representation (from the viewpoint of a method adapted to research into European art) take part in it in building a composition. Organization of artistic space takes place not by the laws of central perspective, but by the tradition of observational perspective, existing from time immemorial, which rests not only on visual perception: the experience of perspective here is inseparable from the atmospheric environment (Appolon, 1997).

"...Proportions of figures and objects in the space do not correspond to the "rules", and laws of perspective are often violated too" (V. Beridze, 2007, 65). He does not know that the "point of gathering" is on the horizon, hence the parallelepipeds of tables (one of the principal attributes of his pictures) are at times shown in inverse perspective, at others – axonometrically, and in one picture each object and structure has its own perspective" (V. Beridze, 2007, 70). In building up space "straightness" and "lack of straightness" coexist (V. Beridze, 2007, 65). He has pictures without any space, where (e.g. in the "Feasts") "the entire space is measured by the depth of the table and a thin band in front of it […]. The plane is fixed by the immovable frontal position of the table. The figures compose a bas-relief frieze, as it were." (V. Beridze, 2007, 11). "Characteristically enough, building, i.e. forms modeled in volume and "flat" rendering occur in one and the same picture. "They coexist. He uses fine graduations as well", (V. Beridze, 2007, 71) and at the same time "all the supporting elements, by the arrangement of which compositions are created, are shown frontally or in full profile" (V. Beridze, 2007, 73). In his pictures we find complete "free mutual correlation" of scales. "Objects are real and easily recogniz-

able, yet they exist for themselves, thrown off from reality. They exist "in general" and not at this moment." (V. Beridze, 2007, 82)

Time in Pirosmani's picture is still and "moves" at the same time. To put it otherwise, there are three streams in his pictures. One stream of time is created by "extended epic narration with and an artistic image of space built on "likeness" with the real world, based on visual precision. This stream flows – passing through material reality – from the present to infinity. This creates the experience of flow of time. The other stream of time issues, as it were, from metaphysical reality, "enters" a "pressed in", charged space and strives in the picture into "contraction into a dot". This is created by the group of decorative elements that serves to convey the experience of hieraticalness, representativeness, trance-like state of the image, and the artistic space which is invariably conceptualized frontally. These two streams of time are synchronous. Confrontation and collision of their mutually opposed direction in the entire picture space results in the creation of enormous energy, energy whirlpool, so to speak, that is articulated by "open" space, which is always infinity (be it a local black, neutral "airless" background or a landscape built of flat terraces, with a road leading far and lost in infinity). The three streams (two streams plus energy whirlpool), articulated by a visual metaphor of space, creates a concentrated charge of the picture, which may be rendered by verbal metaphor as "arrested and flowing" or experience of "eternal time at this moment." This was implied by researchers when they spoke of Pirosmani's characters being "out of time" or of "this moment of the eternal". Time, embracing also indefinite duration of Neolithic epic narration, as well as the momentary intensification characteristic of avant-garde.

Such highly-organized pictorial system of conveying space and time is hard to read for contemporary people. Art researchers often replace it with verbal metaphors, and occasionally they attempt to explain it by the formal/analytical method. As a result, instead of Pirosmani's live world, we are left with articulated, formalistic discourse devoid of life, or another literary interpretation.

Actually, the main difficulty lies in our conception – in our vision of the world. The experience of integrity is lost, hence Pirosmani's syncretic, non-differentiated world is alien to us. To create it, a system of pictorial representation is used whose author is Pirosmani himself. When this painting system is conceptualized by methods adjusted to the study of European painting, it "transpires" that, in spite of the use of differing pictorial elements (differing for European artistic systems), Pirosmani's world is "paradoxically" integral rather than eclectic.

Pirosmani's non-differentiated world is not rational but intuitive. Its experience of the outer (objective) reality is in-depth, it experiences it internally, being its part. The world is in him and he is in the world. That is why the plastic image created by him is "tangible". This is a solid, material world of realized life. At the same time it is optical as well. He is stirred and attracted equally by human beings, beasts and nature. He enjoys the beauty of embodied life and paints it. Such is his "optical tangible" artistic vision.

Pirosmani's artistic method, his pictorial system, creates a "compact" synthesized space, which for its part gives birth to condensed time. In other words, such concentration of space allows boundless expansion of time. The more compressed space is, the more extended time is, i.e. the more extensive is the information put into it. It is in this that the "main secret" of Pirosmani's painting lies. This accounts for the astonishing similarity of the deer and the lion of archaeological statuettes discovered recently and those depicted by Pirosmani well before, more precisely, the almost identical artistic "imagery". The cultural paradigm, which he uses, existed already in the Neolithic period. And this is the same Pirosmani with whom Picasso is enthused, and the entire Russian avant-garde. And, indeed, Pirosmani's close links with modernism, and from the view point of artistic language, with avant-garde too is beyond doubt.

The artistic method that allows to express such a long meaning field, such an extensive cultural and aesthetic paradigm – was discovered by Pirosmani. His painting is a visual/plastic model of his world view, the pictorial form of his world. This creative method may be formulated as intuition–practice. His intuitive idea is evidenced by practice and then acquires the form of a system. His system elements are never fortuitous. On the contrary they are conceptualized and repeated consciously. His artistic system is not empirical trials of a primitivist. It is a great work of a divinely-blessed painter; the visual model of the world depicted by him, his image is organic to Georgian aesthetic consciousness, more precisely, to the uncon-

scious aesthetic nature of Georgian culture.

The subsequent generation of Georgian artists absolutely differ from Pirosmani. Although his road is considered to be a "brilliant example" for new Georgian Art, (D. Kakabadze, 1926) there is no one to continue his artistic style. New Georgian painting looks for its roots in him as a carrier of a genuinely Georgian paradigm.

Along with the 20th century, a stream of new information enters Georgian culture, appreciably its cultural mentality. Professional artists are considered to be the founders of new Georgian art, on part of whom (they are called the first generation) becomes acquainted with European painting in its Russian invariant, for they receive education in art schools of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Representatives of the second generation of Georgian painting familiarize themselves with European avant-garde art in France and Germany; this means that a new informational wave comes into Georgian culture consciousness, which most generally may be described as rationalistic, i.e. Georgian intuitive-traditional world comes under pressure of Western, analytical-rational world attitude. Beginning with the Renaissance, including modern avant-garde, the west simultaneously enters Georgian traditional culture.

The majority of Georgian artists seek to "throw a bridge" across the Georgian traditional experience of the existence sense and the new paradigm that enters them in the shape of European art. David Kakabadze (1889-1952) belongs to the second generation of Georgian painting. He is a searching person of analytical reasoning. His works are characterized by a diversity of artistic styles and trends. His entire work may be defined as striving for classical balanced proportionality. Completed "academic" pictures, sketches, drawings, abstractions, futuristic works abstractionist sculptures or works done in analytical or synthesized cubism are all distinguished for well thought out, clear structure. His compositions are always of classical structure, irrespective of the differing artistic language, style and character of the works. Kakabadze is an intellectual artist, theoretician, student of art, author of quite a few books and papers. "Art is rational"; perception held the basic place in the creative processes of painting in the past century, now reasoning has taken its place", Kakabadze wrote (D. Kakanadze, 1926, No 21, 6-8). The principal theme of the artist's creative quest, the permanent subject of

his experience is to define the role of art in modern life. The basic dichotomies: modern–national, west–East (V. Beridze, D. Lenabidze, M. Medzmariashvili, 1989, 30) were the subject of permanent discussion, being a reflection of Georgian culture – an attempt to define its typology.

In Kakabadze's view art is science. This is a Renaissance thesis. "Art is rational. Everything should be regular in it. Modern life is gaining ground on scientific basis". Thought holds the principal place in the creative process" (R. Arnheim, 1974). Kakabadze is the fruit of the world attitude (beginning with the Renaissance) which "considered" that art is business of man's direct and personal (private) contact with the visible world (E. Panofsky, 1999, 300). At the same time, he believes nature (i.e. objective reality) the best teacher, in which the Georgian nation lives and develops". Kakabadze's rational logic differs from Pirosmani's intuitive logic whose eye and existence sense are in full harmony with each other. Kakabadze's (as well as of the entire post Renaissance painting) theory and practice constitute a dichotomic dilemma, as well as reason-intuition.

Modern man is "alienated" from the world. However, Kakabadze attempts to solve this rationally. He seeks to unite the Western rational, progressistic world with the Georgian traditional intuitive existence sense and "to build" European visual painting "on Georgian foundation". For this Pirosmani's painting is a "fine example." But with Kakabadze, the organic wholeness of Pirosmani's live world is replaced with the wholeness of an artistic system created by reason. The harmony is broken down. The "self" and reason awoken. Man "disintegrated" into sense and mind; into a social, psychological, biological, cultural, etc. being.

Pirosmani's influence on the artists of the second generation, in particular on Kakabadze, lies in the fact that he tries to "build" the integrity of the world in his pictures. In building up space he seeks to combine the space built through the knowledge of the laws of perspective with plane. However, the situation legitimized by perspective, when a work of art has become a fragment of the world, which is viewed by man from a definite stand point at a concrete moment of time (E. Panofsky, 1999). Pirosmani's space, composed of "many spaces", presented from different points of view, not seen but sensed, "tangible", "shrunken" space proved incompatible with the knowledge of

the laws of perspective. Kakabadze is split between Western conceptual-rational thought and knowledge and Georgian palpable-intuitive (metaphoric) thought. It is not feasible to create Pirosmani's space, i.e. the wholeness of his world, with Western rationality. Knowledge of the laws of classical painting stands in the way of immediate sensory perception of the world. But Kakabadze tries to convey the harmony and wholeness of the world through the wholeness of the artistic system. He creates a picture with his mind, but the wholeness of the world's image is already distorted. Time and space have "disintegrated" in human perception. The artist builds space in the drawing with knowledge of laws, i.e. time is subjective. Concrete time comes to the foreground, though in some pictures (e.g. in "Mother Imereti", in which symbolic artistic speech also participates, time, described by D. Tumanishvili as "permanent being – unchanging state" is an experience of characteristic time for symbolism-sensation of inevitable eternity and of stable importance.

Time is also subjective and concrete in the works of E.Akhvlediani, Sh.Kikodze, K.Magalashvili and D.Shevardnadze. With Gudiasvili time is subjective, "artificial", "made". With Tsimakuridze the perception of time in nature is intensified, the expressionless of a moment torn out of flow of time, created in his pictures full of air and light by a non-material transparent space. This is an impressionistic experience of time (again subjective time).

In the late 1950s and early '60s a new "stream" is manifested in Georgian cultural consciousness. In connection with the weakening of Soviet diktat (i.e. of the "Iron Curtain"), the growth of informational stream from the West makes integration very intensive. At this time, new features appear in the works of a whole generation of artists. This art is quite devoid of any social stand (by this it is not avant-garde), altitude to national form is disregarded, and by this taken it is entirely cosmopolitan. Art is thought of only as an artistic form, a detached expressive value in which the artist's subjective "Ego" is depicted. In the subject-object expressiveness the subject dominates. Man is withdrawn into his Ego and is in the captivity of stereotypes. The picture is entirely dematerialized, material takes the place of material form, the world is emptied of substance. Figure/background is built of homogeneous painting material. There is neither an environment nor person in these pictures: form is

transferred to the subjective sphere, into an impressionistic space, while space is an abstraction. There is only a hint at the real material world here. Intensive sensation of the transient and a desire to record the instantaneous – this is an experience of impressionistic time, expressiveness of an instant torn out of the flow of time, which is especially notable in Zurab Nizharadze's portraits and Guram Kutateladze's landscapes. Viewed in-depth, this too is only artistic expressiveness attained by "play" with techniques of decorative art. Intensity of material and wholeness of decorative system constitute the basic "content" of the pictures of the artists of this generation. Their artistic-formal task is eclectic and artificial: rendering classical plastic form in solid volume through contrast painting – this was an end in itself. Parade of colours and "play" with decorative elements – this is fully avant-garde.

Pirosmani, due to his very vast paradigm, did serve as a source for Georgian artists, at which so-called second generation artists (Kakabadze, Gudiashvili, Kikodze and others) "slake their thirst" – at times consciously, and often unconsciously. Conscious influence is manifested in a) the use of separate artistic techniques, resorted to by whole subsequent generations; b) an attempt to adapt and correlate elements of various artistic systems (this is largely characteristic of the so-called second generation artists), and finally, c) "fragments" of his (Pirosmani's) world attitude are revealed in the works of Georgian post-modernists.

The approach of the generation of the '80s to the essence of fine arts changed drastically. Here the characteristic features of post-modernism come to the foreground: styles, pictorial motifs and artistic techniques borrowed from the arsenal of various epochs, regions and cultures are united within a single work.

In painting, the programme positions of the avant-garde are superseded by the merging and uniting of the painting languages of differing historical traditions and nationalities. The canvases of such artists as Gia Bughadze and Dato Sulakauri are organized as a field of interaction of differing stylistic and language units. Langu¬age expressive systems, by being superposed on one another, create intercrossing networks within whole space thoughts move freely, their mutual flow, associational attachment take place. In this play of features there is no single thought centre or

organizing idea. Often the artist himself invents a kind of hypothe¬tical world. Gia Bughadze's magic-mystic canvases, where the objective world is a pretext, and the aim is to show his Ego, demonstrate his knowledge (L. Mamaladze-Antelava, 2008). His pictures are subjects with their own "personality": (M. Merleaux-Ponty, 2007, 49-55) Bughadze's painting is visual thinking, and his pictures are world of the painter's imagination, with no link with the outer world. The world of L. Choghoshvili, who gazes into the past, also exists only in the artist's imagination (L. Mamaladze-Antelava, 1990, No 5, 32-47). Space in the pictures is conditional, bo¬un¬¬ded. Dematerialized, "lifeless" figures/forms and boundless "spacelessness" creates the sensation of timelessness. This world has no future. The world depicted here is permanent and lifeless – it is in the fantasy of the artist. Also permanent is the subjective "arrested" time, divorced from the present and isolated. The ex¬perience of time in D. Sulakauri's pictures is interesting (L. Mamaladze-Antelava, No28, 34-37). The past, present and future are gathered at one point, as it were, time has stopped. Such time, or nostal¬gic or "returned" time, directed to the past, is characteristic of European post-modernists.

Each cultural form is based on a definite organization of time. Time devoid of divine and human sense is an expression of nihilism. Obviously, modern man has lost the ability to structurize clearly the chaos of time. This is equally manifested not only in Western but in Georgian cultural awareness as well.

Notes

1. The end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century is a very important period, when the 500-year-old experience of European painting makes a sudden entry into Georgia and becomes established here. Within a very short period of time – over a few decades – Georgia acquaints herself with the path of European painting: classical, non-classical and modernist art – all at once (and its invariant in the form of Russian art). Digesting and reworking such vast information is a difficult task, when it is not influence or borrowing, i.e. only imitation of this painting. It is the birth of a new art form on the Georgian cultural basis, with preservation of its cultural identity and consideration of new information in the world view.

2. If we consider that Riegl used "optical" and "tangible"

as metaphors to denote this or that style of artistic vision. (Riegl, 1927).

3. It should be noted that this happens not only in painting but in all spheres of cultural consciousness as well (science, philosophy, social system, etc.).

4. More precisely, he describes the state of the sky as "permanent being – exchangeability". (D. Tumanishvili, 2001, 196-200).

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CUBO-FUTURISM IN THE CREATIVE WORK OF EMMA LALAEVA-EDIBERIDZE GEORGIAN PAINTING OF THE 1920S)

The beginning of the 20th century is one of the most interesting and important stages in Georgian Art, which should be explained by the existing political situation in Georgia – the short-term independence of the country (1918-1921) and by active contacts with Europe. The avant-garde art trends percolating into Georgia via Russia infused every sphere of art with a new creative energy, fine arts among them that developed simultaneously with world's artistic trends. Together with their appropriation and elaboration of the achievements of Western and Russian Modernism, Georgian artists brought out problems of nationalism in art anew; at the same time they were strongly attracted by the new trends in world art. During this period Georgian art became part of the global cultural process, a possibility of which Georgia was all too soon deprived.

Between 1900 and 1910 a new generation of Georgian artists appeared on stage, among them were David Kakabadze, Lado Gudiashvili, Shalva Kikodze and Elena Akhvlediani, artists whose names are well known in the history of Georgian art. But alongside them lived and worked artists whose personalities and works – for various reasons – are practically invisible for art historians. Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze (Lali as the artist called herself) is one of those tragic people. Living in fear, in the shadow of her husband, repressed in 1938 by the totalitarian regime, she was denied due recognition for a long time.

Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze is a typical representative of the 1920s and, in our opinion, a very interesting one. In her works one can clearly see an acute interest in Western Modernism. Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze is one of the "leftist" artists among the artists of her times. She applied almost every trend of the avant-garde (Futurism, Cubo-futurism, Reionism, Constructivism, etc.) to her work. But she managed to create a style of her own and to be different

from everyone else. Her works vaguely remind us of examples of Russian and Georgian Modernism. (She shows a special closeness to Russian avant-garde, though always maintains her inner connections to the essential principles of Georgian painting.) Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze's artistic individuality is proved by the fact that she did not apply trends of modernism in their pure form. She basically used several such artistic trends simultaneously and created their synthesis within the frame of one work. In this regard her Cubo-futurist works are especially interesting; in them Lali added extra elements from other artistic trends to the existing one and offered a specific "version" of Cubo-futurism to her viewers. That is why we cannot speak decisively about the existence of pure forms of Cubo-futurism in Lali's creative work. In Lali's version of Cubo-futurism the proportions of both trends are different, as are the interrelations and the distribution of accents in specific trends.

Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze basically used Cubo-futurist language to create portraits. In this essay we will discuss two works done in Cubo-futurist manner: a portrait of "a man in a blue shirt" and the artist's self-portrait.

The first work present the head and upper torso

1. Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze, A man in blue shirt, 1925, paper/guashe
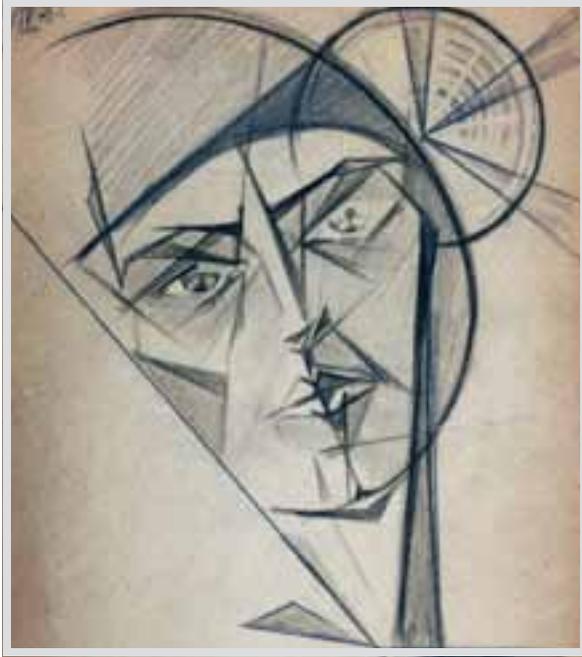
2. Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze, self-portrait, 1925, paper/pencil

of a red-haired man wearing a blue jacket. The head (inclined slightly to the viewer's right) has mildlyurned to the three fourth, broken-line eyebrows, cold eyes, a freezing look, lips locked in dissatisfaction, a monocle in the left eye, a bow tie and only one shoulder fitting into the picture frame make an impression of astonishing artisticness: a vivid, impenetrable, cold-blooded, arrogant person of aristocratic origin. The presentation and painting the right shoulder painted in a meager manner means that the viewer will easily imagine the sitter in full size and will fully sense his plasticity, which is indeed remarkable for its innate graciousness.

From the descriptions provided above it is clear how vivid the image is and how easy it is for a viewer to make contact with it, which is rather a rare case for works in the Cubo-futurist manner, whose specially active language of expression leaves no room for the image. Let us remember the compositions of N. Gontcharova and L. Popova, where the Cubo-futurist manner takes over completely and uses an icon-image for self-expression, eschewing the reverse. It is difficult for a viewer to differentiate and perceive both the portrait and the background together; there are no additional details in the composition, and the lines between the subject and the composition are erased:

everything is subjugated to the unified principle of creation of the form. (L. Popova, "Portrait of a Philosopher," 1915, oil on canvas. 180 cm x 246 cm, Russian Museum, St Petersburg).

Unlike Russian avant-garde artists Lali uses the Cubo-futurist method very carefully. Instead of L. Popova's flat, broken, quite volumetrically square surfaces, our painter offers smaller surfaces, almost turned into separate strokes, which create the face of the model by their rapid inter-replacement. Here Lali uses the futuristic method of the "interchanging of surfaces and lines"; she lays out her images not as spacious and dimensional forms but as small-size surfaces and specific lines. We come across this method in its classic form in N. Gontcharova's famous Cubo-futurist work "Factory" (1912, oil on canvas, 102.5 cm x 80 cm, Russian Museum, St. Petersburg), with only one difference. Here in the works of this most active and bold Russian avant-garde artist her given manner has a wider range of character; the whole material structure of the painting is completely subjugated to it. Thus, as a method, it is more expressive, whereas Lali uses this technique only partially within the frames of one image (a specific face). Besides, with Lali this is perceived graphically and correspondingly obeys the rules of "graphical reading." But this above-mentioned manner strengthens the impression of dynamism in the picture. The whole emphasis is put on the face; the shoulder is expressed by several diagonally drawn broad dark blue and sky-blue fat strokes of the brush strokes. By placing the main emphasis on the face Lali once again differs from her Russian colleagues and places herself closer to her fellow-Georgians.

Lali differentiates primary and secondary things and delimits them from each other in the image. Leaving a modest background area untouched she follows the principle of image reading, by means of which she maintains the autonomy of both the image and the background.. This is entirely characteristic of Georgian painting, but totally alien to both European and Russian figurative thinking.

In Lali's graphic self-portrait in pencil on yellow-toned black paper we meet – in addition to Cubo-futurism – elements of Constructivism, which significantly define the artistic style of this work. This picture is characterized by geometrism. Oval forms are deliberately opposed by square forms. Female features drawn with broken lines introduce a blunt feeling of strain and inner conflict. Generally speaking, the face

is nervously "broken into features." The rapidly rotating machine reflected in the eyes with radiating rays, gives off a metallic shine and gives the woman's gaze an ice-freezing look. Due to this there is a sensation of coldness and touchiness as in the above-discussed portrait of the red-haired man, but unlike the case there, here we feel human tragedy. When contemplating the portrait we involuntarily remember N. Berdiaev's words about "the pathos of speed" of the futurists and their much-likeds "world storm." Berdaiev notes: "Most likely human beings will not be able to stand the storm and will be torn into pieces" (N. Berdiaev, 1999, 25).

Despite the similarities of these works in the Cubo-futurist artistic manner, they have many differences compared to the artistic products of Russian artists working in the above-mentioned trend. Here we will try to point out these differences.

In the works of Russian Cubo-futurist artists, Cubism is more dominant than Futurism. Russian art historians also note this: "In the artistic trend which took the name of Cubo-futurism in Russia, most important are the Cubist tendencies" (D. Sarabianov, 1990, 50) and indeed if we look through the pictures painted within the framework of the trend (for instance, those of D. Burliuk, I. Pun, L. Popova, N. Gontcharova, I. Klun, M. Le Dantiu and compositions by other artists, we will see that the image obeys exactly the method of Cubist disassemblement, despite the fact that the characteristic Cubism staticness is secondary, yielding primacy to Futurism's "plastic dynamism." This means that general dynamics of the composition feed on the spirit of Futurism but out of the Futurist elements we have here only the dynamic solution of the composition, with main load borne by Cubism. In contrast to this, in the Cubist works by Lali specifically Futuristic tendencies prevail. Cubist disassemblement is not used; the author follows the "ethic" characteristic of this artistic direction. Lali is more loyal to the image; our author – if we can say so – is less "iconoclastic." Not only is an easily readable image important for Lali, but also important is its expressiveness (which is clearly seen in above-discussed "Portrait of a Man"). This feature clearly places Lali close to the Georgian modernists.

Thus in case of Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidze we deal with only partial sharing of avant-garde artistic trends and not with an unbiased attitude to the trend itself. A specific feature of the creative work of our author is to "catch" and "to guess at" general

3. Emma Lalaeva-Ediberidz,e self-portrait, 1925, paper/pencil

principles of artistic trends, to follow their inner logic while neglecting practical methods of the application of artistic means. That is why while painting in the Cubo-futurist manner Lali manages to estrange herself from its direct influences. The artist masters figurative language, alters it in her own artistic way, and perfectly adjusts it to her own handwriting, bravely experimenting.

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GEORGIAN WOMEN PAINTERS IN THE AVANT-GARDE OF GEORGIAN ART IN THE 1920S: I. SHTENBERG AND E. AKHVLEDIANI)

The creative work of the two women painters Irina Shtenberg and Elene Akhvlediani is completely different, though Elene was Georgian and Irina Shtenberg was long resident in Georgia. They produced their creative work in the same period. Their art is distinguished for its boldness and its completely different artistic language. The creative work of women painters that draws upon avant-garde impulses is a logical reflection of 20th-century art and on some kind of "underground" art of the subsequent period of social realism, which finds its own niche, not only in the history of Georgian art.

1. Elene Akhvlediani

The history of Georgia, especially in the 20th century, was full of dramatic cataclysms. Until the 20th century, religion was the main essence of life for a Georgian person. The Orthodox faith and spiritual striving were best of all expressed in art, as all artistic fields were gathered within the Orthodox faith by one unifying idea, that of God himself. But despite their harmonious integration, each art form remained independent and a completely self-sufficient field. Yet all the arts —architecture, painting, church chanting, and choreography among them – were united by the same ideals. But the canonic traditions formed during the centuries were gradually forgotten. During the 20th century, Georgia was caught up by capitalistic consciousness, and the "golden past" was more and more eclipsed. Correspondingly, art lost its many centuries of reflecting traditional glory and dealt with more attention to the issues brought forward by the 20th century.

We can consider Georgian easel painting from the end of the 19th century, when a new generation of painters, educated in Europe and in the West, appeared on stage. In many cases their formation as artists occurred in Russia, and as a result of this they returned to their native country enlightened. Due to this fact the greater part of these painters' artistic work was a continuation of the "Peredvizhnic" traditions. They imported to Georgia realistic painting, so strange to Georgian traditions. Correspondingly, there appeared in Georgia new topics and genres previously unknown to us but generic to European easel painting; for example, portrait and landscapes, etc.

The 1920s was one of the most important periods of Georgian cultural life as this was when an increasing impulse toward the development of avant-garde art occurred. Actually Georgia, a small country located at the border of the West and the East, became a significant part of the world's modern culture. Georgian painters naturally got caught in this stream of cultural life. But from the beginning of the modern art movement, Georgian women painters were working side by side with men.

We should note that avant-garde trends coming from the West were not simply mechanical copies of the form, but every artist saw topics and trends through her or his own prism, mixed with originality. The creative work of women painters living in this period found parallels with Western art both in its forms and themes. The 20th century, together with cultural, moral and technical revolutions, advanced the issues

2. Elene Akhvlediani

3. Irina Shtenberg

of opening up and demonstrating the inner world of the human being. Erotic themes, which had their beginnings in ancient times, found a niche in the creative works of many European painters of the 1920s in the form of bold and quite open themes.

In Georgia, erotic themes could not easily emerge, given the position of the Orthodox faith, though the "Tsatsloba" and "Berikoba" rituals that existed in the highlands of Georgia were interesting and certainly had an erotic meaning. But still the above-mentioned theme managed to "leak" into Georgia at the beginning of the 20th century. Though in light of Soviet ideology, in which "sex did not exist," it naturally remained beyond the conventional frames of reference.

Irina Shtenberg was a painter of German origin living in Georgia whose rather bold erotic self-presentation and demonstration of the general world of a woman reflected an artist's interpretation in the modern style. Even while studying at the Academy of Fine Arts from 1923 to 1928), Shtenberg's erotic motives emerged, through which the author achieved self-presentation and demonstrated her own inner world quite openly.

Her early period works such as "Migraine," "Nude" "Leda and the Swan" are the culmination of female liberty where, with the help of classical artistic means, she sometimes revives light passion and at other times gives spectators a chance to take pleasure in contemplating a naked body. Her special inner boldness and her different themes seen with female esthetics are the results of European influence. Despite everything, paintings of this type existed in Georgia, though remained "underground." In 1933, in an article published in Literaturuli Sakartvelo, Shtenberg was reprimanded for her inclination toward "western decadence." She paid her artistic tribute to society by painting a whole series of portraits of "Georgian women," which very nicely fitted the law the study of totalitarian Soviet culture.

If Shtenberg's esthetic made its impression mainly by its passion and instant emotion, Elene Akhvlediani in her Parisian drawings took an interest not only in a nude nature but in the study of human nature as well.

Akhvlediani's Parisian period is considered to be the most fruitful and interesting period of her life, when she began to "conceived the world," when she was liberated from every convention and studied the external world as a free and independent artist. Social freedom, which she practiced in Paris, gave her an impetus to study deeply the female essence as opposed to gaining a superficial, perfect anatomic knowledge of nature. Here one can see her overall attitude to human beings, how scrupulously she studied the form and with what kind of interest she also created a character.

Numerous "studio" sketches demonstrate the evolution of her growing mastery. Some of her sketches she made with swift free strokes. In many cases, the model was not changed, but changes only her movement and position, which the artist tied together with one stroke. Here we clearly see how perfect and free she was in her graphic work, how well she possesses the line. The silhouette is made with one touch, the main voluminous forms are "distinguished" by light and shadow effects. In some cases Akhvlediani experiments and depicts nature in a cubist manner: the pose, body, light and shadow were applied according to geometrical forms. (In the artist's archive are preserved graphic works executed in Cubo-futurist style, and it is quite clear that the artist took an interest in this trend too.) Other sketches are made in the classic style. The entire emphasis was placed on the complicity of the pose and the movements of the body. Dynamic forms were made with powerful lines, expressiveness of the form and spots of the light and shadow.

The aspects of these two artists' creative work that I have discussed is still a largely unknown topic for society, though the work coincided with the European Avant-garde of the beginning of the 20th century, and the work of Shtenberg and Akhvlediani reflects a European cultural synthesis.

Modernism in Georgia

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"READY-MADE" AND GEORGIAN CREATIVE INNOVATIONS

The fact that Dadaistic philosophy greatly attracted the world art elite may today be considered an axiom. Such multi-profile creative outbreaks and artistic installations were not common, even to Symbolism. Like every "now-how" of the Modern, Dada evolved in France as well. As it appears, at that time the widespread and intensive acuity of the Symbolic and, to a greater extent, the Futurist thinking about the world outlook declined: the Symbolists' "the great performances" were coming to an end; the fire of Futurist wars was fading out; and to continue the Modernist current, artists emerged to see the new image of a "transtandentious" world. They did not adopt names for themselves, but merely through disappointment, anger, inconsistency, nihilism, eccentrism and technicism demonstrated their own new attempt aimed at the artistic re-shaping of the existing urban environment. Paris did not host these moments stemming from Modernism for long. Subsequently, it found fertile soil in many countries and only later returned to Paris.

Starting from 1915, the creative period of Paris continued in New York, where the audience seemed to be much more interested and hot-tempered. It accepted the

challenge thrown down by an immigrant artist as a challenge in a game, and responded fully. The New York School soon acquired a certain status; the European immigrants found their American fellow thinkers. Thus, according to certain trends in cultural studies, the emergence of Dadaism should be attributed not to European but to American space. The Americans knew nothing about European Dada and had never even heard the word Dada before; only just then had the word begun in Europe to note radical avant-gardism.

American Dada, which could be called "ready-made," developed and progressed separately from European Dada, and its authors better became aware of Dadaistic radicalism when they arrived in Europe and gathered again in Paris. American art history has never regarded the arrival of "ready-made" as a negative event. Unlike in France, in America it was understood as a form or artistic method, and it was never in conflict with public etiquette. From this viewpoint, Dadaism caused a scandal in Europe, which remained classical and traditional even when Modernist; however, in America, famous for its contrasts, illusions and dreams, Dada appeared to be acceptable and conceivable. The European schools – French, Swiss, German – became more and more visibly distinguished by maximalistic and radical demonstrations of their Dadaistic viewpoints, and they have always remained committed to radicalism and absurdity. After leaving America, Dadaism was named as part of the history of the avant-garde, while formalistic searches and processes for realizing expressive means which continued in Europe, brought about the discovery of new Modernist worlds. Since 1922, Europe had gradually started breaking out of the impasse of the existing artistic frame.

In the history of literature, the page devoted to Dadaism also included one late illustration – namely, Dada in Georgia in 1922-1923. Within Georgian realism, Dada was registered as a mere artistic-creative method, i.e., it was fixed in the literature of method. In contrast to Europe, in Georgia, Dada never acquired a political character and has never had any claims to change social values. Furthermore, like other movements in literature, it was welcomed by the long cultivated soil of the Georgian literary expression and the Georgian mentality and artistic thinking. Considering Georgian literary background, every maximal radical, absolute and orthodox trend has undergone a kind of modification and acquired a national-liberal coloring, not only as a point of view of the world, but also as an artistic method.

As a result, in modern scientific literature the following opinion is becoming ever more profoundly introduced: in the Georgian creative world, Symbolism, Futurism, Dada, Expressionism and Impressionism are all working terms defining artistic directions rather than a specific classical analogue reflecting the

development of these schools. In Georgia, however, this process was also caused by a specific political fact: after 26 May 1918 Tbilisi became utterly changed: the declaration of the independence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia not only meant that Tbilisi was the new nation's administrative center, but also a cultural center – and Tbilisi University was founded.

Russian and Armenian merchants left the city, were replaced by writers and painters trying to escape the "Red" Revolution raging in Russia. Many famous Georgian Modernist artists came to live in Tbilisi. Despite the fact that the Russian artistic immigration did not last long in Georgia, it left an interesting "heritage"; the émigré artists even published Dadaistic-Futuristic magazines, including "The Company of Zaumniks 41" and "The Futurists' Syndicate," etc.

All Futurists shared Dadaistic "maximalism," but it should be mentioned that Georgian Dada was even more liberal than European Dada and it had no signs at all of political protest. The main thing was that classical-scheme Futurism-Dada was reflected in Georgian art and vice versa; Georgian Modernists first tried the soil of Dadaistic radicalism, which further developed into the Futurist movement. This can be illustrated by quoting Georgian artists that reflected Dadaistic psychology: "I write verses with eye-lashes and smell life in my pocket" (Beno Gordeziani), and "Our motto is to be literary hooligans" (J. Ghoghoberidze)...

But still, the history of Dada in Georgia would not have been worth recalling if not for the well-known Georgian poet, one of the founders and leaders of the Georgian Symbolist school - Titsian Tabidze. It was his interest in Dada that focused society's attention on the new forms of artistic perception.

When Titsian Tabidze became attracted to the Dadaistic movement, he had already experienced Symbolism and his artistic abilities, style of writing, and his habit of adopting various artistic perceptions was already known to his readers. Presumably, such explorations brought Titsian to Dada; It was neither an experiment nor escape from an artistic crisis. Titsian did not do this to attract attention. His Dadaistic verses still are among his best ones. This approach to a less esthetic trend resulted in interesting and important verses by this gifted artist.

Titsian Tabidze threw out a challenge to the new literal trend and left his trace on the path of self-expression. These "esthetic movements" and efforts were made in the name of the perfection of lyrical verse. Titsian also translated Tristan Tzara's Dadaistic Manifesto, as well as Philip Supo's and Paul Eluard's verses.

Thus, the Dadaistic mood was reflected in poetry. Georgian Dadaists tried to approach European and Russian associates through eccentric, illogical, and ironical verses. Afterward, nearly all of them became Futurists, representatives of the movement that lasted for about three or four years. And even during those years Dadaism had its impact on the development of Georgian verse. The most radical elements of Georgian Futurist thought actually reflected Dadaistic trends.

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CULTURAL TOURISM & MANAGEMENT

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CAUCASIAN GEORGIA AT THE CROSSROADS: LIFE BEYOND TOURISM

Preliminary Remarks

The Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation has set out on a new journey in life, a great adventure in a wonderful world. In this world it has to be possible for people to appreciate the need to travel not only for personal interest but also, and principally, for the main purpose of any journey: a true need for 'personal knowledge' to contribute to 'community knowledge,' to understand 'cultural diversity' and the need for 'intercultural dialogue,' to appreciate 'respect' for 'other cultures' – a step that is of crucial importance for the international community today.

The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage (ICCROM), which is part of UNESCO, introduced the Romualdo Del Bianco Foundation to the Italian Alliance for Cultural Diversity. The Alliance then invited the Foundation to take part in a meeting on 28 October 2009, held to promote the 9th Millennium Goal, focusing on culture and intercultural dialogue, for submission of recommendations to the United Nations. At the same time we are part of a group promoting the establishment in Florence of an institute for the preservation of "traditional knowledge." In summary, in Florence we are helping to trigger young people's emotions, urging them to come up with thoughts and proposals of use to the international community. At present, in 2010, university delegates from all over the world are participating in monthly programs in Florence, with delegates from up to 8 universities at a time.

To travel is to familiarize ourselves with both the wider cultural and natural heritage – heritage in the shape of both the intangible heritage and the tangible heritage, including the living heritage with its traditional knowledge. Travel is the rediscovery of heritage as our roots. Travel is a means of learning about these roots, of learning to appreciate and to respect other cultures.

Tourism can be seen as a 'chain of distribution' for knowledge at the worldwide level; "Life Beyond Tourism" can be seen as a renaissance of tourism, transcending the mask of today's often commercial tourism to contribute to intercultural dialogue in the international community.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS): 2008 Symposium, Canada

The text that follows in italics is a part of our contribution to the ICOMOS International Symposium in Canada; our paper was selected from a large number of submissions and was presented in Quebec on 1 October 2008.

LIFE BEYOND TOURISM

For INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE: "LIFE BEYOND TOURISM"

Tourism based on values, not just on consumer services.

The soul of a place

The soul – the "spirit" – of a place is subject to its own kind of evolution as time goes by, but in recent decades the exceedingly rapid development of travel has impressed such speed on this otherwise natural process that the local culture cannot easily assimilate the changes taking place.

The fall of the Berlin Wall led many countries to aspire to freedom and to self-determination; there was an increased need to respect cultural diversity. Intercul-

tural dialogue, along with the need to boost awareness of the multiplicity of cultural expressions and traditions, began to take on crucial importance.

If diversity is to be respected, it has to be known; and to be known, it has to be properly communicated.

Mass tourism

Mass tourism is making a major contribution to the destruction of the soul of a place because industrializing the services offered to tourists makes travel simpler to organize, with standard services being offered internationally and having an immediate appeal for most tourists.

While all of this might be understandable from the point of view of the tourist industry that provides the services, it is unacceptable on account of the way in which it erodes the spirit of a place. Selling Coca-Cola at the foot of the Pyramids is not offering the tourist a service, it is feeding him or her disinformation.

The mini-bar in any hotel room around the world contains the same international products and makes it impossible for a tourist to tell what part of the world he or she is in!

All of this is pure disinformation! All of this amounts to millions of wasted opportunities for communicating "the spirit of place" to the visitors!

The tourist, the visitor is nothing more than a . . . credit-card number!

So, we were saying that the kinds of services being offered to tourists have gradually become more and more standardized as a result of procedural simplification.

In other words, without realizing it, those working in the tourist industry are undermining the image of the very places they're trying to promote by offering standardized products to make sure they don't stray from the consolidated habits their international clientèle is deemed to have acquired.

"Managing tourism" means avoiding being managed by it

Tourism is a positive phenomenon per se, but it has to be managed in destinations with a strong tourist appeal. I am merely pointing out a fact. We in Florence are very familiar with what has happened to Venice: it has become an open-air museum.

Yet despite the tangible experience of its close neighbour, Florence too has become "Venetian"; in other words, it has fallen into the very same trap.

All of this means that a tourist center Florence offers fewer and fewer facilities for residents and more and more services exclusively for tourists, which naturally deters an increasingly large number of Florentines from wanting to live in their home town. A post-war city-planning document predicted that Florence would have a population of 700,000 by the end of the 20th century; well, today it has a population of just over 350,000.

All of the downtown shops and businesses are tourist-oriented in terms of the goods they sell and the services and facilities they offer, in terms of their design, their colors, and their opening hours – and this is an efficient way of killing off the memory and spirit of a place.

The city's façade is still there, but its life and its authenticity have gone.

Quick-hit tourists get to Florence by taxi from their cruise ships in the nearby port of Livorno, reaching the city at 11 a.m. By 4.30 p.m. they've gone!

But they'll be perfectly entitled to say . . . "I went to Florence" !

"Been there, done that... Got the T-shirt!"

If all of this is true, then we need to start with precisely those words "been there, done that ..." and turn them into: "I got to know...," "I realized...," or "I've woken up to the fact that there is so much to understand in this world and that I'm unlikely to be able to understand it in such a short time."

So a few less certainties, and a lot more awareness ... please!

Beyond the current "mask" of tourism, so desired yet so dreaded, there is a neglected world, a world of boundless potential. It is precisely this crucial aspect that the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco mulled over at some length.

Its aim was to highlight the fact that beyond tourism, as we know it today, there is a precious world of opportunity which we have called "Life Beyond Tourism,"

using the emblem of a flower to put the idea across.

The petals on this flower are "encounters," "communication," "knowledge," "conservation" and "economy." This five-petaled flower, indeed "Life Beyond Tourism" itself, enshrines the knowledge that it is possible to

foster a new style of tourism strongly aware of its own potential, not as a force for standardization in the world but as a force for the enhancement of difference.

Figure 1. The flower of "Life Beyond Tourism."

This concept allows the visitor to become closely acquainted with his or her destination in terms both of its tangible and its intangible heritage, thus fostering knowledge and, consequently, respect.

"Life beyond tourism": a radical reversal of perspective

"Life Beyond Tourism" is based on the realization that the tourist industry (from the tour operator through the travel agencies, the hotels, restaurants, gift shops, etc.) – which can only operate in peace time – has failed to take on board the importance of its potential role in the world today: a role of crucial importance for understanding and preserving "spirit of place," but also for promoting "intercultural dialogue" and an awareness of "cultural diversity and traditions." So we're talking here about a radical reversal of perspective: the very people who contribute today to the standardization of the world, in other words who represent a threat to the preservation of "spirit of place," can rapidly begin to make an active contribution to its preservation and to spreading awareness of it throughout the world via "Life Beyond Tourism."

On 15 March this year, "Life Beyond Tourism" was presented in the Salone dei Duecento council chamber in Palazzo Vecchio, Florence's city hall (http://www.lifebeyondtourism.org/) and simultaneously implemented at the Vivahotel Pitti Palace al Ponte Vecchio, close by, as just one point of the tourist services distribution chain.

The "Life beyond tourism" initiative

"Life Beyond Tourism" is designed to contribute to the dissemination of such universal values as 'respect and harmony' among peoples, specifically through tourism.

To achieve this, "Life Beyond Tourism" aims to turn traveling from a purely leisure-driven experience into a precious moment of knowledge and encounter between people from different cultural backgrounds.

There is way of traveling that goes beyond snapshots, souvenirs and shopping.

Building an interactive network between travelers and their destinations

provides an opportunity for promoting intercultural awareness that we cannot afford not to seize.

In the spirit of "Life Beyond Tourism" it is absolutely crucial that the relationship between travelers and their destinations not become a mere offering of standardized services; it must get traveler involved with their destinations, with their past, their present and their future.

The "Life Beyond Tourism" manifesto

- Tourism is a crucial source of prosperity;
- Tourism provides an opportunity for getting to know:

  - spirit of place
  - cultural diversity
  - traditional knowledge

- Tourism in its various forms goes way beyond the mere satisfying of personal need;
- People working in the tourist industry foster awareness of spirit of place and of intercultural dialogue;
- The tourist is a potential harbinger of knowledge and of intercultural dialogue;
- Land-use and environmental planning and management must take into account the need to foster intercultural dialogue and awareness;
- Tourist destinations become laboratories

  - for knowledge and cultural enrichment for every traveler,

  - to stimulate an increasingly high-quality demand for tourist products not only in terms of consumer-related services but, above all, in value-related terms.

In other words, any tourist venue can become a workshop for knowledge and for intercultural dialogue. Indeed, tourism can become a school for the world.

Things will really start to change when travel agencies are ready to ask to their customers: Are you looking for tourism based on values or just on consumer services?

"Life Beyond Tourism" is a way of getting 'mass tourism' to think, ask, choose and change the market

(supply and demand).

The full "Life Beyond Tourism" text, as presented at the ICOMOS 2008 Symposium, is available on the Internet.

Final Concept: Using a 'game' to involve youth in the field of heritage.

World heritage can be an extraordinarily powerful tool in devising a strategy to foster intercultural dialogue. By the same token, tourism (in its capacity as a kind of chain of distribution) can also become a powerful tool for fostering intercultural dialogue.

We might summarize this concept as follows:
HERITAGE + TOURISM = "Life Beyond Tourism" for intercultural dialogue through tourism based on values, not only on consumer services: a world of opportunities delving deep behind the mask of (hit and run) tourism.

"Life Beyond Tourism" is an approach, a web site and international community.

"Life Beyond Tourism": add value(s) to your time while you travel.
From Florence, a project designed to promote:

- an understanding of the diversity of cultural expression;
- traditional knowledge;
- the enhancement of tourist destinations.

From Florence we are helping to trigger young people's emotions by urging them to come up with thoughts and proposals of use to the international community.

Current Opportunities: 2010

University delegates from all over the world will be able to engage in in-depth research for their universities in monthly programs in Florence; we can host up to 8 universities at any one time.

The Heritage Engine

If it is true that heritage is an engine that drives travel, we have to use that engine to touch the hearts of the younger generations. We have to forge a bond

between the younger generations and heritage using a game with a photoblog. We have to involve them in the worldwide "Life Beyond Tourism" game.

Heritage is not only great art; it is also part and parcel of our everyday life with our traditional knowledge. Keep heritage simple, keep heritage easy! Let us use heritage to probe and understand the roots of our fellow men and women and their different cultural expressions. We aim to foster intercultural dialogue, making a tremendous contribution to the preservation both of cultural diversity itself and of respect for that diversity.

The "Life Beyond Tourism" Game

Four blogs built around "LIFE BEYOND TOURISM":
1st Blog: Post a photo that embodies your idea of Heritage
2nd Blog: Post a photo that embodies your idea of Cultural Diversity
3rd Blog: Post a photo that embodies your idea of Traditional Knowledge
4th Blog: Post a photo that embodies your idea of Intercultural Dialogue

Share your vision of these topics with us with a photo, 160 characters and 5 key words.

We are ready right now to invite delegates from 8 universities to Florence, during the same month.
In other words, 8 'young ambassadors' from your

LIFE BEYOND TOURISM®

universities and academies in Florence – with their computers – to disseminate these blogs, to publicize a game designed to foster in-depth reflection on the meaning of:

Heritage, Cultural Heritage
  Tangible
  Intangible
  Living Heritage
Traditional Knowledge
  Cultural Diversity
  Travel
  Tourism

Intercultural Dialogue
  Respect for diversity
  Respect for our environment.

Be part of our team! Take part in our game! Play the game with us, to help boost sensitivity toward heritage with your delegates in Florence. They will be your ambassadors for a month while they are in Florence, and when they return to Georgia, they will be ambassadors for these issues as delegates of the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco, as delegates of the "Life Beyond Tourism" philosophy.

Thank you, Georgia!

Paolo Del Bianco

The "Life Beyond Tourism" Game
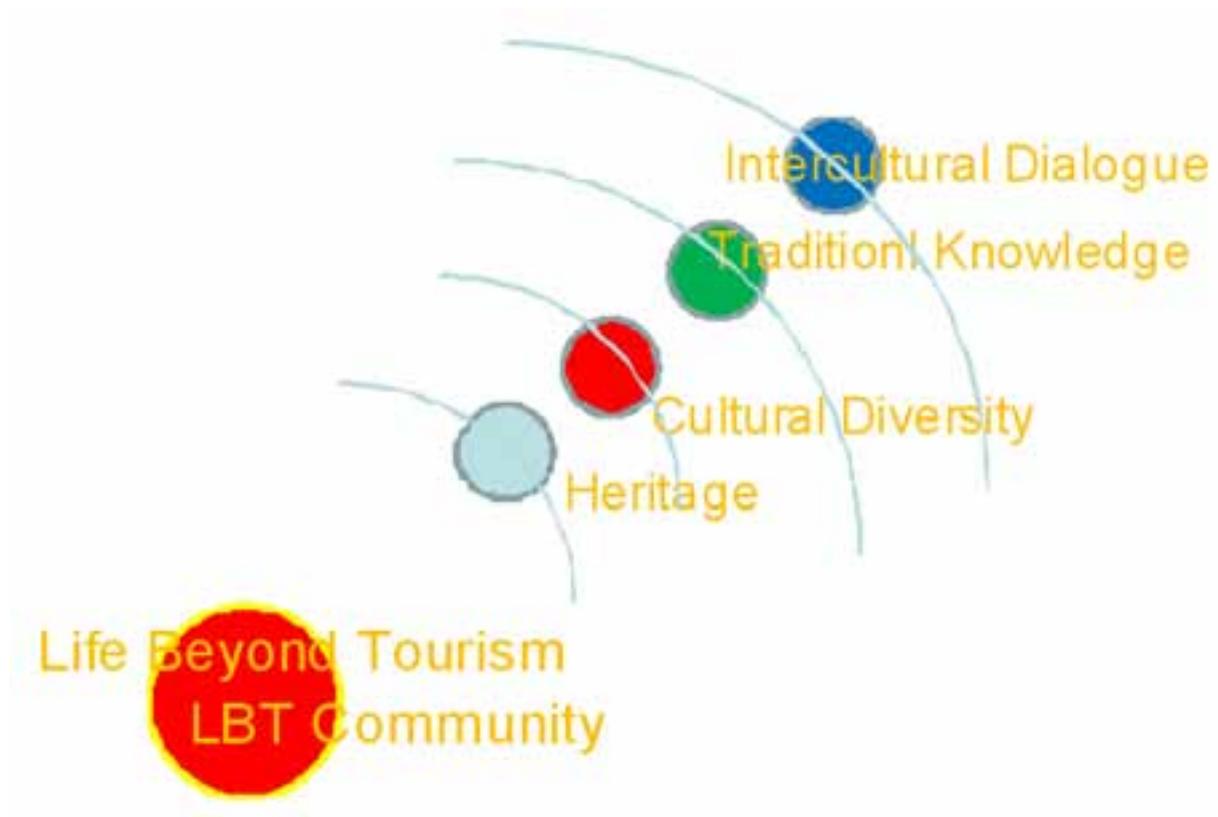
Shota Maglakelidze
Tbilisi City Hall. Georgia
Nana Giorgadze
Tbilisi City Hall. Georgia

TBILISI CITY HALL'S MANAGEMENT OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The city of Tbilisi is often described as shining example of a unique and distinctive cultural heritage as well as crossroads of European and Asian cultures and reciprocal enrichment. In this era of globalization marked by conflicts and economic crises supporting culture is of the utmost importance. Tbilisi City Hall is committed to protecting the city's cultural heritage and its development and also its integration into contemporary and western civilization. Tbilisi's museums hold and display many priceless cultural heritage materials depicting humankind's history. Many of these are valuable artifacts reflecting the achievements of eastern and western civilizations.

To popularize the cultural heritage and spiritual values reflected in the city museums' holdings, City Hall each year organizes the annual educational art action- festival known as "Museum Spring" to celebrate International Museum Day. This action-festival is the response to the Forum "Museum Nights." Visits to the museums on these days are free for all visitors, and there are also are the excursions to the museums for homeless and displaced children who live in orphanage. Each year about 5000 children and teenagers take part in the events organized by the museums. In the commemorative museums devoted to well-known writers literary events are regularly organized; there are also topical literary-music events and concerts, and an exhibition presenting art works created by children. All municipal museums are now equipped with modern tele-video-audio and computer technology .

The Georgian writer and teacher Tinatin Tumanishvili founded the Dolls Museum in 1937. The museum's leading theme is twofold: static and mechanical dolls –and "Dedopala" the doll of a Georgian national character. Over the years more than 2000 unique and refined exhibits of mobile-musical toys, dolls and literary characters have been added to the museum. As a result of scientific research in two areas, the museum developed ethnographic materials for children's esthetic education and to reflect the historic stages in the evolution of toys.

The unrest of the 1990s had very painful results for the museum. In 1996 the premises were burglarized and unique French mobile-musical puppets and other expensive exhibits were stolen. Thereafter, as a

result of a foolish decision of one of the officers, the whole exhibition was kept in a damp basement for 15 years.

Mr Gigi Ugulava, the mayor of Tbilisi, made the decision to restore the museum. The museum, located in a handsome building in the old part of Tbilisi, was named "The Dolls Museum." It opened on 6 May 2008. Some projects have already been implemented with the support of Tbilisi City Municipality to interest schoolchildren in the collections. Master-classes, the "Doll Salon," take place in the museum, and an art studio has been established where art therapy lessons are held. The Dolls Museum has a workshop where people of all ages can learn how to do enamel cloisonné work.

For some 70 years the National Folklore Center of Georgia has actively participated in Tbilisi's cultural life. The mission of folklore is to establish closer relationships between city and the villages, bringing folklore artifacts and folk wisdom to the capital. The Folklore Centre of Georgia is one of the participants in the annual Tbilisoba (the City Festival), founded five years ago. During the Tbilisoba works of fine and applied arts are exhibited in different districts and squares. Folklore ensembles are also essential participants

of the New Year celebrations. Citizens of Tbilisi are used to exhibitions, concerts, presentations and other events held in the capital's galleries, concert halls, theaters and clubs.

National Folklore Center of Georgia, with the support of City Hall, promotes folk events in the capital's cultural life. In addition, on the initiative of the National Folklore Center of Georgia ensembles of elders, famous folk singers and narrators, bandmasters, dancers, family ensembles and individual performers from various regions of Georgia come to Tbilisi and give concerts.

Cultural tourism is certainly on the list of the Tbilisi City Municipality's priorities. To realize the city's full potential in this respect, the government has drawn up a plan focussing on development of the tourism industry. The plan sets out what, within available resources, we can achieve and what we need to introduce to increase tourism in the area. Over the past few years, a wide range of activities and measures has already been taken. Previously, Tbilisi did not have tourist information center providing comprehensive services for visitors. The city lacked information billboards with maps and tourist routes on them. Now, visitors can find their way from the city maps included on the tourist billboards erected on different sites in Tbilisi. Apart from this service, the city government has also prepared guides, maps, booklets, commercial videos and other informational materials.

The protection and popularization of the cultural heritages of ethnic minority groups is one of the policies of the municipality of Tbilisi. We implemented the project "Tbilisi is My House," whose aim is to support the social and cultural life of our multiethnic so-

ciety, to develop tolerant attitudes toward each other, and to maintain the cultural heritage of our national minorities.

The Conference held for "Tbilisi is My House" involved representatives of educational institutions, diaspora organizations and NGOs that City Hall invited because of their multiethnic backgrounds. In Public School No. 98 a multiethnic museum of culture has been opened. Tbilisi City hall has also sponsored various exhibitions, symposiums, scientific conferences and training programs in Georgia. Interested in the look and spirit of Georgian Folk Culture? Go back in time and visit every corner of Georgia through the "ArtGene Festival." Since 2004 it has been a real celebration of Georgian folk culture in which all regions of the country are represented as thousands of Georgians exhibit their handicraft and art works and perform traditional music at the Open Air Ethnographic Museum. Exhibitions range from choral music to martial arts.

We collaborate closely with cultural department of Tbilisi's sister cities and with the cultural representatives of foreign missions to Georgia. In 1975, Saarbrücken became Tbilisi's first official sister city. Areas of cooperation included culture, economics, tourism, city planning and protection of the environment. Today, Tbilisi's other sister cities are Innsbruck, Nantes, Palermo, Bristol, Atlanta, Bilbao, Astana, Kiev, and Ljubljana. Within the framework of the Sister Cities Program an official delegation held a meeting with its counterpart delegations in the city of Nantes, France, to celebrate 30th anniversary of the Tbilisi-Nantes sisterhood and to sign for another three years of collaboration. Also present at the meeting was the vice-mayor of Saarbrücken, Tbilisi's first sister city. During

the Georgian visit an exhibition of Georgian artists, "Underground in Tbilisi," was presented. The folk ensemble "Lasharela" participated in the youth music festival in Innsbruck, May 11-13.

In 2009, under the patronage of Tbilisi City Hall, an Art Academy was established. The aims of the Academy are to identify and recognize young people who are gifted in different spheres of the arts and to support them in their further development. The Academy's principal aim is to ensure the further development of a new generation or artists who will successfully present the culture of our country to the world. The Academy has chosen five areas within the arts as priorities: classical music, literature, classic ballet, pop music and folk trades.

The Art Academy is structured to provide competitions and selective tours (by the Academy itself and by similar institutions) that will annually list students of the Academy and other institutions who qualify for one year of year master classes and lectures on the arts from experienced teachers. The aim is to further develop their knowledge; the students will also take part in concerts, festivals, literary gatherings, exhibitions and other events in Georgia and abroad, where they will be able to reveal their talent before a wide range of audiences and spectators.

In 2009 City Hall was established Tbilisi International Festival of Theatre. In troubled times it is particularly important that artists cross borders to work with each other and to share their hopes and experiences. Theatre is a collaborative art form. The first festival presented shows from eleven different countries, together with work from Georgia's leading theatre companies. There was a tremendous variety of styles and approaches, from classical to modern drama. The

aim of the Festival is to promote and to integrate our country in the international cultural community. The Festival presented the Georgian Showcase, to which journalists, art critics, artistic managers and producers from abroad were invited. The Tbilisi International Theatre Festival organizing team has initiated active collaboration with theatre companies in our neighboring countries of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and expanded this collaboration to many others in Europe and Asia. "The Council of Europe's 'Cultural Event' label is only awarded to a small number of exceptional and innovative cultural and artistic projects which convey a strong message about the Council of Europe's values and work. I am particularly happy that the International Festival of Theatre – TBILISI INTERNATIONAL has been selected to receive the 'Cultural Event' label for 2009," Terry Davis, Secretary General, The Council of Europe.

Preserving our cultural heritage, including classical music, as well as development of our traditions is one of the major priorities of the Tbilisi City Hall. Tbilisi International Piano Competition has deserved its distinguished position both in Georgian and International cultural and musical life. Membership of the World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC) is a great success and a source of irrefutable worldwide acknowledgment of the rich musical and cultural traditions of Georgia. The Competition is an important means of promoting Georgian piano art and at the same time presenting talented young musicians from around the world. The Competition is held early in October every fourth year in the Grand Hall of the Conservatory, under the patronage of The President of Georgia, H.E. Mikhail Saakashvili.

Tbilisi municipality's art schools have different sections: classical music, theatrical, variety entertainment/show, painting, applied art, national folklore and choreography. Children learn to play musical instruments: piano, guitar, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. Some art schools teach icon painting, Georgian ecclesiastical hymns, and Georgian traditional music instruments – the duduki, gudastviri, and the chuniri. There are two orchestral schools where children learn to play string and wind instruments: violin, viola, cello, double bass, flute, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trombone, tuba, saxophone, xylophone and trumpet. The harp is also taught. The initiative to support financially gifted young students has met with a lot of success. The city government pays fees

for 680 talented students from 30 art schools (total cost: 1 million GEL). It also should be noted that students who have graduated from art schools are winners of many national and international festival and contest awards and prizes.

The State Opera and Ballet Theatre held an Art Festival titled "Treasure of the Nation," at which gifted children acting in cultural events were awarded diplomas of special merit, medals and special prizes as "Goodwill Envoys of Georgian Culture."

The idea of Art Zone – Poland/Tbilisi (Performances, Movie shows, Concerts, Photo exhibitions) was born two years ago in Tbilisi. "On a sheet of paper, we wrote about what we and our friends, both Poles and Georgians, had been dreaming about for a long time – about a genuine and direct meeting of two cultures, about an event during which completely new Polish-Georgian projects would be created. We looked for artistic inspirations in urban spaces which until then had not been associated with art."   Magda Novakovska, Founder of Art Zone. The vast majority of Art Zone's activities were held outdoors, in the streets, squares and parks of Tbilisi. The result is a big communal action symbolizing the things which have united Poles and Georgians for centuries; mutual exchange of thoughts and artistic experiences, above all in the sphere of modern art, and especially of projects in public spaces. Activities realizes in the urban space aim to create a spontaneous interaction between passers-by and the city.

Tbilisi City Government is also one of the organizers of The Florence 2009 Symposium – "The Caucasus: Georgia on the Crossroads. Cultural Exchanges across Europe and Beyond."

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MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS AND TECHNICAL STUDIES: OPPORTUNITIES TO STUDY CAUCASIAN ART AND HISTORY

This paper presents a case study of the benefits international exhibitions can bring to the study of materials which are housed in Georgian museums and at the same time bring awareness of Georgia to the world. Although this case is of archaeological materials, certainly the same rationales can be brought to other kinds of artistic production. In addition, it gives examples of the benefits of other kinds of lending, such as long-term loans.

The exhibition "Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.," held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art 18 November, 2008 through 15 March 2009 included two objects from the Georgian National Museum: the silver goblet from Trialeti kurgan 5 and the gold necklace from Trialeti kurgan 8. The inclusion of these two objects in an exhibit of almost 300 pieces from thirteen countries and the Metropolitan's own collection illustrate some of the opportunities for study and learning such international loans facilitate.

In the instance of the goblet, it was able to be studied together with the related silver goblet from Karashamb, loaned by the History Museum of Armenia. Not only were the two objects displayed together for the first time ever, therefore being able to be visually compared in a new way, the Metropolitan Museum, with the permissions of the lending institutions, was able to do some scientific study on both objects. This scientific examination brought new information to light and allowed the two goblets to be technically compared by identical analytical techniques with a single scientist interpreting each test, thus providing a standardized comparison. These results will be published elsewhere (K. Rubinson, forthcoming).

In the instance of the necklace, it could be studied and written about in the context of the many com-paranda that have been suggested over the years. The necklace was set into the context of Ancient Near Eastern goldwork by Kim Benzel, a curator who specializes in the study of such material and who wrote the catalogue entries not only for the Trialeti necklace but almost all of the other gold jewelry in the exhibit, pieces ranging from the Aegean to Egypt and Mesopotamia and Anatolia (J. Aruz et al., 2009, passim). She additionally addressed the Trialeti necklace in her essay in the exhibition catalogue devoted to the jewelry in the exhibition (K. Benzel, 2009, 101-102). We know from the fact that the central bead was broken and had been reset and could be an heirloom from southern Mesopotamia dating to the third millennium BCE and that the grave dated from the early second millennium that the beads could range widely in source and/or comparison. Benzel notes specific technical comparisons to objects from Byblos, Elba, Alaca Hoyuk and Dashur as well as local elements and suggests several ways to explain the evidence. Without technical study, it would be difficult to say more.

Loans to large international exhibitions are one way that countries can bring their cultural heritage to people who would otherwise not know about it and those unable to visit a country and its own museums. Another way that some countries share their cultural heritage is through long-term loans to museums that want to expand the range of their exhibitions beyond what is in their own collections. There has been much press about the agreements that the Italians have made with some American museums, to place on long-term loan exceptional objects of art at the time that such museums returned objects of Italian patrimony that had troubling chains of past ownership. But other long-term loan agreements are based on scholarly interest and the desire to share cultural patrimonies, as a few examples will demonstrate. Such long-term loans often allow curators to spend time in the museum that is borrowing the objects, with time for research and consulting with colleagues.

I begin with an example from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Louvre. Joan Aruz, Curator in Charge of the Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum recently published an article in UNESCO's journal Museum International which discussed the history of a statue of Ur-Ningiru, which was made around 2100 BCE (J.Aruz 2009). For our purposes today, what is important is that the head is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum and

the body in the collection of the Louvre. It had been known for some years that the head and body were parts of the same sculpture and in 1974 the two museums signed an agreement which arranged for the two sections to be together at each of the museums. At present, the statue is displayed in each museum for four years at a time.

In the cited article, Aruz notes the long-term loan program at the Metropolitan Museum, where loans provide museum visitors with a broader context in which to view the museum's own collection. Some objects that the Metropolitan Museum has borrowed are quotidian objects and others are significant works of art.   This practice is not limited to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The importance of loans is demonstrated, for example, in a document of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), where they say

"AAMD recognizes that the public exhibition of works of art is an integral part of research and the ongoing reinterpretation of the world's shared artistic heritage. Lenders of archaeological material and ancient art provide a valued public service by making their works available to a broader public and to scholars. Loans from public institutions provide fresh opportunities for collaborative scholarship, thus facilitating the ongoing reinterpretation of their collections through advances in research and connoisseurship" (AAMD 2006, 2).

Of course, for foreign museums to know that there are objects of interest for possible borrowing, including both for international exhibitions and long-term loans, the objects must be published in ways that they can learn about their existence. This means publication in widely read languages in books and journals with either electronic access or general circulation, or, of course, on the web directly. There are many small museums whose curators are more generalists than those who work in large museums, but they too have special exhibitions and want to enrich the museum-going experience of their visitors.

With the advent of image.google.com, staff at small museums can travel the world electronically to find comparanda to objects in their collections and objects that would complete or complement an exhibition.   An example come from the Godwin-Ternbach Museum, a university-based museum at Queens College, New York City, NY. The exhibition Director's Choice: Highlights of the Godwin-Ternbach

Collection, Part I: Ancient to Renaissance Art (April 17- June 1, 2002) included a small Greek oinochoe in the shape of a female head (http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/godwin_ternbach/godternb_exhibitions/godternb_exhibit_past.html). When Dr. Marilyn Simon, who has taught museum studies at the college, was researching this object, she quickly found two comparable objects on the web by searching google images. One was from the Museum of Cycladic Art, the website of which is in Greek and English. That museum has put part of their collections on line and among the web-published images was a very similar oinochoe (.http://www.cycladic.gr/frontoffice/portal.asp?cpage=NODE&cnode=46&p=8). Certainly Simon might have suspected that one could be found in that collection and she might even, after spending a great deal of time in the library, have found that it had been published.

The other comparable object came from a collection totally unknown to her, even though she is an archaeologist specializing in Greece and the Aegean, and has been a museum curator and director and taught museum studies for many years. The object comes from the Clark Collection at Ripon College, a small college in Wisconsin. On the website of that collection is an almost identical oinochoe to the one at Queens   (http://www.ripon.edu/academics/art/clark/OINOCHOE.HTML).

Not all museums have the resources and expertise to put their collections on line by themselves. There are resources that can help and one example will be familiar to those who attended the previous symposium in Tbilisi: the Open Museum, founded by Maureen Ward Doyle. One Georgian museum, the National Museum of Georgian Folk Songs and Musical Instruments, is among the participants on that website   (http://www.openmuseum.org/museum/show/28).

Lending and borrowing objects from museum collections for special exhibitions and long-term loans, which enriches museum-going experiences and provides opportunities to further knowledge in special ways, requires communication beyond any local countries' borders. Certainly museum personnel, but other scholars too, should be mindful that a country's interesting, educational and beautiful past can easily be invisible to much of the world unless the objects that belong to that past are accessible to others. Thus publication, whether on paper or electronically, needs

to be in a language that communicates beyond national borders, so that the international community can be made aware of Georgia's rich historical and artistic heritage.

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THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF GEORGIAN TOURISM PRODUCTS

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the strategy of "positioning" a country in order to maximize its tourism potential. Objectives include describing those types of tourism that represent the main market segments and specifying target groups. The paper is based on "Tourism Development Strategy," submitted by The America-Georgia Business Council in 2007, as well as on the results of two branding campaigns: Branding Georgia (2005), and Georgia's Department of Tourism and Resorts rebranding campaign (2008).

In recent years, Georgia has made a strong commitment to establish itself as a high quality, sustainable, and competitive international and domestic destination, offering memorable cultural and nature-based experiences.

What are Georgia's Competitive Advantages?

Urban tourism – Tbilisi is Georgia's center of "urban tourism" and is fast becoming a cultural and business hub for the region. With the arrival of world-class hotels, this status will strengthen, and with more world-class accommodation and exhibition facilities (e.g., EXPO Georgia in Tbilisi and eventually a similar facility in Batumi), this segment is expected to grow. Meetings, conferences and exhibitions will increase in number and size.

Adventure and Nature-based Tourism – The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates that this segment will grow by 15 to 20% per year over the next several years, thus exceeding the global tourism growth rate of 4.5% per year.

Georgia is well-positioned for nature-based and adventure tourism: in "Europe Started Here" Georgia can emphasize having Europe's highest mountains.

Cultural Tourism – UNWTO estimates that cultural tourism constitutes about 10% of all tourism

globally; it includes a range of experiences from wine tourism, heritage and architectural tours to music festivals and performing arts activities. Georgia is well-positioned for cultural tourism: in "Europe Started Here," Georgia can emphasize that the nation is home to the remains of Europe's oldest civilization, is the birthplace of viniculture and wine, and one of the first European nations to adopt Christianity – all facts that could capture the interest of cultural tourists.

Wine and Food Tourism – Georgia can be marketed as the birthplace of winemaking and home to the supra, the Georgian feast led by a tamada – a tra-

ditional toastmaster. "The Georgian Feast" and "Wine Started Here" could promote Georgia as a unique food and wine destination.
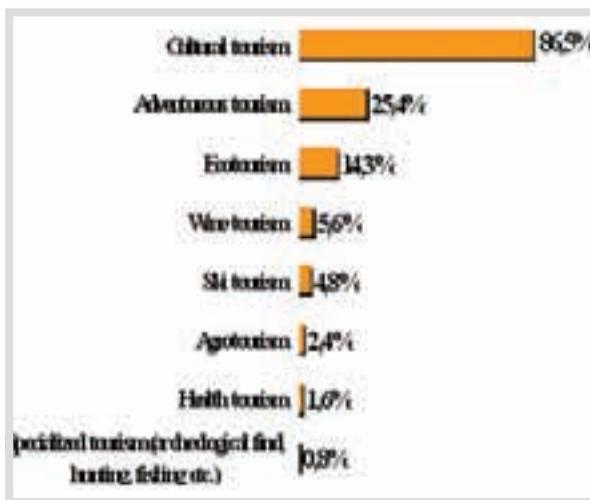
Who Are the High-yield Visitors to Georgia?

A development and marketing strategy for Georgia places proportionally more resources on high-priority markets first and then branches out to the wider markets in the region (Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine).

The results stated below reflected key trends that are consistent with interviews of Georgian tour operators and tourism's growing international travel trends. These visitors were mostly independent leisure travelers, so the business segment was not captured in the survey (Tourism Development and Investment Plan and Strategy, 2007)

We can report that Cultural tourism (includes food and wine tourism); Nature-based tourism (includes mountain travel, adventure travel and skiing); Sun-and-Sand tourism (almost entirely concentrated along the Black Sea coast in July and August) ; Business/Commercial travel; and Visits with Friends and Relatives (VFR) are all market segments that are attracting substantial numbers of foreign and domestic tourists.

Cultural Tourism

We believe that some of the highest returns could come from further development of wine tourism. If developed with high-quality accommodations and cuisine, this product will attract higher-spending tourists. We can look at such wine-tourism destinations as the Napa Valley (California), Tuscany, Provence, and the Stellenbosch Cape region of South Africa – all of which offer some of the highest quality tourism experiences in the world.

Wine tourism can target the local Georgian market, the expatriate community in Georgia, and foreign visitors. Wine and culinary tours are attractive for wine devotees, especially from Western countries, as well as from Russia, Ukraine and other nations whose populations are familiar with Georgia and its cuisine and wines. The country's wine-making history, its 500 varieties of grapes, and the combination of modern and traditional wine-making technology and methods (as can be experienced in Kakheti and other regions of Georgia) are excellent selling points for Georgia.

In Kakheti, wine tourism would benefit from further development. At present, very few tours of wineries are available other than those at the Teliani Valley Winery and the Badagoni Winery.

Wine tourism could easily be coupled with quality ecotourism activities such as horseback riding through wine country and day trips into national park and protected areas such as Lagodekhi. The renovated town of Sighnaghi offers great potential as a hub for this type of tourism, especially as more accommodations, restaurants, cafes, shops and galleries become available in 2008.

The cave cities of Vardzia (in the southwest) and Uplistsikhe (near Gori) might develop restaurants and hotels – similar to what has been developed in the Cappadocian region of Turkey with the Anatolian Houses development, which has built in and around

the caves (see http://www.anatolianhouses.com/index.htm).

Nature-based Tourism and Ski-ing

The entire Kakheti region, as well as other rural regions with agro tourism, mountain tourism and recreational outlets, would be well served with development of more smaller, more intimate facilities such as eco-lodges.

The ski tourism segment, especially for slopes in the Gudauri region, could become internationally competitive. In the high season, the Gudauri ski lifts were carrying 2000 persons per hour up the slopes. On high-season winter weekends the Gudauri slopes reportedly get "as crazy as Georgian highways." In addition, heli-skiing is very popular with European visitors and is booked up several months ahead, sometimes even a year in advance. There is also great potential for mid-week ski packages, when the slopes are less busy.

Ski school and resort developments are being considered for the mountains east of Batumi. The areas around the village of Gomarduli and the Khulo region are considered as interesting prospects for winter sport development. In addition, an ideal scenario, in terms of developing a quality ski product offer, is to create a completely new, well planned ski resort in a new area near Gudauri and/or perhaps in the area that is being considered in Adjara. A detailed Gudauri master plan is needed, which specifies development zones and helps rationalize investment for maximum benefit.

Business/Commercial Travel

According to statistics from the Georgian Department of Tourism & Resorts the country received 57,000 business and professional visitors in 2006 versus only 12,000 leisure and holiday visitors. In the same report, the Department reported that the country received 983,000 total visitors; so data on the purpose of visit for the vast majority of visitors is not being reported.

Nevertheless, the potential for business and commercial travel to Georgia is strong and it is growing. This segment has more than doubled since 2002. As more major international brand hotels are opening in Tbilisi and Batumi and adding to high-class accommodation capacity, interest in these two cities as destinations for meetings and conferences is forecast to grow. Related to this trend is also strong potential for pre- and post-business travel excursions, as well as events in destinations such as Telavi, using facilities such as Prince Chavchavadze's Tsinandali residence and gardens and King Irakli II's palace in the center of town.

In Batumi, there is also longer term potential in the business and commercial segment, particularly as the Radisson, Sheraton and other hotels open in the region. This segment could also help extend the limited season of the Black Sea coast.

Visits with Friends and Relatives

This segment is estimated at 20% of total arrivals, particularly from overseas Georgians. (There are about 1 million Georgians who currently live abroad; The largest group of these Georgians live in Russia, followed by Ukraine, Europe, and the USA.) Many Georgian expatriates return to Georgia for visits. There are also Georgians in Turkey who, for historic reasons, still speak Georgian and sometimes travel to Georgia.

There are also a number of under-developed market segments:

1. Special Events – Cultural events, sporting competitions, etc.
2. Ecotourism – Eco-lodges, birding
3. Spa Tourism – Tapping mineral water resources
4. Special-interest Tourism – Casinos and gaming, golf, and themed attractions

Special Events & Festivals in Georgia

Events can range from single-day fairs to major sporting and cultural festivals through to special interest group activities. The duration of these events can range from a single day to several weeks. Planning might require a few weeks' lead time, or many years of careful preparation in the case of major sporting events.

Over the past decade events have been a growing international segment with a significant increase in the numbers and types of special events available to the traveling public. This growth has been attributed to both an increased emphasis on regional economic development, as well as destination-marketing by many governments and tourism marketing organi-

zations. Special events are seen to have the ability to produce a wide range of significant economic and social benefits for communities and regions, which helps to explain why they have been so eagerly embraced.

In addition to providing opportunities to increase direct expenditure at a destination, special events contribute to a destination's range of tourist attractions, facilitate media coverage and promote awareness of the destination for future visitation.

- Special events can substantially increase the opportunities for new expenditure within Georgia simply by attracting more visitors
- The events can become the reason for visiting the destination.
- Special events also act to retain the expenditures of locals who, in the absence of local special events, would travel elsewhere in pursuit of leisure activities.
- Special events can contribute substantially to a destination's range of tourist attractions, facilitate media coverage and promote awareness of the destination for future visits.

According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), "There is a shift from active holidays to holidays as an experience. The point is to achieve a complete participative experience which provides new knowledge and authentic experiences."

Destinations that have consciously and deliberately forged linkages between special events and special-interest tourism benefit both economically and socially. Events also help diversify the destination's tourism product offers.

The annual Jazz Music Festival in Batumi is a successful example of tapping the special-events segment. This event has gained prestige with every successful year of operation and is a significant contributor to the summer calendar for domestic and regional visitors alike. The ongoing success of this event has encouraged local hotels in Tbilisi, and now in Batumi, to actively market it to their regional and international clientele.

Eco-lodges and Ecotourism

Eco-lodges are a key product element of ecotourism and especially distinguished by the fact that most lodges are unique.

Spa Tourism

The spa tourism segment was at its peak during the Soviet era when reportedly hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens flocked to spa centers such as Tskaltubo (near Kutaisi, west central Georgia); Likani (near Borjomi) and Sairme. The curative waters of Georgian spa centers have been analyzed and demonstrated to have substantial medicinal and therapeutic value. Tbilisi is also known for its curative waters with the "Turkish Baths" being a favorite visitor destination. However, aside from Georgians and visitors from Azerbaijan and Armenia, the spa centers outside Tbilisi are not attracting many visitors. Only 1% of visitors came to Georgia to use them, according to Statistics Georgia. And yet there are at least 2000 mineral springs and numerous medicinal mud bath locations in Georgia.

To be internationally competitive, this segment would need to be strategically repositioned away from a strictly curative focus to a more leisure-oriented market. To accomplish would require substantial investment, development, promotion and marketing. This segment should focus more on self-improvement treatments such as beauty, weight loss, stress reduction and "wellness" treatments than on the traditional curative approach from Soviet times. Promotion should also be closely linked to other products, integrated into overall resort development programs, which could be focused on coastal or mountain tourism.

Special Interest Tourism

Among special-interest markets, some of the most important tourism generators are those that focus on activities that are reasonably popular with high-yield customers. Some of the more appropriate and potentially promising for further development are golf, casino gambling, skiing. Each of these is discussed below:

Casinos/Gambling. Casinos are relatively widespread throughout Europe as well as North America and Asia. For many travelers they are an expected activity opportunity; for some travelers they are the primary reason to travel. Certain destinations (Monte Carlo, Las Vegas, and now Macau) are predominant in their regions, but there is no focal point for casino

activity in the Caucasus, Eastern Europe or the Middle East.

Georgia currently has a few casinos of modest standard. None of these facilities generates the kind of casino action or excitement that most international casino customers are looking for. In examining the potential for an expanded casino industry, it is instructive to look at the example of Macau.

In 2002, Macau went through an RFP process to attract international gaming operators to bid on one of three gaming licenses that were to be awarded by the government. Two Las Vegas operators were among the winning bidders (Wynn Resorts and Las Vegas Sands/Venetian). Since that time these new entrants have invested over $3 billion in modernizing and expanding the Macau gaming product. To date the results have been so remarkable that Macau gaming revenue now exceeds that of Las Vegas.

For Georgia, there is an opportunity to expand its casino-based tourism products; certainly in Tbilisi and Batumi and perhaps elsewhere – Borjomi, Tskaltubo, etc. However, we believe that it will be important for developers to partner with international gambling operators if this potential is to be realized. International operators will bring with them credibility, general market reach and operations expertise. They will also bring with them their existing customer base that will feel comfortable that they will be well taken care off when they visit one of the operator's facilities in Georgia.

In a competitive sense, Georgia will not be alone in trying to expand its casino business. Some neighboring countries also have modest casino operations and some governments in the area are actively providing incentives to attract casino resort investment. Considering the size of the potential casino market in the region, Georgia needs to develop a specific strategy to address whether it wishes to pursue this market and, if so, how to best facilitate partnerships with recognized international operators.

Where Are the Opportunities for Georgia to Attract Tourists?

Priority: Current visitors to Turkey and Eastern European countries. Key targets include tourists who are frequent travelers to the region but have not yet visited Georgia. This is a very efficient target market because they have already expressed their high inter-est in travel to the region by their market behavior. A significant number of them are good candidates to add a trip to Georgia to expand their knowledge of the region and experience new destinations in a known area.

This market includes visitors to all of the Eastern Europe countries, but a particularly attractive target segment includes the high volume of visitors to Turkey.

• Overseas Georgians, approximately 1 million.
• Tourists from Europe who have previously traveled to Eastern and Central Europe for activities for which Georgia already has facilities and attractions.
• Activity Participants, such as mountain tourists to the Alps and wine tourists who visit the Loire, Napa, and Hunter Valleys.
• New Activity Customers who travel for things that Georgia is not currently known for but wishes to develop, e.g., convention market, casino tourism.
• Past Visitors from former Soviet Republics, tourists with pleasant memories of visiting Georgia.

The "whole of Government approach", planning, prioritizing, facilities construction, personnel training, and site marketing will be required in each tourism sector if greater activity and revenues are sought.

Gvantsa Tchanturia

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THE MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM IN GEORGIA

Cultural tourism is becoming generally more popular throughout the world. It is important for various reasons: it has a positive economic and social impact; it establishes and reinforces identity; it helps preserve a nation's cultural heritage, with culture as an instrument; it facilitates harmony and understanding among people; it supports culture, and helps the growth of tourism.

Cultural tourism can play significant role in regional development in the different world regions. It has been defined as the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs. Strategically located on the crossroads between East and West, the Georgian people throughout history have always been influenced by distinctive civilizations. They absorbed features of other cultures and married them to indigenous traditions to produce a vibrant culture which reached its developmental high point in the Middle Ages.

Given its abundant and beautiful natural resources and ideal location on the Black Sea coastline between Europe and Asia, Georgia has nearly everything to take its place among the most attractive cultural tourism sites. Georgia boasts natural, historical, archeological, and architectural highlights as part of its strong cultural heritage. In addition, its culture, folklore, art, lifestyle, and hospitality are all huge potential draws for increased numbers of prospective tourists. The country's tourism sector offers diverse opportunities in drawing tourists interested in adventure, leisure and recreation, wine and gourmet tours, historical/educational tourism (germinal) and eco- and agro-tourism. In general, ecotourism focuses on personal growth and learning new ways to live on the planet. It typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Ecotourism is a conceptual experience, enriching those who delve into researching and understanding the environment around them. It gives us insight into our impacts as human beings and also a greater appreciation of our own natural habitat. These are the basis that encourage ecological and adventure tours in Georgia to be viewed as competitive products on the international tourist market.

Georgia offers sea resorts along the Black Sea, ski resorts and mountaineering in the pristine Caucasus Range, as well as other resorts. In addition, our country has health resorts and spas and mineral springs famous for their unique microclimate. In Georgia there are over 12,000 historical and cultural monuments, which are listed by UNESCO as cultural heritage sites. The country is known for its bio-diversity, which is now protected in nature reserves and national parks – recently opened up to visitors to experience the untouched beauty of Georgia's diverse landscapes. To preserve this natural resource, the 31 protected areas have been established.

The greatest challenge Georgia's tourism sector faces today is to create and keep promoting a favorable image of the country abroad. To this end, Georgia participates in international tourism fairs and exhibitions, works on designing tourist symbols of Georgia, and actively elaborates development projects for its resorts, recreational zones, and tourist infrastructure. Tbilisi, the capital, boasts three full- service hotels, the Courtyard Marriott, Sheraton Metekhi Palace and Tbilisi Marriott. SAS Radisson and Intercontinental are under construction, and Hyatt, Hilton and Kempinsky hotels are already scheduled. Tbilisi has a

1. Jinvali reservoir

2. Jinvali reservoir

large number of restaurants offering traditional Georgian dishes; some of these restaurants specialize in regional cuisines. There are also restaurants offering European dishes, and several Chinese and Japanese restaurants in Tbilisi.

The primary objectives of tourism management for Georgia are: conservation of cultural resources; accurate interpretation of resources; authentic visitor experiences, and the expansion of earned revenues from cultural resources. These resources will ensure the permanent protection of Georgia's unique environment, including its flora, fauna and cultural heritage. Georgia was the country were paleontologists and archaeologists discovered the remains of skeletons of "Homo Erectus" – one of the most ancient humans on our planet, which counts two million years. Two specimens, named Mzia and Zezva, are the oldest residents of the Eurasian continent. Scientists have included Georgian territory in the list of our planet's regions where human formation and development took place and from where aborigines moved to other regions of Eurasia.

The Georgian language has its own unique alphabet (one of the 14 known in the world) and a written tradition going back to the 5th century A.D.

Cultural tourism has always held a significant place in the development of our country. Georgia might be described as sunny Transcaucasian republic with an ancient historical background, rich traditions and culture; a country with a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population. Despite being overwhelmingly Orthodox Christian, Tbilisi is one of the few places in the world where a synagogue and a mosque are located next to each other.

Tourism was one of the industries hit hardest by the war between Russia and Georgia: now we should strive to build it up. The main goal should be to base general activities on the dissemination of cultural and traditional heritage. Increasing popularity and awareness of Georgian culture at the international marketplace surely is a must. Preserving our culture and enriching it with the promotion of cultural dialogue between the past and the future should become a primary focus. Providing assistance in this field can contribute to income generation for cer-

tain population groups that will reduce inequalities and poverty. According to our point of view, report embodies key ways promoting Georgian culture and getting it to the international marketplace.

The preservation and promotion of cultural diversity bears a particular meaning in the context of globalization. The forces of globalization are often perceived as a threat to cultural diversity, leading to an erosion of cultural specificity and a uniformity of lifestyles and values across the world. Migratory fluxes may also be perceived by some as undermining social cohesion, national identities, ethnic homogeneity and societal values. Mobility has always existed and will continue to do so. It is an opportunity for social and cultural exchanges. Exposure to the behavior of others helps to strike a balance between past and future, inscribe cultural heritage into the evolution of modern societies, and pave the way for development.

The reform of the educational system is one of the most important goals both for the flow of information and commercial reasons. Many students from neighbor countries continue their studies in our country; Georgia is an industrial, social and cultural center for the Caucasian and East European regions. A visitor's experience begins when he or she is deciding where to go for a trip and where to

go on to after the trip has ended. Consequently, Georgia needs to be exceptional in all aspects of the visitor 's journey; in providing the motivation to visit, in booking the trip, upon arrival, during the duration of the stay, at the point of departure, and in nurturing the memory. This has implications for marketing, information provision, skills, quality throughout all aspects of the visitor's journey, and the distribution of visitors.

Tourism is one of the key drivers of the Georgian economy. More and more people are spending their vacations here. Each year this industry is growing stronger. People are finding jobs and numerous working places are emerging, especially in our sea-side resorts.

The main goal of our project is to make our country popular and to help the development of the tourism industry and infrastructure and to extend and intensify our friendly relations with other countries, not least with Italy. We must also underline the importance of Georgia as a country with an international transit function and discuss opportunities for the realization of new energy projects.

Relations between Italy and Georgia have always been friendly and, in part through this event, these relations will become even stronger. Italy and Georgia have a long history of cultural relationships;
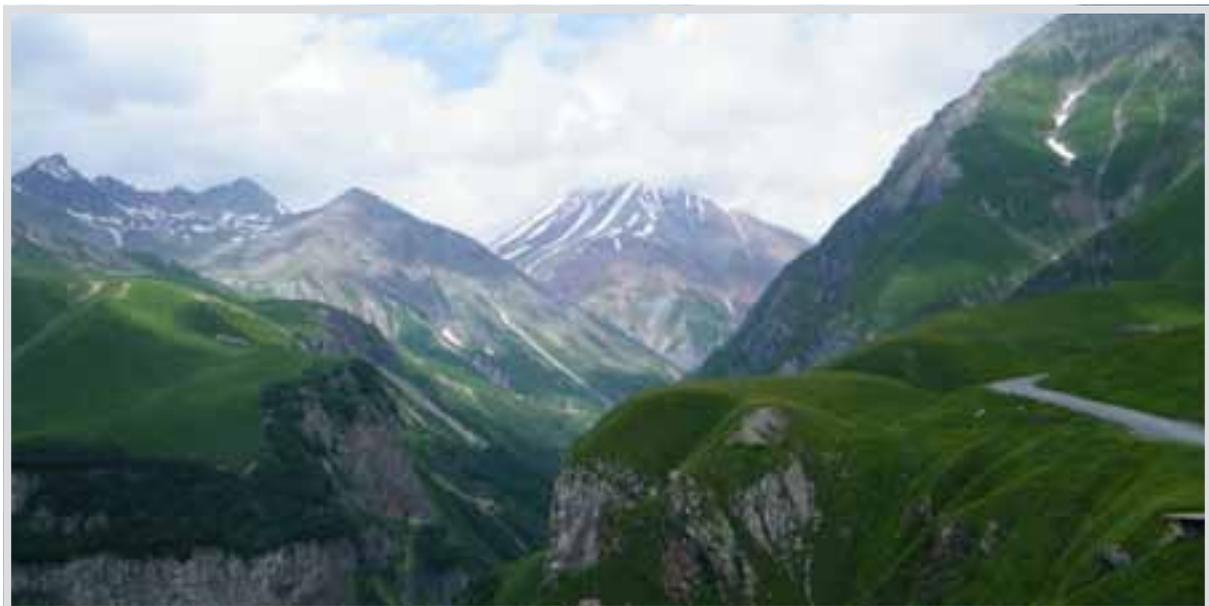
3. Kazbegi

4. Shio Mgvime

examples of this can be seen every day. The Italian Embassy in Georgia marked La Festa della Repubblica Italiana, also known as Italian National Day. There are numerous Italian companies operating in Georgia, especially in Tbilisi.

Though Georgia has been through a war, we are still promoting our cultural values abroad. In the face of dramatic events that recently took place in Georgia, the issue of European Neighborhood Policy (which is to ensure good relations between EU Member States and EU neighboring countries) becomes vitally important. Supporting a close economic, political and cultural cooperation based on shared values such as human rights, democracy and development of the free economy model is the overriding objective of the European Neighborhood Policy. The pursuit of this objective helps to prevent the isolation of countries outside the EU and prevents the creation of new dividing lines of Europe. The policy contributes to the development of good neighborly relations and the discovery of new opportunities for cooperation among local authorities and among regions and governments of countries located in these specific areas.

The objectives of the Management of Cultural Tourism are: to contribute to: tourism development in the historically and culturally important cities, thereby create the conditions for local economic development; to consolidate the tourism industry in Georgia; to revitalize historic city centers; to carry out urban infrastructure improvements and cultural landscape regeneration in and around the historic cores of different cities; to construct a new Visitors Center; to provide financial and technical support to local entrepreneurs and community groups to encourage the creation and/or expansion of environmentally appropriate and financially viable small and medium enterprises in the civic core areas; and to provide technical assistance for capacity building and project management.

We are particularly strong in the area of alternative tourism, including nature-based, cultural heritage and community-based development. Cultural tourism is actually an all-seasons enterprise, which is very important for the country's economy. The following steps will certainly result in economic growth:

1. Development of road infrastructure and communications
2. Exchange programs in the educational field
3. International conferences and congresses
4. Implementation of innovations in the field of tourism development
5. Collaboration between professional associations and the government

The social result of our project will be the creation of many new working places and opportunities. Georgia will become a country better known worldwide, and will take its place in the international marketplace and in the creation of the new business contacts and opportunities.

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THE DISCOVERY OF THE CAUCASUS: THE CHALLENGE THAT FOLLOWED THE CONQUEST OF THE SWISS ALPS

After the first ascent of the Matterhorn, which involved a fatal tragedy, British climbers turned their eyes to a new area: the Caucasus. The pioneer was Douglas Freshfield, who had spent 13 summers in the Alps and then decided to change his horizons. In 1868 he spent his first summer in Caucasus, and after climbing Kasbek and Elbrus, the two highest peaks in the range (both were extinct volcanoes) went back to London.

The two peaks were easy climbs from a mountaineering point of view, but what he described was enough to lead his countrymen into a new type of race, whose goal was simply to be the first to ascend numerous unclimbed and untrodden peaks. Information was not easily available and the maps and sketches with which mountaineers prepared for their expeditions were quite simple. An expedition in itself was a discovery: from one valley to the next even the language was different, as everyone now knows. But the pioneers succeeded in crossing the Caucasus from east to west.

Freshfield, with a keen eye not only for mountains but also for landscapes and people. His images of Svaneti are an outstanding example of how an enquiring artist can travel through a country documenting the existing life.

In 1888 a major tragedy occurred, with four British climbers disappearing north of Shkara. This event slowed the race for discovery: as always, the death of climbers results in serious thought about the essence of climbing and its risks.

After the British came the Germans: they completed the discovery of Caucasus and they even installed, for easier exploration, the "German Bivouac" on the north front of Ushba, staying there for weeks and climbing the surrounding summits.

We should not forget that climbs were performed with the vital help of Swiss or Italian mountain guides, seasoned professional of the summits, used to high altitudes. Local Georgians stepped in later: the most famous was Mikhail Khergiani, son of a Georgian national hero who climbed Elbrus – and did not omit to take down the signs of the German ascent made during the occupation of Russia in World War II. Misha, as he was called, climbed not only in the Caucasus, where he opened new routes, but also in Britain, on Mont Blanc and in the Dolomites, where he was accustomed to test himself against the most difficult routes. On one of these, the Livanos in the Su Alto of the Civetta range, he died in a tragic accident in 1968. Local mountaineers still remember and respect him.

During and after World War II it was not easy to travel to and from Russia and the Caucasus Range


The appearance of Freshfield's first book, Travels in the Central Caucasus and Bashan; including Visits to Ararat and Tabreez and Ascents of Kazbek and Elbruz, was a turning point and the following decades were the years of discovery, much as the events in the Alps after the first ascent of Mont Blanc. The mountaineers returned with beautiful pictures and then maps were prepared to show the details of the area. Among the photographers two created outstanding images: Mr. de Dechy and, most of all, Vittorio Sella, who travelled by himself and with

disappeared from the sight, obscured also by the race to climb the 8000-meter Himalayan peaks. Nonetheless Russian mountaineers kept the flame burning and continued climbing, staying in touch with the outside world in spite of lack of resources and supportive initiatives, climbing also in the Himalayas, thanks mostly to personal initiatives after 1989 and the collapse of the USSR.

Today Georgian climbers and organizations are working toward the rediscovery of the Caucasus, making every effort to encourage foreigners, as

THE CHAIN OF THE CAUCASUS
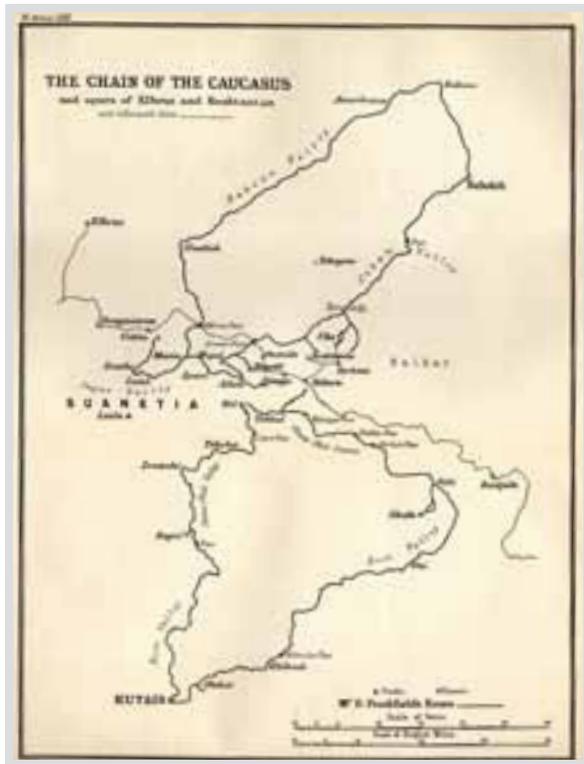
A map including all the trails is in preparation. With the distribution of the map, articles in mountaineering magazines, and information in the media, Svaneti and the Caucasus can expect an inflow of climbers and trekkers. A network of huts can be established to enable visitors to stay comfortably up in the mountains and to enjoy the views and -- why not? – to climb up to the summits by well-marked and graded routes. Of course, many more difficult ascents are still to be explored.

Projects are now ongoing to prepare a guidebook to Georgian mountains, like the ones we are used to in Europe. Obviously it is necessary to overcome the difficulties due to the political situation and relations with Russia: travels like those made by Freshfield and company seem impossible today. But as mountaineers know well, mountains do not belong to politicians and there will be certainly a time in the future when the travel routes of Freshfield or Sella will be open again, zigzagging through peaceful borders.

well as locals, to visit the mountains. One area is indisputably "the jewel of Caucasus": the Svaneti area. An isolated valley, difficult to reach because of bad roads and time-requiring transfers from Tbilisi, the mountain-girded valley is populated by Svans, proud of their customs, language and heritage. Svaneti includes stone-tower villages that UNESCO has declared to be World Heritage monuments because of their architectural uniqueness and environmentally important landscapes.

What is necessary for the development of a local mountaineering culture? First of all, it is necessary to preserve the environment and the local economy, through the development of sustainable practices. Then the mountains must be brought to the attention of the outside world: Mt Ushba is known as the "Terrible," as the Matterhorn of Caucasus. It requires great ability to climb it and only the best prepared should attempt it. In addition to the possibilities of climbing, a network of huts and trails has to be established, as has been done in the Alps. This is now happening, thanks to the initiative of the local Svaneti Tourism Center and the Georgian Union of Mountaineering Associations, which has marked the best trails in the area. In addition, support has been given by other mountaineering clubs, such as the Italian Alpine Club.
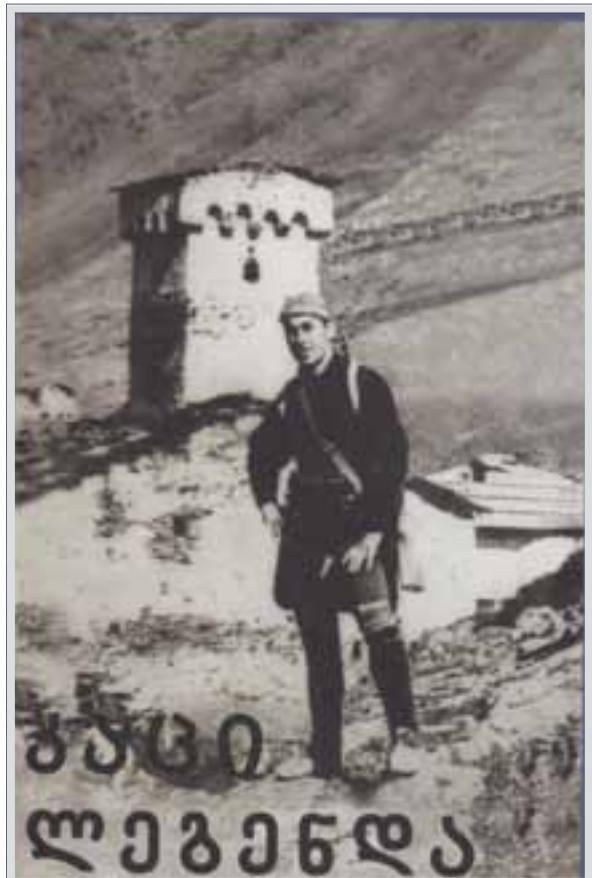
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HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF TSINANDALI ALEXANDRE CHAVCHAVADZE HOUSE-MUSEUM BASED ON THE NEWLY EMBRACED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The village of Tsinandali, located in the charming entrails of nature in the Eastern part of Georgia, is particularly noteworthy for the Chavchavadze Land spread across the fascinating garden of extraordinary flora, where in the 50s of the 20th century, House-Museum of famous Georgian poet, Alexandre Chavchavadze was founded there (I. Khmaladze, 1975, 5).

Alexandre Chavchavadze (1786-1846) House Musuem tells us not only the history of the remarkable Chavchavadze family, but revives the heart of the epoch.

The Chavchavadze family values were grounded on geniuine Georgian traditions; the family was broadly educated and intelligent, which highly influenced the life of the 19th century Georgian society (S. Megutnishvili, 2006, 20). Large part of the progressively thinking members of the society of that time gathered at their place. The family served as the first host of the intelectual guests from Europe and Russia (G. Bogvelishvili, 1967, 14).

"Sad and invaluable history of eternally existed" originated from Garsevan Chavchavadze (1757-1811). After Garsevan Chavchavadze was deceased, in 1835 his son became the propriator of his land and properties. And he started builing houses and developement of decorative gardens, wine cellars and wineries. (S. Megutnishvili, 2006, 26). In the 30s of the 19th century the abovementioned complex on Alexandre Chavchavadze land, which occupied 18 ha of land, is almost being finished

After Alexandre Chavchavadze passed away, his son David Chavchavadze inherited the properties.

The property was significantly damaged during the invasion of Shamil (1854), when lezghins destroed and robbed 22 rooms of the palace, took over the gold, silver, brilliants, precious plate and dishes and many other valuable belongings of the Chavchavadze family. They burned the palace and the gardens and took 24 persons with them (I. Khmaladze, 1975, 14-15). As a result of the fire, the rich library and archive documents of Garsevan and Alexandre Chavchavadze was almost totally destroyed. Due to this fact, many important historical sources and events are not known to us.

To buy out the family from the slavery, David Chavchavadze took out a loan from the Imperator Bank of Russia and used his land and properties for the loan convenants (S. Megutnishvili, 2006, 28, 29).

Following the death of David Chavchavadze, the ownership of the properties went to his children (three sons and six daughters) (T. Chkheidze, 1968, 25).

During the years that followed, incapability to service the debt served the reason for the bankruptcy of the Chavchavadze Family and their properties were sold to the Principal Department (I. Khmaladze, 1975, 7). After February 25, 1885, the properties and other wealth of the Chavchavadze Family were managed by Tutorial Management of the Caucasus. And on February 8, 1886, the Principal Department bought out the properties for 1.5 million rubles. Additionally, Tsinandali House remained in the possession of Ana Chavchavadze (T. Chkheidze, 1968, 24).

The professionals invited by the Principal landlords led the reconstruction of some of the buildings and development of new ones (G. Bogvelishvili, 1967, 31). The leaders of this department pitilessly sold, gave away as gifts, and exported the belongings of the Chavchavadze family. After establishing soviet rule in the country, the palace that survived destruction by the leaders of the Principal Department, was transformed into a hotel (B. Gonjilashvili, 1999, 152).

Following the death of Alexandre Chavchavadze on November 6, 1846, the soviet government took significant actions to restore the property.

In the years of 1886-1887 the Chavchavadze House-Museum, as it is today, was built on the basement of Chavchavadze Palace that was destroyed by the fire.

Important part of Alexandre Chavchavadze House-Museum is devoted to the garden, known as Tsinandali Park. The history of this garden goes back to middle of 18th century, when Garsevan Chavchavadze started developing its land. Later, Al. Chavchavadze garnished the property inherited from his father. He built new palace at the east side (a bulding where

1. Al. Chavchavadze House Museum

the House-Museum is located nowadays), developed underground irrigation system, built the wine cellar, planted various types of plants, trees and flowers, and thus further enhanced the garden. As a result, Al. Chavchavadze had extremely well developed property and decorative garden in Tsinandali in the first half of 20th century (S. Megutnishvili, 2006, 30-31).

Tsinandali park is a living museum, where its main artistic idea is expressed through the landscape, green garden (there were 2025 trees and 4135 bushes in total in the garden by the 30s of the 20th century), and architectural harmony. The main aspect to the spaceutilization, which is the organization of the path that visitors' follow, is managed so that the visitors can fully experience the beauty of the garden and the palace. This type of space management further strenghtens the impression as visitors moves through the garden. To achieve such effect, specific nuances of harmony and contrast are used, which create an innormous artistic impression in the garden. Squares, avenues and other types of plants are positioned in such a way to contrast with the background, thus enhancing the colorfulness of the garden, strenghten the impression and enable the visitors to enjoy the beautiful views of the garden from every side (I. Khmaladze, 1975, 78).

With the passage of time, the landscape of the Chavchavadze garden underwent significant change. Starting from 1854, the Chavchavadze Family property also referred to as Garden of Eden, fell down. The process started when the warriors of Lezgins, led by Shamili burnt the palace and the garden. This act made restoration to its original state impossible. In addition, river Kisiskhevi flooded the property in 1865 and brought especially enormous damage to its west side, turning it into a rocky cliff.

Before 1886, untill it was bought out by the Principal Department, the Chavchavadze garden occupied the west side of the current House-Museum. The development of Al. Chavchavadze decorative garden, as it exists today, started in 1886, when Al. Chavchavadze property was made into Princely Property and its reconstruction had been started (author Arnold Regel).

In parallel with the development of the garden, the palace and the wine cellar (built by Alexandre Chavchavadze earlier in 1835) underwent a rather fast reconstructed.

The historic wine factory view, which organically joined with the Chavchavadze garden, was developed by Principal landlord in 1887 on the basis of the wine cellares built by Alexandre Chavchavadze earlier in 1835. Wine production had started in aforementioned wine cellars from 1865. The unique oenology of Alexandre Chavchavadze, which has partially survived, included more than 20 000 bottles of wine of 70 different varieties form different countries, 1839 year Saferavi among them. The road to the factory goes through the center of the garden alongside of beautiful avenues, further enhancing the beauty of the setting (www.nplg.gov.ge/chavchavadze/alexandrechav.html).

As a result, a monumental wine cellar, palace, vineyards and a garden of exceptional beauty were constructed. Everything together represents

2. Interior

3. Garden

a highly artistic museum complex, which uniquely illustates the genius of the finest Georgian, Russian and other foreign wine-makers, architects, garden-developers, and other specialists (S. Megutnishvili, 2006, 32-33).

Management

The process of collecting the materials for Alexandre Chavchavadze House-Museum, such as exhibits, memorial objects, the documents of the Principal landlord, created a strong ground for future development of the museum.

The museum was opened on August 1, 1947. Initially all the exposition items were exhibited in one room. However, in 1953 another room was assigned to the museum due to the enlarging collections and growing number of materials in the museum fund.

By the year of 1955 the museum staff found the list of the Chavchavadze Family belongings, which helped a lot to find out about many personal items of the family.

Later, the extension of Alexandre Chavchavadze geneology was developed and therefore, addresses of the family members determined. This way, Al. Chavchavadze House-Museum exposition was enriched with a number of interesting items (pictures and geneology materials, piano that belonged to Chavchavadze, hand-script of "Omanian" from the 17th century).

Additionally, museum received number of items as gifts that further expanded the exposition (script of the first publication and music composition of Al. Chavchavadze – The ruler of the beauty, clock that belonged to Chavchavadze Family, the glass with Nino Chavchavadze's initials enscripted on it).

By the 70s of the 20th century, the museum occupied the first and second floors of the central part of Al. Chavchavadze palace. However, the exposition that was rapidly expanding with invaluable items required reexposition and expansion of the exposition space (I. Khmaladze, 1975, 69-79).

During the years that followed, Al. Chavchavadze House-Museum exposition was enriched with a number of interesting items collected in Tsinandali and Tbilisi and by the 70s of the 20th century, the museum occupied the first and second floors of the central part of Al. Chavchavadze palace. Howerer, the exposition that was rapidly expanding with invaluable items required re-exposition and expansion of the exposition space. At the beginning of the 21st century, the total area of the Al. Chavchavadze House-Museum was 1100 sq.m., 700 sq.m. out of which was occupied by the exposition, and 50 sq.m. devoted to the fund (I. Karaia, M. Burchuladze, L. Karaia, S. Tsiskarishvili, 2006, 147-148). The collection that is preserved at the museum, includes more than 4000 exposition items, and operated through three departments: fund, memorial and exposition.

Most part of the museum is occupied by memorial department, which is located on the second floor of the palace and holds 7 rooms and 2 halls.

Al. Chavchavadze House-Museum exposition includes Georgian, Russian and French furniture of the 18-19th centuries; ancient memorial candle holders; household items and personal belongings of the Chavchavadze Family, musical instruments (one piano and two grand pianos), luxurious dishes (Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Italian, Georgian, Russian); paintings, drawings, photos, family files, business documents, hand-scripts, epistolary and econographic archives, exposition items representing life and work of Al. Chavchavadze (I. Khmaladze, 1975, 72-79).

Throughout Al. Chavchavadze House-Museum existence there has been significant changes in the museum management structure. Therefore, the museum management acquired new management styles at different stages of development. The Museum has always been nationalized and managed by a director.

Initially, the Alexandre Chavchavadze House-Museum, the decorative garden, the wine factory, and the farm were under unified management. This style of management was quite effective to keep the complex well taken care off.

The management turned out less effective in 60-70s of 20th century, when the wine factory and the farm were separated form the museum complex and turned into an independent organizations. As a result, no unified management system existed any more, which made it impossible to effectively manage the cohesive cultural center (S. Megutnishvili, 2006, 26).

At the end of 19th century, the house museum and the garden were reunited under the same management system. In that period of the difficult economic and political time in the country, the only thing museum management managed successfully was preserving the wealth of the museum and continuing existence (G. Bogvelishvili, 1997, 106-108).

Throughout Al. Chavchavadze House-Museum existance, there has been significant changes in the museum management structure. Therefore, the museum management acquired new management styles at different stages of development.

Nowadays, museum is still nationalized. And it has been leased by "Silk Road Group" for coming 49 years. This company will undertake the reconstruction works of the property. In addition to developing some new constructions, its main purpose is to preserve the most important historic features.

4. Open Gallery

In the frames of this reconstruction works and based on research of this historic and photo materials, the dinning and guest rooms were reconstructed in the south part of the museum (#2, #3), which create a very characteristic, precious and at the same time humble atmosphere of that time when the Chavchavadze family lived. This atmosphere inspires feeling of being home and bonds them with those who used to live in this palace.

The rooms in the north (#5, #6 and #7) were transformed into the exhibition spaces, where the Chavchavadze family belongings are exhibited. Here the visitor has a chance to travel into the past, learn about the historic events about the paradise of the Chavchavadze, find out about the personalities of the Chavchavadze Family and recognize the basis of their well-being.

Other smaller rooms in the museum have been transformed into exhibition spaces as well, where the accomplishments of the Chavchavadze Family that are specifically linked to Georgia will be demonstrated.

There is a guide room, small souvenir shop, café and cellar for wine tasting on the first floor of the museum.

Perspectives

The museum has long term development plan, which throgh the targeted management implies targeting all museum resources towards preserving Georgian cultural heritage and ensuring that future generations get this extremely valuable heritage.

Under this long term development plan, the museum management first of all plans to develop the infrastructure of the House-Museum, the garden and the wine factory; consequently achieing a featured, convenient, and cosy atmosphere that the visitors can enjoy in every part of the complex.

Important part of the long term development plan is dedicated to the reconstruction of the garden, which implies maintaining the initial Regel style and mostly preserving the original plan of the garden. Some new aspects are also being considered, which will support implementation of the new technologies. The park is aspired to consequently become one of the most important and attractive signtseeing places, which can accommodate large number of guests and on the other hand each of those guests can enjoy cosy and elegant atmosphere.

5. Wine Cellar

In the renewal of the wine factory and cellar, other than its featured architectural reconstruction, the specific aspects as transforming this wine factory into high profile cultural and social center are considered. Everyone who shows interest will be able to on-serve the wine making process of Georgian wine that is unique and traditional. Additionally, they will be able to learn about the wine making history in Georgia through the temporary exhibitions. Combination of different wine with food will also be thought lectures and seminars. Persons interested in wine making and tasting can enjoy the restaurant, wine production company and wine shop.

Additionally, the entrance into the wine cellar will also be renewed. Because of the colossal size of this space allows it to accommodate various kinds of private events including wedding, receptions and anniversaries.

The cellar will also accommodate the meeting rooms, administrative and public relations offices, spaces dedicated to the educational purposes and technical rooms, storage, security room, media room, as well as general social space and restrooms.

The long term development plan also emphasized the role of public relations in the management of the museum. Therefore, it is of vital importance to establish the visitor center at the museum, which will serve as a first contact point of the visitor to the museum. The visitors will receive guidance and information about the role of Tsinandali through historic materials (maps, brochures and event timeline). Additionally, the visitors can enjoy an orientational mov-

ie. The purpose of this short movie is to provide the guidance through historic reality and the life of the Chavchavadze Family, as well as emphasize the most important stages of the history of the Chavchavadze property.

Further plans include building a café in this garden, evening entertainment center, which will accommodate five stages for live performances, as well as the rooms for artisans with their own exhibition halls (www.nplg.gov.ge/chavchavadze/alexandrechav.html).

Nowadays, the changes in the management of Al. Chavchavadze House-Museum promise to transform the museum complex into astonishing, convenient and inspirational sightseeing place for any type of visitor.

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HERITAGE PRESERVATION

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THE EROSION OF THE CARBONATIC EXTERNAL WALLS OF THE CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN IN MARTVILI (SAMEGRELO REGION, REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA) BY ENDOLITHIC ORGANISMS: PRELIMINARY REPORT

Abstract

The biodeterioration phenomenon of the outside walls of the Church of the Virgin in Martvili has been studied using a floristic and ecological approach. The problem is particularly relevant in the cases of the northern, southern and eastern exposures, completely sparing the western wall, and preferring areas not shaded from sunlight and without incident rainfall. The biodeterioration also shows some peculiarities in the way colonization takes place; in addition, different stages can be detected, suggesting an "in progress" phenomenon. Firstly, whitish to blackish spots can be observed on the stone, indicating where the colonization has started; then perforations all along the perimeter of an almost circular area appear, which end, in the third stage, with the detaching of the scale in the middle of the circular area. After this, the process starts over again, burrowing deeper into the stone. These biological colonizations were studied through optical, light-transmitted and SEM microscopy, and species have been determined through morphological and molecular approaches.

Observing fresh samples with optical microscopy has permitted investigators to associate the diffuse growths of green and orange patinas due to algae (Trentepohliaceae) and cyanobacteria (Chroococcales) and meristematic fungi. The presence of a thin continuous green layer under the surface of astone fragment indicated the presence of the euendolithic organisms. The use of thin polished section and PAS stain techniques has helped in understanding the bio-

logical origin of the deterioration phenomena, the organisms' three-dimensional penetration and their potential destructive mechanical action. Ecological and environmental data have been also collected and analysed in order to highlight the macro- and micro-climatic parameters which have favored the organisms' establishment.

Keywords: stone conservation, endolithic microorganisms, biodeterioration, cyanobacteria, meristematic fungi

Introduction

The biodeterioration of stone is a not negligible phenomenon, even if its relevance is often underestimated and sometimes confused with other weathering processes (Th. Warscheid & J. Braams, 2000).

The susceptibility of different stones to deterioration is influenced by their chemical nature, their physical structure and geological origin, in addition to other environmental factors. In particular the porosity and roughness of a stone's surface are also greatly relevant for the growth of organisms (C. Urzì et al., 1994; G. Caneva et al., 2009a).

The phenomenology and the growth forms of biodeteriogens vary a lot and in certain environmental conditions the presence of endolithic microorganisms (mainly cyanobacteria and fungi) is the most widely diffused cause of alteration of stone. Usually the colonization of microorganisms gives rise to discoloration of stone to grey-black, more or less enhanced, and creates evident damage due to the formation of micro-holes resulting from the solubilization of the substrata (G. Caneva et al., 2008).

In highly xeric conditions, such as those of walls of monuments not directly receiving an input of water, the endolithic environment has many advantages (water retention is greater, radiation from the sun lesser and not limiting for phototrophs and, to a certain degree, the action of wind is also limited), and therefore represents an environmental niche for many microorganisms (S. Golubic et al, 1981; A. Danin & J. Garty, 1983; W. Pohl, J. Schneider, 2002).

Within a monuments conservation project, funded by the Getty Foundation and implemented by the Georgian Arts and Culture Center, we had the opportunity to investigate various biodeterioration processes occurring on Georgian monuments, specifically mural paintings and natural stone materials. A

very relevant case was the conservation of frescoes in the western porch of Martvili church, which was the object of a previous study (G. Caneva et al., 2009).

Moreover, on that occasion, we had the opportunity to observe that the external part of stone cladding suffers from different physico-chemical and biological problems.

In particular, some façades of the church, and especially of the tower, show biodeterioration problems due to the growth of lichens, algae and cyanobacteria. Their presence seems linked to the effects of incident rainfall and differential wetting in the various exposures.

In other areas the soft limestone appears to be very highly degraded, with severe cracking, splintering and detachments, similar in shape to those of macropits arising from an endolithic growth.

The aim of this study is therefore to offer a first contribution to knowledge of this weathering process in order to contribute to the conservation of this monument, and to add new data to the understanding of the phenomenon of endolithic colonization.

Study area

The Church of the Virgin in Martvili (7th-19th centuries) is one of the most significant monuments in Samegrelo (Western Georgia), and has been the see of the Episcopal Chair of the Georgian Orthodox Church from its origin (10th century). It is located 288 m above sea level on a hill south the town of Martvili. The grounds of the church are flat and enclosed by stone walls, but some phenomena of water infiltration from the ground occurred in the past, which have been solved in the recent conservation intervention.

Different construction phases of the churches and restoration activities are reported in documents, but some difficulties emerge in stating exact dates, especially for conservation intervention carried out in the past centuries.

The climate of the Martvili area is only partially influenced by that of the Black Sea coast, where high humidity and heavy precipitation give rise to subtropical climate features; the macrobioclimate is temperate-boreal and the bioclimate is oceanic- semicontinental, with superior thermo-moderated termicity index and inferior humid ombrothermic index.

The average precipitation (from 2001 to 2005) shows a total of 1024.8 mm and is characterized by a quite homogenous distribution, with an increase during summer (300.1 mm), with average values in autumn of (278.9 mm) and in spring (291.1 mm), and a reduction in winter (154.7 mm) (G. Caneva et al., 2009b).

Fig. 1 - The entrance of the church is via the west door the western porch

Methods

The pitting phenomena and the biological colonizations were studied observing the phenomenology and their distribution in the field, and later through the collection small samples close to the pits areas. Polished cross sections were prepared and stained with Periodic Acid Schiff (PAS), according to UNI 10922 and UNI 10923 (2001). Sections were observed with a Leitz Orthoplan microscope and digital photographs were taken with Leica DC300 camera. Selected specimens were observed with a SEM (Philips SEM 505). Petrographical analysis were also carried out with a gas pycnometer (ACCU Pyc 1340) and a Quantachrome mercury porosimeter, in order to define the density and porosity of the stone.

The identification of species has been carried out following morphological investigation and, with regards to cyanobacterial systematic, also with molecular approaches. For this aim two different isolating methods were tested at the department of Botany of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Czech Republic (RN Dr. J. Kastòvsky). These were the UltraClean TM Microbial DNA Isolation Kit protocol and an improved method based on xanthogenate-SDS nucleic acid isolation (XS) (D. Tillet & B.A. Neilan, 2000) (M. Yilmaz & E.J. Philips, 2009).

After revitalization in water, samples have been sown on enriched solid soil (Agar + BG-11 medium). Plates were grown at room temperature and non-stop light was provided from fluorescent lamps and after two months, the plates have been checked and isolated organisms sowed on solid enriched soil (Agar + BBM medium), obtaining pure strains. These have been left once again to grow under the same conditions as before waiting the biomasses to be sufficient in order to permit satisfactory molecular DNA isolation.

Results and Discussion

The fairly soft limestone constituting the main lithotype of the church's exterior stone cladding appeared very highly degraded in some areas, with diffuse pitting phenomena and detachments. The duration of the surfaces' exposure is probably variable, but certainly extends over several centuries. The limestone showed petrographical characteristics comparable with those reported in the literature with relatively high values of porosity.

We observed that the pitting phenomenon was particularly relevant, especially in the cases of northern, southern and eastern exposures, sparing completely the western wall. It also seemed to prefer areas not shaded from sunlight and not subjected to incident rainfall (different from the other biological colonization, forming ephilithic patinas on the surfaces).

Two main kinds of pits were observed: one characterized by microscopic holes (micro-pits) which join together forming larger micro-pits (Fig. 2); the second one characterized by circular spots, with detachment of the central scales (Fig. 3).

Figs. 2 and 3: The two main phenomenologies of pitting in the stone cladding of the Martvili church.

The first one seems to be a typical "pitting," with depressions in the rock surface that are at the maximum 1cm deep, with a diameter of relative higher magnitude. The average diameter and depth of the micropits inside each pit is 150μm, creating a sponge-like floor. Looking at the stone surface under magnification, the microorganisms can be seen lodged in the micro-canals and cavities, which were formed by themselves, dissolving the stone, forming thus the micro-pitting.

The second phenomenon appeared more frequent than first and it seemed to be more distributed on all the façades, except the one with western exposure. The pitting showed different stages of growth, suggesting an "in progress" phenomenon. Firstly, whitish to blackish spots on stone could be detected, indicating where the colonization had started; than we observed perforations all along the perimeter of an almost circular area ending, in the third stage, with the detaching of the scale in the middle of it. After this, the process seemed to start over again, burrowing deeper into the stone.

The microscopic observation of fresh samples of the detached scales permitted us to associate the diffuse growths of green and orange layers, on a scale's surfaces facing the inside of the walls, with algae (Trentepohliaceae) and cyanobacteria (Chroococcales). Often, the presence of meristematic fungi has also been detected (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 - Green colonies of coccoids algae, and cyanobacteria together with meristematic fungi.

Moreover, inside the lower layers of stone close to the pits, the observation of polished cross sections permitted frequently us to detect a thin continuous green layer at an average depth of about 2μm from the surface of the stone fragments, thus indicating the presence of the euendolithic organisms. This techniques and the use of PAS (Periodic Acid Schiff's reagent) stain techniques have helped in understanding the biological colonisation and its three-dimensional penetration and its potential destructive mechanical action (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 - Penetration of endolithic microrganisms detected through PAS (Periodic Acid Schiff's reagent) stain techniques.

When dealing with biodeterioration processes it can be observed that chasmoendolithic and crypto-endolithic organisms develop in the interior of stone, in cavities and fissures respectively, whether these are pre-existent or generated by the organisms themselves; in both instances, the increase in the biomass inside the stone results in pressure which in the end gives rise to a fracture corresponding to the colonized area, with consequent detachment of a scale of the material.

According to the literature, in these pitting phenomenologies, different microorganisms are associated, both photosynthetic (cyanobacteria, green algae, lichens) and chemoorganotrophs (fungi, especially meristematic ones) (L. Hoffman, 1989; A.A. Gorbushina et al., 1995; O. Salvadori, 2000). In relation to the detected species, the depth of penetration varies between a few tens to a few hundreds of microns. Cyanobacteria and green algae (both free and as photobionts) will generally reach depths of 100-300 μm, even though some filamentous species can in fact penetrate up to a depth of a few millimeters. Fungi as mycobionts can penetrate further, pushing themselves a few millimeters into the stone (Caneva, G. et al., 2009). The calcifying cyanobacteria play probably an important role, as they reprecipitate calcium as cal-

cium carbonate in the polysaccharidic sheaths and act as centers of nucleation for the neoformation of minerals (X. Ariño et al. 1997; P. Albertano, 2002).

Regarding the Martvili samples, at the moment we could not go further into details of the taxonomy of systematic groups identified through the morphological analysis. This is due to the difficulties in extracting DNA from environmental samples and the slow growth of these organisms under controlled conditions.

Moreover, we cannot now exclude the presence of a lichenic process to in certain kind of weathering processes, such in second kind of phenomenology, producing at the end macropits. In general, endolithic lichens, as well dissolving the stone through the penetration of the thallus, also cause grave damage to the substrate through the development of ascocarps (apothecia or perithecia). When they die, the holes remain on the surface of the stone (mesopitting), the diameter varying according to the species (C.K. Gehrmann, W.E.Krumbein, 1994; D. Wessels, L. Wessels, 1995). As it has already been observed on many monuments (for example the south front of Trajan's Column, or the lower section of the southern face of the Caestia Pyramid) the presence of macropitting is not negligible due to its recurrence and the amount of damage (G. Caneva, et al., 1992; 1994).

The taxonomic recurrence of Trentopohlia sp. confirms also the frequency of species of this genus as colonizer on the surfaces of monuments. In fact, these species have often been detected in Mediterranean, temperate and tropical countries, and their action in the weathering processes has also been proved. In the case of a study carried out on a Scottish castle built of sandstone, and colonized principally by Trentopohlia aurea, it was indeed demonstrated as it can contribute to the mechanical and to the chemical deterioration of stone through the production of lactic acid, which acts as a chelating agent, and the mobilizing of calcium ions (M.S. Jones, R.D. Wakefield, 2000).

Conclusions

- The pitting of the external walls is of biogenic origin, and to be connected to various kind of microrganisms, such as cyanobacteria, algae and meristematic fungi, not excluding, in some cases, also lichens.

- The biodeterioration processes on the Martvili church's external façades appear therefore relevant and complex and the potential damage not negligible, considering also the soft quality of the stone.

- In order to understand the ecological factors permitting the colonization of the various group of organisms, a systematic study has been undertaken, but some more specialized analyses are still in progress.

- Finally, the exact comprehension of the various phenomena and their ecological linkage (e.g., with incident rainfall/rising damp/isolation) will result in some preventive and/or conservative suggestions.

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PRESERVATION OF TBILISI HISTORIC DISTRICT, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE BETLEMI QUARTER REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Georgia Pilot Project. Donors: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Cultural Heritage Directorate of Norway

In 2001, the World Heritage Committee (WHC) recognised the "Outstanding Universal Value" of the Tbilisi Historic District, according the following criteria of the World Heritage Convention:

- "This historic town is a result of the meeting of different cultures, exhibiting an important interchange of values over a long period of time (ii);
- Tbilisi also bears an exceptional testimony to cultural traditions, which have found a concrete form in its urban fabric (iii);
- Thirdly, the characteristic courtyard buildings and their role in forming the urban fabric of Tbilisi represent an interesting architectural and urban development, which at the same time reflects a broad range of influences (iv);"

(ref: WHC – 01/CONF.207/INF.3)

Despite this, World Heritage Centre deferred nomination of Tbilisi Historic District for inclusion on the World Heritage List, with the following recomendations:

"subject to the establishment of adequate legal framework, management structures and guidelines for the rehabilitation and restoration of the nominated area"
(ref: WHC – 01/CONF.207/INF.3).

In the same year another Georgian site, Vardzia-Khertvisi Cultural Landscape, was deferred with the very similar recommendations.

Since 2001, many efforts have been undertaken to improve the state of conservation of Old Tbilisi. The list of international organisations that have contributed to these efforts is impressive: World Bank; Council of Europe; Open Society Georgia; World Heritage Centre, UNESCO; World Monuments Fund; International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM); ICOMOS; British Embassy, Tbilisi; Government of Germany, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GTZ); Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway (Riksantikvaren); Goethe Institute; British Council; etc. The invaluable support provided by these bodies would have proved more efficient if they had been more coordinated both on the international and local level.

A number of documents have been developed to support the implementation of the World Heritage Committee's recommendations:

- 2003: Detailed outline for Implementation of Management Plan, Tbilisi Historic District; ICOMOS Georgia, commissioned by World Heritage Centre's advisory body, ICCROM;
- 2004-2005: Tbilisi Project: Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation-based: Social Development; Department for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Georgia within the framework of the Council of Europe's Technical Assistance and Co-operation Program;
- 2006: Old Tbilisi Rehabilitation State Program Fund for Protection of Cultural Heritage of Georgia; commissioned by Tbilisi City Hall and Private Sector.

These were followed by series of administrative and institutional reforms aimed at the enhancement of the Old Tbilisi management system, some of which reforms responded to the recommendations provided in these documents. However, being fragmentary, these changes were far from reaching the overall goals.

In 2007, The Ministry of Culture, Cultural Heritage and Sport of Georgia commissioned joint work by The GeoGraphic Consultancy Centre and The Fund for Protection of the Cultural Heritage of Georgia. As a result, the Historic-Cultural Plan of Tbilisi Historic District (Safeguard Plan) was developed. It was intended

to serve as the basis for the regulation plan for the historic part of Tbilisi. However, the plan has not yet been adopted.

The setting up in 2007 of the Administration of Old Tbilisi Region by local authorities was a promising declaration and recognition of Old Tbilisi values. The city has launched large-scale rehabilitation works in the Historic District. This was the first intervention of this kind made by the local authorities in the last 25 years. Despite the quality of work and conservation standards being below the desired levels, this was nonetheless a welcome decision.

Various public and non-governmental bodies are complementing the efforts of the authorities. The Betlemi Quarter Revitalization Program is one such undertaking; it is managed by the nongovernmental organization known as ICOMOS Georgia. The aim of the program is to ensure community-based preservation and revitalization of one of Old Tbilisi's historic quarters. This pilot program was established within ICOMOS Georgia's Program – SAVE Old Tbilisi. This program has two major directions: public awareness activities through exhibitions, publications, appeals, etc., and the Betlemi Pilot Project.

The Betlemi Quarter is located within Old Tbilisi's medieval core, namely in Qvemo (Lower) Kala. The quarter's area is 2.4 ha and is distinguished by a concentration urban vernacular dwellings and religious buildings of high architectural value, including the Ateshgah (Fire Temple). The topography of the site has preconditioned the terrace planning of the quarter and the emergence of a multitude of street-stairs and supporting walls. The selection of the site as a project area was, among other factors, defined by the rude interventions made near the Betlemi Quarter in the late 1990s.

A continuing fund-raising program has been underway sine 2000, and donors to the program have included the World Monuments Fund (through the World Monuments Watch Program), Samuel H. Kress Foundation, UNESCO Cultural Heritage Division, and the Swiss Emergency Foundation. Over the last five years the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (through Cultural Heritage Directorate in Norway) has funded the project.

Phase 1 of the Program (1999-2000) envisaged the study and recording of the area. Based on the research that was conducted the "Betlemi Quarter Conservation Plan - Intervention Guidelines" was developed. The research analysis allowed analysts to construct a clear picture of the social character of the problems faced in the quarter and their implications for other Old Tbilisi protection plans.

The most important phase of the programme involved a multi-disciplinary revitalization planning process. Together with a sociologist, a lawyer, an urban planner and an economist, long-term project priorities were outlined for the Betlemi Quarter's development through conservation. Considering the Old City's management and institutional system, the community's active involvement was deemed essential. The quarter's residents were mobilized and a series of public awareness-raising campaigns was held. As a result, five non-registered House-Owners Unions were set up. Given the lack of trust in cooperative activities in post-Soviet communities, the process appeared to be difficult to handle. Nevertheless, together with these unions, ICOMOS Georgia and project experts established the Betlemi Quarter Development Union as a local management agency for the revitalization of the quarter.

This mechanism ensured transparency in decision-making. The agency's mandate is to ensure implementation of the Betlemi Quarter Revitalization Plan (2005-2010). It is organized in a way to enable local residents to take an active part in the planning, monitoring and implementation of the project. According the agency's statute, the local government (represented either by an institution or an official), may also be a member of the agency. The Betlemi
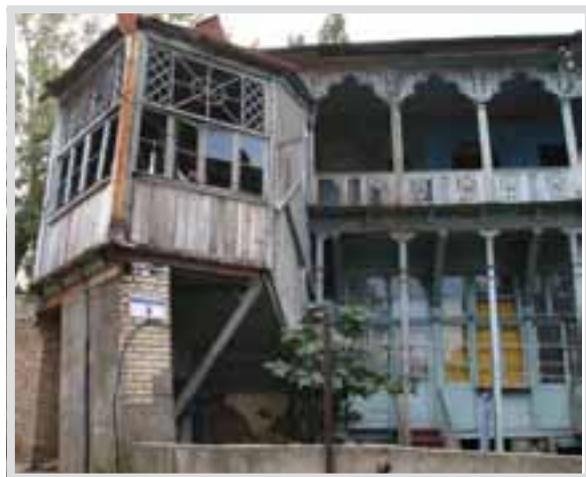
1. 3, Betlemi Street before restoration

2. 3, Betlemi Street after restoration

Project is a grassroots initiative and it is important that it finds its place in the institutional system of the Old Tbilisi rehabilitation management system.

This objective has not yet been achieved because the system is developing at a very slow pace, allowing no place for an entity like the Betlemi Quarter Development Union. However, this does not mean that the project does not cooperate with the Old Tbilisi Region administration. But cooperation is limited to the resolution of current problems (e.g., garbage removal, outdoor lighting, etc.) and is far from being systematic. The Betlemi Program is not integrated in the rehabilitation activity managed by the city and vice versa. It is not clear where and how city authorities plan rehabilitation projects in Old Tbilisi, and whether or not these measures are part of a common strategy. This problem is directly related to the recommendation of the WHC concerning the development of an adequate site management system.

An important step was the opening of the Betlemi Quarter Development Union office in the heart of the quarter, where an information center is also located. The project team has thus become closely integrated into the local community. The office serves as a meeting place for the local community and also provides specific information to tourists and guests of the Quarter.

One of the program's objectives is to develop a tourist route for the Betlemi Quarter. This sub-project aims at preparing conducive settings for creating job opportunities for local residents through enhancing the Betlemi's Quarter's tourism potential. A Georgian-English leaflet, The Betlemi Quarter Heritage Walk, has been produced; a web-page has been developed; and historical photos and archival materials have been exhibited in the Information Center. At present, information boards are being installed to facilitate a better interpretation of the site.

A draft plan for land use and building regulations for the Betlemi Quarter was prepared during the designing of a rehabilitation program. It was believed that these materials would be reflected in the overall Old Town Planning Regulation Plan. As mentioned above, the adoption of this plan has been delayed, which creates serious gaps in the urban preservation framework. Although, the document developed by our team lacks formal approval it is in some cases consulted by the Old Tbilisi Council in its process of decision making, which demonstrates good will on the part of the local authorities and often helps to avoid improper interventions within the Betlemi Quarter. Despite this, in many cases, it appeared impossible to prevent the collapse of one the most important buildings and illegal interventions on some listed buildings. Despite the fact that the Monitoring and Supervision Unit of the Old Tbilisi Region made a timely response to the violation and notified the City Inspection Service, the issue remains unresolved. It is clearly apparent that current procedures are ineffective. In addition, after establishing proper urban planning instruments, it is important to set up a relevant supervision and legal framework. In this light the recommenda-

3. Betlemi Quarter Information Centre

tion of the World Heritage Committee concerning the control of changes and improving the legal framework is noteworthy.

One of the program's most important components implied the restoration of listed historic houses. Due to limited resources, priority was given to emergency repairs, such as effective drainage and structural stabilization, as well as to restoration of house parts that face real threat of destruction, rather than full-scale restoration.

The most challenging case was the restoration of a hall and the balconies of 3, Betlemi Street, a house with a national listing. The restoration of the musharabi using the shebeke technique required skilled craftsmen and careful work. A number of problems had to be addressed to achieve high standards of restoration. With this aim, a series of studies, training sessions and workshops dedicated to timber conservation, traditional surface treatment and colors used on historic buildings was organized. The Norwegian Union of Craftsmen and the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research provided useful advice. It is extremely important to apply the skills and knowledge concerning the use of traditional building materials and techniques in large-scale rehabilitation of Old Tbilisi undertaken by the city. Considering a scale of the rehabilitation intervention in the Old Town, as well as a non-flexible budget and lack of tradition, it should not be surprising that the methodology of the work done fails to meet high standards of conservation, especially due to the use of non-traditional materials. It is important to take measures aimed at improving the methodology used in projects managed by the city. The integration of the expertise obtained within the framework of the Betlemi Quarter project would be highly beneficial. Regrettably, it remains a pilot initiative. Addressing this issue, the WHC's recommendation calls for the development of rehabilitation and restoration guidelines. Unless timely measures are taken in this regard, the positive efforts applied to rehabilitation of the Old Town may prove counter-effective. Apart from the use of non-traditional materials, the trend of "aging" new or contemporary structures is of particular concern.

The main objective of physical rehabilitation is the revitalization of a historic environment and infrastructure. In addition to restoring the Betlemi Quarter's street-stairs and the terrace of Betlemi church, a number of supporting walls and pedestrian passage-

ways were repaired and gardens were laid out, all of which the local community now maintain.

Apart from having scientific and cultural value, the Ateshgah (Zoroastrian Temple) has a significant potential for tourism developments as it adds a special identity to the entire quarter. The conservation of the site was methodologically and technically challenging. The site had been in very poor condition for a long time. As a result of conservation works carried out on the site, important archaeological information was uncovered, which proved further evidence to researchers for analyzing and dating the site. A protective roof was installed on the structure. It is to be noted that the complex restoration works at the

4. Ateshgah, interior conservation works

Ateshgah were fully implemented by local residents. The direct participation in the project gave these local residents an opportunity to acquire craftsmanship skills in conservation, which can be considered as one of the program's permanent achievements. Since the inception of the project, a large number of young people have acquired traditional building skills, and some of them are now employed as craftsmen. It is desirable to use these skills in the large-scale rehabilitation of Old Tbilisi.

Some of the planned subproject that failed to be implemented involved initiatives for the Betlemi Quarter's economic development, which envisaged raising funds so that some of the owners could start small family-run businesses through the reuse of their

an inevitable gentrification. The program's five-year management plan is coming to an end next year. It would be logical to shift emphasis from humanitarian to development initiatives. For this it is vital to attract the private sector. The Betlemi Quarter's gentrification, which is inevitable, will not be destructive if it is balanced. Hopefully, the work done within the Betlemi Quarter Revitalization Program, will contribute to this case.

In conclusion, we should note that nine years have passed since the deferral of inclusion of Tbilisi Historic district on the World Heritage list. The recommendations made by the WHC remain unfulfilled while their timely implementation is essential for the preservation of Old Tbilisi.

5. Ateshgah, interior after restoration

properties, i.e., they could open guest-houses, cafe and bakeries. A number of proposals have been developed. The plan was to issue part of the funds raised as grants, while the remaining part would be given as no-interest long-term loans to be repayable to the agency for further development. The postponement of this component seems to be justified given that specific skills are required. The only family-run café opened with a very small investment – a footpath leading to the property was repaired for the owner. The latter opened his café in a historic cellar offering a cozy atmosphere but limited services.

In addition to financial resources, owners need professional training. The project plans to find a partner organization with relevant experience since development projects are extremely important to ensure the viability of the Betlemi Quarter's rehabilitation process. It is essential to establish links between historic properties and the material well-being of their owners and to allow the local dwellers who wish to stay in the Quarter to remain in their homes and resist

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TIMOTESUBANI CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN: CONSERVATION CASE STUDY

Introduction and Historical Background

The legacy of King David the Builder is revered in Georgia as the father of the modern Georgian identity. By creating an alliance with the Byzantine Empire to the west, and uniting all the regions of Georgia, King David had set the stage for his great-granddaughter Queen Tamar's succeeding reign. Tamar, who is often referred to in historical texts as "King" Tamar, to symbolize her power, ushered in the Golden Age of Georgian history. Under Tamar's rule, the country reached its zenith of military, economic and cultural power from 1184-1213.

Testifying to the glory of her Georgia's strategic importance during the Middle Ages, are a handful of surviving Tamar-era churches with priceless, jewel-like frescoed interiors. The churches attest to the wealth, knowledge and dynamic cultural vibrancy Georgia enjoyed as an ally of the Byzantine Empire at the geographic confluence of the Eastern and Western worlds; transversed by the Silk Road trading routes from Central Asia and the Frankish Crusaders of northern European route to Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Shortly after Queen Tamar's reign in 1236, Genghis Khan led the Mongol invasion that abruptly ended the flowering of Georgian culture in its Golden Age. Following a period of Mongol domination, Georgia then endured centuries of foreign invasions by Turks and Persians, followed by a long period of Russian influence culminating in Soviet annexation in the early 20th century.

One of the most significant churches to survive from the reign of Queen Tamar is the Virgin Church of Timotesubani located approximately three hours west of the capital, Tbilisi, in the rural Borjomi region of southern Georgia. (Photo 1) The church was built in 1200 A.D. on a rocky hillside in the secluded wooded landscape of Tori River valley above the village of Timotesubani.

Despite the centuries of foreign invasion, the disbanding of the Georgian Orthodox Church by the Soviet government and the subsequent years of neglect, the church has been able to retain its artistic and historic integrity. Originally, the interior was completely covered in a full fresco cycle. Today significant amounts of the fresco cycle remain depicting Archangels, Prophets, Saints, scenes chronicling the life of Christ, the Last Judgment, Heaven, Hell and the Apocalypse. (Photo 2 &3)

In December 2005, the Georgian Art and Culture Center (GACC) completed the Virgin Church of Timotesubani's five-year phased restoration project which included introducing site drainage for the unique topography, masonry and roofing repairs and replacement, and the complete documentation and conservation of the interior fresco cycle. The project was supported locally by The Ministry of Culture monuments Portection and Sports and the The Foundation for the Resque and preservation of Historical Monuments of Georgia and internationally by World Monuments Fund, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and Robert Wilson Challenge grant.

The Timotesubani restoration represents an excellent case study of a holistic site and building conservation- successfully bringing together multidisciplinary specialists including geotechnical and structural engineers, microbiologists, architects, art historians and fresco conservators.

GACC Conservation Methodology

1. Timotesubani Church of the Virgin, exterior, view from the south

2. Timotesubani Church of The Virgin, the pious thief, last judgment, western wall

The GACC responded in 2000 to the growing threat that the invaluable frescos of Timotesubani could be lost unless emergency action was taken. By the time their intervention began, more than a decade of neglect and lack of management at the church had passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The GACC's initial survey found that severe amounts of water infiltration from non-existent and inadequate site drainage were allowing water to saturate the foundation and lower walls. In addition to the water problems at the base of the building, was the discovery that over half of the roof area was leaking and allowing further water infiltration into the building. The water infiltration and lack of interior climate control had created an environment that was fluctuating between 70% to nearly 100% percent humidity. The high humidity had created an environment ripe for microbiological attack that had already advanced to critical stages in some areas. On the exterior, the

brick masonry exhibited deteriorated conditions such as mortar loss, and cracking. The rehabilitation works on the architectural structure, which followed the recommendations and action plan elaborated on the stage of diagnostic studies aimed at the elimination of the causative effects, such as drainage and structural problems. After that, GACC's attention focused on the protection and emergency treatment of the frescos.

While the majority of observed patterns of fresco deterioration were typical, characterized by detachment and loss of the painted layer, crystallized salts and efflorescence, they were also affected by an unusual striking condition that took the form of a consistent, strong pink discoloration. The discoloration was believed to be microbiological attack of an unknown origin that had affected the majority of the painted surfaces in the church. The GACC had also encountered a pink discoloration during the restoration of the frescos of Kintvisi, another church built during the reign of Queen Tamar located approximately 100 kilometers away. Prior to the GACC's fresco conservation efforts, this condition was undocumented in Georgia.

The urgency for immediate action prompted the GACC to create a strategy for emergency conservation treatment. To fully understand the causes and nature of deterioration, the first step of the strategy was to implement a series of detailed diagnostic studies of the frescos, the interior climatic conditions, the exterior building envelope and site drainage. To undertake the diagnostic studies, the GACC reconvened a multidisciplinary team of local and international specialists. In addition to the local Georgian architects, engineers and art historians; the international team included Ipplolito Massari, a leading Italian microbiologist and humidity consultant; with Mark Gittins and Sabina Vedovello specializing in painting and fresco conservation from Rome's Conservazione Beni Culturali (CBC).

Diagnostic Studies of Environmental Conditions

Prior to determining the fresco conservation methodology, the first and most pressing task for the team of local architects, engineers and geologists at the onset of the investigative phase in late 2000, was to determine the sources and extant of humidity that was creating the deleterious environment and fostering the microbiological attack of the frescos. With the consultation of Ippolito Massari, a series of diagnostic

studies were designed to evaluate the interior climatic conditions.

The first study employed the use of six termopsychometers used to measure temperature and relative humidity on the interior and exterior of the church. The purpose of the study was to determine the extant of interior humidity and its relationship to exterior environmental conditions. The instruments were set to measure and record temperature and humidity changes over a four day period. The results revealed alarmingly high humidity levels in the church that ranged between 83% and 94%. The measurements were actually consistently higher than the measurements taken outside the building on the north wall. For example, on September 26th the outside humidity was measured at 76.8% and while the interior humidity ranged from 90.6-94%.

The study illustrated that while exterior precipitation was effecting the interior, the higher interior humidity levels also indicated that the building was maintaining its own microclimate due to the absorption of water at the foundation and walls from snow, rain, water run-off and improper and non-existent site drainage. Essentially, the building's physical and site dynamics made it incapable of "drying out" and lowering humidity levels after saturation.

For the second study, samples were taken from the mortar at the wall surfaces in two areas referred to as the "lower horizon" (1'-0" to 3'-0" feet from the ground) and "upper horizon" (5'-6" to 10'-0" feet from the ground.) The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship of surface humidity to rising damp and capillary action from the foundation masonry. The samples were tested for the water content

4. Timotesubani Church of the Virgin, conservation works on murals, consolidation of the paint layer

and presence of salts such as nitrates, chlorides and sulfates. The water content in lower horizon samples were found to be on an average 2 to 2.5 times higher than the upper horizon. In addition, salt levels were consistently higher in the lower horizon which is also indicative of water traveling hydroscopically into foundation and walls.

Following surface sampling, the final study was designed to determine the depth of dampness and the extension of salts into the walls. To perform the study, twenty mortar cores were taken from the different locations in the lower and upper horizon. The cores revealed that dampness the lower horizon was 2.3 times higher than samples taken from the upper horizon. Salts were found in comparative levels between the lower and upper horizon. The next step of the core study was to compare the results of the surface to core samples where they were taken at the same location. The test indicated that the comparative levels of dampness were higher within the wall than on the surface by 23-25%.

This phenomenon of the walls "holding" water also supports the theory of the sustained microclimate within the church that was unable to lower humidity levels due to the masonry's ability to absorb and retain moisture. Massari also concluded that dampness on the surface could be attributed to hygroscopic water while the dampness in the walls could be attributed to capillary action.

3. Timotesubani Church of the Virgin, the soaring angel holding the medallion of the evangelists Mathew, pendentive.

Fresco Testing and Survey

At the same time the humidity studies were on-going, Gittins and Vedovello of CBC arrived on site to consult with Betania's specialists on the study and testing of the physical composition of the frescos. In conjunction with the diagnostic testing of the frescos, local art historians focused on surveying, documenting and recording all existing fresco conditions such as flaking of the painted layer and plaster detachment on scaled drawings.

5. Timotesubani Church of the Virgin, conservation works on murals, treatment of biodeterioration with biocide.

Before the testing and surveying began, the GACC first researched the history of the fresco conservation at Timotesubani in the archives of the Main Board of Heritage Protection to review the history of conservation treatments at the site. One interesting study the GACC team performed with archival material is a comparison of measurements of the painted surfaces form 1970 under the direction of Privalova to current conditions. It was found that the painted surfaces did not have any significant changes or loses since the last intervention and still covered an area of approximately 1240 square meters (13,350 sq ft).

The Timotesubani frescos were executed on a two-layer plaster in the "Secco" or dry technique where the painted later is applied to a dry plaster surface. The first layer, approximately 3-7 mm., is applied directly on the masonry substrate and is identical to the brick pointing mortar in the substrate below composed of lime and sand. The surface layer, 2-5 mm., is a finer version of the lime and sand mortar with the addition of a small amount of clay.

The paint was tempera mixed on site with local pigments in a casein binder. The Timotesubani fresco pigments were derived from lead to create white; coal for black; local clays to create red, green and yellow tones; vinegar-treated copper created emerald green; and the Cinnabar stone found near the city of Racha in the northern mountains of Georgia created a ruby red pigment. Ultramarine blue created from lapis lazuli is the only pigment used at Timotesubani that was derived from a source outside Georgia. According to Nana Kuprashvili, who performed the paint analysis on behalf Betania, the lapis came from the Badagshan, Afghanistan and would have traveled though Europe to Georgia in the early thirteenth century at time of the frescos execution. It is said that at the time, lapis lazuli was more valuable than gold.

Microbiological samples of the pink colored fungus revealed that is was a type of aerobic bacteria. What the samples do not explain, is why many of the surviving Tamar-era churches in Georgia have been affected or what the impetus was for this particular microbiological growth. Different theories have emerged to try to explain the phenomena of the Micrococcus Roseus attack from different chemical and physical standpoints.

One theory focuses on the last conservation effort where eggs were brushed over the painted surfaces as a consolidant treatment. The application of the egg consolidant combined with the relatively high humidity of the interior over time could have potentially created an environment for attack. Another theory that has been considered, but not scientifically studied, focuses on local Georgian pilgrims who travel on religious holidays to the various regional churches in succession thus creating an opportunity for the spores to travel from church to church, where the lack of climatic control subsequently fostered their growth. This theory

would also explain the widespread attack among different churches during the same time frame.

Fresco Conservation Methodology

In 2002, following the comprehensive diagnostic testing and study, the second phase of work at Timotesubani began. The first and most pressing objective was to make the building water-tight while allowing proper ventilation to protect and stabilize interior conditions. "The Rehabilitation of the Architectural Structure of the Church of the Virgin in Timotesubani" was implemented to install proper site drainage, roofing repairs and masonry reconstruction to the foundation and walls with historically appropriate materials.

New wooden windows and glazing were installed and the original remaining terra cotta window surrounds at the drum were conserved and reinstalled with the addition of iron latticework to improve the church's ventilation in addition to acting as bird-proofing measure. The installation of proper windows and ventilation were the final steps to the stabilization the micro-climate of the interior which set the stage for the most vital phase of the restoration work, the fresco conservation, which began in 2004.

The fresco conservation was designed as an emergency conservation intervention to stabilize the fresco's plaster and conserve the painted layer while eliminating the physical and environmental conditions that were exacerbating the cycle of deterioration, including the inappropriate materials introduced on previous conservation efforts and the "Micrococcus Roseus" microbiological attack. To mobilize the fresco conservation, local consulting engineers lead by George Khurtsilava, designed and erected a full wooden interior scaffold system making all the painted surfaces completely accessible up to the ceiling of the five-story drum. Gittins and Vedovello then specified the emergency conservation treatment program and overcame the challenge of locally available conservation-grade materials by arranging for their shipment from Italy and elsewhere in Europe.

The first priority was the stabilization of the plaster layer where it had become detached from the brick masonry substrate. To repair the mechanical connection of the plaster to the masonry, hand drills were used to carefully create small 2 mm holes through the plaster layer into the cavity beyond. A desalinated hydraulic lime grout was then injected through the

holes, filling the cavity between the back of the plaster layer and brick substrate.

The injected grout migrated throughout the voids of the cavity and upon curing, re-established the mechanical connection between the plaster and masonry. Gittins and CBC recommended a special restoration grout, "Italcement Ledan TB1," which is manufactured to the specification of the Instituto Centrale per il Restauro in Rome and commercially available in Italy and specially shipped to Georgia for the project. The grout was designed with a low salt content and strength compatible with the church's historic mortars, as opposed to gypsum or cement mortars that had proved incompatible with original fabric as seen in the plaster borders.

After the plaster layer had been stabilized, attention turned to the removal of the gypsum and cement borders that had been applied at the exposed edges of the plaster during the last restoration campaign. While the intention of the border repairs was to consolidate the fragile fresco edges, the chemical composition of the gypsum and cement mortar proved incompatible with the original materials in the church. The high salt content of the repair products had reacted with the church's high humidity and caused the salts in the gypsum to leach out and form large salt deposits on the fresco's painted layer over time.

The delicate task of removing the gypsum and cement necessitated hand tools such as chisels and scalpels so as to mechanically remove the incompatible materials without removing or disturbing the frescos themselves. The borders were then replaced with lime based mortar, also low in salt content to be compatible with the church's historic mortar and plaster.

Once the plaster layer and borders had been stabilized and conserved, the peeling and flaking painted layer was addressed. Due to the delicate condition of the painted layer, the first step was to use a small workable piece of translucent Japanese paper (6" x 6") placed on the surface and lightly brushed with a mixture of water and alcohol which allows the paper to lightly adhere while softening the paint and wetting the back of the fragile, detached painted layer in preparation for the application of the consolidant. (Photo 4) While the paper is still adhered to the surface, a consolidant is applied directly with a brush. Two different consolidants were employed on the project at CBC's recommendation; "Bresciani Acrylic

33" and "Rohm and Haas Primal B6o." Since both products were manufactured in Europe and unavailable in Georgia, CBC arranged to have them shipped to Timotesubani.

The consolidant was able to penetrate through the paper and migrate behind the painted layer against the plaster. With the painted layer saturated with the consolidant, the detached flakes and powdering conditions were delicately pressed back onto the plaster using damp cotton wool. Remarkably the Japanese paper was then peeled back and removed leaving the newly consolidated painted layer intact. The treated surface was then able to withstand a gentle cleaning to remove unabsorbed, excess consolidant and dust with damp cotton wool. Following a 24 hour drying and setting period, the area was revisited to remove excess unabsorbed consolidants which formed reflective deposits on the surface again with damp cotton and a weak acetone solution.

The final conservation challenge of the Timotesubani frescos was the "Micrococcus Roseus" microbiological damage. With the recommendation of the Instituto Centrale di Restauro, Gititns and the CBC specified "Acima Rocima 101," a broad spectrum microbiologic biocide to be applied as a spray to the entire interior surface area-frescos and exposed masonry included. The biocide treatment was performed as two full applications scheduled ten days apart. The scaffolding was also treated to prevent a reoccurrence of attack prior to its removal from the church and to prevent any migration of the bacteria out of the church on the scaffolding itself. (Photo 5)

Before undertaking the job of dismantling the scaffolding, the conservation team performed a final cleaning of surface areas with damp sponges, including those that had been addressed during treatment of the painted layer, to remove dust and excess biocide.

In 2006, the Timotesubani restoration was honored by the prestigious Europa Nostra Award. The restoration award is given annually by the European Union on a competitive basis within its member countries. The Timotesubani restoration was honored even though Georgia is not yet a member in the EU, on the basis of its exceptional restoration standards and its highly successful collaboration by both an international and interdisciplinary team.

Endnotes

The Timotesubani restoration is now informing the author's on-going work as the consulting Restoration Project Manager of the Brick House (circa 1949) at the National Trust Philip Johnson's Glass House complex in New Canaan, Connecticut in the United States. Although the site is one of America's foremost Modernist properties, the site's dynamics and conservation problems are remarkably similar to Timotesubani. The case study of Timotesubani's restoration and conservation methodology is currently being applied the Brick House's investigation and restoration plan. Brick House and site restoration is expected to begin in late 2010 and be completed in 2011. For project updates please see http://philipjohnsonglasshouse.org/preservationatwork/brickhouse)

Photos

Labeled #1- #5 all supplied by WMF in NYC from submitted files by the GACC documenting the course of the project.

Nana Kuprashvili
Tbilisi State Academy of Art, Georgia

ART, SCIENCE OR CRAFT? PROBLEMS OF HERITAGE CONSERVATION IN POST-SOVIET GEORGIA

Since the late 1990s, methodological problems in cultural heritage protection and conservation in Georgia have acquired special urgency. From this time onward a wide range of mistakes made in and after the 1960s during extensive restoration and repair works on Georgia's immovable and movable heritage properties have come to light.

In many cases, no preliminary studies were made of the various monuments to be restored. No assessment of the degree of and type of damage; no diagnostics; no comprehensive examination of a monument's materials; no determination of the compatibility of materials to be used in restoration work; no documentation prior to and during the work – none of the above were undertaken or compiled.

Work undertaken without any theoretical basis, without any study of the various aspects of the monuments and conservation materials, and without relevant documentation, produced negative results. In the majority of restored monuments the process of deterioration was considerably accelerated and aggravated. By the late 1990s, it had become absolutely clear that there were problems common to all restored immovable properties in Georgia. These included violations of the temperature regime, damp, efflorescence, various types of severe biological damage, disregard of necessary protective measures, and improperly selected conservation materials. These problems considerably accelerated the process of biological damage and corrosion in the most significant immovable monuments and also in museum exhibits – easel paintings, metalwork, glass, etc.

The large-scale interventions referenced above coincided with the period, during which the entire international heritage preservation community had undertaken essential changes in the approach to conservation. As a result of the continuing collaboration of experts in various fields and institutions, the significance of fundamental studies and preventive mea-sures in practical work was highlighted and the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to heritage preservation was clearly outlined. Due to the political situation, Georgia was completely cut off from the Western world and deprived of the possibility to participate in the process of developing modern preservation and conservation standards. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the process was left haphazard – totally unorganized.

In the 1990s, as a result of this alarming situation,

1. Chule, Mural Painting, 13th-14th centuries, before the conservation

which was very evident to Georgian art historians, collaboration with the leading European scholarly centers and heritage preservation experts became a top priority. The "Betania" Center for Technical Studies of Painting was established. The "Georgian Arts and Culture Center," in collaboration with the "Betania" Center's members and with methodological supervision from Italian experts, started implementation of diagnostic-research projects in order to save the most significant monuments of medieval Georgian mural

2. Chule, Mural Painting, 13th-14th centuries, after the conservation

through pilot project (such as "The Multidisciplinary Study and Conservation Plan of Chazhashi Historic Settlement (a World Heritage site), in collaboration with the Getty Grant Programme; "Detailed Outline for the Implementation of Tbilisi Historic District Management Plan" in collaboration with ICCROM and the World Heritage Centre; "Betlemi Quarter Revitalization Program", in collaboration with the UNESCO Cultural Heritage Division and Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage).

Thanks to all the above-mentioned efforts, the scope of problems in the heritage preservation field in Georgia has been identified. It has also been made clear that there was serious deficiency in fundamental interdisciplinary knowledge and a significant lack of qualified professionals of conservation in Georgia.

At Tbilisi State Academy of Arts – the only higher educational institution in Georgia offering any courses in the field of conservation – restoration was merely a

3. The process of icon conservation, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, The Faculty of Conservation, History and Theory of Arts

painting (Diagnostic studies, rehabilitation of architectural structures and conservation of the frescos at Kintsvisi Church of St. Nicholas, (1996-2000); at Timotesubani Church of the Virgin, (2000-2006); at the narthex and chapels in Gelati Church of the Virgin, (2003-2004); and at Martvili Church of the Virgin (2003-2008).

Since 1995 the Georgian National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) has been actively involved in the protection of Georgia's architectural and urban heritage. The Georgian National Committee (ICOMOS Georgia) is collaborating in the expansion of methodological standards as well as the dissemination of these standards in Georgia and their integration in practice

branch of the Faculties of Painting and Architecture, actually being only a supplement. The educational program scarcely considered the specifics components of the field and links with science, and was therefore limited to craftsmanship training.

Awareness of these acute problems led to the establishment of the Faculty of Restoration, Art History

and Theory at Tbilisi State Academy of Arts at the end of 2004.

The goal of the Faculty is to provide a scientific basis for heritage conservation, and a number of steps have been made in this direction. The principles of teaching architecture and painting conservation were basically changed, new areas – metal, glass and ceramic conservation, non-existent up to now – were established. Finalization of the new curriculum, com-

4. Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, the Faculty of Conservation, History and Theory of Arts, Diagnostic Laboratory

patible with the educational programs of the leading European universities and the working principles of international heritage protection organizations, is underway.

Introduction of the new, integrated approach to heritage properties in Georgia is preconditioned by the co-existence of two separate areas in the faculty; these are (1) conservation, and (2) art history and theory. In the educational program, a special place is given to the art historical, technological and diagnostic study of heritage property, as well as study of conservation materials, preventive measures, conservation theory, philosophy and legislation fundamentals, and professional ethics. Step by step, the school is being equipped with all necessary facilities and resources – a modern specialized library, information systems and

a basic diagnostic-research laboratory. It should be noted that the latter is unique in Georgia. Experts of the leading foreign centers participate in the activities of the Faculty, and collaborate in the development of the curriculum, lectures, and seminars.

5. The lecture of UK restorer - Helen Glanville , Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, The Faculty of Conservation, History and Theory of Arts

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND® PROJECTS IN GEORGIA

1. Pitareti Monastic Complex, Tetritskaro Ditsrict, Georgia. (13th C.) List of 100 Most Endangered Sites (1996-97)

Project 1. – Emergency Stabilization of the Main Church of the Virgin (1216-1222), Pitareti Monastic Complex

Project covered reinforcement of the foundation and the dome drum, removal of the vegetation from the masonry, treatment of masonry stones, infill of cracks, repair of the hand-hewn stone slab roof. For the first time in the recent conservation practice in Georgia, scientifically developed lime mortars and grout were specified for the masonry repairs instead of inflexible Portland cement-rich mortars.

Funded by: Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the World Monuments Watch Programme. 1997

Project 2. – Restoration Plan for the Protection of the Historic Environs, Landscape and Rural Settlement of Pitareti and Conservation of the Porch-Bell-tower of Pitareti Monastic Complex

Project covered stabilization of the structural framework of the severely damaged bell-tower, treatment of the wall masonry, infill of cracks.

Funded by: World Monuments Fund®, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation European Preservation Program. 1998.

Implementation – ICOMOS Georgia

M. Bochoidze, G. Khurtsilava, L.Bokuchava

2. Tbilisi Historic District; 6th c. AD - Present
List of 100 Most Endangered Sites (1998-99); (2000); (2002)

Project 1. – Revitalisation of Betlemi Group of Buildings (Tbilisi Historic District)

Pilot Project in Betlemi Quarter comprised data collection: a sociological survey, analysis of the urban fabric and individual buildings of cultural value, preliminary engineering, geological surveys, graphical and photographic documentation. The works undertaken with the support of the World Monuments Fund ensured further adequate planning of actions and launching of the long-term Programme for the Revitalization of Betlemi Quarter, which is still ongoing.

Funded by: World Monuments Watch Programme, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation European Preservation Programme. 1999-2000

Project 2. – Emergency Response for Betlemi Group of Buildings

On 25 April 2002, a strong earthquake further aggravated condition of already damaged historic urban fabric of Tbilisi Historic District. Funds awarded were used for varied scale emergency stabilization works on 13 historic buildings within Betlemi Quarter.

Funding: World Monuments Fund®, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. 2002

Implementation – ICOMOS Georgia, Save Old Tbilisi Programme

M.Bochoidze, N. Tsintsabadze, M. Kenia, M. Suramelashvili, G. Chanukvadze, M. Tumanishvili, E. Makhatelashvili, G. Gugeshashvili, N.Kordzakhia, N. Shatberashvili

3. Ikorta Church of the Archangel, 1172, Zemo Arsevi Village, Georgia
List of 100 Most Endangered Sites
(2000); (2002)
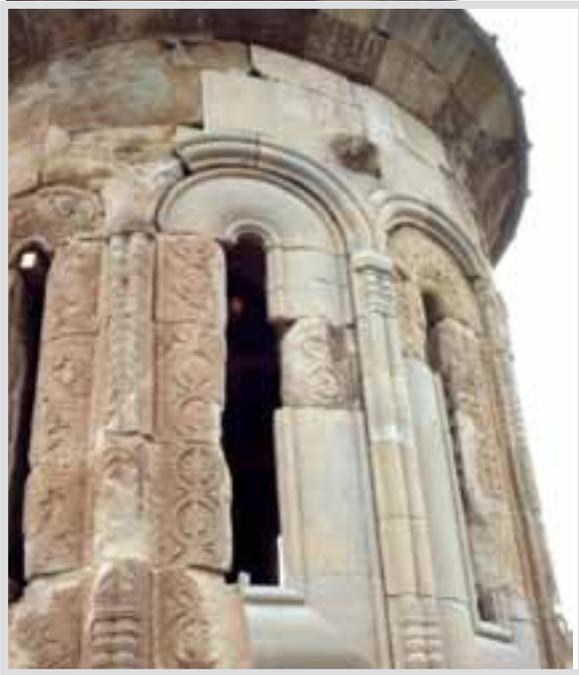
Project – Restoration-stabilisation of the Ikorta Church dome

Project focused on the restoration-stabilisation of the dome, partially collapsed due to the earthquake. Undertaken works had eliminated the danger of further damage and, accordingly, destruction of the site.
Funding: World Monuments Watch Programme, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. 2001-2003
Implementation – ICOMOS Georgia
M. Bochoidze, I. Elizbarashvili, G. Chanukvadze, G. Khurtsilava, L. Bokuchava

4. Tbilisi Synagogue – D. Baazov Museum of Ethnography and History of Jews of Georgia, 1914

Project 1. Emergency Conservation of Tbilisi Synagogue

Project comprised data collection: engineering and art historical studies, creation of graphical and photographic documentation, and emergency response – repair of the roof.

Funding: World Monuments Fund® Jewish Heritage Grant Program. 2003

Project 2. – Elaboration of the Rehabilitation Plan and Minor Physical Stabilization Works

Project comprised elaboration of: Architectural Restoration Plan, Structural Stabilisation Plan, Site Adaptive Reuse Plan and Engineering Infrastructure Development Plan. Besides minor physical stabilisation activities covered cleaning of the semi-basement from late brick and wooden partitions and accumulated waste, removal of the outdated, non-functioning engineering infrastructure damaging the site, arrangement of the temporary fencing around the site, infill of the most dangerous perforating cracks, etc.
Funding: World Monuments Fund® Jewish Heritage Grant Program. 2004-2005
Implementation – ICOMOS Georgia
M. Bochoidze, N. Tsintsabadze, G.Chanishvili, E. Makhatelashvili, G. Gugeshashvili, L. Bokuchava, G. Chanukvadze

5. Bodbe Cathedral
Qedeli, Signakhi Region, 4th-19th c AD
List of 100 Most Endangered Sites
2003-2005

The Bodbe Cathedral encloses the grave of St Nino. Her preaching and missionary work in Georgia resulted in proclaiming Christianity the state religion in the 30s of the 4th century and who has been consecrated Equal-to-the-apostles by the Georgian Church.

According to Georgian historical sources the first Christian king built in 4th century a church on the spot of St Nino's burial. That ancient building has not survived. The present church, comprising St Nino's tomb, belongs to the 9th century. The 19th century murals, the only examples showing transition from the Middle Ages to modern times, are also of interest.

Bodbe Cathedral has survived. A seventeen century wall running around three sides of the church threatens the building stability and spoils its actual proportions.

In 2002 Bodbe Cathedral was included in the Word Monuments Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites. After the inclusion, in 2003-2005, the Bank Republic (Georgia) funded the restoration project, which made the original parts visible.

6. Jvari (Holy Cross) Monastery Mtskheta, 545-605 AD
List of 100 Most Endangered Sites 2006
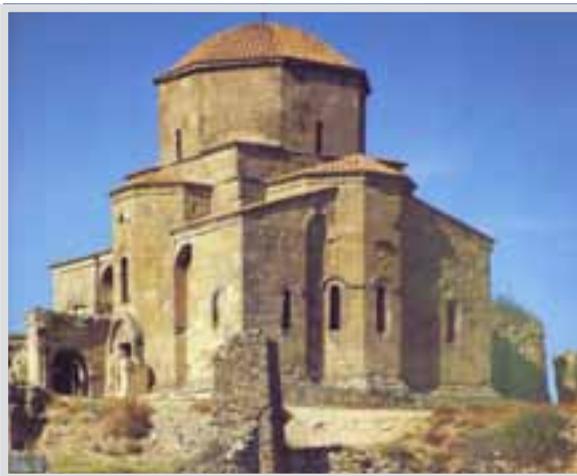
Jvari Monastery, one of the most important landmarks of Georgia medieval architecture, suffered badly during the last 32 years. Due to the acidity of the rain water and strong winds the erosion of the building stone was accelerated. Erosion significantly damaged the reliefs of the church. The small church of Jvari doesn't have a roof. Incorrect planning of the conservation works have endangered the authenticity of the Small Church of Jvari.

In 2007 the site received the financial support from the World Monuments Fund/Samuel H Kress Foundation through European Preservation Program. At this stage documentation and analysis of the present condition and conservation guidelines are completed.

Implementation: Society and Cultural Heritage (NGO), Georgia

7. Timotesubani Church of the Virgin 12th-13th centuries AD List of 100 Most Endangered Sites 2004
Europa Nostra Award 2006

Project 1. Diagnostic studies and determination of conservation needs of the Church of The Virgin in Timotesubani

Project comprised the details multi diagnostic studies of the murals, humidity and engineering, studies of architectural structure and geological investigation of the terrain with the elaboration of a conservation project of the frescoes.

Funded by: World Monuments Fund® Samuel H. Kress Foundation (2000-2001)

Project 2. Rehabilitation of the Architectural Structure of the Church of the Virgin in Timotesubani

The Project comprised the rehabilitation of damaged structural elements in order to stabilize the church's microclimate and thus prepare conditions for the conservation of murals.

Funded by: World Monuments Fund ® Samuel Kress Foundation (2002-2003)

Project 3. The project included the preventive conservation works on the frescos, with the special focus on the treatment of microbiological damage

Funded by: World Monuments Fund ® Samuel Kress Foundation, Robert Wilson Challenge (2004-2005).

Due to the exceptional quality of work demonstrated, the full-scale project was awarded with EU Prize - Europa Nostra 2006 Medal for Cultural Preservation.

Implementation - Georgian Arts and Culture Center

Partners: Conservatione Beni Culturali, CBC Rome, It-

rals and to organize the workshop of Bio deterioration in cultural heritage.

As a result of the project the net of scholars and professionals working in the field of cultural preservation was established. The database of professionals was created with an opportunity for further scientific exchange.

Funded by: World Monuments Fund ® Samuel Kress Foundation

Implementation: Georgian Arts and Culture Center

aly; R&C Laboratory, Bologna, Italy, Betania, center of Technical Study of Paintings after E. Privalova, Tbilisi State Academy of Arts.

Matching Funds: Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia; The Foundation for the Risqué and preservation of Historical Monuments in Georgia.

8. Biological Deterioration in Cultural Heritage

In the framework of the International symposium of Georgian Art "Georgian Art in the Context of European and Asian Cultures", Georgia, June 21-29, 2009

The aim of the project was to convene a group of International experts to examine and discuss onsite the bio-deterioration of Georgian churches and mu-

Georgian Cultural Week & 2nd International Symposium of Georgian Culture
"The Caucasus - Georgia on the Crossroads, Cultural Exchange across the Europe and Beyond"
Florence November 2- 9, 2009,
was made possible by: