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## **THE GOSPELS PRESENTED TO SAMTSIRO GEORGIAN MONASTERY OF NUNS IN JERUSALEM (JER.GEO.153) AND THE INSCRIPTION MADE BY THE JVARI MONASTERY MOURAVI IOSEB TSALKELI WITH THE MENTION OF THE PRESENTERS OF THE GOSPELS – PAVLE, BASIL, PRIEST MIKAEL AND THE MONASTERY OF OPIZA (1180-1140)**

The paper is the first attempt to publish and analyze the written document appended to the XI-XII centuries' Gospels (Jer.Geo.153) 101r, written by Ioseb, former Bishop of Tsalka, Mouravi (administrative officer) of the Jvari Monastery in Jerusalem. According to the document, initially the Gospels belonged to Pavle and Basil. They sold the manuscript to Priest Mikael, but charged only half price, on condition that, after Mikael's death, on behalf of all the three co-owners (Pavle, Basil and Mikael), the book was to be presented to the Monastery of Opiza. Later, Mikael travelled to the Holy Land and died during his pilgrimage. Ioseb of Tsalka, who served as Mouravi at the monastery at that time, sent a letter to Opiza monastery and asked them to sacrifice the Gospels to Samtsiro Georgian monastery of nuns. The monks of Opiza fulfilled this request and sacrificed the manuscript to Samtsiro Monastery.

**KEY WORDS:** Opiza, Jvari, Samtsiro, Gospels, Sacrifice

**T**he collection of Georgian manuscripts at the library of Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem has preserved Gospels written on a parchment and lacking the beginning, the Gospels are preserved under number 153 (Jer.Geo.153) and contain the Georgian text edited by Giorgi Mtatsmindeli (Gabidzashvili 2009, 123).

Scholarly literature yields three brief descriptions of the Gospels. Out of these, the first description is compiled by Aleksandre Tzagareli and published in 1888 in Russian (Цагарели 1888, 155), the second description has been made by Robert Blake and published in 1925 in English (Blake 1925, 150-151), and the third description has been compiled by Maia Karadze, Vladimer Kekelia, Lela Shatirishvili and Nestan Chkhikvadze and

published in 2018 in Georgian (Georgian Manuscripts Abroad : 2018, 116).

Currently there are two opinions regarding the time of re-writing of the Gospels. According to Aleksandre Tsagareli, the manuscript should be dated by the XI century at the latest (Цагарели 1888, 155), but, according to Robert Blake, the Gospels were re-written in the XII century (Blake 1925, 150).

Out of the above-mentioned two opinions, the majority of scholars consider Robert Blake’s opinion as more reliable (Gabidzashvili 2009, 123; (Georgian Manuscripts Abroad 2018, 116).

So far, only one opinion has been expressed regarding the place where the Gospels were copied and the identity of the copier. This is Robert Blake’s opinion. Based on Page 46v, or, to be more precise, Page 461v of the manuscript, Blake argues that the Gospels were re-written at Christ’s Tomb in Jerusalem, and that the copier was a scholar named Iovane (Blake 1925, 150)<sup>1</sup>.

The appendix on page 461v of the Gospels, considered by Blake as an addition made by the copier, reads as follows:

“წ(მოდ) <ღ> {ა} ნ მ ა ბ (ა) ჰ ე ბ (ე) რ ნ <ი> {მ} - მ ა თ ე, მ ა ჰ ც {მ} ზ, ლ {უ} კ ა  
 ღ ა ი (მ ვ ა) ნ ე, შ ე ი ნ წ ყ (ა) ლ ე {თ} ს (უ) რ ი | ც (მ) გ ვ (ი) რ ი ს ა ჯ (უ ა ჰ) ი ს მ (ა) მ ი ს ა  
 ი (მ ვ ა) ნ ე ს ი” (Image 53 of Georgian 153. Four Gospels. 12th cent. 146 f.  
 Pg. 17 ft., Library of Congress).

(Saint Gossellers – Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, have mercy on the soul of a sinner Father of Jvari Iovane )

Analysis of the above-quoted inscription proves that Robert Blake’s opinions regarding the place of creation of these Gospels and the identity of the copier are incorrect.

Above all, research has proved that the inscription is made in different handwriting as compared to the main text of the Gospels. According to paleographic marks, it belongs to a later period, namely, the XIV-XV centuries. Besides, research has proved that the inscription is an imploration of Iovane, Father of Jvari i.e. the priest of Jvari Monastery in Jerusalem. Iovane’s text does not provide any information regarding the re-writing of the manuscript.

Thus, the issues regarding the place of re-writing of the Gospels and the identity of the copier still remain unsolved and require further analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> The page of the Gospels mentioned by Robert Blake, is not numbered. It seems, it was left out during the numbering. Taking into account the fact that this page is pinned between pages 46rv and 47rv, I will term it as Page 461rv.





14. სეძირიძასხე: უ̃ შ̃თ უ̃რ̃ე ყუთაყუთეჩიშე
15. შ̃თხე: უ̃ნ̃ბ̃ყ̃ძიყსე უყუთიქ ჟიჩიქს ღე უყუთი
16. უს: სქ̃შ̃ სთუ̃რ̃იშ ღე სეშეშეშეშე შიხს კო̃ხე შ
17. ჩს̃ქძიხე: ღე: ლ̃შ̃ კო̃ხე: შ̃ძიხე უს̃თის უ̃ყოთ
18. უს ღე: უყო̃თის ღე: შიქ̃თ უ̃ქძიხე: ღე: უს̃ყუთსე: უყო უ̃ყოშ
19. შიყუთი ყ თე უ̃შეთი უ̃შე შიშე უყოთი ში შითე, Ⴖ რ: კო̃:
20. ღე: უძიხს შიჩს̃ქძიხე ღე: შიქ̃თ სთუ̃ქყო ღე
21. ს̃ყუსიყ̃თი შ̃თი სქ̃ჩაშ ტუქძი, ღე: უყოთი
22. ში შითე: შიხს̃ქძიხე: უყოთი უსს ღე: უ̃ქძიხე:
23. უყოთს უ̃ე შ̃ჩი უს̃ქძიხს უს̃ქო ღე: კოქძი[-]
24. შიქ̃თ ჟიყუ უსს: ღე: უყოთი უყოთიძიხე უსს უ̃ჩი უს̃ქძიხს. უჩი:-
25. Ⴖშქს კოქძიქოქძიქოქძიქო შიქ̃თ უ̃ქძიხე: ღეთი უ̃ქძიხე: ღე:

ჩაყ ღე: უყოთი უყოთი:

“ესე ს(ა)ცნ(აუ)ჩი იყ(ა)ვნ ყ(ოვე)თა, ჩ(ამეთუ) წ(მოდ)ა ესე [ოთხთ](ა)[ვ]ი | ნახევაჩი ფასად მ(ი)ც(ე)მ(უ)დ ი[ყ]ო [მ(ი)ქ(ა)ე]დ ს(ა)ცნ(ა)და პ(ა)ვერეს და ბ(ა)ს(ი)ღის მ[(ი)ქ(ა)ე]ჩი [---], | ჩ(აფთ)ა შ(ე)მდგომ(ა)დ ს(ი)ვერ(ი)ღისა ოპიზასა დაუტ[ე]ვ[ო]ს. |

ბ(ოღო) ესე მ(ი)ქ(ა)ე ბ(ე)ც(ე)სი იჭ(ი)სად(ე)მს მოიწია, [მოიღ] ო(ც)ნა გ(ა)ნმ(ა)ნ(ა)თდ(ე)ბ(ე)ღნი ჩ(ე)ნნი წ(მოდ)ნი ადგიღნი და ა(ლ)ს(ა)ს(ე)ღნი მიიღო.

ბ(ოღო) მე, უნდო და ფ(ი)ა ც(ო)დვ(ი)დ(ი) წადვერი, მ(ა)ს ქ(ა)მს(ა) მოუხავად ვიყ(ა)ვ | და კითხვითა ლ(მ)თ(ი)ნსა სავუთახთა ლი(ს)თა მ(ა)მ(ა)თ(ა)თა, მიუწეხე წ(მოდ)ას(ა) მ(ი)ნ(ა)ს(ე)ჩისა ო(პ)იზას, ვ(ი)თახმე)დ, ენებოს თუ და ბ(ა)ნ(ა)ნ(ა)ნ, აჩა | წაიღო წ(მოდ)ით ქ(ა)და ქით, ა(ჩა)მე)დ ეთსა უმც(ი)ჩესსა მ(ი)ნ(ა)ს(ე)ჩისა უბოძო, ს(ა) ხეღითცა | ს(ა)მწიხოსა.

ბ(ოღო) მ(ა)თ ვ(ი)თახე)ა შეპვერდა | მ(ა)თსა ლ(მ)თ(ი)ნ(ა)ს(ე)ჩი(ა) ხ(ე)ბ(ა)სა, ეგხე ქმნეს და უბოძ(ე)ს ს(ა)ვერ(ი)დ ს(ა)დ(ო)ც(ა)ვ(ა)დ და ს(ა)დ(ი)დ(ე)ბ(ე)დ(ა)დ მის წ(მოდ)ისა მ(ი)ნ(ა)ს(ე)ჩისა და ვ(ი)და)დ წ(მოდ)ისა მ(ა)მისა ბ(ა)ს(ი)ღის, პ(ა)ვერეს და <პ(ა)ვერეს და> მ(ი)ქ(ა)ე ბ(ე)ცნსა და ი(ო)ს(ე)ბ(ი)სსა.

აწ, გ(ე)ვ(ე)დ(ე)ჩი უბოთ ყ(ოვე)თა შ(ე)მდ(გომ)თი შ(ე)მდგომ(ა)დ მო-მ(ა)ვ(ა)დთა მ(ა)მ(ა)თა ქ(ა)ჩ(ი)წ(მოდ)ისა | და ამის მ(ი)ნ(ა)ს(ე)ჩისა დათა, ჩ(აფთ)ა ს(ა)დ(ო)ც(ა)ვი და | ს(ა)წს(ე)ნ(ე)ბ(ე)ღნი მ(ა)თი ს(ა)ვერ(ი)დ იპყათ და ვინ | ჩ(ა)ფთაცა მიზეზითა შეცვ(ა)დოს და გ(ა) მოა(ქ)უას, ლ(მ)ე)თს(ა) მ(ა)ნ ვასცეს პ(ა)ს(ე)ბი და წყ(ე)ვ(ი)ს[ა] | მცა ქ(ე)შე აჩს და ვინ შეიკჰადოს, ლ(მ)ე)თ(ა)ნ ავ(ე)თხე)ნ, ა(მ)ე)ნ. |

ოღეს წაიკითხვიდეთ, მ(ი)ქ(ა)ე ბ(ე)ც(ე)სსა დ(ა)პ(ე)დ(ო)ც(ი)ღით და ნუ დაივიწყებთ” (Image 109 of Georgian 153. Four Gospels.12th cent. 146 f. Pg. 17 ft., Library of Congress).

(Let everyone know that these Gospels were sold by Pavle and Basil

*to Priest Mikael at half price, on condition that, after Mikael's death, the Gospels will be brought to Opiza.*

*Priest Mikael came here to Jerusalem, visited all the places of worship, and died.*

*And I, untrustworthy and sinful man from Tsalka, served as Mouravi in that period. And, upon the request of the worthy servants of God, I wrote a letter to the Monastery of Opiza, asking them not to take these Gospels from the Holy Land, but to sacrifice them to a minor monastery called Samtsiro.*

*And they behaved based on their godliness, and sacrificed the Gospels to the Monastery so that they pray for the souls of fathers Basil, Pavle, Priest Mikael and Ioseb.*

*I beg all the future fathers of Jvari, as well as nuns of this monastery, to mention them in their prayers. Whoever does not fulfill this and takes away the Gospels, will bear responsibility to God, and whoever fulfills my request and protects the manuscript, may receive God's blessings.*

*Whenever you read this, bless Priest Mikael and remember his deeds”.*

As we have seen, the Appendix is a legal text aimed at regulating the issues related to the ownership of the Gospels.

Based on the content, the appendix may be divided into six fragments. I will discuss them separately.

The first fragment of the appendix tells us that the Gospels initially belonged to Pavle and Basil. Later they sold the Gospels to Priest Mikael. Pavle and Basil charged only half price on condition that, after Mikael's death, the Gospels would be sacrificed to Opiza Monastery:

*“ესე საცნაუხ იყავნ ყოვერთა, ხამეთუ წმიდაჲ ესე [ოთხთ]ა[ვ] ი ნახევახ ფასად მიცემურ ი[ყო] [მიქაელ]დ ხუცისადა პავლეს და ბასილის მ[იქ]ე[ლ]ის [----], ხადთა შემდგომად სიკუდრიისა ოპიზასა დაუტევ-ვ[ოხ]”.* (Let everyone know that these Gospels were sold by Pavle and Basil to Priest Mikael at half price, on condition that, after Mikael's death, the Gospels will be brought to Opiza).

So far, it is impossible to identify the three people mentioned in the first fragment – Pavle, Basil and Priest Mikael. We only know that they lived in the 12th century, at the time when the Appendix was written, and, most probably, were representatives of the clergy.

Regarding the first fragment of the Appendix, special attention should be paid to the issue of charging half price for the document. Above all, the

fragment mentions that the document had three legal owners after it was sold by Pavle and Basil to Priest Mikael: it belonged to Pavle and Basil, on the one hand, and to Priest Mikael on the other. Besides, according to the fragment, the Gospels were kept by Priest Mikael who used the book until his death. After his death, the Gospels were to be sacrificed to Opiza Monastery on behalf of all the three owners.

The fact that the owners sold not the entire book but half of the legal right of its ownership is very interesting for the study of legal thinking in the 12th century Georgia.

The first fragment of the Appendix does not give information about the links between the three owners and the Monastery of Opiza. This fragment does not explain why they decided to sacrifice the Gospels to this monastery.

At this stage of research, I can only assume that these people worked at Opiza Monastery either at the time of selling of the manuscript or at some other stage of their lives. Therefore, they had a special attachment to this place.

The second fragment of the Appendix informs us that the new owner of the manuscript – Priest Mikael travelled to Jerusalem and died there after visiting the Holy places:

*“ხოლო ესე მიჲსად ხუცესი იჭიხსადემს მოიწია, [მოიღ]ოცნა განმანათლებდენი ჩუენნი წმიდანი აგვიდნი და აღსახუდი მიიღო”.  
(Priest Mikael came here to Jerusalem, visited all the places of worship, and died).*

Of special interest in this second fragment is the fact of death of Priest Mikael. The fact that he died during his pilgrimage is important by itself. Another important issue is the ownership of the property that he had brought with him to Jerusalem. The Appendix mentions only the Gospels. However, it is highly probable that he had brought other objects too, and that the fate of these items had to be arranged.

In the second fragment of the Appendix, attention should be paid to the phrase “Came here to Jerusalem”. This phrase proves that the writer of the text was in Jerusalem at the time of the priest’s arrival.

In the third fragment, the writer introduces himself. On the one hand, he notes that he was from Tsalka. On the other hand, he mentions that at the time of death of Priest Mikael, he served as Mouravi. Besides, he remarks that, after counselling with the clergy of his monastery, he sent a letter to the Monastery of Opiza in which he implored to leave the Gospels brought to Jerusalem by priest Mikael on the Holy Land and grant them to a small monastery known as Samtsiro:

“ხოლო მე, უნდოდა და ფხიად ცოდვილი წადკვედი, მას ჟამსა მოუხავად ვიყავ და კითხვითა ღმერთისა საკუთაჲთა ღიხსთა მამათადთა, მიუწუხე წმიდასა მონასტეხსა ოპიზას, ვითაჲმედ, ენებოს თუ და ბიძანონ, აჲა წაიღონ წმიდით ქადაქით, აჲამედ ეხთსა უმციხესსა მონასტეხსა უბოძონ, სახედითცა სამწიხოსა”.

*(And I, untrustworthy and sinful man from Tsalka, served as Mouravi in that period. And, upon the request of the worthy servants of God, I wrote a letter to the Monastery of Opiza, asking them not to take these Gospels from the Holy Land, but to sacrifice them to a small monastery called Samtsiro).*

The title „Tsalkeli“ points to the fact that the writer of the Appendix was a bishop from Tsalka. Taking into account the facts that, at the time of writing, the author was in Jerusalem and served as Mouravi in one of the local monasteries (see below), it turns out that he no longer served as a Bishop of Tsalka. He had moved from Georgia to the Holy Land and worked there.

It is not strange that the author of the Appendix preserved the title of Bishop of Tsalka after leaving the bishopric. According to a medieval Georgian tradition, the clergy of high rank and position preserved their titles after retirement and were mentioned by these titles in the written sources.

According to „The Description of the Georgian Kingdom“ written by Vakhushti Bagrationi in the years 1742-1745, Tsalka Eparchy embraced the territory of historical Trialeti province. The cathedral of the Bishop of Tsalka was located in the town of Tsalka on the bank of the river Ktsia:

“...ქციის კიდებზე ახს ეკლესია გუმბათიანი, წადკას დიდი, კეთილნაშენი, ზის ეპისკოპოზი, მწყემსი თხიადეთისა” (... on the bank of the Ktsia, there is a church with a dome. It is large and firmly built. There resides the Bishop, the shepherd of Trialeti) (Vakhushti 1973, 319)<sup>1</sup>.

The town Tsalka, mentioned by Vakhushti Bagrationi, was renamed as Gunia-Kala in the 19th century. Currently it is covered by a water reservoir. Six churches have been found on the territory of the historical town of Tsalka. However, it is unknown which of these churches was the cathedral of the Bishop of Tsalka (Narimanishvili, Shanshashvili, Kvachadze 2018,

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<sup>1</sup> On the border of the register (R) of the 1813 copy of Vakhushti Bagration's "Description of the Georgian Kingdom", there is a comment: "There is a church with a dome, in the eparchy of Tsalka, which is called Tsalkeli" (Vakhushti 1973, 319).

181-182).

According to Devi Berdzenishvili, the eparchy of Tsalka and the Bishops of Tsalka are mentioned in the historical sources of later period (Berdzenishvili 2014, 87). Research has proved that the title of the Bishop of Tsalka was first mentioned in the 13th century legal document “Rules of the Royal Council”:

“წესი და გ(ა)ნგებდ <და> დახბდობისა, ხ(ომედ)ი აღესხ(უ)დებინ მცხეთას, კ(უხთ)ხ(ე)ვასა მეფეთასა... ხ(ა)ჟ(ამ)ს იკ(უხთ)ხ(მ)ს მეფე და დ(ა)ჯდეს ტახტსა ზ(ედ)ა და ეფისკ(ო)პ(ო)სნი ამა წესითა დასხდენ: ...შემოვიდეს წადკედი 1r||1v და დაჯდეს ტფიდედა ქუემოთ. შემოვიდეს ბანელი და დ(ა)ჯდეს წადკედსა ქუემოთ...” (The rule of the royal council gathered at Mtskheta is as follows... When the king is crowned and sits on his throne, the bishops sit in the following order: the Bishop of Tsalka sits below the Bishop of Tbilisi. The Bishop of Bana enters and sits below the Bishop of Tsalka) (Ad-560, 1rv).

As for the bishop holding the title Tsalkeli, he is first mentioned in the document of 1678 – the document on the purchase of land, issued by Giorgi Saakadze to Papuna Tukhareli:

“მე, წად<ა>კედსა ქიხს|გეფროხეს, დამიწეხია ესე წიგნი და მოწა)მეცა ვახ” (I, Kristepore Tsalkeli, have written this document and witness this fact) (Sd-63, 1v).

The Appendix under analysis was written earlier than the above-mentioned sources. Thus, it turns out that the earliest facts proving the title of Bishop of Tsalka and mentioning the person with this title are found in the 12th century.

Separate mention should be made of the fact that, at the time of death of Priest Mikael, he was Mouravi i.e. administrative officer of one of the monasteries of the Holy Land.

Regarding the Appendix in question, attention should be paid to the information provided in December comments of the 12th century, copied by Deacon Stepane at the Monastery of Khandzta (S-4999) and mentioning Anton „Mouravi of the Pillar“:

“დაიწეხა ესე თუე დევ(ე)ნბ(ე)ხი უდაბნოსა ხაიძთ|ისასა, ჯ(ე)დითა სგ(ე)ფ(ა)ნე დ(ია)კ(ო)ნისაძთა, უდაბნოდას | სუეგისათ(ვ)ს, საფასოძთა მ(ა)თითა. ღ(მეხთმა)ნ შეუნდვ(ე)ნ, | ხაფცა ვის ქიხი უნახავს ამ(ა)ს წიგნსა ზ(ედ)ა. | პ(იხუე)დ ყ(ოვე)დთასა, მოუხავსა სუეგისსა ანგ(ო)ნის | შეუნდვ(ე)ნ ღ(მეხთმა)ნ და ყ(ოვე)დნი ძმანი



დაიცვენინ ქ(ხისგემა)ნ | და უკ(უე)თუ იპოოს ხ(ა)დ სანდოდა ამას  
 ჩ(უე)ნსა ნა|შხომსა, ჩ(უე)ნთ(კ)სცა ღ(ო)ცვა ყ(ა)ვთ, ღ(მ)თიწათ(კ)  
 ს და | უცბად ჩხეკისათ(კ)ს შემინდვეთ. გ(იო)ხგ(ი)ს, ხუც(ი)ესსა, შე-  
 უნდვენ ღ(მ)ეხთმა)ნ, ღიად შემწუ გუეყო” (S-4999, 332v).

*(This was written in December, in Khandzta Desert, by the hand of Deacon Stepane, for the Pillar of the Desert and upon their payment. May God bless the person who toiled at this book. Above all, Mouravi of the Pillar Anton, and all our brethren, may they be protected by Christ. And if this work is trustworthy, pray for us to God and forgive our sins. God bless priest Giorgi who has greatly supported us).*

Darejan Kldiashvili notes that the term „Mouravi“ mentioned in December comments corresponds to the terms “Abramad”, “Iconomos”, “Epitropos”, mentioned in the Georgian literary sources, and points to the fact that Anton was one of the authoritative representatives of the „Pillar“ i.e. the Monastery of the Pillar (Kldiashvili 2017, 173-174)<sup>1</sup>.

According to my observation, the term “Mouravi” is used in the Appendix with the meaning of Iconomos i.e. its meaning corresponds to that of the word used in December Comments.

Apart from the identical terms used in the Appendix and December Comments, attention should be paid to the authority of the writer of the Appendix. From this document we learn that, after the death of Priest Mikael, the author of the Appendix was in charge of disposing of the priest’s property. According to scholarly literature, disposal of a monastery’s logistics and property was the responsibility of the Iconomos.

Thus, the writer of the Appendix, former Bishop of Tsalka, held the position of Mouravi or Iconomos at one of the Georgian monasteries on the Holy Land.

The Appendix does not explain why the writer was responsible for the property of the late Priest Mikael and why an Iconomos of some other monastery was not responsible for it.

This fact may have two explanations: 1. Mikael died at a hospital or infirmary of the monastery where the writer of the Appendix lived and worked. The property of the deceased priest physically remained at this infirmary; hence, an authorized person of the Monastery – the Mouravi – was in charge of the property; and 2. Priest Mikael died at some other monastery or infirmary, and his property remained there, but his property

<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, scholars argue that „The Desert of the Pillar“ mentioned in December Comments is the same as the Monastery of the Pillar located in the historical province of Klarjeti. I argue that this identification is not proved by facts. Hence, the „Desert of the Pillar“ may just as well be the Monastery of the Pillar in Jerusalem, mentioned in numerous written sources. However, I will abstain from discussing this issue in the given paper and focus on this problem in my further research.

was managed by the largest Georgian monastery on the Holy Land; hence, the issue was to be settled by a corresponding official – Iconomos of the Jvari Monastery.

Having discussed the issues above, I must find out why the writer of the Appendix sent a letter to Opiza Monastery and asked them to sacrifice the Gospels to Samtsiro Monastery.

The fact that the writer of the Appendix sent a letter of request to Opiza is quite logical. As we have seen, the old and new owners of the Gospels – on the one hand, Pavle and Basil, and, on the other hand, priest Mikael had made a purchase agreement, according to which, after Mikael's death, the Gospels were to be sacrificed to Opiza Monastery. Hence, the legal owner of the Gospels after Priest Mikael's death was Opiza Monastery. This is why the writer of the Appendix addressed the legal owner – Opiza Monastery Assembly.

However, the available material does not explain why the writer of the Appendix asked the monks of Opiza to sacrifice the Gospels to Samtsiro Monastery. I can only assume that the writer of the Appendix had some special attachment or reverence to Samtsiro Monastery.

The fact of mentioning of a minor Monastery of Samtsiro in the third fragment of the Appendix is worth attention. As we will see below, Samtsiro was a nuns monastery. Hence, it turns out that one of the less known Georgian monasteries of Jerusalem – Samtsiro Nuns Monastery was still functioning at the time of writing of the Appendix i.e. in the XII century.

Samtsiro Monastery must be mentioned in a manuscript belonging to the Georgian colony on the Holy Land, namely, a collection of Georgian manuscripts preserved at the Library of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The number of the manuscript is 27 (Jer.Geo.27). the comment of the restorer of the manuscript on page 348r says:

*“სამწიხოს მწიხი(უ)ღია ესე წიგნი და ვინცა გამოავ[უ]ას, | წ(მ)იღ  
ათა მ(მ)ც(ი)ქ(უ)ღთა კანონსამცა ქუცში ახს ს(უ)ღი მისი, ა(მ)ე. |  
სახეღითა ლ(მ)თისა)ღთა, ესე წიგნი და მ(ა)ხხვ(ა)ნი მე, ვ(ა)ხე)ანის  
(?) ღეღამ(ა)ნ, | ბეჰმ(ა)ნ ანნა, შევაკაზმიენ და შევმოსე ახლად ღია  
და/ფუშვი(ი)ღი, ჩ(ე)მისა ს(უ)ღისათ(ვ)ს და შენდ(მ)ბასა ჰყ(მ)ფღით,  
მკ(ი)თხვ(ე)ღნო, | წ(მ)იღ)ნო მ(ა)მ(ა)ნო. ანნას და მისთა მშ(მ)ბ(ე)  
ღთა და გამხდ(ე)ღთა შ(ე)უნდვე)ნ ლ(მ)ეჰთმა)ნ” (the text has been  
restored, titlo diacritics have been deciphered and punctuation has  
been added by me - T. J.) (Marr 1955, 52. cf: Blake 1923, 407)1.*

1 Unfortunately, when analyzing this collection, the digital version was not available for me. Due to this, I failed to carry out the codicological and historical-source study analysis of the manuscript and its comments. Therefore, I abstain from any argumentation regarding the time and place of re-writing of the manuscript, the identity of the copier and further fate of the manuscript. I will suffice to say that I have doubts about a widespread opinion, according

*(This book has been sacrificed to Samtsiro and whoever takes away its parts, may his soul be judged by saint apostles. Amen. In the name of God, this book and hymnal have been decorated and bound by nun Anna, mother of Vardan. May the reader holy fathers pray for my soul. May God forgive Anna and her parents).*

As we see, the manuscript is made on behalf of an old-aged nun Anna, who notes that she is mother of Vardan (?). Anna notes that she restored and bound two manuscripts – the collection containing the Appendix and a hymnal. These two books were strongly damaged (Karanadze 2002, 42).

In the beginning of the comment, Anna emphasizes that „this book“, i.e. the collection, was gifted to Samtsiro i.e. belonged to this monastery. It is unclear whether the book belonged to Samtsiro Monastery prior to the restoration or was gifted to the monastery by Anna. We can only know for certain that, at the time of writing of the comment, the collection and, probably also, the hymnal belonged to Samtsiro Monastery<sup>1</sup>.

In my opinion, the Monastery of Samtsiro, mentioned in the Appendix of the Gospels, is also mentioned in another manuscript belonging to the Georgian colony on the Holy Land, namely, a vast comment to the hymnal of 1167, preserved under number 63 in the collection of Georgian manuscripts of the library of the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem (Jer.Geo.63). Pages 160v and 161r of this document mention the following:

“ს(ა)ხვედითა ახსება დაუბადებ(ე)რისა, სამგუამოვნისა, ეხო-  
ლ(მ)თეებინსა, | ბ(უ)ნ(ე)ბით მიუწოდებელისა და გ(ა)მოუ(თ)ქმ(ე)  
რისა და ყ(ოველ)თა ახსთა ახაჲადას|გ(ა)ნ ახსებად მომყვანებ(ე)  
რისა, ს(ა)მებინსა წ(მიღ)ინსადათა და მ(ე)ოხებინსა ყ(ოველ)დწ(მიღ)ინსა  
და | უბიწოდას, უხიწნ(ე)რისა დ(ე)დ(ო)ფრისა ჩ(უ)ენისა ლ(მ)თის-  
მშ(ო)ბ(ე)რისადათა, ძ(ა)რითა და | შეწევნითა წ(მიღ)ინსა და ცხ(ო)ვ(ე)  
დსმყ(ო)ფ(ე)რისადათა და ყ(ოველ)დ პ(ა)ტ(ო)ნისა ჭ(უ)ახისადათა, წყა-  
ღო160v||161rბითა და შეწევნითა ყ(ოველ)თა წ(მიღ)ინსა უსხვედითა  
მთ(ა)ვ(ა)ხანვ(ე)დ(ო)ზითა | და სეხ(ა)ბინ-ქეხაბინთადათა და ყ(ველ)

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to which the collection was re-written in the XVI-XVII centuries (Blake 1923, 407; Marr 1955, 51-52; Karanadze 2002, 42, 44; Georgian Manuscripts Abroad 2018, 127. cf. Tsagareli 1888, 181). I cannot say with confidence that the first sentence of the above-mentioned comment and its following fragments were written in the same period, as Niko Marr considered (Marr 1955, 52. cf. Blake 1923, 407). In my opinion, a thorough analysis of the manuscript and its comments will solve this and other related issues.

1 According to Levan Menabde, the term „Samtsiro“ mentioned in the comment implies the Georgian Kappata monastery of nuns in Jerusalem (Menabde 1980, 146). This assumption is based on Korneli Kekelidze’s opinion, according to which Kappata Monastery was built with the stones of old „Samtsiro“ i.e. inn for pilgrims, at St. Sophia Basilica on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (see below). Some scholars share Levan Menabde’s opinion (Mamatsashvili 2007, 450).

თა ზ(ე)ცისა ძ(ა)რთადათა და მ(ა)ღრითა და მ(ე)ოხებითა | წ(მ)იღ(ი)ნსა წინამოხბედისა ი(ო)ვანე ნ(ა)თლისმცემ(ე)ლისადათა, მ(ე)ოხებითა ყ(ო)ვლად ქებ(უ)რთა წ(მ)იღ(ა)თა | მ(ო)ციქ(უ)რთადათა, წ(ინ)აწ(ახ)მე) ცყ(უ)რთა, მღ(ე)რთმ(ო)ძლ(უ)ახითა, მ(ო)წ(ა)მეთა და ყ(ო)ვლ(ე)რთა ღიხსთა მ(ა)მათადათა, | ხ(ო)მედ(ი)ნი ს(ა)უ(კ)უ(ნ)ითგ(ა)ნ სათნო ყყვნეს ო(ვ)ფადსა ჩ(უ)ნსა ი(ე)ს(უ) ქ(ი)სტესა. ღიხს ვიქმენ მე, ყ(ო)ვლად უღიხსი | ონოფხე, მოგებად წ(მ)იღ(ა)თა ამ(ა)თ პა(ა)კლიტონთა, ხვათავე ვმათა სხ(უ)რთა, | ოხ წიგნად. პ(ი)ხუ(ე)რი თვთ ჩ(ე)მითა წ(ე)რითა დაწიქე და მეოხე ს(ა)ნ(ა)ტ(ე)რთა მ(ა)მათა - | კ(უ)ხიკეს მ(ი)ე, პ(ა)ტ(ი)ონისა მღ(უ)ღრისა და მ(ა)ხ(ო)ზ, ცონცოხიკადს ასურის წურისა | წ(ე)რითა. ღ(მ)ეხთმ(ა)ნ აკ(უ)ხთხნეს და შევსწიხე იჭ(ი)უსა(ე)მს, პ(ა)ტ(ი)ონს(ა)ნთა დედათა მ(ო)ნ(ა)სტ(ე)ხსა ახადსა, | ხ(ო)მედ(ი)ნი იცვ(ა)რეს პიტიტაგ(ა)ნ ძუჭრისა სამწიხოდას მ(ი)ე. ენებოს ქ(ი)სტესა, | ხ(ო)მედ(ი)ნი მტკიცე და უქცევადი იყოს. აწ, ვევე-ღ(ე)ბი ყ(ო)ვლ(ე)რთა, ხ(ო)მედ(ი)ნი შ(ე)მდგ(ო)მითი [ქ(ა)მ]თა (?) მკვდ-ხ(ო)ბდეთ წ(მ)იღ(ა)სა ამ(ა)ს მ(ო)ნ(ა)სტ(ე)ხსა შ(ინ)ა ხ(ა)დათა მომიწ-სენებდეთ წ(მ)იღ(ა)თა შ(ინ)ა რ(ო)ცვათა | თქ(უ)ნთა დაუვიწყებ(ა)დ, ხ(ა)დათა ღ(მ)ეხთმ(ა)ნ მოგაგოს ს(ა)სყიდ(ე)რი წ(ე)ნ(ე)ბისა | თ(უ)ს ჩ(ე)მისა | და ვინ გ(ა)მოაწუას წ(მ)იღ(ა)სა ამ(ა)ს მ(ო)ნ(ა)სტ(ე)ხსა წ(მ)იღ(ა)ნი ესე პ(ა)ხ(ა)კლიტ(ო)ნნი, ხადსაცა | მიზეზისა მოღებითა, გ(ა)მო-მცა-წუჭბ(უ)რ ახს იგიცა წესისაგ(ა)ნ ქ(ი)სტ(ე)ია[ნ(ე)თ(ა)სა] | და ნაწილმცა ახს მისი იუდას თ(ან)ა, ისკახიოტედსა. ოდეს დაიწეხა, ქ(ი)ონიკონი იყო გ(ა)ზ (387 + 780 = 1167 წ.), დასაბამითგ(ა)ნ წედთა ხქოე (6675 - 5509/5508 = 1166/1167 წ.), ბეხდ(უ)რითა სათ(უ)ა(ე)ვითა, ხ(ო)ლ(ო) ქ(ა)ხთურითა - ხლობ (6772 - 5604 = 1168 წ.), | კ(უ)ხიკითგ(ა)ნ - ჩ(ი)ოე (1175 + 30/33/34 = 1205/1208/1209 წ.), ინდიკტიონი იე (78-ე ციკლის (დასაწყ. 1153 წ.) მე-15 ინდიქტიონი = 1167 წ.)”

*(In the name of the unborn, triune God, inaccessible in its nature and inexpressible, creator of all creatures from nothing, the Holy Trinity, under protection of our Holy Virgin Mary, with the power and support of the Holy Cross of Life, with the support of bodiless Archangels, Seraphs and Cherubs and all the heavenly forces, with the support and grace of John the Baptist, all the saints and disciples, prophets, priests, martyrs and venerable fathers who eternally worship our Lord Jesus Christ. I, the unworthy Onofre, contributed to the creation of this hymnal, all the eight parts, in two volumes. The first one was written by me, and the second one was written by reverend fathers – Kvirike, honest priest, and Markos, the son of the daughter of Tsontsorika. God bless them. And I sacrificed this book to the new Monastery of nuns in Jerusalem, built from the stones of the Old Samtsiro. May Christ protect it from destruction. I beg all who reside in this monastery in future, to pray for my soul. May God give his grace to you for mentioning me in your prayers. And whoever takes*

*this hymnal away from this monastery for whatever reason, will violate the Christian rule and form part of Judas Iscariot. The date of writing is Chronicon 838 (387 + 780 = 1167), from the beginning of years 6775 (6675 - 5509/5508 = 1166/1167), by Greek calendar, and by Georgian calendar- 6772 (6772 - 5604 = 1168), | from Crucifixion - 6775 (1175 + 30/33/34 = 1205/1208/1209), Indiction 07 (beginning of the 78th cycle (1153) 15th indiction = 1167)”*

*(Image 163 of Georgian 63. Parakletike. 1167 A.D. 161 f. Pg. 24 ft., Library of Congress)<sup>1</sup>.*

The above-quoted comment tells us that the hymnal was rewritten upon the order of some Onofre in 1167. The hymnal consisted of two volumes. The first one was rewritten by Onofre himself, whereas the second one, i.e. the manuscript containing the comment, was copied by priest Kvirike and Markos - the son of daughter of Tsontsorika<sup>2</sup>. Onofre sacrificed the books to the newly-established monastery of nuns, built from the stones of old Samtsiro, the inn for the pilgrims, and constructed in the place of the old building<sup>3</sup>.

1 Below the comment, with the interval in two lines, there is another comment: “დედაკ(ა) ცმ(ა)ნ ვინმე მწირმ(ა)ნ ათი ქართუბი შეანია წიგნსა ამ(ა)ს. ღ(მერთმ)ან | შეუნდვენ. ლ(ო)ცვა ყ(ა)ვთ მისთ(ვ)ს” (some pilgrim woman sacrificed ten pieces of parchment to the restoration of this book. God forgive her sins. Pray for her soul) (Image 163 of Georgian 63. Parakletike. 1167 A.D. 161 f. Pg. 24 ft., Library of Congress). The fact that some woman sacrificed ten pieces of parchment for the copying of the hymnal, is not accidental. It seems, this anonymous woman had special reverence to the Monastery of Samtsiro mentioned in the comment. Thus, the woman rendered material support to the monastery.

2 The fact that the second book of the hymnal mentioned in the comment is Georgian manuscript number 63, preserved in the collection of Georgian manuscripts at the Library of the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem, proves the comment written on page 160v of this manuscript that the book was re-written by Kvirike and Markos: “ო(ვფალ)ო ღ(მერთ)ო, შეუნდვენ ფ(რია)დ ც(ო)დვ(ი)ლსა მჩხრეკალსა ამის|სა კ(ვრი)კეს და მქ(ა)რკობს” (God forgive Kvirike and Markos who have dug into this book) (Image 163 of Georgian 63. Parakletike. 1167 A.D. 161 f. Pg. 24 ft., Library of Congress).

3 So far, three opinions have been expressed regarding the Georgian monastery of nuns in Jerusalem, built with the stones of the old Samtsiro: 1. According to Aleksandre Tsagareli, the comments to the hymnal mention a Georgian monastery of nuns in Jerusalem, which was constructed in 1162-1175, with the stones of a Georgian inn for the pilgrims (Tsagareli 1888, 125, 170); 2. According to Korneli Kekelidze, the „old Samtsiro“ mentioned in the comments to the hymnal implies an inn for travellers and pilgrims at the old monastery of Kappata near St. Sophia basilica on mount Zion in Jerusalem. This inn is mentioned by Antoine Martviri in the 6th century. According to this scholar, the monastery built with the stones of the old inn is the same as the Georgian monastery of nuns built in the place of the old monastery in the 1070s, upon the order of Georgian queens Borena and Martha, the wife and daughter of King Bagrat IV (1027-1072) (Kekelidze 1942, 111-113); 3. Gocha Japaridze has certain doubts about Koneli Kekelidze’s opinion regarding the fact that the above-mentioned two buildings are, in fact, one monastery. According to this scholar, the comment mentions a „new monastery“

If my assumption is correct and Samtsiro nuns monastery mentioned in the Appendix to the Gospels and the nuns monastery built with the stones of the former inn mentioned in the comments to the hymnal are one and the same, we can solve the issues related to the name and time of establishment of Samtsiro nuns monastery.

From the comment to the hymnal, we learn that Samtsiro nuns monastery was built with the stones of the former inn. Hence, the name „Samtsiro“ which means an inn for travellers and pilgrims.

As for the time of establishment of Samtsiro nuns monastery, in the comments to the hymnal, Onofre calls Samtsiro a newly-established monastery and wishes it „to stand firm for a long time“. Thus, as it turns out, Samtsiro monastery was newly-established at the time of writing of the comment i.e. 1167. Thus, it might have been established somewhere between 1140 and 1160.

The fourth fragment of the Appendix notes that the monks of Opiza considered the request of the author of the Appendix, took a decision that corresponded to their devout nature, and sacrificed the Gospels to Samtsiro Monastery. The act of sacrificing was performed on behalf of the current owner of the Gospels – Opiza Monastery and its previous owners – Basil, Pavle and priest Mikael, as well as on behalf of someone named Ioseb, for praying and glorifying their souls:

*“ხოლო მათ ვითაჲცა შეჰგვანდა მათსა ღმერთისმოყუარეობასა, ეგჲ ქმნეს და უბოძეს საუკუნოდ სარცავად და საღიღებდად მის წმიდისა მონასტრისა და კუადად წმიდისა მამისა ბასილის, პავლეს და მიქაელ ხუცისა და იოსებისა”.*

*(And they behaved based on their godliness and sacrificed the Gospels to the Monastery so that they pray for the souls of fathers Basil, Pavle, Priest Mikael and Ioseb).*

Special attention should be drawn to a person named Ioseb, whose name was added to the Appendix later, and who had never owned the Gospels.

Who is Ioseb and why is he connected to the act of sacrificing of the Gospels to Samtsiro Monastery?

To my observation, Ioseb must be the person who wrote the Appendix and initiated the sacrifice of the Gospels to Samtsiro Monastery. We do not know any other person related to the sacrifice of the Gospels to Samt-

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(in Arabic - “Dayr Al-Jadi”). In 1189, the Sultan of Egypt Salah-ad-Din gifted this monastery to the newly-formed Sufi hanaka, together with other buildings located in the district of patriarchs of Jerusalem (Japaridze 2018, 96-98).

siro Monastery. Hence, no other versions are available.

Thus, it turns out that the author of the Appendix, former Bishop of Tsalka, was called Ioseb, and he is mentioned in the Appendix alongside with the old and new owners of the Gospels.

I will briefly discuss why Ioseb's name was added to the Appendix later. As it seems, the writer of the Appendix initially mentioned only those people who owned the Gospels and on whose behalf the Gospels were sacrificed to Samtsiro Monastery. Later on, probably after the manuscript was granted to Samtsiro monastery, the nuns of this monastery took into account the fact that the Gospels were sacrificed to their monastery upon the initiative of Ioseb. They regarded his contribution no less important than that of the owners of the Gospels. Therefore, they asked him to write his name beside the names of the owners. In my opinion, Ioseb's name was added to the manuscript in the above-mentioned way.

In the fifth fragment of the Appendix, Ioseb of Tsalka addresses his contemporary monks, to be more precise, the monks living at "Holy Jvari" and the nuns of Samtsiro Monastery and asks them to pray for the souls of the grantors of the Gospels. Besides, the author of the Appendix curses the people who deprive the Gospels from Samtsiro for whatever reason, and blesses the people who take care of preserving the Gospels at Samtsiro:

“აწ, გევედრებით ყოვედთა შემდგომითი შემდგომად მომავადთა მამათა ჭუახიწმინდისა და ამის მონასტხისა დათა, ხადთა საღოცავი და საწსენებერი მათი საუკუნოდ იპყხათ და ვინ ხადთაცა მიზეზითა შეცვაროს და გამოაწუას, ღმეხთსა მან გასცეს პასუხი და წყევის[ა]მცა ქუეშე ახს და ვინ შეიკხადლოს, ღმეხთმან აკუხთხენ, ამენ”.

*(I beg all the future fathers of Jvari, as well as nuns of this monastery, to mention them in your prayers. Whoever does not fulfill this and takes away the Gospels, will bear responsibility to God, and whoever fulfills my request and protects the manuscript, may receive God's blessings.. Amen).*

Above all, attention should be paid to the final four words in the XIX line “მომ~ვლთა მ~მთა ჭ~ი წ~”, I have read these words as follows:

“მომ(ა)ვ(ა)დთა მ(ა)მ(ა)თა ჭ(უა)იწ(მინდისა)”. *(future fathers of the Holy Jvari)*

If this reading is correct, it means that the Appendix contains a new

name of the Jvari Monastery in Jerusalem - ჯვარისმონა (Holy Jvari/Holy Cross). This name has not been found in written sources until now.

There are numerous cases in the history of medieval Georgia when the name of a church or a monastery is derived from the name of its heavenly patron. For instance, the names of monasteries of Ninotsminda, Nikorts-minda, Andriatsminda etc. are derived from their holy patrons – St. Nino, St. Nikoloz, St. Andrew and others: Saint Nino > Ninotsminda, saint Nikoloz > Nikolaostsminda //Nikoltsminda //Nikorts-minda, saint Andrew > Andriatsminda and so on.

The name Jvaritsminda (Holy Cross) mentioned in the Appendix has been obtained in a similar way. This monastery had the name of the Holy Cross: Holy Cross > Jvaritsminda (Jvari – cross, tsminda – holy).

Alongside with Jvaritsminda, the Appendix mentions another monastery, which, according to the text, is a monastery of nuns.

Although the Appendix does not give the exact name of the monastery, it is obvious that the minor monastery of Samtsiro is implied.

This can be confirmed by the phrase “of this monastery”, proving that Ioseb of Tsalka meant a concrete monastery to which the Gospels belonged at the time of writing of the Appendix. As we have seen above, after the death of Priest Mikael, the manuscript became the property of Opiza Monastery. Upon the request of the author of the Appendix, the monks of Opiza sacrificed the Gospels to Samtsiro Monastery. The Appendix was written at the time when the Gospels had already been gifted to Samtsiro. Hence, the Appendix mentions the Monastery of nuns which owned the Gospels at that time. Thus, the author definitely implies the Monastery of Samtsiro.

Why does Ioseb of Tsalka address both the nuns of Samtsiro monastery and the fathers of Jvari monastery with a request to pray for the souls of the grantors of the Gospels?

Unfortunately, so far we cannot answer this question. We can only assume that there was some organizational link between these two Georgian monasteries in Jerusalem. Thus, the people who contributed something to the Monastery of Samtsiro were automatically considered as grantors of the Jvari Monastery.

In the final sixth fragment of the Appendix Ioseb of Tsalka asks everyone to pray for Priest Mikael and remember his great deeds:

*“ოღეს წაიკითხვიდეთ, მიქაელ ხუცესსა დაჰგოცვიდით და ნუ დაივიწყებთ”. (When you read this, pray for Priest Mikael and do not forget his deeds).*

As we have seen above, the Gospels were legally sacrificed to Samtsiro



Monastery by its owners – Pavle, Basil, Priest Mikael and the monks of Opiza. It is interesting to find out why Ioseb mentioned only one of these people – Priest Mikael in the final line of the Appendix.

It seems, Ioseb considered Priest Mikael as the grantor of the Gospels. That is why he asked the reader to pray for the priest's soul.

Lastly, I will try to identify the date of creation of the Appendix. As we have learnt from the manuscript, at the time of writing of the Appendix, Samtsiro was a functioning monastery. As mentioned above, the monastery was established between 1140 and 1160. Hence, the earliest date of writing of the Appendix is 1140-1160. As for the latest possible date of writing of the Appendix, it must be the year 1187 when the Sultan of Egypt Salah Ad-Din (1171-1193) occupied Jerusalem and destroyed/abolished the local Christian churches and monasteries.

Thus, the Appendix was written in the period between 1140s and 1180s, and the stories told in the manuscript took place in the same period.

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