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A UNKNOWN 10TH11-TH CENTURY STONE CROSS INSCRIPTION ABOUT KALONAPETRISDZE AND MIKAEL THE BLACKSMITH FROM THE CITY OF KARS (HISTORICAL KAR)

On the 4th of January, 2021 Natia Jimsheleishvili, a teacher, published a very important information on social media about a newly revealed stone cross in Kars and an inscription grooved on it which was accompanied by a colour photograph. According to Jimsheleishvili, a friend of hers sent the photo to her on New Year celebration days saying that the stone was found during the excavation process for house construction. Moreover, the addressee was assuming that the inscription grooved on the stone cross is written in Asomtavruli script is which is damaged, and it is completely impossible to read the inscription rigorously. She gives a preliminary decipherment of the inscription with the help of a specialist: "Saint George have mercy upon Mikael the Blacksmith" („წმინდაო გიორგი შეიწყალე მიქაელ მჭედელი"). Mr. Nikoloz Zhgenti, a historian and my college, has given me the information for which I would like to express my gratitude to him.

According to the colour photo, we can state that it is a very important discovery. More specifically, Mikael the Blacksmith's pleading prayer is written at the end of the inscription. However, before the prayer comes, another historical character is mentioned whose name is not visible due to the damage on the right side of the inscription. The surname is only partially read.

I am presenting a colour photo, an archeographic description, a copied original with keeping the script, and our decipherment:

The inscriptions are performed on a stone cross, namely on both sides and in the middle; Asomtavruli; five lines; cryptic signs - a short lateral line; no excision signs.

1. † ԲՁ ՂՂԿՂ...
2. ԿՆՆԿՍ--
3. ԺՂԾԾ
4. ԶԺՆԴ
5. ԶԾՇՆԴ

„†. ნ(მიდა)ო გ(იორგ)ი, შ(ეინყალ)ე, ... / კ(ა)ლ(ო)ნ(ა)პ(ე) ტ(ის) / ძე და / შ(ი)ქ(ა)ელ<ე> / მჭ(ე)დ(ე)ლი“.

As we read, some Kalonapetisdze and blacksmith Mikael ask for mercy and deliverance from Saint George. Taking into account its paleographic signs, the inscription must be dated to the 10th-11th centuries. An anthroponym Kalonapetisdze/Kalonapetrisdze is quite well known to Georgian epigraphy. To date, the distribution area of the surname has been the historical and geographical province of Kvemo Kartli (lower Kartli), whereas outside Georgia it was the Hnevank Church in northern Armenia and the inscriptions preserved in it.

We meet the surname Kalonapetisdze in the vestibule construction inscription of the Dmanisi Sioni published several times in Georgian historiography and the text is read as follows:

„† ს(ა)ხ(ე)ლითა || ლ(მრთისა)მთა და მ(ეო)ხ(ე)ბ(ი)თა || ნ(მიდი)სა || ლ(მრთი)სმშ|||(ო)ბ(ე)ლ(ისა)მთა, და(ა)მყ(ა)რ(ე)ნ ლ(მერ)თმან || მ(ე)ფ(ე)თა მ(ე)ფ(ო)ბ|||(ა)გ(იორგ)ისი, რ(ო)მ(ე)ლთა მ(ი)ერ || ლ(ი)რს ვ||იქმ(ე)ნ მე || [მ]|||(ი)ნ(ა)მ(ა)თი... ჭ(ე)ტ(ე)ვ|||(ა)ლ(ო) სი მ(ამათ)მ(თავარ)ი კ(ა)ლ(ო)ნ(ა)პ(ე)ტ(ი)სძე აღმ|||(ე)ნ(ე)ბ(ა)დ კ(ა) რ(ი)სბჭ(ი)სა ამის || ს(ა)დ(ი)დ(ე)ბ(ე)ლ|||(ა)დ . . . [მ(ე)]|||(ა)ლ(ო)ბ(ი) სა მ(ა)თ(ი)სა დ[ა] | მ(ო)ს(ა)წს(ე)ნ(ე)ბლად ცოდვ||ილისა ს(უ)ლისა ჩ(უ)ენისა, ბიძ(ა)ქ||სა ჩ(ე)მ(ი)სა ა. || ნტ(ო)ნს, მშ(ო)ბ|||(ე)ლ(ა)თა და . . . || ნთა ს მ(ათ)თათ(ვ)ს, | ლ(მრთ)ისა ს(ი)ყ(უ)არ(უ)ლისათ(ვ)ს ლ(ო) ც(უ)ასა || მოგ(უ)იწს(ე)ნ(ე)ნით...“¹

The text says that Tevdos Kalonapetisdze, a Dmanisi forefather, during the reign of King of Kings Giorgi, for the glory of the King, for the deliverance of his uncle Anton and his parents' souls, built the vestibule of the Dmanisi Sioni. One group of Georgian historians (Ekvtime Takaishvili) think that by the name King of Kings Giorgi goes Giorgi V the Brilliant and date the chronology of the inscription to his reign. Another group of research-

1 Epigraphic Monuments of Kvemo Kartli (Dmanisi) between the 5th-18th Centuries (Tbilisi, 2017), 168.

ers (Vakhtang Japaridze, Valeri Silogava, Giorgi Otkhmezuri) consider that King of King Giorgi was Giorgi IV Lasha, King of unified Georgia and date the inscription back to his reign – between 1214-1222 (Vakhtang Japaridze); 1207-1223 (Valeri Silogava); 1210-1223 (Giorgi Otkhmezuri). Besides, in the western annex to the main church of Hnevank we have an inscription of the gravestones of Father Kvirile and Father Ioseb Kalonapetisdze that belonged to the 13th-14th centuries.¹

During archaeological excavations of Kvirike Church of Satkhe in 2018, an epitaph of tombstone was uncovered in the middle of the floor of the northern chapel. Giorgi Gagoshidze considers that it belongs to some Kalonapetisdze and dates the chronology of the epitaph to the 13th century according to paleographic signs. In addition, he points out that the Satkhe Church belonged to this extended family (?) in the 13th century.²

Within the framework of the project “Kvemo Kartli Epigraphic Corpus” financed by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia throughout the spring and summer of 2019, we visited Kvirike Church of Satkhe in order to examine the inscriptions on the walls and in the interior. During the expedition, we scrutinized the church inscriptions along with the gravestone inscription belonging to Kalonapetisdze uncovered in 2018.

Here we can present an archeological description of the inscription, a colour photo, an archeographic description, a paleographic copy of the inscription, a copied inscription with keeping the original script, and our decipherment:

The inscription is engraved on a dark grey stone installed in the northern nave of the Satkhe Church; dimensions of the gravestone: 90x77cm; area of the inscription: 86,5x70cm; six lines; Asomtavruli; dimensions of the largest grapheme: R (7th grapheme in the 4th line) - 17x6,5cm; dimensions of the smallest grapheme: i (5th grapheme in the 3rd line) - 9,5x7cm; excision signs: a colon after almost every word; no cryptic signs; a few cases of excision and ligature.

Damage: the inscription is damaged. The beginning and the end are deficient. However, the remaining part is clearly read. We have restored the inscription text based on its fragments and context.

The inscription dating in the previous publications:
13th century (Giorgi Gagoshidze³).

1 Temo Jojua, Giorgi Gagoshidze, “Georgian Lapidary Inscriptions of Kobayr, Hnevank and Akhtala Monasteries”, The Proceedings of the Institute of History and Ethnology, Vol. XII-XIII, (Tbilisi, 2012/2013), 317-320.

2 Giorgi Gagoshidze, “Satkhe Monastery Inscription”, Archaospectrum, (Tbilisi, 2019), 58.

3 Giorgi Gagoshidze, “Satkhe Monastery Inscription”, ..., 58.

The basis for the inscription dating: Taking into consideration the date of the iconostasis (in “koronikon” 0ჟა, a Christian 532-year cycle), we define the chronology of the inscription as the second half of the 12th century.

Publications:

Giorgi Gagoshidze, 2019.¹

1. :†: სტეზეტ 'ნ'--
2. ႠႠ სტფზტႠႠ --
3. 'ს': 'ტ'რ'ე'ო'რ' 'ა'ა':
4. ზნონუეჟს:
5. ანტა: სყჟ
6. Ⴀნტტ: Ⴀსტ
7. -'ტ'რ'ე: აოა
8. --ს'ჟ'ჟ'ჟ'

“[†. სახვედითა ღმთისაჲთა | ესე საფრესი ჩვენი [ახ]ს ანტონ, ძველი კანონისვეგჰის/ძისაჲ. სიყვანის/უღისათვის ღმთისა | [რ(მ)]ცვისა მამინვენიძღვრეთ, [ა(მ)ნ]”²

As the decipherment shows, the gravestone belongs not to some Kalonapetrisdze but to Anton Kalonapetrisdze. We should keep in mind that Anton Kalonapetrisdze is the uncle of Tevdos the Forefather mentioned in the vestibule inscription, whom the vestibule ktetor remembers before his parents. This fact points to Anton’s high social status and verifies the new decipherment of the gravestone inscription from the Satkhe Church. Taking into consideration the date of the iconostasis uncovered during the excavation works in 2018, “koronikon” 0ჟა, corresponding to 1171 CE, proves that King of Kings Giorgi mentioned in the inscription of the iconostasis is Giorgi III, King of unified Georgia rather than Giorgi IV Lasha. Correspondingly, the gravestone inscriptions of Anton Kalonapetrisdze should be dated to the second half of the 12th century instead of the 13th century. Giorgi Gagoshidze, after stating the date of the iconostasis, points out that the aforementioned year – 1171 CE “completely changes the facts that have been existed up to now. It finally specifies the chronology of a certain group of churches and iconostases in Kvemo Kartli and that King

1 In his scholarly publication, Giorgi Gagoshidze gives: a) a location area of the inscription; b) a colour photo; c) an inscription fragment; and d) a historical and source of study analysis of the inscription (Giorgi Gagoshidze, “Satkhe Monastery Inscription”, Archaospectrum, (Tbilisi, 2019), 57-58).

2 Giorgi Gagoshidze: `...k(a)lon(a)petr(i)s Ze ...~ Giorgi Gagoshidze, “Satkhe Monastery Inscription”, ..., 58.

Giorgi in church inscriptions who was identified with King Giorgi Lasha is actually King Giorgi III~.¹

I share Giorgi Gagoshidze’s viewpoint and determine the chronology of the inscriptions in the Dmanisi Sioni vestibule between 1157-1184, during the reign of Giorgi III, King of unifies Georgia rather than during the reign of Giorgi the Brilliant (1214-1222, 1207-1223, 1210-1223) accepted in Georgian scientific circles.

Besides the construction inscription on the Gates of Dmanisi Sioni, the name of Tevdosi, episcopus of Dmanisi is also mentioned on the margins of the 12th-13th century mixed manuscript collection of texts (Jer. Geo. 19), preserved in the library of Jerusalem Patriarchate.

We present the colophons along with archeographical description, black-and-white photocopies,² the texts in original script as well as our reading thereof.

The 1st colophon is in Nuskhuri script, on 159 v of the manuscript; 4-line text; the Capital letter mani is decorated and conveyed by means of Asomtavaruli scrip; a dot or ellipsis are employed as separation signs, every several words.

1. *ჭაოუაქსნიე ა~ა. თღ~სი ძი~ძი*
2. *ე~თსუღძიქსძიე ძაძიუე*
3. *უეუთი ეძიბ რიუნიღეს*
4. *ეძინი: .: .:*

“Pray, o Lord, for Tevdosi father Kalonapetresdze, ktitor of this book, amen” (159v)

The 2nd colophon is in Nuskhuri script, on 169 v of the manuscript; 1-line text; the Capital letter oni is decorated and conveyed by means of Asomtavaruli scrip; a dot or ellipsis are employed as separation signs, almost after every word.

*ღე ძაოუაქსნიე. თსი. ძი~ძი. ე~თსუღძიქსძიე. ძაძიუეუეუთი.
ეძიბ რიუნიღეს:.*

1 Ibid.

2 We would like to express our gratitude to Vladimer Kekelia (scholarly employee, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts) for providing us with black-and-white photocopies.

“Lord, pray for Tevdosi father¹ Kalonapetresdze, the ktitor of this book” (169v)

These two colophons provide additional information on Tevdose Kalonapetrisdze’s biography. Previously we had just one inscription regarding the Episcopus of Dmanisi, from Dmanisi Sioni. Now we gave additionally the manuscript from Jerusalem, with two colophons mentioning mamadmtavari Tevdose Kalonapetrisdze//Kalonapetresdze, as the ktitor, i.e. orderer of the aforementioned manuscript. This demonstrates that Tevdosi mamadmtavari was one of the educated and prominent persons of his epoch. This is only natural, as he held the honorary seat of archpriest of Dmanisi eparchy. The colophons of the manuscript we have reviewed confirm that he held an outstanding position in church hierarchy as common person could not order a manuscript of such size. As we know, in medieval Georgia that remained a prerogative of exalted secular and ecclesiastic figures. Considering these colophons we can say that apart from construction works, Tevdosi Kalonapetrisdze, the mamadmtavari of Dmanisi, also committed to creating Georgian manuscript book. Presumably, the aforementioned manuscript collection of works was ordered by Tevdosi and then forwarded to some Georgian monastery in Jerusalem. However, at this stage of the research it is just a hypothesis. It is well known, that many Georgian manuscripts were composed in spiritual centres located in Georgia, and later were relocated to Holy Land due to various reasons.

Niko Marr’s description of Georgian manuscripts preserved in the library of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, including the aforementioned manuscript (#28) is remarkable. Niko Marr has presented short archeographical description of the manuscript, its contents and information on the orderer. The scholar has not dated this manuscript.²

Later on, the manuscript was described by Robert Blake, Niko Marr’s apprentice, American orientalist and Kartvelologist.

Robert Blake indicated in his description the manuscript’s ordinal number (19), its date, and extensive archeographical description, as well as contents. According to Robert Blake, the manuscript could be generally dated to the 12th-13th centuries timeframe.³

Later on, this manuscript was included into the scholarly work published in 2018, Georgian Manuscript Book Abroad („ქართული ხელნაწერი

1 It is noteworthy, that in both inscription on the Dmanisi Sioni Gate and in Jerusalem manuscript, Tevdosi Kalonapetrisdze, being the mamadmtavari, is mentioned by means of an abbreviated form of “mmi”. We cannot exclude that Ioseb and Kwirile, the representatives of the same family mentioned on the 13th-14th century gravestones of Hnevank temple, were also mamadmtavaris, and not just clerics.

2 NNiko Mari, A Description of the Georgian Manuscripts of Jerusalem, (Tbilisi, 1955), 65-66.

3 Blacke R., Catalogue des manuscrits géorgiens de la bibliothèque patriarcale gresque à Jérusalem, par R. P Blacke; Revue de l’ Orient Chrétien, III (XXIII), 1922-1923; 3-4, pp. 51.

წიგნი საზღვარგარეთ“), reproducing the dating of Robert Blake, i.e. the 12th-13th centuries.¹

Considering the chronology of the Construction inscription on the gate of Dmanisi Sioni, i.e. 1157-1184, it is no longer hard to specify when the manuscript Jer. Geo. 19 was created. We would constrict the timeframe proposed by predecessor scholars (Robert Blake, group of authors), and specify the creation of the manuscript as the 2nd half of the 12th century. The manuscript in question was created in the the 2nd half of the 12th century by order Tevdosi Kalonapetrisdze, of the abbot of Dmanis monastery. That means we have revealed one more previously unknown bit of information on Tevdosi Kalonapetrisdze, episcopus of Dmanisi in the reign of Giorgi III, monarch of the united Georgia.

The colophons of the aforementioned manuscript provide us with significant information on the anthroponymy of this prominent feudal house. Previously their family name was indicated in Georgian epigraphic monuments as “of Kalonape’s son [dze]”; of Kalonapetisdze [Kalonapetisdzisaï//Kalonapetisdzisaï]; Kalonapetisdzisaï”; however in both colophons of the manuscript the ktitors is indicated as father Tevdosi Kalonapetresdze.

¹ Georgian manuscript book abroad, compiled by Maya Karanadze, Vladimir Kekelia, Lela Shatirishvili and Nestan Chkhikvadze, edited by Nestan Chkhikvadze, (Tbilisi, 2018), 128.