

MINIATURES OF THE ARMENIAN GOSPEL OF QUEEN MLK'E AND GEORGIAN GOSPEL OF ADISHI: COMPARATIVE STUDIES ON ARTISTIC STYLE AND CODICOLOGY

Among a large number of Armenian and Georgian illuminated manuscripts there are two unique pieces – the Armenian Gospel of Queen Mlk'e and the Georgian Adishi Gospel, which reveal a high artistic level of performance of miniature painting and stand apart from the other manuscripts within the framework of national cultures. These two codices do not adjoin any stylistic direction or artistic school, but have a lot in common with each other. Thus within the framework of this essay I will try to show the commonality of the works, as well as reveal some aspects of the manuscripts in the term of artistic style and codicology.

These are the earliest Armenian and Georgian illuminated and dated manuscripts that came down to us. They were created at the same epoch, as their exact dates are mentioned in the colophons, which is exceptional especially for the early manuscripts. The Gospel of Mlk'e dates back to 862, the Gospel of Adishi was completed in 897.¹ In fact these are large-format codices: the dimensions of the Adishi Gospel are

1 There are also other dates of the Gospel of Mlk'e in the literature (ca. 904 and 922), which was caused by the difficulties of reading one of the letters in the Armenian chronology. See ՍԱՐԳԻՍԵԱՆ, Հ. Բ., *Հնագրական կարեւոր առեղծուած մը եւ անոր լուծման նախափորձը*, ի «Բազմավէպ» ԿԷ (1909), 433-441: Ա. ԴՈՆՑ, Ն., *Մլիթի աւետարանին գրութեան ժամանակը*, ի «Սիոն» 1936, 274-275: ՀԱՅՈՒՆԻ, Հ. Վ., *Մլիթի աւետարանին թուականը*, ի «Բազմավէպ» ԴԷ (1939), բիւ 3-5, 109-112: Ա.ԿԻՆԵԱՆ, Հ. Ն., *Մլիթի աւետարանը*, ՅԶԱ-Չ32 գրուած, ի «Հանդէս Ամսօրեայ» ԾԷ (1943), 23-38: ՃԱՆԱՇԵԱՆ, Հ. Մ., *Հայկական մանրանկարչութիւն*, Վեներտիկ 1970: ԱՆԱՆԵԱՆ, Հ. Պ., *Արծրունեաց տոհմին Աւետարանը Մլիթ թագուհիի անունով ծանօթ*, ի «Բազմավէպ» ՃԾԸ (1994), 117-130:

38 x 32 cm, while the current dimensions of the Gospel of Mk'e are 35.0x29.5 cm.^{2,3} At the same time it is known that the Armenian manuscript underwent restorations and the edges of the parchment have been cut off.⁴ So we can say that the codices are almost identical in size.

The manuscripts are named provisionally. The Georgian codex is named after the place of its discovery, which is the village of Adishi in the mountainous Svaneti, now it is kept in the State Historical and Ethnographic Museum of Mestia in Svaneti, under the catalog number M22.^{5,6} The Armenian Gospel received the name of the wife of Gagik I, the King of Vaspurakan, according to the colophon (not the authentic one, but the second colophon), where it is said that the royal couple donated the manuscript to Varagavank, the monastery of the Holy Cross (Surb Nshan) of Varaga in Vaspurakan (folios 147r, 222v).⁷ The Armenian Gospel is in the depositary of the Library of the Mkhitarist Fathers of San Lazzaro in Venice under the number 1144.⁸

The place of origin of the Armenian manuscript is unknown, since its colophon did not retain the relevant information (the original colophon has the traces of interference, it was deliberately erased) and its belonging to Vaspurakan was determined only due to the names of the royal couple. As for the Adishi Gospel, it was copied and illuminated in the Shatbert(i) monastery in Kgharjk (Klarjeti), according to the colophon.⁹ The historical

2 ШМЕРЛИНГ, Р.О., *Художественное оформление грузинской рукописной книги IX-XI столетий*, т. 2, Тбилиси, 1979; АМИРАНАШВИЛИ, Ш. Я., *Грузинская миниатюра*, Москва 1966.

3 The dimensions of the manuscript in the main editions on the codex are marked as the same, and only in the paper of T. Matthews and M. Orna they are somewhat different and mentioned as 33.5 x 28 cm. See MATHEWS, T. – ORNA, M., *Four Manuscripts at San Lazzaro, Venice*, in «*Revue des Etudes Arméniennes*» (1992), no. 23, 528.

4 ՍԱՐԳԻՍԵԱՆ, Հ. Բ., *Մայր ցուցակ հայերէն Ձեռագրաց, Մատենադարանի Մխիթարեանց ի Վեներիկ*, հտ. Ա., Ա. Ղազար, Վեներիկ 1914, 374:

5 Svaneti (Suania in ancient sources) is a historic province in the northwestern part of Georgia inhabited by the Svans, an ethnic subgroup of Georgians. Svaneti is the highest inhabited area in the Caucasus.

6 АМИРАНАШВИЛИ, Ш. Я., *Грузинская*, 62. աշխ., 13-14; ШМЕРЛИНГ Р. О., *Художественное*, 62. աշխ., 13:

7 ՃԱՆԱՇԵԱՆ, Հ. Մ., *Հայկական*, 62. աշխ., 21-22: ՍԱՐԳԻՍԵԱՆ, Հ. Բ., *Մայր ցուցակ*, հտ. Դ., 62. աշխ., 374:

8 ՍԱՐԳԻՍԵԱՆ, Հ. Բ., *աղբ*, 374:

9 The name of the monastery is of Armenian origin and consists of two words: 'շատ' many and 'բերդ' fortress.

backgrounds of the both manuscripts are extremely interesting and important, but I will return to it later.



Fig. 1 – Eusebian Letter, the Gospel of the Queen Mk'e, 862, Ms. 1144, fol. 2r.
Library of the Mkhitarian Order - San Lazzaro, Venice.



*Fig. 2 – Canon Table, the Gospel of Queen Mk'e, 862, Ms. 1144, fol. 2v.
Library of the Mkhitarian Order - San Lazzaro, Venice.*

Both manuscripts have miniatures and, as it is customary for early codices, they precede the texts of the Four Gospels. The texts are written

in a majuscule script. The headpieces are missing at the beginning of the Gospels, and the paragraphs are marked with simple initials which identify the early stage of the art of book design.¹⁰



Fig. 3 – Ascension, the Gospel of Queen Mlk'e, 862, Ms. 1144, fol. 8r.
Library of the Mkhitarian Order - San Lazzaro, Venice.

10 STONE, M. – KOUYMJIAN, D. - LEBMANN H., *Album of Armenian Paleography*, Aarhus 2002, 374.

The manuscripts are in different states of preservation. There are 393 folios in the Gospel of Adishi, and many of them are badly damaged (burnt edges or torn off parchment pages), and there are missing pages as well.¹¹ The Armenian Gospel is in a good condition in general. The pages are clean and smooth, but there is a gap as well. The Gospel of Mlk'e originally had 466 folios, as the colophon states, but only 461 now exist.¹² It means that five folios are missing, and only four of them probably were illustrated. Taking into account the current state of the manuscripts under discussion, let me present the sequence of the illuminated folios with an endeavor of a preliminary reconstruction of the missing sets.

The main idea of the pictorial cycle of the Gospel of Queen Mlk'e is obvious due to the eleven miniatures presented in the following order. At the beginning there is the Eusebian Letter distributed over three pages (folios 1r, 1v – 2r) (fig. 1), which are continued by three more pages with the Canon Tables (I-IV) on the folios 2 v – 3r, 3v (fig. 2).¹³ Then there is a gap of two missing folios which probably would contain four Canon Tables on the corresponding two opposite sides (4v – 4r, 5v – 5r). Taking into account this gap the full number of the Canon Tables would be seven, which corresponds to the tradition of illuminated gospels. Based on the codicological and iconographical peculiarities of the early manuscripts we can also assume that the cycle of the Canon Tables could terminate with a full-page Rotunda – Tempietto, as paired miniature to the last Canon Table.¹⁴ Such a conclusion comes from the arrangement of the last Canon Table that would be on the back side of the fifth folio (folio 5v) and always needs a closing composition, as the Tempietto (tentatively folio 6r)¹⁵. The Canon Tables and the Tempietto are followed by the Feasts and it is obvious in the case of the Armenian Gospel. Here the Feasts would be on the two subsequent and facing pages, such as the folios 6v-7r and 7v - 8r. From this tentative cycle only the last Feast, the scene of the Ascension of

11 ТАКАЙШВИЛИ, Е., *Адышское Евангелие*, in «Материалы по археологии Кавказа», (1916), вып. XIV, 7-20.

12 From one of the late colophons we also learn about the loss of one protective folio, therefore the four missing folios had illustrations and belonged to the first quire. See ՃԱՆԱՇԵԱՆ Հ. Մ., *Հայկական*, 62. աշխ., 60:

13 ՃԱՆԱՇԵԱՆ Հ. Մ., *Հայկական*, 62. աշխ., 61. 1-3, 4-6:

14 NORDENFALK G., *Die Spätantiken Kanontafeln*, Göteborg, 1938, 57.

15 WEITZMANN, K., *Die byzantinische Buchmalerei des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1935, 2-3; ШМЕРЛИНГ Р.О., *Художественное*, 62. աշխ., 132-133.

Christ has come down to us (folio 8r) (fig. 3).¹⁶ It continues with the portrait of the Evangelist Matthew on its back side (folio 9v) (fig. 4). Such a sequence of miniatures is consequential, providing a key to the reconstruction of the Georgian manuscript, since in the Adishi Gospel there is confusion and the folios are bound in a chaotic manner. Again, according to the iconographic tradition of early codices, the portraits of the authors of the New Testament come after the Feasts and end the general decorative system of the illustrated gospel.¹⁷

As for the portraits of the evangelists in the manuscripts of Mlk'e and Adishi, the latter are given in two iconographic types. Two of them are philosophers who are sitting and writing their texts (so-called Antioch type), and the other two evangelists appear as standing rhetors (so-called Alexandrian type) (fig. 4, 5, 8, 9).¹⁸

It can be noted with regret that the Gospel of Adishi has been greatly damaged, most notably the opening folios of the manuscript. Moreover, the illuminated pages in the first gathering/quire are mixed up, which is also noted by E. Takaishvili, who carried out a facsimile publication of the manuscript in the 14th volume of the series "Materials on the Archeology of the Caucasus".¹⁹ The pages of the manuscript are highly worn out at the edges and have traces of deep soiling (fig. 6, 7, 8, 9), some of them are lost. After a poor rebinding of the manuscript, the pages of the first gathering/quire were displaced, so the portraits of the evangelists moved forward and now are ahead of the Concordance Tables. The Gospel of Adishi opens with a *quatrefoil*, a miniature composition very beautiful in its forms and colors, but, unfortunately, poorly preserved. The vellum page is cut in half and sewn up with rough ties (the folio 1r) (fig. 6). The *quatrefoil* is in the center of the composition, and in the corners of the latter are the busts portraits of the evangelists. Only two of them, the images of Mark and John on the right are clearly visible. There is also a drawn copy of the page, made by S. Poltoratsky in the early 20th century.²⁰

16 ՃԱՆԱՇԵԱՆ Հ. Մ., *Հայկական, 62. աշխ., 64. 7:*

17 WEITZMANN K., *Armenische Buchmalerei des 10. und Beginnenden 11. Jahrhunderts*, Bamberg 1933, 6-7.

18 FRIEND A., "The Portraits of the Evangelists in Greek and Latin Manuscripts", *American Journal of Archaeology* (Special edition: *Art Studies. Medieval, Renaissance and Modern*), (1927), pp. 26-27; ШИМЕРЛИНГ Р.О., *Художественное оформление грузинской рукописной книги IX—XI столетий*, т. 1, Тбилиси 1967, 134-147.

19 ТАКАЙШВИЛИ Е., *Адышское Евангелие, 62. աշխ., 7-20.*

20 Idem, tab. 3.



Fig. 4 – Matthew the evangelist, the Gospel of Queen Mlk'e, 862, Ms. 1144, fol. 8v.
Library of the Mkhitarian Order - San Lazzaro, Venice.

The other side of the *quatrefoil* has no decoration, so Rene Schmerling was sure that this is the starting point of the Georgian Gospel and the *quatrefoil* is in its original place. This speculation is also supported due to the main principle of using *quatrefoil* in early codices, such as the Rossano



*Fig. 5 – John the evangelist, the Gospel of Queen Mlk'e, 862, Ms. 1144, fol. 10r.
Library of the Mkhitarian Order - San Lazzaro, Venice.*

Gospel (Gospels of Mark and Matthew, 6th century, Cathedral Museum, Rossano, Italy). Moreover, in another early Georgian manuscript, the First Jruchi Gospel, dating back to 940, copied and decorated in the same

Shatbert(i) monastery in Kghajk' (Klarjet'i), opens by *quatrefoil* which does not contain a text – there is only a late commemorative note along the edge, as in Adishi.^{21, 22} Concurrently, it is known that such *quatrefoils* are included in the headpieces of the Gospels of the Middle Byzantine codices.

Thus, in the Gospel of Adishi the pictorial cycle begins with the *quatrefoil* with portraits of the evangelists (fig. 6). Then, the Eusebian Letter are on the two sides of a folio. These will provisionally be folios 2v and 2r which are continued by the Canon Tables, the first set of which is lost too. Unlike the Armenian Gospel of Mlk'e, the beginning of the Concordance Tables, or rather two Canons on the folios 3v and 3r are missing in the Georgian manuscript. This is obvious from the currently existing five Canon Tables in the Gospel of Adishi, which together with the lost pages could form the traditional seven-folio series.²³ The existing five Canon Tables and the final Tempietto are placed on the three folios, namely on the pages 4r, 4v–5r, 5v–6r, 6v (fig. 7).²⁴ The current state of the Adishi Gospel, as I already noted, allows us to make a preliminary reconstruction of the first gathering of the binding using the method of comparative analysis. Taking into consideration that the opposite folio of the Tempietto is missing too, it seems that at least one Christological scene should be present here (provisionally the folio 7r), since the portraits of the Evangelists are located in a new double-page spread. But I will assume, that there could be two more Christological scenes, or Feasts on the next facing pages (provisionally the folios 7v – 8r). Among early well-preserved manuscripts let me consider the famous Armenian Gospel of Etchmiadzin (ca. 989, Ms 2374, Matenadaran Museum, Yerevan), with a similar sequence of miniatures. Here we have the Tempietto on the left side and the composition of Christ with Peter and Paul the apostles on the

21 Georgian National Manuscript Center, the former Institute of Manuscripts named after K. Kekelidze, the Academy of Sciences of Georgia, Ms H. 1660.

22 ШМЕРЛИНГ, Р. О., *Художественное оформление*, № 2. № 127-128; ШМЕРЛИНГ, Р. О., *Художественное*, № 2. № 20, 24.

23 Rene Schmerling assumed that all the Tables are distributed on the five folios, or they are compacted in five Canons. The author did not consider that there is a missing folio. ШМЕРЛИНГ, Р. О., *Художественное*, № 2. № 25.

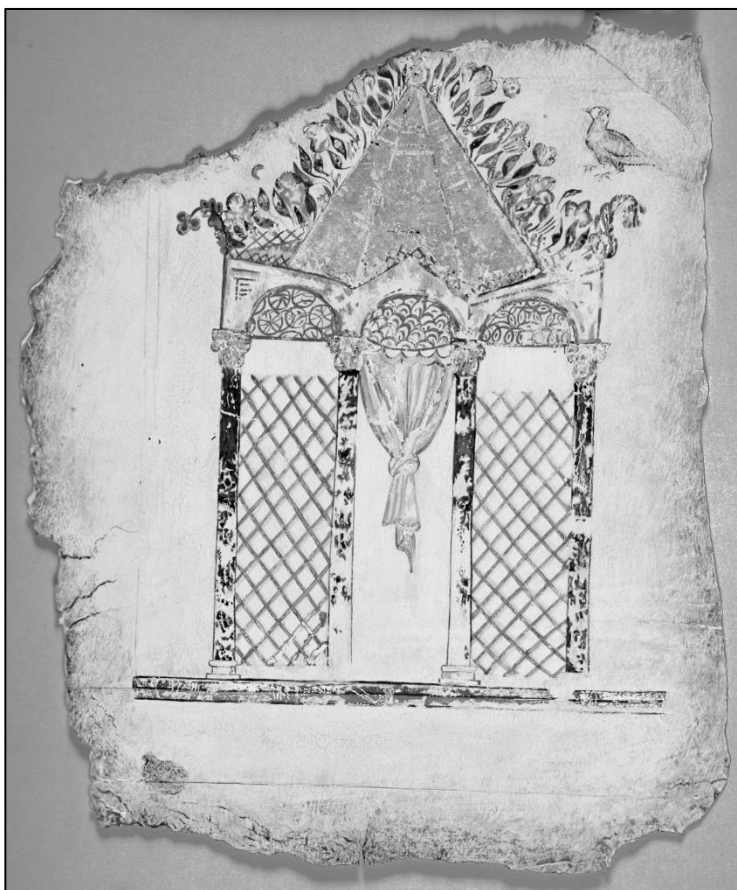
24 ТАКАЙШВИЛИ Е., *Адышское Евангелие*, № 2. № 5, 6; Амиранашвили Ш. Я., *Грузинская*, № 2. № 3-6.



Fig. 6 – Quatrefoil, the Gospel of Adishi, 897, Ms. M22, fol. 1v.
State Historical and Ethnographic Museum of Mestia, Svaneti, Georgia.

right side of the facing pages (the folios 5v – 6r) (fig. 10).²⁵ It continues with the portraits of the paired evangelists on the next double-page spread (the folios 6v – 7r). It seems to me that in Adishi there could be a similar sequence. In fact on the reverse side of the opposite to the Tempietto folio, now lost (provisionally the folio 7r), there should be the portrait of Matt-

25 КАЗАРЯН, В. – МАНУКЯН, С., *Матенадаран. Армянская рукописная книга VI—XIV веков*, т. 1, Москва 1991, 29, илл. 32-42.



*Fig. 7 – Tempietto, the Gospel of Adishi, 897, Ms. M22, fol. 6v (?).
State Historical and Ethnographic Museum of Mestia, Svaneti, Georgia.*

hew. On the facing page where there is the portrait of Mark the evangelist we can see the image of philosopher writing the sacred text (damaged) and as the two images were on the facing pages, so compositionally they are directed towards each other and have the same iconographic types (the folios 7v– 8r). However, only the portrait of Mark has survived from this pair (fig. 8).²⁶ On the reverse side of the folio, we can see the well-preserved paired portraits of Luke and John the evangelists, who are standing

26 АМИРАНАШВИЛИ, Ш. Я., *Грузинская, 62- ш2*у., илл. 2.

together in the pose of rhetors with the codices in their hands (the folio 8v) (fig. 9).²⁷ This is the approximate order of the illuminated folios in the Gospel of Adishi.



*Fig. 8 – Mark the evangelist, the Gospel of Adishi, 897, Ms. M22, fol. 6v (?).
State Historical and Ethnographic Museum of Mestia, Svaneti, Georgia.*

And now let me turn to the artistic peculiarities of the Armenian and Georgian manuscripts. The artistic level of the manuscripts is such that they deserve separate studies. Many years ago I have published an essay about the artistic origins of the illustration of the Gospel of Queen Mlk'e

27 ТАКАЙШВИЛИ, Е., *Адйиское Евангелие*, 62. 323, таб. 2; Амиранашвили, Ш. Я., *Грузинская*, 62. 323, илл. 1.

and suggested a new attribution to the manuscript.²⁸ Therefore, in this paper I will only give the main conclusions of my study and highlight the characteristic features concerning the two codices under discussion.



Fig. 9 – Luke and John the evangelists, the Gospel of Adishi, 897, Ms. M22, fol. 8v. (?). State Historical and Ethnographic Museum of Mestia, Svaneti, Georgia.

In the literature, a special artistic manner inherent in the painting of the both Armenian and Georgian gospels has been noted. But these manuscripts have never been compared or studied as a complex. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in the miniatures of the manuscripts there are strong ancient resemblances, expressed both in iconography and in the ar-

28 ՅԱԿՈԲՅԱՆ, Զ., *Անտիկ Աւանդույթների վերադարձները Միջին թագուհու աւետարանի մանրանկարներում*, ի «Բագմավեպ», ՃԿԷ (2009), 349-373; АКОПЯН, З., *Художественные и иконографические истоки миниатюр Евангелия царицы Млке (862 г.)*, «Лазаревские чтения», 4 (XXXV), 2011, 15-38:

tistic style.²⁹ Even if the miniatures of these codices do not exactly match in details and the different styles of the artists are obvious, maybe even the use of different archetypes. But the thing that unites them and, at the same time, significantly distinguishes them from other early manuscripts of the South Caucasus is the vivid impression of the ancient artistic style that exists there. In both cases, we can say that the codices were commissioned by a high-level or special order.

Let me examine some miniatures of the codices. The Eusebian Latter and Canon Tables, which are at the beginning of two Gospels, reveal similarities with the illuminated books of late antiquity and the early Christian era. All Canons are very slim and elegant, the arches lean on the architectonic columns with multi-profile bases and beautiful Corinthian capitals, and the columns imitate multi-colored marble with a complicated texture design (fig. 2).³⁰

This style especially distinguishes the Canon Tables of the Gospel of Mk'e. Above the arches of the Canons there are birds and twigs with pomegranates, and palm branches along its edges. In the decoration of some arches there is so-called rainbow ornament with a distinctive overflow of colors. Such an arch in this very style is at the beginning of the Canons in Mk'e (the folio 1r) (fig. 1), and at the end of the Adishi Gospel (provisionally the folio 6r). In other arches there is a twisted ornament or serpentine streamers. These are well-known motifs of manuscripts in late antiquity and the early Christian era, and the use of the latter bear witness to the familiarity of the artists with the works of that style and artistic level. The Tempietto, which symbolizing the Holy Sepulcher, in the Adishi Gospel is crowned with a golden cone-shape top (fig. 7). And in the lunettes of the Gospel of Mk'e we can see so-called Nile landscapes, a unique composition for the art of the South Caucasus (this is the facing folios 1v – 2r) (fig. 1), inherited from the iconographic tradition of Alexandrian Hellenism.³¹

29 АМИРАНАШВИЛИ, Ш. Я., *Грузинская*, 62. 221, 14; КАЗАРЯН В., *Черты эллинистических традиций в армянской миниатюре*, Античность и античные традиции в культуре и искусстве народов Советского Востока, Москва 1978, 166; ՅԱԿՈՐԵԱՆ Զ., *Անտիկ Աւանդոյթներ*, 62. 221, 363-670; АКОПЯН, З., *Художественные*, 62. 221, 20-32.

30 ՅԱԿՈՐԵԱՆ Զ., *Անտիկ Աւանդոյթներ*, 62. 221, 351-352:

31 НАМАРНЕН, В., *The River Nile and Egypt in the Mosaics of the Middle East*, The Madaba Map Centenary, Jerusalem 1999, 185-189; СУСЛЕНКОВ, В. Е., *Египетские мотивы и образ Земного Рая на напольных мозаиках в раннехристианских*



Fig. 10 – Crist with Peter and Paul the evangelists, the Gospel pf Etchmianzin, 989, Ms. 2374, fol. 6r. Matenadaran Museum, Yerevan, Armenia.

Nevertheless, the distinct character of the illustration of the two manuscripts is more pronounced in the portrait miniatures. If in the Armenian manuscript all four portraits of the Evangelists are well-preserved, in Adishi there is only a paired portrait of Luke and John (the folio 8vr) (fig. 9). It is noteworthy to highlight some particular features: the very

церквах Ближнего Востока, in «Византийский временник», 2011, т. 70 (95), 219-235.

young image of John the Evangelist in the Gospel of Adishi and the images of Matthew and Luke in the Armenian codex in tonsures (fig. 4), as if inspired from the images of the early Christian mosaics of Rome.³² The relations of the miniatures under discussion with early Christian art on one hand, and the miniatures of the Macedonian Renaissance on the other is obvious – for instance, the portrait of John the Evangelist (the folio 13v) in the codex Ms. 43 from the monastery of Stavronikita on Athos – due to the originally-designed marble book stands (*pupitre*) made in the form of animals, lion and eagle, as in the portraits of Matthew and Mark in the Gospel of Queen Mlk'e (fig. 4).³³

The color composition of the miniatures is also unusual. The colors and correlation of the latter in the miniatures are unique for the region. Thus, the richly decorated *quatrefoil* in the Gospel of Adishi is based on two main colors: the electric blue of the background and the deep cherry tone of the *quatrefoil* itself (unfortunately, partially damaged), which form a very resonating chord. According to R. Schmerling's description, it "amazes with the sound of its colors".³⁴ They combine with the golden color used for the halos, the covers of the codices in the hands of the evangelists, as well as delicately intertwining into the wide border of the *quatrefoil* itself and the decorative frame of the whole page (the folio 1v) (fig. 6). The names of the evangelists are written in vermillion. A limited use of golden can be noted in the miniatures of the Gospel of Mlk'e as well (initials, some architectural details, halos). The special coloring of the first folio with the *quatrefoil* in Adishi goes to the other miniatures of the Georgian manuscript, as the Canon Tables and portraits. The same resonating blue color of the background is used in the paired portrait of Luke and John, where it matches with the pink colors of the vestments of the evangelists (the tunic and *himation*) (fig. 9). They are complemented by delicate and deep nuances of green and creamy yellow. According to R. Schmerling, the coloring of the Adishi miniatures differs significantly from the colorings of other Georgian manuscripts and, it would be worth noting, they reveal resemblances to Hellenistic painting.

We can find the unusual compositions of coloring in the context of the art of the Caucasus in the miniatures of the Gospel of Mlk'e as well. These are different tones of pink tending towards cherry, resonating or

32 ՃԱՆԱՇՆԱՆ, Հ. Մ., Հայկական, նշ. աշխ., նկ. 8, 10:

33 Նոյն, նկ. 8, 9:

34 ШМЕРЛИНГ, Р. О., Художественное, նշ. աշխ., 21.

tinting blue and scarlet red, contrasting with purple (for instance, in the scene of the Ascension) (fig. 3).³⁵ If in the Armenian Gospel the paint layer is comparatively dense and sometime contrasting, in the Adishi Gospel it is lighter, airy, as if it transmits light (fig. 9). Due to this feature, there is a feeling that the miniatures are filled with light.

But it is not just a case of coloring. The miniatures of both manuscripts are characterized by clarity and lightness of pictorial techniques. Here a thin, sometimes transparent layer of coloring, as well as cursory and elegant brushstrokes are seen. The color modeling is very intensive, shadows and lightnings are given in a single session, and the contours are almost not highlighted. The illustrator of *Mlk'e* mainly used wide brushstrokes, therefore the drapery of the garments is unchained and looks like plastic molding (fig. 3, 4, 5). In the case of the Georgian miniatures, the modeling of the garments is given with the help of thinner and fractional lines, the folds accurately convey not only the structure, but also the movement of the figures. It is obvious that the artist has a good command of form and space (fig. 9). This style has very close resemblances with so-called impressionistic manners, inherited from works of late antiquity.

In the miniatures under discussion, there is great liveliness and immediacy in transferring the images which is facilitated by the use of right proportions, the slight turn of the figures, and dynamics in general – for instance, Luke in the Georgian miniature (fig. 9), and in the Armenian miniatures the Mother of God and the apostles in the scene of the Ascension, as well as Matthew the Evangelist could be mentioned (fig. 3, 4). Despite the fact that the backgrounds in the Georgian miniatures are neutral there is a sense of space which has been achieved thanks to the juxtaposition of the planes of different colors, as resonating blue and muted green, but especially due to the sharp rise of the horizon, which conveys liveliness and dynamics both to the space and figures (fig. 9). Such compositional “tricks” are present in the Armenian miniatures as well, where we can see a high horizon line and a strong foreshortening of the chairs and footstools in the portraits of the Evangelists (fig. 4, 5).

As the parallels to the portrait of the evangelists of the Georgian manuscript, images from the Syriac Gospel of Rabula, the Georgian First Jruchi Gospel (fig. 11), or the Armenian Etchmiadzin Gospel (fig. 10) are

35 CABELLI, D. – MATHEWS, T., *Pigments in Armenian Manuscripts of the 10th and 11th Centuries*, in «*Revue des Etudes Arméniennes*», (1984), т. 18, 33-47; АКОПЯН, З., *Художественные*, 62. աշխ., 27.

given. The Adishi and First Jruchi Gospels were copied and illuminated in the same scriptorium in the Shatbert(i) Monastery.³⁶ However, in the miniatures of Jruchi, the images and the style of illustration were apparently simplified. As for the images of the evangelists from the Rabula or Etchmiadzin Gospels (fig. 10), one could characterize the images as made in a more symbolic linear style, distancing them from the miniatures of the Adishi Gospel. At the same time when we look at the image of John the Evangelist in the Greek manuscript Garrett 6 (9th century, Princeton University) (fig. 12), one can find a very close resemblance.³⁷



Fig. 11 – Mark the evangelist, the First Jruchi Gospel, 936, Shatbert, Ms. H. 1660, fol. 92

(after: Амиранашвили, Ш., *Грузинская миниатюра*, Москва 1966).

36 ШМЕРЛИНГ, Р. О., *Художественное*, 62. աշխ., 13.

37 WEITZMANN, K., *The Study of Byzantine Book Illumination, Past, Present, and Future*, in *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art*, ed. WEITZMANN, K. Et al., Princeton, New York 1975, fig. 3.



Fig. 12 –John the evangelist, the second half of the IX century, Garrett 6, fol. 130r, the Library of the Princeton university, America (after: *The Place of Book Illumination in Byzantine Art*, ed. WEITZMANN, K. et al., Princeton, New York, 1975).

What unites the two Gospels under discussion? The gospels of Queen Mk'e and Adishi are connected by a common cultural and artistic environment belonging to the circle of Bagratid rulers. Thanks to the original colophon of the Adishi Gospel, we know that the Georgian ma-

nuscript was copied in the Shatbert(i) Monastery in Kgharjk'/Klarjet'i. This is the territory where, after the abolition of Arab rule in the South Caucasus, the representatives of the younger branch of the Bagratid princely family settled.³⁸ It is also known that the manuscript was copied by the order of Sofron, the abbot of the monastery itself. Sofron was, apparently, an extraordinary person, since he is mentioned in the biography of Gregory of Khandzta.³⁹ Moreover, according to recent studies, the Adishi Gospel is an independent recension of the New Testament, once translated, in the monastery of Sabbas the Sanctified.⁴⁰

This means that the origins of the Adishi codex, or its archetype, were related to the circle of one of the most important spiritual centers of the Byzantine in the east, and as it is known, there were monks from the South Caucasus there as well.⁴¹

Unfortunately, we know nothing about the background of the Gospel of Mlk'e. Its original colophon was partially erased, and the mention in the subsequent colophon of the names of King Gagik Artsruni and his wife Mlk'e linked the origin of the manuscript with Vaspurakan for a long time.⁴² However, according to my latest attribution, the Gospel of Queen

38 After the punitive campaigns of the Arabs on the ancestral lands of the Mamikonian princes and, as a result, their withdrawal from the historical and political scene, the representatives of the younger branch of the Bagratids (Armenian - Bagratuni, Georgian - Bagrationi) settled with hereditary rights on the territories of Tayk' and Klarjk'. By virtue of confessional (Orthodox Armenian or Chalcedonian) and political reasons, the younger branch of the dynasty later became known as the Georgian branch and used both languages. These territories were also marked by a mixed Armenian and Georgian population.

39 ШМЕРЛИНГ, Р. О., *Художественное*, 62. աշխ., 13.

40 OUTTIER, B., *Le martyre de Šušanik une hypothèse au sujet de la date des traductions Géorgiennes des Evangiles*, in «*Revue des Etudes Arméniennes*», (2020), no. 39, 593-597.

41 АРУТЮНОВА-ФИДАНЯН В. А., *Армяне-халкидониты на восточных границах Византийской империи (XI в.)*, Ереван 1980, 76.

42 ՄՏԹԻԳՈՎՍԿԻ, Յ., *Զարդարանիք Աւետարանի Միջին թաղանթի*, ի «Հանդես Ամսօրնայ», ԺԺ (1905), թիւ 2, 32; MACLER, F., *Notices de manuscrits arméniens vues dans quelques bibliothèques de l'Europe centrale*, Paris 1913; WEITZMANN, K., *Armenische Buchmalerei*, 62. աշխ., 4-8; ДУРНОБО, Л. А., *Очерки изобразительного искусства средневековой Армении*, Москва 1979, 171; ՀԱՆԱՇԵԱՆ, Հ. Մ., *Հայկական*, 62. աշխ., 21-22; DER NERSESSIAN S., *L'art Armenien*, Paris 1989, 80-81.

Mlk'e is most likely executed within the Bagratid kingdom of Shirak.⁴³ This assumption was confirmed within the *History of the House of Artsruni*, where there is a reference to the first wife of King Gagik, née Bagratuni, who was the niece of King Smbat I Bagratuni. But, unfortunately, her name remains unknown.⁴⁴ So it would be appropriate to assume that this codex ended up in Vaspurakan due to this short dynastic marriage and, most likely, came about in the circle and by order of the Bagratids of Shirak.⁴⁵

The epoch of Bagratid rule, which followed the period of Arab rule in the South Caucasus, was marked by a new cultural upsurge and close political ties with Byzantium.⁴⁶ That relationship coincided in turn with the founding of the Macedonian dynasty and the Macedonian Renaissance in the art of Byzantium. A great love for antiquity and for classical heritage formed a special artistic environment, receiving echoes in neighboring lands, including in the South Caucasus. Both works that are in the focus of my research – the Armenian Gospel of Queen Mlk'e and Georgian Gospel of Adishi – are the earliest examples of the manifestation or return to the early Christian classical traditions. They also mark the revival of local classical foundations which reached their apogee in the second half of the 10th century and were embodied in a number of works of high artistic level, including in architecture.⁴⁷ So, this period of the 9th-10th centuries went down in history as the cultural era of the Bagratids, that is the kingdom of Shirak, and the principalities of Tayk' and Kgharjk'.

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43 ՅԱԿՈԲԵԱՆ, Զ., *Անտիկ Աւանդոյթների*, ԳԶ. աշխ., 371; АКОПЯН, З., *Художественные*, ԳԶ. աշխ., 15-38.

44 ԹՈՎՄԱ ԱՐԾՐՈՒՆԻ, *Պատմութիւն տանն Արծրունեաց*, Իրտ. ԴԱՐԻՆԵԱՆ-ՄԵԼԻՔԵԱՆ, Մ. Հ., Երևան 2006, 254.

45 ՅԱԿՈԲԵԱՆ, Զ., *Անտիկ Աւանդոյթների*, ԳԶ. աշխ., 371; АКОПЯН, З., *Художественные*, ԳԶ. աշխ., 37-38:

46 TOUMANOFF, C., *The Bagratids of Iberia from the Eight to the Eleventh Century*, in «*Le Museon*», 1961, 74, 5-42; Idem, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History*, Georgetown 1963; ЮЗБАШЯН, К.Н., *Армянские государства эпохи Багратидов и Византия IX-XI вв.*, Москва 1988.

47 КАЗАРЯН, А., *Столичная школа армянской архитектуры эпохи Багратидов. Новый обзор развития*, in «*Вопросы всеобщей истории архитектуры*», вып. 8 (1), 2017, 87-116.

Ամփոփում

ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՄԼՔԷ ԹԱԳՈՒՀՈՒ ԵՒ ՎՐԱՑԱԿԱՆ
ԱԴԻՇԻԻ ԱԻԵՏԱՐԱՆՆԵՐԻ ՄԱՆՐԱՆԿԱՐՆԵՐԸ.
ԳԵՂԱՐՈՒԵՍՏԱԿԱՆ ՈՃԻ ԵՒ ՁԵՌԱԳՐԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ
ՀԱՄԵՄՏԱԿԱՆ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹԻՒՆ

ԶԱՐՈՒՀԻ ՅԱԿՈԲԵԱՆ

Հայկական Մլքէ թագուհու եւ վրացական Աղիշիի նկարագարող աւետարաններն երկու ինքնատիպ եւ եզակի յուշարձաններ են՝ իւրաքանչիւրն իր ազգային արուեստի շրջանակներում: Նրանք չեն յարում որեւէ գեղարուեստական ուղղութեան կամ դպրոցի: Միեւնոյն ժամանակ այս մատեանները շատ ընդհանրութիւններ ունեն միմեանց հետ, իսկ միասին՝ մեծ աղբրսներ ունեն անտիկ գեղարուեստական աւանդոյթների հետ: Աւելին, վաղ ձեռագրերի, այդ թւում այս երկու ձեռագրերի մանրանկարների կառուցուածքը հնարաւորութիւն է տալիս տեսականօրէն վերականգնել դրանցից մէկի՝ Աղիշիի աւետարանի պակաս թերթերն ու մանրանկարների հերթականութիւնը: Յայտնի է Աղիշիի ստեղծման վայրը՝ Կղարջի Բագրատունիների Շատրեր(դ)տ վանքը: Միեւնոյն ժամանակ Մլքէ թագուհու աւետարանի վերջին շրջանում վերագրումը Շիրակի Բագրատունիներին, թոյլ է տալիս տեսելու երկու նկարագարող ձեռագրերի ստեղծման ընդհանուր մշակութային միջավայրը, որ կապում էր Բագրատունիների հետ եւ արդիւնքն էր այդ միջավայրին բնորոշ դասական կամ անտիկ գեղարուեստական լեզուի եւ ճաշակի:

