

ATHOS AND CONSTANTINOPLE: REFERENCES AND NETWORKING (GEORGIAN EVIDENCE IN THE 11TH CENTURY)¹

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Abstract: TCHKOIDZE, Eka. *Athos and Constantinople: References and Networking (Georgian Evidence in the 11th Century)*. Georgians were the first non-Greeks to settle on Mount Athos in the 960s, the same period when Athanasios the Athonite built the monastery of the Great Lavra. Shortly afterward, in 983, they established their own monastery named Iveron/ Iviron. From the very beginning of its operation, it was the founders' strict desire to dedicate it to scholarly activities. It was set within a network of translation and literary centers throughout Byzantine Empire. As a consequence, Iviron acted as a source of influence for Georgian monks and intellectuals from Sinai to Georgia. While its connection with Georgian monasteries on the Black Mountain in Antioch and in Jerusalem has been well studied, scholarship has largely neglected the study of the cultural connections between the monastery of Iviron and Constantinople.

There is evidence that some Georgian manuscripts were moved from the monastery of Triantafyllou in Constantinople to Iviron. They were rewritten by Theophilos the Hieromonk, one of the most important Georgian scholars of the 11th century. In the article some colophons written by him at that Constantinopolitan monastery are analyzed. These colophons are the main source for understanding the literary relationships between these two monastic communities within the Byzantine Empire.

A separate sub-chapter deals with the references to Constantinople from two Georgian hagiographic texts written in Iviron. It is clear that *Basileuoussa*'s relevant term in Georgian was introduced and established by those texts.

Keywords: *Iviron Monastery; Hagiography; Constantinople; Eftymios, George, Theophilos (Georgian translators)*

Introduction - The Monastery of Iviron: General Outlines

The 11th century was paradoxically the best and the worst period for relations between Byzantium and Georgia. On the one hand, a diplomatic split and tension, which originated at the end of the 10th century, culminated in a war in 1021. On the other hand, however, the most important Byzantine-Georgian marriages occurred at this time: in 1032 Georgian king Bagrat IV (1027 – 1072) married the niece of Byzantine emperor Romanos III (1028 – 1034) Eleni Arguri and in the 1060s Martha (later Maria), the daughter of the same Bagrat got married to Michael Doukas, later on Michael VII (1071 – 1078)² and became the only Georgian queen of the Byzantine empire.

¹ I would like to thank Ugo Mondini and Alberto Ravani, for their kind invitation to contribute to the Byzantine Studies Conference of BSANA (Byzantine Studies Association of North America), which took place in December 2021. Moreover, I would like to thank them for reading this manuscript and for their valuable suggestions.

² Details about these diplomatic marriages, see the very useful monograph by Panaghopoulou 2006, 194-195; 201-216.

It is impossible to examine Byzantine-Georgian relations, especially during that period, without taking into account the monastery of Iviron generally, and particularly the reasons for its establishment, its history, and the important texts and manuscripts written and produced there in Georgian. All these issues are tightly connected to different aspects of Byzantine history as well. Georgians were the first non-Greek people to settle on Mount Athos in the 960s; almost immediately after Athanasios the Athonite built the monastery of the Great Lavra. In 983 they established their own monastery named Iviron (or Iveron, the monastery of the Iberians³) and its founders dedicated it to scholarly activities. Thus, it is one of the early Athonite monastic settlements dating from the end of the tenth century. Founded by a Georgian aristocrat, John Varazvache, and his close relative, a former general Tornike, Tornikios in Byzantine sources (John was his monastic name), it soon became one of the most well-organized and economically strongest monasteries of Athos.

The arrival of the Iberians/ Georgians demonstrates the prestige of Mount Athos. It is probable that John the Iberian knew Athanasios from Pontos. Athanasios' mother is believed to be from the Black sea coast area near Klarjeti (in historical Georgia, now in North Turkey).⁴ John's arrival would have taken place between 963, after the Lavra was founded, and 969. It was here that John met the emperor Nikephoros II Phokas (963 – 969) (Actes 1987, 20).

The uninterrupted history of the monastery since its foundation suggests that the library must also have existed continuously since that time, when books/manuscripts were surely part of the needs supplied by its own founder, the former general Tornike. His own scholarly interests may also have played a role in shaping the early library. As a consequence, Iviron acted as a magnet and source of influence for Georgian monks and intellectuals from Sinai to Georgia (Aleksidze 2021, 625-626).

The contribution of the monks of Iviron in the preservation of medieval Georgian and classical Greek literature is too well known to require discussion. Devotion to literary labor became, over the course of a few centuries, one of the greatest distinctions of the monastery of Iviron. It should be noted that the possession of a scriptorium or a library was the privilege of wealthy cloisters. During the Middle Ages "as the monasteries obtained more and more landed possessions and greater wealth, the monks abandoned physical labor in the fields for spiritual work and writing in the scriptorium, instead of being left to those unfit for other work, became the task of the most intelligent monks" (Edler 1931, 183).

The first books produced in Iviron were translated from Greek into Georgian even before the official establishment of the monastery. The manuscript dating to 977 (Doctrines by Basil the Archbishop of Kesaria-Kappadocia, #Ath. 32 (Gippert- Outtier - Kim 2022, 308-318) is regarded as one of the best examples of early Athonite translations, executed by Efthymios the Athonite (950s? – 1028), one of the greatest Georgian translators of all times. At the beginning, Iviron would also receive manuscripts from outside, from Southern Georgia's monasteries (Melissakis 2013, 75; Tchkoidze 2021, 370), mostly from Oshki. As a result of these attempts, many valuable MSS of the 10th century accumulated at Iviron monastery.⁵ The patron in all these cases was the same Tornike, (Metreveli 1996, 17), who, before leaving Tao around 970, was tonsured in the

³ For the names of Georgians in medieval Georgian and non-Georgian sources, see Tchkoidze 2011, 29-34.

⁴ From the relevant text analyzed below, it is obvious that John knew Athanasios before he settled on Mount Athos.

⁵ From many evidences, and especially the Synodikon Biblion of Iviron Monastery, it is obvious that books and manuscripts were offered to the monastery and were regarded as precious gifts in the subsequent period, even when the monastery had become a center of manuscript production (details, Tchkoidze 2021, 377-379). For details on the Synodicon Biblion, see Chronz 2024, 137-154, especially 137-138.

monastery of Oshki. He then went briefly to Mount Olympus. Later, around 973, Tornike moved to Mount Athos, where he settled in the Lavra of Athanasios together with John the Iberian, his son Efthymios, and other Georgians.

The influence of Iviron on the spiritual life of Georgia is immense. The Gospel, as translated by George the Hagiorite (see details about him below), remains the standard in church services to this day. Although the language of the eleventh century is archaic and differs from modern Georgian, it is not entirely alien to a contemporary listener (Grdzeliidze 2009, 49).

Two Georgian hagiographic texts written in Iviron in the 11th century

The monastery Iviron is not only the place that has preserved many valuable manuscripts, but also the place where some original hagiographic texts were composed. Specifically, at least two Georgian Lives were written and kept in the monastery. Both deal broadly with Athos generally and with different aspects of Iviron specifically. For this reason, they are regarded as the Georgian Athonite Lives.⁶

The author of the first one, entitled briefly the “Life and deeds of Saints John and Efthymios” („ცხოვრებაჲ ნეტარისა მამისა ჭუენისა იოვანესი და ეფთჳმესი და უწყებაჲ ღირსისა მოქალაქეობისა მათისაჲ, აღწერილი გლახაკისა გეორგის მიერ ზუგესმონაზონისა“⁷) is George the Athonite (1009 – 1065), a well-known translator from Greek into Georgian of many ecclesiastical texts. This text is his original work, which tells us about the foundation and the internal organization of Iviron, where John and Efthymios were the first abbots: John from its foundation until 1005, when he passed away, and his son Efthymios, who remained abbot until 1019, when he resigned in order to have more time for translating books from Greek into Georgian. In addition to describing Iviron’s foundation, its organization, first steps, and Efthymios’ prolific translating work, this *Life* touches on many interesting issues of the end of the 10th century. It is regarded as a valuable source for Byzantine history as well. The *Life* was written in 1042 – 1044.

In this text, the author, George the Athonite, attests that translation of any kind of theological works from Greek into Georgian – as well as reproduction and rewriting of manuscripts – was established as the main priority of Iviron. Specifically, he refers to some deeds of the first Georgians for which they deserve to be praised: “their deeds still proclaim loudly their activities and labour: <in the first place> this splendid Lavra adorned with every beauty and embellished by every jewel, built by those blessed fathers with great labour and sweat to <offer> rest for the souls of many. And inside <the Lavra> they erected churches, imitating the heavens, and filled them with **divinely spiritual books** and rendered them brilliant with honorable icons ... **They [the first Georgians of Iviron] adorned and revived our language and country with translations of the Holy Scripture**” (Grdzeliidze 2009, 54). As a matter of fact, in this short passage we find a formula for the foundation of a monastery in the Middle Ages. In these few sentences, we have a very brief description of the requirements which were necessary to satisfy in order to establish and build a monastery. The final requirement is intellectual labor (translation of books), which

⁶ There is also another Georgian Life, the *Life of Hilarion the Georgian*. There is ample evidence that at least the short version of the *Life*, the oldest one, was written in Iviron (Tchkoidze 2011, 44-48). In addition, in my opinion, even the cult of Hilarion the Georgian as a saint was created there (see details, Tchkoidze 2011, 41-43).

⁷ The text is cited from Life of John and Efthymios 1967, 38-100. The full title of the text in English is “The Life of our blessed fathers John and Efthymios, and the story of their worthy citizenship as described the poor Hieromonk George the Hagiorite”; English translation, Grdzeliidze 2009, 53-94; notes to the English translation, Grdzeliidze 2009, 165-175.

was determined by Iviron's founders as the monastery's primary mission. It is interesting that, according to George the Athonite's description, the creation of a strong economic basis was considered more important than a legal framework.⁸ Probably, this preference was not accidental. We can speculate that at the beginning of Athonite monasticism, it was more difficult to secure a regular source of income than to obtain an imperial consent.

This *Life* also contains elements of the Monastic Typikon, regulations for its ongoing functions.⁹ Especially extensive are references to monks' behavior in church during the liturgy. There are strong restrictions concerning monks' rights to have their own possessions, extra food, and certain special occasions, which can arise in any monastery. The Athonite typicons/or typica, at the beginning of organized monasticism according to the Georgian Athonite texts, constitute a large chapter that requires special attention and represents another topic for further research.

The *Life* under consideration also contains a series of information in terms of Byzantine ecclesiastical and monastic titles. As all of them are mentioned in their Greek forms (for instance, *oikonomos*/ οἰκονόμος, *epitropos*/ ἐπίτροπος, *kananarchis*/ κανάρχης, etc), but their functions are explained clearly in Georgian, the *Life* could serve as one of the most important sources for the study of Byzantine, especially monastic, titles.

There are a total of 86 Georgian manuscripts kept there (Chkhikvadze 2018, 188)¹⁰. The monastery's history and scholarly activities have been studied since the 18th century. Iviron's Manuscripts Catalogue, published by American scholar Robert Blake in 1931 – 32, is still regarded as the most complete codicological study.¹¹ The majority of translations were done from Greek ecclesiastical texts into Georgian. Due to the very fruitful translation activity of Efthymios the Athonite, the monastery became such an important center for Georgian texts that it had a significant impact on monastic and literary traditions even within Georgia. Efthymios is regarded as one of the most important translators from Greek into Georgian. It is worth mentioning that, among all Georgian translators who lived in different monasteries in Byzantium, Efthymios is regarded as the best translator from Greek and the best example to be followed. One of them who highly respected him was Theophilos the Hieromonk, about whom details will be provided below.

The second so-called Athonite *Life*, the *Life of George the Athonite* (full title „ცხოვრება და მოქალაქეობა წმიდისა და ნეტარისა მამისა ჩუენისა გიორგი მთაწმიდელისა“¹²), was written by his closest disciple George the Mtsire (literally 'the Lesser' or 'Minor'), who accompanied his spiritual father to all the places he visited during his lifetime: Antioch, the Black Mountain, Constantinople, Jerusalem, and Georgia. This *Life* holds a prominent position in Georgian hagiography. It is regarded as one of the best mediaeval Georgian texts. Moreover, it is one of the most extensive *Life* written in the Georgian language. The value of the text is not due solely to its high literary significance. It is a precious source for Byzantine history, as George the Athonite lived for most of his life in the Byzantine Empire. Some interesting topics in terms of Byzantine history include: diplomatic relations between Georgia, the Islamic world, and Byzantium; the role of the Georgian nobility in Byzantine political life in the 11th century; educational issues

⁸ He mentioned first: “<For the Lavra> they acquired villages and hamlets and monasteries and hermitages” and then, the founders “obtained long-lasting chrysobulls”. Grdzelidze 2009, 54.

⁹ This is the only evidence, as the early version of Iviron's Typic has not survived.

¹⁰ The most recent publication of MSS refers to the number of 95 (Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, xi).

¹¹ Chkhikvadze 2018, 188; Blake 1931-1932, 289-361.

¹² The text is cited from *Life of George the Athonite* 1967, 106-207. The full title in English is “Life and Citizenship of our holy and blessed father George the Hagiorite by George the Minor”, Grdzelidze 2009, 100; English translation, Grdzelidze 2009, 100-162; notes to the English translation, Grdzelidze 2009, 176-190.

in Constantinople during 1022-1034; the monastery of Iviron in the 11th century; the economic policies of the Byzantine court on the Holy Mountain during the same period; relations of the monks of the Holy Mountain with the Byzantine court; Byzantine ecclesiastical and secular titles; and more. This is the only Georgian source that mentions the arrival of the Georgian princess Martha, later Maria, in Constantinople in 1055, who became the spouse of two Byzantine emperors: Michael VII Doucas (1071 – 1078) and Nicipforos III Botaneiates (1078 – 1081).

This particular *Life* provides a broad range of Greek words that are used by the writer without being translated into Georgian. This linguistic study enables researchers to understand which Greek words and expressions acquired a prevailing presence in Georgian literature and society, and why. Their detailed study can reveal certain aspects of the Greek language and its pronunciation in the 11th century. On the one hand, it shows the extent of the influence of the Greek language and culture on the neighboring country, and, on the other hand, it contributes to the study of the development of the Greek language during the Byzantine period. Above all, it will enable researchers to draw some conclusions about how Greek was used as a foreign language by scholarly monks who lived in Byzantium. Furthermore, another stimulating point concerns the Greek names that dominated in Georgia during this period, which shows the spread of the Medieval Greek culture in neighboring Georgia. The rich phonemic system of the Georgian language helps to account for some specific features of the Greek language, which appear at the beginning of Modern Greek (Makharadze 2003, 3-4). Thus, Georgian hagiography as a whole offers valuable information for this type of study.

The most important information offered by this *Life* concerns the relations between the Holy Mountain and the Byzantine court. It sheds light on various aspects of the relationship between Athonite monasticism and the Byzantine court, such as the economic and political strategies adopted by the Byzantine state in these monasteries, including the types of taxes imposed on Athos. The text makes it clear that the most decisive factor in the development not only of Iviron but of the entire Holy Mountain was the emperor's endorsement. Without imperial backing, Athos would have remained a collection of insignificant hermitages. From the start, Athos was as much an imperial project as anything else. A series of emperors promoted the foundation and prosperity of the great monasteries through donations of estates and peasants, annual subventions, and tax privileges (Smyrlis 2024, 166).

George's abbacy (1044 – 1056) was the most successful period following the turmoil that Iviron underwent in the 1030s. During his tenure, Iviron re-acquired its initial intellectual function, established by its founders: translation of books, copying of manuscripts, and the enrichment of Georgian literature. Unfortunately, the positive results of his efforts were never again achieved at this monastery.

At the end of his life, George made a special effort to guarantee the presence of ethnic Georgians at Iviron by bringing from Georgia eighty people, mostly youths and orphans, to raise them in the spirit of the founders of the monastery so that they would continue the legacy for generations to come. The active Georgian presence in Iviron lasted only until the fourteenth century, when the Patriarch of Constantinople, Kallistos I (1350 – 1353, 1355 – 1363), issued a decree confirming its Greek ownership (Grdzeldze 2009, 49).

References to Constantinople: the “Life of John and Efthymios”

Both Athonite texts are rich in references to Constantinople. It is not accidental, as both Lives' protagonists were tightly connected to the imperial court. Thus, they visited the city frequently.

In the Life of John and Efthymios, the first reference to Constantinople is in the episode where John the Iberian was informed about his son's arrival to Constantinople as a hostage. He was forced to reveal himself and to go there from Athos: „ესე რა ცნა იოვანე ... სამეუფოდ ქალაქად აღვიდა“ (Life of John and Efthymios 1967, 43.19-20). Its English translation: „when Father John heard of this (that his son was brought as a hostage) he went to **the imperial city** (Grdzelidze 2009, 56). Generally, in this translation Constantinople, which is referred to as სამეუფო ქალაქი, is always translated as the *Imperial City*. The Georgian სამეუფო ქალაქი corresponds to the Greek *Βασιλεύουσα*/ *Basileuoussa*. In Georgian there is no grammatical gender. Consequently, there is no feminine form for this term. Thus, *Basileuoussa*'s equivalent in Georgian is Royal City. It is no surprise that Constantinople's prestigious title *Basileuoussa* was introduced into Georgian by these two Athonite texts. They were written in the Byzantine Empire, and their authors were familiar with Byzantine trends as no other Georgian writers were. In this specific passage the verb deserves special attention. The აღვიდა/ aghvida means 'to go up', i.e. from a lower point to a higher one. This verb is used in many other episodes of the texts, when someone goes from Mount Athos to the byzantine capital.

It is a well-known fact that in colloquial speech it was commonly referred to as just *Polis* (ἡ Πόλις) 'the City' by Constantinopolitans and provincial Byzantines alike. The same phenomenon is observed in the text under consideration. One example is Skleros' rebellion, where the author says: „... ვმელით კერძი ყოველი დაიპყრა და მეფენი და დედოფალი შეწყუდეულად იყუნეს ქალაქსა შინა დიდითა ჭირითა (Life of John and Efthymios 1967, 45.14-16). In English translation: „When there was the rebellion of Skleros, who had conquered the inland part of the country so that the emperors and the empress were detained and kept in the **city** in great hardship (Grdzelidze 2009, 57).

According to the Life, Efthymios was a supervisor of the Great Lavra. In ca. 1028 there was an acute conflict among its monks; it grew to such an extent that news of it reached the imperial court. The emperor Constantine VIII (1025-1028) „summoned Efthymios to the imperial court“ (Grdzelidze 2009, 87); in Georgian: „აღუწოდა მას სამეუფოდ, რადთა ყოველი ჭეშმარიტი ისწაოს მისგან“ (The Life of John and Efthymios 1967, 89.19).¹³

It should be emphasized that in this text Constantinople is always mentioned as the Royal City (*Basileuoussa*) or simply 'the City' and never as 'Constantinople'.

References to Constantinople: the Life of George the Athonite

The word 'Constantinople' is mentioned only in this Life and only once: „გიორგი კონსტანტინეპოლედ წარიყვანეს“ (Life of George the Athonite 1967, 118.3-4), when the Georgian feudal lord Peris' wife, „this worthy lady with her household¹⁴ was banished to Constantinople, where they remained twelve years“ (Grdzelidze 2009, 107).

In the entire Life, Constantinople is referred to either as ქალაქი სამეუფო (city royal) or სამეფო ქალაქი (Royal city), or სამეუფო (Royal).

It is worth mentioning that there is only one earlier text in Georgian where Constantinople is mentioned. It is dated to the 8th century: the Martyrdom of Abo of Tiflis by John Sabanis dze. There are two references: 1. In the grand city Constantinople/ „დიდსა მას ქალაქსა კონსტანტინეპოლისასა (Martyrdom of St. Abo 1963, 60.1-2). 2. „During

¹³ In this passage, and throughout both texts, it would be more precise to translate the term as 'Royal City' rather than 'imperial court'.

¹⁴ George was in her household.

the reign of Constantine, Leo's son, in Constantinople, in this grand city“/ „მეფობას კონსტანტინეპოლეს, ქალაქს მას დიდსა, ქრისტიანეთა ზედა კონსტანტინჴსსა, მისა ლეონისსა“. (Martyrdom of Abo 1963, 63.4; Latin translation in Peeters, 1934). In both cases the adjective დიდი/Grand can also mean 'large' referring to Constantinople's size. *Megalopolis* (the Great City) was one of Constantinople's prestigious Greek titles, alongside *Basileuoussa*. It is interesting that the 8th-century Georgian text reflects this tradition and uses the same title.

It is clear that a relevant term corresponding to *Basileuoussa* in Georgian was introduced and established by these two Athonite hagiographic texts. After these texts, a vivid example of use of the term *Basileuoussa* in Georgian appears in the colophon on the MS #20: „ქალაქსა შინა სამეფოსა კონსტანტინეპოლეს“/“In the Royal City of Constantinople” (Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 224).

Networking Iviron with Constantinople

The monastery of Iviron was set within a network of translation and literary centers in the Byzantine Empire. Its connections with Georgian monasteries in Georgia, as well as on the Black Mountain near Antioch and in Jerusalem, have been well investigated by scholars. Iviron's Georgian manuscripts and their colophons¹⁵ enable us to observe these networks. There are at least three monasteries in southern Georgia (in present-day Turkey: Oshki, Khakhuli, Otkhta) that were connected with Iviron.

As for Constantinople, it is well known that members of many Byzantine monasteries were consistently present in the capital throughout the Middle Ages. Athos was no exception, since its communities were in frequent contact with the authorities.¹⁶ The presence of Athos in the economic and ecclesiastical affairs of Constantinople was fueled by the monasteries' relationships with the imperial family and with the elites (Melvani 224, 3). Iviron was no exception, since its abbots' close relationships with the court are mentioned in several sources. For practical reasons, it would have been very helpful for Iviron's abbots to have a place to stay in the capital, but we have no evidence for this. In the 14th century, when it became common for Athonite monasteries to acquire landholdings in Constantinople, Iviron's economic situation was critical, and this was probably the reason why it never acquired a metochion there.

Analyzing two Georgian Athonite texts, it is clear that the monastery of Iviron was closely connected to Constantinople from its very beginning. This connection was primarily practical. Abbots of the monastery frequently visited the court, either to meet with high-ranking Byzantine officials (including the emperor himself) or with members of the Georgian royal and feudal houses hosted by the court. There is no systematic study of the cultural connections between Iviron and Constantinople. A main source for such connections is Georgian manuscripts that were moved from Constantinople to Iviron. The place where they were produced is mentioned as the monastery of Triantafyllou.

¹⁵ Georgian colophons are a valuable source for studying different aspects of medieval history, literature, and culture, as they are often extensive texts spanning two, three, or even more pages.

¹⁶ The Great Lavra, Vatopedi and Hilandar acquired landholdings in the capital during the Palaiologan period (Melvani 2024, 44-48).

Theophilos Hieromonk: a link between Iviron and Constantinople

The first manuscript which should be mentioned in this regard is the Iviron MS #20 dated to 1081 (Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 208-229). According to its colophon, it was created in Constantinople by Theophilos the Hieromonk, and it is his autograph. It contains the readings for September from the collection of Symeon Metaphrasis. In addition, there is a colophon, an extensive prologue, and many notes made by Theophilos himself. Their content is diverse: when he started to translate, who motivated him to translate, who financed the manuscript, biographical data, prayers, poems, etc. For Byzantine studies in general, the most important part is the prologue, where the author refers to the work of Symeon Metaphrasis and explains why Theophilos translated those hagiographic texts into Georgian, providing important information about this significant literary movement in Byzantium at the end of the 10th century.

In the colophon, besides Theophilos, the translator, two more Georgians are mentioned; they lived in the monastery of Triantafyllou and participated in producing the manuscript under consideration. They were Sabba, who produced the cover, and Khristodule, who decorated it (Chkhikvadze 2018, 201; Kartul khelnatserta aghtseriloba 1986, 63; Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 225). Both were hieromonks, like Theophilos (Menabde 1980, 249). The manuscript under consideration contains 25 Lives of Saints for September, corresponding to its original Greek (details in Høgel 2002, 114).

In one of the prayers written by Theophilos and included in the manuscript, there is a reference with gratitude to the Georgian King George II (1072 – 1089). Theophilos prays that God grant him strength and a long life (Kartul khelnatserta aghtseriloba 1986, 71; Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 224). The same king is also mentioned in a poem included in the manuscript. George II was the brother of Maria, a Byzantine empress twice over. In one note of the same manuscript (#20), there is a reference to Maria herself. According to it, she paid the expenses of the manuscript (Kartul khelnatserta aghtseriloba 1986, 65; Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 221).

Theophilos the Hieromonk (in Georgian თეოფილე ხუცესმონაზონი/ Khutses-monazoni = priest-monk), a Georgian scholar who lived in the 11th century in Constantinople, is completely unknown outside Georgia. Information about his biography is extremely scarce, and the main sources are his colophons. There are four such manuscripts that contain some details of his life, three of which are preserved at Iviron: 1. MS #20 (mentioned above), MS #29 (11th c., Exegesis of the Old Testament, Book of Genesis, by John Chrysostom, (Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 281-293) and MSS #36-37 (11th c. Metaphrastic Lives of November (Kartul khelnatserta aghtseriloba 1986, 99-103; Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 355-362); The fourth manuscript is kept at the K. Kekelidze Center of MSS in Tbilisi (Collection A, #1105).

In the colophon of the MS #29 Theophilos refers to George the Athonite as his spiritual father, “who reared me” (Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 290). Theophilos mentions himself as a “poor, weak, foreigner and orphan”. He expresses great gratitude to the parents of George, Mariam and Jacob (Gippert – Outtier – Kim 2022, 223). In Georgian scholarship, there is an opinion that since Theophilos was an orphan (mainly based on this information), George’s parents raised him and later entrusted him to their son. As mentioned, George the Athonite studied in Constantinople for 12 years, from 1022 to 1034. In 1034 he returned to Georgia, and probably George and Theophilos met each other that year (Metreveli 1996, 228). George was likely the person who brought Theophilos to Constantinople, oversaw his education, and remained the living link between Theophilos and the monastery of Iviron. This is all that is known about him.

All three MSS (#20, #29 and #36-37) kept in Iviron contain Theophilos’ translations and all of them are his autographs. These MSS have never been rewritten; they were created especially for Iviron (Makharashvili 2002, 84). It should be emphasized that, wanting to do something

special for Iviron, Theophilos translates exclusively Metaphrastic Lives. This extremely interesting literary movement was probably much popular in Constantinople than on the Holy Mountain, and he wanted to keep his compatriot Georgians up to date. Theophilos' Prologue to the September's Metaphrastic Lives is a very important source on Symeon Metaphrastic's work and method. He notes that in Byzantium those 12 volumes by Symeon were read and respected like the Holy Gospel (Kartul khelnatserta aghtseriloba 1986, 75-76). In the same text, he wonders: if those 12 volumes were so important, why did Efthymios and George the Athonites not translate them? The formulation of this question reveals that Theophilos regarded Efthymios and his spiritual father George as the greatest Georgian translators from Greek. He himself provides an answer: when a man suffers from hunger and has no bread to eat, he cannot look for luxury food. Similarly, Efthymios and George had to translate texts as essential as the bread is for the everyday diet. This is why they did not translate many texts from the Metaphrastic collection (Kartul khelnatserta aghtseriloba 1986, 76). However, it is important to mention that, in fact, both had translated some Metaphrastic texts, nearly 10 Lives each (Makharashvili 2002, 81). Consequently, we can assume that Theophilos either did not know about these translations or regarded them as too few to be mentioned. From the same prologue, it is evident that Theophilos was well informed about other Georgians' translation activity, especially at Iviron. In MS #20, he even inserted a few translations by Efthymios with relevant notes (Makharashvili 2002, 83).

MS #20 is the only manuscript that mentions the monastery of Triantafyllou as its place of creation. Although little is known, its name (τριαντάφυλλο), which in Greek means 'rose', might indicate a dedication to the Holy Virgin. This is clearly underlined in the colophon, although it does not specify which feast it was dedicated to: the Annunciation, Dormition, Nativity, or Entrance. Nothing is known about the location of the monastery of Triantaphyllou. No one has studied this issue in detail. Even Prof. Levan Menabde, who analyzed all Georgian monasteries outside Georgia in depth, provides no information about its possible location (Menabde 1980, 249-250).

The monastery of Triantaphyllou could possibly be identified with the Gül (Rose) Mosque in Istanbul. The Rose, or Gül, Mosque is located on the Golden Horn. Formerly a Byzantine church, it is regarded by some scholars as the Church of Euphemia, built during the rule of Basil I (867-886), and later rededicated to St. Theodosia, a local saint martyred during the iconoclast riots. A later date of construction, between 1000 and 1150, has also been suggested, identifying the church as Christos Euergetes. The origin of the Turkish name is equally uncertain but is attributed to a Muslim saint named Gül Baba, the alleged owner of the grave located inside the southern pier. It is not known whether the church remained in use after 1453 (Gül Mosque, Istanbul, Türkiye; ArchNet internet resource). Thus, there is no direct or indirect evidence to identify any monument in Istanbul with the monastery of Triantafyllou.

Speaking about the network between these two Georgian monasteries on Athos and in Constantinople, it is logical to wonder whether Theophilos had visited Iviron. Nothing is known about this, and there is no hint in the colophons written by Theophilos. However, it can be suggested that he may have stayed there for a while during George the Athonite's abbacy at Iviron (1044-1056), as George was Theophilos' spiritual father.

Conclusions

To sum up, the information provided in this paper illustrates the connection between Iviron and Constantinople generally, as well as the scholarly link between two Georgian monasteries: one in the Byzantine capital and one in its most important monastic center, Mount Athos. The main

sources for this topic are two Georgian hagiographic texts written at Iviron and the colophon of the MS #20.

The hagiographic Lives analyzed in the article are the richest in terms of references to Constantinople. They make it clear that the capital's title Basileuoussa in Georgian was introduced and established by these texts.

The colophon of MS #20 indicates that it was produced in Constantinople to be offered to the monastery of Iviron. The translator of the Lives included in this manuscript, and the author of the colophon, is Theophilos the Hieromonk, the most important scholar living in this Constantinopolitan Georgian monastery. Biographical data about him is extremely scarce, and there are only a few studies about this important figure. The only sources are the colophons he wrote for his manuscripts. However, we do know that he lived in the 11th century and was well acquainted with Efthymios' work. At present, Theophilos and his translation methods are still under investigation. In fact, he has never been compared with Efthymios or Ephrem Mtsire, who are, on the contrary, widely studied. The above-mentioned colophons and their analysis enable a first attempt to understand the literary relationships between the two Georgian monastic communities within the Byzantine Empire. One of them was situated in the capital, and the other was slightly farther away, on the Holy Mountain. It is interesting that, in monastic terms, the latter was the center of monastic activity. It is also important to underline that Theophilos' living connection to Iviron was his spiritual father, George the Athonite, who by 1081 had already passed away. Nevertheless, Theophilos maintained his contacts with Iviron.

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