

# Medieval Bread Stamps from Antioch and Georgia

by

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*To Alexandre (Lali) Djavahišvili*

During the summer campaign excavations of 1964 conducted in the monastery of Saint Barlaam on Mount Kasius near Antioch on-the-Orontes two bread stamps were found in a niche in room no. 51<sup>1</sup>. One of them was a Georgian bread stamp (figs. 1-3) used for the preparation of eucharistic cakes (სეგის კუერი). It is carved out of soft fine-grain limestone. Total h. 0.076 m. of mold proper, 0.033 to 0.037 m. Diam. of the circular stamp (fig. 1) is 0.164 m. of the handle (fig. 3) located in the center 0.064 m. (top) 0.043 m. (bottom). Engraved on the upper circular surface of the stamp's handle are two crossed triangles<sup>2</sup> within two crossed squares<sup>3</sup>, the first forming a hexagram and the second an octagram. The entire composition is encompassed by a circle<sup>4</sup>. The inner circle of stamp's face (figs. 1, 2) is symmetrically divided into twelve evenly sized squares arranged in the form of an equal-armed cross and eight triangles which fill the space between the crossarms. The four central squares constitute the lamb<sup>5</sup> (საუფლოდ). Each

<sup>1</sup> W. Djobadze, "Third Campaign in the Monastery of St. Barlaam", *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi*, XIV 1-2 (Ankara 1967), 128f., fig. 10.

<sup>2</sup> This geometric form could have dogmatic significance symbolizing the Trinity and the two natures of Christ, perhaps a reflection of the resistance of the Georgian church to the revival of Arianism as literary sources attest (M. Tarchnišvili, *Geschichte der kirchlichen georgischen Literatur, Studi e Testi* 185 [Rome 1956] 373f.; W. Djobadze, *Materials for the Study of Georgian Monasteries in the Western Environs of Antioch-on-the-Orontes*, CSOC, Subsidia 48 [Leiden 1976] 62). See also the reverse inscription on the eucharistic bread stamp from Çalka (*infra* p. 170).

<sup>3</sup> The intersecting squares could signify the body of Christ which at the incarnation consisted of four elements (G. Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy* [Wisconsin 1970] 87; J. M. Hanssens, *Institutiones Liturgicae de ritibus Orientalibus* 3 [Rome 1932] 310; PF. 155 p. 265).

<sup>4</sup> Octagram circumscribed by a circle could have the symbolic allusion of perpetuity (F. Dölger, "Die Symbolik der Achtzahl in der Schriften des Ambrosius" in *ACh* IV-3 (1934) 160ff.; K. Schneider in *RAC* I (1950) s.v. *Achtzahl*) attained by the Eucharist and thus aptly affirming Christ's words: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John VI-51), "Whose eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day", (*ibid.*, VI-54), "This is that bread which came down from heaven: ... he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever". (*ibid.*, VI-58).

<sup>5</sup> For the definition of lamb see J. M. Hussey, P. A. McNaulty, *Nicholas Cabasilas, A Commentary of the Divine Liturgy* (London 1960) 2-4, 18; Galavaris, *op. cit.*, 65.



of these four squares contains one engraved word arranged in the following manner :

ი(ესო)ჰ	ქ(რისტ)ე
ძე	ლ(მროთის)ა

“Jesus Christ Son (of) God.”

This inscription differs from the usual Byzantine formula  $\text{ΙΧ ΧΣ ΝΙ ΚΑ}$  but does not conflict with it since it too affirms both the triumph of Christ and his divinity which is partaken by the faithful through the eucharist. However, we should point out that the formula for our lamb inscription seems to be unique among Georgian eucharistic bread stamps and elsewhere occurs only twice; once in Panopolis (Egypt) on a terracotta stamp bearing the inscription  $\text{Ι(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς υ(ιὸ)ς θ(εο)ῦ}$  which is assigned to the sixth or seventh century<sup>6</sup>, the second on a greenish basalt seal found Mécérian in the monastery of Saint Symeon Stylites the Younger. This object, which seems to me to be a medieval breadstamp, bears on its face an inscription :  $\text{Ι(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς θ(εο)ῦ υ(ιὸ)ς}$  similar to that of Panopolis<sup>7</sup>.

Another typical feature of our bread stamp is the variety of geometric forms carved on its face. The right crossarm consists of two squares, each divided into four equilateral triangles by a diagonal cross (*crux decussata*), while the remaining crossarms are filled with four-petalled rosette patterns. These geometric shapes and the eight triangles placed between the crossarms reflect the carver's conscious intention to differentiate the geometric forms on the face of the bread stamp in accordance with the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, where during the anaphora the square lamb (საუფლო) which symbolizes the body of Christ is extracted from the loaf of bread and placed in the center of the paten while the triangular portion known as the All-Holy (ყოვლად-წმიდისა), which emphasizes the role of Mary in the incarnation,

<sup>6</sup> R. Forrer, *Die frühchristlichen Altertümer aus dem Gräberfelde von Achmim-Panopolis* (Strassburg 1893) 14, pl. ix-6. This stamp is briefly discussed by F. Dölger, “Heidnische und christliche Brotstempel mit religiösen Zeichen”, *Antike und Christentum*, I (Münster 1929) 23, and more extensively by Galavaris, *op. cit.*, 73-75.

<sup>7</sup> J. Mécérian, “Les inscriptions du mont admirable”, *MUSJ* 38 (1962) 304.



is placed on the right side of the lamb. Similarly, one-third of the oblation consisting of nine triangular sections, known as nine orders (წმიდისაჲ) are placed on the left side of the lamb and the portions commemorating the living and dead are extracted and placed below the lamb<sup>8</sup>. The grooves of these geometric forms which are 0.005 to 0.007 m. deep have a practical function. They facilitate the division of the bread into several portions.

As in the lamb, the main circular inscription of the stamp is executed in Georgian uncial letters (mrgvlovan). It begins on the left corner of the crosses' upper arm and continues to the right around the entire edge of the stamp. It reads:

«— შეიწყნარე: ოცვალო: ღმერთო: ჩუენო: შესაწირავი: ესე: მესოცებ(ი)თა: წმიდის: ღმერთის: მშ(ო)ბ(ე)ლისა: და: მარადის: ქალწ(უ)ლისა: მარ(ი)ამ(ი)ს:»

“O Lord our God, accept this offering through the intercession (of the) Holy Mother of God and the Ever-Virgin Mary”.

All the words are divided by a colon<sup>9</sup> except the first which ends with three vertically arranged dots. Punctuation was mistakenly omitted between და and მარადის (and ever). Instead, these two words are ligated — a minor error for a mason carving the letters in the negative. The text of the inscription derives word for word from the liturgy of Saint John the Chrysostom<sup>10</sup> and reflects the two natures of spiritual sacrifice — eucharistic and supplicatory. It is narrated by the priest during the ceremony when the section of the bread called All-Holy (ყოვლად წმიდისაჲ) is cut out and placed on the paten (ფეშხუჭმი) as described above. In mentioning the Mother of God as intercessor and by directly alluding to the eucharist, this bread stamp inscription is unique.

The iconography of our bread stamp and the content of its main inscription verify two points — it was used for the preparation of eucharistic (not

<sup>8</sup> The preparation of the Holy prothesis is exhaustively discussed by Galavaris (*op. cit.*, 62-69, fig. 35); see also J. M. Hussey and P. A. McNulty (*op. cit.*, 2-14, 18). For commentaries on the anaphora and its symbolism see H. J. Schulz, *Die byzantinische Liturgie* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1964) 195-198, and Galavaris, *op. cit.*, 86-87). Instructions for the preparation of the Holy prothesis are given also in a Georgian redaction of John Chrysostom's liturgy (M. Tarchnišvili, *Liturgiae Ibericae Antiquiores, Scriptores Iberici*, CSCO 122 (Louvain 1950) 64-65).

<sup>9</sup> In regard to punctuation marks introduced by Ep'rem Mcire, which are evident in our inscription by the use of semicolons to separate words see I. Djavahišvili, *Kart'ul damçerlobat' amcodneoba anu paleograp'ia* (Tbilisi 1926) 142.

<sup>10</sup> M. Tarchnišvili, *Liturgiae Ibericae Antiquiores*, CSCO 122 (Louvain 1950) 64. For pertinent passages regarding the Greek text see F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western I* (Oxford 1965) 363, 365.



eulogia) cakes<sup>11</sup> and it was carved in accordance with the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom.

To date this bread stamp we have reliable literary and archaeological evidence confirming that Georgian monks inhabited Barlaam's monastery on Mount Kasius from the end of the tenth century until the devastating raids of Bibar's armies in 1268 when the monastery was completely destroyed never again to be revived<sup>12</sup>. In addition it is known that towards the middle of the eleventh century the Georgian church substituted the Oriental or Saint James liturgy for the Byzantine or Saint John Chrysostom's liturgy<sup>13</sup> and our stamp, despite its lamb inscription, follows John Chrysostom's formula. Consequently, it should have been produced between the end of the tenth century and 1268. This chronological span however can be narrowed considerably by several paleographic indications contained in the inscription of our stamp:

1. The letter **Ⲇ** (d) has no neck; instead the circular body of the letter narrows towards the top and is surmounted by a horizontal line.
2. Occasionally letters overlap each other as **ⲕⲥ** (čn), **ⲙⲙ** (rm).
3. Sometimes the open space of one letter is filled in with another as **ⲥ** (sa), or one letter is incorporated by another as in **Ⲇ** (da).

These characteristics are common in the late twelfth to thirteenth century as is evinced by inscriptions on Georgian silver repoussé icons<sup>14</sup>. Therefore it seems reasonable to place the stamp towards the middle of the thirteenth century.

Despite the singular peculiarities mentioned above our stamp is not without precedent. Very close to our specimen and perhaps its only parallel is a Greek eucharistic bread stamp of Sinai (figs. 4, 5) which bears similarities

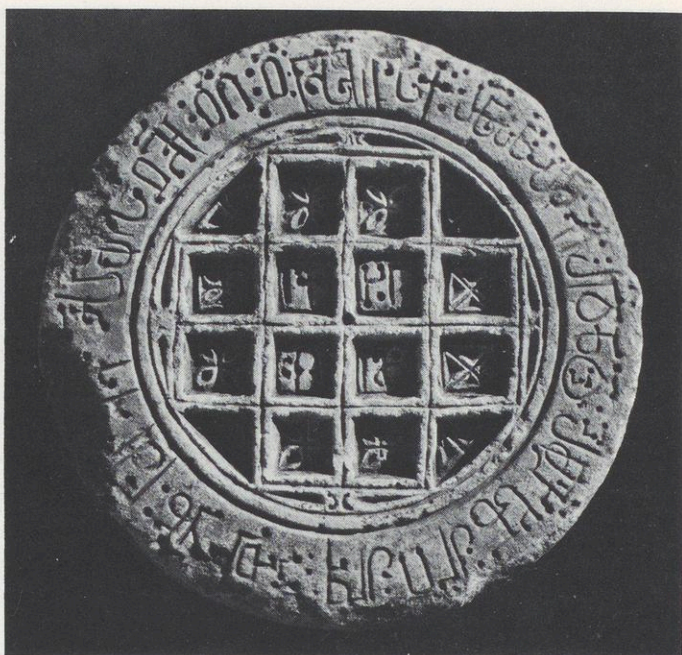
<sup>11</sup> The stamping of eucharistic cakes is called Kvet'a (კვეთა) in Georgian and it is conducted in the Samkvet'lo (სამკვეთლო) which is the northern pastophory, or prothesis.

<sup>12</sup> W. Djobadze, *Materials*, 90.

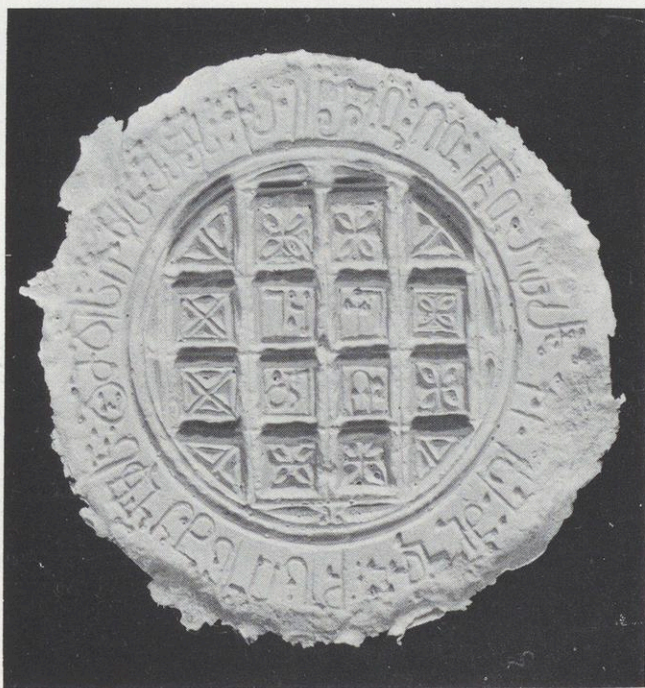
<sup>13</sup> M. Tarchnišvili, *Geschichte*, 445-446.

<sup>14</sup> The most pertinent paleographic parallels for our inscription can be found in silver repoussé works executed at the end of the twelfth century: (1) Book cover of the gospel from Kkarost'avi, executed by Bek'a Opisari in 1195 (S. Amiranašvili, *Bek'a Opisari* (Tbilisi 1956) 8 pl. 3); (2) book cover of the Bert'ai gospel executed by Bešken Opisari in the second half of the twelfth century (*Ibid.*, 37, pl. 5); (3) book cover of the Tbet'i gospel, end of the twelfth century (*Ibid.*, 26, pl. 7); (4) the Icon of the Saviour from the Church of Ančišati, executed by Bek'a Opisari between 1184-1193 (*Ibid.*, 14, pl. 17u, 25, 26); and (5) a repoussé inscription on the icon now in the Greek patriarchal library in Jerusalem, which is very closely associated to the above-mentioned examples, and could not have been executed in the fourteenth century as usually assumed (M. Ross, "Byzantine Goldsmith Work", *Byzantine Art, A European Art* (1964) 406 No. 475) but at the very beginning of the thirteenth century. Finally, the lengthy inscription on the architrave of the Iconostasis of Sat'he, which is dated 1213-1222 (R. Schmerling, *Mal'ye formy v arhitekture Srednevekovoi Gruzii* (Tbilisi 1962) 187 pl. 70).





*Fig. 1 Georgian eucharistic breadstamp (Monastery of Saint Barlaam near Antioch)*



*Fig. 2 Latex impression of fig. 1.*



TAFEL V

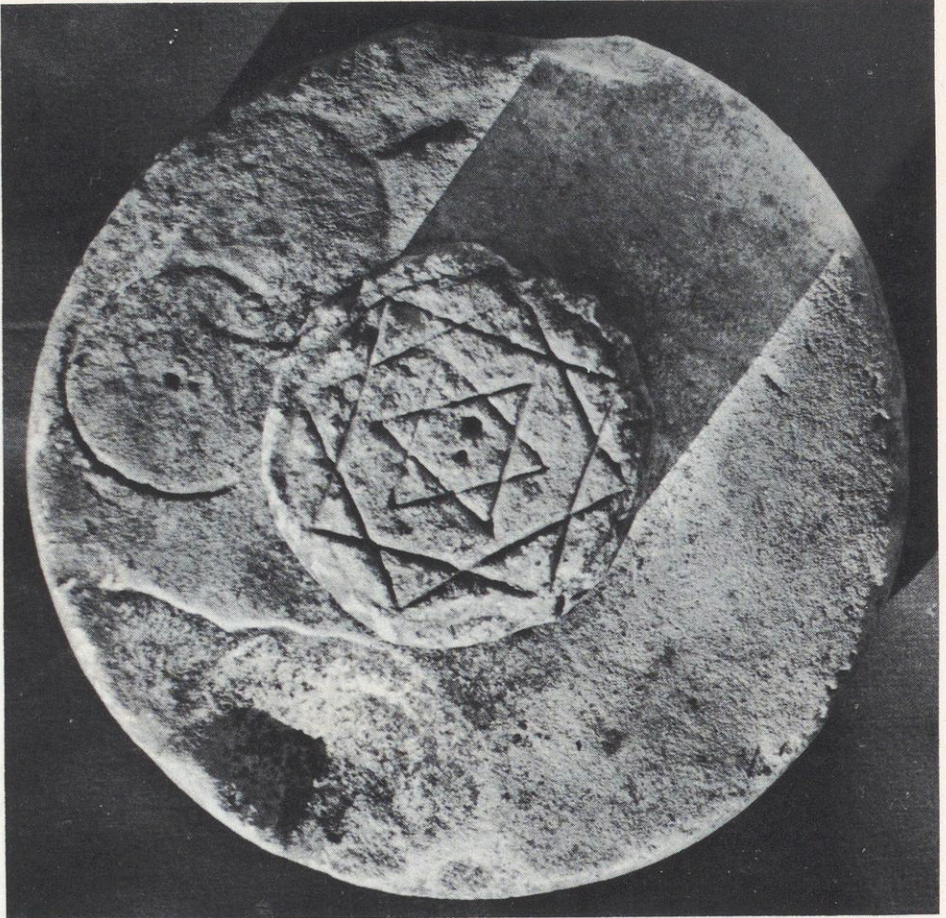


Fig. 3 Reverse of fig. 1.



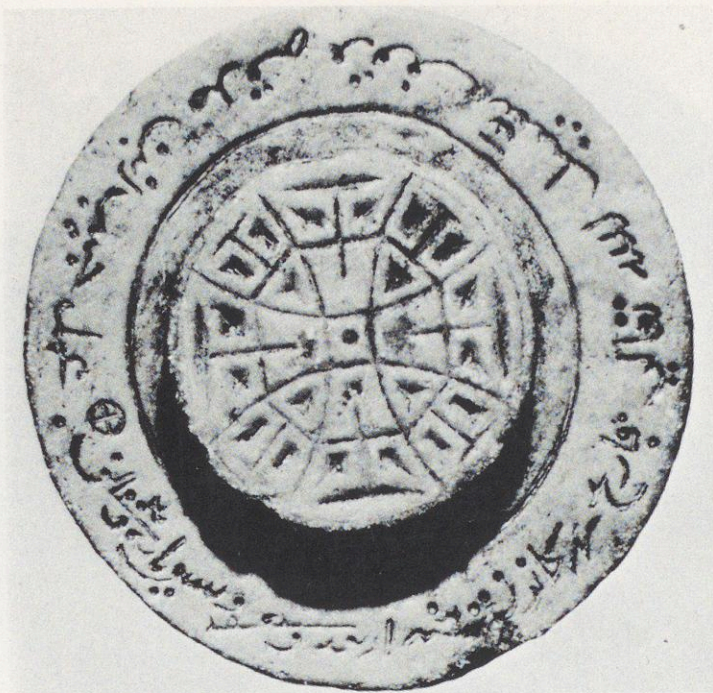


Fig. 5 Reverse of fig. 4.

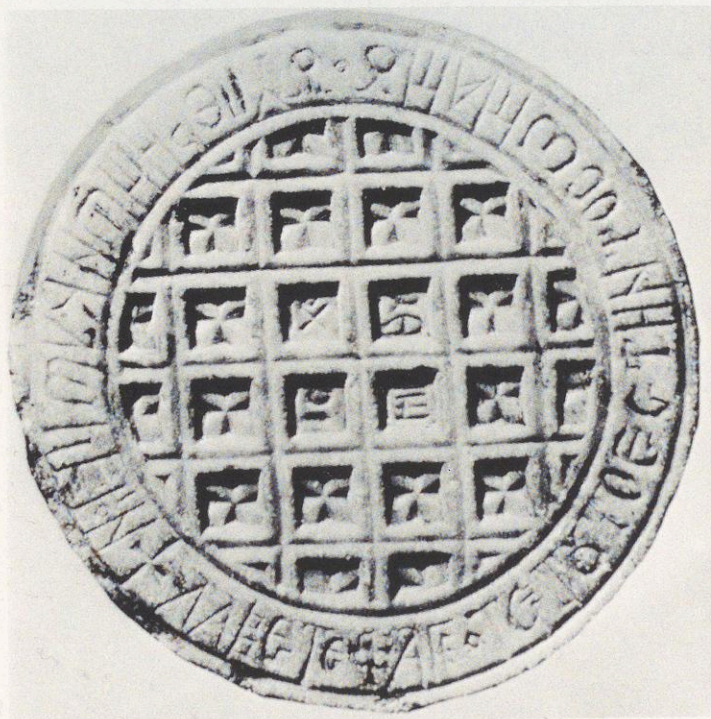


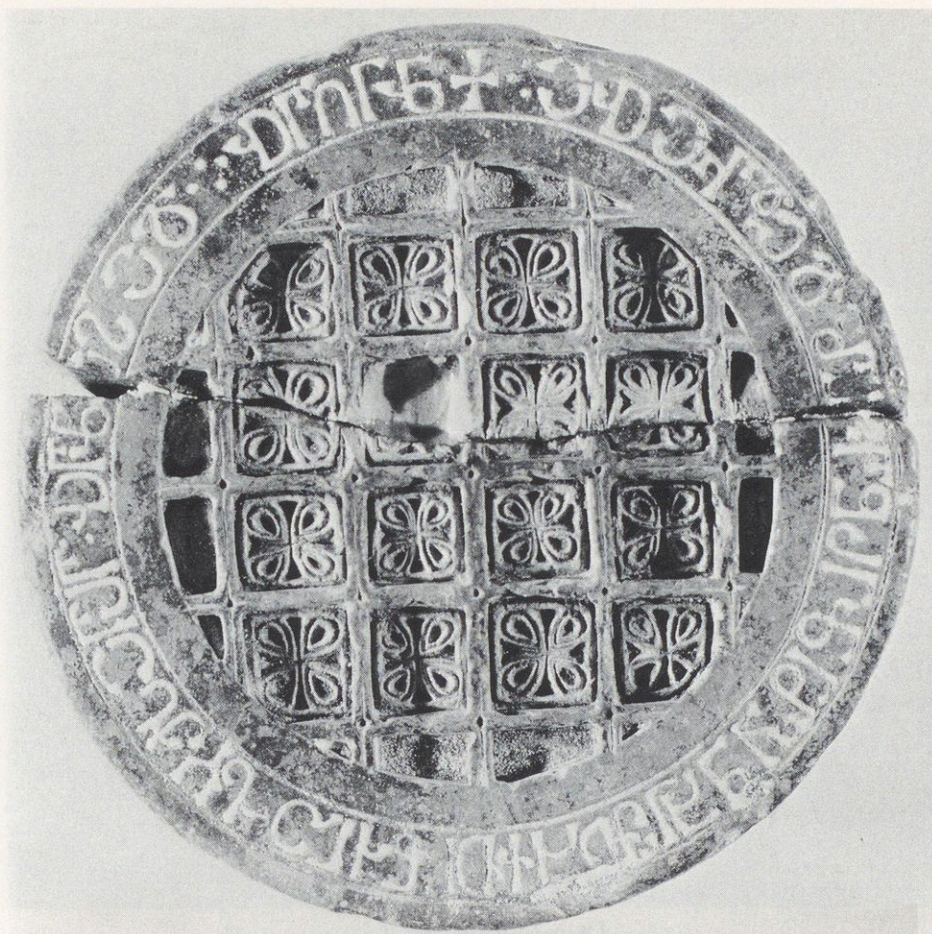
Fig. 4 Eucharistic breadstamp (Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai). Photos by Cortesy of Sinai expedition of Universities of Alexandria-Michigan-Princeton.





*Fig. 6 Georgian eucharistic breadstamp ( Çalka), reverse.*





*Fig. 7 Face of fig. 6.*



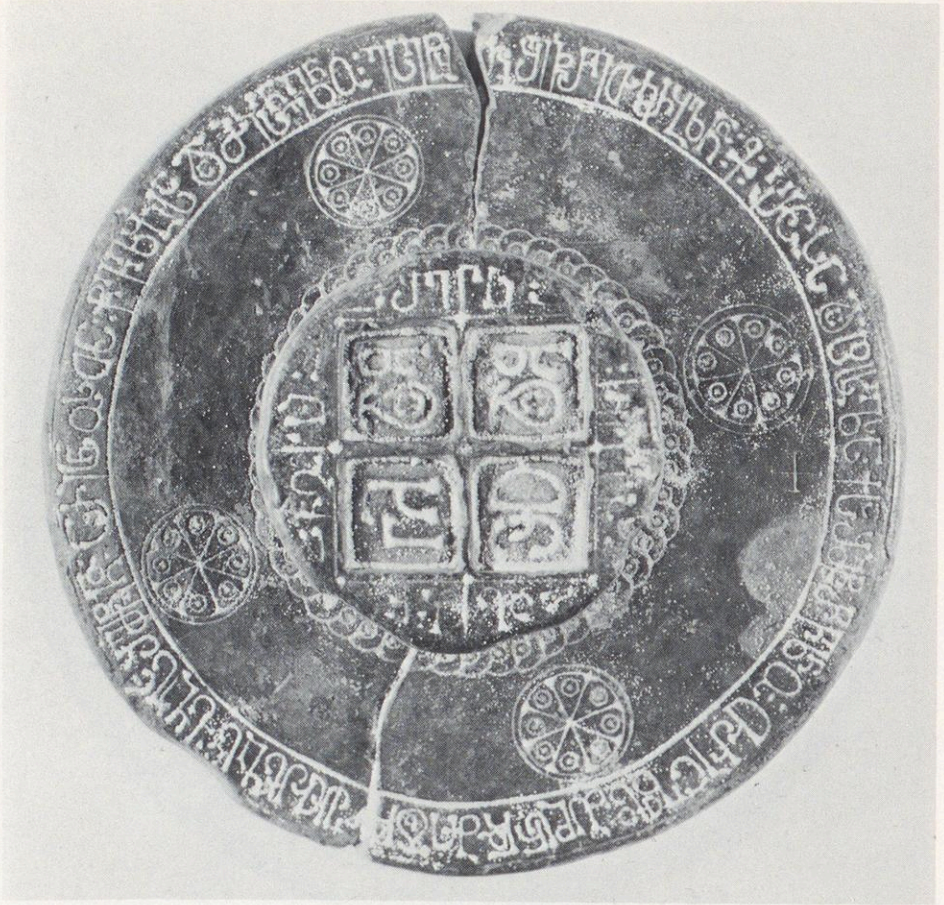
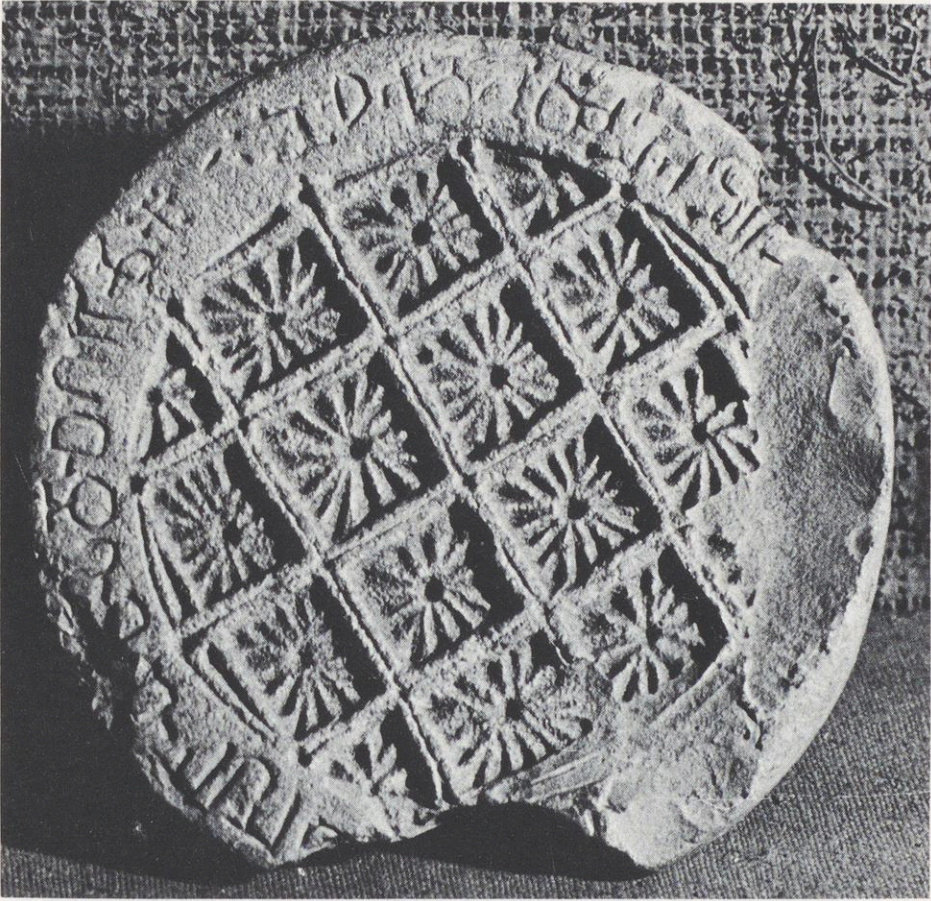


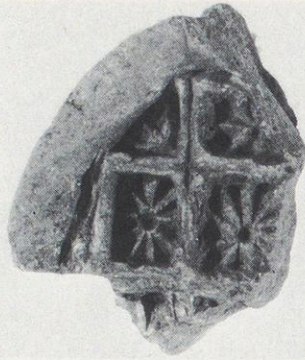
Fig. 8 Upper portion of fig. 6.



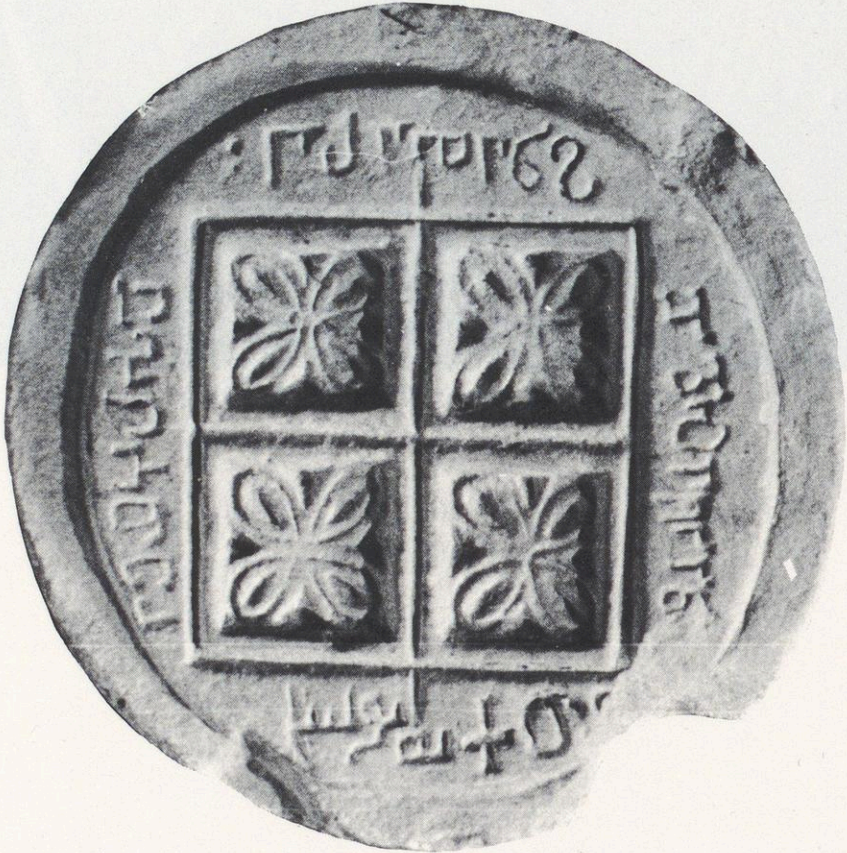


*Fig. 9 Georgian eucharistic breadstamp (Gudarehi).*



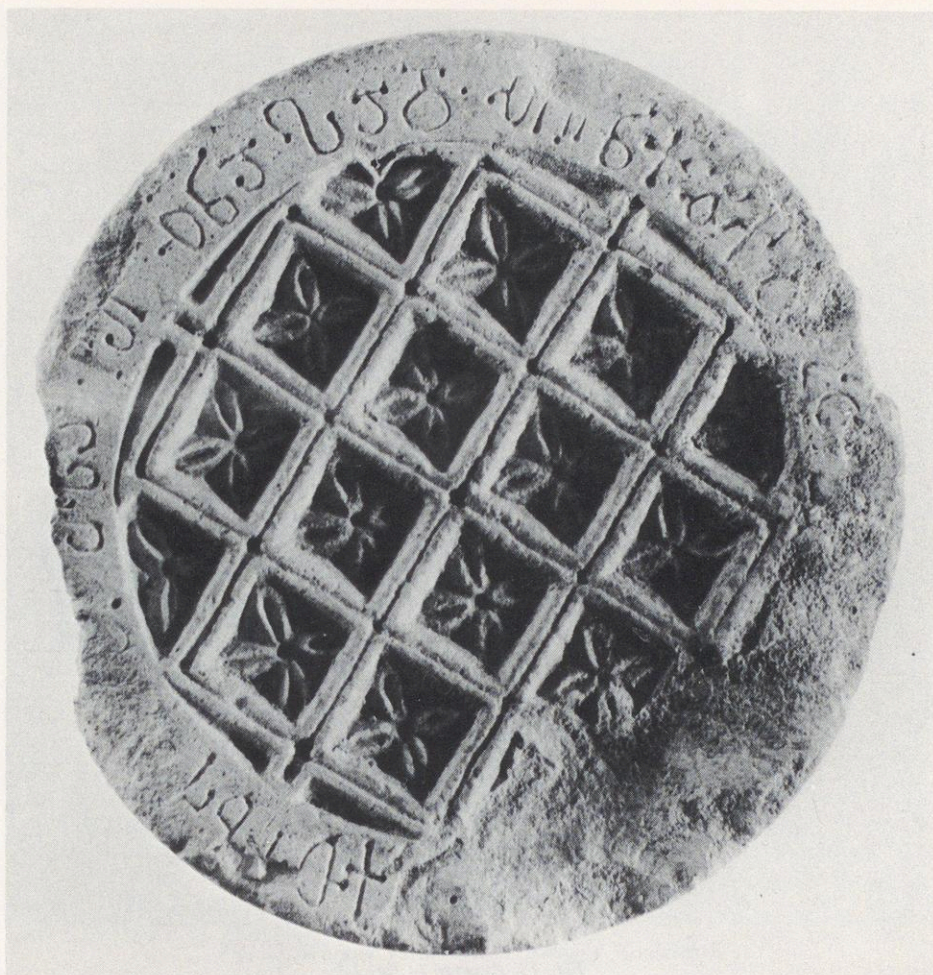


*Fig. 10 Fragment (Gudarehi)*



*Fig. 11 Georgian eucharistic breadstamp (Urbnisi)*





*Fig. 12 Georgian eucharistic breadstamp (Hovle), face.*



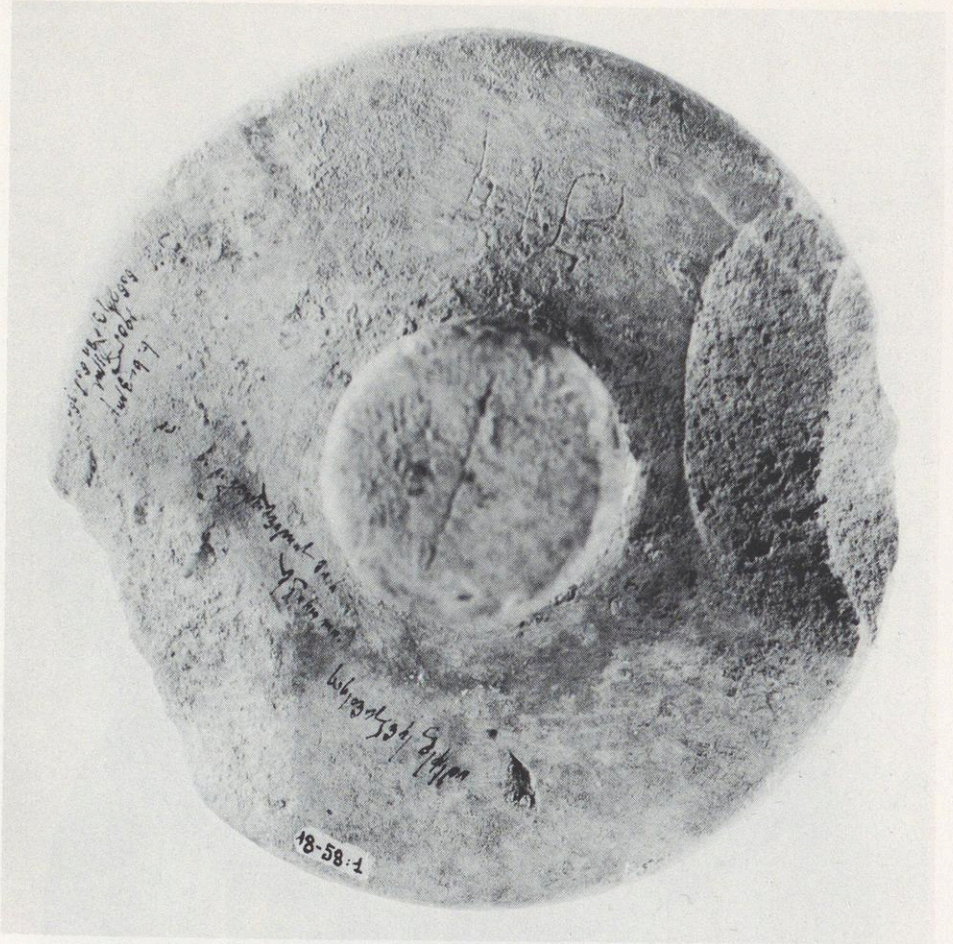


Fig. 13 Reverse of fig. 12.

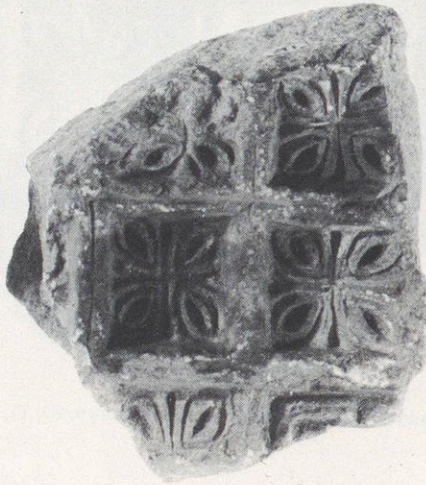
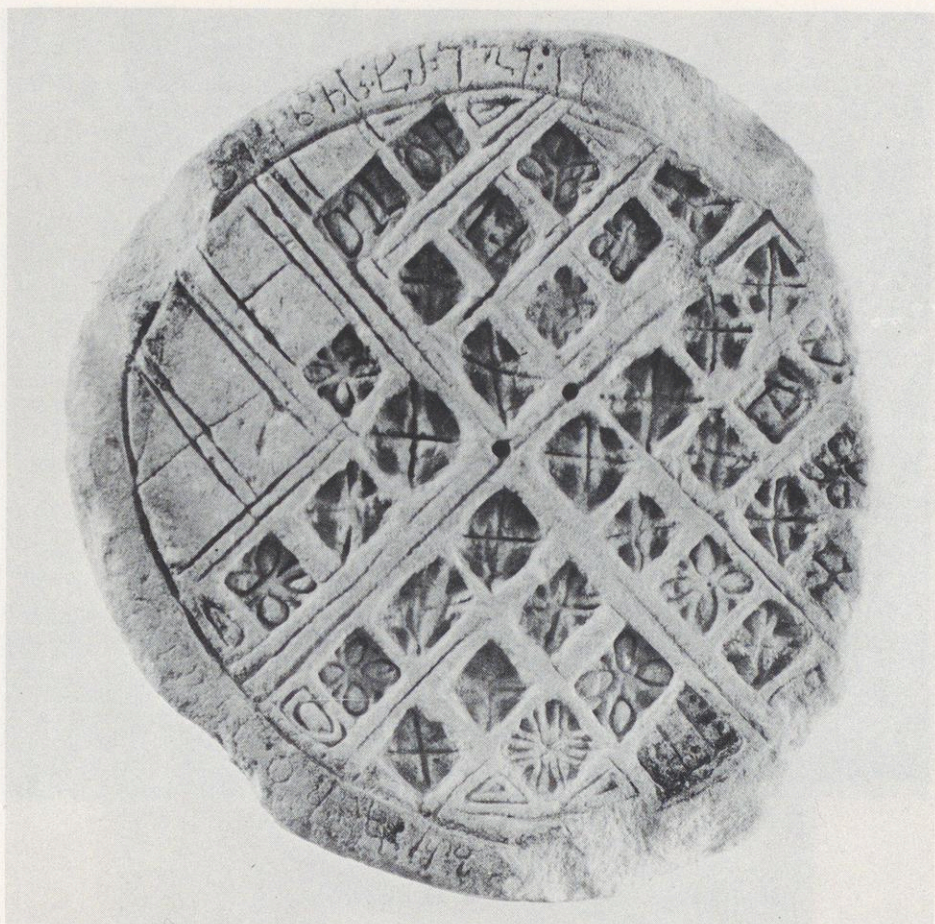


Fig. 14 Fragment (Gudarehi).





*Fig. 15 Georgian eucharistic breadstamp (Gudarehi).*





*Fig. 16 Altarscreen (Cebelda).*





Fig. 17 Altarscreen (Šiomgvine), Hospitality of Abraham.





*Fig. 18 Greek Eulogia breadstamp  
(Monastery of Saint Barlaam on Mount Casios near Antioch)*



*Fig. 19 Latex impression of fig. 18.*



not only in its inscription implicating the Mother of God whose name appears next to Jesus Christ in the lamb but also in its formal appearance as well. Furthermore, the Sinai stamp is precisely dated by an Arabic inscription on its obverse face designating the year 1265/6<sup>15</sup>. Thus it conveniently coincides with the date of our specimen which was executed around 1250. These striking affinities between the geographically distant Georgian and Greek stamps should not be surprising; it is well known that numerous Georgian monastic colonies existed in the environs of Antioch as well as in various parts of the Holy Land including Sinai. Close cooperation between these monasteries can easily be conjectured from Georgian hagiographic literature and the colophons of manuscripts. For instance, a colophon of a paracliton copied in the twelfth century and now preserved in Saint Catherine's monastery in Sinai states that it was copied by monk Iovane in the monastery of St. Barlaam on Mount Kasius and donated to his compatriots in the monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai<sup>16</sup>. In another instance the case is reversed; a Georgian collection of hymns copied in the monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai in the thirteenth century was donated to the monastery of Saint Barlaam on Mount Kasius<sup>17</sup>.

During my visit to the State Museum of Tbilisi in June 1977, the director of the museum, Prof. A. Djavahišvili, brought to my attention five circular Georgian eucharistic bread stamps preserved in the same museum and kindly placed their photographs at my disposition. All of them are carved of sandstone and are relatively well-preserved. Unfortunately, they lack archaeological documentation, being accidental finds, but their carvings and inscriptions which are executed in mrgvlovani scripture facilitate our understanding of the bread stamp from Barlaam's monastery and the morphology of Georgian bread stamps in general. I am including them in this study inasmuch as Georgian bread stamps have never before been the subject of a special investigation<sup>18</sup>.

The first (figs. 6, 7, 8) of these three bread stamps derives from Çalka<sup>19</sup>. This is the best preserved, the largest in size and unique in its dedicatory inscription. (Diam. of the stamp equals 0.21 m., diam. of the upper surface of the handle 0.09 m., total h. 0.08 m.) The face of the stamp is divided into sixteen equal squares containing equal-armed concave crosses with

<sup>15</sup> Galavaris, *op. cit.*, 89.

<sup>16</sup> W. Djobadze, *Materials*, 42.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 42, 90.

<sup>18</sup> The only exception is the stamp from Çalka. The part of its inscription recorded by Prof. L. Muşelişvili and preserved in the archive of Prof. I. Djavahišvili (no. 2045 or 2919) is briefly mentioned by Mr. V. Silogava in *Mnat'obi* 3 (Tbilisi 1977) 147.

<sup>19</sup> Çalka, located in T'rialet'i, was from the tenth to fifteenth centuries an administrative center and Bishopric. The ruins of the Cathedral are still preserved.



widening arms and tear-drops between the crossarms as in the stamp of St. Barlaam's monastery. Around the edge of the stamp's face is the following Georgian inscription executed negatively in mrgvlovani letters :

«— მი(ი)ღეთ: და ჭამეთ: ესე არს კ(ო)რცი ჩ(ე)მი თქ(ო)ვენთ(ჲ)ს განტ(ე)ვ(ი)ლი მის(ა)ტე(ვე)ბლად ც(ო)დვათა:»

“Take and eat : This is my body broken for you for the remission of (your) sins.”

The content of this inscription is taken verbatim from the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom<sup>20</sup> where it is pronounced by the priest during the anaphora upon the institution of the sacrament. This sentence is not found on eucharistic bread stamps elsewhere but seems to have been common in Georgia since all four stamps in the State Museum in Tbilisi refer to it. The only exception is the Sinai stamp (fig. 4) which has the following Greek inscription around the edge of the front face : “Take, eat : This is My Body which is broken for you.”<sup>21</sup>

The second part of the Çalka stamp is the upper circular surface of the cylindric handle, which has four symmetrically arranged squares within an equal-armed cross (fig. 8). The squares contain the Georgian capital letters (mrgvlovani) forming two words :

წ(მი)და	ნი
წ(მი)და	თა

Holy (things) for (those who are) holy

These words refer to the liturgical formula “Holy things for those who are Holy” (τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις)<sup>22</sup> exclaimed by the priest as he lifts up the

<sup>20</sup> Tarchnišvili, *Liturgiae*, 77. The inscription of this bread stamp could have also derived from the liturgy of St. James (« მიიღეთ ჭამეთ, ესე არს კორცი ჩემი თქოვენთჲს განტეხილი და განყოფილი მისატევებლად ცოდვათა » Tarchnišvili, *op. cit.*, 49) by condensing its text.

<sup>21</sup> Galavaris, *Bread*, 89.

<sup>22</sup> PG 56, 138D; F.E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford 1896) 393 and the appendix C (the Liturgy of Antioch from the writings of S. Chrysostom, *ibid.*, 475 and note on p. 480; Schulz, *op. cit.*, 39.



lamb in the ceremony which precedes the communion of the faithful<sup>23</sup>. They occur in all Georgian liturgies with slight variations: წმიდა წმიდათა in the liturgy of St. James and St. Peter<sup>24</sup>, წმიდა წმიდათა in the liturgy of James the Older<sup>25</sup>, and წმიდა წმიდათა in the liturgy of Saint Chrysostom<sup>26</sup>.

Since both the face and handle inscriptions of the stamp are carved in the negative, there is no doubt that the stamp from Çalka was used to produce two cakes (კვერძი) differing in size and purpose. The larger one was used for various parts of the holy prothesis and the smaller one, after cutting its segments off, was used as a lamb, which during the anaphora was broken in two. The design of the stamp complements the liturgy of Saint James<sup>27</sup> which requires breaking the lamb in two pieces first and then dividing it into several smaller portions in the order prescribed<sup>28</sup>. This opinion is supported by the similarity of our stamp to eucharistic bread stamps of eastern derivation where the stamps' faces are divided into squares only and do not have the traditional lamb in the middle, nor do they differentiate between the other sections of the stamp<sup>29</sup>.

If the face inscription of the Çalka bread stamp derives directly from the liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, then it conflicts with the iconography of the stamp's face design which reflects the liturgy of Saint James. This however should not disturb us in view of the numerous variations and inconsistencies found in bread stamps in Byzantium and elsewhere. Our bread stamp could be regarded as the fusion of two traditions, the Antiochean or Saint James used in Oriental churches, which the Georgian church adhered to traditionally, and the Byzantine or Saint John Chrysostom which was introduced to the Georgian church in the eleventh century when Byzantine influence began to grow markedly<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> Brightman, *op. cit.*, 395, Hussey and McNulty, *op. cit.*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Tarchnišvili, *Liturgiae*, 25, 91.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>27</sup> On account of various liturgical texts, particularly that of St. James used in Georgian churches, see G. P'eradze, "Les monuments liturgiques prébyzantines en langue Géorgienne", *Le Museon* 45 (1932) 255-272, and Tarchnišvili, "Eine neue Jakobosliturgie", *Ephemeridis Liturgicae* 62 (1949) 49-82. The works of K. Kekelidze, (*Liturgičeskie gruzinskie pamiatniki* [Tiflis 1908], *Drevnegruzinskij arhieratikon*, [Tiflis 1912], and *Ierusalimskij Kanonar VII veka* [Tiflis 1912]) are beyond my reach.

<sup>28</sup> Galavaris, *Bread*, 91-93. Evidence that the Saint James liturgy was practiced in Georgia in the eleventh century can be found in an altar screen of Šiomgvime (A. Volskaja, *Reliefy Šiomgvime*, (Tbilisi 1957) 23f., pl. III, and on wall paintings of David Garedja (G. Čubinašvili, *Peščernye monastyri David-Garedja*, [Tbilisi 1948] pls. 86, 121).

<sup>29</sup> Galavaris, *op. cit.*, fig. 43-46; F. Dölger, "Heidnische und christliche Brotstempel mit religiösen Zeichen" in *Antike und Christentum* I, (Münster i. W. 1929) 28f.

<sup>30</sup> Tarchnišvili, *Geschichte*, 445f.; G. P'eradze, "Ein Dokument aus der mittelalterlichen Liturgiegeschichte Georgiens", *Kyrios* 1 (1936) 77.



The iconography of our Çalka stamp could have been put in sharper focus had the inscriptions on the four small segments between the circle and the inscribed square on top of the handle been legible, but unfortunately I was not able to decipher them from the photograph.

Finally, we must briefly consider the dedicatory inscription engraved in "positive" mrgvlovani around the edge of the stamp's reverse side. This inscription is stylistically different from the obverse inscription, but its paleographic symptoms verify its contemporaneity. The inscription reads as follows :

«— ჯ(ო)რც(ი)სა და სისხლ(ი)სა ქ(რისტე)სა შ(ე)მწ(ი)რც(ე)ლნო: თრიალ-  
(ე)თ(ი)სა პ(ა)ტ(ი)ოს(ა)ნნო მღდ(ე)ლნო ერთ(ა)რს(ე)ბისა: ს(ამე)ბისა:  
შემწენო: არიანოსთა: წვ(ა)ლ(ე)ბისა დამკსნელნო ესე ტვ(ა)რი  
შე(ი)წ(ყნა)რეთ კრ(ე)ბ(უ)ლნო: »

"The consecrators of the flesh and blood of Christ, honorable priests of T'rialet'i, followers of the trinity in one essence, saviours from the Arian heresy, may your council accept this bread stamp as an offering."

It is unique not only in its unusually lengthy narration but in its dedicatory nature<sup>31</sup> and, above all, in its content, indicating that at the time when the stamp was made the Arian heresy had been revived in the Bishopric T'rialet'i (whose seat was in Çalka) but through the courageous intervention of the local clergy it was suppressed<sup>32</sup>.

The inscription of Çalka stamp show the following paleographic symptoms : on the face of the stamp the letter **G** (t') is consistently reproduced with an upward bent hook while in the donor's inscription, which is executed in "positive", the hooks are bent downwards as required. Furthermore, the vertical bar of the same letter is not straight but somewhat concave. In addition, the letters terminate boldly in distinct triangular forms. Also, the body of the letter **D** (d) comes to a slight point on top and is surmounted directly by a horizontal bar without a vertical neck<sup>33</sup> reminding

<sup>31</sup> The only compatible parallel for this donors inscription is the reverse Arabic inscription of the Eucharistic bread stamp from Sinai where, in the same position as in the Çalka stamp, the donor, Habib ibn Sadaga (who carved the stamp in 1265 or 1266) is mentioned (Galavaris, *Op. Cit.*, 89).

<sup>32</sup> In this regard we should take into consideration a document written by a Georgian man of letters, Ep'rem Mcire, in the second half of the eleventh century in defense of the Georgian church which states that the Antiochean patriarchate feared the revival of monophysitism in Georgia (Djobadze, *Materials*, 62; Tarchnišvili and Assfalg, *Geschichte*, 373f).

<sup>33</sup> The transformation of the letter *d*, which is apparent in the twelfth and common in the thirteenth century is discussed by I. Djavaḡišvili, *Kart'uli damc'erlobat'a-mcodneoba anu paleograf'ia*, (Tbilisi 1926) 201.



us of letters on twelfth and thirteenth century Georgian inscriptions in repoussé works<sup>34</sup> and wall paintings<sup>35</sup>. The period from the end of twelfth to thirteenth century is also indicated by the letter **Ⲙ** (a) which in prominent epigraphic monuments of the tenth and eleventh century has a neck with a horizontal bar on top, as in the inscription of Ilarion Kančaeli on the eastern facade of Samt'avi church (1030)<sup>36</sup>, the inscriptions on the capitals of Šiomg'vime (1010-1033)<sup>37</sup>, and the inscriptions of the bishop Melk'isedek in Mchēt'a (1029)<sup>38</sup>. However, in later inscriptions such as our bread stamp, the letter is less sharply defined and the distinctness of its component parts fade resulting in the elimination of the vertical neck in favor of a curvature terminated by a bar. The overlapping of two letters as **Ⲙⲙ** (er), and the placement of one small letter into another as **Ⲙⲙ** (da), **Ⲙ** (no) is a common occurrence in the twelfth and thirteenth century when the clear articulation of letters began to deteriorate<sup>39</sup>.

The second eucharistic bread stamp (fig. 9) was found in Gudarehi (Inv. No. 2-58/438). Diam. 0.143 m., max. h. 0.07 m., handle 0.05 m., diam. 0.06 m. In the middle of its face is a cross made up of twelve squares. The arms of the cross are each fashioned of two squares and the crossing contains four squares. Each square is filled with a symmetrically arranged diagonal strip shaped in a conic form creating a diaper pattern with a circular cavity in the center. It is instructive to mention that we also encounter the diaper pattern on a small breadstamp fragment found in Gudarehi (No. 2-58/360, fig. 10). Around the edge of the stamp is an inscription in mrgvlovani scripture. One third of it is chipped off but since it is similar to the inscription from Čalka it can be reliably restored as follows :

«— მიიღ(ე)თ და ჭ(ამ)რ(ე)თ ესე ა[რს კ(ო)რცი ჩ(ე)მი თქ(უ)ნთ(ვ)ს  
გ(ა)ნტ(ე)ხ(ი)ლი მ[ი]ს(ა)ტ(ე)ვ(ე)ბლ(ა)დ ც(ო)დვ(ა)თა:»

<sup>34</sup> For instance the metal work produced during second half of the twelfth century such as the P'hotreri icon (G. Čubinašvili, *Gruzinskoe Čekannoje Iskusstvo I* (Tbilisi 1959) 616, vol. II, pls. 419, 420). The fragment of the Abulasan icon (*Ibid.*, I, 617, vol. II, pl. 421), the cover of the Tbet'i Gospels (*Ibid.*, I, 570f., vol. II, pl. 431), and thirteenth century icons in Čalendjiha (*Ibid.*, I, 582, vol. II, pl. 480) and Hobi (*Ibid.*, I, 576, vol. II, pl. 481).

<sup>35</sup> Specifically, inscriptions on wall paintings in P'avnisi executed between 1180-1190 (E. Privalova, *P'avnisi* [Tbilisi 1977] 40, pl. III-1) in Bet'anias executed around 1207 (*Ibid.*, 41), and in Bert'ubani executed either 1212 or 1213 (*Ibid.*).

<sup>36</sup> N. Severov, *Pamjatniki Gruzinskogo Zodčestva*, (Moskow 1947), pl. 27.

<sup>37</sup> R. Schmerling, "Das Fragment einer Säule aus Šiomg'vime", *Ars Georgica* 5 (Tbilisi 1959) 161, pl. 99.

<sup>38</sup> L. Mušelišvili, "Sveti Čovelis", *Ars Georgica* 1 (Tbilisi 1942) 134, fig. 1.

<sup>39</sup> On this account see note 14 where pertinent examples are enumerated. I hasten to add that the rules mentioned here, especially the incorporation of one letter into another occurs in the eleventh century as in the above-mentioned Melk'isedek's inscription (see note 38).



“Take and eat<sup>39a</sup>: this is my Body (which is) broken for you, for the remission of (your) sins.”

The stamp can be approximately dated by its paleographic characteristics: the circular body of the letter *d* has a long neck surmounted by a horizontal bar, the semicircular half of the letter *t* is terminated on the right side by a vertical line and none of the letters are squeezed together or ligated. In addition the terminations of some letters (*d*, *t*, *l*, *g*) are emphatically widened and deepened. These symptoms are typical of epigraphic monuments of the tenth to eleventh century such as the column of the southern gate in the church of Eredvi (909)<sup>40</sup>, the southern gate of the church in Dodot'a, the tympanum of the southern gate in Tbet'i church (both tenth-eleventh century)<sup>41</sup>, the tympanum of the western door in the small church of Ateni (end of the tenth century)<sup>42</sup>, and the tympanum in Šepiaki (end of tenth century)<sup>43</sup>.

The third and smallest stamp (fig. 11) in the National Museum of Tbilisi (Inv. No. 1-57/1556) was accidentally found in Urbnisi. Diam. 0.108 m., h. 0.03 m. The handle is missing. The face has four squares, each containing one equal-armed cross with flared arms which resemble the stamp from Čalka (fig. 7) and to a lesser extent the stamp from Saint Barlaam's monastery (fig. 1). In the four segments between the square and circle is an inscription executed in mrgvlovani scripture, although the carver used some nušhuri letters too. It duplicates the inscriptions of the two previous stamps although in a somewhat abbreviated form:

« მიიღეთ და ჭ(ა)მეთ:	“Take and eat
ესე არს ჳო(რ)ცი ჩემი	this is My Body
თქო[(ჳენ)თჳს] »	for you”.

The fourth stamp (fig. 12) which was accidentally found in Hovle (Inv. No. 18-58/1) is carved of light grey sandstone. Diam. 0.16 m., total h. 0.07 m., h. of the handle (fig. 13) 0.048 m., diam. 0.048 m., (above), 0.050. (below). Its face contains twelve cruciformly arranged squares housing equal-armed

<sup>39a</sup> This sentence is given in plural indicating that the cake was broken in particles and distributed. For checking my translation and making valuable comments I should like to thank Professor J. Meyendorff.

<sup>40</sup> R. Mep'isašvili, “Eredvis 906 çlis ħurot'mozgvruli dzegli”, *Ars Georgica* IV (Tbilisi 1955) 111f., fig. 9, pl. 38.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 115, fig. 11, pls. 46<sub>2</sub>, 45<sub>1-2</sub>.

<sup>42</sup> L. Rčeulišvili, “Atenis mcire gumbat'iani eklesia”, *Ars Georgica* I (Tbilisi 1942) 36, fig. 7 pl. 14<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 35, pl. 14<sub>4</sub>.



crosses closely resembling cruciform rosettes employed in the stamps from Saint Barlaam's monastery (figs. 1, 2), that of Çalka (fig. 7), Urnisi (fig. 11), and the small greenish sandstone fragment found in Gudarehi (fig. 14)<sup>44</sup>.

Around the edge of the stamp is a badly damaged mrgvlovani inscription. It reads :

« მ(ი)ლეთ. და ჭამ(ე)თ ესე. არს [კორცი] ჩ(ე)მი.  
თქ[ოვენთვს განტეხილი მისატევებლა]დ ც(ო)დვ(ა)თა ».

“Take and eat : This is my Body (which is) broken  
for you, for the remission of (your) sins”.

Among the eucharistic breadstamps preserved in the Archeological Museum of Tbilisi, the most unusual one derives from Gudarehi (No. 2-58/350, fig. 15). The primitiveness of this uneven and incomplete carving and the employment of a “positive” rather than “negative” inscription, the poor remains of which are unevenly scattered on its face as well as around its circular border, make it impossible to determine the real function of this enigmatic piece. It hardly could have been used as an eucharistic breadstamp. Yet this item is significant because of the diversity of its geometric patterns indicating the mason's attempt to render this stamp in accordance with St. John Chrysostom's liturgical formula (*supra* p. 164f.).

It is difficult to propose a precise date for the Urnisi and Hovle breadstamps. It is possible that they were produced sometime after the thirteenth century. This could also be true of the stamp found Gudarehi (fig. 9). I hope that Georgian epigraphists will be able to assign secure dates to our stamps in the near future.

Summing up our brief study of Georgian eucharistic bread stamps we can conclude that the stamps preserved in the State Museum in Tbilisi are carved in accordance with the Syro-Palestinian or Antiochean liturgy of Saint James while the stamp from Saint Barlaam's monastery demonstrates the formula required by the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. This conclusion reflects the history of the Georgian church which until the middle of the eleventh century practiced the Syro-Palestinian liturgy which in turn was replaced by the Byzantine or St. John Chrysostom's liturgy, translated from Greek into Georgian by George Mt'acmindeli and used in the Georgian

<sup>44</sup> This fragment (No. 2-58/363) is of particular interest because of its remarkable similarity to the Çalka stamp (fig. 7) in its design, style and in the technical particularities of its carving. Furthermore, its present dimensions (max. l. 0.09 m., w. 0.075 m., and thickness 0.05 m.) indicate that its diameter must have been equal to the Çalka stamp and that it could derive from the same workshop.



church up to the seventeenth century<sup>45</sup>. The only exception is the stamp from Çalka, which if it was produced in the twelfth-thirteenth century, would indicate that the transition from the Syro-Palestinian tradition to the Byzantine was slow and gradual<sup>46</sup> or that perhaps no clear distinction was made between the eucharistic bread stamps of two different but closely related liturgies.

The final answer to this question can be resolved in later studies when the problems related to the liturgies practiced in Georgia are clarified and additional eucharistic bread stamps, especially of the early Christian period, are revealed and investigated; no doubt such stamps should have existed and been used. This is evident from the typicon of Mar-Saba and the Hanmeti lectionar attesting that in the capital of Iberia, Mçet'a, since the middle of the fifth century liturgies were performed in the Georgian language<sup>47</sup>. Consequently, from this time on liturgical bread stamps must have been used during the eucharistic services. Further evidence can be found in the *bios* of St. Peter the Iberian, who in order to perform the eucharist, sent one of the brethren of his monastery responsible for the task to prepare the eucharistic breads which were "white, small and beautiful"<sup>48</sup>.

The literary evidence concerning the eucharistic breads is supported by some Georgian sculptures. The earliest of them is the large fragment of an altarscreen from the church in Çabelda (fig. 16)<sup>49</sup>. This screen which belongs to the seventh or eighth century contains on its lower right side a paten and five similar circular cakes symmetrically placed around its border, while in the center is a larger and distinctly carved loaf. It seems that here we have not only eucharistic cakes, but a complete Holy Prothesis<sup>50</sup>. This assumption is reinforced by a wide-mouth jar placed nearby complementing the eucharistic table<sup>51</sup>. The second screen deriving from Šiomgvime and roughly con-

<sup>45</sup> Tarchnišvili, *Geschichte*, 446. M. Tarchnišvili, "Die georgische Übersetzung der Liturgie des Hl. Johannes Chrysostomus nach einem Pergament-Rotulus aus dem X-XI Jahrhundert" *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft* 14 (1938) 6; K. Kekelidze, *Kart'uli Lituraturis istoria* (in Georgian) I (Tbilisi 1960) 574.

<sup>46</sup> This opinion seems to be supported by the discourse of the church father Ek'vt'ime Mt'açmindelī († 1028). (G. Peradze, "Ein Dokument aus der mittelalterlichen Liturgiegeschichte Georgiens" *Kyrios* 1 (1936) 74, 77.)

<sup>47</sup> Tarchnišvili, *op. cit.*, 439; Kekelidze, *op. cit.*, 573.

<sup>48</sup> R. Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer. Ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig 1895) 106. F. Dölger, "Heidnische und christliche Brotstempel mit religiösen Zeichen", *Antike und Christentum* I (Münster i. W., 1929) 33f.

<sup>49</sup> R. Schmerling, *Malye formy v arkhitekture Srednevekovoi Gruzii* (Tbilisi 1962) 66, pl. 3 above.

<sup>50</sup> The eucharistic significance of this composition was already suggested by Schmerling, *ibidem*.

<sup>51</sup> We encounter a very similar jar on the relief of the western facade of the cathedral at Mçet'a (1029) which suggests definite eucharistic implications. The Christ in majesty depicted



temporary to our breadstamps depicts the hospitality of Abraham (fig. 17) where Abraham is holding a rather large, round cake<sup>52</sup>.

The nature of the Georgian bread stamps investigated here can be understood more clearly by discussing the second of the two stamps found in St. Barlaam. It is a Greek stamp carved of a very soft limestone (figs. 18, 19). Its upper portion and handle are broken off. On the face of the stamp (Diam. 0.137 m., present h. 0.05 m.) is the frontal figure of St. Barlaam wearing a long girdled robe and mantle. In his right hand he holds a Latin cross (*crux immissa*) and in his left, a scroll. St. Barlaam is identified by vertical inscription: 'Ο ἄ(γιος)<sup>53</sup> [Βαρ] λα(α)μ and a second one around the edge: [εὐλ]ο[γ]ητά τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶ[ν] Β[αρ]λαάμ]. The main characteristic feature in the iconography of this stamp is the complete absence of squares, triangles, crosslets or grill-like grooves. In their place is St. Barlaam's image. This, then, is clear evidence that the Greek stamp was not used for the preparation of eucharistic breads but the Eulogia breads of St. Barlaam<sup>54</sup>. These breads must have been distributed among the pilgrims after the liturgy in the monastery of St. Barlaam in the basilica consecrated to him on special occasions<sup>55</sup> such as the festival celebrated on June 19 which is the day of St. Barlaam's commemoration<sup>56</sup>. The employment of the word εὐλόγια in St. Barlaam's stamp should not disturb us since it does not relate to the Eucharist but is used in a general sense referring to the bread as a blessed object possessing miraculous powers like pieces of the bones of saints, fragments of their clothes, lamps from the tombs of martyrs and the apulae of Monza<sup>57</sup>. In a broad sense, eulogia is an object which has been blessed and given away as a sign of love and protection<sup>58</sup>. The same significance

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in the center is flanked by two angels; the left one holds a wine jar, while the right one bears a circular loaf: R. Mepisaschwili and W. Zinzadse, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien* (Leipzig 1977), fig. on p. 155 above.

<sup>52</sup> R. Schmerling, *op. cit.*, 138 pl. 40 left.

<sup>53</sup> The beginning of this inscription ((A)) is mistakenly carved by the mason working in the "negative" on the Saint's left side instead his right.

<sup>54</sup> The iconography and nature of Eulogia bread is discussed by F. Dölger, *op. cit.*, 44-46, and more extensively by Galavaris, *op. cit.*, 109-153, figs. 75-81.

<sup>55</sup> The custom of distributing the Eulogia bread to the faithful, during the Saint's days and on special occasions is discussed by Galavaris, *op. cit.*, 141f., 151. The distribution of blessed Eulogia bread among the pilgrims in the monastery of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger, located near St. Barlaam's monastery, and its phylacteric power is described in the *bios* of St. Symeon Stylites the Younger, P. van den Ven, *La Vie ancienne de S. Symeon le Jeune* (521-592) I (Bruxelles 1962) Ch. 189<sub>1-3</sub>.

<sup>56</sup> On the date of St. Barlaam's commemoration, see P. Peeters, *BHO* (Bruxelles 1910) 34.

<sup>57</sup> Galavaris, *op. cit.*, 117 and note 38; Idem., *Reallexikon der Byzantinischen Kunst* I (Stuttgart 1966) s.v. *Brotstempel*. For further examples see Dölger, *op. cit.*, 45; O.F.A. Meinardus, "Das Brot bei den Kopten", *Brot and Gebäck* (Oktober 1964).

<sup>58</sup> This assumption is deduced from an episode told in *Pratum Spirituale* by John Moschus (Ch. CXXV) where a solitary Abba Sergius endangered by a lion was saved with the help



should be attributed to St. Barlaam's bread stamp inasmuch as it contains the image of the Saint himself reaffirming the miraculous healing power of the bread<sup>59</sup>.

of eulogia bread. (PG 87, Pt. 3, 2988). In *bios* of Nisimes even two eucharistic breads (სუგობ კვდობი) are offered as eulogia (K. Kekelidze, *Keimena* [Tiflis 1918] 209).

<sup>59</sup> For instance in the *bios* of Saint Symeon Stylites the Younger (521-592) we are told of various healings accomplished by the image of Saint Symeon (Van den Ven, *op. cit.*, Ch. 118). On the phylacteric and apothropaic power inherent in images of holy men, see A. Grabar, *Martyrium, recherches sur le culte des reliques à l'art Chrétien antique* II (Paris 1946) 343-357 and E. Kitzinger, "The Cult of Images before Iconoclasm" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 8 (1954) 100-109.