

# On the Previously Unknown Translation of the Three Miracles of Saint Menas by Euthymius the Athonite

Sophio Sarjveladze

*Faculty of Humanities, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia*

(Presented by Academy Member Avtandil Arabuli)

**Abstract.** The paper discusses the three miracles of Saint Menas, translated by Euthymius the Athonite, a text that had remained unknown to Georgian scholars and the broader academic community. This was due to the fact that the text of *The Martyrdom of Saint Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugephos* had never been published, and in the descriptions of the three manuscripts containing Euthymius's translation, the cataloguers mistakenly considered the miracles of Saint Menas as part of the *Martyrdom* narrative, failing to distinguish the end of the martyrdom text from the beginning of the miracle stories. For the first time, this work presents the Georgian translation of three Miracles of Saint Menas to a wider audience. It examines the relationship between the three miracles of Saint Menas and the text translated by Euthymius, the variations in Euthymius's translation, and their relationship to the original text. Based on the examples, the conclusion is made that Euthymius the Athonite applied his translation method, known as the 'addition-subtraction' method, not only when translating theological works but also in hagiographical writings, including, the three miracles of Saint Menas. © 2025 Bull. Natl. Acad. Sci. Georg.

**Keywords:** philology, Byzantine studies, hagiography, manuscript studies

## Introduction

The hagiographical work *The Martyrdom of Saint Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugephos* (camebay çmidisa menaysi, ermoginesi da evğrapoysi), translated into Georgian by Euthymius the Athonite, was completed during the lifetime of his father, John the Athonite, from the late 10th century until 1005. This work, listed as the fifteenth (XV) text under the title *The Martyrdom of Saints Mina and Hermogenes*, appears in John's testament, which precedes the text of John Chrysostom's *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, translated

by Euthymius. In this testament, John enumerates the works translated by his son, Euthymius, from Greek (Shanidze et al, 1996).

## Discussion

The *Martyrdom of Saint Menas, Hermogenes and Eugephos* is preserved in Greek in several recensions. There exists a keinema recension of the martyrdom (BHG 1270, CPG 2212), a metaphrastic recension (BHG 1271), and shorter synaxarion recensions (BHG 1271e; 1272d) (BHG, 1909). The Greek keinema text of the Martyrdom,

*MAPTYPION TΩN AITΩN MARTYΡΩN MHNA, EPMOΓENOYΣ KAI EYΓPAΦOY*, Passio BHG 1270 (BHG, 1909), has not been published.

The text of the *keinema* recension *çamebay çmidisa menaysi, ermoginesi da evğrapoysi*, translated by Euthymius the Athonite, is preserved in three manuscripts: H-341 (XI), 1–28; A-70 (XIII), 526–534; Q-112a (1801), 368r–390r (Gabidzashvili, 2004). In 2025, the critical text of this work, together with a study, was published by me (Gigashvili & Sarjeladze, 2025). The Georgian translation of the same Martyrdom's metaphrastic recension – *çamebay çmidata da didebulta kristes moçametay mina, ermogine da evğrapoysi* is preserved in the following manuscripts: A-90 (XIII), 67v–87v; A-128 (XII–XIII), 281v–305v; Kut. 5 (XVI), 141–169 (Gabidzashvili, 2004). Regarding the synaxarial version, E. Gabidzashvili provides no information; however, it is preserved in manuscripts containing the text of George the Hagiorite's Synaxarion for the commemoration of the saints (George the Hagiorite, *Great Synaxarion*, 2017).

Greek manuscripts of the *keinema* recension of the *Martyrdom of Saint Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugraphos* do not include the miracles of Saint Menas, which are usually preserved separately in distinct collections. Euthymius the Athonite, however, appended three miracles to his Georgian translation of the Martyrdom: the miracle of the Isaurian pilgrim (BHG 1257); the miracle of Eutropius and the silver plates (BHG 1258); and the miracle of the Jew and the Christian (BHG 1260).

Two possibilities may explain this: a) Euthymius himself collected, compiled, and appended these three miracles to the martyrdom; b) a now-lost Greek archetype included the text of the Martyrdom together with these miracles (or perhaps more), from which Euthymius selected three to translate. The first is considered more plausible, given Euthymius's known practice of compiling texts and organizing their divisions in his translations. N. Melikishvili, studying the homiletic collection of Saint John Chrysostom, *Margaliti*,

(*Pearl*) translated by Euthymius, concluded that the Georgian translation's sectional divisions were introduced by Euthymius himself (Melikishvili, 2015). If we accept that Euthymius structured the text, adjusted other authors' reflections, omitted authorial opinions, added his own insights, and shaped the narrative for clarity (Ibid), it follows naturally that he sought out the miracles of Saint Menas, selected three of the thirteen, translated them, and appended them to the martyrdom for Georgian readers.

The Greek texts of the miracles of Saint Menas have come down to us. L. Silvano and P. Varalda studied the Greek manuscript texts of the miracles of Saint Menas and classified them into four recensions (Silvano & Varalda, 2019). L. Silvano and P. Varalda published the critical text of four miracles from recension A of the Greek miracles (Ibid). P. Devos published the Greek text of the miracle of Saint Menas concerning the Jew and the Christian, recension A, based on two manuscripts (Devos, 1960). The texts of the miracles of recension C were published by R. Miedema (Miedema, 1918). The Greek critical text of Saint Menas' second miracle (BHG 1258) according to recension A (with variant readings from other recensions in the scholia) was published by P. Varalda (Varalda, 2021). Since the cult of Saint Menas as a miracle-working saint was quite widespread in the Christian East, particularly among Coptic Christians, there exist Coptic, Ethiopian, Old Nubian, Arabic, Armenian, and Old Slavic versions of the miracles of Saint Menas (Silvano & Varalda, 2019; Varalda, 2021).

Until now, nothing was known about the three miracles of Saint Menas translated into Old Georgian, because in the descriptions of the three manuscripts preserving the *keinema* text of the *Martyrdom of Saint Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugraphos*, the cataloguers could not distinguish between the texts of the saints' vitae and Saint Menas's miracles, as the Greek text of the *Martyrdom* (BHG 1270) has not yet been published.

The Greek archetype of the three miracles translated by Euthymius is probably of the B recension. This recension is preserved in a single Greek manuscript, namely, the Moscow, Synodal Library, no. 369, copied in the 10th–11th centuries (currently catalogued as Synod. Gr. 161). The text of the 13 miracles of Saint Menas from this manuscript was published by I. Pomjalovskij in 1900 (Pomjalovskij, 1900). Euthymius does not mention Timothy of Alexandria, author of the Greek B recension of the miracles. Greek miracles were preceded by a prologue (Ibid), which Euthymius omitted.

In Georgian, miracles have no numbers or titles. Greek examples: Θαῦμα α'. Περὶ τοῦ πορευθέντος προσεύξανθαι (BHG 1257), Θαῦμα β'. Περὶ τοῦ ταξάμενου τὸν δίσκον (BHG 1258), Θαῦμα δ'. Περὶ τοῦ Ἑβραίου καὶ τοῦ Χριστιανοῦ (BHG 1260) (Ibid). In scholarly literature, the miracles are commonly referred to as follows: for the first miracle – The Isaurian pilgrim (BHG 1257); for the second miracle – Eutropius and the silver plates (BHG 1258); and for the third (the third in Georgian, the fourth in Greek) – The Jew and the Christian (BHG 1260).

The Georgian translation of the three miracles of Saint Menas has survived in two recensions. The text of recension A is preserved in manuscript H-341, which we designate with the siglum A in the critical text, while the text of recension B is preserved in manuscripts A-70 (B) and Q-122a (C).

Before each miracle narrative, Euthymius the Athonite addresses the reader with a single sentence, which in the Greek original is attested only in the case of the second miracle. Before the first miracle, concerning the Isaurian pilgrim (BHG 1257), we read: *aç visminot, žmano, saḡwirvelebani, romelni hkmnna ḡmertman qelita ḡmidisa moçamisa (ḡmidisa moçamisa)monisa BC) twisisa menaysita*, “Let us now hear, brethren, the wonders that God wrought through the holy martyr (A: holy martyr. BC: servant) Menas”. Before the third miracle, concerning the Jew and the Christian (BHG

1260), the introductory words – which are not attested in the Greek exemplar – are preserved in Euthymius’s translation, which survives in two recensions: *da kualad sxuay saḡwrveli megulebis mitxrobad ḡmidisa amis, saquarelno* “Let us now hear another wonder, told by the holy one, beloved brethren” (A recension); *kualad sxuay saḡwrveltmokmedebay gauçqo ḡmidisa mis, saquarelno* “Let us now hear another miraculous deed, proclaimed by the holy one, beloved brethren” (B recension).

As for the introductory words for the second miracle, concerning Eutropius and the silver dishes, the Greek manuscript reads: Ἐτερον θαῦμα βούλομαι διηγῆσθαι τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ πανολβίου γενόμενον μάρτυρος Μηνᾶ. “I wish to recount another miracle of the holy and all-blessed martyr Menas” (Pomjalovskij, 1900). In Euthymius’s translation, it is rendered as: *da kualad sxuay saḡwrvlebay ḡmidisa menaysi* (A: *ḡmidisa menaysi*. BC: *ḡmidisay mis) megulebis mitxrobad ḡkuenda, romeli ikmna* “Let us now hear another wonder, which occurred through the holy Menas (A: *holy Menas*. BC: *the Saint*), beloved brethren, which was done.” It is possible that Euthymius the Athonite: a) either had a Greek manuscript at hand in which, as with the first and third miracles, the author addressed the reader in the second person directly before recounting the miracle; b) or he himself added the text that precedes the narratives of the first and third miracles.

It is well known that Euthymius the Athonite did not always render the Greek original with exact precision. He translated with flexibility, often modifying sentences and phrases – sometimes altering their meaning, and at other times preserving it while intensifying the message. Greek words were replaced with Georgian equivalents of similar or different sense, and adapted to his own style. His translation method has long attracted scholarly attention and has been thoroughly examined in recent studies (Bezarashvili & Machavariani, 1995; Tsikvatia & Tchebukhava, 2022; Kotlamazashvili,

2003; Kotlamazashvili, 2014; Gippert, 2013; Högel, 2020).

I will present several examples that demonstrate how Euthymius the Athonite translated the text of the three miracles of Saint Mena using his characteristic method of 'addition-subtraction.' The following examples highlight Euthymius the Athonites' paraphrasing of the Greek text of the miracles:

Euthymius the Athonite consistently translated the Greek word *δίσκος*, which appears repeatedly in the text of Saint Menas' second miracle (BHG 1258), as *barzim-i*, "the cup of the Eucharist." The Greek *δίσκος* means: 1. orb of sun or moon; 2. plate; 3. esp. paten, sts. made of gold; eucharist bread deposited thereon by deacons or preasts (Lampe, 2005). Its Latin equivalent is *patena*. In Old Georgian, the Greek *δίσκος* corresponds to *peṣxuen-i*/*peṣxuem-i*, which means "a large plate, a dish, a deep plate on which, during the liturgy, the *tarigi*, the commemorative portion of Christ, the communion bread, the host, is placed". The most common Greek equivalent of the Georgian *barzim-i* is *ποτήριον* (Ibid). Unfortunately, we cannot explain why Euthymius the Athonite replaced the Greek *δίσκος* with *barzim-i* in his translation.

For the first miracle, concerning the Isaurian pilgrim (BHG 1257), Euthymius the Athonite made several changes compared to the Greek original text. In the examined example, he rephrased the sentence. In the Greek original it reads: *ὁ δὲ κύριος τῆς ἀποθήκης περιποιήσατο στρώματα, ὅπως ὑπνώσωσιν ἀμφότεροι* "And the owner of the inn prepared the bed so that both of them might sleep" (Pomjalovskij, 1900: 63,26-27). The text speaks about the innkeeper preparing a bed for himself and the guest so they could sleep. However, in Euthymius the Athonite's translation, the focus is not on the bed and sleeping, but rather on the innkeeper bringing and setting a table for the guest to eat and sleep. Euthymius changed the Greek word *στῶμα*, which means "bed, bedding, mattress" (Lampe, 2005) into *tabla* "table" and

thus, added the phrase that "the man would want to eat." Since Euthymius here tells us that the innkeeper's care is solely directed toward the guest's food and sleep, in his translation, the innkeeper's attention is focused only on the guest. In contrast, in the Greek original, the phrase *ὅπως ὑπνώσωσιν ἀμφότεροι* means "so that both of them might sleep." In Euthymius's translation, this becomes: *xolo meṗandokseman man moigo ṭablay da daugo* (AC: *daugo*. B: *daudga*) *činaṣe missa, da vitarṭa ṣamay eneba da dazinebis* (AB: *vitarta ṣamay eneba da dazinebis*. C: *vitarta ṣṣama, eneba dazinebis*).

Euthymius the Athonite freely translated the phrase in the following sentence. The Greek original reads: *ιδὼν δὲ τὸ βαλάντιον τοῦ ἀνδρός ὁ ἀποθηκάριος, εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ ὁ πάντοτε βασκαίνων τὴν ἄλυπον ζωὴν ἡμῶν διάβολος, καὶ ἐβίβλευσε τὸν ξένον ἕως οὗ ἀπεκοιμήθη* (Pomjalovskij, 1900: 63,27-30) "And when the storekeeper saw the man's purse, the devil — who always envies our painless life — entered into his heart and spied on the stranger until he fell asleep." Here, Euthymius made a significant alteration to the devil's description. The original Greek phrase *ὁ πάντοτε βασκαίνων τὴν ἄλυπον ζωὴν ἡμῶν* means "the one who always envies our carefree life," but Euthymius changed it to "the one who always opposes the lineage of men." In Euthymius's translation, we read: *da ixila meṗandokseman man ḱisaḱi igi okroyta (igi okroyta om. BC) ḱacisa mis tana. mas ḱamsa* (A: *mas ḱamsa*. BC: *mašin*) *ṣevida eṣmaḱi gulsa mis ḱacisasa* (A: *eṣmaḱi gulsa mis ḱacisasa*. B: *eṣmaḱi gulsa missa*. C: *gulsa missa eṣmaḱi*), *romeli maradis hbrzavs natesavs ḱactasa*. This modification shifts the focus of the devil's hostility from a general envy of peaceful human life to a specific opposition to the human race.

I will provide few examples of the "additions" and "subtractions" in Euthymius the Athonite's translation of the Greek text. In relation to the first miracle of Saint Menas, Euthymius added a

sentence. The Greek text says: *Καὶ ἡλόγησεν αὐτὸν ὁ ἅγιος μάρτυς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μηνᾶς, ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸν φονέα, καὶ εὐθέως ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν* (Pomjalovskij, 1900: 65,24-26) "And the holy martyr of Christ, Menas, blessed him, and likewise the murderer, and immediately became invisible to them." Here, Euthymius himself added a reflection about the slain and resurrected rich man, who did not know what happened to him, and neither did his murderer, the innkeeper, reveal the incident to him. **Euthymius's translation reads:** *da ara scna kacman man, ray-igi ikmna mis zeda da arca meṗandoqseman gamoucxada mas. da akurtxa cmidaman moṣameman* (A: *moṣameman*. BC: *mena*) *moḱluli igi da mḱlveli da miepara matgan*.

In the miracle of the Jew and the Christian (BHG 1260) the story describes how the Jew prepared to go for trading. The Greek text says: *Ἐν μιᾷ οὖν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναχωρῶν ὁ Ἑβραῖος ἐπὶ πραγματείας ἔασεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Χριστιανοῦ βαλάντιον βεβουλωμένων* (Pomjalovskij, 1900: 70,30-71,1) "So then, on one of the days, the Jew, departing on business, left in the house of the Christian a purse sealed up." **Euthymius's translation reads:** *da ganemzada* (C add. *odesme*) *huriay igi čarslvad vačrobad da movida saxed moḱusisa mis twisisa da misca mas ḱisaḱi twisi daḱrḱzaluli sapasita da dabečduli bečdita twisita damarxvad, vidremdis moikces igi saxid twsad da čarvida gzasa twissa* "And the Jew prepared to departure on business and came to his neighbor's house and gave him his pouch with sealed property and sealed with its seal to keep before he returns to his house and went on his way." Here, Euthymius made some differences, while translating the Greek text: a) time reference: Greek text: *Ἐν μιᾷ οὖν τῶν ἡμερῶν* – "One day" or "On one of the days." Euthymius's translation: He omitted the reference to "one day" and the word "*odesme*" is added in B recension; b) specifics of the transaction (the pouch): Greek Text: *"βαλάντιον βεβουλωμένων"* – "a pouch of minted coins." Euthymius's translation: *"ḱisaḱi twisi daḱrḱzaluli sapasita"* – "his pouch

(*ḱisaḱi*) with sealed property." The term "*daḱrḱzaluli sapasita*" could be a more detailed description of the pouch, adding more context than the original, which simply says "pouch of minted coins"; c) additional information in Euthymius's translation: Euthymius's version adds extra details, which is not present in the Greek text.

Euthymius shortened the beginning of the first miracle (BHG 1257). In the Greek original it is: *Τούτου δὲ τοῦ ναοῦ τελειωθέντος τῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάριτι καὶ τῇ τοῦ ἁγίου πρεσβείᾳ ἀνθρωπός τις ἦν ἐκ τῆς χώρας τῶν Ἰσαύρων καὶ ἦν πλούσιος πάνν. Εἰσῆλθε δὲ εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν λόγῳ πραγματείας καὶ ἤκουσε πάντα τὰ θαύματα καὶ τὰς ἰάσεις ὥσπερ ἐποίει ὁ ἅγιος* (Pomjalovskij, 1900: 63,10-14) "When this church had been completed by the grace of God and through the intercession of the saint, there was a certain man from the land of the Isaurians, and he was exceedingly wealthy. He came to Alexandria on business, and heard of all the miracles and healings which the saint performed." Euthymius here omitted: a) the account concerning the completion of the church of Saint Menas; b) he omitted that the person involved in the miracle, a rich man, was from the region of the Isaurians. It seems that Euthymius considered the mention of the completion of Saint Menas' church and of the Isaurians superfluous for the Georgian reader, and therefore, he omitted the sentence entirely. In Euthymius' translation it is: *ḱaci vinme iḱo* (BC om. *iḱo*) *priad mdidari da movida aleksandria kalakad saqmarad vačrobisa, da esmnes saḱwrvelebani* (B: add. *da ḱurnebani*), *romelta ḱḱopda cmiday mena* "There was (C om. was) a man exceedingly wealthy and came to Alexandria city on doing business, and he heard miracles (B add. and healings), which performed Saint Mena."

Euthymius shortened the narrative, omitting certain details. In the Greek text, we read: *Καὶ ἀναστὰς ἔλαβεν μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ τὸ βαλάντιον αὐτοῦ καὶ διήρχετο εἰς τὴν λίμνην τῆς παραθαλασσίας καὶ ἐνρὼν πλοῖάριον κατέλαβεν τὸν τόπον τὸν λεγόμενον Λοζονῆτα* (Pomjalovskij, 1900: 63,17-

19) “And rising up, he took his purse with him and went toward the lake by the seashore, and finding a small boat, he arrived at the place called Loxonēta.” Euthymius made the following omissions: a) the toponym “Loxonēta” (Λοξονῆτα); b) the phrase implying the rich man was on his way to the lake; c) the detailed description of the man traveling and reaching the place, including the mention of “Loxonēta” and its contextual significance. Euthymius’s translation reads: *da aḡdga da miḡo mis tana ḡsaḡi okroyta da ševida navsa da ḡiaḡqda zḡuasa* “And he raised up, took with him his purse with gold and entered the ship and went by sea.”

**Euthymius omitted the detail that Saint Mena appeared to the innkeeper 'in the attire of a spatharios.'** In the Greek original it reads: *Σπασθεῖς δὲ τὸν ἄγιον ὡς ἐν σχήματι σπαθαρίου λέγων* (Pomjalovskij, 1900: 64, 24-25) “And trembling, he pleaded with the Saint, who was in the attire of a spatharios, saying.” Here, Euthymius omitted two key details: a) that the innkeeper was ‘trembling’ (σπασθεῖς); b) that the Saint appeared ‘in the attire of a spatharios’ (τὸν ἄγιον ὡς ἐν σχήματι σπαθαρίου). In Euthymius’s translation it is attested: *evedreboda ḡmidasa menas* (BC: *ḡmidasa menas. A: mas*) *da eḡqoda*, “He was praying to Saint Menas (BC: Saint Menas. A: him) and saying.”

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be noted that the three miracles of Saint Menas translated by Euthymius the Atho-

nite were most likely rendered into Georgian based on the Greek B recension manuscript. Some of the differences described above may have been present in the manuscript that Euthymius had at hand. However, since the Greek B recension has reached us only in a single X–XI century manuscript, it must be assumed that other, earlier Greek manuscripts existed, one of which served as Euthymius’ source. The number of divergences between the Greek original and the Georgian translation corresponds roughly to the number of precise agreements.

As for Euthymius’s translation method, by which both the *Martyrdom* and the three miracles of Saint Menas were rendered, it fully aligns with his general approach to sources: he translated freely and was not constrained by strict adherence to the original. He omitted details that seemed irrelevant to him, occasionally adding words or phrases where he deemed new interpretations necessary, clarifying meanings, and reshaping the narrative when he believed certain nuances required highlighting for the reader.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia, (SRNSFG) in the frames of the project ‘Electronic Scholarly Edition of the Translated Hagiographic Heritage of the Athos Scribal-Literary School (Part II)’ [Grant №FR-21-4884].

ფილოლოგია

## წმიდა მენას სამი სასწაულის ექვთიმე ათონელის აქამდე უცნობი თარგმანისათვის

ს. სარჯველაძე

*ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახ. თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ჰუმანიტარულ მეცნიერებათა ფაკულტეტი, საქართველო*

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის ა. არაბულის მიერ)

ნაშრომში განხილულია ექვთიმე მთაწმიდელის (ათონელის) მიერ თარგმნილი წმიდა მენას სამი სასწაული, რომელიც დღემდე უცნობი იყო ქართველი მკვლევრებისა და, საზოგადოდ, სამეცნიერო საზოგადოებისათვის, რაც იმით იყო განპირობებული, რომ „წმიდა მენას, ერმოგენესა და ევგრაფოსის წამების“ ბერძნული და ქართული კიმენური რედაქციის ტექსტები დღემდე არ იყო გამოქვეყნებული და სამივე ხელნაწერის აღწერილობაში, სადაც „წამების“ ექვთიმესეული თარგმანია დაცული, აღმწერებმა წმიდა მენას სასწაულები „წამების“ თხრობის ნაწილად მიიჩნიეს, ვერ გამოიყენეს „წამების“ ტექსტის დასასრული და სასწაულთა თხრობის დასაწყისი. ამდენად, ნაშრომი პირველად აცნობს ფართო მკითხველს ქართულ ენაზე წმიდა მენას სასწაულების თარგმანის შესახებ. ნაშრომში ტექსტოლოგიური და შედარებითი მეთოდების გამოყენებით განხილულია წმიდა მენას სამი სასწაულისა და ექვთიმეს მიერ თარგმნილი ტექსტის ურთიერთმიმართება, გამოყოფილია თარგმანის რედაქციები. მოხმობილ მაგალითებზე დაყრდნობით, კეთდება დასკვნა, რომ ექვთიმე მთაწმიდელი მის მთარგმნელობით, ე.წ. „კლება-მატების“ მეთოდს იყენებდა არა მხოლოდ თეოლოგიური ლიტერატურის თარგმნისას, არამედ ჰაგიოგრაფიული ნაწარმოებების და, ჩვენს შემთხვევაში, წმიდა მენას სამი სასწაულის თარგმნისასაც.

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Received February, 2025