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KUTAISI AND PALIASTOMI ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

The name of Paliastomi Icon of the Mother of God originates from a widespread legend in Georgia according to which the Icon of the Mother of God was placed in the church of fortress city Paliastomi. The Mother of God had appeared to Silibistro, the chief presbyter of this church and instructed him to deliver the icon to fortress city Kutaisi. Afterwards, flood covered city Paliastomi and its inhabitants.

The icon is a piece of painting with chased silver. The central part of the icon depicts the faces of the Mother of God and Jesus painted on damaged wood. The remaining part of the icon is entirely chased and gilded. The icon represents a unique masterpiece of painting and art that was restored by Rafael Monk in 1612 during the reign of George III of Imcreti. The icon was transferred from the Kutaisi Cathedral Church to the Kutaisi Museum in 1923.

The Russian Ambassador A. Ievliev who viewed the Kutaisi and Paliastomi Icon of the Mother of God in 1651 described in his report how the icon appeared to be in Bagrati Cathedral; he repeated the legend about the icon. According to Academician N. Berdzenishvili, the icon ended up in Kutaisi during the reign of Bagrat III when Kutaisi became an eparchial center. However, B. Kudava assumes that it happened during the reign of Giorgi I when relics from different eparchies were transferred to Bagrati Cathedral in Kutaisi.