

**The Meaning of the Words “mkali (locusts)”
and “veluri tapli (wild honey)”
Mentioned in the Gospel**
(*mkali*, that is *danakiskudi*, *tapli veluri* – *melagria*)

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Abstract: This article discusses the meaning of old Greek words and their old Georgian equivalents, mentioned in the New Testament as the food of St. John the Baptist.

According to Matt. 3:4 and Mark 1:6, John the Baptist ate locusts and wild honey: Mt. (3:4): “...and his food was locusts [Gr: *akrides*] and wild honey [Gr. *meli agrion*]; Mr. (1:6): “...and he did eat locusts [Gr. *akridas*] and wild honey” [Gr. *meli agrion*].

The discussion about the terms *locusts* and *wild honey* began in the early centuries and continues until today. The Georgian translations of Greek homilies or patristic works, beginning from the VII century, as well as the Greek authors of these works often have commented the meaning of the words *akris* and *meli agrion*//*melagria*. These terms are also interpreted and determined in the old Georgian original texts.

In this article we support the view that claims that these terms mean plants, herbs. We have already published one article on the issue. Now, after 11 years, more, additional arguments were found both from old manuscripts and contemporary researches, which are presented in this work.¹

Key Words: *John the Baptist, melagria, mkali, locust, danakiskudi, wild honey, dates*

Regarding John the Baptist we read in the Gospel that “his food was locusts and wild honey”[15, Matthew 3:4.]//“ἡ δὲ τροφή ἣν αὐτοῦ ἀκρίδες καὶ μέλι ἀγρίον”. MT “he ate locusts and wild honey [15, Mark 1:6]//”...ἐσθίων ἀκρίδας καὶ μέλι ἀγρίον MK.

¹ Maya Barnaveli, *His food was Locusts and Wild Honey*, “Byzantine Studies in Georgia”, Tbilisi, “Logos”, 2007. pp. 268-275.

ἀκρίς, gen. ἀκρίδος is an *insect – locust*, and/ἄκρις, ἄκριος (ἴ) is the *peak, upper part of the top*). In Biblical encyclopedias or dictionaries this word is univocally defined as a *grasshopper, insect*. However, this definition is sometimes followed by the explanation that there is a tradition and some scholars still share the idea that this word denoted not an insect but a plant. There is a similar situation about the collocation *wild honey*, often in the works of ancient exegeticians; for example, in the works of Theophilactus Bulgarian, the above-mentioned term is interpreted as *honey prepared by the wild bees*, but some authors still hold the view, according to which this term also denoted a plant.

Based on the linguistic analysis on the one hand, and the etymology of these words (both Georgian and Greek), on the other, we argue that John the Baptist's food *the locust* and *wild honey* both denote plants. Regarding this issue we will employ the materials preserved in old Georgian manuscripts, writings of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani as well as in Modern studies.

Already in the first century AD, the definition of these words was commented on. Because Jesus Christ said that John the Baptist neither ate nor drank [15, Matthew 11:18, "John came neither eating nor drinking.."], that among those born of women there has risen no one greater than John the Baptist.he was the Mighty One, the second Elijah, the greater than the Prophets, that from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence. [15, Matthew, 11:12] So it was hard to imagine that he ate non-vegetarian food. The Holy Fathers explained the meaning of the words *locusts* and *wild honey*. In the early centuries, in translated (from Greek) as well as in original Georgian manuscripts – such as lives, homilies, exegetical and metaphrastic writings - the meaning of the above-mentioned words was often explained and specifically interpreted.

In a Georgian original hagiographical text "Life of Peter Kartveli (Georgian)"², one of the disciples says that he approached, together with other disciples, father Isaiah's cell, and overheard the conversation. However, when they came closer, they saw no one there besides Father himself. When asked about the person he was talking to, Father Isaia replied: "The great John the Baptist came and said: 'After three days we'll come and take forth your soul'. And I asked the Great John, "What was your food while living in the desert?" And he said to me, "Herbs, vegetable, and hay was the food of mine" [18, pp. 253-254].

² Peter Kartveli/Peter Iberi was a Georgian scholar of the V c.

In the 5th and 132th epistles dedicated to John the Baptist Isidore of Pelusium (IV-V) wrote that he lived simply and ate tops of grass and leaves, he fasted. (The Greek text: ο2 Ισιδορε Πελυσιστιαε "Περί τῆς τοῦ Προδρόμου, καὶ περὶ ἀσκήσεως".

Εἰ οἱ θεοὶ χρησιμοὶ σημαίνουσι τὴν ἀκριδεῖαν, περιττὴ ἢ περιεργὸς ζήτησις τοῖς νουνεχῶς τουτούς ἀναγινώσκουσιν. Εἰ τοίνυν καὶ βρώματα καὶ ἐσθήματα τῆς κατὰ θεὸν τελείας ἀσκήσεως ἐν Ἰωάννῃ τῷ βαπτιστῇ ἐπαιδεύζημεν, Φριξὶ μὲν, εἰ οἶον τε, πρὸς σκέπην ἀρκέσθησόμεθα, ἀκρέμοσι δὲ βοτανῶν καὶ φύλλων πρὸς ὀλίγην τροφήν καὶ ἀπέρριπτον. Εἰ δὲ ταῦτα, δι' ἀσθένειαν μείζονα, τύπος ἡμῖν ἔστω χρείας ἀπάσης καὶ τελεώσεως, ἢ τοῦ προεστῶτος δοκιμασία καὶ κέλευσις [27, col. 183, 184] Τί εἰσιν αἱ ἀκρίδες, καὶ τὸ μέλι τὸ ἄγριον, οἷς ὁ Βαπτιστὴς Ἰωάννης ἐτρέφετο.

Αἱ ἀκρίδες, αἷς Ἰωάννης ἐτρέφετο, οὐ ζῶα εἰσιν ὥς τινες ἀμαζῶς, κανθάροις ἀπεικότα. Μὴ γένοιτο. Ἄλλ' ἀκρέμονες βοτανῶν ἢ φυτῶν. Οὔτε δὲ πόα τίς ἐστὶ πάλιν τὸ μέλι (τὸ) ἄγριον. Δι' ὧν τὴν ὑπερβαλλουσάν κάκωσιν ἐπεδείκνυτο Ἰωάννης, οὐκ ἐνδεία μόνη, ἀλλὰ καὶ τραχύτητι πᾶσαν ὀρεξίν πικραίνων τοῦ σώματος». [27, col. 270].

Blessed Theophilactus Bulgarian (+1107) explains the meaning of these terms in the following way: “His food was locusts and wild honey”. Some sources say, that *locust* is also called *melagria*, which is a kind of grass, some mean it is *walnut* or *wild fruit*. Wild honey is produced by some bees and can be found in trees and rocks [6, p. 32]//«Ἡ δὲ τροφή αὐτοῦ ἦν ἀκρίδες, καὶ μέλι ἀγριον». Τινὲς λέγουσι βοτανὰς εἶναι τὰς ἀκρίδας, ὅς καὶ μελαγρὰ καλοῦσι τινὲς δὲ, τὰ ἀκρόδρυα ἦτοι ὀπώρας ἀγρίας• μέλι δὲ ἄγριον, τὸ ὑπὸ ἀγρίων μελισσῶν γεωργουμένον, ἐν δένδροις εὕρισκομενον καὶ πέτραις [6, col. 173].

The Greek ἀκρις, ἀκρίδος in old Georgian translations³ is transposed as *mkali*, *danakiskudi* (date palm), *mtsuvali mdeloisa* (top of a field) *mtsvanili mdeloisa* (wild herbs//herbs of the fields//meadows), or these words are followed after *mkali* (*locust*) – as an explanation. And words μέλι ἄγριον – is translated as *wild honey*//*honey o field*//*melagria*//*source of a water plant*, as on a barren place was grown such a sweetness (a sweet plant) that's why it has been called *wild honey*.

Each of these terms will be discussed separately below:

The homily dedicated to Baptism, the author of which was first considered to be John Chrysostom [9, pp. 79-82; 11, pp. 50-51], but later, it was confirmed to be written by Pseudochrysostom [19, p. 51], mentions the man [John the Baptist] eating herbs of fields and wild honey and, “by spiritual preaching motivating the Church of God//«ἐνταῦθα ὁ ἐν ἀκρίσι καὶ μέλιτι τραφεὶς Ἰωάννης, τοῖς ἐρημικοῖς κηρύγμασι, μάλλον δὲ πνευματικοῖς, τὰς Ἐκκλησίας κινήσας.» [26, col. 489-492].

In the metaphrasis “Silence of Zachariah” [17, p. 395] we read: “In all things we find John in the likeness of Eliah, because he lived in the mountain, but John- in the deserts; the fowls gave food to Eliah, but John ate tops of a field”//«ἐκεῖνον

³ The Georgian texts, which were translated much earlier, but reached us starting from the IX c.

κόρακες ἔτρεφον, καὶ οὗτος ἀκριδας βοτανῶν ἥσθιεν» [25, col. 786-787].

In the “Sinuri Mravaltavi” [11, p. 208] the following is mentioned: “[John] eating locusts (mkali) and the wild honey”//«ὁ ἀκριδας ἐκ βοτανῶν ἥσθιων καὶ μέλι ἄγριον» [26, col. 761-76].

In one of the readings of “Klarjuri Mravaltavi” (XIc.) [9, p. 358], it is clarified that *Mkali* (locust) that is (date palm) - *danakiskudi*, and *wild honey* is the source of water from the spring, as on this barren place was grown such a sweetness, that's why it has been called wild honey”. In another text of the Klarjuri Mravaltavi, Jesus Christ says: “I say unto thee, *danakiskudo* [locust], incline your head with fruit down and feed my father and mother. And the tree bent immediately. It is interesting to know what happened to this locust tree – *danakiskudi*- after Jesus said to it: “And you have to be food for the men who are living isolated in the mountains and the deserts! Now you, *danakiskudo* (locust), go back to the first place you moved from! “Then the tree raised up, moved to heaven” [9, pp. 423-425].

In the text of the “Lives of Holy Fathers” (XIc.) it is written: “our food was *wild field hay*, which is the *mane of horse*, [10, p. 168]; “...and as they couldn't find the bottom of *melagria* in the wilderness//desert, then they asked God to give them some edible food for men [10, p. 247]; “...There was a field nearby and some locusts – *danakiskudoanni* – were raised there” [10, 33]; ...and they had a bit of locust – *danakiskudoanta* – to eat [10, 34]; “...there was some edible grass there [10, 33]; they had some *locusts-danakiskudi*- to eat [8, 34]; And his food was herbs...he used to eat nothing but bread and locust – *danakiskudi* – and drink some water” [10, p. 312]; “He went out to pick some herbs” [10, 278]; “And he [Gerasim] founded the monks in the cave and instituted the rules for them: five days a week not to eat anything but bread, *locust-danakiskudi* – and drink water” [10, p. 312]; and “...they (monks) had nothing else to eat, but the bottom of *wild honey* and the heart of the reed. And the monks living isolated did eat and drink enough” [10, p. 63]; “There was some herb for them to eat” [10, p. 151]; “the *herb* – *mkhali*-became sweet and pleasant immediately” [10, p. 247]; “And he [saint Kviriakos] ate the *bottom of the melagria* and core of reed [10, p. 248].

The Gelati manuscript reads: “he [st. John the Baptist] didn't work on land, he didn't care for harvest, nor where to live, nor about the bed for himself, he didn't work to get his own daily bread, but his food was *the top of trees*” [16, 563v]//5: «οὐ κλίνης, οὐ τραπέζης, οὐκ ἄλλου τῶν τοιούτων οὐδενὸς ἔδειτο, οὐ γῆν ἤροσεν, οὐκ αὐλακα ἔτεμεν, οὐκ ἐκ ἰδρωτι προσώπον, ἄρτον ἔφαγεν, ἀλλὰ δένδρων μὲν ἀκρίδες αὐτῷ ἡ τροφή» [22, pp. 384-400].

“As they had nothing to eat, they needed to be comforted by food found in nature, but there was nothing edible in the

desert, even wild honey (//in greek text: *melagria*), that would be enough to feed them..” [17, p. 461]//«Ἀπορούμενοι τοῖνυν παραμυθήσονται οὐδὲ γὰρ [οὐδὲ] μελάγρια κατὰ τὴν ἔρημον πεφύκει» [28, col. 929]; “...he grew up eating bottoms of *wild honey* (*melagria*) and tips of reed... [17, p. 462]//«καὶ πέντα παρ' αὐτῇ διαγαγὼν ἔτη, ρίζας τε μελαγρίων καὶ ἀκρέμονας [ἀκρεμόνας2] καλάμων προσίετο» [28, col. 932]; “Bishop John used to get out of his cave and wandered in the (wilderness//) desert and pick up *melagria* - food of monks living in deserts” [10, p. 278]

It is interesting to mention that the “Treasure Cave” (Gandzta Qvabi”) gives us the same explanation of the term *wild honey*: “And John was in the wilderness all the days of his life. And his food was *locust* (*mkali*) and *wild honey*, *locust* (*mkali*) which is the core of the plant referred to as a pine palm, which, like an animate thing grows on the top of a tree, and the honey, which is the mane of the horse, called in Greek *melagrio*” [4, p. 163].

As we can see, in the two latter examples is mentioned *honey of a field* (//*valley*), in Georg. *veluri*), but not *wild honey*. This shows that in the Georgian language the *valley* and *wild* were used synonymously and derived from the word *field* by adding the suffix “ur”. (The word *mindori* (//*veli*) means a *valley*, a woodless place). The great Georgian lexicographer Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani (1658-1725) in his explanatory dictionary defined the word in this way: *mindori*—(a field – little valley, small valley, a woodless place” [12]; The word *veluri*(*wild*) in Modern Georgian is the name of a wild or non-cultivated plant (*veluri*//*wild* animal refers to non-domestic animals, that live in forests). The following words have the same meaning: “wild /growing in a valley, field//habitant of a forest, wood, wild nature”. Etymologically, the Greek word *agros*, that means *a village, a garden* is related to the word *agrios*—wild, habitant of a valley, habitant of the wild (or non-domestic) nature”.

The name of the plant is confirmed in old Georgian as *a wild olive, velis-khrdeli* (plant), *shroshanni velisani* [15, Matthew, 6, 28]//τὰ κρίνα τοῦ ἀγροῦ//lilies of the field: the heath in the desert, (griki, mtis jholo)//mountain raspberries [2, Ieremiah, 17, 6 p. 2612], (Saba explains *mountain raspberries* [12])//– ἀγριομυρική ἢ. “every beast of the forest is mine” [2, p. 49//50, 10, p. 1897]//: «...ἐμὰ...πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ»; they plant wild figs (during six days) [1, p. 52] in greek: «τὰς ἀγρίας συκᾶς παραφυτεύουσι» [20, p. 55]; A wild donkey (*viru veluri*) – Kanjari, as explained by Saba [12].

As we see from these examples, ἀγρός, ὁ – if it stands in the genetive case – and the word ἄγριος, α, ον – are translated into Georgian as the *habitant of wild nature, field, valley, forest*; for example, *veli shuenieri*–(beautiful valley) [14, p. 342]; *nadirni velisani*–(beasts living in wilderness) [14, p. 342] (Certianly, in this case *nadirni velisani* - animals living in

wilderness – mean beasts, non-domestic animals, living in nature, as well as *mtzenare veluri* (wild plants) mean plants that grow in wilderness, valley, forest non-domestic plant//flower), for example: “the Khazarians are wild people” [14, p. 342]; But: “You, wild olive tree, the Christ has accepted you” [14, p. 342].

In Sulkhan-Saba's dictionary [12] we also have a definition of *wild honey*: “This is the tree that is called “Erika” in latin, it’s like a ...urtkhli [a yew tree]. The fruit of this tree and the tree itself have honeylike sweetness coming out of it. Some people call it *manna* (in Georgian: *manana*). So, this is called *wild honey*. The word *urtkhli*, is explained by the great Georgian lexicographer in this way: “The tree, the non- rotting wood, the yew, the sage”//*dzeli ulpolveli, utxovari, saji* [12]. As we have seen above, wild honey is uniquely identified as a plant by Sulkhan-Saba.

Rehav Rubin considers the *melagria* as a plant and specifies it in the article “The Melagria: On Anchorites and Edible Roots in the Judean Desert” [30, pp. 347-352]. He considers this word uniquely to describe the plant and offers his own arguments, what plant must have been the food as described in the “Lives” of the ancient monks living in deserts. He believes this word denoted an asphodel (Latin *aspedelus*), which is still abundant in the wilderness of Judea.

Regarding the definition of a word *mkali*, in the earliest manuscripts (manuscripts of Georgian dictionary, indicated with the letter - E), Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani wrote that it was *the top, upper part of herbs*//*mtsuervali mdelota*. In addition, closeby Saba wrote the words “the Baptist”, which refers to the fact that in the context of John the Baptist the word was interpreted as a plant. However, in the manuscripts written in a later period (ZA), this definition was altered and Sulkhan-Saba defined the word in the following way: “mkali–(Mark, 1:6) that was eaten by John the Baptist, some say, was tops of herbs, but it is a lie; in reality the word meant “locusts-grasshoppers”, still used as food by the Arabs; it has an elongated shape and can fly. In addition, in some earlier manuscripts of Georgian Dictionary by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani (Cab) the following is added: “The Hellenistic and Latin vocabulary has proved that this word means *grasshopper*, not *the top of grass*//*herb*//*valley*.”

It is interesting to see how Saba defined the word *danakiskudi*, for Georgian translators and theological figures frequently translated the word *akris/locust* into Georgian as *danakiskudi*, or the word *mkali* was followed by the definition of this kind: *mkali, that is danakiskudi*. On the other hand, Sulkhan-Saba gives such an explanation of the word: “in the Greek language *danakiskudi* is a tree – a date palm, (ἀκρίς), in Georgian it is called *danakiskudi, valanos* [12]. Indeed, in the Bible, in the book of Exodus the Greek *φοῖνιξ, ἱκος, ὁ* is translated into Georgian as *danakiskudi*: “There were twelve

springs of water and seventy trees of danakiskudi” [2, p. 226]; where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees. [Exodus, 15, 27]. The parallel Greek text runs in this way: «καὶ ἦσαν ἐκεῖ δώδεκα πηγαὶ ὑδάτων καὶ ἐβδομήκοντα στελέχη φοινίκων παρενέβαλον δὲ ἐκεῖ παρὰ τὰ ὕδατα» [20, Exodus, 15, 27].

The etymology of the word *danakis kudi*/(*danakiskudi*) was discussed by M. Ivanishvili in her article “Danakis Kudi”(the Palm Tree), “Bza” (Boxux) and “Bzoba” (Palm Sunday) in the Kartvelian languages.” [6, p. 149-159]. She suggests the etymology of the word *danakis kudi*, as derived by merging the words *danaki* (a little knife) and *kudi* (a tail), as the leaves of the date palm look like the tip of a knife. As this palm is not an endemic plant for the Caucasus, according to the researcher, the shape of the palm leaves was taken into consideration while transposing the name for this tree in Georgian.

The issue about the names of plants in the Georgian New Testament has been discussed by A. Khintibidze in his article about no-endemic species. The scholar agrees the word (*danakiskudi*) was originated by merging two Georgian words: *danaki* and *kudi* [7, 23/2015].

In order to better understand the case, we also looked up the materials in the Greek-Georgian documented dictionary [1, p. 461], and we found that the Greek word *φοῖνιξ, ἰκος, ὁ* – (date palm) is transposed into Georgian as *piniki, danakiskudi*, which means that, as πόλιν φοινίκων ἕως Σηγὼρ /shown above, these two words are synonymous: Φοινίκη, ἡς, ἡ – ქვე, *danakiskudovani* (kvekana-country)//land of Canaan/εἰς μέρος τῆς Φοινίκης [2, I Ezra, 2, 13] πόλιν φοινίκων ἕως Σηγὼρ//the city of palm-trees, to Segor [2, Deuteronomy, 34:3] 2, r., 16, 35); *φοῖνιξ, ἰκος, ὁ* – [date-palm]- *piniki, danakiskudi*.; *φοίνικες* – trees of the date palm, palm trees,- *kheni danakiskudisani* [2, Ezek. 40, 26, p. 281].

This explanation by Saba is supported by one extract from “the Lives of the Fathers”, which mentions that holy Fathers used to weave baskets with the leaves of danakiskudi – (the date palm). Indeed, the date palm has got leaves that are suitable for weaving baskets: “...(the monk) lay on the reed-woven bed, the Governor of the Lavra used to give him the leaves of danakiskudi, he weaved fifty bags and gave them to the Head of Accommodation”; Here the words *date palm* and *danakiskudi* are used in parallel, as well as the date palm is translated as “danakiskudi”: “They get their food for Sunday: some bread and dates [piniki] and water..” [10, p. 313]//«τῇ Κυριακῇ δείλης τὸ ἀνάλωμα τῆς ἐβδομάδος λαμβάνων, ἄρτους καὶ φοίνικας καὶ ἐν κλικήσιον ὕδατος.» [23, p. 177]; “They didn’t eat anything but bread and dates (danakiskudi), and water” [10, p. 312]//«μεθενὸς ἐτέρου μεταλαμβάνοντα, πλὴν ἄρτου καὶ ὕδατος καὶ φοινίκων» [23, p. 176]. In order to strengthen the proposition that John the Baptist was believed to be a vegetarian, we could use an example of holy Fathers,

living later, who used only vegetarian food: we know well and the literature describes that monks following each other in a way of life, fasting, and, of course, most likely they should have followed the way of John The Baptist.

None of the “Lives” or works that we know of describe that the monks ever received non-vegetarian food. We’ll introduce some extracts from the Georgian original hagiography of early centuries: In the “Life” of the great Georgian theological figure Grigol Khandzteli (IXc.) it reads: “The Father Grigol lived the life of the hermit, because he had heard about the angel-like lives of the holy Fathers living alone in the wilderness, who, like the grazers ate herbs, fruit and some of them a little bit of bread” [18, p. 253]

Great Georgian theological father, Giorgi Mtatsmideli (XIc.) refused to drink wine and to eat hay” [18, p. 199]. He walked along the road, refusing to get wine or hay (*tsveli*), as he ate once a day some bread and drank water [18, p. 188]. Sulkhan-Saba explains: *tsveli* (*herb*) is the part of herbs from the bottom the top (Matthew 7:4); “*kanis chala monamkali*” (part of the hay after the wheat has been reaped). In our opinion, the word *monamkali* - is related with the word *mkali* that means the upper part, top of herbs, and the word *mkali* is related with word *mka*, which means harvesting, reaping of wheat field; possibly John the Baptist ate the upper part of the plant, *the top of the meadows*, as while harvesting//reaping wheat field, upper parts of the herbs are cut off.

I believe that the old Georgian word *mkali* had a double meaning: 1. *Grass, herb*, that is cut when harvesting, or reaping; 2. *Locust, grasshopper*. However, later, in course of time, it is likely that second meaning, that of the grasshopper remained whilst the first meaning (that of the harvesting) disappeared. On the other hand, *kaliya* (grasspoper, comes from the old Georgian word *mkali*), has a double meaning in Modern Georgian too: besides the insect (locust), it means a plant, which is described by Niko Ketskhoveri and is included in the Botanic dictionary of Al. Makhashvili “*Kaliya-Salsola crassa*” [3].

In addition, in the German-Georgian and Georgian-German Botanical Dictionary [5] this word is defined as “*Kaliya* – n 1. *Salsola cali* Kalisalzkrut, n. *Zalzkrut*, n. and the dictionary in the German-Georgian section of *Zalzcrut* – 1. *Salsola cali-Kaliya*, 2. *Glaux maritima-peak*”.

The above examples prove that as well as the word *mkali* is often transposed as *danakiskudi*, *the upper part of grass, herbs of the meadows*, or is followed by these words as its definition, – sometimes by the Greek authors of homilies and Lives of Saints, and, therefore, by Georgian Holy fathers - the translators of these works, the collocation *wild honey* – is defined as *melagria*. The word *Melagra* itself derives from the merging of two Greek words: μέλι ἄγριον [*meli agrion*].

The dictionary by Lampe presents the word *μελάγριον* as a definition of the grass (a herb found in the desert) [22, p. 840], the *Greek Dictionary of the Roman and the Byzantine age of Sophocles* offers the definition of this word in the following way: *μέλι, ιτο, τα-αγριον-honey-dew, upon the leaves of certain trees* [21, p. 742].

Our opinion is strengthened by the fact that Greek *melagria* denotes the same in Georgian – *melagria*, and this word unequivocally means a plant and has never had a meaning of *honey made by wild bees*.

Based on the above examples and relying on the analysis, it is possible to conclude that the food of John the Baptist was the tops of grass and plants, therefore, the *locusts and wild honey* mentioned in the Gospel mean plants.

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