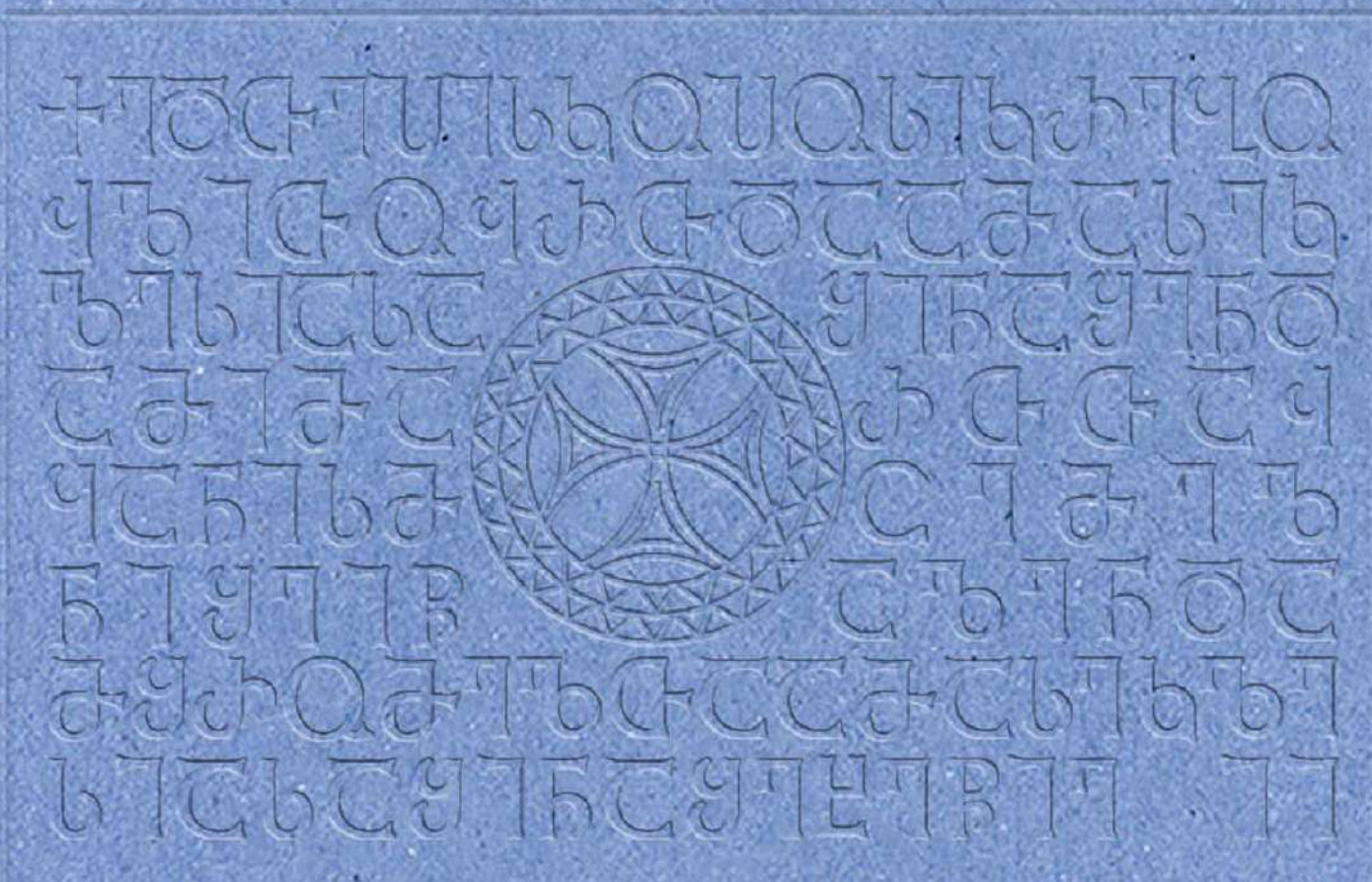


ACADEMY FOR DIGITAL  
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# დიגיტალური ქართვლოლოგია



## Digital Kartvelology

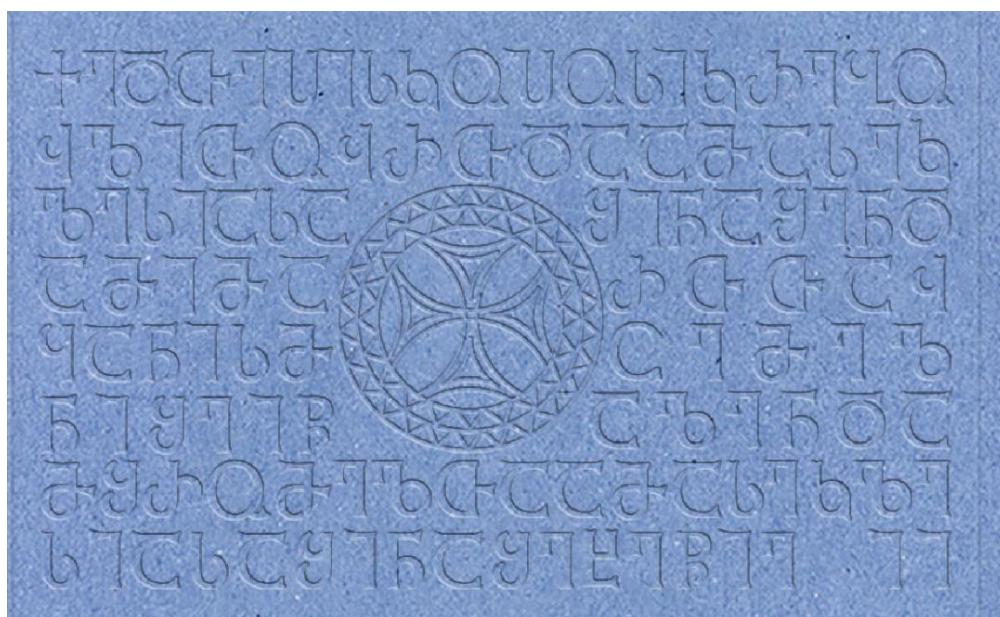
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ორენოვანი საერთაშორისო სამეცნიერო ონლაინჟურნალი

## დიგიტალური ქართველოლოგია



## Digital Kartvelology

Volume 4

Dedicated to the 100th Birthday of Mzekala Shanidze (16.1.2026)  
ეძღვნება მზექალა შანიძის დაბადების 100 წლისთავს (16.1.2026)

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2025

The journal **Digital Kartvelology** aims to promote the development of Digital Kartvelology and to create an academic platform for specialists working in Digital Humanities to publish scientific papers. The journal covers the following fields: Digital Humanities, Digital Kartvelology, Digital Caucasiology, Digital Lexicography, Translation Studies, Georgian Language Technologies, Corpus linguistics, Documentary Linguistics, Digital Manuscript Studies, and others.

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# Georgian Palaeography Revisited: Dating Undated Manuscripts

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**Abstract:** The present article summarises the results of the first radiocarbon (or  $^{14}\text{C}$ ) analysis of Old Georgian manuscripts, undertaken in 2024–2025 on behalf of the DeLiCaTe project (“The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories”) at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich, with support by Graz University Library and the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi. Samples from a total of 20 manuscripts of their collections, mostly of palimpsests and other undated manuscripts from the first millennium of our era, have yielded decisive insights into the early centuries of Georgian literacy, especially with respect to the distinction of *khanmeti* and *haemeti* layers: the analyses clearly show that this distinction was not chronologically determined but must have been regional or dialectal, thus supporting the view first expressed by Akaki Shanidze in 1923. Other important insights concern the transition period between *khanmetoba* and *haemetoba* on the one hand and the emergence of *sannarevi* forms; this can now be safely assigned to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. For the collective volume of Shatberdi, MS S-1141 of the National Centre of Manuscripts, the analyses have proven that a time span of more than 100 years must have passed between its two units (one in *asomtavruli* majuscules and one in *nuskhuri* minuscules).

**Keywords:** Georgian manuscripts, palimpsests, *khanmeti*, *haemeti*, *sannarevi*, Shatberdi collection, radiocarbon analysis,  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis

The detection of remnants of a psalter with *khanmeti* and *haemeti* forms in the lowest layer of the fragmentary palimpsest MSS Sin. georg. 84 and 90 in St Catherine’s Monastery on Mt Sinai<sup>1</sup> has proven that the translation of the psalms had a much longer history in Georgian than what the bulk of manuscripts preserving it suggests, and that the redactor of Mzekala Shanidze’s epochal edition of 1960, her father Akaki, was probably right in assuming that the chants of David “must have been translated if not in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, then at least in the 5<sup>th</sup> century”.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the newly found Sinai palimpsests are not dated explicitly, in a colophon or the like, so that their age can only roughly be guessed at by way of palaeographical features, especially the existence of *khanmeti* and *haemeti* forms in them; a disposition that they share, among others, with the famous Sinai Lectionary, today preserved in the University Library of Graz (MS 2058/1),<sup>3</sup> which is the only non-palimpsested manuscript with these features.

For a project that is devoted to the “Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories”,<sup>4</sup> the fact that the oldest Georgian manuscript with an explicit dating is the so-called Sinai *Mravaltavi*, MS Sin. georg. 32-57-33 + NF 89 of 864 CE, and that none of those with *khanmeti* and/or *haemeti* features is dated, is mischievous indeed, given that it impedes more exact chronological assignments. This is all the more regrettable as the coexistence of *khanmeti* and *haemeti* forms in one and the same document leaves room for several interpretations, thus re-

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<sup>1</sup> Gippert & Outtier 2021: 42–43.

<sup>2</sup> Akaki Shanidze, Preface (წინასიტყვაობა) to Mzekala Shanidze 1960, [2009]: “ფსალმუნი ქართულად IV საუკუნეში თუ არა, V-ში მაინც უნდა იყოს წათარგმნი”.

<sup>3</sup> See Gippert 2025: 23–26 for details as to the collection and MS 2058/1.

<sup>4</sup> Project “DeLiCaTe”, ERC grant agreement no. 101019006, running at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University Hamburg (2022–2027).



opening a discussion that was held by Ivane Javakhishvili and Akaki Shanidze more than a hundred years ago: do *khanmetoba* and *haemetoba* represent two chronologically distinct periods, the first one covering the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> and the latter, the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries as Javakhishvili suggested?<sup>5</sup> Or are they indications of dialectal rather than chronological differences, as Shanidze argued?<sup>6</sup>

To overcome this debate, we have initiated in our project a first scientific approach to the dating of undated Georgian manuscripts, applying the so-called radiocarbon (or <sup>14</sup>C) analysis to them. In close cooperation with the University Library of Graz (hereafter: UBG) and the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts (hereafter: NCM), we have chosen specimens from 20 manuscripts of their collections for being analysed at the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich,<sup>7</sup> including nearly all codices that are known to include *khanmeti* and/or *haemeti* forms.<sup>8</sup> In the following pages, I will present the results of these analyses and discuss their impact on Kartvelology.

## 1. The Graz collection

The collection of Georgian manuscripts in the University Library of Graz consists of seven items (MSS 2058/1–7), all from the inheritance of Hugo Schuchardt and probably all stemming from Mt Sinai, with one of them (MS 2058/6) consisting of three independent fragments and another one (MS 2058/4), of two different units produced by different scribes.<sup>9</sup> Specimens for a <sup>14</sup>C analysis were taken from all of these items in April–May 2024 at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (hereafter: CSMC), University Hamburg, by the restaurator of UBG, Theresa Zammit Lupi.<sup>10</sup> The sample also included the only Armenian fragment of the collection (MS 2058/7).<sup>11</sup> Among the Georgian items, one is dated explicitly in the colophon of its scribe, Ioane Zosime; this is the first unit of MS 2058/4, written by him in the year 985 CE.<sup>12</sup> For two of the fragments (MS 2058/6B and 6C), the actual date can be determined implicitly, given that they have been identified as belonging to the manuscript Sin. georg. 35;<sup>13</sup> the colophon of this codex, which has been preserved as the back flyleaf of another Sinai codex, Sin. georg. 67, provides the year 907 CE.<sup>14</sup> The three “dated” items were nevertheless submitted to a <sup>14</sup>C analysis in order to check the reliability of both the assignment and the scientific method. The following summary of the results proceeds along the shelf-marks applied to the different items in the Graz collection.

<sup>5</sup> Javakhishvili 1922–23: 367–368.

<sup>6</sup> Shanidze 1923: 359–361.

<sup>7</sup> The <sup>14</sup>C analysis of manuscripts requires a minimal piece (c. 5–10 mg) each of the writing support, in our case, parchment; the necessary specimens were kindly provided by the restaurators of UBG and NCM. For the background and methodological implications of radiocarbon dating see Hajdas *et al.* 2021.

<sup>8</sup> From the NCM collections, no analysis was possible yet for the palimpsests A-737 (1), H-1445 (2), Svan-4 and Svan-23 (3); they will hopefully be treated in a next round.

<sup>9</sup> See Gippert forthcoming for a survey.

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/25360848/image-31-large-15697e4e3fdcbd7986364517daefa63ba06b3ac5.jpg> for Zammit Lupi’s work at the CSMC (2 May 2024). All URLs quoted in the present article were last accessed on 29 December, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> In a former description, this was treated as MS 2058/6D (Kern, Marold & Zotter 2023 s.n. 2058).

<sup>12</sup> See Gippert forthcoming: 29–30 for details.

<sup>13</sup> See Gippert forthcoming: 31–34 for details.

<sup>14</sup> For details see 1.7 below.

## 1.1 Graz, UBG, MS 2058/1

For the famous Sinai Lectionary, still described as no. 9 of the collection of St Catherine's Monastery in 1888 in the catalogue of Aleksandre Tsagareli,<sup>15</sup> Akaki Shanidze argued for a dating before the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of its palaeographical appearance and its linguistic similarity with the inscriptions of Bolnisi, Mtskheta, and Tskisi.<sup>16</sup> Bernard Outtier, who detected one additional folio of the Lectionary in Paris, proposed the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>17</sup> probably based upon Shanidze's views. Considering the existence of *haemeti* forms in the codex,<sup>18</sup> a dating to the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century was envisaged in comparison with “pure” *khanmeti* manuscripts,<sup>19</sup> in agreement with Javakhishvili's periodisation. These proposals must now be given up: according to the <sup>14</sup>C analysis undertaken in 2024,<sup>20</sup> the manuscript can be dated to the 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries instead. The result is illustrated in Fig. 1, with indication of the radiocarbon date (in red, 1553 ± 21 BP),<sup>21</sup> the calibration curve for the period in question (in blue) and the calibrated date range (in grey, 433–574 calCE, with a major peak at 545 calCE and two minor peaks at 440 and 480 calCE).<sup>22</sup>

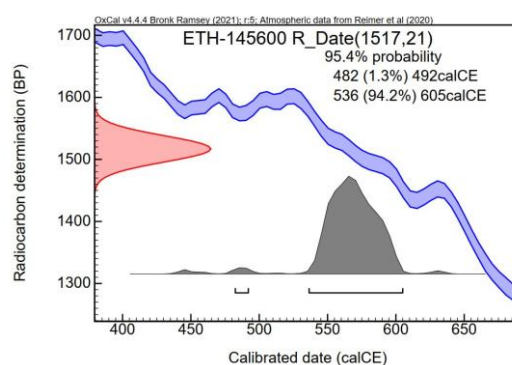
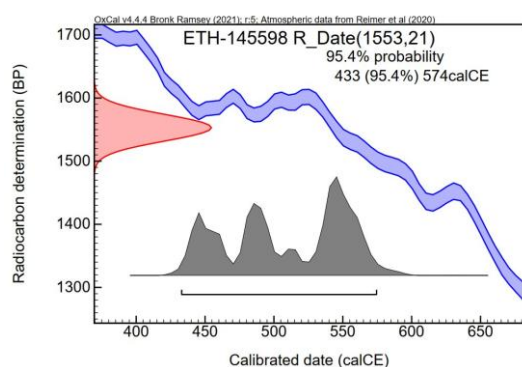


Fig. 1: Result of <sup>14</sup>C analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/1      Fig. 2: Result of <sup>14</sup>C analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/2

<sup>15</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 199–200; for a thorough codicological description see Zammit Lupi 2023. See <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/xanmeti/grlekt/grlek.htm> for an online edition of the complete codex with colour images kindly provided by UBG.

<sup>16</sup> Shanidze (1944: 021): “რაც შეეხება ენობრივ მოვლენებს, ამ მხრივ კი ხანმეტი ლექციონარი უეჭველად ბოლნის-მცხეთა-წყისის წარწერების გვერდით დგას. ამიტომ შეუძლებელია მისი გადაწერის დრო VII საუკუნეს გადმოვაცილოთ”; (ib. 027): “По языковым данным, памятник выявляет ближайшее родство с надписями Болнисского храма (нач. VII в.), а по палеографическим признакам он мог появиться не позднее второй половины VII века”.

<sup>17</sup> Outtier (1972: 399): “début du VII<sup>e</sup> s.”

<sup>18</sup> The codex comprises the following seven *haemeti* forms: ჰიხილოთ “you will see (him)” (Mk. 16:7; Mt. 24:33; vs *khanmeti* სიხილოთ in Mt. 28:7); ჰიცილობთ “you exchange with each other” (Lk. 24:17); შეჰიძრენ “they will be moved” (Mt. 24:29); ჰიტყებდენ “they will mourn” (Mt. 24:30); მიჰეხებო “he approaches” (Lk. 12:33); ჰიყოს “it will be” (Lk. 12:34, vs ხიყოს in Mt. 24:35).

<sup>19</sup> Gippert, Sarjeladze & Kajaia 2007: xxvi; Gippert forthcoming: 25.

<sup>20</sup> The specimen for the analysis was taken from fol. 1 of MS 2058/1 (ETH no. 145598). A second specimen was taken from a small strip that was inserted into the binding; this turned out to be of paper, not parchment, dated to the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, so without any internal relation to the codex.

<sup>21</sup> The radiocarbon date (“BP” = “before present”) indicates the time that elapsed between the death of the animal yielding the parchment sheet and the year 1950, assuming a linear decay in its skin of the radioactive carbon isotope <sup>14</sup>C and its ratio to the <sup>12</sup>C / <sup>13</sup>C isotopes.

<sup>22</sup> The calibrated year range (“calCE”) indicates time spans that meet the given radiocarbon concentration accounting for deviations from the linear decay of <sup>14</sup>C that were caused by changing atmospheric influences, detected via external dating methods such as dendrochronology and displayed in a curve based on known-age samples. See Hajdas et al. 2021: 5–10 for details as to the calibration curves and the precision of calendar ages to be achieved.



## 1.2 Graz, UBG, MS 2058/2

In contrast to the Sinai Lectionary, which is thus likely to be the oldest non-palimpsested Georgian manuscript that has been preserved, MS 2058/2 of Graz University Library is a palimpsest, with a Georgian psalter written in *asomtavruli* majuscules<sup>23</sup> above an Armenian undertext. Even though the latter was heavily erased, its contents have been established with certainty; it is a so-called “Divining Gospel”, comprising the Gospel of John combined with oracles.<sup>24</sup> For this codex, several datings have been proposed. Aleksandre Tsagareli, who described it when it was still on Mt Sinai, assumed the Georgian upper text to belong to the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries “on the basis of its palaeographical traits”;<sup>25</sup> taking this dating as a basis, Jacobus Dashian, who had been asked by Hugo Schuchardt to analyse the Armenian undertext,<sup>26</sup> arrived at the “6<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup>, if not even the 5<sup>th</sup> century” for the manuscript, which thus represented for him “a monument from the first period of the emergence of Armenian literacy”.<sup>27</sup> In a second description, Hamazasp Oskian came to the less optimistic conclusion “that the Armenian text was not written much earlier than the Georgian, probably in the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries”.<sup>28</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> century was also envisaged by Bernard Outtier, who was the first to determine the “divining” genre of the sentences accompanying the Gospel in the Armenian undertext.<sup>29</sup> The results of our radiocarbon analysis now clearly endorse the estimation by Jacobus Dashian: with the calibrated dating of the parchment between 482 and 605 calCE and a clear peak at 565 calCE (see Fig. 2),<sup>30</sup> the Armenian layer of the codex can confidently be assigned to the second half or the 6<sup>th</sup> century, thus being one of the oldest specimens of written Armenian known so far.<sup>31</sup> For the Georgian overtext, this simply means a *terminus post quem*, and we are left with the usual palaeographical indications: given that it is written in majuscules but contains no *khanmeti* or *haemeti* forms, it can reasonably be assigned to the 9<sup>th</sup>–10<sup>th</sup> centuries, in accordance with Akaki Shanidze’s view.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/at/psgraz/psgra.htm> for an online edition (based upon Imnaishvili 2004: 70–220) with colour images kindly provided by UBG.

<sup>24</sup> See Renhart 2015 and 2022 for details.

<sup>25</sup> Tsagareli (1888: 196, no 2): “На основаніи палеографических признаковъ Псалтырь эту слѣдуетъ отнести къ VIII–IX в.”. Mzekala Shanidze, who included the psalter text as “E” in her edition, provided no dating of her own (1960: 021–022).

<sup>26</sup> See Renhart 2015: 43 for the correspondence between Schuchardt and Dashian.

<sup>27</sup> Dashian (1898: 4b): “Եթէ ստուգիւ վրացերէնը Ը–Թ դարերէն է, կրկնագիրը պէտք է որ գոնէ Զ–Է դարերէն ըլլայ, կրնայ մինչեւ նաեւ Ե դարուն ըլլայ, ուստի նոյն իսկ հայ մատենագրութեան ծագման առաջին ժամանակներէն... յիշատակարան մը”.

<sup>28</sup> Oskian (1976: 312): “կը միտիմ եզրակացնելու որ հայերէն բնագիրը վրացերէն շատ յառաջ գրուած չէ : Հաւանօրնէ գրուած պիտի ըլլայ Ը–Թ դարերու մէջ”. Oskian’s description is by no means a reprint (“Nachdruck”) of Dashian’s as stated by Renhart (2015: 43 n. 8) but his own work; correspondingly, Renhart’s quotation (ib.) is not from Dashian’s description as indicated but from Oskian’s.

<sup>29</sup> Outtier (1993: 182): “La couche inférieure est en arménien et pourrait remonter au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle”.

<sup>30</sup> For the analysis, fol. 274 was chosen.

<sup>31</sup> In parallel to the radiocarbon analysis of the Georgian samples, a set of undated Armenian manuscripts (palimpsests and others) of the Matenadaran, Yerevan, were analysed, too; only one of them reveals an earlier date. The results of this investigation will be published soon.

<sup>32</sup> Shanidze (1929: 344): “მე კი მგონია, რომ იგია დაახლოვებით მეათე საუკუნის პირველი ნახევრისა”. Unfortunately, the scribe’s colophon on fols 258v–259r mentions neither a place nor a location (see Gippert forthcoming: 2.).

### 1.3 Graz, UBG, MS 2058/3

The small codex comprising the Georgian version of the Life of St Simeon the Holy Fool (Symeon Salos; *BHG* 1677, *CPG* 7883), written in a bold *nuskhuri* minuscule,<sup>33</sup> is defective at the end, breaking off within the colophon of the scribe, a certain Teodore of Tskudeli (C̣ūdeli), on the badly damaged fol. 172r (Fig. 3). This page may have contained an indication of the time and place introduced by დაიწერა “it was written”, of which the first four letters have remained at the bottom, followed by ღოცვა ყავთ “pray (for us)” in the last line; however, Aleksandre Tsagareli, who mentions the colophon in his description<sup>34</sup> and may still have seen the folio complete (at least he provides the first two lines as რომელმან კელ-ჰყო ამისი შექმნაჲ, of which only რ~ნ კ and შექმნ have survived), does not provide a date. On the backside of the folio (Fig. 4), we see the remnants of the colophon of the binder, Ioane Zosime, of which Tsagareli also noted some more elements than are visible today (“შეიმოსა წმიდა ესე წიგნი... სინა წმიდასა კელითა იოვანე ფ~დ-ცოდვილისათა, ბრძანებითა დეკანოზისა სინა წმიდისა.... წელსა ხვპე (981 რ.), ქკს ს (981 რ.)”; at least the latter dating (“chronicon 201”) has been preserved, which yields 981 CE as the year in which Ioane Zosime bound the codex. Ioane Zosime’s hand is also discernible on the scrap remaining of one more folio (fol. \*173) between the colophon and the pastedown; distributed over three lines, we here see a large letter დ, the sequence და and another instance of ღოცვა ყავთ (ღც~ყო; Fig. 4).

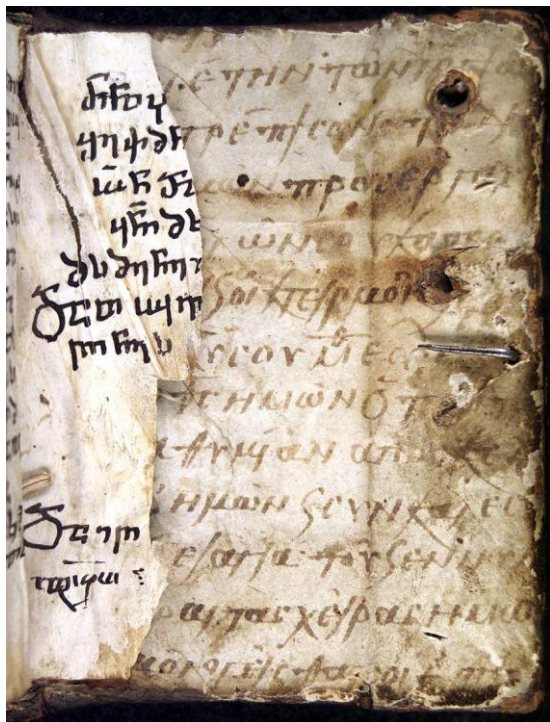


Fig. 3: Graz, UBG, 2058/3, end of scribe’s colophon on fol. 172r and Greek pastedown

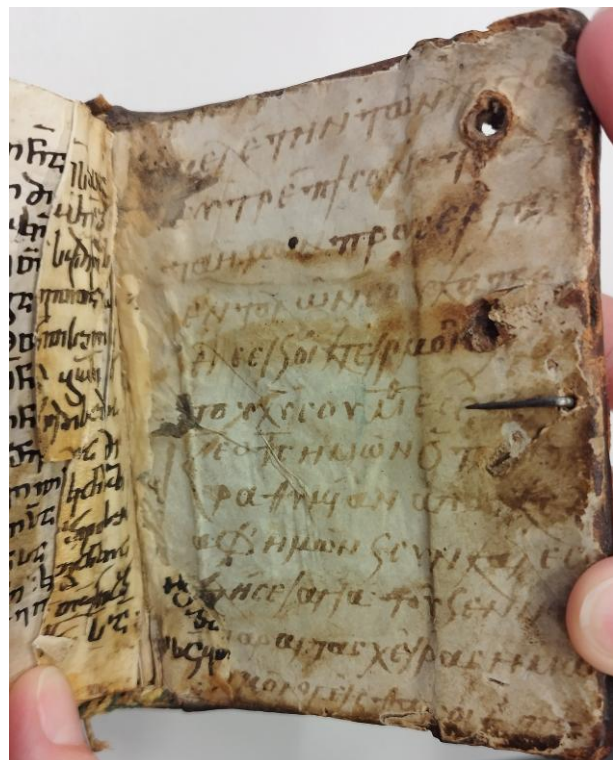


Fig. 4: Graz, UBG, 2058/3, beginning of binder’s colophon on fol. 172v and Greek pastedown

<sup>33</sup> See <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/tmin/symsal/symsa.htm> for an online edition (based upon Imnaishvili 2004: 228–258) with colour images kindly provided by UBG. See Renhart & Zammit Lupi forthcoming for a thorough codicological analysis of the codex.

<sup>34</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 226, no. 69.



It has hitherto remained unnoticed that the remainder of fol. \*173 has been preserved as a fragment in another collection in Europe, namely, as MS Georgian 8 in the Mingana Collection of the Cadbury Research Library (formerly Selly Oak) in Birmingham, which also hosts Ioane Zosime's colophon of MS Graz, UBG, 2058/1 (as MS Georgian 7).<sup>35</sup> Mingana's MS Georgian 8 was described by Gérard Garitte, who attributed it to Ioane Zosime, styled it the “end of a colophon” and provided a complete transcript of the 15 lines of its recto (Fig. 5) and the eight lines of its verso, plus the Arabic note at the bottom (Fig. 6).<sup>36</sup> In his transcript, the first characters of the last three lines of Mingana Georgian 8 are only reconstructed, as “<sup>1</sup>დ<sub>1</sub>”, “[და]”, and “[ლცყო]”, thus exactly matching the remnants we see in the Graz codex. In Garitte's transcript, the three lines in question run:

<sup>1</sup>დ<sub>1</sub> თქ(უე)ნდა ქ(რისტემა)ნ შეგ(ინდ)ვ(ე)ნ  
[და] შეგ(ო)წყ(ა)ლ(ე)ნი ნ(ო)ვ(ე)ლ(ი) ა(მ)ენ ∴  
[ლცყო] ხ(უე)ნ თ(ე)ს წ(მიდა)ნო ლ(ო)ც(ვა) ყ(ა)თ ა(მ)ენ ∴

This colophon must be later than that on fol. 172v, given that Ioane Zosime himself refers to his “second” binding here: შეიმოსა მეორედ წ(მიდა)ნ ესე წიგნი [sic] სინა წ(მიდა)ს, with მეორედ “a second time” being added over the first line of fol. \*173v (Fig. 6). As the first colophon is dated 981 CE, this binding cannot have been much later, because Ioane Zosime must have died before the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

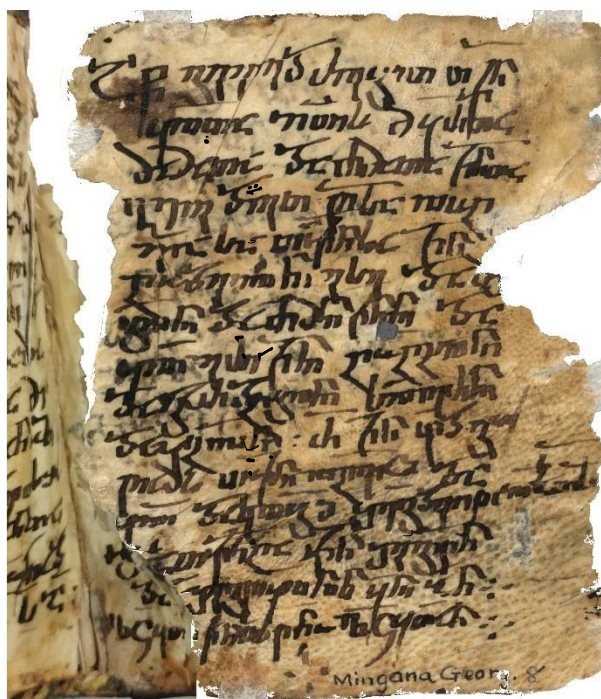


Fig. 5: Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Mingana collection, Georgian 8, recto, with Graz, UBG, 2058/3, fol. \*173 inserted: Ioane Zosime's additional colophon, beginning

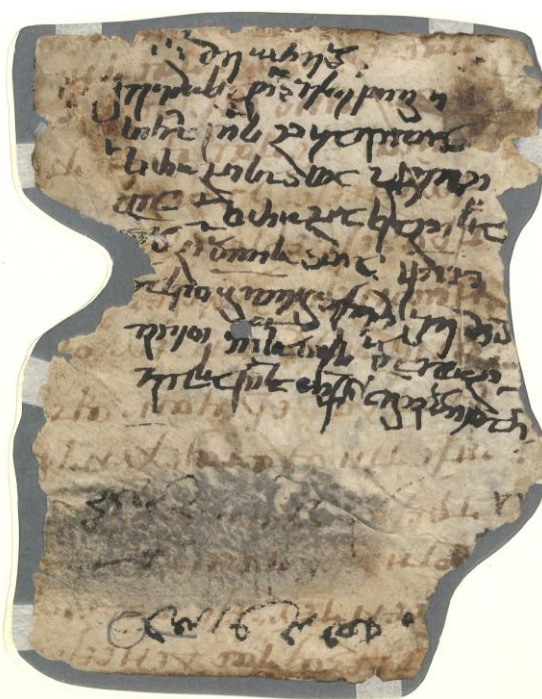


Fig. 6: Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Mingana collection, Georgian 8, verso: Ioane Zosime's additional colophon, end, and Arabic note at the bottom

<sup>35</sup> See Gippert forthcoming: 1.

<sup>36</sup> Garitte 1960: 258–259: “Fin d’un colophon [...] Le scribe ne se nomme pas [...] mais l’écriture et les formules employées indiquent, sans aucun doute possible, que l’auteur du colophon est Jean Zosime [...]. Nous n’avons pu identifier le manuscrit dont provient ce feuillet”. The identification is corroborated by the fact that Ioane Zosime refers to himself as “ზრობაკაცი”, i.e. “cow-man” in it (verso, l. 4); the same self-designation, probably reflecting his use of cow-skin for binding, also appears in his colophon of the Sinai *Mravaltavi* (MS Sin. georg. 32-57-33, fol. 274v; see Gippert 2015: 102 with n. 6 and 2016: 64 with n. 48).

The assumption that the Mingana fragment is the missing part of fol. \*173 of MS 2058/3 is further corroborated by the fact that it is a palimpsest, with an undertext in Greek majuscules, of a similar hand like that of the Greek pastedown of the Graz codex. Garitte, who could only make out the three words δέξαι τὰς δεήσεις on the verso of Mingana Georgian 8 (Fig. 8), supposed this to be a “liturgical” text;<sup>37</sup> indeed, it can be identified with a text that appears in the Greek Euchologion edited by Jacques Goar as the eighth prayer of the *Laudes*. The passage in question here runs: *πρόσδεξαι τὰς δεήσεις ἡμῶν, τὰς ἐντεύξεις, τὰς ἐξομολογήσεις, τὰς νυκτερινὰς λατρείας· καὶ χάρισαι ἡμῖν ὁ Θεός...*<sup>38</sup> The elements *πρό[σ]*, *τὰ[ς]* and *[λ]*, highlighted in the passage, are clearly discernible in the UV image of fol. \*173v of MS 2058/3 (Fig. 7). The beginning of the same prayer is preserved on the Greek pastedown (lines 8–13; Figs 3 and 4), reading *Κύριε ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ τὴν τοῦ ὕπνου ῥαθυμίαν ἀποσκεδάσας ἀφ’ ἡμῶν, καὶ συγκαλέσας ἡμᾶς κλήσει ἀγία, τοῦ καὶ ἐν νυκτὶ ἐπᾶραι τὰς χεῖρας ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐξομολογεῖσθαί σοι ἐπὶ τὰ, with only four words (κρίματα τῆς δικαιοσύνης σου), i.e. one line missing before the continuation on Mingana Georgian 8. The text on the upper half of the pastedown has not yet been identified.<sup>39</sup>*



Fig. 7: Graz, UBG, 2058/3, fols \*173v and pastedown, inverted, UV image

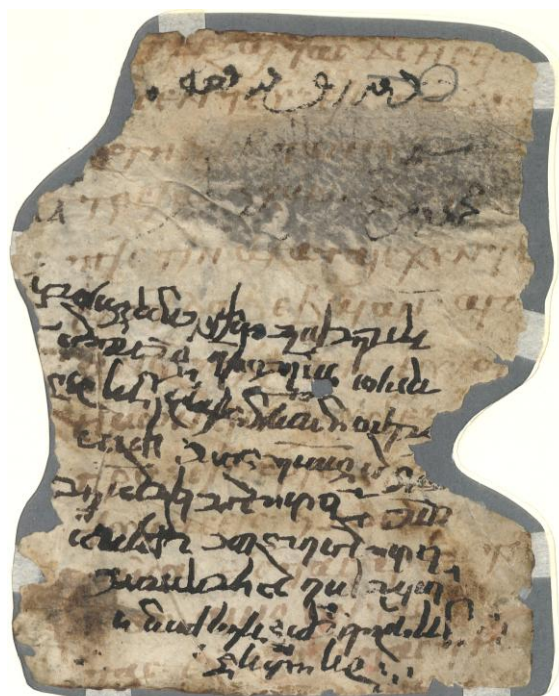


Fig. 8: Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Mingana collection, Georgian 8, verso, inverted

All in all, it is likely that the present binding of Graz, MS 2058/3 is still Ioane Zosime’s second binding: as a pastedown for the back cover but also for his additional colophon, he used a fragment of a Greek euchologion manuscript, which he palimpsested. There are two more traces of Ioane Zosime’s work in the codex: in the fold between fols 8v and 9r, there is a parchment stripe with Georgian (*nuskhuri*) letters inserted as a binding aid, possibly written in Ioane Zosime’s own hand, which can be made out to read *ადგებობს კერ(ობი)სა*

<sup>37</sup> Garitte (1960: 259): “l’écriture sous-jacente est une petite onciale grecque tardive, accentuée ; le texte grec semble être liturgique”.

<sup>38</sup> Goar 1647: 51, ll. 4–6 / 1730: 41, ll. 4–6; see also Parenti & Velkovska 1995, 71–72 (morning prayer no. 77).

<sup>39</sup> My thanks are due to Sandro Tskhvedadze who supported me searching for this text.



ცობკ(არს)ს ს, (Fig. 9); and as a pastedown for the front cover, he used a Christian Palestinian Aramaic fragment, which contains part of the 11<sup>th</sup> catechesis of Cyril of Jerusalem (Fig. 10).<sup>40</sup>

As was stated above, for the dating of the original codex, Ioane Zosime's bindings can only provide a *terminus ante quem*. The radiocarbon analysis undertaken now<sup>41</sup> clearly confirms this, with a calibrated date range between 772 and 891 calCE and peaks at 785, 845 and 885 calCE (Fig. 11); an early range indeed for a manuscript written in *nuskhuri* minuscules. For the Greek pastedown (and the palimpsest folio containing Ioane Zosime's second colophon) as well as the pastedown with Christian Palestinian Aramaic text, individual datings would be required; for them too, Ioane Zosime's second binding provides a *terminus ante quem*.



Fig. 9: Graz, UBG, 2058/3, binding aid between fols 8v and 9r.



Fig. 10: Graz, UBG, 2058/3, front pastedown, UV image

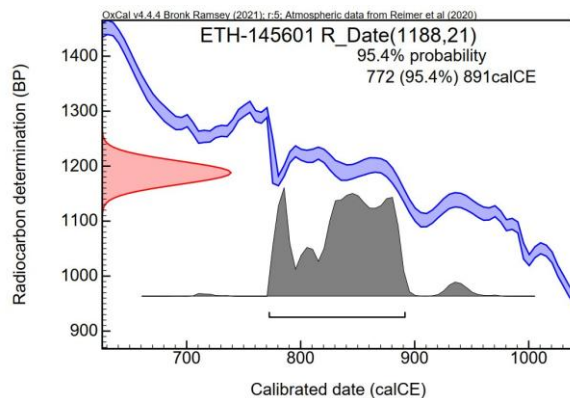


Fig. 11: Result of <sup>14</sup>C analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/3

#### 1.4 Graz, UBG, MS 2058/4

Manuscript no. 4 of the Graz collection consists of two units, one containing the Liturgy of James and the other, the *Missa praesanctificatorum* by Gregory the Great, both written in *asomtavruli* majuscules. The scribe of the first unit (fols 1–95) is clearly Ioane Zosime, who provided a colophon dated to the year 985 (fols 94v–95r). The second unit was also written by

<sup>40</sup> Identified by Christa Müller-Kessler, e-mail of 4 August 2025; see Renhart & Zammit Lupi forthcoming: 7.1–2 for further details.

<sup>41</sup> The specimen was taken from fol. 2 of the codex.

a person named John (იოვანე), whose colophon is undated though (fol. 110v); it reads: ქე შე კე ამის წიგნისა მომგებელი და იოვანე მხრეკელი ფდ ცოდვილი.<sup>42</sup> Comparing the hands of the two units,<sup>43</sup> we can exclude that they were written by the same person;<sup>44</sup> the commissioner named Kvirike (or Kiriile: კე) who is mentioned in the second colophon is unidentified. We have therefore applied a radiocarbon analysis to both units separately;<sup>45</sup> they do reveal a difference which, however, is not spectacular with respect to the dating arrived at: the radiocarbon dates are 1156 and 1122 BP (each  $\pm 21$ ), thus suggesting a difference of 34 years between the two units with a chronological priority of the second one. In contrast to this, the calibrated date ranges are harder to account for. For both units, they end around 980 (975 / 990) calCE, which would match Ioane Zosime's dating by and large (see Figs 12 and 13). What is astonishing in the result is the extreme extension of the time range for the first specimen, which extends from 773 to 975 calCE with the last peak at 940 calCE; we must take into account here that the parchment was not necessarily used immediately after its production (which is the event reflected by the radiocarbon analysis) and that the Sinaitic environment may have had special conditions influencing the calibration.

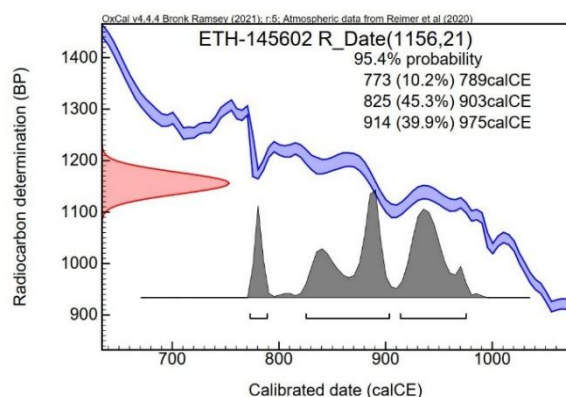


Fig. 12: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/4a

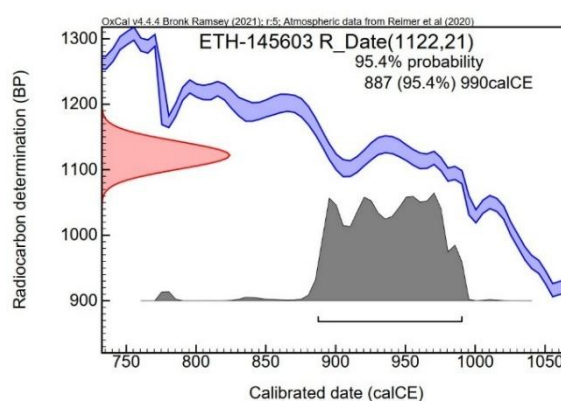


Fig. 13: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/4b

### 1.5 Graz, UBG, MS 2058/5

MS 2058/5, the only scroll in the Graz collection, contains the Liturgy attributed to John Chrysostom (*CPG* 4686); it is written in a *nuskhuri* minuscule with large *asomtavruli* initials<sup>46</sup> but includes no colophon. Aleksandre Tsagareli, who provided the first description, regarded it as a “monument of the 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries”<sup>47</sup> while Michael Tarchnišvili argued for the 10<sup>th</sup>–

<sup>42</sup> The reading provided by Tsagareli (1888: 210, no. 31) is incorrect. A second note appearing below the colophon, also beginning with ქე შე, remains for most parts illegible even with multispectral imaging.

<sup>43</sup> See <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etca/cauc/ageo/liturg/litjak/litja.htm> for an online edition (based upon Imnaishvili 2004: 265–294) with colour images kindly provided by UBG.

<sup>44</sup> Pace Tsagareli (1888: 210, no. 31, referring to the second colophon): “Писецъ Иоаннъ, вѣроятно тотъ самый, который написалъ на Синаѣ такъ много книгъ въ X в”; see also Tarchnišvili (1950: IV): “indoles enim scriptionis et orthographia omnino discedunt ab iis quas exhibet liturgia S. Iacobi”.

<sup>45</sup> From fol. 89 for the first unit (2058/4a), fol. 110 for the second unit (2058/4b).

<sup>46</sup> See <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/johchrys/chryslit/chrys.htm> for an online edition (based upon Imnaishvili 2004: 300–313) with colour images kindly provided by UBG.

<sup>47</sup> Tsagareli (1888: 209, no. 29): “памятникъ XI–XII в.”.

11<sup>th</sup> centuries on the basis of palaeographical and textual features.<sup>48</sup> Tsagareli's estimation is now confirmed by the radiocarbon analysis, which offers a calibrated date range between 1041 and 1210 calCE with two major peaks at 1050 and 1160 calCE (Fig. 14).

### 1.6 Graz, UBG, MS 2058/6A

The first of the three fragments kept under the shelf mark MS 2058/6, containing John 15:8–19 written in *asomtavruli* characters, has been identified as belonging to the Gospel lectionary Sin. georg. 63, which was described as no. 13 in Tsagareli's catalogue;<sup>49</sup> according to the latter, this is a manuscript “not later than the 10<sup>th</sup> century”.<sup>50</sup> This vague assumption is again confirmed by the radiocarbon analysis, which yields a radiocarbon date of 1253 ( $\pm$  21) BP and the long timespan between 675 and 871 calCE as the calibrated date range, with a major peak at 720 calCE (Fig. 15). As the manuscript includes no *khanmeti* or *haemeti* features, thus pointing to a later time, the minor peaks at 800 and 820 calCE must also be taken into account.

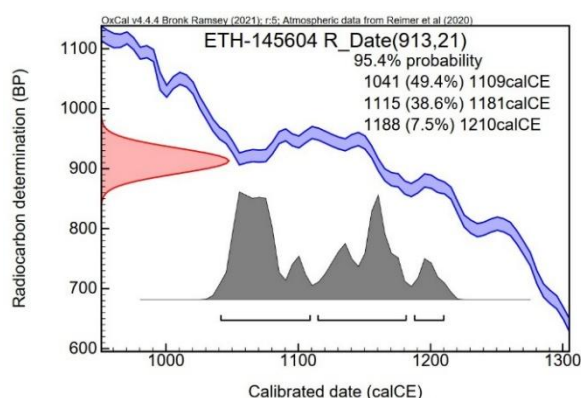


Fig. 14: Result of <sup>14</sup>C analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/5

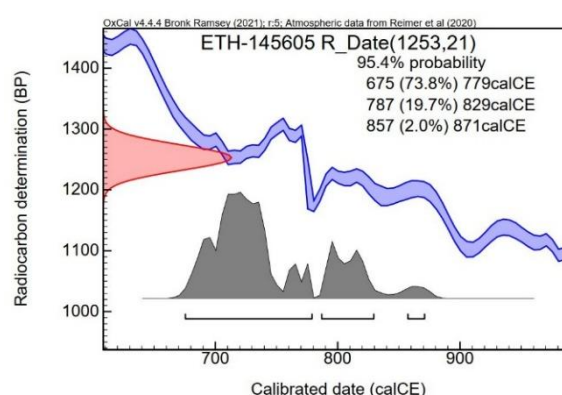


Fig. 15: Result of <sup>14</sup>C analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/6A

### 1.7 Graz, UBG, MS 2058/6B and 2058/6C

Although written by different hands, the two single-folio fragments containing parts of the Epistles of St Antony<sup>51</sup> and other ascetic matter<sup>52</sup> have both been shown to belong to the same codex of St Catherine's Monastery, Sin. georg. 35.<sup>53</sup> In his catalogue, Aleksandre Tsagareli dated this “interesting collective volume” to the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries;<sup>54</sup> Akaki Shanidze preferred a dating to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>55</sup> whereas Gérard Garitte proposed the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>56</sup> In 1978,

<sup>48</sup> Tarchnišvili (1950: III): “consideratis tum indole paleographica rotuli tum statu evolutionis liturgiae quem exhibet, videtur exarata esse saec. X–XI”.

<sup>49</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 204; for the identification see Shanidze 1929: 349–350.

<sup>50</sup> Tsagareli (1888: 204, no. 13): “рукопись эта не позже X в.”

<sup>51</sup> The Graz fragment was included in the edition by Gérard Garitte (1955: 41–43); see <https://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/ascetica/antepist/antep.htm> for an online edition based on it.

<sup>52</sup> See <https://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/tmin/2058C/2058c.htm> for an online edition (based upon Imnaishvili 2004: 320–322) with colour images kindly provided by UBG.

<sup>53</sup> See Gippert forthcoming: 31–34 for details.

<sup>54</sup> Tsagareli (1888: 232–233, no. 80): “интересный сборникъ X–XI в.”

<sup>55</sup> Shanidze (1929: 353): “მე კი მგონია, რომ თამამად შეიძლება მისი მეორემეტე საუკუნის დასაწყისში გადმოწევა”.

<sup>56</sup> Garitte 1956: 97.



Manana Dvali and Lali Jghamaia detected the colophons of Sin. georg. 35 on the back flyleaf of another manuscript of the monastery, Sin. georg. 67 (Fig. 16); according to these colophons, Sin. georg. 35 was written in the Lavra of St Sabas as early as 907 (Fig. 17) and bound by Ioane Zosime on Mt Sinai in 973 (Fig. 18).<sup>57</sup>

In spite of the different hands, the radiocarbon analyses of the two fragments 2058/6B and 6C yielded nearly equal results, with radiocarbon dates of 1198 and 1190 BP ( $\pm 21$ ) and calibrated dates ranging between 774 and 885 calCE (6B) and 773 and 890 calCE (6C). Both ranges are also fairly close to the date provided by the scribe's colophon (907 CE), at least with their last peaks at 885 and 880 calCE. Taking this together with the result of the analysis of MS 2058/4a (see 1.4 above), we may conclude that the actual dates of manuscripts from Mt Sinai (or Palestine) can be assumed to be 20 years later than the end of the time range of the calibrated radiocarbon datings; a conclusion that needs be verified with further specimens.



Fig. 16: Sin. georg. 67, fol. 330v (right, turned by 90°) and back flyleaf (left)

<sup>57</sup> Dvali & Jghamaia 1978: 74–75. The transcript of the binder's colophon given there is misleading: the chronicon ("პა" = 81) does not relate to the Georgian date ("ხვობ" = 6577 ~ 973) but to the Greek date, which is lost with the margin of the leaf, as is the Georgian chronicon date; what has remained of lines 8–11 of the colophon is *წელთა ქართველთა* | *ხვობ და ქრ(ონი)კ(ონ)სა \*\*\** | *და ბერძ(უ)ლად წელთა \*\*\*\** | *ქრ(ონი)კ(ონი) იყო : პა :* (a correct transcript is found in Marr 1940: 170). The Greek year indicated cannot have been the Byzantine *annus mundi* (6480–81) but only the year of the Alexandrian era, which would have been 6465 for 973; this would coincide with a 81<sup>st</sup> chronicon assuming a cycle of 532 years as in the Georgian tradition. The Georgian chronicon itself would have been 193 ("რკ"). This proposal agrees with several other "double" datings preserved in manuscripts of the Sinai collection.

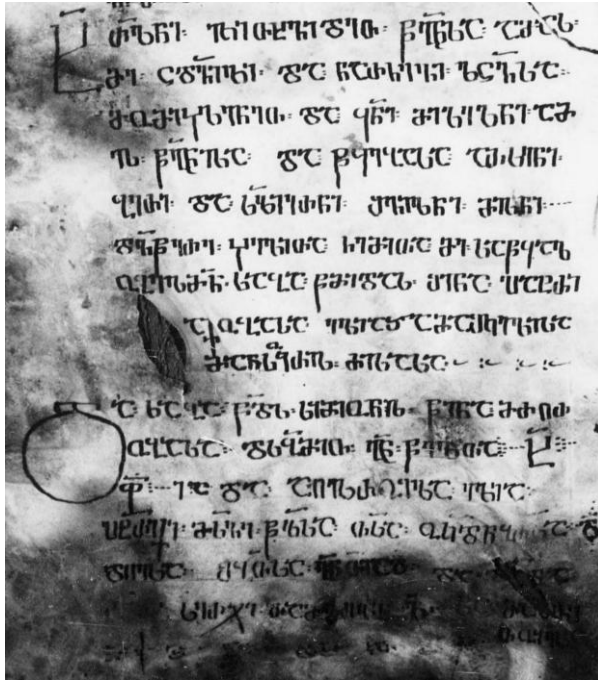


Fig. 17: Sin. georg. 67, back flyleaf, first column: scribe's colophon of Sin. georg. 35 (excerpt)

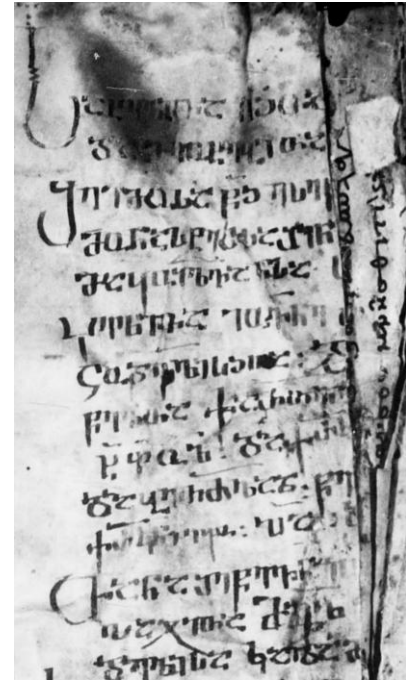


Fig. 18: Sin. georg. 67, back flyleaf, second column: binder's colophon of Sin. georg. 35 (excerpt)

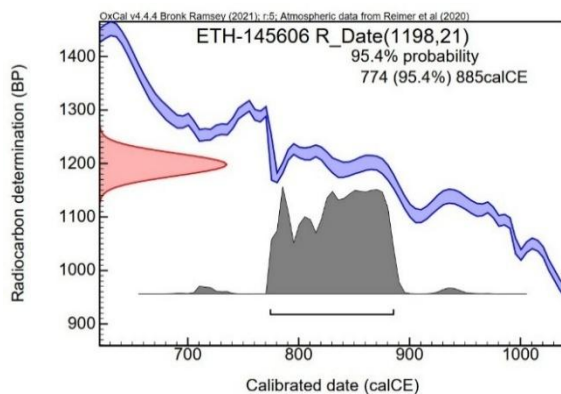


Fig. 19: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/6B

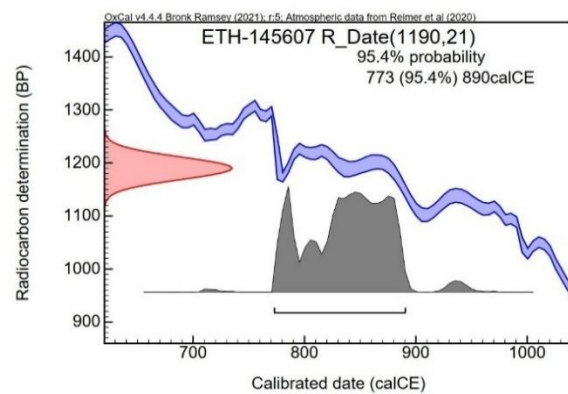


Fig. 20: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of Graz, UBG, 2058/6C

### 1.8 Graz, UBG, 2058/7

For the only Armenian fragment of the Schuchardt collection in Graz, consisting of three quarters of a folio that was obviously once used as a flyleaf and contained Mt. 8:28–32 and 9:2–6,<sup>58</sup> the radiocarbon dating is  $1146 \pm 21$  BP and the calibrated date ranges from 773–979 calCE, with major peaks at 890 and 940 calCE.

<sup>58</sup> Not “Marcus II 10ff.” as indicated in (Kern, Marold & Zotter 2023 s.n. 2058).

## 2. The NCM collections

From the manuscript collections of the NCM, a total of 13 specimens were chosen for a first radiocarbon analysis; they comprised 11 specimens of palimpsests with *khanmeti* and/or *haemeti* features and two from the *krebuli* ('collective volume') of Shatberdi (S-1141). The datings achieved range from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, with no chronological difference between *khanmeti* and *haemeti* manuscripts discernible; nevertheless, there are a few astonishing aspects. In the following Sections, I will discuss the results codex by codex, proceeding from the oldest to the youngest.

### 2.1 NCM, H-999

From the 26 lower layer units of this palimpsested codex,<sup>59</sup> two have been analysed because they contain *khanmeti* features; these are unit (1), comprising fols 85–87 and 140–145 with remnants of a lectionary in their lower text, and unit (2) with fragments from the Four Gospels on fols 121–123, 128–131, 135, 136, 138, 139, 153, and 154. From H-999 (1), a specimen was taken from fol. 87, and from H-999 (2), from fol. 135. In the <sup>14</sup>C analysis, the specimen from H-999 (2) turned out to be the oldest one in the NCM sample, exceeding even the age of the Sinai Lectionary, with a radiocarbon date of  $1620 \pm 23$  BP and a calibrated date range between 411 and 538 calCE, and with three peaks at 425, 465, and 525 calCE (Fig. 21). In contrast, H-999 (1) is considerably younger, with a radiocarbon date of  $1367 \pm 23$  BP and a calibrated date range between 609 and 759 calCE, and with but one peak at 660 calCE (Fig. 22); this is an important result for a lectionary of the Jerusalem rite covering both Old and New Testament lections.<sup>60</sup>

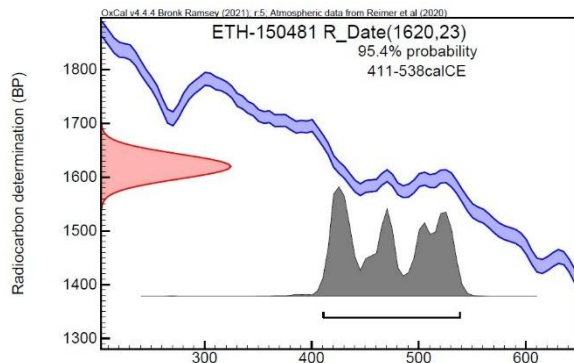


Fig. 21: Result of <sup>14</sup>C analysis of NCM, H-999 (2)

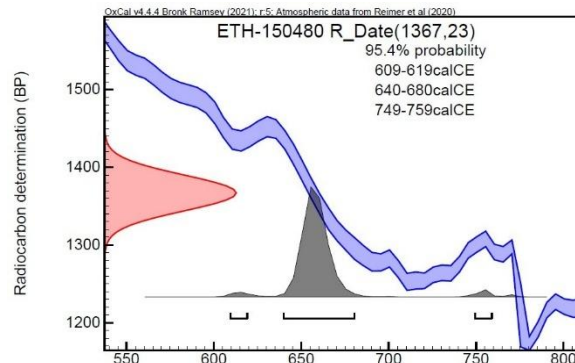


Fig. 22: Result of <sup>14</sup>C analysis of NCM, H-999 (1)

### 2.2 NCM, Q-333 and H-1329

With a total of 104 (7 + 97) folios plus one fragment,<sup>61</sup> the two palimpsest codices are the only representatives of a *haemeti* lectionary that have been preserved; they are generally assumed to stem from the same original manuscript.<sup>62</sup> This assumption, which is corroborated by some

<sup>59</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 72–97, with specimens ib. 388–436.

<sup>60</sup> See Kvirkvelia forthcoming: 4.2.4 as to the content of the lectionary. Instead of “Wisdom of Solomon 9:1–4” (Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 72 n. 4) read Proverbs 9:1–4.

<sup>61</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 100 and 214–215, with specimens ib. 442–443 and 654–655.

<sup>62</sup> See Shanidze 1923: 354 with n. 3; Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 215.



transitions from a folio of one codex to a folio of the other one within a given verse or even word,<sup>63</sup> seems not to be supported by the radiocarbon analysis, which has yielded two clearly distinct datings for the specimens taken,<sup>64</sup> with that of Q-333 anteceding that of H-1329 by more than 150 years and no overlap in the calibrated time ranges ( $1464 \pm 23$  BP corresponding to 569–645 calCE, with two peaks at 600 and 630 calCE, vs  $1295 \pm 23$  BP corresponding to 664–774 calCE, with two major peaks at 680 and 770 calCE; see Figs 23 and 24). This astonishing result needs further validation, best to be undertaken in form of a second sampling.

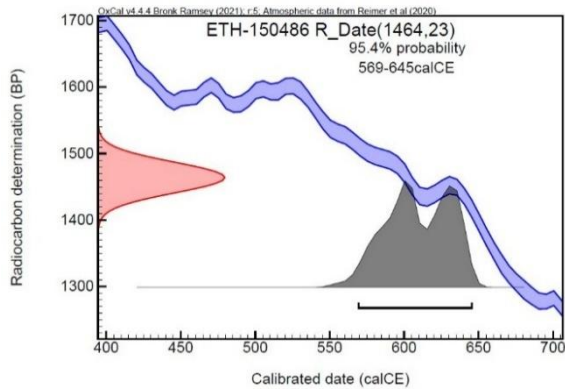


Fig. 23: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, Q-333

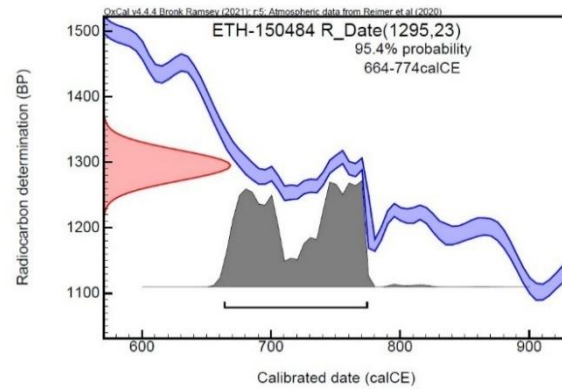


Fig. 24: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, H-1329

### 2.3 NCM, A-89 and A-844

In a similar way as Q-333 and H-1329, the palimpsest codex A-89 (443 folios)<sup>65</sup> and the first of the three units with *khanmeti* features of A-844 (107 folios)<sup>66</sup> are regarded as remnants of one and the same original,<sup>67</sup> a manuscript containing the Four Gospels; here, too, there are clear transitions from one to the other codex within a given verse or word.<sup>68</sup> Again, the radiocarbon results are not exactly the same, but they show a minor difference: whereas A-844 (1) is dated to  $1400 \pm 23$  BP corresponding to 605–662 calCE (Fig. 25), A-89 is dated to  $1340 \pm 23$  BP corresponding to 648–774 calCE (Fig. 26),<sup>69</sup> thus sharing an overlap between 648 and 662 calCE, exactly at the major peaks of both ranges (660 / 650 calCE).

Of the two other units of A-844 with *khanmeti* features, A-844 (2) with its 59 folios containing remnants of the book of Isaiah<sup>70</sup> fits into the same time frame as A-89 and A-844 (1), with a radiocarbon dating of  $1417 \pm 23$  BP (corresponding to 601–657 calCE, with two major peaks at 615 and 645 calCE; Fig. 27). For the third unit, A-844 (3) with its Gospel fragments (8 folios),<sup>71</sup> a slightly later dating has been achieved, interestingly coinciding with that of H-1329

<sup>63</sup> E.g., from H-1329, fol. 10v to Q-333, fol. 3b within the *haemeti* word form *მამაცეს* in Mt. 14:11; see Kvirkvelia forthcoming (b): Table VI.

<sup>64</sup> From fol. 3 of Q-333 and fol. 24 of H-1329.

<sup>65</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 20–21, with a specimen ib. 292–293.

<sup>66</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 43–44, with a specimen ib. 334–335.

<sup>67</sup> Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 21 and 44. Both manuscripts are treated together in the edition by Lamara Kajaia (1984).

<sup>68</sup> E.g., from A-844, fol. 92r to A-89, fol. 16r within *კუროლთავთაგად* in Mt. 7:17.

<sup>69</sup> The specimens were taken from fol. 55 of A-89 and fol. 48 of A-844 (1).

<sup>70</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 45, with a specimen ib. 336–337. In the lower layer of A-844 (2), about 20 further passages from Isaiah have been identified in the course of the DeLiCaTe project; see the poster at <https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.16955>. The specimen was taken from fol. 39.

<sup>71</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 46, with a specimen ib. 338–339. The lower layer of A-844 (3) has been determined in the DeLiCaTe project as being part of a Gospel lectionary with lections for Maundy Thursday (Jo.

( $1295 \pm 23$  BP, corresponding to 664–774 calCE, with major peaks at 680, 700, 750 and 770 calCE; Fig. 28).

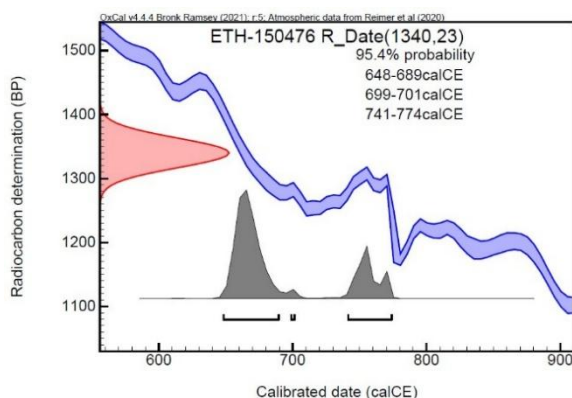


Fig. 25: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, A-89

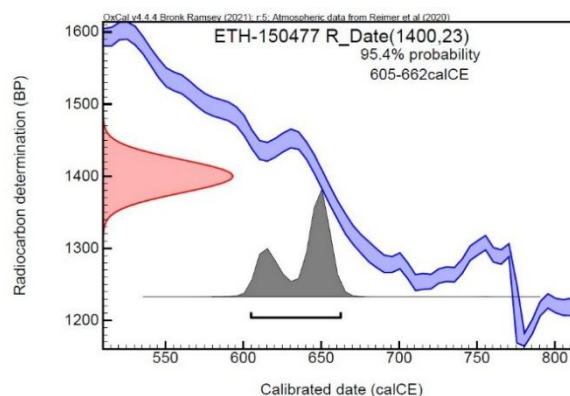


Fig. 26: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, A-844 (1)

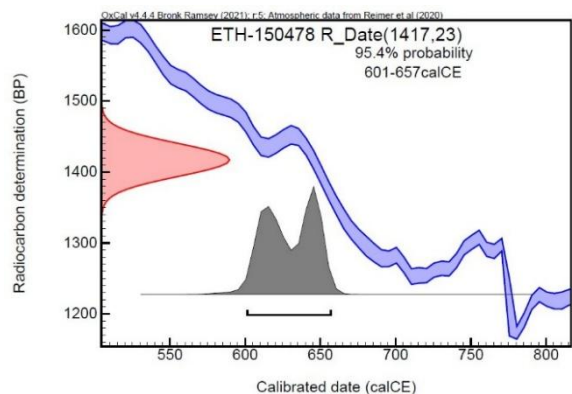


Fig. 27: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, A-844 (2)

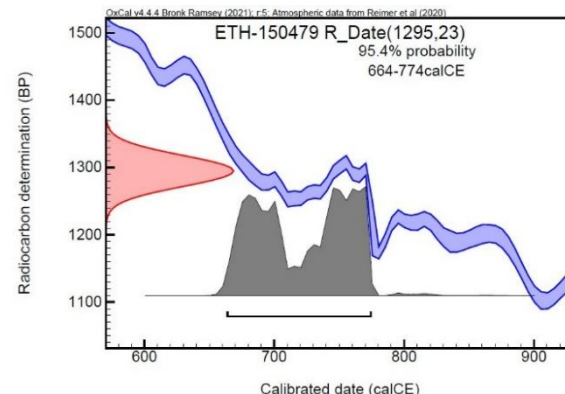


Fig. 28: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, A-844 (3)

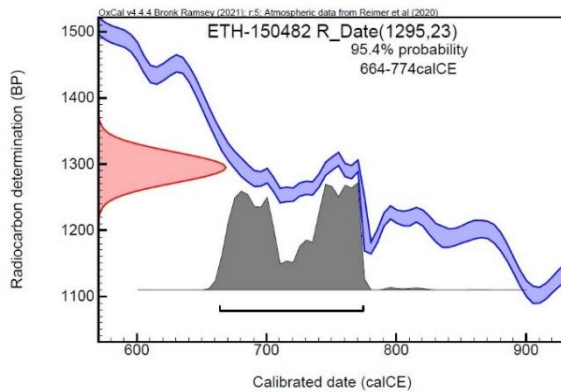
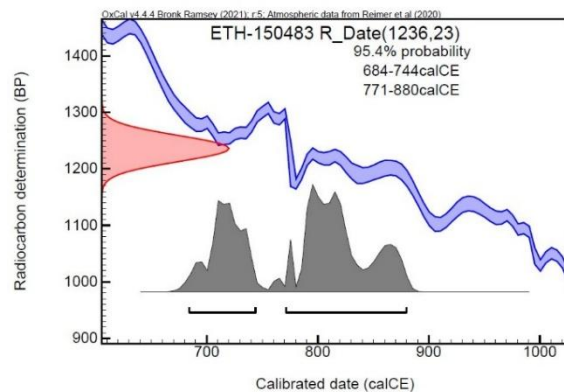
## 2.4 NCM, H-1442

The radiocarbon dating of A-844 (3) and H-1329 ( $1295 \pm 23$  BP, 664–774 calCE; Fig. 29) is shared by one more palimpsest with *khanmeti* features, namely, the first unit of H-1442 consisting of fols 13 and 14 with a passage from the beginning of Gospel of Mark in its undertext.<sup>72</sup> The second *khanmeti* unit of the same codex is H-1442 (4), represented by fol. 25, which also contains a passage from the beginning of Mark,<sup>73</sup> it appears to be considerably later though, with a radiocarbon date of  $1236 \pm 23$  BP and a calibrated time span of 684–880 calCE, with peaks at 715, 795, and 820 calCE (Fig. 30). As there is no clear overlap between the two datings, the assumption that the two fragments do not stem from the same original seems corroborated. Of the other ten palimpsest units of H-1442, none carries *khanmeti* or *haemeti* features.

17:20 – 18:1; Mk. 14:41–42; Mt. 26:36–51 and 26:71 – 27:2; Jo. 18:28–31). The specimen was taken from fol. 151.

<sup>72</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 120, with a specimen ib. 482–483; the identified passage is Mk. 1:45 – 2:3. The specimen was taken from fol. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Described in Kajaia *et al.* 2017: 123, with a specimen ib. 488–489; the identified passage is Mk. 1:24–27.

Fig. 29: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, H-1442 (1)Fig. 30: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, H-1442 (4)

## 2.5 NCM, S-3902 (1)

With its radiocarbon dating of  $1236 \pm 23$  BP, H-1442 (4) appears to be posterior not only to H-1442 (1) but also to the Graz fragment MS 2058/6A ( $1253 \pm 21$  BP, see 1.6 above), which reveals no *khanmeti* or *haemeti* features; this seems to indicate a transitional period during which *khanmeti* manuscripts were still produced alongside *sannarevi* manuscripts. As a crucial witness to this we may regard the palimpsested *khanmeti mravaltavi* in S-3902 (1), which contains *sannarevi* forms such as *დასწერს* “he writes (down)” (instead of *დასწერს*; fol. 7vb, l. 14), *მისწერა* “he wrote” instead of *მისწერა* (l. 10), and *დასწერ* “write!” instead of *დასწერ* (l. 19).<sup>74</sup> With a radiocarbon date of  $1268 \pm 23$  BP and a calibrated time range between 670 and 820 calCE including major peaks at 705 and 730 calCE,<sup>75</sup> it seems to indicate that the decline of *khanmetoba* began in the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century; differences in the application of the “new” *sannarevi* orthography may be due to local preferences. Determining the actual provenance of the manuscripts dealt with here is therefore a task of utmost urgency; it requires a different scientific approach based on the chemical analysis of inks<sup>76</sup> and, possibly, DNS analyses of the parchment material itself.

## 2.6 NCM, S-1141

The collective volume of Shatberdi, MS S-1141 of the NCM, contains no *khanmeti* or *haemeti* forms but is peculiar because it consists of two clearly differentiated units, one written in *asomtavruli* majuscules and one, in *nuskhuri* minuscules, with the latter succeeding the former on fol. 126. Two colophons at the end of the second unit, both written in the *nuskhuri* hand, provide the names of the translator of the last text of the collection (the Commentary on the Psalms by Theodoret of Cyrrhus), a certain Dachi, and of the scribe, Beray; both are not dated but the mention of King Bagrat (II) yields a time frame of between 937 and 994. The first unit ends with the section on the Byzantine emperors of the Chronicle attributed to St Hippolytus; as Fig. 32 shows, there are at least three different writing styles involved, first an *asomtavruli*

<sup>74</sup> See Gippert 2017: 911 and 926–927. Cf. Kvirkvelia (forthcoming b: 6.) for “contaminated” *haemeti* and *sannarevi* prefixes in forms like *დასწერს* in the palimpsest H-1329.

<sup>75</sup> The folio analysed was fol. 18.

<sup>76</sup> See Bosch & Kvirkvelia, this volume, as to first steps undertaken towards a database of inks used in Georgian manuscripts.



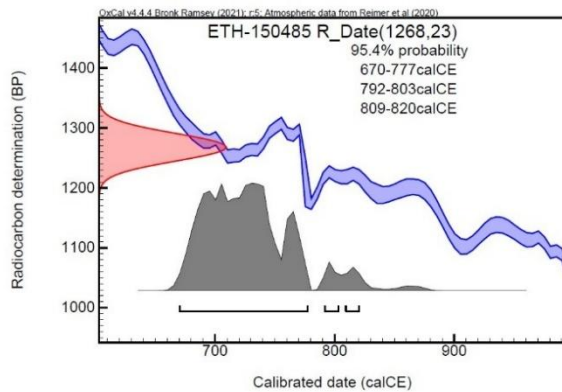


Fig. 31: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, S-3902 (1)

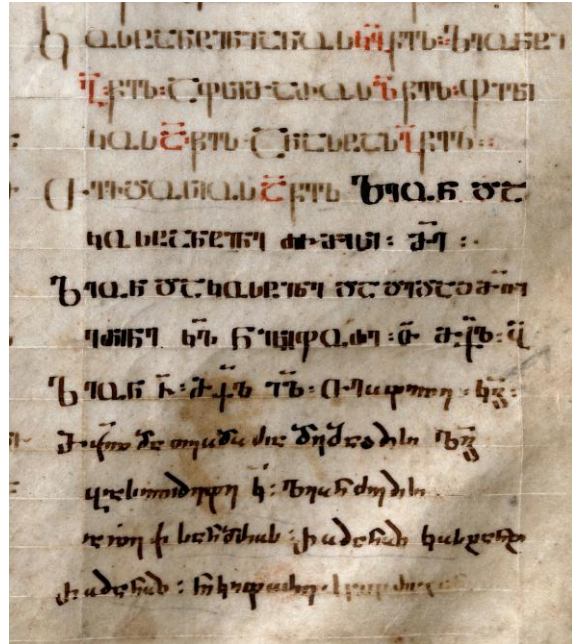
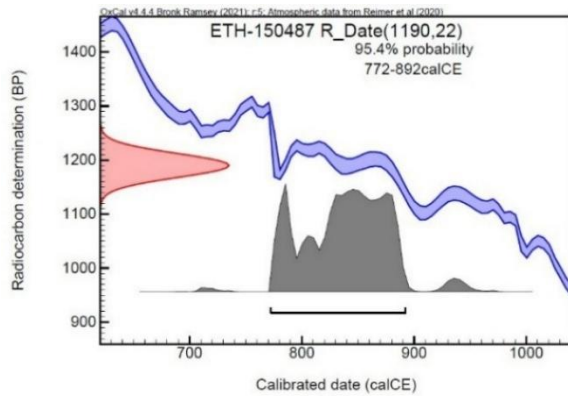
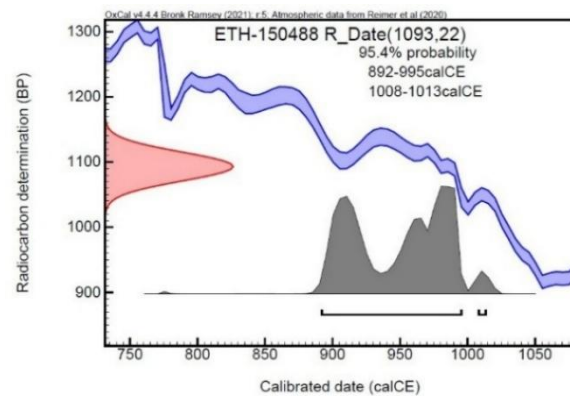


Fig. 32: S-1141, fol. 126rb, end of the Chronicle

hand using a brownish ink (with elements in red) that is likely to be the same for all preceding folios, then an *asomtavruli* hand writing with a blackish ink, and lastly, a *nuskhuri* hand also applying a blackish ink. The part written in the first style ends with emperor Theodosius (III Adramytnos), who reigned from 715–717 CE; the second part, with Michael (II the Amorian), 820–829; and the third, with John (I Tzimiskes), 969–976, thus providing a *terminus post quem* for the finalisation of the Chronicle. On the verso of the same page, the second unit begins with a text on the Benediction of Moses, one of a series of seven texts attributed, like the Chronicle, to Hippolytus (Romanus), and all written in the *nuskhuri* hand of the second unit. Regardless of whether or not the four-and-a-half last lines of the Chronicle were written by the same scribe as the *Hippolytica* following them, all this suggests that the two units belong to two different chronological strata. In order to reassess this, one specimen each from both units was submitted to a radiocarbon analysis (from fols 38 and 221). The result clearly supports the assumption of two strata, with the two  $^{14}\text{C}$  datings differing by c. 100 years: for S-1141 (1), the *asomtavruli* unit, the radiocarbon date is  $1190 \pm 22$  BP and the calibrated dates range from 772 to 892 calCE, with peaks at 785, 850 and 880 (Fig. 33); for S-1141 (2), the *nuskhuri* unit, we have received a radiocarbon date of  $1093 \pm 22$  BP, with a calibrated date range between 892 and 1013 and two major peaks at 920 and 980 calCE (Fig. 34). The latter clearly matches the *terminus post quem* indicated by the mention of John Tzimiskes by the “third” hand in the Chronicle and of King Bagrat II in Beray’s colophon. For the first one, the peak of 845 calCE seems to agree with the mention of Michael II; however, if the four lines after Theodosius III are a later addition, too, as suggested by the different ink, the first peak of 785 can also be taken into account. In any case, it remains remarkable that the part of fol. 126 which was left over when the first unit was finished was not only used for the continuation of the Chronicle but also, on its verso, for a completely different sequence of texts more than 100 years later, the only connecting link between the two parts being the alleged author of both the Chronicle and the texts following it, Hippolytus.

Fig. 33: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, S-1141 (1)Fig. 34: Result of  $^{14}\text{C}$  analysis of NCM, S-1141 (2)

### 3. Summary

As illustrated in Table I below, the results achieved by the radiocarbon analysis of the specimens from UBG and NCM cover a time span of more than 600 years. All manuscripts with *khanmeti* and *haemeti* features fall into the first five centuries (between 400 and 900), with no clearcut chronological distinction between them. As a transition period towards the *sannarevi* type, we may take the 8<sup>th</sup> century, with the first example of a *sannarevi* manuscript being the Graz fragment 2058/6A, stemming from Sin. georg. 63. The first example of a manuscript written all in *nuskhuri* minuscules is Graz MS 2058/3 with a dating that may be earlier than the *nuskhuri* colophon of the Sinai Mravaltavi dated 864 CE (Sin. georg. 32-57-33 + NF 89).

### 4. Outlook

It is clear that the results of the first campaign of radiocarbon dating whatsoever are not yet sufficient to clarify the development of Georgian literacy in the first millennium in all its facets. In order to proceed further, we not only have to verify seemingly contradictory datings such as those of NCM Q-333 and H-1329 (see 2.2 above) but also to widen our sample by including palimpsests with *khanmeti* and *haemeti* features of other collections such as those of Mt Sinai (e.g., Sin. georg. 84+90), Vienna (Austrian National Library, georg. 2), Iviron Monastery (Ivir. georg. 86), England (Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS Georg. C 1 = MS Heb. 2672; Cambridge, University Library, Taylor-Schechter MS 12,183 and 12,741; London, British Library, MS Or. 6581), and Makhachkala (Daghestan Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography, Fund of Oriental Manuscripts). A first step towards this has recently been undertaken by the National Archives of Georgia who sent specimens of two palimpsests together with one of the undated “Anbandidi” Gospels to Zurich; for this, we have just received the first result: with a radiocarbon date of  $1181 \pm 22$  BP, a calibrated date range between 772 and 945 and peaks at 785, 840 and 885 calCE, the Gospel codex can safely be attributed to the 8<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries.


Considering that the amount of material needed for these analyses does not exceed 10 mg per specimen, the damage caused to the codices by the extraction of such specimens can be regarded as much lower than the gain of knowledge this can produce. Still in 2015, Erich Renhart wrote on behalf of Graz, UBG, 2058/2: “Es wurde verschiedentlich angeregt, eine C14-Untersuchung des Pergaments machen zu lassen, um die Datierung der Handschrift zu vergewissern. Dazu haben wir uns bis dato nicht entschließen können, zum einen wegen des

damit einhergehenden Materialverlustes, zum anderen wegen der Varianz der zu erwartenden Ergebnisse”.<sup>77</sup> I am all the more grateful to him, Theresa Zammit Lupi and the staff of Graz University Library that they finally paved the way for us towards a thorough scientific analysis of ancient Georgian manuscripts, and to the members of the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts and the National Archives of Georgia for joining these efforts. I do hope that the addressee of this volume will live on for many years to see as many results of this as possible.

**Table I: Georgian manuscripts submitted to <sup>14</sup>C analyses (arranged by radiocarbon dates)**

Shelf no.	ETH ID	<sup>14</sup> C Date (BP)	calCE Date from	to	Major peak(s) <sup>78</sup>	Content	Type <sup>79</sup>
H-999 (2): fol. 135	150481	1620 ± 23	411	538	425, 465, 525	Gospels (Mt., Lk.)	X
2058/1: fol. 1	145598	1553 ± 21	433	574	440, 480, 545	Lectionary	X(H)
2058/2: fol. 274r	145600	1517 ± 21	482	605	565	<i>Arm. Divining Gospel</i>	—
Q-333: fol. 3	150486	1464 ± 23	569	645	600, 630	Gospels Lectionary	H(X)
A-844 (2): fol. 39	150478	1417 ± 23	601	657	615, 645	Isaiah	X
A-844 (1): fol. 48	150477	1400 ± 23	605	662	615, <u>655</u>	Gospels	X
H-999 (1): fol. 87	150480	1367 ± 23	609	759	620	Lectionary (OT, Gospels)	X
A-89: fol. 55	150476	1340 ± 23	648	774	<u>660</u> , 755	Gospels	X
A-844 (3): fol. 151	150479	1295 ± 23	664	774	680, 755, 770	Gospels Lectionary	X
H-1442 (1): fol. 14	150482	1295 ± 23	664	774	680, 755, 770	Gospels	X
H-1329: fol. 24	150484	1295 ± 23	664	774	680, 755, 770	Gospels Lectionary	H(XA)
S-3902 (1): fol. 18	150485	1268 ± 23	670	820	705, 730	Mravaltavi	X(A)
2058/6A	145605	1253 ± 21	675	871	720, 800	Gospels	A
H-1442 (4): fol. 25	150483	1236 ± 23	684	880	715, 795, 820	Gospels	X
2058/6B	145606	1198 ± 21	774	885	785, 855, <u>885</u>	Letters of Antony	A
2058/6C	145607	1190 ± 21	773	890	785, 845, <u>880</u>	Ascetica	A
S-1141 (1): fol. 38	150487	1190 ± 22	772	892	785, 845, 880	Shatberdi, 1 <sup>st</sup> unit	A
2058/3: fol. 2	145601	1188 ± 21	772	891	785, 845, 885	Hagiography	N
2058/4a: fol. 89v	145602	1156 ± 21	773	975	780, 890, <u>940</u>	Liturgy of James	A
2058/7	145608	1146 ± 21	773	979	890, 940	<i>Arm. Gospel (Mt.)</i>	—
2058/4b: fol. 110v	145603	1122 ± 21	887	990	895, 920, 970	Missa praesanctificationum	A
S-1141 (2): fol. 221	150488	1093 ± 22	892	1013	920, <u>980</u>	Shatberdi, 2 <sup>nd</sup> unit	N
2058/5 (scroll)	145604	913 ± 21	1041	1210	1050, 1160	Liturgy of Chrysostom	N

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<sup>77</sup> Renhart 2015: 45.

<sup>78</sup> Peaks that agree with external evidence are underlined.

<sup>79</sup> X = *khanmeti*, H = *haemeti*, A = *sannarevi-asomtavruli*, N = *sannarevi-nuskhuri*; brackets indicate secondary features.



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## ქართული პალეოგრაფიის რევიზია: დაუთარიღებელი ხელნაწერების დათარიღება

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სტატიაში შეჯამებულია ძველი ქართული ხელნაწერების პირველი რადიონახშირბადული ( $C^{14}$ ) ანალიზის შედეგები, რომელიც 2024–2025 წლებში ჩატარდა ციურიხის ფედერალურ ტექნოლოგიურ ინსტიტუტში (ETH) პროექტის „მწიგნობრობის განვითარება კავკასიის ტერიტორიებზე“ (DeLiCaTe) ფარგლებში, გრაცის უნივერსიტეტის ბიბლიოთეკისა და კორნელი კეკელიძის სახელობის საქართველოს ხელნაწერთა ეროვნული ცენტრის მხარდაჭერით. მათი კოლექციების 20 ხელნაწერიდან აღებული ნიმუშებმა, უმეტესად პალიმფსესტებიდან და, ასევე, ჩვენი წელთაღრიცხვის პირველი ათასწლეულის სხვა დაუთარიღებელი ხელნაწერებიდან, დამაჯერებელი შედეგები მოგვცა ქართული მწიგნობრობის განვითარების ადრეული საუკუნეების შესახებ, განსაკუთრებით ხანმეტობისა და ჰაემეტობის გამიჯვნის კუთხით.

ანალიზის შედეგები ნათლად აჩვენებს, რომ ეს განსხვავება არა ქრონოლოგიური, არამედ რეგიონული ან დიალექტური პრინციპით უნდა იყოს განპირობებული, რაც ადასტურებს პირველად აკაკი შანიძის მიერ 1923 წელს გამოთქმულ ამავე შეხედულებას. კვლევის შედეგად მიღებული სხვა მნიშვნელოვანი შედეგები ეხება გარდამავალ პერიოდს ხანმეტობასა და ჰაემეტობას შორის და სანნარევი ფორმების გაჩენას; ეს უკანასკნელი ახლა დანამდვილებით შეიძლება მივაკუთვნოთ VIII საუკუნეს. შატბერდის კრებული (ხელნაწერთა ეროვნული ცენტრის ხელნაწერი S-1141) შემთხვევაში კი, ჩატარებულმა ანალიზმა დაადასტურა, რომ მის ორ – ასომთავრულითა და ნუსხურით გადაწერილ ნაწილებს შორის 100 წელზე მეტი დროის ინტერვალი უნდა ვივარაუდოთ.



# Georgian Manuscripts from the Graz and Leipzig Collections: Results of Ink Analysis

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**Abstract:** This article presents the results of an ink analysis conducted on the collections of Georgian manuscripts preserved at the Universities of Graz (Austria) and Leipzig (Germany). Notably, this study represents the first systematic ink analysis ever carried out on Georgian manuscripts. It focuses on identifying the composition of red and black inks using a range of analytical methods, including X-ray fluorescence (XRF), Raman spectroscopy, ultraviolet (UV), visible (VIS), and near-infrared (NIR) microscopy. The research was carried out within the framework of the project “The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories” (“DeLiCaTe”) by the laboratory of the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) at the University of Hamburg. The primary aim of the study is to analyze inks from as many manuscripts as possible in order to establish a unified database identifying metals characteristic of specific regions and periods over time. Manuscripts whose date and place of origin are securely identified through colophons play a crucial role in building this database. Identifying inks of the same composition in manuscripts lacking such historical information can provide valuable evidence for determining their origin and, potentially, their date of production.

**Keywords:** Georgian manuscripts, Graz collection, Leipzig collection; ink analysis, XRF imaging, Raman spectroscopy, UV/VIS/NIR microscopy.

## 1. Introduction

The Georgian manuscript collections of the University Libraries of Graz (Austria) and Leipzig (Germany) are among the most significant collections outside of Georgia, due to the importance of the manuscripts they preserve. These collections, which contain both complete and fragmentary manuscripts, have repeatedly been the subject of research by Georgian and foreign scholars. They have been studied and described,<sup>1</sup> and in the case of the Graz collection, even published.<sup>2</sup> For the fragments, it has largely been established to which manuscript collections they originally belonged.<sup>3</sup> This information is particularly valuable for our research, as the original manuscripts sometimes provide clues regarding the provenance of the fragments, including their place and time of copying. However, for certain manuscripts or fragments, these questions remain unresolved.

In order to determine the origin and, if possible, the age of the manuscripts, the project “The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories” (“DeLiCaTe”), carried out at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (hereafter CSMC) at the University of Hamburg under the leadership of Jost Gippert, initiated the study of the chemical composition of various inks used in Georgian manuscripts to identify metals characteristic of specific regions as well as plant-based components. A key goal of this approach is the creation of a database encompassing as many manuscripts as possible, for the accurate compilation of which

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<sup>1</sup> For the Graz collection, see Tsagareli 1888; Schuchardt 1928; Garitte 1960; Outtier 1972; Kern *et al.* 2023; Zammit Lupi 2023. For the Leipzig collection, see Tischendorf 1855; Vollers 1906; Assfalg 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Shanidze 1929; Shanidze 1944; Tarchnišvili 1950; Garitte 1955; Shanidze 1960; Imnaishvili 2004.

<sup>3</sup> For the most recent comprehensive material on this, see Gippert forthcoming (a); Gippert forthcoming (b).



manuscripts with securely dated colophons indicating their place of origin play an essential role.

The first stage of the study was conducted on the Georgian collection of Graz between 22 April and 3 May 2024, followed by an examination of the Leipzig collection between 21 October and 1 November 2024. The manuscripts were investigated by the CSMC laboratory staff using several multi-analytical material characterization methods.<sup>4</sup> In the current article, we focus on the results of the ink analysis, carried out using XRF imaging, Raman spectroscopy, ultraviolet (UV), visible (VIS), and near-infrared (NIR) microscopy. For a detailed description of the methodology, see Section 3. The preliminary results were presented in March 2025 at the CSMC.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Place of Origin and Date of the Manuscripts

It has already been established that the Georgian manuscripts of Graz University Library all stem from the Georgian collection of St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai. All of them were still described by Aleksandre Tsagareli as being part of that collection in his catalogue published in 1888.<sup>6</sup> However, this does not necessarily imply that they were copied at Sinai. It is possible that they were produced at another scriptorium and subsequently brought to Sinai.

Regarding the Leipzig collection, with two exceptions – which also stem from the Sinai collection – the manuscripts derive from the Jerusalem collection of Georgian manuscripts, today kept in the Library of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate.<sup>7</sup> Some of these manuscripts were also described by Aleksandre Tsagareli.<sup>8</sup>

Our task is to examine these manuscripts and fragments individually, either directly or through the colophons of their original manuscripts, and to classify them into two groups: those with a known place and date of copying, and those without. This classification will then allow us to compare the historical information with the laboratory data on the composition of the red and black inks used.

### 2.1 The Graz Collection

The Georgian manuscripts in the Graz collection comprise four nearly complete codices (MSS 2058/1, 2058/2, 2058/3, 2058/4), one scroll (2058/5), and three fragments (2058/6a, 2058/6b, 2058/6c). Of these, the place of origin (St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai and the Holy Lavra of St. Sabas) and the date are known for one manuscript, 2058/4, and two fragments: 2058/6b and 2058/6c.

2.1.1 MS 2058/4 contains the *Liturgy of James* (fols 1r–94v) and the *Missa praesanctificationum* by Gregory the Great (fols 96r–110v).<sup>9</sup> The manuscript was copied by two scribes. Following the first part is the colophon as shown in Fig. 1: “When this Liturgy was written on Holy Sinai

<sup>4</sup> We would like to express our special gratitude to the laboratory members for their contribution: Olivier Bonnerot, Claudia Colini, Katerina Grigoriadou, Małgorzata Grzelec, Kyle Ann Huskin, Giuseppe Marotta, Greg Nehring, Sowmeya Sathiyamani, Ivan Shevchuk, Chen Yu.

<sup>5</sup> Bosch & Kvirkvelia 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Tsagareli 1888, приложение II: 193–240.

<sup>7</sup> For a summary see Gippert forthcoming (b), 2.1.6.

<sup>8</sup> Tsagareli 1888, приложение I: 143–192.

<sup>9</sup> In Tsagareli's catalogue, this manuscript is described under number 31 (1888: 210). The first quire of the manuscript has been preserved in the National Museum Library in Prague (DJ VI 1); see Jedlička 1961a and 1961b.

by the hand of John, the very sinful Zosimus, in the days of my wretched old age, for prayers on my behalf and for all my relatives, the year after Creation in Georgian was ხვ<sup>3</sup>პთ (6589), and the chronicon was ს<sup>3</sup>ე (205)” (MS 2058/4, 95r, see Fig. 1).<sup>10</sup> This indicates that the first part was written by John Zosimus on Mt Sinai in the year 985 CE.

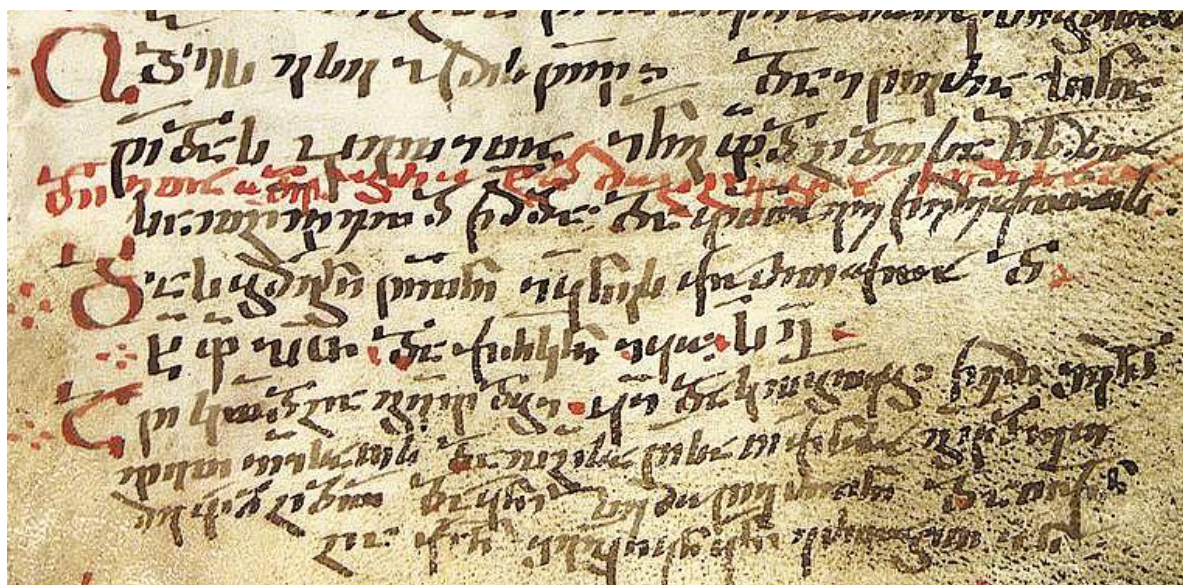


Fig. 1: Graz, UBG, MS 2058/4, fol. 95r (excerpt: scribe's colophon)

Since the place and date of copying of the first part of MS 2058/4 are beyond doubt, identifying the composition of the inks used in both parts may help clarify its relation to the second part.<sup>11</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fols 1v, 5r, 31r, 43v, 49v, 60v, 70r, 93v, 95r (part I), and folios 96r, 100r, 110v (part II). In addition, ink samples were taken from fols 5r and 60v: the former contains the marginal note კქსი (for კუერეკსი “prayer litany”) and the monogram for Jesus Christ (ⲓ) written in a different ink, while the latter bears another inscription, presumably in Syriac (see Figs 2 and 3).

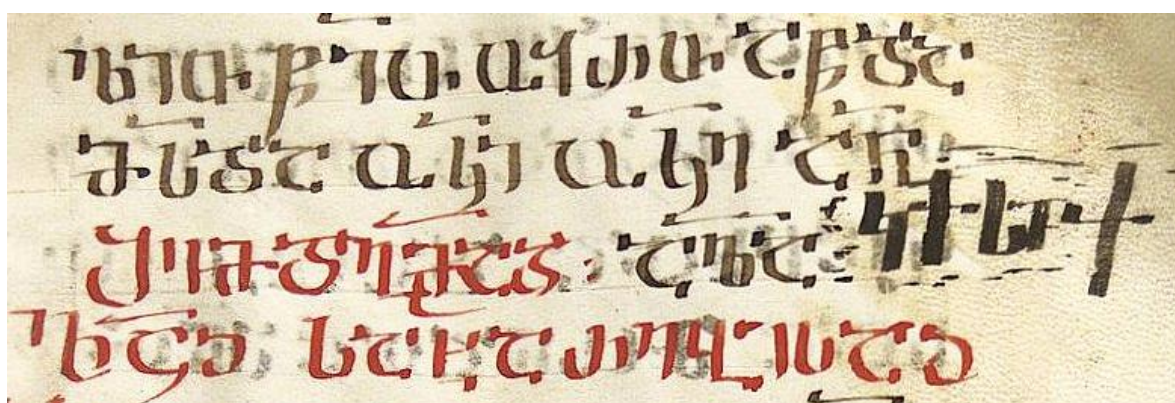


Fig. 2: Graz, UBG, MS 2058/4, fol. 5r (excerpt showing marginal note)

<sup>10</sup> Vakhtang Imnaishvili published the full text of the colophon with abbreviations resolved (2004: 311): ოდეს ესე ჟამისწორება დაიწერა სინა წმიდას კელითა იოანე ფრიად ცოდვილისა ზოსიმესითა, დღეთა ოდენ ბოროტად მოხუცებისა ჩემისათა, სალოცველად ჩემდა და ყოველთავე ჩემეულთათჳს, დასაბამითგანი წელნი ივენეს ქართულად ხვ<sup>3</sup>პთ (6589) და ქრონიკონი იყო ს<sup>3</sup>ე (205).

<sup>11</sup> A radiocarbon analysis taken of both parts has revealed that the second part is probably 30 years older than the first; see Gippert, this volume, 1.4.



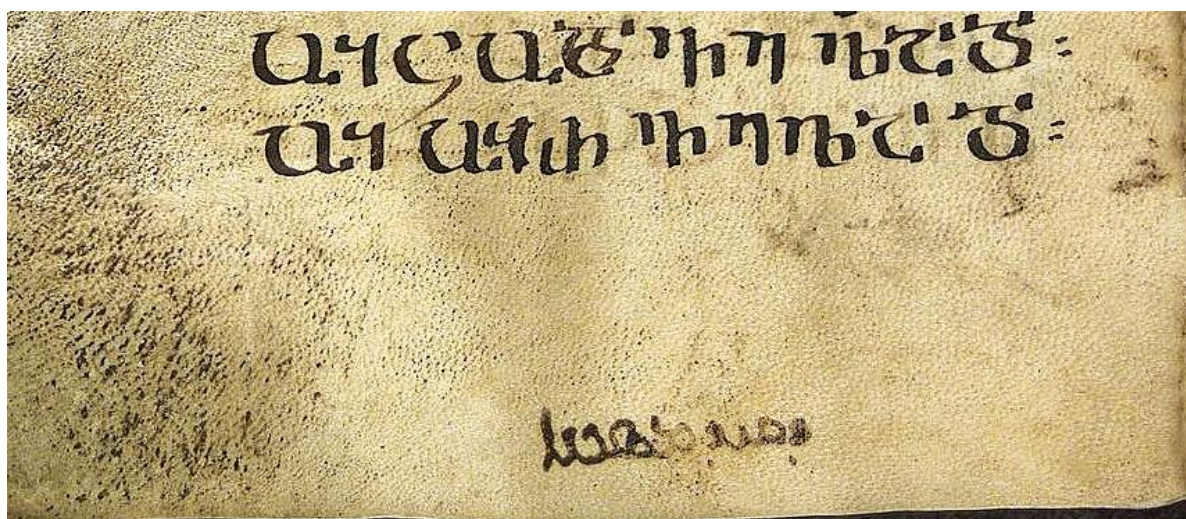


Fig. 3: Graz, UBG, MS 2058/4, fol. 60v (excerpt showing marginal note)

2.1.2 It has for long been established that the Graz fragments MS 2058/6b and MS 2058/6c belong to another manuscript from Mount Sinai, namely, Sin. georg. 35,<sup>12</sup> which contains a large collection of *Ascetica*. Fragment 2058/6b is the last folio of its quire 3 and fits perfectly after fol. 22v of Sin. georg. 35. Fragment 2058/6c is considered a continuation of the last folio (320v) of the same codex.<sup>13</sup> In an article published in 1978, Manana Dvali and Lali Jghamaia argued that the flyleaf of another Sinai manuscript, Sin. georg. 67, represents the last folio of Sin. georg. 35 and, most importantly, its colophon indicating the date and place of origin.<sup>14</sup> The text of the colophon reads as follows (Fig. 4): “And you who read this book, remember me, sinful and the least (of all), in your prayers, as well as all those who were the reason for this book to be begun: the monk Arsen and his spiritual children. I have written it with my own hand, I, the unworthy one, in (the Lavra of) St Sabas, under the patriarchate of Elia (III) from Damascus, son of Manšūr, and during the abbotship of Symeon of the Holy Laura, in the year ხვ̃ია (6511) after Creation. And Elia the Patriarch died in the same year, on 4 October, a Saturday, before sunrise. After him, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the same month, Sergius from Ramallah was instated as the patriarch” (Sin. georg. 67, back flyleaf, “recto”).<sup>15</sup> This means that the corresponding part of the manuscript was copied in 907 CE at the Lavra of St Sabas. As the Graz fragments (as well as Sin. georg. 35) were written by different hands, non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from the recto and verso sides of both sheets.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> For the first description of the Sinai codex see Tsagareli (1888: 232–233, no. 80); for the identification of the Graz fragments, see Shanidze 1929: 349–350.

<sup>13</sup> See Gippert forthcoming (a): 7.

<sup>14</sup> Dvali & Jghamaia (1978).

<sup>15</sup> ხოლო რომელნი იკითხვიდეთ წიგნსა ამას, მე, ცოდვილი და ნარჩევი, ღოცვასა მომიტყენეთ და ყოველნი მიზეზნი ამის წიგნისა დაწეებასა, არსენი ბერი და სულიერნი შვილნი მისნი. დაეწერე კელითა ჩემითა მე საწყალობელმან საბაწმიდას შინა, პატრიარქობასა ელია დამაშკელისა მანსურის ძისასა და საბაწმიდას სუმეონის წინამძღვრობასა დასაბამითგან წელთა ხვ̃ია (6511). და აღესრულა ელია პატრიარქი მასვე წელსა, თუესა ოკტონბერსა ო (4), დღესა შაბათსა განთიად. და დაჯდა სერჯი რამელელი წ-სა (7), მასვე თუესა.

<sup>16</sup> A radiocarbon analysis of the two fragments has revealed nearly the same dates; see Gippert, this volume, 1.8.



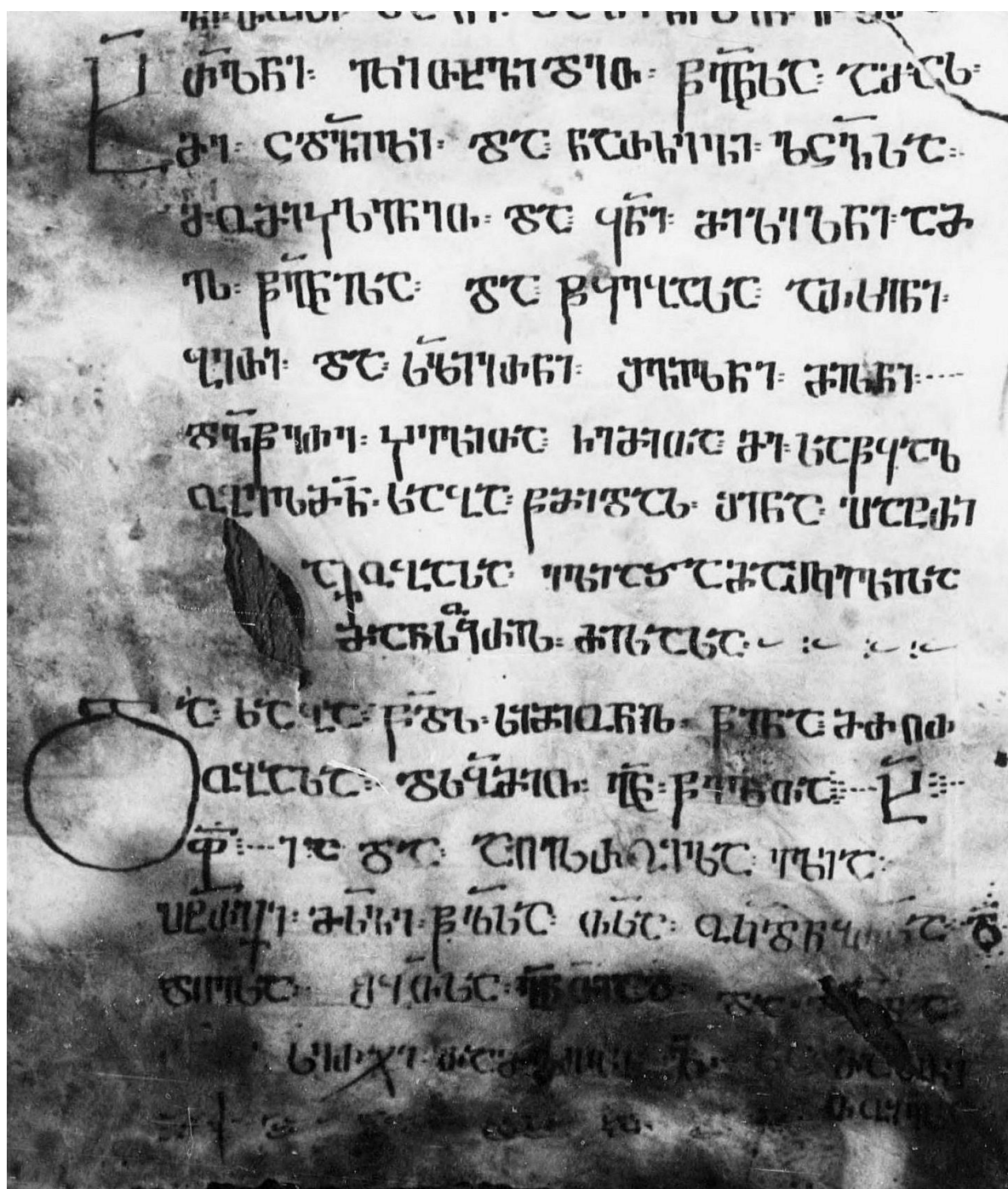


Fig. 4: Sin. georg. 67, scribe's colophon on back flyleaf (excerpt)

2.1.3 As for the remaining manuscripts in the Graz collection, neither their dates nor their places of copying are indicated in colophons or the like. The most important one among them is the Sinai Lectionary (MS 2058/1), also known as the *Khanmeti* Lectionary, which represents, within the Georgian tradition, the earliest form of the Jerusalem Lectionary;<sup>17</sup> it was first described by Aleksandre Tsagareli as no. 9 of the collection of St Catherine's Monastery<sup>18</sup> and edited by Akaki Shanidze in 1944. Notably, it is the only source from the *khanmeti-haemeti*

<sup>17</sup> Kvirkvelia forthcoming, 3.1.

<sup>18</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 199–200, no. 9.

period that has survived in a non-palimpsested form. A single leaf belonging to this manuscript is preserved today in Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France, géorg. 30),<sup>19</sup> and another one in Birmingham (Cadbury Research Library, Mingana Collection, Georg. 7).<sup>20</sup> The Birmingham leaf contains the colophon of Ioane Zosime, which Aleksandre Tsagareli transcribed in his description of his no. 9 of the Sinai collection.<sup>21</sup> This colophon provides the date (983 CE) and the place (Mount Sinai) of the third binding undertaken by John Zosimus;<sup>22</sup> however, the manuscript itself is much older, as confirmed by a radiocarbon (<sup>14</sup>C) analysis, which dates it to between 433 and 574.<sup>23</sup> Before the <sup>14</sup>C analysis, it had been dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century from both paleographical and linguistic perspectives. As the provenance of this manuscript is still unknown, non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fols. 1r, 1v, 5r, 5v, 7v, 23v, 26r, and 27r.

2.1.4 The next codex of the Graz collection (MS 2058/2), described by Tsagareli under no. 2,<sup>24</sup> is a palimpsest with an Armenian undertext; its Georgian layer contains the Psalter (fols 1r–258v) and the nine biblical Odes (fols 259r–282v), with the latter being incomplete.<sup>25</sup> Between these two sections there is a colophon (folios 258v–259r) that mentions only the scribe, Serapion (სერაპიონ), and his brother Peter (პეტრე), without specifying the place or date of the manuscript's copying.<sup>26</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fols 42v, 57v, 83v, 136r, 136v, 137r, 166r, 137r, 166r, 234v, 236r, 243r, and 259r (colophon).

2.1.5 Graz 2058/3, described by Tsagareli as no. 69 of the Sinai collection,<sup>27</sup> preserves the Georgian version of the *Life of Symeon Salos* by Leontius of Naples (BHG 1677, CPG 7883). The colophon, which starts on fol. 171v, mentions the name of the scribe, Teodore Çqudeleli (თეოდორე წყუდელელი), who wrote this manuscript for Mt Sinai. Unfortunately, the major part of the last folio of the colophon (fol. 172), which might have contained the date and place of origin, is lost. Tsagareli did not provide a transcription of this part, but he recorded the note of John Zosimus on folio 172v, which states that he bound the manuscript in the year 981 on Mount Sinai: “This holy book was bound on Holy Sinai by the hand of John, the very sinful one, by order of the sacristan of Mt Sinai, in the year after Creation ხვჳჳე (6585, i.e. 981), the chronicon was სჳ (201, i.e. 981).”<sup>28</sup> The number სჳ (201) is still visible on the remnants of the verso of fol. 172 (see Fig. 5). Jost Gippert has distinguished three different hands in the manuscript (fols 2r–88v, 89r–168v, and 169r–172r).<sup>29</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fols 2r, 82r (hand 1), and 89r, 96v (hand 2); due to time constraints, the ink of hand 3 could not be analyzed.

2.1.6 The only scroll of the Graz collection (MS 2058/5), first described by Aleksandre Tsagareli as no. 29,<sup>30</sup> comprises the Liturgy of John Chrysostom (CPG 4686). It does not

<sup>19</sup> Identified and edited by Outtier (1972).

<sup>20</sup> Identified and edited by Garitte (1960).

<sup>21</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 200.

<sup>22</sup> See Tsagareli 1888: 200 and Garitte 1960: 254–257.

<sup>23</sup> See Gippert, this volume, 1.1.

<sup>24</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 196, no. 2.

<sup>25</sup> For the missing parts, see Gippert forthcoming (a): 26–27.

<sup>26</sup> For the proposed dating of the undertext by different scholars as well as the results of a <sup>14</sup>C analysis, see Gippert, this volume, 1.2.

<sup>27</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 226, no. 69.

<sup>28</sup> Tsagareli (1888:226): “შეიმოსა წმიდა ესე წიგნი... სინა წმიდასა ჰელითა იოვანე ფჳდ-ცოდვილისათა, ბრძანებითა დეკანოზისა სინა წმიდისა... წელსა ხვჳჳე (981 რ.), ქკს ს (981 რ.).”

<sup>29</sup> Gippert forthcoming (a): 3.

<sup>30</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 209, no. 29.

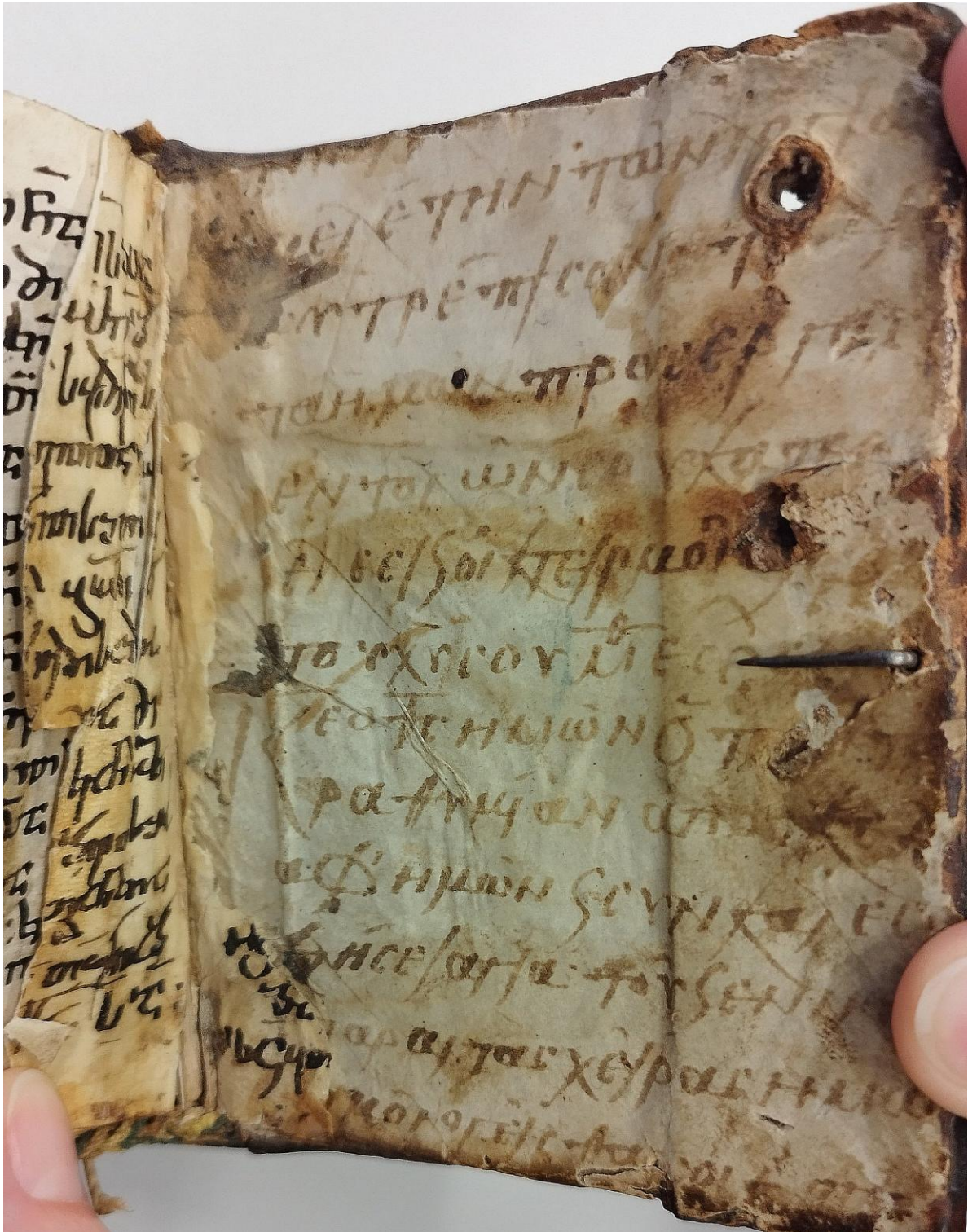


Fig. 5: Graz, UBG, MS 2058/3, fol. 172v, remnants of back flyleaf and Greek pastedown

include a colophon indicating the date or place of origin.<sup>31</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from the drawing and text in the first two lines (l. 1, l. 2).

<sup>31</sup> Scholars have proposed different datings: Aleksandre Tsagareli suggested the 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries (1888: 209), Michael Tarchnišvili the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries (1950: 111), while André Jacob dated it to after the 12<sup>th</sup> century (1964: 65–66). A radiocarbon analysis has now confirmed Tsagareli's dating; see Gippert, this volume, 1.5.



2.1.7 The final fragment from the Graz collection, MS 2058/6a, contains a passage from the Gospel of John (15:8–19). Akaki Shanidze identified it as a continuation of the text broken off on fol. 57v of Sin. georg. 63, which had first been described by Aleksandre Tsagareli under no. 13.<sup>32</sup> No colophon is preserved for the Sinai codex. Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from both the recto and verso of the fragment.

## 2.2 The Leipzig Collection

The Leipzig collection of Georgian manuscripts contains five objects (V 1094 – V 1098). Only one of them, V 1094, derives from a single original codex, preserving nine folios of it; the others consist of fragments from different codices bound together. As noted above, the provenance of the collection is Jerusalem, with two exceptions, V 1096-2 and V 1096-5, which have been identified as originating from the Sinai collection.<sup>33</sup>

The place of origin is known for only four fragments from the Georgian manuscripts in the Leipzig collection: V 1094 (the Monastery of the Holy Cross, Jerusalem), V 1096-2 (the Lavra of St Sabas), V 1096-5 (Mount Sinai), and V 1097-3 (probably the monastery of Ss Cosmas and Damian on Mount Olympus in Bithynia). For all other fragments, the place of origin remains unknown.

2.2.1 The nine folios of V 1094, which contain a hagiographical collection for the month of October, together with an additional fragment preserved in the University Library of Cambridge (MS Add. 1890.3 / Georgian Ms. 5),<sup>34</sup> derive from a sister manuscript of Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Georg. 1.<sup>35</sup> The latter preserves a colophon indicating its place of origin: “... God made me, poor Prokhore, worthy to write this soul-enlightening (book) of holy martyrs. And I have completed it and placed it, by the will of God and with the help of all the saints, in the Church of the Holy Cross, built up by me” (Oxford, Georg. b1, fol. 501v).<sup>36</sup> According to Enriko Gabidzashvili, who published the synaxarian version of the Life of Prokhore,<sup>37</sup> the saint completed the construction of the Church of the Holy Cross in 1057–1058 CE. In 1061, he withdrew to the desert of Arnon. This allows the manuscripts to be dated between 1058 and 1061.<sup>38</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 1v.

2.2.2 Fragment V 1096-2 (fols. 4–7) preserves material from a hymnary (*Iadgari*). As determined by Lili Khevsuriani, it belongs to the well-known liturgical codex compiled and written by John Zosimus, Sin. georg. 34.<sup>39</sup> Additional fragments of this manuscript are preserved in the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg under the shelfmarks Ф. № 906 (Греч.) VI (fols. 1–3), VII (fols. 1–8), XLI (fols. 1 and 3), and Сир. H. C. 16/1 (fols. 11–21, 24–29, 56, 57) and 16/3 (fols. 1–6).<sup>40</sup> These fragments preserve a colophon that provides both

<sup>32</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 204; Shanidze 1929: 349.

<sup>33</sup> Gippert forthcoming (b), 2.1.6.

<sup>34</sup> Assfalg 1963: 35–39.

<sup>35</sup> Blake 1932: 216.

<sup>36</sup> ... ღირს-მყო ღმერთმან მე გლახაკი პროხორე დაწერად ამის სულთა განმანათლებელისა წმიდათა მოწამეთა წიგნისა. და გავასრულე და დავდევე ნებითა ღმრთისაჲთა და შეწევნითა ყოველთა წმიდათაჲთა ჩემ მიერ აღშენებულსა ეკლესიასა წმიდისა ჯუარისასა.

<sup>37</sup> The publication of the text was prepared on the basis of the manuscripts Jer. georg. 24 and four codices of the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts: NCM H-1661, H-886, Q-105a, and Q-75; see Gabidzashvili 1968: 345–346.

<sup>38</sup> Gabidzashvili 1968: 110–111.

<sup>39</sup> Khevsuriani 1978: 88–122. The codex was first described by Tsagareli (1888: 206) under no. 19.

<sup>40</sup> Metreveli *et al.* 1978: 131–143.

the date and the place of origin; according to it, the manuscript was written by John Zosimus in the Lavra of St Sabas in the year after Creation (Georgian style) ხვწნგ (6569) and the chronicon რჷჰე (185), both corresponding to the year 965 CE (Cyp. H. C. 16/1, 17rv).<sup>41</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fols 4r, 4v, 5v, and 7r.

2.2.3 Fragment V 1096-5, represented by a single folio (12), contains 1 Peter 1:11–22; it stems from a Sinai Apostolos codex that has been preserved in three parts: Sin. georg. 58, 31, and 60.<sup>42</sup> At its end, Sin. georg. 60 provides a colophon mentioning the scribe Kvirike Soxastreli (კვრიკე სოხასტრელი), who came to Mt Sinai and wrote this manuscript for the commissioner Kvirike Miznazoroele (კვრიკე მიძნაზოროელი) and his priest, who served as sacristan at Mt Sinai at that time. The colophon further reads: “The year after Creation was ხვწპა (6581) and the chronicon was რჷწზ (197)”,<sup>43</sup> both indicating that the manuscript was copied on Mt Sinai in 977 CE. Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 12r.

2.2.4 Jost Gippert determined that the four folios of V 1097-3 (fols 5–8), containing Romans 2:5 – 5:13, derive from the Praxapostolos codex today stored in the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem as Jer. georg. 94 and 82. He also identified the same scribe’s hand in three manuscripts of the Athonite collection preserved at Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos. These are Ivir. georg. 11, a homiliary (*mravaltavi*) codex; Ivir. georg. 25, a hagiographical-homiletic collection; and Ivir. georg. 42, another Praxapostolos codex (Fig. 7).<sup>44</sup> Among these manuscripts, only Ivir. georg. 42 contains a colophon: “It was written on Mt. Olympus, in the abode of Ss. Cosmas and Damian, during the patriarchate of Polyeuctus in Constantinople (and) the reign of Nikephoros” (Ivir. georg. 42, fol. 236r).<sup>45</sup> This indicates that the manuscript was copied between 963 and 969 CE. The colophon also records the commissioner, Mikael Zekepe (მიქაელ ზეკეპე), and his supporter Iovane Kaxi (იოვანე კახი), who might have been the scribe.<sup>46</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 6v.

2.2.5 Fragments V 1095-1 (fols 1–4, 6, and 9–11) and V 1097-1 (fols 1–2) originate from the triodion–pentecostarion preserved in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem as Jer. georg. 101.<sup>47</sup> Neither the original codex nor any one of the fragments contains a colophon indicating the place or date of their production. Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 2v of V 1095.

2.2.6 Fragment V 1095-2 (fols 5, 7, and 8), which contains a menaion of September, derives from Jer. georg. 110, a codex that likewise preserves no indication of its date or place of origin. Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 5v.

2.2.7 Fragment V 1095-3 (fols 12r–15v) contains *agapebi* (აღაპები), i.e. commemorative notes, for the Georgian community in Jerusalem, written by different hands over an extended period (13<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> centuries). Their content is primarily devoted to the remembrance of deceased persons. These notes belong to the synaxary of the same community, which is preserved in the

<sup>41</sup> Metreveli *et al.* 1978: 142.

<sup>42</sup> First described by Tsagareli (1888: 205–206) under no. 16.

<sup>43</sup> დასაბამითგანი წელი იყენეს ხვწპა და ქრონიკონი იყო რჷწზ.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Gippert forthcoming (b), 2.1.4, figs 28–31.

<sup>45</sup> დაიწერა წმიდასა მთასა ოლიმპოსსა, საყოფელსა წმიდათა კოზმან დამიანეთასა, პატრიარქობასა კონსტანტინოვლეს პოლიოქტოსსა, მეფობასა ნიკეფორესა.

<sup>46</sup> For the full text of the colophon, see Gippert *et al.* (2022: 399).

<sup>47</sup> Assfalg 1963: 55–59; Gippert forthcoming (b): 2.1.2.

two codices Jer. georg. 24 and Jer. georg. 25.<sup>48</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fols 12r–15r.

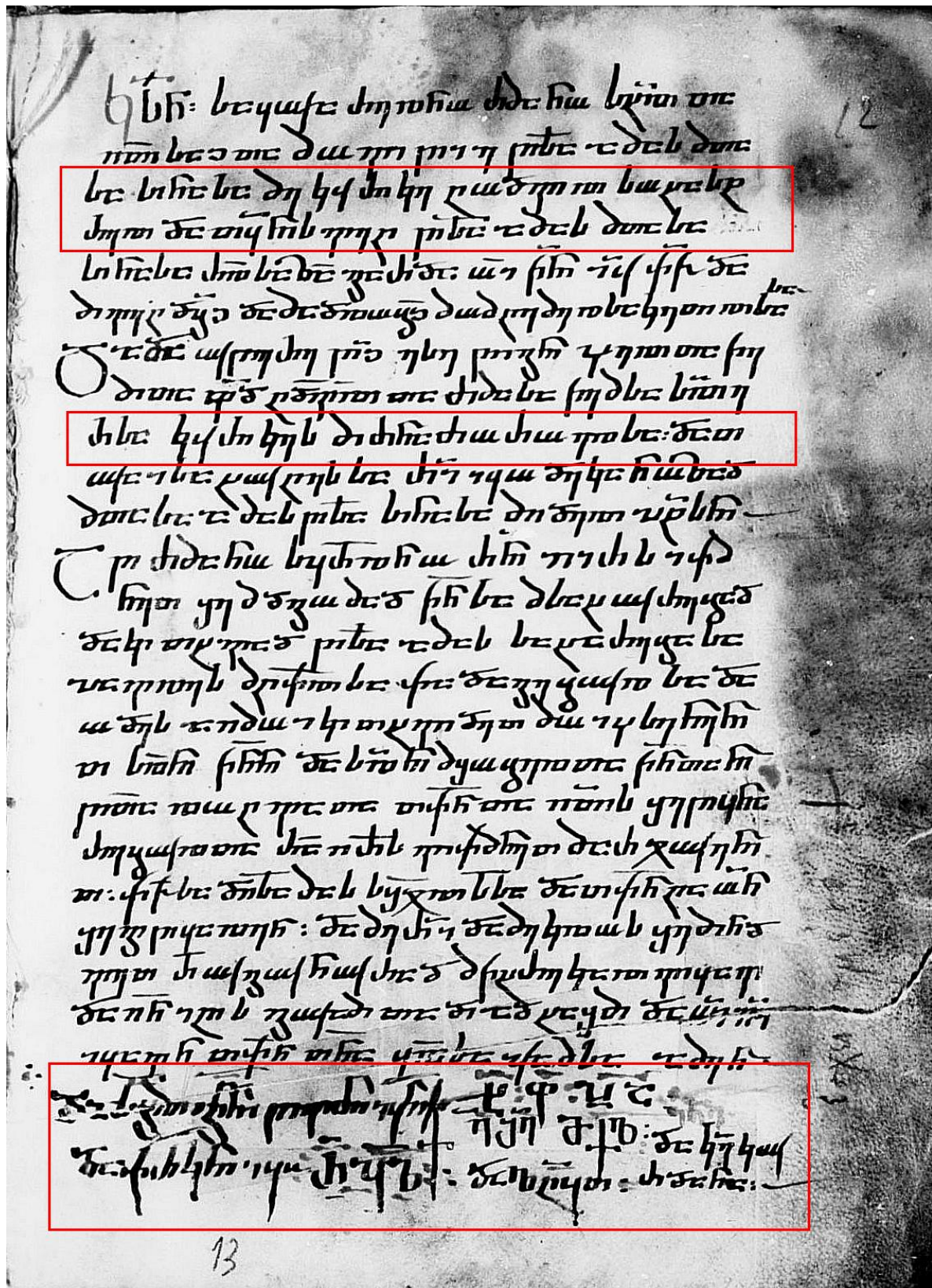


Fig. 6: Sin. georg. 60, fol. 12r: colophon by Kvirike Soxastreli

<sup>48</sup> See Gippert forthcoming (b): 2.1.2.



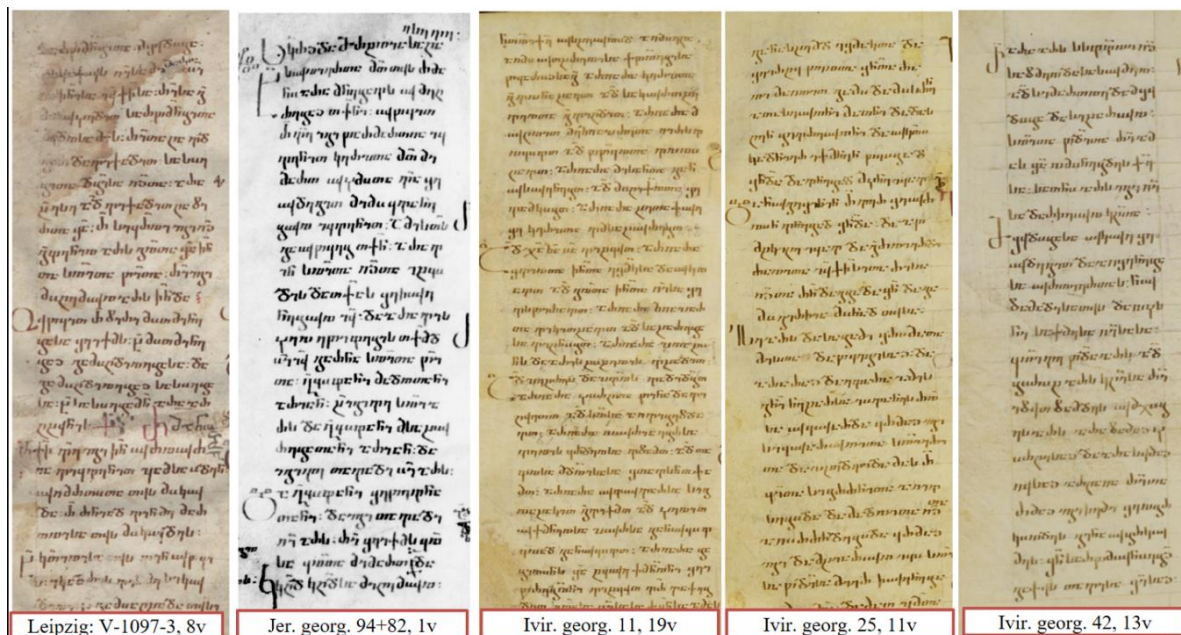


Fig. 7: Scribe's hand of Ioane Kaxi (?), Mount Olympus

2.2.8 Fragment V 1096-3 (fols 8r–10v) preserves theological Questions and Answers. A similar fragment, housed in the Schøyen Collection in Oslo as MS 1600, derives from the same original manuscript, which has not yet been identified. The authorship of the text has been attributed by Jost Gippert to (Pseudo-)Athanasius of Alexandria. The questions numbered 109, 110, and 113 attested in the Leipzig fragment are part of the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* (CPG 2257), corresponding to numbers 113, 114, and 117 in the Greek tradition, while questions 96–98 (corresponding to numbers 100–102 in the Greek) are preserved in the Oslo fragment.<sup>49</sup> No further information regarding the provenance or date of these fragments is provided. Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fols 8r and 11r.

2.2.9 Fragment V 1097-2 (fols 3–4) preserves Apostolos lections for 7–9 September and 3–14 October. The original manuscript from which this fragment derives has not yet been identified. Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 3v.

2.2.10 Fragment V 1097-4 consists of four folios (fols 9–12) and derives from a menaion for February today preserved in the Austrian National Library in Vienna (Vienna, ÖNB, georg. 3). The provenance of the Vienna codex is again Jerusalem, as it was described by Aleksandre Tsagareli among the manuscripts of the Monastery of the Holy Cross.<sup>50</sup> This is confirmed by the scribe's colophon on fol. 258v, also cited by Tsagareli: "I, poor and unworthy John of Khakhuli (იოანე ხახულელი), have written this menaion" (Vienna, ÖNB, georg. 3, fol. 258v).<sup>51</sup> No further information concerning the date or place of copying is provided. Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 12v.

2.2.11 Fifty-six folios of V 1098-1 contain a menaion for July. Jost Gippert assumes that this fragment might derive from one of several parchment menaia of the Jerusalem collection

<sup>49</sup> Gippert forthcoming (b): 2.1.3.

<sup>50</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 164, no. 35.

<sup>51</sup> მე გლახაკი და უღირსი იოანე ხახულელი დავსწერე ესე თოუენი. See Gippert forthcoming (b): 2.1.4 for further details.



described by Aleksandre Tsagareli (nos. 31 and 40),<sup>52</sup> which were no longer present or identifiable when Robert P. Blake compiled his catalogue in the 1920s.<sup>53</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 4r.

2.2.12 The last folio of V 1098-2 has been identified as containing a hymn for the Resurrection in the 3<sup>rd</sup> mode plagal composed by Mikael Modrekili. A possible candidate for the source might be Jer. georg. 123.<sup>54</sup> Non-destructive ink measurements were conducted from fol. 57r.

To summarize the information collected above regarding the dates and places of origin of the Georgian manuscripts from the Graz and Leipzig collections, we present it in Table I below. The Table first lists the manuscripts whose place of origin and date are known, then those whose origin and date remain unknown.

### 3. Analytical Methods

The inks of the manuscripts were analyzed according to a standard protocol, developed and improved in our laboratory.<sup>55</sup> It is best suited for the analysis and comparison of historic inks using exclusively non-destructive and non-invasive techniques, which are essential to prevent damage to the objects. In a first step, a preliminary screening to determine the ink typology is conducted with a digital USB microscope (Dino-Lite AD413T-12 V) equipped with built-in near infrared (NIR) and ultraviolet (UV) lights at 940 nm and 395 nm, respectively, to which we added an external LED white light source (VIS). The principle of differentiation between the three main kinds of ink (carbon-based, plant, and iron-gall) is based on the comparison of the ink's opacity in visible and NIR light.<sup>56</sup> In contrast to the constant black colour of carbon ink, plant inks become transparent at the red end of the visible light region, *c.* 750 nm, while iron-gall inks only start losing opacity at this wavelength, turning totally transparent at much longer wavelengths (*c.* > 1400 nm).

The elemental composition of the inks was analysed by X-ray fluorescence (XRF) imaging using a Bruker M6 Jetstream high-speed scanning micro-XRF spectrometer featuring focusing polycapillary optics and a variable-sized X-ray spot. The instrument was equipped with a mobile XRF probe that moved over the manuscript at a distance of 5 to 10 mm. The areas of investigation and the scanning parameters (X-ray spot, xy resolution, and acquisition time) were determined before each scan. For the measurements presented here, the probe was operated under the following conditions: Rh X-ray tube at 50 kV, 600  $\mu$ A, and X-ray spot size of 50  $\mu$ m. The acquisition time for each scan ranged from 50 to 600 ms/pixel, with a pixel (step) size of 30 to 100  $\mu$ m. The X-ray emission peaks were fitted based on Gaussian deconvolution using the Bruker M6 Jetstream software. The abundances of the elements are depicted in the resulting XRF maps. Net intensity values for the detected elements were further subtracted by measured areas from the writing support.

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<sup>52</sup> Tsagareli (1988:163, 165).

<sup>53</sup> Blake 1922–26: [IV], 155; Gippert forthcoming (b): 2.1.5.

<sup>54</sup> Gippert forthcoming (b): 2.1.5.

<sup>55</sup> Colini *et al.* 2021.

<sup>56</sup> Mrusek *et al.* 1995.

**Table I: Content, Provenance, and Dating of the Manuscripts in the Graz and Leipzig Collections**

Collection, no.	Content	Date, Place	Relations	Analyzed
<b>Manuscripts with Known Origin and Date</b>				
Graz 2058/4, 1 <sup>st</sup> part (1r–94v)	Liturgy (James)	985 CE, Mt Sinai	< Tsagareli 31; + Prague, National Museum Library, DJ VI 1	1v, 5r, 31r, 43v, 49v, 60v, 70r, 93v
Leipzig V 1096-5	Catholic Epistles	977 CE, Mt Sinai	< Tsagareli 16 > Sin. georg. (58-)31(-60)	12r
Graz 2058/6b, 2058/6c	7 <sup>th</sup> Letter of St Antony Evagrius Ponticus, Martyrius Monachus	907 CE, St. Sabas	< Tsagareli 80 > Sin. georg. 35 + Sin. georg. 67 (flyleaf)	r, v r, v
Leipzig V 1096-2	Hymnary (Iadgari)	965 CE, St. Sabas	< Tsagareli 19 > Sin. georg. 34 + St Petersb. Φ. № 906	4r, 4v, 5v, 7r
Leipzig V 1094	Hagiography	1058–1061 CE, Holy Cross, Jerusalem	+ Cambridge, UL, georg. 5, Oxford, BL, georg.1	1v
Leipzig V 1097-3	Pauline Epistles	between 963 and 969 CE, Ss Cosmas and Damian on Mt Olympus (Bithynia)	< Jer. georg. 94(+82)	6v
<b>Manuscripts with Unknown Origin and Date</b>				
Graz 2058/4, 2 <sup>nd</sup> part (96r– 110v)	Missa praesantificationum		< Tsagareli 31; + National Museum Library in Prague (DJ VI 1)	96r, 100r, 110v
Graz 2058/1	Jerusalem Lectionary	(VII?)	= Tsagareli 9; + Paris, BnF, géorg. 30; + Birmingham, CRL, Mingana Coll., Georg. 7	1r, 1v, 5r, 5v, 7v, 23v, 26r, 27r
Graz 2058/2	Psalter / <i>Gospel of John</i>	(VII–VIII?)	= Tsagareli 2	42v, 57v, 83v, 136r, 136v, 137r, 166r, 137r, 166r, 234v, 236r, 243r, 259r
Graz 2058/3	Life of Symeon Salos	(before 981 CE)	= Tsagareli 69	2r, 82r, 89r, 96v
Graz 2058/5	Liturgy (John Chrysostom)	XI–XII?	= Tsagareli 29	drawing, l. 1, l. 2
Graz 2058/6a	Gospel of John	IX–X	< Tsagareli 13 > Sin. georg. 63	r, v
Leipzig V 1095-1, V 1097-1	Triodion-Pentecostarion	XII–XIII	< Jer. georg. 101	2v
Leipzig V 1095-2	Menaion, September	XII–XIII	< Jer. georg. 110	5v
Leipzig V 1095-3	Commemorative Notes	XIII–XVII	< Jer. georg. 24–25	12r–15v
Leipzig V 1096-3	Erotapokriseis	IX–X	+ Oslo, Schøyen MS 1600	8r
Leipzig V 1097-2	Apostolos	XII–XIII	?	3v
Leipzig V 1097-4	Menaion (February)	XI	< Tsagareli 35 (Jer.) > Vienna, ÖNB, georg. 3	12v
Leipzig V 1098-1	Menaion (July)	XII–XIII	< Tsagareli 31? 40? (Jer.)	4r
Leipzig V 1098-2	Hymn (Mikael Modrekili)	XII–XIII	< Tsagareli 123? (Jer.)	57r

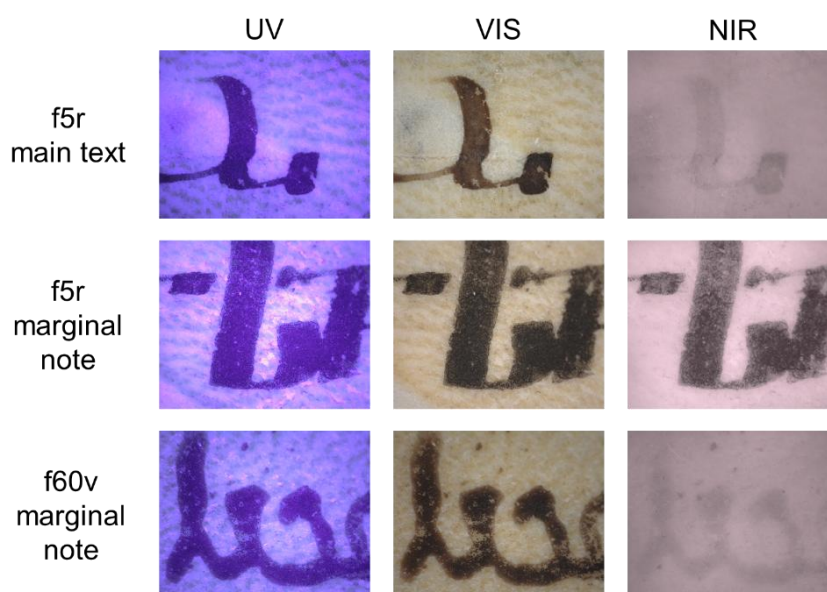
Raman spectroscopy was performed on selected inks to verify the presence of specific materials that cannot be conclusively identified by XRF alone. For this study a Renishaw inVia Raman spectrometer with an infrared laser (300 mW, 785 nm) was used for the acquisition of the spectra, recorded under a microscope with a 100× long distance objective, at laser power 2% (~2.2 mW), with an accumulation of 20 scans of 2 s each.

The complete data set with raw files and images and their further step-by-step evaluation can be retrieved from the repository of the University of Hamburg.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> For the step-by-step strategy of data evaluation, see Bosch (2025)

#### 4. Results

An initial microscopic examination was carried out using a Dino-Lite digital microscope under ultraviolet (UV), near infrared (NIR) and visible (VIS) light source to discriminate between the general black ink types, namely, plant, iron-gall, and carbon ink. Most inks in the Graz and Leipzig collections showed changes in opacity under NIR illumination, suggesting the use of iron-gall inks. Only some texts (e.g., marginal notes) exhibited no loss of opacity under NIR light and appeared very dark black to the naked eye. This is shown in Fig. 8 for three different inks of MS Graz, UBG, 2058/4. The main text and the marginal note on fol. 60v were written in iron-gall ink, whereas the marginal note on fol. 5r is clearly carbon ink.



**Fig. 8: Digital microscope images under UV (left), visible (centre), and NIR (right) light of the main ink and two marginal notes of MS Graz, UBG, 2058/4.**

Microscopic screening revealed that manuscripts from both collections contain a variety of inks, ranging in color from pale brown to deep black, with some inks already faded or undergoing degradation. Fig. 9 shows the results of XRF imaging of a scanned area on fol. 13v of fragment Leipzig, UL, V 1095-3. The element maps clearly reveal different iron-gall inks with varying ratios of iron (Fe), copper (Cu), zinc (Zn), manganese (Mn), calcium (Ca), and potassium (K). Note that, due to the XRF penetration depth, signals from the verso (rear) side can also be detected. This phenomenon posed challenges in sampling exact areas for the quantitative comparison of intensities and elemental ratios across inks throughout both collections. To mitigate these effects, the scanned areas were chosen with particular care.

XRF imaging also revealed pronounced differences among the red inks used. In most manuscripts, the red inks exhibited mercury (Hg) and sulfur (S) signals, indicating the use of the pigment vermilion derived from the mineral cinnabar (HgS). This is illustrated in Fig. 10a for the red ink used in Leipzig, UL, V 1095-3. On the same folio, one red letter (at the bottom of the scan) shows no Hg or S signals but instead strong lead (Pb) signals, indicating the use of the lead oxide pigment minium (Pb<sub>3</sub>O<sub>4</sub>). Mixtures of both pigments were also detected, predominantly in manuscripts from the Graz collection; an example from MS 2058/1, fol. 5v, is shown in Fig. 10b. However, Pb signals alone do not conclusively prove the presence of minium, as lead may also originate from the basic lead carbonate pigment lead white

( $2\text{PbCO}_3 \cdot \text{Pb(OH)}_2$ ), which could have been used in mixtures to brighten the red colour. Raman spectroscopy was used to verify these findings and showed that, in red inks containing Hg and Pb, characteristic Raman bands of both pigments could be detected at 231, 252, and 320  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for cinnabar, and at 122, 152, 392, and 551  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  for minium (Fig 10c).



Fig. 9: XRF element maps of iron (Fe), copper (Zn), manganese (Mn), calcium (Ca), and potassium (K) for a scanned area on Leipzig, UL, V 1095-3, fol. 3v.

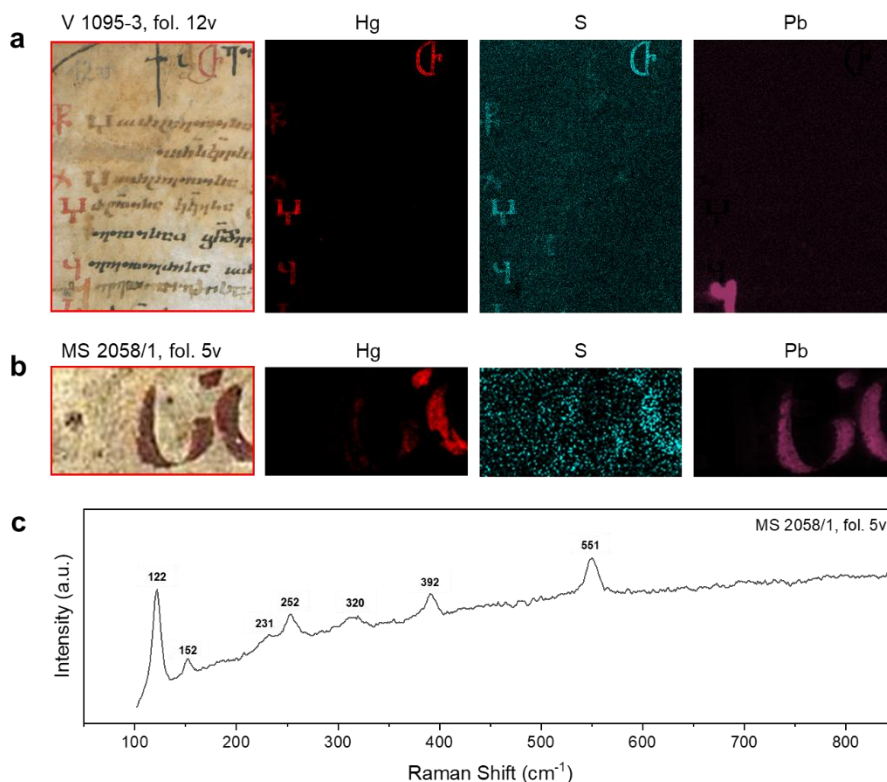


Fig. 10: XRF element maps of mercury (Hg), sulfur (S), and lead (Pb) for a scanned area on Leipzig, UL, V 1095-3, fol. 12v (a), and on Graz, UBG, MS 2058/1, fol. 5v (b), together with the corresponding Raman spectrum (785 nm) of the red ink (c).



In very rare cases of red ink, neither Hg nor Pb was detected; instead, low iron (Fe) signals were observed, indicating the use of red ochre (iron oxide mineral). This is illustrated in Fig. 11 for a red letter in Leipzig, UL, V 1097-3, fol. 6v. Because much stronger Fe signals were detected from the black/brown ink, the Fe elemental map required filtering by pixel averaging ( $3 \times 3$ ), conversion to a black-and-white scale, and reduction of the number of bins from 256 to 20.



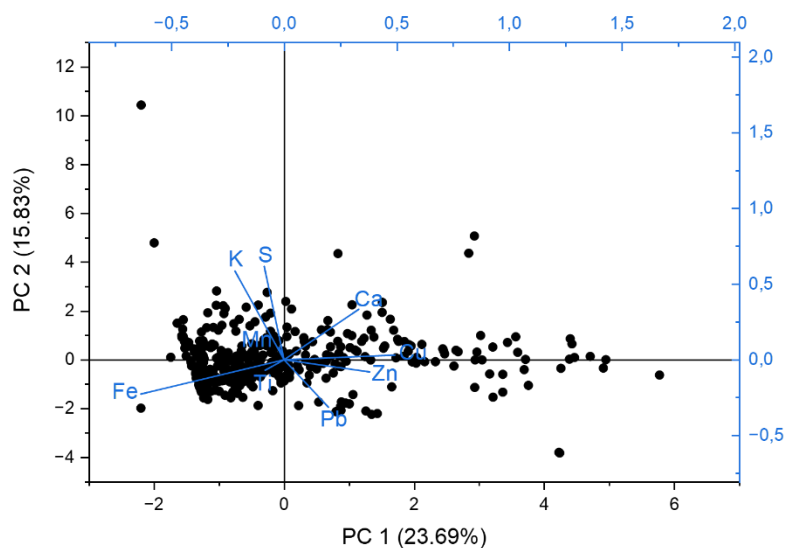
**Fig. 11.** XRF element map of iron (Fe) in standard visualisation (centre), and filtered by pixel averaging, black-and-white scale, and reduction to 20 bins (right) in order to highlight the weak iron signal of the red letter.

The XRF results of the black and red inks measured on all the investigated manuscripts of both the Graz and Leipzig collections are summarized in specific scatter plots to facilitate visualization of the large number of measurements.<sup>58</sup> Fig. 12 shows the combined results for the brown/black inks measured on selected folios of the investigated manuscripts, following detailed evaluation of the raw XRF imaging scans and principal component analysis (PCA) of the signal intensities of the relevant detected elements. For clarity, the results are further separated into individual plots for each manuscript (Fig. 13). It can be seen that most inks cluster in area **A** with an elemental profile of mainly Fe, and only traces of other elements, indicating the presence of non-vitriolic iron-gall inks,<sup>59</sup> whereas area **B** highlights inks with varying amounts of Cu and Zn, a very common profile of iron-gall inks. Area **C** shows a small cluster of iron-gall inks with a relative high amount of Pb, and only the inks of V 1097-3 are highly heterogeneous spread in areas **D** and **E** with high amounts of sulfur and potassium. The evaluated results are further summarized in Table II.

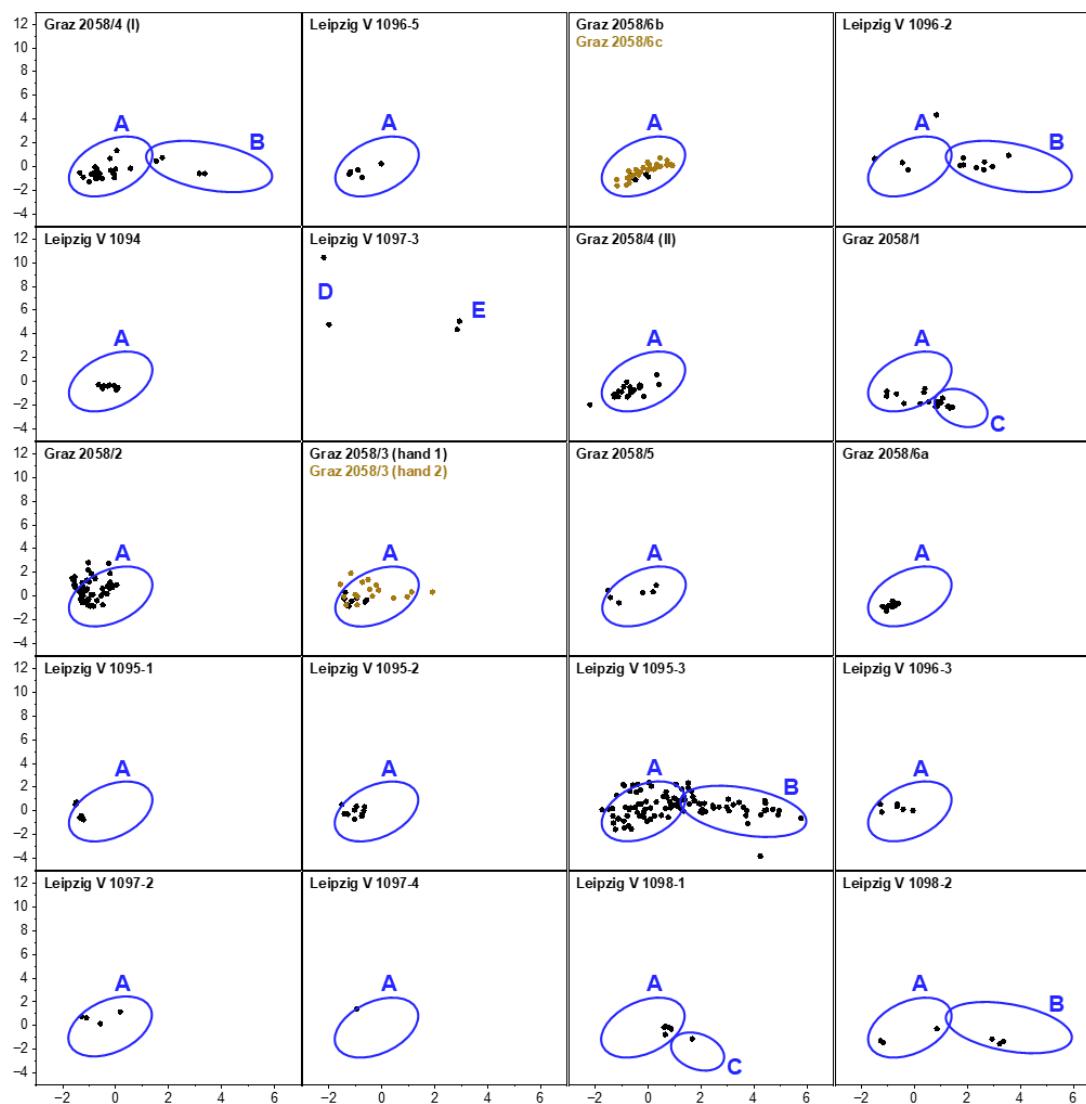
In contrast to the complex elemental profiles of the brown/black inks, the red inks can be distinguished by the presence of Hg and S (vermillion), Pb (minium), Fe (red ochre), or mixtures of these pigments. For this reason, their signal intensities are plotted as the ratios  $Pb/(Hg+S)$  and  $Fe/(Hg+S)$  in scatter plots for each manuscript (Fig. 14). Most red inks are composed of vermillion, as indicated by the clustering in area **a**, characterized by high signal intensities for Hg and S and low or no detection of Fe and Pb. For one red ink in Leipzig, UL, V 1095-3, fol. 12v (Fig. 10a), only Pb was detected as a prominent signal, with only trace amounts of other elements, resulting in very high intensity ratios (Fig. 14, data point **d**), consistent with the presence of vermillion. Areas **b** and **c** indicate red ink mixtures with varying amounts of vermillion and minium, e.g. Graz, UBG, MS 2058/1, fol. 5v (Fig. 10b). Data point **f** marks the red ink on V 1097-3, fol. 6v (Fig. 11) with the complete absence of Hg and Pb signals but low Fe signals observed, indicating the use of red ochre. For the drawing at the beginning of the scroll (MS 2058/5, data points **e**), high signals of Hg and Fe could be detected assuming the use of vermillion either mixed with red ochre or contaminated by other iron containing materials. The evaluated results are further summarized in Table II.

<sup>58</sup> For the step-by-step strategy of data evaluation, see Bosch (2025).

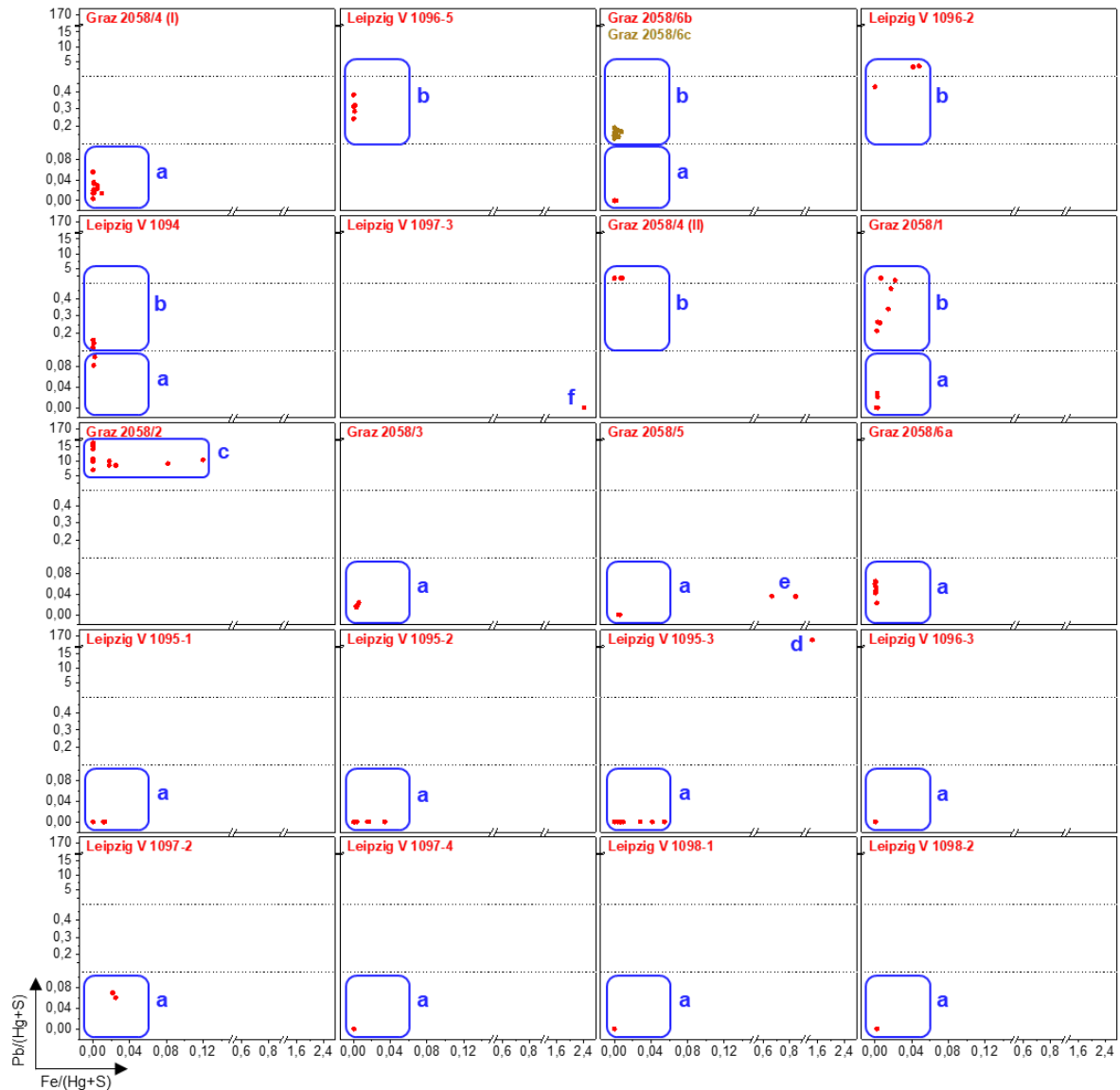
<sup>59</sup> Ghigo *et al.* 2020.



**Fig. 12.** Biplot showing the PCA results of elements detected from brown/black inks with XRF imaging with the loading plot (blue) and the scores plot of all measurements (black).



**Fig. 13.** Individual PCA score plots of the measured brown/black inks of each manuscript with areas A-D of clusters indicating the same or a similar ink.



**Fig. 14. Individual scatter plots with XRF intensity ratios of the detected elements from the measured red inks of each manuscript**

The analytical results of this study are summarized in Table II, sorted by the cluster types of brown/black inks (BI) and red inks (RI).

## 5. Summary


The existing database of analysed manuscripts provides a basis for adding new material and thereby strengthening its reliability. The apparent exception, i.e. the case of the two parts of a manuscript presumed to have been copied at Sinai (2058/4, part I and 2058/4, part II), which show differences in ink composition from each other, can be explained; however, this is not our focus here. For ink analysis to be reliable as a research method, it is necessary to examine as many manuscripts as possible, so that a large body of data can accommodate occasional exceptions, which may have their own logical explanations.



Table II also shows that the manuscript copied at the monastery of Saints Cosmas and Damian on Mount Olympus (V 1097-3) stands out as distinct, which is likewise a significant result. In the future, as the range of scriptoria and the number of analysed manuscripts increase, we will gain a clearer picture of the inks used in different places, enabling us to determine the origin of Georgian manuscripts more accurately.

<b>Table II: Summary of the analytical results of the Manuscripts in the Graz and Leipzig Collections</b>					
<b>Collection</b>	<b>Shelf no.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place of Origin</b>	<b>BI</b>	<b>RI</b>
Graz	2058/3	(before 981)		A	a
Graz	2058/6a	IX-X		A	a
Leipzig	V 1095-1 V 1097-1	XII-XIII		A —	a —
Leipzig	V 1095-2	XII-XIII		A	a
Leipzig	V 1096-3	IX-X		A	a
Leipzig	V 1097-2	XII-XIII		A	a
Leipzig	V 1097-4	XI		A	a
Graz	2058/6b 2058/6c	907 CE	Lavra of St. Sabas	A A	a b
Leipzig	V 1094	1058–1061	Holy Cross, Jerusalem	A	a, b
Graz	2058/4, part II			A	b
Leipzig	V 1096-5	977 CE	Mt Sinai	A	b
Graz	2058/5	XI-XII?		A	a, e
Graz	2058/2	(VII-VIII?)		A	c
Graz	2058/4, part I	985 CE	Mt Sinai	A, B	a
Leipzig	V 1098-2	XII-XIII		A, B	a
Leipzig	V 1095-3	XIII-XVII		A, B	a, d
Leipzig	V 1096-2	965 CE	Lavra of St. Sabas	A, B	b
Leipzig	V 1098-1	XII-XIII		A, C	a
Graz	2058/1	(VII?)		A, C	a, b
Leipzig	V 1097-3	963–969 CE	Ss Cosmas and Damian on Mt Olympus	D, E	f

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## Picture credits

Figs 1–3, 5: Graz University Library

Figs 4 and 6: Library of Congress, Washington DC

Fig. 7: Leipzig University Library; Library of Congress, Washington DC; Iviron Monastery

Figs 8–14: Sebastian Bosch

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## გრაცისა და ლაიფციგის კოლექციების ქართული ხელნაწერები: მეღნის ანალიზის შედეგები

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წარმოდგენილ სტატიაში განხილულია გრაცისა (ავსტრია) და ლაიფციგის (გერმანია) უნივერსიტეტებში დაცულ ქართულ ხელნაწერთა კოლექციაზე ჩატარებული მეღნის ანალიზის შედეგები. მნიშვნელოვანია, რომ ამგვარი კვლევა ქართულ ხელნაწერებზე ისტორიაში პირველად განხორციელდა. იგი გულისხმობს წითელი და შავი ფერის მეღნის შედგენილობის კვლევას რამდენიმე მეთოდის გამოყენებით, როგორებიცაა: რენტგენოფლუორესცენცია, რამან-სპექტროსკოპია, ულტრაიისფერი/ხილული/ახლო-ინფრაწითელი მიკროსკოპია. კვლევა ჩატარდა პროექტის „მწიგნობრობის განვითარება კავკასიის ტერიტორიებზე“ („DeLiCaTe“) ფარგლებში, ჰამბურგის უნივერსიტეტის ხელნაწერთა კულტურების შესწავლის ცენტრის (CSMC) ლაბორატორიის მიერ. კვლევის მიზანია, მეღნის ანალიზი ჩატარდეს რაც შეიძლება მეტი რაოდენობის ხელნაწერს ერთიანი მონაცემთა ბაზის შესაქმნელად. ბაზაში თავს მოიყრის ინფორმაცია მეღნის შედგენილობის შესახებ, რომელიც კონკრეტული რეგიონებისა და პერიოდებისთვის არის დამახასიათებელი. ამ მონაცემთა ბაზის შექმნაში საკვანძო როლი აქვს ისეთ ხელნაწერებს, რომელთაც გადაწერის ადგილი და თარიღი ახლავს. იმავე შედგენილობის მეღნის გამოვლენა სხვა უანდერძო ხელნაწერის შემთხვევაში, იქნება უტყუარი საბუთი მისი წარმომავლობისა და, შესაძლოა, გადაწერის თარიღის დასადგენად.





# Armeno-Georgian Connections through the Lens of Palimpsested Manuscripts

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**Abstract:** The literary heritage of the first millennium produced by Armenians and Georgians offers clear evidence of interactions between two nations that developed in constant contact with one another. While research on Armeno-Georgian palimpsests is still ongoing, current available data show that there are more Georgian manuscripts with Armenian lower texts than contrariwise. The chronological distribution of these palimpsests suggests that Armenians reused Georgian manuscripts only in modern times (16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> centuries), while Georgian palimpsestation of Armenian manuscripts took place already from the 9<sup>th</sup> century through the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In order to answer key questions such as the whereabouts, motivations, and circumstances of palimpsestation of Armenian or Georgian manuscripts, further research based on <sup>14</sup>C analysis in combination with parchment and ink analysis will be necessary to ascertain both the chronology and the geographical origin of the lower layers of the manuscripts under examination.

**Keywords:** Armenian manuscripts, Georgian manuscripts, palimpsests; Graz, Sinai, Tbilisi, Yerevan; <sup>14</sup>C/Radiocarbon analysis

## 1. Introduction

The literary heritage of the first millennium produced by Armenians and Georgians offers clear evidence of interactions between two nations that developed in constant contact with one another, sometimes in imitation or derivation, sometimes in competition, sometimes in independent ways.<sup>1</sup> Material evidence too—and in particular archaeology—witnesses to the remarkable ways in which Armenians and Georgians imprinted the gradual particularism of their architecture and culture in their surrounding landscape.<sup>2</sup> While significant advances have been made in the fields of literary studies and archaeology, however less attention has been paid to sources that fall both within the realms of material and literary culture. Filling this gap, this article explores the reality of Armeno-Georgian relations by focusing solely on manuscripts evidence or, more specifically, on Armeno-Georgian palimpsests that contain either an Armenian lower layer and a Georgian overtext or, conversely, a Georgian lower layer and an Armenian upper text. The primary aim of the article is to provide an easily accessible survey of all known extant Armeno-Georgian palimpsests for the benefits of both philologists and cultural historians working on Armeno-Georgian relations. This material is of particular importance when considering that before the end of the first millennium only very few complete manuscripts are extant in both Armenian and Georgian written culture, while for the early centuries of the two respective literacies all we are left with is parchment fragments, many of which are palimpsested.

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<sup>1</sup> The problem of the complexity of Armeno-Georgian literary and historical relations, including the invention of the national alphabets for the Armenians, the Georgians, and the Albanians is already present in the earliest original Armenian writing, i.e. Koriwn's *Life of Maštoc*, written as early as the 440s. For Koriwn's text and its context, see Terian (2023).

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, at least Tchekhanovets (2018).

The list of palimpsested manuscripts discussed in this article has been compiled over the years and already published in a series of posters dedicated to Armenian and Georgian palimpsests prepared by Jost Gippert within the scope of the ERC project “DeLiCaTe”.<sup>3</sup> The article presents first Georgian manuscripts with an Armenian lower layer (2.1) and then Armenian manuscripts with a Georgian undertext (2.2). The inequality apparent in the more or less detailed information provided for each item discussed in this article reflects the current state of the art on this ensemble of items. Although it is not likely that the number of Armeno-Georgian manuscripts may sensibly alter in the future, nevertheless the findings presented in this article are to be taken as provisional, for in the field of manuscript studies—and especially of palimpsested manuscripts—new finds are more the norm than the exception.

## 2. The Extant Palimpsests

Lists of Armeno-Georgian palimpsests have been compiled over the years by Jost Gippert and are currently available online in a series of posters dedicated to manuscripts with either Armenian or Georgian lower layers.<sup>4</sup> Due to the fact that not every manuscript depository around the world has yet been fully described, it is possible that new items may be added to these lists. For the time being, the currently available data point at the existence of eight Georgian manuscripts with Armenian lower writing and three Armenian manuscripts with Georgian undertext. Being palimpsested, these manuscripts—or, at any rate, those folios actually palimpsested that belong to them—are, naturally, all in parchment. Table I gives a preliminary overview.

**Table I: Current list of Armeno-Georgian palimpsests**

Manuscripts with Armenian Lower Layer and Georgian Upper Layer			
Location	Institution	Shelfmark	Nr of Palimpsested Pages/Folios
Graz	Universitätsbibliothek	MS 2058/2	556 pp / 278 ff
Sinai	St Catherine’s Monastery	Sin. georg. NF 13	46 pp / 23 ff
Sinai	St Catherine’s Monastery	Sin. georg. NF 55	42 pp / 21 ff
Tbilisi	National Centre of Manuscripts	A-491	70 pp / 35 ff
Tbilisi	National Centre of Manuscripts	A-495	24 pp / 12 ff
Tbilisi	National Archives	1446/322	82 pp / 41 ff
Tbilisi	National Archives	1448/1976	4 pp? / 2 ff?
Tbilisi	National Archives	1446/5016	14 pp? / 7 ff?
Manuscripts with Georgian Lower Layer and Armenian Upper Layer			
Location	Institution	Shelfmark	Nr of Palimpsested Pages/Folios
Yerevan	Matenadaran	M 6141	109 pp / 55 ff
Yerevan	Matenadaran	M 6705	4 pp / 2 ff
Yerevan	Matenadaran	M 8624	334 pp / 167 ff

<sup>3</sup> On this project (PI: Jost Gippert) see <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/delicate/about/project.html>; for the posters see <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/delicate/materials/posters.html>. These and all other URLs quoted in this article were last accessed on 29 December, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> “Armenian Palimpsests”: <https://www.fdr.uni-hamburg.de/record/16949>; “Georgian Palimpsests of the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts”: <https://www.fdr.uni-hamburg.de/record/16951>; “Georgian Palimpsests Outside of the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts”: <https://www.fdr.uni-hamburg.de/record/16953>.

## 2.1 Armenian Palimpsested Manuscripts with Georgian Upper Layer

### 2.1.1 Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, MS 2058/2

The Universitätsbibliothek in Graz holds a small collection of Armenian and Georgian manuscripts that includes four codices, one scroll, three Georgian fragments, and one Armenian folio.<sup>5</sup> Within this collection is the Armeno-Georgian palimpsest Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, MS 2058/2, which is, to date, one of the best known and most studied codices among those comprising an Armenian undertext and a Georgian overtext.<sup>6</sup> This latter transmits a Georgian Psalter and part of the Biblical Odes,<sup>7</sup> while the Armenian lower layer witnesses to the Armenian version of the Gospel of John together with a collection of 279 extant “oracle sayings” (or *puḥunuqmizuli*), out of the original 318 oracles.<sup>8</sup> The codicological structure of the codex has already been thoroughly described by Erich Renhart,<sup>9</sup> who also published the text of the whole set of oracles that he was able to read without multispectral images.<sup>10</sup>

The codex at present consists of 283 leaves measuring *c.* 135 × 100 mm. The folios are all palimpsested, except for fols 1–4. These latter show a different script, hand, and ink from the rest of the Georgian text—they are written in *nuskhuri* minuscule and, for the headings and the beginnings of verses, in *asomtavruli* majuscule—, suggesting that the first quire of the palimpsested Georgian book was replaced at a later stage with a new one, perhaps by the famous scribe and bookbinder Ioane Zosime.<sup>11</sup> The Georgian Psalter was probably written in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century and appears in full page, with 12 or 16 lines per page. The original Armenian codex was thought to have been copied in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. A recent <sup>14</sup>C (or radiocarbon) analysis of the manuscript undertaken in 2024/2025 on behalf of the “DeLiCaTe” project and conducted at the Federal Institute for Technology (ETH) in Zürich indicates that the parchment dates to a period comprised in between the years 482 and 605, most probably around the year 565.<sup>12</sup> The lower layer is also written in full page, in a slightly slanted *erkat’agir* (Armenian majuscule; see Fig. 1). Sometimes in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century the manuscript was palimpsested, rotated by 90°, and lightly trimmed, before accommodating a copy of the Georgian Psalter. While this latter only reused material from the Armenian palimpsested codex, some twenty folios of the original codex are now missing.

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<sup>5</sup> For details, see Renhart (2022: 50).

<sup>6</sup> See the groundbreaking study by Renhart (2015), which supersedes Renhart (2009), and the most recent Renhart (2025), all with further references.

<sup>7</sup> For the Georgian text see Imnaishvili (2004).

<sup>8</sup> According to Renhart, the only other known Armenian manuscript witnessing to the same textual content, i.e. the combination of the Gospel of John and the oracle sayings, sometimes called “Divining Gospel Book”, is the codex Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 9640; see Renhart (2024).

<sup>9</sup> Renhart (2015: 14–38, 48–58) for, respectively, the Georgian upper layer and the Armenian lower layer.

<sup>10</sup> Renhart (2015: 115–143). In 2024 the manuscript has been object of an multispectral imaging campaign that took place at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures of the University of Hamburg within the scope of the “DeLiCaTe” project. Renhart is currently studying anew the Armenian undertext and preparing an edition of the Gospel of John contained in this manuscript based on the newly available images.

<sup>11</sup> Renhart (2022: 52).

<sup>12</sup> On the difficulty of dating the Armenian layer of this codex on palaeographical ground, see Renhart (2025: 236–239); on the definitive radiocarbon dating of this manuscript, see Gippert, this volume, who also provides a conveniently quick overview of all previous dating hypotheses. Gippert states that this is, to date, the second oldest securely dated Armenian manuscript (the oldest one is housed in the Matenadaran).



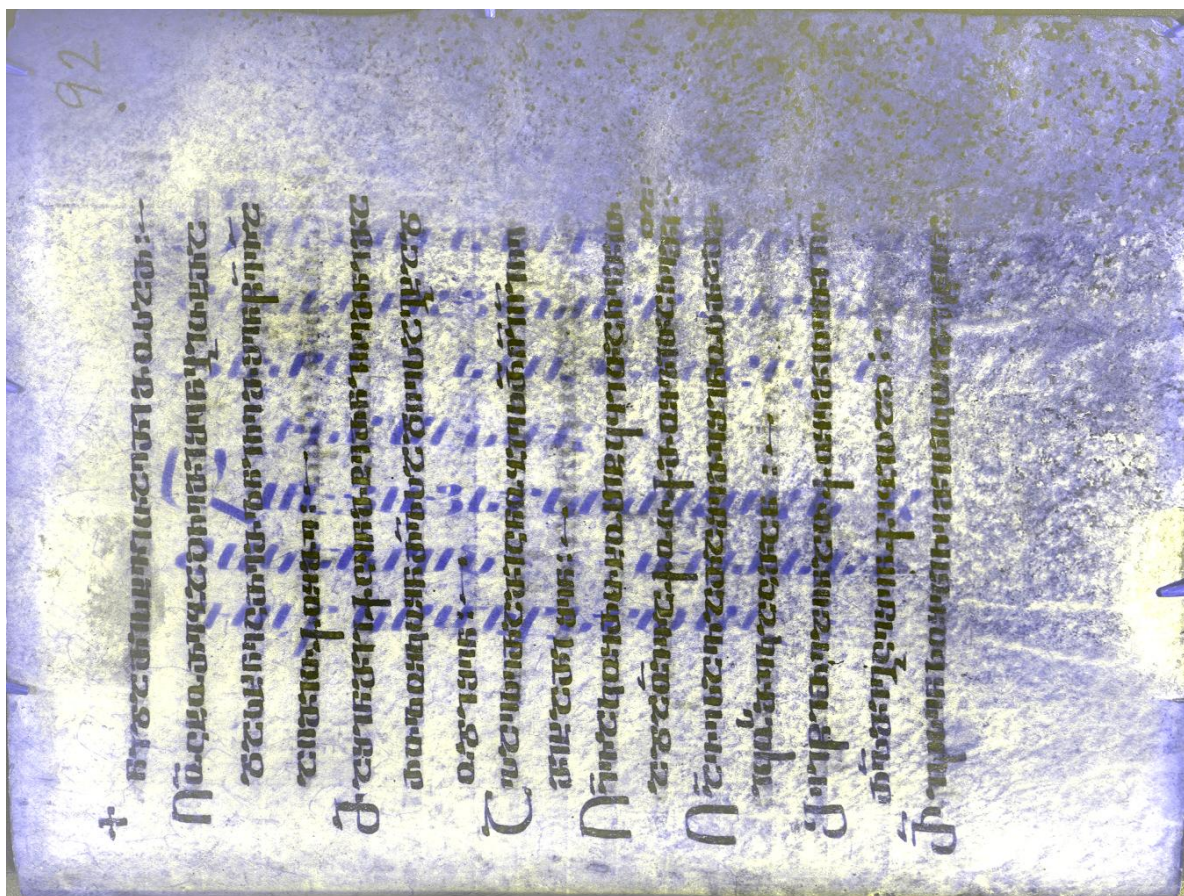


Fig 1: Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, MS 2058/2, fol. 92r (pseudo-colour rendering of multispectral image)

The modern history of this codex has been reconstructed in considerable detail and scholars have ascertained its Sinaitic provenance.<sup>13</sup> In spite of that, Renhart has often stressed that a Sinaitic origin does not warrant also a Sinaitic origin. Indeed, while the palimpsestation of the original Armenian codex may have occurred at St Catherine's Monastery, it is very unlikely that the origin of the early Armenian layer is also to be sought on Mount Sinai, for the monastery "has never had a tradition as being the place where a great number of Armenian manuscripts were kept".<sup>14</sup> This methodological point of separating the provenance of a palimpsested manuscript from the origin of the pre-palimpsested codex should be kept in mind when discussing any palimpsested manuscript and applies to all other items discussed below in this article.

While the Armenian version of the Gospel of John transmitted in the lower layer of this codex is not, in itself, a rare text, Renhart has showed not only that the text of this manuscript witnesses to interesting variant readings and that its pericopation of the Biblical text differs from what is generally known, but that the combination of the Gospel of John with a set of Armenian oracles makes this an exemplar of considerable significance. Indeed, this palimpsest represents the oldest Armenian witness to a kind of divinatory Biblical books which, while developed from earlier pre-Christian practices and once widespread also in other medieval language traditions (such as, for instance, Greek, Latin, Coptic, and Syriac), were at some point

<sup>13</sup> On the history of this manuscript, see Imnaishvili (2008a and 2008b), Renhart (2022: 51), and the resumé in Renhart (2015: 14). On the collections of Georgian manuscripts in Austria, see Imnaishvili (1977).

<sup>14</sup> Renhart (2022: 51).



shun by the official Church.<sup>15</sup> When hypothesising the reasons laying behind the palimpsestation of the original Armenian manuscript, Renhart consequently considers the fact that divinatory Biblical books were forbidden by the official Church as one of three possible explanations. The other two would be the fact that in each page only ca. half of the parchment was covered by writing, an economic condition that would make the text to erase relatively little, and the fact that the Armenian manuscript might have ended up in the hands of a non-Armenian community (and therefore be useless).<sup>16</sup>

### 2.1.2 Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, Sin. georg. NF 13 and 55

Next to the Graz palimpsest just discussed, the other best known and studied Armeno-Georgian palimpsests are two items preserved in the library of St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai, in Egypt. After the Vatican, this library houses one of the largest monastic collections of manuscripts in the world. Standing as the oldest Christian library continually in use, this institution and its heritage of multilingual books are living witnesses to the various communities of monks that at specific points in the history of the monastery worshipped within its walls.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the number of manuscripts contained in this library amounts to more than 4,500 codices.<sup>18</sup> Of these, ca. 1,200 belong to the so-called New Finds,<sup>19</sup> a heterogenous collection of manuscript fragments, of which at least 170 are palimpsested, that were discovered by chance after a fire destroyed a room located against the northern wall of the compound in 1975.<sup>20</sup> The two Armeno-Georgian palimpsests housed in St Catherine's Monastery belong to these New Finds and undoubtedly represent two of its most celebrated manuscripts: these are MSS Sin. georg. NF 13 and 55.

Although nowadays they represent two separate items, these two palimpsests are often presented together because it has been proved that Sin. georg. NF 55 was once part of NF 13,<sup>21</sup> but also because in parts of their lower writings they preserve the only known extant manuscript texts in Caucasian Albanian.<sup>22</sup>

Manuscript Sin. georg. NF 13 consists of 107 folios measuring ca. 220 × 150 mm. The overtext contains Georgian ascetical and hagiographical material written in *nuskhuri* by a certain Mikael sometimes in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century. The lower text transmits texts in Armenian, Caucasian Albanian (Gospel of John and parts of a Jerusalem-rite Lectionary), as well as a hagiographical Georgian text penned in *asomtavruli*.<sup>23</sup> The Armenian lower text is in *erkat'agir* majuscules and occupies two blocks. The first is at folios 52–53, 62–63, 71–72, which transmit fragments

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<sup>15</sup> Renhart (2024: 77); see also Outtier (1993).

<sup>16</sup> Renhart (2022: 56).

<sup>17</sup> On the history of St Catherine's Monastery and its library see, among others, Forsyth & Weitzmann (1973), Mango (2011), Justin Sinaites (2017), and Rossetto (2023).

<sup>18</sup> Although more than half are in Greek, the monastery also houses codices in all the most known languages of the Christian Orient, as well as in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Persian, and Polish.

<sup>19</sup> For more details, see Rossetto (2023: 14).

<sup>20</sup> While the discovery was first announced in 1978, the palimpsests of St Catherine's collections have since been at the centre of an international research project led by Michael Phelps and Claudia Rapp that run from 2012 to 2017. For a history of the project and a selection of the first outcomes see Rapp *et al.* (2023). Multispectral images of the palimpsests from Sinai are available at <https://sinaipalimpsests.org/>.

<sup>21</sup> Information on both items is taken from Gippert *et al.* (2008), Gippert (2010), and <https://sinai.library.ucla.edu/>.

<sup>22</sup> For an overview on the state of the art on these texts see Gippert (2023a). For the history, contexts, and culture of the Caucasias Albanians, see the updated handbook Gippert & Dum-Tragut (2023).

<sup>23</sup> For the identification of the Georgian undertext see Gippert (2022b); for details on the codicological structure of Sin. georg. NF 13 in general see the dedicated entry at <https://sinai.library.ucla.edu/>.

of Pauline Epistles with the Euthalian apparatus (see Fig. 2). The second, also in *erkat'agir*, is located at folios 79–95 and contains fragments from the *Works of Solomon* (or *Paulip Unghnūnūh*).<sup>24</sup> Both texts have provisionally been dated on palaeographical grounds to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.

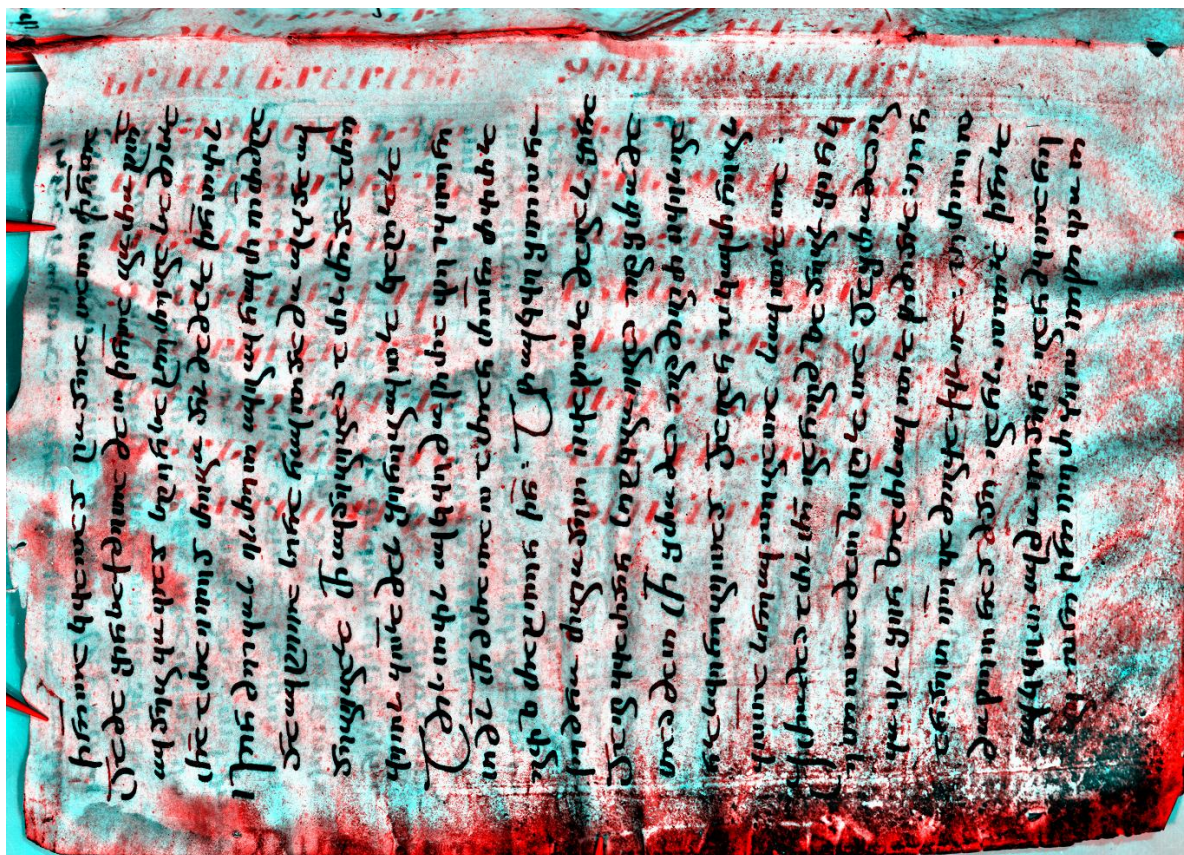


Fig 2: Sin. georg. NF 13, fol. 52v (pseudo-colour rendering of multispectral image)

Manuscript Sin. georg. NF 55 consists of 78 folios measuring ca. 220 × 150 mm. The overtext transmits a copy of the *Apophtegmata Patrum* in Georgian, also written by the same Mikael of Sin. georg. NF 13. The lower layers of this codex include texts in Armenian, Caucasian Albanian (other parts of the same texts of NF 13), and Christian Palestinian Aramaic (Gospel of Matthew).<sup>25</sup> The Armenian lower layer is entirely in *erkat'agir* and consists of fragments of three texts. Folio 64 contains fragments of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (see Fig. 3);<sup>26</sup> folios 28–29 and 37–38 transmit other fragments of the same Pauline epistles with Euthalian apparatus dated to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries as Sin. georg. NF 13; and folios 43–61 contain other parts of the same *Works of Solomon* as found in NF 13 and, therefore, also date to the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> For the Armenian texts of this manuscript, see Gippert (2010).

<sup>25</sup> For the identification of the Christian Palestinian Aramaic text see Müller-Kessler (2025: 148–149); for details on the codicological structure of Sin. georg. NF 55 in general see the dedicated entry at <https://sinai.library.ucla.edu/>.

<sup>26</sup> See Gippert (2023b).

<sup>27</sup> See the edition in Gippert (2010).



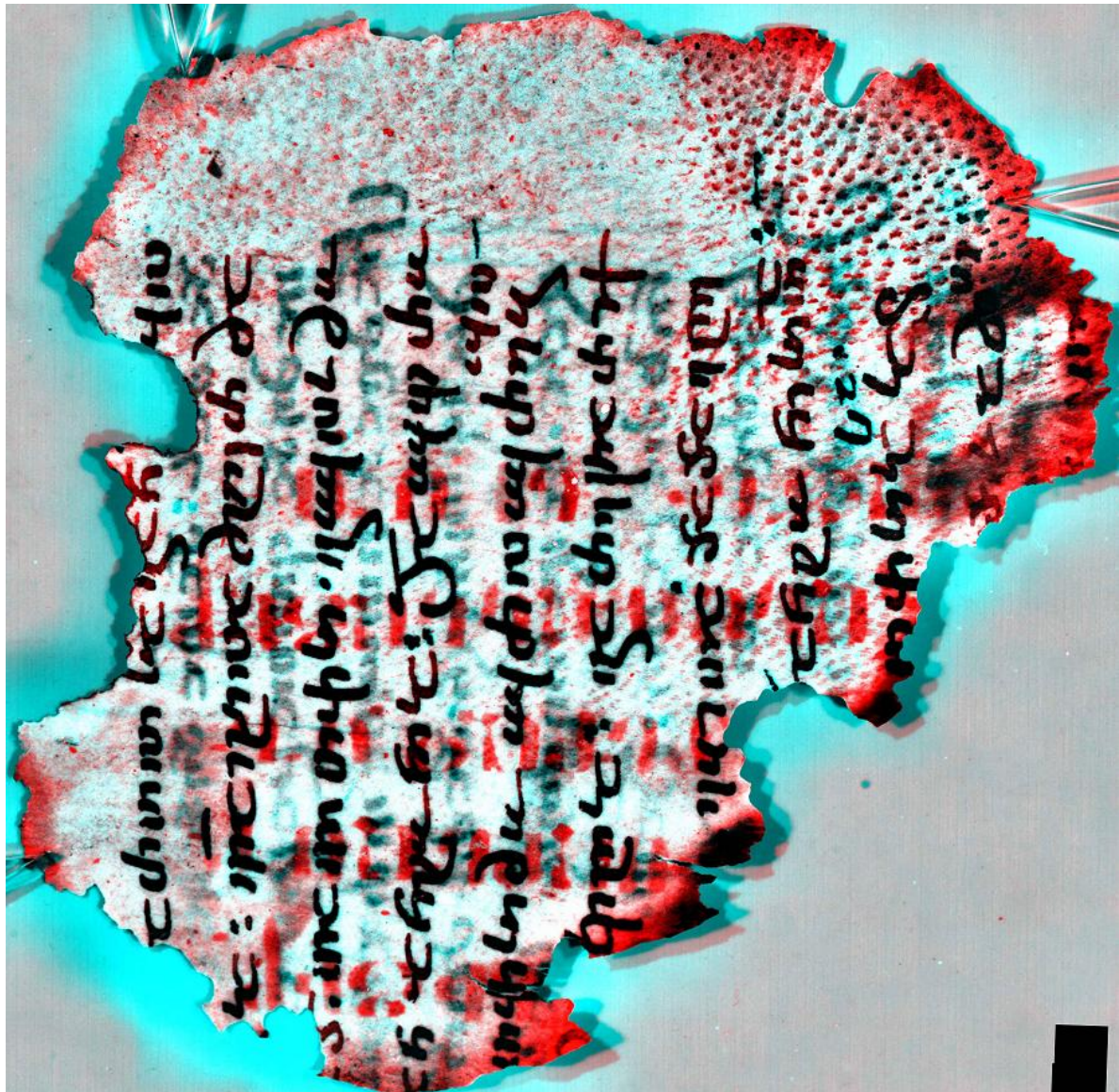


Fig 3: Sin. georg. NF 55, fol. 64v (pseudo-colour rendering of multispectral image)

### 2.1.3 Tbilisi, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts

Located in Tbilisi, the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts (hereafter: NCM) is the largest depository of Georgian manuscripts in the world and, therefore, also in the land. It houses ca. 9,000 Georgian codices and 309 Armenian manuscripts, among several other smaller collections of manuscripts written in other languages.<sup>28</sup> Differently from other manuscripts collections that are still (even if at times only partially) hosted in the same location where they were first assembled or created—as, for instance, the manuscript collections preserved in the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos, or the Monastery of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem<sup>29</sup>—, the manuscripts currently housed in

<sup>28</sup> For a general introduction to libraries and depositories containing collections of Georgian manuscripts and, more specifically, to this centre see Gippert (2015). For the Armenian manuscripts preserved in this institution, see Coulie (2020: 335–336) and also Gaprindashvili, Chitunashvili & Khositashvili (2025).

<sup>29</sup> The manuscripts once housed in this latter are, however, now kept in the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Tbilisi entered this depository from both Georgia (in its current borders) and elsewhere, e.g. Anatolia. Within the walls of the NCM, two Georgian manuscripts belonging to the ‘A’ collection, i.e. the collection once housed in the former Ecclesiastical Museum, contain Armenian texts in their lower layers: NCM A-491 and A-495.

### 2.1.3.1 NCM A-491

Manuscript NCM A-491 is an important Armeno-Georgian palimpsest, whose special significance lies in being one of the earliest, if fragmentary, witnesses to the Armenian version of Agathangelos’ *History of the Armenians*.<sup>30</sup> The Armenian lower layer of this codex has already been the object of a thorough study by Zaza Aleksidze and Dali Chitunashvili who, in addition to providing a detailed codicological description which I follow below, also published those parts of the text that they were able to read with the naked eye or with the sole help of a lamp of Wood.<sup>31</sup>

In its current state, this manuscript, which was once housed in Svetitskhoveli Cathedral (Mtskheta), consists of 108 folios, measuring 234 × 180 mm, 35 of which are palimpsested.<sup>32</sup> The codex is in poor conditions today, being without a cover, unbound, and showing lacunae in its quire structure. The Georgian upper layer lacks its colophon, due to mutilation, and has therefore been dated only paleographically to the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century. The Georgian text, which was written rotating the palimpsest by 90°, transmits a copy of the *Festal Menaion* and was written by an otherwise unknown Lat’avri.<sup>33</sup>

Aleksidze and Chitunashvili have calculated that the original Armenian manuscript should have measured approximately 460 × 240 mm (two pages of the Georgian text representing one page of the original Armenian manuscript).<sup>34</sup> This original codex was written in two columns of 21/22 lines in a large and round *erkat’agir* majuscule.<sup>35</sup> The text presents characteristic punctuation signs and palaeographical features—including, among others, smaller letter-size for text subtitles and parallel citation marks—which the two scholars believe to be a sign of its old age, presumably the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The identified text, which includes portions of Agathangelos comprised between §§ 781–874 of the 1909 Tbilisi edition of the *History of the Armenians*,<sup>36</sup> aligns on the whole with the text of manuscripts α, β, b, U, P of the Tbilisi edition,

<sup>30</sup> I.e. the version usually known as “Aa”. For an overview of the various versions of Agathangelos’ *History* in both Armenian and other medieval languages, see the synthesis in Winkler (1980).

<sup>31</sup> I received this information orally by Dali Chitunashvili—whom I thank here—during my stay at the NCM in Tbilisi in Summer 2025. A palaeographical analysis of the earliest surviving witnesses to Agathangelos’ *History* (including—in addition to MS A-491—the famous “Vienna Agathangelos”, i.e. the palimpsested codex Vienna, Mekhitarist Library, MS 56; Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 1235; Tbilisi, NCM, Arm. 18; and other early fragments in *erkat’agir*) is currently being prepared jointly by the author of these pages and Dali Chitunashvili. For the description of the lower layer and partial edition of the Armenian text see Aleksidze & Chitunashvili (2020).

<sup>32</sup> According to Aleksidze & Chitunashvili (2020: 199) these are: fols 5, 6, 38, 40–41, 45, 48–50, 55, 57–58, 60, 63, 65, 66, 68, 71, 73–74, 76–77, 79, 81–82, 85–86, 89–90, 96–97, 100–101, 107–108.

<sup>33</sup> See Metreveli (1986: 232–235).

<sup>34</sup> Further details concerning other codicological and palaeographical measurements of the lower layer are provided in Aleksidze & Chitunashvili (2020: 200).

<sup>35</sup> A pseudo-colour photograph of this codex has recently been published in Gaprindashvili, Chitunashvili & Khositashvili (2025: 18–19), where the Armenian undertext is dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century. I thank Khatuna Gaprindashvili for providing me with a fresh copy of the book.

<sup>36</sup> Agathangelos (1909). Interestingly, the extant text contained in the palimpsest known as the “Vienna Agathangelos” extends only from §§ 3 to 341. Although no final conclusion has yet been reached, a first palaeographical inspection of MS A-491 (conducted *in situ* in June 2015 by me and Dali Chitunashvili) seems to



though at times it also contains readings that are absent from both the main text and the apparatus of that edition.

### 2.1.3.2 NCM A-495

Manuscript NCM A-495 is a palimpsested codex consisting of 198 folios measuring 120 × 95 mm and wrapped by a brown leather cover.<sup>37</sup> The Georgian upper layer contains a copy of the Gospels of Matthew and John and, the colophon being lost, is dated on palaeographical grounds to the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Metreveli's catalogue, twelve folios of this codex, namely fols 186–197, are palimpsested and contain, in the Armenian lower writing, a copy of the Armenian version of the Jerusalem Lectionary, which has been dated to the 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries, perhaps on the ground that it is written in a large *erkat'agir*.<sup>38</sup> The text so far identified consists of pericopes to be read during the Great Lent, which include at least Exodus 2:21–22 and Joel 2:1–11.<sup>39</sup>

### 2.1.4 Tbilisi, National Archives of Georgia, MSS 1446/322, 1448/1976, and 1448/5016

After the NCM, the National Archives of Georgia represent the second largest depository of manuscripts in the city of Tbilisi. Originally established in 1920, this institution hosts a heterogenous collection of items, including archival written documents (charters, letters, legal and official documents), films, photographs, as well as sound records, ranging from medieval to modern times.<sup>40</sup> Among their written records, the National Archives also house a collection of almost one thousand Georgian manuscripts, dating from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Of this collection—which, besides, includes some fifty Armenian codices too—,<sup>41</sup> there figure three palimpsested manuscripts containing an Armenian lower layer and a Georgian overtext, namely MSS 1446/322, 1448/1976, and 1448/5016. None of these three items has yet been the object of a detailed study nor of a multispectral imaging campaign.<sup>42</sup>

MS 1446/322 is a rather damaged manuscript of 41 folios measuring 200 × 130 mm, which was brought to Tbilisi from Tsalka in Kvemo-Kartli.<sup>43</sup> The Georgian upper layer consists of a 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century copy of Bible readings for the Lenten time, while the lower Armenian layer

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rule out the possibility of considering this Tbilisi witness as the same manuscript (i.e. the final part) of the “Vienna Agathangelos”. Further study is, however, necessary before confirming or refuting this hypothesis. A new study on the “Vienna Agathangelos” based on a set of multispectral images is currently being prepared by the author of these pages. For a preliminary overview, see Bonfiglio (2025).

<sup>37</sup> Metreveli (1986: 239). Gaprindashvili, Chitunashvili & Khositashvili (2025: 20) give a different size for this manuscript (namely 200 × 195 mm).

<sup>38</sup> See Gaprindashvili, Chitunashvili, and Khositashvili (2025: 20–21), who also provide two colour photographs of the codex.

<sup>39</sup> See Gaprindashvili & Khositashvili (2013: 28 and 207), who inadvertently note Job instead of Joel.

<sup>40</sup> See <https://archive.gov.ge/>.

<sup>41</sup> See Melikset-Bek (1958).

<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, none of these manuscripts is described in the 3-vols catalogue by Asatiani, Kavtaria & Chitunashvili (vol. 1, 2016), Abzalava *et al.* (vol. 2, 2018), and Asatiani & Chitunashvili (vol. 3, 2019).

<sup>43</sup> This is the number of folios according to UNESCO (2018: 52); however, the description provided by Kakabadze & Gagoshidze (1949: 292–293) names only 40 folios.

witnesses to one form of the many stages of the Armenian version of the Jerusalem Lectionary.<sup>44</sup>

As for MSS 1448/1976 and 1448/5016, these items have not yet been the object of a detailed codicological description. However, according to the published images, MS 1448/1976 seems to contain two palimpsested folios, and MS 1448/5016 perhaps seven.<sup>45</sup> In both cases, the Armenian undertext still remains unidentified.<sup>46</sup> Finally, a short note found in Bernard Coulie's *Armenian Manuscripts* simply states that these two items are '2 palimpsest mss with lower text in Armenian writing'.<sup>47</sup>

## 2.2 Georgian Palimpsested Manuscripts with Armenian Upper Layer

Compared to the (so far) known eight Armeno-Georgian palimpsests with an Armenian lower and a Georgian upper text which today are found in institutions scattered among Georgia, Austria, and Mount Sinai, those containing a Georgian lower and an Armenian upper text amount to only three and are all housed in the same country and depository: the Matenadaran of Yerevan. Although the total number of items equals to eight for the first group of manuscripts and three for the latter, a better indication of the quantity of material palimpsested within each language tradition can be better appreciated when looking not at the number of codices but at the total number of folios that are actually palimpsested. According to the published data,<sup>48</sup> this gives a total of 419 Armenian folios palimpsested with a Georgian overtext vs 227 Georgian folios palimpsested with an Armenian overtext. Differently from the first group of palimpsests, those comprising a Georgian undertext and an Armenian upper layer are currently much less studied.

### 2.2.1 Yerevan, Matenadaran, MMS 6141, 6705, and 8624

Of the ca. 31,000 extant Armenian manuscripts worldwide, one third, i.e. about 11,000, are housed in the largest and most prominent depository of Armenian manuscripts: the Matenadaran of Yerevan, whose official name is actually the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, this library is unique in the world, for in addition to being a depository of manuscripts, it is also a centre for the preservation and restauration of books, a museum, a research centre, and a learning institution. In addition to its well-known collection of Armenian manuscripts,<sup>50</sup> the Matenadaran contains as well relatively minor, but important collections of manuscripts in other languages, including Georgian.

<sup>44</sup> Information from <https://www.fdr.uni-hamburg.de/record/16949>. For an overview of the early stages of the development of Armenian lectionaries, see Gippert & Sargsyan (forthcoming).

<sup>45</sup> See the short descriptions with images in UNESCO (2018: 48–49 and 50–51). The catalogues by Kakabadze & Gagoshidze (1949–1950) and Asatiani, Kavtaria & Chitunashvili (2016), Abralava *et al.* (2018), and Asatiani & Chitunashvili (2019) do not mention these two items.

<sup>46</sup> See <https://www.fdr.uni-hamburg.de/record/16949>.

<sup>47</sup> Coulie (2020: 329), where the author acknowledges Dali Chitunashvili for having passed him this information in June 2018.

<sup>48</sup> See note 4 above.

<sup>49</sup> For an overview of all the Armenian collections around the world, including the Matenadaran, see Kouymjian (2015); for references to the catalogues and specific studies of this latter and other depositories of Armenian manuscripts, see Coulie (2020: 388–402).

<sup>50</sup> For research on the Armenian palimpsests preserved in the Matenadaran see Gippert (2022a) and Gippert (2024).

For the manuscripts discussed in this paragraph that contain a Georgian lower layer and an Armenian uppertext, no detailed description has yet been published, for the 11<sup>th</sup> volume of the ongoing *General Catalogue* (*Մայր Ցուցակ*) of the Matenadaran has reached only manuscript number 3,700.<sup>51</sup> All descriptions provided below are based on the second volume of the older *Manuscripts Catalogue* (*Ցուցակ ձեռագրաց*) of the Matenadaran, which was published in 1970.<sup>52</sup> As it is well known, the entries of this catalogue can be extremely short as succinct, at times even cryptic, and often occupy just a few lines. The information that follows therefore reflects this state of affairs.

According to the catalogue of 1970, MS 6141 is a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian Horologion (ժամագիրք) and Missal (Խորհրդաստեղծ) consisting of 141 folios of 110 × 80 mm.<sup>53</sup> The Armenian overtext is written in *bolorgir* and occupies full pages of 17 lines each. The catalogue does mention that this codex is a Georgian palimpsest but does not provide its content. Thanks to multispectral imaging, it is now known that 55 folios of this codex (namely folios 80–106, 112–117a, and 120–141) are palimpsested and that the text transmitted in their lower writing (or at least part of it) contains Georgian hymnographic material (see Fig. 4).<sup>54</sup>

Manuscript M 6705 is catalogued as an Armenian Gospel book and dates to the year 1679.<sup>55</sup> The codex, whose provenance is Verin Zakam in Artsakh, is in paper and consists of 264 folios measuring 207 × 150 mm. The text, in *bolorgir*, is written in two columns of 21 lines each. The decoration includes miniatures of the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and, in addition to half-arcs illustrations, also a number of marginal ornaments. The flyleaves of this manuscript are in parchment and palimpsested (pp. 1–4). The Armenian upper layer of the flyleaves is in *nōtrgir* and contains at least a prayer, while the Georgian lower text witnesses to a fragment of the Georgian Euchologion (see Fig. 5).<sup>56</sup>

As for Manuscript M 8624, this has been described as a Festal Book (*Solugniq*) and Horologion (*ժամագիրք*).<sup>57</sup> It was written in the year 1663 by a priest called Abraham in Verngiwl (Վերնգիւղ), i.e. in the Tortum region (*Թորթում*), which today corresponds to a district of Erzurum. The codex consists of 167 folios, entirely palimpsested, measuring 93 × 70 mm. The writing is a *bolorgir* written in full page, with 16 lines per page. The codex contains three flyleaves (pp. 1–6), which are not palimpsested (see Fig. 6). The lower Georgian text of the core of the codex transmits a copy of the Gospels in Georgian written in *asomtavruli* majuscules (see Fig. 7), while the flyleaves contain fragments of the first homily *In exaltationem sanctae crucis* by Andrew of Crete written in *nuskhuri* (d. 740).<sup>58</sup>

<sup>51</sup> See Ter-Vardanean & Gasparyan (2024).

<sup>52</sup> Eganyan, Zeytownyan & Antabyan (1970).

<sup>53</sup> Eganyan, Zeytownyan & Antabyan (1970: 258).

<sup>54</sup> See note 4 above.

<sup>55</sup> Eganyan, Zeytownyan & Antabyan (1970: 376).

<sup>56</sup> See note 4 above.

<sup>57</sup> Eganyan, Zeytownyan & Antabyan (1970: 783).

<sup>58</sup> The original Greek text of this homily is printed in *Patrologia Graeca* 97: 1017–1036. The analysis of the multispectral images of this manuscript has not yet been completed. As a consequence, only parts of the Georgian lower writings have been identified and transcribed or edited.



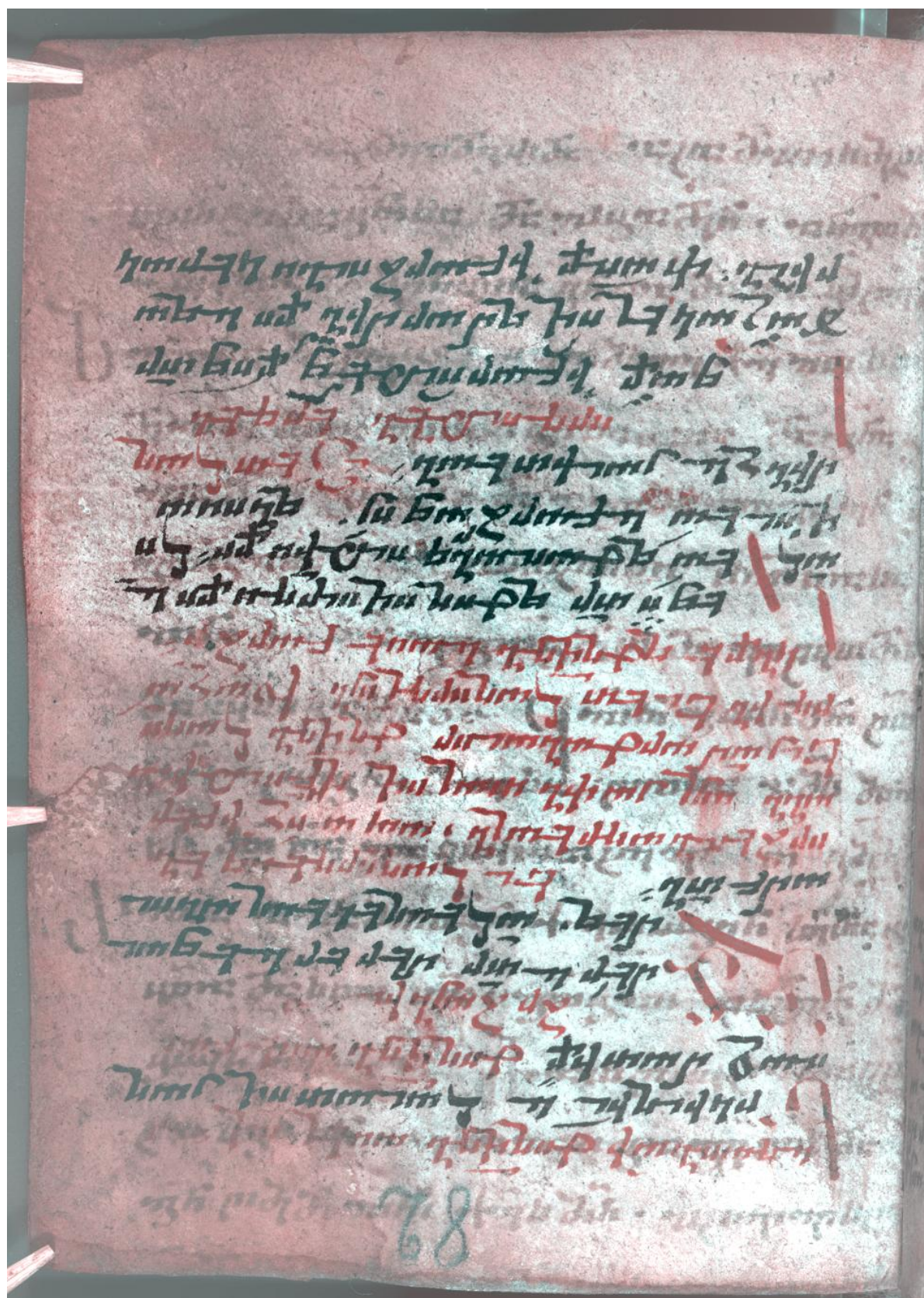


Fig 4: Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 6141, fol. 82r (pseudo-colour rendering of multispectral image)





Fig 5: Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 6705, p. 3 (PCA rendering of multispectral image)

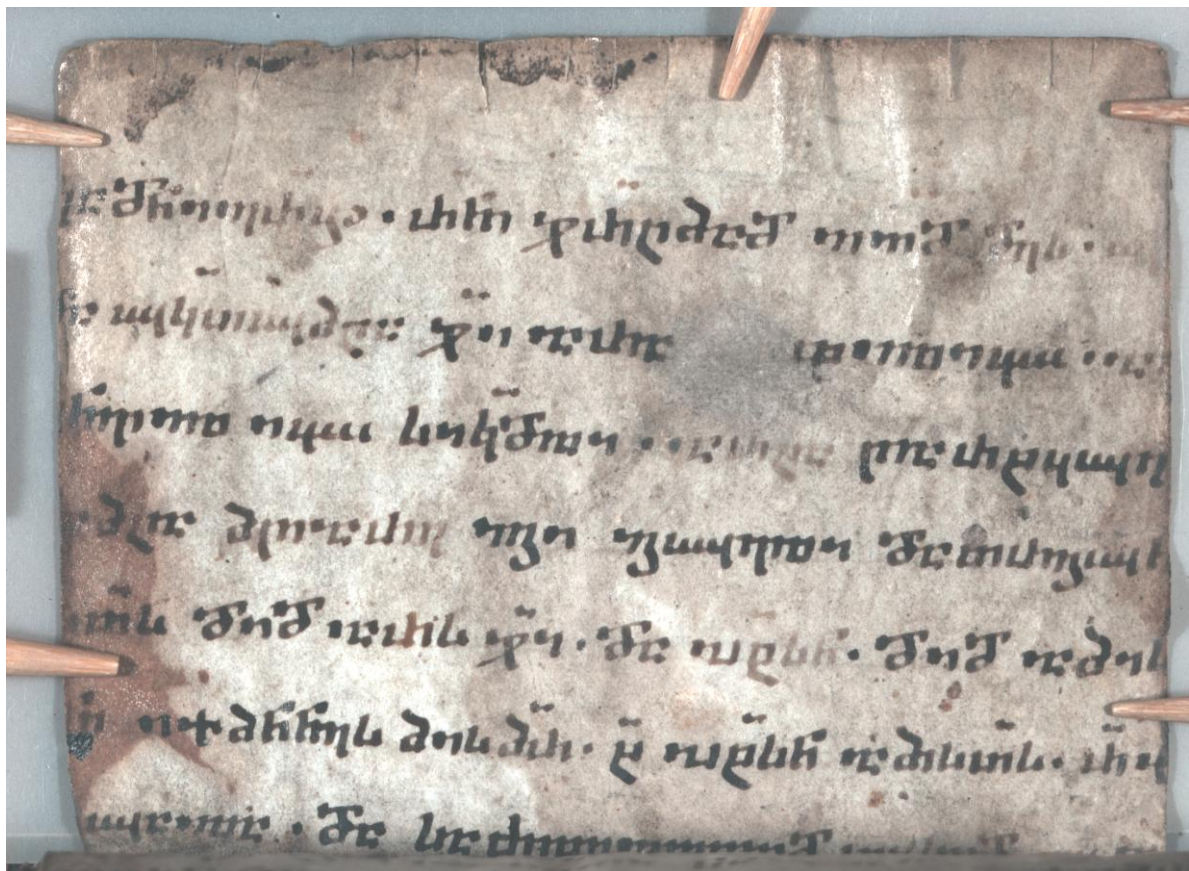


Fig 6: Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 8624, flyleaf p. 2 (colour image)



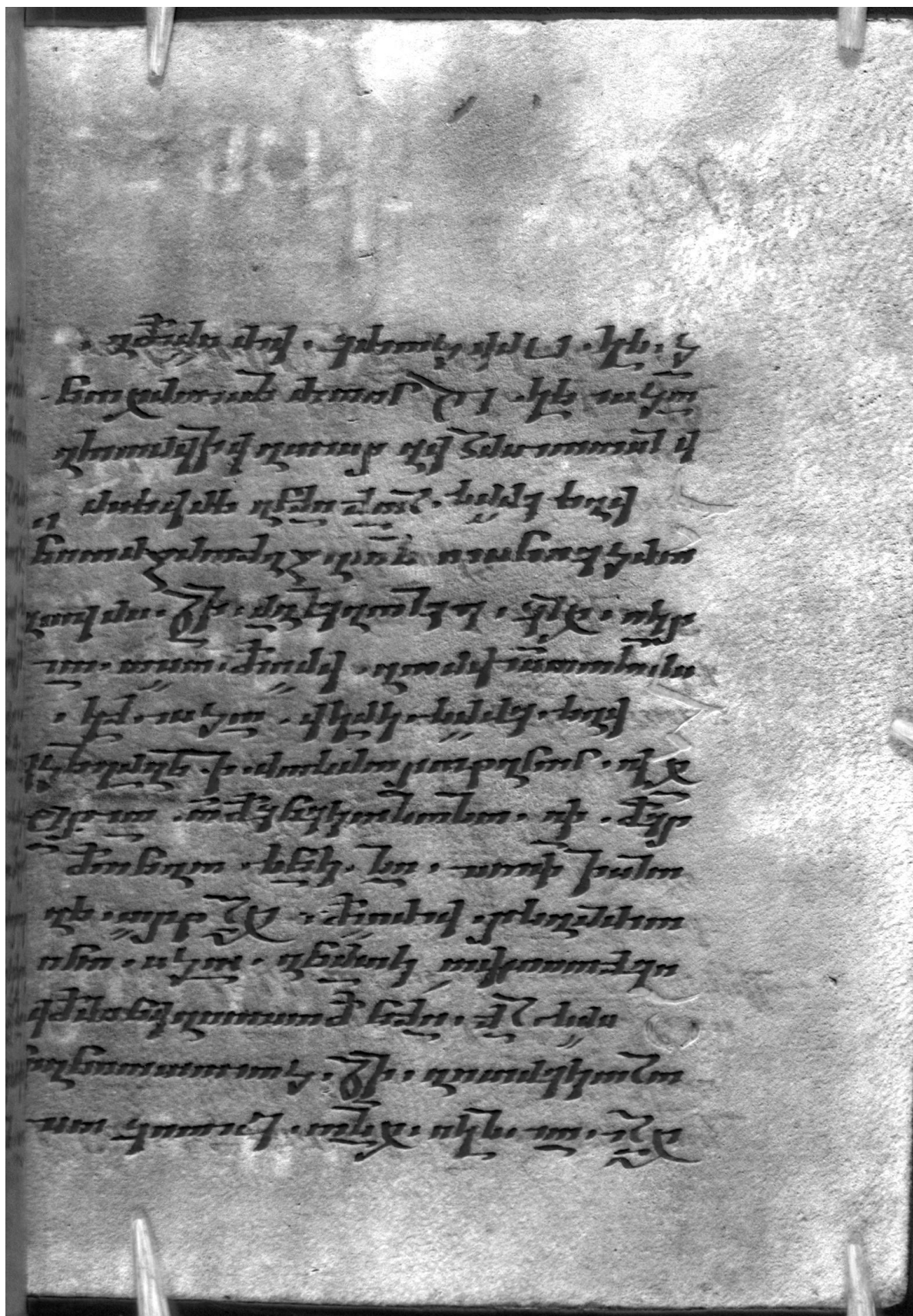


Fig 7: Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 8624, fol. 20v (PCA rendering of multispectral image)

### 3. Summary and Avenues for Future Research

The survey of Armeno-Georgian manuscripts presented and discussed in this article clearly shows that historically reused manuscripts in both Armenian and Georgian belong to either manuscript tradition. From a chronological point of view, although for certain manuscripts we still lack vital data (namely for the three manuscripts Tbilisi, National Archives of Georgia, MSS 1446/322, 1448/1976, and 1448/5016), the available evidence shows that while Armenians reused earlier Georgian codices in either the 16<sup>th</sup> (Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 6141) or the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 6705 and M 8624), Georgians palimpsested Armenian manuscripts centuries earlier, either in the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries (this is the case of all Sinaitic manuscripts, including the Graz palimpsest), or in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (as it is the case of the two manuscripts preserved in the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts).

While historians would be tempted to use such data to hypothesize on the nature of Armeno-Georgian relations throughout history, any working hypothesis should be weary of some methodological caveats. First of all, as already pointed out by Erich Renhart, one should distinguish between provenance and origin of a manuscript.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, while a manuscript may have been found and preserved in, for instance, St Catherine's Monastery, there is no guarantee that the manuscript was written there, unless the colophon says so. If we consider palimpsests as complex objects, the sole presence of two texts involves investigating not only the provenance and origin of the upper layer of the manuscript—which is sometimes, though not always, possible, thanks to colophons—but also those of the lower writing, which is at present impossible because, to my knowledge, none of the Armeno-Georgian palimpsests discussed above preserves any colophon in the lower writing of either languages.

Next to the geographical information and in the absence of internal data concerning the origin or provenance of the lower writing, all we are left with is to at least try to figure out the chronological sequence of each palimpsest. This investigation involves finding out the date or time of writing of the lower writing, the whereabouts of the manuscript between the time it was written and the time in which it was bought, taken, or acquired by another language community, the moment of its palimpsestation and rewriting of the upper layer, and, as in the case of the lower layer, the travels or usage of the newly reconstituted manuscript between its rewriting and the moment of the “last” travel, the one occurring between its “location of provenance” and its “definitive”, or better current, “storage”.


In order to answer important historical questions such as the reasons and circumstances laying behind the palimpsestation of manuscripts by their new owners, be they Armenians or Georgians, the crucial steps to tackle are to find out first the approximate time of writing of the lower layer, which is now possible by means of <sup>14</sup>C analysis, and then to try to localise the possible geographical origin of the lower layer by means of a combination of philological data together with parchment and ink analyses. Only then the full potential of Armeno-Georgian palimpsests for the study of the relations between these two Christian nations will be fully exploited.

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<sup>59</sup> See 2.1.1 above.



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## Picture credits

Fig. 1: Graz University Library / CSMC Hamburg / DeLiCaTe Project

Figs 2 and 3: The Sinai Palimpsest Project, © St. Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt

Figs 5–7: Yerevan, Matenadaran / DeLiCaTe Project

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## სომხურ-ქართული კავშირები პალიმფსესტური ხელნაწერების პრიზმაში

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პირველი ათასწლეულის განმავლობაში სომხებისა და ქართველების მიერ შექმნილი ლიტერატურული მემკვიდრეობა ორ ერს შორის ურთიერთკავშირის ნათელ მტკიცებულებას წარმოადგენს, რომელიც ერთმანეთთან მუდმივ კონტაქტში ვითარდებოდა. მატერიალური მტკიცებულებებიც, კერძოდ კი, არქეოლოგია, მოწმობს იმ შესანიშნავ გზას, თუ როგორ აღბეჭდეს სომხებმა და ქართველებმა თავიანთი არქიტექტურისა და კულტურის თანდათან მზარდი ინდივიდუალობა მიმდებარე ლანდშაფტზე, როგორც ფიზიკური, ასევე წერილობითი ფორმით. ვინაიდან ლიტერატურული კვლევებისა და არქეოლოგიის სფეროში მნიშვნელოვანი წინსვლაა მიღწეული, ეს სტატია გვთავაზობს სომხურ-ქართული პალიმფსესტების პირველ მიმოხილვას.





# Non-Destructive Investigation of a Georgian Codex Binding Using a Portable Computed Tomography Scanner

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**Abstract:** This study demonstrates a non-destructive approach to investigating the structure of bookbindings in historical manuscripts using high-resolution X-ray computed tomography (CT). We applied the portable CT scanner ENCI to a Georgian codex from the Graz University Library, MS 2058/1, the famous Sinai Lectionary. Three-dimensional reconstructions reveal the complex arrangement of the spine, cords, threads, and gatherings of folios. Individual characters written in vermillion and iron gall ink can be digitally segmented and distinguished. These results highlight the potential of X-ray tomography as a powerful, non-invasive tool for the structural and textual analysis of delicate manuscripts, offering new opportunities to study fragile or partially damaged books while preserving their physical integrity.

**Keywords:** Computed Tomography, Bookbinding, Georgian manuscripts, Graz collection, Digital humanities, ENCI

## 1. Introduction

For many centuries, books have served as one of the most important media for recording and transmitting information across generations. By writing down knowledge, people have been able to preserve it from antiquity to the present day. However, beyond the written content itself, the materials used in book production, as well as the techniques employed in their manufacture, can offer rich insights into the history of these artefacts.

Since the beginning of the first millennium, the codex has become the dominant form of the book. Codices consist of folded sheets bound together along a spine, which serves as the structural backbone of the volume. This spine, typically composed of organic material, tends to degrade over time, eventually compromising the structural integrity of the book and leading to its gradual deterioration. To counteract this decay, books were often rebound throughout history, a task typically undertaken in monasteries. In many cases, fragments of older manuscripts were repurposed during the rebinding process. As a result, not just the textual content, but the bindings themselves, can reveal valuable and sometimes hidden clues about a book's provenance and history.

There are several ways to access this embedded historical information. One conventional method involves the careful disassembly of the spine to examine its structure and materials. However, this approach is inherently invasive and destructive, posing the risk of losing critical information that cannot be recovered or visualized through physical means alone. In recent years, numerous non-destructive analytical techniques rooted in physics and chemistry have been developed to study cultural heritage objects. These include active and passive infrared thermography (IRT) and X-ray fluorescence (XRF) spectroscopy.<sup>1</sup> While such techniques offer the advantage of portability and in situ applicability, they are often limited in the depth of information they can provide, for instance, in cases where thick leather bindings are involved. In the case of XRF, large-area scans with high spatial resolution can also require prohibitively long acquisition times.

More recently, researchers have explored the use of X-ray computed tomography (XCT) to investigate book structures non-destructively.<sup>2</sup> XCT provides volumetric datasets that reveal both surface and internal features of a sample in three dimensions. However, traditional CT systems are typically located in research institutions or medical facilities, and transporting fragile, historically significant books to such locations is often not feasible due to conservation regulations that prohibit the removal of artefacts from museums or archives.

This study presents a non-destructive approach to examining the structural features of a historical Georgian codex from the Graz collection (University Library, MS 2058/1) using a portable, high-resolution X-ray computed tomography scanner known as ENCI (Extracting Non-destructively Cuneiform Inscriptions). Originally developed for on-site analysis of encased clay tablets, ENCI is the product of a collaboration between the Cluster of Excellence “Understanding Written Artefacts” at the University of Hamburg (UHH) and the Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (DESY). Here, we demonstrate how ENCI enables detailed structural analysis and virtual exploration of historical bookbindings in situ. This approach opens up significant new possibilities for cultural heritage research by making advanced volumetric imaging accessible within the secure environments of museums and archives, without compromising the integrity of the artefacts themselves.

## 2. Methods

Unlike conventional X-ray radiography, computed tomography collects multiple projections from different angles. These data are reconstructed into a three-dimensional volume that reveals internal structures through cross-sectional views.

Commercial CT scanners, such as those used in hospitals or industrial settings, typically weigh several tons and are thus immobile and unsuitable for on-site cultural heritage analysis. Transporting delicate artefacts to such stationary scanners is often not feasible due to conservation constraints. To address this challenge, ENCI was developed as a portable, high-resolution X-ray CT system specifically designed for use in museums, libraries, and archives. Weighing 420 kg in total, ENCI is composed of eight modular units, enabling rapid deployment in sensitive heritage environments. It features an integrated shielding system, eliminating the need for additional radiation protection infrastructure at the scanning site. The device includes an X-ray source with adjustable accelerating voltage ranging from 30 to 180 kV and a maximum power of 80 W, allowing for the examination of even dense inorganic materials.

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<sup>1</sup> See Mercuri *et al.* 2011 and 2013 for IRT and Duivenvoorden *et al.* 2017 for XRF spectroscopy.

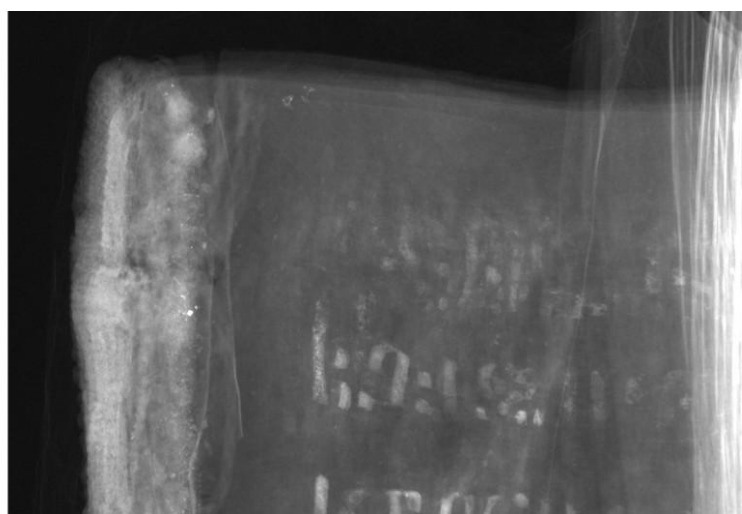
<sup>2</sup> See Seales *et al.* 2016; Stromer *et al.* 2018; Kumpová, Vavřík & Vopálenský 2018; Dilley *et al.* 2022; Ensley *et al.* 2023; Sargan *et al.* 2022; Vavřík *et al.* 2024.



ENCI has already been successfully deployed at major institutions, including the Louvre in Paris and the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, where it has been used to investigate encased cuneiform tablets in situ.

This study explores whether the ENCI scanner is also suitable for the analysis of other types of written artefacts beyond its original application. As a case study, we selected a Georgian codex from the Graz University Library, catalogued as MS 2058/1. This manuscript has been proven to be the oldest known linguistic and literary monument in the Georgian language and originates from the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, dating to the 5th or 6th century CE. Recently, a radiocarbon analysis has yielded a dating between 433 and 574 CE for the codex. Historical evidence indicates that the book was rebound at least three times, with the third binding, carried out in 983 CE, attributed to the Georgian Christian monk Ioane Zosime. Notably, a previous investigation revealed the presence of parchment fragments from a Greek majuscule manuscript used in the binding. Further details on the manuscript and its history can be found in the work of Zammit Lupi.<sup>3</sup>

For the analysis, the codex was gently curved and mounted in ENCI's sample holder to accommodate the limited space within the scanner. X-rays were applied using a tube voltage of 60 kV and a current of 200  $\mu$ A. A 0.2 mm aluminium foil between source and sample was used to filter the lower part of the X-ray spectrum and reduce beam hardening artefacts. A total of 720 radiographs (also referred to as projections) were acquired over a full 360° rotation, with an exposure time of 0.5 seconds per projection. Including both acquisition and motor movement, the full scan duration was roughly 15 minutes.



**Fig 1: X-ray transmission projection of MS 2058/1 with spine on the left side and folios with letters on the right side.**

### **3. Results and Discussion**

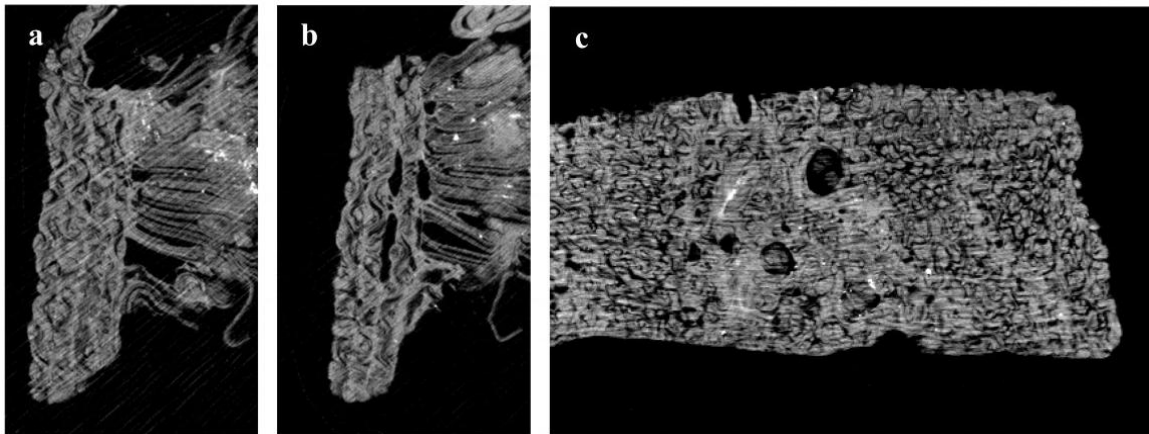
The X-ray projection (Fig. 1) already provides valuable insight into the internal structure of the codex. On the left side, the complex bookbinding is clearly visible, consisting of several distinct structural elements. Moving toward the right, the individual pages become apparent, and even

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<sup>3</sup> See Zammit Lupi 2023: 124–125; see also Gippert forthcoming: 24–26 and in this volume.

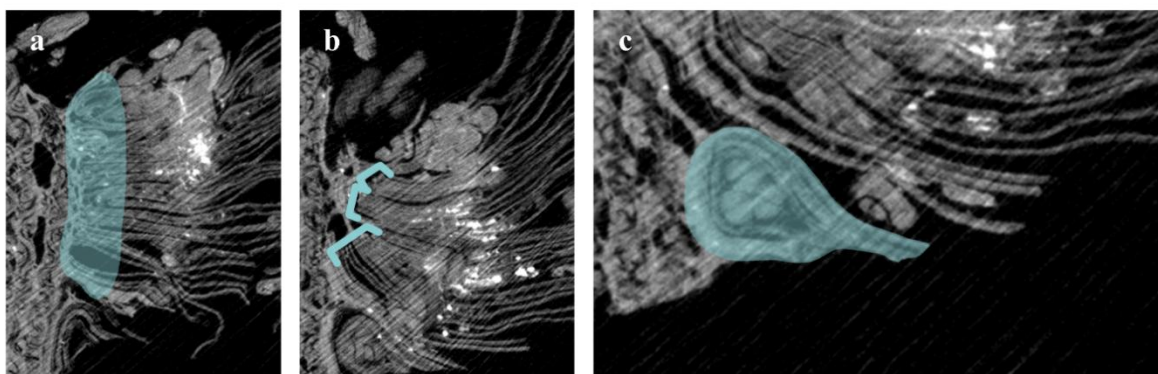
separate lines of text can be distinguished. At the right edge, some pages appear slightly curved, a result of adjusting the book's dimensions to fit inside ENCI's sample chamber.

To gain a clearer understanding of the book's structure, and particularly the configuration of its spine, it becomes evident that the reconstructed volume must be examined in detail. While features overlap in a single projection, a full three-dimensional reconstruction obtained through XCT provides cross-sectional images of the sample. In the following, these tomograms are used to explore the internal architecture of the book in greater detail. From left to right, the individual structural components are examined and described more closely.



**Fig 2: (a) Linen cloth lining of the cover. (b) Different slice revealing the three-layer structure of the linen. (c) yz-slice highlighting the characteristic texture and appearance of the linen lining.**

For the protection and stability of the binding, the outermost component is the spine cover, which is made of linen. This cover is preserved only along the spine, while the front and back boards are missing. In the tomogram (Fig. 2), the cover can be readily identified by its characteristic appearance. Figures 2a and b show the axial plane according to the nomenclature of Sargan *et al.*,<sup>4</sup> while Fig. 2c presents the spinal plane through the entire cover, where the texture of the linen fabric is particularly visible. Furthermore, Fig. 2b reveals that the linen cover consists of three layers, designed to provide maximum robustness. This observation is consistent with the findings reported by Zammit Lupi.<sup>5</sup>



**Fig 3: Manually highlighted: (a) single and bifolio units attached to the spine, (b) folios arranged in three main groups, and (c) removed pages and stays located at the front of the book.**

<sup>4</sup> See Sargan *et al.* 2022: Fig. 3.

<sup>5</sup> See Zammit Lupi 2023: 131 and Gippert forthcoming: 25.

Additional information can also be derived from the analysis of the folios within the book. Owing to the high spatial resolution of less than 50  $\mu\text{m}$  achieved with ENCI, the individual pages can be clearly resolved. As shown in Fig. 3a, most of the pages were bound as bifolios, meaning that a larger piece of parchment was folded in the middle and then sewn into the binding. Fig. 3b presents a cross-sectional slice taken at a different height of the volume, revealing that the folios were bound in three distinct gatherings. In addition, several single leaves can be observed outside these main stacks (Fig. 3c). At the front and back of the book, as well as in its central part, truncated pages referred to as stays are visible. At least two single folios were removed from the codex before it arrived in Graz. They later reappeared in Paris (National Library of France, géorgien 30) and Birmingham (Cadbury Research Library, Mingana Collection, Georg. 7). The tomograms reveal further truncated pages, which may indicate the loss of additional folios. However, there appears to be no missing textual content. It is therefore likely that these stays were intentionally integrated into the spine to reinforce the binding structure.

Although the individual pages can be well separated in most areas, there are regions where the pages are very closely packed, making separation more challenging. Moreover, streaking artifacts notably reduce the quality of the tomographic reconstruction, as is particularly evident in Fig. 3c. These artifacts arise from an insufficient number of projections, which leads to streaks and noise because the reconstruction algorithm lacks enough information to accurately represent the object. This phenomenon, often referred to as angular undersampling, results in fine streaks. This indicates that 720 projections are not sufficient, and future scans should include a higher number of projections to improve the reconstruction quality.

Of particular interest is how the pages are held together and connected to the spine. To investigate this, the highly complex structure of the spine must be analyzed. Due to the intricate arrangement and the interaction of numerous components, it is necessary to examine the cross-sectional images from the paginal plane, axial plane (Fig. 4a and 4b), and spinal plane (Fig. 4c). This analysis reveals a variety of structural elements.

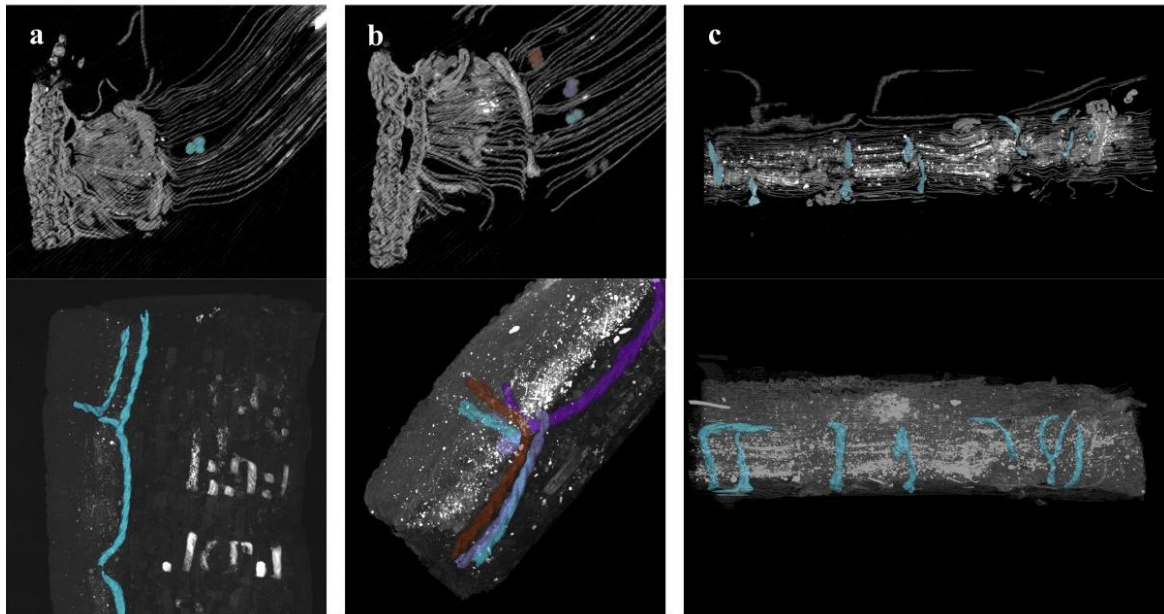
One especially prominent feature is a cord composed of three threads, which can be readily identified in many of the tomograms (Fig. 4a). To trace its exact course, the reconstructed volume was visualized in three dimensions using the Python program napari.<sup>6</sup> The napari plugin nnInteractive was then employed to segment the cord.<sup>7</sup> nnInteractive is a state-of-the-art, promptable deep learning-based framework for three-dimensional image segmentation, providing an intuitive human-computer interface. A core principle of nnInteractive is enhancing usability by bridging the gap between intuitive two-dimensional annotation and full three-dimensional segmentation: a feature of interest can be manually marked using points, scribbles, boxes, or lasso prompt, and nnInteractive then automatically generates the corresponding three-dimensional segmentation. The three-dimensional visualization reveals that the cord extends along the entire length of the scanned region and is attached to the spine at two distinct points.

At the upper end, four additional cords composed of two threads each are visible, three of which were semi-automatically highlighted using nnInteractive (Fig. 4b). In the reconstructed volume alone, these cords can only be followed to a limited extent. However, segmentation provides

<sup>6</sup> Software and documentation can be found at <https://napari.org/>. This and all other URLs quoted in this article were last accessed on 29 December 2025.

<sup>7</sup> See Isensee, Rokuss, Krämer *et al.* 2025; the project page can be found at <https://github.com/MIC-DKFZ/nnInteractive>.

an excellent insight, revealing that the cords converge at a single point in the spine, where they are knotted.



**Fig 4:** (a) Prominent cord extending along the entire length of the book. (b) Four cords originating at the top of the book and converging in a single knot. (c) Threads running perpendicular to the spine, showing the sewing of the folios.

Furthermore, several threads running perpendicular to the spine can be observed at different heights within the binding (Fig. 4c). These are likely part of the sewing that holds the pages together. A precise classification as components of stab sewing, overcast sewing, or supported sewing on hemp cords is, however, difficult for us to determine.

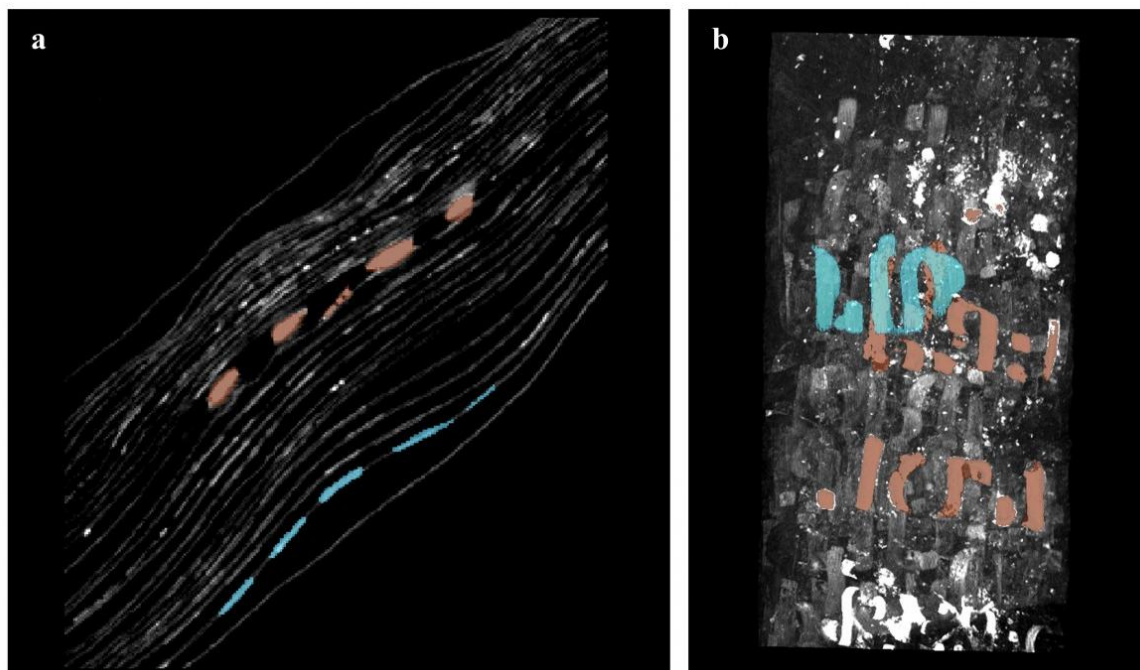
Another important insight can be gained from examining the folios. The tomograms reveal variations in gray values, which correspond to differences in density and thus indicate different materials (Fig. 5a). Three distinct gray levels can be identified. First, the parchment itself, which constitutes the support material. Second, very bright regions correspond to ink, which is highly absorbing (Fig. 5, marked in red by nnInteractive). In this scaling, these inked areas may appear thicker than the page itself due to beam hardening artifacts from the polychromatic X-ray source. Applying appropriate X-ray filtering could reduce these artifacts in future analyses. A third intermediate gray value can also be observed, which likely represents a second type of ink (Fig. 5, marked in blue by nnInteractive). This interpretation aligns with Zammit Lupi's observation that both a red ink made from vermilion, which is powdered cinnabar and therefore mercury-based, and a reddish-brown iron gall ink were used.<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that mercury has an atomic number of 80 and therefore absorbs X-rays much more strongly than iron, which has an atomic number of 26. A third, carbon-based ink applied later cannot be detected with the ENCI setup, as the contrast between carbon-based parchment and carbon-based ink is insufficient.

In addition, individual characters on the folios were segmented. The segmentation of characters written in vermilion is much easier due to the higher contrast. Letters written in iron gall ink can also be segmented, although with greater effort, provided that the pages are not too closely spaced. The results demonstrate that the text from different pages can be segmented and

<sup>8</sup> See Zammit Lupi 2023: 128 and Bosch & Kvirkvelia, this volume.



visualized separately. In the given case, the book can still be opened and read without tomography. In other cases, where manuscripts are poorly preserved or have deteriorated over time, this method allows the text to be made visible and readable.




**Fig 5: (a) Axial tomographic slice showing pages with variations in gray values corresponding to different inks, with blue indicating iron gall ink and red representing vermilion. (b) Segmented individual characters from two different pages.**

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, XCT provides unprecedented insight into the construction and organization of the Graz codex. The three-dimensional analysis reveals a sophisticated spine and binding system, with cords, threads, and stays interacting to support complex gatherings of folios. High-resolution imaging resolves individual pages and enables the digital separation of closely packed text, making it readable without physically opening the book.

These results demonstrate that X-ray tomography is a powerful, non-invasive tool for studying historical manuscripts. It allows detailed investigation of structure and text, offering new possibilities for examining fragile or partially lost books and providing a deeper understanding of historical bookbinding practices.

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ქართული კოდექსის არამრღვევი მიდგომა  
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წინამდებარე სტატიაში მოცემულია არამრღვევი მიდგომა ისტორიულ ხელნაწერებში წიგნის სტრუქტურის შესასწავლად მაღალი გარჩევადობის რენტგენის კომპიუტერული ტომოგრაფიის (CT) გამოყენებით. პორტატული კომპიუტერული ტომოგრაფიის ENCI სკანერი გამოვცადეთ გრაცის უნივერსიტეტის ბიბლიოთეკაში დაცულ ქართულ კოდექსზე (MS 2058/1-ის), ცნობილ სინას ლექციონარზე. სამგანზომილებიანი რეკონსტრუქციები აჩვენებს წიგნის ყუნწების, თოკების, ძაფებისა და ფოლიოების კოდექსების რთულ განლაგებას. კომპიუტერული ტომოგრაფიის შედეგად შესაძლებელია წითელი და რკინის ნაღვლის მეღნით დაწერილი ცალკეული სიმბოლოების ციფრული სეგმენტირება და გარჩევა. მიღებული შედეგები ხაზს უსვამს რენტგენის ტომოგრაფიის პოტენციალს, როგორც მძლავრ, არაინვაზიურ ინსტრუმენტს იშვიათი ხელნაწერების სტრუქტურული და ტექსტური ანალიზისთვის, რაც ახალ შესაძლებლობებს გვთავაზობს მყიფე ან ნაწილობრივ დაზიანებული წიგნების შესასწავლად მათი ფიზიკური მთლიანობის შენარჩუნებით.



# ხე, როგორც იშვიათი საწერი მასალა საქართველოში: XIV–XV საუკუნეების სვანური ისტორიული საბუთების მიხედვით

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**საკვანძო სიტყვები:** ხე, როგორც საწერი მასალა, სვანური ისტორიული დოკუმენტები, სვანეთის ეკლესიები

ქართულ ხელნაწერ ტრადიციაში ძირითად საწერ მასალას ეტრავი და ქაღალდი წარმოადგენდა. პაპირუსი, რომლის ქართული შესატყვისია ჭილი, საქართველოში საწერ მასალად გამოყენებული არ ყოფილა. დღეისათვის ცნობილია მასზე შესრულებული მხოლოდ ორი ქართული ხელნაწერი და ორივე

საზღვარგარეთის სამონასტრო ცენტრებშია შექმნილი, ესენია IX–X საუკუნეებით დათარიღებული, პაპირუსის ფსალმუნი<sup>1</sup> და X საუკუნის საგალობელთა კრებული – ჭილ-ეტრატის იადგარი (H-2123).

ხელნაწერი H-2123 მრავალმხრივ მნიშვნელოვანია, უპირველესად კი, გამოირჩეულია საწერი მასალისა და ფორმისა თვალსაზრისით; გადაწერილია ჭილიზე და ეტრატზე, აქვს კოდექსის ფორმა, თითოეული რვეული შედგება ეტრატის ოთხი (ორი ბიფოლიო) და პაპირუსის ექვსი (სამი ბიფოლიო) ფურცლისაგან.<sup>2</sup> ხელნაწერში, თითქმის ყოველთვის დაცულია სამწიგნობრო ხელოვნებაში მიღებული, ეტრატის რვეულებად დაკეცივისა და დაწყოების წესი, პაპირუსის ფურცელი კი, დაკეცილია ვერტიკალური მიმართულებით და რვეულებად დაწყობილია ისე, რომ დარღვეულია სიმეტრია.<sup>3</sup>

უძველესი ქართული ხელნაწერები, ეტრატზეა შესრულებული და თითქმის XIV საუკუნემდე – პრივილეგირებული საწერი მასალაა ქართულ ხელნაწერ პრაქტიკაში. X–XI საუკუნიდან გავრცელებას იწყებს ქაღალდი. ჩვენამდე მოღწეული, ქაღალდზე ნაწერი უძველესი ქართული ხელნაწერი – Sin. georg. 34, X საუკუნის შუა წლებით თარიღდება და სინის მთის წმ. ეკატერინეს მონასტრის წიგნსაცავშია დაცული,<sup>4</sup> ხოლო საქართველოში გადაწერილი უძველესი ქართული ხელნაწერი ქაღალდზე – ადიშის იადგარი, X–XI საუკუნეებითაა დათარიღებული და მესტიის მუზეუმშია დაცული.<sup>5</sup>

დღეისათვის არსებული მონაცემებით, ხე, ქართულ ხელნაწერ ტრადიციაში საწერი მასალის დასამზადებლად გამოყენებული არ ყოფილა,<sup>6</sup> ასეთი ფაქტი

<sup>1</sup> პაპირუსზე ნაწერი ფსალმუნი, Sin. georg. 98 (Tsag. 1) სინის მთის ქართველთა მონასტრიდანაა, დღეისათვის შემორჩენილია ძალზე დაზიანებული, დაშლილი, ფრაგმენტული სახით და ინახება სინის მთაზე. მისი კუთვნილი ორი ფურცელი, 1883 წლიდან დაცულია სანკტ-პეტერბურგში, ეროვნული ბიბლიოთეკის ხელნაწერთა ფონდში. ხელნაწერის შესახებ იხ. შანიძე 2017: 191–193, 196–197; Gippert & Outtier 2021: 41–65; Vasileva 2019: 18 and 53; Outtier, ამ ტომში.

<sup>2</sup> ჭილ-ეტრატის იადგარი, ხეც H-2123 საბაწმიდის ლავრიდანაა და დაცულია ხელნაწერთა ეროვნულ ცენტრში. ხელნაწერის აღწერილობისთვის იხ. შანიძე და სხვ. 1977: 213–219; მეტრეველი და სხვ. 1978: 229–239.

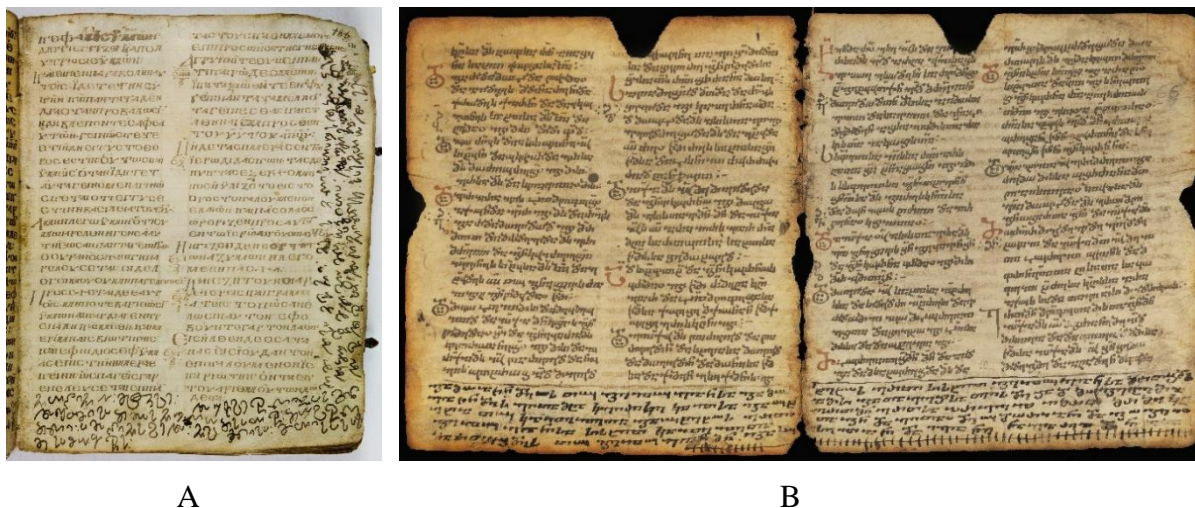
<sup>3</sup> გაშლილ ხელნაწერში არ ხდება პაპირუსის ფურცლის შემადგენელი პორიზონტული (recto) და ვერტიკალური (verso) ზოლების თანხედრობა. კერძოდ, recto ყოველთვის წინ უსწრებს verso-ს რვეულის პირველ ნახევარში, ხოლო verso – recto-ს რვეულის მეორე ნახევარში. პაპირუსის შემადგენელი ბოჭკოებისა და ზოლების ურთიერთმიმართება განსაზღვრა, უშუალოდ, H-2123-ის ვიზუალური შესწავლისა და მაღალი ხარისხის ციფრული ასლების გამოყენებით.

<sup>4</sup> Sin. georg. 34 (Tsag. 19), ლიტურგიკული კრებული, შემადგენელ-რედაქტორი – იოვანე-ზოსიმე, შესრულებულია ეტრატზე და ქაღალდზე, შეიცავს 210 ფურცელს. ფურცლები: 124–129, 132–137, 147–195 ნაწერია ქაღალდზე. გარიტის აღწერილობით, 147–195 ფურცლების ქაღალდი არის ძალიან ძველი, თხელი, გაშავებული და მეღნისაგან დაზიანებული. Sin. georg. 34-ის აღწერილობისთვის იხ. Цагарели 1888: 206; ჯავახიშვილი 1947: 54; Garitte 1958: 15, 17; მეტრეველი და სხვ. 1978: 94.

<sup>5</sup> სიემ მესტია #479 (კ-74) ტაო-კლარჯულია, გადაწერილია იოანეს მიერ, მამათმთავარი სტეფანე ერუშნელის დაკვეთით. 1948 წლიდან ინახება მესტიის მუზეუმში. ხელნაწერის აღწერილობისთვის იხ. ხეც, საქ. № 369, ფ. 12; გაგნიძე და სხვ. 2015: 280.

<sup>6</sup> საწერი მასალის დასამზადებლად ხის გამოყენება ქართულ ხელნაწერ პრაქტიკაში დღეისათვის დადასტურებული არ არის, თუმცა საქართველოს ტერიტორიაზე მოპოვებული, ძვლისა და მეტალის სტილოსების სიმრავლე, უდაოდ მიუთითებს ცვილით დაფარული ხის ფირფიტების არსებობის შესაძლებლობაზე. საწერ მასალად ხის ფირფიტების (ე. წ. ფიცარი) გამოყენებას ვარაუდობს ი.

მხოლოდ სვანეთში, კერძოდ, კალის ჭვეში დასტურდება და მასზე ამ ჭვეთან დაკავშირებული ისტორიული საბუთებია ნაწერი. აქვე უნდა აღინიშნოს, რომ სვანური საბუთებისთვის საწერ მასალად, ძირითადად, სვანეთის თემების ეკლესიებში დაცული ხელნაწერების აშიები ან ტექსტისაგან თავისუფალი – დაუწერელი გვერდებია გამოყენებული. ცნობილია, რომ სვანეთის ყოველ ჭვესა და სოფელს თავისი ეკლესია აქვს, საბუთების მოთავსება ხელნაწერების აშიებზე და მათი ასეთი სახით დაცვა და შენახვა ეკლესიებში, საკმაოდ გავრცელებული იყო ძველ საქართველოში და, როგორც სილოგავა აღნიშნავს, მრავალი ისტორიული საბუთი სწორედ ასეთი სახით არის მოღწეული ჩვენამდე.<sup>7</sup> კალის ჭვეი, ამ საერთო წესს არ მისდევს და საბუთებისთვის ხისგან დამზადებულ საწერ მასალას იყენებს, გამონაკლისია კალის ჭვეის მხოლოდ ორი საბუთი, რომლებიც ხელნაწერი წიგნების აშიებზეა მოთავსებული. კერძოდ, კორიდეთის ბერძნული ოთხთავის (ხეც Gr-28) აშიებზე ნაწერია XV საუკუნის საბუთი,<sup>8</sup> ხოლო H-1836<sup>ა</sup>-ის აშიებზე – XVII საუკუნით დათარიღებული საბუთია მოთავსებული<sup>9</sup> (სურ. 1). საბუთებს, საკუთრივ ხელნაწერის ტექსტთან კავშირი არ აქვთ, დამოუკიდებლად არსებობენ და მინაწერი ისტორიული საბუთების სახელით არიან ცნობილი.



სურ. 1: Gr-28, 188 recto (A); H-1836<sup>ა</sup>, 9 verso – 10 recto (B): ძირითად ტექსტსა და ისტორიულ დოკუმენტს შორის გადმოდგენილი კონტრასტი.

სვანური საბუთების შესწავლა-შეკრება XIX საუკუნის 30-იან წლებში დაიწყო. მათ კვლევას მრავალი პუბლიკაცია მიეძღვნა, გამოქვეყნდა, როგორც ცალკეული საბუთების ტექსტები (მ. ბროსე, დ. ბაქრაძე, ნ. მარი, გურია-

გიპერტი, მაგრამ ამავდროულად უძველესი ნიმუშების არარსებობაზეც მოუთხოვს, იხ. Gippert 2015: 177.

<sup>7</sup> სილოგავა 1986: 21–24; სილოგავა 1989: 5.

<sup>8</sup> ხეც Gr-28 XIV–XV სს-დან, 1869 წლამდე ინახებოდა სოფ. კალაში, წმ. კვირიკესა და ივლიტას სახელობის ეკლესიაში (42°56'20.1" N, 42°54'24.9" E), შესაბამისად მასზე კალის ჭვეის საბუთია მოთავსებული (187 recto – 188 recto; იხ. [https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA\\_038\\_digital#](https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_038_digital#)), სილოგავა 1986: 220; ხელნაწერის ისტორიისთვის იხ. სილოგავა 1989: 8–11; ბეზარაშვილი 2015: 44–45, 49.

<sup>9</sup> საბუთი მოთავსებულია ხელნაწერის ქვედა აშიებზე (8 verso – 11 recto), სილოგავა 1986: 223; ხელნაწერის აღწერილობისთვის იხ. მეტრეველი 1950: 236–237.

სამეგრელოს ეპისკოპოსი გრიგოლი, ბ. ნიუარაძე, ექ. თაყაიშვილი, სარ. კაკაბაძე, ე. გაბლიანი, ს. მაკალათია, ელ. მეტრეველი, ი. გიპერტი და სხვა),<sup>10</sup> ასევე მომზადდა კრებულები, სადაც მასალა შესწავლილი და დალაგებულია სხვადასხვა პრინციპით: ბ. ნიუარაძისა და ა. ხახანაშვილის გამოცემული საბუთები (ტექსტები, მოკლე შინაარსი, რაობა) დალაგებულია დამწერლობის მიხედვით (ნუსხური, მხედრული); პ. ინგოროყვას მიერ მომზადებულ კრებულში მასალა დაყოფილია თემატურად (მაგ. აქტები პატრონ-ყმობისა, სათემო აქტები სვანეთის ცალკე ჯგუფათა, წიგნი სასისხლო საქმისა ბაღს ზემო სვანეთისა, კერძო აქტები და სხვა);<sup>11</sup> მ. ბერძნიშვილის პუბლიკაციაში საბუთები დალაგებულია ქრონოლოგიური თანმიმდევრობით;<sup>12</sup> გ. სილოგავას მიერ მომზადებულ წიგნში – „სვანეთის წერილობითი ძეგლები“ – თავმოყრილია დღეისათვის ცნობილი ყველა ისტორიული საბუთი,<sup>13</sup> ნაწერი როგორც ხელნაწერი წიგნების არშიებზე და დაუწერელ გვერდებზე, ასევე ხეზე, ანუ „ხის გათლილ ჯოხებზე“ (გ. სილოგავა). პუბლიკაციაში საბუთები დალაგებულია ჯგუფების მიხედვით.<sup>14</sup>

მიუხედავად მრავალი პუბლიკაციისა, ხე როგორც საწერი მასალა კვლევისა და შესწავლის საგანი არ გამხდარა, არ განხილულა შუა საუკუნეების ქართული ხელნაწერი წიგნის ერთიან ისტორიულ კონტექსტში, სვანური ისტორიული საბუთები გამოსაცემად მომზადდა, როგორც მასალა, დოკუმენტური წერილობითი საისტორიო წყარო. ამდენად, ცალკეული მოსაზრებების გარდა,<sup>15</sup> არ არსებობს პუბლიკაცია, სადაც წარმოდგენილი იქნება საქართველოს ერთ-ერთ უძველეს მხარეში – სვანეთში, ამ იშვიათი და ქართულ ხელნაწერ პრაქტიკაში სრულიად განსხვავებული საწერი მასალის დამზადებისა და გამოყენების წესები ან კოდიკოლოგიური მახასიათებლები.

პირველი ცნობა ხეზე დაწერილი სვანური ისტორიული საბუთების შესახებ ეკუთვნის გურია-სამეგრელოს ეპისკოპოსს გრიგოლს,<sup>16</sup> მან პირველმა გააკეთა აქცენტი ხეზე, როგორც საწერ მასალაზე და 1973 წლამდე ეს იყო ერთადერთი გამოქვეყნებული ცნობა, საქართველოში, ხის საწერ მასალად გამოყენების შესახებ.

<sup>10</sup> სვანური საბუთების ტექსტების შესწავლის ისტორიისთვის იხ. სილოგავა 1986: 8–40; 94–96; იხ. ასევე Gippert 2013: 83–160.

<sup>11</sup> ინგოროყვა 1941.

<sup>12</sup> ბერძნიშვილი 1968.

<sup>13</sup> მათ შორის, ცხრა ეპიგრაფიკული საბუთი – ნაკაწრი წარწერები (გრაფიტები) მოთავსებულია ეკლესიის კედლებზე (იფრარის მთავარანგელოზის ეკლესია, ნაკიფარის წმ. გიორგის ეკლესია, ჩვაბიანის მაცხოვრის ეკლესია, ადიშის მაცხოვრის ეკლესია და სხვა); სილოგავა 1986: 33–34, სილოგავა 1988: 188–190, 194, 199, 200, 204, 207.

<sup>14</sup> სილოგავა 1986.

<sup>15</sup> ბერძნიშვილი ეტრატთან და ქაღალდთან შედარებით, ხეს მიიჩნევს უფრო მტკიცე და გამძლე საწერ მასალად, ყურადღებას ამახვილებს წმ. კვირიკესა და წმ. ივლიტას სახელობის ეკლესიის მნიშვნელობაზე და ფიქრობს, რომ სწორედ ამ სალოცავის პოპულარობა განაპირობებდა მის სახელზე გაცემული საბუთებისთვის ხის, როგორც უფრო გამძლე მასალის გამოყენებას (Бердзნიшвили 1988: 183–184); სილოგავა ამ ფაქტს, სვანური საბუთების ერთი ჯგუფის დიპლომატიკური თავისებურებით ხსნის და საბუთების ტექსტის შესანახად გარიგების მონაწილე ორ მხარეს შორის განაწილებას ვარაუდობს (სილოგავა 2008: 202).

<sup>16</sup> Епископ Григорий 1893: 22, 47.



1972 წელს, სოფელ კალის წმ. კვირიკეს ეკლესიის (სვანურად, „ლაგურკა“) საკურთხევლის ნიშაში აღმოჩნდა მანამდე უცნობი ხეზე დაწერილი 20 ისტორიული საბუთი,<sup>17</sup> მათი ტექსტები არქეოგრაფიულ აღწერილობასა და რამდენიმე შავ-თეთრ ფოტოსთან ერთად გამოქვეყნდა 1973 წელს.<sup>18</sup> დღეისათვის საბუთების რაოდენობა 27 ერთეულით განისაზღვრება, პალეოგრაფიულად, XIV–XV საუკუნეებით თარიღდება, ყოველი მათგანი კალის ჰეგს უკავშირდება და შეიცავს საერთო სახეგო დადგენილებებსა და გადაწყვეტილებებს, თემებს შორის ან თემებსა და კერძო პირებს შორის დადებულ პირობებს სხვა.<sup>19</sup>

როგორც ჩანს, საბუთები ადგილობრივ, კალის თემში შეიქმნა<sup>20</sup> და იქვე, ეკლესიაში ინახებოდა. XX საუკუნის 30-იან წლებში კოლექცია დანაწილდა, შვიდი – გაიტანეს ეკლესიიდან. ამჟამად, ორი დაცულია ხელნაწერთა ეროვნულ ცენტრში,<sup>21</sup> ხუთი – მესტიის მუზეუმში,<sup>22</sup> ძირითადი ნაწილი კი, ოცი ერთეული, ისევ სოფელ კალაში, წმ. კვირიკეს და წმ. ივლიტას ეკლესიის საკურთხევალში ინახება.<sup>23</sup> ეკლესიაში დაცული საბუთები ძნელად ხელმისაწვდომია, არც 1972 წლის ექსპედიციის დროს გადაღებული შავ-თეთრი ფოტოპირები იძებნება, ასევე არ არსებობს მათი მაღალი ხარისხის ციფრული ასლები, რომლებიც საბუთების კოდიკოლოგიური მახასიათებლების განსაზღვრის, მათ ერთ მთლიან კონტექსტში განხილვის, დანაწილებული კოლექციის დიგიტალურად თავმოყრისა და გაერთიანების საშუალებას მოგვცემდა. დღეისათვის, მხოლოდ იმის თქმაა შესაძლებელი, რომ საბუთების ტექსტი ცვალებადი სიგრძის (იცვლება 150 მმ-დან 580 მმ-მდე) წახნაგოვან ხეზეა ნაწერი, წახნაგების რაოდენობა სხვადასხვაგვარია და იცვლება სამიდან შეიდანამდე.<sup>24</sup>

წარმოდგენილ სტატიაში განვიხილავთ მხოლოდ ორ, ხელნაწერთა ეროვნულ ცენტრში დაცულ საბუთს. ორივე საბუთი ნაწერია ოთხწახნაგიან ხეზე, შავი მელნით. ხის ჯიშის იდენტიფიცირებისა და მელნის ანალიზი ამ ეტაპზე არ ჩატარებულა. ხის ბოჭკოების მიმართულება და მელნის სავარაუდო ტიპი განისაზღვრა უშუალოდ საბუთების ვიზუალური შესწავლისა და ციფრული ასლების გამოყენებით. დიგიტალურ ფოტოზე (Qd-7975, წახნაგი 4; Qd-7976, წახნაგი 2, წახნაგი 3) ნათლად ჩანს როგორც ხის ბოჭკოების მიმართულება, ასევე მელნის ტიპის განმსაზღვრელი ვიზუალური მახასიათებლები (ფერი, ფაქტურა,

<sup>17</sup> საბუთები გამოვლინდა ს. ჯანაშიას სახელობის საქართველოს სახელმწიფო მუზეუმის სამეცნიერო კომპლექსური ექსპედიციის მიერ (ხელმძღვანელი – მიხეილ ჩართოლანი), რომლის მიზანს სვანეთის მატერიალური და სულიერი კულტურის ძეგლების აღრიცხვისა და დაცვის მდგომარეობის შესწავლა წარმოადგენდა (ჩართოლანი 1975: 165, 171).

<sup>18</sup> სილოგავა 1973: 174–181, ტაბულა I–X; იხ. ასევე, ჩართოლანი 1975: ტაბულა VIII.

<sup>19</sup> სილოგავა 1986; ინგოროყვა 1941.

<sup>20</sup> საბუთების დამწერი სვანი მწიგნობრების შესახებ იხ. სილოგავა 2008: 187–204.

<sup>21</sup> ხეც. Qd 7975, ხეც. Qd 7976.

<sup>22</sup> სიემ მესტია ## 16 (კ-78), 17 (კ-28); 18 (კ-79), 19 (კ-77), 20 (კ-27) საინვენტარო წიგნის მიხედვით, საბუთები კალიდან არის და მუზეუმში ინახება 1936 წლიდან. საბუთები მესტიის მუზეუმის მუდმივმოქმედ გამოფენაზეა წარმოდგენილი; იხ. ასევე, მესტიის მუზეუმის კატალოგი, გოგაშვილი 2014: 204–205.

<sup>23</sup> ლაგურკა ##1–20.

<sup>24</sup> მონაცემები აღებულია გ. სილოგავას პუბლიკაციიდან, იხ. სილოგავა 1986: 33, 219–234; ## 140–165.

საწერი მასალის ფორმებში შედგენადობის უნარი) და ტიპური დაზიანებები (ტენისადმი მდგრადობა, ინერტულობა, გადარეცხვა/წაშლა და სხვა), რის საფუძველზეც მეღნის ტიპად, ჭკარტლის ანუ ნახშირბადის მეღანი ვივარაუდეთ<sup>25</sup> (სურ. 2).



სურ. 2: Qd-7975, Qd-7976, დეტალები

I. Qd-7975, XIV ს., დაწერილი უშგულისა და კალის კვების ერთობისა, მოწმობითი ნაწილი,<sup>26</sup> მხედრული, ტექსტი ნაწერია ხის ბოჭკოების პარალელურად, განკვეთილობის ნიშნად გამოყენებულია, ორი წერტილი ყოველი სიტყვის შემდეგ, ზომები იცვლება წახნაგების მიხედვით და მერყეობს: სიგრძე, 273 მმ-დან – 276 მმ-მდე; სიგანე, 37 მმ-დან – 14 მმ-მდე, შესაბამისად იცვლება წახნაგებზე მოთავსებული ტექსტის სტრიქონების რაოდენობა – პირველ წახნაგზე ოთხი სტრიქონია, მეორეზე და მესამეზე – ორ-ორი, მეოთხეზე კი – ერთი (სურ. 3, ცხრილი 1).

II. Qd-7976. XIV ს., დაწერილის ფრაგმენტი, მოწმობითი ნაწილი,<sup>27</sup> მხედრული, ტექსტი ნაწერია ხის ბოჭკოების პარალელურად, განკვეთილობის ნიშნად გამოყენებულია, ორი წერტილი ყოველი სიტყვის შემდეგ, ზომები იცვლება წახნაგების მიხედვით და მერყეობს: სიგრძე, 130 მმ-დან – 142 მმ-მდე; სიგანე, 19 მმ-დან – 24 მმ-მდე, შესაბამისად იცვლება სტრიქონების რაოდენობა წახნაგებზე: პირველ წახნაგზე ოთხი სტრიქონია, დანარჩენ სამ წახნაგზე კი – სამ-სამი (სურ. 4, ცხრილი 2).

<sup>25</sup> არ გამოვრიცხავთ ე. წ. „შერეული მეღნის“ არსებობასაც, თუმცა ანალიზის გარეშე, დაზუსტებით რაიმეს თქმა ძნელია.

<sup>26</sup> ტექსტი გამოცემულია: ინგოროყვა 1941: 71; სილოგავა 1973: 173; სილოგავა 1986: 234; ტექსტი მოტანილია ე. სილოგავას მიხედვით და შეჯერებულია უშუალოდ საბუთთან.

<sup>27</sup> ტექსტი გამოცემულია: ინგოროყვა 1941: 106; სილოგავა 1973: 174; სილოგავა 1986: 229; ტექსტი მოტანილია ე. სილოგავას მიხედვით და შეჯერებულია უშუალოდ საბუთთან. შეჯერების შედეგად გამოიკვეთა მცირე შეუსაბამობა, კერძოდ, Qd-7976 საბუთის მოწმობითი ნაწილია, რომელსაც ბოლოში დამტკიცების ნიშნად დასმული აქვს ჯვრები, სილოგავას მიხედვით, ჯვრების რაოდენობა 11-ია, ჩვენი დაკვირვებით – 10.



სურ. 3: Qd-7975, ტექსტის ორგანიზება წახნაგების მიხედვით.

ცხრილი 1: Qd-7975-ის სტრუქტურა				
Qd-7975. XIV ს. დაწერილი უშულისა და კალის ჰევეების ერთობისა, მოწმობითი ნაწილი				
წახნაგები	წახნაგის სიგრძე (მმ) წიბოების მიხედვით	წახნაგის სიგანე (მმ) მარცხნიდან მაჯგინივ	ტექსტი	სტრიქონების რ-ბა
I	273 – 270	37 – 34	უჯობდეს: გულმართლად: მას ვიჭიროდეთ: თქვენიანად: და	1
			უთქვენილ და: რასაცა: პირსა: ზედა:	2
			შედეგმილ: ვართ: არ გაგი	3
			ტეხოთ: ჰეუმ(ან): ჰეუსა: ჰეობითა: თუ გაგიტეხოთ: რაიც: ჩვენ	4
II	270 – 273	19 – 14	სა: შხერასა: უფოთ: იმისა: საქმესა: არას: გერხოლეთ: თუ ერთ	1
			მ(ან): ანუ: ორმ(ან): გაგვიტეხოს: ერთობილ: წავეკიდოთ: ამასა: გათა ვეებისა: თაუხდებად: მოგვიტეხებია: დედაი ღ(მდ)თისა: უშგულის(ა)	2
III	273 – 276	15 – 16	წმიდაი: კვირიკე: კალისა: კაცთაგან: ადაი გომგოთელიან(ი): ხოჯი: ჩარგა	1
			სიანი: გიორგი: დადილიან(ი): დათვია: გელგვანი: მე ფარსმ(ან)	2
IV	276 – 273	19 – 17	ანბარეიანსა: დამიწერია: და: მოწამეც: ვარ:	1



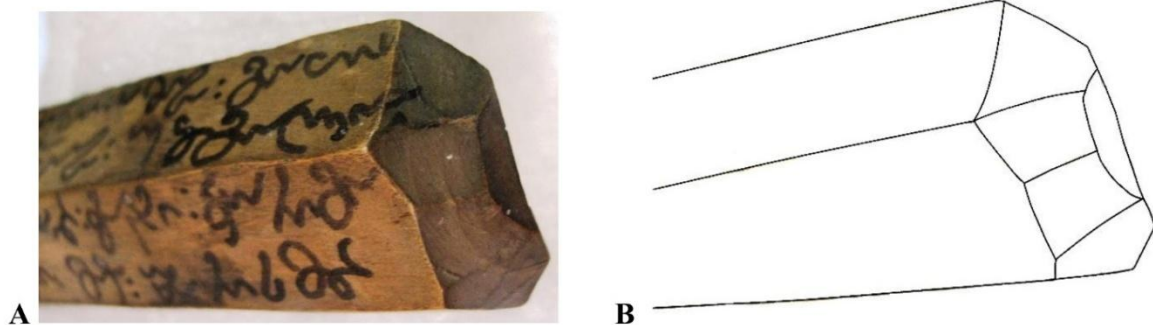


სურ. 4: Qd 7976, ტექსტის ორგანიზება წახნაგების მიხედვით.

ცხრილი 2: Qd-7976-ის სტრუქტურა				
Qd-7976. XIV ს. დაწერილის ფრაგმენტი, მოწმობითი ნაწილი				
წახნაგები	წახნაგის სიგრძე (მმ) წიბოების მიხედვით	წახნაგის სიგანე (მმ) მარცხნიდან მარჯვნივ	ტექსტი	სტრიქო- ნების რ-ბა
I	136 – 134	23 – 24	ურავი: არა: დიდი: და: არ: პატა	1
			რაი: არაის: თანა: არა(ი): მოკეთეო	2
			ბისაგან: კიდეში: ალა(რ)ც: არას: გერხოლე	3
			თ: ამისა: გათაგებისა: თაუ	4
II	134 – 130	24 – 20	სდებად: მოგა[იკსენებია: პ(ირველ): ლ(მერთი):	1
			დაუსაბამოი: [მაცხოვარი] [მრივ] მერისა (?)	2
			ამისნი მოურაური და მოწამენი არიან:	3
III	130 – 142	21 – 22	ხურსი: კესონიანი: აქულა: კონბერია <sup>ნი</sup>	1
			დათვია(ნი): გ(იორგ)ი: გელ(ო)ვანი: ადაი: დათელი	2
			ანი: დაულა: ივანე: დაუვლიანი: და მ	3
IV	142 – 136	22 – 19	იქაელ: გაკელია(ნი) ივანე დაუვლიანი მე	1
			მ(უ)შკუდიანსა: აღმართის დამიწერია	2
			და მოწამე(ვა ვარ (დამტკიცების ნიშნად დასმულია ჯვრები).	3

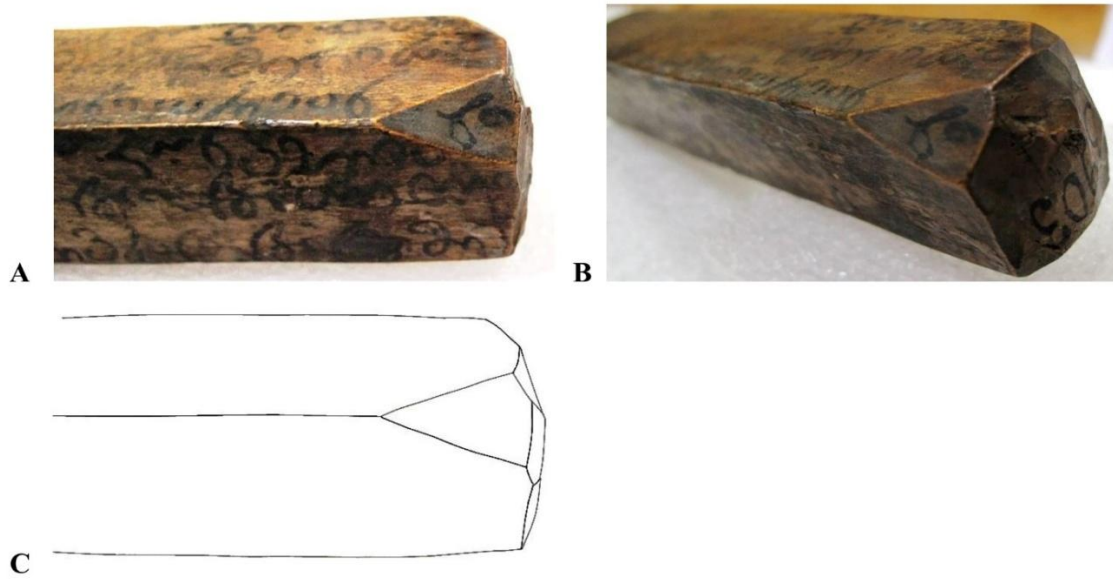


როგორც მოტანილი მასალიდან ჩანს, საბუთები გარკვეული კოდიკოლოგიური მახასიათებლებით გამოირჩევიან, რასაც უპირველესად საწერი მასალა, ფორმა და ზომა განაპირობებს. კერძოდ, საბუთები ნაწერია წახნაგოვანი ფორმის ხეზე, წახნაგები შეიძლება განვიხილოთ, როგორც საბუთის შემადგენელი გვერდები; გვერდებს არ უზის თანმიმდევრობის ან სათვალავის აღმნიშვნელი ნიშანი; წახნაგები, ანუ გვერდები ერთმანეთისაგან წიბოებით არიან გამოჯნული (სურ. 5, სურ. 6); წახნაგებზე არ შეინიშნება ჰორიზონტულად ან ვერტიკალურად გაყვებული ხაზების კვალი (ლინირება) ან რაიმე ნიშანი, რომელიც წახნაგს დაყოფდა დაწერილ და დაუწერელ ადგილებად; სტრიქონებს შორის მანძილი არათანაბარია; ტექსტი წახნაგის მთელ ფართობზეა განაწილებული და არ არის დატოვებული ტექსტის ირგვლივ დაუწერელი არე ანუ აშია; უფრო მეტიც, ზოგჯერ სტრიქონი სცილდება საწერად განკუთვნილ არეს და სტრიქონის ან დამოწმებაში მოტანილი გვარის დაბოლოვება, მცირე ზომის წაკვეთილ წახნაგზეა დასრულებული. იხ. I. Qd-7975: ცხრილი 1, წახნაგი II, სტრიქონი 2; სურ. 3 (II), სურ. 5 A; II. Qd-7976: ცხრილი 2, წახნაგი III, სტრიქონი 1, სურ. 4 (III), სურ. 6 A, B.



სურ. 5: Qd-7975, წახნაგოვანი ხის ფრაგმენტი (A); ფრაგმენტის გრაფიკული მონახაზი (B).

Qd-7975-ის ტექსტი, საბუთის მოწობითი ნაწილია, ტექსტის ბოლოს იკითხება: *მე ფარსმა)ნ ანბარევიანსა დამიწერია და მოწამეც ვარ*. ამ საბუთის დასაწყისი აღმოჩნდა, წმ. კვირიკეს ეკლესიაში 1972 წლის ექსპედიციის მუშაობის დროს და დღემდე იქ ინახება (ლაგურკა #3), ანუ საბუთის ტექსტი მოთავსებულია, ორ, ერთმანეთისაგან დამოუკიდებელ წახნაგოვან ხეზე. საგულისხმოა, რომ Qd-7975-ს, რომელიც ლაგურკა #3 საბუთის გაგებლებას წარმოადგენს, ტექსტის დასაწყისში დასმული აქვს მცირე ზომის (2,8 მმ.), ერთმანეთის პარალელური, ორი ვერტიკალური ხაზი – || (სურ. 3, წახნაგი I). ასეთივე, ორი პარალელური ხაზი ერთვის Qd-7976-საც (სურ. 4, წახნაგი I), რომელიც Qd-7975-ის მსგავსად, საბუთის მოწობითი ნაწილია (ტექსტის ბოლოს, დამოწმების ნიშნად დასმული აქვს ჯვარები). სამწუხაროდ, მისი დასაწყისი, დღეისათვის ცნობილ, ხეზე დაწერილ საბუთებს შორის არ იძებნება. ამდენად, შეიძლება ითქვას, რომ: ა) ორ ხეზე განაწილებული ტექსტები უშუალოდ არ უკავშირდებიან ერთმანეთს და დამოუკიდებლად არსებობენ; ბ) მეორე წახნაგოვან ხეზე ტექსტის დასაწყისში დასმული ორი პარალელური ხაზი, პირველ წახნაგოვან ხეზე ნაწერი ტექსტის გაგრძელებას უნდა ნიშნავდეს.



სურ. 6: Qd-7976, წახნაგოვანი ხის ფრაგმენტი (A, B); ფრაგმენტის გრაფიკული მონახაზი (C).

როგორც ზემოთ აღინიშნა, ხეზე დაწერილი კალის ხევის საბუთების კოლექცია 27 ერთეულით განისაზღვრება, აქედან, რიგი საბუთებისა მოთავსებული ყოფილა ორ, ერთმანეთისაგან დამოუკიდებელ ხეზე (სამ ან უფრო მეტ ხეზე მოთავსებული საბუთები დღეისათვის არ დასტურდება). ორ ხეზე დაწერილი ტექსტის სახით შემორჩენილია მხოლოდ ერთი საბუთი (ლაგურკა #3 და Qd-7975), 8 არასრული სახითაა წარმოდგენილი და შეიცავს ტექსტის დასაწყისს ან დასასრულს – მოწმობით ნაწილს.<sup>28</sup> ამის გათვალისწინებით, შეიძლება ითქვას, რომ დღეისათვის, ჩვენამდე მოღწეული კალის ჯევის 26 საბუთი დაწერილი უნდა ყოფილიყო 35 (27+8) წახნაგოვან ხეზე.

მოტანილი მასალა გვიჩვენებს, რომ კალის ჯევის კოლექცია უნიკალურია რამდენიმე თვალსაზრისით: ა) კალის საბუთების სახით ჩვენს ხელთაა XIV–XV სს-ში, საქართველოს ერთ-ერთ უძველეს ისტორიულ მხარეში – სვანეთში, ხის საწერ მასალად გამოყენების ფაქტი, ბ) საბუთები ნაწერია ქართული ხელნაწერი ტრადიციისათვის სრულიად განსხვავებულ მასალაზე, გ) გარდა იმისა, რომ ხეზე ნაწერი ტექსტები მნიშვნელოვანი დოკუმენტური წყაროა იმ დროინდელი სვანეთის სოციალურ-ეკონომიური საკითხების შესასწავლად, უპირველეს ყოვლისა გამორჩეულად საყურადღებოა, რადგან დღეისათვის სამეცნიერო ლიტერატურაში არსებულ, ხელნაწერ პრაქტიკაში გამოყენებული ხის არცერთ ფორმას არ იმეორებს,<sup>29</sup> დ) კალის თემში იქმნება სრულიად ორიგინალური, გრძივი, წახნაგიანი ფორმის მასალა, რომელიც გამიზნულად, მხოლოდ პრაქტიკული დანიშნულების ტექსტების – იურიდიული აქტების ანუ, ისტორიული საბუთების საწერად გამოიყენებოდა, ე) ხის, როგორც ადგილობრივი, იაფი, ხელმისაწვდომი და მარტივად დასამზადებელი მასალის გამოყენება, XIV–XV საუკუნეებში, მხოლოდ

<sup>28</sup> საბუთების ტექსტები – იხ. სილოგავა 1986: 221, 226, 229, 230, 231.

<sup>29</sup> Buzi 2015: 138–139; Cleminson 2015: 239–240; Bülow-Jacobsen 2011: 11–14, 23; Figs 1.5; 1.6; 1.14; Bowman & Thomas 1983: 32–45.

სვანეთში და ისიც მხოლოდ კალის ჯეშში, ვფიქრობთ, გამოწვეული უნდა ყოფილიყო სხვა სახის საწერი მასალის<sup>30</sup> არ ქონით ან სიმცირით.

და კიდევ, საქართველოში ხის საწერ მასალად გამოყენების საინტერესო ფაქტია, მუგუთის ქვაბებში მოპოვებული ხის ფირფიტა (სემ #1-1994/792)<sup>31</sup> მხედრული სასწავლო წარწერით, რომელზეც იკითხება: *სწავლაჲ: კეთილაჲ: მონახა: შენსა: გიორგის:*

ზომა: 125/16 მმ. ტექსტი ნაწერია შავი მეღნით, ხის ბოჭკოების პარალელურად,<sup>32</sup> განკვეთილობის ნიშანად გამოყენებულია, ორი წერტილი ყოველი სიტყვის შემდეგ.



A

*სწავლა: კეთილაჲ: მონახა: შენსა: გიორგის:*

B

სურ. 7: ხის ფირფიტა მხედრული სასწავლო წარწერით (A); წარწერის გრაფიკული მონახაზი (B)

მუგუთის ქვაბები კლდის ძეგლთა კომპლექსს მიეკუთვნება. გამოთქმულია მოსაზრება, რომ ფეოდალურ ხანაში ამ კომპლექსში უდაბნო-მონასტერი ფუნქციონირებდა, მონასტერში ცხოვრება XIII–XIV საუკუნეში შეწყვეტილა და შემდეგ XVII–XVIII სს. განახლებულა - მოპოვებულია ქალაქზე მხედრულით ნაწერი, XVII–XVIII სს. დათარიღებული მონახონის წერილი, ვახტანგ VI-ის სტამბაში დაბეჭდილი სახარების ფრაგმენტი და ზემოთ მოტანილი ხის ფირფიტა მხედრული სასწავლო წარწერით, რომელიც სავარაუდოდ, მონასტერში დროებით მყოფ მოსწავლეს უნდა ეკუთვნოდეს.<sup>33</sup> მასალის სიმცირის გამო, საწერ მასალად ხის გამოყენება მონასტრის სასწავლო პროცესში მიღებულ პრაქტიკად ვერ ჩაითვლება, მაგრამ მისი არსებობა, უდაოდ, საინტერესო და საყურადღებო ფაქტია.

<sup>30</sup> ჯეშის ეკლესიაში დაცული ხელნაწერების დაუწერელი ადგილები. აღსანიშნავია, რომ ამ პერიოდის კალის ჯეშის საბუთებიდან, მხოლოდ ერთია ნაწერი ხელნაწერი წიგნის აშიებზე; იხ. სურ. 1 A, სქოლიო 8.

<sup>31</sup> დაცულია საქართველოს ეროვნულ მუზეუმში.

<sup>32</sup> ხის ჯეშის იდენტიფიცირებისა და მეღნის ანალიზი ამ ეტაპზე არ ჩატარებულა. ამ შემთხვევაში ვიზუალური შესწავლისა და ციფრული ასლების გამოყენებით, მეღნის სავარაუდო ტიპის განსაზღვრა ვერ მოხერხდა, დადგინდა, მხოლოდ ხის ბოჭკოების მიმართულება.

<sup>33</sup> მუგუთის ქვაბები მდებარეობს ქვემო ქართლში, თეთრი წყაროს რაიონში, სოფ. დაღეთის სამხრეთ აღმოსავლეთით (41°30'33" N, 44°34'18" E). მუგუთის ქვაბები შესწავლილია ნ. ბახტაძის მიერ, მის მიერვე აღმოჩენილი მოტანილი მასალა (ბახტაძე 1988: 33–40, ბახტაძე 1991: 70–82).

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საარქივო მასალა

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## Wood as a Rare Writing Material in Georgia. According to Svan Historical Documents of the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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The writing material for Svan historical documents was mainly the margins of manuscripts kept in the churches of Svaneti. These documents possess no connection to the text of the manuscript itself; they exist independently and are known as marginal historical documents. Documents written on wood are rare.

Wood was not used as a writing material in Georgia in general. It appears only in Svaneti, specifically within the Kala community. The documents of this community are written exclusively on wood cut into three-, four-, five-, or seven-sided pieces; they date back to the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries and contain community decrees and resolutions, as well as agreements concluded between communities and private individuals. The documents on wood are distinguished by specific peculiarities, conditioned primarily by the writing material and its form.

The study of Svan historical documents began in the 1830s. Numerous publications have been dedicated to their research; however, wood as a writing material has not been the subject of research or study: Svan historical documents were published merely as written historical sources. Consequently, there is no publication that presents the rules regarding the making of and usage of this rare writing material, which is completely unique within Georgian manuscript practice.

This paper discusses two such documents preserved at the National Centre of Manuscripts. Their codicological characteristics are presented, with a focus on their form, the number of faces, and the organization of the text. Wood, as a rare writing material in the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries in Georgia, specifically in Svaneti, one of the most high-altitude historical-geographic regions, is discussed within the unified historical context of the medieval Georgian manuscript tradition.





# Some Unedited Witnesses of the Old Georgian Translation of the Psalms

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**Abstract:** The article provides an edition of five pages of the Old Georgian Psalter on papyrus (MSS Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, Georgian 98 and Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Georgian N.S. 10), comprising Psalms 64:11 – 65:11, 111:1 – 112:6 and 118:68–81, and of two palimpsests containing other passages of the translation of the psalms (MSS Cambridge, University Library, Tailor-Schechter AS 124.1 with Psalms 3:4–8 and 4:3–6, transcribed from ultraviolet images, and Yerevan, Matenadaran, Georgian fragment 37 with Psalms 43:6 – 44:10, transcribed from multispectral images by Sandro Tskhvedadze). Variants important for the history of the Georgian translation are indicated throughout by reference to the major Psalter versions as edited by Mzekala Shanidze.

**Keywords:** Old Georgian Psalter; psalm titles; MS Sin. georg. 98; MS Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Georgian N.S. 10; MS Cambridge, University Library, Tailor-Schechter AS 124.1; MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, Georgian fragment 37.

In a common article dedicated to Mzekala Shanidze on her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, we wrote in 2021 that she is the one “who paved the way for all investigations into the history” of the Psalter in Georgian.<sup>1</sup> As early as in 1960, she had edited for the first time the two older redactions (ⴌ and ⴍ);<sup>2</sup> a detailed study of these redactions appeared nearly 20 years later.<sup>3</sup> Mzekala Shanidze also studied the titles of the psalms<sup>4</sup> and compiled a concordance, unfortunately with a very small print run of only 70 copies.<sup>5</sup> In our article of 2021, we underlined the importance of the manuscript Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, Georgian 98 (hereafter: Sin. georg. 98);<sup>6</sup> for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the great scholar and friend of old, I would like to present what may be known today of that manuscript, and of two palimpsested ones that were not yet described.

## 1. Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, Georgian 98

Within the Georgian tradition, Sin. georg. 98 is a very peculiar manuscript indeed, since it is written on papyrus. It was first noticed by the archimandrite Porphyrius Uspensky in 1850, who took two folios of it and handed them over in 1883 to the Imperial Public Library in Saint Petersburg, where they are kept until now. The first description of Sin. georg. 98 was published by Aleksandre Tsagareli in 1888, as manuscript no. 1 of the Georgian collection of St Catherine's Monastery.<sup>7</sup> At his time, it comprised 70 folios preserved in full, and 15 in a damaged or fragmentary state.

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<sup>1</sup> Gippert and Outtier 2021: 43.

<sup>2</sup> Shanidze 1960.

<sup>3</sup> Shanidze 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Shanidze 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Shanidze 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Gippert and Outtier 2021: 41–42 with fn. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Tsagareli 1888: 193–196.

Later, in 1950, Gérard Garitte saw the manuscript but only very shortly. In his catalogue of the Georgian manuscripts of Mt Sinai, he writes:<sup>8</sup> “Il faut ajouter à ces 84 manuscrits un psautier en papyrus, qui est conservé à part, en dehors des rayons de la bibliothèque ; je ne peux en donner une description complète parce que je n’ai pu le voir que quelques instants et qu’il n’a pu être microfilmé, étant donné son état fort délabré (85 feuillets de papyrus, plus quelques fragments non numérotés ; environ 200 mm. × 140 ; 1 colonne, 22 lignes ; surface écrite 170 × 120 mm. ; fol. 1 *Ps* I ; sur un feuillet détaché, sans numéro, *Ps* CXLIII ; fol. 81v, partie inférieure, note de la main de Jean Zosime, scribe sinaïte du X<sup>e</sup> siècle”. During our common stay in the Monastery, in May 2009, the librarian, hieromonk Justin of Sinai, showed us some of the folios, meanwhile kept under glass, and took a photograph of one recto for us, which contains part of Psalms 64–65. Together with the determination of the text passage covered (*Ps.* 64:11 – 65:11), the photograph, processed to show the original structure of the page, was first published by Jost Gippert in 2018;<sup>9</sup> the original image and its processed version are reproduced below as Figs 1a and 1b.

Recently, Olga Vasilieva, the keeper of the Oriental manuscripts in the National Library of Russia (hereafter: NLR) in Saint Petersburg published a beautiful book with good reproductions of two pages of the papyrus Psalter.<sup>10</sup> When I asked Basil Lourie how I could obtain reproductions of the other two pages of the folios, he was pleased, as a former student of Mzekala Shanidze, to help me; so was Olga Vasilieva, who kindly sent me the images, wanting to contribute in this way to the present festschrift; I convey my sincere thanks to both of them.

1.1 After this short survey of the state of the art concerning the papyrus Psalter, let us come back to Aleksandre Tsagareli (hereafter: Ts.).

In his description, Ts. provides the beginning of the Psalter manuscript (sometimes with the words spelt in a more modern form), which at his time was lacunose at the beginning and at the end. In contrast to Garitte, Ts. did not identify *Ps.* 1; in his description, *Sin. georg.* 98 begins on its first page with *Ps.* 3:2. From Ts.’s description, I quote the four first verses printed, adding the variants according to the redactions  $\mathcal{C}$  and  $\mathcal{L}$  of Mzekala Shanidze’s critical edition but leaving the abbreviations unresolved.<sup>11</sup>

*Ps.* 3:2: უო რად განმრავლდეს მაჭირვებელი ჩემი და {ABDE} მრავალნი  
აღდგეს ჩემ ზნა: –

*Ps.* 3:3: მრავალნი რქვან {რქვან B, პრქვან A *cet.*} სულსა ჩემსა რა {რ BCEa, <  
A *cet.*} რად (?) {არა + არს *omnes*} ცხოვრებაჲ ძისა {lege: ძისა *omnes*} ღუთისა  
{ღმრთისა *omnes*} ძისა {lege: მიერ *omnes*} ძისისა: – {add. განსუენებაჲ  $\mathcal{C}$ }

*Ps.* 3:4: ხ შენ ღო {lege: ოო BEa; უფალი A *cet.*} მწე ჩემდა ხარ დიდებაჲ  
{ABCD, დიდებაჲ Ea} ჩემდა {+ და BCEa} ასამადლებელად თავისა ჩემისა: –

<sup>8</sup> Garitte 1956: 6–7.

<sup>9</sup> Gippert 2018: 68–69 with Abb. 64.

<sup>10</sup> Vasilieva 2009: 52–53.

<sup>11</sup> Shanidze 1960: 4. The sigla A–H used in Shanidze’s edition stand for the following manuscripts: A = MS Tbilisi, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts [hereafter: NCM], A-38; B = *Sin. georg.* 42; C = *Sin. georg.* 29; D = *Sin. georg.* 22; E = Graz, University Library, MS 2058/2; F = NCM, H-1798; G = Jerusalem, Greek Patriarchate, Georgian (hereafter: *Jer. georg.*) 161; H = *Jer. georg.* 133.

Ps. 3:5: ხმითა {ჴმითა *omnes*} ჩემითა ღისა {ოისა *omnes*} მიმართ ღაღად-ჴყავ და შეესმა ჩემი მთით წმიდით მისით: –

After this, Ts. provides the following text from “p. 4”: განსოვნებაჲ (განსუწნებაჲ) მოწოდებაჲ სულისა წმიდისა. This is the Georgian translation of the term *diapsalma* and the title: “Appeal to the Holy Spirit”. This title does not appear elsewhere, so it is really a great loss that a full edition of the papyrus Psalter has not yet been possible. As Mzekala Shanidze rightly underlined, the “variety in the titles indicates that... one has to do with different textual and dogmatic traditions. However, at the present stage of investigation it is hardly possible to draw definite conclusions as to the history and provenance of the titles”.<sup>12</sup>

For “p. 5” of the manuscript, Ts. notes:

ფნი თ: .... დასასრულსა {BCDE}: კნი ბ: (A) .... ქრს (ქრისტეს): სიკვდილისაჲ თუეს და .... საფლავისა {sic Ts.; lege: სასუფეველისა} დაპყრობისა თუეს და ერთა {sic Ts.; lege: მტერთა} ეთა დაპყრობისა თუეს :, i.e. “Psalm 9... at the end: canon 2: about the death of Christ and... about the conquest of the reign and about the conquest of all enemies”.

Only the three first words of this are to be found introducing Ps. 9 in other manuscripts (BDE), but one of the appendixes of manuscript A has the complete wording of the title; it runs: წინაწარმეტყუელაბაჲ ქრისტეს სიკვდილისათჳს და აღდგომისა, სასუფეველისა დაპყრობისა და ყოველთა მტერთა დამკობისათჳს.<sup>13</sup>

From “p. 7”, Ts. provides the following title, not to be found in other manuscripts: მოლოდებაჲ სულისა წმიდისა: – “Expectation of the Holy Spirit”.

From “p. 9”:

ფნი {sic Ts.; lege: ფნი} დავითისი იდ: დღესა მას რომელსა იგი იჴსნა უნ ჴელთა საულისათა და ყოველთაგან მტერთა მისთა და თქა ეკკლესიათა გამოჩეჴაჲ და დგომაჲ {sic Ts.; lege: აღდგომაჲ}: – “Psalm of David, 14. On the day when the Lord saved him from the hands of Saul and from all his enemies and he pronounced the choice of the churches and the Resurrection”.

This is the title for Ps. 17 (with parts of it also appearing in A and BD),<sup>14</sup> so Tsagareli’s იდ = “14” must be erroneous.

From “p. 15”:

შეწევნისა თუეს {შეწევნისათჳს A} ფნი ღთსი: კა: წინასწრტყლბაჲ ქრს ენებისაჲ და ჩინებაჲ წარმართთა: ღზა: უო ღო ჩო მომხედე {A, მომხედენ BCDE} მე რად დამაგდებ მე განმიშორებ {BCD(E), განმიშორე A} ცხოვრებისა ჩემისაგან სიტყუათა.... {სიტყუათათჳს Ⴀჳ} ....ბისა {sic Ts.; lege: ...ლისა; ბრალისა Ⴀჳ} ჩემისათა: – “About succour. Psalm of David, 21. Prophecy of Christ’s passion and summoning the nations. Gloria! ‘Lord my God, look at me, why do you leave me? You reclude me from my life because of the words of my guilt.’”

For Ps. 21, no comparable subtitle is found in the other manuscripts.

Without indication of the manuscript page, Ts. then gives the beginning of Ps. 139 (ფნი რლთ):

<sup>12</sup> Shanidze 2012: 21.

<sup>13</sup> Shanidze 1960: 471, ll. 15–16.

<sup>14</sup> The appendix of A notes the last four words as the title for Ps. 15 (Shanidze 1960: 471, ll. 26–27).

განმარინე მე ღო {ოო *omnes*} კაცსა უკეთურსა კაცისა ცრუმსა და მზაკვარისაგან {მზაკუვარისაგან *omnes*} მივსენ მე: – “Ps. 139: ‘Deliver me, God, from the evil man, from the bad and treacherous man release me’”, and the title of Ps. 140: .... დასასრულსა {დასასრულსა A, *om. cet.*} ფნი: ვედრებად ღს-მსახურთად {sic Ts.; ღისა მიერ სრულთად A, ღისა მიერ სრულთად BE} ფნი რმ: შკი {sic Ts.; *lege*: შკი} ივ: – “At the end, Psalm: imprecation of those serving God. Psalm 140, 16 verses”.

Ts. continues with the first four verses of the same psalm (140:1–4):

უო {ოო *omnes*} დაღად-ვეავ შენდამი ისმინე ჩემი მომხედენ {BE, მომხედე *cet.*} ხმასა {ჰმასა *omnes*} ღოცვისა ჩემისასა: {2} წარემართენ ღოცვად ჩემი ვა საკმეველი {საკუმეველი *omnes*} შენ წინაშე აპყრობად {BE, აღპყრობად *cet.*} ჰელთა ჩემთად მსხუერპლი {მსხუერპლ *omnes*} სამწუხროდ: {3} დასდეგ უო საცჴე {საცოდ *omnes*} პირსა ჩემსა და კარი ძნელი ბაგეთა ჩემთა {4} რათა {რათა *omnes*} არა მდრკეს {მიდრკეს *omnes*} გული ჩემი სიტყუათა მიმართ უკეთურებისათ: – “Lord, I call upon you; listen to me, look at me in the voice of my prayer! {2} May my prayer work out like incense before you (and) the lifting up of my hands (be) an evening sacrifice! {3} Set, Lord, a guard over my mouth and a strong door on my lips {4} lest my heart incline to words of evil”.

Finally, Ts. remarks that there are many indications in red ink, such as:

შკი {მუჴლი ზ A, < *cet.*}, თენცმ: {თაყუანის-ცემა AB, დიდება CE}, გლბად აღსავალთად და ღოცვად მოწამეთად: რლ:  
 ღრმით აღმო ვდაღადებ შენდამი ღო {ოო *omnes*} {2} ღო {ოო B, უფალსა *cet.*} შეისმინე {შენ გესემინ C, შეგესემინ *cet.*} ჰმისა ჩემისად:  
 იყენენ {B, იყენედ *cet.*} ყურნი შენნი მორჩილ ჰმისა {ჰმასა *omnes*} ღოცვისა ჩემისა:

The indications represent the end of Ps. 128 and the title and beginning of Ps. 129 (not 130 as indicated in Ts.):

“Verse(s): {8}. Worship. Chant of the ascents and prayer of the martyrs. 130. ‘Up from the depth I cry to you, God; God, hear my voice! May your ears be attentive to the voice of my prayer!’”

After these examples, Tsagareli tells us that manuscript had been seen before him by E. Henry Palmer (in 1869)<sup>15</sup> and by Georg Ebers, the detector of the famous medical *Papyrus Ebers* (in 1871),<sup>16</sup> and that Porphyrius Uspensky had left a note in the manuscript according to which he had seen the Psalter in 1850. In his catalogue, Tsagareli also provided the reproduction (in colours) of one page (between pp 192 and 193); it is one of those that were taken by Uspensky to Saint Petersburg.<sup>17</sup>

1.2 I now give the text of the page whose image was produced for us in 2009 (Fig. 1a). The upper part of the folio is severely damaged; the readable part as transcribed in Table I begins within Ps. 64:11.

<sup>15</sup> See Palmer 1871: 69: “There are other very interesting volumes in the collection; among them an ancient copy of the Psalms in Georgian, written on papyrus.”

<sup>16</sup> See Ebers 1872: 300 / 1881: 311.

<sup>17</sup> See Vasileva 2009: 53.





Fig. 1a: Sin. georg. 98, unnumbered folio, recto (page containing Ps. 64:11 – 65:11). Photograph taken by Father Justin Sinaïtes, 15 May 2009, © St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai.





Fig. 1b: Same, processed version with page structure reestablished

**Table I: Sin. georg. 98, unnumbered folio, recto, transcript with variants indicated**

Line	Ps.	Text
1	64:11	{ღჳრ ნატნი Ⴢღ} [მისნი დაათრვენ] <განამრავლე ნაყოფი მისი ცუარითა {ღღ}>
2		[შენითა მხიარულ იყო[ს ჯეჯღ]ი <მისი {ღღ}>
3	64:12	ღკურთხო შწ გუირგუინი წე[ლი]წა[ღისაჲ] <+ სიტკბოებითა შენითა Ⴢღ>
4		და ევლნი შწნი აივსნენ {ად[ი]ესნენ A, აღივსნენ BD} სიპოს[ი]თ<ა>
5	64:13	ღანპოხო შწ {განპოხო CE, განპოხნეს ABD} შეუნიერებაჲ [უდაბ]ნოს[ა და სი]ხა[რული ბორცუთა] <შეიმოსონ {ღღ}>
6	64:14	ყეიმოსნენ ვერძნი ცხოვართანი ღელ<ეთა გაამრავლონ {ღღ}>
7		იფკლი ღაღაღადებდენ {sic; ღაღადებდენ Ⴢღ} და გაღობდენ : – შწი ი[ე]
8	65	ჟწნი ღწთისი {C} ადგომისათ[უის] {AE} [ჩინებაჲ წარმართთაჲ] {BD}
9	65:1–2	ღაღადებდით ღწთისა ყწლი ქუეყანაჲ {2} უ[გაღ]ობ[დით სახელ]-
10		სა მისსა მიეცით ღწჲ ქებულებასა მის[სა]
11	65:3	ღრქუ {sic, Ⴢრქუთ Ⴢღ} ღწ რაბამად საშინელ არიან ს[ა]ქმენი შწნი მრავლითა
12		ძალითა შწითა გეცრუენეს შწ მტერნი შწნი : –
13	65:4	ყწლი ქუეყანაჲ თაყუანის-გცმდს შწ {< A} გიგაღბდენ შწ {< CE} [გიგა]-
14		ღობდენ შწ {<< Ⴢღ} და უგაღობდენ (G) სახელსა შწნსა : –
15	65:5	ჟოვედით და იხილენით {ABDE} საქმენი ღწთისანი ვწრ საშინელ არს
16		იგი {ABDE} ზრახნითა უფროეს ძეთა კაცთასა : – კიგ {BDEG}
17	65:6	ჟწ გარდააქცია ზღუაჲ კმელად და {< E} მდინარესა {ABDE} წიადკდა [ფრ]-
18	65:6–7	ჟწ ვიხარებდეთ წწ მისა მიმართ {7} რწლი იგი უფლებს ძალითა
19		თუისითა ოწკე : –
20		ღუაღნი მისნი წარმართთა ხედვენ რწლთა განამწა[რეს იგი]
21		ნუ ამადღდებიან {A} თავით თუისით : – კწჲ ქებისა მისის[აჲ]
22	65:8	ღკურთხევდით წარმართნი ღწა წწსა და სასმ[ენელ ყავთ]
		თა წწ[თა]
23	65:9	ჟწ ღადვა სული წწნი ცხორებად და არა სცა ძრ[ე]აჲ [ფერვ]-
24	65:10	{+ და BCDE} ღანმცადენ წწ ღწ და {< C} გამომავურვენ წწ [ვწა გამ]{ოივურ}
25		ვის ვეცხლი : –
26	65:11	ყემიყანენ წწ საფრტკესა დაჰკრ[იბე] ჭირი [ბჭეთა] <წწთა>



1.3 The two folios of the Sinai Psalter brought to Russia by Porphyrius Uspensky are today kept in Saint Petersburg under the shelfmark Грy3. HC 10; they cover Ps. 111:1 – 112:5 and 118:68–81. All four pages are transcribed in Tables II–V below facing the corresponding images (Figs 2–5), which I publish here with kind permission of Olga Vasileva.

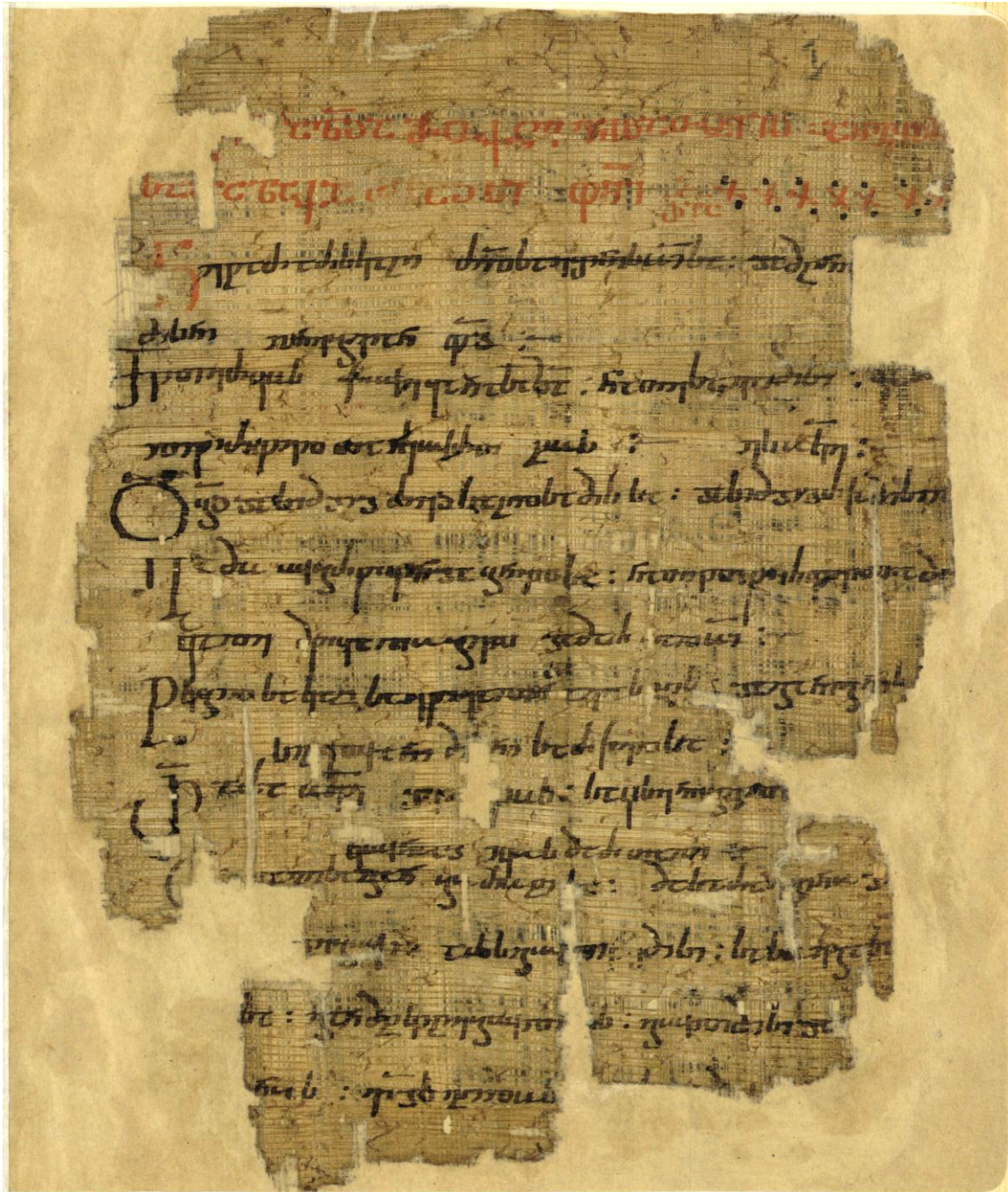


Fig. 2: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Грy3. HC 10, fol. 1r



Fol. 1r is incomplete on its right side and at its bottom. It begins with two lines in red ink in *asomtavruli* majuscules, representing the title of Ps. 111, partly corresponding to the title in manuscript B. Fol. 1v is incomplete on its left side; the title of Ps. 112 is akin to the titles of B and E, the two closest manuscripts to the papyrus Psalter.

**Table II: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fol. 1r: transcript with variants**

Line	Ps.	Text
1	111	აღა მოქცევისათვის : ანგესი- {B}
2		სა და {<< B} ზაქარიაჲსი {B} ფნი რია <sup>18</sup> ႁ ႁ ႁ ႁ ႁ ႁ ႁ
3	111:1	ჩეტარ არს კაცი რლსა ეშინის ოისა : და მცნე<ბანი>
4		მისნი ჰნებაჲნ ფდ : –
5	111:2	ძლიერ ყოს {C} ქუეყანასა ზა : ნათესავი მისი : და თ<ეს>-
6		ღი წრფელთა იკურთხოს : – ეს {C} ოკე :-
7	111:3	ძბჲ და სიმდიდრეჲ {სიმდიდრე AE, სიმდიდრჲ BCD, + არს E} სახლსა {BCDE} მისსა : და სიმდიდრჲ {!} მისი ჰ<გი>-
8	111:4	ღამოუბრწყინდა {AD} ბნელსა : ნათელი წრფელთა მო<წ>
9		ყალე მწყალობელ და {BCDE} მარ[თ]ალ ოი {BCE} : –
10	111:5	ღებოლსა კაცსა ეწყაღინ და <sup>19</sup> {BCDE} ავასხის : და განიგნის {E}
11		სიტყუანი მისნი სარჩელსა : –
12	111:6	ჟ არა ოკე შეი<რ>ეიოს : საჴსენებელა[ა]<დ საუ>-
13		კუნოდ იყოს მართალი : –
14	111:7	წ[მ]ბავისაგან ბოროტისა : მას არა ეშინოდინ<ს>
15		<განმზა>დებულ არს გული მისი : სასოებასა
16	111:7–8	<ოისა>სა {ACDE} : {8} განმტკიცებულ არს : გული მისი და <არა>
17		<შეიში>ნოს : ვდს იხილოს <მტერთა> [მ]<ისთად>

<sup>18</sup> Under the line, with ornamental sign above.

<sup>19</sup> Added above the line.

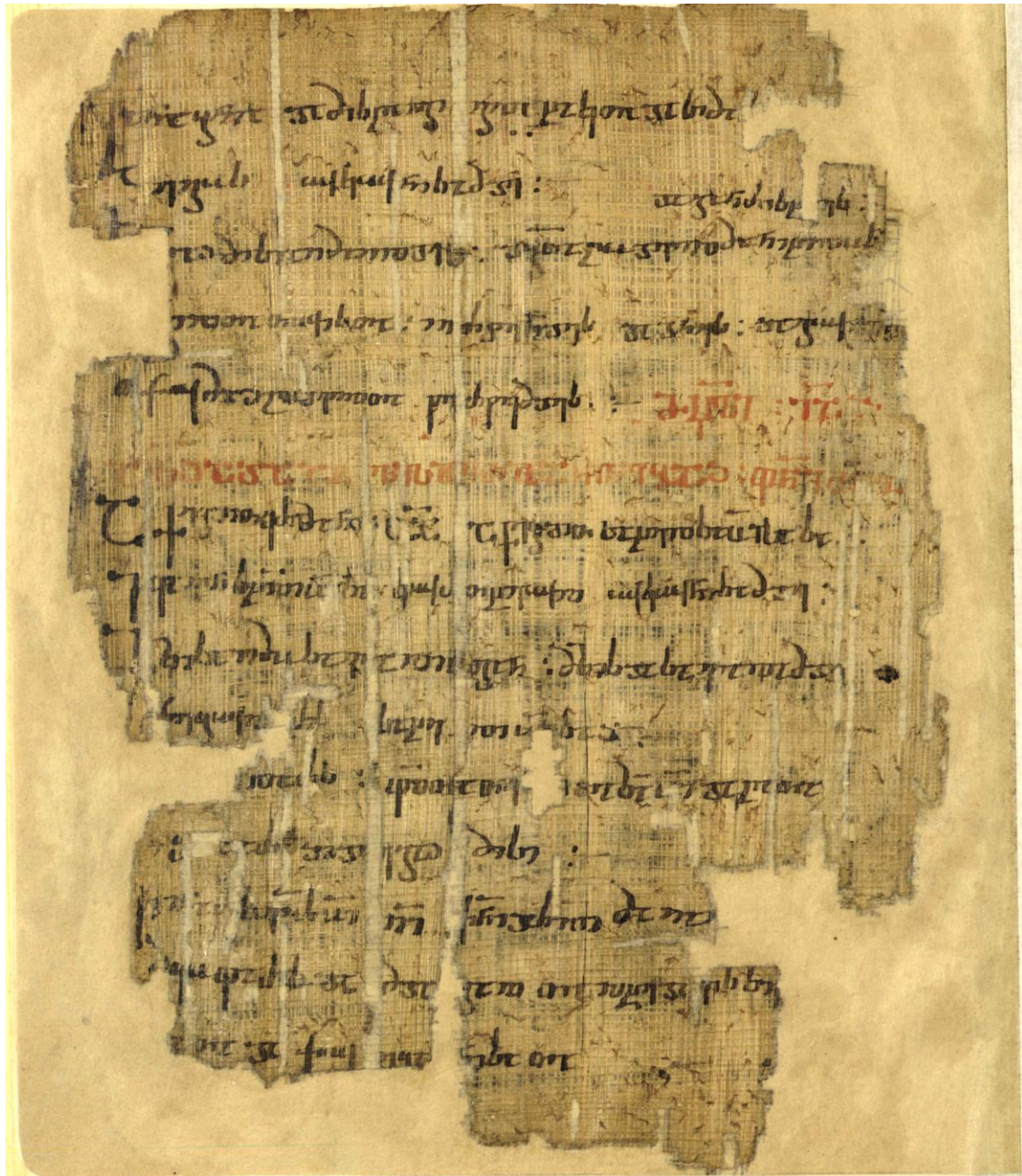


Fig. 3: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fol. 1v

**Table III: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fol. 1v: transcript with variants**

Line	Ps.	Text
1	111:9	ღანაბნია და მისცა იგი გლახაკთა {BCE} და სიმარ<თლქე {სიმართლქე AE, სიმართლქ C} მისი>
2		ეგოს (ABD) უკუნისამდე : და განრისხ[დ]ეს {A}:
3		ჰ[ქ]ად მისი აღმაღლდეს : დ <sup>ა</sup> ბ <sup>ა</sup> თა {10} ცოდვილმან იხილოს
4		<კ>[ბ]ილთა თუისთა : იღრჭენდეს {ABCD} დადნეს {ABDE} : და გუელ[ის]
5		თქუმა ცოდვილთა წარწყმდეს : – <span style="color: red;">მ<sup>ა</sup>გ<sup>ა</sup>ლი : ი<sup>ა</sup> :-</span>
6	112	<span style="color: red;">აღ<sup>ა</sup> და ახლისა ერისა ჩინება : ფ<sup>ა</sup>ნი რ<sup>ა</sup>ბ</span>
7	112:1	ტქებდით ერმანი : ო <sup>ა</sup> აქებდით სახელსა ო <sup>ა</sup> ისასა :
8	112:2	უყავნ ს <sup>ა</sup> ხელი ო <sup>ა</sup> ისა კურთხეულ {+ ამიერიტგან omnes} უკუნისამდე :
9	112:3	შ <sup>ა</sup> ზის აღმოსავალითგან : მ <sup>ა</sup> ზის დასავალამდე
10		ქებულ არს {ABCD} სახელი ო <sup>ა</sup> ისა : –
11	112:4	<შ <sup>ა</sup> და>ლ არს : ე <sup>ა</sup> ლთა თე<სლ>თა ზ <sup>ა</sup> ო <sup>ა</sup> ი და ცათა
12		შ <sup>ა</sup> ინ <sup>ა</sup> არს დიდება მისი : –
13	112:5	წინ არს გ <sup>ა</sup> რ ო <sup>ა</sup> ი დ <sup>ა</sup> ი ჩ <sup>ა</sup> ნი <sup>ა</sup> <sup>20</sup> რ <sup>ა</sup> ლი მადა<ლთა შინა>
14	112:5–6	მყოფ არს {6} და {AE} მდაბალთა ჰხედავს {sic, ხედავს cet.} ზე<ცი>-
15		<ს>ათა და ქუეყანისათა

<sup>20</sup> Sic? The character might also be a ႁ of და “and”, erroneously added but not erased.



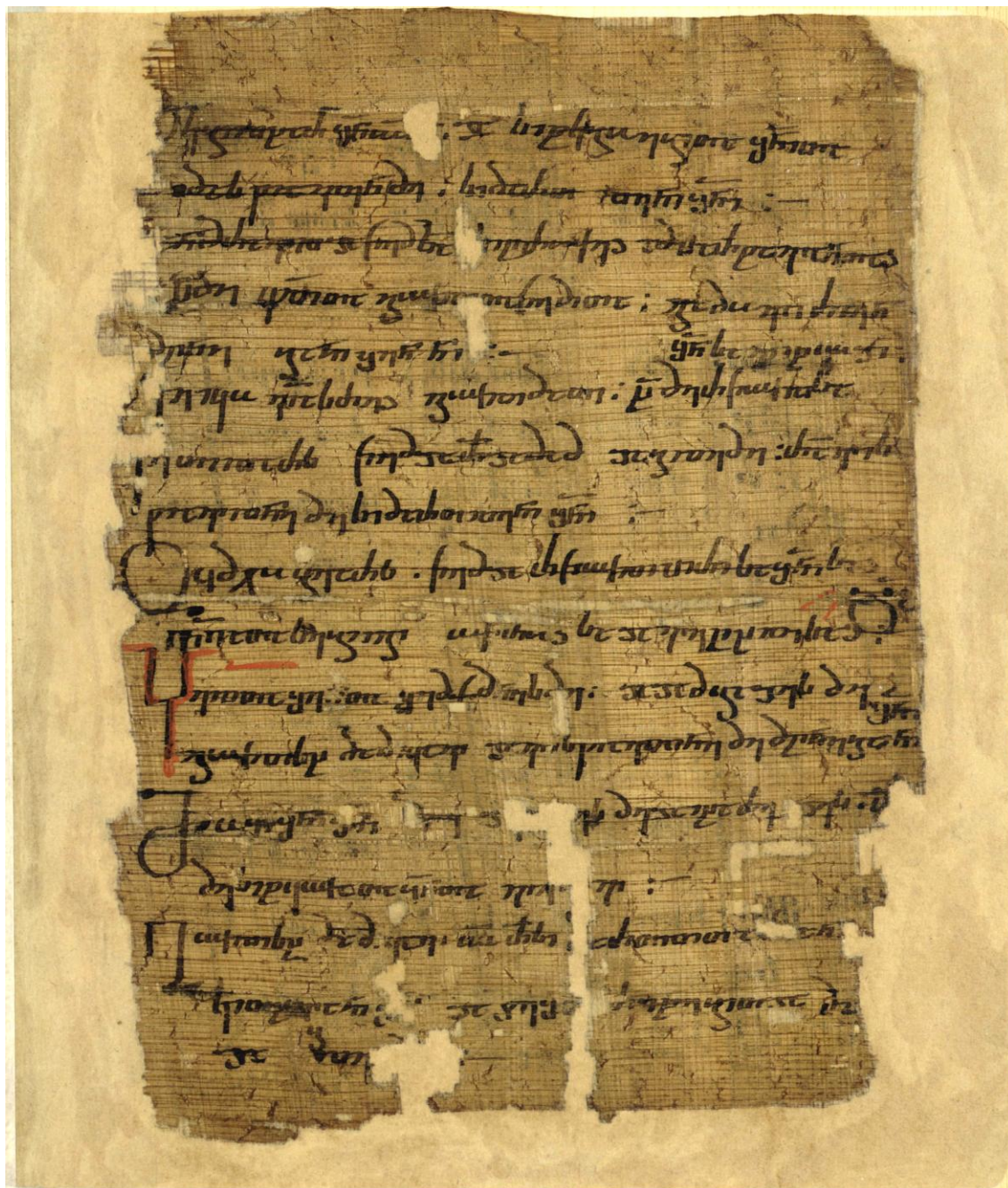


Fig. 4: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fol. 2r



**Table IV: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fol. 2r: transcript with variants**

Line	Ps.	Text
1	118:68	[P]კბილ ხარ შნ ოო . და სიტკბოებითა შნითა
2		მასწავენ მე : სიმართლენი შნი : –
3	118:69	[L]ანმრავლდა ჩემ ზა სიცრუედ ამპარტავანთად
4		ხ მე ყლთა გულითა ჩემითა : გამოვიძიენ
5		მცნებანი შენნი : – შნსა ვიტყოდი {C} :
6	118:70	[F]ეიყო ვა სძედ გული მათი : ხ მე რჩულსა {BE}
7	118:71	[B]ეთილ არს ჩემდა რ დამამდაბლე მე : რა ვის-
8		წავლნე {AC} მე {BCE} სიმართლენი შნი : –
9	118:72	ღუმჯობე {BCE} არს : ჩემდა რჩული პირისა შნისად
10		ვე ათასები იგი ოქროსა და ვეცხლისად : ჭ[ა] {?} <sup>21</sup>
11	118:73	ჟელთა შენთა შემქმნეს მე : და დამბადეს მე {ABCD}
12		გულისხმა-მიყავ {BE, + მე C} და ვისწავლნე {ACD} მე {ACDE} მცნებანი შნი <sup>22</sup> <: ->
13	118:74	შოშიშნი შნი [მხ]ედ[ვიდ]ეს მე და იხარე[ბ]დეს . რ
14		მე {ABCD} სიტყუათა შნთა ვე[სა]ვ : –
15	118:75	ღულისხმა-მიყავ {E, -ვეავ ABCD} ოო რ სიმართლით არ[ი]ან [გ]<ან>
16		კითხვანი შნი და {BCE} ჭეშმ[ა]რიტებით დამა<მ>-
17		დაბლე მ<ე> : –

<sup>21</sup> Uncertain; capital letter written over the preceding colon, with two marks in red before and possibly an abbreviation mark above; A has იოდ for the Hebrew letter but this does not help.

<sup>22</sup> Added above the line.

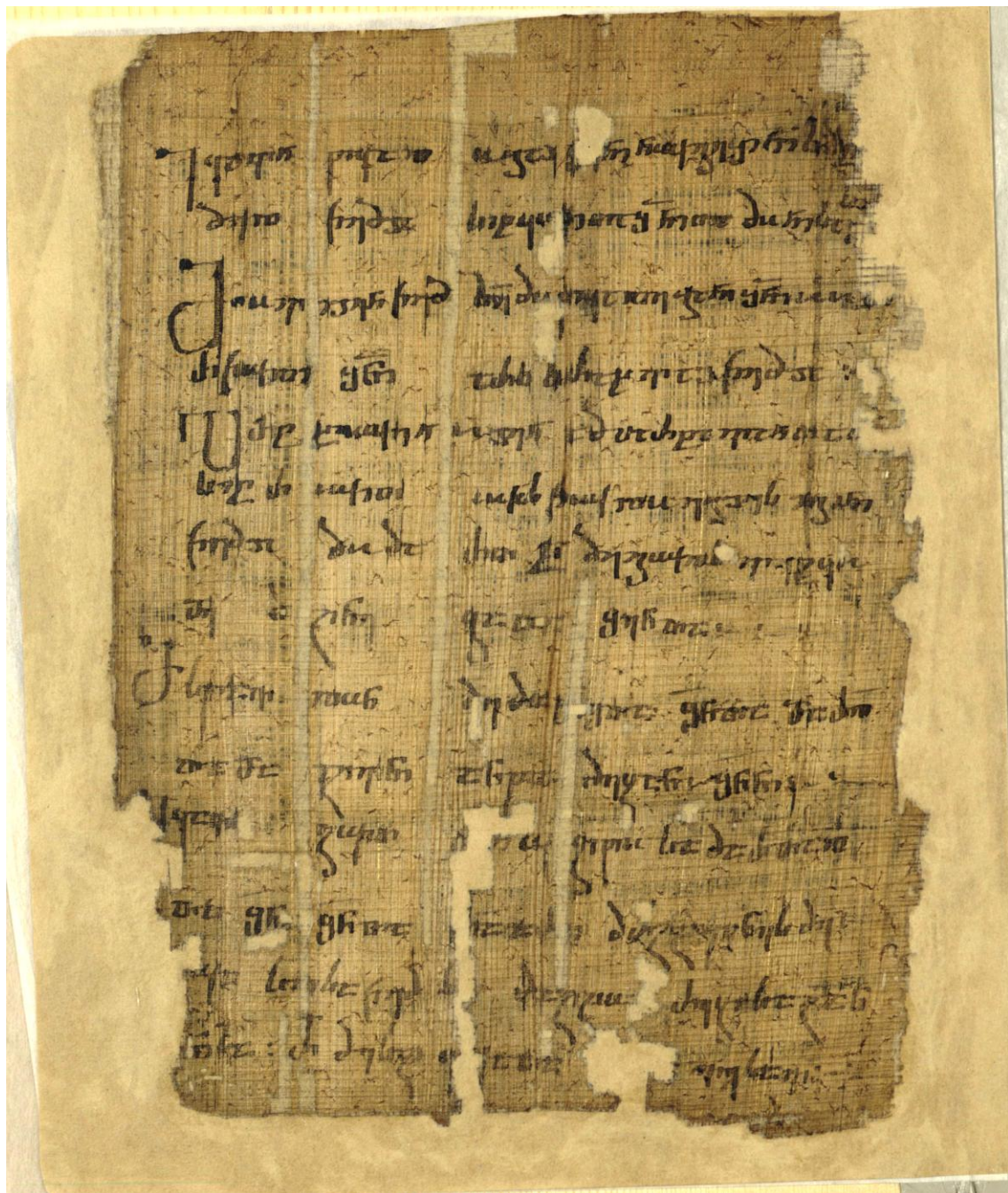


Fig. 5: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fol. 2v

**Table V: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fol. 2v: transcript with variants**

Line	Ps.	Text
1	118:76	Դყავն Վყաღობաჲ Չენი ნუგეშინის-მც<ე>-
2		მელ {ACD} ჩემდა სირუითა შნითა მონისა [შ]<ნი>სა <sup>23</sup> <: ->
3	118:77	Ժოვიდენ ჩემ ზ~ <sup>24</sup> მოწყალებანი (BCE) შნი ო~ო {+ და გცხოვნდე რ~ omnes}
4		რჩული {BE} შნი არს ზრახვაჲ {AD} ჩემდა : –
5	118:78	Նրცხუენოდენ {ABD} ამპარტავანთა [რ~]
6		სიცრუით {ADE} ურჩულობდეს {BE} იგინი {ABCD}
7		ჩემდა მომართ ხ~ მე გუღს-ვეტყო-
8		დე მცნებათა შენთა : –
9	118:79	Ժსწავლოն მე მოშიშთა შნთა და რ~ლ-
10		თა დაცივნიან {sic; დადცნიან BCE, იცნიან AD} წამებანი შნნი : –
11	118:80	Դყავն გული [ჩემი] უბიწო სამართաღ-
12		თა შნა შნთა რ~ა არა მრცხუენეს მე : –
13	118:81	<Դ>გ~უა {ABD} ს~ლსა ჩემს[ა] მაცხო[ა]րებისაგან
14		<შ~>ნისა : რ~ მე {ACDE} სიტყუათა <შნთ>[ა] ვესავ :

In minor orthographical or textual variants, the papyrus Psalter agrees 38 times with B, 33 times with E, 32 times with A, 29 times with C, and 28 times with D. It is a pity that the manuscript has been damaged so much, especially concerning the titles of the psalms, which are its most original contribution.

<sup>23</sup> Ending added above the line.

<sup>24</sup> Corrected from ზ~ე?



## 2. Cambridge, University Library, Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1 and 79.31

It was the Georgian palimpsest of Jeremiah from the Cairo *genizah* (MS Cambridge, University Library, Taylor-Schechter ms. 12,183 and 12,741) that provided the proof for Mzekala Shandize's father Akaki that his assumption about the former existence of *khanmetoba* in the Georgian language was right.<sup>25</sup> Some decades ago, an article was published with a survey of the palimpsest fragments from the Cairo *genizah* with Christian content and with the indication of the language of the underlying texts.<sup>26</sup> Among them, there was one more Georgian fragment kept in the Library of Cambridge University, with hitherto unidentified content, namely, MS Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1. Another fragment, Taylor-Schechter 79.31, was indicated as having an Arabic undertext, likewise unidentified. In 1982, I asked for a UV reproduction of both fragments and received the photographs of two folios. The upper text of them, both badly damaged, was written by two different hands in Hebrew. Taylor-Schechter 79.31 remained impossible to decipher, but Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1 was partly legible: it revealed Ps. 3:4 – 4:7 in Georgian, with the lines usually covered by the upper layer in Hebrew. The text is written in *nuskhuri* minuscules, with the initials of verses in *asomtavruli*; on the basis of its palaeographic appearance, it can be dated to the tenth century. In Tables VI–VII, I provide a transcript of both pages of Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1, facing the photographs that were kindly provided by the University Library of Cambridge in 1982 (Figs 6 and 8–9).

Of course, nowadays, with multispectral imaging technology, one should be able to decipher the text entirely, which has unknown variants in Ps 4:4 while usually representing the text of the old manuscripts. And of course, I hope that the Arabic palimpsest will also be deciphered.

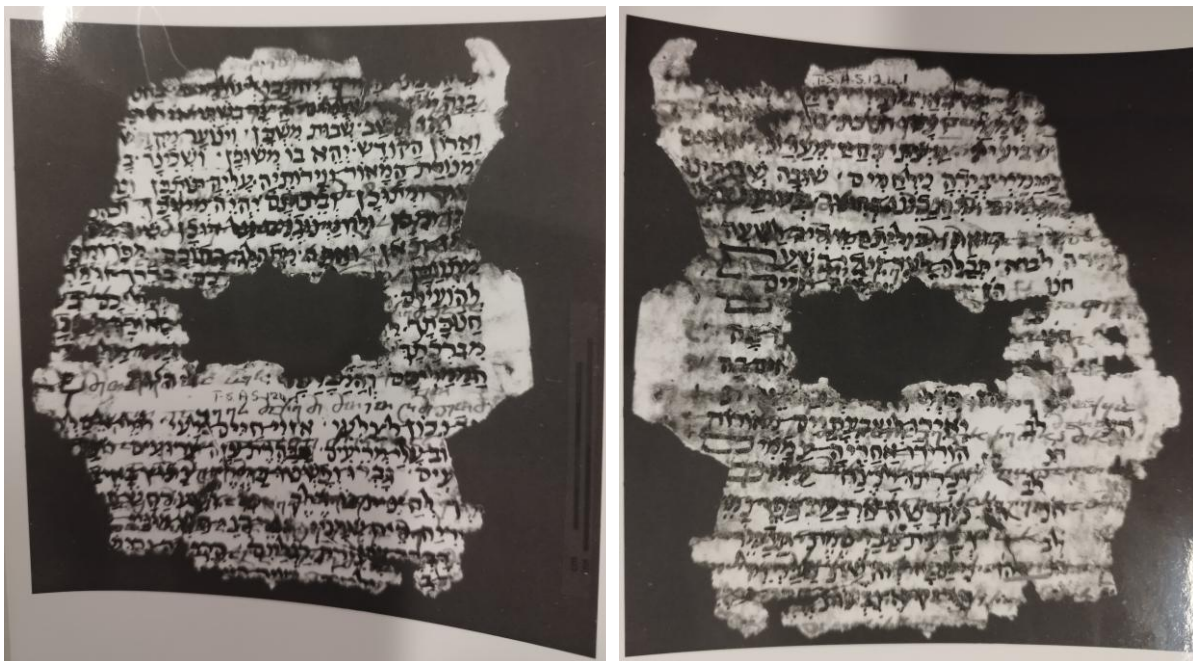


Fig. 6: Cambridge, UL, Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1, recto and verso (original UV image)

<sup>25</sup> See Gippert 2019 for the relation of the Cambridge fragment to that of London, British Library, ms. Or. 6581, and Gippert forthcoming for new readings of the Jeremiah palimpsest based on multispectral images.

<sup>26</sup> Sokoloff & Yahalom 1979, 126, rearranged in Vollandt 2023, 245.



### 3. Yerevan, Matenadaran, Georgian fragment 37

While preparing a description – which will eventually be published by a team from Tbilisi – I could decipher with the naked eye part of the inferior text of the two-folio Georgian fragment 37 kept in the Matenadaran in Erevan. The deciphered text is enough to state that this is another witness of the Georgian Psalter according to the old redaction. The *asomtavruli* initials of the verses were the easiest to read. Meanwhile, the multispectral technology has helped to decipher the underlying text (see Figs 7 and 10–13), and a complete transcript was provided by Sandro Tskhvedadze in March–April 2024, which I am happy to present here in his name.

The text is entirely written in *asomtavruli* as in manuscripts ABCE. I think it was not copied after the tenth century. The ink is brown, there are rubricated parts such as titles and the indication of a *diapsalma* (დასტყეხბად). The text is generally covered by the upper layer, line on line, but on fols 1r and 2r, the first line of the psalter was not overwritten; the big initials of verses are in the margin and are usually quite legible. The undertext must be read in the order 2rv – 1rv as arranged in Tables VIII – XI.

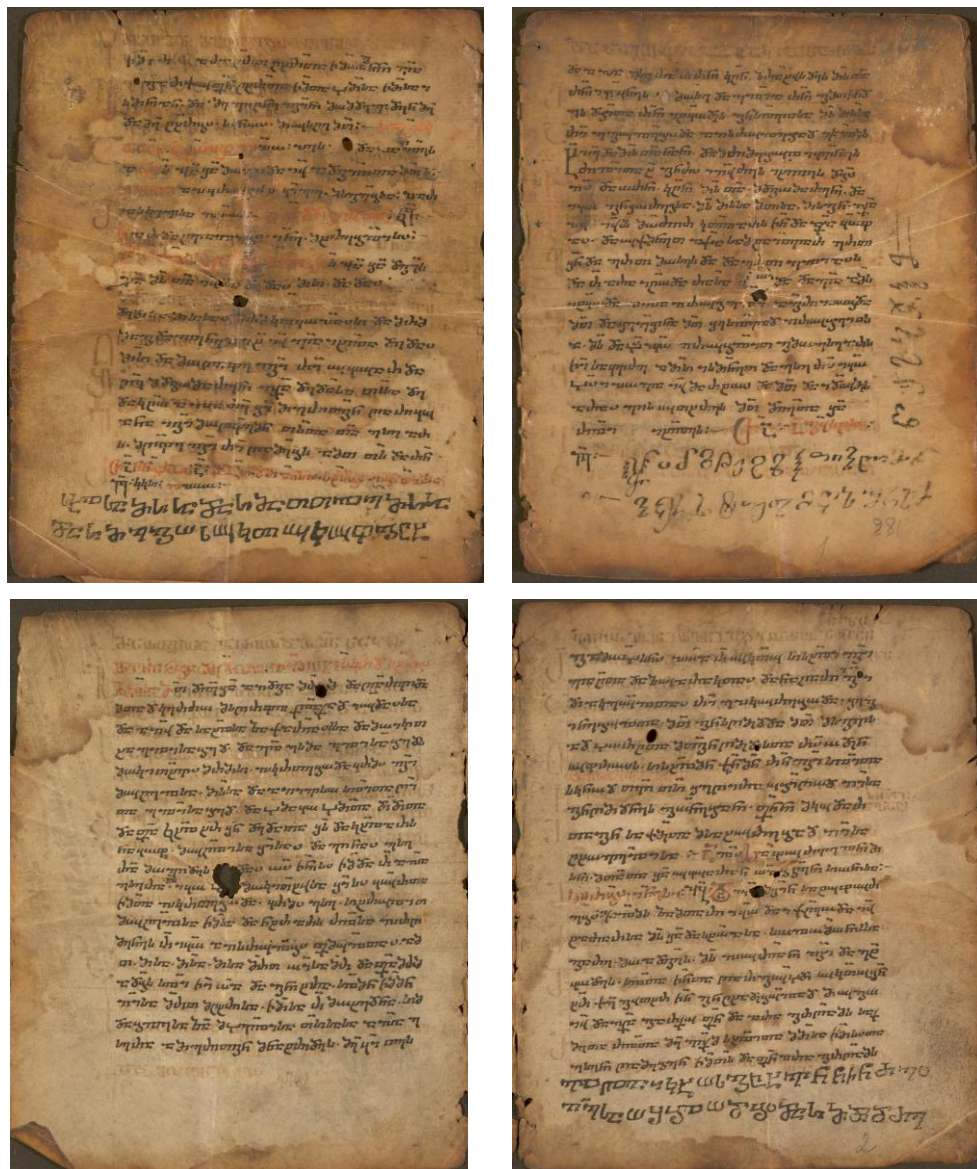


Fig. 7: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fols 2v, 1r, 1v, and 2r (colour images)

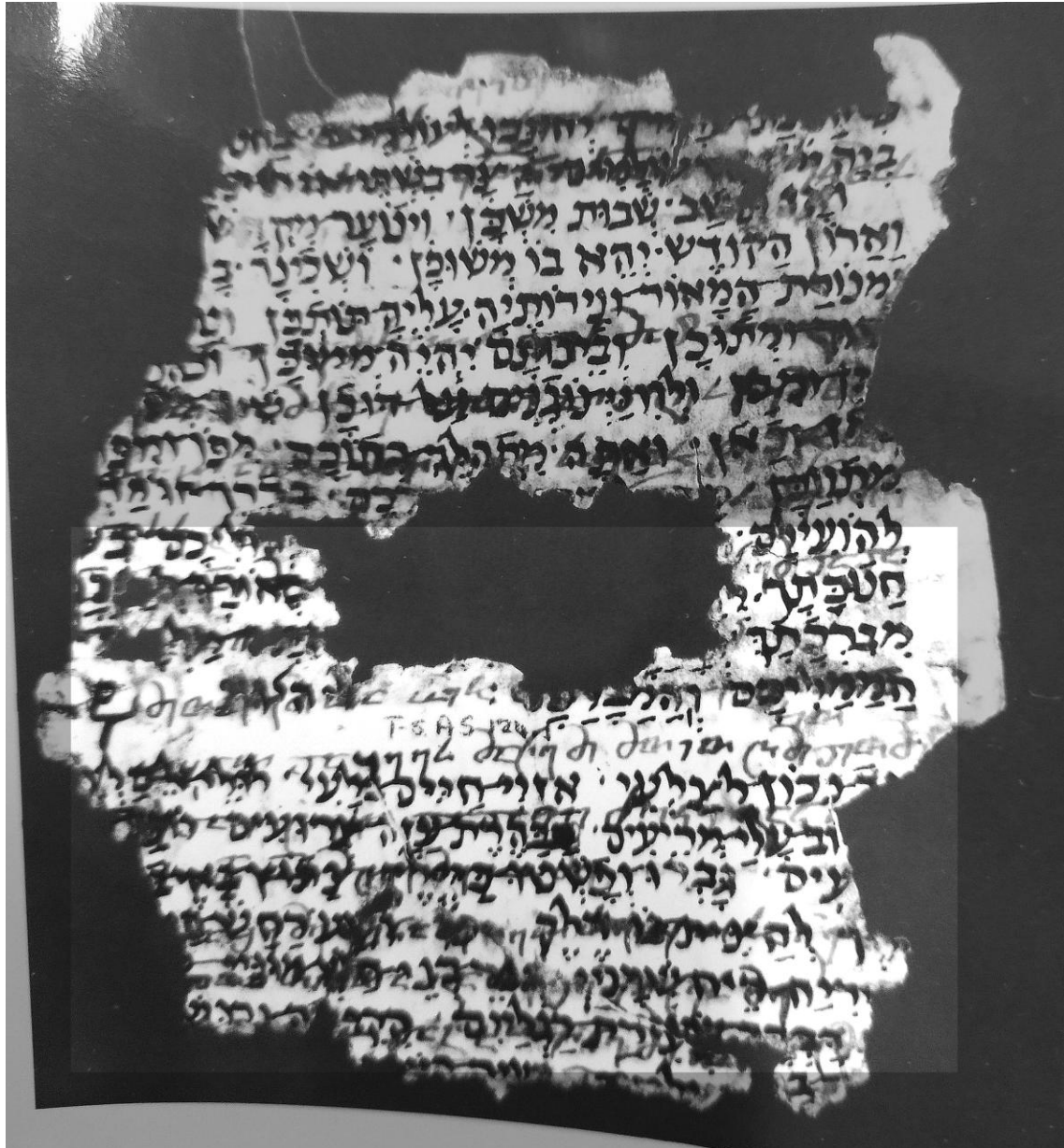


Fig. 8: Cambridge, UL, Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1, recto (transcribed part highlighted)

Table VI: Cambridge, UL, Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1, recto, partial transcript

Ps.	Transcript with variants indicated
3:4	ჩემდა და {BCEa}
3:5	ყმითა ჩემითა ოწისა {მიმართ ღაღად <i>omnes</i> } [ვ]ეავ და შეესმა ჩემი მითი წმიდით მისით <sup>27</sup>
3:6	[შ]ე დაეწევ და { <i>ლ, om. ოვ</i> } დავიძინე გან[ი]<ლეი>- [ძ]ე რ ოწი მწე მეყო მე
3:7	<Ი>[რ]ა შემე[ში]ნა {BCEa} მე ბევრეულისაგ ე[რ]<ი
3:8	მატხოვნე მე

<sup>27</sup> Last three characters added above the line.

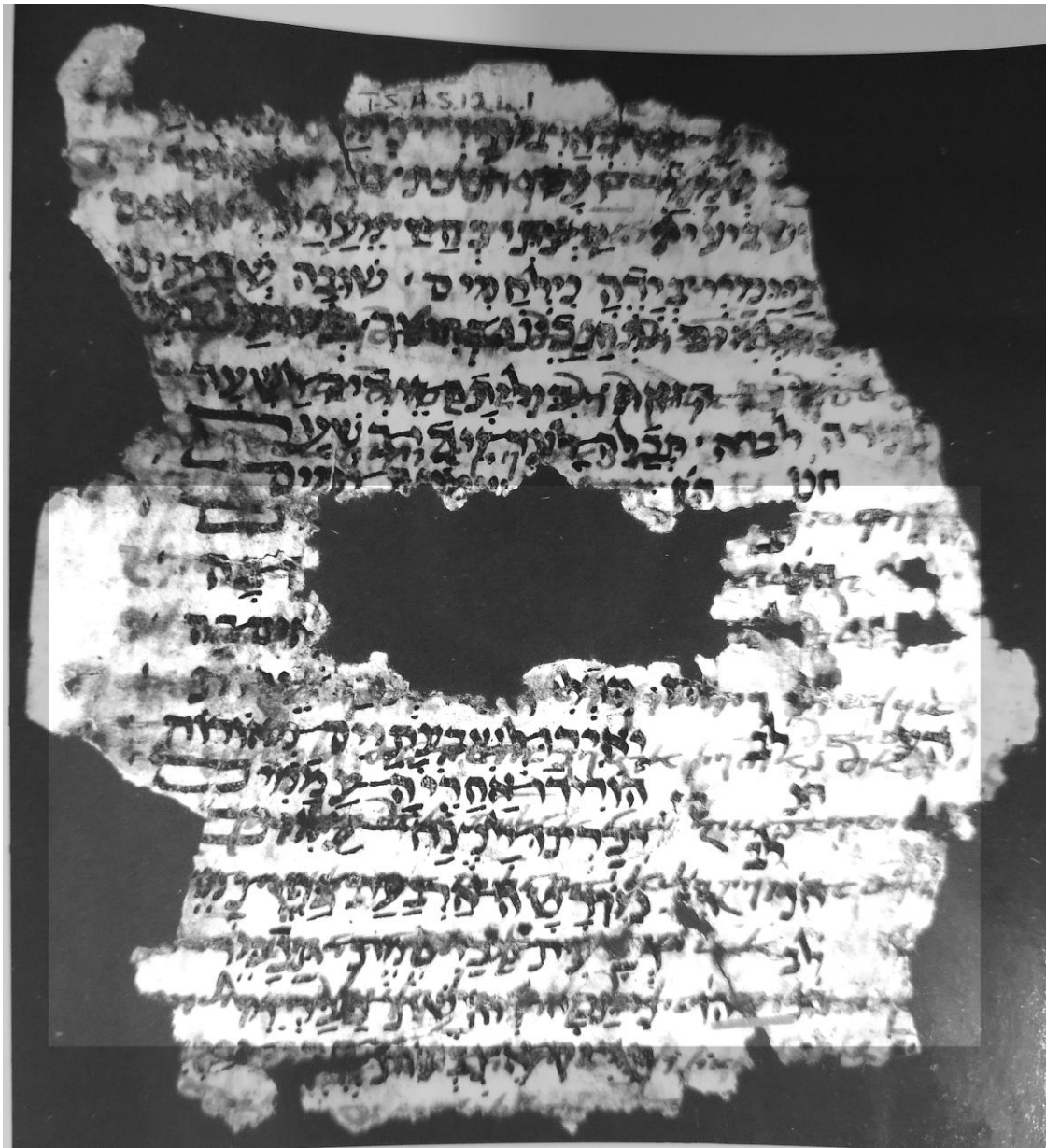


Fig. 9: same, verso (transcribed part highlighted)

Table VII: Cambridge, UL, Taylor-Schechter AS 124.1, verso, partial transcript

Ps.	Transcript with variants indicated
4:3	გულ-ფიც[ხ]<ელ> ხ[ართ] <რად გიყუარს ამ>აოება[დ და] ექ[იებთ] <სიცრუესა>
4:4	ღ[ულისხმა-ყავთ რ~ საკერველ-უყო [ო~6] შეგესმინ ღაღადებისა ჩემისაჲ მისა მიმართ <sup>28</sup>
4:5	<ღული>ს-წერომასა თქ~ნსა ნუ სცოდავთ [რა]<დ> <თქუა>[6] გულთა თქ~ნთა სარეცელთა თქ~ნ <თა ზ~ა> [შეი]ნან[ეთ] [დით ო~სა]
4:6	<ყე>[წ]ირეთ მსხუერპ[ლი სი]მართლისა[დ და ეს]<ევ>

<sup>28</sup> Last four letters added above the line; homoioteleuton from ო~ა to ო~6?



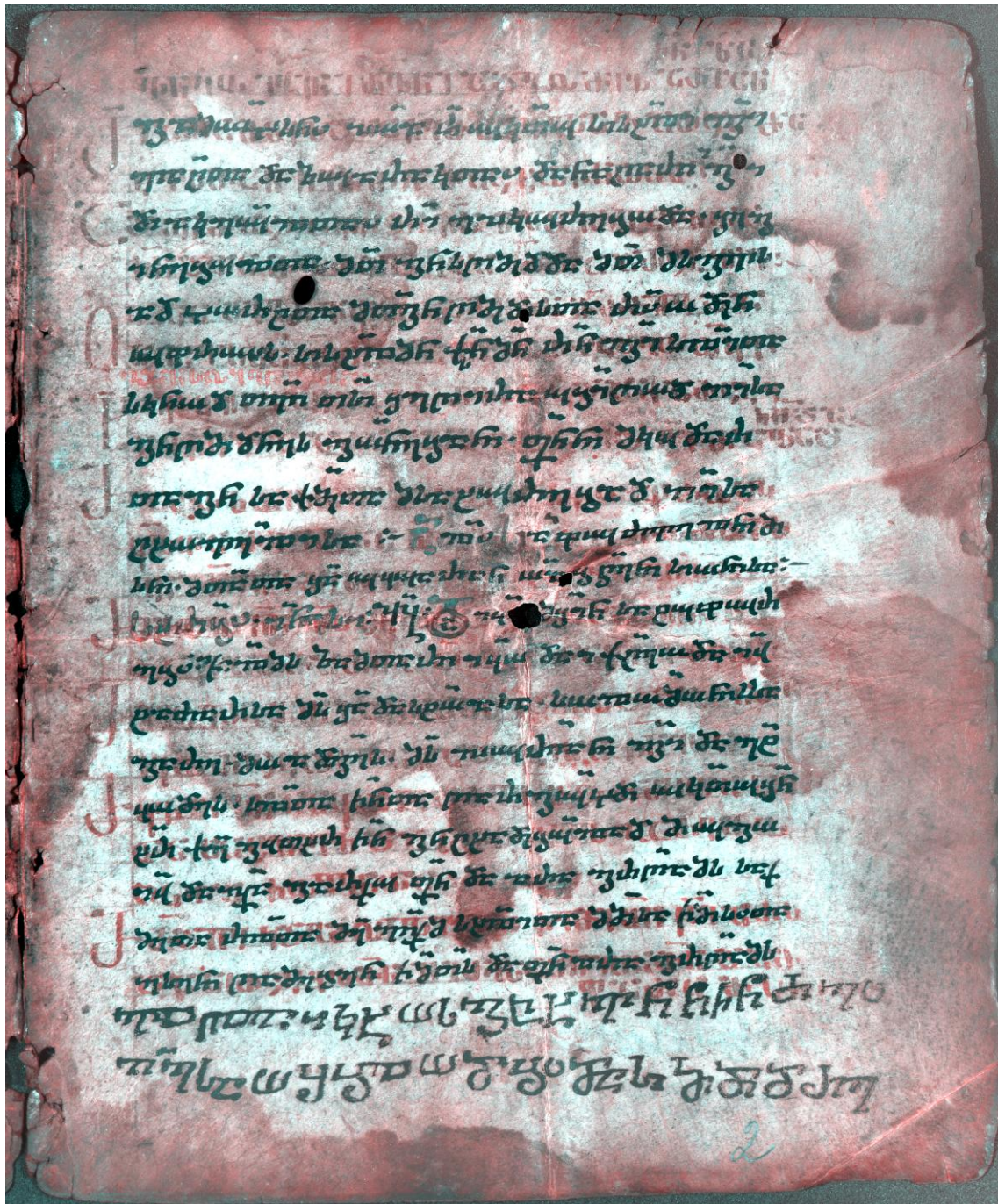


Fig. 10: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 2r (multispectral image,<sup>29</sup> processed)

<sup>29</sup> This and the following multispectral images were taken in May 2018 at the Matenadaran, Yerevan, in the course of the project “Palimpsest Manuscripts of the Matenadaran”, kindly supported by the Volkswagen Foundation (grant no. 93304), and further processed with the HOKU software developed by Keith T. Knox (see <http://www.cis.rit.edu/~ktkpci/Hoku.html>) in the course of the DeLiCaTe project (“The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories” (ERC grant no. 101019006, see <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/delicate.html>) between 2022 and 2025. All URLs quoted in this article were last accessed on 30 December 2025.



**Table VIII: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 2r: transcript Sandro Tskhvedadze**

Line	Ps.	Text
1	43:6	ენეთ იგინი რ~ლნი ადგომილ არიან ჩ~ნ ზ~ა :— <sup>30</sup>
2	43:7	ჟ არა მშუღლდსა ჩემსა ვესავ არცა მა-
3		ხვლმან ჩემმ~ნ მაცხოვნოს მე :—
4	43:8	ჯ~დ შ~ნ მაცხოვნენ ჩ~ნ მაჭირებელთა
5		ჩ~ნ[თა დ]ა <sup>31</sup> მოძო[ვლ]ეთა [ჩ~ნთ]ა არცხვ~ნე :—
6	43:9	ღ~თისა [მი]ერ ვიქე[ბოდ]ით ჩ~ნ მ~რდღე და
7		[სა]ხელსა შენ[სა {BCDE} აოვვა]რებდეთ ო~კე :— განსოვენება :
8	43:10	ღ~ აწ~ შენ განმიშორენ [ჩ~ნ] და {CE} მარცხ-
9		ნე {sic?} ჩ~ნ და არა გამო[ხოვ]ედ ღ~ი ძალად ჩ~ნდა :— <sup>32</sup>
10	43:11	შ~ართლოვკ[ოვნ] მაქციენ ჩ(ოვე)ნ ოვფროდს
11		ე~ლთა მტერთა ჩ~ნ[თასა] და მოძოვლ-
12		ენი ჩ~ნნი მიმოდა[მიტაც]ებდეს ჩ~ნ :—
13	43:12	შ~იმცენ ჩ~ნ ვ~ა ცხოვარ<ნი> საჭმლისანი
14		და წ~არმართა {sic} შ~ს [გან]მაბნიენ ჩ~ნ :—
15	43:13	შ~იეც ერი შენი ოვსასყიდლოდ და არა
16		იყო რიცხოვ ღაღადებისა ჩ~ნისა :—
17	43:14	შ~ევენ ჩ~ნ საყოვედრელ მოძმეთა ჩ~ნ-
18		თა საცინელ და სა[კი]ცხელ გარემო-
19		დსთა ჩოვენთა :—
20	43:15	შ~რდღე კდემოვლებად ჩემი შ~ნ წ~ე არს
21		და სირცხვლმ~ნ პირისა შ~ნისამ~ნ დამ- ფარა მე :— <sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Last two words added above the line.

<sup>31</sup> Uncertain; corrected from ჩ~ნდთა?

<sup>32</sup> Last word added above the line.

<sup>33</sup> Last six characters and punctuation marks added below the line.

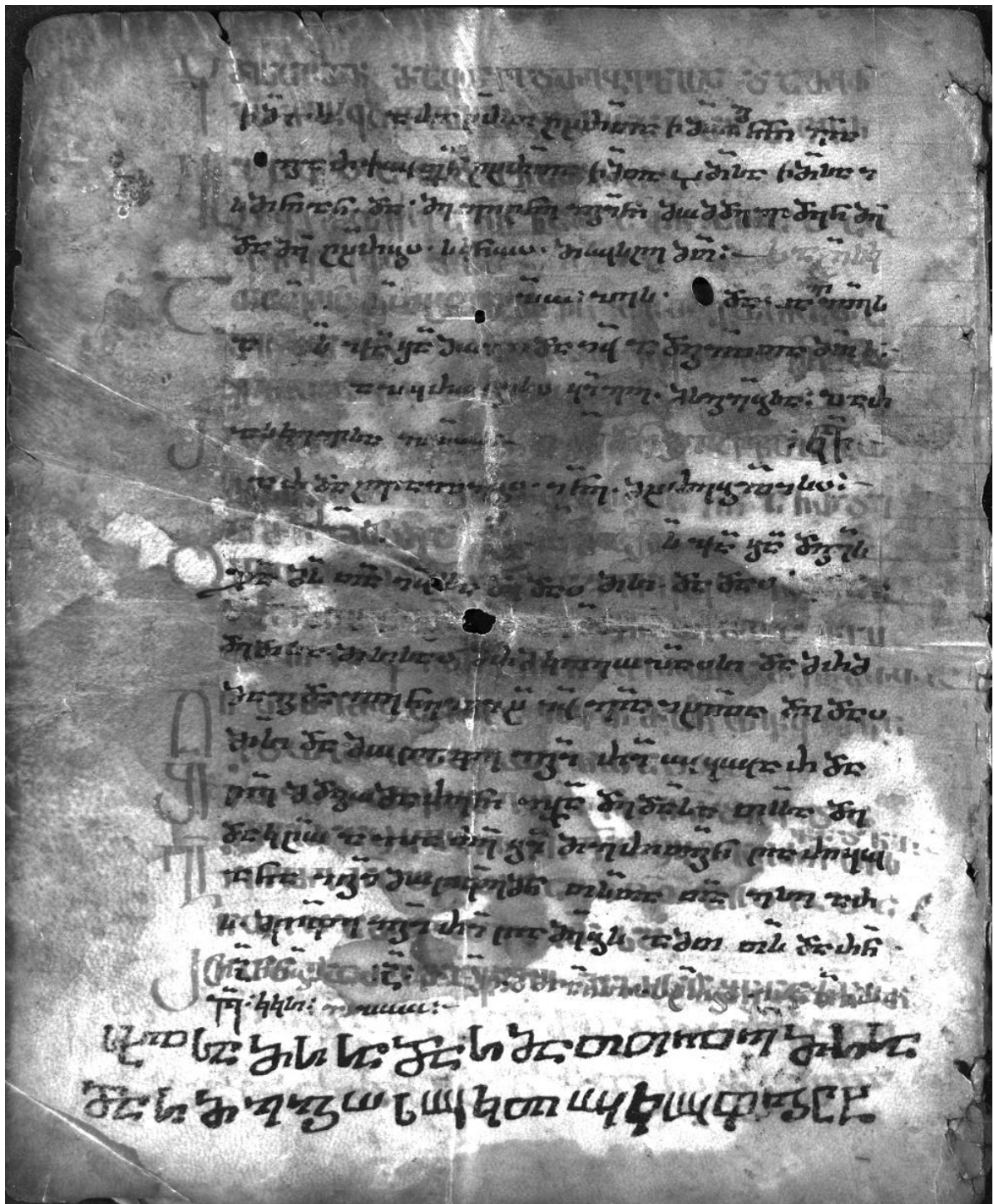


Fig. 11: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 2v (multispectral image, processed)

**Table IX: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 2v: transcript Sandro Tskhvedadze**

Line	Ps.	Text
1	43:17	ყმისაგან მაყოგედრებელისა და ძურ-
2		ის მეტყოველისა [პ]ირისაგან მტერ-
3		ისა და მდევარისა :-
4	43:18	უსე ყი მოიწია ჩნ ზა და ჩნ არა დაგ-
5		ივიწყეთ შენ :-
6		სრა ვეცრო[ვე]ენი[თ] ჩნ აღთქოვმათა
7	43:19	შენთა არც[ა ოვკ]ო[ვნ] ვიქეცით ჩნ {BCDE} [გო]-
8		ულითა ჩო[ვენ]ითა :-
9	43:20	ჟ დამა[მდაბლენ] ჩნ [ადგ]ილსა ბო-
10		[როტ]სა და დამფარნა ჩნ ახრდი-
11		ლმნ [სიკოვდილ]ისამან :-
12	43:21	ოვკოვ[ეთ]ოვმცა დავივიწყეთ ჩნ სახ-
13		ელი ღთისა ჩნ<ის>[ად გა]ნ-თოვმცა-ვიპ-
14		ერენით ჳელნი ჩნნი კერპთა მიმართ :-
15	43:22	ონ სამემცა იძია ესე რ მან ოვწყის სა-
16		იდოვმლოდ გოვლისად :-
17	43:23	ყნთვს მოვწყდებით ჩნ მრდღე და
18		შევირაცხებით ჩნ ვა ცხოვარნი კლვადნი :- <sup>34</sup>
19	43:24	უნჩილვქე რად [გძინ]ავს ოო აღდგ და
20		ნოვ დამაგდებ ჩნ სდ :-
21	43:25	ჟად გარემიიქცევ პირსა შნსა ჩნგნ

<sup>34</sup> Last five characters and punctuation marks added above the line.

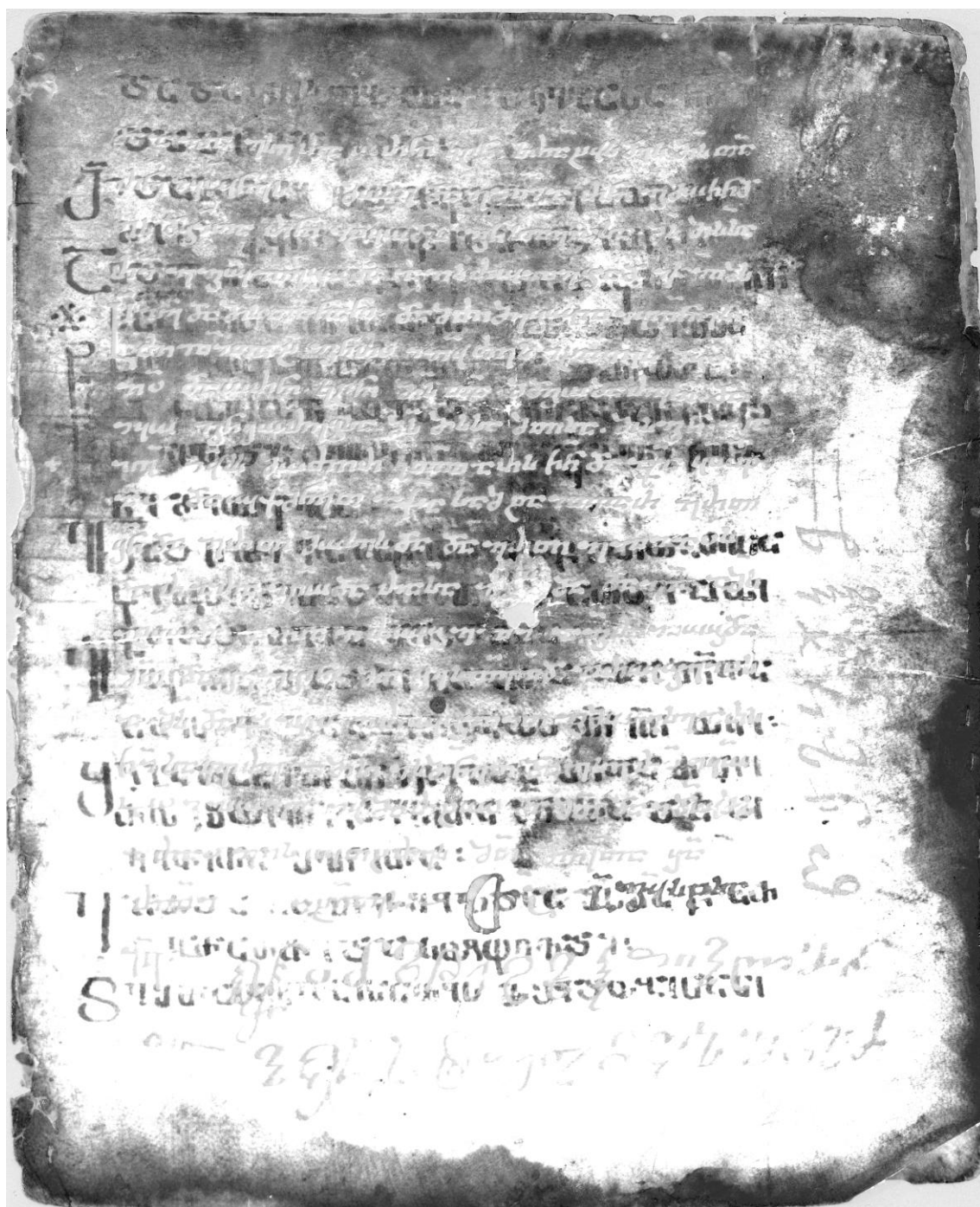


Fig. 12: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 1r (multispectral image, processed)



**Table X: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 1r: transcript Sandro Tskhvedadze**

Line	Ps.	Text
1		და დაგიწეებ გლახაკებასა ჩნსა
2		და ჭირსა ჩნსა :—
3	43:26	ჴ დამდა[ბლ]და მიწა[მდ]ე [სოვლი ჩე]-
4		მი და ქენდ მიიწია მოვცელი ჩე[მი]
5	43:27	ზღდებ ღო [შემ]ეწიე ჩნ და მივსნენ ჩნ
6	44	სახელისა <sup>35</sup> შნისათჳს · <b>დასასროვლსა</b>
7		ცვალებოვლთათჳს ძეთა კორწსთა :—
8	44:2	ზღმოთქოვნ გოვლმან ჩემმან სიტყჲ
9		კ[ე]თილი და ოვთხრნე მ[ე] ს[ა]ქმენი ჩემ-
10		ნი მეოვფესა :—
11		ჴჩაჲ ჩემი ვა საწერე[ლი მ]წიგნობრისა
12	44:3	კელოვნისაჲ შოვენ[ი]<ე>[რ] არს იგი ოვ-
13		ფროდს ძეთა კაცთასა :—
14		ჴჩეფინა მადლი ბაგეთაგან შნთა
15		ამისთჳს გაკოვრთხოს შნ ღნ ოჲკე :—
16	44:4	ყეიბ მახვლი შნი წელთა შნთა ძლიე-
17		რო შოვენირებითა შნითა და სი-
18		კეთითა შენითა :—
19		ჴარდა[ა]ცოვ {BCD} მშვლდსა შნსა წარ-
20		გმართე და სოვფევდი :—
21	44:5	სეშმარიტებისათჳს მშვდობისა სი-

<sup>35</sup> Above the word the number of the following psalm (: მდ : = “44”) and in the left margin, a dotted cross and a *kanc’ili*, all in red ink.

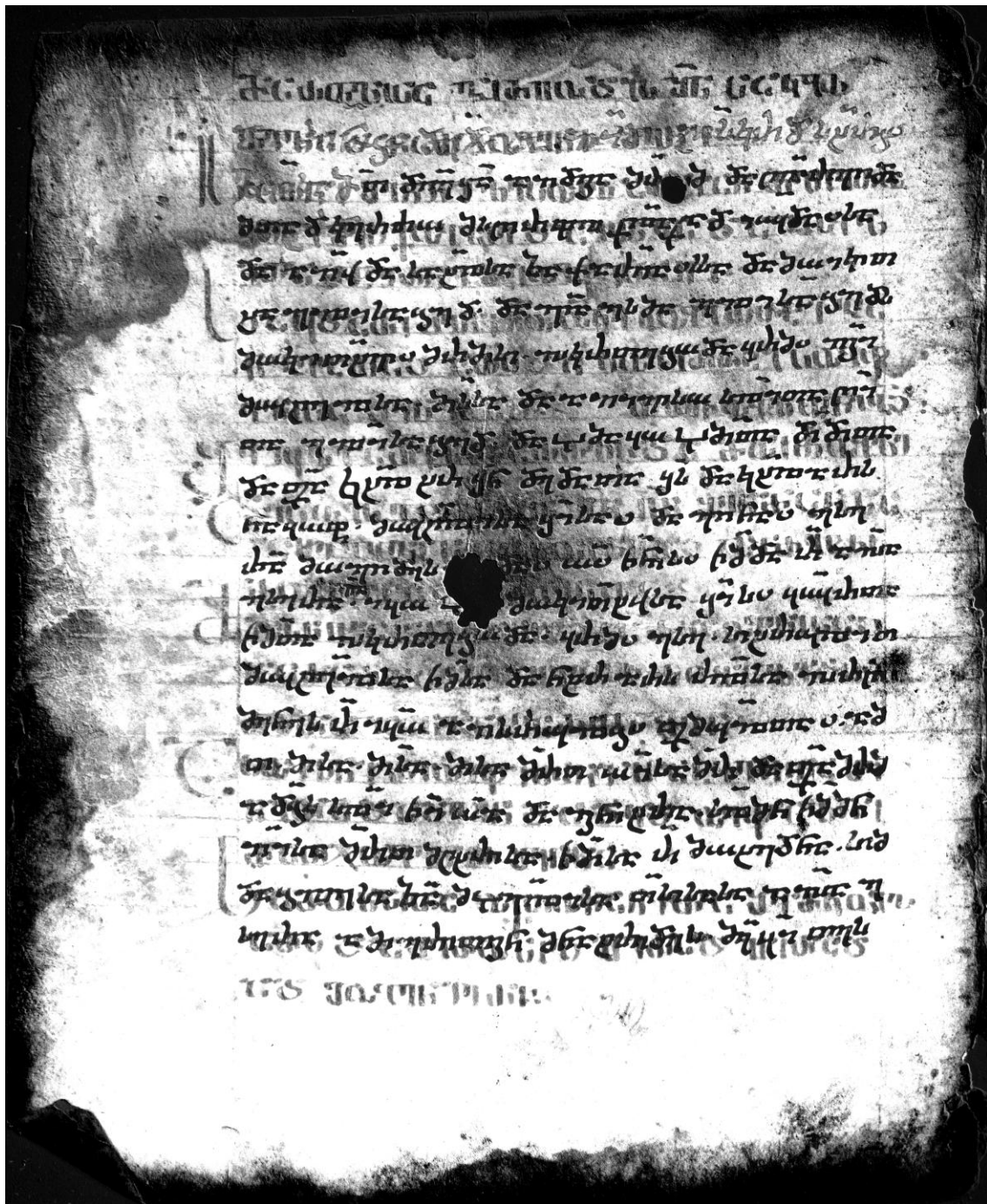


Fig. 13: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 1v (multispectral image, processed)

**Table XI: Yerevan, Matenadaran, VP 37, fol. 1v: transcript Sandro Tskhvedadze**

Line	Ps.	Text
1		მართლისა გიძღოდეს შ"ნ საკურ-
2		ველად მარჯოვენს შენი :-
3	44:6	Მსარნი შენნი ღესოვლ ა[რ]იან ძლიერო
4		[ერნი]ი შენ ქოვეშე დაეცნენ და გოვლ-
5		ითა მტერნი მეოვფისანი :-
6	44:7	საყდარი შენი ღ"ო ო"კე კოვერთხი გა-
7		ნგებისად არს და კოვერთხი სოვფ-
8		ევისა შენის[ად]
9	44:8	ყეიოვარე სიმართლჳ და მოიძოვლე ოვრხოვლოვებჳ :- <sup>36</sup>
10		Ლ[მ]ისთვის გც[ხოს შ]ნ ღ"ნ ღ"ნ შენმან სა-
11		ცხებელი სი[ხარ]ოვლისად ოვმეტჳს
12		მოყოვა[ს]<თა> [შ]ენთა :-
13	44:9	ჭოვრი ტახში {sic} [კას]ია სამკაოვლისად
14		ტაძართაგ[ან] პილოს {sic} ძოვალედთა
15		[რ"ლ]თა განგახარეს შენ :-
16		Ლსოვლნი მეოვფისანი პატივითა შე-
17		ნითა {BCDE} დადგენ {დადგეს BCDE} და {< AC} დედოვფალნი {C}
18		მარჯოვენით შენსა :-
19	44:10	სამოსლითა ოქროვანითა შემკოვლ
20		არს და შემოსილ პირად პირად-
21		ად შოვენირი :-

#### 4. Dedication

Dear Mzekala, the fragments dealt with here reinforce the value of your critical edition of the Psalter and the accuracy of your judgment on the titles. Please accept my deep respect for this wonderful work and my best wishes for many years to come!

<sup>36</sup> Last word and punctuation marks added in the line above.

## Picture credits

Fig. 1: Justin Sinaïtes; St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai.

Fig. 2: Justin Sinaïtes; Jost Gippert; St Catherine's Monastery, Mt Sinai.

Figs 3–5, 14: Olga Vasileva, National Library of Russia, St Petersburg

Figs 6, 8–9: University Library, Cambridge

Fig. 7: Matenadaran, Yerevan

Figs 10–13: Matenadaran, Yerevan / DeLiCaTe project, Hamburg

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# ფსალმუნების ძველი ქართული თარგმანის რამდენიმე გამოუცემელი ხელნაწერი

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სტატიაში წარმოდგენილია პაპირუსზე დაწერილი ფსალმუნის ძველი ქართული თარგმანის ხუთი გვერდის გამოცემა ორი ხელნაწერიდან (სინა, წმინდა ეკატერინეს მონასტერი, georg. 98 და სანკტ-პეტერბურგი, რუსეთის ეროვნული ბიბლიოთეკა, ქართული N.S. 10), რომელიც მოიცავს ფსალმუნებს 64:11 – 65:11, 111:1 – 112:6 და 118:68–81, და ორი პალიმფსესტიდან, რომელიც სხვა მონაკვეთებს შეიცავს (კემბრიჯის უნივერსიტეტის ბიბლიოთეკის ხელნაწერი, Tailor-Schechter AS 124.1 (ფს. 3:4–8 და 4:3–6), გადმოწერილი ულტრაიისფერით გადაღებული ფოტოებიდან, და ერევანი, მატენადარანის ქართული ფრაგმენტი 37 (ფს. 43:6 – 44:10), გადმოწერილი სანდრო ცხვედაძის მიერ მულტისპექტრულად გადაღებული ფოტოებიდან).

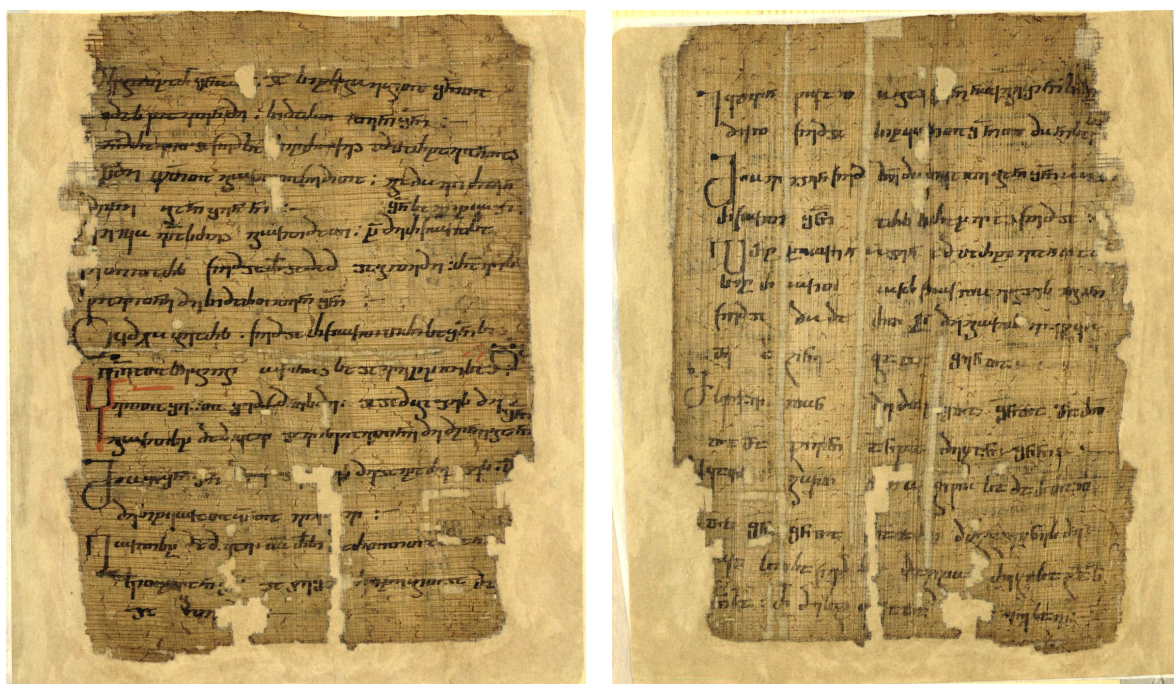


Fig. 14: Saint Petersburg, NLR, Georgian NS 10, fols 2r and 2v

ფსალმუნის ქართული თარგმანის ისტორიისთვის მნიშვნელოვანი ვარიანტები მოტანილია მზექალა შანიძის მიერ გამოცემულ ფსალმუნთა ძირითად რედაქციებზე მითითებით.

# Reading and Commenting Gregory the Theologian: Davit Tbeli's Translations

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**Abstract:** In the intellectual tradition of the Middle Ages, translation was often conceived as an exegetical process rather than a purely linguistic operation. This article examines such an interpretive approach through the Georgian translations of Gregory the Theologian produced by the 11<sup>th</sup>-century Georgian translator Davit Tbeli. Although Davit does not provide explicit commentaries, his translations reveal a consistent interpretive stance expressed through additions, omissions, paraphrases, and lexical choices. These interventions reflect his understanding of the theological content of the source texts and their intended reception by a Georgian audience.

The study reconstructs Davit Tbeli's activity on the basis of manuscript evidence and situates his work within the broader context of Georgian translation practices, particularly in relation to Euthymius the Hagiorite. While sharing the general aim of making complex texts accessible, Davit adopts a more restrained method, remaining closer to the Greek original. His consistent handling of theological terminology and biblical quotations positions him as a transitional figure between the Athonite and later Hellenophile translation traditions, and as an important stage in the development of Georgian theological-philosophical vocabulary.

**Keywords:** Byzantine–Georgian literary relations; Gregory of Nazianzus; interpretive translation; theological terminology.

In the intellectual framework of the Middle Ages, translation was not simply a linguistic operation but was often understood as a form of exegesis – a process through which a learned mediator interpreted an authoritative source text and rearticulated it in a way appropriate to a new linguistic, cultural, and theological setting. This understanding of translation as interpretation – or even transformation – was especially prevalent in the transmission of patristic and other doctrinal writings, where fidelity to the text often coexisted with, or even demanded, an active hermeneutic engagement.

The seminal voice in shaping this conception was St Jerome. In his *Letter to Pammachius* (Ep. 57), Jerome distinguished between *verbum e verbo* (“word-for-word”) and *sensum de sensu* (“sense-for-sense”) translations, explicitly favoring the latter, especially in rendering sacred or rhetorical texts. His defense of a freer translation strategy, grounded in the translator's discernment of the *intentio auctoris*, would resonate profoundly throughout the medieval period. Jerome's vision situated the translator not simply as a linguistic technician but as an exegete – one who reads and interprets through the very act of rewriting.<sup>1</sup>

This model of translation as a commentary-in-action gained particular traction in monastic and theological contexts, where the boundaries between reading, translating and teaching were fluid.

In the Christian East, where patristic texts were not only preserved but also mediated through layered traditions of commentaries, the translator's freedom to paraphrase, reframe, or interpolate could be understood as a form of implicit commentary.

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<sup>1</sup> Hritzu 1965: 114–138 (*Letter 57*).

In the Georgian ecclesiastical tradition, this approach is also evident. In many cases, especially in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the translator's interpretive stance is embedded in the very fabric of the translation itself. Choices of omission, addition, paraphrase, or lexical nuance may reflect more than stylistic variation; they offer insight into how the translator understood the source text, its theological emphases, and its proper reception by the targeted readers. In such cases, the translation *is* the commentary.

This view aligns with a broader medieval understanding of translation as an interpretive act – a process in which the translator assumes an exegetical role without explicitly presenting it as such. In this model, translation is not limited to reproducing the form of the original; rather, it involves re-creating its meaning in a manner appropriate to a new audience and context. The translator becomes both mediator and teacher, guiding readers through the theological, rhetorical, and emotional layers of the text, and shaping their reception of its message. Within this context, the 11<sup>th</sup>-century Georgian translator Davit Tbeli, through his renderings of Gregory the Theologian, offers a thoughtful example of how the theological meaning and rhetorical artistry of patristic speech could be carried into another language. Although Davit does not provide any overt commentary on the homilies he renders, the nature of his interventions – lexical variations, shifts in register, omissions, or elaborations – invite us to consider his work as a kind of embedded exegesis, where translation becomes a theological reading.

But before approaching Davit Tbeli's translations, it is important to outline what we know about his life and the context in which he worked.

In fact, almost nothing is known about him. In the Ordinance of the Church Council (Synod) of Ruisi-Urbnisi in 1104,<sup>2</sup> Davit is named together with another Georgian ecclesiastic figure, Stepane Sananoisdze: ღირსთა მამათა ჩუენთა დავით ტბელისა და სტეფანე სანანოიძისა საუკუნომცა არს ჳსენებად და კურთხევად მათი<sup>3</sup> (“The memory of our venerable fathers, Davit Tbeli and Stepane Sananoisdze, is everlasting, and their blessing endures”). Stepane's name, in turn, appears in the hymnographic collection of Mikael Modrekili, the *iadgari* compiled between 978 and 988, where several hymns of his composition are preserved.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of these references, scholars have concluded that Davit Tbeli and Stepane lived and worked in the same period, namely, the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>5</sup>

The earliest independent mention of Davit, apart from Stepane, occurs in a manuscript copied in 1030 (MS Tbilisi, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts [hereafter: NCM], A-1), which preserves Euthymius the Hagiorite's Georgian translations of Gregory the Theologian's homilies. In the colophon to *Or.* 24 (on St Cyprian), Davit is named as the translator: ესე საკითხავი წმიდისა კჳპრიანე მღვდელმოწამისაჲ დავით ტბელის ძისა თარგმნილი არს. ვინცა იკითხვიდეთ, ღოცვა ყავთ მისთვის (“This reading for [*lit.* of] St. Cyprian the Hieromartyr was translated by Davit son of Tbeli. Whoever [of you] reads it, pray for him!”).<sup>6</sup> The analysis of Georgian manuscripts containing Euthymius' translations shows that Davit's contributions were incorporated into these collections gradually, thus documenting the ongoing process of his work. Most likely, *Or.* 24 was the first piece of

<sup>2</sup> Text published in Gabidzashvili 1978: 176–196.

<sup>3</sup> Gabidzashvili 1978: 196.

<sup>4</sup> Zhordania 1892: 113.

<sup>5</sup> Kekelidze 1980: 179–180.

<sup>6</sup> MS Tbilisi, NCM, A-1, fol. 438r (see Fig. 2); Bregadze 1988: 68.



Gregory's writings that Davit translated.<sup>7</sup> His project, begun in the 1020s, was completed in the 1040s; all in all, Davit translated ten homilies.<sup>8</sup>

Davit's choice of texts was far from random. Of Gregory's sixteen liturgical homilies, Davit translated *Or.* 24; a text that Euthymius had reworked for another purpose, namely, to create the praise of St Demetrius of Thessaloniki.<sup>9</sup> He also retranslated *Or.* 2, whose earlier rendering by Euthymius diverged considerably from the Greek.<sup>10</sup> While Euthymius translated three of the Theological Orations, Davit translated the remaining second Theological Oration (*Or.* 28), which Euthymius left untranslated for reasons unknown (the first theological homily, *Or.* 27, had been translated earlier by Grigol of Oshki).<sup>11</sup> This pattern strongly suggests that Davit selected his material in consultation with Euthymius' circle: his translations did not duplicate what had already been done, but rather complemented Euthymius' corpus. One might therefore suppose that Davit himself worked on Mount Athos. Yet neither in the *Life of John and Euthymius*<sup>12</sup> nor in any other source connected with Iviron Monastery does his name appear. It is thus more likely that Davit never resided on Athos at all.

After the death of Euthymius (who passed away in 1028, while Davit's first translation appears already in a manuscript copied in 1030–1031), Davit Tbeli took up the major task his predecessor had begun – the creation of a Georgian corpus of Gregory's writings.<sup>13</sup> This is an important point: by the 1020s Davit must already have been a well-known and acknowledged translator, and it is plausible that he was chosen to carry on Euthymius' work precisely because his approach was closely aligned with that of Euthymius, sharing the same translational principles.

Euthymius the Hagiorite lived and worked at a decisive turning point, when the cultural and political orientation of the Georgians had taken a clear direction toward Byzantium. In this context, the concern expressed by his father, Ioane the Georgian, that “the land of Kartli was lacking in books”<sup>14</sup> reflects the new demands that arose from this epochal shift and the fact that Georgian literature was poor in comparison with what Constantinople had by then achieved. It was precisely Euthymius' task to remedy this deficiency: to provide Georgian literature with new works hitherto untranslated, and to accomplish this within a short span of time. The sheer volume of material to be translated, together with the brevity of a single human life, was one of the factors that to some extent shaped Euthymius' method of translation.

Equally decisive, however, was the condition of Georgian society itself. Deprived of new books, it was, in the words of Ephrem Mtsire, “a simple and infant people”,<sup>15</sup> neither mature enough nor prepared to grasp such texts in their full depth. With this in mind, Euthymius sought to make his translations as clear as possible: he simplified the originals, expanded or condensed them, added insertions and explanations, and in more than a few cases went well beyond paraphrasing to assume the role of author himself, producing compilations that amounted to new interpretations of the sources. Such is the case, for instance, with Gregory of Nazianzus'

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<sup>7</sup> Matchavariani 2003: 114.

<sup>8</sup> Matchavariani 2005: 95–103.

<sup>9</sup> Matchavariani 2004–2005: 165–176.

<sup>10</sup> Matchavariani 1995: 201–225.

<sup>11</sup> Regarding the Georgian translations of Gregory's *Or.* 27 see Raphava 2015: 294–332.

<sup>12</sup> For an English translation see Grdzelidze 2009: 53–96.

<sup>13</sup> Matchavariani 2005: 95–103.

<sup>14</sup> MS Iviron Monastery, georg. 10, 334v: რ(ომე)დ ესრეთ ნაკლუღევან იყო ქ(უე)ყ(ა)ნ(ა)ჲ ქართლისაჲ წიგნთაგ(ა)ნ... (Gippert *et al.* 2022: 120; English translation by Grdzelidze 2009: 67).

<sup>15</sup> MS Jerusalem, Greek Patriarchate, georg. 43, fol. 2v: მაშინ ჩუჴნი ნათესავი ღიჭონ იყო და ჩნულ; see Bregadze 1988: 149.

second and third homilies. In short, Euthymius' translations are prime examples of the above mentioned method of "interpretive translation".

Davit Tbeli, as Euthymius' younger contemporary, faced similar challenges. His translations, too, had to be fully accessible to readers and listeners alike. A close study of his renderings of the works of Gregory the Theologian reveals similar types of intervention: expansion, interpolation, abridgment, condensation, paraphrase. Like Euthymius, Davit produced translations that interpret the original. Yet unlike Euthymius, he remained consistently close to the Greek source. To see more clearly how Davit's interpretive approach takes shape, it is useful to examine the specific kinds of changes introduced into the texts he translated.

## I. Expansion

1. In Davit's translations, the most common phenomenon is the expansion resulting from the differences between Georgian and Greek grammatical structures; for example, restoring omitted sentence elements, rendering Greek passive and participial constructions with active verbal forms, and similar adjustments.

2. In many cases, Davit renders a single Greek word by means of two or more Georgian equivalents. Such examples are also fairly common in Euthymius' translations, but in Davit's work they are especially abundant, appearing in virtually every sentence of his translations as well as in his interpolations:

a) synonyms

ὃν βραχὺ μὲν τὸ τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης λείψανον (Or. 8, § 5; PG 35, 793 C 16 – 796 A 1)  
 "whose remnant of this life is but brief"

რომელთა მცირედი არს ცხოვრების ამის დანარჩენი და ნეშტი (MS NCM A-87, fol. 364v)<sup>16</sup>  
 "those for whom the remaining portion and residue of this life is very small"

b) hendiadyses

Πέτρον ὕστερον, τὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἔρεισμα (Or. 9, § 1; PG 35, 820 B 2)  
 "Peter, later the pillar of the Church"

პეტრეს, საფუძველსა და სიმტკიცეს ეკლესიისა (MS NCM A-87, fol. 228v)  
 "Peter, the foundation and steadfast support of the Church"

c) compounds and derivatives

Sometimes, when translating compounds and derivatives, Davit divides the meaning of the word: with one equivalent he renders only the sense of the stem or one component of the compound, and with the other, the meaning of the affix or the remaining part of the compound.

τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς εὐγενές διαφθείρειν τῇ περὶ ταῦτα μικροπρεπείᾳ (Or. 24, § 3; PG 35, 1173 B 1–2)  
 "to corrupt the nobility of the soul through a petty-minded concern with such things"

სულისა სიკეთესა და აზნაურებასა და დიდებასა განხრწნიან უშუერებითა (MS NCM A-87, fol. 341r)  
 "they debase the soul's goodness, nobility, and honor by their depravity"

<sup>16</sup> Since the Old Georgian texts cited here have not been published, all quotations are taken directly from the manuscripts as indicated.

3. In certain instances, the expansion in the translation arises from the translator's attempt to clarify this or that specific word, e.g. a Graecism. In the given example, the part enclosed in brackets is an interpolation by the translator, illustrated with examples, meant to explain his choice of a particular Greek word.

ἐτι δὲ καταγῶγια πῆξασθαι καὶ ξενῶνας (Or. 4, § 111; PG 35, 648 C 7–8)

“and moreover, to establish inns and xenones for guests”

რადთა იყუნენ საქალწულონი და ქსენონნი, [ესე იგი არს გლახაკთა და ჭირვეულთა შესაწვნარებელნი] (MS NCM A-292, fol. 192v)

“so that there may be houses for virgins and xenones [that is, dwellings for the reception of the poor and the afflicted]”

4. Expansion may also occur as a reflection of the translator's attitude toward the text or as a means of intensifying its emotional register. For example, in *Or.* 12, where Gregory speaks of the Holy Spirit, Davit develops Gregory's thought by expressing, in the author's voice, his own devotion to the Spirit and his submission to Its will, since the Spirit is part of the Lord and represents Him:

გარნა კუაღად სახიერებამან მანვე და სიყუარულმან სულისა წმიდისამან მომიყვანა მე მრავალთა უმჯობესისათჳს და შემომიყვანა შორის, ვითარცა-იგი მას სათნო-უნდა და არა ვითარ-იგი მე მენება. და უმეტესადღა იგი არს ჩემი ნებაჲ, რომელი-იგი მას სთნდეს, ამის უკუე ჯერისათჳს განგებულებით მომიძღუა მე (MS St Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts [hereafter: IOM], P-3, fol. 263r).

“But again, it was that same goodness, that same love of the Holy Spirit which led me toward what is greater and set me in the midst, as it pleased Him, and not as I desired. And above all, it is my will only when it accords with His will; for on this occasion, He has guided me by His own providence (Or. 12, § 4; cf. PG 35, 848 A 13).

Davit also uses such insertions to enhance the vividness and expressiveness of individual passages. In the examples shown, you can see how he underscores, in one case, the repulsiveness of pagan sacrifice, and in another, the mercy of the Lord toward humankind.

## II. Davit as a Commentator

Another method of translation is set apart here, for it reveals the translator's position in a particularly noteworthy way. Technically, these cases may also be regarded as expansions; however, in such instances, Davit brings into sharper focus certain themes or issues in Gregory's homilies which, in his judgment, required especially clear and emphatic exposition in order to prevent his Georgian readers or hearers from falling into error.

One example comes from *Or.* 36. Here Gregory states that the true believer must avoid all those who corrupt the Lord's true teachers and who preach a hierarchy within the Godhead. Such people, Gregory says, must be cut off from the faithful as incurable wounds of the Church – yet not out of hatred but out of pity for their delusion (*Or.* 36, § 10; PG 36, 277 B 6 – C 3). Davit, however, renders this passage in a markedly uncompromising way, stressing the destructive role of heretics in the Church:

ხოლო რომელნი სხუებრ რასმე მეტყუელებდენ და სხუებრ ირწმუნებდენ გარეგან მისსა, რომელი-იგი თქუენ გისწავიეს, მათ ევლტოდეთ, ვითარცა ბრანგუსა მას განმრყუნელსა და გესლსა ეკლესიისასა მათ ყოვლადვე

განიოტებდით. ნუცა ჰზრასავთ, ნუ მახლობელად მათსა ყოვლადვე მიხუალთ, არამედ სრულიად განეშორებით მათგან, ვითარცა წინააღმდეგობათგან ჭეშმარიტებისათა (MS IOM P-3, fol. 270r).

“As for those who speak otherwise and believe otherwise concerning Him whom you were taught, flee from them as from the mind-corrupting beast and from the poison of the Church. Avoid them altogether; do not think of them, do not draw near to them in any way but withdraw entirely, as from those who oppose the truth.”

This is followed by a long insertion, in which Davit develops the theme still further, reinforcing his position with biblical citations:

რამეთუ იტყვს სული წმიდაჲ დავით წინასწარმეტყუელისა და მეფისა მიერ: “არა მოძულენი შენნი მოვიძულენ-ა და მტერთა შენთა ზედა განვჰკაფდიო, სიძულილითა სრულითა მოვიძულენო” (Ps. 138:21–22) და უფალი იტყვს კუალად: “რომელსა უყუარდეს მამაჲ, გინა დედაჲ ჩემსა უფროჲს, იგი არა არს ჩემდა ღირსო” (Mt. 10:37) და შემდგომი. ესე იგი არს, თუ მამაჲ, გინა დედაჲ საღმრთოსა იყვნენ, განეყენე მათგანო, ვითარცა მტერთაგან. უკუეთუ მამისა და დედისაგან განეყნებასა გვბრძანებს ამის ჯერისათჳს, რაოდენ სხუათაგან ჯერ-არს სივლტოლად, რომელნი უცხოსა და განმრყუნელსა გონებითა განხრწნილითა ზრასვიდენ მოძღურებასა შეპყრობილნი და უმეტესად ჯერ-არს თქუმაჲ, დაბნელებულნი ამპარტავნებისაგან და ცუდად მზუაობრობისა, რომელთათჳს ამცნებს წმიდაჲ მოციქული ჰრომაელთა და ეტყვს: “გლოცავ, ძმანო, განეყენებით ეგევითართა მათგანო” (Rom. 16:17). ხოლო განეყენებით ესრეთ, არამედ გეწყალოდენცა შეცთომილნი იგი და განგრდომილნი ღმრთისაგან ნებისით თჳსით (MS IOM P-3, fol. 270r).

“For the Holy Spirit says through David, the prophet and king: ‘Do not I hate them, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred’ (Ps. 138[139]:21–22).<sup>17</sup> And the Lord likewise says: ‘He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me’ (Mt. 10:37), and so on. This means that, if a father or mother should stand against the divine, you must withdraw from them as from enemies. If He commands us, for the sake of this matter, to separate even from father and mother, how much more fitting is flight from others – those who, being corrupt in mind, devise doctrines that are strange and misleading, ensnared – and, one should rather say, darkened – by pride and vain self-exaltation. Concerning such people the holy Apostle admonishes the Romans, saying: ‘I beseech you, brethren, withdraw from such as these’ (Rom. 16:17). Yet withdraw in such a way as to show compassion for those who have gone astray and become alienated from God through their own folly.”

A similar kind of interpretive intervention is found in *Or.* 2 § 38, where Gregory begins to discuss the doctrine of the Trinity and explains its essence (*PG* 35, 445 B 12 – C 8). Here Davit does not translate Gregory’s exposition at all but instead inserts his own creed-like declaration: sentence by sentence he stresses the unbegottenness of the Father and the tri-hypostatic unity of God. What he provides is not so much an explanation of the Trinity as a series of assertive, dogmatic statements. The categorical tone of these affirmations leaves no room for hesitation or doubt, and effectively prevents the faithful from straying from the true path. Such interventions clearly responded to the needs of the time and to the intellectual capacities of the

<sup>17</sup> All English biblical quotations are cited from the King James Version (KJV).



intended audience, which required the translator to offer additional clarification of theological dogmas.

ესრეთ უკუე ჯერ არს გულის-ჰმისყოფად და სარწმუნოებად წმიდისა მის სამებისად: მამად უშობელი, მშობელი ძისად და მისვე უშობელისა დაუსაბამოდსა მამისაგან გამომავალი სული წმიდად. რამეთუ ვითარმცა დიდ იყო და თაყუანის საცემელ ყოველთა დაბადებულთა, ხილულთა და უხილავთაგან საიდუმლოდ იგი ყოველად წმიდისა მის სამებისა ერთარსებისად, არა თუმცა დაუსაბამოდ იგი და უშობელი მამად იყო მიზეზ სახიერთა მათ, ძისად და სულისა წმიდისად, ერთდსად მის, ვითარცა ძისა და სიტყვსად, ხოლო მეორისად მის, ვითარცა სულისა დაუსრულებელისა და განუღვენელებისად, ძე უკუე შობილი მამისაგან უშობელისა, უწინარეს ყოველთა საუკუნეთა, და სული წმიდად გამოსლვით დაუსაბამოდსა მისგანვე და უშობელისა ღმრთისა და მამისა. აღვიარენ და ვჰადაგნეთ ჰმამაღლად, რამეთუ კეთილ არს და ფრიად საჭირო, რადთა ერთი დავიცვათ ჩუენ ღმრთეებად და ბუნებად სამთადვე, და სამნი აღვიარნეთ გუამოვნებანი და თითოეული თვთებითა მის თვსითა (MS NCM A-87, fol. 199v).

“This, then, is the proper understanding and the true faith concerning the Holy Trinity: the Father is unbegotten, the begetter of the Son; and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the same unbegotten and unoriginate Father. For the mystery of the all-holy Trinity and Its consubstantial unity is great and worthy of veneration by all created beings, both visible and invisible. Although the unoriginate and unbegotten Father is the cause of the two Persons – the Son and the Holy Spirit – of the one, as Son and Word, and of the other, as the Spirit which is unfailing and inexhaustible, nevertheless the Son is begotten from the unbegotten Father before all ages, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from that same unoriginate and unbegotten God and Father. We confess and proclaim this openly, for it is good and greatly necessary: that we may preserve the one Godhead and the single nature of the Three, while also confessing the Three Persons, each in His own proper and distinctive property.

### III. Omission (Abridgement)

In addition to omitting individual words, Davit systematically leaves out passages of the original text in which:

a) the argumentation is overly rhetorical and might have been less accessible to a Georgian audience,

or

b) the text contains reminiscences of the ancient world or references to specific heresies. In such cases Davit is remarkably consistent: he either omits the passage altogether or reduces it to the briefest possible summary.

This tendency is especially evident in his translation of Gregory's *Or. 4, Against Julian the Apostate*. The original contains a wealth of allusions to the classical world, which Davit either abridges or excises. Thus, in §§ 94–95 Gregory compares Julian to the mythological monsters Scylla and Charybdis, equating the emperor's actions with theirs. In place of these long paragraphs, Davit offers only a few sentences that summarize their essential point:

რამეთუ... განცხადებულად არა ბრძანებდა იგი ღვეწულებასა ქრისტიანეთასა. ხოლო რომელნი იპოვნიან უმძუნვარეს ქრისტიანეთა ზედა, მათ აღიდებდა და პატივსცემდა მოსწრაფებით. და რამეთუ შჯულთა არა

აღსწერდა, არამედ სატანჯველთა თითო-სახეთა და ცისად-ცისადთა იგონებდა მათთვის (MS NCM A-87, fol. 307v).

“For he did not openly proclaim persecution against the Christians; but when he found others more violent against them, he honored and commended such men eagerly. And although he did not record formal laws, he devised for their sake various kinds and degrees of torments.”

At the end of the same homily, in §§ 102–106, Gregory devotes five extended paragraphs to the question of Hellenic education. He reports that according to Julian, the art of rhetoric and Hellenic learning are inseparably linked with pagan religion, while ignorance must remain the lot of Christians, for all higher, divine wisdom is, for them, contained in a single word: “believe” (Πίστευσον, *Or.* 4; *PG* 35, 637 A 2–3). Gregory then turns to reflect on the relation between language and faith. The term ἐλληνίζειν here does not merely denote pagan or ancient culture; Gregory consciously frees it from a strictly religious connotation. He argues that language, like every art or useful institution, belongs not to its inventor alone but to all who make use of it (*PG* 35, 641 B 5–7). If rhetorical eloquence were the exclusive property of pagan Greeks, and Christians were forbidden to approach it, then by the same logic Romans should also be denied the use of writing (a Phoenician invention), military tactics (ascribed to the Euboeans), weaponry (to the Cyclopes), chess, and countless other arts whose origins lay outside their own people. Gregory thus concludes that Greek Christians – despite their faith – remain Greeks and the descendants of Greeks, and therefore the rightful heirs of Greek rhetoric and of Greek culture as a whole.

Gregory’s discussion, which stretches across §§102–106, is in fact the climax and most important section of *Or.* 4. Yet in Davit’s translation, this entire passage is reduced to only a few sentences:

ესე უკუე ცუდ და ამო არს და ვერ შემძლებელ ხარ შენ ამას შეწირვად ეშმაკთა, რამეთუ არა ვხედავ, ვითარმცა ენად და შჯული ელენთა შორის ზოგად მოპოვნებულ იყო და უკუეთუმცა შჯულისანი იყვნეს სწავლანი იგი, ნუუკუე და სამართლითმცა დავეყენებით მათისა სწავლისაგან, რამეთუ ჭეშმარიტებით შჯულისა შენისა საქმენი განსაყენებელცა არიან კაცთა მიერ და საძაგელ ფრიად, რამეთუ საქებელნი შჯულისა შენისა ქადაგებანი და მოძღვართა შენთანი არიან მამათმავლობანი და სიძვანი და ყოველნივე სრწნილებანი (MS NCM S-383, fol. 180v).

“This is vain and futile, and you cannot offer it as a sacrifice to demons. For I do not see that language and religion were found exclusively among the Greeks. Even if their religion contained learning, we ought not therefore to be bound to their teaching; for in truth the works of their religion are abominable before men, and most shameful. For the things they proclaim as praiseworthy in their religion, and the teachings of their instructors, are sodomy, fornication, and every form of corruption” (*Or.* 4, §103).

As we can see, Davit renders the above passage of the homily in a highly simplified form, effectively summarizing Gregory’s lengthy discussion into a concise conclusion: pagan belief is unacceptable and reprehensible, but language and learning are not inherently tied to religion.

Another feature that stands out in Davit’s translations of Gregory’s works is the use of hagiographic *topoi*.

One of the central functions of hagiographic literature in Byzantium was its didactic purpose: the instruction of the faithful and the presentation of exemplary models of Christian conduct. The *Vitae* and *Passiones* of saints offered readers or listeners patterns of behavior to be

imitated. For this reason, hagiography was conceived from the outset not merely as a record of historical facts but as a spiritual and moral guide.<sup>18</sup>

This didactic aim was served by hagiographic *topoi* – recurring narrative schemes and clichés that transformed the saint’s life into a shared “rhetorical language”. Examples include the martyr’s unshakable endurance under torture, the ascetic’s withdrawal into the desert, miraculous healings, or angelic visitations. Such *topoi* ensured both the recognizability of the text and its didactic value. As Martin Hinterberger observes, the repetitiveness of hagiographic texts should not be dismissed as mere formula, but rather understood as a deliberate strategy aimed at foregrounding Christian virtue and at “teaching” the reader or listener.<sup>19</sup>

The use of *topoi* was not confined to *Vitae* and *Passiones* alone. They permeated homiletics, where sermons invoked saintly examples to illustrate truth; liturgical hymnography, where short formulas symbolically expressed the saint’s virtues; and other spheres. Thus, hagiographic *topoi* became a universal didactic and spiritual instrument across multiple Byzantine literary genres, presenting not only the saint’s sanctity but also a clear model of how the faithful should live.

It must be noted that both the didactic impulse and the use of *topoi* are already visible in Gregory’s works; for example, in his depiction of the Maccabean martyrs (*Or.* 15), in the praise of his sister Gorgonia (*Or.* 8), in his encomium of the priest-martyr Cyprian (*Or.* 24), and even in his invective against Julian (*Or.* 4), which is interesting from many points of view.

Emperor Flavius Claudius Julian<sup>20</sup> ruled the Byzantine Empire for only two years (361–363), but this short period was sufficient for him to leave his mark on Byzantine history as a gifted and progressive ruler, attentive to the interests of the state.

For Christians, however, Julian’s brief reign was remembered as one of the most difficult times. The reason lay in his reforms – above all, in his well-known edict against the Christians,<sup>21</sup> which forbade them access to pagan education.<sup>22</sup> In itself, this decision was entirely logical: those who reject paganism, and with it the entire pagan cultural tradition, should not be entrusted with the teaching of youth in matters they themselves do not believe.

This edict provoked considerable unrest and became one of the principal reasons for Gregory’s invective against Julian. In Gregory’s account, every action of the emperor is to be condemned; to him are ascribed all types of sins and vile crimes. In fact, this portrayal closely resembles the hagiographic *topos* of the wicked persecutor. Yet, despite such a relentlessly negative characterization, the attentive reader will notice that Gregory’s depiction of Julian is not entirely consistent in its negative characterization. Whether consciously or not, Gregory’s polemical homily contains details of the emperor’s activity that could be judged positively; in several instances Gregory even appears, in a way, to justify some of Julian’s actions. This is true, for example, of chapter 75 of *Or.* 4, where Gregory lists Julian’s reforms: the reduction of state taxes, the improvement of communications, and the severe punishment of theft (*PG* 35, 600 B 13 – C 5). These measures were unquestionably beneficial to the state. Gregory attempts to nullify their value with the remark that “the health of one or two limbs does not mean the health of the whole body” (*PG* 35, 600 C 12 – 601 A 2). Yet this observation, instead of cancelling the reforms, actually underscores the impression that they were, in fact, advantageous for the empire.

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<sup>18</sup> Delehay 1907: 62–68; 1962: 50–54.

<sup>19</sup> Hinterberger 2014: 161–181.

<sup>20</sup> *OCD* 1996: 800.

<sup>21</sup> Athanassiadi-Fowden 1981: 176–184; Bowersock 1978: 83–88.

<sup>22</sup> Julian 1913: *Letter* 36, 117–123.

Similarly, in chapter 111 of the same *Oratio* Gregory notes that Julian transplanted certain institutions associated with Christianity (such as hostels, houses for the poor, and the like) into a pagan environment (*PG* 35, 648 C 7–13). Although in chapter 112 Gregory goes on to provide a lengthy explanation of what he sees as the “true” meaning of Julian’s initiatives (*PG* 35, 648 D 2 – 649 A 9), this does not erase the fundamentally positive character of the measures themselves.

In this sense, one might even say that Gregory’s portrayal of Julian is, at points, ambivalent: lacking complete coherence and not being entirely or consistently negative. This may be explained by two factors. First, Gregory was a contemporary of Julian and knew him personally. Second, Gregory’s period coincided with the early stages of the development of Christian hagiography, at a time when the stereotypical narrative patterns had not yet become fully fixed or obligatory. Gregory was, in effect, describing a living person whom he knew well, and under such circumstances it would have been difficult to reject all positive qualities outright, especially since doing so was not yet demanded by a firmly codified literary scheme.

From this perspective, Davit Tbeli’s translation is of particular interest. In Davit’s rendering, Julian’s figure is presented in a strictly negative light, fully conforming to the codified image of the tyrant-emperor that dominates contemporary hagiographic literature. This is only natural: Davit was writing almost six centuries after Julian’s reign. Unlike Gregory, he had no personal or emotional connection to the emperor. For Davit, Julian is simply a destructive figure, equal to Diocletian and other persecutors of Christianity. Moreover, by Davit’s time, the literary conventions of hagiography had become firmly defined. Accordingly, he reworked Gregory’s homily in strict accordance with these established patterns. What follows examines how this transformation takes place.

In hagiographic literature, the heretical emperor or the wicked judge is set in stark opposition to the martyr and is typically constructed as his complete antithesis: evil, demonic, destructive and malign in every action, with no possibility that any good could proceed from his hand. In short, he is the embodiment of Satan. Davit applies this very scheme to his characterization of Julian, and accordingly omits entirely all those passages in his translation of Gregory’s homily which might, even to the slightest degree, cast the emperor in a favorable light.

Thus, for example, Davit does not include the passages describing Julian’s reforms. As already noted, in chapter 111 of *Or.* 4 Gregory briefly recounts Julian’s attempts to graft onto pagan soil certain institutions borrowed from Christianity, which, however reluctantly, invite approval: Julian imposed penances upon sinners, introduced special prayers, required training before priestly ordination, and founded schools, hospices for the poor, hostels, and the like (*PG* 35, 648 B 11 – C 7). Indeed, Gregory uses all this primarily as material for rhetorical antithesis and ultimately dismisses the significance of these initiatives by listing the revolts and other calamities that occurred during Julian’s reign. But for Davit, even in this context, any positive action traceable to Julian is unacceptable, especially when it derives from Christian liturgical practice. Accordingly, these passages are omitted from his translation, and only a brief mention remains. After this, Davit offers a summation of Julian’s activities which has no parallel in Gregory’s text:

და რადენი რა არს ჩუენისა წესიერებისა საქმე, ესე ყოველი ზაკუთ განაწესა მას და რეცა აჩუენებდა სათნოებათა სიმდიდრესა და კაცთმოყუარებისათჳს ზრუნვასა (MS NCM S-383, fol. 182v).

“And as many of our ecclesiastical institutions as there were, all these he deceitfully established; and as it were, he displayed a wealth of virtues and concern for works of charity” (*Or.* 4, §111).



Even more striking is Davit's treatment of Gregory's *Or.* 36, where he again intervenes actively and reshapes a text that, at first glance, seems far removed from the hagiographic genre. This homily is apologetic in character: Gregory defends himself before bishops and members of the congregation who believed that he had "usurped" the see of Constantinople. Here Gregory speaks of himself as an ordinary man, marked by weaknesses and failings; these passages contain the intimate, confessional tone so characteristic of his poetry. In Davit's translation, such sections are either omitted altogether or substantially reworked. The reason is clear: the person of a great Christian theologian must be presented to the reader or listener as the ideal figure of a holy father. Any hint of doubt, weakness, or frailty in the historical person could mislead the audience. Davit therefore strips Gregory's figure of every detail that might lend itself to misinterpretation, and instead constructs the sufficiently schematic image of an ideal pastor – an image that is unmistakably shaped by the conventions of hagiographic literature.

### Summary

As we have seen, Davit displays a marked tendency toward literary schematization. This is evident not only in his characterization of figures within the works he translates but also in other features of his translations, which cannot be examined in detail here. Naturally, this inclination toward schematization simplifies and impoverishes Davit's renderings to some extent, since the subtle nuances of the original are lost. Yet this feature must also be recognized as a characteristic element of his translation method. Davit's translations are reader-oriented: like Euthymius the Hagiorite, he strives to bring the original closer to the reader (rather than bringing the reader closer to the original – a goal more typical of later, literal translations, especially those of the Hellenophile school). His aim is to make the text as accessible as possible, removing any passages that might prove puzzling or misleading to an inexperienced audience. The reworking of Gregory's homilies according to hagiographic clichés serves precisely this purpose: the stereotyped figures shaped by hagiographic conventions were familiar and intelligible to readers, whereas preserving their original individuality, in Davit's view, might give rise to misunderstanding.

Thus, the features of Davit's translations discussed above highlight the closeness of his method to the translational conception of Euthymius the Athonite. As noted, both translators share the same aim: to adapt the original to the reader, to simplify complex texts, and to render them comprehensible to the contemporary Georgian audience. But a shared aim does not necessarily imply identical methods. Euthymius reoriented the original entirely toward the reader, occasionally modifying the Greek text to such an extent that the result can be regarded as a new work. His conflation of Gregory's *Or.* 2 and 3, together with a radical shift in their rhetorical purpose, produced two compositions that differ substantially from the original homilies. Other comparable examples of this practice have also been documented.

Davit's reconfiguration of the denunciation of Julian according to hagiographic conventions may be seen as a parallel to Euthymius' translation of Gregory's funeral speech for Basil (*Or.* 43). Both Davit and Euthymius pursued the same aim: to recast homiletic works into hagiographic compositions. Yet they implemented this aim in different ways. In Davit's version of the invective against Julian, as we have seen, the changes are confined to individual sentences or short passages; these alterations are moderate, and the translation remains close to the original. By contrast, Euthymius' version of the funeral speech departs much further from Gregory's text: lengthy rhetorical sections and mythological allusions are omitted, while extended miracle stories are inserted. As a result, Euthymius' version diverges radically from the Greek original.<sup>23</sup> In short, his modifications are far more substantial and wide-ranging than Davit's.

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<sup>23</sup> Kurtsikidze 1995: 62.

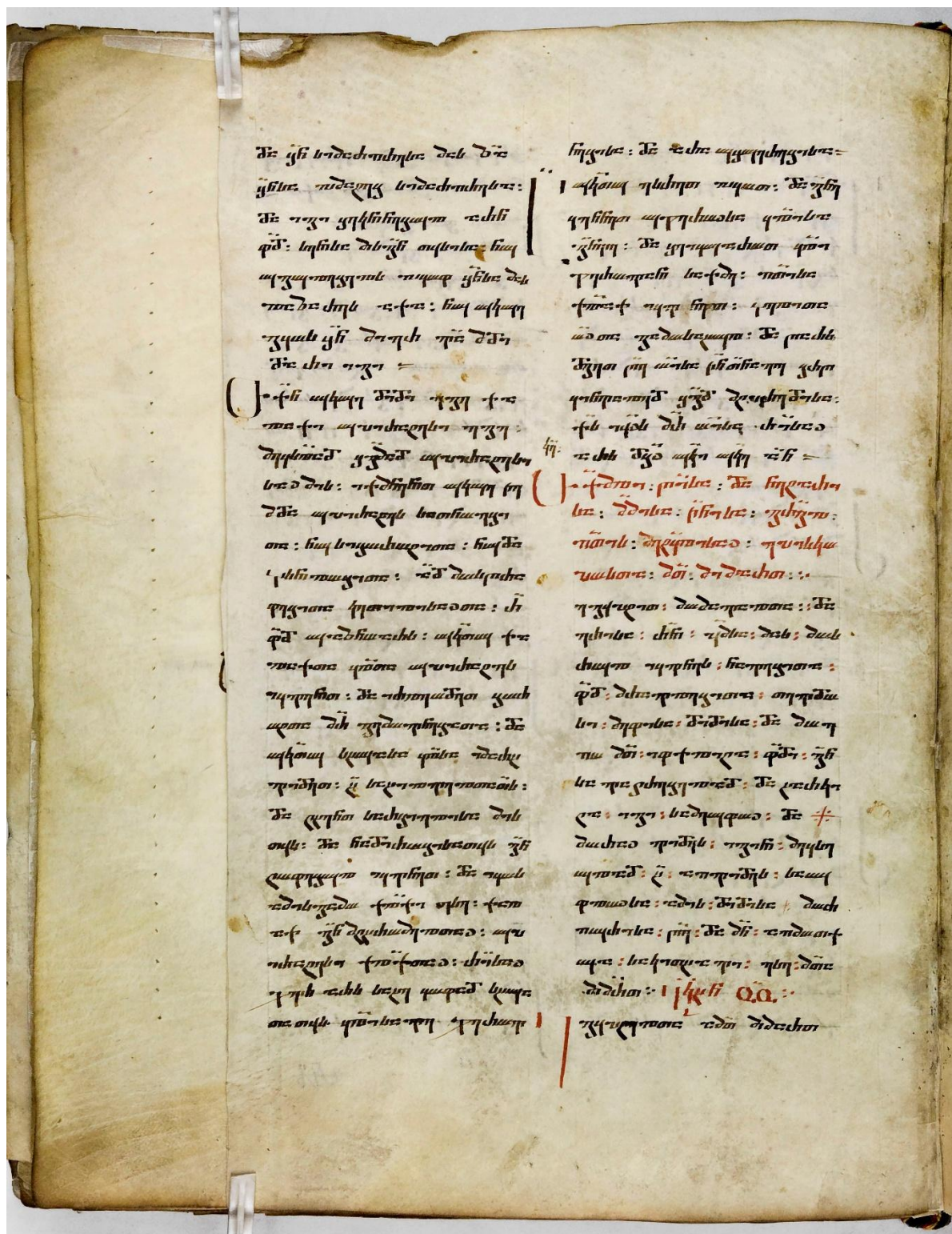


Fig. 1: MS Tbilisi, NCM, A-1 (11<sup>th</sup> c.), fol. 277v: collection of Georgian translations of the works of Gregory the Theologian, Or. 34, translation of Davit Tbeli



[illegible]

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Davit, being a contemporary of Euthymius, naturally faced similar challenges. His translations of Gregory's works reveal that, like Euthymius, he modified the text, adding expansions, interpolations, omissions, or paraphrases. Yet in no case are Davit's alterations as extensive as those of Euthymius. For Davit, the author's rights remain paramount: in none of his translations does he transform the original such that the work ceases to resemble its source or becomes a new composition loosely based on it. It is therefore misguided to expect in Davit – or in any other translator of the same period – the creative freedom and boldness characteristic of Euthymius. Euthymius was an exceptional figure, above all a great original writer, whose genius enabled him to recast translated texts into entirely new works – an extraordinary phenomenon in Georgian literature. His method was unique, as was his talent. Davit, by contrast, shares only the general aim with Euthymius: to render the Greek texts accessible. He therefore alters his originals, but always with moderation.

At the same time, Davit's translations of Gregory's works show that, despite this relative freedom in handling the text, he is remarkably consistent in one crucial respect: the rendering of theological terminology. It is precisely this consistency that distinguishes him from Euthymius and makes him the direct precursor of Ephrem Mtsire in the development of Georgian theological vocabulary. Davit's translations of Gregory can thus be regarded as representing an important stage in the evolution of Georgian theological and philosophical terminology. His practice also aligns him with Ephrem in his handling of biblical citations.

In conclusion, Davit Tbeli stands as a continuator of the tradition of the early Georgian translators and the Athonite school. Yet his translations generally remain closer to the Greek originals (especially in their treatment of terminology) than do those of Euthymius. In this respect Davit anticipates the approach of later translators such as Ephrem, and his work may thus be understood as a transitional stage between the Athonite and Hellenophile schools of translation.

### Picture credits

Figs 1–2: Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi



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## გრიგოლ ნაზიანზელის თხზულებათა ინტერპრეტაცია: დავით ტბელის თარგმანები

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შუა საუკუნეების ინტელექტუალურ სივრცეში თარგმნა ხშირ შემთხვევაში განიხილებოდა როგორც ეგზეგეტიკური პროცესი – ტექსტის ინტერპრეტაცია და მისი გადმოცემა სხვა ენაზე ისეთი ფორმით, რომელიც ახალი ენობრივი და კულტურული კონტექსტის შესაფერისი იქნებოდა. თარგმანის როგორც ინტერპრეტაციის ან კომენტარების გაგება განსაკუთრებით თვალსაჩინო იყო საღვთისმეტყველო თუ ფილოსოფიური ლიტერატურის გადმოღებისას, როდესაც მთარგმნელთა ამოცანა იყო არა მხოლოდ სიტყვების, არამედ მნიშვნელობების, თეოლოგიური ნიუანსებისა და ზნეობრივი გზავნილების გადმოტანა.

მსგავსი მიდგომა კარგად ჩანს ძველ ქართულ ნათარგმნ ლიტერატურაშიც. ინტერპრეტაციული თარგმანის თვალსაჩინო მაგალითად გვევლინება გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის თხზულებების XI საუკუნის მოღვაწის, დავით ტბელის მიერ შესრულებული თარგმანები. მართალია, დავითი ქართულ ტექსტებს კომენტარებს არ ურთავს, მაგრამ მის თარგმანებში შეტანილი ცვლილებები –მატება, კლება, პარაფრაზი და სხვა – ასახავს გადმოსაღები ორიგინალის მთარგმნელისეულ გაგებას. ასეთ ვითარებაში თავად მთარგმნელი წარმოგვიდგება როგორც ტექსტის კომენტატორი, თარგმანი კი – როგორც ორიგინალის განსხვავებული ინტერპრეტაცია.

დავით ტბელის შესახებ თითქმის არაფერია ცნობილი. მისი თარგმანების შემცველი ხელნაწერების ანდერძ-მინაწერების მიხედვით, დავით ტბელი მოღვაწეობდა XI საუკუნის პირველ ნახევარში. ეს ხელნაწერები ძირითადად გრიგოლ ნაზიანზელის თხზულებათა ეფთვიმე მთაწმინდელის თარგმანების შემცველი კრებულებია, სადაც დავითის თარგმანების გაჩნდა თანდათანობით, რაც მთარგმნელის მუშაობის პროცესზე უნდა მიანიშნებდეს. საერთო ჯამში დავითმა თარგმნა გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის 10 ჰომილია. არსებული მასალის კვლევამ აჩვენა, რომ: 1) დავითმა გრიგოლის თხზულებების თარგმნა დაიწყო XI საუკუნის 20-იანი წლების ბოლოს, სავარაუდოდ, ეფთვიმე მთაწმინდელის გარდაცვალების შემდეგ მალევე, და დაასრულა 40-იანი წლების ბოლოს; 2) დავითი იყო საგანგებოდ შერჩეული მთარგმნელი, ვისაც დაევალა ეფთვიმეს მიერ დაწეხული დიდი საქმის – გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის თხზულებათა ქართული კორპუსის – შექმნა. შესაძლოა, ეს გადაწყვეტილება განაპირობა იმ გარემოებამ,

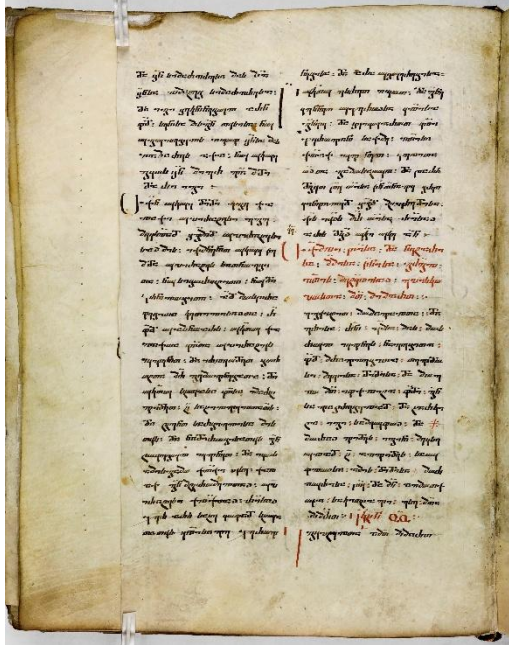
რომ დავითი თავისი მუშაობის სტილითაც ახლოს იდგა ეფთვიმესთან, იზიარებდა მის მთარგმნელობით პრინციპებს.

ეფთვიმე მთაწმინდელისა და მისი უმცროსი თანამედროვის, დავით ტბელის მთავარი მიზანი იყო ორიგინალის დაახლოვება მკითხველთან, რთული თხზულების თარგმანის გამარტივება, მისადაგება თანადროული ქართველი მკითხველის ცნობიერებისათვის ისე, რომ ახალი თარგმანები მაქსიმალურად გასაგები ყოფილიყო მკითხველისა თუ მსმენელისათვის. გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის თხზულებათა დავითისეული თარგმანების კვლევამ აჩვენა, რომ დავითიც, ეფთვიმეს მსგავსად, ორიგინალს თარგმანში ცვლის – ავრცობს, ურთავს ჩანართებს, აკლებს და კუმშავს, აკეთებს პერეფრაზს. დავითი თავის ჩანართებში განმარტავს ორიგინალის გარკვეულ მონაკვეთებს, ან აკომენტირებს მათ; მთლიანად გამოტოვებს ორიგინალის იმ პასაჟებს, რომლებიც შეიცავს რემინისცენციას ანტიკურ სამყაროსთან ან სადაც მოხსენიებულია რომელიმე ერესი. ასეთ შემთხვევებში დავითი ძალიან თანამიმდევრულია – ყველა ამ მონაკვეთს ან მთლიანად გამოტოვებს, ან მაქსიმალურად ამოკლებს. დავითი გარდაქმნის სათარგმნ ტექსტს ჰაგიოგრაფიული ტოპოსების გამოყენებით. ამ მეთოდით თავის თარგმანებში დავითი აძლიერებს დიდაქტიკურ მოტივს – ჰაგიოგრაფიული ტოპოსები ბიზანტიური ლიტერატურის მრავალ ჟანრში გამოიყენებოდა უნივერსალურ სასწავლო და სულიერ ინსტრუმენტად, რომელიც არა მხოლოდ წმინდანის ღირსებას წარმოაჩენდა, არამედ მორწმუნესაც აძლევდა მკაფიო გზას, რომლის მიხედვითაც მას უნდა ეცხოვრა.

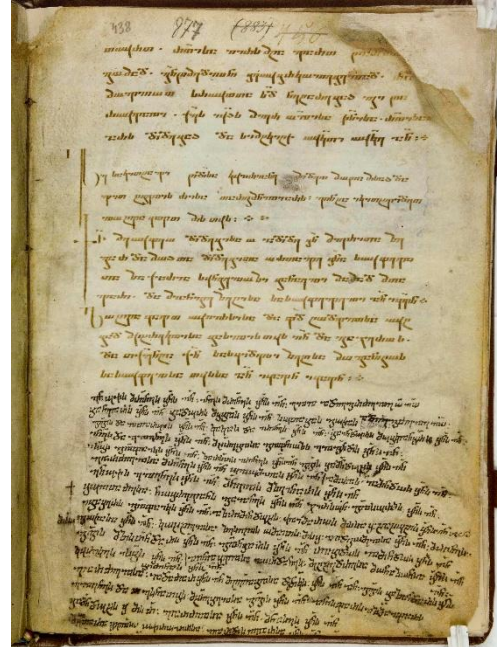
დავით ტბელის თარგმანების თავისებურებები ცხადყოფს დავითის მთარგმნელობითი მეთოდის სიახლოვეს ეფთვიმე მთაწმინდელის მთარგმნელობით კონცეფციასთან. მაგრამ ერთი და იგივე მიზანი არ გულისხმობს მუშაობის მეთოდის იგივეობასაც. ეფთვიმე ორიგინალს მთლიანად უქვემდებარებს მკითხველის ინტერესებს და დედანს ზოგჯერ თარგმანში იმდენად ცვლის, რომ ვიდრე თვისობრივად ახალ თხზულებას. დავითს ეფთვიმესთან აკავშირებს ზოგადი მიზანდასახულება – ორიგინალების მაქსიმალურად გასაგები ფორმით გადმოტანა თარგმანში. ამიტომ დავითიც ცვლის ტექსტს, მაგრამ მისი ცვლილებები ყოველთვის ზომიერია, თარგმანი გრიგოლის ტექსტს დიდად დაშორებული არ არის, ძირითადად ორიგინალს მისდევს.

ამასთანავე, დავითი თანამიმდევრულია ისეთ მნიშვნელოვან საკითხში, როგორიცაა საღვთისმეტყველო ტერმინოლოგიის გადმოტანა. სწორედ ამ თანამიმდევრულობის პრინციპით დავითი სცილდება ეფთვიმეს და გვესახება ეფრემ მცირის უშუალო წინამორბედად ქართული საღვთისმეტყველო ტერმინოლოგიის ჩამოყალიბების პროცესში. გრიგოლ ნაზიანზელის თხზულებების დავითისეული თარგმანები კი უნდა მივიჩნიოთ ქართული

საღვთისმეტყველო-ფილოსოფიური ტერმინოლოგიის განვითარების ერთ საინტერესო ეტაპად. დავითი ასევე ამჟღავნებს სიახლოვეს ევრემთან ბიბლიური ციტატების გადმოღებაში.



სურ. 1: ხეც, S-383, ფ. 277v



სურ. 2: ხეც, A-1, ფ. 438r

საბოლოოდ შეიძლება ითქვას, რომ დავით ტბელი თავისი მთარგმნელობითი მეთოდის მიხედვით ძველ ქართველ მთარგმნელთა და ეფთვიმე მთაწმინდელის მემკვიდრეა. მაგრამ დავითის თარგმანები ჩვეულებრივ უფრო ახლოსაა ბერძნულ დედანთან. ორიგინალთან ამგვარი დამოკიდებულებით დავითი სცილდება ეფთვიმეს და უფრო გვიანდელი ხანის მთარგმნელებს (მაგალითად, ევრემ მცირეს) უახლოვდება, ამდენად, დავითის მოღვაწეობა გვევლინება როგორც გარდამავალი საფეხური ათონურ და ელინოფილურ სკოლებს შორის.



# The Influence of Basilus Minimus' Commentaries on the Georgian Translations of Gregory the Theologian's Sermons

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**Abstract:** The article examines how the *Commentaries* of the 10th-century Byzantine scholar Basilus Minimus on the sermons of Gregory the Theologian influenced the medieval Georgian translations of Gregory's sermons produced in the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries. A comparative analysis of the Georgian translations and Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* demonstrates that, although the famous Georgian translator Euthymios the Hagiorite did not translate Basilus' work, he was familiar with it and drew upon it when rendering Gregory's sermons into Georgian. Euthymios' use of the *Commentaries* served the purpose of making Gregory's complex theological and stylistically sophisticated passages more understandable and accessible to Georgian readers with limited experience. Gregory's texts contain intricate artistic devices – allegories, euphemisms, analogies, metaphors, etc., the meanings of which are clarified in Basilus' *Commentaries*. In Euthymios' translations, these artistic features are not reproduced literally but conveyed semantically, in accordance with Basilus' explanations. Ephrem Mtsire, the Hellenophile translator of Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries*, attached particular importance to reproducing Gregory the Theologian's literary style in his Georgian translations. He characterized Gregory's style as "laconic, deep and shrouded". In preserving these stylistic qualities, Ephrem relied extensively on those sections of Basilus' *Commentaries* that explicitly discuss the nature of Gregory's style. As a result, in Ephrem's highly literal translations, the nuances of tone and rhythm characteristic of Gregory are rendered with remarkable precision, thanks to the guidance provided by Basilus Minimus.

**Keywords:** Basilus Minimus' Commentaries, Gregory the Theologian, Georgian manuscripts, Georgian translations, Euthymios the Hagiorite, Ephrem Mtsire.

Of the medieval commentaries on the works of the Church Fathers, though not very numerous, almost all were translated into Georgian during the 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> centuries. These include:

- John of Sinai's *Ladder* and its scholia, translated from Greek into Georgian twice: first by Euthymios the Hagiorite, abbot of the Iviron Monastery, in the last quarter of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, and later, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, by the Hellenophile translator Petre Gelateli of the Gelati literary school (a monastic centre in western Georgia)<sup>1</sup>
- the *Corpus Dionysiacum* and its commentaries composed by John of Scythopolis, translated from Greek into Georgian by Ephrem Mtsire of the Black Mountain by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>2</sup>
- Maximus the Confessor's works and their commentaries, rendered from Greek into Georgian in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by a Hellenophile translator of the Gelati literary school.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the edition see Tsintsadze (2024). Altogether, six Georgian versions of *The Ladder* are known ranging in date from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century; scholia are found only in the two translations mentioned above. See Otkhmezuri (2025), 115–135.

<sup>2</sup> Alexidze (2009), 113–131. For a general overview of this subject see Otkhmezuri (2024), 568–569.

<sup>3</sup> The *Commentaries* are attested in the margins of MS Kutaisi, State Historical Museum, 14 (13<sup>th</sup> c.).

A special place in the Georgian literary tradition is held by the translations of commentaries on the works of the Cappadocian Father, Gregory the Theologian. Among the numerous commentaries on Gregory's works, the following were translated into Georgian:

- Pseudo-Nonnos' *Mythological Commentaries* (6<sup>th</sup> c.), rendered into Georgian twice within a single century: first by Euthymios the Hagiorite in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century and later by Ephrem Mtsire at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>4</sup>
- the *Commentary on Gregory's Oratio 38*, a composite text incorporating excerpts from Maximus Confessor's *Ambigua ad Ioannem* along with traces of *Commentaries* by Basilus Minimus translated by Euthymios the Hagiorite<sup>5</sup>
- Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* on Gregory the Theologian's sixteen liturgical sermons (10<sup>th</sup> c.), translated from Greek by Ephrem Mtsire.<sup>6</sup>

Several short excerpts of the *Commentaries*, whose Greek originals have not been identified – each comprising about one or two manuscript pages –, are appended to the translations of Gregory's sermons (*Or.* 44, 9, 27)<sup>7</sup> in Georgian manuscripts.

All these translations are closely connected to the rendering into Georgian of Gregory the Theologian's works and are included in the Georgian *corpora* of Gregory's works. Briefly about the translation process of Gregory the Theologian's works: in the pre-Athonite period, two sermons – 38 and 39 – were translated by anonymous translators and incorporated into the Georgian homiletic and hagiographic collection (*mravaltavi*). During the same period two sermons (7, 27) were also translated from Armenian into Georgian by the Georgian translator from Tao-Klarjeti, Grigol Oshkeli. At the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries, Euthymios the Hagiorite produced translations of several liturgical and non-liturgical sermons employing what Ephrem Mtsire described as the method of “reduction and expansion”, i.e. a free, reader-oriented, expository translation technique. Shortly after Euthymios, the Tao-Klarjeti translator David Tbeli also rendered several sermons into Georgian.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the translation of Gregory's works into Georgian was completed by Ephrem Mtsire at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

The aim of our present paper is to provide a brief overview of the Georgian version of Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries*, with a particular focus on their influence on the Georgian translations of Gregory the Theologian's sermons.

As already mentioned, Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* on Gregory the Theologian's sixteen liturgical sermons were translated into Georgian by Ephrem Mtsire, founder of the Hellenophile tendency in Georgian translation practice, in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century – perhaps alongside the translation of Gregory the Theologian's works. The Georgian version of Basilus' *Commentaries* is preserved in four 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts of Gregory's *Corpus* of sixteen liturgical sermons: MSS Jerusalem, Greek Patriarchate, Georgian (hereafter: Jer. georg.) 43 (12<sup>th</sup> c.), Jer. georg. 15 (12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> cc.), Jer. georg. 13 (12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> cc.), and Tbilisi, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts (hereafter: NCM), A-109

<sup>4</sup> Otkhmezuri (2002).

<sup>5</sup> Otkhmezuri (2016b).

<sup>6</sup> The Georgian translation of Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* has been published in Georgia only in part, encompassing *Commentaries* on just two of Gregory the Theologian's sermons (1 and 39); see Otkhmezuri (2011), 229–268.

<sup>7</sup> Raphava (2020), 127–151.

<sup>8</sup> See Maia Matchavariani, this volume.

(13<sup>th</sup> c.).<sup>9</sup> In one case (Jer. georg. 13), it appears following the sermons, and in three cases (Jer. georg. 43, Jer. georg. 15, NCM A-109), it is preserved in the margins of the manuscripts (see Figs 1 and 2). The order of the sermons in the *Corpus* is as follows: *Orationes* and *Commentaries* 19, 38, 43, 39, 40, 11, 21, 42, 14, 16, 1, 45, 44, 41, 15, 24; in certain cases, the manuscripts lack some sermons at their beginning or end. It cannot be entirely ruled out that Ephrem translated the whole of Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* on Gregory's forty-two sermons, since traces of these *Commentaries*, including several explanations on *Or.* 7, are attested in the Georgian *Corpus* of Gregory's sermons of the later period.<sup>10</sup>

Ephrem's translation of this work combines literal and free methods of translation, in contrast to the consistently Hellenophile style of his translation of Gregory the Theologian's sixteen liturgical sermons. A comparison between the Georgian translation and the Greek text<sup>11</sup> reveals that Ephrem's choice of translation method varies according to the content of the individual explanations. Thomas Schmidt, editor of the *Commentary* of Basilus on Gregory's *Oratio* 38, has grouped the explanations as follows:

- (a) explanations of various lexical units and Gregory's allusive phrases
- (b) explanations on the syntactical structure of Gregory's texts
- (c) explanations of Gregory's theological thoughts (Basilus Minimus used earlier theological commentaries to Gregory's writings)
- (d) explanations of the style and rhetorical art of Gregory (in these explanations Basilus mostly used Classical manuals of rhetoric namely, the writings of Hermogenes)<sup>12</sup>
- (e) explanations of punctuation.<sup>13</sup>

Basilus' explanations of theological character are translated by Ephrem with close fidelity, while his notes on Gregory's lexis, syntactical structure and allusive phrases, as well as rhetorical observations (because of the abundance of this kind of explanations, Basilus' *Commentaries* have been termed "rhetorical" in scholarly literature) are treated more freely, often with expansion or reduction. Basilus' discussion of Nicanor's eight-sign punctuation system, which he attempts to apply to Gregory's sermons, is also rendered freely, at times diverging substantially from the Greek or omitted altogether. The composition of each *Commentary* is reshaped: some explanations are merged or divided, others omitted, and a few appear to have been composed and added to Basilus' explanations by Ephrem himself.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Bregadze (1988), 133–138, 144–158, 159–167.

<sup>10</sup> Othkmezuri (2011), 174–178.

<sup>11</sup> As only one Greek text of the *Commentaries* on Gregory's liturgical sermons (*Oratio* 38) has been published (Schmidt 2001), the Georgian version of the *Commentaries* was compared with this edition of *Comm.* 38, as well as with MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter: BnF), Coislin 240 (11<sup>th</sup> c.). On Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* of Gregory the Theologian's non-liturgical sermons see Rioual (2019), Rioual (2020); see also Rioual (2024); Schmidt (2024).

<sup>12</sup> Schmidt (2001), xx.

<sup>13</sup> Schmidt (2001), xvi–xxiv.

<sup>14</sup> Othkmezuri (2016a), 141.



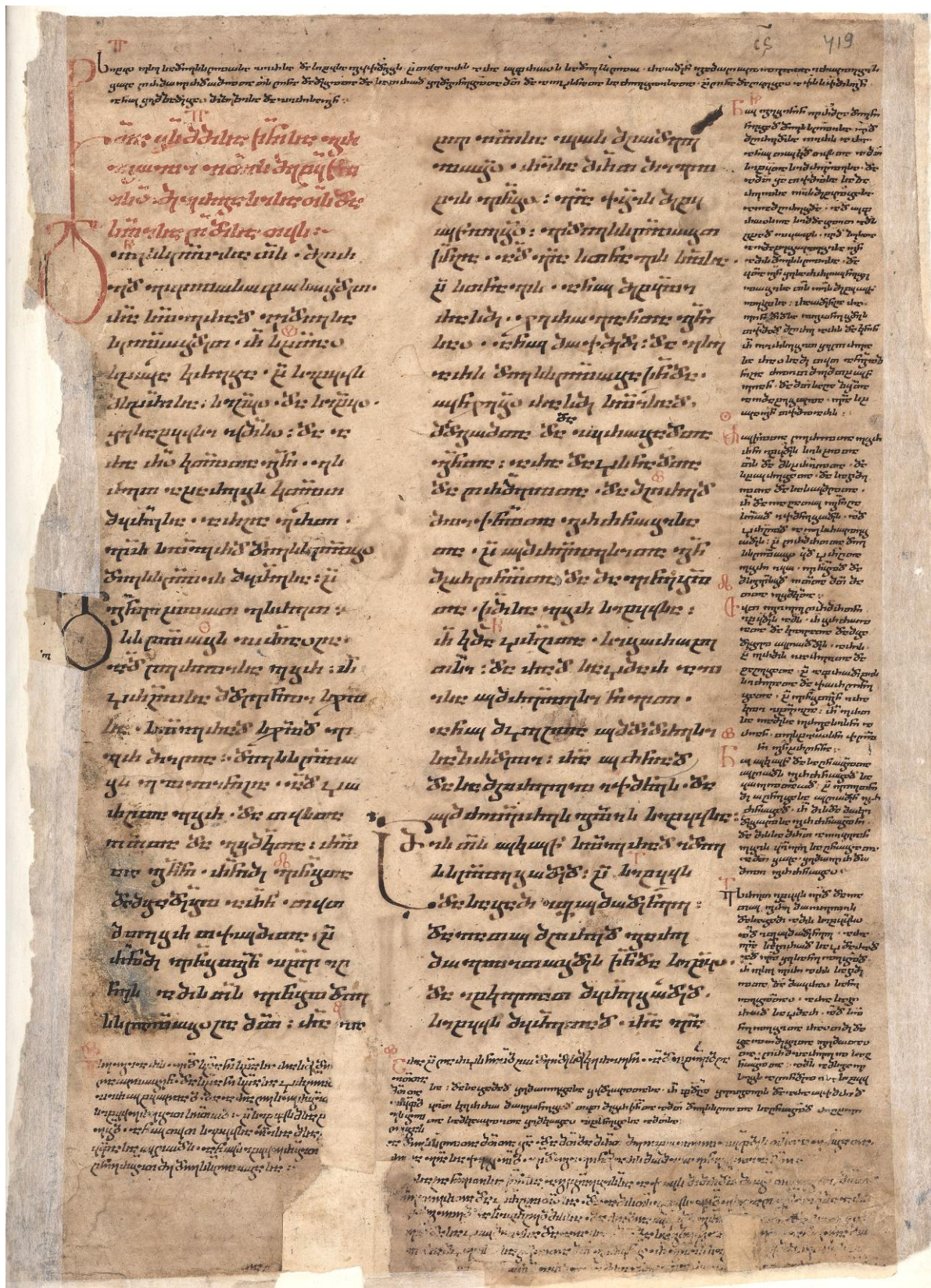


Fig. 1: MS Tbilisi, NCM A-109, fol. 211r: Or. 41 (beginning) with Basilus' commentary



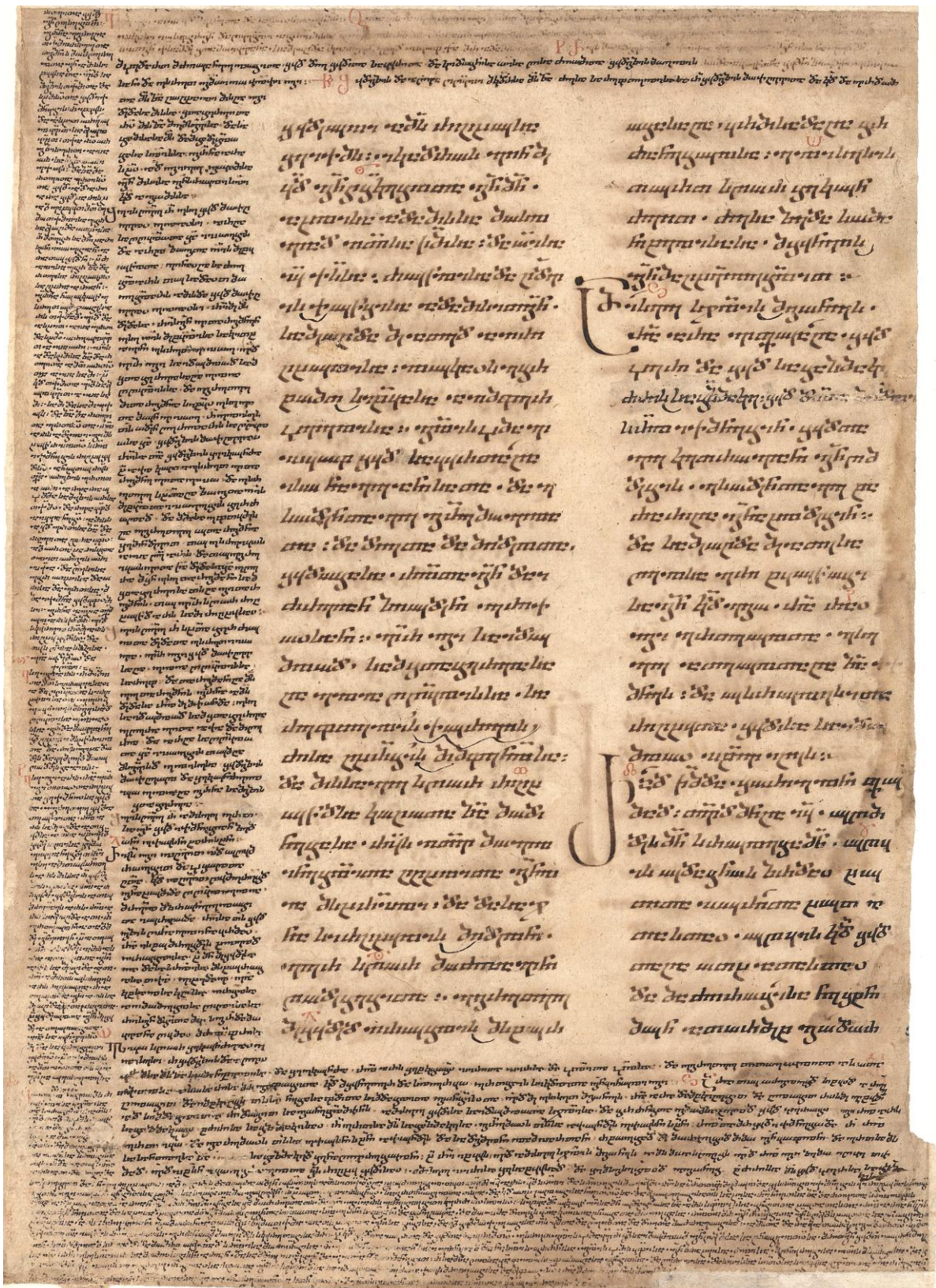


Fig. 2: MS Tbilisi, NCM A-109, fol. 212v: Or. 41 (continuation) with Basilii's commentary



The comparative analysis of the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century Georgian translations of Gregory the Theologian’s sermons and Basilios Minimus’ *Commentaries* reveals that (a) although there is no evidence that Euthymios translated Basilios’ *Commentaries*, he was obviously familiar with them and drew on them in his translation of Gregory’s sermons; (b) as the translator of Basilios’ *Commentaries*, Ephrem’s translation of Gregory’s sermons was decisively shaped by Basilios’ work.

#### **a. The Influence of Basilios Minimus’ *Commentaries* on Euthymios the Hagiorite’s translation**

The fact that Euthymios used Basilios’ *Commentaries* in translating Gregory’s sermons is documented in Ephrem Mtsire’s *Preface* to the *Corpus* of Gregory the Theologian’s liturgical sermons, which takes the form of a letter entitled *To Kvirike the Monk from Ephrem Mtsire*.<sup>15</sup> The aim of Ephrem’s *Letter* is to explain to the monk Kvirike (of Alexandretta) why he had decided to produce a new translation of Gregory’s sixteen liturgical sermons, despite the existence of an earlier translation by a highly respected authority, Euthymios the Hagiorite. In this context, while discussing the peculiarities of Euthymios’ and his own translation techniques, he observes:

[Euthymios] blended the undiluted, strong wine of Theologian’s book with life-giving water, expanding the Teacher’s brief words for commoners, since our people were still ignorant and infant. This was the reason why he blended some of the commentaries into the holy Father’s sermons.<sup>16</sup>

In another part of the same *Letter* Ephrem writes:

[Euthymios] modified the shrouded meaning of Theologian’s words, as he did not trust his people [to grasp it].<sup>17</sup>

Thus, Euthymios aimed to simplify Gregory’s texts for his audience, making effective use of Basilios’ *Commentaries* in the process. In doing so, he enabled Georgian readers to achieve a deeper understanding and assimilation of Gregory’s works.

Many of Basilios’ explanations focus on Gregory’s allusive expressions, in which he hints at a subject without naming it directly. These artistic images (tropes) include periphrasis, metonyms, euphemisms, allusions, and similar devices. Euthymios’ simplification concerns these very literary figures. He does not translate them literally; rather, he conveys their original meaning, the sense in which Gregory employs them.

At the end of *Oratio* 42, composed by Gregory the Theologian upon his departure from Constantinople after the Second Ecumenical Council and the resignation from his ecclesiastical office, he bids farewell to Constantinople, to his beloved and cherished church Anastasia, and to the other local churches, also to his flock. In this context, he uses the following phrase:

Χαίρετε, Ναζαράϊων χοροστασίαι<sup>18</sup> – “Farewell, choirs of Nazarites!”

<sup>15</sup> For the publication of the letter and its French translation see Metreveli et al. (1998), xxxii–xxxiii; Gippert (2024), 585–597.

<sup>16</sup> “ურწყულობასა ძლიერისა ამის ღმრთისმეტყუელისა წიგნისა ღვინისასა განჰზავებდა წყალთაგან სუელიერთა, რაჟამს სიტყუად-სიმოკლე მოძღურისა განავრცის ღიგონისა ერისათჳს, რამეთუ მაშინ ჩუჴნი ნათესავი ღიგონ იყო და ჩჩუღ მისდადმი, ამისთჳს რომელნიმე თარგმანთაგანნიცა წმიდისა სიტყუათა შინა განეზავა”, Metreveli et al. (1998), xxxiv.

<sup>17</sup> “ღმრთისმეტყუელისა სიტყუათა მიფარულება, რომელი მას ნუჴუეჴდა ერისა არ მინდობისათჳს სხუებრ შეეცვალა”, Metreveli et al. (1998), xxxv.

<sup>18</sup> *Or.* 42, 26. *PG* 36, 489 C 8.

The Hebrew word *nazirite* literally means “one who separates oneself”. This designation appears in the book of Judges, when the Angel tells Samson’s mother that her son will be a *Nazirite* of God (Ju. 13:5). Basilus explains this biblical allusion in the following way:

Ναζιραίους (v.l. Ναζαραίους) τοὺς ἡγιασμένους καὶ ἀφορισμένους ἐκάλουν. Λέγει δὲ νῦν τοὺς μοναχοὺς, οὓς καὶ σοφώτατον ἐν ἄλλοις καὶ ἔγκριτον τῆς ἐκκλησίας μέρος ὠνόμασεν<sup>19</sup> – “They called the consecrated and set-apart ones *Nazirites*. But now he refers to the monks, whom he also named in other (writings) ‘the wisest among others’ and ‘a chosen part of the Church’.”

Based on this explanation Euthymios renders *Nazirites* as “monks” in his Georgian translation:

გიხაროდენ, მონაზონთა კრებულნი!<sup>20</sup> – “Farewell, choirs of monks!”

Ephrem Mtsire’s translation of the explanation attracts special attention:

ძუელსა შინა ნაზირეველ უწოდდეს ღმრთისად განკუთვნილთა და განწმედელთა, ვითარ-იგი სამსონისთვის ანგელოზმან, ვითარმედ: ‘იყოს იგი ნაზირეველ ღმრთისა’. ხოლო ნუმცა ვინ მსგავსებისათვის სახელთადას ‘ნაზარეველ’ შეჰრაცხს ამათ, რამეთუ ნაზარეთი ქალაქი არს გალილეადასა, ხოლო ნაზირეველობა ებრაულად ‘წმიდასა’ და ‘საშოთაგან ღმრთისად განკუთვნილსა’ ეწოდების. ხოლო აქა მონაზონთათვის იტყვს, რომელთა სხუასაცა ადგილსა ‘უბრძნეს ნაწილ ეკლესიისად’ სახელ-სდებს<sup>21</sup> – “In the Old Testament, *Nazirites* were called those consecrated and purified for God, as the Angel said about Samson: ‘He shall be a Nazirite of God’. However, do not confuse this with the similar-sounding word Nazarene; Nazareth is a city in Galilee. *Nazirite* means ‘holy’ in Hebrew and refers to ‘one dedicated to God from birth’. Here, he calls the monks *Nazirites*, and elsewhere he refers to them as ‘the wisest part of the Church’.”

Ephrem’s explanation is more developed and detailed than Basilus’. It explicitly cites the biblical source of the allusion and explains why a reader might misinterpret Gregory’s artistic expression. Ephrem’s translation of Gregory’s passage mentioning the *Nazirites* is:

გიხაროდენ, ნაზირეველთა მწყობრმდგომობაო!<sup>22</sup> – “Farewell, choirs of *Nazirites*.”

In *Oratio* 14, 40, Gregory mentions Nicodemus, a Pharisee who is traditionally understood to have been a secret disciple of Jesus, based on the narratives in the Gospel of John (chapters 3, 7 and 19). According to one of these accounts, he visits Jesus at night, in secret, to discuss his teachings. Gregory refers to him with the epithet ἡμισείας φιλόχριστος:

Νικόδημος ὁ ἐξ ἡμισείας φιλόχριστος<sup>23</sup> – “Nicodemus, the half-devoted-to-Christ.”

Basilus explains the meaning of this epithet:

Νυκτερινὸς γὰρ ὢν μόνον καὶ κρυπτὸς, ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ φανερός καὶ ἡμερινός, τῷ ἡμίσει πῶς τῆς ἡμέρας λέγει τῇ νυκτί; Καὶ φιλὼν καὶ ἐντυγχάνων Χριστῷ. Ἡμισυ δὲ τῆς ὅλης ἡμέρας ἢ νύξ εἰκότως ἐξημισείας φιλόχριστος καὶ λελόγισται καὶ ὠνόμασται<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> MS Paris, BnF, Coislin 240, fol. 99r; see <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10038116t/f106.item>.

<sup>20</sup> Coulie et al. (2013), 352.

<sup>21</sup> MS Jer. georg. 15, fol. 163r.

<sup>22</sup> Coulie et al. (2013), 353.

<sup>23</sup> PG 35, 909 C 3–4.

<sup>24</sup> MS Paris, BnF, Coislin 240, fol. 134r; see <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10038116t/f141.item>.

– “[Nicodemus] was only nocturnal and hidden, and not manifest and of the day; how can [Gregory] ascribe half of the day to the night? [Nicodemus] loved and met Christ. And since night is half of the whole day, he has rightly been reckoned and called half-devoted-to-Christ.”

Euthymios overlooks Gregory’s allusion and translates this passage based on Basilios’ interpretation:

ნიკოდემოს, რომელი ღამით მივიდა ქრისტეს<sup>25</sup> – “Nicodemus, who came to Christ by night.”

In Ephrem Mtsire’s translation of Gregory’s *Oratio* 14, the same passage is rendered literally:

ნიკოდემოს, კერძოდ ღმრთისმსახურმან<sup>26</sup> – “Nicodemus, the half-devoted-to-Christ.”

There is another way in which Euthymios employs Basilios’ *Commentaries*: in certain instances, he incorporates factual information drawn from them into his translation. In *Oratio* 15, 2, Gregory discusses the Maccabees:

Οὗτοι τίνες μὲν ὄντες, καὶ ὅθεν, ἢ περὶ αὐτῶν βίβλος δηλώσει τοῖς φιλομαθέσι<sup>27</sup> – “Who these men are, and from where, the book about them will make (this) clear to those who love learning...”

In Basilios’ *Commentary*, there is an explanation of this passage:

Τίνες οὖν οὗτοι καὶ διὰ τί οὕτω τετίμηνται; δηλώσει, φησί, ἡ βίβλος Ἰωσήπου...<sup>28</sup> – “Who, then, these men are, and why they have been thus honored, he says, the book of Josephus... will make clear.”

The same information can be found in Euthymios’ translation of Gregory’s *Oratio* 15:

და ამას ყოველსა მათოვს აღწერილი იგი წიგნი გამოაცხადებს და მის მიერ ისწაონ ყოველთავე სწავლისმოყუარეთა, რომელი-იგი იოსიპოს მოსწრაფებან აღწერა<sup>29</sup> – “All this is set forth in the book composed about them by the tireless Josephus, and from it the lovers of learning will learn everything.”

The reference here is to Flavius Josephus’ *Antiquitates Judaicae*, Book 12.

There are additional instances in which Euthymios inserts the names of specific historical figures (especially, in *Orationes* 21 and 43) and identifies the sources from which Gregory cites certain passages, and in many cases, the source of the information is Basilios’ *Commentaries*. Such expansions serve an educational purpose, being directed toward lovers of learning. It is not without reason that Euthymios is mentioned in the colophons of his contemporaries as the enlightener of his own people, which implies not only spiritual elevation and strengthening in the Christian faith but also the intellectual development of his people.<sup>30</sup>

Of course, it is not impossible that such an erudite translator with a Byzantine education as Euthymios might have expanded and interpreted Gregory’s sermons based on his own knowledge and that the examples cited above are merely coincidental with the explanations

<sup>25</sup> Coulie et al. (2017), 284.

<sup>26</sup> Coulie et al. (2017), 285.

<sup>27</sup> PG 35, 913 B 3–4.

<sup>28</sup> MS Paris, BnF, Coislin 240, fol. 188r; see <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10038116t/f195.item>.

<sup>29</sup> Metreveli et al. (2000), 6.

<sup>30</sup> MS NCM A-1103, f. 117v; see also Otkhmeuri & Raphava (2022), 184, 194, 203.



found in Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries*. However, Ephrem Mtsire's testimony regarding Euthymios' use of the *Commentaries* when translating, as well as the traces of Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* found in one of Euthymios' translations,<sup>31</sup> confirm that Euthymios had access to and did, in fact, make use of Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* when translating Gregory's sermons.

#### b. The Influence of Basilus Minimus' Commentaries on Ephrem Mtsire's translation

Ephrem Mtsire's *Letter to Kvirike* offers valuable information indicating that when translating the sermons of Gregory the Theologian, Ephrem's main goal was to preserve their distinctive stylistic features. Ephrem gives a very precise characterization of Gregory's literary style: for him, it is "brief-worded, *i.e.* laconic, deep, and shrouded" (სიტყვა-სიმოკლე, სიღრმე და მიფარულება).<sup>32</sup> According to Ephrem, this style is reflected in his own translation, contributing to the "uniqueness" (უჩუქველობა) and "distinctiveness" (სხეებრობა) of his rendition.<sup>33</sup> This description of Gregory's style closely aligns with the assessments of medieval commentators and scholiasts, including Basilus Minimus and Michael Psellos, as well as with modern scholars of medieval rhetoric.<sup>34</sup>

It is generally held that in Gregory's sermons, stylistic effects, together with artistic imagery, are generated through the very syntactic structure of the text – the interplay of short and long sentences (*cola* and *commata*), the alternation of narrative and interrogative phrases, etc. Explanations of these stylistic devices occupy a significant place in Basilus' *Commentaries* and serve as a guide for Ephrem in translating Gregory's texts.

In this context, Ephrem's translation of the beginning of Gregory the Theologian's *Oratio* 38, 1 is noteworthy. Gregory's text runs:

Χριστὸς ἐξ οὐρανῶν, ἀντήσατε, Χριστὸς ἐπὶ γῆς, ὑψώθητε ... Χριστὸς ἐν σαρκὶ ...  
Χριστὸς ἐκ παρθένου.<sup>35</sup>

The effect of the laconic style in Gregory's prose here is created by omitting the verbs in four instances. In scholarly literature, this passage is described by as "a boundless dance of *cola* and *commata*".<sup>36</sup> Ephrem followed this manner in detail and translated the Greek text without verbs:

ქრისტე – ზეცით, მიეგებოდით! ქრისტე – ქუეყანასა ზედა, ამაღლდით! ...  
ქრისტე – გორციოთ! ... ქრისტე – ქაღწულისაგან!<sup>37</sup> – "Christ – from heaven,  
go out to meet Him! Christ on earth, be exalted! Christ in the flesh!... Christ from a  
Virgin!"

Ephrem's version of Basilus' explanation on this passage, which differs from the Greek original, is noteworthy:

რაჟამს თქუას 'ქრისტე ზეცით', ნაკლულად დაუტევებს ამას, ვითარმედ  
'მოვიდა'. და კუაღად: 'ქრისტე ქუეყანასა ზედა', ამასცა ნაკლულებასა

<sup>31</sup> See n. 5 above.

<sup>32</sup> Metreveli *et al.* (1998), xxxv.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Bezarashvili (2004), 260–292; Mayer (1911), 27–100.

<sup>35</sup> PG 36, 312 A 3 – 313 A 1.

<sup>36</sup> Guignet (1911), 85: "une « danse éperdue » de kôla et de kommata".

<sup>37</sup> Metreveli *et al.* (2001), 51, 53.

იგურდიემოქცეობითა აღმოუგებს... რამეთუ ესევეთარნი ნაკლულნი ფილოსოფოსთა ჰელოვნებისანი არიან და არა ვითარ ვინ ჰგონოს, უსრულობისანი<sup>38</sup> – “When he says, ‘Christ from heaven’, he omits ‘came’, and in ‘Christ on earth’, he compensates for the missing [word] with a pause. To omit words is an art of philosophers, and nobody should assume that they are left incomplete.”

According to the explanation of this passage, the missing verbs, which are implied in each *colon*, are replaced with a pause; due to Basilus’ *Commentary*, the dynamics of the original text are preserved in the Georgian translation. In Euthymios’ translation, the verbs are added as required by the rules of Georgian grammar, resulting in the loss of the laconic effect of the original, but perfectly suiting the norms of Georgian and thus, being more acceptable and comprehensible for the Georgian reader:

ქრისტე ზეცით მოვალს, მიეგებოდით! ქრისტე ქუეყანასა ზედა არს, ამაღლდით! ... ქრისტე ჳორციელ იქმნა! ... ქრისტე ქალწულისაგან იშვა!<sup>39</sup> – “Christ comes from heaven, go out to meet Him! Christ is on earth, be exalted! Christ is in the flesh!... Christ is born of a Virgin!”

As Ephrem paid particular attention to preserving Gregory’s characteristic laconism in his translation, numerous explanations in his version of Basilus’ *Commentaries* address this very feature of Gregory’s style. There are instances where such explanations have no counterpart in the Greek manuscripts known to us. We do not exclude the possibility that their author is Ephrem himself, who, drawing on his profound knowledge of Gregory the Theologian’s style and modeling himself on Basilus’ *Commentaries*, composed these explanations on his own.

For example, in *Oratio* 21, 25 dedicated to Athanasios the Great, there is a phrase commented by Basilus:

Τοῦτο Ἀθανάσιος ἔμνη<sup>40</sup> – ესე ჩუენ ათანასი<sup>41</sup> – “This [is what] Athanasios [did] for us.”

Basilus starts his explanation with the question regarding the first word of this phrase: Τοῦτο – ποῖον; (“*This* – what?”) and then elaborates at length on *what* Athanasios taught his flock. Ephrem renders this explanation with a free method of translation introducing it by the following remark:

აკლს, ვითარმედ “შემძინა” გონებით ოდენ შესადგინებელად და არა სიტყვთ გინა წესით აღსავსებელად ნაკლულევანისა<sup>42</sup> – “‘Taught’ is absent and is to be supplied mentally, rather than verbally inserted into the lacuna.”

Ephrem Mtsire also relied on the *Commentaries* of Basilus when selecting the most appropriate lexical units for translating Gregory’s more artistic passages. Ephrem himself refers to this practice in his *Letter to Kvirike*:

<sup>38</sup> MS Jer. georg. 13, fol. 286r.

<sup>39</sup> Metreveli *et al.* (2001), 50, 52.

<sup>40</sup> PG 35, 26, 1112 B 1.

<sup>41</sup> Coulie *et al.* (2013), 167.

<sup>42</sup> MS Jer. georg. 13, fol. 345r.

რამეთუ რაჟამს ცვალეზა მინდის სიტყვსაჲ, პირველად თარგმნითა გავეჰმართი<sup>43</sup> – “For when I want to change a certain word [in my translation], I use the *commentary* first.”

By “changing a word”, Ephrem refers to modifying the vocabulary employed by Euthymios in his translations. As mentioned in the *Letter*, Ephrem knew Euthymios' translations by heart.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, in his own work, he occasionally replaced certain words used by Euthymios with alternative lexical choices, and in some cases, these substitutions were directly informed by the *Commentaries*.

For example, in Gregory's *Oratio* 15, 3 the author mentions Eliazar's martyrdom as *προοίμιον ἀθλησεως δεξιόν*.<sup>45</sup> Euthymios rendered this phrase in the following way: დაწყებაჲ წამებისაჲ კეთილად – “the nice beginning of a martyrdom”. In contrast, Ephrem replaced all lexical units of this sentence: წინაშესავალი ღუაწლისაჲ მარჯუენე<sup>46</sup> – “the fortunate prologue of deeds”. Basilus' explanation, commenting on two out of these three words, presumably served as a source for Ephrem's translation:

მარჯუენეობაჲ კეთილისა და სახიერისა წილ უთქუამს, ხოლო “წინაშესავალობაჲ” – რამეთუ პირველ ყრმათაჲსა იწამა<sup>47</sup> – “By ‘fortunate’ [the author] means ‘nice’ and ‘good’, while [he] uses the word ‘prologue’ because [Eliazar] became the martyr before the young fellows.”

Basing himself on Basilus' *Explanation*, Ephrem replaces Euthymios' expository translation with a closer equivalent of the underlying Greek text.

The usage of the *Commentaries* to convey the exact meaning of Greek lexical units is one more interesting method employed by Ephrem Mtsire. In his *Letter to Kvirike* Ephrem writes:

იგი ყოველთა ზედა ეკლესიათა განგებნილი ბრწყინავს, ხოლო ესე იმჴთ ვიეთოვსმე იღვას გულისჴმისყოფელთათჴს – “That one (*i.e.* Euthymios' translation) is shining spread all over the churches, while this one (*i.e.* Ephrem's own translation) is designed for curious people.”<sup>48</sup>

Basilus Minimus' *Commentaries* played a crucial role in forming, on the one hand, Euthymios' expository translation for commoners, *i.e.* for his flock, and on the other hand, for Ephrem's word-for-word translation which reproduced in Georgian the very tone, timbre, and rhythm of Gregory's sermons and which was intended for experienced readers. In this way, Basilus' *Commentaries* supported both translators, though in different ways.

## Picture credits

Figs 1–2: Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi



<sup>43</sup> Metreveli *et al.* (1998), xxxiii. See also Otkhmezuri (2016a), 145.

<sup>44</sup> Metreveli *et al.* (1998), xxxiv.

<sup>45</sup> PG 35, col. 913 C 7.

<sup>46</sup> Metreveli *et al.* (2000), 8-9.

<sup>47</sup> MS Jer. georg. 15, fol. 235v.

<sup>48</sup> Metreveli *et al.* (1998), xxxiv.

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## ბასილი მინიმუსის კომენტარების გავლენა გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის საკითხავთა ქართულ თარგმანებზე

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გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის თხზულებათა შუა საუკუნეების კომენტარებს შორის მნიშვნელოვანი ადგილი უჭირავს X საუკუნის ბიზანტიელი მწიგნობრის, კესარია-კაპადოკიის ეპისკოპოსის, ბასილი მინიმუსის განმარტებებს, რომლებიც ქართულად XI საუკუნის ბოლოს არის ნათარგმნი შავი მთის ცნობილი ელინოფილი მწიგნობრის, ეფრემ მცირის მიერ. ქართულ ხელნაწერებში ბასილი მინიმუსის კომენტარები გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის 16 ლიტურგიკულ საკითხავს ერთვის და წარმოდგენილია XII-XIII საუკუნეების ოთხ ნუსხაში: Jer. georg. 43, Jer. georg. 15, Jer. georg. 13 და ხეც A-109. ამათგან ერთში – Jer. georg. 13 – ის გაბმული ტექსტის სახით მოსდევს გრიგოლის საკითხავებს, ხოლო სამში – Jer. georg. 43, Jer. georg. 15, ხეც A-109 – აშიებზე ერთვის ძირითად ტექსტს.

გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის საკითხავები ეფრემ მცირემდე, წინაათონურ ეპოქაში, ნათარგმნი აქვთ ანონიმ მთარგმნელებსა და გრიგოლ ოშკელს, X-XI საუკუნეების მიჯნაზე – ცნობილ ქართველ მთარგმნელს, ივირონის მონასტრის წინამძღვარს, ექვთიმე მთაწმინდელს და ოდნავ მოგვიანებით – დავით ტბელს. X საუკუნის შემდგომი პერიოდის თარგმანების შედარებითმა კვლევამ ბასილი მინიმუსის კომენტარებთან აჩვენა, რომ, მართალია, ექვთიმე მთაწმინდელს არ უთარგმნია ბასილი მინიმუსის კომენტარები, მაგრამ ის იცნობდა ამ კომენტარებს და მათ გავლენას განიცდიდა გრიგოლი საკითხავების ქართულად თარგმნისას. ამის შესახებ საუბრობს ეფრემ მცირეც თავის ეპისტოლეში კვირიკე აღექსანდრიელის მიმართ, რომელიც ერთვის გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის 16 ლიტურგიკული საკითხავის კრებულს. ის მიუთითებს, რომ ექვთიმეს „რომელნიმე თარგმანთაგანნიცა წმიდისა სიტყუათა შინა განეზავა“. როგორც ეფრემი აღნიშნავს, ამას ექვთიმე აკეთებდა იმ მიზნით, რომ გრიგოლის საკმაოდ რთული, თეოლოგიური სიღრმითა თუ მხატვრული თვალსაზრისით დატვირთული პასაჟები ადგილად გასაგები და მისაწვდომი გაეხადა ჯერ კიდევ „სიჩილებაში“ – სიჩვილეში მყოფი, გამოუცდელი მკითხველისათვის. ამ თვალსაზრისით საყურადღებოა გრიგოლის ტექსტში დადასტურებული საკმაოდ რთული მხატვრული სახეები – აღეგორიები, ევფემიზმები, ანალოგიები, მეტაფორები, რომელთა შინაარსის განმარტება მოცემულია ბასილთან. ექვთიმეს თარგმანში ეს მხატვრული სახეები პირდაპირ კი არ არის გადმოტანილი, არამედ, ბასილი მინიმუსის განმარტებების

მიხედვით, შინაარსობრივად არის გადმოცემული. ექვთიმე თავის თარგმანებს ამდიდრებს ასევე ფაქტობრივი ინფორმაციით, რომლებზეც გრიგოლთან მხოლოდ მინიშნებებია გაკეთებული. ამ ინფორმაციის წყაროც ექვთიმესათვის ბასილი მინიმუსის კომენტარებია.

ეფრემ მცირე, რომელიც ქართულ მთარგმნელობით ტრადიციაში თავისი ბერძნულთან დაახლოებული, სიტყვასიტყვითი თარგმანებით არის ცნობილი, გრიგოლ ღვთისმეტყველის თხზულებების თარგმნისას განსაკუთრებულ მნიშვნელობას ანიჭებდა საკუთარ თარგმანებში ამ ავტორის ლიტერატურული სტილის ასახვას. „სიტყუა-სიმოკლე, სიღრმე და მიფარულება“ – ასე ახასიათებს ის გრიგოლის პროზის სტილს თავის ეპისტოლეში კვირიკეს მიმართ. მისი სიტყვებით, ამ სპეციფიკის ასახვა ქმნის სწორედ მისი თარგმანების „უჩუქველობას“ და „სხუებრობას“. აშკარაა, რომ ამ საქმეში, ანუ გრიგოლის სტილის შენარჩუნებაში, მას დიდ დახმარებას უწევდა ბასილი მინიმუსის კომენტარების ის განმარტებები, რომლებშიც გრიგოლის სტილზეა საუბარი. ბასილი მინიმუსის კომენტარები ასევე ეხმარება ეფრემს, გრიგოლის თარგმნისას, ზუსტი, ადეკვატური ლექსიკური ერთეულების შერჩევაში. მის ეპისტოლეში კვირიკეს მიმართ ვკითხულობთ: „რამეთუ რაჟამს ცვალებაჲ მინდის სიტყუსაჲ, პირველად თარგმნითა გაჰჰმართი“. „სიტყვის ცვალებაში“ უნდა იგულისხმებოდეს ეფრემის მიერ გრიგოლის თხზულებათა ექვთიმე მთაწმინდელისეული თარგმანების ლექსიკის შეცვლა. როგორც ამავე ეპისტოლიდან ირკვევა, ეფრემი კარგად იცნობდა – თითქმის ზეპირად იცოდა ექვთიმესეული თარგმანები. დასტურდება შემთხვევები, როდესაც ეფრემი ექვთიმესეული თარგმანის ლექსიკას სწორედ ბასილი მინიმუსის განმარტებებზე დაყრდნობით ცვლის.

ამგვარად, ბასილის კომენტარებმა მნიშვნელოვანი როლი შეასრულა, ერთი მხრივ, ექვთიმეს ექსპოზიციური თარგმანების შექმნაში, რომლებიც „სიჩრებაში“ მყოფი მკითხველებისათვის იყო განკუთვნილი, ხოლო, მეორე მხრივ – ეფრემ მცირის სიტყვასიტყვითი თარგმანის შედგენაში, რომელშიც, ბასილის კომენტართა წყალობით, ოსტატურად არის ასახული გრიგოლისეული სტილის ნიუანსები, ტონი და რიტმი.





# Unbound and Untamed? A Corpus-Based Exploration of Georgian Function Words

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the role and function of Georgian function words from a corpus-linguistic perspective, focusing on their morphosyntactic as well as syntactic and typological qualities. Particular attention is paid to the formal and functional properties of prepositions, postpositions, particles, conjunctions, and other elements and their usage in both the nominal and verbal domain. The study is grounded on evidence from a representative Georgian corpus, the GNC, which facilitates the empirical investigation of syntactic environments and distributional patterns. In addressing the challenge of function word classification in a morphologically complex language such as Georgian, the study confronts several theoretical models of classification of synsemantics and autosemantics. To support this analysis and enable further empirical exploration, a lightweight Java tool has been developed as part of the study. The tool allows users to supply a predefined list of Georgian function words and analyse their occurrence within any given input text. It automatically identifies which function words are present, counts their frequency, and optionally visualises the results. This practical component demonstrates how computational methods can complement theoretical linguistic investigation and highlights the importance of corpus-based, tool-supported methodologies in advancing our understanding of function word systems in typologically complex languages such as Georgian.

**Keywords:** Functional Grammar; corpus linguistics; computational tools; Georgian language; Java

## 1. Introduction

Function words (also known as *synsemantic elements*) are words that are largely devoid of independent semantic content, serving only to express grammatical relationships between words in a sentence. They include articles (*the, a*), adpositions (*in, on*), conjunctions (*and, but*), auxiliary verbs (*to be, to have*), modal verbs (*can, must*), and others. Unlike content (or *autosemantic*) words, which carry clear, independent meaning (e.g., nouns and full verbs), function words primarily fulfil grammatical, structural, and interactional roles. They are characterised by a high frequency in discourse and play a strategic role in communication. Coherence and cohesion in discourse are largely supported by function words, which help signal logical relationships between ideas, establish connections between sentences, organise arguments, moderate interaction, and enable speakers and listeners to express and interpret complex ideas effectively. Function words are essential for indicating cause and effect, contrast, conditions, and overall coherence. Beyond structuring grammar, function words are also crucial in conveying tone and first speaker intention. For example, a function word such as a negation particle can completely alter the meaning of a sentence. These words can also soften statements, add emphasis, or qualify meaning. Shifts in meaning are particularly significant in spoken discourse, where intonation and delivery often carry as much interpretive weight as the lexical content. In addition to individual function words, function phrases are frequently used to convey a speaker's stance or attitude (e.g., *it seems, of course, by the way, I*

*think*). These expressions help speakers e.g. assert their position, express uncertainty or confidence, or transition between topics. In conclusion, function words are far more than mere “fillers” in texts. They are powerful tools for rhetorical strategy and interpersonal communication. Mastery of their use is essential for expressing ideas clearly, accurately, and persuasively.

In Georgian linguistic literature, function words have typically been studied from a purely formal perspective, often neglecting their functional and semantic roles. Compared to autosemantic words, function elements have received limited attention in lexicography; they are underrepresented as independent units in most dictionaries. The only dictionary that includes functional elements more comprehensively is the *Dictionary of Morphemes and Modal Elements of the Georgian Language* by Jorbenadze *et al.*, published in 1988. However, this resource no longer meets contemporary needs due to the following limitations:

- a) its content was processed manually and lacks systematic organisation
- b) it exists solely in printed form and is incompatible with digital research tools
- c) it reflects theoretical frameworks that were current only until the early 1990s
- d) the functional analysis it offers requires revision and clarification based on more recent theoretical advancements.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Linguistic theory has traditionally placed a strong emphasis on the difference between autosemantic (content) and synsemantic (function) words. This contrast, which has historically been presented as a binary opposition or dichotomy, has influenced how we understand morphosyntactic organisation, lexical structure, and grammar in various languages. But as time has gone on, researchers have come to see the relationship as a continuum that is impacted by both the structural characteristics of individual languages and diachronic processes like grammaticalisation.

In the upcoming part, several theories are introduced which concern the distinction and/or entanglement of autosemantics and synsemantics. It offers a comparative overview and introduces analytical tools for modelling the continuum between lexical and grammatical elements, drawing on ideas from structuralism, generative grammar, functional-typological models, cognitive-constructional and pragmatic approaches.

### 2.1 Foundations in Early Linguistic Thought

The roots of this distinction can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when linguistic and philosophical grammar (as introduced by Wittgenstein) began to take shape. Otto Jespersen was among the pioneers to define this concept, making a clear distinction between “notional words”, which carry their own meaning, and “form words”, which mainly serve to express grammatical relationships. Jespersen pointed out that content words stand on their own in terms of meaning, while function words depend heavily on their syntactic context for understanding.<sup>1</sup> In 1934, Karl Bühler, in his significant work *Sprachtheorie*, proposed the so-called “organon model” that connected autosemantic words to a “representation function” and synsemantic

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<sup>1</sup> Jespersen 1924: 73–75.

words to an “expressive function” and a “conative function”. According to Bühler, function words play a crucial role in organising discourse, rather than just acting as syntactic fillers.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Structuralist and Distributional Approaches

Within American structuralism, Leonard Bloomfield (1933) placed significant emphasis on the distributional behaviour of words. He categorised “full words” – typically nouns, verbs, and adjectives – as autosemantic due to their ability to stand alone and contribute referential meaning. In contrast, “function words” were seen as dependent items that appeared in limited syntactic slots.<sup>3</sup> Zellig Harris extended this distributional approach by proposing formal methods to categorise words based on their positional behaviour and frequency within corpora. For Harris, function words are characterised by high frequency, syntactic dependency, and constrained positional freedom.<sup>4</sup> In the European dependency tradition, Lucien Tesnière’s *Éléments de syntaxe structurale* likewise opposed “mots pleins” and “mots vides”:<sup>5</sup> in his stemma diagrams, content words form the nuclei of constructions, while function words serve as relational connectors, anticipating later structural and functional treatments of the autosemantic–synsemantic divide.

The core distinctions between autosemantic and synsemantic words can be summarised as illustrated in Table I.

**Table I: Core distinctions between autosemantic and synsemantic words**

Property	Autosemantic Words	Synsemantic Words
Semantic Autonomy	High	Low
Grammatical Function	Minimal	Central
Distributional Flexibility	Broad	Restricted
Phonological Independence	Often independent	Often clitic or bound
Frequency	Typically lower	Generally higher

## 2.3 Generative Grammar and Formal Syntactic Categories

The generative grammar framework brought a fresh, more abstract way of looking at how we categorise words. In his books, *Syntactic Structures* (1957) and *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965), Noam Chomsky made a clear distinction between lexical and functional categories. Lexical items, which are usually autosemantic, are kept in the lexicon and carry semantic meaning (e.g. *run*, *house*, *child*). On the other hand, functional elements (e.g. *the*, *will*, *of*) act as the structural heads of phrases, such as Determiner Phrases (DPs), Tense Phrases (TP), and Complementiser Phrases (CPs).<sup>6</sup> This distinction became even more significant in *The Minimalist Program* (1995), where the syntactic spine is often made up entirely of functional projections. Components like T (Tense), C (Complementiser), and D (Determiner) illustrate synsemantic elements that, whereas they may not contribute much to meaning, play a vital role in the process of syntactic derivation.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Bühler 1934: 28–34.

<sup>3</sup> Bloomfield 1933: 178–180.

<sup>4</sup> Harris 1951: 122–126.

<sup>5</sup> Tesnière 1959: 53–55.

<sup>6</sup> Chomsky 1965: 68–77.

<sup>7</sup> Chomsky 1995: 177–184.

## 2.4 Functional Grammar and Diachronic Change

Functionalist approaches offer a new perspective, highlighting the communicative and historical aspects of word categories. Simon Dik (1978, 1997) introduced the autosemantic-synsemantic division within a larger functional grammar framework. For Dik, content words are all about encoding new, referential information, while function words help organise that information within discourse.<sup>8</sup> Talmy Givón (1979, 1984) took this concept even further by emphasising grammaticalisation as the main process that drives the transformation of autosemantic items into synsemantic ones. His famous saying, “Today’s morphology is yesterday’s syntax” captures the essence of how grammatical markers often evolve from complete lexical items over time.<sup>9</sup>

Syntactic reanalysis,<sup>10</sup> semantic bleaching,<sup>11</sup> and phonological reduction<sup>12</sup> have been pinpointed as crucial mechanisms that turn autosemantic roots into grammatical elements. Building on these earlier insights, Bernd Heine and his colleagues explored this historical development in their research on grammaticalisation pathways.<sup>13</sup>

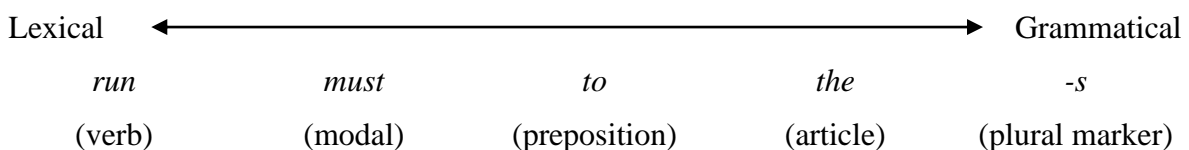
Example:

Latin *habere* (“to have”) → French future tense auxiliary *-ai* in *chanterai* “(I) will sing”

## 2.5 Typological and Cognitive-Constructional Models

From a typological perspective, Martin Haspelmath (2000, 2011) suggests that we should view the autosemantic-synsemantic contrast as a scale rather than a strictly binary opposition. He presents a variety of diagnostic criteria like obligatoriness, semantic generality, and phonological integration to determine where a particular item fits in the lexical-grammatical spectrum.<sup>14</sup> In cognitive linguistics, Ronald Langacker (1987, 2008) also breaks away from rigid categorisations. He analyses all linguistic expressions as meaningful, even the most grammaticalised elements, though these are regarded in more schematic and abstract ways.<sup>15</sup>

Adele Goldberg’s *Construction Grammar* (1995, 2006) provides yet another viewpoint. In this framework, meaning doesn’t just lie in individual words but in constructions, i.e. combinations of form and function. Function words are essential within these constructions, as they help shape argument patterns and discourse routines.<sup>16</sup> Fig. 1 illustrates the lexical-grammatical continuum in English, showing how items range from fully lexical words like *run* to highly grammatical elements such as the plural suffix *-s*.



**Fig. 1: Continuum Representation**

<sup>8</sup> Dik 1997: 120–124.

<sup>9</sup> Givón 1971: 413.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Langacker 1977: 59.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Givón 1981: 51.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Bybee & Pagliuca 1985: 76.

<sup>13</sup> Heine *et al.* 1991: 17–36.

<sup>14</sup> Haspelmath 2011: 41–44.

<sup>15</sup> Langacker 1987: 58–64.

<sup>16</sup> Goldberg 1995: 9–12.



## 2.6 Gradient Classification Models

The idea of a lexical-grammatical continuum has inspired some researchers to suggest classifications that go beyond a simple two-way split, proposing instead three-way or even multi-dimensional frameworks. A notable model comes from Haspelmath (2011), who advocates for a graded typology, while Lehmann (1982) introduces scalar parameters in the process of grammaticalisation. These frameworks often identify an “intermediate” category that encompasses auxiliaries, modals, or aspectual markers – elements that sit somewhere between being fully lexical and fully grammatical. A summary is provided in Table II.

**Table II: Expanded Diagnostic Table (based on Lehmann 1982; Haspelmath 2011)**

Property	Autosemantic	Intermediate	Synsemantic
Semantic specificity	high	moderate	low
Syntactic obligatoriness	optional	variable	required
Phonological independence	full	partial	reduced/clitic
Frequency in discourse	low–moderate	moderate–high	high
Position in clause	flexible	mid–clause	fixed/pre/postposed
Diachronic stability	high	moderate	low

## 2.7 Pragmatic Approaches to Function Words

Beyond their grammatical behaviour, function words are also essential for structuring discourse and directing interpretation in context. Pragmatically, they can be used as discourse markers, modal particles, and focus or topic indicators. Deborah Schiffrin (1987) suggested the concept of discourse markers as items that structure spoken language, marking coherence and speaker intention. Words such as *well*, *so*, *you know*, and *but* serve not grammatical but interpersonal and organisational functions in conversation.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Fraser (1999) categorises discourse markers as lexical items used to signal a relationship between the discourse segment they precede and the prior discourse. These words do not contribute propositional meaning but are crucial to the pragmatic interpretation of speech.<sup>18</sup>

In Germanic languages, modal particles like *doch*, *ja*, and *mal* convey speaker attitude or epistemic certainty. Diewald (2006) views these as grammatical elements with pragmatic functions, specifically in dialogic contexts.<sup>19</sup> Topic and focus markers are likewise pragmatic function words. Lambrecht (1994) describes how topic-comment structures in languages like Hungarian or Japanese are encoded by way of particles like *wa* or *ga*.<sup>20</sup>

Searle in his theory of *Speech Acts* (1969) highlights the function of words like *please*, *let's*, and modal auxiliaries to create performative functions. These words are very important in projecting illocutionary force, enabling utterances to have commanding, requesting, or declarative power.<sup>21</sup> Levinson (1983) extends this within pragmatics, noting that function words often communicate the speaker's implicatures of mutual knowledge and discourse relevance. For example, the use of focus-sensitive particles such as *even* or *only* demonstrates

<sup>17</sup> Schiffrin 1987: 31–40.

<sup>18</sup> Fraser 1999: 931.

<sup>19</sup> Diewald 2006: 407–410.

<sup>20</sup> Lambrecht 1994: 117–124.

<sup>21</sup> Searle 1969: 63–70.

pragmatic scope and presuppositional structure.<sup>22</sup> Table III presents cross-linguistic examples of major types of pragmatic function markers – discourse markers, modal particles, focus/topic markers, and speech act markers – along with illustrative items, together with the languages in which they occur and key references.

**Table III: Pragmatic Functions of Function Words**

Function Type	Examples	Languages	Key References
Discourse Markers	<i>well, so, anyway</i>	English, Spanish	Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1999)
Modal Particles	<i>doch, ja, mal</i>	German	Diewald (2006), Abraham (1991)
Focus/Topic Markers	<i>wa, ga, mo</i>	Japanese, Hungarian	Lambrecht (1994), Givón (1983)
Speech Act Markers	<i>please, let's, sorry</i>	English, Korean	Searle (1969), Levinson (1983)

According to these pragmatic approaches, functional elements ought to be categorised according to their function in discourse and communicative intent as well as their involvement in syntax or morphology. By including a dimension that represents speaker-hearer interaction, they enhance the conventional autosemantic-synsemantic split.

### 3. Function words in Georgian

In Georgian, syntactic and pragmatic functions can manifest themselves in function words or function constructions. The latter consist of a function word combined either with other function words or with different elements. Function words are quite versatile: depending on the element they determine, their function changes. A good example is the grading adjective *upro* ‘more’, which can be used to construct the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stage comparatives in the analytic gradation of descriptive adjectives.<sup>23</sup> Examples (1–3) show the different use, function and possible combination of *upro* with other elements.

- (1) *Leo-s ak upro zvel-i zmaḱac-eb-i hqavs*  
 Leo-DAT.SG here **more** old-NOM.SG male friend-PL-NOM have.S3SG.PRES  
 ‘Leo has **older** (male) friends here [...]’ (Revaz Mišveladze, *Rčeuli txzulebani IV - novelebi*)

- (2) *brzol-is survil-i aḡaravis aḡmoačnda*  
 fight-GEN.SG wish-NOM.SG no one.FOC.GEN.SG discover.S3SG.AOR  
  
*upro imiṭom rom brzola uazroba iḡo*  
**more because** that fight.NOM.SG meaninglessness.NOM.SG be.S3SG.AOR  
 ‘No one wanted to fight anymore, **mostly because** fighting was pointless.’ (Journal *Axali taoba*, 2000)

- (3) *ar šeiṣleba gačereba mit upro axla*  
 NEG be possible.S3SG.PRES stop-INF **that**.INST.SG **more** now  
 ‘It must not stop, **especially** now.’ (Journal *Axali epoka*, 2003)

<sup>22</sup> Levinson 1983: 204–211.

<sup>23</sup> Georgian can differentiate between three levels of comparatives: 1<sup>st</sup> level comparatives are built with the adverb *upro* ‘more’ (e.g. *upro lamazi* ‘more beautiful’), 2<sup>nd</sup> level comparatives are constructed with *bevrad* ‘much (more)’ (e.g. *bevrad lamazi* ‘much more beautiful’), and 3<sup>rd</sup> level comparatives with both *bevrad* ‘much (more)’ and *upro* ‘more’ (e.g. *bevrad upro lamazi* ‘by far more beautiful’; Kamarauli 2022: 113).

In example (1), the adverb *upro* ‘more’ is paired with a lexical adjective *zveli* ‘old’ and functions as a comparative grading adverb (‘friends older than others’); in (2), *upro* is combined with another function word, namely the causal subordinator *imiṭom* ‘because’, which is intensified through this combination and triggers the following argumentative structure; and lastly, in (3), *upro* is part of a lexicalised phrase, which has focusing function (*mit upro* ‘especially’).

Another good example is *ra* ‘what’, which is quite diverse in its meaning and function; examples (4–6) showcase *ra* ‘what’ in combination with different auto- and synsemantics.

- (4) *es* *ra* *gaakete* *rom* *icode*  
**this.NOM.SG** **what.NOM.SG** do.S2SG.AOR that know.S2SG.CONJ  
‘[If] you [only] knew what you did with this.’ (Revaz Mišveladze, *Rčuli txulebani IV - novelebi*)

- (5) *ḡarg-i* *ra* *gexvečebi* *sxva* *rame-ze*  
**good-NOM.SG** **what.NOM.SG** beg.S1SG.PRES other something.DAT.SG-ON  
*vilaparaḡot*  
speak.S2PL.OPT

‘**Okay**, I beg you... let’s talk about something else.’ (Revaz Mišveladze, *Rčuli txulebani I - novelebi*)

- (6) *ra* *tkma* *unda* *cud-ad* *iḡo*  
**what.NOM.SG** **say.INF** **MOD** bad-ADV.SG be.S3SG.AOR  
‘Of course, he was feeling unwell.’ (Revaz Mišveladze, *Rčuli txulebani I - novelebi*)

In (4), *ra* has a referencing function: it refers to an action prior to the utterance and the speaker evaluates the action of the hearer. In (5), *ra* is paired with the adjective *ḡargi* ‘good’ and has a convincing, admitting function; lastly, in (6), *ra* is part of the grammaticalised function phrase *ra tkma unda* ‘of course’ (lit. ‘what talk does it need’), today written as one word; syntactically, it functions as a clausal adverb (modifying the whole clause) and adopts the meaning of an obvious conclusion (presupposing the previous expectation/knowledge of the speaker about the state of the referred person).

Another illustration of the multifunctionality of function words – and thus the need for a multi-layered approach – is provided by *erti* ‘one’; cf. examples (7–10).

- (7) [...] *ševedi* *da* *ert-i* *cal-i* *viḡide*  
[...] go in.S1SG.AOR and **one-NOM.SG** **piece-NOM.SG** buy.S1SG.AOR  
*arada* *saxl-ši* *uḡve* *oc-amde* *mkonda*  
even though house.DAT.SG-in already twenty-until have.S1SG.IMPF  
‘[...] I went in and bought **one piece**, even though I already had about twenty at home.’  
(Journal *11x11*, 2010)

- (8) *ert* *dḡe-s* *movedi* *saxl-ši* *da*  
**one.DAT.SG** **day-DAT.SG** come.S1SG.AOR house.DAT.SG-in and  
*iaṭaḡ-ze* *goraobda* *tiḡa-s-tan* *ertad*  
floor.DAT.SG-on roll around.S1SG.IMPF Tika-DAT.SG-with together  
‘**One day** I came home and he was rolling around on the floor with Tika.’ (Journal *Axali ṭaoba*, 2006)

- (9) *žer erti*                      *uxerxul-i*                      *ikneboda*                      *morcxv-ad*  
**first of all**                      awkward-NOM.SG                      be.S3SG.COND                      shy-ADV.SG
- stkva*                      *Andriko-m*                      [...]   
 say.S3SG.AOR                      Andriko-ERG.SG                      [...]   
 “**First of all**, it would be awkward” Andriko said shily [...]’ (Guram Dočanašvili, *Čvens ezoši čvima modis*)

- (10) *ert-i*                      *es-e-c*                      *mitxari*                      *bazar-ši*                      *rogor*  
**one-NOM.SG**                      **this-EMPH.V-FOC**                      say.S2SG.IMP                      bazaar.DAT.SG-in                      how
- moxvdi*  
 turn up.S2SG.AOR  
 ‘**Now** tell me this, how did you turn up at the bazaar?’ (Journal *Sakartvelos respublika*, 2005)

In (7), *erti* functions as a numeral, and together with the numeral classifier *cali* ‘piece’, the phrase denotes a definite quantity. The opposite happens in example (8), where *ert* is paired with *dges* ‘day’, which entails the meaning of ‘one day’ and functions as an unspecific and indefinite temporal phrase. In contrast, examples (9) and (10) demonstrate more multi-layered functions of *erti*: in (9), together with *žer*, *erti* triggers an argumentative structure and introduces a listing (*first of all X and secondly, Y*), which carries a focusing function, whereas in (10), *erti* can be considered to have an adhortative function, changing the topic and intensifying the focus given by *esec* ‘this’.

All these examples demonstrate the urgency of introducing a multi-layered approach that includes not only syntax but also semantics and pragmatics. This will be discussed in the following Chapter.

## 4. Analysis

### 4.1 Linguistic approach

For the present paper, the linguistic approach includes several subfields of linguistics:

- syntax, in particular syntactic roles, e.g. what grammatical function does the word fulfil (connector, modifier, etc.)?
- semantics, in particular semantic autonomy, e.g. does the word carry standalone meaning, or is it dependent?
- pragmatics, in particular pragmatic function, e.g. does it manage discourse, express stance, or organise information?

For this analysis, we have chosen 100 of the most frequent function words found in the Georgian National Corpus (hereafter: GNC),<sup>24</sup> more precisely in the subcorpus of Modern Georgian (GNC-NG). The following Tables are a first attempt at classifying and explaining function words according to their syntactic (Table IV), pragmatic (Table V), and semantic (Table VI) functions. In Table IV, the roles and grammatical functions of these 100 most frequent function words are given.

<sup>24</sup> <http://gnc.gov.ge/>. This and all other URLs quoted in this article were last accessed on 30 December 2025.



**Table IV: Classification of the 100 most frequent function words in GNC-NG**

Word	Translation	Role	Grammatical function
<i>da</i>	and	connector	coordinating conjunction
<i>ar</i>	not	negation	negative adverb
<i>rom</i>	that, if	subordinator	complementiser/subordinating conjunction
<i>magram</i>	but	connector	coordinating conjunction
<i>tu</i>	if	conditional/subordinator	conjunction
<i>ki</i>	yes, well	contrastive/affirmative	affirmative word
<i>ar</i>	not	negation	negative adverb
<i>rom</i>	that, if	subordinator	complementiser/subordinating conjunction
<i>magram</i>	but	connector	coordinating conjunction
<i>tu</i>	if	conditional/subordinator	conjunction
<i>ki</i>	yes, well	contrastive/affirmative	affirmative word
<i>ra</i>	what	interrogative	pronoun/ WH-word
<i>unda</i>	must	modal verb	auxiliary
<i>ara</i>	no	negation	negative word
<i>erti</i>	one	quantifier/numeral	indefinite numeral
<i>ver</i>	not (potential)	inability marker	negative auxiliary
<i>arc</i>	not even	negative coordination	negative conjunction
<i>axla</i>	now	time adverb	temporal adverb
<i>mere</i>	then, after	time adverb	temporal adverb
<i>mainc</i>	however	concessive marker	particle
<i>ase</i>	this way	manner adverb	modal adverb
<i>ise</i>	that way	manner adverb	modal adverb
<i>rogorc</i>	as	comparison/subordination	comparative conjunction
<i>xom</i>	after all, well	question tag/emphasis	particle
<i>upro</i>	more	comparative degree	adverb/ degree modifier
<i>kidev</i>	again	additive/focus	focus particle/adverb
<i>rac</i>	what	relative pronoun	WH-word/relativiser
<i>tavi</i>	head	reflexive noun	grammaticalised noun
<i>isev</i>	as before	repetition/focus	adverb
<i>qaci</i>	man (general subject, expletive)	generic subject	grammaticalised noun
<i>ağar</i>	not anymore	temporal/negative	negative particle
<i>žer</i>	first	temporal adverb	temporal adverb
<i>rogor</i>	how	interrogative adverb	WH-word (manner)
<i>roca</i>	when	temporal subordinator	subordinating conjunction
<i>titkos</i>	as if	hypothetical/evidential/ modal	modal particle
<i>ras</i>	what	interrogative object	WH-pronoun
<i>mxolod</i>	only	focus marker	focus particle
<i>an</i>	or	alternative connector	coordinating conjunction
<i>šemdeg</i>	after	time adverb/postposition	temporal adverb
<i>uqve</i>	already	perfectivity marker	aspectual adverb
<i>tavs</i>	head	reflexive form	grammaticalised noun
<i>ak</i>	here	locative adverb	spatial adverb
<i>nu</i>	not (prohibitive)	prohibitive particle	negation/imperative particle
<i>mašin</i>	then	temporal adverb	temporal adverb
<i>mašinve</i>	instantly	temporal adverb	temporal adverb
<i>sul</i>	always	emphasis/frequency	intensifier/adverb
<i>radgan</i>	because	causal subordinator	conjunction
<i>marṭo</i>	alone	focus/quantification	adverb/focus marker
<i>čin</i>	before	direction/postposition	adverb/postposition
<i>ert</i>	one	indefinite numeral	quantifier
<i>xolme</i>	sometimes	habitual marker	aspectual particle

**Table IV: Classification of the 100 most frequent function words in GNC-NG**

Word	Translation	Role	Grammatical function
<i>aba</i>	well then	turn-taking/irony marker	discourse particle
<i>albat</i>	probably	epistemic modality	modal particle
<i>coṭa</i>	few	quantity	quantifier
<i>raṭom</i>	why	interrogative	reason WH-word
<i>meṭi</i>	more	comparative degree	quantifier
<i>ṭalian</i>	very	adverb	degree modifier
<i>martla</i>	truly	particle/adverb	emphatic
<i>ertxel</i>	once	adverb	temporal adverb
<i>sad</i>	where	interrogative	WH-locative
<i>ik</i>	there	adverb	locative adverb
<i>vidre</i>	than	conjunction	comparative subordinator
<i>tviton</i>	self	pronoun/focus	reflexive/emphatic
<i>sṭored</i>	truly	focus marker	emphatic particle
<i>ertad</i>	together	adverb	manner/coordination
<i>tumca</i>	but	conjunction	adversative subordinator
<i>ḡargad</i>	well	adverb	manner adverb
<i>ai</i>	after all, well	particle	demonstrative/emphatic
<i>uḡan</i>	back	adverb	locative/directional
<i>ṣina</i>	in	postposition/locative	locative adverb
<i>romelic</i>	which	relative pronoun	WH-word
<i>saertod</i>	generally	adverb	scope/generalisation
<i>imiṭom</i>	because	subordinator (causal)	subordinating conjunction
<i>xolo</i>	but	conjunction	contrastive
<i>iṣeti</i>	that kind of	pronoun/adjective	descriptive/demonstrative degree
<i>aseti</i>	this kind of	pronoun/adjective	descriptive/demonstrative degree
<i>raḡac</i>	anything	pronoun/indefinite	thing/something
<i>ḡidec</i>	yet again	particle	additive particle
<i>sanam</i>	until	conjunction	temporal subordinator
<i>uceb</i>	suddenly	adverb	temporal/manner
<i>xan</i>	sometimes	particle/temporal	iteration
<i>rame</i>	something	indefinite pronoun	something
<i>ram</i>	something	indefinite pronoun	variant of above
<i>ḡvelas</i>	all	pronoun/quantifier	universal
<i>verc</i>	not even (potential)	negative auxiliary	verb-related negation
<i>veḡar</i>	not anymore	negative auxiliary	inability marker
<i>ḡovel</i>	every	quantifier	universal
<i>torem</i>	or else	conjunction	conditional/contrastive
<i>ṣoris</i>	between	postposition	locative (between)
<i>ertmanets</i>	each other	pronoun	reciprocal
<i>vitom</i>	as if	particle	hypothetical
<i>bevri</i>	much	quantifier	lexical
<i>ikneb</i>	maybe	modal particle	possibility
<i>aravin</i>	no one	pronoun	indefinite negative
<i>xans</i>	time	noun (temporal use)	temporal
<i>tan</i>	at the same time	particle/adverb	accompaniment
<i>saḡutari</i>	own	adjective/pronoun	reflexive possessive
<i>ḡai</i>	good, okay	adjective (colloquial)	description of quality
<i>ḡvelaze</i>	most	quantifier (superlative)	degree
<i>ḡoveli</i>	every	quantifier	universal
<i>gamo</i>	because of	postposition/causal marker	causal adverb
<i>turme</i>	apparently	modal particle	evidential
<i>martalia</i>	it is true	concessive marker	modal/contrastive conjunction
<i>romelsac</i>	which	relative pronoun	WH-relative
<i>sadac</i>	where	relative pronoun	WH-locative

The analysis of syntactic functions and roles maps structural dependency. Function words cluster around clausal structure, e.g.:

- conjunctions (*da* ‘and’, *rom* ‘that’, *radgan* ‘because’, *tumca* ‘but’) mark syntactic linking
- sentence particles (*ki* ‘yes’, *aba* ‘well’) operate at sentence or discourse level, often outside argument structure
- adverbs and pronouns (*ak* ‘here’, *ik* ‘there’, *ase* ‘in this way’, *romelic* ‘which’) serve as intermediate links – they connect content to structure.

Syntactic functions constitute the formal backbone of Georgian syntax. Function words are crucial scaffolding elements that carry syntactic but no propositional meaning – they structure grammar rather than content.

As for the pragmatic aspect of function words, several aspects need to be considered:

- discourse markers: do these words organise a turn or indicate how the discourse is structured (e.g., *aba* ‘well’, *xom* ‘after all’)?
- modal particles; do these words express speaker stance or attitude (e.g., *albat* ‘maybe’, *titkos* ‘as if’)?
- focus/emphasis markers: do these words highlight or limit scope (e.g., *mxolod* ‘only’, *kidev* ‘again’)?
- topic/frame markers: do these words set up contrasts or frame shifts (e.g., *ise* ‘like that’, *aba* ‘well then’)?
- illocutionary markers: do these words indicate a speech act type (e.g., *nu* ‘well’, *ki* ‘yes’)?
- rhetorical markers: are these words used in argumentation, irony, questioning (e.g., *raṭom* ‘why’, *kaci* ‘one’ (generic subject))?

Not all 100 words have pragmatic functions. The 23 that do are explained in Table V according to their pragmatic function.

For the analysis of the pragmatic function of some function words, the implementation of interpersonal and discourse layers is needed. Words like *xom*, *ki*, *aba*, *tumca*, *albat* show that many function words serve pragmatic rather than purely grammatical purposes, such as guiding the listener’s interpretation:

- modal particles: *albat* ‘probably’, *turme* ‘apparently’ (speaker stance)
- discourse markers: *xom*, *aba*, *ai* (interactional control)
- focus particles: *mxolod* ‘only’, *scored* ‘truly’, *kidec* ‘yet again’ (information structure).

This confirms that *functionality* in language is not purely syntactic – it can extend into discourse management and intersubjective meaning, implying that function words may be procedural rather than conceptual.<sup>25</sup>

Lastly, semantics needs to be included to the analysis of function words, to be more precise, the level of their semantic autonomy:

- high (autosemantic): the word has a referential or lexical meaning; it is interpretable in isolation

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Blakemore 1987: 75.

**Table V: Classification of the 23 function words with pragmatic function**

Word	Translation	Pragmatic function	Notes
<i>ki</i>	yes, well	illocutionary/emphatic/ contrastive	used for contrast, affirmation
<i>xolme</i>	sometimes	aspectual/framing	indicates habitual action
<i>aba</i>	well then	discourse marker/framing	turn-taking, irony, emphasis
<i>mainc</i>	however	concessive marker	implies contrast or unexpectedness
<i>mxolod</i>	only	focus marker	restricts the scope of assertion
<i>albat</i>	maybe	modal particle	expresses epistemic uncertainty/probability
<i>coṭa</i>	few	quantitative emphasis	often mitigates or softens assertions
<i>raṭom</i>	why	rhetorical/interrogative	signals justification or challenges
<i>rogor</i>	how	interrogative (pragmatic)	also used rhetorically, not just for inquiry
<i>ar</i>	not	illocutionary marker	negates propositions, can mark prohibitive tone
<i>titkos</i>	as if	modal particle	used in hedging, hypothetical framing
<i>nu</i>	not (prohibitive)	illocutionary/directive	used in prohibitions, soft commands
<i>xom</i>	after all, well	discourse/tag particle	used to confirm shared knowledge or expectation
<i>ai</i>	after all, well	discourse marker	introduces examples or emphasis
<i>martla</i>	truly	emphatic marker	speaker stance
<i>ikneb</i>	maybe	modal particle	possibility
<i>tumca</i>	but	concessive marker/ discourse-level adversative	often rhetorical, same as ‘but’ in argumentation
<i>imiṭom</i>	because	rhetorical/causal	explains cause
<i>vitom</i>	as if	hypothetical/ironic	hedging function
<i>torem</i>	or else	rhetorical connector	expresses warning or contrast
<i>sṭored</i>	truly	focus particle	highlights specific constituent
<i>kidec</i>	yet again	additive particle	reinforces previous constituent
<i>sanam</i>	until	temporal discourse marker	frames time of main action

- medium (intermediate): the word has a limited standalone meaning; it is sometimes interpretable without context
- low (synsemantic): the word lacks a standalone meaning; it functions only in relation to other elements.

Table VI shows the 100 most frequent function words, categorised according to their semantic autonomy (from low to high) and relevant notes.

The semantic autonomy criterion thus reveals a continuum, not a binary opposition. Many words in Georgian do not fit cleanly into the categories *autosemantic* (content) or *synsemantic* (function), instead, they form a gradient:

- high autonomy: lexical or quasi-lexical items (*erti* ‘one’, *bevri* ‘many’, *saṭutari* ‘own’, *ḡargad* ‘well’)
- medium autonomy: adverbs and pronouns (*ase* ‘in this way’, *ise* ‘in that way’, *ik* ‘there’, *isev* ‘again’)
- low autonomy: particles, conjunctions, and negators (*da* ‘and’, *ar* ‘not’, *ki* ‘yes’, *tu* ‘if’, *radgan* ‘because’, *tumca* ‘but’).

The semantic continuum which Georgian function words show supports the theories by Haspelmath (2011) and Lehmann (1982): grammatical and lexical elements form a scalar hierarchy, not a dichotomy.



**Table VI: Classification of the function words according to their semantic autonomy**

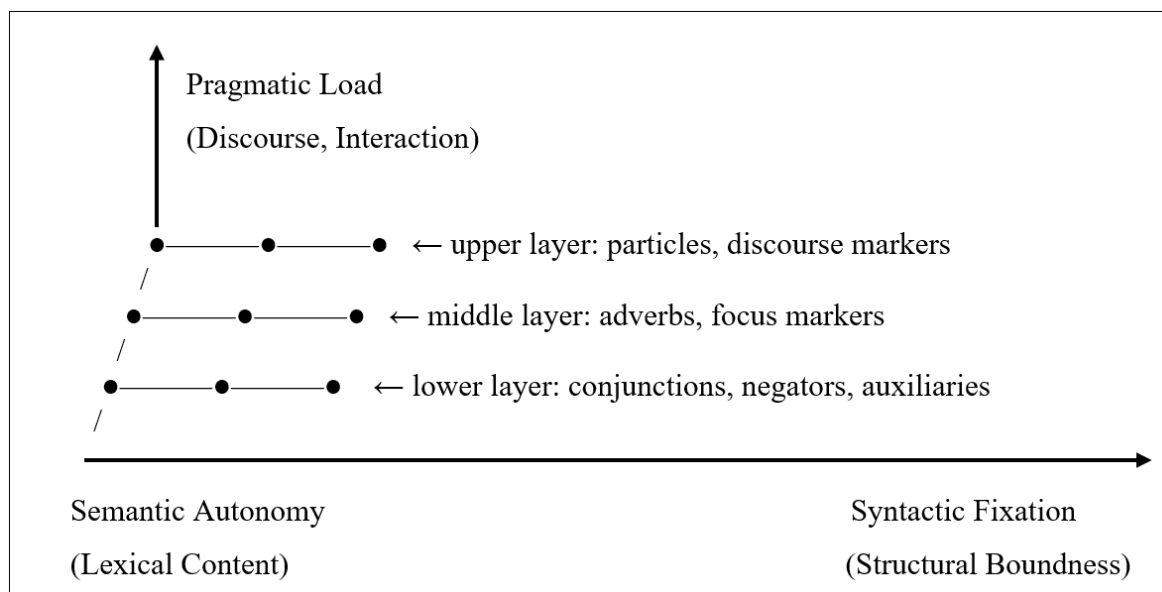
Word	Translation	Autonomy	Notes
<i>da</i>	and	low	has no meaning without linking two elements
<i>ar</i>	not	low	pure negation, context-bound
<i>rom</i>	that, if	low	grammatical subordinator
<i>magram</i>	but	low	logical connector, not lexical
<i>tu</i>	if	low	conditional/focus, highly context-dependent
<i>unda</i>	must	low	modal auxiliary without independent meaning
<i>ara</i>	no	low	pure negation
<i>ver</i>	not (potential)	low	grammaticalised inability marker
<i>arc</i>	not even	low	coordinated negation
<i>rogorc</i>	as	low	comparative marker, dependent on clause
<i>xom</i>	after all, well	low	discourse particle, context-driven
<i>aġar</i>	not anymore	low	composite negation and aspect marker
<i>roca</i>	when	low	subordinator
<i>an</i>	or	low	logical disjunction, purely structural
<i>nu</i>	not (prohibitive)	low	directive/prohibitive, lacks standalone meaning
<i>radgan</i>	because	low	subordinator, non-lexical
<i>aba</i>	well then	low	discourse-only use
<i>vidre</i>	than	low	subordinator; purely comparative in function
<i>tumca</i>	but	low	adversative conjunction; has little lexical content
<i>ai</i>	after all, well	low	emphatic/discourse function; no lexical reference
<i>šina</i>	in	low	postpositional; cannot appear in isolation
<i>xolo</i>	but	low	logical connector; no semantic autonomy
<i>ķidec</i>	yet again	low	additive/focus particle; not interpretable alone
<i>sanam</i>	until	low	subordinator; only meaningful with full clause
<i>verc</i>	not even (potential)	low	negative clitic; syntactically and semantically dependent
<i>veġar</i>	not anymore	low	composite negation + aspect; non-autonomous
<i>torem</i>	or else	low	discourse connective; only meaningful in clause structure
<i>šoris</i>	between	low	postposition; semantically empty without complement
<i>vitom</i>	as if	low	hypothetical/discourse use; no stable referent
<i>ikneb</i>	maybe	low	modal particle; epistemic, speaker-oriented
<i>gamo</i>	because of	low	postpositional causal; semantically empty alone
<i>turme</i>	apparently	low	evidential particle; relies entirely on speaker stance
<i>ķi</i>	yes, well	low–medium	affirmative or contrastive; may carry stance
<i>mainc</i>	however	low–medium	pragmatic concession, vague semantics
<i>upro</i>	more	low–medium	comparative degree, no standalone referent
<i>titkos</i>	as if	low–medium	modal/hypothetical frame, no concrete referent
<i>mxolod</i>	only	low–medium	focus marker, vague semantics
<i>uķve</i>	already	low–medium	perfectivity marker, aspectual nuance
<i>xolme</i>	sometimes	low–medium	aspectual particle, pragmatically loaded
<i>albat</i>	probably	low–medium	modal, speaker-oriented; interpretable in vague sense
<i>martalia</i>	it is true	low–medium	fixed concessive form; modal-discourse with partial meaning
<i>ra</i>	what	medium	WH-word with referential potential
<i>axla</i>	now	medium	temporal adverb, somewhat interpretable alone
<i>mere</i>	then, after	medium	time-related, needs discourse anchor
<i>ase</i>	this way	medium	modal adverb, deictic, partially interpretable
<i>ise</i>	that way	medium	similar to <i>ase</i>
<i>ķidev</i>	again	medium	additive, context-enhanced meaning
<i>rac</i>	what	medium	relative pronoun, semantically active
<i>isev</i>	as before	medium	temporal iteration, moderately autonomous
<i>ķer</i>	first	medium	temporal nuance, vague alone
<i>rogor</i>	how	medium	WH-adverb, interpretable in questions
<i>ras</i>	what	medium	interrogative pronoun, referential
<i>šemdeg</i>	after	medium	adverbial/postpositional, partially lexical
<i>ak</i>	here	medium	spatial deictic, interpretable alone

<b>Table VI: Classification of the function words according to their semantic autonomy</b>			
<b>Word</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>mašin</i>	then	medium	temporal reference, discourse-anchored
<i>mašinve</i>	instantly	medium	temporal adverb; semantically specific in discourse
<i>sul</i>	always	medium	adverbial, quantifying, vague stand-alone
<i>čin</i>	before	medium	adverb/postposition, spatial reference
<i>martla</i>	truly	medium	emphatic stance marker; vague without context
<i>coğa</i>	few	medium	quantifier, meaning is scalar
<i>raŋom</i>	why	medium	interrogative, semantically oriented
<i>meŋi</i>	more	medium	quantifier, relational but partly referential
<i>sad</i>	where	medium	WH-word with referential potential
<i>ik</i>	there	medium	deictic; interpretable but needs discourse anchor
<i>tviton</i>	self	medium	reflexive pronoun; requires antecedent
<i>sčored</i>	truly	medium	focus marker; semantically weak but locatable
<i>ertad</i>	together	medium	manner adverb; dependent but partly interpretable
<i>uŋan</i>	back	medium	spatial adverb; interpretable with spatial context
<i>romelic</i>	which	medium	WH-relative; needs antecedent for full interpretation
<i>sadac</i>	where	medium	WH-locative, needs antecedent for full interpretation
<i>saertod</i>	generally	medium	generalising adverb; vague alone, clear in context
<i>imiŋom</i>	because	medium	causal phrase; compositional meaning with <i>imis gamo, rom</i> ‘because of this’
<i>iseti</i>	that kind of	medium	degree expression; requires comparative reference
<i>aseti</i>	this kind of	medium	demonstrative; needs a referent to specify
<i>rağac</i>	anything	medium	indefinite pronoun; referential but vague
<i>xan</i>	sometimes	medium	temporal/discourse use; vague and context-sensitive
<i>rame</i>	something	medium	indefinite pronoun; weak referential value
<i>ram</i>	something	medium	variant of <i>rame</i> ; also vague but referential
<i>qvelas</i>	all	medium	quantifier/pronoun; requires context for scope
<i>qovel</i>	every	medium	quantifier; needs noun to specify scope
<i>ertmanets</i>	each other	medium	reciprocal pronoun; contextually anchored
<i>aravin</i>	no one	medium	negative pronoun; referential but polarity-bound
<i>xans</i>	time	medium	noun of time; vague without construction
<i>tan</i>	at the same time	medium	focus/discourse marker; context-dependent
<i>qvelaze</i>	most	medium	superlative adverb; dependent on comparative frame
<i>qoveli</i>	every	medium	quantifier; general scope without specific referent
<i>romelsac</i>	which	medium	relative pronoun; dependent on antecedent
<i>marŋo</i>	alone	medium–high	adverb/quantifier, semantically rich
<i>erti</i>	one	high	lexical numeral
<i>tavi</i>	head	high	lexical noun, even when grammaticalised
<i>ƣaci</i>	man (general subject, expletive)	high	lexical noun, semantically full
<i>tavs</i>	head	high	lexical noun inflected
<i>ert</i>	one	high	numeral, lexical
<i>zalian</i>	very	high	lexical adverb; expresses intensity independently
<i>ertxel</i>	once	high	temporal adverb; specific lexical meaning (“once”)
<i>ƣargad</i>	well	high	lexical adverb (manner); semantically rich
<i>uceb</i>	suddenly	high	temporal/manner adverb; interpretable in isolation
<i>bevri</i>	much	high	quantifier/lexical; has referential content
<i>sakutari</i>	own	high	possessive adjective; strong lexical meaning
<i>ƣai</i>	good, okay	high	adjective (colloquial); referential

How the three introduced dimensions (semantic autonomy, syntactic role, and pragmatic function) interact, can be summarised as shown in Table VII and visualised as in Fig. 2.

**Table VII: Interaction of the three dimensions**

Dimension	Level of Description	Role in Functional System
Semantic autonomy	lexical–grammatical	degree of meaning dependency
Syntactic role	structural	position and combinatorial function
Pragmatic function	communicative	interpretation and discourse management

**Fig. 2: The three-dimensional model of Georgian function words**

The model shown in Fig. 2 visualises the interplay between semantic autonomy, syntactic fixation, and pragmatic load as a dynamic continuum rather than a categorical split. Function words are distributed within a conceptual space in which semantic autonomy decreases as syntactic fixation increases, while pragmatic load rises orthogonally, reflecting discourse-level functions. Elements such as *da* ('and') and *ar* ('not') cluster in the grammatical core, characterised by low semantic autonomy and high syntactic dependency. By contrast, discourse particles like *ki* 'well, yes', *xom* 'after all', and *albat* 'probably' occupy the upper pragmatic layer, where speaker stance and interactional meaning dominate. Adverbs and focus markers, including *kargad*, *upro*, and *mar̄to*, lie between these poles, mediating between lexical content and structural function. The model thus captures the continuum nature of Georgian function words as multi-dimensional operators balancing meaning, structure, and discourse.

## 4.2 Computational Approach: Functional Elements Analyser

### 4.2.1 Development and application of an analysis tool

To automate the identification of functional elements in Georgian and to visualise the results in an intuitive format, an analysis tool was developed. The software is implemented as a lean, standalone Java program with a clear separation of data management (I/O), logical processing, and presentation.

### 4.2.2 System architecture and implementation

The system follows a classic three-tier application pattern adapted to a desktop tool (Fig. 3):

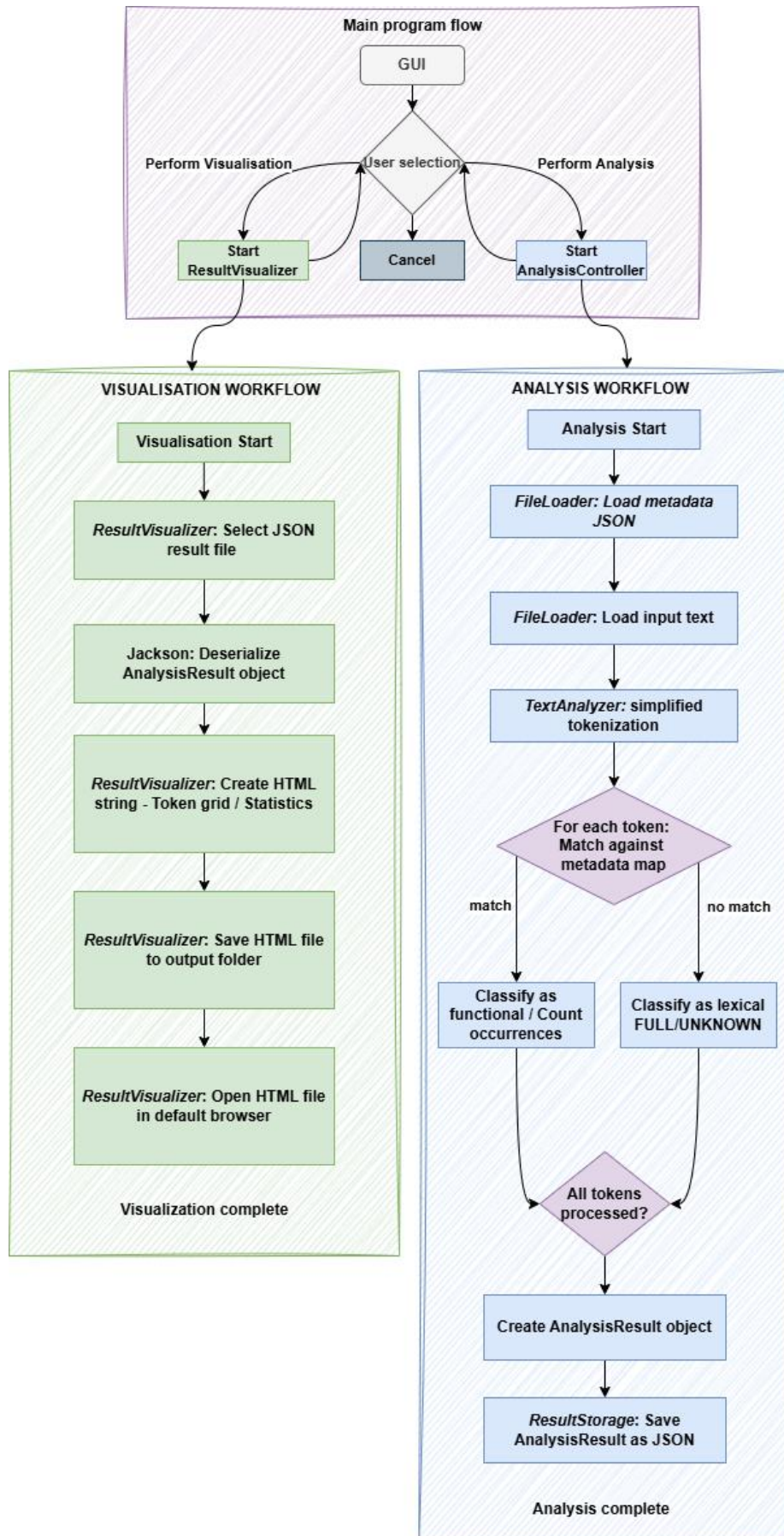


Fig. 3: Program flow



### 1) **data access (I/O)**

*FileLoader* reads input texts and function-word metadata. *ResultStorage* serialises analysis results in machine-readable JSON to ensure reusability and long-term archiving.

### 2) **analysis logic**

Implemented in *TextAnalyzer* and *AnalysisController*. This layer performs tokenisation, comparison against the metadata base, and statistical evaluation.

### 3) **presentation/visualisation**

User interaction is handled via simple Swing<sup>26</sup> dialogs. *ResultVisualizer* generates an interactive, platform-independent HTML file that opens automatically in the default browser.

Java provides high portability and robust error handling. The Jackson library<sup>27</sup> is used for efficient JSON serialisation and deserialisation.

The structure of the Functional Elements Analyser and the relationship between the individual classes can be seen in the UML diagram<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 4).

#### 4.2.3 The metadata base (function-word corpus)

The analysis relies on a function-word metadata base that translates the theoretical classification into a processable data model. Each function word is represented by the *FunctionWord* data model with the following attributes:

- **word:** the function word itself (primary key for matching)
- **role** and **pragmaticFunction:** linguistic categorisation for contextualisation
- **semanticAutonomy:** central classification level (e.g., LOW, MEDIUM\_HIGH, HIGH)
- **pragmaticFunctionNote/semanticAutonomyNote:** optional explanatory notes

Semantic autonomy is the central feature. The model differentiates words along a spectrum rather than a binary functional/lexical split, from **LOW** (purely grammatical or discourse-structuring, no independent meaning) to **HIGH** (a function word with notable lexical colouring).

The metadata are stored in JSON and loaded at start-up into a `Map<String, FunctionWord>`.<sup>29</sup> This enables  $O(1)$  retrieval<sup>30</sup> of metadata for tokens found in the text.

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<sup>26</sup> Swing is a Java-based GUI toolkit that provides lightweight, platform-independent components for building desktop applications. For the documentation see <https://docs.oracle.com/en/java/javase/21/docs/api/java.desktop/javax/swing/package-summary.html>.

<sup>27</sup> The Jackson library (*FasterXML/Jackson*) is the de facto standard in Java for processing JSON data. For the documentation see <https://github.com/FasterXML/jackson>.

<sup>28</sup> *Unified Modeling Language* (UML) is a standardised graphical modeling language for the specification, construction, and documentation of software systems.

<sup>29</sup> A *Map* is a collection type that stores key–value pairs and allows efficient lookup of values based on their associated keys.

<sup>30</sup>  $O(1)$  retrieval refers to constant-time access in algorithmic complexity, meaning that the lookup time remains the same regardless of the size of the dataset.

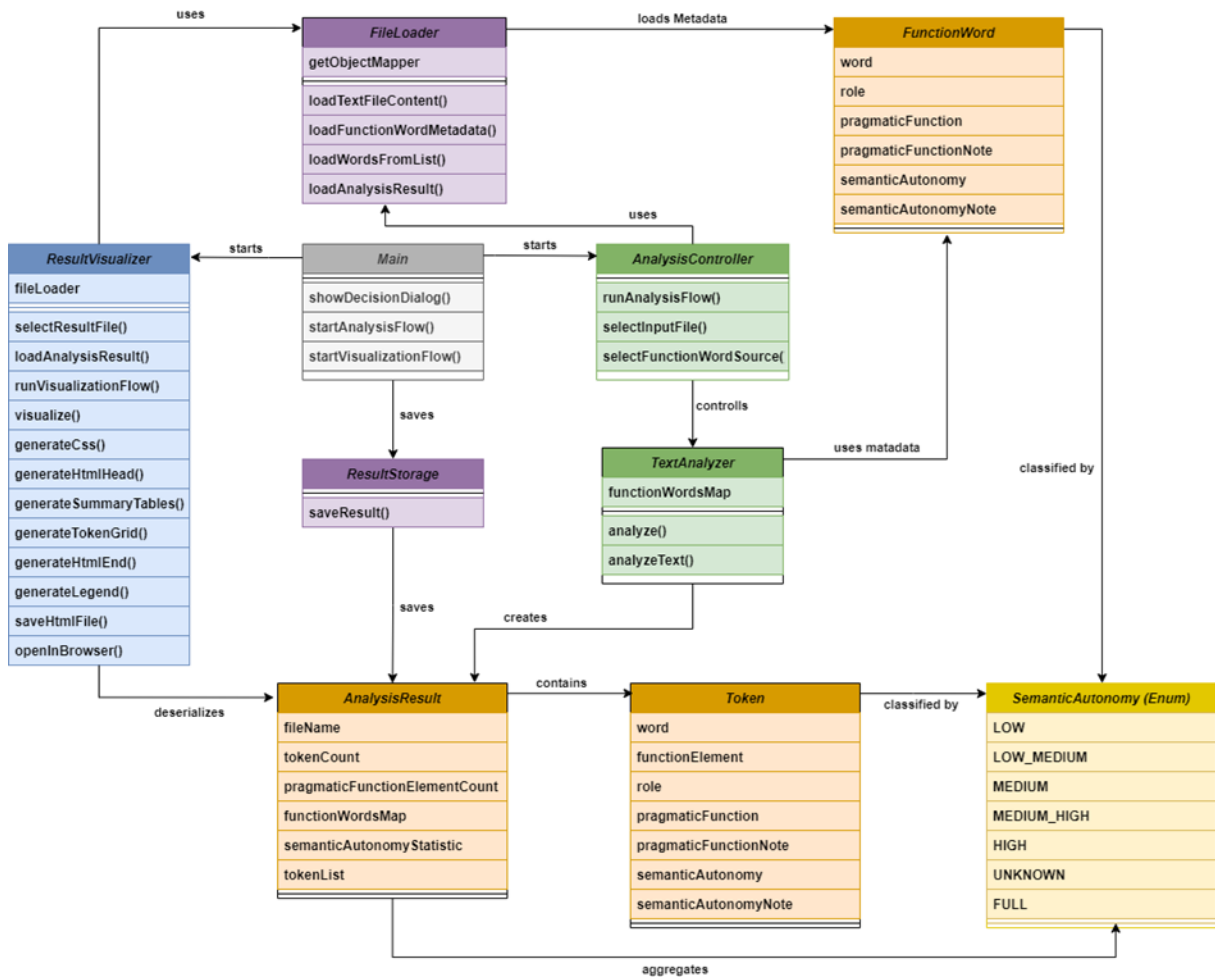


Fig. 4: UML Model

#### 4.2.4 Analysis workflow

The workflow is organised into three steps coordinated by *TextAnalyzer*. The goal is to produce a token list enriched with function-word metadata and to compute summary statistics.

The autonomy levels (**LOW**, **LOW\_MEDIUM**, **MEDIUM**, **MEDIUM\_HIGH**, **HIGH**, **UNKNOWN**, **FULL**) are defined as an Enum<sup>31</sup> (*SemanticAutonomy*) to ensure consistency and prevent assignment errors.

#### 4.2.5 Text processing and simplified tokenisation

Processing begins with simplified tokenisation. Regular expressions replace all characters that are neither letters nor spaces (e.g., commas, periods, parentheses) with spaces. The cleaned string is then split on one or more spaces.

This simplified tokenisation deliberately ignores more complex phenomena such as compounds, clitics/apostrophes, or word-internal punctuation. It was chosen for the prototype stage.

<sup>31</sup> An *Enumeration (Enum)* defines a fixed set of named constant values. It is used to create a type-safe collection of constants that prevents the use of invalid input values.

#### 4.2.6 Metadata assignment and counting

After tokenisation, each token is matched against the *FunctionWord* map:

- 1) **matching:** for each token, the tool checks whether it appears as a key in the metadata map
- 2) **classification:**
  - **functional:** if found, the token is marked *isFunctionalElement* = true. The corresponding metadata (*role*, *pragmaticFunction*, *semanticAutonomy*) are copied into the token object, and the counter for that function word is incremented in *functionWordCounts*.
  - **lexical:** if not found, the token is marked *isFunctionalElement* = false and assigned **FULL** semantic autonomy as a default (potentially lexical with independent meaning).
- 3) **statistical analysis:** in parallel, occurrences per autonomy level are aggregated in *semanticAutonomyStatistic*. Regardless of type frequency, the total number of tokens assigned to each autonomy level (e.g., LOW or MEDIUM\_HIGH) is recorded, enabling percentage distributions across the text.

#### 4.2.7 Data model and result storage

After processing, a comprehensive *AnalysisResult* object is created and stored:

- 1) ***AnalysisResult* encapsulates:**
  - *tokenList* – the complete sequential list of tokens with metadata
  - *tokenCount* – the total number of tokens
  - *functionWordCounts* – frequency distribution for each function word in the metadata base
  - *semanticAutonomyStatistic* – aggregated counts per autonomy level
- 2) **persistent storage:** *ResultStorage* writes the *AnalysisResult* to JSON. Filenames are generated from the original input name plus a timestamp. JSON preserves the structure and classifications for later reuse (e.g., additional visualisations, cross-text comparisons, or external analyses).

#### 4.2.8 Interactive data visualisation

Visualisation is essential for making the classification interpretable. *ResultVisualizer* deserialises the JSON output and generates a self-contained, interactive HTML page.

#### 4.2.9 Technical concept (HTML generation)

Instead of a native Java GUI, the visualisation is produced as a complete HTML file, which offers:

- 1) **platform independence:** viewable in any modern browser without additional dependencies
- 2) **interactivity:** HTML/CSS allow tooltips and flexible layouts that are cumbersome in basic Java UI components
- 3) **archiving:** a static document that preserves results independently of the analysis tool.

The method *saveHtmlFile* reads the JSON results and builds a full HTML string with inline CSS and the token grid.

#### 4.2.10 The colour-coded token grid

The central element is a colour-coded token grid (Fig. 5) that supports rapid, holistic assessment:

- each word is rendered as a `<span>`.<sup>32</sup>
- only tokens classified as functional elements receive a coloured background; lexical tokens (autonomy **FULL**) remain uncoloured
- background colours map to autonomy levels, increasing in intensity from grammatical to lexically stronger functions:
  - **blue (LOW)**: purely structural/grammatical
  - **green (LOW\_MEDIUM)**: weak lexical/modal function
  - **yellow (MEDIUM)**: low autonomy, context-dependent interpretation
  - **orange (MEDIUM\_HIGH)**: pronounced lexical or pragmatic role
  - **red (HIGH)**: significant independent lexical colouring
  - **grey (UNKNOWN)**: in metadata but autonomy unresolved

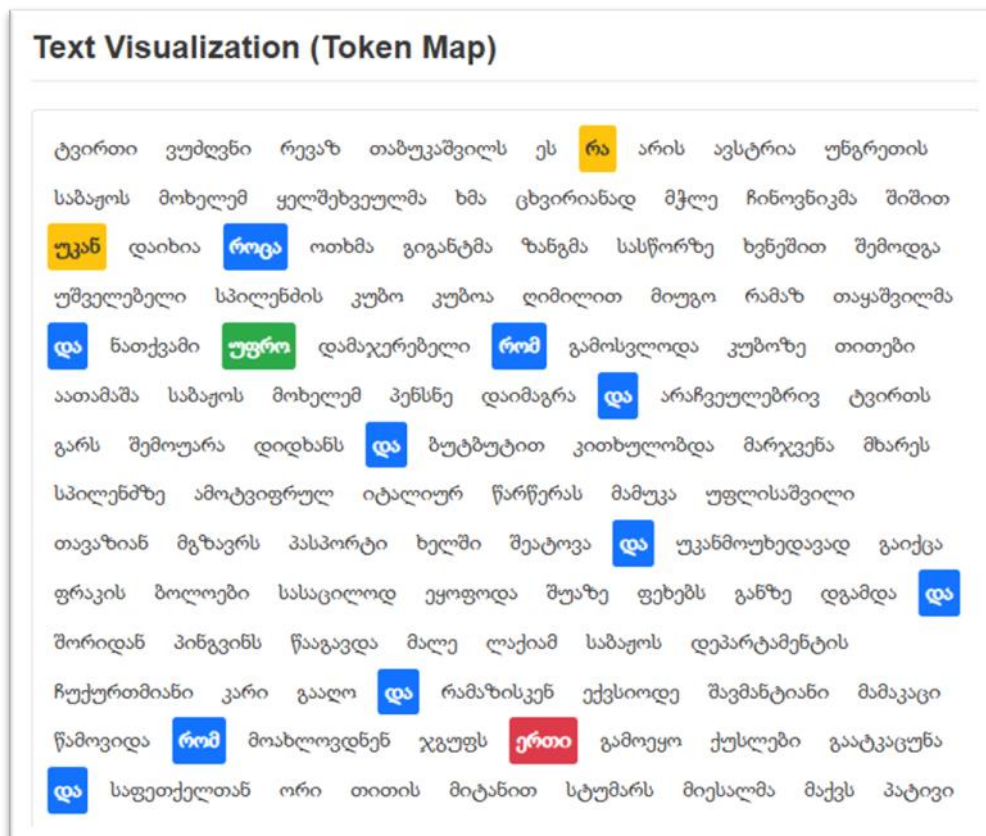


Fig. 5: Color-Coded Token Grid

<sup>32</sup> The `<span>` element in HTML is an inline container used to group text or other inline elements for styling or scripting purposes without affecting the document's layout and does not convey any functional meaning.



Each coloured token includes a tooltip<sup>33</sup> with role, *pragmaticFunction*, *semanticAutonomy*, and additional notes, making the classification transparent (Fig. 6).

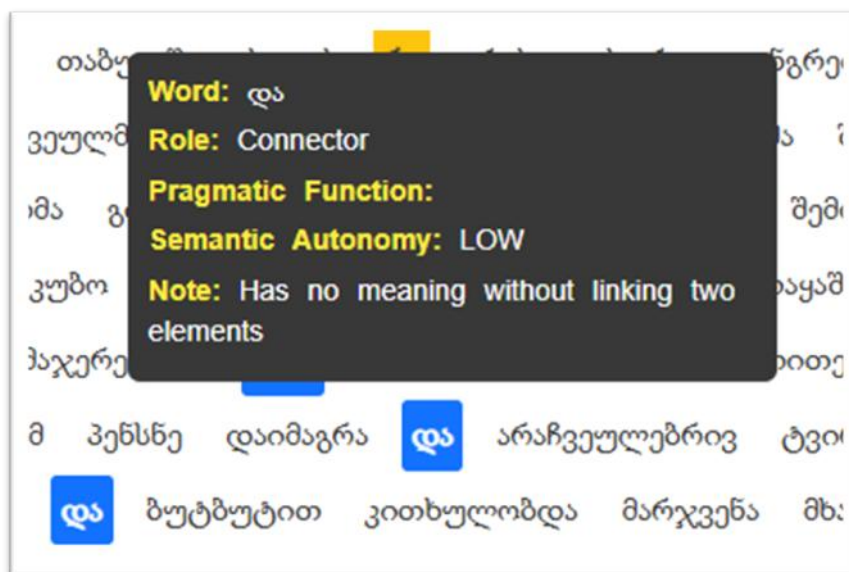


Fig. 6: Tooltip

#### 4.2.11 Statistical overview

The HTML page also provides a statistical summary:

- 1) **general text statistics** (Fig. 7): total number of tokens and number of items classified as functional/pragmatic
- 2) **autonomy distribution** (Fig. 7): a Table with absolute and percentage shares across autonomy levels (LOW to HIGH, FULL, UNKNOWN)
- 3) **frequency list** (Fig. 7): all function words found in the text (present in the metadata base) with absolute frequencies, supporting frequency-based analysis.

### 4.3 Discussion of Limitations and Outlook

The tool efficiently identifies, classifies, and visualises function words using a semantic-autonomy model. Clear separation of data, logic, and presentation yields a robust, portable Java application that converts linguistic classification into statistics and readable visual patterns.

#### 4.3.1 Benefits for future research

- 1) **efficiency**: the colour grid enables an immediate qualitative assessment of functional density and autonomy levels. Researchers can quickly locate passages or documents with specific profiles (e.g., high shares of higher-autonomy function words)
- 2) **transparency**: tooltips expose token-level metadata, ensuring the traceability of decisions and links to the theoretical model

<sup>33</sup> A tooltip is a small, contextual pop-up text box that appears when a user hovers over an element, providing additional information without cluttering the main interface.

**Analysis Result for: რევაზ მიშველაძე\_რჩეული თხზულებანი IV\_ტვირთი.txt**

**Summary Statistics**

Metric	Value
Total Tokens	3303
Functional Elements Count	642
Lexical Words Count	2661

**Semantic Autonomy Distribution**

Autonomy Level	Count	Percentage
LOW	397	12.02%
LOW_MEDIUM	41	1.24%
MEDIUM	153	4.63%
MEDIUM_HIGH	0	0.00%
HIGH	51	1.54%
UNKNOWN	0	0.00%
FULL	2661	80.56%

Fig. 7: General text statistics

**Functional Element Frequencies**

Functional Word	Frequency
და	42
არ	21
რომ	14
თუ	12
კი	11
რა	11
არა	10
ვერ	8
ახლა	7
ისე	7
უნდა	7
ასე	6
არც	5

Fig. 8: Frequency list

- 3) **comparability:** absolute and percentage metrics support a quantitative comparison across text types, authors, or periods. The JSON output integrates easily with external statistical tools.

#### 4.3.2 Limitations of the tool

Despite its strengths, the limitations of the analysis tool primarily lie in its deliberately simplified design choices and its reliance on external data:

- 1) **rudimentary tokenisation:** RegEx<sup>34</sup>-based splitting may mishandle clitics, compounds, or internal punctuation, leading to misclassification as UNKNOWN or FULL
- 2) **no POS or syntactic disambiguation:** the identification is string-based; homonyms that can be functional or lexical (e.g., *tavi*) are not distinguished via the context
- 3) **dependence on the metadata base:** the quality of the result depends on the coverage and accuracy of the classification. Revisions of the theoretical model require manual updates to the metadata.

<sup>34</sup> *Regular Expressions* are a sequence of characters that define a search pattern. In this context it is utilised for rudimentary tokenisation by systematically removing punctuation and splitting the text content based on whitespace. This method provides a lightweight, language-agnostic approach to segmentation but does not account for complex linguistic phenomena such as clitics or compound words.

#### 4.4 Outlook

In summary, the prototype analysis tool shows that a scalar model of semantic autonomy can be operationalised for Georgian, turning abstract classifications of function words into transparent visualisations and comparable statistics, which allow for both the internal frequency comparison of functional elements within a single text and the external comparison of functional profiles across different texts. Its modular Java architecture and JSON-based metadata make it portable and extensible, but current limitations in tokenisation, lack of POS- and syntax-based disambiguation, and dependence on a hand-crafted metadata base still constrain coverage and precision. Future work will focus on integrating a more fine-grained tokenisation adapted to Georgian orthography, lightweight syntactic and POS cues for resolving homonymy and scope, and enhanced visual and statistical modules that enable systematic comparison across larger corpora, text types, and time periods. In this way, the tool can evolve from a proof of concept into a broader platform for quantitative and qualitative research on function words in Georgian and beyond.

#### 5. Conclusion

Over the past century, the autosemantic-synsemantic contrast was mostly treated as a dichotomous, hierarchical opposition. More recently, this has shifted towards a scalar and dynamic conception. Older linguistic models as presented in Chapter 2, ranging from Jespersen to Bloomfield and Diwald, emphasised the opposition of formal and semantic functions. Other approaches, such as generative grammar, supplemented abstract syntactic functions, while functionalist and typological approaches introduced communicative and diachronic considerations. Nowadays, the content-function distinction is increasingly regarded as gradient and dynamic, being shaped not only by usage but also by structure, diachronic evolution, and pragmatic function.

The analysis conducted in this study has led to the following conclusions:

- 1) there are functional overlaps across domains: words like *ḱidev* ‘again’, *marṭo* ‘only’, *sul* ‘always’ blur syntax, semantics, and pragmatics, acting simultaneously as focus markers, intensifiers, and adverbs
- 2) cross-linguistic parallels are created: the scalar relationship matches patterns in German, Japanese, and English, suggesting universality in how languages encode pragmatic force through semantically “light” items
- 3) the necessity for reconceptualising arises for the GNC concerning classification, which must be multi-dimensional: instead of a single tag (“function word”), we need layered tagging (semantic, syntactic, pragmatic).

The three classification levels (syntactic, pragmatic and semantic) together show that function words in Georgian form a dynamic continuum linking meaning, structure, and use: semantically, they range from lexical to fully grammatical; syntactically, they anchor clause architecture; and pragmatically, they orchestrate interaction, focus, and stance.

This confirms that function words are not a homogeneous category – they represent multifunctional, context-sensitive operators that integrate semantics, syntax, and pragmatics into a cohesive linguistic system.

The analysis tool developed by Anastasia Kamarauli is a first computational approach and will certainly need enhancements. These specifically include improved tokenisation tailored to Georgian orthography, POS tagging with light syntactic cues to resolve homonymy/syncretic

forms and identify scope-sensitive categories (e.g., negation, complementisers), and a module for direct comparison of multiple documents to support quantitative studies.

## Abbreviations

ADV	adverbial case	INST	instrumental case
AOR	aorist tense	MOD	modal
COND	conditional	NEG	negation
DAT	dative case	NOM	nominative case
EMPH.V	emphatic vowel	OPT	optative
ERG	ergative case	PL	plural
FOC	focus	PRES	present tense
GEN	genitive case	S	subject
IMP	imperative	SG	singular number
IMPF	imperfect tense	1/2/3	1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> person

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# ქართული ენის ფუნქციური სიტყვების კორპუსზე დაფუძნებული კვლევა

მარიამ ყამარაული (ფრანკფურტი / ჰამბურგი)

ანასტასია ყამარაული (ჰაგენბერგი / ბათუმი)

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## შესავალი

წინამდებარე სტატიის „ქართული ფუნქციური სიტყვების კორპუსზე დაფუძნებული კვლევა“ მიზანია ქართული ენის ფუნქციური სიტყვების სისტემური, კორპუსლინგვისტური კვლევა, კერძოდ, იმის აღწერა, თუ როგორ იქცევიან ქართულ ენაში ფუნქციური სიტყვები (ანუ სინსემანტიკური ელემენტები) ბუნებრივ გარემოში და რატომ არის რთული მათი ცალსახა კლასიფიკაცია მორფოლოგიურად მდიდარ ენაში. ნაშრომი ორი ურთიერთდაკავშირებული ამოცანის გადაჭრას ისახავს მიზნად: (1) შეიმუშაოს ქართული ენის ფუნქციური სიტყვების კორპუსზე დაფუძნებული, ლინგვისტურად დეტერმინირებული კლასიფიკაციის სისტემა, რომელიც სცილდება მარტივ დიქტომიას „შინაარსი vs. ფუნქცია“ და (2) აჩვენოს, თუ როგორ შეიძლება ამ კლასიფიკაციამ ოპერაციონალიზაცია მოახდინოს კომპიუტერული ლინგვისტიკის ფარგლებში საგანგებოდ შექმნილი მსუბუქი ინსტრუმენტის მეშვეობით, რომელიც ამოიცნობს ფუნქციურ სიტყვებს ტექსტში და უზრუნველყოფს შედეგების ვიზუალიზაციას.

## მოტივაცია და წინაპირობა

ავტორთა დაკვირვებით, ფუნქციური სიტყვები, მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ ისინი ხშირად აღწერილია, როგორც სემანტიკურად „მსუბუქი“ ელემენტები, გადამწყვეტ როლს თამაშობენ გრამატიკული მნიშვნელობის, დისკურსის კოჰერენტულობისა და ინტერაქციის თვალსაზრისით. ისინი მიუთითებენ ლოგიკურ ურთიერთობებზე (მიზეზი, კონტრასტი, პირობა), მართავენ თანმიმდევრობას წინადადებებსა და ფრაზებს შორის და შეუძლიათ ილოკუციური ძალის შეცვლა (მაგ., უარყოფის ან მოდალობის გამოხატვა). ქართულ საენათმეცნიერო ლიტერატურაში ფუნქციური სიტყვები ძირითადად ფორმალური პერსპექტივიდან განიხილება და შედარებით ნაკლებად არის წარმოდგენილი ლექსიკოგრაფიაში; სპეციალიზებულ ლექსიკონებშიც კი (მაგ., ჯორბენაძე და სხვ. 1988), რომლებიც მანუალურად დამუშავებულ რესურსებს ეყრდნობიან და

მხოლოდ ბეჭდური ფორმით არიან გამოცემული, თეორიულად ვერ ფარავენ ფუნქციური ელემენტების კვალიფიკაციისათვის აუცილებელ თანამედროვე მოთხოვნებს. ამიტომ, არსებული გარემოება მოითხოვს ფუნქციური სიტყვების განახლებულ, პრაქტიკულ გამოყენებაზე დაფუძნებულ მიდგომას, რომელიც კორპუსული კვლევის შედეგებით იქნება გამყარებული.

### თეორიული ჩარჩო: დიქტომიიდან გრადაციამდე

სტატიის თეორიულ ნაწილში, რომელიც კვლევის ბირთვს წარმოადგენს, დაწვრილებით განვიხილავთ ლინგვისტურ თეორიებში მოცემულ ავტოსემანტიკური და სინსემანტიკური ელემენტების შეპირისპირებით ანალიზს. ადრეულ თეორიულ ჩარჩოებში (მაგ., იესპერსენი, ბიულერი) ხაზგასმულია ის გარემოება, რომ ფუნქციური სიტყვები დამოკიდებულია კონტექსტზე და ემსახურება დისკურსის ორგანიზებას. სტრუქტურალისტური/დისტრიბუციული მიდგომა (მაგ., ბლუმფილდი, ჰარისი) ხაზს უსვამს ფუნქციურ ელემენტთა განაწილების შეზღუდვას და მათი გამოყენების მაღალ სიხშირეს. დამოკიდებულების გრამატიკა (ტენიერი) ფუნქციურ სიტყვებს განიხილავს, როგორც შინაარსობრივი სიტყვის „ბირთვების“ გარშემო არსებულ რელაციურ შემაერთებლებს. გენერატიული გრამატიკა (ჩომსკი) კი მათ ლექსიკურ და ფუნქციურ კატეგორიებად ყოფს შესაბამისი ფუნქციური თავებით (D, T, C), რომლებიც წინადადების სტრუქტურის ჩამოყალიბებას უზრუნველყოფენ. ფუნქციონალისტურ და გრამატიკალიზაციაზე ორიენტირებულ ნაშრომთა ავტორები (მაგ., დიკი, გივონი, ჰაინე და სხვ.) ხაზს უსვამენ ცვლილებას დიაქრონულ ასპექტში, რის შედეგადაც ლექსიკური ერთეულებიდან მიიღება გრამატიკული მარკერები რენალიზის, სემანტიკური გაუფერულებისა და ფონოლოგიური შემცირების გზით. ტიპოლოგიურ/კოგნიტურ/კონსტრუქციულ მოდელებში (მაგ., ჰასპელმათი, ლანგაკერი, გოლდბერგი) ავტორები გვთავაზობენ გრადუირებული, სხვადასხვა კრიტერიუმებისაგან შემდგარი კონტინუუმის არსებობას ბინარული სისტემის სანაცვლოდ. პრაგმატული მიდგომები (მაგ., შიფრინი, ფრეიზერი, დივალდი, ლამბრესტი, სირლი) კი გვიჩვენებს, რომ ბევრი „მცირე სიტყვა“ ძირითადად დისკურსს მართავს და სტრუქტურული და გამოყენებითი ცვლილების გზით არის ჩამოყალიბებული, და რომ პრაგმატული დატვირთვა ხშირად ცალკე, დამოუკიდებელ განზომილებად უნდა განვიხილოთ.

### ქართული ენის მონაცემები: მრავალფუნქციურობა და კონსტრუქციული ქცევა

ცალკე ქვეთავში განვიხილავთ საკითხს, თუ რატომ მიგვაჩნია განსახილველ ოდენობებთან მიმართებით ერთი ეტიკეტი („ფუნქციური სიტყვა“) არაადეკვატურად. როგორც კვლევამ გვიჩვენა, ერთი და იგივე ელემენტი შეიძლება მონაწილეობდეს სხვადასხვა კონსტრუქციაში, სხვადასხვა პოზიციაში, რის

შედგადაც იცვლება მისი წვლილი სინტაქსში, სემანტიკასა და პრაგმატიკაში. მაგალითად:

- „უფრო“ შეიძლება იყოს ა) შედარებითი ხარისხის მოდიფიკატორი ზედსართავ სახელებთან, ბ) ინტენსიფიკატორი, რომელიც აძლიერებს მიზეზობრივ დაქვემდებარებას ან გ) იყოს ლექსიკალიზებული ფოკუსირებული გამოთქმის ნაწილი (მაგ., „მით უფრო“).
- „რა“ მერყეობს კითხვითი ელემენტიდან დისკურსზე დაფუძნებულ ინტერაქტიულ გამოყენებამდე და ასევე გვხვდება გრამატიკალიზებულ ფუნქციურ ფრაზაში „რა თქმა უნდა“, რომელიც წინადადებაში ფუნქციონირებს როგორც მოდალური ფრაზა.
- „ერთი“ იქცევა ა) როგორც რიცხვითი სახელი კლასიფიკატორებთან, ბ) როგორც განუსაზღვრელობითი ნაცვალსახელად („ერთ დღეს“), გ) დისკურსში ფოკუსირებადი სტრუქტურის ნაწილი, დ) როგორც გამხსნელი ფრაზის ნაწილი ჩამონათვალში („პირველ რიგში...“) ან გამოიყენება სასაუბრო თემის სხვა თემაზე გადამტანი ელემენტის ფუნქციური ოპერატორი.

ეს მაგალითები საშუალებას იძლევა ჩავატაროთ მრავალდონიანი ანალიზი: ფუნქციური სიტყვები ქართულში ხშირად მოქმედებენ როგორც ოპერატორები, რომელთა როლი დამოკიდებულია მათ სინტაქსურ გარემოსა და კონსტრუქციულ შეფუთვაზე.

### კორპუსზე დაფუძნებული კლასიფიკაცია სამი განზომილების მიხედვით

სტატიის ემპირიულ ნაწილში, საკვლევად შევარჩიეთ 100 ყველაზე მაღალი სიხშირის ფუნქციური სიტყვა ქართული ენის ეროვნული კორპუსის თანამედროვე ქართული ენის ქვეკორპუსიდან (GNC-NG) და მოვახდინეთ მათი კლასიფიკაცია სამი განზომილების მიხედვით - სინტაქსური როლი, პრაგმატული ფუნქცია და სემანტიკური ავტონომია - რომლებიც წარმოდგენილია ნაშრომის IV–VII ცხრილებში.

განზომილება	რას მოიცავს	ტიპიური ქართული ერთეულები (მაგალითები)	რატომ არის მნიშვნელოვანი
სინტაქსური როლი	სტრუქტურული ფუნქცია წინადადების არქიტექტურაში (შემაერთებელი, მაქვემდებარებელი, მოდიფიკატორი და ა.შ.)	შემაერთებელი სიტყვები/მაქვემდებარებელი სიტყვები (მაგ., „და“, „მაგრამ“, „რომ/თუ“, „რადგან“), ნეგატორები, wh-ფორმები, ზმნიხედები, თანდებულები	ასახავს, თუ როგორ ქმნიან ფუნქციური სიტყვები წინადადების სტრუქტურას.



პრაგმატული ფუნქცია	დისკურსის მართვა, ურთიერთქმედების ჩარჩოები (პოზიცია, ფოკუსი), რიტორიკული ძალა	დისკურსის მარკერები, მოდალური/ევიდენციალური ნაწილაკები („შესაძლოა/როგორც ჩანს“), ფოკუსის შემზღუდველები („მხოლოდ“).	განსაზღვრავს ფუნქციურ სიტყვებს, რომლებიც გრამატიკის მიღმა ინტერპრეტაციას წარმართავენ.
სემანტიკური ავტონომია	„დამოუკიდებელი მნიშვნელობის“ ხარისხი კონტექსტუალურ დამოკიდებულებასთან შედარებით	LOW: კავშირები, ნაწილაკები, ნეგატორები; MEDIUM: ზმნიშედები, ნაცვალსახელები; HIGH: უფრო მეტად ლექსიკური შეფერილობის ერთეულები (მაგ., კვანტიფიკატორები, ზოგიერთი ზმნიშედა, გრამატიკალიზებული არსებითი სახელი, როგორიცაა „თავი/თვით“).	წარმოაჩენს კონტინუუმს არა როგორც ბინარულ, არამედ როგორც გრადაციულ სისტემას.

კვლევის ძირითადი თეორიული შედეგი ის არის, რომ ქართული ფუნქციური სიტყვები ნაწილდება სემანტიკურ-ავტონომიურ გრადაციულ ველში: დაბალი ავტონომიის ერთეულები განთავსდებიან გრამატიკულ ბირთვში (მაღალდამოკიდებული, სტრუქტურული), საშუალო ავტონომიის ერთეულები ხშირად მოიცავს დეიქტურ ზმნიშედებს და ნაცვალსახელის ფორმებს, ხოლო მაღალი ავტონომიის „ფუნქციური“ ერთეულები ინარჩუნებენ უფრო ძლიერ ლექსიკურ შინაარსს. ნაშრომში წარმოდგენილ კლასიფიკაციას განვიხილავთ, როგორც სკალარული მოდელის მტკიცებულებას და არა მკაცრ ავტოსემანტიკურ vs. სინსემანტიკურ დიქტომიის. წარმოდგენილი კვლევის პროცესში შევქმენით ინსტრუმენტი „ფუნქციური ელემენტების ანალიზატორი“ (Java), რომელიც კვლევის კომპიუტერული ლინგვისტიკის ნაწილს წარმოადგენს და განახორციელებს კლასიფიკაციის ოპერაციულ რეალიზებას. მომხმარებლები წინასწარ ადგენენ ფუნქციური სიტყვების ან ფუნქციურსიტყვიანი კონსტრუქციების სიას (JSON მეტამონაცემების სახით) და შეჰყავთ იგი საანალიზო ტექსტთან ერთად; შემდეგ ინსტრუმენტი განსაზღვრავს, თუ რომელი ფუნქციური სიტყვები გვხვდება მოცემულ ტექსტში, ითვლის ფუნქციური სიტყვების სიხშირეს და დამატებით ახდენს მიღებული შედეგების ვიზუალიზაციას.

არქიტექტურა და სამუშაო პროცესი (რომელიც აღწერილი და დიაგრამირებულია ნაშრომის ვიზუალიზაციაში) ხორციელდება სამ ეტაპად - (1) მონაცემების მიწოდება (ტექსტის + მეტამონაცემების ჩატვირთვა, შედეგების JSON-ად შენახვა), (2) ტექსტის ანალიზი (ტოკენიზაცია, შესაბამისობა, სტატისტიკური დამუშავება) და (3) პრეზენტაცია (Swing დიალოგები და HTML ვიზუალიზაცია, რომელიც იხსნება ბრაუზერში).

## შეზღუდვები და პერსპექტივები

ნაშრომში ნათლად არის მითითებული, რომ ჩვენ მიერ შექმნილი ინსტრუმენტი პროტოტიპულია: ტოკენიზაცია განზრახ არის გამარტივებული და შესაძლოა არასწორად გააანალიზოს ნაწილაკები ან რთული სიტყვები; იდენტიფიკაცია სტრიქონებს ეფუძნება და არ გააჩნია POS/სინტაქსური დისამბიგვირება, რის გამოც ომონიმურობა, მაგალითად, „თავი“, როგორც ლექსიკური ერთეული (არსებითი სახელი) და უკუქცევითი ნაცვალსახელი, ავტომატურად ვერ გაანალიზდება; კვლევის შედეგების საერთო ხარისხი დამოკიდებულია ხელით შედგენილი მეტამონაცემების სიის სისრულესა და სისწორეზე. დაგეგმილი სამომავლო სამუშაოები მოიცავს ქართული ენის ბუნების გათვალისწინებით განხორციელებულ ტოკენიზაციას, მსუბუქ POS ანალიზს, დისამბიგვირების განხორციელებას და უკეთეს მხარდაჭერას სისტემური ჯვარედინი ტექსტური შედარებებისთვის.

## დასკვნა

ნაშრომის მთავარი შედეგი არის დებულება, რომ ქართული ფუნქციური სიტყვები არ ქმნიან ჰომოგენურ კლასს. ისინი წარმოადგენენ მრავალგანზომილებიან სისტემას, რომელიც აბალანსებს (i) სტრუქტურულ სინტაქსს, (ii) გრადუირებულ სემანტიკურ ავტონომიას და (iii) პრაგმატულ-დისკურსურ ფუნქციას. კორპუსზე დაფუძნებული კლასიფიკაცია (100 მაღალი სიხშირის ერთეული; მათგან 23 მონიშნულია, როგორც პრაგმატულად მნიშვნელოვანი) ოპერაციულ ინსტრუმენტთან ერთად ხელს უწყობს ქართული ენის კორპუსებში ქართული ენის ფუნქციური სიტყვების უფრო მდიდარ ანოტაციასა და ანალიზს, ასევე თეორიული ლინგვისტიკისა და მსუბუქი გამოთვლითი მეთოდების გაერთიანებას.

# The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). A Comparison of Georgian and Abkhaz Translations (in relation to the Greek original)

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**Abstract:** In my contribution to *Digital Kartvelology* 3, I took the well-known chapter 13 of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians and compared the Georgian renditions with the sole existing version in Abkhaz, included in the late Mushni Lasuria's privately published New Testament (2004). Since the Institute for Bible Translation published in 2023 four parables from the Gospel of St. Luke by Arda Ashuba (unnamed in the booklet itself), I have here repeated the exercise by comparing the Georgian versions of the Parable of the Prodigal Son with the four Abkhaz translations, comparing, as in the previous article, all renderings with the Greek original.

**Keywords:** Abkhaz, Georgian, Greek, Latin, Bible, New Testament, Vulgate, Tyndale, Institute for Bible Translation, Patriarchate; St Paul, Epistle, St Luke, Gospel, Parable; Gulia, Khiba, Lasuria, Ashuba

In an earlier article,<sup>1</sup> I offered a comparison based on the translations into Abkhaz and Georgian of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. For that text, whilst several Georgian publications were available for consultation, only one translation into Abkhaz existed (viz. that by the late Mushni Lasuria (ML) from his New Testament of 2004). For the Parable of the Prodigal Son, whilst the same sources for Georgian as consulted in 2024 naturally also contain the Parable, three additional versions exist for Abkhaz. These are the translations by: (a) Dmitri Gulia (1874–1960), whose four Gospels were first published in 1912 (DG) and then reprinted both in 1975 and in 2006 (in the script employed in 1912), as well as in 1998 (in the then-contemporary script); (b) the late Zaira Khiba (1944–2025), whose translation of the Gospels (Khiba 2021 = ZK) was first produced in the late 1970s/early 1980s but reworked/edited in the 2010s based on my input from the perspective of the Greek original; and (c) Arda Ashuba (2023 = AA). The authors for (a) and (c) are not named in their respective published works.

For those unfamiliar with my earlier comparison I recapitulate the details of the Modern Georgian translations consulted. Of the five in my possession three present the whole Bible, whereas the other two offer the New Testament (NT) along with the Psalms. Four of the five publications (viz. those of 1980/91, 1982, 1989-90, and 2002) were printed in Stockholm under the imprint of *The Institute for Bible Translation* (hereafter: IBT). The IBT versions turned out to be very close to one another, but the publication from the Georgian Patriarchate of 1989 (hereafter: PV) was clearly divergent. Ashuba's translation (hereafter: AA) is the final text (pp. 33–45) in a booklet containing four parables from St. Luke's Gospel prepared for the IBT, which is now based in Moscow.

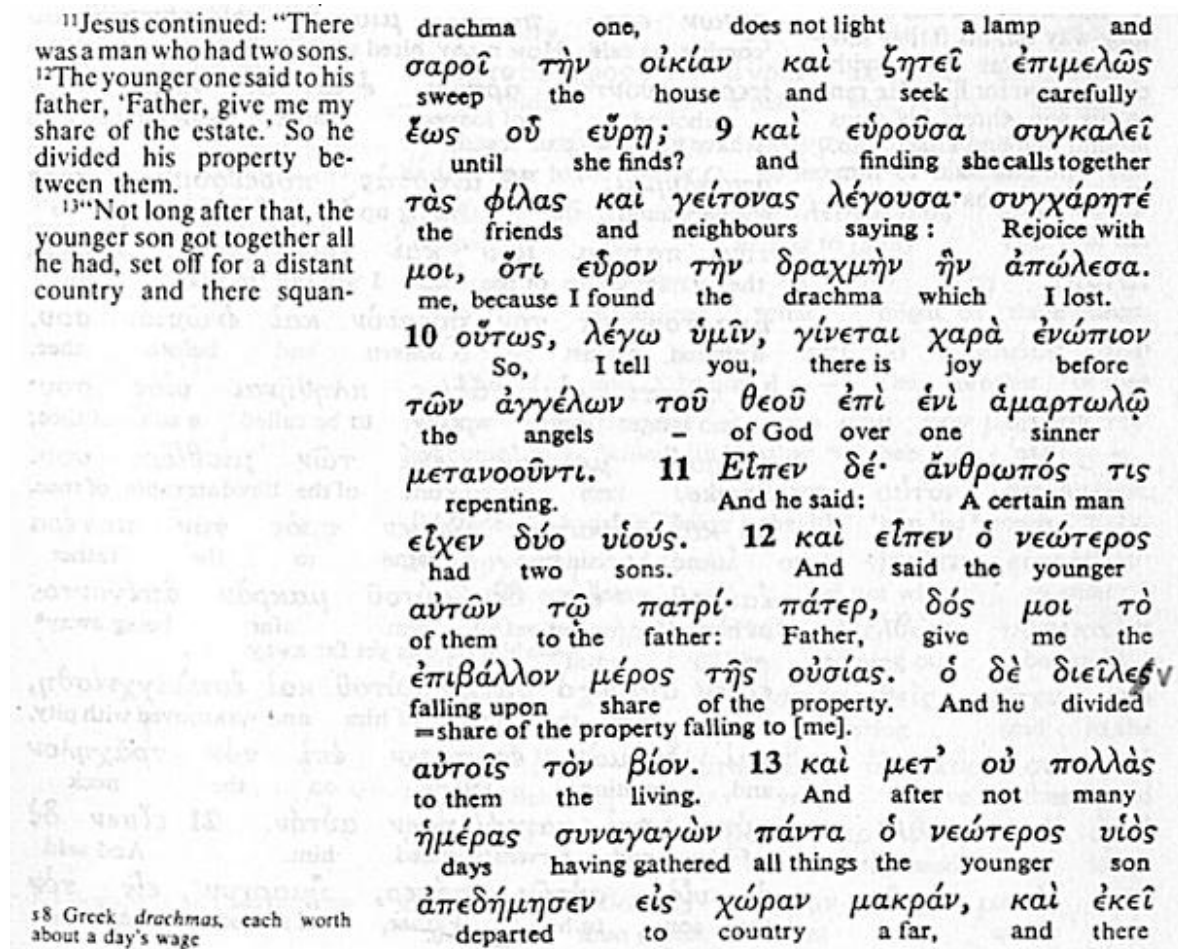
For Old Georgian we still have the New Testament published in 1963 by the Georgian Catholicosate, but that is now supplemented by three other editions of the Gospels as edited by: (a) Ak'ak'i Shanidze (1945); (b) Ivane Imnaishvili (1979); and (c) as contained in volume

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<sup>1</sup> *Digital Kartvelology* 3, 2024, 109–124 (<https://doi.org/10.62235/dk.3.2024.8516>). This and all other URLs quoted in this article were last accessed on 30 December 2025.

five of the *Mtskheta Manuscript*, which was prepared for publication by E. Dochanashvili (1986) under the editorship of Zurab Sarjveladze.

Given the number of translations available, it would take up too much space to include copies of them all in full, and so, although I quote throughout from the five texts listed below, I include illustrations of only two, namely, (a) the start of *Bagster's Critical New Testament* (NT n.d.), which combines the Greek original along with both English interlinear glosses and a more literary English rendition (Fig. 1);<sup>2</sup> and (b) the full text of the Modern Georgian text printed in the Patriarchate's large-format volume (PV) (Figs 2 and 3); for (c) the two Old Georgian (OG) redactions (MSS DE versus MS C, this latter being the Adishi manuscript), presented side-by-side in Shanidze's 1945 volume; (d) Khiba's Abkhaz text (ZK), chosen since it is rather close to Gulia's; and (e) Lasuria's version (ML), online-locations are given in the references.



**Fig. 1: Beginning of the parable in *Bagster's Critical New Testament***

It might be useful to note at the start that, although our chosen text does not have a title within the NT itself; it is universally known in English as ‘The Parable of the Prodigal Son’, where ‘prodigal’ refers to one who squanders money or spends it recklessly, thereby capturing the Greek adverb ἀσώτως describing the son’s lifestyle after leaving the family-home as ‘profligate, debauched’. In the Georgian IBTs (*NT* 1980 and *NT* 1982), we find a little insert highlighting this section of Chapter 15 as [იგავი] დაკარგულ ძეზე *figavi* *dak’argul dzeze*

<sup>2</sup> Note my correction of the misprint in verse 12!



‘[Parable (*igavi*)] on/concerning (-*ze*) the Lost (*dak’argul*) Son (*dze*)’; *NT* 2002 inserts a heading to this section of Chapter 15 which reads ძე შეცთომილი *dze šetstomili* ‘The son gone astray’. In general, however, Georgians know this parable by the title უძღვები შვილი *udžvebi švili* ‘The insatiable/profligate/prodigal son’. Ashuba gives his translation the formal title აჟა კალა იჟუ აჟამაანა *apa q’ala jəzku: aʒʷama:na* ‘Parable (*aʒʷama:na*) about (*jəzku:*) the son (*apa*) who lost his way (*q’ala*)’, which borrows from, and slightly adapts, Lasuria’s insert, viz. [Ажәмаана] аჟა კალა იჟუ ‘[Parable] for/about the lost son’, where იჟუ *jəzə* means ‘for/about him’. And so, we see three different aspects of the story highlighted by those responsible for providing the summary, viz. lack of wisdom in controlling personal finance (English) vs family-division (Georgian) vs the going astray of a family member (Abkhaz).

Since we have more material to examine than in my afore-mentioned Abkhaz-Georgian comparison, I shall look at the translations verse-by-verse, concentrating (for Georgian) on *PV*, *NT* 2002 and Shanidze (1945): note that Ashuba does not number the verses, presenting the material as a continuous story interspersed with large illustrations to appeal to young readers.

11. მერე თქვა: ერთ კაცს ორი ძე ჰყავდა;
12. და უთხრა უმცროსმა მამას: მამა, მომეცი ჩემი წილი, რომელიც მერგება სამკვიდრებლიდან. და გაუყო მათ თავისი ქონება.
13. ცოტა ხანმა რომ განვლო, შეკრიბა უმცროსმა ყველაფერი, შორეულ მხარეს გაემგზავრა და იქ გაულანგა

(34) მათ. 5,13. მარკ. 9,50.  
თავი 15. (4) მათ. 18,12.

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Fig. 2: Beginning of the parable in *PV*.

**Verse 11.** Corresponding to the Greek ‘a certain man’, three of the Abkhaz translators use the single word pronoun seen in *ZK*, whilst *ML* opts for ‘a man’ (хатѡк *χats’ak*).

*OG* does not use the root *-q’-* for ‘have (an animate entity)’ but employs *-sx-*, which in the modern language is used for plants producing an abundance of fruit.<sup>3</sup>

**Verse 12.** Greek’s ‘the younger of them’ provides the pattern for *ZK* ‘the (one who was the) younger of them’, whilst *DG* and *ML* simply write ‘the younger (one)’ (აიძბი *ajts’bə*) against *AA*’s ‘the younger son’ (აიძბი *ape:jts’bə*). Greek’s Aorist ‘said’ is switched to the (Historic) Present in *ML* and *AA*. The Greek phrase ‘the portion of the property which falls to me’ is perfectly acceptably reduced by *DG* and *ZK* to just ‘my share of the property’, whilst

<sup>3</sup> See Deeters 1954.

ML and AA have the full phrase, though the differences need to be noted. ML literally translates the Greek as *исаѣау ахѣта jəsar<sup>w</sup>o:w aχ<sup>w</sup>ta* ‘the part which befits me’, whereas AA offers *исыкѣнагоу сыхѣтаа jəsək<sup>w</sup>nago:w səχ<sup>w</sup>ta:* ‘my portion which is appropriate for me’. Apart from the different roots for capturing the notion of ‘befitting, being appropriate for’, one could say that AA’s version is pleonastic insofar as ‘my portion’ (*səχ<sup>w</sup>ta:*) makes the addition of the relativised verb *jəsək<sup>w</sup>nago:w* redundant.

In Georgian PV shares AA’s pleonasm by saying ‘my share which falls to me from the inheritance’, whilst NT 2002 avoids it by saying *ჩემი კუთვნილი წილი ქონებისა tʃemi k’utvnili nats’ili konebisa* ‘my due share of the property’. OG-DE’s ‘the portion of the inheritance which befits me’ aligns with ML, whilst OG-C’s ‘a portion of the inheritance’ is the most minimal of all.

**Verse 13:** Whilst ML and AA agree with ZK in rendering Greek’s ‘after not many days’ as ‘when some days had passed’, DG is perhaps somewhat closer in writing ‘not many days having passed’ (*шъарда мыш мырцкѣа farda məs marts’ək<sup>w</sup>a*). Between the four translators three different verbs are selected to render ‘gather (together, up)’ (viz. *აიზგარა ajzgara*, *აიდკylara ajdk’alara*, *ააშტყჰრა a:ʃtəχra*), and for Greek’s (single word for) ‘all things’ both DG and ZK also use a single word ‘everything’ (*зегъ(ы) zeg<sup>j</sup>(ə)*), whereas ML adds ‘which he had’ (*имаз jəmaz*), and AA adds ‘which he had received’ (*იოუზ jo:w(ə)z*). DG is the outlier for the phrase ‘to a far(-off) country’, for instead of employing the postposition *ახე aχ<sup>j</sup>* ‘to it’, it seems that the old oblique case-marker *-n* with locative (allative) force is used, and the indefinite marker *-k* then attaches to it (viz. *ჰარა თჳლანკ χარა t<sup>w</sup>alank*). However, the most interesting feature of this verse is the translation of ‘he squandered his property living prodigally’, which is the specific interpretation of the Greek adverb *ἀσώτως*. The main verb is common to all four translators, the simplest sentence being formed by DG who just offers the adverbial *хнымкylарала χnəmk’alarala* ‘with *-la* no *-m-* self *χ-* restraint *-nk’alara-*’. ZK expands to incorporate an equivalent to the Greek participle ‘living’ (viz. *дныкѣан dnəq<sup>w</sup>an* literally ‘he walked and’ => ‘conducted himself and’). So, what further expansions do we see in the interpretations made by ML and AA? Both start with *акы дамеичаха ak’ə dame:jtʃ’aha* ‘having taken no care of anything’. AA then follows this with *хырхагада xərhaгада* ‘without advantage’ and caps off his interpretative expansion with *калтшътаныкѣарала k’altʃtanəq<sup>w</sup>arala* ‘by chasing after (?women’s) hems, licentiously’, clearly an importation conditioned by the content of Verse 30. ML does not go to the same lengths as his younger colleague but adds *хнымкylарада χnəmk’alarada*, which I initially took to be a misprint for the word used by both DG and ZK. I felt the form as printed could not be correct, as the suffix *-da* is a postposition meaning ‘without’, which would give ‘\*without no self-restraining’, whereas ‘with no self-restraint’ is what is logically required. To my astonishment, three native speakers, including ZK, assured me that the printed form is indeed perfectly acceptable!

PV turns both Greek’s prepositional phrase ‘after not many days’ and the participial phrase ‘living prodigately’ into full subordinate clauses, whereas NT 2002 has a postpositional phrase and Masdar respectively, viz. *რამდენიმე დღის შემდეგ ramdenime dʒis ʃemdəg* ‘after some days’ and *თავაშვებული ცხოვრებით tavaʃvəbuli tsχəvrebət* ‘by unselfrestrained living’. OG-DE and OG-C impeccably follow Greek’s prepositional phrase (including the word-order) but turn the participial phrase into a full clause, viz. respectively *შემდგომად არა მრავალთა დღეთა ʃemdgomad ara mravalta dʒeta* ‘after not many days’ and *რამეთუ ცხოვნდებოდა არაწმიდად (DE) vs ცხოვნდებოდა არაწმიდებით (C) rametu tsχəvndəboda arats’midad vs tsχəvndəboda arats’midebit* ‘since he was living impurely’.

სახარება ლუკასი, თ. 15-16

მთელი თავისი ავლა-დიდება, კინაიდან თავაშეებულად ცხოვრობდა.

14. და როცა ყველაფერი შემოესარჯა, დიდი შიმშილობა ჩამოვარდა იმ ქვეყანაში, და ძალიან გაუჭირდა.

15. წავიდა და ერთი იქაურ კაცს შეეკედლა, სოლო მან მინდორში გაგზავნა ღორების მწყემსად.

16. ნატრობდა, ნეტავი ღორების საჭმელი რქით ამომავსებინა მუცელით, მაგრამ ვინ აღირსებდა.

17. გონს რომ მოეგო, თქვა: მამაჩემის რამდენ მოჯამაგირეს თავზე საყრელადა აქვს პური და მე კი აქ შიმშილით ვკვდები.

18. ავდგები, მივალ მამაჩემთან და ვეტყვი: მამა, ცოდვების მიმართ და შენს წინაშე,

19. და აღარ ვარ იმისი ღირსი, რომ შენი ძე მერქვას, მაგრამ მოჯამაგირედ მაინც დამიყენე.

20. ადგა და მამამისისკენ გასწია. ჯერ კიდევ შორს იყო, რომ მამამ დაინახა და შეებრაღა იგი; სოლო ის გამოიქცა, კისერზე მოეჭდო და ჰკოცნიდა მას.

21. და უთხრა მამას: მამა, ცოდვების მიმართ და შენს წინაშე, და აღარ ვარ იმისი ღირსი, რომ შენი ძე მერქვას.

22. სოლო მამამ თავის მონებს უთხრა: მოიტანეთ უკეთესი სამოსი და შემოსეთ იგი, გაუკეთეთ ბეჭედი სელზე და ხაშლები ჩააცვით მას.

23. მოიყვანეთ ნასუქი სხო და დაკალით; ვჭამოთ და ვიმსიარულოთ.

24. რადგან ეს ჩემი ძე მკვდარი იყო და გაცოცხლდა, დაკარგული იყო და გამოჩნდა; და დიწყეს მსიარულება.

25. სოლო უფროსი ძე ყანაში იყო, და როცა შინ მიმავალი მიუახლოვდა სახლს, შემოესმა სიმღერისა და ფერხულის სმა.

26. მოუხმო ერთი მონათავანს და ჰკითხა: რა ამბავია?

27. მან მიუგო: შენი ძმა მოვიდა და მამაშენმა ნასუქი სხო დაკლა, რაკი საღ-სალამათი დამიბრუნდაო.

28. სოლო ის გაბრაზდა და აღარ უნდოდა შესვლა. გამოვიდა მამამისი და მიიხმო იგი.

29. მაგრამ მან უთხრა მამას: აგერ, რამდენი წელია გემსახურები და ერთხელაც არ გადავსულვარ შენს მცნებას, და ან ერთი თიკანი თუ მოგიცია ოდესმე ჩემთვის, რომ მეგობრებში მომეღოსინა.

30. სამაგიეროდ, მოვიდა თუ არა ეს შენი ძე, რომელმაც მთელი თავისი ავლა-დიდება მეძავეს გადაავო, ხელად კვებულა სხო დაუკალი.

31. სოლო მამამ მიუგო მას: შვილო, შენ ყოველთვის ჩემთან ხარ და ყველაფერი, რაც მაქვს, შენია.

32. ამჯერად კი გვმართებს ვისართ და ვიმსიარულოთ, კინაიდან ეს შენი ძმა მკვდარი იყო და გაცოცხლდა, და დაკარგული იყო და გამოჩნდა.

#### თავი მეთექვსმეტი

1. და თავის მოწაფეებსაც უთხრა: იყო ერთი მდიდარი კაცი და ჰყავდა მოურავი, რომელიც დაბეჭდეს მის წინაშე, შენს ქონებას ანიაგებდო.

2. მოიხმო იგი და უთხრა: ეს რა მესმის შენზე? ჩამაბარე შენი სამოურავოს ანგარიში, რადგანაც ამიერიდან აღარ გიწერია მოურავობა.

3. მაშინ მოურავმა თავის თავს უთხრა: რა ვქნა? აგერ ჩემი ბატონი მოურავობას მართმევს; თონხა მე არ შემოძლია და თხოვნა კი მერცხვინება.

4. თუმცა, გიცი, რაც უნდა ვქნა, რომ თავიანთ სასლებში მიმიღოს საღსმა, როცა მოურავობას ჩამომართმევს.

5. მოიხმო სათითაოდ თავისი ბატონის მოვალენი და ჰკითხა პირველს: რამდენი გმართებს ჩემი ბატონისა?

6. მან მიუგო: ასი კასრი ზეთი. და უთხრა მას: ამა, ინებე შენი თამასუქი, დაჯექი სასწრაფოდ და დაწერე ორმოცდაათი.

7. ახლა მეორეს ჰკითხა: შენ რამდენი გმართებს? და მან მიუგო: ასი კოდი პური. და უთხრა მას: ამა, ინებე შენი თამასუქი და დაწერე ოთხმოცი.

8. და შეაქო ბატონმა ორგული მოურავი: გონივრულად მოიქცეო; კინაიდან ამ სოფლის ძენი თავიანთ მოდგმაში უფრო გონიერნი არიან, ვიდრე ნათლის ძენი.

9. ამიტომაც გეუბნებით თქვენ: შეიძინეთ მეგობრები უსამართლო სიმდიდრით, რათა როდესაც გადაიხდებით, საუკუნო სამყოფელში მიგიღონ თქვენ.

10. მცირედში სანდო დიდშიც სანდოა, და მცირედში უნდო დიდშიც უნდოა.

11. და თუ ამ ცრუ და უსამართლო სიმდიდრეში უნდონი იყავით, ჭეშმარიტს ვინ განდობთ თქვენ?

12. ანდა თუ სხვისაში უნდონი იყავით, თქვენსა ვინ მოგცემთ თქვენ?

13. არცერთ მსახურს არ შეუძლია ორი ბატონის მონობა: რადგან ან ერთს შეიძულეს და მეორეს შეიყვარეს, ან კიდევ ერთს შეითვისეს და მეორეს შეიზიზღეს. ვერ შესძლებთ ღმერთსაც ემონოთ და მამონსაც.

14. ისმენდნენ ყოველივე ამას კერცხლის მოყვარე ფარისევლები და დასცილდნენ მას.

15. და უთხრა მათ: თქვენა ხართ, მართლმად რომ მოგაქვთ თავი კაცთა წინაშე, მაგრამ ღმერთი იცნობს თქვენს გულს, რადგან ის, რაც მაღალია კაცთა შორის სიბილწეა ღმერთის წინაშე.

(24) ეფეს. 2,1; 5,14. კოლ. 2,13. გამოცხ. 3,1.

თავი 16. (9) მათ. 6,19; 19,21. (10) მათ. 25,21. (13) მათ. 6,24. (14) 1 ტიმ. 6,10. (15) 1 მეფ. 16,7. იერ. 11,20.

**Verse 14:** Both ML and AA adapt Greek's simple past 'having spent', AA by saying 'when nothing became left to him' (აკაგბი ანიზაანიმხა *ak'ag'ə anjəza:nəmχa*), whilst ML slightly alters the timeline to give 'as he was on the verge of spending everything' (ზეგბი აანიხუანი აიპჷშ *zeg'ə a:ni:χwanə ajpʃ*). The closest match for Greek's two words meaning 'he began to suffer want' is found in DG's იგხუა<sup>4</sup> დალაგეიტ *jəgχwa dalagejt* 'he began being in need', though ZK too has just two words meaning 'he began to suffer'. ML transforms the original into 'he remained/was left having become an object to be pitied' (დრატჷახუა დაკ'ე:jt'). AA places two extra words in front of these, namely აკაგბი იმამკა *ak'ag'ə jəmamk'a* 'having nothing'. Greek has two different verbs in verses 13 and 14 for the son's treatment of his property, firstly 'scatter' and then 'spend up', and this distinction is mirrored in Georgian. Modern Georgian opposes გაფლანგა *gaplanga* to შემოეხარჯა *šeməχardza*, which latter includes the compound preverb *šemə-*. This sometimes replaces a root's normal preverb (for this root it is *da-*), motivating a shift from transitive to indirect verb (as here), and conveys the nuance that the verbal action is carried out inadvertently or accidentally<sup>5</sup>. Here, then, the suggestion is that the dispersal of monies results in unwitting exhaustion of the wealth. OG simply contrasts two transitive verbs, viz. განაბნია *ganabnia* 'he scattered it' with წარწყმოდა *ts'arts'q'mida* 'he ruined it'. Modern Georgian's single (inchoative) verb გაუჭირდა *gauf'irda* 'it became difficult for him' corresponds to OG's (and Greek's) main verb plus Masdar/infinitive (in the Adverbial case) იწყო მოკლებად *its'q'a mək'lebad* 'he began to suffer want'.

**Verse 15:** DG and ZK agree in rendering Greek 'he got attached to a local resident' as 'he attached himself to...', whereas ML says 'he really pestered (a local) and [he sent him to the fields to herd swine]' (დხტეიკჷან *dəχte:jk'dzan*). AA also employs this verb but in a temporal clause preceding the last finite verb of the sentence, so that we have დიხჷეიტ დიდიკლარც *djəh'e:jt djədi:k'alarts* 'he entreated him to receive him (sc. as labourer)', followed by დანხტეიკჷა *danəχte:jk'dza* '[and] when he really pestered him', after which the local employer then sends the supplicant into the fields to feed the pigs, which is exactly how DG and ZK translate albeit with differing syntax.<sup>6</sup> ML and AA, on the other hand, translate as 'he sent him to be swineherd/herd swine', viz. ხაჷხარა დიშტიტ *h'aχ'tfara di:fti:t*.

NT 2002 is closer to the Greek than PV. They both have the same root for 'attaching himself to someone (for protection)', but PV selects the preverb შე- *fe-* against მი- *mi-*, producing ერთ იქაურ კაცს შეეკედლა *ert ikaur k'atss fəek'edla* 'he attached himself to a man of that locality' vs იმ ქვეყნის ერთ მცხოვრებს მიეკედლა *im kveq'nis ert mtsχəvrebs miek'edla* 'he attached himself to a resident of that country'. OG-C resembles PV in saying შეეყო ერთსა მოქალაქეთაგანსა *fəeq'o ertsə mək'alaketagansa* 'he joined one of the citizens' vs OG-DE's closer rendition of the Greek, viz. შეუდგა ერთსა მოქალაქესა მის სოფლისასა *fəudga ertsə mək'alakesa mis səplisasa* 'he united with a citizen of the country'. If PV resembles ML and AA's Abkhaz translation ('he sent him to the field(s) as a guardian of the pigs'), NT 2002 does not diverge from the Greek, sending him to the fields ღორების საძოვებლად *χərebis sadzəvblad* 'to feed the pigs'. OG-CDE all concur with the Greek, saying 'to feed the pigs', viz. ძოვნად ღორთა *dzəvnad χərtə*, where we note the Greek word-order is maintained.

<sup>4</sup> Today this would be იგხო *jəgχə* in the literary dialect.

<sup>5</sup> Abkhaz has a similar morpho-syntactic procedure for transforming a verb to indicate action carried out unintentionally or unwittingly, namely the infix -ამხა- *-amχa-* (see Hewitt 1979).

<sup>6</sup> DG's purpose clause is structured like this: იხაჷკა იხუარ აზი *jəh'ak'a jəχ'tfar azə* 'for the purpose that he guard his pigs'.



**Verse 16:** DG and ZK perfectly reflect the Greek, the only point for discussion being what they say the pigs are eating. ML and AA start by adding a phrase translatable as ‘in his starving state’, viz. უი დызლამლაშუაზ ალა *wi: dəzlamlaʃwaz ala*. Then AA has for the object of eating non-specific აჩაქა ირამტარაშუაზ *ah<sup>w</sup>ak<sup>w</sup>a jəramts ‘arəʒwaz* ‘that which they were casting before the pigs’, whilst ML inserts after this sequence his non-specific specification აცხინამინა *ate<sup>w</sup>ənχa-mənχa* ‘scraps, odds-and-ends’. The only specific identification of the pigs’ food is found in DG, who has აძრატ *adzrats* ‘acorn(s)’. Bagster’s *The Analytical Greek Lexicon* (undated: 229) has a discussion of the word used in the Greek original, namely: ‘*κεράτιον* [...] a little horn; in N[ew] T[estament] a pod, the pod of the carob tree, or *Ceratonis siliqua* of Linnaeus, a common tree in the East and the South of Europe, growing to a considerable size, and producing long slender pods, with a pulp of a sweetish taste, and several brown shining seeds like beans, sometimes eaten by the poorer people of Syria and Palestine, and commonly used for fattening swine’. The Latin *Vulgata* (2007) here uses the syntactically context-determined case (viz. the ablative) of *siliqua* as the food the pigs are eating in this verse, and Tyndale’s English translation (*NT* 1526) has *coddes* (i.e. ‘pods, husks’), whilst the English Authorised Version (*Bible* 1611) has ‘husks’, which means that these three are the closest to the original Greek of the translations discussed here.

The Georgian versions offer at least four translations for the opening verb ‘he was longing’: PV ნატრობდა *nat’rɔbda* vs *NT* 2002 ენატრებოდა *enat’rebɔda*<sup>7</sup> vs OG-DE გული ეტყოდა *guli et’q’ɔda* vs OG-C სწადინ *sts’adin*.<sup>8</sup> The complement is then expressed in different ways: OG Masdars in the Adverbial case directly correspond to the Greek infinitive ‘to fill’ (viz. OG-DE განძებდა *gandʒebad* vs OG-C აღვსებდა *avsvɛbad*), whereas *NT* 2002 prefers a clausal representation (viz. მუცელი... ამოვვრება *mutseli...amɔvɛq’ɔra* ‘...that he gorge full (his stomach)’). But PV employs a totally different strategy, namely *oratio recta* in order to present the form of the wish that was in the son’s head: ნეტავი ღორების საჭმელი რქით ამომავსებინა მუცელი *net’avi ɔrɛbis satʃ’meli rkit amɔmavsebinə mutseliɔ* ‘would that he [*sc.* God] let me fill my stomach with the pigs’ carob-pod fodder, saying (= -ო)!’ Rayfield (2006: 802b) gives კერატი *k’erat’i*, clearly a loan from Greek, as a synonym for რქა *rka* in the sense of ‘carob’ (its commoner meaning being ‘horn’), and this is the word found in the OG texts, but in *NT* 2002 the foodstuff is given as რკოთი *rk’ɔti*, Instrumental case of რკო *rk’ɔ* ‘acorn’.

**Verse 17:** DG and ZK faithfully and identically follow the original. Again, we find ML and AA offer slight adaptations, including a shift of the quantifier from the employed labourers to the bread available to them. They both start with: зны ихахы ихшыѠ анаи *znə jəχaχ’ə jəχʂəy ana:j* ‘one day when his common sense came into his head’. ML continues with a time-shift for the verb (‘said’ to ‘says’) but AA, while keeping the original tense, translates as ‘he said in his heart / silently mused’, viz. იგაყ იტიჟააიტ *jəg<sup>wj</sup>ə jəti:h<sup>w</sup>a:jt’*. ML continues: саб иаанкылань имоу ауаа зака ртаху ача иалажъуп *sab ja:nk’əlanə jəmo:w awa: zaq’a rtaχu: atʃa jalaʒu:p’* ‘the men whom my father has taken on are in the midst of as much bread as they want’, which can be compared with AA’s adaptation, viz. саб иѠны қыралә аус зуа урт зака ртаху ача рымоуп *sab jəynə k’ərala awəs zwa wərt zaq’a rtaχu: atʃa rəmo:wp’* ‘those who

<sup>7</sup> Two earlier IBT translations have მონატრული იყო *mɔnat’ruli iq’ɔ* ‘he was in a state of longing’ (1990) and მოხარული იყო *mɔχaruli iq’ɔ* ‘he was pleased (*sc.* to fill his stomach)’ (1982), which clearly deviates from the Greek.

<sup>8</sup> Whilst the first three verbs just quoted are in the Imperfect, this verb-form is the Periphrastic, used for regular, repeated actions in the present or past; the other two finite verbs in this verse are also in the Periphrastic in the OG versions.

work for hire in my father's house have as much bread as they want'. For 'I am dying of hunger' AA gives the usual verb, viz. *амла сыпсуеит amla sapswe:jt'*, whereas ML has *амла сыпцэит amla sənɛ'ojt'* 'I am perishing with hunger'.

Both PV and NT 2002 use the standard expression for 'he came to his senses', and OG-C captures this with its *მოდგა გონებასა თვსსა mōdga gōnebasa twissa* 'he came to stand in his (own) sense(s)'. But OG-DE are to be compared with AA's Abkhaz version – *ср. განიზრახა თავსა თვსსა ganizraxa tavsā twissa* 'he mused in his (own) head'. Modern Georgian *მოქამაგირე mōdžamagire* 'hired labourer' has two equivalents in the old manuscripts (viz. OG-DE *სასყიდლით დადგინებულსი sasq'idlit dadginebuli* vs OG-C *მორეწვე mōrets'e*), and the quantifier in all instances correctly qualifies these nouns. If in the modern version *თავზე საყრელი tavze saq'reli* 'to be cast over the head' serves to indicate a superfluity (here of bread), the OG manuscripts present us with two verbs signifying '[bread] is in super-abundance [for them]', viz. OG-DE *ჰმატს hmat's* vs OG-C *გადაერევს გადაერეvis*.

**Verse 18:** GD and ZK are once again in agreement in their renditions, though interestingly they do not distinguish between the different prepositions of the Greek (and the English of the Authorised Version), viz. 'against heaven and before you' but coordinate the two nouns with a single token of the postposition 'before'; both ML and AA coordinate two tokens of the identical postposition (-*ἐπαυχῶ -ts'apχ'a*), each governing its own noun. For 'I have sinned' ML has *აგნაჲა сѣмоуп ag'naħa sēmo:wp'* 'I have a sin', but AA prefers *აგნაჲა კაძეიტ ag'naħa q'asts'e:jt'* 'I have committed a sin'.

All the Georgian versions follow Greek in using two distinct adpositions for 'against [heaven]' and 'before [you]'.

**Verse 19:** Both DG and ZK adhere to the Greek with the slight difference that for 'to be called' ZK prefers the Masdar 'the name/title being upon me' to DG's protasis in *-r* 'if/that the name/title be upon me'. The next sentence is presented by AA as follows: *уажѣшьта унѣа соуп хѣа ахѣарагы сапсам waz'ŋta wəpa sowp' ħ<sup>w</sup>a aħ<sup>w</sup>arag<sup>j</sup>ə sapsam* 'henceforth I am not worthy even for it to be said that I am your son', where the speech-particle *хѣа ħ<sup>w</sup>a* is clearly being treated more like a subordinating conjunction meaning 'that' than it was in the versions by DG and ZK, since it is associated here with the finite verb *соуп* 'I am'. ML is similar to AA but more complicated. The first two words are the same, but he omits the finite verb before the speech-particle and adds the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular prefix to the Masdar following the speech-particle and alters 'I am not worthy' to 'I have become (being) unworthy' to produce *сахѣарагы сапсамкѣа скалеит saħ<sup>w</sup>arag<sup>j</sup>ə sapsamk<sup>w</sup>a sq'alejt'*. We know what ML's sentence is meant to mean, but the problem is that ZK could not interpret it and suggested that the verb-form be changed to the protasis in *-r* to give *сархѣаргы sarħ<sup>w</sup>arg<sup>j</sup>ə* meaning 'even if/that they *-r*- say to me [the words] your son'<sup>9</sup>. Perhaps some mistake crept into ML's text, because in Verse 21, his translation mirrors that of AA except that for the last word in the sequence he has there *иапсам japsam* 'it is not worth/valueless'. If DG and ZK translate 'make me as one of your hirelings' as 'deeming me to be among your servants, receive/accept me', both ML and AA have 'receive/accept me like one of the workers whom you have on hire', viz. *судкыл, кыралә нумоу аусуцәа азә иеҭш swədk'al k'ərala jəwəmo:w awəsu:tɛ<sup>w</sup>a adz<sup>w</sup>*

<sup>9</sup> This proved to be the last ever native-speaker comment elicited from Zaira Khiba after almost half a century of partnership in life and academic pursuits...

*je:jpʃ*, though if the penultimate word were *ru:wadz<sup>w</sup>k* ‘one of them’, the syntactic connection between postposition and its dependent phrase would be more transparent.

PV uses the Aorist subjunctive (there being no Present Subjunctive) of the stative verb-form მერქვას *merkvas feni dze* ‘that I carry the name / be known as your son (in the Nominative case)’, whilst NT 2002 has the Present subjunctive შენს ძედ ვიწოდებოდე *fens dzed vits ‘adebode* ‘that I should be (being) called your son (in the Adverbial case)’. The OG manuscripts have the Masdar (in the Adverbial case) წოდებად *ts ‘adebad* to match Greek’s passive infinitive. Perhaps closest to the Greek are OG-DE in saying მყავ მე ვითარცა ერთი მუშაკთაგანი *mq ‘av me vitartsa erti mufak ‘tagani* ‘make me as one of the workers’, lacking only the possessive we see in OG-C’s შემრაცხე მე ვითარცა ერთი მორეწეთა შენთაგანი *femratsxe me vitartsa erti mōrets ‘eta fentagani* ‘regard me as one of your hirelings’. PV lacks the possessive in saying მოჯამაგირედ... დამიყენე *mōdzamagired... damiq ‘ene* ‘set me up as a labourer’, whilst NT 2002 has the possessive in მიმიღე როგორც ერთი შენი მოჯამაგირეთაგანი *mimikē rōgorts erti feni mōdzamagiretagani* ‘receive/accept me as one of your labourers’.

**Verse 20:** There is not a great deal to discuss in this verse. Whilst DG describes the son on his homeward journey as being ‘far away’ (хара дшыказ *χara dʃəq ‘az*) when his father noticed him, the other three prefer to say he was still some distance from reaching his goal; these three also agree on the father’s reaction to seeing his son (being ‘he pitied him’), where DG says ‘he was cut to the heart (literally: his heart burnt him)’, viz. игәы даблит *jəg<sup>w</sup>ə dabli:t*. Different verbs are used for the father falling upon, hugging and/or embracing his son. Moreover, ML says ‘he began kissing him (sc. his son)’ (дигәзуан *di:g<sup>w</sup>(ə)dzwan*), though the others agree with the Greek in saying ‘he kissed him’ (дигәзит *di:g<sup>w</sup>(ə)dzi:t*).

The Georgian versions present a variety of verbs to express the idea of the father ‘falling upon/embracing/hugging’ his returning lost son. NT 2002 and OG-C are faithful to the tense of the Greek in saying ‘he kissed him’ (viz. აკოცა *ak ‘atsa* and აბოროს უყო *ambōrs uq ‘ə* respectively), whilst PV and OG-DE use the Imperfect in its inceptive sense of ‘starting to kiss’ (viz. ჰკოცნოდა *hk ‘atsnida* and აბოროს-უყოფდა *ambōrs-uq ‘əpda* respectively).

**Verse 21:** This is essentially a repetition of part of Verse 19.

**Verse 22:** Again, DG and ZK hardly differ from each other, but for Greek’s ‘bring out’, DG uses a preverb that captures ‘out’ (цәырганы *te<sup>w</sup>ərganə* ‘having taken it out’), whilst ZK employs one that stresses hitherness (ааганы *a:ganə* ‘having brought it out’); DG has the singular ‘his foot’ (ишьапы *jəʃap ‘ə*) for the plural, whilst ZK pluralises (ишьапкәа *jəʃap ‘k<sup>w</sup>a*). Only AA translates the Greek adverb ‘quick(ly)’ (ирласны *jərlasnə*). The translators select two different verbs for ‘putting on (the tunic/clothing)’, AA’s sequence nicely illustrating the different preverbs (underlined in the citation below) that accompany one and the same verb-root for putting things on different parts of the body, as illustrated here: иреиґу амаґәа изааганы ишьәшәґа, инаґәаґы амаґәаз ахәшәґа, аймааґы ишьәшәґа *jəre:jə<sup>u</sup>: amat<sup>w</sup>a jəzə:ganə jə<sup>l</sup>ə<sup>w</sup>ts ‘a jənatə<sup>w</sup>ag<sup>j</sup>ə amatə<sup>w</sup>az a<sup>l</sup>ə<sup>w</sup>ts ‘a ajmaag<sup>j</sup>ə jə<sup>l</sup>ə<sup>w</sup>ts ‘a* ‘Fetch here for him and dress him in the best clothing, and place a ring on his finger, and put footwear on him’. In fact, the requirement to use three different preverbs necessitates the presence of three verbs, whereas the Greek employs only two. Strangely, ML finishes with ‘prepare his footwear’ (ишьапымаґәа еиқәшәыршәа *jəʃap ‘əmat<sup>w</sup>a e:jk<sup>w</sup>ə<sup>w</sup>ə<sup>w</sup>ə<sup>w</sup>*).

PV, NT 1982 and 2002 have three verbs for the placement of the items the father wants to be placed on his son, but NT 1990 and the OG manuscripts (as well as Tyndale) follow the Greek

in letting one verb suffice to cover the last two actions, namely *მიეცით* *mietsit* (NT 1982 and MsC) vs *მეცეს* *featsut* (all other OG manuscripts consulted) ‘give him (a ring on the finger and sandal(s) on his feet’.

**Verse 23:** It is difficult to imagine that there could be any variation in English for the phrase ‘fatted calf’, but our quartet of translators, whilst settling on *ჩაх* *t/aχ* for ‘fatted’, offer a choice of four lexemes for ‘calf’, namely: *агамла* *agamla* (ZK) vs *акабла*<sup>10</sup> *akabla* (ML) vs *აძეცხ* *ate<sup>w</sup>ts’as* (AA) vs DG’s choice of *აჟაყ-რეა* *aħ<sup>w</sup>as-rte<sup>w</sup>’a* for the whole phrase. DG and ZK have two finite verbs ‘we shall/let us feast [and] we shall/let us make merry’, whereas ML’s postpositional phrases ‘for a feast [and] joyfulness’ (*ჩარაზ გაყრყარაზ* *t/araz g<sup>w</sup>arq<sup>i</sup>araz*) correspond to AA’s ‘for merry-making [and] joyfulness’ (*კაფურაზ გაყრყარაზ* *k<sup>i</sup>afu:raz g<sup>w</sup>arq<sup>i</sup>araz*), where we have to assume ‘merry-making, having a good time’ includes feasting, as it naturally would in Abkhazia.

PV and NT 2002 say *მიიყვანეთ ნასუკი* (*al*) *mbiq’vanet nasuk(al)i χbɔ* ‘fetch the fatted calf’. The OG manuscripts use a verb for fetching a tethered animal,<sup>11</sup> namely *მიიბო* *mbibt* with *ზუარაკი იგი მსუკანი* *zuarak’i igi msukani* (OG-DE) vs *ჭარი იგი უსხი* *qari igi usχi* (OG-C) ‘the fat(ted) bull(ock)’. Two different verbs are used to convey ‘we shall/let us make merry’, viz. *ვიხარებდეთ* *viχarebde*t (OG-DE) vs *ვიმუებდეთ* *vimuebde*t (OG-C).

**Verse 24:** ZK is almost identical to DG but is more faithful to the Greek by replacing *დააბეი* *da:be:jt* ‘we have seen him’ with *დაპააჟეი* *dap̄sa:χe:jt* ‘he has been found’. Both ML and AA use the expression *იქსი ტალ* *jəpsə talt* ‘his soul has entered in [sc. the body]’ for ‘he is/has become alive’. For ‘he was lost’, AA has the finite verb ‘he had gone missing’ (*დაძუან* *dədzχ’an*), whereas ML uses the relativised form, viz. *იძუან* *jədzχ’az* ‘who had gone missing/been lost’. Both ML and AA adapt the final sentence from ‘they began to be/make merry’ to, in AA’s case, ‘they all began to make merry together’, viz. *ზეგა ექსგარაჟი* *zeg<sup>i</sup>ə e:jtsg<sup>w</sup>arq<sup>i</sup>an*, whereas ML simply offers the strange ‘He (the father or the son?) made it a joyous affair’, viz. *იგარაჟეი* *jəg<sup>w</sup>arq<sup>i</sup>are:jt<sup>w</sup>i:t*’.

The differences between the Georgian translations are mainly a matter of lexical choices (conjunction, nouns, verbs). However, OG *იპა* *ip’əva* perfectly matches the Greek, as opposed to the modern *გამოჩნდა* *gamotfnda* ‘he (has) appeared’. In passing, it is interesting to note different vowels in the shared participle for ‘perished, lost’, viz. *წარწყმედილ* *ts’arts’q’mēdil* (OG-DE), vs *წარწყმედულ* *ts’arts’q’mēdul* (OG-C), as in the modern language, though in Verse 32 OG-C too has the ending in *-il*.

**Verse 25:** DG and ZK are slightly different: if ZK writes the Stative verb-form for ‘to be in’ coupled with the simple noun ‘the field’ to give *ამხი დან* *amχə dtan* ‘he was in the field’, DG uses the copula ‘he was’ (*დაყ* *dəq’an*) with a postpositional phrase we might translate as ‘field-ward(s)’ (*ამხ-აჟი* *amχ-aχ<sup>i</sup>ə*), for which ML chose a different word for ‘field’, namely *ამხარსტაჟი* *amχ<sup>w</sup>arsta[-a]χ<sup>i</sup>*. If ZK, like AA and (albeit without coordination) ML, translates ‘music and dancing’ as ‘the sound of singing and the sound of dancing’, DG has ‘singing’s sound and merry-making’, viz. *აჟაჟა-ბჟი* *ag<sup>w</sup>arq<sup>i</sup>are:j*. ML differs from the others in avoiding the normal word for ‘he heard’ (*იაჟი* *jaχajt*) by saying something like ‘[sounds] impinged on his ear(s)/hearing’, viz. *ილმჟა*

<sup>10</sup> Defined by Kaslandzia (2005: 536b) as ‘one year-old heifer’ (‘годовалая тёлка, нетель’).

<sup>11</sup> Imnaishvili (1948/1949 (1986): 362a) s.v. *მიიბო*: ‘მიიყვანა (თოკობმულისა)’.



იტაჿიტ *jəlamħa jətaɣi:t'*. AA inserts a word at the start of this sequence which is not in the Greek or the other Abkhaz versions, namely *ძჳჳრჳჳ d(ə)dzəryən* 'he listened and'.

PV matches Greek's participle with *მიმავალი mimavali* 'going' and literally translates *სიმღერისა და ფერხელის ხმა simħerisa da perħulis ħma* 'the sound of singing and dancing'. NT 2002 changes the participle into a finite Aorist verb within a subordinate clause, *რომ დაბრუნდა rəm dabrunḁa* viz. 'when/as he returned' and adapts 'of dancing' to give *ცეკვა-თამაშის tsek'va-tamašis* 'of dancing-playing'. The OG manuscripts also have a finite Imperfect verb for 'coming' within a clause (viz. *vitar(tsa) məvidəda* 'as he was coming') followed by the Aorist for 'getting close to', OG-C preserving hither-orientation (*მოესალა məsaħla*) against OG-DE's thither-orientation (*მიესალა miəsaħla*). What the son hears is described slightly differently, viz. *ჴმა სიხარულისა და განცხრომისა qmaj siħarulisaj da gantsħrəmisaj* 'the sound of joy and merriment' (OG-DE) vs *ჴმა სახიობისა და პართი მემღერთა qmaj saħibisaj da p'arit mēmħertaj* 'the sound of music and singers at a round-dance' (OG-C).

**Verse 26:** For three of the translators there is only slight variation (e.g. 'one of the servants' vs 'a servant', and 'what's this?' vs 'what's all this?'), but AA chooses to elaborate on this question by saying 'What sort of merry-making is it that is going on here?', viz. *изакə гəыр҃҃арои икоу ара jəzak'w' g'wəry'aro:wɪ: jəq'o:w ara*.

PV and NT 2002 differ only in terms of the lexical choices made for the verb 'summon/call to' and whether the workers are called 'slaves' or 'servants'. OG manuscripts share the verb and style the workers 'slaves'.

**Verse 27:** As in Verse 23 we have the same variants for 'fatted calf'. DG and ZK align in rendering 'he has him back in good health' as 'he has seen him healthy', whilst ML and AA, who both have the Present instead of the Past tense of 'say', use the doublet *дейбга-деиз҃҃ыда de:jbga-de:jzɣəda* 'fit and well; hale and hearty', although AA has it accompanying *дхынхəит dħənh'i:t* '[your brother] has returned'.

PV diverges from the Greek by using *oratio recta* so that the father can say why he had the fatted calf slain, namely *სად-საღამათი დამიბრუნდაო sak-salamati damibrundao* 'he has returned to me hale-and-hearty, saying [= -o]'. NT 2002 also has the son returning (rather than being taken/brought back), as explained by the questioned servant, viz. *მთელი დაუბრუნდა mrteli daubrunḁa* 'he has returned to him [your father] in one piece'. OG-DE introduce a new term for 'fatted' (viz. *ჴამებული tħ'amebuli*) but like the Greek make the father subject of the final verb, viz. *ცოცხლებით მოიყვანა იგი tsətsħlebit moiq'vana igi* 'he has brought him back alive', whereas OG-C adapts to give *ცოცხალ იყო და იპოვა tsətsħal iq'ə da ip'əva* 'he was alive and has been found'.

**Verse 28:** ZK differs from DG only insofar as she says 'as for his father' instead of 'his father', which is matched by ML and AA. ML and AA miss the inchoative force of the Greek Imperfect 'he began to entreat him' and add the specification of what his father is urging his son to do, to wit: *уахь анеиразы (ML)/ды҃наларазы (AA) дихəеит waħ'ane:jrazə/dəynalarazə djəh'e:jt* 'he urged him to go (inside = AA) thither'.

PV and NT 2002 differ in their choice of lexeme for 'entreat', but only the latter preserves the inceptive force of the Greek by copying its use of the Imperfect, viz. *its'vevda* 'he began inviting him'. Our OG manuscripts also select different lexemes for these verbs, but they too use the Imperfect to preserve the inceptive, cf. OG-DE *ჴლოცვიდა hlətsvida* vs OG-C *ევედრებოდა evədrebəda* 'he began pleading with/entreating him'. However, they agree in

changing the past tense of Greek's 'he did not want to enter/go inside' to the Present. But the main point to note is that, whilst OG-DE place the Masdar in the Adverbial case (viz. არა უნდა შინა შესვლად *ara unda fina feshvad*), OG-C uses the Genitive (viz. არა უნდა შესვლის *ara unda feshvis*). Since the Georgian verb does not normally govern the Genitive, how can this anomaly be explained? Greek had another verb meaning 'yearn, desire, want' (namely ἐπιθυμέω) which did govern the Genitive. Could it be that the Adishi translator either was copying from a text that contained this verb or perhaps simply had in mind the construction appropriate to this other verb and used the Genitive as a consequence?

**Verse 29:** Again only marginal differences are manifest in DG's and ZK's translations: DG, like the Greek, has only the one expression for 'never', whereas ZK changes the second token; equating to ZK's *уҳәатәы wəḥ<sup>w</sup>at<sup>w</sup> ə* 'your instruction(s)' DG pluralises a different lexeme alongside the Imperfect of its governing verb *уҟкаракәа сырхыҟомызт wəpɣ<sup>w</sup>arak<sup>w</sup>a sərɣəpəmzɪt* 'I was not/have not been transgressing your instructions', as against ZK's Perfect; different lexemes are selected for the expression of purpose, since DG offers *сыуацәа срыцкәафразы səwate<sup>w</sup>a srətsk<sup>j</sup>afrazə* 'for me to make-merry together with my comrades'. As usual, ML uses the Present instead of the original's Past for the verb of saying. But then he hardly differs from ZK until instead of 'to make merry with my friends' he offers 'to sit with them [my friends]' (viz. *срыдтәаларазы srədt<sup>w</sup>'alarazə*), the idea being that the 'sitting' would (in Abkhazia!) take place at a table groaning with food and drink. AA offers a radically different interpretation, which reads in full as follows: 'But the son reproaches his father: "All these years I am/have been serving you like the slaves; I have never transgressed your instruction(s), but not once have you slain a goat for me in order that my friends and I might make merry together"', which in transcription reads as follows:

<i>aχa</i>	<i>a.pa</i>	<i>j.ab</i>	<i>j.a.tʃspn.i: .h<sup>w</sup>o:jt'</i>
but	the.son	his.father	he.reproaches.him.with.it

<i>ab.art</i>	<i>a.ʒək<sup>w</sup>s.k<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>zɛg<sup>j</sup>ə</i>	<i>sa.ra</i>	<i>wə.mats'</i>	<i>ø.z.w.[w]e: .jt'</i>	<i>a.t<sup>w</sup>'.tɛ<sup>w</sup>a</i>	<i>r.e:j.pʒ</i>
these	year.s	all	I	your.service	I.do.it		the.slave.s them.like

<i>janag<sup>j</sup></i>	<i>wə.h<sup>w</sup>a.t<sup>w</sup>'ə</i>	<i>s.a.χə.m.pa.ts.t'</i>	<i>aχa</i>	<i>wa.ra</i>	<i>dzə.sə.k'.g<sup>j</sup>ə</i>
never	your.order	I.have.not.transgressed.it	but	you	even.one.kid

<i>ø.sə.z.u: .m.ʃə.ts</i>	<i>s.yəz.tɛ<sup>w</sup>e: .j</i>	<i>sa.re: .j</i>	<i>h.əj.ts.g<sup>w</sup>ə.r.ɐ<sup>j</sup>a.r.ts</i>
you.have.not.slain.it.for.me	both.my.friend.s	I.and	that.we.make-merry.together

The PV and NT 2002 translators have their own lexical preferences, but the latter text is more faithful to the original. Instead of directly rendering ‘and you have never given me a kid’, PV adapts it as follows: და ან ერთი თიკანი თუ მოგიცია ოდესმე ჩემთვის *da an erti tik’ani tu mogitsia odesme tfemtvis*, which can perhaps be literally translated ‘and if only you had once given me a kid [*sc.* but you never have]’. The OG manuscripts are pretty uniform in the lexical choices, but two observations can be made about OG-C: the original ‘I have been serving you for so many years’ is turned into ესე რავდენნი წელნი არიან, ვინადოგან გმონე შენ *ese ravdenni ts’elni arian, vinajtgan gmonē fen* ‘how many are these years that I have served/slaved for you’; we then have a tautological reference to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular in არასადა გარდაგიჰედ მცნებათა შენთა *arasada gardagiqed mtsnebata šenta* ‘I never transgressed **for you** your instructions’, the Objective Version being absent from the verb in OG-DE (გარდავჰყედ *gardavhqed*). This verb, like its modern equivalent in PV and NT 2002 (viz. გადავსულვარ *gadavsulvar* ‘I have gone beyond/over’) is intransitive, but NT 1982 gives a transitive counterpart (viz. გადამიღასხავს *gadamilaxavs*).

**Verse 30:** ZK and AA follow the original in saying ‘your property’, but DG and ML say it was the son’s own property that he squandered. AA differs from the other three as regards the adjective he employs to describe the kind of women on whom the property was caused to be frittered away, namely კალტყაშიცა *k’altq’i’afte<sup>w</sup>a* ‘?of loose morals’. Before the final verb ‘you slew it for him’ ML chooses to add, as he had done before the same verb in Verse 27, ლკაჟნა *lk’aznə* ‘having made it drop down’.

The original has a simple temporal clause ‘when your son came’, but PV says მოვიდა თუ არა ეს შვინი ძე *movida tu ara es feni dze* ‘as soon as this son of yours came’. Though the Greek has ‘who devoured your living/property’, both PV and NT 2002 say (with different verbs) ‘his own property’. PV then offers us ხელად კვებულა ხბო *xelad k’vebula xbo* ‘the hand-fed one year-old calf’ for ‘the fatted calf’. The OG manuscripts concur in keeping the simple temporal clause; neither do they change the original’s ascription of the squandered property to the father.

**Verse 31:** ML and AA, as usual, place the introductory verb (‘say’) in the Present as opposed to the Past of the original. Two methods of translating ‘you are (always) with me’ are employed, DG and ZK selecting сара сыкны укоюп *sara saq’nə waq’o:wp* against ML and AA, who prefer сара усыцкоюп *sara wasatsq’o:wp*. AA switches the simple ‘(everything I have) is yours/belongs to you’ to ‘it’s yours, isn’t it / it belongs to you, doesn’t it’, the sentence being marked by an exclamation mark (rather than a question-mark), which equates it to ‘it’s yours / it belongs to you after all’, viz. нутэymi *ju:t<sup>w</sup>’ami:*.

PV inserts ‘father’ (მამამ *mamam*) as subject to the verb of saying. Otherwise PV and NT 2002 are essentially identical, ‘all my things’ being rendered via a relative or indefinite clause, viz. ‘everything that I have’ (PV ყველაფერი რაც მაქვს *q’velaperi rats makvs*) vs ‘whatever I have’ (NT 2002 რაც კი მაქვს *rats k’i makvs*). OG-C has the relative clause ‘everything which is mine’ (ყოველი, რად ჩემი არს *q’veli, raj tfemi ars*), whilst OG-DE avoid it by saying ‘everything mine is yours’.

**Verse 32:** DG and ZK adhere to the Greek’s past tense ‘there was an obligation, it was fitting/appropriate’, whereas ML and AA move to the Present, ML writing агэрыѣarei ақбафуреи ирымѣоуп *ag<sup>w</sup>ar<sup>ʃ</sup>are:j ak<sup>ʷ</sup>afu:re:j jərəmyo:wp* ‘it is rejoicing and merry-making’s path/time’, whilst AA prefers the more normal *hg<sup>w</sup>ar<sup>ʃ</sup>aro:wp k<sup>ʷ</sup>afu:ro:wp* ‘we have to rejoice, there must be merrymaking’.

None of the Georgian versions, whether ancient or modern, preserves the past tense of the marker of obligation (ἔδει), PV opting for გვმართებს *gvmartəbs* ‘it behoves us’, NT 2002 for უნდა *unda* ‘it is necessary’, and the OG manuscripts for ჳერ-არს *dzer-ars* ‘it is right’. These markers of obligation are then coupled with (a) the Aorist Subjunctive (PV), (b) the Present Subjunctive (NT 2002), (c) the Masdar in the Nominative case (DE), and (d) the Masdar in the Adverbial case (C).

## Comments

The verse-by-verse comparisons/contrasts detailed above speak for themselves. There are several cases where a remark about this or that language will be of interest mainly only to those who specialise in the relevant language, such as the double negative discussed in Verse 13 for Abkhaz or the distribution of different case-forms of the Masdar when functioning as verbal complement in Old Georgian. A few general remarks will not go amiss. Nothing negative is to be read into observations calling attention to divergence from the Greek, for it cannot be assumed that the translations were done directly from Greek or under supervision from

someone with knowledge of the original. Certain features of Lasuria's style noted in the discussion of his translation of 1 Corinthians 13 are also found here, such as his tendency to embellish or expand the basic text or introduce a complication (see the discussion of Verse 19); his (and Ashuba's) seeming preference to replace the past tense 'X said' with the Historic Present may add an immediacy in the spoken language, but one has to wonder if it does anything to enhance the kind of material under examination here. Verse 29 affords examples in both Abkhaz and Georgian where one of the available renditions chooses a rather more emotive way of expressing the idea of the original. Each reader must decide if such deviations in style are to be preferred to those translations which eschew them in order to preserve the simplicity of the ancient authors. From the above it should be evident which translator is likely to satisfy each reader's preferences in each of the two languages selected for this exercise, though, of course, one's preferences may be different depending on which literary genres are being translated.

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**Appendix: Transcribed Text with Interlinear Glosses of Khiba's Abkhaz Translation**

11. adz<sup>wə</sup>      qədʒa      apatə<sup>wə</sup>      jəman  
a.person      2.animate      son-s      he-had-them
12. wərt jərə:jts'bəz      jab      wəs je:jh<sup>wə</sup>ejt'      sab  
those who-was-their-younger his-father thus he-said-it-to-him my-father  
jəsət      amazarax<sup>j</sup>t<sup>w</sup>'      səχ<sup>wə</sup>ta:      jara      jak<sup>wə</sup>'zar      wərt  
give-it-to-me      from-the-property      my-portion him      as-for-him      those  
amazara      rzi:ʃe:jt'  
the-property      he-divided-it-for-them
13. məšk<sup>wə</sup>ak'      ana:bzəs      ape:jts'bə      zeg<sup>j</sup>      e:jzganə  
some-days when-they-passed      the-younger      everything      having-gathered-it  
t<sup>w</sup>'əla      χarak'      aχ<sup>j</sup>      dtse:jt'      waq'a      χnəmk'əlarala  
country      a-distant      to-it      he-went      there      with-no-self-restraint  
dnəq<sup>wə</sup>'an      jəmazara      zeg<sup>j</sup>      ni:χi:t'  
he-walked-and      his-property      all      he-consumed-it
14. zeg<sup>j</sup>      ani:χ      wi:      at<sup>wə</sup>'əlan      amlaʃra      du:      q'ale:jt'  
all      when-he-consumed-it      that      in-the-country      famine      great it-occurred  
deɡ<sup>j</sup>alage:jt'      wi:      ag<sup>wə</sup>aq'ra  
and-he-began-it      he      to-suffer
15. dtsan      wi:      at<sup>wə</sup>'əlan      jənχəz      adz<sup>wə</sup>  
he-went-and      that      in-the-country      who-was-living      a-person  
jətsjədi:k'əlt'      wi:      jəd<sup>wə</sup>k<sup>wə</sup>a      raχ<sup>j</sup>      djəʃti:t'  
he-attached-himself-to-him      he      his-fields      to-them      he-sent-him  
jəh<sup>wə</sup>ak<sup>wə</sup>a      ak'rərtʃ'e:jts'arts  
his-pigs      in-order-to-feed-something-to-them
16. de:jlaħawan      jəh<sup>wə</sup>ak<sup>wə</sup>a      jərfəz      atə<sup>wə</sup>ənχa-mənχak<sup>wə</sup>a      rəla  
he-was-yearning his-pigs      what-they-were-eating      the-scraps      with-them  
jəmg<sup>wə</sup>a      jərt<sup>wə</sup>ər      aχa      waqə      ji:təməzt'  
his-stomach      that-he-might-fill-it      but      man      he-was-giving-them-to-him
17. jəχsəu      atʃ'ə      dana:j      jəh<sup>wə</sup>e:jt'      sab      ʃaq'aq  
his-sense      in-it      when-he-came      he-said      my-father      how-many-persons  
mats'u:tə<sup>wə</sup>a      jəmo:wze:j      atʃa      mətsχ<sup>wə</sup>ə      zaqzχwa  
servants      does-he-have      bread abundant      who-squander-it-on-themselves  
sara      sak<sup>wə</sup>'zar      amla      sagojt'  
me      as-for-me      hunger      it-carries-me-off
18. sgəlanə      stsap'      sab      jaχ<sup>j</sup>      jəɡjash<sup>wə</sup>ap'  
I-having-stood-up      I-shall-go      my-father      to-him      and-I-shall-say-to-him  
sab      sara      ag<sup>wə</sup>naħa      zwi:t'      aʒ<sup>wə</sup>qani:      ware:j  
my-father      I      sin      I-committed-it      both-heaven      and-you  
ʃ<sup>wə</sup>tʃ'apχ<sup>j</sup>a  
before-you-both

19. sɛgʲapsam                      ʃta              wara wpa              hʷa              aχʲdz  
and-I-am-not-worthy-of-it    already    you    your-son    saying    its-name  
  
sɣəza:ra              swədkʰəl              wəmətsʰu:tə<sup>w</sup>a              sərɣəpχʲadʒalanə  
it-being-on-me    hold-me-to-you    your-servants    having-counted-me-among-them
20. dgəlan              dtse:jtʰ              jab              jaχʲ              məkʲʰana              ane:jrazə              akʰər  
he-got-up-and    he-went    his-father    to-him    yet              for-arriving somewhat  
  
sɣəgəz                      jab              di:be:jtʰ              dɛgʲrətʃhajfe:jtʰ              dəpənə  
as-he-was-lacking-it    his-father    he-saw-him    and-he-pitied-him    he-running  
  
dtsan              jəχʲda              jətʃsaxaʒnə                      di:gʷədʒi:tʰ  
he-went-and    his-neck    he-hurled-himself-on-it    he-kissed-him
21. apa              wi:              je:jhʷe:jtʰ              sab              aɡʷnaha              zwi:tʰ  
the-son    him    he-said-it-to-him    my-father    sin    I-committed-it  
  
aʒʷqani:              ware:j              ʃʷtʃsʰapχʲa              ʃta              sapsam                      wara  
both-heaven    and-you    before-you-both    already    I-am-not-worth-of-it    you  
  
wpa              hʷa              aχʲdz              sɣəzar  
your-son    saying    its-name    that-it-be-on-me
22. ab              jəmətsʰu:tə<sup>w</sup>a              jərə:jhʷe:jtʰ              jərə:jɤʰu:  
the-father    his-servants    he-said-it-to-them    which-is-better-than-them  
  
amatʷa              a:ganə              de:jlafʷhʷ              amate<sup>w</sup>azgʲə              jənapʰə  
the-garment    having-fetched-it    clothe-him-in-it    the-ring-too    his-hand  
  
jaχaʃʷtsʰ    aʃatsʰatʷgʲə              jəʃapʰkʷa              jərəʃaʃʷtsʰ  
put-it-on-it    footwear-too    his-feet    put-it-on-them
23. agamla              tʃax              a:ganə              jəʃʷʃə              akʰrahʃapʰ              kʲaf  
the-calf    fattened    having-fetched-it    kill-it    let-us-eat-something    merry  
  
a:wlapʰ  
let's-make-it
24. jəzban              akʷzar              ari:              spa              dəpsnə              dəqʰan              dəbzaxɛ:jtʰ  
why?    if-it-is-it    this    my-son    he-having-died    he-was    he-became-alive  
  
dədzənə              dəqʰan              dəpʃa:χɛ:jtʰ              jɛgʲalage:jtʰ              akʲafu:ra  
he-having-been-lost    he-was    he-was-found    and-they-began-it    merry-making
25. jəpe:jhab              jakʷzar              amχə              dtan              dχənʰnə  
his-older-son    as-for-him    the-field    he-was-in-it    having-retained  
  
dʃa:waz                      aqənə              danaza:jgʷaxa              aʃʷahʷabzi:  
as-he-was-coming    the-house    when-he-got-near-to-it    both-the-sound-of-singing  
  
agʷərɣʲabzi:              jaħajtʰ  
and-the-sound-of-joy    he-heard-it
26. amatsʰu:tə<sup>w</sup>a              ru:wadzʷkʰ              djəpχʲan              djaztsʰa:jt  
the-servants    one-of-them    he-summoned-him-and    he-asked-him-about-it  
  
art    zakʷu:ze:j  
these what-are-they?

27. wi: je:jh<sup>w</sup>e:jt' waf<sup>a</sup> da:jt' wabg<sup>jə</sup> agamla tʃaχ  
 he he-said-it-to-him you-brother he-came and-your-father the-calf fatted  
 jəʃi:t' de:jbganə daχ<sup>i</sup>:baz azə  
 he-killed-it he-being-whole that-he-saw-him because-of-it
28. jara dg<sup>w</sup>a:jt' aqnalarag<sup>jə</sup> jətaχəməzt' jab jak<sup>w</sup>'zar  
 he he-grew-angry and-to-go-inside he-did-not-want-it his-father as-for-him  
 dd<sup>w</sup>əłts'nə djəpχ<sup>jən</sup>  
 he-having-rushed-out he-began-to-entreat-him
29. aχa jara je:jh<sup>w</sup>e:jt' jab atak's abar sara abri: aq'ara  
 but he he-said-it-to-him his-father as-answer lo(ok) I this amount-of  
 ʂək<sup>w</sup>sa wəmat<sup>s</sup> zwe:jt' janak<sup>w</sup>'za:lak'g<sup>jə</sup> wəh<sup>w</sup>at<sup>w</sup>'ə  
 year(s) your-service I-am-performing-it (n)ever your-command  
 saχəmpats aχa wara znəmzar znə sʉəzte<sup>w</sup>a  
 I-have-not-gone-against-it but you never once my-friends  
 srəts<sup>w</sup>ərj<sup>j</sup>arazə jəs<sup>u</sup>:(wə)mtats dzəsək'g<sup>jə</sup>  
 that-I-rejoice-with-them you-have-not-given-it-to-me even-one-kid
30. ari: wpa wəmazara zeg<sup>jə</sup> te<sup>w</sup>əbzak<sup>w</sup>a jərək<sup>w</sup>zərdzəz  
 this your-son your-property all harlots who-caused-it-to-be-lost-on-them  
 dana:j agamla tʃaχ jəzu:ʃi:t'  
 when-he-came the-calf fatted you-slew-it-for-him
31. jara je:jh<sup>w</sup>e:jt' spa wara janag<sup>j</sup> sara səq'nə sara  
 he he-said-it-to-him my-son you ever me with-me I  
 jəsəmo:w zeg<sup>jə</sup> wara ju:wt<sup>w</sup>'u:p'  
 which-I-have everything you it-belongs-to-you
32. ag<sup>w</sup>ərj<sup>j</sup>are:j ak<sup>j</sup>afu:re:j k<sup>w</sup>nagan jəzban ak<sup>w</sup>'zar  
 both-joyousness and-merriment they-were-appropriate why? if-it-is  
 waf<sup>a</sup> dəpsnə dəq'an dəbzax<sup>e</sup>:jt' dədzən  
 your-brother he-having-died he-was he-became-alive he-was-lost-and  
 dəpʂa:χ<sup>e</sup>:jt'  
 he-became-found

### Translation of Khiba's Version

11. A certain man had two sons.
12. The one who was the younger of them spoke thus to his father: 'Father, give me my portion of the property/estate.' As for him, he divided the property/estate for them.
13. When some days had passed, the younger son gathered everything together and went to a distant land; there he acted/behaved with no self-restraint and used up all his wealth.
14. When everything was used up, a great famine occurred in that land, and he too began to suffer.
15. He went to a certain man who was living in that land and attached himself to him: that one sent him to the fields to feed his pigs.



16. He was yearning to fill his stomach with the scraps which the pigs were eating, but no-one was giving them to him.
17. When he came to his senses, he said: 'How many servants does my father have who over-indulge themselves on an abundance of bread, [but] as for me, I'm being carried off by hunger.'
18. 'I'll up and go to my father and say to him: "Father, I have committed a sin before both heaven and you,
19. 'And I am now not worthy to bear the title your son; accept me, considering me (as one) among your servants".'
20. He upped and went to his father. As he was yet some distance from arriving there, his father saw him and took pity on him; at a run he went, threw himself upon his neck and kissed him.
21. The son said to him: 'Father, I have committed a sin before both heaven and you, [and] now I am not worthy to bear the title your son.'
22. The father said to his servants: 'Fetch the best clothing and dress him in it, and put the/a ring on his finger, place footwear on his feet;
23. 'Fetch the fatted calf and kill it; let's eat; let's make merry,
24. 'The reason being that this son of mine was dead, [but] he has come alive; he was lost, [but] he has been found.' And they began to make merry.
25. As for his older son, he was in the field; when, as he was coming back, he drew near to the house, he heard the sound of singing and the sound of jollity.
26. He summoned one of the servants and asked him: 'What are these things?'
27. He said to him: 'Your brother has come; and your father killed the fatted calf because he saw him whole/unharmful.'
28. He grew angry and had no wish to go indoors. As for his father, he rushed out and began to entreat him.
29. But he said in reply to his father: 'Look here, for this number of years I have been at your service and have never disobeyed your command, but never once have you given me even one kid for me to rejoice together with my friends.
30. '[But] when this son of yours who squandered all your wealth on women of low morals came, you killed the fatted calf for him.'
31. He said to him: 'My son, you are always with me, [and] everything I have belongs to you.
32. 'Jollity and merry-making were appropriate for the reason that your brother was dead, [but] he has come alive; he was lost and was found.'

უძღები შვილის იგავი (ლუკას სახარება 15:11–32):  
ქართული და აფხაზური თარგმანების შედარება  
(ბერძნული დედნის გათვალისწინებით)

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მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ ბიბლია რამდენჯერმე არის ქართულად თარგმნილი, აფხაზურ ენაზე დღემდე მხოლოდ ერთი თარგმანი არსებობს და ისიც მხოლოდ ახალი აღთქმისა. აღნიშნული თარგმანი ეკუთვნის აწ განსვენებულ მუშნი ლასურიას და იგი 2004 წელს გამოქვეყნდა. ჟურნალ „დიგიტალური ჰუმანიტარიის“ წინა, მე-3-ე ნომერში გამოქვეყნებულ ჩემ სტატიაში „პავლე მოციქულის პირველი ეპისტოლე კორინთელთა მიმართ“ (თავი 13, ქართული და აფხაზური თარგმანების შედარება ბერძნული ორიგინალის გათვალისწინებით)<sup>12</sup> ერთმანეთს შევუდარე პავლე მოციქულის ეპისტოლეში კორინთელთა მიმართ სიყვარულის თემის შესახებ დისკუსიის აფხაზური - ლასურიასეული და ქართული თარგმანები (ძველ-ბერძნული წყაროს გათვალისწინებით). ჩატარებული კვლევის შედეგად შეჯამების სახით შეგვიძლია ვთქვათ, რომ ლასურიაში, რომელიც რუსულიდან თარგმნიდა, გამოაქვეყნა თარგმანი, რომელიც, სხვა თარგმანებისაგან განსხვავებით, ალაგ-ალაგ ბერძნულ დედანს საკმაოდ არის დაშორებული.

2023 წელს ბიბლიის თარგმნის ინსტიტუტმა გამოსცა აფხაზურენოვანი წიგნაკი, რომელშიც წმ. ლუკას სახარებიდან ამოღებული ოთხი იგავი არის მოცემული. მთარგმნელი გახლდათ არდა აშუბა, რომელიც წიგნაკში არ არის მოხსენიებული. ამ წიგნაკის გამოცემამ საშუალება მომცა, წინა სტატიაში მოცემული კვლევის მსგავსი შედარება ჩამეტარებინა, ამჯერად ე.წ. უძღები შვილის იგავზე. რამდენადაც ხელთ მქონდა ოთხი აფხაზური თარგმანი, კერძოდ, არდა აშუბას, მუშნი ლასურიას, დიმიტრი გულიას და აწ განსვენებული ზაირა ხიბას თარგმანები. როგორც შედარებითმა ანალიზმა გვიჩვენა, გულიას და ხიბას ვერსიები არა მხოლოდ ერთმანეთთან ახლოსაა, არამედ ოთხი აფხაზური ვერსიიდან ბერძნულთან ყველაზე ახლოს დგას, მაშინ როდესაც, აშუბას და ლასურიას აფხაზური თარგმანები დედნის უფრო მეტი თავისუფლებით თარგმნის ტენდენციას გვიჩვენებენ.

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<sup>12</sup> *Digital Kartvelology* 3, 2024, 109–124

წინამდებარე სტატიაში ჩვენი კვლევის მთავარი მიზანი იყო ამა თუ იმ მთარგმნელის მიერ თარგმნის პროცესში გამოყენებული სტრატეგიების ჩვენება, ისეთ საკითხებთან დაკავშირებით, როგორიცაა მაგალითად:

1. ტექსტის ინტერპრეტაცია (მაგ., მე-16 მუხლში *ღორები ზუსტად რას ჭამენ?*),
2. შერჩეული ლექსიკა (მაგ., 27-ე მუხლში როგორ ითარგმნება *შესაწირავი ცხოველი?*)
3. სინტაქსური კონსტრუქციის შერჩევა (მაგ., როგორ გამოიხატა სურვილის მიზანი მე-16 მუხლში?).

რამდენად მისაღები და გამართლებულია, ან რომელი სტრატეგია უკეთესია წინამდებარე სტატიაში აღწერილი მიდგომებიდან, მკითხველებმა თავად გადაწყვიტონ.

