

## A Georgian Palimpsest in Vienna \*

by

J. Neville Birdsall

In 1940, Gregor Peradze wrote »Über die georgischen Hss. in Österreich« in: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*. His observations, doubtless due to the war and its aftermath, have not previously been followed up, but in May 1968, aided by a research grant of the University of Birmingham, I was able to visit Vienna and to spend the major part of a week there examining the little collection of Georgian mss. in the Nationalbibliothek, described by Peradze.

My attention had already been drawn by his catalogue to ms. Georg. 2, which he asserts is originally from the Hagiou Staourou monastery in Jerusalem, and described by Zagareli in his catalogue of 1888. Since this is not accessible, I have been unable to check this observation. However this may be, I was able to ascertain the absolute truth of his remark »Es ist eine sehr wichtige Palimpsesths.«, and it was to a cursory examination, and the decipherment of some pages specifically noted by Peradze that I devoted the time at my disposal. A further grant from my university has provided me with ultra violet photographs of much of the ms. and it is on the basis of the examination thus made that I write this report.

Peradze, following the number on the last leaf of the ms. gives the number of leaves as 136: in fact, we have the intrusive numbers 28a, 41a, 56a, 125a and 129a, and an unnumbered initial leaf, while 65, 72 and 80 are not found, which gives a total of 139 leaves. The gatherings are mainly quaternions with some single folia: I was not able to perform a thorough collation of this aspect, but many signatures are in fact visible on the photographs (for the execution of which all praise must be given to the skill and care of Herr Janderk a and the Photographisch Atelier of the Nationalbibliothek).

In a footnote Peradze indicates that certain leaves are not palimpsest remains of older mss.: his list is not completely accurate and includes some which are certainly palimpsest. He is right that fol. 1, foll. 106-128 inclusive

---

\* See also: J.N. Birdsall, *An ancient manuscript rediscovered in Vienna = Alta* (The University of Birmingham Review), Spring 1969, p. 103-105 (with two photos).



and fol. 136 are not palimpsest; 89 the unnumbered leaf should be added to their number.

In another footnote he specifies the distribution of leaves derived from different mss. of which he writes in the text »Das Pergament für den unteren Text stammt mindestens aus acht verschiedenen Hss. Ich habe wenigstens acht verschiedene Schreibweisen festgestellt«. I have made my own analysis on the basis of this: in many instances the groups alleged by him to be those written by a particular hand, need subdivision. I find fifteen different hands and it is probable that most of these are from different original mss. The possible exceptions to this are hands 3 and 9, and 4 and 10 respectively. My numeration is developed from that of Peradze, but I have felt that while preserving his original series, it is better then to continue in numerical order rather than to subdivide by alphabetical letters (e.g. 3a, 3b). Peradze also identified some Khanmeti passages: I have been able to confirm his observations, and also to discover that not only the work of one scribe, but of six, manifests this stage of Georgian.

- Hand 1. Folia 47-54; 129a, 129, 130, 134, 135 (checked only cursorily *in situ*) nuskuri *circa* eleventh Century (cp. Plate VI of Assfalg, Georgische Hss. in Deutschland). Content unidentified. Text extends across the page. On the same axis as the later writing.
- Hand 2. Folia 1, 2, 5-7, 56, 59, 62, 76, 77. mrglovani *circa* tenth century (cp. hand B of the Sinai mravaltavi, Plate 6, ed. Shaniдзе). Content II Chronicles. Still not transcribed in detail. Text in two columns on same axis as later hand, 18 lines of text still survive per page.
- Hand 3. Folia 8, 32, 39, 40, 41a, 42, 43, 45, 46. mrglovani *circa* eighth century (cp. comparisons of hand 9 below, but written with a thicker pen). Content Lk. 2.15-23; 2.51-3.6; 4.13-21; 7.32-39; 8.25-30. Ammonian sections marked on one fol. Text in two columns: parchment turned through 90 degrees for use the second time, so that one folio of the earlier ms. forms two conjugates of the present one. Ten or eleven lines of text per page of present ms. Khanmeti with *khan* sometimes erased.
- Hand 4. Folia 12, 13, 35, 36, 66, 67, 68, 69, 83, 86. mrglovani *circa* late seventh century, but perhaps earlier (cp. Oxford Bodleian ms. Georg. Cl and Cambridge Taylor-Schechter 12741 in Blake Georgian mss. in Cambridge University Library: Khanmeti Palimpsest Fragments ... of Jeremiah. 1932). Content. Protevangelium Jacobi IX-XVII. Related textually to the version published by Professor Garitte, but more closely in agreement with the Greek: probably a revision of Ga-



- ritte's version. Khanmeti. Parchment turned through 90 eleven or twelve lines per page of present ms. degrees (cp. hand 3) on the same axis except for 83,86 where the central bifoliate of a gathering has been used a second time on the same axis: Seventeen lines of text.
- Hand 5. Folium 3. mrglovani *circa* ninth century (not unlike the hand of the Adysh tetraevangelium cp. reproduction in V ö ö b u s . Early Versions of the New Testament plate 11). Content unidentified: the words ე ს ე ც ე ლ მ წ ი გ ე დ ყო ფ ა დ ა რ ს დ ა მ ა ვ ა ლ ნ ე ბ ა ს ა ზ ე დ ა თ ა ვ ი ს ა თ ჯ ს ი ს ა ს ა , is one of two complete sentences visible, suggest Dan. xi. 3: but this wording does not correspond to the Georgian version published in P.O. XXIX. pg. 861, and the variant ἐλεύσεται or περιπατήσει for ποιήσει is apparently unknown in the Greek tradition and its derivatives. Text in two columns: upper writing on the same axis as the earlier. Twenty lines of text extant but difficult to read. Not fully deciphered.
- Hand 6. Folia 9-11, 14-26, 30, 31, 63, 64 (fol. 65 non invenitur), 70, 71, 90-105. mrglovani very closely akin to hand 4 but not the same scribe. Content. Lives of saints. The parts transcribed contain Christina (in a version akin to, but not identical with, that published by Kekelidze, Etiudebi dzvel kartuli literaturis istoriidan, III, 1955, pp. 183 ff.) and Cyprianos. Almost fully transcribed. Text in two columns, utilised as the folia by hand 4: Fol. 25v and fol. 102r still bear the signatures of the original ms. კო and კჭ respectively. Khanmeti.
- Hand 7. Folia 55, 61, (?131). mrglovani *circa* tenth century (not unlike Plate I of Assfalg *op. cit.*). Content. Exodus 15 (fol. 55) Isaiah 60 (fol. 61). Text on same axis as upper writing. Text in two columns. Sixteen lines of text extant per page.
- Hand 8. Folia 57, 58, 82, 87. mrglovani *circa* seventh century (very closely similar to the Graz Khanmeti lectionary ed. Shanidze 1944). Content. I Esdras, parts of chapters 1, 2, 9. Lucianic text-type. Text of 57, 58 on same axis as upper writing, of 82, 87 turned through 180 degrees. Text in two columns. Seventeen lines of text extant per page. Khanmeti.
- Hand 9. Folia 27, 28a, 28, 29, 33, 34, 37, 38, 41, 44, mrglovani *circa* eighth century (cp. Cambridge Taylor-Schechter 12183 in Blake *op. cit.*: also note affinities of hand 3) Content. Matt. 26.39-47: Mk. 9.44-10.32. With Ammonian sections. The text of these folia and of those by hand 3 very close to the Tbet-



- Opiza stratum of the Old Georgian gospel version. Arrangement and use as hand 3 above. Khanmeti with *khan* sometimes erased.
- Hand 10. Fol. 4. Very obscure and indecipherable from photograph. Text in two columns but width of column greater than that in any other folium here preserved.
- Hand 11. Folia 56a, 60, 73. mrglovani *circa* tenth century. Content Deuteronomy 19 and 22. The writing is faint and there has been some erosion of the parchment by chemical action of the ink. Text in one column across page. Text of 56a, 60 on same axis as upper writing, of 73 turned through 180 degrees. Khanmeti.
- Hand 12. Folia 74, 79. mrglovani of uncertain date. Content undeciphered and unidentified. Text in one column extending over the whole page. Very faint and much erosion particularly at the edges of the text. Probably a little more easily legible than that of hand 10.
- Hand 13. Folia 75, 78. mrglovani perhaps of tenth century (cp. Plates 6 and 9 of Shaniidze's edition of the Psalms, Tbilisi 1960, mss. Sinai 42 and Graz 2 respectively). Content Judges 1-3. These folia are conjugate, turned through 180 degrees for upper writing. Khanmeti.
- Hand 14. Folia 81, 88. mrglovani *circa* tenth century (cp. Plate I in Assfalg *op. cit.* and ms. Sinai Georg. 39 *apud* Vöobus *op. cit.* Plate 12). Content apparently a homily referring to Mt. 19.29 or Mk. 10.30 (see excerpt). Text in two columns, twenty-four lines extant per page, upper writing on same axis as earlier. Fol. 81v., col. 1 inf.: გლაზაკი მან ღა ავასხის რ აჰა ესერა  
ამას სოფელსა რნ მოეცა შენ ასიწილი  
და საუკუნესა მას ცხორებაჲ
- Hand 15. Folia 84, 85. mrglovani of uncertain date, very angular in style, with flourishes at either end of cross bars. Content. I Chronicles chapter 28. The folia are conjugate, the text in two columns, showing the format of the original, since the folium has been turned through 90 degrees to form the middle of a gathering in the new ms. Twenty-six lines stood in the earlier ms.

As these interim observations will indicate, work on the different components of this ms. is at different stages. The Protevangelium Jacobi has attracted my attention from the first through Peraidze's note 4 where he takes the last sentence of Prot. Jac. XVI. to be Luke 2.4. An edition of the Khanmeti text collated with Garitte's Georgian and de Strycker's edition of the Greek text is almost ready for publication: and the work of hands 3, 8 and 9 is fully transcribed. Since the writer's other duties prevent



him publishing this material as rapidly as he could wish, he presents this interim report in the hope that his colleagues will for a while be content with a mere foretaste.