

MS. Vindob. Georg. 2: a progress report

von

J. Neville Birdsall

In 1969, following the rediscovery of this important Georgian palimpsest in Vienna, the writer announced its existence and gave a preliminary analysis of its components and their contents¹. Since then, some further advances have been made in the study of the manuscript: but other duties have lain heavily upon him and the writer has been unable to publish all that has been discovered or identified. It seems best for the information of colleagues to give here a summary of the advances that have been made, of the state of the research on different parts of the palimpsest contents of the manuscript, and of the publications which have appeared up to the present and the use made of these by other scholars.

Further perusal of the manuscripts in the excellent ultra-violet photography of Herr Janderka led to some correction of our knowledge of the extent of palimpsest leaves in the manuscript. It has been found that the folia 106 to 128 (inclusive), 132, and 133 are palimpsest: the original writing is a very tiny *nuskuri* script, very faint. The content is quite unidentified since there is little yet deciphered. The appearance is of short phrases which appear to be possibly phrases of stanzas, suggesting poetic or liturgical composition. The closest parallel to the script seems to be plate 86 of Abuladze, *K'art'uli çeris nimušebi*². Following the numeration of hands in the previous article this will be Hand 16 of our manuscript.

For the progress report we follow the order of hands in the original article, with one difference, namely of giving the khanmeti texts in a prior group and the other texts in a posterior.

A. Khanmeti texts

Hands 3 and 9. It is probable that these two hands should be regarded as the work of one scribe, writing hand 3 with a thicker pen. The fragments of the Synoptic gospels from these folia have been published in this journal

¹ *Oriens Christianus*, Bd. 53 (1969) pp. 108-112: "A Georgian palimpsest in Vienna".

² Tbilisi 1949.

in 1971³. It is unfortunate that some faults of impression beyond the control of author or editor are to be found and that no correction could be given. Any scholar wishing to use these texts for orthographical or morphological analysis should consult either the manuscript or the author of the above named article.

Hand 4. The remains of a Georgian Protevangelium Jacobi from these leaves were published in *Le Muséon* in 1970⁴. The data of khanmeti verbal forms found there were utilised in the index of such forms by Z. Sarjveladze published in 1971⁵.

Hand 6. Acts of Cyprianos and Christina account for the whole of the survivals from this scribe. Cyprianos precedes Christina, the explicit of the one and the incipit of the other being found consecutively on fol. 100 r col. 2. Eight conjugates in the present ms. contain Cyprianos in a form akin to BHG 452b and 454. This is probably the whole of gathering 28 of the original from which the leaves came. Eleven conjugates contain Christina as described in the first account of this palimpsest: this certainly contains part of gathering 29 in the original but extends beyond it. The text does not appear to run in a smooth sequence however and this probably accounts for the fact that the initial leaf of gathering 30 has not been observed. However, certain leaves had been very badly affected by water before they were used the second time, and this may have obscured the signature. The explicit of Cyprianos is worthy of note in that it gives October 8 as the date and the name of the month as Tirisididi⁶ a rather rarely attested form of probable Iranian origin. It runs as follows:

ხიქმნა საქმე ესე წელთა დიოკლეტიანწსთა და მაქსიმიანწსთა.
ნიკომედია ქალაქსა თთუესა ტირისდიდისასა ხოვთსა მეუფებასა
ჩუენსა ზედა ოისა ჩუენისა იჲ ქწსსა რომელისა დიდებაჲ და ძალი
უკუნეთი უკუნისამდე ამენ.

Hand 8. The fragments of I Esdras from this hand were published in *Le Muséon* in 1972⁷. The text has been reprinted with the Oški text by its

³ Bd. 55, pp. 62-89: "Khanmeti fragments of the Synoptic gospels from ms. Vind. Georg. 2".

⁴ *Le Muséon*, T. LXXXIII (1970), pp. 49-72: "A second Georgian recension of the Protevangelium Jacobi".

⁵ "Hanmet da haemet tek'stebši dadasturebul zmnis pirian p'ormat'a sadzieblebi", *passim*.

⁶ See I. Abuladze, *Dzveli k'art'uli enis lek'sikoni* (Masalebi), Tbilisi 1973, pp. 412 s.v. ტირისდენი*.

⁷ T. LXXXV, pp. 97-105: "Palimpsest fragments of a Khanmeti Georgian version of I Esdras".

side for comparison in the second volume of K'urcikidze Dzveli aġt'k'mis apokrip'ebis k'art'uli versiebi⁸.

Hands 11 and 13 (Deuteronomy and Judges) have not yet been published. Both are only partially legible.

B. Asomtavruli texts, not Khanmeti

Hand 2. No further work has been done on these fragments.

Hand 15. No further example of this style has come to the writer's notice. On the basis of photographs Professor Shanidze and the late Professor Gamkrelidze date the hand as ninth or tenth century.

Hands 4 and 12 still defy identification although single letters and even words are readable.

Hand 3. This text proves to be part of the Georgian version of Gregory of Nyssa *De hominis opificio*⁹. The text corresponds to the edition of Abuladze pp. 181 l. 7 to pp. 182 l. 3¹⁰.

Hand 7. Folium 131 should certainly be ascribed to this hand. Folia 55 and 61 although no longer conjugate in the present manuscript, were conjugates or at least adjacent leaves in the original since Isaiah 60, already noted as the content of fol. 61 begins of fol. 55v directly after Exodus 15.21. Only a space intervenes. This surely indicates that we have here remains of a lectionary of the type edited by Tarchnisvili (*Le grand lectionnaire de l'église de Jérusalem*)¹¹ of which the Armenian evidence has been more recently edited by Renoux¹². These two passages succeed one another on Easter Eve lections 5 and 6¹³. The content of fol. 131 therefore presumably belongs to the same lectionary: but to the present it defies identification, since it is far more difficult to read. The only phrase approaching a sentence in completeness runs: გამ <ო>იღეს წარმარ <თთ>აგან ხ ჩნდა ჯერ არს შეწყნარებაჲ იგი which still escapes the searcher in concordance or lexicon.

Hand 14. The bifolium 88-81 which is the work of this scribe stood in that order in the original as is demonstrated by the presence of the signature

⁸ Tbilisi 1973, pp. 109-116 and p. 321.

⁹ Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, t. 44, col. 185.

¹⁰ Udzelesi redak'ciebi basili kesarielis "ek'ust'a dġet'aysa" da grigol noselis t'argmanebisa "kacisa aġebulebisat'vis", Tbilisi 1964.

¹¹ CSCO, vol. 188, 189 and 205, Louvain 1959-60.

¹² *Patrologia Orientalis*, t. XXXV (fasc. 1) et t. XXXVI (fasc. 2). *Le codex Arménien Jérusalem 121*, par Athanase Renoux, moine d'En Calcat.

¹³ Tarchnischvili, op. cit. (vol. 188), p. 139 and Renoux, op. cit. (t. XXXVI), p. 301.

ლზ (37) in the middle of the upper margin of fol. 88r. The bifolium must have been the outermost conjugate of a gathering. At various stages of the identification of its content great help has been given by Michel van Esbroeck S.J., well-known collaborator of the Bollandists. Fol. 88 recto and verso soon proved, once the initial observations were made, to be part of a version of Epiphanius *De mensuris et ponderibus*: it runs from paragraph 38 of the Syriac version¹⁴ to the beginning of paragraph 46, with the omission of paragraph 42 dealing with the 'hin', and the insertion between paragraphs 45 and 46 of a passage on the drachma in relation to the libra and the uncia. Fol. 81 proved more difficult to place as its content differs widely from the Syriac version. However, Father van Esbroeck's researches on the Tbilisi ms. A-691 revealed that a passage on the name Bethlehem (fol. 81r col. 2 and 81v col. 1) in fact had place in a Georgian version of the work of Epiphanius. Thus we can assume that this leaf too came from that treatise. In contradistinction, however, to the Tbilisi ms. and to all other traces of the treatise known to us, this passage is preceded by a little anecdote known to us in Greek in two forms BHG 1322zk and BHG 1438p: it is closer to the latter but has a conclusion not known in the Greek but in the Armenian *Apophthegmata*¹⁵. The Bethlehem passage is followed too by an addition elsewhere unknown: it deals with baptism and ends with a kind of credal statement, after quoting Matt. 28.19: გურწამს და აღვიარებთ მამაჲ უშობელი ღი სრული და ძჳ შობილი მამისა <ღი სრული და ს>ული <წმიდაჲ ...

C. *Nuskuri texts*

Hand 1. All the leaves deriving from this scribe are legible in part, but none in more than small part. No full sentence has yet been satisfactorily deciphered. From the little which has been read the matter appears to be homiletical.

When the manuscript was first described, the collection of Abuladze¹⁶ was not available to give guidance on the dating proposed for each hand found in palimpsest. Through the generosity of the Institute of Manuscripts

¹⁴ Epiphanius' *Treatise on Weights and Measures*. The Syriac Version edited by James Elmer Deane. (The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization no. 11), Chicago 1935, esp. pp. 55-57.

¹⁵ *Vitae patrum*, ed. Venice 1855, vol. II, pp. 248-249 (*Bibliotheca hagiographica orientalis*, ed. P. Peeters, 1910, no. 862).

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, fn. 2 *supra*.

at Tbilisi this lack has been rectified. It has not necessitated a change of opinion in most cases, but some comparisons may be of interest. We give these hand by hand in the numerical order.

Hand 1 is paralleled in plates 52, 53, 63, 64 and 65. Thus an eleventh century date is confirmed.

Hand 2 finds its parallel in plates 32 and 33, and in type 9 (pp. xi). This indicates an eleventh century origin rather than a tenth.

The dating of hands 3 and 9 (see the observations above for this collocation) can only be approximative. The types of character 3 to 5 in Abuladze each find some parallel feature. Since the Khanmeti lectionary (type 3) is dated in the seventh century while types 4 and 5 (Sinai *mravaltavi* and *Adyš* gospels) are from the second half of the ninth century the suggested eighth century may be correct. The similarities to Taylor-Schechter 12183 are still striking.

Hand 4 still shows affinity with the Oxford and Cambridge palimpsest of Jeremiah; but at Tbilisi the opinion was expressed that nevertheless the hand could possibly be better dated in the eighth century than in the seventh.

Further study of hand 5 still maintains the similarity to the *Adyš* gospels on which the ninth century date is based.

Hand 6 found no correspondence in the plates of Abuladze: the long upper horizontal of the letter *nari* remains quite distinctive in a hand not dissimilar in other regards from hand 4. Peradze¹⁷ indeed classified these as one, in which he was no doubt in error: but this emphasizes that the hands must be of the same date. Moreover, the column and line measurements of these hands are identical and might come from the same manuscript, although as has been indicated, some insoluble calendrical problems are raised by this conclusion¹⁸.

Hand 7 is paralleled in plates 18 and 19, confirming the tenth century date proposed.

The seventh century Khanmeti lectionary still provides a close parallel to hand 8.

Hand 11 finds no parallel in Abuladze. The sloping ductus and the cross-bar of *k'ani* written on the line, not below it, are distinctive features.

Hand 12, for which no dating was proposed, is paralleled in single letters of types 6 to 8 (Abuladze, p. xi). These are from mss. dated between 936 and 1050. This gives a tenth-eleventh century date for these still unidentified leaves.

¹⁷ "Über die georgischen Hss. in Österreich" (Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Bd. 47, 1940), p. 224, fn. 3.

¹⁸ Le Muséon, t. LXXXIII, art. cit. (fn. 4 supra), p. 49.

For hand 13, Abuladze provides no closer analogy than the Sinai and Graz manuscripts cited.

Hand 14 should probably be dated a little later than in the earlier article. The plates in Abuladze which appear analogous are those from 25 to 28, all tenth-eleventh century.

Of hands 15 and 16 we have written above.

It seems clear that this important palimpsest still has much to reveal for the history of the Georgian language and its literature, and at least in the case of the fragment of Epiphanius, for patristic studies too. The texts of the Protevangelium Jacobi and of I Esdras show that along-side the well attested Armenian influence upon early Georgian translation literature, there existed at an early period translation from Greek models. Data is probably not yet fully enough available to determine whether this took place in the same or in different areas. It may be that examination of some of the hands not yet published may add to these for the eventual elucidation of this and other problems.