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ორენოვანი საერთაშორისო ახალგაზრდული სამეცნიერო ონლაინჟურნალი

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Analysis of Functional Words in Georgian Political Discourse: a New Perspective

The Greek Gospel Lectionary Paris, BnF, grec 279 and the Georgian Monastery of Gialia in Cyprus

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Abstract: The Greek Gospel lectionary housed at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris under the shelf mark grec 279 serves as a rare piece of a mosaic to uncover the medieval repository of a Georgian monastery at Gialia in Cyprus, which lies in ruins now. Very little is known about the manuscripts once kept within its walls, making this surviving codex an important material witness to the monastery's manuscript heritage.

The connection of this lectionary to the repository is established by a newly identified librarian's note on the third folio of the codex. Written in Georgian *nuskhuri* (minuscule) script, the inscription explicitly attests that the manuscript was owned by the Monastery of the Holy Theotokos at Gialia. Furthermore, the specific phonetic shape of the monastery's name in the text reveals Greek and Georgian pronunciation peculiarities at the turn of the second millennium.

Palaeographic analysis dates the Greek codex to the ninth century. While the manuscript remained in its home monastery in Cyprus probably for a long time, its eventual fate illustrates the broader dispersion of the repository's collection. The manuscript survived in the monastery and remained in Cyprus until the late seventeenth century, when it was acquired and transferred to France by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, a French statesman under Louis XIV. By analysing this artefact, the present study opens a new perspective on the existence and ultimate fate of the ruined monastery's once-active collection of manuscripts.

Keywords: Manuscripts' Provenance and Provenience, Greek Gospel Lectionaries, Byzantine Manuscripts, Georgian Monastery of Gialia (Cyprus), Byzantine Phonetics, Greek Historical Pronunciation

Introduction

In Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Levant in particular, was characterised by a dynamic environment of intercultural, multilingual, and interreligious interactions. Monastic communities and foundations were major centres for literary and linguistic interchange. The presence of Georgian monastic communities outside of Georgia, stretching from Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos and the Petritsoni (Bachkovo) Monastery in the Balkans to the Black Mountain of Antioch, Mount Athos and Palestine, illustrates the dynamic nature of manuscript production and cross-cultural engagement during this period.

Georgian communities on the island of Cyprus also made their mark on history. In Cyprus, the manuscript heritage was likely concentrated in institutions such as the Monastery of the Holy Theotokos in Gialia. Although it was once a distinguished spiritual and intellectual formation under Georgian royal patronage, today the monastery lies in ruins.¹ Its history has

¹ The ruins of the Gialia Monastery are situated in the Paphos Forest in Cyprus at 35.0894° N, 32.555° E. Spatial data for this site were monitored using NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS; NASA, 2026); <https://firms.modaps.eosdis.nasa.gov/map/#d:today:@32.555,35.090,14.000z> (Retrieved June 11, 2026).

been silenced by centuries of physical decay and the dispersion of its cultural assets.²

Monastic libraries and repositories of the late antique and medieval Levant did not exist in isolation. Their collections reflect the multilingual realities of their environments, so the repository of Gialia Monastery was not an exception.

This article introduces an overlooked witness to this heritage, the 9th-century Greek Gospel Lectionary Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter: BnF), grec 279. By shifting the focus from the main Greek text to a brief marginal note written in Georgian script, this paper establishes a direct link between this Byzantine codex and the Gialia repository.

Beyond its value for provenance and provenience research, this librarian's inscription provides a particular linguistic detail. The specific phonetic rendering of the monastery's name in Georgian within the note captures the precise moment where colloquial Greek pronunciation met Georgian scribal practice at the end of the first millennium in the Levantine linguistic environment. Tracing the manuscript's journey from a medieval Cypriot monastery to the collection of the Jean-Baptiste Colbert, this article offers a new small puzzle piece on the active life and dispersal of Gialia's manuscript heritage.

1. Georgian Foundations in Cyprus

The number of Georgian monastic communities and foundations established within the Byzantine Empire and its peripheries significantly increased after the second half of the 10th century.³ One of those foundations was the Monastery of the Holy Theotokos in Gialia, Cyprus.

1.1 The historical significance of institutions in Cyprus is broadly framed in medieval Georgian historiography (*Kartlis Cxovreba*), which credits 11th and 12th-century monarchs with actively patronising the Georgian monastic network of Cyprus. In the chronicles of King David IV (the Builder, †1125), the king is depicted as endowing institutions far beyond the borders of his kingdom. He explicitly extends his charity, and thus his influence, to the “lauras, assemblies, and monasteries” of “Syria and Cyprus (*asuretisa da kwprisa*), the Black Mountain, [and] Palestine, filling them all with goodness”.⁴

This royal patronage continued into the next generation with Queen Regnant Tamar (†1213), King David's great-granddaughter. She bolstered the Georgian presence on Cyprus by providing significant financial support. The chronicle of her reign precises this general geographic connection down to a specific area, recording that she “adorned Ġalia of Cyprus (*kwpres ġalia*) and endowed it with revenues”, ensuring the complex was embellished in accordance with sacred monastic customs.⁵

² For initial fieldwork results and identification of the site as a Georgian monastery in 1981, see Djobadze, 1984, pp. 198–209. For a relatively recent catalogue of the site's archaeological finds, see Gagoshidze et al., 2014.

³ For more, see Otkhmezuri, 2022; Menabde, 1980, pp. 252–253.

⁴ Kaukhchishvili, 1955, p. 353; Metreveli, 2008, p. 336.

⁵ Kaukhchishvili, 1959, p. 91; Metreveli, 2008, p. 461.

1.2 There are later non-Georgian sources that indicate the presence of Georgian communities in Cyprus beyond the Monastery of Gialia.⁶ Books by Christian pilgrims from the West suggest that Georgian religious congregations were active on the island. In 1346, Jacobus de Verona visited Famagusta on the eastern coast of Cyprus, where Georgians were present and actively practiced their religion, alongside other communities. In the chapter titled *Dy newumb der stat Famogost* (“News from the City of Famagusta”), Jacob primarily discusses the Armenian community (*y fluchen von Armenia*), but he also notes the presence of Georgians among the various religious groups:

*Dar|nach armeni dy halltent | ir ambt
alls di rechten | christen dann das si es |
lesent in ir aigner sprach | Item es sind
die Jörger | und Maroniten | die zwo
seckt habent tauff| alls die christen aber
| das ambt nach chriech|ischem siten*

“Thereafter, the Armenians, they hold their liturgy like true Christians, except that they read it in their own language. Furthermore, there are the Georgians and the Maronites, two sects that have baptism like the Christians, but whose liturgy follows the Greek rite”.

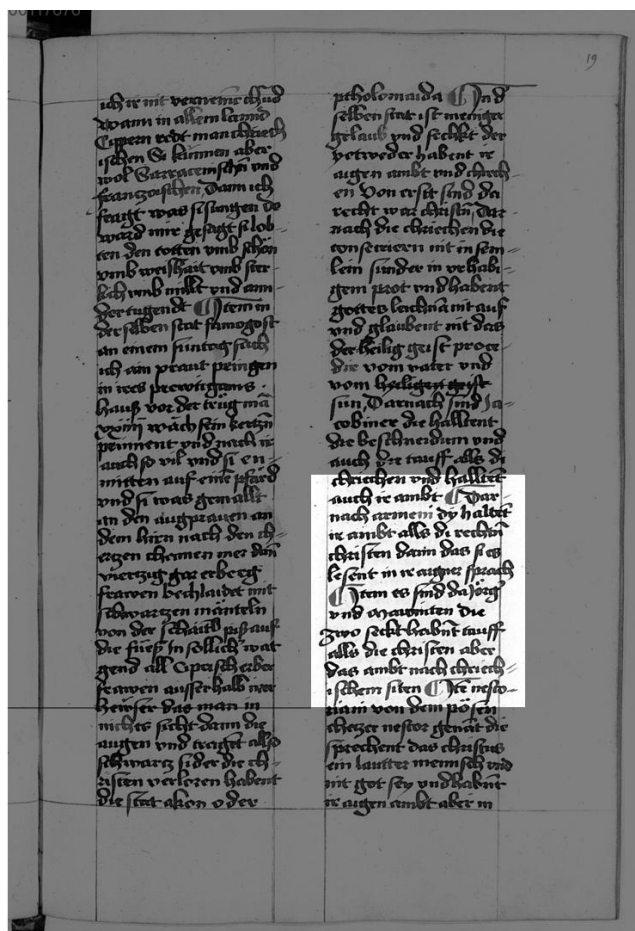


Fig. 1. Jacobus de Verona, ‘Buch der Kirchfahrt’

< <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb00117676?page=42,43> >

Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Codices germanici monacenses (Cgm) 235, fol. 19rb, lines 22–32.

(Highlighting Sandro Tskhvedadze)

⁶ For a list of attestations of the Gialia monastery in several historical sources, see Lachkepiani, 2009, pp. 242–259.

According to this record, it is not surprising that 14th-century Georgian communities in the Levant and beyond adhered to the Byzantine rite. This rite was already well-established within Georgian religious communities by that time.⁷ The author implies that, unlike the Armenians in Famagusta who made theological compromises with the ruling Catholic Lusignans, the Georgians probably refused to recognise papal authority or alter their theology. Furthermore, the author validates the Georgians by noting that they “have baptism like the Christians”, an indication that the Western Church recognised the legitimacy of their sacraments, even if it viewed their specific practices as distinct.

1.3 Although the exact dates of the Georgian migration to Cyprus are unclear, 10th–12th-century manuscript colophons provide evidence of an active monastic community and the probable Georgian translation network on the island.

1.3.1 One of the earliest references to Georgian activities on Cyprus appears in a 10th-century hymn book (*Iadgari*), MS Sinai, St Catherine’s Monastery (hereafter: Sin.) georg. NF 19, fol. 50rv, which was copied at St Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai by the prominent scribe Iovane Zosime. Zosime noted that this collection of chants was a “new Octoechos” (*msgebsi axali*), which had shortly before been translated into Georgian in Cyprus (*axlad gamovida čuenda enad kwprit*). It subsequently arrived at Sinai to serve as a “master copy” (*sadeded*) for further liturgical usage. The colophon states that the collection of chants was brought to Georgian monasteries in Palestine from the island of Cyprus, which is why the copyist refers to them as “Cyprian”.⁸

Zosime’s dating system features a chronological peculiarity. He used both Georgian and Greek datings to indicate the completion of the codex: “When this was written at holy Sinai, the years from the Creation were according to the Georgians 6584, and the Chronicon (*kronikoni*) was 200, and according to the Greeks the years were 6472 and the Chronicon was 88” (*odes ese daičera sinačmidas, dasabamitganni čelni iqvnes kartulad xp̃pd da kronikoni iqo š da berzulad čelni xw̃ob da kronikoni iqo p̃ē*). Based on this note, the following calculations can be applied:

- $xp̃pd = 6584$ (Georgian *Anno Mundi*) $\rightarrow$ $6584 - 5604 = 980$ CE
- $\tilde{s} = 200$ (Chronicon) $\rightarrow$ $6584 \bmod 532 = 200 \rightarrow 980$ CE

Both Georgian notations in the colophon dating thus point to 980 CE. The parallel Greek coordinates are similarly cohesive if they refer to the Alexandrian Era. Taking 6472 as the year

⁷ Chris Schabel (2005) notes that “[b]eyond James’ assertion that they were baptized like Latins but performed the liturgy in Greek, we know nothing about them.” (p. 164). Notably, the source specifies that the Georgians followed the Greek (Byzantine) rite; this denotes liturgical tradition and practice, rather than the language used in worship, which in Georgian communities in the Levant and elsewhere was predominantly Georgian, witnessed by the continuous tradition of Georgian liturgical manuscripts.

⁸ For the edition of the colophon, see Alexidze et al., 2005, p. 265.

of Creation and calculating the position within the 532-year Great Paschal Cycle yields a remainder of exactly 88:

- $x\tilde{w}ob = 6472$ (Alexandrian *Anno Mundi*) $\rightarrow 6472 - 5492 = 980$ CE
- $p\tilde{e} = 88$ (Indiction) $\rightarrow 6472 \bmod 532 = 88 \rightarrow 980$ CE

Using the Alexandrian Era, the year 6472 corresponds precisely to the Georgian coordinates. Anchoring both systems to 980 CE indicates that Georgian translation and manuscript production on Cyprus were probably underway by the late 10th century, when the new translations were sent to Palestine.⁹

1.3.2 The only known codex containing a colophon stating that it was copied in Cyprus and introducing the Monastery of Gialia as *Žalia*, as opposed the variant *Ġalia* attested in *Kartlis Cxovreba*, is the codex Saint Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (hereafter: IOM-RAS), H 18 (H 17, G 197). In the catalogue compiled by Tseradze and Khoperia (2016), the codex is described under the shelf mark H 18.¹⁰ Based on its palaeographical features, the proposed date for the copying of this codex is approximately the 11th–12th centuries (Tseradze & Khoperia, 2016, p. 357).

The colophon by the scribe *Ḳviriḳe* illustrates the manuscript copying process. In the given case, this process was localised and isolated, as it appears to have been typical of the *scriptoria* of the Eastern Christian monastic communities where monks mostly copied manuscripts in their own cells rather than in consolidated big scriptoria, like in the Western Christian tradition.

Ḳviriḳe’s remarks in his colophon reveal a clash of ideologies or personalities between himself, the monastic administration and the wider community. He reports that his work was not completed with the help of any single person, whether the Hegumen or any member of the congregation, but rather under hardships caused by them (*xolo ḳactagan arca ertisa vis šeḳevnita, ḳinamzḡu[risa] gina zmatayta, aramed uprosḡa zwirta šemtxuevita matgan*). Although he does not state the exact location of his alternative workspace, his explicit grievance regarding the complete lack of communal support strongly implies that the codex was executed entirely away from the hostile environment of the Gialia complex itself, in a place that was yet somehow under the jurisdiction of the same Georgian monastery. This geographical displacement explains his concluding notation: “... and it was copied at the Georgian monastery of *Žalia* in Cyprus, not inside the monastery, but two miles away” (... *xolo daiḳera ḳwpres*

⁹ For the synchronisation of the underlying time reckoning systems, see Gippert (2026). For a broader comparative review of early Eastern Christian chronologies, see Grumel (1958), who contrasts the Pre-Byzantine (pp. 73–84) and Alexandrian (pp. 85–97) calendar matrices alongside integrated synchronisation tables for Old Georgian correspondences (p. 253). Utilising the 16-year variance in the calculations between the Byzantine and historical Alexandrian chronological eras, Velkovska (2016, pp. 202–204) has proposed a new date (877/878) for the Jerusalem-rite Gospel Lectionary Sin. gr. 210 and its dismembered fragments (Diktyon numbers: 58585, 61050, 58341, 57061), in contrast to the traditionally proposed dating of 861/862.

¹⁰ For accounts of the St. Petersburg manuscript, see the foundational inventory by Brosset (1846, p. 632) and the subsequent descriptive catalogue by Tsagareli (1889, p. 46). The text of the colophon was initially published by Zhordania (1892, p. 128); for a comprehensive analysis and edition of the text, see Shanidze (1968, pp. 77–122). For a recent publication of the colophon, see Tseradze & Khoperia (2016, pp. 366–367).

kartvelta monaṣṭersa žalias ara xolo šina, aramed or milion šors monaṣṭrisagan; Saint Petersburg, IOM-RAS, H 18, fol. 389v).

The codex later appeared in Jerusalem, from where it was taken to Russia in the 1820s by the Georgian politician and traveller Giorgi Avalishvili. He visited the Ottoman Empire, particularly Palestine, on a political mission, and had received the Codex as a gift from the representatives of the Holy Cross Monastery in Jerusalem.¹¹

1.3.3 Another source naming the Georgian monastery of Gialia on Cyprus was revealed in the colophon of a manuscript of the *Lenten Triodion* which is now kept in the library of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem (hereafter: Jer.) as MS georg. 85. This colophon (fol. 272v)¹² contains a dedication inscription by a monk named Romanos. He describes himself as a *mçiri* (a ‘pilgrim monk’ or ‘hermit’) from Dodorka, a smaller eremitic site operating within the bigger monastery complex of Davitgareja in Georgia. In the inscription, Romanos states that he commissioned this volume of Lenten chants (*movige ese çigni*) to bring joy to his soul and subsequently donated it to the “Abode of the Holy Theotokos, the Georgian Monastery of Žalia” (...*sulisa amis čemisa saçqalobelisa da priad codvilisa salxinebelad (da) ševsçire twt çmidasa ġmrtismšobelisave saçopelsa, žalias kartvelta monaṣṭersa*). He explicitly indicates that this donation was made at the request of the congregation and during the abbocy of John the *Mçignobari* (*I(ovan)e mçignobrisasa da misita da sxuata qovelta zmata brzanebita*).¹³

Whether the Lenten Triodion was originally produced at Gialia or brought to the island from elsewhere remains unclear, as there is not definitive codicological or other evidence to determine its place of origin. Tseradze (2002) identified two distinct scribal hands within the manuscript, concluding that it was produced in two stages: according to her, the primary text dates to the first half of the 12th century, and the colophon was added during the second half of the 12th century or the 13th century. As the donor, Romanos, was from the Davitgareja complex in mainland Georgia, it is possible that he travelled to Cyprus as a pilgrim, carrying the pre-copied volume with him. Alternatively, he may have commissioned or executed the manuscript locally during his stay on the island. It is also possible that he commissioned the manuscript to the Gialia monastery while he was in Palestine.

In either scenario, upon his arrival or upon completing the text, he donated the codex to the Gialia community to fulfil his own spiritual needs, subsequently adding the commemorative colophon to the volume. It is highly significant that Romanos uses the word form *Žalia*, rather than *Ġalia*, to refer to the monastery in his dedication, the same form that is employed in the colophon of IOM-RAS, H 18.

1.3.4 Both these codices (IOM-RAS, H 18 and Jer. georg. 85), which were probably once owned by the Gialia monastery, eventually ended up in Jerusalem. They were likely brought

¹¹ Tseradze & Khoperia, 2016, p. 357.

¹² For the identification of the name of the monastery and a transcription of the colophon, see Tseradze, 2002, pp. 252–253. The punctuation of the text was readjusted by the author of the present article.

¹³ In this context, the meaning of the Georgian term *mçignobari* can vary. It may refer to a scribe or legal expert, which is the same as the Greek term *nomikos*; or it may be an adjective denoting a “wise” or “well-educated” person.

there by monks who were forced to leave the monastery during the Mamluk and/or Ottoman invasions of the island, relocating them to a safer location nearby, such as Jerusalem.

There is no specific date on which the Georgian community in Cyprus ceased to exist. In the mid-18th century, the Georgian archbishop and traveller, Timote Gabashvili († 1764), travelled to holy places and Georgian monasteries outside the Georgian kingdom, including Cyprus. However, in the account of his travels from Cyprus to Pisidia, he makes no mention of any remaining Georgian monasteries on the island.¹⁴

2. Codex Paris, BnF, grec 279 and Its Georgian Inscription

The Greek Gospel lectionary which is housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France under the shelf number grec 279¹⁵ is written on parchment. The original binding has not survived; instead, the codex is kept in a binding from the period when it was acquired by Jean-Baptiste Colbert.¹⁶ The manuscript comprises 192 folios and is dateable to the 9th century.¹⁷ The script is an upright majuscule,¹⁸ a common feature of lectionary manuscripts from the late 8th century until it was replaced by other forms. Based on the script, it is plausible that codex is of Italo-Greek provenance, as argued by Eduardo Crisci.¹⁹

The text in the manuscript is set out in two columns of 23 lines each. The codex is beautifully illuminated, featuring ornamental headpieces that mark the major liturgical cycles and sections, as well as decorated initial letters with floral and zoomorphic motifs.

2.1 The codex bears the title Εὐαγγέλιον σὺν | θ(ε)ῷ· ἀρχ(ό)μενον ἀπὸ | τῇ ἁγία καὶ μεγάλῃ | κυριακῇ τοῦ πάσχα (‘‘Gospel Lectionary – God willing – beginning on the Holy and Great Sunday of Pascha’’). The manuscript contains Gospel lections according to the Byzantine rite, and its overall structure corresponds to Aland’s classification as U-*l*esk.²⁰

The lectionary includes daily Gospel readings from Easter to Pentecost (the section of John: ἐκ τ(οῦ) κ(α)τὰ Ἰωάν(νην), fols 1r–55r), followed by Saturday and Sunday lections for the subsequent weeks of the movable cycle, from the weeks after Pentecost (Matthean section: Σ(αββάτω) πρότ(ω) | τοῦ Ματθαίου ∴, fols 56r–77v) via the Pre-Lenten period (Lukan section, including the lections of the Meatfare and Cheesefare Saturdays and Sundays: Σαββάτ(ω) | πρώτο | τοῦ Λουκᾶ, fols 78r–109r), up to Lent (spanning from the 1st Saturday of Lent to the Holy Saturday Vespers, fols 109v–142v). This moveable cycle is followed by fixed-calendar lections arranged from 1 September to 31 August (section titled Μήνη Σεπτεμβρ(ί)ω | α'· ἀρχ(ῆ)

¹⁴ Gabashvili, 1956, pp. 93–95.

¹⁵ Diktyon number 49851, Aland number *l*17, Colbert 5106.

¹⁶ Jackson, 2011, p. 54.

¹⁷ It should be considered that the codex had previously been dated to the 12th century by F. H. A. Scrivener (1894, p. 329), then re-dated to the 9th century by Caspar René Gregory, 1900, p. 388. The dating to 9th century was accepted by Aland, 1994, p. 219.

¹⁸ Cavallo, 1967, p. 122. For more, see Orsini, 2010; 2019.

¹⁹ Crisci, 1985, p. 143.

²⁰ According to the definitive classification framework established by Aland et al. (1994, p. 219), the siglum U-*l*esk designates an uncial New Testament lectionary. This specific liturgical sub-category features continuous daily readings spanning from Easter to Pentecost; for the remainder of the movable liturgical cycle, only the Saturday (*s*) and Sunday (*k*) pericopes are contained in the manuscript.

τ(ῆ)ς ἡνδίκτου | τοῦ νέου ἔτου(ς)... (“Month of September, 1st: Beginning of the Indiction, of the New Year ...”; fols 142v–165v). The manuscript concludes with a section of lections for various occasions (introduced by Ἀνά(γνωσις) εἰς Ἑγκένια [sic!] ἐκκλησιῶν... (“Lecture for the Dedication of Churches”; fol. 165vb), followed by the Twelve Passion Gospels (fols 166r–190r), and finally ends with the Eleven Resurrection Gospels (Ἀνάγνωσ(εις) ἑωτ(ινά) | ἀναστάσημ(α)·, fols 190r–192v).²¹

In the Georgian Byzantine-rite Gospel lectionary tradition, two codices structurally follow the model of *lesk*,²² defined by Aland for the Greek lectionary manuscripts: a codex of Mount Athos, Iviron Monastery (hereafter: Ivir.) georg. 60, and a codex housed at the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts in Tbilisi (hereafter: NCM), H-1704. The strict preservation of an identical selection of pericopes, as well as shared structural and scribal errors, strongly suggests that both manuscripts are direct copies of a single archetype. In these Georgian codices, the selection of feasts in the fixed calendar, the choice of lections for various occasions, and the placement of the Passion and Resurrection Gospels all diverge from the structure of BnF, grec 279. In the Greek manuscript, both lists of lections appear after the fixed calendar, suggesting that BnF, grec 279 is unlikely to have served as their direct exemplar.

2.2 Manuscript BnF, grec 279 belongs to the historical collection of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Chief Minister to Louis XIV, who had the largest private library of Greek manuscripts in 17th-century France. Colbert himself was the person who commissioned the purchase of Greek manuscripts in Cyprus. Consequently, the manuscript arrived in Paris from Cyprus on 16 June 1682, most likely via the French consulate in Larnaca, alongside seven other Greek volumes.²³ As the Greek librarian inscriptions have been erased, it is impossible to determine where the manuscript was kept prior to this acquisition. Following Colbert’s death in 1683, the manuscripts passed to his heirs, remaining in the family’s possession for several generations before ultimately entering the Royal Library (*Bibliothèque du Roi*).

The palaeographical features of BnF, grec 279 suggest that the codex is dateable to the 9th century. Closer observation of the marginal inscription on folio 3r (see Fig. 2) reveals that it was subsequently incorporated into a medieval Georgian monastery manuscript collection, if not originally copied in the same monastery. While the manuscript contains several later Greek notes, such as on folios 22v and 48r, the note on folio 3r is written entirely in Georgian *nusxuri* script. It reads: ⲙⲥ ⲥ(ⲁ)ⲭ(ⲁ)ⲣ(ⲉ)ⲃ(ⲁ)ⲱ: ჯალიისა: ყ(მიდ)ისა: გ(მრ)თის|მშობ(ე)ლისა:– (ⲙⲥ ⲕ(ⲁ)ⲕ(ⲁ)ⲣ(ⲉ)ⲃ(ⲁ)ⲱ: ჟალიისა: ყ(მიდ)ისა: ღ(მრ)თის|მშობ(ე)ლისა:–), translating as: “Gospel of the [Monastery of the] Holy Theotokos of Gialia”.

²¹ Because the manuscript is mutilated, the sequence of the Resurrection Gospels breaks off within the 10th pericope. Consequently, the codex lacks the final, 11th reading necessary to complete the standard Byzantine liturgical cycle of Matins Gospels.

²² Aland et al., 1994, p. 219.

²³ Rincel, 2022, p. 920.

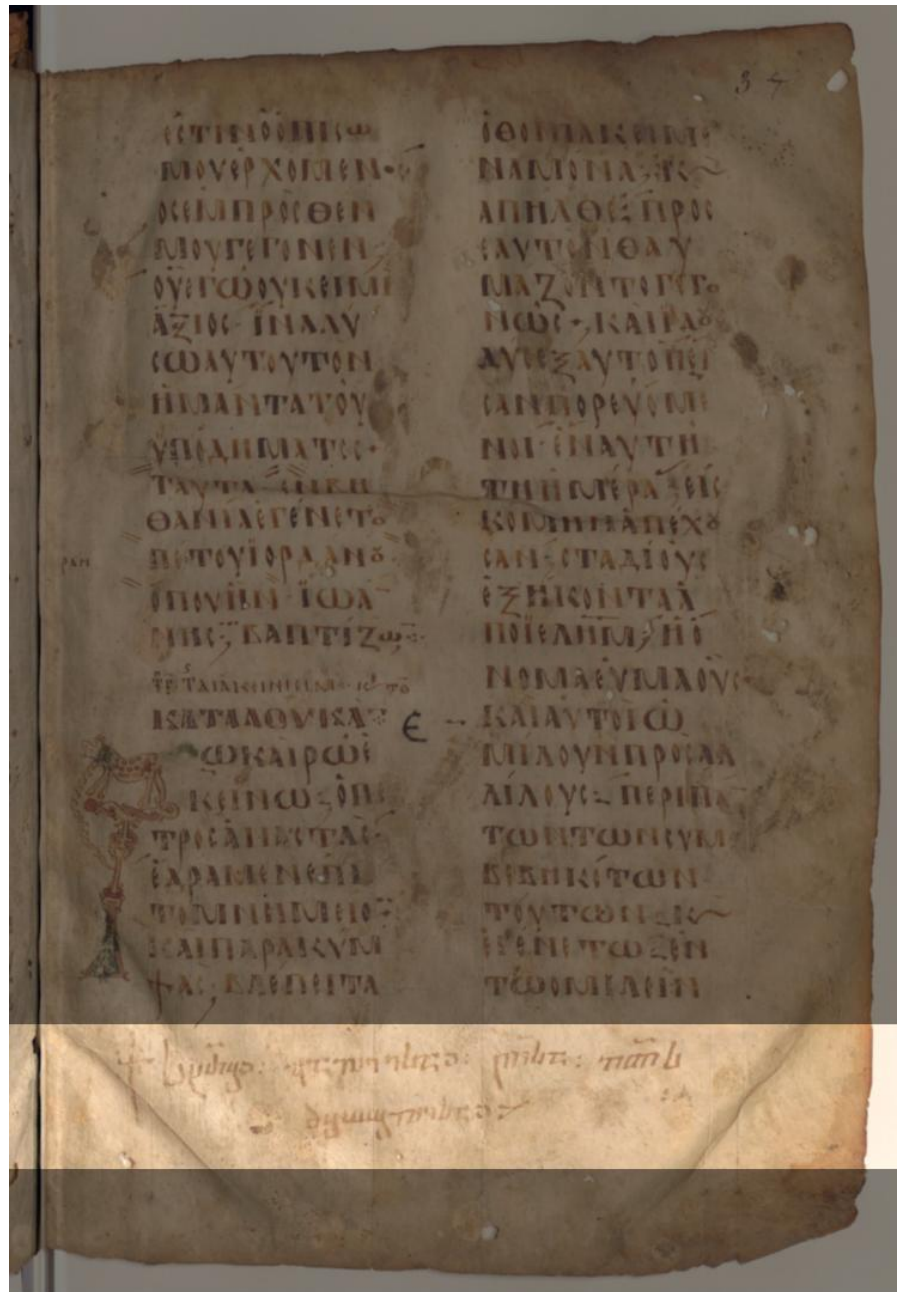


Fig. 2: Paris, BnF, grec 279, fol. 3^r; © Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris;
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b530458794/f13.item.r=%22grec%20279%22>

Detail of the folio showing the Old Georgian marginal colophon, highlighted in the lower margin by Sandro Tskhvedadze.

Henry Omont provided an initial description of the codex following its acquisition by the Paris library: 279. *Evangeliarium. IX s. Parch. 192 fol. Onciale. Pent. (Colbert. 5106.) M.*²⁴ Neither Omont's brief inventory nor Frédéric Macler's later *Catalogue des manuscrits arméniens et géorgiens de la Bibliothèque nationale* notes the presence of a librarian inscription

²⁴ Omont, 1886, p. 30.

within the codex.²⁵ Subsequent scholars who examined the Georgian holdings of the National Library of France, most notably Ekvtime Takaïchvili, similarly overlooked this paratextual feature.²⁶

Overall, it is probable that the codex in question originated in the Eastern Mediterranean, or even on Cyprus. The codex later appeared in the monastery of Gialia in Cyprus, where it remained for quite a long time, staying at least until the end of the 17th century. From there, it was acquired for Jean-Baptiste Colbert's collection before ultimately being transferred to its current repository.

3. The Georgian Renderings of the Greek Toponym *Gialia*

The toponym *Žalia* as attested in the inscription of BnF, grec 279 (here in the genitive *žaliisay*) matches the forms attested in the colophons of Saint Petersburg, IOM-RAS, H 18 (*kwpres kartvelta monastērsa žalias*) and Jer. georg. 85 (*žalias kartvelta monastērsa*). However, the Georgian tradition displays an alternation between the forms *Ġalia* and *Žalia*: there is a clear distinction between the contemporary variant beginning with *ž-* (*žalia*) and the more distant historical variant beginning with *ġ-* (*ġalia*), with the latter only attested in *Kartlis Cxovreba*.²⁷

3.1 To trace the origins of this variation, the graphic and phonetic differences must be examined in relation to their underlying Greek basis. One of the earliest sources in the Greek Cypriot tradition to capture the name of the Gialia monastery is found in George Boustronios's *Chronicles of Cyprus*, which describe contemporary events on the island from around 1456 CE onwards. In these chronicles, the toponym appears in the context of military raids launched against the monastic community. The text edition by G. Kechagigoglu reads as follows: *Και ἐπῆγαν εἰς τὴν μερίαν τοῦ Χρυσόχου, εἰς τὸ μοναστήριον τὴν Γιαλλίαν. Καὶ ἐποίησαν ᾽νοῦ καλογήρου πολλὰ κακά*,²⁸ ("...and [they] went to the region of Chrysochous, to the monastery of Gialia. And they did many bad things to a monk").²⁹

The toponym can be established as *Γιαλία* or *Γιαλλία* across the surviving manuscript branches of Boustronios's text³⁰ (attested in the accusative as *τὴν Γιαλλίαν*; see Fig. 3).

²⁵ Macler, 1908, pp. 169–177.

²⁶ Takaïchvili, 1933.

²⁷ See 2.1 above.

²⁸ Boustronios, 1997, p. 108.

²⁹ George Boustronios's text survives in three manuscripts. One is held in the British Library, while two are in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice, with shelf numbers Gr. VII, 16 and Gr. VII, 17. In the edition, these are designated with the sigla (M) and (B), respectively. The earliest of these is the codex in the British Library (Arundel MS 518), designated by Georgios Kechagioglu as A in his critical edition (Boustronios, 1997). The text provided above represents Arundel MS 518.

³⁰ In the codices the word appears as *Γιαλίαν* (B) or *Γιαλλίαν* (A and M).

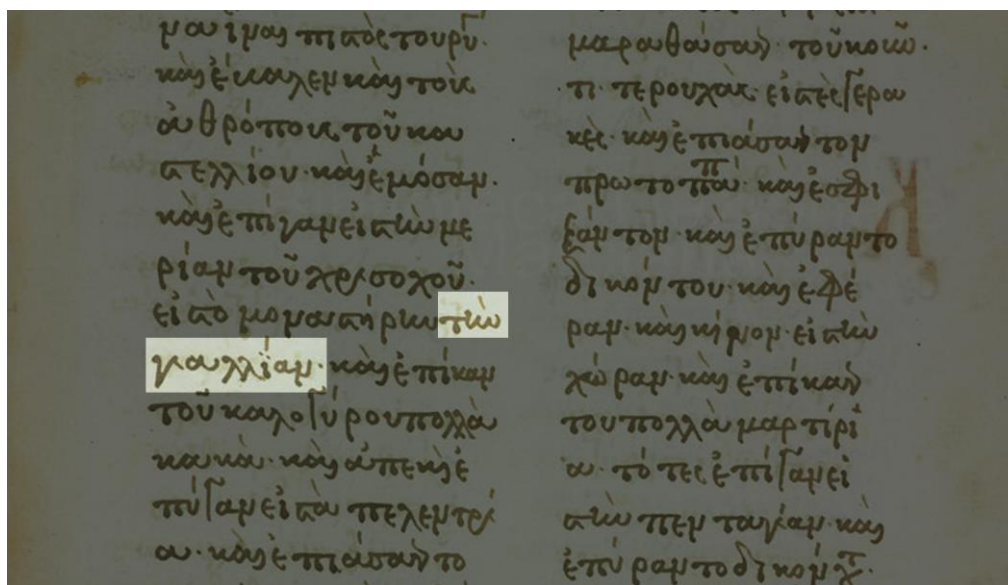


Fig. 3: Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Gr. VII, 16 (=1080), fol. 321r; © Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana; Image retrieved from www.internetculturale.it (Identifier: CSTOR.241.10820 / VE0049_Gr_07_0016_01080).

Attestation of a word-form *τὴν Γαλλίαν* of the name of the monastery in the Chronicles of Georgios Boustronios. (Highlighting Sandro Tskhvedadze)

Even though the Greek form *Γιαλ(λ)ία* attested in this source is much later than the Georgian renderings, the structural opposition between the Georgian variants *galia* and *žalia* can only be explained on the basis of the original Greek form. Of these variants, *galia* is attested in only one source, while *žalia* is attested in all other sources, which were either authentic monastery products (for instance, the librarian's inscription of BnF, grec 279) or in close relation with the authentic inhabitants of the community. Considering the original Greek form of the word, these Georgian forms do not stem from divergent transcription conventions among scribes, but rather reflect diachronic phonological shifts within Greek itself. These changes are reflected in the pronunciation of the initial sounds of the toponym.

The first attested variant, *galia*, is strongly intertwined with two different translations from the Greek into Georgian. On the one hand, it is the name of the Gialia monastery, which has already been mentioned. On the other hand, it is also the direct phonological rendering of *Γαλία* (or *Γαλλία*), which is the Greek name for Roman Gaul (Gallia). This toponym has been used in Greek sources since the classical period and also appears in early fifteenth-century texts such as Mazaris's *Journey to Hades*. The relevant passage reads: *μνήμης εἶχον, κὰν τῇ Βρετανίᾳ κὰν τῇ Γαλίᾳ καὶ πανταχοῦ, καὶ ἔτι νῦν διὰ μνήμης ἐν ᾧδου ἔχω, ἣν ἐλπίζω καὶ ἐκδέχομαι* ("I held in memory, both in Britain and in Gaul and everywhere, and even now I keep it in memory in Hades, which [hope] I hope for and await").³¹

In the Georgian translations, the same toponym appears in a 12th-century manuscript comprising the translations of *De Gymnosophystis*. The Georgian text is entitled as follows: *čmidisa da gmr̥tiv-ganbr̥znobilisa didisa basilisi txrobay evevlos mimart, mozgurisa twsisa,*

³¹ Barry et al., 1975, pp. 2–99.

šišuel-martaltatws da kueqnisa sazomiatws aḡmosavlitgan vidre dasavletadmde, which translates as: “Account of the Holy and God-instructed Basil the Great towards Eubulus, his Master, concerning the Naked Righteous and the Measurement of the Earth from East to West” (NCM, A-65).³² This text, whose Greek original has not survived, comprises a minor geographical overview, vividly modelled after the Latin *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*.³³ The relevant text passage, where the word *ḡalia* is mentioned, reads: *xolo hromitgan vidre ḡaliadmde sadguri ocdatxi. ertobit ḡovelni sadgurni samotxitgan, sada igi mze aḡmovals, vidre ḡaliadmde, sada štagordebis zḡuasa mze, ars atas otxas ocdaxuti* (“From Rome to Gaul there are twenty-four stations. In total, all the stations from Paradise, where the sun rises, up to Gaul, where the sun sets into the sea, amount to one thousand four hundred and twenty-five [stations]”).³⁴ In this instance, the Latin text does not contain the corresponding passage of the Georgian version, where the equivalent toponym for *ḡalia* is attested. However, considering the geographical context, it is plausible to interpret *ḡaliadmde*, meaning “up to Gaul ...”, as referring to what is known in Classical Greek as *Γαλλία* or *Γαλατία*, i.e. Roman Gaul (Gallia), corresponding to parts of present-day France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Germany.³⁵

The Georgian form *ḡalia* as an attested rendering of two different Greek toponyms, one of which is Gialia Monastery and the other, Roman Gaul, does not resolve the issue of the two different attestations of the same toponym in Georgian. The coexistence of *žalia* and *ḡalia* may reflect a difference between acoustics-based rendering in situ and graphics-based transliteration ex situ from a Georgian perspective. To understand the roots of this linguistic bifurcation and the whole mechanism behind it, the broader diachronic background of how the Greek consonant *gamma* evolved from Late Antiquity up to the late Byzantine period may be examined.

3.2 From the mid-fourth century CE onward, Georgian translators continuously adapted Greek proper names and loanwords. Over this long period, Greek underwent a key phonological shift. This long timeline coincided with significant phonological changes, including the fricativisation of several voiced stops. The Classical Greek voiced velar stop /g/ in Classical Greek shifted to the voiced velar fricative [ɣ] in back-vowel environments. In contrast, it developed a voiced palatal fricative allophone [j] before front vowels (/i/ and /e/) or the palatal glide (/j/).³⁶

³² Kekelidze, 1945, pp. 127–129; For an online version, see: <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcg/cauc/ageo/tmin/minthkek/minth.htm> (Retrieved June 11, 2026).

³³ For the respective passage in the Latin text, see Rougé, 1966, p. 148.

³⁴ Kekelidze, 1945, pp. 120–121.

³⁵ It is important to clarify that *Γαλατία* in this case is not the same as the *Γαλατία* of Hellenistic and Byzantine Greek, which referred to a region in Asia Minor. This change in meaning is already evident even in Koine Greek, as seen in New Testament texts such as the Epistle to the Galatians and Acts 16:6 and 18:23. In the present case, however, the reference is to *Γαλατία* in western Europe. Despite the apparent similarity between Georgian *ḡalia* and Greek *Γαλατία*, it is not possible to derive *ḡalia* directly from *Γαλατία*, especially since the *Γαλατία* of the New Testament, which is the Anatolian one, had already been translated into Georgian several centuries earlier.

³⁶ Boas et al., 2019, pp. 11–12; Gignac, 1976, pp. 71–72; Holton et al. 2020, p. 193.

3.2.1 While early Georgian texts rendered Greek γ as a stop /g/, later texts show an updated orthography reflecting contemporary Byzantine speech, rendering γ before back vowels as /ġ/ (Γαγγρ(ῶν) > Ġangr(it), etc.). In the linguistic context of Sinai and Palestine, scribes writing down Greek words in Georgian script adapted the palatalised gamma before front vowels via the palato-alveolar affricate /ʒ/. Examples of this phenomenon can be found in the manuscripts of the tenth-century Sinai Hymn Book (*Iadgari*), in which the incipits of Greek hymns (*heirmos*) were transcribed into Georgian characters.³⁷ In this corpus, when γ precedes a front vowel as for instance in γεννᾶται and γῆς, it is transcribed as the palato-alveolar affricate /ʒ/ (*ženate*, *žis*).³⁸ This transcription may be explained by an influence of Arabic on the pronunciation of Greek spoken in the regional environment in the Levant, so the text written in Georgian letters reflects this change. This specialised phonetic strategy is also evident in other texts, such as the early translation of John Moschus's *Pratum Spirituale* (PG 78), where Γιγάντ(ων) is rendered as *žegunt(elman)*.³⁹ The word form *Žalia* should also be regarded in this context, since in the Greek toponym Γαλία the γ is followed by a front vowel.

The table below outlines selected examples of various Georgian renderings of Greek γ , drawn from the Epistle to the Galatians, the Gospel of Mark (5:1),⁴⁰ the *Passion of Queen Shushanik*,⁴¹ the Book of Ezekiel,⁴² the Minor and Great Synaxarions,⁴³ the Sinai Hymnbook (*Iadgari*), and the *Pratum Spirituale*:

³⁷ Metreveli, 1971; Metreveli & Outtier, 1975; Kiknadze, 1982; Gippert, 2011.

³⁸ Gippert, 2011, pp. 584–585 yields overall 11 examples, with γ in all cases followed by ϵ , $\epsilon\iota$, η or ι : γεννᾶται/ *ženate*, γενῶν/ *ženon*, γῆς/ *žis*, etc.

³⁹ Lacking a native /j/ phoneme, Arabic has historically adapted the Greek palatal approximant [j] using the palatalised $\mathfrak{c}$ (/ʒ/ or [dʒ]) and $\mathfrak{c}$ (/y/). The example of /ʒ/ rendering a Greek γ is quoted by Kaukhchishvili (1973, p. 245): *gwtxra čuen mamasaxlisman žeguntelman*, which in Greek reads: ὁ τῆς μονῆς τῶν **Γιγάντων** ἡγούμενος (*Pratum Spirituale*, PG 78: 2932).

⁴⁰ Mark 5:1 reads: Καὶ ἦλθον εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν. In various Greek manuscripts, the name of the Gerasenes is altered to Gadarenes and Gergesenes: Γαδάρηνων A C K f13 l2211 | Γεργυστηνῶν W | Γεργεσηνῶν x2 L Δ Θ f1 28. 33. 565. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. 2542 | txt x* B D (Nestle-Aland, 2017, p. 119). The underlying ethnonym Γεργεσηνῶν is rendered uniformly as *gergeseveltasa* across Old Georgian witnesses predating the 11th-century recension of George the Athonite. For one of the earliest Georgian attestations, see Gippert, 2007, pp. 1–39.

⁴¹ For the text, see Abuladze et al., 1963, p. 16; for the Greek loanword in Georgian, see Gippert, 1995, pp. 73–78. According to the *Lexicon* by Photius the Patriarch, Γαλεάγρα is defined as ἡ τῶν θηρίων ὑποδοχή ('the containment of wild beasts'; Theodoridis, 1982). The same entry as in Photius *Lexicon* appears in the *Etymologicum Magnum* (Gaisford, 1848, p. 220). According to the *Lexikon* by Pseudo-Zonaras Tittmann, 1808 / 1967, p. 419, the definition of the word Γαλεάγρα is expanded by punitive semantics: ὄργανον τιμωρητικόν, ἡ τῶν θηρίων ὑποδοχή ('punitive instrument, to receive the wild animals') meaning possibly also a trap. In Georgian translations, the word has been attested with the meaning 'cage', based on the translation of the book of Ezekiel (Abuladze, 1973, p. 39), and 'chamber', based on *The Passion of Holy Queen Shushanik* (Imnaishvili, 1982, p. 271).

⁴² See Tskitishvili, 1976, p. 66.

⁴³ For the edited text of the Great Synaxarion by George the Hagiorite, see Dolakidze & Chitunashvili, 2017.

Table I. The Renderings of Greek γ in Georgian

	Greek Sound / Environment	Georgian Rendering	Examples	Primary Source
Early Layer (with exceptions of later renderings of /g/)	[g] (Velar stop in all environments)	/g/	1. Γαλατάς > galaṭelta	1. Paul's Epistles to Galatians
			2. Γεργεσηνῶν > gergeseveltasa	2. e.g., Mk. 5:1
			3. γαλεάγρα > galiakḡi (Chamber)	3. <i>The Passion of Holy Queen Shushanik</i>
			4. γαλεάγρα > galiakḡita (Animal cage)	4. Book of Ezekiel
Late Layer (fricativisation)	[ɣ] (Velar fricative before back vowels and non-palatal consonants)	/ġ/	1. Γαγγρ(ῶν) > Ġangr(it)	1. Minor & Great Synaxarions
			2. Γρατιανός > Ġraṭiane	2. Great Synaxarion
			3. Ἀγνῆς > Aġnisi	3. Great Synaxarion
	[j] (Palatalised before front vowels and the glide /j/)	/ž/ or /ʒ/	1. γεννᾶται > ženaṭe	1. Sinai Hymn Book (<i>Iadgari</i>)
			2. γῆς > žis	2. Sinai Hymn Book (<i>Iadgari</i>)
			3. Γυγάντων > žegunṭelman	3. <i>Pratum Spirituale</i>
			4. Γαλία > Žalia	4. BnF grec 279; IOM-RAS H 18; Jer. georg. 85

3.3 There is no phonetic rule within Greek to account for a sound change leading from Γαλία to *Ġalia* (Γαλία), or vice versa. Phonetically, a palatal glide /j/ before a back vowel does not simply drop in Greek to revert a palatalised initial sound back to a hard-velar stop. Instead, the manuscript variants point to two distinct phenomena:

1. confusion of foreign toponyms (*Gialia/ Galia*): the Georgian form *Ġalia* as found in *Kartlis Cxovreba* is not the result of a phonetic development but a scribal error or graphic simplification caused by confusion with the much more prominent geographic name *Ġalia* (Gaul).
2. rendering of contemporary local pronunciation (*Žalia*): the scribes working on Cyprus, in direct contact with local speakers, spoke and heard the native Cypriot Greek pronunciation /ja'lja/. Because Georgian lacks a precise voiced palatal fricative /j/, these

local scribes rendered the spoken sound with their closest native phoneme, the post-alveolar fricative /ʒ/ (*Žalia*). Far from being ignorant of the name, the scribes residing in or writing about Gialia knew precisely how it was pronounced locally.

4. Conclusions

Prior to this study, no Greek manuscript from the Georgian monastery of Gialia in Cyprus was known. By analysing a Georgian note contained in it, this article demonstrates that the Byzantine Gospel lectionary manuscript BnF, grec 279 was once in the Gialia monastery's possession. Although brief, this inscription also provides insights into the linguistic history of the monastery's name. It confirms that the toponym *Žalia*, as attested in several manuscript colophons, reflects a specific phonetic development in Greek rather than a mere spelling variation in Georgian. The note thus offers a real-time documentation of how living spoken Greek was perceived, recorded and rendered by scribes living in a multicultural environment.

Abbreviations

Diktyon	Réseau numérique pour les manuscrits grecs, Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, Paris < http://www.diktyon.org/ > (Retrieved January 10, 2026)
NCM	Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts
PG	Patrologia Graeca
TITUS	Thesaurus Indogermanischer Text- und Sprachmaterialien < https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/ > (Retrieved June 11, 2026)

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ბერძნული სახარება-ლექციონარი Paris, BnF, grec 279 და ჟალიის (ღალიის) ქართული მონასტერი კვიპროსზე

სანდრო ცხვედაძე

(ჰამბურგის უნივერსიტეტი, ხელნაწერ კულტურათა შემსწავლელი ცენტრი)

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შესავალი

შუა საუკუნეების აღმოსავლეთ ხმელთაშუაზღვისპირეთი წარმოადგენდა დინამიკურ სივრცეს, რომელშიც სამონასტრო სამწიგნობრო ცენტრები ხელნაწერთა და კულტურათა ურთიერთგაცვლის ძირითად კერად გვევლინებოდა. საქართველოს ფარგლებს გარეთ (პალესტინა, შავი მთა, ათონის მთა და სხვა) არსებული ქართული სამონასტრო კერების ისტორიაში თავისი ადგილი უკავია კვიპროსის კუნძულზე მდებარე ჟალიის (ღალიის) მონასტერს. ნანგრევებად ქცეული ამ საეკლესიო წიგნსაცავის შედგენილობა ნაკლებად იყო გამოკვეთილი ხელნაწერთა გაფანტვისა და მათი განადგურების გამო, ხოლო ამ წიგნსაცავის ბერძნულენოვან ხელნაწერთა შესახებ არაფერი იყო ცნობილი.

წინამდებარე სტატია მიზნად ისახავს, სამეცნიერო დისკუსიაში შემოიტანოს პარიზის ეროვნულ ბიბლიოთეკაში დაცული მე-9 საუკუნის ბერძნული სახარება-ლექციონარი (Paris, BnF, grec 279), რომლის მე-3 ფურცლის ქვედა არშიაზე ქართული ნუსხურით შესრულებულია მინაწერი: „ს(ა)ხ(ა)რ(ე)ბ(ა)ჲ: ჟალიისაჲ: წ(მიდ)ისა: ღ(მრ)თისმშობ(ე)ლისაჲ:“. ეს მინაწერი, რომელიც პარიზის ნაციონალურ ბიბლიოთეკაში დაცული ბერძნული ხელნაწერების მკვლევართა (ანრი ომონი, ფრედერიკ მაკლერი) ყურადღების მიღმა დარჩენილი, მოწმობს, რომ ბერძნული ხელნაწერი წიგნი კვიპროსის ღვთისმშობლის სახელობის ქართული მონასტრის საკუთრება იყო და გარკვეული პერიოდის განმავლობაში იქ ინახებოდა.

1. დისკუსია

საისტორიო წყაროებში, ხელნაწერთა ანდერძებსა და მინაწერებში კვიპროსის ამ მონასტრის დასახელება ორი ქართული ვარიანტით დასტურდება: *ღალია* (მხოლოდ „ქართლის ცხოვრებაში“) და *ჟალია* (იმ ხელნაწერთა

ანდერძებსა და მინაწერებში, რომელთა გადამწერებსა და მინაწერთა შემსრულებლებს უშუალო კავშირი უნდა ჰქონოდათ ქალის მონასტერთან მაგ. BnF, grec 279-სა და სანქტ-პეტერბურგისა (IOM-RAS H18) და იერუსალიმის კოლექციებში (Jer. georg. 85) დაცულ ხელნაწერებში).

ენობრივი თვალსაზრისით, ფორმა *ღალია* უკავშირდება როგორც ბერძნულ ტოპონიმს Γαλιᾶ (ქართველთა მონასტერი კვიპროსზე), ისე ისტორიულ გეოგრაფიულ სახელს Γαλιᾶ (რომაული გალია), რაც ძველ ქართულ თარგმანებშიც დასტურდება. ორივე შემთხვევაში, საკითხი დაისმის ბერძნულ ენაში მომხდარ ფონეტიკურ ცვლილებებზე, რაც შემდგომში ბერძნულ-ენოვანი ტოპონიმის გადმოტანისას სხვადასხვა ვარიანტში აისახა.

გვიანანტიკურ ბერძნულში წინა რიგის ხმოვნებსა და პალატალურ სპირანტებთან ბერძნული γ წარმოითქმებოდა როგორც პალატალური ფრიკატივი [j]. პალესტინასა და მის შემოგარენში, მათ შორის, კვიპროსში, ბერძნულენოვან გარემოში მოღვაწე ქართველმა მთარგმნელებმა თუ სხვა მოღვაწე პირებმა, რომელთაც ხელნაწერებზე თავიანთი მინაწერები დატოვეს, არაბული წარმოთქმის გავლენით, წინა რიგის ხმოვნების წინ მდგომ ბერძნულ γ-ს აფრიკატი /ჯ/ შეუსაბამეს სიტყვათა ტრანსლიტერაციისას. ამ მოვლენის თვალსაჩინო ნიმუშია მე-10 საუკუნის სინური *იადგარი* (რომლის ძლისპირთა ბერძნული დასაწყისების ქართულ ტრანსლიტერაციებში გვხვდება სიტყვა ფორმები: ჯენატე (γενᾶται), ჯის (γῆς), და ა.შ.) და იოანე მოსხის *ლიმონარის* თარგმანი (ჯედუნტელმან (Γυᾶνταν)). სწორედ ამავე ფონეტიკურ კანონზომიერებას ეფუძნება ფორმა *ჟალია*: რადგან ქართულს არ მოეპოვება ბერძნული პალატალური ფრიკატივი [j], კვიპროსში მოღვაწე ან ადგილობრივებთან პირდაპირ კონტაქტში მყოფმა ქართველმა ბერებმა ცოცხალი ბერძნული წარმოთქმა ([ja'lja]) თავიანთ ენაში არსებული უახლოესი უღერადობით, პოსტალვეოლარული /ჟ/ ბგერით გადმოსცეს ეს სახელი (ჟალია).

2. დასკვნა

ამრიგად, Paris, BnF, grec 279 მნიშვნელოვანია არა მარტო ბიზანტიური ლიტურგიკული პრაქტიკისა და მასში დაცული სახარების ტექსტის კვლევისათვის, არამედ მასში დაცული მინაწერი არსებითი წყაროა კვიპროსის ქართული კერის ისტორიისა და ბერძნულ-ქართულ ენობრივ ურთიერთობათა შესასწავლად.