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„The Khanmeti Fragment of London“

von Jost Gippert (2019).

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Jost Gippert, Frankfurt 2020

THE KHANMETI FRAGMENT OF LONDON

Jost Gippert

In his famous article of 1923, Ivane Javakhishvili for the first time drew the attention of the scholarly world to the existence of the so-called *khanmeti* period of Georgian literacy [ჯავახიშვილი 1922-23: 313-319]. One of the five manuscript specimens he dwelt upon was the fragment of a Georgian-Hebrew palimpsest from the Bodleian Library in Oxford (ms. Georg. C 1 = ms. Heb. 2672),¹ the Georgian undertext of which (written in large *asomtavruli* letters) had been proposed by Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare to belong to the Old Testament book of Jeremiah² and was determined as covering the passage of Jer. 17.26-18.8 by Javakhishvili [ჯავახიშვილი 1922-23: 373-374; a photograph of the recto was printed *ib.*, pl. X].

Two further fragments of a Georgian-Hebrew palimpsest containing an undertext from the book of Jeremiah were first published by Robert Pierpont Blake in 1932, in his catalogue of the Georgian manuscripts preserved in the library of the University of Cambridge (Taylor-Schechter ms. 12,183 and ms. 12,741, described as nos. 1 and 2 of the 11 items of the collection).³ In their undertext, Blake was able to detect portions of Jer. 12.10-16 and 20.9-16, resp., with similar *khanmeti* features as in the Oxford fragment. In a separate article immediately following the catalogue [Blake 1932: 225-272],⁴ Blake undertook a thorough analysis of

¹ The other four manuscripts are all kept in the Korneli Kekelidze National Centre for Manuscript, Tbilisi, today (nos. A-737, A-89, A-844, and H-999).

² Neubauer, Cowley 1906: 74: “Palimpsest of Jeremiah, chap. viii, in Georgian (9th century, or perhaps earlier, according to Mr. F. C. Conybeare)”. – A first notice of the fragment, without regard of its being a palimpsest, is found in Lewy 1895: 20; the Georgian undertext is first mentioned in Коквицов 1899: 195-205 and 413. The latter article also contains the first photographs (as plates X and XI, appended at the end of the volume).

³ The catalogue comprises photographs (Plates 1–4), sketches (Plates 1a–4a), and complete transcripts of the Georgian undertext.

⁴ This article comprises photographs (Plates 7-8), sketches (Plates 7a-8a), and transcripts of the Oxford fragments.

both the Cambridge and Oxford fragments, concluding that both came from the Cairo Genizah and derived from the same codex.⁵

In an article of 1937, Akaki Shanidze joined a third fragment to this set, viz. ms. Or. 6581 of the British Museum, London, one of three minor pieces also stemming from the Cairo Genizah [შანიძე 1937: 29-42].⁶ The Georgian undertext content of this fragment had first been noticed by Oliver Wardrop in his catalogue of Georgian manuscripts in the British Museum [Wardrop 1913: 406 under no. 3],⁷ who already stated its affinity to the Cambridge fragment Taylor-Schechter 12,183.⁸ Wardrop tentatively proposed the following reading for the two sides of the fragment, without attempting at an identification of the text:

d. m | a(?)i **ei...d(a) | (?)qovlis ? e**

This reading was much improved on by A. Shanidze, who proposed the following rendering instead:

ყოლი მ | ხ(?)უამ **ჩემი დ[ა] | გულის**

⁵ Explicitly stated also in Lake, Blake, New 1928: 289: “They unquestionably belong to the same manuscript as the Bodleian leaf, which, though bought in Jerusalem, came from Cairo”.

⁶ The article includes photographs of all three fragments (on pp. 40-42).

⁷ Wardrop’s discovery had well been noted by Blake who wrote [Blake 1932b: 226]: “Through a reference in J. O. Wardrop’s Catalogue of the Georgian Mss. in the British Museum I discovered that one minute fragment is preserved there ... The British Museum fragment proved to be so small that it is impossible to place it, though it can be said with certainty that it belongs to the same codex as the fragments in Oxford and Cambridge”. Blake inspected the fragment himself, cf. *ib.* 228: “The British Museum specimen ... is a tiny, irregular bit of parchment, measuring about 38 by 30 mm. It is framed with two other palimpsest fragments containing Palestinian Syriac texts”.

⁸ “The style of the writing resembles that of the fragment T–S. 12. 183 of the Cambridge University Library, and both probably belong to the same MS. of the Bible. These fragments are from the Genizah at Cairo”. – The two other fragments stored under the same shelf number contain a Palestino-Aramaic undertext. Digital images of ms. Or. 6581 are available on http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_6581_f001r and ..._f001v; colour images of f. 1v of the London fragment are also provided in Karanadze, Kekelia, Shatirishvili, Chkhikvadze 2018: 47 (no. 28.) and 291 (no. 153.). The same book offers colour images of the Oxford fragment, too (p. 61, nos. 50 and 51).

However, Shanidze did not attempt any identification of these shreds of text either. It is not surprising then that in the subsequent decades, only the fragments from Oxford and Cambridge have been taken into account for further investigations into their dating and the position they take in the history of the Old Georgian Bible.⁹ Nevertheless, a thorough re-analysis of the London fragment enables us to proceed a bit further. First of all, Shanidze’s reading can be improved on and extended by a few characters. In the second line of the first side, one character more is discernible at the beginning, most probably an **ⴚ**, and the **ⴒ** can be confirmed. On the second side, the second line seems to continue with a second **ⴒ**, and of the third line we can make out traces of the characters **ⴒⴓⴑ** of which Wardrop already perceived the **ⴓ**). We thus arrive at a representation that can be schematised linewise as follows:¹⁰

ყოფილ ჯედაც ორს	იქნა: ოც ჯდასს ორს
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This, now, fits astonishingly well with the Cambridge fragment Taylor-Schechter 12,183, more precisely with the first lines each of the outer columns of its verso and recto as established by Shanidze, i.e., with Jer. 12.10 and 15. The text of the “verso” can be integrated with the recto of 12,183 with a few minor restitutions as follows in accordance with the Greek text:

 ⴒⴚⴓ	(ἐμόλυναν) τὴν μερί-	Jer. 12.10
Or. 6518 “verso”	ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ	δα μου, (ἔδωκαν) μερί-	
	ⴒ ⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ	δα ἐπιθ-	
	ⴒ ⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ	μητὴν μου εἰς ἔρ-	
T-S 12,183 recto col. a	ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ	ημον ἄβα-	
	ⴒⴓ ⴒⴓ ...	τον...	

⁹ Cf. დანელია 1992: 279-280; მელიქიშვილი 2012: 56-57; and especially ხარანაული 2004: 314–333, who argued that the text form they contain is based upon a hexaplaric Greek text form of the 6th-7th centuries.

¹⁰ Hereafter, a grey background indicates uncertain readings and a black one, reconstructed text.

Note that the only major divergence as to the Greek text here consists of the omittance of ἔδωκαν ‘they gave’;¹¹ on the other hand, the published images of the Cambridge fragment clearly show remnants of the 𐌆 and the 𐌰 at the beginning of the second and third lines as well as the 𐌱 following later on so that there can be hardly any doubt as to the reconstruction. For the restitution of ოვერად და უვალად for the ‘desolate wilderness’ (ἔρημον ἄβατον) we may compare the cooccurrence of the two words in Jer. 50.12 in the Mxeta Bible (ოვერ და ურწყულ და უვალ); the Oshki and Jerusalem Bibles have უგზო instead of უვალ here.¹² For the “recto” of Or. 6518, things are a bit less straightforward; however, the transition to the first line of the verso of Taylor-Schechter 12,813 can as well be established with certainty:

	(...ἐπιστρέψω καὶ)	Jer. 12.15
Or. 6518 “recto”	𐌲𐌺𐌱𐌶𐌵𐌹𐌸𐌰𐌱𐌰	ἐλεήσω αὐτοὺς	
	𐌸𐌰𐌸𐌰𐌲𐌺𐌶𐌰𐌱𐌰	καὶ κατοικ-	
	𐌰𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶-𐌶𐌰-𐌺	ἰὼ αὐτοὺς ἕκα-	
T-S 12,183 verso col. b	𐌶𐌺𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶	στον εἰς τὴν κληρο-	
	𐌰𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶𐌶...	νομίαν...	

In this case, too, the Cambridge fragment has preserved some traces of characters that must have pertained to the lines represented by Or. 6518, viz. the final 𐌶 of the second and, possibly, the second 𐌰 of the third line. What remains problematical is the verbal form corresponding to Greek ἐλεήσω (αὐτοὺς) ‘I shall have compassion (on them)’;¹³ if we have <ხოვეტ>ყოფე მ<ათ> here, i.e. ‘I shall talk to them’ as proposed above, we might expect this to have been

¹¹ ἔδωκαν + μερίδα is missing in Greek manuscripts of the Lucianic recension, and instead of ἔδωκαν, Symmachos has εταξαν; cf. Ziegler 1976: 211 n.

¹² The Greek text of the Septuagint has only ἔρημος ‘desert’ in the corresponding verse (Jer. 27.12). – There are several other cooccurrences of ოვერ- and უვალ- attested; e.g., in Juanšer’s Life of Vaxt’ang Gorgasali (§ 15; p. 239, l. 2 in ქართლის ცხოვრება 1955); the passion of Davit and Konstantine (§ 35; p. 259, l. 9 in ძველი ქართული აგიოგრაფიული ლიტერატურის ძეგლები 1971; or the Vita of St. Symeon the Stylite (§ 199; p. 328, l. 4 in ქართული აგიოგრაფიული ძეგლები 1918).

¹³ Aquila and Symmachos have οικτιρησω instead of ἐλεήσω (cf. Ziegler, o.c., 212 n.), which does not help.

combined with something like წყალობით ‘with compassion’ expressing a similar meaning.¹⁴ If the restitutions are correct, we gain with დახოჯამკვდრნე ‘I shall settle them in (their own inheritance)’ a hitherto unregistered *khanmeti* form, corresponding to დავეამკვდრნე in the Mxeta Bible and opposing itself to დავეამწნე in the Oshki and Jerusalem Bibles. The transition between the Cambridge and London fragments is further confirmed by the Hebrew overtext, which in the case of the Cambridge fragments has for long been identified as belonging to the tractate *Bābā Qammā* in the text form of the Jerusalem Talmud.¹⁵ The London shreds, which have hitherto remained undeciphered,¹⁶ fill the gaps of the Cambridge fragment at the indicated positions neatly, yielding, e.g., the following wording at the junction of Or. 6518 (a) with the verso of Taylor-Schechter no. 12,183v:¹⁷

<p>נפל לתוכו שור חרש שוטה וקטן חייב. אמר ר' לעזר כיני מתני' שור והוא חרש שור והוא שוטה. בן ובת עבד או אמה פטור:</p>
<p>“If an ox (that is) deaf-mute, insane, or young falls inside (a pit, the owner is) liable. Rabbi Eleazar said, thus is the Mishna: an ox that is deaf-mute, an ox that is insane. If a boy or a girl, a slave or a maidservant (falls inside, the owner is) exempt.”</p>

¹⁴ Cf., e.g., the verse წყალობით ეტყოდა უფალი მართას ‘With compassion the Lord talked to Martha’ in a vesper hymn authored by Ioane Minčxi (no. 93; p. 258, l. 3 in the edition by ხაჩიძე 1987).

¹⁵ Cf. Blake 1932a: 210, who erroneously mentions the 9th chapter; the text is from the 5th chapter instead.

¹⁶ Cf. the description in Margoliouth 1915: 579, no. 1154: “Another palimpsest (middle piece), the lower writing being Georgian, and the upper writing Rabbinic Hebrew (also apparently oriental) probably belonging to a date not far removed from the first-described fragment. – The Hebrew fragment seems to deal with the Calendar, the word שנה occurring twice, besides הנה, בא, and apparently also ירשת.”

¹⁷ Indications of missing or barely readable characters as above. – For the text passage (BQ 5.9(6) ~ 5a, 44-46 ~ 26a, ll. 5-7) cf. Guggenheimer 2008: 151 (with vocalisations) and further the English translations by Guggenheimer 2008: 152; Neusner 1984: 128; and the German translation by Wewers 1982: 95. The passage is not included in the edition of the Genizah fragments by Ginzberg 1909: 242, *pace* Blake 1932a: 210 n.1.

Taking all this evidence together, there can hardly be any doubt that the fragment kept in London belongs not only to the same codex as the fragments of Oxford and Cambridge but even to one of these fragments exactly, viz. ms. Taylor-Schechter 12,183, completing its upper corner as illustrated in Figure 1 for the recto and Figure 2 for the verso.



Figure 1: ms. Taylor-Schechter 12,183r
joined with ms. Or. 6581

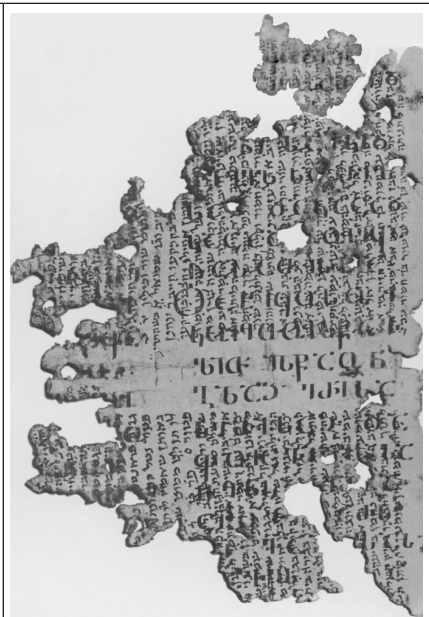


Figure 2: ms. Taylor-Schechter 12,183v
joined with ms. Or. 6581

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ლონდონის ხანმეტი ფრაგმენტი

იოსტ გიპერტი

სტატიაში განხილულია ლონდონის ბრიტანეთის მუზეუმის ხელნაწერის, Or. 6581-ის პატარა პალიმფსესტური ფრაგმენტი, რომლის ზედა ფენა შეიცავს ებრაულ ტექსტს, ხოლო ქვედა ფენა – ასომთავრულით დაწერილ ხანმეტ ტექსტს. დანვრილებითი კვლევის შედეგად ნავარაუდევია, რომ ფრაგმენტი დაკავშირებულია სხვა პალიმფსესტურ ფრაგმენტთან, რომელიც ინგლისში, კერძოდ კემბრიჯის ტეილორ-შეხტერის კოლეჯში ინახება და რომლის ქვედა ფენის ტექსტი რობერტ ბლეიკს იდენტიფიცირებული აქვს, როგორც ძველი აღთქმის წიგნის, იერემიას ნაწილი (იერ. 12:10-16 და 20:9-16). ორივე – ებრაული და ქართული ტექსტების შესწავლით დადგინდა, რომ ფრაგმენტი Or. 6581 არათუ იმავე ხელნაწერს მიეკუთვნება, რასაც კემბრიჯის პალიმფსესტი Taylor-Schechter 12,183, როგორც ეს 1913 წელს ოლივერ უორდროპმა ივარაუდა, არამედ წარმოადგენს თავად ამ ფრაგმენტის ნაწილს და ავსებს მის ზედა კუთხეს. ამრიგად, ბრიტანეთის ფრაგმენტი რამდენიმე სტრიქონს (12:19 და 12:15) ამატებს იერემიას ხანმეტ ვერსიას და, გარდა ამისა, შეიცავს ხანმეტ ფორმას „დახოვამკვდრნე“, რომელიც სხვაგან ჯერ-ჯერობით არ არის დადასტურებული.