

Philology

The Tradition of Copying the “Avgarozi” in Manuscripts Written in the “Dedabruli Script”

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Abstract. The present paper examines manuscripts of the Avgarozi, a talismanic text from Ottoman-ruled southern Georgia, written by female converts to Islam using the Kobuletian-Ajarian Dedabruli script (KAAs). This paleographic term refers to the characteristic angular script of elderly women in the Kobuleti-Ajara region. The “Avgarozi” originates from the apocryphal correspondence between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus Christ. Translated into Georgian starting from the 11th century, the text evolved from a Christian apocryphon into a popular talisman, later associated with the cult of Saint George. The analyzed manuscripts exhibit distinctive features such as angular letterforms and scriptio continua. Their content is a syncretic blend of Gospel fragments, healing prayers, disease terminology, and references to prophets, biblical kings, and local sanctuaries of Saint George. The scroll format and textual composition suggest that these converted women continued the “late Avgarozi” tradition. These “Dedabruli avgarozi” manuscripts may provide crucial evidence of crypto-Christianity, suggesting the preservation of national and religious identity in the context of oppression. They represent a unique cultural phenomenon, highlighting women's active role in safeguarding national memory. The study assesses whether these manuscripts constitute a direct continuation of the “late Avgarozi” or a unique manifestation of religious and cultural identity.
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Keywords: Epistle of Avgarozi, apocryphon, Kobuletian-Ajarian Dedabruli script

Introduction

The Georgian manuscript tradition is one of the most distinguished legacies created by the nation, marked by refined calligraphy and its capacity to reflect diverse forms of adaptation to global cultural processes. In this context, the translation of apocryphal literature (AL) – particularly manuscripts containing the apocryphal New Testament (NT) text known as the *EA* – is especially significant. This early Christian legend occupies a notable

place in Georgian literary heritage. The literary history of this text is of particular interest. The foundation of the *Avgaroz* narrative lies in the Syriac legend describing the correspondence between King Abgar of Edessa and Jesus Christ. Questions concerning the text's history, its narrative variants, and the chronological relationship among different manuscript versions continue to attract scholarly attention. The legend of King Abgar V of Edessa was translated into Greek,

Georgian, Armenian, and Slavic languages. Some scholars (C. Baroniuc, L. C. Tillemont, W. Cureton, G. Phillips, W. Cave, G. E. Grabe) regarded the correspondence as a document of historical value. An Armenian recension of the *Abgar* is also attested, which is more complete than the Georgian translations. More than thirty Georgian manuscripts contain the *EA*, indicating its widespread popularity in Georgia – a country situated at the crossroads of Eastern and Western civilizations – and its deep integration into the spiritual and cultural life of the Georgian people. Three Georgian translations of the *EA*, dating to the 11th-12th centuries, are known in three versions. Scholarly literature offers diverse perspectives on the narrative and iconographic dimensions of the legend, particularly the *acheiropoieton* – the “image not made by human hands” associated with Edessa. Studies also examine the iconographic representations of the so-called “Legend of Abgar” (Karaulashvili, 2024). The importance of the *EA* for Georgian Christian literature is evidenced by both early and later transformed manuscripts, including those written in the so-called “women’s script.” The increasing need for verification and reliability of paleographic, codicological, and textological studies in the digital era has prompted the digitization of manuscripts written in the “KAd” using high-resolution technology, as these are considered primary

sources. In 2023, a team of scholars built a digital corpus of these manuscripts at Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University through the research project, enabling further paleographic, linguistic, and interdisciplinary research (Khakhutaishvili et al., 2023). In the present paper, we explore the nature of the *Avgarozī* texts written in the KAd to determine whether they represent a continuation of the tradition of copying the so-called “late Avgarozī texts” by *gemini* in historical southern Georgia. To achieve this, the paper addresses several key questions. In particular, what role does the *Avgarozī* play within the Georgian manuscript tradition? How did the text transform from an epistolary genre into a healing-oriented narrative? What attributes contributed to its talismanic function? What types of texts comprise the “Avgarozī” tradition in this regional women’s script, and how unique are these texts as expressions of national, religious, or cultural identity? The study of the *Avgarozī* manuscripts written in the “women’s script” is significant for the fields of paleography, book history, folklore, magic texts, archaeography, and textual criticism. The study combines various methodologies including **descriptive analysis, synthesis and interpretation, – comparative – contrastive method, paleographic analysis** – to classify and interpret the distinctive script features, including the angularity

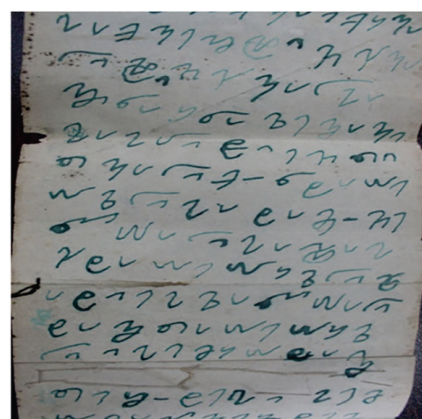
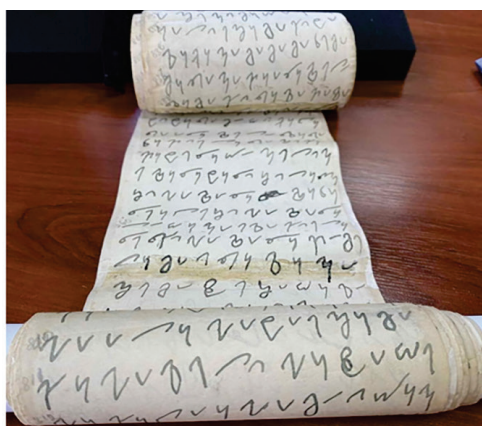


Fig. 1. Each manuscript was examined in terms of its content, paleographic features, and cultural implications, allowing for a contextualized understanding of its role in Georgian manuscript heritage, especially under Ottoman rule, when the texts were produced or copied by female converts to Islam.

of letters, vowel omission, lack of punctuation, and unspaced text typical of this writing style, **codicological examination** and **textological evaluation**. The analysis focuses on three primary manuscripts: The *Avgaroz* manuscript held in the Kobuleti Museum (**Kob.**), and two scrolls preserved at the **KKNCM: H 1258a (kek2)** and **Q 1556 (kek3)**.

The “EA” from the cycle of apocryphal legends held paramount significance in Georgian everyday and cultural life. The epistles’ references to the healing power of Jesus endowed the text with magical properties. Despite prohibitions by the Orthodox Church, this literary work was transformed into a talisman. Upon gaining canonical acceptance, the apocryph underwent transformation within the Georgian context. Over time, the Abgar text transcended its purely literary and theological function, becoming a protective talisman against illness, the “evil eye,” and various other threats.

By the 14th and 15th centuries, late Georgian manuscripts began incorporating the *EA* into Gospel readings, particularly those of John and Matthew. These manuscripts also included healing recipes and archaic incantations. The 19th-century tradition consolidated textual developments from the 14th to the 17th centuries, giving rise to *Avgaroz*-titled manuscripts that primarily carried magical content. In later manuscripts, the apocryph, conceived as having talismanic function, becomes associated with the name of St. George, suggesting a connection between the epistle and the Georgian cult of St. George. The term “Dedabruli script” (*dedabruli kheli*) in Georgian paleography typically refers to a crude variant of the *Mkhedruli* script associated with female scribes (D. Bakradze, T. Sakhokia, N. Berdzenishvili, Val. Silogava, Kh. Akhvlediani, T. Khajomia, among others). However, in the southwestern regions of Georgia, especially in Kobuleti and Upper Ajara, a specific form of this script- termed here as the *KAds*- emerged. This style is distinguishable from other “crude *Mkhedruli*” scripts by its angular forms, frequent omission of vowels, and continuous, punctuation-free

text. These features suggest deliberate efforts at concealment, especially by women converted to Islam, but retained Christian practices in secret. A particular variety of this writing is identified as the *KAds*. Three manuscripts of Abgar executed in the *KAds* have survived to the present and are dated to the 19th-20th centuries. All three focus thematically on protection from illness and evil spirits, featuring healing prayers, incantations, and listings of diseases. The *Avgaroz* texts contain Gospel fragments alongside names of biblical prophets and kings. The prayer of Cyprian – a Christian saint known for healing and exorcism – is also included, as are references to sacred sites such as Mart’q’opi and invocations of Saint George. One of the manuscripts is preserved in a scroll format. The proliferation of manuscripts demonstrates the continuity of the *Avgaroz* copying tradition throughout the Ottoman era. Despite imperial and religious pressures, Islamized women still resorted to Christian texts for protection against diseases to seek healing, demonstrating both the endurance of folk Christianity and a pragmatic syncretism of belief systems.

According to a Syriac legend, Abgar V, the ruler of Edessa, who was afflicted with an incurable disease, wrote a letter to Jesus Christ, asking him to come and heal him of his illness. In his reply, Jesus promised that after his ascension, he would send one of his disciples to heal him and convert the people of Edessa. The oldest version of the legend of Abgar is preserved in Greek and Syriac sources. This apocryphon narrates one of the most popular versions of the origin of the *acheiropoieton* (from Greek ἀχειροποίητον, literally “not made by hands” – a term used in Christian theology and art history to refer to sacred images or icons believed to have been created miraculously, rather than by a human artist, through divine intervention) – left on a tile in the city of Hierapolis. The localization of this tile in Edessa laid the foundation for the veneration of this sacred image in Georgia and its subsequent transformation into the *Mandyliion* (cloth icon) (Karaulashvili, 2003). From this perspective, the

text also became a point of interest for Georgian Christians. The EA, as an apocryphal text (AT) of the NT, held an important place in the early Georgian literary tradition. According to Georgian scholars, “AL was so abundant that Euthymius of Athos was compelled to compile a special index. Both Old and New Testament apocryphs were widely translated into Georgian” (Gigineishvili, 1977). Texts found in papyri and epigraphic sources attribute healing powers to Jesus, reinforcing the magical function of the *Epistle*. Despite opposition from the Orthodox Church, the text gained firm ground in Georgian popular belief and became widely used as an amulet, a talisman (Chkhikvadze, 2007). The earliest Georgian translations of the short and long recensions of the EA are attested from the 11th-13th centuries in four Gospel manuscripts. The abbreviated recension appears in the Alaverdi Gospel (dated 1054), whereas the expanded version is documented in both early and later codices. According to Nestan Chkhikvadze, the incorporation of the *Epistle* into Gospel manuscripts such as those from Alaverdi and Gelati demonstrates its deliberate integration within the Gospel corpus, where it served a supplementary function in the narrative of Christ's earthly ministry (Chkhikvadze, 2007). The short recension displays Syriac influences and is considered an archaic, Eastern-style translation, incorporating motifs absent from Greek versions. The longer translation shows stylistic features associated with the Petritsoni School (Chkhikvadze, 2007). Though initially viewed with suspicion by ecclesiastical authorities, the *Epistle of Avgarozī* (EA) was eventually granted canonical status in some Christian circles. As K. Kekelidze noted, “In certain periods and ecclesiastical contexts, the *Epistle* was even regarded as having canonical value, and for this reason it was included in the Gospels” (Kekelidze, 1960). Transformation of the apocryphal texts (AT) in Georgia included the development of new narratives, as well as adaptation to diverse cultural contexts. Over time, stories

emerged linking the arrival of the *Mandylion* to Georgia, such as in the hagiographic life of Anton Mart'q'opeli (Anthony of Mart'q'opi) compiled by Arsen Bulamaisidze. Although the original version of this synaxarion has not survived, a later recension remains extant. This suggests that from the early Christian period through the medieval era and even into modern times, the EA underwent continuous transformation (Chkhikvadze, 2007). The AT appended to the Four Gospels in this context functions to underscore the theological significance of venerating the icon of the Savior and the sacrament of baptism. The Sinaitic translation, incorporated within liturgical collections, is explicitly linked to the rite of communion. Within the Sinaitic corpus, the final two texts contain pericopes from the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, selected on account of their thematic affinity with the EA. This epistle subsequently appears in later *Books of Eulogies* (კურთხევანი), embedded among healing prayers, wherein it is associated with St. George, regarded as a talismanic text. In manuscripts dating from the 14th-5th cc., one encounters rare healing prescriptions and archaic incantatory formulas, further reinforcing the perception of the text as functioning in a talismanic capacity. Within these codices, the epistle is strategically positioned between the Gospel readings of John and Matthew, with *Avgarozī* itself employed as a generic designation for a talisman. As one scholar has observed, “it seems that this very era and manuscript must have laid the foundation for the introduction and dissemination of *Avgarozī* within the Georgian manuscript tradition.” Scholarly consensus suggests that the conceptualization of the text as a talisman during this period derives primarily from the Byzantine cultural milieu rather than from indigenous Georgian tradition. In subsequent manuscripts, the interrelation between the epistle and Gospel pericopes assumes considerable significance. The EA purports to be a letter from the Savior addressed to King Abgar, delineating the path to healing and salvation; this attribution occasioned the tradition

of its inclusion alongside the canonical Four Gospels. In later codices, the apocryphon, imbued with a talismanic function, becomes increasingly associated with the cult of Saint George. Significantly, such an association with Saint George is absent from the earliest Greek witnesses. By contrast, in the later tradition, *Avgaroz* texts are explicitly linked to the saint, including manuscripts produced in the so-called *KAds*. The prominence of Saint George within the Georgian religious imagination is attested by Ivane Javakhishvili, who observes: "...in life itself, the Georgian nation venerates him the most. There are not as many temples in Georgia dedicated to the name of God and Jesus Christ, or any other saint, as there are built in the name of Saint George..." (Javakhishvili, 1979) Furthermore, Javakhishvili maintains that "in the religious imagination of the Georgian nation, the first place in seniority and power is occupied by Saint George, the second by God the Creator, and the third by Elijah" (Javakhishvili, 1979). Echoing this, Professor Ramaz Khalvashi has argued that by the eleventh century a literary tradition had already crystallized portraying Saint George as the celestial patron of Georgia (Khalvashi, 1998). Nestan Chkhikvadze identified the scroll-form of the manuscripts as a defining characteristic of those texts designated under the rubric of *Avgaroz* and classified as magical. This is corroborated by examples from the 18th-19th centuries, which, while functioning as talismans, include both healing prayers and select Gospel pericopes most frequently from Matthew, Mark, and John. As Chkhikvadze notes, "the nineteenth-century tradition unified the changes of the fourteenth-fifteenth as well as the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries and preserved for us many manuscripts with magical content under the name *Avgaroz*" (Chkhikvadze, 2007). Notably, these later texts also frequently invoke the sanctuaries of Saint George (Chkhikvadze, 2007).

Within Georgian popular tradition, a talisman believed to provide protection against the "evil eye" or illness is generally termed an *Avgaroz*. Its

origin is traced to the apocryphal *Epistle of Avgaroz*, and its widespread diffusion is attested by the sheer number of extant copies. The phenomenon is equally observable in *Avgaroz* texts transcribed in the so-called *dedabruli script*. Its distinctive features include angularized forms of *Mkhedruli* graphemes, a predominance of vowel usage, and the absence of spacing or punctuation. This mode of writing, practiced predominantly by women who had converted to Islam, served the purpose of maintaining secrecy (Khakhutaishvili, 2017). The cultural significance of manuscripts produced in the *KAds* is considerable, for they represent a deliberate effort by female converts to Islam to safeguard the Georgian language and national identity during the Ottoman hegemony over Ajara. As noted in contemporary sources, "among the Muslim Georgians of Ajara and Ottoman Georgia, a special form of Georgian script preserved until recent times was known as the *dedabruli script*, because it was mainly used by women" (Akhvlediani, 1978). The extant manuscripts of this category, dating from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, include personal correspondence, *Avgaroz* texts, alphabet samples, signatures, and marginal inscriptions.

Presently, three *Avgaroz* manuscripts in *KAds* are known: the *Avgaroz* of the **Kob.**, manuscript H 1258a preserved in the **KKNCM** (*kek2*), and manuscript Q 1556 from the Q Fund of the **KKNCM**, consisting of two scrolls (*kek3*). Zakaria Chichinadze notes: "...in Churuk-su, besides Georgian literacy, Georgian *Avgaroz* are also widespread" (Chichinadze, 2013:106). This observation suggests that the tradition of copying *Avgaroz* continued unabated during the period of Turkish rule, as evidenced by the abundance of surviving examples.

The inventory record for manuscript H 1258a was entered by Ekvtime Takaishvili (Kekelidze, 1948), who described it as a *Karabadini* (a compendium of medical recipes) discovered in Kobuleti, transcribed in *Mkhedruli* script, and bound in

notebook form. Within its collection of incantations and prayers, one encounters supplications against fevers, the evil eye, and related afflictions. The manuscript also includes Apollon Tsuladze provided valuable information regarding manuscript H 1258a in the newspaper *Sakartvelo*, preserved in the archive of the Georgian Catholic monastery in Istanbul. Tsuladze notes: “...the Muhajirs those who left Ajara-Kobuleti have not forgotten the Georgian language and the writing of Georgian ‘books’ (letters)” (Tsuladze, 1916). These manuscripts were ultimately transferred to the Society for the Spreading of Literacy among Georgians. Dating from the nineteenth century, the manuscript possesses a thin cardboard cover sewn with thread. Takaishvili’s notes describe it as a *Karabadini* inscribed in a highly “peculiar Ajarian Mkhedruli” consisting of thirty-four pages (Kekelidze, 1948). The scribe, identified as Aishe Okropiridze (also known as Aishe Okorobeloghuli), explicitly designates the work not as a *Karabadini* or a book of incantations, but rather as an “*ebisutole vagarozs*” (Epistle of Vagaroz). **The internal evidence of the text confirms** this talismanic function, repeatedly affirming: *visatsu ese agarozī kodesu* (“whoever has this agarozī”). For the chanter, the *Avgarozī* served as an amulet for protection against the evil eye, for healing illnesses, and for ensuring success in diverse undertakings. Although catalogued as a *Karabadini*, the text itself testifies to its identity as an *Avgarozī*, understood in its generic talismanic sense. **The classification as a Karabadini is generally accepted by scholars, primarily on the authority of Takaishvili’s description.** From the outset, the inclusion of Gospel pericopes alongside the *Epistle of Avgaroz* was premised upon their close thematic resonance, particularly their shared emphasis on the deliverance of the sick and the possessed. Gospel fragments are also preserved in the *Avgarozī* manuscripts written in *KAdS*, e.g. manuscript *kek2* contains an extended passage from the Gospel of Luke recounting the Visitation: Mary’s journey to

Judah, Elizabeth’s greeting, and the gestation of the Eternal in the womb. The text preserves the blessing pronounced by Elizabeth – “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb” – along with Mary’s Magnificat. These passages exhibit both faithful reproduction and variant readings, attesting to the enduring liturgical resonance of the Gospel narrative within the talismanic context of the *Avgarozī*. Compare (Giunashvili et. al., 2016). Manuscript H 1258a thereby exemplifies the continuation of the *Avgarozī* tradition during the period of Ottoman domination, when female converts, while nominally aligned with Islam, nevertheless preserved Christian texts for healing, deliverance, and protection. The manuscript further invokes biblical prophets and kings, e.g.: “...this Epistle of Angarozī brings one close to heaven and earth, and by its icon-likeness of Elias, by the faith of the prophecy of Jacob, by the strength of Joseph, by the humility of the prophecy of the old, and of David the king (*kek2*).” The prayers of the manuscript petition Saint Cyprian (3rd-4th cc.) renowned in Christian tradition as a healer of the possessed, for deliverance from witchcraft and demonic affliction: “In the time of Cyprian every knot is untied and every temptation is wiped away... O mighty God, I ask in supplication...” The rationale for the incorporation of Cyprian’s prayer into the *Epistle* remains uncertain. Furthermore, the text makes reference to “Mart’q’opeli,” citing “the prophecy and great power of the apostles, the prophecy of the martyrs of Martvili of Martqopeli, of the stylite from afar, of the chanter...” (H 1258a). The establishment of the cult of the acheiropoietos in Georgia is traditionally attributed to the hymnic compositions of Arsen Bulamaisidze and Saba Svingelozī, as well as to the writings of Abuserisdze Tbeli. The hymn of Arsen Bulamaisidze, in particular, provided the basis for the *synaxarion* recension of the *Life of Anton Martqopeli*, produced at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although the recension itself has not survived, later

versions are extant. The motif of the Edessa icon's translation, rooted in the hymn of Anton Martqopeli, recurs in historical literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, often in interpolated or variant forms. In these contexts, the sanctuaries of Saint George are again explicitly invoked in the *Avgaroz*. As in related manuscripts, H 1258a incorporates incantations for deliverance from illness and demonic affliction: "from all sickness, from apparitions, from fever, from chills (27v); from cold and from fever, from enemies, from exhaustion, from those who walk by day and night, from apparitions and from silence (33r)." One incantation contains an epic fragment: "We went to a high mountain to hunt; I saw the trail (29v) of a devil at the base of a bush. I cast a net of silk (30v)." The banishing formula follows: "Be bound and turn back, devil, adversary (10r); before the fire, so may every adversary be dispelled, O Trinity, fever, and chill, with the chanting of cherubim..." The manuscript also contains a sequence of nonsensical or magical words resembling the so-called "abracadabra": *Uraelosa Uraelo Raphaelorah Shutaello Zetsapaelo*. A prayer template likewise appears: "Let there be an agaroz, in the name of Aishe of the Gospel of... by Peter, by Paul, by the prayer of the holy apostles... by Elias, by faith in the name of Jesus (12v)." It is probable that manuscript H 1258a was originally intended as a scroll; however, due to its age and repeated relocations - belonging as it did to a Muhajir woman and transported from Turkey. It was ultimately rebound into book form. By contrast, the *Avgaroz* preserved in the **Kob.**, written in *KAds*, is folded lengthwise, presumably as a scroll. Measuring 6.53 meters, though incomplete at both ends and damaged in places, the manuscript likewise identifies itself as an *Avgaroz*: "Whoever has this agaroz in the house; whoever has this angaroz; whoever has this episto angaroz; let them hold close this epistole angaroz; save the owner of this agaroz from all misfortune." The text here too confirms that *Avgaroz* functioned as a generic designation for talismanic writings. As

anticipated, the **Kob.** also preserves fragments of Gospel texts and explicitly Christian elements. Among these is the account of the Visitation: Mary's journey to the hill country of Judah, her greeting to Elizabeth, the leaping of the child in Elizabeth's womb, and the Magnificat. The narrative culminates with Mary's three-month sojourn in Elizabeth's household, rendered in a form close to the canonical text (cf. Luke 1:39-45). In addition to Gospels, the manuscript contains healing incantations and prayers of deliverance from demonic possession. The text invokes the names of various saints: "Let us say the name Kuviroz, Koroz, Korotine; of the glory of Michael and Gabriel the archangels; by the light of Elias; full of grace and truth, John..." The supplicant, convinced of the omnipotence of the Lord and the Gospel, petitions for salvation from misfortune and peril: "O God and Four Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John save the owner of this angaroz from all misfortune, from strife" (*kob*). The manuscript further enumerates prophets and kings among them Elias, Jacob, Joseph, David, and Solomon together with Mart'q'opeli, described "by the icon-likeness of Elias, by the faith of the prophecy of Jacob, by the strength of Joseph, by the humility of the prophecy of the old, and of David the king, and by the wisdom of Solomon, the prayer of king Ezekiel, by the prophecy and power of the apostles, by the prophecy and of the martyrs of Mart'q'opeli, we mention from far-off the chanters, there is no deceit" (*kob*). The manuscript likewise preserves conventional incantations. It includes an agricultural prayer: "May you protect with holiness (so it is!) the field, the vineyard; may it be fruitful by the power of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit..." (*kob*). A catalogue of diseases is also provided: "Prayer for ailment, pain, chills, fevers, severe aches, scurvy, gout, and whitlow, sciatic hernia and evil wind, of the stomach, heart, dropsy, hemorrhoids, jaundice..." (*kob*). As in manuscript H 1258a, the sanctuaries of Saint George are invoked, although the specific enumeration differs from

that preserved in the latter (Khakhutaishvili, 2017). Manuscript Q 1556, preserved in the Q Fund of the **KKNCM**, comprises two scrolls. The first measures 1065 × 12.5 cm and consists of forty sections (the opening lines, containing one to three lines, are torn away), while the second scroll measures 192 × 12 cm and comprises five sections. Copied in Kobuleti, the text is written on a single-lined folded sheets of notebook-shaped paper of medium thickness, aged and yellowed, including of paper?. Within the text, the designation *Avgarozī* appears eight times, *ebistole avgarozī* appears three times: *visatsu esu anugarozī khukonudesu* (“whoever has this anugarozī”); *visatsu es ebistoli anugarozī khukonudesu* (“whoever has this epistole anugarozī”); This recurring formula confirms that *Avgarozī* functioned as a generic designation for talismanic writing. The manuscript also enumerates ailments: “scarlet fever, chills, fever, severe ache, scurvy, gout, whitlow, sciatica, stomach affliction, cardiac disease, dropsy, jaundice...” (Khakhutaishvili & Tsketskhladze, 2024). Of particular importance, manuscript Q 1556 preserves the most complete version of the *Avgarozī* text. Within it are included pericopes from the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (cf. John 1:1). The text continues with: “We received grace for grace... the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, the only begotten, full of grace and truth” (cf. John 1:16-17). Another passage reads: “He cried out and said: This is he who comes after us and was before us, for he was before us” (cf. John 1:15). In addition, as in other *Avgarozī* manuscripts, the Visitation pericope from Luke (1:39-45) is reproduced: Mary’s greeting to Elizabeth, the leaping of the child, Elizabeth’s blessing, and Mary’s rejoicing that “from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” The manuscript also invokes biblical kings and prophets, including Martqopeli: “of the prophecy of Martqopeli, of the distant stylite, of David the king, and of the wisdom of Solomon, the prayer of Eze-

kiel the king, of the prophecy of Mart’q’opeli” (Q 1556). The supplicant appeals to “the caster out of demons” for deliverance: “I ask of the Lord and of the earth, in the time of Cyprian, every knot is untied and wiped away... from all temptation now, O Lord God Almighty, I have asked in supplication” (Q 1556). One section of particular interest reads: “Of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, prayer of the eternal, the unseen... we entrust our soul to the power of God, with five angels... With the seal of Solomon. Mark, the coming one will remind you with cunning. We are of Christ. Of Christ, we are sealed by the hand of Christ. John the Evangelist came, the devil is mighty...” This passage vividly illustrates the syncretism of Christian elements (invocation of the Trinity, Gospel figures such as Mark and John the Evangelist, and affirmation of Christ) with folk-magical motifs, including the magical authority attributed to King Solomon, the “seal” as a protective symbol, and references to the devil as an adversarial force.

In this way, the Q 1556 scroll demonstrates the fusion of apotropaic magic and Christian devotion that characterizes the *Avgarozī* corpus.

Conclusion

The EA evolved from a Syriac legend into a Christian talisman, deeply intertwining with St. George. This transformation is epitomized by the KA scrolls. Created by female converts to Islam during the Ottoman dominance, these manuscripts represent a syncretic blend of Christian and folk beliefs, serving as tools for healing and protection. The texts combine Gospel excerpts, prayers to St. George, and magical spells, using culturally coded metaphors for illness. Their content, along with the script’s distinctive, angularity and discreet style, highlights a pragmatic strategy for preserving identity under religious oppression. More than religious artifacts, these manuscripts are dynamic records of cultural resistance, demonstrating the vital role of women in safeguarding tradition and collective memory.

ფილოლოგია

„ავგაროზის“ გადაწერის ტრადიცია „დედაბრული ხელით“ შესრულებულ ხელნაწერებში

მ. ხახუტაიშვილი

*ბათუმის შოთა რუსთაველის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ჰუმანიტარულ მეცნიერებათა
ფაკულტეტი, საქართველო*

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის მ. შანიძის მიერ)

ნაშრომი იკვლევს ისტორიულ სამხრეთ საქართველოში ოსმალთა ბატონობის პერიოდში გამაჰმადიანებული ქალების მიერ „ქობულურ-აჭარული დედაბრული ხელით“ (გამოირჩევა კუთხოვანი ასოებით, ხმოვანმეტობითა და უინტერვალო წერით) შესრულებული „ავგაროზის“ ხელნაწერებს. ტექსტების შინაარსი სინკრეტულია და მოიცავს: სახარების ფრაგმენტებს, სამკურნალო შელოცვებს, მათში დასახელებულია წმ. გიორგის სალოცავები. ზოგიერთი ხელნაწერი გრაგნილის ფორმისაა. ტექსტების შინაარსი და ფორმა ადასტურებს, რომ გამაჰმადიანებული ქალები აგრძელებდნენ „გვიანდელი ავგაროზის“ გადაწერის ტრადიციას. „დედაბრული ავგაროზები“ ფარული ქრისტიანობის მნიშვნელოვანი მტკიცებულებაა, გამოხატავს რა ქალთა აქტიურ როლს ეროვნული მეხსიერების დაცვაში.

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