

## **For the political-ideological and practical significance of “Jami Abbas”**

### **(NCM. S-174)and the Persian Four Gospel written in Georgian (NCM. S-16).**

*The research aims* at studying two Codes – S-174 and S-16 preserved in Georgian National Center of Manuscripts from the historical and religious-political viewpoint. Our objective is to establish the historical and ideological significance of **Jam-i Abbas** (NCM. S-174) and **the Persian Four Gospel written in Georgian script** (NCM. S-16), which was translated by Farsadan Gorgijanidze as well as to determine their practical purpose.

Occasioned by its foreign political situation Georgia has always been the localization of various religions. Since the 30s of VIII century Georgians have had the active political, cultural and ideological relations with Muslim believers. Hence, the polemic over Christian and Muslim religions has the multi-century history in our country. The phenomenon of “dialogue between civilizations” necessitates the special study as it clearly demonstrates the following: Georgians’ religious-political relations with neighbouring Muslim states (Iran, Ottoman); the knowledge about the Islamic religion accumulated in Georgian society over the centuries as well as the Georgians’ attitude towards Islam and people professing it. Most importantly, we consider, that this kind of studies to a greater extent determine the management and plan of peaceful co-existence between the confessions at the modern stage.

The present work deals with the study of two Codes- S-174 and S-16 preserved in Georgian National Center of Manuscripts in historical and religious –political directions. Our goal is to define the historical and ideological importance of “Jami Abbas” (NCM. S-174) and the Persian Four Gospels written in Georgian script (NCM. S-16), which were translated by Farsadan Gorgijanidze, and to state their practical purpose.

From the standpoint of studying the religious situation existing in Eastern Georgia the special importance is attached to the period of King Rostom’s reign(1632-1658) in Kartli. In Georgian scientific literature the policy implemented by Safavid’ Iran towards Eastern Georgia is, for some reason, considered to be a “compromise”, because the throne was left to the Bagrationi dynasty on condition that they held the title of “Vali of Gurjistan” and converted to Islam. Rostom Khan’s activities are the shining example of so called “compromised policy”. In the scientific researches the emphasis is laid on the restoration of churches and monasteries carried out by Rostom, that somehow idealizes his merits, in our view.

During Rostom’s reign Christianity was neither officially prohibited nor persecuted in Georgia. However, according to the traditions of Georgian historical narratives<sup>1</sup>, Rostom Khan, being brought up as Muslim, created all the necessary conditions for the representatives of upper Feudal stratum to convert to Islam, which was the essential precondition for their promotion. This action exerted the oblique pressure on conversion to Islam. Apparently, Islam was gaining more prestige and “popularity” that was occasioned by the fact that Kartli was ruled by the king who was Muslim by his up-bringing and mentality<sup>2</sup>.

As a result of religious policy pursued by Rostom Khan in Kartli, Christian and Muslim weddings as well as funeral rituals were enacted concurrently, parallel to each other. For example, Rostom’s first wedding

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<sup>1</sup> Monk Egnatashvili, *New Kartli Life, First text, Lie of Kartli, II, Tb., 1959, pp.424-426*; Vakhushti Batonishvili, *Description of Kingdom of Georgia, Life of Kartli, IV, the text is compiled according to all the main manuscripts by S. Kaukhchishvili. Tb., 1973, pp.438-439, 442-443.*

<sup>2</sup> Kh. Baindurashvili, *Schism in Tbilisi, (VIII-XVIII cc), Historical and Ethnographic studios, IX, Tb., 2005, p. 152*

ceremony in Kartli was conducted according to the both Christian and Muslim customs<sup>1</sup>; among Mussulmen Rostom declared himself to be a Muslim, however, he crossed himself in the presence of his wife<sup>2</sup>. According to Farsadan Gorgijanidze when Rostom's adopted son- Luarsab Batonishvili died, the Georgians "observed the Georgians' as well as Tatars' burial customs of eating, feast, giving away<sup>3</sup>...". As we see, Georgian and European sources reflect the process of establishing a double standard of life during Rostom's reign, that was expressed in the simultaneous performance of Christian and Islamic traditions. Such practice should have facilitated the recognition and adaptation to Muslim customs for the Georgians.

Based on the historical sources, we deem, that actually, the "compromise" on the part of Iran was expressed in replacing the coercive ways of spreading Islam by the diplomatic maneuver - "soft power" utilized by Safavids in Eastern Georgia, which had a rather greater effect<sup>4</sup>.

D. Karichashvili writes that during the reign of Rostom –Khan Koran<sup>5</sup> was translated into Georgian by Farsadan Gorgijanidze (1626-1696). This information is not confirmed anywhere else. However, we know for sure, that "Jami Abbas" seems to have been translated into Georgian by Farsadan Gorgijanidze at the request of Rostom Khan during his reign. The manuscript is preserved in K. Kekelidze Georgian National Center of Manuscripts, with the number S-174.

Code S-174 consists of 280 pages and is in sizes of: 32X23,5; 31X2; it is performed in Mkhedruli script and beautiful handwriting on white, European paper of high quality. The paper of last pages of the manuscript is

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<sup>1</sup>Vakhushti Batonishvili, *Life of Kartli*, IV, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> Information about Georgia by Din Pietri avitabile (XVIIIc.). The introduction, translation and comment by B. Giorgadze, Tb., 1977, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> The History of Farsadan Gorgijanidze, S. Kakabadze's edition, *Historical Narrative*, II, Tf., 1926, p.55.

<sup>4</sup> Kh.Baindurashvili, *Shia Madhhabs in Tbilisi (VIII-XVIII cc)* The dissertation presented to earn the academic degree of Doctor of History, Tb., 2022, pp.164-178.

<sup>5</sup> D. Karichashvili, *King Rostom*, 1894, 50.

different- of lower quality; the cover is made of Eastern, leather-coated cardboard. Both wings are adorned with champlévé golden rosettes (the colour has been faded to a great extent); the cover is set in the gold frame (here the colour has mostly been faded as well); The pages of the manuscript are framed with two golden, narrow lines, and the text is enclosed with the frame consisting of golden, blue and salad- coloured lines; only the first page is set in the frame of golden rosette. The manuscript has been restored. The blank pages are as follows: the second so called title page as well as pages - **254, 272-289**; the ink used is black, and the important words and phrases are written in cinnabar; it has a watermark- the writhe (conditionally) attached to the ornamented, narrow log with the **bunch of grapes below. The appearance of the filigree of bunch of grapes goes back to 1724<sup>1</sup>**. The manuscript has Custos: the eastern (Iranian), narrow Unwan, square in shape, is decorated with blue, coral, golden and black ornaments. In the midst of Unwan, in a gold-plated place, the title of the first work of Code is written in black ink in the Persian language: - هو جامی عباسی بلغت گرجی - “He(God) Jami Abbas with Georgian words” ( **word by word “He (God) collection of Abbas with Georgian words”**). Later, the title page of the manuscript was inscribed in black ink with different handwriting: “ **Muslim’s religion. Donated by Alexander Roinishvili**” As it seems, the mentioned Code was bestowed on the “Society for spreading Literacy among Georgians” in XIX century by the prominent public figure and photographer Alexander Roinishvili. Hence, the book bears the seal of the mentioned society.

It is interesting why the manuscript was given the conventional title – “**Muslims’ Religion**”. It can be explained by Farsadan Gorgijanidze’s words written in the introduction of “Jami Abbas”. On the first page of the manuscript we read: “K. This is God’s will that I, the most inferior, and the most sinned and guilty in dishonest things done by me, Farsadan Gorgijanidze started to translate the book of Muslim Religion and Koran

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<sup>1</sup> S.A. Klepikov, filigrees and stamps on the European and foreign-made papers of XVII-XX centuries, M., 1959, p. 292.

with God's help and power granted to me<sup>1</sup>". We believe, that exactly these words of the author conditioned the fact that the Society for Spreading Literacy among Georgians considered the manuscript as the Muslims' religious book, and later, for the same reason as well as giving the Code only a cursory glance D. Karichashvili deemed it to be Koran and this is how the narrative about Farsadan Gorgijanidze having translated Koran during the reign of King Rostom appeared.

It can be read in the description of manuscript that the Code belongs to XVII-XVIII centuries and represents one of the autographs of the author<sup>2</sup>. However, if consider the fact that in 1656 Farsadan Gorgijanidze was sent to Iran instead of Rostom Khan and was appointed to the position of Taruga (magistrate) of Isfahan, we consider that the translation of "Jami Abbas" was done in the 60-70s of XVII century. But according to the watermark of S-174 itself, it belongs to the 20s of XVIII century. On this basis, it cannot be F. Gorgijanidze's autograph. However, the extent of admissibility that the manuscript was re-written from autographic list is great.

Relying on S-174, M. Janashvili singles out five works by Farsadan Gorgijanidze: 1. Georgian-Arabic-Persian dictionary, 2. Anjani alphabet, 3. The story of Ottoman Kings, 4. The Muslims' Judicial Book(including "Legal Tax") and 5. The Song for letters<sup>3</sup>. S-174 was considered to be a single writing (//a single work) by the compilers. However, we think that it represents the collection of F. Gorgijanidzes works. As the detailed study of S-174 clarifies it consists of four independent works:

1. هو جامی عباسی بلغت گرجی – "He (God) Jami Abbas with Georgian words" comprising pp.1-20.

2. **Georgian-Arabic-Persian Dictionary** compiled by Farsadan Gorgijanidze – pp. 231-249; It includes: a) The names of moon, year and stars- 249-250; b) The twelve pillars of heaven and their names – p. 250; c)

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<sup>1</sup> NCM. S-174, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Description of Georgian Manuscripts, S collection, I, it is compiled and prepared for publication by: T.Bregadze, T.Erukidze, N.Kasradze, L.Kutateladze and KR. Sharashidze, by E. Metreveli's edition, Tb., 1959, p. 191-193.

<sup>3</sup>M. Janashvili, Farsadan Gorgijanidze and his works, Tf., 1896.

The name and behaviour of seven chariots – pp. 250-251; d) The report of Muslim chronology – pp. 251-252; e) Anjine alphabet – p. 252; g) Truth and genuine of a dream –p. 253.

3. ترجمه رساله اختلاجات اعضا – „ The translation of epistle of the Song for letters” –pp. 255-256;

4. احواله سلسله عثمانجوگ گرچند نفر پادشاهی کرده اند در روم – “ The stories (the succession of stories) of Osman Jugi (the Osman dynasty), about how many [of them] men became the Padishah of Rumi pp. 267-271; This story briefly depicting the order and activities of Ottoman Sultans ends with Hijri events of 1089(=1678/9) year.

Except for the first one, the titles of the rest of the texts are considered to be postscripts by the compilers of S-174<sup>1</sup>. Actually, they represent the separately existing works.

“Jimi Abbas” is the collection of rules of life for Shia Islam followers. It was compiled by Sheikh Baha ad-Din Muhammad (also known as Sheikh Bahai) (H. 953-1031//1546/47-1621/22 years) by the order of Shah Abbas I (1087-1629) and titled “Jami Abbas” i.e. “The collection of Abbas” in honour of the Shah of Iran. At the beginning of the book it is said that Shah Abbas, who evinced the interest in obeying religious rules, asked Sheikh Baha ad-Din Muhammad to write a book where Islamic customs and legal issues, necessary for Muslim population, would have been explained on the basis of Sharia rules and Shia Fiqh. “Jami Abbas” was soon translated into Urdu. This book was published several times in Iran (1974 and 2009 years)<sup>2</sup>.

“Jami Abbas” written in Georgian script by Farsadan Gorgijanidze represents the methodical manual for Muslim- Shia prayers, rules and rituals. The prayers to be pronounced in the Arabic language are written with Georgian letters and the Arabic names of rituals are defined in Georgian in it. “Jami Abbas” highlights the necessity and salience of sunat, ablution and prayers for devout Muslims. The book offers the detailed

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<sup>1</sup>Description of Georgian Manuscripts, S collection, I, it is compiled and prepared for publication by: T.Bregadze, T.Enukidze, N.Kasradze, L.Kutateladze and KR. Sharashidze, by E. Metreveli's edition, Tb., 1959, p. 191-193

<sup>2</sup> <https://lib.eshia.ir/127471/1/2>

description of the rules concerning all the spheres of life to be followed by Muslims. Most importantly, the book depicts rakats to be performed at the time of various namaz, explains the Georgian context of Arabic prayers, underlines the significance of the Arabic language in the process of namaz (e.g. unless the prayer is pronounced in Arabic, it is rendered void), etc.

At the beginning of the book Farsadan Gorgijanidze writes that “Jami Abbas” was translated from Arabic into Persian and from Persian into Georgian by him<sup>1</sup>. However, it is worth noting, that he is attributed only the Georgian contextual or word-by-word translation of Persian definitions and meanings of Arabic prayers given in the text and their re-writing in Georgian script.

Farsadan Gorgijanidze writes about the importance of “Jami Abbas”: “The Muslims must know these things (Muslim rules –Kh. B.) and they would be superior to all the men and would not inflict any harm to Georgians if they knew anything about every religion and could distinguish between good and evil”

It is salient, that “Jami Abbas” and all the works included in the manuscript S-174, despite their context and purpose, begin with “Kantsili” i.e. mentioning of God. For example, “K. This is God’s will that I, ..., Parsadan Gorgijanidze started to translate the book of Muslim religion and Koran with God’s help and power granted to me<sup>3</sup>” (the beginning of “Jami Abbas”); “K. Glory to the Great, All-Mighty himself, I asked the All-Powerful for granting assistance from the heaven to me ...<sup>4</sup>” (the beginning of Georgian-Arabic-Persian dictionary); “K. The Song for Letters from the true, genuine and proved Apostle Daniel<sup>5</sup>”( the beginning of “The Song for Letters”); “K. the story of Osman jugi’s relative about the number of Kings in Urum<sup>6</sup>”(The beginning of “the story of Osman jugi). If we consider what Farsadan Gorgijanidze writes about himself (...the most sinned and guilty of

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<sup>1</sup> NCM.S-174, p.1

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.,p.231

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 255

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.267

all the sinned and guilty, having done dishonest things,...), we will clearly see the psychological -emotional mood which the Georgians, being in the way of forcedly conversion, experienced.

The translation of “Jami Abbas” by Farsadan does not represent the exact paraphrase of the original. It is a rather edited version. In contrast to the original it is not divided into chapters. However, the themes are developed in the same succession.

In our view, “Jami Abbas” represents a kind of example of the Safavids’ religious policy and its outcomes in Kartli. The existence of this book, certainly, demonstrates its necessity. “Jami Abbas” served the practical purpose through which Georgian Muslim clerics had to explained the Georgians, newly converted to Islam, the significance of Muslim prayers to be necessarily uttered in the Arabic language and teach them the rule of enactment of Muslim rituals in the time of Rostom; All this would have helped the Georgians with the sensible confession of Islam.

We have a divergent opinion about the purpose of the second Code - S-16. The manuscript represents the Persian Four Gospel written in Georgian script. It encompasses Gospels of Matthew (3r-108v), Mark (109r-172v), Luke (173r- 278v) and John(279r-357v) and is in size of 29,9X19,5; 23,5X14,5; The manuscript comprises the total of 258 pages, out of which 2r-v and 108v are blank. The Four Gospel is re-written with beautiful Mkhedruli script in black ink; the titles are performed in cinnabar; the manuscript is richly adorned and it is apparent even at first sight, that it is made at the request of the representative of upper Feudal stratum. The sides of the manuscript are decorated by rhombus- shaped golden figures and frequent speckles of gold ink, which make the frames of pages. On some pages the gold ink is faded from rhombuses creating the impression of being silver plated. The manuscript is performed on European paper of high quality and has no watermark( bull, horse, donkey, rider with a spear, RIVE RDITO, GBC, etc.) The manuscript is undated; it has Custos and bears the seal of the Society for Spreading Literacy among Georgians”.

Based on the watermarks (horse with a rider, horse, bull), the researchers are of the opinion, that the manuscript, presumably, belongs to

XVII or the period following the first quarter of XVIII century<sup>1</sup>. According to the postscript existing on 1r, one of its owners should have been the descendant of Erekle II- Ivane Andronikov<sup>2</sup>. This information allows us to suppose that the order for the manuscript was made by the member of Royal Family of Eastern Georgia who was its original owner as well.

A number of scientists<sup>3</sup> evinced interest in the phonetic and codicological-paleographic study of the manuscript. However, to date, S-16 has not been the research subject in the historical and ideological-political direction.

According to M. Khubua, C-268, which is preserved in Teimmuraz Batonishvili's collection at the Institute of Oriental Studies of St. Petersburg, represents the original of S-16. The book was translated from Arabic into Persian in Isfahan at the time of Nadir Shah (1736-1747), and its copy, written in Georgian script, was created<sup>4</sup> later, when it was brought to Tbilisi. The scientist points out, that "the comparison made between the materials re-written directly from Teimuraz's list and the corresponding data of the Persian Four Gospel written in Georgian script confirms their complete identity<sup>5</sup>. Hence, S-16 should have been created in Tbilisi in the second half of XVIII century (at first, the working version of Georgian transliteration was made from Persian text of C-268 and then the manuscript itself was prepared). As M. Khubua points out, the manuscripts NCM. S-16 and

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<sup>1</sup>Description of Georgian Manuscripts, S collection, I, it is compiled and prepared for publication by: T. Bregadze, T.Enukidze, N.Kasradze, L.Kutateladze and KR. Sharashidze by E. Metreveli's edition, Tb., 1959, p. 25. M. Khubua, Persian manuscripts of Four Gospel XVII-XVIII cc. in Georgian museum, the works of the Institute of Linguistics, I, Tb., 1954, p.171 (p. 163-185)

<sup>2</sup> N. Dundua, Persian Gospel performed in Georgian script preserved in Korneli kekelidze Georgian National Center of Manuscripts, Middle East and Georgia, XVIII, Tb, 2021, p.272-278.

<sup>3</sup> M. Khubua, supra; O. Suladze, About a Manuscript of Persian Gospel by Ivane Javakhishvili, The Messenger of Academy of Georgian SR, Language and Literature Series, 2, Tb., 1979, pp. 87-90; N. Dundua, supra

<sup>4</sup> M. Khubua, "The Persian manuscripts of the Gospel of XVII-XVIII cc. in Georgian Museum", the works of Institute of Linguistics, I, Tb., 1954, p.167(p.163-185)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.184

(IOP)C-268 are of the same edition<sup>1</sup> from the standpoint of Persian literary language, and it is quite logical, as the first manuscript represents the transliteration of the second one.

The Code (NCM) P-55, which is preserved in Georgian National Center of Manuscripts, represents the Four Gospel written in Persian and belongs to comparatively earlier period- the turn of XVII-XVIII centuries. According to the introduction of the translator, Ibn Ismael al Hussain Mohammad Baqer<sup>2</sup> translated the text of Gospels, Hijri 1108 (=1696/7) year, from Arabic into Persian by order of the Shah of Iran, Shah Sultan Hussein I(1694-1722 ). There are lots of comments and notes of the translator on Ashias of P-55. The markings made with Arabic numbers and Persian letters on the text are moved to Ashias with the appropriate tags; the comments mainly begins with the words: „گویند کہ“ – “It is said that”, etc. ( This issue represents the subject of separate study and at this stage I will refrain from the profound discussion).

As M. Khubua points out, the manuscripts, C-268 and P-55 are of the same edition. Though without any changes (in most cases), S-16 still “keeps editing” the matching places in the Persian Four Gospels, which was designed in Isfahan ( by Shah Hussein’s order) in 1696 (P-55 – Kh.B), but still it is independent and, apparently, was designed in the following century<sup>3</sup>.

Despite the same edition, I think, there can be captured the so called religious-political nuances between S-16, **C-268** and P-55, which are of paramount importance: 1. in contrast to others all the texts of NCM. P-55 start with the formulation “In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit”, whereas John’s Gospel(121r) begins with Bismilah inscribed on the upper edge of the page. 2. S-16 and **C-268 do not have any definitions and notes, the abundance of which** P-55 is distinguished by. Hence, P-55 was intended for Muslim clerics, while S-16 and C-268 - for Christian clergymen.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 167

<sup>2</sup> NCM. P-55, 3v-4r.

<sup>3</sup> M. Khubua, supra, p.171.

The fact that the Persian translation of Gospel was done in Iran indicates the existence of religious dialogue in the Safavids' State, that should have been launched prior to Shah Sultan Hussein's accession to the throne. The manuscript reviewed by us can be put in chronological order in the following way: P-55 – the turn of XVII-XVIII centuries; C-268-the first half of XVIII century and S-16 - the second half of XVIII century.

Relying on the viewpoints relating to the Persian Four Gospel (NCM. S-16) written in Georgian script, it: 1. served the denationalization of the Georgians and 2. along with this type of Codes, in general, it was created for the purpose of language practice:

1. Ts. Abuladze – “ it's clear that the princes (Batonishvilebi), Christian in spirit and flesh, chose Four Gospels and psalms to practise in Turkish and Persian languages. Teimuraz Translated “ The Affair of Apostles” from Georgian into Persian<sup>1</sup>

2. E. Giunashvili, T. Abuladze – „ In Christian Churches of eastern and western principalities of Georgia (Kartli-Kakheti and Meskheta) the main tactics for the gradual Islamization of population was to make ethnically Georgian priests preach the Gospels for Christian population in the Persian and Ottoman languages”<sup>2</sup>.

3. N. Dundua – shares the standpoint expressed by Ts. Abuladze related to creating such kind of Codes for “the language practice” and writes “we deem that Mrs. Tsisana Abuladze's viewpoint is the most persuasive among the views expressed in relation to this issue<sup>3</sup>.

We cannot agree on the expressed opinions due to the following circumstances:

1. In Georgia the practice of inter-religious polemic has multi-century history. This is corroborated by the original anti-Islam works created at various times: “The mention of polemics<sup>4</sup>”, “Polemic through the Psalm<sup>1</sup>”

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<sup>1</sup> Ts. Abuladze, The Turkish texts transliterated in Georgian script, Multi-chapter, XXI, Tb., 2005, p.184(pp. 184-185).

<sup>2</sup> H. Giunashvili, T. Abuladze, Notes on the Persian Gospel Manuscript in Georgian Script, Iran Namag, Vol. 5, №4, 2021, p. 110 (pp. 102-119).

<sup>3</sup> N. Dundua, supra, p. 278.

<sup>4</sup> NCM. Q-50

by Arsen the son of Vache, “The story of Tatars with Godless religion<sup>2</sup>” by Bagrat Mukhranbatoni, which was later versified by Jacob Shemokmedeli and “For Agarians<sup>3</sup>” by Timote Gabashvili (We have published special scientific works on each of them.) As it has been clarified from the study of above mentioned works, Georgian clergymen won the victory in the religious disputes with the Muslims, as they had acquired the proper knowledge not only in Christian religion, but they were well-aware of Arabs’ history, Islamic religious doctrine and Koran.

2. The situation was changed from the 30s of XVIII centuries. Occasioned by Rostom Khan’s religious policy (above talked about) no anti-Islamic polemical work was written during his reign in Kartli. Moreover, as it seems, no longer was the attention focused on the proper preparation of Georgian clergies in the practice of polemics, that itself implied the argumentative criticism of Islamic religion

3. In the second half of XVII century the disputes involving Christian and Muslim clergy ended in Christians’ defeat. For example, “The Aid of Truth” by Iranian author, Zahir ad-Din Tafresh, tells us about the religious dispute held at the Royal Court of Kartli (A total of three disputes occurred at the royal court of Shahnavaz and his son – Archil), during which he (Tafresh) opposed the Patriarch Macarius of Antioch and the priest from Rumi - Pater Gabriel<sup>4</sup>. The Muslim cleric won the victory in the theological controversy and the most salient is the fact that the Georgian clergy is not mentioned among the participants.

4. In the last quarter of XVII century at the request of King of Kartli Giorgi XI, Jacob Shemokmedeli versified Bagrat Mukhranbatoni’s “The story of Tatars with Godless Religion”. As we see, the Georgians could not write a new anti-Islamic work and were satisfied themselves only with the revival of the old ones, which, on the one hand, indicates the decline in theological knowledge and on the other hand, the loyal attitude of Georgian Church

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<sup>1</sup> NCM.Q-50

<sup>2</sup> NCM. S-1338, Q-90 and others

<sup>3</sup> NCM. S-3244

<sup>4</sup> M. Todua, Georgian-Persian Etudes, III, Tb., p.90.

towards the Shah of Iran (The Georgian Church had been under the influence of Iranian Shahs following the period of Rostom Khan's reign).

5. In XVIII century the situation changed in Iran as well as Kartli. Nader Shah(1736-1747) separated from the Safavids' religious policy and gave Teimuraz II ( 1744-1762) and Erekle II (1744-1798) the right to coronation to the thrones of Kartli and Kakheti, respectively, under the Christian rule. This was followed by launching the public Christening of Feudal lords having converted to Islam, i.e. Christian religion returned its positions in the upper Feudal society.

The manuscripts P-55 and C-268 indicates the activation of religious polemic in Iran from the end of XVII century. Taking into account the political and religious situation established exactly in XVII-XVIII centuries we deem, that the creation of S-16 or the similar types of Codes (The Persian Gospel transliterated in Georgian)<sup>1</sup> envisaged the religious polemic. Even the visual aspect of S-16 makes it obvious that the person making the order is a highly ecclesiastics or secular person. Such a voluminous, costly Code of religious significance is impossible to have been created for the purpose of "language practice". Especially when Eastern Georgia experienced the influence of Iranian culture and the Persian language was widely spread among Georgian society, particularly, in higher Feudal stratum. It represented the language of diplomacy, poetry and literature.

The Persian Four Gospel (NCM. S-16) transliterated into Georgian( as well as Ottoman texts transliterated in Georgian) is not only the local, Georgian phenomenon. It is noteworthy, that in XVIII century there occurs Armenian written transliteration as well. The colophons existing on this type of manuscripts preserved in the Matenadaran directly evidence that the

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<sup>1</sup> As regards the Persian text included in H-2290 and S-418 of the bilingual manuscript compiled in Georgian and Persian, they are Georgian-Persian conversation and a simple dictionary type of manuscripts, besides they do not belong to the costly group of Codes.

Armenians needed the Persian Gospel written in Armenian script for conducting polemic with Muslim clerics<sup>1</sup>.

Hence, occasioned by all the above listed circumstances we deem that the Persian Four Gospel (NCM. S-16) transliterated in Georgian script bears the practical significance and was intended for the controversy with Muslim clerics.

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<sup>1</sup> Hasmik Kirakosian, On the Colophons to the Two Persian Gospels Manuscripts in Armenian Script (Matenadaran № 3044 and № 8492), (Jour.) Ejmiatsin (In the Armenian language), №5, 2018, p.69 (pp.56-70)