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GEORGIAN PRIMARY SOURCES: AN ANALYSIS  
OF CHANT MANUSCRIPT Q-684<sup>1</sup>

To attempt to edit and reprint an original manuscript requires an engagement with its history. More than that, the task requires understanding how and why the manuscript was written, by whom and in what circumstances it was written, and then to follow, as best as possible, the historical life of the manuscript to the present day. In the case of the original document at hand, that which is designated as National Centre of Manuscripts document Q-684 (hereafter Q-684), we have an original manuscript with a complex and impressive story to tell.

Books rarely exist in a vacuum, and Q-684 is no exception. This manuscript belongs to a collection of other music manuscripts that interacted as a group, were recopied from one another, were edited together and separately, traveled sometimes together and sometimes independently. If we think about these manuscripts as a family, the closest relative to ms. Q-684 among this family of manuscripts would be its direct parent, ms. Q-1475, the source manuscript from which all of the chants in Q-684 were copied. The precise relationship of these two manuscripts is explored below. Others in the family include close siblings such as Q-686 and Q-689, which appear to have been copied on similar paper, from similar sources, in similar circumstances, and probably at the same time in the mid-1920s. Separately, there are a set of manuscripts that could be considered cousins: the group of manuscripts Q-683, Q-687, and Q-688. Like Q-684, these three were draft manuscripts edited by the same people (Ekvtime Kereselidze, Razhden Khundadze, and Ivliane Nikoladze), but were likely worked on during an earlier period (1910-1914). Using close analysis of manuscript Q-684, and its related manuscripts, we attempt to present an informative picture of the history of these books, as they traveled through time and space, and continue to contribute to our collective knowledge of the musical past of the Georgian Orthodox church.<sup>2</sup>

There are several unusual elements to this manuscript that need some unraveling in order to understand what we are holding. Some of the outstanding questions to be discussed are:

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Davit Shugliashvili for his careful review of this article, and to Ekaterine Diasamidze for her thorough editing of the Georgian translation.

<sup>2</sup> Indexing information for manuscript Q-684 appears in *Kartuli khelnats'erta aghts'eriloba, akhali (Q) k'olektsiisa* (*Description of Georgian Manuscripts from New (Q) Collection*), T. II. Tbilisi, Publishing of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, 1958. Indexing information for manuscript Q-1475 appears in a separate, handwritten document, which states a connection between these two documents: „Chants in notation. Handwritten version of Q-684.“ Further information on Q-1475 states the origin as „Iortkipanidzis arkividan,“ and the submission date as July 31st, 1978. Updated index information can be found in: Davit Shugliashvili, *Kartuli sagalobebis khelnats'erta aghts'eriloba da anbanuri k'at'alogi* [Georgian chant manuscripts and alphabetic catalogue]. Edited by Vazha Gvakharia, Davit Shugliashvili, and Nino Razmadze. 2nd Edition (in Georgian). Tbilisi: Chant Center of the Georgian Patriarchate Press, 2013. For more on the historical imperative to record these manuscripts, see John Graham, *The Transmission and Transcription of Georgian Liturgical Chant*, PhD. diss., Princeton University, 2015.

1. The question of scribal authorship: though Pilimon Koridze supposedly transcribed the chants from Anton Dumbadze in 1893, the notation is in Ekvtime Kereselidze's handwriting.<sup>3</sup>

2. The question of musical style: though the melodies in the top voice display the musical characteristics of Anton Dumbadze's style – such as initiating voice crossing gestures – the second and third voice parts clearly reflect a different musical style.

3. The question of multiple editors: Kereselidze's hand-written notation has been erased in many places, replaced with notation in a different handwriting.

4. The question of dating: Collectively, these questions place into doubt the dating of this manuscript as originating in 1893, even though other sources confirm that the music was transcribed at that time.

Let's address each of these questions in turn. The question of scribal authorship is quickly answered: ms. Q-684 is a copy!<sup>4</sup> The original notation that Pilimon Koridze transcribed from Anton Dumbadze in 1893 is written into a separate manuscript, designated ms. Q-1475.<sup>5</sup> At some point, Ekvtime Kereselidze transcribed the entire contents of Q-1475 into this manuscript, Q-684, note for note. Why this copy was necessary is a question we speculate on further in the essay. Koridze's transcriptions were incomplete at the time of transcription: only the first voice part in ms. Q-1475 was written down from master chanter Anton Dumbadze.<sup>6</sup> But Koridze apparently intended to complete the harmonization later, because he left two blank staves below each melody staff.

This brings us to the second question: that of musical style. This question can also be quickly answered based on recent scholarship: the second and third voice parts were written by the priest and master chanter Razhden Khundadze,<sup>7</sup> who was commissioned by Kereselidze to harmonize

<sup>3</sup> A colophon on the last page of the manuscript, Q-684, page 90r, gives a short prayer and then is signed by „Priestmonk Evtime.“

<sup>4</sup> The very few discrepancies between the manuscripts are noted in Shugliashvili, *Kartuli sagaloblebis...* 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Manuscript Q-1475 is not bound, and is a large collection of loosely tied folia containing 188 pages of music notation. The music is written in three-voiced harmony, but was written in different handwriting (Koridze - first voice; Khundadze - second and third voice parts; Kereselidze - rubrics). This is an original manuscript written by Pilimon Koridze in 1893 in Guria, prompted by the master chanter Anton Dumbadze and his students. The only alterations occur in Khundadze's hand, as he took liberties to rewrite and simplify many of the original Dumbadze voice-crossings in the cadences as notated by Koridze. There are no visible edits from Kereselidze or Nikoladze. This manuscript is currently stored at the National Centre of Manuscripts (NCM) in Tbilisi, Georgia. But it did not arrive in this archive via Ekvtime Kereselidze's collection in 1936. Rather, it was stamped as property of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia (perhaps in 1937 along with the other manuscripts in Khundadze's personal collection), and only found its way to the NCM in 1978. Note: there are six chants that have medieval-Georgian style neumes written into them. It is unknown who drew these neumes in red pencil, but they appear similar to Vasil Karbelashvili neumes.

<sup>6</sup> The decision to transcribe only the first voice was made jointly between Pilimon Koridze and the financiers of the project, Maxime Sharadze and Ekvtime Kereselidze. They were worried that there were too many chants to notate from the aging master chanter, Anton Dumbadze, so they decided to focus on transcribing only the most important element of each chant, its melody. They committed to completing the harmonization with other expert chanters. This method of working allowed Koridze to notate hundreds of chant melodies in a short time. The model was repeated a decade later in 1903 when Koridze transcribed the melodies of 1000 heirmoi texts from the master chanter Aristovle Kutateladze. From 1912 onwards, Kereselidze worked to complete the harmonization of these melodies by commissioning first Fr. Razhden Khundadze, and later, chanter Ivliane Nikoladze.

<sup>7</sup> Razhden Khundadze (1845-1929), a master chanter originally from Chokhatauri (Guria region), lived most

many chants in traditional style between the years 1912-1913 (Graham, 2010: 425-446). Khundadze completed the three-voiced polyphony of the heirmoi chants. He employed his own style, which is clearly identifiable due to its abundance of parallel third motion between the second voice part and the original melody. In ms. Q-1475, two handwriting styles are identifiable: the melodies in the top line belong to Pilimon Koridze, while the second and third voice parts directly underneath each melody line belong to Razhden Khundadze (ex. 1).

Continuing with the question of musical authorship, let us examine example pages from the manuscripts. In figure 1, we see the first page of the heirmoi, *Monebisa misgan mtsarisa* as it appears in ms. Q-1475. This is a typical-looking page for this manuscript: the music is written in score, one voice part per staff, grouped into three-stave systems on the page.<sup>8</sup> The handwriting of the title, text, and top voice melody belongs to Pilimon Koridze, while that of the lower two voice parts belongs to Razhden Khundadze.<sup>9</sup> The key signature includes four flats.<sup>10</sup>

In figure 2, we see the same heirmoi as copied into ms. Q-684. But here, all three voice parts and the text appear in Kereselidze's handwriting, with only a few additions such as bar lines (ex. 2).

Concerning the third question about multiple editors, we examine the role of Ivliane Nikoladze. His editing is clearly visible in measures 1 and 2 (ex. 2), where for example several notes in the middle voice have been erased and rewritten in his handwriting. Such edits can likewise be seen in measures 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15. In fact, almost every note that is not a parallel harmonization of the melody represents an intervention by Nikoladze. With these observations, advanced performers of these chants can therefore choose to: 1) sing the chants as printed here in Nikoladze's edited style; 2) sing Khundadze's simple-style original parallel third harmonization in the upper voices; or 3) ornament the chants according to common practice of harmonization and ornamentation in the Gelati monastery style (ex. 2).

The question of editing necessarily involves a larger discussion on issues of chant harmonization style, proprietorship of documents, and aesthetic preferences.<sup>11</sup> Kereselidze hired a knowledgeable chanter, Ivliane Nikoladze, to "correct" and "improve" harmonizations that he felt had been poorly constructed by Razhden Khundadze.<sup>12</sup> As pertains to ms. Q-684 specifically, we observe that Nikoladze

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of his life serving as a priest in the city of Kutaisi. In 1885, he participated in the first large-scale transcription project as a chanter

<sup>8</sup> Note that Koridze's manuscript paper contains 14 staves, similar to the paper in manuscript Q-685, which also records transcriptions made from Anton Dumbadze in 1893.

<sup>9</sup> Koridze's note stems often don't touch the note heads, Khundadze's almost always do; Koridze does not write slurs, Khundadze does; their half notes are shaped differently; Koridze's eighth note groupings tend to be spaced wider apart than the Khundadze note groupings. After looking at hundreds of pages of this notation, the differences become more apparent.

<sup>10</sup> Georgian traditional tuning for liturgical chants, as heard in several early-to-mid 20th century recordings, consisted of a heptatonic scale division of the octave. Each interval is wider than a half step, while narrower than a whole step, approximating 150-180 cents in distance. Several theories exist on this topic, as research is ongoing. Considering these points and the difficulties of accurate transcription, these alteration signs can be considered as the best-available compromise when mapping Georgian-tuned chants onto five-line staff notation.

<sup>11</sup> The aesthetic preferences for the harmonization of the heirmoi melodies is discussed in the article, John A. Graham, "Ivliane Nikoladze: the Alternate Redacteur of the Georgian Heirmoi," Proceedings of the Fifth International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony, Tbilisi Conservatoire, 2010:425-446.

<sup>12</sup> Ivliane Nikoladze (d. late 1920s?) was a chanter and choir-director in the West Georgian city of Kutaisi. As a young man, he studied European music notation with Pilimon Koridze in 1894, and later helped Kereselidze

erased many passages throughout the manuscript (specifically those containing parallel-third harmonization), and replaced them with counter motion and other voice-leading constructions. In his memoir, Kereselidze described his editing work with Nikoladze as *ertguli* (faithful, lit. “single-hearted”), and mentioned that even after their intensive work was completed in 1914, they continued to work together „whenever necessary“ (Kereselidze, Q840: 58). This comment may be important when considering how to date the copying and editing of ms. Q-684, as it would appear to date from after 1914.

The question on when ms. Q-684 was copied, and perhaps more significantly, why it was copied, may never be definitely proven. Other than the note on the front page indicating 1893 as the year of original transcription, there are no other dates on the manuscript (as noted above, the year 1893 must refer to Koridze’s original transcriptions into ms. Q-1475, the original version of our manuscript Q-684). There are several curious facts that separate this manuscript from others in the same family however, that might lead to further advances in scholarship. For example, unlike other manuscripts such as Q-687 and Q-688 that were harmonized by Razhden Khundadze and then edited directly by Ivliane Nikoladze in 1914, Nikoladze did not edit Q-1475. Why would Kereselidze bring some original manuscripts for editing, but not others? Why did he need to make copies of some manuscripts, but not others? The answers may lie in Kereselidze’s unpublished memoir, which warrants a brief description here before we return to the question of dating.

According to the Kereselidze memoir (1941), he took all of the manuscripts in his possession to the Gelati Monastery in central Georgia in 1912, where he became a monk and later a priest.<sup>13</sup> As previously discussed, in 1912 he commissioned Razhden Khundadze to complete the harmonization of Koridze’s unfinished chant transcriptions. What we’re interested in is who worked on which documents, and when. In several manuscripts, for example, Khundadze’s handwriting appears directly beneath Koridze’s handwriting in the original transcriptions from the 1890s (such as Q-1475). In other cases, Khundadze’s handwriting appears beneath Kereselidze’s handwriting in what was apparently a copy from another manuscript (such as Q-687, Q-688, etc.). Does Kereselidze detail when and why he made such copies?

Kereselidze mentions in his memoir, in passing, that he had to recopy several collections of original transcriptions by Koridze in the years 1910-1911 because a man named Losaberidze – another partner at the press – claimed them as part of his legal share of assets at the dissolution of the press partnership. The Koridze originals comprised many unfinished *heirmoi* chants notated from master chanters Anton Dumbadze in 1893 and Aristovle Kutateladze in 1903, and are likely the nine manuscripts that appear under the collective rubric H-154 (National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Georgia). Kereselidze rebound his rough draft copies into various working documents, for example, manuscripts Q-683, Q-686, Q-687, Q-688, Q-689, and folia in Q-690 in the National Centre of Manuscripts (Tbilisi, Georgia). According to Kereselidze, these working documents were given to Khundadze for harmonization between 1912-1913, and then were later edited by Nikoladze in 1914.

Importantly, manuscript Q-1475 is not of this group. It is an outlier. It is not a Kereselidze copy, but an original Koridze transcription. Khundadze created his harmonizations of the Koridze-transcribed melodies directly into the original transcription. This work he accomplished in 1915,

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re-harmonize several chant books in the years 1914-1915, and potentially through the 1920s.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. According to his memoir, Ekvtime Kereselidze lived at the Gelati monastery from 1912 until 1924 (likely 1923 when the monastery was officially closed).

later than the previous group of manuscripts, as proved by a colophon on page 259.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, Kereselidze's copy of ms. Q-1475 into ms. Q-684, which included all of Khundadze's additions, must date from after 1915. To find out when, we return to the memoir, seeking other possible scenarios in when Kereselidze might have copied entire manuscripts. One episode sparks our curiosity.

In the memoir, Kereselidze describes how in 1924, he was forced to hastily move his entire manuscript collection by horse cart from the Gelati Monastery to the nearby city of Kutaisi, where he hid the chant books in the basement of Razhden Khundadze (this likely happened in 1923, when the Gelati Monastery was aggressively closed by Bolshevik authorities, requiring all of the monastics to flee). When he went to retrieve the manuscripts a year later, Kereselidze reports, a conflict of ownership forced him to spend the following two years recopying some 2000 pages of chant notation (Kereselidze, Q840: 65-66). It is quite possible that ms. Q-684 was copied from Q-1475 at this time. The manuscripts that Khundadze retained in his possession as a result of this conflict found their way posthumously into the "Khundadze Archive" at the Folklore State Centre of Georgia (Tbilisi, Georgia). Most of the manuscripts in that collection are written in Khundadze's hand-writing, but three are different. These manuscripts contain Koridze's handwriting in the first voice, while displaying Khundadze's hand writing in the lower two voice parts. Not coincidentally, these three manuscripts were copied by Kereselidze, and retained among his collection that found its way to another archive, the National Centre of Manuscripts. These are manuscripts Q-1475 (source of Q-684), ms. No. 2127 (source of Q-689), and ms. No. 2128 (source of Q-686).<sup>15</sup> Could it be that ms. Q-1475, ms. No. 2127, and ms. No. 2128 were three of those chant books claimed by Khundadze for himself, and that ms. Q-684, the source of this publication, was one of those copied after the conflict in 1924-1925? Indeed, several facts support this hypothesis.

1. Ms. Q-684 must have been copied from Q-1475 *after* 1915.
2. Ms. Q-1475 was not edited by Nikoladze, suggesting that Kereselidze did not have control of the manuscript (other manuscripts harmonized by Khundadze, and in Kereselidze's possession from the 1912-1914 period, were edited directly by Nikoladze).
3. Ms. Q-684, conversely, was edited by Nikoladze, further suggesting that Kereselidze wanted these chants edited, but did not have access to Q-1475.
4. Ms. Q-1475 was not in Kereselidze's possession in 1936, when his archive was submitted to what is now the National Centre of Manuscripts archive.
5. Ms. Q-1475 must have been in Khundadze's possession, together with ms. No. 2127 and ms. No. 2128, because they were posthumously submitted with his collected works to the archive now housed in the Folklore State Centre of Georgia.

All three of the mentioned manuscripts were meticulously copied by Kereselidze onto identical 12-stave lined notation paper, which became the new working manuscripts from which he continued his editing work with Nikoladze. These are manuscripts Q-684, Q-689, and Q-686 re-

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<sup>14</sup> A comment on page 259, ms. Q-1475, written in Razhden Khundadze's hand, discusses the quality of the chant melody. The comment is signed by "Fr. Razhden," and dated June 11th, 1915.

<sup>15</sup> Manuscript Q-1475, now housed in the National Centre of Manuscripts, was clearly submitted to the archive of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia together with the rest of the Khundadze collection in the 1930s. It is stamped on the last page with the inventory mark: "sak. khalkhuri shemokmedebis respublik'uri sakhli seipi sainvent'aro no. 16/42." In 1978, the manuscript somehow found its way to the other archive, the National Centre of Manuscripts, via the "Lortkipanidze archive." Thank you to my esteemed colleague, musicologist Davit Shugliashvili for making this important connection.

spectively. According to these points, the dating for the creation of ms. Q-684 looks as follows:

Year	Manu- script	Archive	Note
1893	Q-1475	NCM	Koridze transcribes heirmoi melodies from Anton Dumbadze.
1915	Q-1475	NCM	Razhden Khundadze harmonizes the melodies.
1924	Q-684	NCM	Ekvtime Kereselidze makes a copy of ms. Q-1475 (also probably ms. No. 2127 and ms. No. 2128).
1924- 1925	Q-684	NCM	Ivliane Nikoladze edits Q-684.
1936	Q-684	NCM	Q-684 enters National Centre of Manuscripts precursor archive, submitted by Ekvtime Kereselidze.
1937	Q-1475	FSCG	Q-1475 enters Folklore State Centre of Georgia precursor archive, submitted by Shalva Khundadze.
1978	Q-1475	NCM	Q-1475 transferred to the NCM by “Lortkipanidze.”
2018	Q-684	NCM	Q-684 transcribed into digital notation and published for the first time.

This chart shows the history of Q-1475 and its copy, ms. Q-684, but the relationship is also shared by the other two manuscripts which appear to have been created under similar circumstances. Manuscripts Q-684, Q-686, and Q689 are all Kereselidze generated copies of other working manuscripts that had been previously harmonized by Razhden Khundadze. The original copies stayed in Razhden Khundadze’s possession and were submitted posthumously to the FSCG archive in 1937, while Kereselidze’s copies were edited by Nikoladze in the 1920s and were submitted to the NCM archive in 1936.<sup>16</sup>

The details of the history of manuscript Q-684 may seem confusing, perhaps even trivial, but they are as vital to our understanding of the manuscript as any biographical detail would be to a human being. Through close analysis of the sources, we gain insight into the origins, adaptations, and histories of the manuscript, as well as the feelings and actions of those people that for a time, however brief, entered the life of the manuscript. We hope that through the recent publication of these chants (*Anthology*, Vol. VI, 2019), a new chapter begins in the life of manuscript Q-684, and that through this effort we add to its already storied existence greater recognition, value, and respect.

### References

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<sup>16</sup> The history of this group of manuscripts is therefore much different from another group, manuscripts Q-683, Q-687, and Q-688, which contain one-voiced transcriptions copied by Kereselidze in 1910-1911 from the Koridze original transcriptions (H-154) retained by Losaberidze. Into these copies, Khundadze wrote second-third voice harmonizations in 1912, and Nikoladze conducted extensive editing in 1914.



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Kereselidze, Ekytime. *Istoria kartuli saeklesio sagaloblebis notebze gadaghebisa (History of the Preservation of Georgian Church Chant)*, Q840, p. 58, Tbilisi: National Centre of Manuscripts (in Georgian).

მაგალითი 1. მონებისა მისგან მწარისა (გვ. 07v, Q-1475, ხელნაწერთა ეროვნული მუზეუმი).  
Example 1. Monebisa misgan mtsarisa (page 07v, Q-1475, NCM).

The image shows a handwritten musical score on six staves. At the top, the title "სქილ წიგნი." is written in large, stylized Georgian script. Below it, the subtitle "მონების მისგან" is written in smaller Georgian script. The score begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff contains a vocal line with lyrics in Georgian: "სქილ წიგნი, ვაჟიშვილი ბ. ხა. ა." followed by "მონების მისგან". The second staff contains a bass line. The third staff contains a tenor line. The fourth staff contains a vocal line with lyrics: "სქილ წიგნი, ვაჟიშვილი ბ. ხა. ა." followed by "მონების მისგან". The fifth staff contains a bass line. The sixth staff contains a bass line. The score is written in a clear, legible hand.

მაგალითი 2. მონებისა მისგან მწარისა (გვ. 08v, Q-1475, ხელნაწერთა ეროვნული მუზეუმი).  
Example 2. Monebisa misgan mtsarisa (page 08r, Q-684, NCM).

Handwritten musical score for the piece "Monebisa misgan mtsarisa". The score is written on aged paper and consists of two systems of three staves each. The top system includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written in Georgian script below the notes. A large handwritten number "85" is in the left margin. The second system continues the melody and accompaniment.

ს ძ მოს - წახნი - ვ -  
სქოის - ძახი, გუმობა ა. ბ. შ. ა.  
მონებისა მისგან მწარისა  
მონებისა მისგან მწარისა  
მწარისა მისგან მწარისა  
მწარისა მისგან მწარისა