

**THE GEORGIAN TRANSLATION (K14) OF THE DOGMATIC AND POLEMICAL
TREATISES OF SAINT MAXIMUS THE CONFESSOR AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GREEK ORIGINAL TEXT
(BASED ON TREATISES XIII AND I)¹**

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Abstract. This article examines the Georgian translation (K14) (= Gelatian translation) of Saint Maximus the Confessor’s Dogmatic and Polemical Treatises, focusing exclusively on the textual evidence of Treatises XIII and I, and evaluates its significance for the reconstruction of the Greek original text. The order follows the Constantinopolitan corpus, in which Treatise XIII precedes Treatise I. This sequence is therefore adopted intentionally in accordance with the manuscript tradition. Through comparative philological and text-critical analysis, the Georgian manuscript is collated with the principal witnesses of the Constantinopolitan corpus (A, N, Va, M, and Par), with attention to their composition, structure, and textual variants.

The study demonstrates that K14 closely follows the structural organization of codices A and N, while displaying a complex pattern of textual agreements—most frequently with N, and occasionally preserving unique readings found only in Par.

Particular importance is attributed to those passages in which the Georgian translation preserves readings absent from all extant Greek manuscripts. Such evidence suggests that the translation may derive from an earlier or otherwise unattested Greek archetype.

These findings confirm the critical value of the Georgian version for textual reconstruction and highlight its role as an independent witness within the manuscript tradition of Maximus’s treatises.

The analysis of the remaining treatises is planned for a subsequent stage of the research.

Keywords: Saint Maximus the Confessor, Dogmatic-polemical treatises, Constantinopolitan corpus, Gelatian manuscript (K14), textual criticism.

Introduction

The patristic legacy of Saint Maximus the Confessor, a leading theologian and philosopher of the Christian tradition, is notably diverse, spanning a wide range of theological and philosophical writings. His writings are distinguished by profound theological and philosophical reflection, to the extent that a dedicated scholarly discipline—Maximology—has emerged around the study of his works.

Among Maximus’s works, a significant corpus consists of the 27 dogmatic and polemical treatises known as the *Opuscula theologica et polemica*. These texts constitute a major source for the study of Christian theology, particularly in the context of Christological controversy. They were composed approximately between 633 and 657 (Jankowiak, 2015; Boudignon, 2023).

A detailed cataloguing of the treatises is provided in the *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (CPG 7697). A critical Greek edition of the corpus has yet to be published. The only complete version currently available is that of the *Patrologia Graeca* (PG 91, 9-285), which is based on François Combefis’s seventeenth-century edition (1675) (Boudignon, 2023). As these editions rely on a limited number of manuscripts, they do not always reflect the author’s original text.

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The dogmatic-polemical treatises of Maximus the Confessor were translated into Georgian in the Gelatian literary school in the 12th century. In many instances, the Georgian translations preserve readings that reflect an earlier or alternative Greek archetype, thereby enabling scholars to reconstruct lost formulations and to gain a fuller understanding of the original structure and meaning of the text.

Methods

The study employs a comparative philological and text-critical methodology to examine the Georgian translation (K14) of Maximus the Confessor's dogmatic-polemical treatises. The research integrates textual, philological, and codicological approaches.

The manuscript is analyzed codicologically and systematically compared with the Greek Constantinopolitan corpus (A, N, Va, M, Par), with particular attention to composition, structure, and textual variants. A central method is the comparative analysis of the Greek and Old Georgian texts, aimed at assessing the accuracy of the translation and the principles of textual transmission.

Special attention is given to passages in which the Georgian text preserves readings absent from the extant Greek manuscripts, making it possible to reconstruct otherwise unattested or modified segments. The study also applies the principle of formal equivalence to evaluate the fidelity of the translation and its significance for establishing a critical edition of the original Greek text.

Results and Discussion

The Monastery of Gelati was one of the most important theological and philosophical centers in medieval Georgia, characterized by intensive translation activity and the production of numerous Georgian versions of works by Greek authors. The academy that functioned within the monastery left an invaluable cultural and scholarly heritage in the form of manuscript books.

A distinguished example of this tradition is the 12th-century Gelatian manuscript codex (designated K14), preserved in the Kutaisi State Historical Museum. The manuscript contains the Georgian translation of twenty-four works by Maximus the Confessor, including ten of the dogmatic-polemical treatises. These works are:

- Quaestiones ad Thalassium (1r-165v)
- Opusc. 13 (165v-167r)
- Letters 6, 7, 11 (167r-174r)
- Expositio orationis dominicae (174r-188r)
- Letters 4, 8, 9, 1, 19, 12, 13, 15 (188r-251v)
- Disputatio cum Pyrrho (252r-275r)
- Opusc. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 6, 14, 8 (275r-312v)

The dogmatic-polemical treatises of Maximus the Confessor are preserved in approximately 145 Greek manuscripts, dated from the 10th to the 18th centuries. The distribution of these manuscripts by century is as follows:

Table 1.
NUMBER OF CENTURY
MANUSCRIPTS

6	X
7	XI
15	XII
23	XIII
25	XIV
24	XV
26	XVI
10	XVII
4	XVIII
5	Undated

No Greek manuscript preserves the complete corpus of the polemical treatises. The largest number—eighteen treatises—is preserved in the manuscript Vat. gr. 508. Eleven treatises are preserved in the manuscripts A (Angelicus 120), N (Coislinianus 90), Va (Vaticanus 1502), and M (Monacensis gr. 363). It is noteworthy that manuscript A represents the earliest extant witness of the Constantinopolitan corpus, which is dated to the 11th century (Sietis, 2022: 123, 126), whereas the remaining manuscripts belong to the 12th century. The 13th-century manuscript Par (Grec 886), belonging to the Constantinopolitan corpus group, is directly dependent on manuscript A (Laga, Steel, 1980). Other manuscripts contain a smaller number of treatises.

The manuscripts A, N, Va, and M constitute the Constantinopolitan corpus group. These manuscripts are largely identical in terms of composition and structure. The Georgian translation closely mirrors the composition and structure of the Greek manuscripts of the Constantinopolitan corpus (A, N, Va, M). The table below shows the correspondence between the composition of the named Greek manuscripts and the Georgian collection:

Table 2.

MANUSCRIPT	COMPOSITION
A, N	Quaestiones ad Thalassium, Opusc. 13, Letters (6, 7, 11), Expositio orationis dominicae, Letters (4, 8, 9, 1, 19, 12, 13, 15), Ambiguorum liber, Disputatio cum Pyrrho, Opusc. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 6, 14, 8, 9)
M	Quaestiones ad Thalassium, Ambiguorum liber (Difference with respect to A, N) , Opusc. 13, Letters (6, 7, 11), Expositio orationis dominicae, Disputatio cum Pyrrho, Opusc. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 6, 14, 8, 9), Letters (4, 8, 9, 1, 19, 12, 13, 15) (Difference with respect to A, N)
VA	Quaestiones ad Thalassium, Ambiguorum liber (Difference with respect to A, N) , Opusc. 13, Letters (6, 7, 11), Expositio orationis dominicae, Letters (4, 8, 9, 1, 19, 12, 13, 15) (Difference with respect to M) , Disputatio cum Pyrrho, Opusc. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 6, 14, 8, 9)
K14	Quaestiones ad Thalassium, Opusc. 13, Letters (6, 7, 11), Expositio orationis dominicae, Letters (4, 8, 9, 1, 19, 12, 13, 15), Disputatio cum Pyrrho, Opusc. (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 6, 14, 8, 9)

The Georgian manuscript reflects the structure of the A and N manuscripts, with only one divergence—namely, the absence of the Ambiguorum liber; however, its arrangement also aligns with the structural framework of the M and Va manuscripts.

Such structural similarity among the manuscripts indicates the Georgian translation's direct dependence on the Constantinopolitan corpus version.

A comparative analysis of the textual data of the Georgian manuscript and the Constantinopolitan corpus demonstrates that the Georgian witness does not consistently follow any single Greek manuscript. Its readings vary, aligning at times with one Greek witness and at other times with another. Notably, the Georgian manuscript most frequently concurs with manuscript N. I also observe that, in certain instances, the data of the thirteenth-century manuscript Par are employed, as the Georgian text occasionally reflects exclusively its readings. The following table displays this data:

Table 3.

A	N	Va	M	Par	K14	
διαροῦσι	διαροῦσι	om	om	διαροῦσι	Om [165vII]	= Va, M
ὑποστάσεις τρεῖς	τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις	ὑποστάσεις τρεῖς	ὑποστάσεις τρεῖς	ὑποστάσεις τρεῖς	τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις (სამნი გუამნი) [166vI]	= N
διαρέσει	ἀναρέσει	διαρέσει	διαρέσει	διαρέσει	διαρέσει (განსაწვალეხელა დ) [166vI]	= A, Va, M, Par

καὶ	om	καὶ	καὶ	καὶ	Om [166vII]	= N
om	om	om	om	καὶ	καὶ (და) [275vII]	= Par
οἶον	οἶον	οἶον	οἶον	om	οἶον (რეცა) [275vII]	= A, N, Va, M
om	om	om	om	πέφυκε	Πέφυκε (მოუგეცხ) [276rI]	= Par
οὖν	οὖν	οὖν	om	οὖν	Om [277vI]	= M
om	πράγματος	πράγματος	πράγματος	om	πράγματος (საქმისსა) [279rII]	= N, Va, M
ὀνομάτων	ὀνομάτων	ὀνομάτων	ὀνομάτων	om	ὀνομάτων (სახელთა) [279vI]	= A, N, Va, M
γὰρ	γὰρ	γὰρ	γὰρ	om	γὰρ (რამეთუ) [279vII]	= A, N, Va, M
λογικὸν οὖν ... ζῶον ὑπάρχων ὁ ἄνθρωπος	λογικὸν οὖν ... ζῶον ὑπάρχων ὁ ἄνθρωπος	λογικὸν οὖν φύσει ζῶον ὑπάρχων ὁ ἄνθρωπος	λογικὸν οὖν φύσει ζῶον ὑπάρχων ὁ ἄνθρωπος	λογικὸν οὖν ... ζῶον ὑπάρχων ὁ ἄνθρωπος	λογικὸν οὖν ... ζῶον ὑπάρχων ὁ ἄνθρωπος (ვინადაცა სიტყვერად ... ცხოველად მყოფი კაცი) [280rI]	A, N, Par
ἐμφανῶς	ἐμφανῶς	ἐμφανῶς	ἐμφανοῦς	ἐμφανῶς	ἐμφανῶς (განცხადებულა და) [280rII]	= A, N, Va, Par
φύσει παθητὸν, τὴν οἰκείαν κεκήνηκεν ἔφεις· πόθου γὰρ πλήρωσις ἢ τοῦ ποθοῦντας πρὸς τὸ φύσει ποθοῦμενον	φύσει ... ποθοῦμενον	φύσει ... ποθοῦμενον	φύσει ... ποθοῦμενον	φύσει παθητὸν, τὴν οἰκείαν κεκήνηκεν ἔφεις· πόθου γὰρ πλήρωσις ἢ τοῦ ποθοῦντας πρὸς τὸ φύσει ποθοῦμενον	φύσει ... ποθοῦμενον (ბუნებით ... სასურველისა) [280vI]	= N, Va, M

For the reconstruction of the critical text of Maximus the Confessor's treatises, those fragments of the Georgian manuscripts that preserve unique textual readings are of particular importance. A small selection of these readings is presented in the table shown here. Here we present a few examples:

A N Va M Par

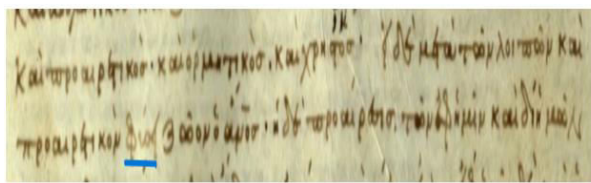
μετὰ τῶν λοιπῶν καὶ προαιρετικὸν φύσει ζῶον ὁ ἄνθρωπος... (A, 202v, 5–6; N, 232v, -18–17; Va, 217vI, 13–15; M, 195vII, 3–4; Par, 220r, -7; PG 91, 24B)

Man, along with the rest, is **by nature** also a creature endowed with free choice...

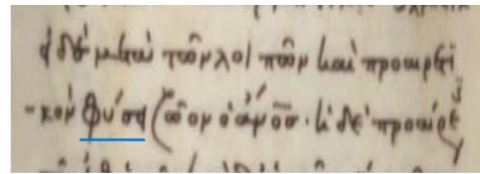
K14

*ბ(ოლო) უკ(უე)თუ სხ(უა)თა
თ(ა)ნა წინაღმრჩეველობიოთიცა
[...] ცხოველი არს [280rII]
კ(ა)ცო...* (K14, 280rI)

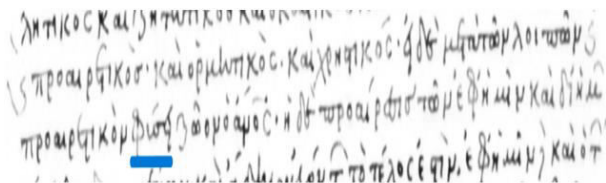
Man, along with the rest, is [...] also a creature endowed with free choice...



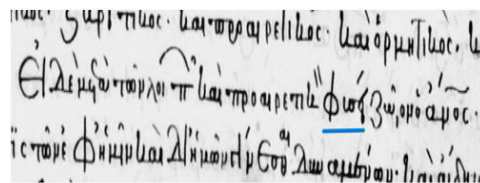
A



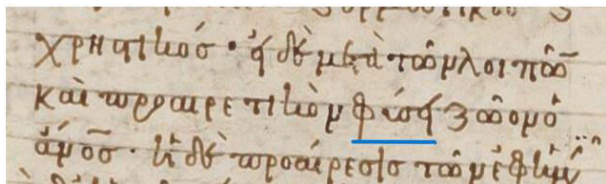
M



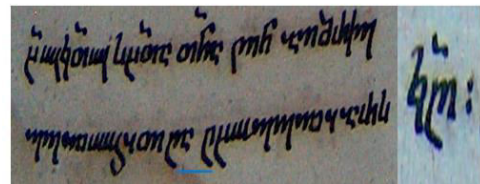
N



Par



Va



K14

A N Va M Par

μόνης ἀφράστως ἐπειλημμένη τῆς (τῆς] om N) τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν ὀρεκτοῦ μυστικῆς ἀπολαύσεως (A, 202v, 21-22; N, 232v, -2-1; Va, 217vI, -3 – 217vII, 1; M, 195vII, -13-11; Par, 220v, 9-10).

having received, ineffably, **solely** the mystical enjoyment of that which is naturally desirable.

K14

[...] გამოუთქმელ(ა)დ მიღებოთა ბ(უ)ნ(ე)ბით სახადელითა მის საიდუმლოთა საშუშბლოთადათ (K14, 280vI).

having received, ineffably, [...] the mystical enjoyment of that which is naturally desirable.

In the samples shown, the text of the Georgian translation differs from the readings of all the manuscripts. Naturally, this does not reflect the translator’s interpretation. As a rule, the Gelatian scribe translates the text according to the principle of formal equivalence, ensuring that even the smallest units are preserved in the Georgian version.

Numerous other cases indicate, indicate that the Georgian translation preserves fragments that diverge from the known Greek manuscript tradition. The relevant material is presented below.

Table 4.

A	N	Va	M	Par	K14	
om	om	om	om	om	ხელი [166vII]	= X
om	om	om	om	om	მონაგონელად [275rII]	= X
ένωσιν, ώς	ένωσιν, ώς	ένωσιν, ώς	ένωσιν, ώς	ένωσιν, ώς	Om [275rII]	= X
έπισης	έπισης	έπισης	έπισης	έπισης	Om [279vI]	= X
Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	ნდომასა [279vII]	= X
Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	თვსსამე [279vII]	= X

φύσει	φύσει	φύσει	φύσει	φύσει	Om [280rI]	= X
δυνάμεων	δυνάμεων	δυνάμεων	δυνάμεων	δυνάμεων	Om [280rII]	= X
Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	მყოფი [280rII]	= X
Om	Om	Om	Om	Om	გუარი [280rII]	= X
μόνης	μόνης	μόνης	μόνης	μόνης	Om [280vI]	= X

The data presented in Table 4 reveal a consistent pattern: the Georgian (Gelatian) translation both omits elements attested in all known Greek manuscripts and, conversely, preserves lexical items absent from the extant Greek tradition. Such a dual phenomenon cannot be explained solely by scribal error or occasional negligence. Given the translator's well-attested tendency toward formal equivalence, these divergences are more plausibly rooted in the nature of the Greek Vorlage itself.

In particular, the presence of Georgian equivalents where all Greek witnesses read *om.* suggests that the translator may have had access to a Greek exemplar containing readings no longer preserved in the surviving manuscript tradition. Conversely, the omission of words uniformly attested in Greek manuscripts may reflect either secondary harmonization in the Greek tradition or, less likely, controlled abbreviation at the level of translation.

Taken together, these cases point to the potential value of the Georgian version as an independent witness for the reconstruction of the Greek text. The Gelatian translation thus emerges not merely as a derivative rendering, but as a source of text-critical significance, capable of preserving archaic or otherwise lost stages of the textual tradition.

Conclusion

The Georgian translation (K14) is textually affiliated with the Constantinopolitan manuscript group.

Within this group it stands closest to codex N;

however, it is not a direct copy of N, since it contains original readings unattested in N or in any other known Greek witness.

The Gelatian translator evidently had access to a Greek exemplar no longer extant among surviving manuscripts.

Consequently, the K14 version constitutes a significant independent witness and offers valuable material for the reconstruction of lost or altered passages in Maximus the Confessor's dogmatic-polemical treatises and for the preparation of a critical edition.

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Manuscript Sources

K14 = Gelatian collection (12th c.), Kutaisi State Historical Museum, Georgia, Kutaisi

A = Angelicus 120 (11th c.), Angelica Library, Rome, Italy

N = Coislinianus 90 (12th c.), National Library of France, Paris

Va = Vaticanus 1502 (12th c.), Vatican Apostolic Library, Vatican City

M = Monacensis gr. 363 (12th c.), Bavarian State Library, Germany, Munich

Par = Parisinus 886 (13th c.), National Library of France, Paris