

# Shorena Metreveli

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## **The musical and liturgical aspects of the great feasts of the Church services inserted in the Great Lent**

Georgian chant is the inheritance of the ancient professional music – the country and its church have an enormous quantity of old musical and liturgical traditions. The purpose of this paper is to show some details of Georgian style. The crucial aspect of this phenomenon are chant schools, which were present in Georgia in the past and also exist nowadays. The culture of Georgian chant is variable and particular schools are different from each other, but all of them have one basis. The vital schools are Gelati, Shemoqmedi (West Georgian chant traditions) and Karbelashvilebi (East Georgian chant traditions). In this paper musical analysis of West Georgian chant traditions will be presented, using Gelati school as an example. Scores are taken from Georgian musical manuscripts from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which are saved in National Centre of Manuscripts and were written by St. Pilimon the Chanter (Koridze) and St. Ekvtime the Confessor (Kereselidze).

The church year consists of many holidays. In the Orthodox Church there are twelve Great Feasts, which are divided into immovable and movable. The movable feasts are: Palm Sunday, The Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ and Pentecost. Among the immovable feasts there are: Epiphany, The Meeting of the Lord in the Temple, The Annunciation

of the Theotokos, The Transfiguration of Our Lord, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos, The Elevation of the Holy Cross, The Entrance into the Temple of Our Most Holy Lady, and The Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The most meaningful feast is Easter (Pascha). The Great Feasts are scattered throughout the year, what is particularly important. The patterns, designed for each of them, are performed only on certain days. The typicon of the Great Feasts services is considerably different from the typicon of the weekly days or the Sunday's serves. The distinctive features of the vital festivities are additional texts and musical material; the excellence of the worship is also noticeable. All of them are the marks that are connected with the content and significance of the Great Feasts. These characteristic features can be found in three parts of Liturgy of the Hours: Vespers, Matins and Liturgy. Because of the specific character of parish calendar, the Great Feasts ceremonials have different variants from each other in order to diverse days of the week.

This paper summarises old Georgian professional music, chant, and its specific traditions, which were in use in the church of Georgia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and they are used also nowadays. The article's aim is to show how some of the Great Feasts in Georgia were celebrated. I will present the examination of some individual aspects of Georgian liturgical practice, for example Great Lent and also the musical and liturgical aspects of the Great Feasts of the church services inserted into the Great Lent. Then, some aspects will be synthesized, what is important in the process of researching Georgian chant. The paper includes only typical phenomenon of Georgian liturgical and musical traditions.

For the aim of this work, our interests will be focused on the changes that appear in the structure of seasonal calendar of the Great Feasts, namely, on the Lent, which serves as a preparation for the Easter. Among the Great Feasts, only the Palm Sunday and the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord are placed in the Lent. The Palm Sunday belongs to the series of movable holidays and is celebrated on the Sunday that precedes the Easter. In Christian services, the Palm Sunday has appeared from the 4<sup>th</sup> century (it comes from the old Jewish holiday). The Annunciation of the Lord is an unmovable festivity and it is celebrated on April 7 (March 25 in the old style). The goal of the present report is to show the very specific nature of the services

of these feasts, their musical and typical hallmarks in the scope of the Lent settings. We also desire to determine the issue of the reflection of the typical peculiarities in the liturgical books (in the Triode and The Celebration of the Menaion).

In the present report the establishment of the Lent, the peculiarities of the historical development and the particular importance of the feast services will be examined. It is known that from the beginning, even before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, the Church had established the short-term fast before Easter. In the local churches various Lent service traditions had been established. From the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries onward the so-called forty-day fast became a commonly acknowledged fact. Determining the issue of a liturgical content of the Lent, the liturgical reform, carried out by St. Theodore of Stoudios in the 9<sup>th</sup> century at Studios Monastery in Constantinople, was crucial. After that the adult baptism and Catechumens Institute, which had been provided in the Lent period before, had completely disappeared from the life of the Church and, after this reform, the Lent was identified only as a “repent” period.<sup>1</sup>

In our research, the demonstration of compatibility issue of the festive typicon and the specific elements of the Lent services is also important. A comparative study of the Great Feasts and the Triodion typicons found that the liturgy of the Palm Sunday is based on the festive typicon and it does not include the repentance hymns that are characteristic for the period of Lent, three hymns of Matins canon and the other elements. The typical Liturgical pattern of the Great Feasts is completely preserved. As for the Annunciation feast, the diversity of approach is evident. It is celebrated with the Forefeast, which has its own pattern. The holiday falls on the typicon influence of this period, which will coincide with the “Thursday of the third week of the Lent period and lasts until the Bright Week Wednesday”. This fact is confirmed by the facts that are reflected in the liturgical book “The Mark’s chapters” with the 8 cases of Forefeast, 18 cases of Annunciations, and 9 cases of Afterfeast services. It is clear that in this “liturgical collection” it is impossible to discuss all the cases of this holiday and only the important features of the Feast are presented here, the knowledge of which facilitates the use of “The Mark of chapters”.<sup>2</sup>

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1 [online] <http://www.orthodoxtheology.ge> [accessed: 18.03.2016]; St. Paul’s Orthodox Christian Theology Centre, *Lent – the historical development*, 2012.

2 B. Gunia, I. Gunia, *Liturgical collection #2*, Tbilisi 1996.

In the cases examined in this collection, to each Annunciation canon of the Orthros (Matins) the canon from the Menaion (hymns for each calendar day of the year) is added, that depends on the calendar day to which the Annunciation coincides. Interestingly, as one of the examples of “the variant diversity” caused by the typicon influences of the Lent period, the Palm Sunday, and the Annunciation, coincidence variant is given – “if the Annunciation day coincides with the Palm Sunday”. This fact is quite interesting in terms of the music, as in this case the hymnographic canons of both holidays are performed. It is known that canons of both feasts are given on the 4<sup>th</sup> tone. The canon on the Palm Sunday belongs to Cosmas of Jerusalem, and the Annunciation one to Theophanes. On the other days, the confluence of the 4<sup>th</sup> tone and different tone canons would take place. However, the simultaneous designation of two Great Feasts is really an exception, a rare and complex phenomenon in the liturgical practice, as well as in the process of services.

In addition to the Liturgical book reviews, we will focus on the music-analytical sphere of the Great Feasts. From the various genre structures of the service, we will focus on the performance characteristics and the hallmarks of the hymnographic canon, which is the biggest in the service. What is well-known, the hymnographic canons have special position in diverse structure of the liturgical services. The hymnographic canon is a composition of nine hymns (Oda). Every hymn is composed by strophes, from which the first one – theme-song – is rhythmic and melodious model for the others, called *Dasdebeli*. The last one is devoted to the Virgin, so its name is *Theotokion*. As Iovane Batonishvili writes, Matins theme-songs number is 500, and Vespers theme-songs number – 60. On the festive Matins, where a canon was implemented simultaneously, every canon must have had its own theme-song. It is a reason of an enormous number of theme-songs.

In the contemporary serve practice, Matins canon is read by psalm-reader and that is a reason for reducing the share of chanting. During the ceremony, serve singers perform only 9 theme-songs and to the Easter – only 8 theme-songs. The fundamental reason of it could be a prolongation of serves time, absence of the hymns scores or unpreparedness of singers. The hymnographic canon is the most complicated and has a scaled form, so it is difficult to listen it while singing, and that is why it is performed by reading. It is not helping in revival of the old musical tradition in the contemporary service practice. What

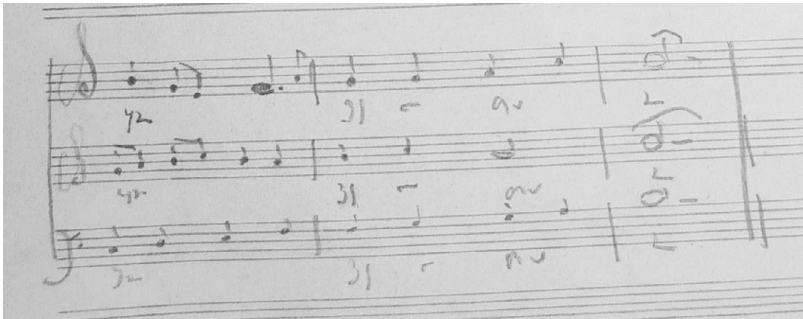
is known from old Georgian musical manuscripts, in the service practice from the 18<sup>th</sup> century it is not inevitable to sing the theme-songs and other hymns of canon instead of reading it. As we know, due to the intervention of Russian Tsarism in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, church services in Georgia were discouraged and in many cases forbidden in place of Russian style services.

Comparative analysis of the Festive Ektenia in the contemporary services, Triodioni and sacred hymns description – catalogue (“Description of the Manuscripts and Alphabet Catalogue of Georgian Sacred Hymns according to the handwritten scores of St. Pilimon the Chanter [Koridze] and St. Ekvtime the Confessor [Kereselidze]”) proves the existence of different versions of hymnographic canons performed during the Great Feasts. Taking into consideration the peculiarities of texts, it is obvious that the mentioned genre developed in the Octoechos system. Musical manuscripts which include this feast (Palm Sunday and the Annunciation of Our Lady) chant material, are kept in the National Centre of Manuscripts. The survey found that the musical manuscripts contain the notation of three-voiced Heirmos. Annunciation Heirmoses are included in the manuscripts Q-666 and Q-681.<sup>3</sup> The musical samples of the Heirmos are identical. Heirmoses of the Palm Sunday (excluding Heirmos VIII) are included in the manuscript Q-689.<sup>4</sup> Unlike the musical material of the Annunciation, the Palm Sunday music also has notations of Kontakion (Chreli) and different variants of the Heirmos IX – simple, ornamented and motley (Chreli). This material is gathered in the various manuscripts.<sup>5</sup> The identities of the expounders are also revealed: Dimitri Chalaganidze, Razhden Kundadze, Ivliane Anton and David Dumbadzes, Simon Molarishvili. This leads to the existence of the different hymn options.

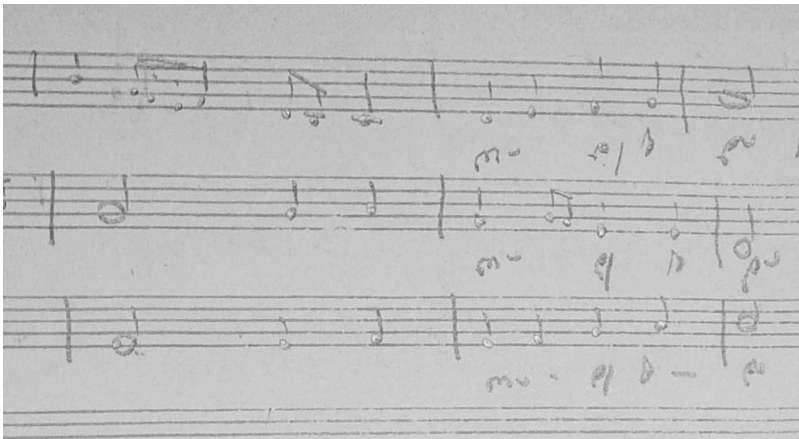
Both celebration canons are given on the 4<sup>th</sup> tone, what creates the possibility to reveal the eight-tone cycle features based on the examples of comparison and intonation analysis of the 4<sup>th</sup> tone Heirmos. Also, it will help to shape up the intonation models of the whole tune, or that of individual structural units (verse, phrase and motive). There are

- 3 Q-666 is written in 1885, in Kutaisi and Q-681 is likely to be copied from this manuscript in 1886 in Kutaisi. Chant editors are: D. Chalaganidze, R. Khundadze, and I. Tsereteli. Both manuscripts are written by P. Koridze.
- 4 The chant was copied by E. Kereselidze and transferred by A. Kutateladze.
- 5 Q-668, Q-680, Q-687, Q-690, Q-694 and H-154, which were recorded by E. Kereselidze and P. Koridze in Tbilisi and in Kutaisi.

two motive verses in the Annunciation Heirmoses, the end of which coincide with the contextual end of the verbal text phrasing. On the semantic point of view, the phrases cannot be split. On the intonation point of view, all of the eight Heirmoses are individual and different. We are not able to find repetitions of the verses, formations of the intonation connections, the variant repetition of the second, ending motives and various short rhythmic figurations here.



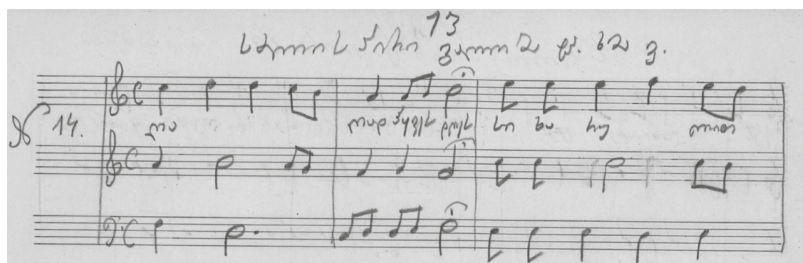
Example 1. *IV Theme-song of Annunciation*. Written by Pilimon the Chanter (Koridze); Manuscript Q-666, Kutaisi 1885.



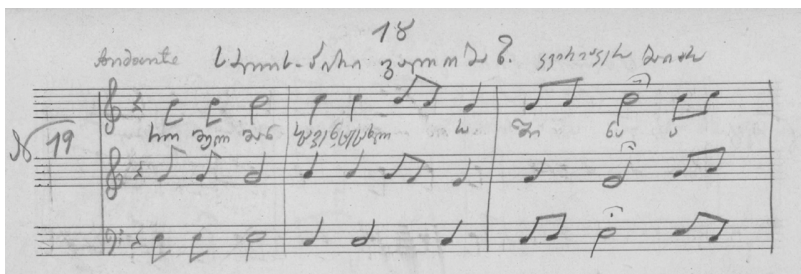
Example 2. *V Theme-song of Annunciation*. Written by Pilimon the Chanter (Koridze); Manuscript Q-666, Kutaisi 1885.

According to the verbal text volume, the number of Heirmos verses also varies. The Heirmos I has 7 verses, The Heirmoses III-IV-V-VI – 5 verses, The VII Heirmos – 4 verses, The Heirmoses VIII-IX – 9 verses. We have to stress the fact that the Annunciation Feast shares the Heirmos VII with the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple Feast. In the Hymnographic practice, this kind of sharing the chant-like material between the different holidays is not a rare case. In this case, the same topic and the same liturgical essence is gathered around the common material (in this case the subject is the Virgin Mary). The insertion of the IX chant, which contains the similar ending formulas as the Heirmoses, also shows intonation links with them. In accordance with its function, in the IX chant the insertion with the succession of Katavasia forms some sort of a rondeau and generates the intonation arches, where the familiar musical motives of the ending phrases are clearly dominated. Despite the different and individual musical structure of the Heirmoses, the development of a common logic is quite clear.

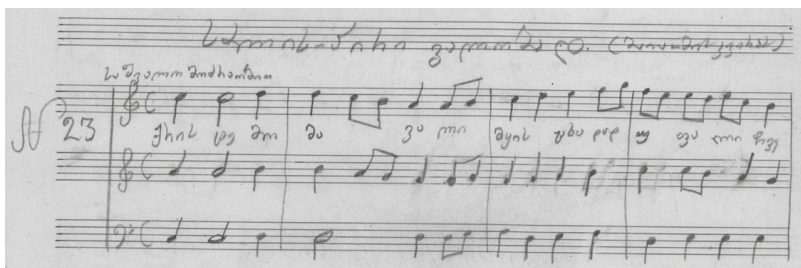
The Palm Heirmoses sharply differ from the music of the Annunciation ones. Although both feast chants situate around one tone, it is impossible to trace the signs of the big resemblance here. In this case, the ending verses and short rhythmic figurations act as the connecting forces. It should be noted that, unlike in the Annunciation Heirmoses, in the Palm Sunday ones full repeating of the whole verses takes place, as well as in the other Heirmoses (excluding Heirmos I). As an example, we name the beginning verses of the Heirmoses III and V and the beginning verses of the Heirmoses IV-VI-VII.



Example 3. *VI Theme-song of Palm Sunday*. Written by Ekvtime the Confessor (Kereselidze); Manuscript Q-689, Mtskheta 1925.



Example 4. VII Theme-song of Palm Sunday. Written by Ekvtime the Confessor (Kereselidze); Manuscript Q-689, Mtskheta 1925.



Example 5. IV Theme-song of Palm Sunday. Written by Ekvtime the Confessor (Kereselidze); Manuscript Q-689, Mtskheta 1925.

The borders of the musical and verbal phrases are in compliance too in this case. There is no two-motived principle in the short verses used in the Palm Sunday Heirmoses. Intonation connections in the level of the ending formulas are revealed in the motley Kontakion that demonstrates the integrity of the canon more clearly. Very interesting information about Palm Sunday hymnographic canon is found in the old Georgian literature – in John Minckhi's poetry in particular, a study of which was done by Lela Khachidze. From Georgian hymnographic history there is also the greatest myth of Iovane Minckhi to the forming of Georgian Triodioni. In the autographic collection of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli, it is presented the Palm Sunday's serve with extensive repertoire. 4 hymnographic canons are shown there; Iovane Minckhi's canon is the first one and then there are 3 canons, which



authors are Kozma and Kristephore. The last canon does not contain the name of the author. On the manuscript Iovane Minchkhi's name is signed as "Minchkhi" or just "M". Every hymn of canon contains also the theme-songs. The importance of canon is broadening with second hymn. Nowadays, the second hymn of canon is not written in the contemporary liturgical books, as it was lost in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. The scientists reckon that the reason of it is the fact is the second hymn's mourning disposition and its size. It is believed that the second hymn of canon was sung during the Lent previously. It seems to be a reason why the second hymn of canon is not sung in the contemporary practice. From the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the second hymn starts to appear in the addition to the canon and this process is connect with the name of Iovane Minchkhi.<sup>6</sup>

While working on the paper, one interesting detail appeared. Discussed above, Heirmoses of the Palm Sunday and the Feast of the Annunciation were compared with Heirmoses that are collected in Paracliton, but Heirmoses of the Palm Sunday was not found there. Talking about the Annunciation Heirmoses, it is possible that, in the material of the IV tone of Sunday Orthros, they are pointed as the models set in the beginning of chants for The Elevation of the Holy Cross. As a full text, it is given in the same tone in the Friday Orthros Cross canon. Apparently, the Annunciation Heirmoses are scattered in the IV tone of Paracliton and in the weekday services. However, the issue of festive Heirmoses is not quite clear and deserves a further research. It is not confirmed whether Paracliton absorbed Heirmoses or, on the contrary, Heirmoses are moved from Paracliton to The Celebration of the Menaion. Certainly, while creating the canons, hymnographers applied to Heirmoses as an elective principle of the models and as it appears, the similar case has been observed here.

The analysis shows individuality and diversity of the chant material within the one tone frame. Stability is manifested mainly in the level of the ending formulas. The Heirmos genre, unlike the others, gives more freedom to the performer and creates infinitely diverse fund of the tunes, which has once again demonstrated the wealth and the original nature of the Georgian church chanting. Singing performance tradition of complete hymnographic canon was revived at the Gelati

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6 L. Khachidze, E. Metreveli, *Poetry of Iovane Minchkhi – monuments of old Georgian poetry*, "Metsniereba", Tbilisi 1987.

Monastery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the whole divine service was performed by chanting there. Even Razhden Khundadze was talking about this fact: “In bygone times Gelati was the nesting ground for church chant, and in modern times some of our most famous and renowned chanters have been trained at Gelati including Anton Dumbadze, Sino Kandelaki, Davit Chkhareli and others...”. Nowadays, only few chants are performed from the vast repertoire. Georgian chant is believed to have originated from the Tao-Klarjeti region between the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> century from where it spread to the major monastery-academies throughout Georgia. Chant flourished at the academy of Iqalto in far Eastern Georgia, the Gelati academy in the Kutaisi region, and Martvili (Chqondidi) Monastery. During the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, chant was unified in the school of hymnography at the Gelati Monastery, which was among the leading spiritual and educational centers of the world at that time.

Diversity of the Great Feasts canons which are fixed in Georgian music manuscripts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century confirms viability of Georgian chanting tradition. Diversity and abundance of existing materials gives the opportunity to conduct further research on the topic. Despite the fact that, in the modern religious practice, discussed Heirmoses are read and on this point of view the chant’s share is reduced, according the results of the intonation analysis of the noted Heirmosesit, it is possible that connecting it with the practice by the returning it to the service will help to revive the Georgian chant traditions.

Notably interesting letters by Catholicos-Patriarch Kirion II of All-Georgia and also of Pilimon Koridze are preserved. They contain information about Old Georgian Chant:

Not only is Georgian church chant rich with melody, each phrase and even each word carries special meaning. From this point of view, melody and text are incomparable and we thank God for blessing our nation with such a musical treasure. This three-voiced chant, unlike the chant of our neighbors the Armenians or the Greeks, has been delighting our ears for centuries...

(Kirion II).<sup>7</sup>

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7 M. Erkvanidze (ed.), *Georgian Church Chant (Gelati School). The hymns of the Twelve Feasts of Our Lord and Immovable Feasts*, Tbilisi 2006.

We are no longer fearful that our church will disappear forever, because as they have been accurately transcribed into notation the same way they have been sung. But if these transcriptions are not published and taught to people in schools, or if these chants are not sung in churches as part of our daily services, then they will lose their purpose, and that would be even worse than their degeneration (Pilimon Koridze).<sup>8</sup>

## Abstract

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The culture of Georgian chant is variable and particular schools are different from each other. The vital schools are Gelati, Shemoqmedi (West Georgian chant traditions) and Karbelashvilebi (East Georgian chant traditions). The paper presents musical analysis of West Georgian chant traditions, using Gelati school as an example. Scores are taken from Georgian musical manuscripts from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which are saved in National Centre of Manuscripts and were written by St. Pilimon the Chanter (Koridze) and St. Ekvtime the Confessor (Kereselidze). The article's aim is to show how some of the Great Feasts in Georgia were celebrated. The first part contains the examination of some individual aspects of Georgian liturgical practice. The second part synthesises what is important in the process of researching Georgian chant. The analysis shows individuality of the chant material. Diversity and abundance of existing materials gives the opportunity to conduct further research on the topic.

## Keywords

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Georgian chant, Gelati school, Orthodox Church, liturgy

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8 *Ibid.*

## Abstrakt

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### Muzyczne i liturgiczne aspekty nabożeństw Wielkich Świąt przypadających na Wielki Post

Tradycja chorału gruzińskiego należy do zróżnicowanych, w jej obrębie występuje kilka odmian. Najważniejszymi szkołami są: Gelati, Shemoqmedi (należące do tradycji zachodniogruzińskiej) oraz Karbelashvilebi (należące do tradycji wschodniogruzińskiej). Artykuł stanowi próbę analizy zachodniogruzińskiej tradycji chorałowych w oparciu o utwory napisane w stylu szkoły Gelati. Jako materiał źródłowy wykorzystano XIX-wieczne manuskrypty pochodzące ze zbiorów Gruzjińskiego Narodowego Centrum Rękopisów, autorstwa św. Filimona Koridze oraz św. Ekvtima Kereselidze. Tekst omawia muzyczną celebrację dwunastu wielkich świąt Kościoła prawosławnego w Gruzji. Pierwsza część artykułu zawiera charakterystykę indywidualnych aspektów gruzińskiej tradycji liturgicznej. Część druga jest syntezą cech kluczowych dla badania gruzińskiego chorału. Analiza dowodzi indywidualizmu ocenianych śpiewów. Różnorodność i bogactwo zachowanego materiału muzycznego stwarza możliwość do prowadzenia dalszych badań w tym zakresie.

## Słowa kluczowe

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chorał gruziński, szkoła Gelati, Kościół prawosławny, liturgia

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