

SAMKVIDRO

International Electronic Scientific Journal of Social Sciences

LEXICAL, PHILOLOGICAL, AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF GABRIEL MTSIRE'S COLLECTION THREE HUNDRED: A STUDY COMBINING TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL HUMANITIES METHODS

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Abstract

This article examines the lexical, philological, and linguistic features of Three Hundred, a collection compiled and edited by the Georgian monastic writer Gabriel Mtsire on the basis of three treatises translated by Euthymius the Athonite. The study rests on the autograph manuscript A 224 and the non-autograph copies S 127, H 211, and H 1248, all preserved in the National Center of Manuscripts in Tbilisi, and on manuscripts from the John the Baptist Monastery in the Gareji desert that document the setting in which the collection was produced. The text of the collection is collated with its primary sources, and the variants are classified by linguistic level: phonetics and orthography, lexicon, morphology, syntax, and stylistics. Traditional philological collation is combined with digital humanities approaches to the systematic recording and counting of recurring forms, so that each change can be assessed as a proportion of the cases in which it could have occurred. The analysis shows that the orthographic modernization of the text was systematic in some categories and only partial in others, that lexical and stylistic interventions were cautious and aimed chiefly at restoring traditional biblical wording and at helping the reader, and that a considerable share of the apparent errors belongs to a damaged archetype or to later copyists rather than to the compiler. The collection is best understood as a qualified transcription with limited editing, and it provides valuable evidence for the linguistic norms of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Gabriel Mtsire; Three Hundred; Old Georgian; philology; textual criticism; Euthymius the Athonite; digital humanities

Research Article

1. Introduction

Three Hundred is a collection of ascetic and homiletic chapters compiled and edited by Gabriel Mtsire, who lived in the John the Baptist Monastery in the Gareji desert and is referred to in the manuscript tradition and in scholarship as Saint Gabriel. The collection is not an original composition. It is drawn from three treatises that were translated into Georgian by Euthymius the Athonite in the eleventh century, and its chapters are selected, transcribed, and in places altered on the basis of these older translations. Several manuscripts of the collection have survived to the present day, and they make it possible to observe closely how a nineteenth-century Georgian writer handled a text translated eight centuries earlier.¹

A comparison of Three Hundred with its primary sources shows that Gabriel Mtsire relied on them entirely and that most of the text follows them accurately. Nevertheless, numerous linguistic and stylistic differences emerge between them. These differences reflect, on the one hand, the editorial position of the compiler and, on the other hand, and even more prominently, the linguistic norms established in the nineteenth century, to which the writer adapted the linguistic fabric of the older sources in order to meet the needs of a contemporary reader. He could not avoid archaisms entirely and carried many of them diligently into his edited texts, but he introduced significant changes in orthography. His editorial work can therefore serve to illustrate the nature of the linguistic requirements of his era.

The scholarly problem lies in the fact that the differences between Three Hundred and the older translations do not have a single cause. Some are deliberate interventions by the compiler. Others were inherited from the manuscript that he copied, which was probably old and damaged and which may itself have differed from the manuscripts that survive today. Still others were introduced by the later copyists of his autograph. Every use of the collection as evidence, whether for the history of the Georgian language, for the reception of medieval translations, or for the working methods of monastic editors, depends on the ability to distinguish these causes.

The present article addresses this problem by collating the text of the collection with its sources and by classifying the resulting variants by linguistic level. Its contribution is twofold. Descriptively, it offers a systematic inventory of the phonetic, orthographic, lexical, morphological, syntactic, and stylistic features of Three Hundred. Methodologically, it combines traditional philological collation with digital humanities approaches to the recording and counting of variants, so that each type of change can be evaluated against the number of cases in which it could have occurred.

2. Research Objectives and Questions

The principal objective of the study is to establish the nature and extent of the linguistic and textual differ-

1 Tbilisi, National Center of Manuscripts (hereafter NCM), MS A 224. The text of the collection was established on the basis of this autograph manuscript, and the variants of the non-autograph manuscripts NCM, MS S 127, NCM, MS H 211, and NCM, MS H 1248 were attached to it.

ences between Three Hundred and its primary sources, and to determine which of these differences reflect the editorial position of the compiler, the character of the manuscript that he used, or the work of later copyists. A secondary objective is to consider what the collection shows about the linguistic norms of the nineteenth century as they applied to the copying and editing of medieval Georgian texts.

Four research questions follow from these objectives. First, which manuscripts were available to the compiler in the monastic setting of Gareji, and what can be said about the archetype that he used? Second, at which linguistic levels do the changes occur, and how systematically were they applied? Third, in which cases can a change be attributed to the compiler, and in which cases must it be attributed to the archetype or to later copyists? Fourth, what does the pattern of change reveal about the compiler's approach to the older text, which combined a commitment to transcribing it accurately with a willingness to adapt it for the reader?

3. Methodology and Sources

3.1 Manuscript Witnesses and Primary Sources

The study rests on two groups of sources. The first consists of the manuscripts of Three Hundred itself. The text of the collection was established on the basis of the autograph preserved as MS A 224, and the variants of three non-autograph copies, MS S 127, MS H 211, and MS H 1248, were attached to it. All four are held in the National Center of Manuscripts in Tbilisi. The second group consists of the three treatises translated by Euthymius the Athonite, which served as the primary sources of the collection, together with the surviving manuscripts of those translations, which are cited by the sigla A, B, C, D, E, and J. In addition, three manuscripts connected with the John the Baptist Monastery in the Gareji desert, MS A 87, MS A 100, and MS S 1350, are used to reconstruct the setting in which the collection was compiled. Table 1 lists the manuscripts and the folios that are relevant to the argument.

Table 1. Manuscripts Examined in the Study

Manuscript	Repository	Date	Role in the Study	Relevant Folios
A 224	NCM, Tbilisi	18th century	Autograph of Gabriel Mtsire; base text of the edition	—
S 127	NCM, Tbilisi	18th century	Non-autograph copy; variants collated	—
H 211	NCM, Tbilisi	18th century	Non-autograph copy; variants collated; preserves a phrase in [ⲁ73] lost in other descendants	—
H 1248	NCM, Tbilisi	—	Non-autograph copy; variants collated	—
A 87	NCM, Tbilisi	11th century	Copy kept in the John the Baptist Monastery, Gareji; marginal notes of ownership	1r, 13r, 78r
A 100	NCM, Tbilisi	1713	Copy made in the Gareji monastery by the hieromonk Ioseb; patron Besarion Orbelisdze	1r, 150r–v, 208v, 275v
S 1350	NCM, Tbilisi	25 March 1794	Copy by Archimandrite Euthymius and the hierodeacon Porphyry; patron Gavril	126r–v

Source: Manuscript descriptions and colophons; NCM = National Center of Manuscripts. A dash indicates that no folio reference is needed for the argument.

The three hundreds of the collection are designated in the apparatus by the Georgian letters ⲁ, Ⲃ, and ⲃ. The hundred designated ⲁ derives from the work of Gregory the Theologian, the hundred designated Ⲃ corresponds to the Century of Homilies of Basil the Great, which comprises 130 chapters, and the hundred designated ⲃ to the Teachings attributed to Maximus, the author who is referred to in the philological literature as Pseudo-Maximus.

3.2 Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeded in four steps. In the first step, the text of Three Hundred was collated with the text of the primary sources. In the second step, every variant was recorded and classified by linguistic level (phonetics and orthography, lexicon, morphology, syntax, and stylistics) and by type of change, for example addition, omission, replacement, or repositioning. In the third step, each variant was tested against the manuscript tradition of the source. A reading that is already attested in the older manuscripts was treated as inherited from the archetype; a reading found only in Three Hundred was treated as a probable editorial decision; and a reading found only in individual copies descending from the autograph was treated as the work of a later copyist. In the fourth step, the recurring forms were counted across the whole corpus, both in the sources and in the collection, so that a change could be expressed as a share of the cases in which it might have been made.

The digital humanities component of the study consists in the systematic, searchable recording of variants and in the counting of recurring forms across all three hundreds, which replaces selective sampling by an exhaustive inventory. The method has a limit that must be stated openly: because the archetype has not survived, the attribution of a variant to the compiler or to his model cannot always be certain, and wherever the evidence does not permit a decision, the analysis says so.

3.3 Conventions

Passages are cited in square brackets by the letter of the hundred and the chapter number, for example [g19] or [ð87]. Chapter numbers follow the numbering of the primary source.² A change is written in the form “form in the primary source > form in Three Hundred”. Georgian forms are given in the original script, because the phenomena under discussion are orthographic and cannot be represented adequately in transliteration, and English glosses are added in single quotation marks where the meaning is relevant to the argument. Personal names and titles are transliterated consistently, and the archaic letters ჳ, ზ, ა, ჟ, and ღ are cited only in the original script. Biblical passages are cited in the numbering used in the sources.

4. Main Analysis and Discussion

4.1 The Gareji Setting and the Archetype

Most of the text of Three Hundred follows the primary sources accurately, and it is therefore of interest which manuscripts the compiler used. In the Mravalmta desert of Gareji, and specifically in the John the Baptist Monastery where Gabriel Mtsire lived, several copies were kept. One of them is MS A 87, which dates from the eleventh century. Its marginal notes establish that it belonged to the monastery: the note on fol. 1r reads “Of the Mravalmta John the Baptist Desert,” and the note on fol. 13r states that this theological book belongs to the monastery. A supplication on fol. 78r asks the Holy Mother of God to forgive Gabriel his sins.³

Some manuscripts containing primary sources of the collection were copied in Gareji itself. MS A 100 was copied in 1713 by the hieromonk Ioseb Aragvis Eristvis Shvili for the patron Besarion Orbelisdze, and the copy-

² This applies, for example, to the chapters of the Century of Homilies of Basil the Great, in which the numbers of the primary source are retained although only some of its chapters were transferred to the collection.

³ NCM, MS A 87, fols. 1r, 13r, and 78r. The quotations are the marginal notes on the folios cited.

ist's colophon states that he wrote the holy book "in the Gareji desert, in the Mravalmta John the Baptist Monastery."⁴ MS S 1350 was completed on 25 March 1794 by Archimandrite Euthymius and the hierodeacon Porphyry, who was a pupil of Gabriel Mtsire and died young in 1801. Its patron is named as Gavriil, who is understood to be Gabriel Mtsire himself.⁵

It follows that Gabriel Mtsire had access to these manuscripts and that he even appears as the commissioner of one of them. It is therefore highly probable that he used one of the manuscripts kept in the monastery when he compiled the collection. It is equally likely that a further manuscript containing the text of the sources was kept in the monastery and can no longer be found in the manuscript repositories, since it is known that many manuscripts once preserved there have not survived. The textual evidence supports this inference. An examination of the variants in the hundred that contains the Teachings of Maximus shows that the text available to the compiler belonged, in most cases, to the type represented by manuscript B, although some of its variants survive in other manuscripts. The clearest case is the expression დღითი-დღე ('day by day'), which occurs twenty-eight times in the sources. Three Hundred mostly repeats it, but in eleven cases it reads დღითი დღედ, a form that manuscript B always contains and that must therefore have entered the collection from a source text related to B [398].

Other readings show that the archetype was not uniform in quality. In one instance a correct reading, which among the old manuscripts known today is preserved only in manuscript A, appears in Three Hundred as ისწრაფე შენცა მიმსგავსებად საქმეთა და ცხორებასა მათსა, whereas most old manuscripts violate the agreement required by Old Georgian syntax (მიმსგავსებად ... ცხორებისა მათისა). Gabriel Mtsire transferred the correct form and changed only the spelling of ცხორება to ცხოვრება. In other cases variants of the manuscripts designated (J)BC recur in his text, as in ვერ უძლო > ვერ შეუძლო and უფლისა > ღმრთისა. Such correspondences show that readings that look like innovations may already have stood in the manuscript that he copied.

4.2 Phonetics and Orthography

The phonetics and orthography of Three Hundred show eleven recurring features. Most of them reflect the orthographic norms of the nineteenth century, and because they are recurrent they lend themselves to quantitative assessment. The counts are summarized in Table 2.

The most conspicuous change is the replacement of the archaic letter ჯ, and in the Teachings of Maximus also of the diphthong უი, by the syllable ვი. Examples are ამისთვის > ამისთვის [344], გვრგვნი > გვირგვინი [385; 360], დამკვლრება > დამკვილრება [30, 70, 100; 33], მახული > მახვილი [357; 333; 332], and აღვრი > აღვირი > აღვირი [38; 341, 70]. The change was applied without exception in the forms of the verb 'to say': ვიგყვ and იგყვ occur forty-five times in the sources and იგყვს forty-two times, and in every case Three Hundred reads ვიგყვი, იგყვი, or იგყვის. In the postposition -თვის ('for'), by contrast, the change was carried out only in part. The postposition occurs 112 times in the sources, and Three Hundred sometimes repeats the old form but in seventy cases changes it to -თვის, as in ამისთვის > ამისთვის [352, 63, 64; 329, 81; 310, 13, 20] and ქრისტესთვის > ქრისტესთვის [324].

4 NCM, MS A 100, fols. 1r, 150r–v, 208v, and 275v. The date and the name of the copyist are given in the colophon on fols. 150r–v, the patron is named on fols. 150r–v and 275v, and the place of copying is stated on fol. 150v.

5 NCM, MS S 1350, fols. 126r–v. The date of completion and the names of the copyists and of the patron are recorded on fol. 126v, and the note on the death of Porphyry is on fol. 126r.

The consonant *კ* is replaced by *ხ*. The word *ქსენება* occurs eighteen times in the sources and is changed to *ხსენება* in sixteen cases [გ47; ბ31, 49, 60], and *მკურგალე* occurs twenty-five times, of which seventeen were transferred as *მხურგალე* [ბ5, 6, 7]. The change was not applied mechanically, since the word *კამლნი*, which occurs only once [ბ2], is repeated unchanged.

The letter *ა* disappears in two ways. It is omitted from within stems, as in *რაათა* > *რათა*, which occurs 251 times in the sources and appears as *რათა* 192 times, in *რაათამცა* > *რათამცა* (fifteen of thirty cases), and in *უფროა* > *უფრო* (twenty-eight of thirty-seven cases). It is also omitted where it serves as the marker of the nominative case, which happens in almost all places of the sources, with a few exceptions that are limited to biblical citations and even there are not consistent: *მსგავსება(ა) ანგელოზთა(ა)* [გ7] and *სიგეუა(ა) ღმრთისა(ა)* [გ12]. In one place an extra *ა* is added (*არარას იგონებდეს* > *არარაისა იგონებდეს* [ბ53]), and the letter *ჰ* is lost in *გეჰენია* > *გეენია* [მ33]. The letter *ზ*, which serves as a nominative marker in the sources, is replaced by *ე*, as in *საქმზ* > *საქმე* [ბ12], *სიბრძნზ* > *სიბრძნე* [გ85], and *მეუზ* > *მეუე* [ბ100].

The diphthongs *ეე* and *ეა* lose their first element. Examples are *თქეენ* > *თქვენ*, which occurs twenty-two times in the sources and appears as *თქვენ* in twenty-one of them; *ჩეენ* > *ჩვენ*, which occurs 232 times and is changed 155 times; *სიგეუა* > *სიგეეა* (thirty-four of thirty-nine cases); and *მოლუაწე* > *მოლევწე* (eighteen of twenty-eight).⁶ The rate of change varies considerably, however. The word *კეალად* occurs 163 times in the sources, but it appears as *კეალად* in only fifteen cases [ბ46, 51, 60; მ3, 29]. The diphthong *ეე* is also transformed into *უზ*, a phenomenon that is widespread in the written monuments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The word *უეეე* occurs 167 times in the sources and is changed to *უეუზ* in forty-two cases, and *ნუეეე* becomes *ნუეუზ* in nine of fourteen cases, so that the traditional form persists alongside the new one.⁷

The vowel *ე* is also reduced between consonants and in stems. Examples are *აქეს* > *აქეს* [გ59; ბ66], *გულისთქუმა* > *გულისთქმა* [ბ44, 72, 83; მ1, 52], *ჯუარცუმა* > *ჯვარცმა* [ბ100], *იოქუმის* > *იოქმის* [გ23], and *მზაკუვარი* > *მზაკვარი* [ბ55]. The first-person plural formant *გუ* becomes *გე* in *გუიბრძანა* > *გეიბრძანა* [მ50] and *გუეზიარე* > *გეეზიარე* [გ90]. The reduction was not extended to every word: although *სიკედილ* and *მკედარ* might have been expected, the compiler prefers *სიკედილ* and *მკედარ*, which occur thirty-seven and eight times respectively across all three hundreds.⁸

Three smaller changes complete the picture. The sound *ჟ* is replaced by *ს* in *შჯული* > *სჯული*, which occurs thirteen times, and the compiler systematically writes *ანგელოსი* instead of *ანგელოზი*, a form that occurs twenty times in the sources. The letter *ფ* is introduced in words of Greek origin, as in *ფარისეველი* > *ქარისეველი* [ბ36; მ80] and *ფსალმუნება* > *ქსალმუნება* [მ47]. Taken together, the orthographic changes show that the compiler applied a consistent set of nineteenth-century conventions, but that he applied them unevenly: the rates in Table 2 range from 9 per cent to 100 per cent.

Table 2. Selected Orthographic Changes in Three Hundred Compared with the Primary Sources

Form in the source	Change	Cases in the sources	Cases changed in Three Hundred	Share changed (%)
ფიჭუ, იჭუ	ჟ > გ	45	45	100.0

6 The diphthongs *ეა* and *ეე* often remain unchanged in the manuscripts of Gabriel Mtsire, as in *სუათა* [გ48].

7 In one place the compiler renders the diphthong *ეე* in the form *უზ* in *წუეთა* > *წუზთა* [მ53].

8 See [მ32, 33] and other passages.

Form in the source	Change	Cases in the sources	Cases changed in Three Hundred	Share changed (%)
იტყვს	ჟ > ვი	42	42	100.0
Postposition -თჱს	თჱს > თვის	112	70	62.5
ჟსენებაჲ	ჟ > ხ	18	16	88.9
მკერდალ-	ჟ > ხ	25	17	68.0
რაითა	ჲ omitted	251	192	76.5
რაითამცა	ჲ omitted	30	15	50.0
უფროის-	ჲ omitted	37	28	75.7
თქუენ-	ჟე > ვე	22	21	95.5
ჩუენ-	ჟე > ვე	232	155	66.8
ჩუენი	ჟე > ვე	60	44	73.3
გულისსიგყუაჲ	ჟა > ვა	69	41	59.4
სიგყუაჲ	ჟა > ვა	39	34	87.2
კუალად	ჟა > ვა	163	15	9.2
მოლუაწე-	ჟა > ვა	28	18	64.3
შუენიერ-	ჟე > ვე	14	9	64.3
ნუკუე	ჟე > უწ	14	9	64.3
უკუე	ჟე > უწ	167	42	25.1
უკუეთუ	უკუეთუ > უკეთუ	121	110	90.9
ღლითი-ღლე	ღლითი-ღლე > ღლითი ღლეღ	28	11	39.3
ცხორებაჲ	ცხორება > ცხოვრება	39	39	100.0
ანგელოზ-	გ > ს	20	20	100.0
მარგალიტი	ლ > რ	5	5	100.0
Total		1581	998	63.1

Source: Collation of Three Hundred with its primary sources; only forms for which complete counts were established are included.

4.3 Lexicon

The lexical changes fall into three groups: changes in the form of a word, replacement by a synonym or a closely related word, and confusion of graphically similar words.

Many changes of word form are modernizing simplifications, such as ბელნიერობა > ბელნიერება [გ64], ეგებომცა > ეგზომცა [ბ80, 100], ითქუმის > ითქმის [გ82; მ33], and უკუეთუ > უკეთუ, which occurs 121 times in the sources and is shortened in 110 cases. The word ცხორებაჲ, which occurs thirty-nine times, is changed to ცხოვრება everywhere. Some changes are phonetic in origin: სელნელება > სენნელება [ბ65] is a case of assimilation, and რაოლენი > რაფლენი [გ59] reflects the development of ჟ between vowels.⁹

A case of particular interest for lexicography is ცხორებისათჱს > ცხოვნებისათვის [მ13]. The change of the stem sound produced a new lexical unit, ცხოვნება. The dictionaries record a semantic divergence between ცხორება ('life, living') and ცხოვნება,¹⁰ although the roots have the same meaning. Since the supplication to God is expressed by the word გუაცხოვნე ('save us', literally 'grant us life') and not by გუაცხოვრე, it may be assumed that ცხოვნება denotes the granting of life, that is, salvation. The word has both an active form, აცხოვნა, and a passive form, ცხოვნდა.

Some changes of form reveal the compiler's awareness of traditional wording. In a phrase from the Gospel of Luke [ბ99], the translator had replaced the traditional არასაღა ('never') with the synonym არასოდეს. Gabriel Mtsire, who undoubtedly knew the phrase by heart, regarded this innovation as an error and restored the traditional form.

The second group consists of replacements by words that are synonymous or closely related in meaning. In

⁹ The form რაფლენი is also found in old manuscripts. It must originate from the development of the sound ჟ between vowels in რაოლენ, which was followed by the elision of the vowel ო from რაფოლენი.

¹⁰ Iliā Abuladze, Dictionary of the Old Georgian Language (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1973), 522; Zurab Sarjveladze, Dictionary of the Old Georgian Language (Tbilisi, 2001), 263.

ტკივილითა და გლოვითა > ტკივილითა და გოღებითა [ბ64], გლოვა ('mourning') is replaced by გოღება ('lamentation'), and in მაცხოვნე მე, სახიერო > შემიწყალე, სახიერო [ბ98], the request for salvation is replaced by the request for mercy, with which it is closely connected. In სერობისაგან უფლისა იჯმნა > სერობისაგან ღმრთისა იჯმნის [ბ60], 'the Lord' is replaced by 'God' although the passage refers to the Lord's Supper, so that the reading of the source is more appropriate to the context. In another place მოიწიოს is replaced by მოგაღს [ბ62].

The third group, the confusion of graphically similar words, is illustrated by მსაჯულისა > მოსაჯულისა [ბ66], in which a 'judge' becomes a 'plaintiff'. The substitution introduces inaccuracy into the context, and it cannot reasonably be regarded as intentional.

4.4 Morphology

The morphology of Three Hundred is characterized by features that mostly reflect the state of the language in the nineteenth century. The directional case is cancelled in a series of phrases: ისწრაფე სათნო-ყოფად მისა > მისსა, შესწირეღინ ღმრთისა > ღმერთსა, შეწირე შესაწირავი ღმრთისა > ღმერთსა, and ღარღუევად მისა > მისსა. The forms of the verb are also changed. In უჩინო იქმნის > უჩინო იქმნების the uniformity of the habitual forms is violated, in შთავარღის > შთავარღეს the habitual is transformed into the future, and in ყოველთავე მაღლობით უკმს შეწყნარებაჲ > გვიხმს შეწყნარებაჲ the person changes. A change of number appears in კაცისმკლველი > კაცის მკლველი, which is of interest for the history of the language. Some changes must be considered slips: გულსმოღვინელ > გულსმოღვინეთ replaces the adverbial marker in a way that has no grammatical motivation.

The compiler also intervenes in derivational and grammatical morphology, sometimes with the aim of archaizing and sometimes with the aim of clarity. The phrase ცხოვარი ხარ შენ, მთავარო, as the old manuscripts have it, becomes ცხოვარ ხარ შენ, and this change is described as a correct archaization. In another case a formant is added on grammatical grounds. In რომელსა შეენის ყოველივე ღიღებაჲ the verb შეენის is bivalent, which means that besides the subject it implies an indirect object, and the compiler writes ჰშეენის with the marker of the indirect object. Because this form is also found in the old manuscripts D and E, it is possible that the initiative does not originate with Gabriel Mtsire but with his archetype.

4.5 Syntax

The verbs with the extension -ოდ show the clearest syntactic difference between the eleventh-century translation and the nineteenth-century collection. In Old Georgian, forms such as იგყოდის are future forms, whereas forms such as იგყოდეს are past forms, and the loss of this distinction is characteristic of the written monuments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the translation we read რაჲთა მარადის კეთილსა იგყოდის. Gabriel Mtsire apparently took იგყოდის for a past form, which he considered inappropriate in the context, and he "corrected" it to იგყოდეს, although იგყოდის is in fact a future form and suits the context. In the exhortation ვივღგოღით გუღისტქუმათაგან სოფღისათა the form ვივღგოღით expresses a future action, but he altered it in both places to ვივღგოღეთ, which according to Old Georgian grammar is already a past form and no longer suits the context. Here the linguistic consciousness of the nineteenth century is diametrically opposed to that of the older period. Nevertheless, the correct reflection of the features of the -ოდ verbs is found quite frequently in Three Hundred, and it expresses the compiler's trust in his archetype.

Irregularities of another kind concern agreement. From the standpoint of Old Georgian syntax, agreement in number is disturbed in *ღავიმარხნეთ მცნებანი* > *ღავიმარხოთ მცნებანი* and in *იხილნე თუ უკეთურნი* > *იხილო თუ უკეთურნი*, and a change of nominal number appears in *მოქალაქობანი სათნოებისანი* > *სათნოებათანი*. The repetition of the negation particle in *ნუ უგულებელს-ჰყოფ მას და ნუ ისმენ მგერისა შენისასა* is also instructive, because the second *ნუ* is missing in the archetype and was added by the compiler.

4.6 Stylistics and Editorial Intervention

Four stylistic features are particularly important: the editing of the text to restore the traditional form of biblical citations, the replacement of words by synonyms, the replacement of words by words of different meaning, and the repositioning of words and phrases.

The first feature reveals most clearly the editorial position of the compiler. According to his translation principles, Euthymius the Athonite did not always render the text of his source literally, and this applies even to biblical phrases. Matthew 25:35 was cited in his translation as *უცხო ვიყავ და შემიწყნარე მე, მშვიერ ვიყავ და გამომზარდე*.¹¹ In the traditional translation of the Gospel that Gabriel Mtsire knew, the verbs were in the plural, and he correspondingly corrected them to *შემიწყნარეთ* and *გამომზარდეთ*. The example shows that the compiler did not hesitate to deviate from the archetype when he had the traditional wording in mind. In a similar way, Euthymius often appends the marker of direct speech -ო to verbs, particularly in biblical citations, as in Ps. 93:19, *ნუგეშინისცემანი შენნი ახარებენო გულსა ჩემსა*.¹² Gabriel Mtsire removed the marker, probably in order to keep the biblical phrase intact, although it is also possible that the archetype presented it in that form.

The second feature is the replacement of words by synonyms, as in *მწყალობელ* > *მოწყალე*, *მიიღეთ* > *ნუგეშინისცემა* > *მოიგეთ* > *ნუგეშინისცემა*, *ყოველთა სათნოებათა ლოცვა* > *უბეშთაეს არს* > *უმჯობეს არს*, and *ვერ კელ-ეწიფების მოკუდინებად* > *მოკლეად*. Some replacements aim at comprehensibility. In *ძნელ არს და საჭირო* the word *საჭირო*, which here means ‘difficult’, is replaced by *საჭირველ*.¹³ In *საჭიროსა ამას ცხორებასა შთააგლო*, where *საჭირო ცხოვრება* means a ‘restricted life’, the compiler writes *საჭირველსა*, a form that in his opinion should probably have been clearer to the reader. Liturgical language also influenced his choices. In *რომელსა შეენის ყოველივე ღიღება და პატივი და თაყუანისცემა* he replaced *ყოველივე* by *ყოველი* under the influence of the doxologies of liturgical prayers, in which this phrase occurs, with minor variations, and in which *ყოველი* is always spoken.¹⁴ The concluding phrase of the homilies of Basil, *რამეთუ მისი არს ღიღება უკუნიით-უკუნისამდე*, is likewise replaced by a fuller doxology that names the Father and the Holy Spirit: *რომელსა ჰშვენის პატივი და თაყუანისცემა თანა მამით და სულით წმიდითურთ აჴ და მარადის და უკუნიით-უკუნისამდე*.

The third feature, the replacement of words by words of different meaning, sometimes causes a significant change in meaning. In some cases the replaced and replacing words are connected by a common feature. In *მოირწყის წჳმისა მიერ* > *წყლისა მიერ*, ‘rain’ and ‘water’ are materially identical; in *სამოსელი იგი ნათლისა* > *სამოსელი იგი სათნოებათა*, ‘light’ and ‘virtue’ share a positive connotation; and in *სიბრმისა* > *სიბოროტისა*,

11 Matt. 25:35.

12 Ps. 93:19.

13 The word *საჭირო* in the sense of ‘difficult’ is found also in the prologue of Shota Rustaveli’s *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*.

14 See *Old Georgian Blessing with Footnotes*, vol. 1, ed. Edisher Chelidze (Tbilisi, 2020), 8, 31; vol. 3, 123, 225; Zhamni, 2017 ed., 198, 212, and elsewhere.

blindness of mind and wickedness are different concepts that share a negative connotation. A more difficult case is განწმდეს ნივთთაგან და სიღნოშეთა მათგან > განწმდეს ნივთთაგან სიხენეშეთა მათგან. The word სიღნოშე denotes filthiness specifically, whereas სიხენეშე denotes a general unwholesomeness, so that the two cannot be considered synonyms. Why the compiler replaced one with the other is difficult to say. His archetype may have been damaged at this point, and he then needed a word suitable to the context. Alternatively, he may have taken the interest of the reader into account and preferred the transparent word სიხენეშე to the rare სიღნოშე, whose meaning the reader might not have understood.

In other cases the substitution creates ambiguity and hinders the logical flow of the reasoning, and it is impossible to attribute such changes to the intention of the compiler. They should probably be attributed to the incorrect decoding of a damaged archetype. In ძნელ არს და საჭირო კორციელად სიგლახაკე და ნაკლულევანებაჲ, გარნა ფრიად უძვრეს არს სიმდიდრე ბოროტად მოგებული, the word უძვრეს ('worse') is replaced by უძნელეს, which does not correspond to the meaning of the context, since wealth acquired wrongfully is not difficult to bear. The compiler was apparently prompted by the appearance of ძნელ in the first coordinate clause, but there ძნელ has the meaning 'difficult to endure', and the substitution cannot be considered a skillful decision. Clear paronymasia is found in ქაღებაჲ > ქაღაგებაჲ ('boasting' becomes 'proclamation').

The fourth feature, the repositioning of words, is a matter of style and does not affect the meaning, as in ყოველსა შინა საქმესა > ყოველსა საქმესა შინა, ოღენ არა > არა ოღენ, and ჰნაგრის უკუე წინასწარმეტყველი კაცსა მას > ჰნაგრის უკუე კაცსა მას წინასწარმეტყველი. Related additions show that the compiler addressed the reader directly. The vocative ძმანო საყვარელნო is added in ვეკრძალნეთ, ძმანო საყვარელნო, where the archetype has no address, and in ვისწრაფთო, ძმანო საყვარელნო, შვილ ღმრთისა ყოფად, where the word სარწმუნოებით is also added.

4.7 Omissions, Errors, and Mechanical Defects

The compiler's treatment of the Century of Homilies of Basil the Great shows that he worked selectively. Of its 130 chapters, one hundred were transferred to the collection. Some of the chapters in the source are preceded by phrases that mention the author, in three forms: "Again spoke Saint Basil," "Again spoke Saint and God-bearing Basil," and "Again spoke the same Saint Basil." These phrases occur in thirty chapters in total of the hundred designated ბ, and in Three Hundred all of them are omitted. The omission is systematic, and it is therefore likely to be an editorial decision.

Other omissions are of a different kind. In several places a word or a short phrase is missing, and the loss changes the sense. In რაჲთა ესე თითოეული თჳსსა ქამსა და თჳსსა საზომსა ზელა იქმნებოდის > რაჲთა ესე თითოეულსა ქამსა და თჳსსა საზომსა ზელა იქმნებოდეს [ბ42], the scribe omitted თჳს from თჳსსა and attached the ending -სა to the preceding word. The phrase then no longer states that an action should be done at its 'proper time' but implies that it should be done at 'each time', that is, always. In ხელვათა მათ უბეშთაესთა იყოს მხელველ > ხელვათა უბეშთაეს იყოს მხელველ [ბ56], the omission shifts the reference from 'supreme visions', in which 'supreme' qualifies the vision, to visions in general, with 'supreme' acting as an adverb of degree. In არა თავეს-იღებ საფასეთაგან განყოფასა > არა თავეს-იღებ საფასეთა განყოფასა [მ13], the omission of the post-position გან reverses the meaning: the source speaks of separating oneself from wealth, whereas the new version

speaks of the distribution of wealth, because *განყოფა* has a double meaning.

It is important to establish where such defects originate. In many cases they must be attributed to the archetype rather than to the compiler. In [მ13], the word *მიზეზი* in *მრავალმოწყალე არს მეუფე ჩუენი, ოღენ მიზეზი წყალობისაო მიესცეთ მას* is omitted in Three Hundred, which creates ambiguity, but this cannot be the fault of the compiler, since the word is also missing in some manuscripts of the source (B and D) and was presumably missing in his archetype. In [ბ60], the phrase *რამეთუ სამოსელი საქორწინე* is omitted after the quotation from Matthew, and the phrase is left crippled.¹⁵ The flaw is likely to have been caused by an omission in the archetype. In [ბ73], the phrase *რაათა მან გიშვას შენ კსენებაო საშჯელისაო* is omitted in most manuscripts descending from the compiler's copy and is preserved only in MS H 211.¹⁶ This shows how the non-autograph copies can preserve readings that the autograph or its closest descendants lost.

One case of displacement is explained by the same cause. In [გ80], the compiler missed the phrase *რათ არს იგი თითოსახენი*, wrote *თითო წესნი* instead of *თითოფერნი*, and inserted the omitted phrase after *წესნი*. This created ambiguity in the sentence. The likely explanation is that the scribe of the archetype had omitted the phrase, noticed the omission, and written it in the margin so that readers and copyists could insert it in the right place. Gabriel Mtsire could not insert it in its proper place and put it several words lower down. The cause must have been the damage of the archetype through age, which made it difficult to read. A quotation of Ps. 83:6–7 [გ68] shows a different type of omission: “*ღელსა ამისგან განვლოს*” lacks the word *გლოვისა*, which is strange because the compiler presumably knew the psalm by heart.¹⁷

Finally, random variants found in copies that originate from the autograph, such as *წარაგებლი > განაგებლი* [გ2] and *ჭირვეულთა > ჭირებულთა* [გ2], are dictation errors and other slips of the pen that belong not to Gabriel Mtsire but to the calligraphers who copied his manuscript. There are also individual slips and defects in his own work, such as *კელის-მიყოფითა > კელის-მიყოლითა*, which is an obvious error. Most of them are explained by the characteristics of the manuscripts that he used as his archetype.

5. Results and Findings

The analysis supports six findings. First, the version of the three treatises that Gabriel Mtsire created is a composition based on the primary sources. The compiler attempted a qualified transcription of the text of the sources and resorted to editing only in isolated instances. The selective transfer of 100 of the 130 chapters of the Century of Homilies and the systematic omission of the formulae naming the author are the most far-reaching editorial decisions that were identified.

Second, the orthographic modernization of the text was systematic in some categories and partial in others. The twenty-three forms recorded in Table 2 occur 1,581 times in the sources, and 998 of these cases, or 63 per cent, were changed in Three Hundred. The median rate of change is 73 per cent. Five forms were changed in every case: *ვიგყჲ*, *იგყჲ*, *ცხორებაო*, *ანგელოზ-*, and *მარგალიტი*. Others were changed in a large majority of cases, such as *უკეთუ* (91 per cent) and *თქვენ-* (95 per cent). At the other end of the range, *კჳალად* was modernized in only 9 per cent of cases and *უკუე* in 25 per cent. The coexistence of old and new forms in a single text is a

¹⁵ Matt. 22:12.

¹⁶ NCM, MS H 211.

¹⁷ Ps. 83:6-7.

feature of a transitional orthography, and it shows that the compiler followed the conventions of his time without imposing them mechanically.

Third, the phonetic, orthographic, and morphological changes reflect the norms of the nineteenth century. They include the replacement of ჳ by ვი, of ჵ by ლ, and of ზ by ჶ, the loss of ა, the reduction of the diphthongs ეე and ეა and of the vowel ე, the transformation of ეე into ელ, and the cancellation of the directional case. The confusion of the forms of the -ოვ verbs shows that the linguistic consciousness of the older period was no longer fully available to the compiler.

Fourth, the lexical and stylistic interventions were cautious and were aimed chiefly at restoring traditional biblical wording and at helping the reader. The restoration of არსადა in the Gospel phrase, the plural forms in Matthew 25:35, the removal of the marker of direct speech in Ps. 93:19, the replacement of rare words by transparent ones, and the addition of vocatives all point in this direction.

Fifth, a considerable share of the apparent errors and irregularities does not belong to the compiler. Some were already present in the manuscript that he copied, as the correspondence of his text with the variants of manuscript B and of the (J)BC group and the omissions shared with manuscripts B and D demonstrate. Others were introduced by the calligraphers who copied his autograph, as in წარაგებლი > განაგებლი [გ2], and MS H 211 preserves a phrase that most of the descendants of his copy lost.

Sixth, the counting of recurring forms across the whole corpus made these attributions more secure than an unsystematic collection of examples would have allowed, and it revealed the uneven application of the orthographic norms that a selection of examples would have concealed.

6. Conclusion

This study has examined the lexical, philological, and linguistic features of Gabriel Mtsire's collection Three Hundred by collating it with its primary sources, the translations of Euthymius the Athonite, and by combining traditional philological analysis with the systematic recording and counting of recurring forms. The setting of the monastery of John the Baptist in the Gareji desert, the manuscripts kept and copied there, and the evidence of the text itself make it highly probable that the compiler worked from a manuscript that was available in the monastery, most probably of the type represented by manuscript B for the Teachings of Maximus, and that this manuscript was old and damaged.

In answer to the research questions, the changes occur at all linguistic levels but are concentrated in phonetics and orthography, where they follow the conventions of the nineteenth century and are applied with varying consistency. The lexical and stylistic changes are fewer and more cautious, and they are motivated by fidelity to the traditional biblical text and by concern for the reader. A significant proportion of the errors that at first sight seem to be the compiler's own must be attributed to the archetype or to later copyists. The compiler's approach to the older text can therefore be described as a qualified transcription that admits editing only in isolated instances.

The findings have implications beyond the collection itself. They provide quantified evidence for the orthographic and grammatical norms of the nineteenth century, and they show why the attribution of variants must rest on the whole manuscript tradition and not on individual examples.

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Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFG) under Grant FR-24-711, titled “Collection: ‘Three Hundred’ / Fundamental Philological-Textual-Theological Research and Academic Publication.”