A common trait of most parchment manuscripts connected to Christian traditions is that in contrast to the black or dark brown ink that is dominant in them, some elements are written in a second colour, usually red. This is also true for the bulk of Old Georgian manuscripts, which are spread in various repositories in Georgia and abroad. As the conditions and purposes of the use of ‘rubrics’ in Georgian manuscripts have not as yet been studied in detail, it seems sensible to establish a basic typology in order to facilitate future research.

1. Decoration and Demarcation
A typical use of red ink in Old Georgian manuscripts is decorative, as in the braid-like bands of two colours we often meet at the beginning or end of a given manuscript; such bands can be found, for example, in the Sinai mss. no. N 2 (Fig. 1) and 32-57-33 (Fig. 2), the latter representing the oldest dated Georgian manuscript known so far.

The same type of coloured bands can also be found demarcating different elements of texts, such as in fol. 84r of the Sinai mss. no. 15 (Fig. 3), where it serves to separate the final verses of the Gospel of Matthew from the scribe’s colophon (in smaller letters). This contrasts with fol. 224v of the same manuscript (Fig. 4), where although a similar band is placed after the colophon (of the Gospel of Luke), the end of the main text is only indicated by a few neume-like scratches in red ink.

Fig. 1: Sin.geo. N 2, fol. 1r (detail)
Fig. 2: Ms. Sin.geo. 32-57-33, fol. 273r (detail)

Fig. 3: Sin.geo. 15, fol. 84r (detail)

Fig. 4: Sin.geo. 15, fol. 224v (detail)
By no means is this type of ornamental band restricted to the Mt. Sinai manuscripts. It is also found, for example, in ms. no. 176 of the Kutaisi State Historical Museum (Fig. 5),4 where such bands separate the different parts of the so-called Euthalian materials introducing the Pauline Epistles.

A special form of two-coloured ornament of this type consists in rows of crosses added at the end of Gospel texts and the like, as is found in the Sinai ms. no. 19 (Fig. 6).

2. Headings and Titles
A related demarcation purpose can be seen in the many cases of headings and titles being written in red ink, either completely or partly. This feature is widespread, both in Gospel codices such as the Sinai ms. no. 16 (Fig. 7, where we read s(a)x(a)r(e)b(a)y m(a)t(ē)s t(a)vi as the heading of the ‘Gospel of Matthew’ in the top margin) and in other manuscripts, as for example the Sinai ms. no. 6, where the heading introduces the legend of St. Christina with the date of the saint’s commemoration (t(tues)ta ivnisā ḳ’d:  ṣamebay ḳ(mi) disa krisṭinaysi twisa orbanosis(ān) dionis(ān) da ivliays(ā)n, ‘in the month of June, 24: Martyrdom of St. Christina by her father Urbanus, Dios, and Julian’, Fig. 8).

A similar type of marking is extensively used in liturgical codices, such as the Sinai lectionary ms. no. 37 (Fig. 9), where red ink indicates the date of a particular reading (in the given case, didsas oxšabatsa, ‘Big Wednesday’, i.e. the Wednesday before Easter, in the 5th line from the bottom), or the type of prayer or hymn to be sung in the service (e.g., psalmuni ri’za, i.e. ‘Psalm 116’, 2nd line from the bottom), etc.

4 My thanks are due to the staff of the Kutaisi State Historical Museum, who made ms. 176 and several other manuscripts of the collection available to the members of the above-named INTAS project during a sojourn in Kutaisi in April 2007.
Fig. 7: Sin.geo. 16, fol. 7r (detail)

Fig. 8: Sin.geo. 6, fol. 201r (detail)

Fig. 9: Sin.geo. 37, fol. 105r (detail)
Likewise, titles written in red ink are often found in hymnaries, where they indicate the type of hymn (heirmos) as well as its primary mode, as in line 1 of the Sinai ms. no. N 73 (samš(a) b(a)t(o)nive: owg(a)(o)bdt(itsa): qmay b˜ , ‘on Saturdays as well: the ugalobdit (heirmos), mode no. 2’; Fig. 10). In special cases, the elements in red ink represent the transcription into Georgian (majuscule) script of the Greek titles of hymns, as in the Sinai ms. no. N 5 (Fig. 11: ṭonen morpi anǯe(low) ~ τὸν ἐν μορφῇ ἀγγέ(λου), and lowṭroṭaṭow ~ λυτρωτὰ τοῦ (παντός)).

3. Initials and Capitals
Serving a similar function to many of the examples above, single characters outdented into the left margin as initials are often written in red ink, either completely or outlined on a black background, as found in the beginning of the scribe’s colophon of the Sinai Gospel ms. no. 15 (on fol. 292r: Saxelita ḡ(mrti)s(a)yta ‘In the name of God’; Fig. 12). In the same way, red ink is also applied to initial letters within lines, usually indicating the beginning of a sentence or phrase, as in the text of the same colophon (meoxebita ç(mid)isa ḡ(mrr) tismš(o)b(e)lisayta da ç(mida)ta maxar(e)beta : m(a)te mark(oz) łow)ka da ł(jo)va(nes)ta : da... ‘With the help of the holy Mother of God and the holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and ...’), or in the colophon at the bottom of fol. 224v of the same manuscript (Fig. 4: daesr(u)la ç(mida)ya s(a)x(ar)e(b)a(y) : ḡavı ç(mid)isa łow)ka m(a)x(a)

reb(e)lis(a)y . méx(re)k(a)li amisi i(o)a(me) c(o)dl(v)i locvasa ç(mida)sa łk(ow)ensa ḡvedia, ‘Completed is the holy Gospel, the chapter of St. Luke the Evangelist. The writer of this, sinful Ioane, be remembered in your holy prayer.’).

In these examples, marking the initial letters of the names of the four Evangelists with coloured ink is similar to the use of capital letters in denoting proper names in modern Latin-based orthographies. An even more striking example of this is the list of the ancestors of Jesus Christ at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew in the Sinai Gospel ms. no. 16 (fol. 7r, Fig. 7), where most of the names have red initials, with the additional enlargement of the initial letters (Çiŋi şobisay i(es)ow k(ristō)si ʒisa Davatiti: ʒisa Abrahamisi: Abraham śva ḡsak: Isak śva ḡakob [sic!]: ḡakob śva iuดา... ‘Book of the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of David son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, Jacob begat Jude...’).

4. Referencing and Marginalia
Another typical use of rubrics in Old Georgian manuscripts is related to referencing. A characteristic example can be seen in fol. 314v of the Sinai Gospel ms. no. 16 (Fig. 13), where initials in red ink (in one case, the dots over a black letter) are combined with references that comply with the system of Ammonian (or Eusebian) section numbers (in the given case: sk’d = 224 = Jo. 21,12a–b, Ł’ = 10th canon; sk’e = 225 = Jo. 21,13, Ł’ = 9th canon; sk’v = 226 = Jo. 21,14–15a, Ł’ = 9th canon). A similar use is found on the Georgian flyleaves of ms. no. 303 of the Yerevan Matenadaran (Fig. 14); here, only initials and canon numbers are written in red, while the section numbers have the same colour as the main text

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5 The nine odes (heirmoi) that constituted the canon of the Georgian (Orthodox) church in the Middle Ages were named after their initial words (in the case in question, ugalobdit ‘praise (the Lord)’, Ex. 15,1); cf. Gippert et al. 2007, vi n. 17.

6 Cf. Meṭreveli 1971, 31 ff. with regard to this kind of transcript.

7 In the following transcripts and translations, the letters in red ink in the originals are marked by underlining.

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Cf. Gippert, and Outtier 2010; my thanks are due to the staff of the Matenadaran, who made ms. 303 and several other manuscripts of its collection available to the members of the above-named INTAS project during a sojourn in Yerevan in September 2007.
Fig. 11: Sin.geo. N 5, fol. 4r (detail)

Fig. 12: Sin.geo. 15, fol. 292r (detail)

Fig. 13: Sin.geo. 16, fol. 314v (detail)
(sm‘b = 242 = Lk. 20,19, a‘ = 1st canon; s‘y = 260 = Lk. 22,1, c‘ = 1st canon; sy‘a = 261 = Lk. 22,2,  a‘ = 1st canon).

In the margins of both these manuscripts, we find additional information written in red, either entirely or partially. In the Yerevan flyleaf, this is another element of referencing, viz. the number ṭ‘z = 87 that is attached to the final verse (38) of Lk. 21, decorated with a dotted circle in red. On fol. 314v of Sin. geo. 16 (and elsewhere in the manuscript), one finds a complete gloss written in red that has been added in the margin, in this case with a liturgical background (metertmeṭe s(a)x(a)r(e)b(a)y aġdg(o)mis(a)y, i.e. ‘eleventh Gospel (reading) of Resurrection (Day)’).

The rubrication of letters that represent numeric units is not restricted to marginal references of the type discussed above. It is also found in the tables listing the Eusebian canons in the front matter of the Sinai Gospel ms. no. 30 (Fig. 15), where all numerical data (as well as some letters) are in red (on a black background): Ḳanoni a owtk(ow)ams d m(a)tēs : Ḳanoni b owtk(ow)ams g m(a)tes [sic!] m(a)rk(oz)i(s l(ow)k(ay)s: ... ‘These are

Fig. 14: Back flyleaf of ms. 303 of the Matenadaran (detail)

Fig. 15: Sin. geo. 30, fol. 2r (detail)
the ten canons of the Holy Gospels: Canon 1 denotes (all) 4 Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; Canon 2 denotes 3 (Evangelists), Matthew, Mark, Luke ...

A similar type of rubrication is seen in the Kutaisi ms. no. 176 (Fig. 5), where most of the numerical data comprised in the ‘Euthalian’ material, that is, the introduction to the Pauline Epistles attributed to a certain Euthalius Bishop of Sulca,9 are written in plain red ink; cf. Table 1, which illustrates this with two entries from the so-called ‘Testimonia’ chapter: a list of sources quoted or alluded to by Paul in his letters (fol. 95v).10

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canons</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Leviticus: 1st 41st; Galatians: 1st 10th; Romans: 4th 38th; Hebrews: 14th 20th.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the [letter] to the Romans:
- from [the book of] Leviticus: 14 41;
- in the [letter] to the Galatians:

In the [letter] to the Romans:
- from [the book of] Deuteronomy: 4th 38th;
- in the [letter] to the Hebrews:

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9 Cf. Willard 2009 for details on this work.

10 For a thorough account of the given passage and the structure of the Testimonia chapter in general cf. Gippert 2010, I-2-5.

11 Cf. the edition by Zacagnius 1698, 548–549. Zacagnius’ edition was the basis for the text printed in Migne 1860, col. 725 cc.

There are several other passages that deal with the use of colours in Euthalian manuscripts: in the Greek text, p. 573 / 749C (‘echesis’ to the list of chapters of Romans); 591 / 753 C (the same, 1 Corinthians); 613 / 757C (II Corinthians); 625 / 759D (Galatians); 635 / 763A (Ephesians); 643 / 765B (Philippians); 650 / 768B (Colossians); 658 / 769D (I Thessalonians); 664 / 773A (II Thessalonians); 671 / 777A (Hebrews); 688 / 781B (I Timothy); 696 / 785A (II Timothy); 704 / 788B (Titus); 707 / 789A (Philemon; the last 13 attestations have no counterparts in the Georgian version).

where it would fall into the large lacuna between the present fols. 93v and 94r. However, another programma of this type has been preserved in this codex, namely, at the bottom of fol. 92r (Fig. 16).12 Under the title Zemo ceril ars: (‘Above is written:’) it reads: Ῥ(ome)l-igi melnita ars ricxw raodeni ars tavebi mas x(olo) aowcqeb: da r(ome)l-igi citelita ars : aoqcqebos titeowlıa cıgnıa camebata gancsebasa erthbamad ... ‘A number that is in black ink denotes only how many chapters there are (quoted). And (a number) that is in red ink denotes the sum of quotations of each book altogether...’ 13

There is no indication why the scribe of the Kutaisi manuscript did not adhere to the principle outlined by Euthalius; elsewhere in the Caucasian tradition it was applied, as seen in the Armenian underwriting of the Georgian palimpsest ms. no. N 55 of Mt. Sinai (Fig. 17). Here, as can clearly be seen even in the monochrome (UV) photograph of the fold between fols. 28v and 29r,14 the numbers pertaining to the epistle names are much less distinct than the numbers concerning the book of Leviticus, which strongly suggests that in the erased original they were written in red ink.15

5. Neumes and other non-linguistic signs

A less common usage of rubrics in Old Georgian manuscripts is the denotation of melodic features with neume-like signs. A good example of this can be found in the Sinai hymnary ms. no. N 73 (Fig. 10).16 It remains unclear whether the awkward-looking scratches in red ink in the Gospel codex no. 15, fols. 84r and 224v (Figs. 3 and 4), which seem to serve as demarcations or perhaps simply as ornaments, have any relation to the neumes of the hymnaries.


13 There are several other passages that deal with the use of colours in Euthalian manuscripts: in the Greek text, p. 573 / 749C (‘echesis’ to the list of chapters of Romans); 591 / 753 C (the same, 1 Corinthians); 613 / 757C (II Corinthians); 625 / 759D (Galatians); 635 / 763A (Ephesians); 643 / 765B (Philippians); 650 / 768B (Colossians); 658 / 769D (I Thessalonians); 664 / 773A (II Thessalonians); 671 / 777A (Hebrews); 688 / 781B (I Timothy); 696 / 785A (II Timothy); 704 / 788B (Titus); 707 / 789A (Philemon; the last 13 attestations have no counterparts in the Georgian version).


15 For an edition of the Armenian version of the Euthaliana cf. Vardanian 1930.—A preliminary version of the same edition was printed in the journal Handis Amstrey in subsequent fascicles of the years 1924–1927 under the title Evt’ alli Matenagrovi inwv (‘for matters concerning the Pauline Epistles: 1925, cols. 423–434; 515–530; 1926, cols. 1–16; 97–120; 193–208; 289–304; 417–436; 513–524; 1927, cols. 1–12; 97–108; 225–236; 353–366; 481–492; 545–558.).—Parts of the Euthalian apparatus were also printed in the so-called Zohrab Bible (Zohrapanian 1805 / 1984).

16 Cf. Kiḳnaże 1982 for another Old Georgian manuscript exhibiting neumes.
<i>ayec'woc'n</i>
<i>ı levtac'woc'n</i>
<i>ালতাক'woc'n</i>
<i>লেতাক'woc'n</i>

From the [letter to the] Romans
from [the book of] Leviticus
the 41st (quotation);
the 1st (quotation);

From the [letter to the] Galatians
<from> [the book of] Leviticus
the 10th (quotation);
the 1st (quotation).
6. Multicoloured manuscripts
If we exclude illuminated codices, there are very few Old Georgian manuscripts that exhibit the use of more than two colours. One such case is the Gospel manuscript of the Austrian National Library (Cod. Vind. georg. 1),¹ where we find green, red, and black elements accompanying the main text in brown ink. In the given example (fol. 224r, Fig. 18), the items in black are clearly numerical data, referring again here to the Ammonian sections (ržʿd = 194 = Jo. 19,15a; ržʿv = 196 = Jo. 19,16; ržʿz = 197 = Jo. 19,17–18a; ržʿě = 198 = Jo. 19,18b; ržʿt = 199 = Jo. 19,19);¹⁸ these references were probably added by a later hand. The elements in green are mostly liturgical prescriptions, as between lines 6 and 7, where we read ḣ(owar)ta aṗq̇ rob(a)sa eseve ‘as well on the (day of the) Exaltation of the Cross’; the entry between the lines above reads d(a)s(a)sr(u)li, which simply means ‘end’. It is clear that these elements are indications of lectures to be read, thus preparing the Gospel manuscript for its use during holy services. In contrast to the references in black ink, it is likely that they were added prima manu, given that the same ink is also used for the large initial of Jo. 19,17 = 197.

¹⁷ My thanks are due to the staff of the Austrian National Library, who made the Cod.Vind.georg. 1 and several other manuscripts of its collection available to the members of the above-named INTAS project during a sojourn in Vienna in June 2008.

¹⁸ The two single letters can hardly refer to the Eusebian canons (ēʿ = 8 and tʿ = 9), as the sections in question pertain to canon 1.
Lastly, red ink is applied here and there in initials, as seen in the latter initial, which again may be taken as being a purely ornamental feature.

It is clear that this list of features is only a first step in establishing a typology of the use of coloured ink in Old Georgian manuscripts, this to some degree due to the fact that until now very few codices have been easily accessible to Western scholars. To proceed, a methodical investigation of a larger number of specimens needs to be done, including sources from different periods and genres. We cannot but hope that the major repositories of Georgian manuscripts will soon join the ever increasing number of libraries and archives that are ready to digitize their treasures and publish them online, thus sharing them with the interested public. And of course the Georgian data needs to be compared to that of other manuscript traditions, as this will enable a more general typology of the use of coloured ink.

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In beginning with xolo ‘but’ (instead of da ‘and’), the text of Cod.Vind. georg. 1 reveals itself as pertaining to the third redaction of the Georgian Gospels (the so-called Athonite vulgate).