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THE GEORGIAN LITURGICAL BOOK OF THE 18th CENTURY

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The *Feast Hymn Book* is a liturgical collection, containing either hymnography or synaxary material, accompanied by liturgical notes and Bible readings. The history of the development of Georgian Feast Hymn Books was studied by Mikheil Kavtaria¹ and previously by Korneli Kekelidze.² The *Feast Hymn Book* as a title is used in Georgia since the 17th century. Until the 11th century another collection, with a similar composition to the *Feast Hymn Book*, was used, called *Zatiki (Pentekostarion)*.³ In Byzantine literature, the most common title for a similar book was *Anthologion*, while in Slavic-Russian – Праздничная, Минея, Анфологион, Анфологии, Цветослов, Цветная Минея, Трефологион, or Трофологии.⁴

Manuscripts of the Georgian *Feast Hymn Book* are divided in two groups. The first group includes the so-called traditional *Feast Hymn Books*, while the second contains those compiled according to the Russian Typicon. There is also a *Feast Hymn Book* of the mixed type, which represents a unification of the material of Russian Prologue – Synaxaria and the Georgian traditional *Feast Hymn Book*, but this version did not become widespread.⁵

The traditional *Feast Hymn Book* includes hymnographic material (and not for every day), liturgical notes, and Bible readings. Synaxarion texts, with rare exceptions, are not included. Manuscripts of the *Feast Hymn Book* are not identical, and the difference is found in the calendar as well as in the text. Hymnographic material is included here from the *Menaion* of Giorgi the

¹ М. Kavtaria, *From the History of Old Georgian Poetry, 17th-18th c.*, Tbilisi, 1977.

² К. Kekelidze, "From the Liturgical Activity of Catholicos Anton", in *Studies from the History of Old Georgian Literature*, Vol. IV, Tbilisi, 1957, p. 175-186; К. Kekelidze, *History of Old Georgian Literature*, Vol. I, Tbilisi, 1980.

³ К. Кекелидзе, *Литургические грузинские памятники в отечественных книгохранилищах и их научное значение*, Tbilisi, 1908, p. XIV.

⁴ П. Алексеев, *Церковный словарь или истолкование речении славенских древних такоже иноязычных без перевода положенных в священном писани...*, I, А-К, St Petersburg, 1794, p. 27; К. Никольский, *Обозрение богослужбных книг православной российской церкви по отношению их к церковному уставу*, St Petersburg, 1858, p. 90-91.

⁵ М. Kavtaria, *From the History of Old Georgian Poetry...*, p. 118.

Hagiorite, and readings of Typicon notes – from relevant books; i.e., the *Feast Hymn Book*, as a ready-made collection, was not translated into Georgian.⁶

The second group contains *Feast Hymn Books* arranged according to the Slavic-Russian Typicon. This group is divided into two sub-groups: a) based on the material of Prologue – Synaxaria (end of the 17th c. – beginning of the 18th c.); b) based on the Russian *Feast Hymn Book* and *Menaia* (second half of the 18th c.).

Catholicos Anton I compiled his *Feast Hymn Book* precisely under the influence of the Russian *Feast Hymn Book*. Anton I wished to convey to the Georgian divine service the Russian style instead of the Byzantine one. By doing this, he followed the Georgian Holy Fathers living in the Iviron Monastery on Mount Athos in the 11th century, who had freed the Georgian liturgical practice from its “Oriental” aspect and brought it closer to the Byzantine divine service practice.⁷ The *Feast Hymn Book* composed by Catholicos Anton is primarily remarkable due to the fact that it offers almost the complete services and rites of Saints of the Georgian Church (see Fig. 1). Generally, from the beginning of the 18th century the national tendency strengthened in the Georgian Orthodox literature. This led to an evaluation of the activity of Georgian Saints from a new viewpoint by the Church leaders and a definition of their service before the national Church. Liturgical books were revised exactly from this viewpoint and services and rites of Georgian Saints were introduced. Anton I, whose entire work was defined by the “national-patriotic tendency”,⁸ could certainly not have remained indifferent to this issue. Already in the first period of his activity (before his exile to Russia) he created a *Feast Hymn Book* of traditional style, as close as possible to the *Menaion*. Anton included in the collection all calendar days, but there are only services here, and no rites (Fig. 4).⁹

In Russia, Catholicos Anton I compiled a new version of the *Feast Hymn Book*, whose authorized manuscript text is preserved at the National Centre of Manuscripts in Tbilisi (S 1464). It was copied in *mkhedruli* script, in 1759-1760, by Mikhail, son of Ioane, at the Bogolyubovo Monastery in Vladimir (see Fig. 2). It was donated by Iason Tsitsishvili to the Society for Expanding Literacy (see Fig. 3). Anton’s *Feast Hymn Book* provides the rites for almost every day, with a few exceptions. His version of the *Feast Hymn Book* was widespread and it acquired canonical significance. Unfortunately, no scientific edition was yet prepared. It was printed three times in the 19th century, but only in its short version.

It is clear from the foreword of the *Feast Hymn Book*¹⁰ that Catholicos Anton, first of all, carried out a calendar reform. This *Feast Hymn Book* differs

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷ K. Kekelidze, *History of Old Georgian...*, p. 380.

⁸ M. Kavtaria, *From the History of Old Georgian Poetry...*, p. 79.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106-107.

¹⁰ K. Kekelidze, “From the Liturgical Activity of Catholicos Anton” ..., p. 175-186.

from others in the completeness of the calendar. It observes the principle of the *Menaion* and includes rites for almost every day. Saints of the World Church, as well as Georgian Saints, are presented in detail. Anton used the existing rites and then added his own. In some cases, he changed commemoration days; *e.g.*, he changed the feast of David the Builder from January 25 to January 26, while on December 2 he eliminated the feast of Peter the Iberian altogether, and instead instituted on that day the feast of Ise of Tsilkani. He compiled anew the rites of Georgian Saints, and in some cases wrote new hymns. Anton, of course, used the already existing hymnographic material, but gave it no precedence. In the general part he translated separate passages from Russian, changed the old Georgian translation, and, to indicate the new translation, he placed a circle in the margin. Catholicos Anton not only introduced feasts of almost all the Georgian Saints, but also added the commemoration of one more Saint in particular: Neophite of Urnisi. At the same time, he was the first hymnographer to compose the rites of the great Georgian Holy King David the Builder, Holy Father Grigol of Khantsta, founder of the monastic life in Tao-Klarjeti, and Neophite of Urnisi, an Arab martyred for Christ. Nine-ode canons of these Saints, with hymns of the small form, did not exist before.¹¹

Overall, Anton I composed nine-ode hymns of the following Georgian Saints:

1. Queen Ketevan (September 13)
2. Bidzina Cholokhashvili (September 18)
3. Shalva and Elizbar Eristavis (18 September)
4. David and Konstantine (October 2)
5. Grigol of Khantsta (October 5)
6. Neophite of Urnisi (October 28)
7. Prince Konstantine (November 10)
8. Mikael-Gobron (November 17)
9. Ilarion the Georgian (November 19)
10. Abibos of Nekresi (November 29)
11. Ise of Tsilkani (December 2)
12. St Nino (January 14)
13. Anton of Martqopi (January 19)
14. David the Builder (January 26)
15. Ioane of Zedazeni (May 7)
16. Euthymius the Athonite (May 13)
17. Archil and Luarsab (June 21)
18. Second canon of Archil and Luarsab (June 21)

¹¹ K. Tatishvili, *Original Hymnography of Catholicos Anton I*, dissertation paper for obtaining the degree of Doctor of Philological Sciences, 2005.

19. Giorgi the Hagiorite (June 27)
20. Ioane the Athonite and Gabriel (July 12)
21. Evstati of Mtskheta (July 29)
22. Razhden the Protomartyr (August 3)
23. Queen Shushanik (August 28)
24. David of Gareja (Thursday after the Ascension).

Anton I wrote mostly canons of Georgian Saints; however, other canons also occur, *e.g.*, two canons of the Theotokos (June 21 and August 3). Anton usually wrote hymns of the small form along with canons and introduced them into the collection alongside already existing hymns. However, sometimes he wrote only hymns of a small form, whereas the canon belonged to another hymnographer, for example: canons of Dodo of Gareja (by Nikoloz Cherkezishvili) and Ioseb of Alaverdi (by Princess Mariam-Macrina) are attached to small hymns written by Catholicos Anton.

Although other hymnographers of the Renaissance period also wrote hymns of Georgian Saints (Grigol of Dodorkha, Mariam-Macrina, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, Nikoloz Maghalashvili, Iese Eristavi, and others), none of them were equally prolific to him.

It should also be noted that Anton I almost always indicates the identity of authors (not only of a canon, but of *shichera* as well). Taking into account that he would have never written anything without checking, it becomes clear how important Anton's composition of the *Feast Hymn Book* is for researchers of the works of individual hymnographers.

It has been considered so far that Anton I differentiated his work from manuscripts of older redactions technically as well. He placed Typicon notes at the end of the services, whereas in old redactions they are, as a rule, placed at the beginning of a service.¹² However, subsequent studies have shown that in this regard Anton I is neither the first, nor the only one among Georgian liturgists. Aleksi Meskhishvili, the compiler of another significant *Feast Hymn Book* in the 18th century, also attached Typicon notes at the end of services. Along with this, his work was written in parallel with the *Feast Hymn Book* S 1464. In fact, these two great figures started working at the same time, but, due to the exile from his homeland to Russia, Anton finished his collection in Russia, whereas Aleksi Meskhishvili – in Georgia. The autograph manuscript of the latter's work is preserved at the National Centre of Manuscripts (A 1093, 1758). As Anton's version became canonical, "it is almost impossible to find another manuscript that represents a copy of A 1093".¹³

¹² M. Kavtaria, *From the History of Old Georgian Poetry...*, p. 116.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

Thus, the *Feast Hymn Book* of Catholicos Anton I is a very important liturgical collection. It is an anthology of both original Georgian and translated hymnographic heritage. This makes it, in my opinion, very interesting for researchers of the history of liturgical literature.

Note: All illustrations are courtesy of the “K. Kekelidze” Georgian National Center of Manuscripts in Tbilisi.

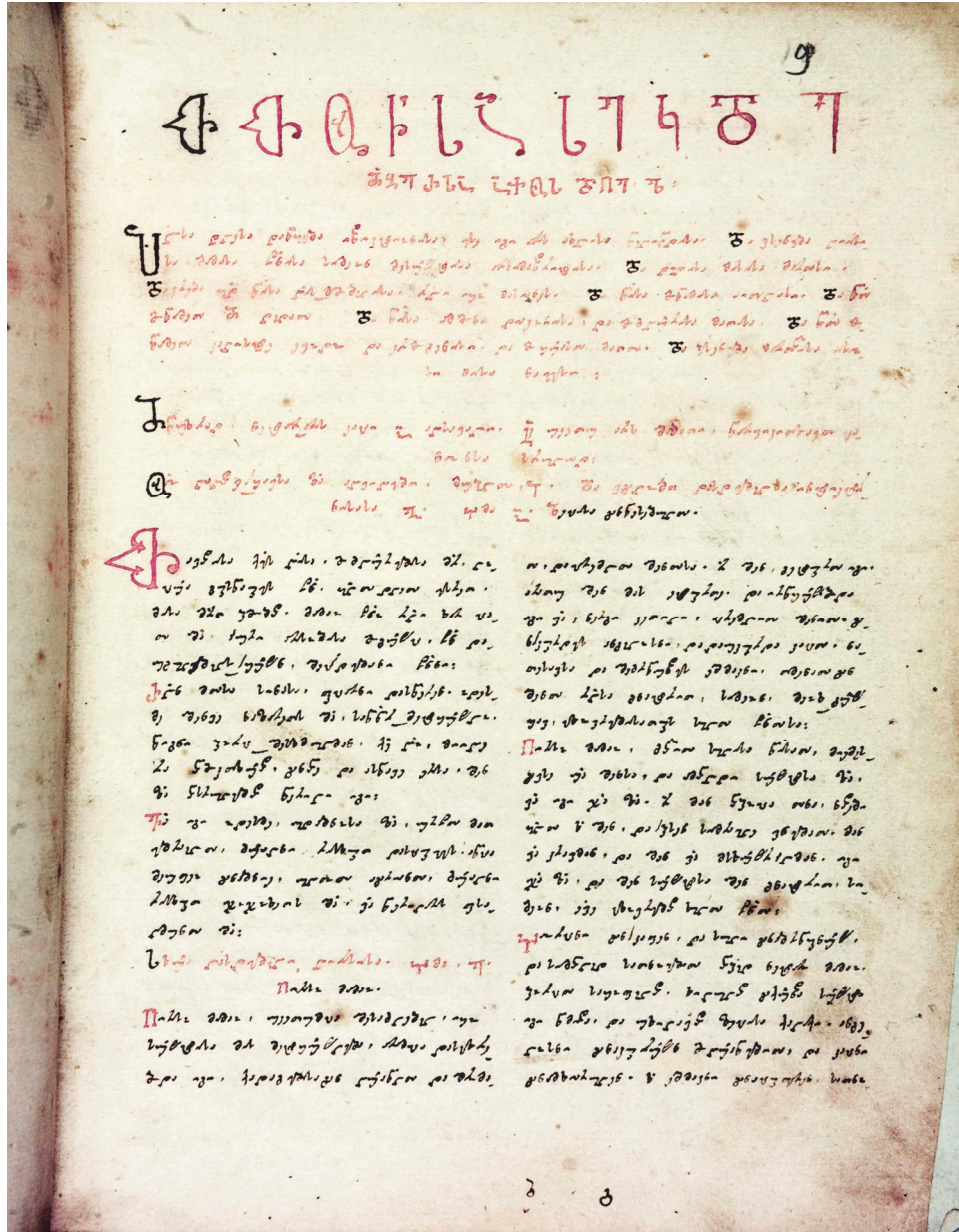


Fig. 1 – Ms. S-1464 of the *Feast Hymn Book*, 1759-1760, f. 9r, title page for the month of September.

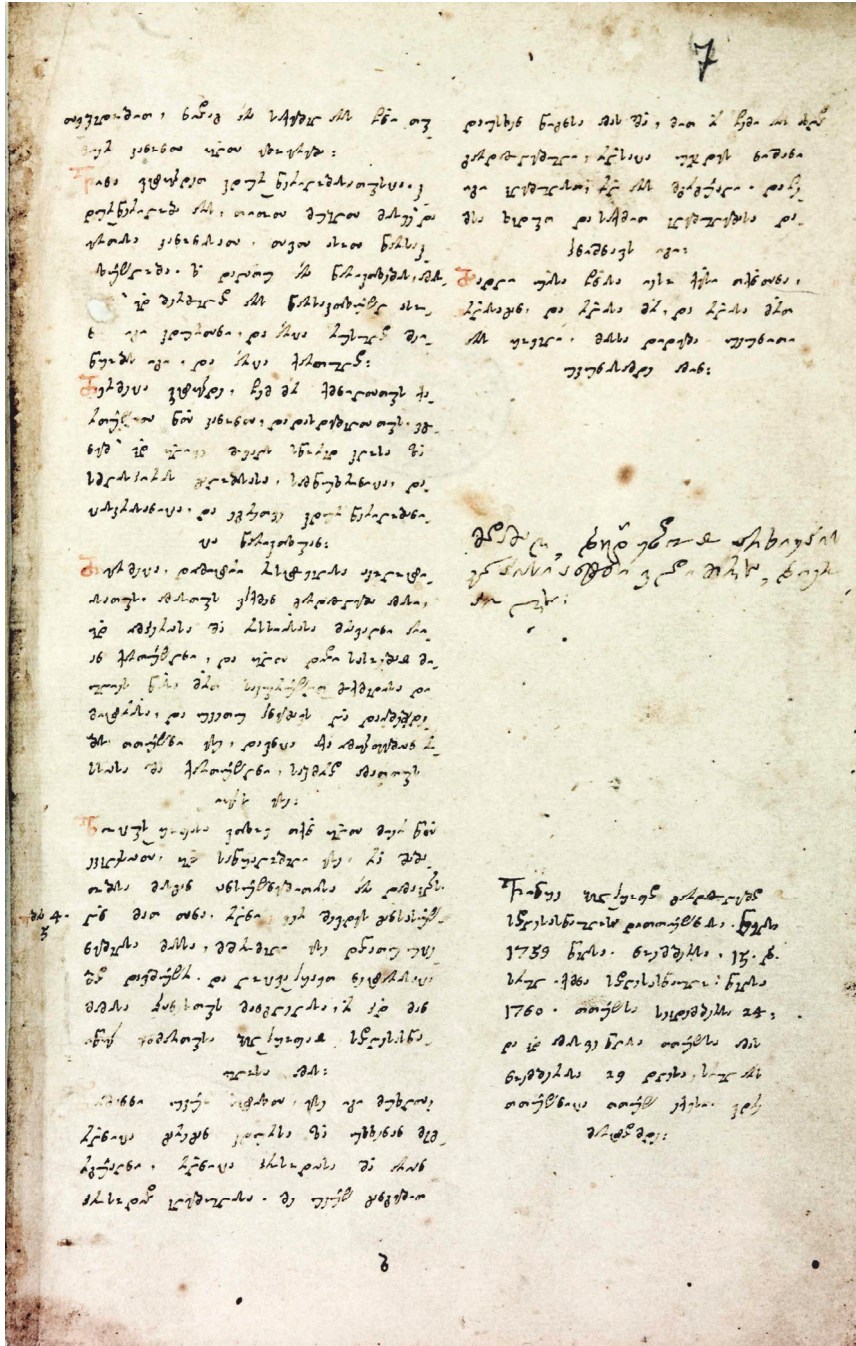


Fig. 2 – Ibidem, scribe's colophon, f. 850v.

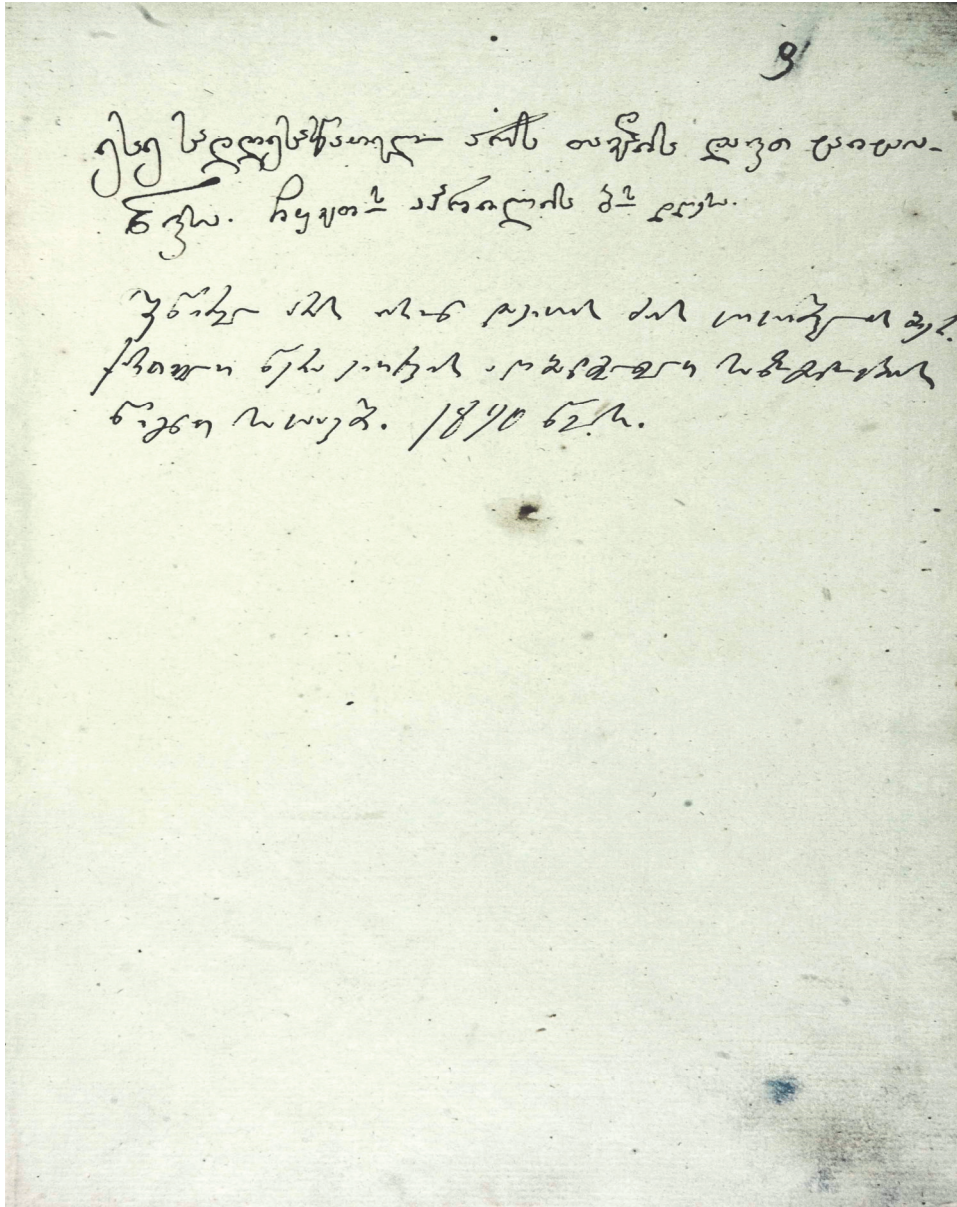


Fig. 3 – *Ibidem*, f. 3r, colophon of the last owners,
 the Prince Tsitsishvili family, 19th c.

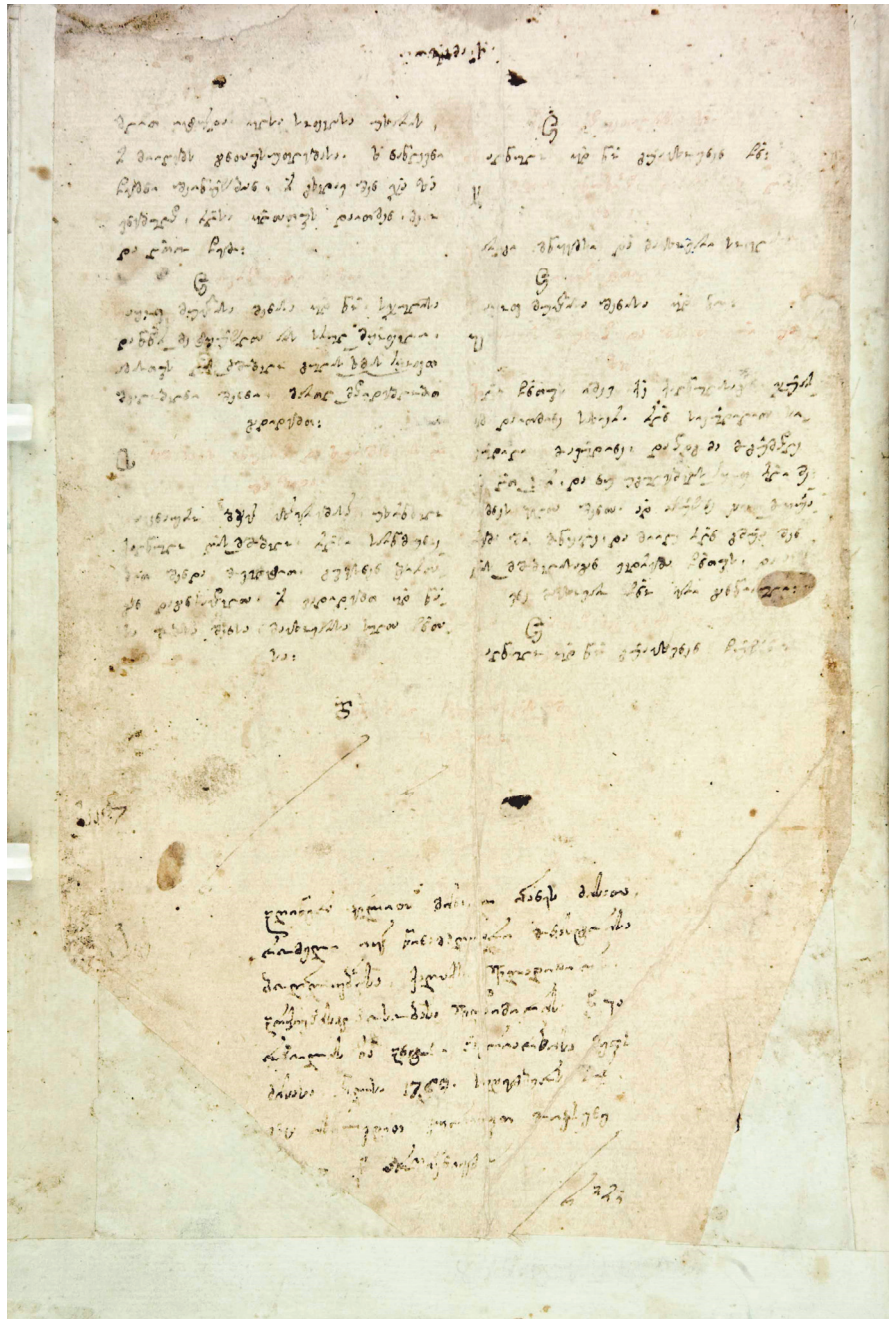


Fig. 4 – Autograph of Catholicos Anton I, f. 7r, Ms. S-1464 of the *Feast Hymn Book*, 1759-1760.