in its main book. The Hebrew book is united by script and/or language: besides Hebrew books, there are manuscripts written in the Hebrew language in Arabic letters, or in Arabic in Hebrew transcription.

Christian books are written in different languages in different alphabets. Of course, they are united at the level of contents by their religious nature, but the same religious unity is also present in missionary books, but as a subject of material culture it cannot be compared with a book created in a truly Christian environment. Thus we will restrict ourselves to an examination from the viewpoint of codicology of handwritten books from the Christian East.

There are excellent studies of Coptic manuscript books, Syrian, Ethiopian, Georgian and Armenian [36], and Graeco-Byzantine books have been studied thoroughly. However, we are not so much interested in their individual, "ethnic" features, as the issue of "material" unity in them, the issue of the role which Christianity played in the history of the book in general.

Many researchers link the establishment of the codex in book form to replace scrolls with the appearance and spread of Christianity, with the need to be able to open a book at the required place in church service. There is also another explanation for the appearance of the codex, as yet unproven, but not refuted: the new writing material—parchment, the manufacture of which began developing actively in the city of Pergamon in Asia Minor in the 2nd century BC when it was forbidden to export papyrus from Egypt, made it extremely difficult to keep and use it in the form of a scroll because of its weight. The earliest codices of oriental origin date to the 2nd—3rd centuries AD and were written both on parchment and papyrus, the manufacture of which only stopped in the 11th century [37]. The oldest dated parchment manuscript in the NLR is already mentioned “Church history” by Eusebius of Caesarea in 362. Both this and other early Syrian manuscripts in the NLR were written on rough thick white parchment with noticeable signs of glossing: there are no lines [38]. An example of a papyrus codex in the NLR collection is the two folios from the Georgian Book of Psalms of the 8th—9th centuries (Gruz.n.s. 10) [39]. It is quite possible that the above-mentioned Coptic papyri fragments of the 5th—6th centuries (OLDP F. 624), at any rate some of them, were parts of codices.

In the 6th—8th centuries another material—paper—gradually became distributed, and by the 12th century became the most widely used [40]. Many oriental manuscripts are written on local paper. With the development of the trade manufacture of paper in Europe, this material began to be exported to the Middle East in increasingly greater quantities (from the end of the 14th century) [41]. European paper with the watermarks “pitcher”, “glove”, “anchor”, “three crescents”, “crown with star and crescent” (the last two were manufactured in Italy specially for the Middle East) were glossed before use for manufacturing Christian books, as well as Muslim and Jewish. According to our observations in the Middle East, Christians, Muslims and Jews used the same paper. As for parchment, in general it was used for much longer in Christian books (especially Ethiopian) than in Muslim ones. The creators of books, regardless of their religious belief, used the material which was available in their area. Perhaps this does not just concern the material on which they wrote, but also the inks.

Thus the writing material may serve as more of a sign of the time and place of the production of the book than the cultural and religious sphere in which it was originated from. Of course, there are also exceptions from this rule: for example, the scrolls of the Torah (Pentateuch), the Books of Esther and mezuzah talismans continue to be written by Jews on parchment as a tribute to the tradition of many centuries.

Even fewer signs of the unity of Christian books can be found in writing, which is natural, as the texts were written in different languages and different scripts. Perhaps the only feature of writing which is characteristic for many Christian monuments of the East is the frequent use of red inks to separate sections, write title letters and some words, i.e. for a visual and meaning, structure organization of the surface of the page.

Undoubtedly, it is interesting as to whether Arabic Christian texts differ from Arabic Muslim texts in their writing. As far as early manuscripts from South Palestinian or Sinai monasteries are concerned, according to the observation of A. B. Khalidov, they are characterized by unique handwriting, in which the verticals of letter are straight and the ligatures began almost at right angles [42].

As for later Arabic Christian manuscripts (15th—17th centuries), we may note that their writing gives the impression of being older and more traditional than in Muslim codices of the same period. Furthermore, red inks and large letters seem to be used more often to write the names of chapters and sections. Punctuation marks in Arabic Christian manuscripts are quite frequent: red full stops with a black circle around them, red circles, etc.

Thus we can see that there are virtually no common features in writing which are characteristic for all Christian manuscripts of the East. The features listed above are not compulsory, they may be present, but they may also not be present, and furthermore they may also be present (although much more rarely) in Muslim and Jewish books.

An important element of the internal design of the book is ornamental decoration. By the ornament it is easy to determine the "religious" identity of the manuscript in Christian books it frequently contains variants of "Byzantine chain" (Persian band-i rúm) [43]. Sometimes, the initial folios of Armenian and Georgian codices were decorated with arches, which are so characteristic for Graeco-Byzantine decorative art. The existence of a specific "Christian" ornament or miniatures with a religious subject is an undisputed feature, but is not always present in books.

The NLR contains a liturgical collection of the 13th—14th century, “Consecration of a Patriarch of the Copts” in Coptic with an Arabic translation (Doro 627) (fig. 20). The frontispiece of this book is in the
“Mamlık” tradition—a specific ornamental style characteristic for artistically decorated manuscripts of the period of the rule of the Mamlık sultān in Mīr and Sālim (13th—15th centuries). The numeration of the folios is from left to right, and the frontispiece is on the foldout of the first folio, before the beginning of the text on folio 2—an ornamented headpiece. In any Arabic manuscript, the text, and accordingly the numeration of folios, is made from right to left, and the frontispiece (if it is not unfolded) should be on the face side of the first folio, and the headpiece should be on the foldout of the same folio. The above-mentioned manuscript is a case of a combination of Arabic-Muslim design with Christian contents, which require a “correct” positioning of decorations [44]. This example shows that regional elements of internal book design which are inherent to the neighboring religious tradition may also be present in Christian books, but in adapted form.

On the whole, decorative adornment (frontispieces, headpieces, miniatures) are a very reliable indication of the origin of the codex. Another reliable sign is the binding. Only one Arabic-Christian manuscript of the NLR, a Syrian-Arabic Gospel of 1467 (Str.n.s. 26) is in a binding, with embossing which may be classified as “Muslim”, and of a later period. Bindings of other Arabic-Christian codices do not look “oriental”. Unfortunately, the NLR collection does not have the earliest bindings which have survived—Coptic bindings from the late 3rd—early 4th century. There were two types of them—wooden and leather, with several different variants. Both types were assimilated by neighboring cultures, for example Byzantium. The NLR contains Byzantine bindings beginning from the 11th century: wooden covers stretched with stamped leather with embossing, a smooth spine and clasps [45]. This type of binding, which underwent several changes over time (“bands” appeared on the covers, cardboard began to be used as the basis of covers, and clasps could be absent), can be encountered in the Christian East until the 20th century (in Ethiopia).

Local differences are most noticeable in the ornament of binding embossing, but here we also find several “coincidences”. The “cross” embossing can also be seen in Ethiopian and Armenian bindings, and in Arabo-Christian bindings stamped patterns of the Byzantine type such as “lily” and “rose” can be encountered. It is interesting that neighboring Muslim binding, it seems, had little direct influence on the Christian binding of the East, with the evident exception of the cardboard base for lids, which was used in Christian books along with wood. As for the so-called “Arabic” embossing, which is an oval centre-piece and sometimes corners filled with “Arabesque” ornaments which are frequently gilded, it is known that it was eagerly assimilated in Europe through Venice and Genoa of the Renaissance era in the 15th century [46]. In Arabic-Christian bindings of the 18th—19th centuries, this Europeanised version of “oriental” embossing is encountered, and evidently already seen as Christian (especially if the centre-piece is filled with an embossing on the subject of the “Transfiguration” or the “Crucifixion”). “Arabic” embossing is encountered in several late Coptic bindings of the NLR, but it is hard to recognize them as Muslim: the stamped medallions on the four sides of the centre-piece resemble a cross; in a Muslim binding only two such medallions can be present—above and below the space.

We will not examine issues of book stitching and the time that “bands” appeared, or periodisation and localisation of different types of bindings, or compare early Eastern Jewish bindings with Christian bindings. These are subjects for further investigation. So far we can say that the binding of Christian books differs from Muslim binding as easily as the internal decoration.

To sum up the above, we note that the book of the Christian East can be distinguished from the book of the Jewish or Muslim East by a number of signs: by the language and writing (manuscripts in Hebrew or Arabic in Hebrew or Arabic script are not Christian, with the exception of a small number of Arabic-Christian), by the miniatures, ornamental decoration and binding. The last three signs are the most obvious, but they are not always present in the book, and additionally the artistic design and especially the binding may be made later. The writing material is frequently an indicator of the place, although in the Christian book of the East parchment was used for quite a long time, while in the Muslim tradition paper replaces parchment in the 12th century (the last kuf Qur’āns). Parchment requires a rough and heavy binding which cannot be deformed. This evidently explains the long existence of wooden bindings wrapped in leather, frequently with clasps. For paper books, covers with a cardboard base are quite sufficient.

The relation of Christian and Muslim books can be easily examined, especially on the basis of the Arabic collections. At the same time, the issue of comparing Christian manuscripts with the Eastern Jewish tradition remains open [47]. Jewish codices originated from European countries can in general be studied in the vein of local traditions (with the exception of writing, of course). As far as Jewish books made in the East, especially before the establishment of the book industry in the Ottoman Empire, we can say that as Jews there skillfully enriched their craft with the achievements of peoples living next to them, it is hard to find any significant features of bindings, parchment, paper or format which distinguish them from the books of the Christian East. As for the illumination of Hebrew Bibles from the Near East, we can say that in colours and ornamental elements it is quite close to the decoration of early Qur’āns of the so-called ‘Abbāsid tradition [48].

Comparative codicology is a new, promising direction in the study of the book [49]. For its development the funds of the manuscript division of the NLR, which contain West European, Oriental, Old Russian, Slavonic and Greek codices, are an excellent base. Our report is simply an attempt to outline the circle of problems, to set down the path for an approach to a comparative study of the manuscripts of the Christian East. Their total number is close to 700 items (not counting Greek codices and Georgian documents) which makes up less than 3% of the entire Oriental fund. Nevertheless, the group of Christian handwritten books of the East is of undoubted
D. A. Morozov, "Zaterinnye teksty Efremu Sirma" ("The lost texts by Ephrem the Syrian"), Vizowe chteniia pamyati professora Nikol'ia Fedorovicha Kaptereva (Moscow, 2004), pp. 11–2.


33. Descriptions see: Catalogue des manuscrits et xylographes orientaux, pp. 455–58.


38. Puglevskaya suggests that they were among the ancient books which were acquired in the 10th century in Mesopotamia by the Syrian monastery of the State desert. See: Puglevskaya, “Sirikski sbornik logiologiiskih pamyatnikov i legend”, p. 18.


40. In Samarqand, paper manufacture began in the mid-8th century.


42. As. A. Khazilov, "Rukopisniaia kniga v arabskoi kulture" ("The manuscript book in Arabic culture"), Rukopisniaia kniga v kulture narodov Vostoika, p. 296.

43. In the Persian book manufacture, the term band-i rimii ("Greek chain") is used to describe the borders which consist of an element that is repeated over and over again, resembling the letter "S".

44. Such combination is not unique. See: Illustration from Coptic Manuscripts (Cairo, 2000) (s. a.).


47. We note that in the NLR collections, which contain 18,000 Hebrew manuscripts items (both in Hebrew and Arabic script), not a single palimpsest has been found. On Jewish codicology, see M. Bein-Arie, Hebrew Codicology (Jerusalem, 1981); idem, The Making of the Medieval Hebrew Book: Studies in Pseurography and Codicology (Jerusalem, 1993); idem, Hebrew Manuscripts in East and West: Towards a Comparative Codicology (London, 1993).


Inside the text:

Fig. 1. “Sharaknu” (collection of hymns). Parchment, 130x90 mm, 196 f. Armenian, 14th century. Purchased in 1999. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Arm.m.s. 66, fols. 79v—79r. Courtesy of the NLR.

Fig. 2. Eusebius of Caesarea, “Church History” in Syriac translation. Copied by Ishag. Parchment, 310x235 mm, 123 f. Mesopotamia, 773 Seleucid era/462. Purchased in 1852. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Sur.n.s. 1, fols. 81v—82r. Courtesy of the NLR.

Fig. 3. Syrian-Georgian palimpsest. Parchment, 180—190x145—160 mm, 129 separate f. Lower layer — Biblical fragments in Syriac of the 8th century. Upper layer — Hagiographical texts in Georgian of the 10th century. Collections of K. Tischendorf, 1858—1859. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Sur.n.s. 161, fol. 18r. Courtesy of the NLR.

Fig. 4. The same MS, fol. 103r.

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Fig. 6. Service book. Coptic and Arabic. Frontispiece, headings, leather stamped binding. 14th century. Paper, 163x128 mm, 76 f. Collection of P. P. Dubrovskii, 1803. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Dorn 629, fols. 63v—64r. Courtesy of the NLR.

Fig. 7. Gospel. Headings, leather binding and two leather bags. Copied by ‘aleqa Kasa. Parchment, 315x280 mm, 264 f. Ethiopian, 1809. Gifted by Menelik II to the Russian tsar Nicholas II. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Efip.n.s. 22, fols. 113v—114r. Courtesy of the NLR.

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Fig. 10. The same MS, fols. 1v—2r. Tables of canon.

Fig. 11. Four Gospels. Two miniatures, fragments of wooden covers. Parchment, 230x200 mm, 255 f. Georgian, 12th century. Purchased in 1880. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Sobr. ts. Ioana 210, fols. 105v—106r. Courtesy of the NLR.

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Fig. 13. Four Gospels. Parchment, 167x115 mm, 292 f. Copied and illustrated by Sahak Balashteti. 30 miniatures, titles of canons, headings, small pictures on the margins, stamped leather binding. Armenian, Bileti (Turkey), 1635. Gifted in 1857 by A. V. Zvenigorodskii. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Arm.m.s. 11, fols. 1v—2r. Courtesy of the NLR.

Fig. 14. “Sharaknu” (collection of hymns). Copied, illustrated and bound by Nikolaos. Four miniatures, headings, small pictures on the margins, stamped leather binding. Parchment, 135x95 mm, 402 f. Armenian, Kafa (Theodosia, Crimea), 1645. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Dorn 631, fols. 1v—2r. Courtesy of the NLR.

Fig. 15. Four Gospels. Copied by Hsana b. Mas’ud al-Nasrāl Črūtlūnū. Three miniatures, headings, leather binding of the 14th century. Parchment, 150x150 mm, 220 f. Arabic, 1036. NLR, Manuscript Department, call no. Dorn 1, fols. 93v—94r. Courtesy of the NLR.

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PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

M. Dehqan

A LATE OTTOMAN TURKISH VERSION OF XANĪS MEM Ü ZİN IN THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION OF THE ISLAMIC CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY LIBRARY I*.

The collection of modern and medieval Turkic manuscripts in the Islamic Consultative Assembly Library I contains a lot of valuable materials on the Islamic literature and history. Some of them are well-known and exist in hundreds of copies throughout the world, but a few items are rare or unique. This article is not aiming to give a full scholarly analysis of the Turkic manuscripts preserved in the collection of Islamic Consultative Assembly Library I. Our aim is much more modest — that is, to arouse only attention of specialists to a valuable Turkish version of Xani’s Mem ü Zin (written in 1694).

Among the early Kurdish poets of Kurdistan, if we leave out the great founders of Kurdish literature [1], the name of Ehmedi Xani (1651—1707) [2] is entitled to hold one of the most distinguished places. The Mem ü Zin [3], or the most important work of Xani in its broadest sense, is one of the great works of Kurdish literature. The study of the contents of this work, which centred about the tragic love story of Mem and Zin, is important not only because they form the folkloric belief of the Kurds, but particularly also because of their nationalist aspect [4], their linguistic nicety, and their intrinsic value. If we leave the written Kurdish Mem ü Zin wholly out of account we are still able to draw from other sources material for the study of Xani’s literary masterpiece. First and foremost, we may study the picture of the work of Xani that can be drawn in outline from the oral versions of Mem ü Zin [5]. This may be further supplemented through the use of material found in a version which a Xani’s follower for his interest in him caused to be recorded in a non-Iranian language — that is, the Turkish translation manuscript which we would like to discuss in this brief presentation [6].

The Kitâb Mami wa Zin (“The Book of Mami [sic] and Zin”) is an anonymous manuscript (call No. 9385, 59 folios, 19 × 22 cm) mentioned neither in the “Fihrist

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