

## **Monk John Zosimus and His Works: Praise and Exaltation of the Georgian Language**

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John Zosimus, also known by the Georgian version of his name as Ioane Zosime (იოანე ზოსიმე), was a 10th-century Georgian monk active in Palestinian monasteries. His main tasks in the monasteries of Mar Saba and Mount Sinai appeared to be copying texts, bookbinding, collating, translating, and composing hymns. Monk John, who died in 990, is known in Georgia as the author of a hymn titled “Praise and Exaltation of the Georgian Language,” composed in Georgian and recorded in Nuskhuri script, one of the three Georgian writing systems.

In the summer 2024, one of the surviving books by John Zosimus was auctioned by the Christie’s auction house in London, UK. Mr. Bidzina Ivanishvili, the wealthiest Georgian citizen and an informal leader of the country, reportedly purchased it for 1.25 million pounds (more than 2.24 million Canadian dollars). The 70-page book containing Monk Zosimus’ writings in Georgian and Aramaic was earmarked for the National Museum of Georgia.

John Zosimus’ book, auctioned by Christie’s of London, is known as the Codex Sinaiticus Rescriptus. It was sold by the Schoyen Collection, a private collection of Dr Martin Schoyen.

Monk John’s hymn “Praise and Exaltation of the Georgian Language” (ქება და დიდება ქართულისა ენისა) is a mystic and esoteric text that makes biblical and numerological references. The exact meaning of some of the verses of the hymn is being debated. It is given below in an English translation.

### **Praise and Exaltation of the Georgian Language**

1. The Georgian language is hidden until the day of the second coming of the Messiah. So that God may reveal the language to everyone with this tongue.
2. And this tongue is sleeping until the day, and this tongue is like Lazarus of the Gospel.
3. And like Nino and Queen Helen converted new ones. These are the two sisters, like Mary and Martha
4. And friendship the evangelist spoke about is for this. Because every secret is dormant in this language.
5. And like dead for four days, for this reason, David the prophet said, "A thousand years are like one day."
6. And in the Gospel, in Georgian, in the Book of Matthew, in which it has a share of the living letter, and speaks to all four thousand descendants,
7. And this is for four days, and the dead of the four days, for that reason, was buried in death with its own epiphany.
8. And this language, adorned and blessed by the name of the Lord, lowly and rejected, awaits the day of the second coming of the Lord.
9. And this is a miracle: one hundred and four years more than the other tongues pass from the arrival of Christ to this day.
10. And all this, which is written, the martyr presented to you, this one hundred and four years, and a sharer of the script.



The Codex Sinaiticus Rescriptus is a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century palimpsest containing Aramaic texts.



Monk John Zosimus bound the Codex Sinaiticus Rescriptus in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

*Christie's Images.*