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von Jost Gippert (2011).

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Qafqaz Albaniyasının Azərbaycan və Qafqazın Tarixində yeri və rolu. Beynəlxalq elmi konfransının
əsərləri /*

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THE ALBANIAN GOSPEL MANUSCRIPT – NEW FINDINGS

The discovery of the first manuscript remains of the Caucasian Albanians in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai has provided a solid basis for the decipherment of the Albanian script and language. In an international cooperation project devoted to this task,¹ the two Georgian palimpsest manuscripts in question (Sin. georg. N 13 and N 55) have been thoroughly studied and analysed and a full account of their content has been published two years ago.² The edition project has proven beyond doubt that the two Sinai manuscripts comprise, as palimpsests, 166 leaves pertaining to at least six different original manuscripts, two of them Armenian (a New Testament and an Old Testament manuscript), one Georgian, one Aramaic, and two written in the Albanian script and language. Of the latter two originals, one is a lectionary manuscript containing lections from three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) as well as Acts and Epistles (St. Paul's and Catholic), plus a few verses from the Psalms and a short lection from Isaiah. The 64 folios of the lectionary manuscript have been preserved well enough to provide the main basis for the decipherment of the script and the language, and more than

¹ The project was funded by the Volkswagen Foundation from 2003 to 2007; the project members were Zaza Aleksidze, Jean-Pierre Mahé, Wolfgang Schulze, Manana Tandaschwili, and myself.

² Gippert, Jost / Schulze, Wolfgang / Aleksidze, Zaza / Mahé, Jean-Pierre: *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mount Sinai*. Vols. I-II. Turnhout: Brepols 2009 (Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi / Series Ibero-Caucasica, 2/1-2); hereafter referred to as "the edition".

95 % of its contents have been re-established with certainty. The second original manuscript written in the Albanian script has been much more difficult to account for, given that it was erased much more rigidly than the lectionary manuscript for being re-used as a palimpsest. Nevertheless it is clear now that it was part of a Gospel manuscript, with 54 folios extant representing fragments of the Gospel of John. The following passages have been identified with certainty: Jo. 1.45-3.9; 3.27-4.10; 4.35-4.47; 5.17-7.17; 8.14-10.6; 11.7-11.29; 11.52-13.11; 15.13-16.22; 18.32-20.29. The identification of four further folios that are likely to pertain to the Gospel manuscript (Sin. N 55 = B 1-5 and 40-35)³ remained doubtful though.

On the basis of an enhanced codicological study of the remains of the Gospel manuscript, we have now arrived at a reliable solution for these folios. According to this, B 1-5 is likely to have contained John 11.30–57, and B 40-35 must represent John 18.16-31. In the present paper, I intend to describe the procedure undertaken to achieve these findings and to outline the Albanian Gospel manuscript in its entirety.

In attempting this, we first of all have to consider the fact that the palimpsests, as most medieval codexes, had a typical structure in that they consisted of a certain amount of quires, i.e., gatherings or sets of four to five double leaves (“bifolia”) piled upon each other, with a fold in the middle which was used for sewing the leaves together; cf. Figure 1 which shows the arrangement of four quires of the Sinai Palimpsests with the indication of the respective folio numbers and of the contents of the original manuscripts re-used in them.⁴

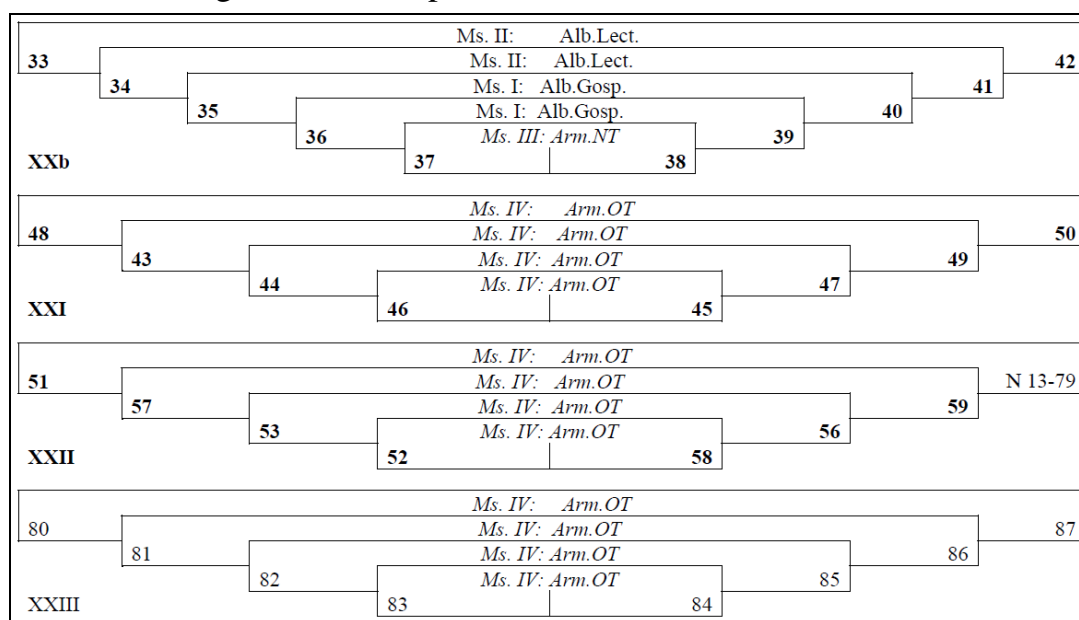


Figure 1: Quires of the Sinai palimpsests

³ As in the edition, A and B are used hereafter to denote the two catalogued manuscripts, Sin.georg. N 13 and N 55.

⁴ In the diagram (taken from the edition, Vol. I, p. I-26), the different original manuscripts are indicated by the following abbreviations: “Ms. I: Alb.Gosp.” = the Albanian Gospel ms., “Ms. II: Alb.Lect.” = the Albanian Lectionary ms., “Ms. IV: Arm.OT” = the Armenian Old Testament ms. Cf. the edition, Vol. I, pp. I-25–27 for a full description of the quire structure of the palimpsests.

In preparing the leaves of the original manuscripts for the production of palimpsests, the medieval monks had to develop peculiar methods to cope with the different sizes of the originals they wanted to re-use, on the one hand, and the new manuscript codex they intended to produce, on the other. In the ideal case, a bifolium of the original could be re-used as such, i.e., yielding a bifolium of the new codex, with the effect that the upper script could be applied horizontally over the underwriting. In the case of the Sinai palimpsests under consideration here, this is true for the 16 bifolia of the Armenian Old Testament manuscript that were re-used⁵ (cf. Figure 2 displaying this effect in the bifolium consisting of A 87r and 80v); note that the overwriting is turned by 180° in comparison with the underwriting of the given leaves.⁶



Figure 2: Bifolium of the Armenian OT ms.

In most of the cases, however, the original leaves were larger than the intended (Georgian) codex. In these cases, it was usually one single leaf that was re-used as a bifolium of the new codex, with the effect that it had to be turned by 90°, with the underwriting being overwritten vertically and a considerable amount of lines remaining uncovered in the new fold. This effect is schematically displayed in Figure 3; in the Sinai palimpsests, it can be observed in both the folios stemming from the Armenian New Testament manuscript

⁵ As to the Armenian parts of the palimpsests cf. Vol. III of the edition (“The Armenian Layer”, edited by Jost Gippert, Turnhout: Brepols 2010; Monumenta Palaeographica Medii Aevi / Series Ibero-Caucasica, 2/3).

⁶ The bifolium comprises Eccl. 12.11–14 (A 87r) and Cant. 4.6–10; cf. the edition, Vol. III, pp. IV-38–41.

(where the underwriting consisted of one column) and in both Albanian originals (with a two-column layout); cf. Figures 4 (A 72v-71r)⁷ and 5 (A 13v-10r)⁸ showing this effect.

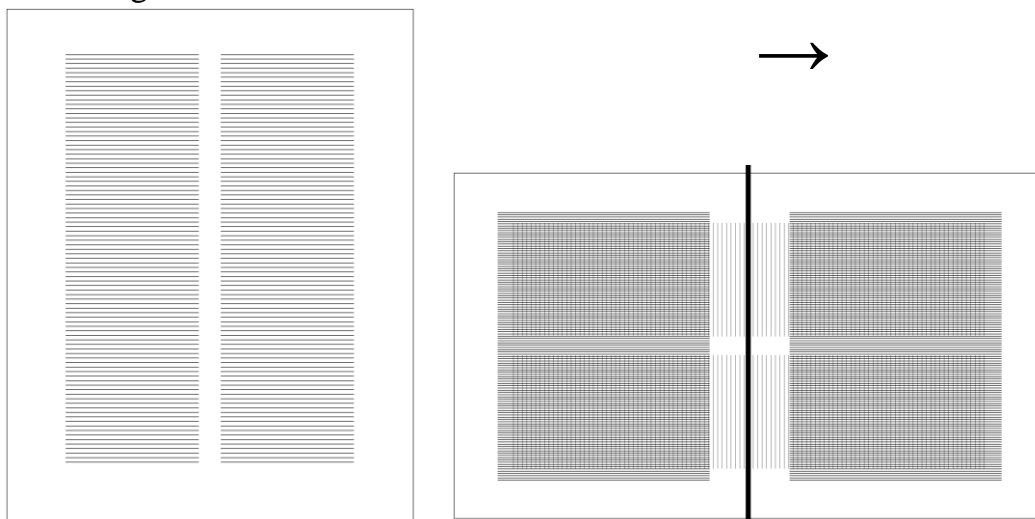


Figure 3: Re-usage of a single leaf as a bifolium (schematically)

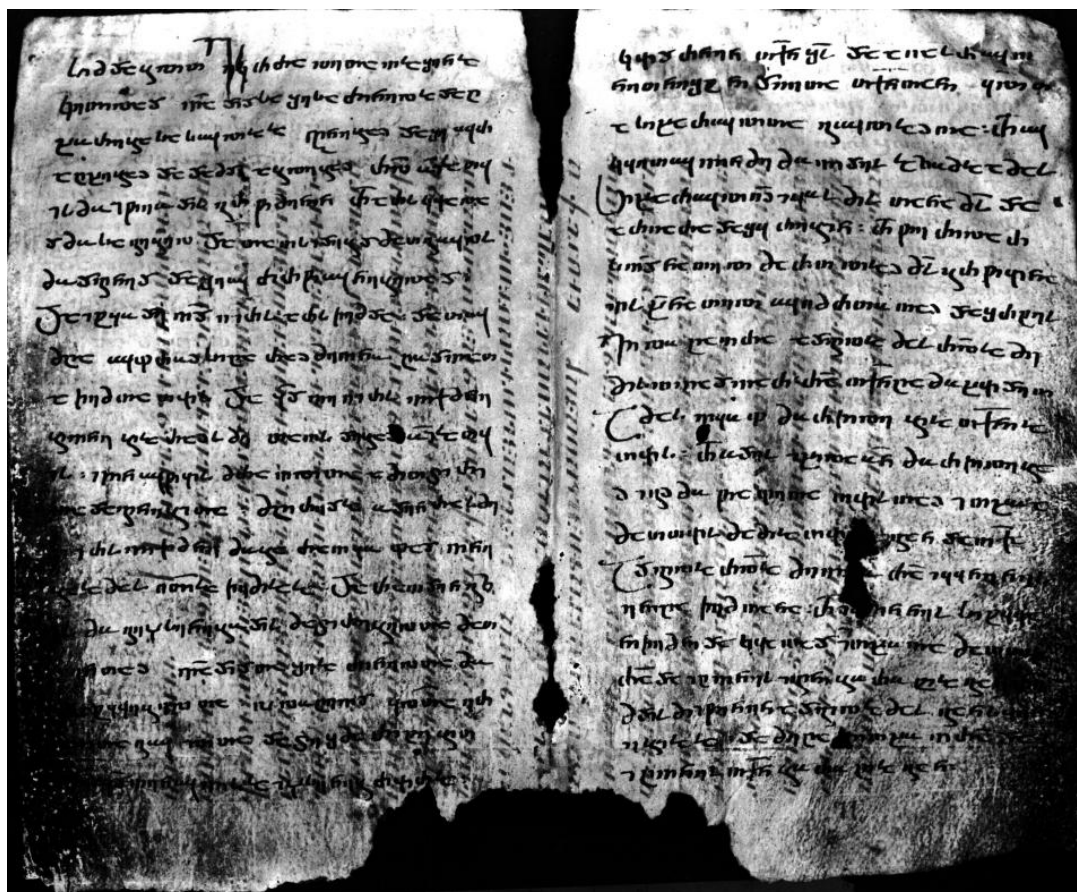


Figure 4: Single folium of the Armenian NT manuscript re-used as a bifolium of the palimpsest

⁷ The bifolium contains a part of the Armenian version of the Euthalian “Prologue” to St. Paul’s Epistles; cf. the edition, Vol. III, pp. III-2-3.

⁸ The bifolium (part of the Albanian lectionary manuscript) contains Mt. 5.19-20 and 17.1-5; cf. the edition, Vol. II, pp. VI-30-31.



Figure 5: Single folium of the Albanian lectionary manuscript re-used as a bifolium of the palimpsest

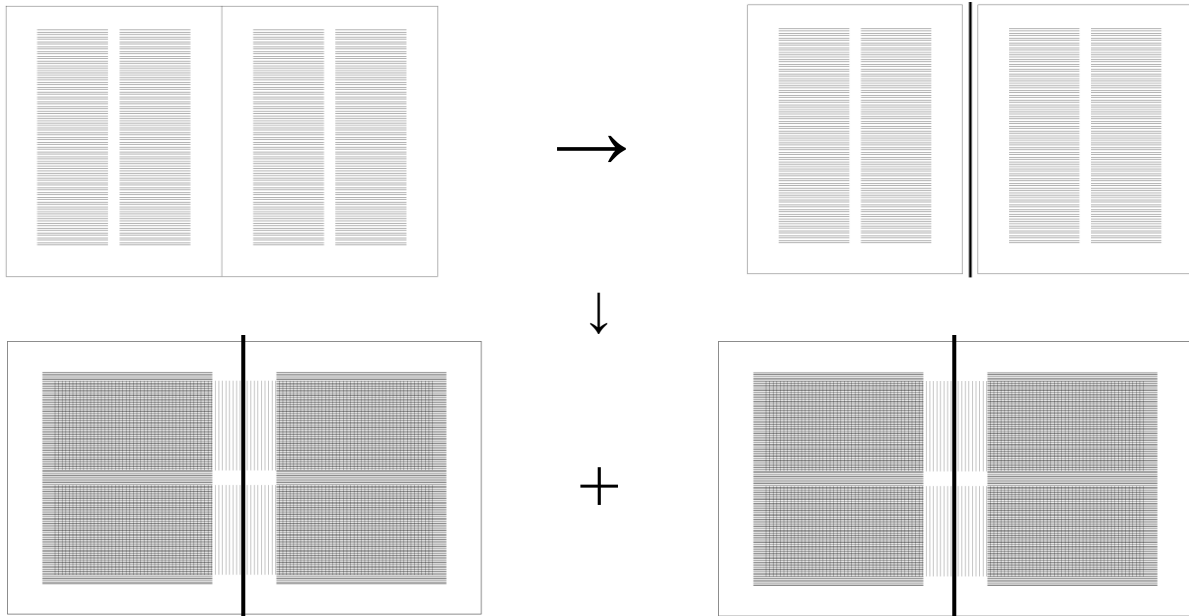


Figure 6: Splitting of original bifolia for re-usage (schematically)

We must further consider that these single leaves, too, must have been part of original bifolia, which must have been cut in two in their folds; in this way, every bifolium of the original yielded two bifolia of the new codex. Cf. the schematical visualisation of this effect in Figure 6.

Interestingly enough, we can observe in the Sinai palimpsests that the two new bifolia resulting from this are not distributed at random in the new codexes

but according to a clear principle: they were usually kept close together in that they were used one after another in the pile. This is clearly discernible in the distribution of St. John's Gospel text among the bifolia of the two palimpsest codexes if we consider the following observations.

First, we can assume that the complete text of St. John's Gospel must have comprised 47 folios in the original manuscript, 29 of which have survived as bifolia (or, in two cases, halves of bifolia) in the palimpsests; cf. the following Table (taken from the edition, Vol. II, p. V-1) which displays the sequence of preserved and missing folia (with the latter indicated by a grey background and the uncertain bifolium of B 40-35, by italics).

Jo. 1.1–25		Jo. 1.25–45		Jo. 1.45–2.15		Jo. 2.15–3.9		Jo. 3.9–26		Jo. 3.27–4.11		Jo. 4.11–31		Jo. 4.31–48		Jo. 4.48–5.17	
A40r	A40v			A6r	A6v	A7r	A7v			A41r	A41v			B18r	B18v		
A47v	A47r			A1v	A1r	[A0v	A0r]			A46v	A46r			B21v	B21r		
Jo. 5.17–35		Jo. 5.35–6.9		Jo. 6.9–27		Jo. 6.27–48		Jo. 6.48–66		Jo. 6.66–7.17		Jo. 7.17–37		Jo. 7.37–8.14			
A100r	A100v	A101r	A101v			A99r	A99v			B17r	B17v						
A97v	A97r	A96v	A96r	A107v	A107r	A98v	A98r			B22v	B22r						
Jo. 8.14–31		Jo. 8.32–50		Jo. 8.51–9.9		Jo. 9.9–27		Jo.9.27–10.6		Jo. 10.7–27		Jo. 10.27–11.7		Jo. 11.7–30		Jo. 11.30–47	
A19r	A19v	A50r	A50v	A51r	A51v	A18r	A18v	A74r	A74v					A65r	A65v		
A20v	A20r	A55v	A55r	A54v	A54r	A21v	A21r	A102v	A102r					A60v	A60r		
Jo. 11.48–12.6		Jo. 12.6–26		Jo. 12.26–44		Jo. 12.44–13.11		Jo. 13.11–28		Jo. 13.28–14.7		Jo. 14.7–24		Jo. 14.24–15.13			
B12r	B12v	B11r	B11v	B54r	B54v	A66r	A66v										
B9v	B9r	B10v	B10r	B55v	B55r	A59v	A59r										
Jo. 15.13–16.5		Jo. 16.5–22		Jo. 16.22–17.6		Jo. 17.6–25		Jo. 17.25–18.16		18.16–31							
A30r	A30v	A31r	A31v														
A25v	A25r	A24v	A24r														
Jo. 18.32–19.7		Jo. 19.7–22		Jo. 19.23–38		Jo. 19.38–20.14		Jo. 20.15–29		Jo. 20.30–21.15		Jo. 21.15–25		Col.			
A61r	A61v	A17r	A17v	B13r	B13v	B14r	B14v	A16r	A16v	<i>B40r</i>	<i>B40v</i>	B39r	B39v				
A64v	A64r	A22v	A22r	B8v	B8r	B7v	B7r	A23v	A23r	<i>B35v</i>	<i>B35r</i>	B36v	B36r				

Second, we may assume that the codex contained nothing but the Gospel of John, given that not even a single leaf of it has been preserved with remnants of another text. And if it contained only the Gospel of John, it is *a priori* likely that it consisted of 48 folios distributed among 6 quires of 8 folios each, which is the most widely used structure of first millennium parchment codexes. If this is true, one additional folio must have been present at either the beginning or the end of the codex. And indeed, we arrive at a consistent structure if we assume an introductory leaf (containing a title, an index or the like) to have preceded the folio containing the beginning of the Gospel text proper. Cf. the schematical outline of this in the following Table where the individual quires are enumerated with Roman numbers.

Qafqaz Albaniyasının Azərbaycan və Qafqazın tarixində yeri və rolu

Beynəlxalq elmi konfransının əsərləri

I															
(Title)		1.1–25		1.25–45		1.45–2.15		2.15–3.9		3.9–26		3.27–4.11		4.11–31	
		A40r	A40v			A6r	A6v	A7r	A7v			A41r	A41v		
		A47v	A47r			A1v	A1r	[A0v	A0r]			A46v	A46r		
II															
4.31–48		4.48–5.17		5.17–35		5.35–6.9		6.9–27		6.27–48		6.48–66		6.66–7.17	
B18r	B18v			A100r	A100v	A101r	A101v			A99r	A99v			B17r	B17v
B21v	B21r			A97v	A97r	A96v	A96r	A107v	A107r	A98v	A98r			B22v	B22r
III															
7.17–37		7.37–8.14		8.14–31		8.32–50		8.51–9.9		9.9–27		9.27–10.6		10.7–27	
				A19r	A19v	A50r	A50v	A51r	A51v	A18r	A18v	A74r	A74v		
				A20v	A20r	A55v	A55r	A54v	A54r	A21v	A21r	A102v	A102r		
IV															
10.27–11.7		11.7–30		11.30–47		11.48–12.6		12.6–26		12.26–44		12.44–13.11		13.11–28	
		A65r	A65v			B12r	B12v	B11r	B11v	B54r	B54v	A66r	A66v		
		A60v	A60r			B9v	B9r	B10v	B10r	B55v	B55r	A59v	A59r		
V															
13.28–14.7		14.7–24		14.24–15.13		15.13–16.5		16.5–22		16.22–17.6		17.6–25		17.25–18.16	
						A30r	A30v	A31r	A31v						
						A25v	A25r	A24v	A24r						
VI															
18.16–31		18.32–19.7		19.7–22		19.23–38		19.38–20.14		20.15–29		20.30–21.15		21.15–25 / Col.	
		A61r	A61v	A17r	A17v	B13r	B13v	B14r	B14v	A16r	A16v	<i>B40r</i>	<i>B40v</i>	B39r	B39v
		A64v	A64r	A22v	A22r	B8v	B8r	B7v	B7r	A23v	A23r	<i>B35v</i>	<i>B35r</i>	B36v	B36r

It is obvious from this arrangement that the distribution of subsequent bifolia of the new codexes is symmetrical, which suggests that they represent, as pairs, one bifolium each of the original codex. This also forces us to reconsider the position of the two doubtful bifolia, B 40-35 and B 1-5. For the former, a symmetrical arrangement of the given type would suggest its placement not at the position of the last but one bifolium, Jo. 20.30–21.15, but at the beginning of the last quire (no. VI), as the „symmetrical partner“ of the last bifolium of the same quire (B 39-36); in this case it would have contained Jo. 18.16–31. In a similar way, we may guess that the bifolium of B 1-5 might have been the partner of the “final” bifolium of Sin. georg. N 55, B 54-55, which would suggest its placement in the IVth quire at the position of Jo. 11.30–47. Cf. the following Table which displays the rearrangement of the quires in question (with the pairs of “adjusted” bifolia marked in bold letters).

IV															
10.27–11.7		11.7–30		11.30–47		11.48–12.6		12.6–26		12.26–44		12.44–13.11		13.11–28	
		A65r	A65v	B1r	B1v	B12r	B12v	B11r	B11v	B54r	B54v	A66r	A66v		
		A60v	A60r	B5v	B5r	B9v	B9r	B10v	B10r	B55v	B55r	A59v	A59r		
VI															
18.16–31		18.32–19.7		19.7–22		19.23–38		19.38–20.14		20.15–29		20.30–21.15		21.15–25 / Col.	
B40r	B40v	A61r	A61v	A17r	A17v	B13r	B13v	B14r	B14v	A16r	A16v			B39r	B39v
B35v	B35r	A64v	A64r	A22v	A22r	B8v	B8r	B7v	B7r	A23v	A23r			B36v	B36r

The underlying structure of the original quires can then be reconstructed in the following way (with missing folia indicated by a grey background):

(Title)		(4.11–31)	
1	1.1–25	3.27–4.11	8
	2 [A ₄₀₋₄₇]	(1.25–45)	(3.9–26)
	3	1.45–2.15	2.15–3.9
I		4 [A ₆₋₁]	[A ₇₋₉] 5
	6		
4.31–48		6.66–7.17	
9 [B ₁₈₋₂₁]	(4.48–5.17)	(6.48–66)	[B ₁₇₋₂₂] 16
	10	5.17–35	6.27–48
	11 [A ₁₀₀₋₉₇]	5.35–6.9	6.9–27
II		12 [A ₁₀₁₋₉₆]	[A ₉₉₋₉₈] 14
		[A ₁₀₈₋₁₀₇] 13	
(7.17–37)		(10.7–27)	
17	(7.37–8.14)	9.27–10.6	24
	18	8.14–31	9.9–27
	19 [A ₁₉₋₂₀]	8.32–50	8.51–9.9
III		20 [A ₅₀₋₅₅]	[A ₁₈₋₂₂] 22
		[A ₅₁₋₅₄] 21	
(10.27–11.7)		(13.11–28)	
25	11.7–30	12.44–13.11	32
	26 [A ₆₅₋₆₀]	11.30–47	12.26–44
	27 [B ₁₋₅]	11.48–12.6	12.6–26
IV		28 [B ₁₂₋₉]	[B ₅₄₋₅₅] 30
		[B ₁₁₋₁₀] 29	
(13.28–14.7)		(17.25–18.16)	
33	(14.7–24)	(17.6–25)	40
	34	(14.24–15.13)	(16.22–17.6)
	35	15.13–16.5	16.5–22
V		36 [A ₃₀₋₂₅]	[A ₃₁₋₂₄] 37
		38	
18.16–31		21.15–25 + Col.	
41 [B ₄₀₋₃₅]	18.32–19.7	(20.30–21.15)	[B ₃₉₋₃₆] 48
	42 [A ₆₁₋₆₄]	19.7–22	20.15–29
	43 [A ₁₇₋₂₂]	19.23–38	19.38–20.14
VI		44 [B ₁₃₋₈]	[A ₁₆₋₂₃] 46
		[B ₁₄₋₇] 45	

The assumption that B 40-35 contained Jo. 18.16–31 is further supported by the scanty remnants of Albanian letters that can be made out on these pages. In the edition (Vol. II, p. V-113), it is only the sequence of the two letters **Ϛ** = *a* and **ϛ** = *o* that was proposed to be read in line 15 of the verso of the bifolium, a sequence not assignable in any way if the passage in question was Jo. 21.10. If we assume the bifolium to have represented Jo. 18.16–31 instead, we can calculate that the given line must have contained parts of Jo. 18.26. And indeed, we do find a context here that admits of identifying the giving sequence of characters, which is rather rare elsewhere in the Albanian palimpsest material. It is the denotation of the ‘high-priest’, *kahanaowbân’i* (or, rather, its genitive *kahanaowbân’ioya*) which we can expect to have stood here. The given verse can, at least for its beginning, be reconstructed in the following way⁹ on the basis of a comparison

⁹ For the rendering of different grades of readability by different grades of grey-shading cf. the edition, Vol. I, p. I-38.

with the Greek and Armenian versions:

Jo. 18.26	14	ՄԸԿԵԿՈՒԿԱԶԻՏԵԿԱԶԿԵՆՈՒ			
	15	ՀՈՒՏՈՒԴԱԶԱԶՈՒԵՍԼԿ			
	16	ՕՒԶԹՎԱԶԶԵԼԶՈՒԿ			
<i>pē-ne</i>	<i>sown</i>	<i>hayke</i>	<i>nai</i> ‘ow zowğoy	<i>kahanaowğoybân</i> ‘i/oya	<i>çin</i> ‘a-ğarn ‘aoen ...
said ¹⁰	one	certain ¹¹	of servants ¹²	of high-priest ¹³	a relative ¹⁴ ...
λέγει	εἷς		ἐκ τῶν δούλων	τοῦ ἀρχιερέως,	συγγενῆς ὧν ...
<i>Ew asē</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>omn</i>	<i>i carayic</i> ‘	<i>k’ahanayapetin</i>	<i>azgakan</i> ...
<p><i>pē-ne sown hayke nai</i> ‘owzowğoy <i>kahanaowğoybân</i> ‘i/oya <i>çin</i> ‘a-ğarn ‘aoen ...</p> <p>“One of the servants of the high-priest, a relative ..., said ...”</p>					

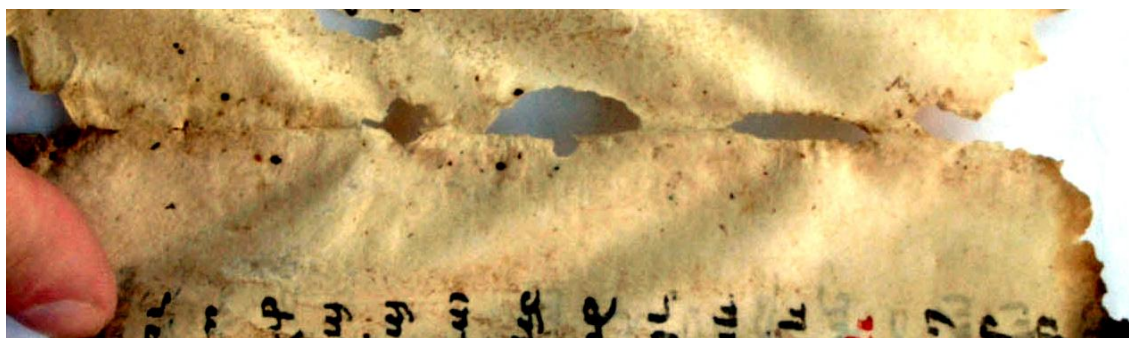


Figure 7: Center fold (lines 14–16) of B 40v-35r

As a matter of fact, a few more characters of the verse seem to be perceivable in the given context; cf. Figures 7 and 8 showing the lines in question, with the perceivable characters re-drawn in the latter.

For the bifolium of B 1-5, no such solution can be offered yet. It will be necessary to provide more special photographs to verify its identification with Jo. 11.30-47 as suggested by the codex structure.

¹⁰ The substitution of the Greek (and Armenian) historical present by a preterite form is usual in the Albanian Gospel manuscript; cf., e.g., Jo. 4.9, 6.8, 8.39 and other instances. Note that the Udi New Testament of 1902 has the perfect form *pine* in the place of Russian present *говорит* in 18.26, too (*kala beinšgo sa çulen* ... *pine* vs. *Один из рабов первосвященнических* ... *говорит*; cf. Сборник материалов для описания местностей и племен Кавказа 30, 1902, вып. 4, стр. 105).

¹¹ For the assumption of *hayke* as the equivalent of Arm. *omn* cf. the text of Lk. 7.2 in the lectionary (cf. the edition, Vol. II, pp. VI-12–13).

¹² The genitive plural form of *nai* ‘ow ‘servant’ is not attested elsewhere; cf., however, the nominative plural form *nai* ‘owzowx occurring in Jo. 15.15 (cf. the edition, Vol. II, pp. V-82–83).

¹³ The genitive singular form of *kahanaowğoybân* ‘i ‘high priest’ is not attested elsewhere; cf., however, the dative *kahanaowğoybân* ‘ioows in Heb. 3.1 which clearly proves that the word had the pronominal inflection assumed here (cf. the edition, Vol. II, pp. VII-74–75).

¹⁴ The ‘hendiadys’ compound *çin* ‘a-ğarn ‘ao, lit. ‘the (one) of (the same) tribe-(and)-kind’ is assumed here in accordance with Lk. 1.58 where it corresponds to Gk. *συγγενεῖς* as well (but Arm. *azgatohm*, not *azgakan*; cf. the edition, Vol. II, pp. VI-18–19).

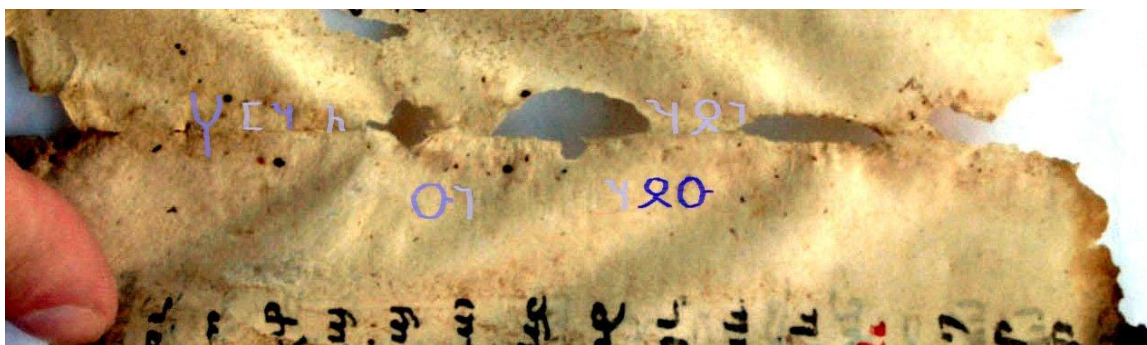


Figure 8: Same, with perceivable letters re-drawn

The Albanian Gospel Manuscript – New Findings

The discovery of the first manuscript remains of the Caucasian Albanians in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai has provided a solid basis for the decipherment of the Albanian script and language. In an international cooperation project devoted to this task, the two Georgian palimpsest manuscripts in question (Sin. georg. N 13 and N 55) have been thoroughly studied and analysed and a full account of their content has been published two years ago (Gippert, Schulze, Aleksidze, Mahe 2009).

The edition project has proven beyond doubt that the two Sinai manuscripts comprise, as palimpsests, 166 leaves pertaining to at least six different original manuscripts, two of them Armenian, one Georgian, one Aramaic, and two written in the Albanian script and language. Of the latter two originals, one is a lectionary manuscript containing lectures from three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) as well as Acts and Epistles (St. Paul's and Catholic), plus a few verses from the Psalms and a short lection from Isaiah. The 64 folios of the lectionary manuscript have been preserved well enough to provide the basis for the decipherment of the script and the language, and more than 95 % of its contents have been re-established with certainty. The second original manuscript written in the Albanian script has been much more difficult to account for, given that it was erased much more rigidly than the lectionary manuscript for being re-used as a palimpsest. Nevertheless it is clear now that it was part of a Gospel manuscript, with 55 folios extant representing fragments of the Gospel of John. The following passages have been identified with certainty: Jo. 1,45-3,9; 3,27-4,10; 4,35-4,47; 5,17-7,17; 8,14-10,6; 11,7-11,29; 11,52-13,11; 15,13-16,22; 18,32-20,29. The identification of four further folios that are likely to pertain to the Gospel manuscript (Sin. N 55, 1-5 and 40-35) remained doubtful.

On the basis of an enhanced codicological study of the remains of the Gospel manuscript, we have now arrived at a reliable solution for these folios. According to this, Sin. N 55, 1-5 must have contained John 11,30-57, and 40-35, John 18,16-31. The presentation will describe the procedure undertaken to achieve these findings and will demonstrate the outline of the Albanian Gospel manuscript in its entirety.