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An Early Witness of the Armenian Lectionary

Jost Gippert

This article provides a preliminary account of the Armenian undertext of the palimpsest codex no. 637 of the National Library of Greece, Athens. The first 30 folios of the palimpsest (fols. 21–50) are shown to contain, in distorted order, the text of the Armenian lectionary of the Jerusalem style, covering the months of January through March and matching by and large the text form as edited by A. Renoux on the basis of Jerusalem codex no. 121, with a few remarkable differences and peculiarities to be noticed off-hand.

1 Introduction

In the early Middle Ages, when paper had not yet reached the Near East and Europe, manuscripts were usually written on parchment, an expensive support material indeed as it had to be produced in a time-consuming procedure from animal hides. It is therefore no wonder that parchment codices which were no longer deemed up-to-date were often prepared for reuse as “palimpsests” by washing or scratching their original content off, thus leaving empty space for writing down new content. However, in many palimpsests that were produced in this way, the erased undertexts left traces, visible either to the naked eye or through sophisticated photographic means, and many of these undertexts are considered more important today than the overtexts covering them because they represent ancient sources that may otherwise have vanished. This is especially true for the Armenian tradition, given that the oldest dated codices preserved in this language date only from the late ninth century while palimpsests may conceal textual materials that are older than that by centuries. In this respect, it is an advantage that from the early times of Armenian literacy on, Armenian manuscripts were scattered about large areas of the Near East and Eastern Europe, where many of them were re-used as palimpsests by people who were not interested in their contents, for instance on Mt. Sinai where two Armenian majuscule codices, containing parts of the Old Testament (the so-called *Bank’ Solomoni*) and the Pauline Epistles with the Euthalian apparatus, were overwritten, along with the only

manuscript remains of the Caucasian Albanians, by a Georgian monk in about the eleventh century.¹

Another important Armenian palimpsest is manuscript no. 637 of the National Library of Greece in Athens, which in its upper layer contains liturgical material in Greek (α Παρακλητική) written in a hand attributed to the 14th century. According to a recent description of the codex,² it consists of a total of 122 folios, with the Greek overwriting (in minuscule) written in two columns of 48–55 lines each; the size is given as 347 × 249 mm. An Armenian undertext (“παλαιότερη γραφή”) is found on all of fols. 21–122, arranged in two columns “in parallel with the overtext” (“παράλληλη πρὸς τὴ νεότερη”) and relatively well discernible up to fol. 50. In accordance with a former cataloguer who consulted an “anonymous Armenian priest” (“ἄνωνυμο ἄρμένιο ἱερέα”), the Armenian content is determined as pertaining to the “Old Testament” (“Παλαιὰ Διαθήκη”).³ This, however, is only partially true. A preliminary investigation of fols. 21–50 of the codex undertaken on the basis of both colour photographs and multispectral images⁴ has clearly revealed that the Armenian underwriting contained materials from both parts of the Bible side by side, arranged as lections along the liturgical year, with the original order being heavily distorted as usual in the re-use of palimpsested codices. As a matter of fact, the original codex must have been a lectionary of the Jerusalem style, matching by and large the text form as edited by A. Renoux on the basis of the Jerusalem codex no. 121⁵ but with a few remarkable differences and peculiarities to be noticed off-hand. Even though only one third of the palimpsest has been investigated so far (fols. 21–50), it

1 See J. Gippert, W. Schulze, Z. Aleksidze, J.-P. Mahé, *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mt. Sinai*, vols. 1–2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009) for the Caucasian Albanian undertexts and J. Gippert, *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests of Mt. Sinai*, vol. 3: *The Armenian layer* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010) for the Armenian undertexts of the codices Sin. Georg. N13 and N55 of the so-called New Finds collection.

2 Z. Μελισσάκης, “Οἱ παλίμψηστοι κώδικες τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος,” *Σύμμεικτα* 16 (2003–2004): pp. 159–216, here pp. 190–191. My thanks are due to Zisis Melissakis who drew my attention to the Armenian palimpsest of Athens, provided excellent photographs of the pages dealt with below and supported an assistant of mine, Manuel Raaf, in undertaking a preliminary multispectral analysis of the codex.

3 Μελισσάκης, “Οἱ παλίμψηστοι κώδικες,” p. 190 with note 56 referring to Ἱ. Σακκελίων, Ἀ. Ἱ. Σακκελίων, *Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος* (Ἀθήνα: Ἐθνικὸ Τυπογραφεῖο καὶ Λιθογραφεῖο, 1892), p. 119.

4 For the technique of multispectral imaging applied in the investigation of palimpsests see J. Gippert, *The Old Georgian Palimpsest Codex Vindobonensis georgicus 2* (Turnhout: Brepols 2007), pp. xxxii–xxxiv.

5 A. Renoux, *Le codex arménien Jérusalem 121*, vols. 1–2 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1969–1971).

seems appropriate to summarise the preliminary results here in order to show that further efforts, especially a thorough application of multispectral imaging, would be worthwhile indeed.

2 The Structure of the Palimpsest Codex

As was stated above, the Armenian undertext appears in two columns, each covered horizontally by the Greek overwriting; among the folios investigated so far, none has been turned, the Armenian text always beginning on the top of the “Greek” page. The Armenian columns consist of only 25 lines each (vs. 48–55 of the Greek), due to the use of majuscules and larger spaces between the lines; nevertheless, one line at the top and one line at the bottom usually stand out, as well as a few characters in the right or left margins and between the columns, because the live area of the overtext is slightly smaller than that of the underwriting. Text passages pertaining to the lections proper are written in reasonably bold *erkat’agir* majuscules,⁶ with no slant, at an average of 14–15 characters per line and column; initials (of sections or paragraphs) are usually outdented and may extend in height up to four lines, while final characters in a line may be reduced in size and positioned a bit further up or down (cf. Fig. 7.1⁷ showing the first five lines of cols. a and b of fol. 41^r, representing Jo. 11.43–44 from the last lection of January 11 and Rom. 1.1–2 from the first lection of January 12—see the transcripts in Table 7.1). In contrast to this, lection titles and liturgical matter introducing them, including psalm verses and antiphons (“hallelujahs”), are written in smaller characters, at an average of 22 characters per line and column, thus reminding one strikingly of the Caucasian Albanian lectionary where the same distribution of letter sizes has been observed⁸ (cf. Fig. 7.2 displaying the first four lines of fol. 28^r, contrasting the text of Heb. 11.34–35 from the first lection of January 17 in col. b with the introductory matter concerning the commemoration of St. Anthony on the same day, with the *incipit* of Ps. 115.6, in col. a—see the tentative transcripts in Table 7.2). There is practically no word-spacing, especially in the lection passages; punctuation is restricted to the use of a mid-line dot, and hyphenation is executed with-

6 Cf. Σακκελίων, Σακκελίων, Κατάλογος, p. 119, who styled the undertext to be “Armenian written in capital letters” (“ἡ προτέρα γραφή ἐστὶν ἀρμενιστί, γράμμασι κεφαλαίοις γεγραμμένη”).

7 All images displayed below were processed manually in order to enhance the visibility of the undertext.—The first lines of the right column of fol. 41^r are also displayed, in lithographic form, among the figures added at the end of Σακκελίων, Σακκελίων, Κατάλογος.

8 See Gippert et al., *The Caucasian Albanian Palimpsests*, vol. 2, p. VI-1.

FIGURE 7.1 Ms. EBE 637, fol. 41^r (top)

MULTISPECTRAL IMAGES PRODUCED BY MANUEL RAAF AND JOST GIPPERT
WITH KIND PERMISSION OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF GREECE

TABLE 7.1 Transcription (Jo. 11.43–44 / Rom. 1.1–2)

ՉԱՅՆ ԲԱՐՁՐ ԱՂԱՂԱ-	ԱԻՂՈՍ ԾՍՅ ԶՆԻ ՅԻ ԿՈ-
ԿԵԱՅ ԵՒ ԱՍԷ՛ ԴԱԶԱ-	ՉԵՑԵԱԼ ԱՌԱՔԵԱԼ ՈՐ-
ՐԷ ԱՐԻ ԵԿ ԱՐՏԱԿՍ՝	ՈՇԵԱԼ ՅԱԻԵՏԱՐԱՆՆ
ԵՒ ԵԼ ՄԵՌԵԱԼՆ՝ ՈՏԻԻՔՆ	ԱՅ՝ ՈՐ ՅԱՌԱԶ ԽՈՍ-
ԿԱԴԵԼԱԻՔ՝ ԵՒ ՉԵՌԱԻ-	ՏԱՅԱԻ Ի ՉԵՌՆ ՄԱՐԳ-

FIGURE 7.2 Ms. EBE 637, fol. 28^r (top)

TABLE 7.2 Transcription (introduction to January 17 / Heb. 11.34–35)

Յիշատակ սրբոյն անտոնի ա-	ԱՌԻՆ ԶԲԱՆԱԿՍ ԱԻՏԱ-
նապատականի՝ Եւ այս կանոն	ՐԱՅ ԸՆԿԱԼԱՆ ԿԱՆ-
կատարի սաղմոս ճԺԵ կց-	ԱՅՔ ՅԱՐՈՒԹԵՆԷ ԶԸ-
ուրդ՝ Պատուական է առաջի	ՄԵՌԵԱԼՍ ԻԻՐԵԱՆՑ՝

out any mark.⁹ As in the oldest Gospel codices of Armenian, abbreviations are reserved for the *nomina sacra* ‘God’ and ‘Lord’, ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’, ‘Israel’ and ‘Jerusalem’ (but see 3.1 below for a remarkable exception). The individual days treated in the lectionary are usually demarcated by an ornamental line in red

⁹ For the sake of better readability, word-spacing and hyphens are introduced in the transcripts below.

FIGURE 7.3 Ms. EBE 637, fol. 28^{vb} (extract)

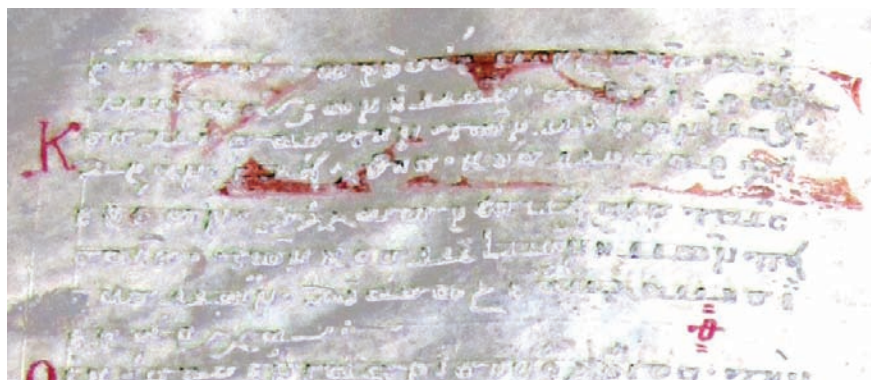
TABLE 7.3 Transcription January 17 (Mt. 10.42)—January 19

Jan. 17: Mt. 10.42	-ՅԷ ԶՎԱՐՁՍ ԻԻՐ .
	(Demarcation line)
Jan. 19	ՅՈՒՆՈՒԱՐԻ ԱՄՍՈՂ ՈՐ ԱՐ ԺԹ Է

colour (cf. Fig. 7.3 showing the crown-shaped elements of the line indicating the beginning of January 19 after Mt. 10.42 as the last lection of January 17 on fol. 28^v, col. b—see the transcripts in Table 7.3). It remains unclear whether red ink was also used for certain textual materials, for instance psalms or lection titles, all visible traces of letters appearing in brownish tones.

As was stated above, the palimpsest agrees by and large with the text of the Armenian lectionary of the Jerusalem type as edited by A. Renoux, both in the lections it contains and in the ancillary materials surrounding them. However, there is a major difference right at the beginning of the text. According to Renoux's edition, there is a lacuna in the Jerusalem codex between the first lection on January 6, Lk. 2.8–20, which breaks off after the *j* of the word *ամենա* (*amen*), thus omitting the seven last words of verse 20, and the following lection, which covers Gen. 1.28–3.20; here it is the first 17 words of the first verse (28) that are missing, the text beginning with the *l* of the word *Աղաւթ*.¹⁰ In the Athens codex, the text of Lk. 2.8–20 is contained *in toto* on fol. 21, the very first folio that is palimpsest, which also bears, after a demarcation line at the top of its recto, the introductory matter to the lectionary itself (matching, as far as one can tell from the few traces of the text that have remained visible, the

¹⁰ See Renoux, *Le Codex arménien*, vol. 1, p. 210/72 with note 7. In the Paris codex (P, Bibliothèque Nationale no. 44, ca. 10th century), the lacuna extends from the beginning of the lection from Lk. 2 up to Gen. 1.22 (see Renoux, *ibid.*, n. 6). The Erevan codex (E, Matenadaran 985, ca. 10th century) lacks the corresponding quire.

FIGURE 7.4 Ms. EBE 637, fol. 21^{ra} (top)

introduction of the Jerusalem codex; see Fig. 7.4).¹¹ The text of Lk. 2.20 ends in the tenth but last line of fol. 20^{vb}, with ten lines following that have remained indecipherable; however, it seems clear that they did not pertain to the lection, given that they were obviously written in the smaller letters used for liturgical matter. Gen. 1.28 is also contained in the Athens palimpsest, on fol. 24^r where it extends from the end of col. a (թռչնոց երկնից եւ) to the beginning of col. b (ամասնոց եւ ամենայն երկիր; ամենայն is missing before ամասնոց, probably by *saut du même au même* at the column break). However, verse 28 is by no means the beginning of the lection from Gen. 1 represented on fol. 24^r, which starts with verse 25 (Եւ արար ա՛ծ զգազանս). What is more, fol. 24 clearly continues fol. 23, which all in all contains Gen. 1.9 (Եւ եղեւ այնպէս)—24 (ըստ ազգի եւ եղեւ այնպէս), and fol. 23 continues fol. 46, in its turn containing the very beginning of Genesis (1.1, Ի սկզբանէ արար ա՛ծ,—1.9a, եւ երեւեցի ցամակն). On the other hand, the lection in question extends far beyond Gen. 1.28 in the palimpsest, the text on fol. 24 continuing up to 2.9 (զեղեցիկ ի տեսանել եւ), followed by 2.9b (քաղցի ի կերակուր)—3.1 on fol. 47 and 3.2–3.19 on fol. 26. We thus arrive at a contiguous lection comprising Gen. 1.1–3.19, possibly further extending beyond that on a folio that has not yet been identified. The Jerusalem codex does contain a corresponding lection, Gen. 1.1–3.24, but this is to be read on the Monday before Easter (no. 106 in Renoux's edition).

On fol. 46, the text of Gen. 1.1 is preceded by another lection, viz. that of Mt. 1.18–25, in its turn introduced by its title and following the indication of

¹¹ Of the text given in Renoux, *Le Codex arménien*, vol. 1, p. 210/72 as Յիշատակարան ժողովոցն որք կատարեն յէ՛մ, the initial letter (Յ) is clearly discernible below the demarcation line. The first text line in the palimpsest may well read Յիշատակարան ժողովոցն.

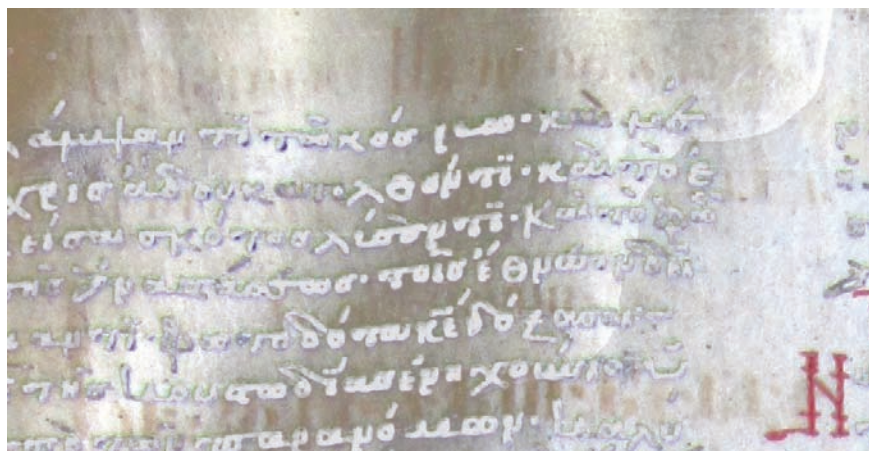
FIGURE 7.5 Ms. EBE 637, fol. 46^{ra} (top)

TABLE 7.4 Transcription (Mt. 1.18 with indication of antiphon and title)

Antiphon	Աղեղուիա Սաղմոս ՃԹ
Title	Աւետարան ըստ մատթէ- սի ԺԷ
Mt. 1.18	ԵՒ ՅԻ ԶԻ ԹԻ ԾՆՈՒՆԴՆ ԷՐ

Ps. 109 to be sung as the antiphon (cf. Fig. 7.5 showing the four lines at the top of fol. 46^{ra}, transcribed in Table 7.4). The lection of Mt. 1.18–25 introduced by Ps. 109 does occur in the Jerusalem codex, too, but as the last lection on January 7 (lection no. 17 in Renoux's edition), and it is by no means followed by Gen. 1.1sq. there, the next lection being Act. 6.8–8.2 on January 8 instead. Therefore, it seems conceivable that the sequence of Mt. 1.18–25 and Gen. 1.1sq. which we find in the Athens palimpsest followed the lection of Lk. 2.8–20 on January 6 as part of the liturgy concerning the Nativity of Jesus Christ, thus filling the gap between the end of Lk. 2.20 and Gen. 1.28 in the Jerusalem codex.

Indirect evidence for this assumption is provided by the Georgian version of the Jerusalem lectionary.¹² Here, the lections concerning the Nativity are gath-

¹² For the Georgian lectionary see the edition by M. Tarchnischvili, *Le grand lectionnaire de l'Église de Jérusalem (ve–viii^e siècle)*, vol. 1 (CSCO 188, Iber 10; Louvain: CorpusSCO, 1959), which is primarily based upon the Paris manuscript no. 3 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (of about the 10th–11th centuries). Older witnesses of the Georgian lectionary have been found in palimpsest form, for instance in the Gospel manuscript of Kurashi (Svane-

ered not on January 6–7 as in the Armenian tradition but on Dec. 24–25, in accordance with the date established in Greek Orthodoxy in the fourth–fifth centuries;¹³ nevertheless, the liturgical contents of the two versions of the lectionary are nearly the same. Indeed, in the Georgian version, Lk. 2.8–20 is the first lection, too, with Mt. 1.18–25 and Gen. 1.1–3.24 following.¹⁴ It is true that there are two further lections inserted here before Mt. 1.18–25, viz. Jer. 23.2–6 and Heb. 1.1–12;¹⁵ however, the sequence of Mt. 1.18–25 and Gen. 1.1–3.24 is as contiguous here as it is in the Athens palimpsest, including the antiphon of Ps. 109.1 preceding the lection from Matthew.

The assumption that the Athens palimpsest represents, with Mt. 1.18–25 and Gen. 1.1–3.24 following upon Lk. 2.8–20, the original sequence of lections to be read on January 6, with no further lection inserted after Lk. 2.20, is corroborated by the codicological structure of the codex. To prove this, it may be convenient first to establish the sequence of the folios that have been identified so far in accordance with the lections they contain. In Table 7.5, the lections of the individual dates are arranged in the sequence given in the Jerusalem lectionary, with the corresponding palimpsest folios indicated below in their proper sequence. The Table clearly shows to what extent the original sequence of folios was distorted when they were overwritten with the Greek text.

The picture becomes much less chaotic, then, if we try to reconstruct the structure of the original codex. To reach this aim, only three further presuppositions are necessary. One is the assumption that in reusing it for the Greek overtext, its original bifoliate were retained as such, yielding bifoliate of the present codex again. This assumption is unproblematic, given that the live areas of both the underwriting and the overwriting are near to identical. The second assumption is that the original codex consisted of quaternions, i.e., quires with four bifoliate each, different from the present structure which obviously comprises at least one ternion (fols. 21–26) alongside quaternions (fols. 27–34, fols. 35–42, fols. 43–50). A third assumption is that fol. 21 was not the first folio of the original codex, as suggested by its contents (see 2.2 above), but that one folio, possibly carrying title matter, an index or the like, must have

tia), see J. Gippert, “The Gospel Manuscript of Kurashi. A preliminary account,” *Le Muséon* 126 (2013): pp. 83–160, here pp. 107–114; 148–155.

13 Cf., e.g., S.K. Roll, *Toward the Origins of Christmas* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1995).

14 Sections no. 5, 9, and 13 in Tarnischvili’s edition; note that different from Renoux, Tarnischvili numbers psalms, antiphons, and other elements separately.

15 Sections no. 7 and 8 in Tarnischvili’s edition; in the Armenian lectionary, Heb. 1.1–12 is read on January 8.

TABLE 7.5 Sequence of fols. 21–50 along the lections of January through March

	Jan. 6		
Intro	1	[2]	[3]
21 ^r	Lk. 2,8–20 21 ^{rv}	[Mt. 1,18–25] 46 ^{rv}	Gen. 1,[1]–3,20 46 ^v ; 23 ^{rv} ; 24 ^{rv} ; 47 ^{rv} ; 26 ^{rv}
Jan. 6			
4	5	6	7
Is. 7,10–17	Ex. 14,24–15,21 22 ^{rv} ; 27 ^{rv}	Mi. 5,2–7 27 ^v	Prov. 1,2–19
Jan. 6			
8	9	10	11
Is. 9,4–6	Is. 11,1–9 29 ^r	Is. 35,3–8 29 ^{rv}	Is. 40,10–17 29 ^v ; 32 ^r
Jan. 6			
12	13	14	15
Is. 42,1–8 32 ^r	Dan. 3,1–35; –51; –90 32 ^{rv} ; 34 ^{rv} ; 25 ^{rv} ; 38 ^{rv} ; 35 ^r	Tit. 2,11–15 35 ^{rv}	Mt. 2,1–12 35 ^v
Jan. 7		Jan. 8	
16	17	18	19
Tit. 2,11–15 bis	Mt. 1,18–25 bis (46 ^{rv})	Act. 6,8–8,2 45 ^{rv} ; 48 ^{rv} ; 42 ^{rv}	Tit. 2,11–15 ter (42 ^v)
Jan. 8	Epiphany		Jan. 9
20	21	22	23
Jo. 12,24–26 42 ^v ; 39 ^r	Heb. 1,1–12 39 ^{rv}	Mt. 2,13–23 39 ^v	Gal. 4,1–7
Jan. 9	Jan. 10		Jan. 11
24	25	26	27
Lk. 1,26–38 37 ^r	Heb. 12,18–27 37 ^v ; 36 ^r	Lk. 1,39–56 36 ^{rv}	1.Thess. 4,12–17 36 ^v ; 43 ^r

TABLE 7.5 Sequence of fols. 21–50 along the lections of January through March (*cont.*)

Jan. 11	Jan. 12		Jan. 13 (Circumcision)
28 Jo. 11,1–46 43 ^{rv} ; 50 ^{rv} ; 41 ^r	29 Rom. 1,1–12 41 ^{rv}	30 Lk. 2,1–7 41 ^v ; 40 ^r	31 Kol. 2,8–15 40 ^{rv}
Jan. 13 (Circumcision)	Jan. 14		Jan. 17 (Anthony)
32 Lk. 2,21 40 ^v	33 Rom. 8,28–39 40 ^v	34 Mt. 10,16–22	35 Heb. 11,32–40 28 ^{rv}
Jan. 17 (Anthony)	Jan. 19 (Theodosius)		Feb. 14
36 Mt. 10, 37–42 28 ^v	37 1.Tim. 2,1–7 28 ^v	38 Lk. 7,1–10	39 Gal. 3,24–29 44 ^r
Feb. 14	March 18 (Cyrill of Jerusalem)		Preparation of Baptism
40 Lk. 2,22–40 44 ^{rv} ; 31 ^r	41 2.Tim. 4,1–8 31 ^{rv}	42 Jo. 10,11–16 31 ^v	43 Is. 1,16–20 30 ^r
Preparation of Baptism			
44 Ez. 18,20–23 30 ^{rv}	45 Rom. 6,3–14 30 ^v ; 49 ^r	46 Kol. 2,8–3,4 49 ^{rv}	47 Heb. 11,1–31 33 ^{rv}

preceded it.¹⁶ On this basis, the codex structure can be re-established as outlined in Table 7.6 where the original quires are indicated by Roman numbers and the original bifoliate, by Arabic numbers plus the letters a and b for the two folios they comprised.

¹⁶ See J. Gippert, “The Albanian Gospel Manuscript—New Findings,” in *Research Papers of the International scientific conference “The Place and Role of Caucasian Albania in the History of Azerbaijan and Caucasus”* (Baku: Natsional'naja Akademija Aviatsii, 2012): pp. 55–64, here p. 61 for a similar proposal concerning the Caucasian Albanian Gospel palimpsest from Mt. Sinai. (Available online: <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/personal/jg/pdf/jg2011j.pdf>.)

TABLE 7.6 Presumable distribution of palimpsest folios among original quires

I															
1a		2a		3a		4a		4b		3b		2b		1b	
Title		Intro; Lk. 2,8–20		Mt. 1,18–25; Gen. 1,1–9		1,9–24		1,25–2,9		2,9–3,1		3,2–19		Gen. 3,20; Is. 7,10–17; Ex. 14,24–29	
		21 ^r	21 ^v	46 ^r	46 ^v	23 ^r	23 ^v	24 ^r	24 ^v	47 ^r	47 ^v	26 ^r	26 ^v		
II															
5a		6a		7a		8a		8b		7b		6b		5b	
Ex. 14,29–15,14		Ex. 15,14– 21; Mi.5,2–7		Prov. 1,2– 19; Is. 9,4– 6; Is. 11,1–6		11,6–9; Is. 35,3–8; Is. 40,10–17		40,17; Is. 42,1–8; Dan. 3,1–5		3,5–20		3,20–3		3,36–54	
22 ^r	22 ^v	27 ^r	27 ^v			29 ^r	29 ^v	32 ^r	32 ^v			34 ^r	34 ^v	25 ^r	25 ^v
III															
9a		10a		11a		12a		12b		11b		10b		9b	
3,54–85		3,86–90; Tit. 2,11–15; Mt. 2,1–4		2,4–12; Tit. 2,11–15 ² ; Mt. 1,18– 25 ² ; Act. 6,8		6,9–7,10		7,10–28		7,28–45		7,45–8,2; Tit. 2,11– 15 ³ ; Jo. 12–24–26		12,26; Heb. 1,1–12; Mt. 2,13–15	
38 ^r	38 ^v	35 ^r	35 ^v			45 ^r	45 ^v	48 ^r	48 ^v			42 ^r	42 ^v	39 ^r	39 ^v
IV															
13a		14a		15a		16a		16b		15b		14b		13b	
Mt. 2,15– 23; Gal. 4,1–7; Lk. 1,26–28		1,28–38; Heb. 12,18–26		12,26–27; Lk. 1,39–56; 1.Thess. 4,12–15		1.Thess. 4,15–17; Jo. 11,1–20		11,20–43;		11,43–46; Rom. 1,1– 12; Lk. 2,1–4		Lk. 2,4–7; Kol. 2,8–15; Lk. 2,21; Rom. 8,28–29		8,29–39; Mt. 10,16–22	
		37 ^r	37 ^v	36 ^r	36 ^v	43 ^r	43 ^v	50 ^r	50 ^v	41 ^r	41 ^v	40 ^r	40 ^v		

TABLE 7.6 Presumable distribution of palimpsest folios among original quires (*cont.*)

v													
17a		18a		19a		20a		20b		19b		18b	
Heb. 11,32–40; Mt. 10,37–42; 1.Tim. 2,1		2,1–7; Lk. 7,1–10; Gal. 3,24–25		3,25–29; Lk. 2,22–39		Lk. 2,39–40; 2.Tim. 4,1–8; Jo. 10,11–16		Is. 1,16–20; Ez. 18,20–21; Rom. 6,3–10		6,10–14; Kol. 2,8–21		Kol. 2,21–3,4; Heb. 11,1–12;	
28 ^r	28 ^v			44 ^r	44 ^v	31 ^r	31 ^v	30 ^r	30 ^v	49 ^r	49 ^v		
												33 ^r 33 ^v	

It is clear from this reconstruction that from the first five quires of the original codex, one bifoliate each is still unidentified (I: 1ab; II: 7ab; III: 11ab; IV: 13ab; v: 18ab). It is likely that these can be found among the 72 palimpsest folios by applying a thorough multispectral analysis.

3 Peculiarities of Language and Orthography

All in all, the palimpsest text of the Athens codex agrees with that of the Jerusalem lectionary, and its appearance matches that of the oldest dated Gospel manuscripts of Armenian that have survived, such as the Moscow Gospels of 887 AD.¹⁷ This is true for the letter shapes, the use and arrangement of enlarged initials and reduced line-final characters, the use of ե vs. է in եթէ and in imperfect forms, the spelling աւ appearing instead of օ, the scope and the means of punctuation and abbreviation, and the layout in columns. However, there are a few peculiarities that can be remarked off-hand.

As was stated above, abbreviations are in general restricted to the six *nomina sacra*, in accordance with the ancient Gospel manuscripts¹⁸ and in contrast to later usage where many pronouns, conjunctions, suffixes and the like were abbreviated. On fol. 41^r, in the first line of the lection from Rom. 1 (cf. 2.1 with

17 Cf. the facsimile edition by Grigor Xalat'eanc' published at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages under the title Աւետարան ըստ թարգմանութեան նախնեաց մերոց գրեալ ՅԼԶ թ. հայոց եւ յամի տեառն 887 (Մոսկուա: Լազարեան ճեմարանի Արեւելեան Լեզուաց, 1899) / Évangile traduit en langue arménienne ancienne et écrit en l'an 887 (Moscou: Institut Lazareff des Langues Orientales, 1899).

18 Cf. B.O. Künzle, *Das altarmenische Evangelium / L'Évangile arménien ancien*, vol. 1 (Bern et al.: Peter Lang, 1984), pp. 102*–103* for the Moscow and Etchmiadzin Gospels.

FIGURE 7.6 Ms. EBE 637, fol. 30^r (top)

TABLE 7.7 Transcription (introduction to the preparation of baptism / Is. 1.18–19)

(Demarcation line)	ԵԹԵ ԻՅԵՆ ԻԲՐԵԻ Զ-
Ընթերցուածք վարդապետու-	ՅՈՐԴԱՆ ԿԱՐՄԻՐ Ի-
թեան ի գիր անկելոցն քառա-	ԲՐԵԻ ԶԱՍՐ ՍՈՒՐԲ Ա-
սնէրորդսն · եւ հանդերձե-	ՐԱՐԻՑ · ԵԻ ԵԹԵ ԱԽ-

Fig. 7.1 and Table 7.1 above), we find Զ՝Ի = Զրիստոսի and Յ՝Ի = Յիսուսի as typical examples of this. However, the same line also contains a word ԾՍՅ which in the given context must stand for ծառայ ‘servant’ as the epithet applied by St. Paul to himself (\approx Gk. δούλος). ԾՍՅ can by no means be a “regular” abbreviation, given that the word does not contain an U letter at all. In my view, the only way to explain the curious spelling is to assume that the U resulted from a misinterpretation of a similarly shaped abbreviation mark in a *Vorlage* manuscript (quasi Ծ՝Յ). If this is true, it still remains remarkable as the word seems not to have been abbreviated elsewhere, and the misunderstanding would be astonishing, to say the least.

Another curious mistake witnessing to a reduced erudition of the scribe is found on fol. 30^r which contains, as the first of the 19 lections pertaining to the Preparation of Baptism, Is. 1.16–20. Within the text of Is. 1.18, appearing at the top of col. b, it presents the accusative form of the name of the river Jordan, ԶՅՈՐԴԱՆ, instead of the word զորդան rendering, together with the adjective կարմիր, Gk. κόκκινος ‘scarlet’ (cf. Fig. 7.6 showing the first four lines of fol. 30^r, cols. a and b, transcribed in table 7.7—note the demarcation line introducing the entry in question).¹⁹

On fol. 41^r again, within Jo. 11.43, the palimpsest reads ձայն բարձր (‘loud voice’, lit. ‘high voice’), while the ancient Gospel manuscripts unanimously

¹⁹ The lections concerning the Preparation of Baptism are arranged after March 29 in the Jerusalem lectionary (section XVII in Renoux’s edition). Note that the introductory text following the demarcation line agrees with that of the Erevan ms. (E), and not with that of the Jerusalem codex (cf. Renoux, *Le Codex arménien*, vol. 1, p. 232/94).

show ձայն մեծ (lit. 'big voice') for Gk. φωνή μεγάλη.²⁰ This wording may have been influenced by Lk. 1.42, Mk. 15.8 and other New Testament passages that contain the same phrase. Two lines further down, the palimpsest shows ԱՐՏԱԿԱ for usual արտաքս 'out', a spelling that seems not to be attested elsewhere.

In some cases, the extent of lections differs from that of the Jerusalem codex. This is true, e.g., for the lection from Rom. 1, which according to Renoux's edition ends with 1.7 while it continues up to 1.12 in the palimpsest. In contrast to this, the lection of Jo. 12.24–30 prescribed for January 8 in the Jerusalem codex is reduced to 12.24–26 in the palimpsest.

The time is not ripe yet to deal with differences in the application of suffixed articles, the *nota accusativi*, alternative verbal forms, or the substitution of synonymous function words like որպէս and իբրեւ, which are found on and on in the palimpsest. However, the examples adduced so far clearly show that a further investigation of the Athens codex is likely to reveal important insights into the history of the Jerusalem lectionary in the Armenian tradition, as well as the history of Armenian literacy in general.

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20 The text form of the Jerusalem lectionary is not available as Renoux's edition gives only the *incipit* and *desinit* of the lection in question (Jo. 11.1 and 46; Renoux, *Le Codex arménien*, vol. 1, section VII, p. 220/82).

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