

The Gothic Gospels in Context¹

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Leaving the few Runic inscriptions from earlier centuries aside, the beginning of Germanic literacy is marked by the translation of the Bible undertaken by bishop Ulfila in the fourth century of our era, whose remnants preserved in the famous Codex Argenteus² and other manuscripts³ have been a first-rate object of linguistic, codicological, and historical investigations for long. One matter of debate has been the question of the *Vorlage* of Ulfila's Bible, i.e., the translation model and its language; a question to which Rosemarie Lühr has contributed a lot in articles concerning Gothic and its Germanic sister languages.⁴ Today, it has been generally accepted that the translation of the Gospels into Gothic was primarily based on a Greek model, not a Latin one;⁵ however, the concrete text type is still uncertain, given that the Gothic Gospels show both readings that match the younger Byzantine 'Mehrheitstext'⁶ as well as 'old crystallised readings, i.e. readings that did not become widespread'.⁷

In this context, it is astonishing that in the on-going discussion, evidence that might be adduced from a contemporary branch of Greek-based Gospel versions has been neglected. This is the 'Caucasian' branch constituted by the early Gospels in Armenian, Georgian and, since the detection of palimpsested fragments among the so-called 'New Finds' of St Catherine's Monastery on Mt Sinai, the language of the Caucasian 'Albanians', all being based on translation work of the fourth–fifth centuries, with remarkable accordances as well as differences.⁸ As a matter of fact, for the oldest Armenian and Georgian Gospel manuscripts we now have radiocarbon datings showing that they go back to the fifth–sixth centuries,⁹ thus

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² Now MS Uppsala, Universitätsbibliothek, D G 1, with an additional fragment in Speyer, Historisches Museum der Pfalz. See <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/germ/got/gotnt/gotnt.htm> for an online edition with page-by-page links to the colour images provided by Uppsala University Library (<https://www.alvin-portal.org/alvin/view.jsf?pid=alvin-record%3A60279&dswid=4093>) and Historisches Museum der Pfalz, and the processed images produced by David Landau et al. on the basis of the facsimile edition of 1927 (see https://www.modeemi.fi/~david/Codex_Argenteus/contents.html).

³ See Falluomini 2015: [XVII] and 34–40 for details. In a common project of the University of Perugia (Carla Falluomini) and the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, University Hamburg (Jost Gippert), the palimpsested fragments of Milan (Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, S 36 sup. = 'A', and S 45 sup. = 'B', I 61 sup. = 'C', G 82 sup. = 'D', and E 147 sup. = 'E') were the object of multispectral imaging in February 2025 (undertaken by Ivan Shevchuk and Kyle-Ann Huskin); the results will hopefully be publishable soon. For the palimpsested folios of the Codex Carolinus (MS Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August-Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf. 64 Weiss.) see Gippert 2014: 168–169 and [342–345].

⁴ See, e.g., Lühr 2005, 2012, 2025.

⁵ See Falluomini 2015: 16–17 as to the '*vexata quaestio*' of a secondary influence of Latin versions.

⁶ Falluomini 2005: 313.

⁷ Falluomini 2015: 146.

⁸ See Gippert 2023: 108–116 as to the interrelation of the Gospel versions in the three languages. As far as I can see, evidence from Armenian was only once taken into account, by James W. Marchand (1957: 233–234), and only concerning the arrangement of the Gospels in the 'Western' order Matthew–John–Luke–Mark; this is erroneous though, Armenian Gospel codices usually showing the 'canonical' order.

⁹ See Gippert Forthcoming a. for details as to the datings.

antedating the Gothic ‘Silver Bible’ by about one century.¹⁰ In the following study, which is meant as an antidoron to Rosemarie Lühr for a long-lasting fruitful cooperation, I will show how a comparison of the Gothic Gospel text with its Caucasian parallels can contribute to the question of text versions that were available in Ulfila’s times. Of course, the study cannot be exhaustive here as this would presuppose a verse-by-verse investigation; instead I will restrict myself to some noteworthy features of the text structure, focussing on new insights that have been gained in the course of the DeLiCaTe project.¹¹

1 The pericope adulterae

The fact that the text passage on Jesus and the woman taken in adultery, which covers John 7:53–8:11 in modern Bibles, is missing in the Gothic Gospels has been listed among the ‘important textual features’ of the Codex Argenteus, which shares this feature with several ancient Greek¹² and Latin manuscripts and the *Vetus Syra*.¹³ The same is true for the Caucasian tradition, but only for the time up to the 10th century.

1.1 For Armenian, this has been explicitly stated in a first publication especially devoted to the pericope;¹⁴ a later investigation nevertheless concluded:¹⁵ ‘It is quite possible that the *pericope adulterae* was introduced in the Armenian version during the fifth-century revision’. As a matter of fact, the content of the pericope appears among dated manuscripts first in the Ejmiatsin Gospels of 989 (MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 2374), where Jo. 7:52 is followed by a shorter sequence of verses corresponding to 8:3–6, 7, 9, and 11 (fols 194v–195r),¹⁶ accompanied by a marginal gloss in a frame which reads *irkn knojn šnac’elo* ‘the affairs of the adulterous woman’; the gloss is written in tiny majuscule letters that are probably not from the same hand as the main text, probably also in a different ink. In contrast to this, the pericope is not yet present in the Moscow (or Lazarian) Gospels (now MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 6200), dated 887 CE, which jumps directly from Jo. 7:52 to 8:12 on fol. 191r, as well as the Vehamor Gospel codex (MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 10680, fol. 223v), which has now been radiocarbon-dated between 895 and 1023; in the ‘Gospels of the Translators’, MS Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W.537 of 966, there is only the gloss *irk knojn šnaceloj* in the margin between Jo. 7:52 and 8:12

¹⁰ According to a radiocarbon analysis undertaken in 1998, the Codex Argenteus is ‘from the 6th century, not later than 550’ (Possnert and Munkhammar 1999–2000: 59).

¹¹ ‘The Development of Literacy in the Caucasian Territories’, ERC Advanced Grant no. 101019006, 2022–27; see <https://www.csmc.uni-hamburg.de/delicate.html>. The project work has kindly been supported by the University Library of Graz, the Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts (Matenadaran) in Yerevan, the Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts in Tbilisi, and the partners involved in the Sinai Palimpsests Project (see <https://sinaied.library.ucla.edu/>). My thanks are due to the members of the project and of the named institutions who supported the present investigation.

¹² Among them the papyri P75 (fol. 2B.6v, l. 10; see [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pap.Hanna.1\(Mater.Verbi\)](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Pap.Hanna.1(Mater.Verbi))) and P66 (p. 56, ll. 2–3; see <https://bodmerlab.unige.ch/fr/constellations/papyri/mirador/1072205287?page=056>).

¹³ Falluomini 2005: 313–314; 2015: 138–139. The *Vetus Syra* is here represented by both its witnesses (the Sinai palimpsest, MS Sinai, St Catherine’s Monastery, syr. 30, and the Curetonian Gospels, MS London, British Library, Add. 14451).

¹⁴ Herklotz 1927: 636: ‘Wann die Perikope Aufnahme gefunden, wird sich vorläufig kaum bestimmen lassen; die frühesten Zeugnisse reichen über das 10. Jahrhundert nicht hinauf.’

¹⁵ Knust and Wasserman 2020: 55.

¹⁶ This reduced text is styled type ‘b’ in Ter-Movsesyan 1902: 209 and Herklotz 1927: 623.

(fol. 212v),¹⁷ and in the Gospel codex of Tsughrut (Tsqruti in South-West Georgia) dated 974, the transition from Jo. 7:52 to 8:12 on p. 323 is without any further mark. Beyond this, we have now analysed two Armenian palimpsests that contain the Gospel of John, namely, the Armenian-Georgian palimpsest MS Graz, University Library, 2058/2, whose radiocarbon dating is between 482 and 605, and the Armenian-Armenian palimpsest MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 10362, now dated between 890 and 992; both these palimpsests do not contain the pericope.¹⁸

In the Gospel MS Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt, Armen. 1,¹⁹ the pericope is found added after the end of the Gospel of John on fol. 220v, introduced by *irk^k knoĵ šnac'eloy* and written in a smaller majuscule than the main text but probably by the same hand; the Halle codex shares this arrangement with several other manuscripts of the 12th–17th centuries.²⁰ Given this coincidence, the recent proposal to date the Halle codex to 924 CE instead of 1224 CE²¹ remains questionable; it is all the more doubtful if we consider that the manuscript is written on paper,²² a material for which MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 2679 of 981 CE has hitherto been regarded as the oldest specimen available in the Armenian realm. In addition, the number appearing in majuscules on the last page, after the end of the Gospel of John and before the pericope, taken to be an indication of the Armenian year 673 equalling 1224 CE before and now corrected to $\Omega\zeta\tau = 674$, is not likely to be an indication of the ‘Summe der parallelen Stellen in den eusebianischen Kanontafeln’ instead,²³ given that the section numbers are written in minuscules throughout in the manuscript. Lastly, the number *q đh q̃* read as 373 (*g-c h-g*, for $3 \times 100 + 70 + 3$), introduced by *i t̃v(i)n hayoc' ‘in the year of the Armenians’* and thus suggesting 924 CE, was obviously written by a much later hand, in a black carbon ink also used for the notes *zawrawar grč'i* and *edaw orpēs ew asē sēbi* on the same page, and it cannot be taken to be a contemporary witness of the dating of the main text.²⁴ As a matter of fact, the latter note is a substitute for the missing end of the scribe’s epilogue after the pericope, which in its entirety also appears in the Gospel MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 355, dated 1280; here it runs: *Yawrinakn haync' ēr grac, tē ays sk'anč'eli growfēan šnorhn i K'ristosē i hebrayec'i Awetaranēn ast edaw, orpēs asē Ewsebi*, i.e. ‘It was thus written in the *Vorlage* that the grace of this wonderful writing from Christ was laid down here from the Hebrew Gospel, as Eusebius says’.²⁵ The given reference is obviously to Eusebius’ *Historia ecclesiastica*, book III, ch. 39, according to which it was Papias (of Hierapolis) who ‘also laid down another story, of a woman in many sins defamed before the Lord, which is also written in the Hebrew Gospel’.²⁶ Leaving orthographical dif-

¹⁷ See <https://art.thewalters.org/object/W.537/>. The Gospels of Queen Mlkē (MS Venice, Mkhitarists’ Library, 86, formerly 1144, dated 851–862), Ashot Sparapet (MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 6202, 909), Sanasarian (ib., M 7735, 985) and Skantchelagorts (ib., 8906, 988) have not yet been inspected.

¹⁸ See Renhart 2025: 240 for the Graz codex. In M 10362, the text proceeds immediately from Jo. 7.52 to 8.12 on fol. 9v, in Graz 2058/2 on fol. 126r–v.

¹⁹ See Assfalg and Molitor 1962: 4–6 (no. 2) for a description; images are now available online at <https://opendata.uni-halle.de/handle/1981185920/96376>.

²⁰ Herklotz 1927: 634–635 with reference to Gregory 1900–1909: II, 571 and III, 1319–22; for Herklotz’s manuscript ‘vom Jahre 1230’, i.e. MS Venice, Mkhitarists’ Library, 129 (old no. 325), see Sargisean 1914: 567–574.

²¹ Drost-Abgarjan 2024: 453–455.

²² Assfalg and Molitor 1962: 4: ‘Dickes Baumwollpapier’.

²³ Drost-Abgarjan 2024: 453.

²⁴ Pace Drost-Abgarjan 2024: 454 and 456.

²⁵ Eganean et al. 2004: [112], no. 355.

²⁶ In the Armenian version of the History: *Dnē darjeal ew ayl inč' patmowfiwn, knoĵ i bazowm mels bambaseloy arāĵi Tear'n, or ew greal kay yEbrayec'woc' awetaranin* (Chagean 1877: 231).

ferences aside, the wording in the Halle Gospels including the addition is nearly the same as in the Yerevan codex, with the exception of *growfēan* ‘writing’ being replaced by *gt’owf’e(an)* ‘clemency’, by all means a better reading in the given context, and *ast* ‘here’ missing.²⁷ Having the parallel of Yerevan, Matenadaran, M 355 at hand, we may assume for the Halle codex that it lacks at least one folio at its end which contained the end of the note as well as, possibly, a final colophon of the scribe, who was a certain Sargis.²⁸ Together with the note pointing to a year 373, the note *zawrawar grč’i* may then indicate another scribe who provided the addition, probably copying it from another manuscript like that of Yerevan; the same scribe left his trace a second time in a note reading *zawrawar grč’i asys* on fol. 168v, just before Sargis’s colophon. There is no need to hypothesise the book to have been used by military leaders²⁹ as *zawrawar* ‘general’ may simply have been that scribe’s name. That this *Zōrawar* was not very skillful is proven by the fact that he erroneously transferred the *ew* of *ewsēbi* ‘of Eusebius’ before *asē* ‘says’ so that it came to mean ‘also’ and that he wrote *asys* instead of *ays* ‘this’.³⁰ Taking all this together, the notion of a year 373 from his hand deserves no trust.

For the history of the *pericope adulterae* in the Armenian tradition, we may summarise that there is no reason to assume that the text might have existed in this language before the ninth century – the Ejmiatsin Gospels of 989 still remain the earliest witness known, and the palimpsests that contain the Gospel of John, including the Graz palimpsest of the 5th–6th century, do not possess it.³¹ It is also important in this context that no pericope from John 7–8 is comprised in the ancient Armenian lectionaries, which represent the Jerusalem rite of the first millennium. The habit of adding the pericope at the end of Gospel codices like Halle Armen. 1 was probably not introduced before the 12th century. In this light, the assumption that ‘the attestation of the passage at the end of John in many manuscripts and the characteristic titlos and reference to the Eusebian section 86 in at least a few manuscripts, are unmistakable traces from Greek manuscript(s), which could have been available already in the fifth century’³² remains more than doubtful as far as the dating is concerned.

1.2 The Georgian tradition reveals a similar picture: the pericope is not attested in any known manuscript witness before the 11th century. It is missing in all Gospel codices of the first millennium, beginning with the Adishi Gospels of 897 (MS Mestia, Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography [hereafter: SMHE], 478 [k-82], siglum ‘C’, fol. 333v) and the Opiza Gospels of 913 (MS Athos, Iviron Monastery, Ivir. georg. 83, ‘A’), the Gospels of Jrutchi (936; MS Tbilisi, Korneli Kekelidze Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts [hereafter: KKNCM], H-1660, ‘D’) and Parkhali (973; ib., A-1453; ‘E’), one dated codex of St Catherine’s Monastery on Mt Sinai (MS Sin. georg. 15, 975, ‘R’) as well as three further Gospel codices datable to the 10th century (the Tbeti Gospels, MS St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Грыз. HC 8–9, formerly Собр. ц. Иоанна

²⁷ See below as to the transfer of *ew* from *ewsēbi* ‘of Eusebius’.

²⁸ Thus according to three short colophons at the end of the Gospels of Mark (fols 102r and 103r) and Luke (fol. 168v).

²⁹ Pace Drost-Abgarjan 2024: 454–455: ‘Kraft- bzw. Heerführer des Schreibers oder des Schreibzeuges bzw. der Feder’.

³⁰ Less probably instead of *ar’ y(isow)s* ‘bei/zu/an Jesus’ as proposed by Drost-Abgarjan 2024: 455 (the second letter is clearly *s*, not *r*); the assumption of ‘eines späteren Aziz’ (Assfalg and Monitor 1962: 6) is in any case untenable.

³¹ The phrasing ‘some Armenian manuscripts’ in Metzger 1994: 187 is misleading in this point.

³² Knust and Wasserman 2020: 53.

212, 'B'; the Urbnisi Gospels, MS KKNCM A-28, 'F'; and MS Sin. georg. 30+38, 'P').³³ It must be underlined here that there is in general a remarkable contrast between the Adishi Gospels ('C') and the other codices mentioned, which are usually taken together to represent a 'Protovulgate'; for both redactions we have older witnesses in form of palimpsests from the 5th–8th centuries (the so-called *khanmeti-haemeti* period), including the MSS Tbilisi, KKNCM, A-89+A-844 = 'X' (now radiocarbon-dated between 601 and 774); Vienna, Austrian National Library, georg. 2 = 'W'; Makhachkala, Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Daghestan Scientific Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Ф. 14. Оп. 1. Д. 1012 = 'M'; Athos, Ivir. georg. 86 = 'Y'; and Sinai, Sin. georg. NF 90 = 'S'.³⁴ However, nothing between Jo. 7:28 and 8:48 has been preserved or detected in any one of these witnesses so that they cannot contribute to our question.³⁵

The first Georgian witness of the *pericope adulterae* is the so-called Palestinian Gospel codex (MS Tbilisi, KKNCM, H-1741) of 1048, which marks an intermediate stage between the 'Protovulgate' and the 'Athonite Vulgate' developed on Mt Athos in the 11th century; in its turn, this redaction is represented, among many others, by the 12th–13th-century Gospels of Vani (MS Tbilisi, KKNCM, A-1335, 'H'), Gelati (ib., Q-908, 'K'), and Ejmiatsin (MS Yerevan, Matenadaran, ext. 161 georg. 31, 'I'). In these manuscripts, the pericope is regularly found between Jo. 7:52 and 8:12. A peculiar arrangement is met with in the undated Gospel codex of Kurashi in Svaneti, where Jo. 7:53–8:11 is inserted between 7:44 and 7:45 (fol. 152r) and Jo. 8:12 follows after 7:46–52 on the next page (fol. 152v).³⁶

In the Old Georgian lectionaries, representing the Jerusalem rite like their Armenian counterparts, the pericope is not attested. In only one of the available witnesses, the lectionary of Latali (MS Mestia, SMHE, 621 [k-67]), we find a lection covering Jo. 7:45–52 plus 8:12 for the Tuesday of the fifth week after Easter, with the *pericope adulterae* omitted in between (fols 220v–221r); the corresponding lection in the lectionary of Kala (MS Tbilisi, KKNCM, Q-1653, fol. 140v) is a different one (Jo. 7:37–44).³⁷ The fragmentary lectionaries from the *khanmeti-haemeti* period (MS Graz, University Library, 2058/1, now radiocarbon-dated to between 433 and 574, and the palimpsest MSS Tbilisi, KKNCM, H-999 [2] (between 411 and 538), H-1329 and Q-333 (between 569 and 774), and H-1445 (no dating yet) do not contain any passage from Jo. 7–8.

In sum, we may state that in the Georgian tradition the *pericope adulterae* has remained unknown until the end of the first millennium; it was only introduced in the course of the redactional work undertaken in the Iviron Monastery on Mt Athos in the 11th century, which was characterised by a thorough revision of the Gospels on the basis of contemporary Greek (Constantinopolitan) models.

³³ The readings of all these Gospel manuscripts were arranged synoptically in electronical form on the basis of the existing editions or, where available, the collation of images by Lela Samushia and Natia Dundua within the LOEWE research cluster 'Digital Humanities Hesse' in 2011–14; see <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etca/cauc/ageo/nt/ntkpl/ntkpl.htm>. The pericope is also missing between Jo. 7:52 and 8:12 in the undated MSS Kutaisi, State Historical Museum, 176, fol. 72r, and Vienna, Austrian National Library, georg. 1, fol. 189v.

³⁴ See Gippert Forthcoming b. as to the distinction of the two redactions among the palimpsests.

³⁵ See the poster at <https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.16955> for the hitherto confirmed text materials from the *khanmeti-haemeti* period.

³⁶ For the codex of Kurashi and its peculiarities see Gippert 2013.

³⁷ See <https://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/cauc/ageo/lekt/lektpar/lektp.htm> for a reconstruction of the Georgian lectionary including the lections, based on the Paris codex (MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, géorg. 3) with additional material from the lectionaries of Latali, Kala, and Sinai (MS Sin. georg. 37) and the editions by Tarnichvili (1959–60) and Danelia, Chkhenkeli and Shavishvili (1992–97).

1.3 The third Caucasian tradition that has to be addressed here, that of the people named ‘Albanians’ in Greek sources (with no relation whatsoever to the Albanians on the Balkans), is restricted to two palimpsest codices that were detected among the so-called ‘New Finds’ in St Catherine’s Monastery on Mt Sinai in the 1990s, overwritten by monastic texts in Georgian in about the 10th–11th centuries (MSS Sin. georg. NF 13 and 55). During the decipherment of the erased Albanian undertexts, it turned out that the original manuscript must have comprised a complete Gospel of John, along with lectionary materials from the other Gospels, the Pauline and Catholic Epistles, the Acts of Apostles, and the book of Isaiah.³⁸ On the basis of new image material, the structure of the Albanian Gospel of John has meanwhile been reconstructed in detail;³⁹ even though there is a lacuna extending from Jo. 7:37–8:14 in the third quire of the original codex, it can be taken for granted that the folio in question cannot have comprised the pericope for lack of space: the average of verses covered by one folio in the palimpsest is 19, which would just be enough for 7:37–52 + 8:12–14 on the missing folio. We thus arrive at the conclusion that the pericope was not contained in the Albanian palimpsests, just as in the Greek Codex Alexandrinus (London, British Library, Royal MS 1. D. V–VIII), for which Caspar René Gregory argued in a similar way.⁴⁰ Of course the Albanian palimpsests are not dated; however, they can clearly be assigned to the first centuries of Caucasian literacy, given the strong agreements they reveal with the Armenian and, partly, the Georgian tradition and, beyond that, the *Vetus Syra*.⁴¹

1.4 As we see, the Caucasian traditions of the first millennium match the Gothic one in ignoring the Pericope of the Woman in Adultery. Together, they clearly prove that the pericope was not yet part of the ‘canonical’ Greek text that was available as the basis for the translations in the 4th–5th centuries. At the same time, the simple fact of the pericope missing in them does not yet provide a clue for determining the actual model of either the Gothic or the Caucasian Bibles, given that it is not present either in too many Greek codices of the time. On the other hand, ‘Western’ witnesses like the Greek-Latin Codex Bezae (Cambridge, University Library, MS Nn.2.41)⁴² can be excluded because they do contain the pericope.⁴³

2 The long ending of the Gospel of Mark

Another important structural element in the history of the New Testament is the ending of the Gospel of Mark, which has received peculiar attention recently in form of a five-year research project conducted by Claire Clivaz;⁴⁴ it resulted, among other things, in a cross-linguistic survey of the existing witnesses of the 16th book of Mark,⁴⁵ including those in Armenian and Georgian. The general question is whether the Gospel originally extended up to Mk. 16:20 (‘long ending’) or ended before, at Mk. 16:8, with or without further ad-

³⁸ See the first edition of the palimpsests in Gippert *et al.* 2008.

³⁹ See Gippert 2023: 107 and the poster at <https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.14586>.

⁴⁰ Gregory 1900–1901: I, 30: ‘die Berechnung des Raumes zeigt, dass Jo 7,53 – 8,11 auf jenen fehlenden Bl[ättern] bei Jo nicht vorhanden war’.

⁴¹ See Gippert 2023: 108–110 as to the ‘AAA trias’ joining the Albanian Gospel text with the Armenian one and that of the Georgian Adishi Gospels and as to its relation to special Greek and Syriac witnesses.

⁴² See <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-NN-00002-00041/1>.

⁴³ Note that the Old English Gospels do have the pericope; see Skeat 1871–87: IV, 76–77.

⁴⁴ See Clivaz 2022: 303 n. 1 for the ‘MARK16’ project.

⁴⁵ Clivaz, Monier, Batovici 2022.

ditions ('short ending'). The Gothic Bible, which is not treated in the survey but in an extra article by Carla Falluomini, does contain Mk. 16:9–20; the author concludes that her own 'text-critical and linguistic analysis of the Longer Ending of Mark does not provide any proof that it is not part of the original Wulfilian translation' and that 'the Longer Ending of Mark [...], attested by the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus, was already present in Wulfila's Greek *Vorlage* in the middle of the fourth century', with the *Vorlage* being 'a Greek manuscript close to Byzantine witnesses, especially the three members of Family 1 [...] and Codex Alexandrinus'. If, as Falluomini states, the 'Gothic version represents, then, the oldest witness to the circulation of these verses at the eastern borders of the Roman Empire (Dacia and Moesia Inferior) and, at the same time, in the Constantinopolitan milieu',⁴⁶ its relation to the more eastern witnesses remains to be established, all the more so since the Syriac tradition diverges here, with the 'long ending' appearing in the Peshittā and the Curetonian Gospels (MS London, British Library, Add. 14451)⁴⁷ in contrast to the Sinai palimpsest (MS Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, syr. 30),⁴⁸ which ends the Gospel with Mk. 16:8,⁴⁹ as in other cases, the text form of the latter witness likely represents the older one.⁵⁰

2.1 The Caucasian Albanian palimpsests cannot contribute anything to this question, given that the Gospel of Mark is represented in them only by the very short pericope comprising Mk. 15:39–41, introduced as a 'Gospel (lection to be read in the commemoration) of Women' in accordance with its content (Sin. georg. NF 13, fols 15v+8r).⁵¹

2.2 For the Armenian tradition, it has for long been stated that from the mass of Gospel manuscripts available, there is only one from the first millennium that contains the long ending of Mark while it is omitted in five.⁵² The one that does contain Mk. 16:9–20 is the Ejmiatsin Gospel codex (fol. 110v), which thus opposes itself again to the Moscow Gospels (fol. 110v) and the Gospels of the Translators (fol. 114v) as well as the Gospels of Queen Mlkē (MS Venice, Mkhitarists' Library, 86, formerly 1144) of 851–922 and the undated MSS no. 103 (formerly 190) and 123 (formerly 38) of the same collection;⁵³ from the 10th–11th centuries, we may add the Gospel codices no. 171 and 608 of the Mkhitarists' Library in Vienna as well as MS London, British Library, Add. 21932, and from the 10th–12th centuries, MS Venice, Mkhitarists' Library, 139 (formerly 145), all lacking the longer ending.⁵⁴ From the manuscripts investigated in the DeLiCaTe project, the same can be said of the Gospel codex of Tsughrut, which ends the Gospel of Mark with 16:8 on p. 165, followed by a short doxology (*Paṛk' kēz t(ē)r a(stowa)c* 'Glory to you, Lord, God!'), the closing title of the Gospel (*Awetaran Eṣt Markosi*, 'Gospel according to Mark'), and, in a frame, a short prologue to the Gospel of Luke, which then begins on the next page. The manuscript of Halle (Armen. 1) ends with Mk. 16:8, too, on p. [203] and does not preserve any remnant of a longer ending anywhere else. In the two palimpsests that contain the Gospel of Mark (MSS Yerevan, Mate-

⁴⁶ All quotations from Falluomini 2020: 79.

⁴⁷ Only Mk. 16:17b–20 has been preserved here, see Cureton 1858: 37 and [154].

⁴⁸ See Smith-Lewis 1910: 120.

⁴⁹ See Taylor 2022 for more details.

⁵⁰ See Haelewyck 2019: 148 as to the priority of the Sinai palimpsest.

⁵¹ See Gippert Forthcoming c., 2.3.16 for further details.

⁵² Colwell 1937: 378; see Batovici 2022: 605–620 for a more detailed account including displaced shorter endings.

⁵³ Thus according to Colwell 1937: 374.

⁵⁴ See Colwell 1937: 374–375; all datings given there are taken from the respective catalogues.

nadaran, M 963 and M 10362),⁵⁵ nothing has been detected so far between Mk. 15:19/41 and Lk. 1:8/13 so that they cannot yet be categorised; however, the short ending is also confirmed by the ancient Armenian lectionaries, which prescribe a pericope covering Mk. 15:42 – 16:8 (or, shortened, only Mk. 16:2–8) to be read on Easter Sunday⁵⁶ but no longer lection anywhere. We are thus left with one witness from the first millennium for the longer version, and this is the same witness as that for the (shortened version of the) *pericope adulterae*, viz. the Ejmiatsin Gospels of 989; a codex that must have had a peculiar history indeed within the Armenian realm.

2.3 In contrast to the Armenian tradition of the first millennium, the Georgian one is a bit more differentiated and, at the same time, more spectacular. In his recent survey of the witnesses, Bernard Outtier listed three codices that end the Gospel of Mark with 16:8, namely, the Adishi Gospels of 897 ('C'), the Opiza Gospels of 913 ('A'), and the undated Gospels of Ksani (MS Tbilisi, KKNCM, A-509, 'L'), as well as the one published palimpsest that contains (fragments of) the Gospel of Mark, MS Tbilisi, KKNCM, A-89+A-844 ('X', now radiocarbon-dated between 601 and 774), which has Mk. 16:3–8a on fol. 424v of A-89.⁵⁷ In contrast, all manuscripts of the 'Protovulgate', beginning with the Gospels of Jrutchi (of 936, 'D') and Parkhali (973, 'E'), and after them, all manuscripts representing the Athonite Vulgate have the long ending. Taking into account also the lectionary tradition, which does not know the long ending either, Outtier concludes that 'the Short Ending (Mark 16:8) is the only one known up to the tenth century and is found up to the eleventh century; the Long Ending (Mark 16:20) appears in the tenth century and is used up to now'.⁵⁸ However, this conclusion must be revised now, given that on one of the many unpublished folios of the Tbilisi palimpsest A-844, remnants of the long ending have meanwhile been detected, comprising parts of Mk. 16.17 (on fol. 179v) and nearly the complete text of Mk. 16.20 (on fol. 179r). The latter verse can be restored as shown in Table I.⁵⁹

Table I: Mk. 16.20 in the palimpsest A-844, fol. 179r, reconstructed.

1	<i>x(olo) igini {ga}</i>	But they ca-
2	<i><m>ovides [da k]a</i>	me outside and pr-
3	<i><da>[g]ebdes {q(ove)lsa}</i>	eached in all
4	<i><ko>[w]eqan{asa o(wpl)isasa}</i>	the land of the Lord,
5	<i><da> [š]e[çe]{vnita da si}</i>	and with the help and that
6	<i><ıq>wsa {mis damıki}</i>	word's confirma-
7	<i><ce>bi{ta mat mier}</i>	tion by those
8	<i><r(ome)l>[n]i [igi] {šexow}</i>	which foll-
9	<i><dg>{es mat sasçaowlıni}</i>	owed them, the wonders.

⁵⁵ See the poster at <https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.16949> for a survey of known Armenian palimpsest and their contents.

⁵⁶ See Renoux 1971: 312–313 [174–175], no. XLV.

⁵⁷ See the edition by Kajaia 1984: 81–82.

⁵⁸ Outtier 2022: 647.

⁵⁹ In the transcription, which is based on a digital colour image kindly provided by the KKNCM, round brackets indicate the restoration of abbreviations; square brackets, badly readable characters; curly brackets, untraceable characters; and angle brackets, reconstructions of letters cut out in the margin.

If this reconstruction is correct, the *khanmeti* palimpsest A-844 here agrees perfectly well with the text of the ‘Protovulgate’,⁶⁰ representing its oldest witness and thus contrasting with both the redaction of the Adishi Gospels and the lectionary tradition, in its turn datable back to the 5th–6th centuries via the Graz manuscript 2058/2 (now dated between 482 and 605). All this cannot be a surprise, given that the text version of the palimpsest A-844(+A-89) has revealed a closer affinity to the Protovulgate elsewhere within the Gospel of Mark, too.⁶¹ To verify the reconstruction, it will be necessary to undertake a thorough multispectral imaging of the palimpsest; considering the large number of still unpublished folios of A-89 and A-844, this is a task of utmost urgency.⁶²

2.4 The reconstruction of the long ending of Mark in the Georgian palimpsest of the 7th–8th centuries marks not only a striking contrast between the two ancient Gospel versions that have been determined for that language but also with the Armenian tradition where, as we have seen, no long ending is found before the end of the 10th century. This again is no surprise as it is the Georgian version represented by the Adishi Gospels, not the ‘Protovulgate’, that reveals a closer affinity to the Armenian text; the Protovulgate is usually closer to the Greek where the Armenian differs from it. For the comparison with the Gothic text, this means at the same time that the long ending was available to translators in the East before the 7th century, so the Gothic text no longer stands alone here.

3 Luke 4:16–19

Another text passage that is significant for the interrelation of Gospel versions has received much less attention so far than the *pericope adulterae* or the long ending of Mark. This is Lk. 4:16–19 which in the Gothic Bible reads as illustrated in Table II.

Table II: Lk. 4:16–19 in the Gothic Bible

Lk. 4:16	<i>jah qam in Nazaraip, þarei was fodipþ, jah galaiþ inn bi biuhtja seinamma in daga sabbato in swnagogein jah usstop siggwan bokos.</i>	And he came to Nazareth, where he had been (<i>lit.</i> was) reared, and went inside in accordance with his custom on the Sabbath day into the synagogue and stood up to recite (from) the Scripture.
Lk. 4:17	<i>jah atgibanos wesun imma bokos Eisaeiins praufetus, jah uslukands þos bokos bigat stad, þarei was gamelid:</i>	And given to him was the book of the Prophet Isaiah, and opening the book he found the place where (it) was written:
Lk. 4:18	<i>ahma frauþins ana mis, in þizei gasalboda mik du wailamerjan unledaim, insandida mik du ganasjan þans gamalwidans hairtin, merjan frahunþanaim fralet jah blindaim siun, fraletan gamaidans in gaþrafstein,</i>	The spirit of the Lord is above me, because he anointed me to evangelise the poor, he sent me to heal those with broken hearts, to proclaim deliverance to the captives and sight to the blind, to dismiss the bruised into consolation,
Lk. 4:19	<i>merjan jer frauþins andanem.</i>	to proclaim the year acceptable for the Lord.

⁶⁰ See Outtier 2022: 656–657 for a rendering with variants and the synopsis by Samushia and Dundua (see n. 33 above).

⁶¹ According to Kadzaia 1989: 28–54, ‘X’ agrees with ‘C’ in the Gospel of Matthew up to Mt. 11.7 but with the Protovulgate in the second half of Matthew as well as Mark, Luke, and John. See Gippert Forthcoming d. for further examples.

⁶² The edition by Kajaia 1984 covers only 260 out of a total of 870 pages (435 folios) of A-89 and 65 out of 208 pages (104 folios) of A-844 (1), i.e. not even one third of the relevant material contained in these codices.

In the Caucasian traditions, there are two remarkable differences as to this wording: first, the phrase ‘and he stood up to recite’ is moved in all extant witnesses after the following sentence, ‘given to him was the book of the Prophet Isaiah’; and second, the healing of those with broken hearts is only mentioned in the Georgian texts.

3.1 The transfer of ‘and he stood up to read’ after the mention of the book of Isaiah in all three Caucasian traditions⁶³ is indeed decisive for the determination of the underlying model, given that it is extremely rare in Greek: among manuscripts in majuscules, it is only met with in the 9th-century Gospel codex of Koridethi (Θ, fol. 133v)⁶⁴, today stored in the KKNCM, Tbilisi, whose affinity to the Caucasus is clearly indicated by numerous notes it contains in Georgian language and script.⁶⁵ Beyond, the transfer is also attested in the minuscule manuscripts of ‘family 1’,⁶⁶ while all other ancient codices⁶⁷ and the ‘Mehrheitstext’ as well as the Latin tradition and those depending on it⁶⁸ have the ‘canonical’ arrangement also met with in the Gothic Bible. For the Caucasian tradition, it is important that the transfer is also attested in the *Vetus Syra* (the Sinai Palimpsest, MS Sin. syr. 30, fol. 72v) while the Peshittā has the ‘canonical’ order.⁶⁹

3.2 The mention of the healing of the broken-hearted in Lk. 4:18 sharply differentiates the Georgian tradition, which does contain the phrase⁷⁰ like several Greek witnesses, the Peshittā and the Gothic Bible, from the Armenian⁷¹ and Albanian Gospels⁷² which omit it, again in accordance with the Syriac palimpsest of Mt Sinai.⁷³ Among the Greek manuscripts that contain the phrase, we here find the Gospels of Koridethi and the ‘family 1’ manuscripts along with the ‘Mehrheitstext’ as well as the codices Alexandrinus (fol. 47rb), Ψ (MS Athos, Megistē Lavra, B’ 52, fol. 24v),⁷⁴ 0102 (MS Paris, BnF, suppl. grec 1155, fol. [11]),⁷⁵ and a few

⁶³ See Gippert 2023: 137–139 for a preliminary account with a synoptical arrangement starting from the Albanian text. In Armenian, the transfer can be noted for the Ejmiatsin Gospels (fol. 121v), the Tsughrut Gospels (pp. 189–190), the Halle manuscript (p. [224]) and the palimpsest M 10362 (fol. 156r); among lectionaries, it is attested for that of Drazark (MS Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Arch.Cap.S.Pietro B 77, fol. 203r), while the Paris lectionary (MS Paris, BnF, armén. 44) has a lacuna between fols 190v and 191r including the complete pericope of Lk. 4:14–22 as read on 6 July, the day devoted to the Deposition of Isaiah. Within the Georgian tradition, the transfer is first attested in the *khanmeti* palimpsest Vienna, georg. 2 (‘W’, fol. 40vb); it has even been maintained in the Athonite Vulgate. In the Adishi Gospels (‘C’, fol. 295ra), the word for ‘to read’ (*kitxvad*) was further transferred after ‘and he opened the book’ (*da ganqo cigni igi*).

⁶⁴ See https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_038_digital for images.

⁶⁵ See Marr 1911: 211–240.

⁶⁶ The transfer is not indicated at all in Nestle-Aland 1995: 164 but see Swanson 1995: 67.

⁶⁷ The papyrus P75 has a lacuna between Lk. 3:18 and 4:37; P66 only contains the Gospel of John.

⁶⁸ For Old English, see Skeat 1871–87: III, 46–47.

⁶⁹ The Curetonian Gospels have a lacuna between Lk. 3:16 and 7:33; see Cureton 1858: V, 52 and [180].

⁷⁰ Again beginning with the Vienna palimpsest ‘W’, fol. 46va. In the Paris Lectionary (géorg. 3, fol. 255r: pericope no. 1035 for 16 June comprising Lk. 4:14–22), the phrase appears, with a slightly different wording, transferred after that concerning the blind, thus supplanting that on the dismissal of the bruised; in the lectionary of Kala (fol. 176r), only 4:14–15a has been preserved of the pericope. The lectionary palimpsest Tbilisi, KKNCM, Q-333 (fol. 3r) refers for the lection from 1 September to 16 June which, however, has not been preserved.

⁷¹ The Gospels of Ejmiatsin (fol. 121v), Tsughrut (p. 190), and Halle (p. [225]), the palimpsest M 10362 (fol. 95r), and the Drazark Lectionary (fol. 203r).

⁷² Sin. georg. NF 13, fol. 37rb.

⁷³ Fol. 72v; see Smith Lewis 1910: 131.

⁷⁴ See <https://www.loc.gov/resource/amedmonastery.00271051177-ma/?sp=28>.

⁷⁵ See https://manuscripts.csntm.org/manuscript/Group/GA_0102?OSIS=Luke.4.18; Lk. 4:16–17 are lost in this manuscript with the lower half of the folio.

others; the close relation of the Georgian tradition with the Koridethi Gospels seems thus to be confirmed. However, to account for the inner-Caucasian divergence, it is important to note that the complete verse from the Gospel of Luke is a quotation of Is. 61.1, which does contain the phrase in question (ιάσασθαι τοὺς συντετριμμένους τῆ καρδία);⁷⁶ it is therefore the omission of the verse that represents the *lectio difficilior* and, probably, the older wording, preserved in Armenian and Albanian but not in Georgian which seems to have a revised text here.⁷⁷

4 Conclusion

The examples discussed above have shown that the ancient Caucasian translations of the Gospels have preserved text versions that deviate from that underlying the Gothic Bible to a considerable extent, partly in agreement with the Sinai palimpsest as the most ancient Syriac witness and thus representing an earlier stage. From within the Greek tradition, the most striking matches are with the Gospel codex of Koridethi (Θ) and the manuscripts of ‘family 1’, at least in connection with Lk. 4.16. In the case of the *pericope adulterae*, Θ shares the omission with the Caucasian tradition of the first millennium and most ancient Greek witnesses as well as the Gothic Bible while ‘family 1’ adds it at the end of the Gospel like many later (12th–17th-century) Armenian witnesses; for these, the text type of ‘family 1’ may indeed be taken to have been a model⁷⁸ but not for the older stratum. For the omission of the long ending of Mark in Armenian and one branch of the Georgian tradition as well as the Sinai palimpsest, neither Θ nor ‘family 1’ can be made responsible as they do extend up to Mk. 16:20; they thus may rather indicate a possible source for the extension appearing in the Georgian ‘Protovulgate’ with its newly detected *khanmeti* witness. In any case, we cannot expect to find one possible source that would match all and everything throughout the Gospels, and many other text passages must be investigated before conclusions can be drawn.⁷⁹

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⁷⁶ In the Caucasian lectionaries of the Jerusalem rite, Is. 61.1 ff. is read on Maundy Thursday (Armenian: Is. 61.1–6; Georgian: Is. 61.1–6, extended to 61.1–11 in MS Sin. georg. 37), in the Georgian tradition also on 1 September. On the days devoted to the Deposition of Isaiah (7 July / 16 June), both the Armenian and the Georgian traditions read Is. 6.1–10.

⁷⁷ This here includes the Adishi Bible (‘C’) whose text generally agrees with that of the Protovulgate in Lk. 3:9 – 15:7 and 17:25 – 23:2; see Kadzaia 1989, 49 and Gippert Forthcoming b, 2.2.

⁷⁸ See Knust and Wasserman 2020: 55.

⁷⁹ Other important passages are, e.g., Lk. 22:43–44 (missing in most Caucasian witnesses as in the Greek papyrus P75, the codices Alexandrinus and Vaticanus and the Syriac Sinai palimpsest; lacuna in the Gothic Bible) and Jo. 5:4 (missing in most Caucasian witnesses as in the Greek papyri P66 and P75, the codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus and the Curetonian Gospels; again lacuna in the Gothic Bible).

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