

**Didier Lafleur, with the assistance of Luc Brogly, *Greek New Testament Manuscripts from Albania*, New Testament Tools Studies and Documents 57, Leiden: Brill, 2018. ISBN 978-90-04-36783-8. Hardcover, pp. xvii + 626 + 9 color illustrations and 24 plates [23 in color]. €176.00/\$212.00.**

- [1] At first glance the title of the present book under review might appear as enigmatic, arcane, and even puzzling to some readers, because Albania, and that means, first and foremost, the Albanian National Archive in Tirana (AQSh [Arkivi Qëndror i Shtetit]; <https://arkiva.gov.al>) would not be the first thought of students and scholars familiar with and working at issues of textual criticism when it comes to name the current location of relevant (Greek) manuscripts with New Testament texts. However, textual critics will certainly have bright eyes when they hear about the purple codices Beratinus I (Φ 043) and Beratinus II (GA 1143), when they specialize in the manuscript group family 13 or when they deal intensively with the testimony situation of *pericope adulterae*. Didier Lafleur and Luc Brogly present crucial and indispensable information on a collection of manuscripts that “for more than 140 years ... was kept away from Western scholarship” (p. 1). The authors describe the manuscripts physically and offer very useful analysis of textual features and variant readings. By doing so the rich heritage kept in Tirana is made accessible to interested and specialized scholars and the impressive color illustrations and plates might even attract readers who are just fascinated by ancient and medieval book culture.
- [2] The authors inspected the manuscripts *in situ* during their “twenty-four Albanian stays during the last seven years” (xi) and offer interesting and insightful details on the years full of deprivation and isolation from occupation (by Italy and Germany) to communist rule until 1991. Around 1978 Theofan Popa made up an index of the Greek manuscripts at the National Archives and noted down codicological features and description of each manuscript, which were only published in 2003 as a first catalogue of what is to be found in the Archives (1–4). Lafleur and Brogly define their “aim and methodology” as follows (4): they do not intend to offer “a descriptive catalogue of Greek manuscripts. Its [the book’s; reviewer’s note] primary purpose is to offer textual critics of the Greek New Testament a fresh overview of a collection of Byzantine and post-Byzantine manuscripts written in Greek.” Of course, with their catalogue-like depiction of manuscripts and their features they want to underline a paradox: textual critics are aware of the high importance of the Albanian collection of manuscripts, but the titles listed as secondary literature manifests “how few scholars had examined these treasures of world significance.”
- [3] The book is primarily divided into two major parts: a very readable survey of the historical background of attention to and efforts to describe, systematize, and catalogue the library stock of manuscripts in Tirana, on the one hand, and a clearly structured depiction of twenty-one manuscripts. A two-page postscript offers more or less concluding remarks, and four appendices facilitate the identification of individual manuscripts and their particular features in different publications and catalogues. An ideal type of a comprehensive and well thought out bibliography (with primary sources, secondary literature and reference tools) that provides titles (560) “beyond the Greek New Testament manuscripts described in this volume.” An *index manuscriptorum* (with places of location, catalogue or inventory numbers and a section with Gregory-Aland numbers) and *index nominum* are fine helping hands for navigating through the many details of this massive multifaceted book.
- [4] Textual critics obsessed with variants and readings will perhaps turn over the first main section and immediately open the second section with the individual manuscripts

in order to search there for the details that are of central importance to them. In doing so, however, they are missing out on pieces of information that are both specific to the collection and of great importance for the understanding and background of the Greek New Testament manuscripts that Lafleur/Brogly deal with in their book. The two scholars draw a line from the Metropolitan of Berat, Ἄνθιμος Ἀλεξούδης, who made a first attempt of describing the Albanian manuscripts in 1868, to Louis Duchesne and Pierre Batiffol with their observations and collations in 1885 and 1887, to Ἀλεξούδης again and his works from 1892, 1898, and 1900–1901, to the story of the Σκουριπέκης' Chronicle and Batiffol's detailed accounts on the development of publications on the manuscripts in Albania, to Hermann von Soden's numbering in 1902 and Caspar René Gregory's listings in 1908, to Νίκος Α. Βέης and his catalogue from 1952, to the two then Byzantinist students Johannes Koder and Erich Trapp who in 1968 described the manuscripts numbered 1 to 25 in their catalogue (and their notes checked by Lafleur/Brogly in 2016/2017), and finally down to Theofan Popa in 2003 and (67–70) the rediscovery of *Beratinus* 1 and *Beratinus* 2 and their Chinese Restorers (1968–1972). These catalogues and their short names are necessary to know for comparing the different catalogues and listings of manuscripts presented in the synopsis on pages 523–47 (appendix A; having Mullen [2003], Dan Wallace and his CSNTM [2017], and the cataloguing of the Albanian National Archive in Tirana, too).

- [5] The most space of the book is occupied by the twenty-one Greek New Testament manuscripts kept in the Albanian National Archives in Tirana, which are correspondingly abbreviated as ANA plus number. Each entry is organized according to a fixed pattern (here, as an example case, Codex *Beratinus* 1 on p. 73): catalogue and inventory number together with a reference to a plate in the back of the book (“Albanian National Archives 1 [pl. 1], Arkivi Qëndror I Shtetit, Fonds Kodikët e Shqipërisë 488, Dosjes 1”); manuscript number (“Gregory-Aland Φ.043”); contents (“Matthew [mutilated at the beginning, with lacuna], Mark [mutilated at the end], John [fragments of printed matter]”); provenance (“Berat”); text form (“Byzantine with Singular Readings”). Then follow (1) a physical description (for *Beratinus* 1 the authors distinguish between the original and facsimiles), (2) contents (extent of texts; chapters and verses of New Testament texts), (3) textual features (important peculiarities of the texts preserved), (4) variant readings, and (5) bibliography (comprehensive). It is just natural that the treatment of Codex *Beratinus* 1 (ANA 1) covers quite some pages (73–149): the purple parchment manuscript is dated to the sixth century, consists of single folios only (original bifolia cut into two parts after the discovery in 1968; cf. 73–74 n. 3), has two columns per folio (320x270mm according to the facsimiles and 314x268mm according to earlier descriptions, but see now [74] “size of folio: 240x230”; 197 folios extant) with sixteen–seventeen lines per column and seven–twelve letters per line. The biblical majuscules are written in silver ink (erased) and golden letters (*nomina sacra* and list of chapter titles), while the cursive letters on ff. 175r–176v are performed in brown ink. Canon Tables are missing. There is only one scribe who wrote the manuscript, but musical notation was added by someone else. Descriptions are very detailed and concise, codicological information is provided in an illustrative manner (with illustrations; cf. 82–85, 122–37). The codex is a witness to the long addition after Matt 20:28 that is also there in Codex *Bezae* (D 05), offers an interpolation in Matt 21:9 that is only attested once more (by sy<sup>c</sup>), lacks Ἰερουσόμ in Matt 27:9 (cf. 33 a b sy<sup>a,p</sup> bo<sup>ms</sup>), and has an additional sentence after Matt 27:35, just to mention a few of its variant readings (94–120, with some interesting readings in Mark, too). Furthermore, Lafleur/Brogly describe flyleaves from other manuscripts—here ANA 12—and give a historical account of the rediscovery and

restoration of the Codices *Beratinus* 1 and 2 that are both “considered by UNESCO as international documentary heritage” (1).

- [6] Consequently, *Beratinus* 2 (GA 1143) follows thereafter: the (faded) purple parchment codex is dated to the ninth century, consists of single folios, has writing in one column per folio (230/240x170/185mm), seventeen lines per column and its minuscules are written in gold letters (except κεφάλαι and Ammonian sections, which are given in majuscules and in silver ink). Canon Tables are missing. Obviously, the original bifolia were cut after its discovery in 1968 (cf. 151 n. 2), which is true for ANA 1, too. The minuscule codex contains the four gospels on 417 folios with occasional miniature images and ornaments on its metal protection cover. Probably of highest interest among the textual features and variant readings is that it has the *pericope adulterae* (hereafter PA) in John (cf. 7:52–8:11) on folios 360v–361v “without emendation, obeli or asterisk” (163). In addition (162), the “Pericope of the Angel and the Sweat-like drops of Blood (hereafter PASB) is in Luke, without emendation, alteration, obeli or asterisk, neither in the main text nor in the margin” (162; cf. Luke 22:43–44 on folio 309v; cf. Matt 26:39 on f.107v where the pericope is not placed after the verse given).
- [7] Interestingly, PA is missing after John 7:52 in ANA 4 (GA 1141) from the tenth or eleventh century with the four gospels (just as in ANA 12 [GA 1707 from the thirteenth century, a commentary on John, additional text inside its front cover], ANA 15 [GA 2244 from the tenth century with the four gospels, *catenae* and liturgical notes], ANA 85 [GA 2900 from the thirteenth century with the four gospels], ANA 92 [GA 2901 date? (cf. 458 n. 1) with the four gospels], while PASB is in Luke 22:43–44 (just as in ANA 2, ANA 5 [GA 2252 from the tenth/eleventh century with the four gospels together with synaxarion and menologion], ANA 10 [GA 2253 from the fourteenth century], ANA 15, ANA 19 (see below), ANA 26 [GA 2246 from the eleventh/twelfth century with the four gospels], ANA 29 [GA 2245 from the thirteenth century with the four gospels], ANA 35 [GA 2247 from July 1312 with the four gospels, synaxarion, and menologion], ANA 38 [GA 1705 from 1360/1390 with the four gospels], ANA 79 [GA 2514 from the thirteenth/fourteenth century with the four gospels], ANA 85, ANA 92 and ANA 93 [GA 2902 with the four gospels, synaxarion, and menologion]). Strikingly, ANA 4 (folio 238r) has PA after the four gospels written in another hand, while ANA 85 (folio 211r–v) has it after John 21:25 “without special rubrication or notes, except a line break after the end of John” (443).
- PA is in ANA 5 (John 7:52–8:11, and not located elsewhere), ANA 10 (“with each line obelized in the left margin” [260]), ANA 12 (GA 1707 from the thirteenth century, a commentary on John, additional text inside its front cover), ANA 19, ANA 26, ANA 29, ANA 35, ANA 38, ANA 79 and ANA 93.
- [8] ANA 19 (GA 1709 from the twelve century consisting of 195 folios and written by three different hands) is of special interest as it belongs to family 13 (cf. Didier Lafleur, *La Famille 13 dan l'évangile de Marc*, NTTSD 41 [Leiden: Brill, 2013]), but it also contains other rather unique features (e.g., a note in seven lines and red ink in the right-hand margin on folio 25r [Matt 26:39] as a liturgical reference to Luke 22:43–44). Further see ANA 93 as member of family K<sup>a</sup>/II (478–99).
- [9] Each entry would deserve a complete and detailed depiction and their palaeographical/papyrological and textual features are fascinating details. The variant readings are of interest, too, but all these pieces of information lead astray and are too many in order to be presented here. And, of course, the manuscripts dealt with in some more detail above have more to offer than purely serving as an aside to the issue whether PA and PASB are there or not. So, ANA 15, for instance, has John 7:52 with an obelus referring to the bot-

tom of the folio where there are three lines of writing “corresponding to Jo 7:53–8:2,” while John 8:3–11 (folio 308r–v) “is written on an addedfolio (paper with unidentified watermark, in brown ink), by another different hand” (294). In addition, readers find ANA 17 (GA 1764) with Acts and *catenae* (311–23), ANA 76 with fragments of Matt and Luke and complete Mark, ANA 98 [GA 2903] with 2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude, Romans–2Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1–2 Timothy, Titus (500–513), and ANA frg. 7 (GA 2908, two fragments with Matt 8:1, 18:1, 19:4, John 18:30) together with ANA frg. 12 (GA 2913, two fragments with Mark 11:27–12:5 and 12:37–13:3).

[10] The postscript (520–21) deserves close inspection and attention: (1) Lafleur/Brogly offer further systematize some of their observations so that they can distinguish between “luxury manuscripts” (ANA 1, 2, 4, 10, and 93) and “obviously *provincial* manuscripts” (e.g., ANA 26, 76, 85 or 98), the latter witnesses to a lively “liturgical tradition in the region.” (2) They cannot confirm any trace of (520–21) “the so-called ‘Caesarean text’ amongst the Greek New Testament manuscripts I Albania.” To them, the manuscripts manifest a Byzantine text form, while *Beratinus* 1, *Beratinus* 2, and, possibly, ANA 35 and ANA 85 have affinities with the Alexandrian text form.

[11] The color plates offer at least one or a double page of every single manuscript dealt with in the book so that there is a hint of imagination of how the individual manuscript looks like and its palaeographical features are to be understood. There is also an image of the unopened Codex *Beratinus* 2 after its rediscovery in 1968 with its metal covers and its binding (plate 3) and a black-and-white photograph of the Sino-Albanian restoration team in Beijing in 1971 (plate 4). For more and scalable images of these and other manuscripts kept in Albania (e.g., for lectionaries) interested readers and scholars may want to visit the online pages of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (CSNTM; <http://www.csntm.org/Manuscript> → manuscripts search → Albania) and read its Executive Director Daniel B. Wallace’s account of the center’s imaging project in the National Archive in Tirana in 2007 (see <https://bible.org/article/greek-new-testament-manuscripts-discovered-albania>).

[12] Once more, Lafleur and Brogly are to be thanked for their strenuous, persistent, and meticulous work so that everybody interested in the stunning world of (Christian) book culture has a chance of getting to know these unique exemplars of cultural heritage kept in Tirana, Albania, today more closely. Apart from the accurate descriptions and catalogues, the authors present the story of the manuscripts in a very attractive manner, something that adds up to the overall impression of holding a first-class academic publication in one’s hands.

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