W. Andrew Smith. *A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus: Codicology, Palaeography, and Scribal Habits*. NTTDS 48. Leiden: Brill, 2014. Pp. x + 384. ISBN 978-90-04-26783-1. Hardcover, €126.00/$163.00.

[1]   Sometimes a publication provokes reactions like "Yes, of course!" or "Why hasn't anybody written about this?" This is true for the book under review. W. Andrew Smith has managed to write a research work that (1) triggers reactions like those delineated above, (2) fills a gap in New Testament textual criticism, and (3) represents a high-quality and probably *the* standard work for one of the most significant manuscripts of the (Hebrew Bible and) New Testament.

[2]   When it comes to naming the best known and most interesting codices of the New Testament, people familiar with biblical writings and the history of the text of the New Testament will name Codices Sinaiticus (01 א; yes, of course, the adventurous stories about Constantin von Tischendorf), Vaticanus (03 B), Ephraemi Rescriptus (04 C; again Tischendorf, here deciphering the lower text of the palimpsest), Bezae Cantabrigiensis (05 D^ea), and Alexandrinus (02 A). After all the work focusing on Sinaiticus, its particularities and peculiarities (e.g., its corrections and correctors, its online publication), and the acknowledged and obvious importance conceded to Vaticanus (salient for textual criticism), a major study of Alexandrinus has been missing so far, even though the codex has always been regarded as among the most central ones for reconstruction the New Testament. This may come as a surprise.

[3]   The name of the codex derives from Alexandria in Egypt where it is said to have been stored since the eleventh century in the local library there. In 1627, Cyril Luca, Patriarch of Constantinople, presented the codex as a gift to King Charles I. So, the codex came to England, where it is now on display in the British Library in London together with Sinaiticus. In textual criticism, Alexandrinus is praised for its extremely important text of Revelation; for the Gospels, it is said to be the oldest representative of the Byzantine text-type, while it should be a typical witness to the Alexandrian text-type for all the other New Testament writings together with Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Interestingly, the Pericope Adulterae (John 7:53–8:11) is missing.

[4]   It is high time for an in-depth, sound, and complete analysis of the physical features of the codex. This is at least what the subtitle of W. Andrew Smith′s Ph.D. work promises when we read "codicology, palaeography, and scribal habits." And Smith fulfills the promise throughout his book by means of his meticulous analyses of the most salient features of Codex Alexandrinus, or to be more precise, its text of the four canonical Gospels.

[5]   After an introduction to his objective and the history of Alexandrinus in the first two brief chapters of the book, Smith analyses its codicology (35–101). He writes about the codex itself (773 leaves, 630 of the Old Testament and 143 of the New Testament, probably 46 lost leaves), its material (vellum and ink), its composition and binding, its ancient arrangement, and dimensions and formatting, for which he provides statistical data (e.g., column widths). Without doubt, readers might be interested in the books of the Bible actually extant in Alexandrinus (60), in *lacunae,* in the specific table of contents of the codex, the ordering of the New Testament books, the page numbering system (of quires), the quire structure, and the modern numbering of leaves.

[6]   Chapter 3 is dedicated to "Palaeography and Paratextual Features of the Gospels" (102–81) and chapter 4 to "Scribes" (182–246). Smith describes the

scribes' hands in detail and also attracts the reader's attention to paratextual features such as miniatures like an amphora, plants as tailpieces for the Gospel of Luke, fruit baskets, etc. Smith also deals with the Eusebian Canons and additional texts (above all, Odes, 1–2 Clement, Psalms of Solomon). This is very welcome because these elements are usually ignored by scholars although they help to describe the skills and interests of the scribe who copied the text in more detail. All in all, according to Smith, the evidence for identifying Alexandrinus as an Egyptian manuscript is not as compelling as has been believed. Furthermore, Smith identifies three copyists for the New Testament, one writing Revelation and two copying the rest. So Smith stands with Carl Gottfried Woide and Guglielmo Cavallo but against previous opinions held by Frederic G. Kenyon, T. C. Skeat, and H. J. Milne, and taken over by many scholars.

[7]   Finally, Smith offers brief conclusions which do not mark the end of the book. There is abundant evidence to follow in the appendices: tables of concordance (page numbers), orthographic data, statistical analysis (e.g., size calculations and measurements), Eusebian apparatus data, and unit delimitation data (space, ekthesis, paragraphus). The book comes with a list of abbreviations, a comprehensive bibliography, and short indices of names and subjects, manuscripts, and biblical references.

[8]   This book is not only valuable due to its originality as the first detailed study of Codex Alexandrinus available. It can also serve as a role model for studies of other manuscripts because its method are sound, its analyses are meticulous, and it deals with physical features of a manuscript, so that the manuscript is assessed for what it is: a physical (and in most cases archaeological) object. And this is probably the most significant aspect of the study, as Smith takes this seriously in studying Alexandrinus as a codex, not purely focusing on the texts it preserves.

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