

chrétienne', pp. 151–288) consider some Gallic cities (Arles, Autun, Puy-en-Velay, Tournay, Lyon, Vienne, the Rhone and Saone valleys, Saint Quentin) as case studies able to prove the usefulness of an intertwined analysis of both archaeological evidences and hagiographic literature. The book ends with a third part ('Les Cadres de la vie chrétienne', pp. 291–509) which explores the presence of the Christian way of life in the countryside and in the monastic environment. Critical assessment of the individual papers is not possible within the format of the present review. Instead, I will limit myself to some comments on the volume as a whole. Whereas each essay can be read with profit on its own terms, the degree to which they contribute to the overall theoretical aim of the volume varies. Several of them deal with materials and topics that are arguably relevant to the question of the 'Christianisation' of Gaul but do not make an attempt to relate the analyses that they offer to issues at the more general level of theoretical reflection. However, much more could be said about this rich volume. Above all else, and through a variety of examples stretching from the fourth to the ninth century, it makes plain the complexity of the subject and the need for a further discussion. One aspect of this is surely the high level of manipulation that can be seen in the hagiographical dossier and the almost continuous refurbishment of buildings. The processes of re-usage seems to be much more similar than we usually think. In one of the clearest pieces, Marie-Céline Isaïa shows how the selection, adaptation and transmission of a biography may be understood if we look carefully at the archaeological evidence: the life of a saint bishop may be conceived with the clear intention of influencing the Christian topography of a late antique city (p. 129).

'Apprécier l'empreinte du christianisme en Gaule' (p. 521): thus Stéphane Lebecq closes his lucid and comprehensive concluding remarks. Read collectively, the essays in this volume clarify what it was to become and then be Christian in Gaul, exploring the particularity of lived realities, understood at concrete times and places, as well as the seemingly timeless literary constructions of Christianities that the modern world has inherited from this past.

UNIVERSITY OF TURIN

ROBERTO ALCIATI

*A study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus. Codicology, palaeography, and scribal hands.*

By W. Andrew Smith. (New Testament Tools, Studies and Documents, 48.)

Pp. x + 384 incl. 43 tables and 52 colour and black-and-white figs. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2014. €126. 978 90 04 26783 1; 0077 8842

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Codex Alexandrinus, dated to the fifth century, is one of the four ancient manuscripts of the Greek Bible. It has been known to western scholarship for the longest, having been presented to Charles I in 1627. This volume sets out to give a full and detailed examination of its presentation of the Gospels. The focus is on the manuscript as an artefact, without examination of the text or comparison between it and that in other manuscripts. Although the focus is on the Gospels, the author sometimes turns to other parts of the manuscript. There are four main chapters. The first deals with the origins and history of the codex, describing the (meagre) available evidence and different interpretations of it. The second deals with the codicology, including the format, the composition and the ordering

of the books. The third has two main topics: the palaeography, including a discussion of the number of scribes who wrote the Gospels, the use of colour, and paratextual features (super- and subscriptions, tailpieces, the Eusebian apparatus, *kephalaioi* and *titloi*). The fourth is called 'Scribes' but after a section headed 'Overview of scribal hands', it is devoted to 'unit delimitation', the *nomina sacra* and various abbreviations. A final chapter provides a summary of the author's findings. There are also five appendices. Appendix A provides concordances, giving for each page the contents and the several quire, leaf and page numberings that have been given to it, to which are added the author's own. The second lists orthographica in the Gospels. Appendix C describes the way in which measurements of physical elements such as leaves and columns were made. The fourth provides a concordance of the Eusebian apparatus as it appears in Nestle-Aland and Codex Sinaiticus. Appendix E lists places where larger sense units are marked by one or more of space, *ekthesis* and *paragraphus*. There is a bibliography, and a subject index. The book provides some useful data. For example, it produces evidence to suggest that two scribes were responsible for the Gospels, one copying the first two and the other Luke and John. I could wish that more time had been devoted to turning it from the genre of doctoral thesis to that of monograph, and that it had lost a hundred pages. It is to the carefully compiled lists that one will be most likely to go.

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

D. C. PARKER

*From Byzantine to Islamic Egypt. Religion, identity and politics after the Arab conquest.*

By Maged S. A. Mikhail. Pp. xiii + 429. London–New York: I. B. Tauris, 2014. £56.50. 978 1 84885 938 8

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The transition from Byzantine to Islamic Egypt is a trending topic in current scholarship – and rightly so, since this area has been neglected for a long time. Interest in Islam and Christian-Muslim interactions has been sky-rocketing since 9/11 and has stimulated research in many areas, and Egypt is no exception. The Arabs conquered the country in 641 and the Nile Valley's slow transformation from a predominantly Coptic- and Greek-speaking, Christian country into an Arabic-speaking, Islamic one began. The attraction of Egypt lies above all in the wide range of sources which can be consulted. Besides a literary tradition, archaeological remains, inscriptions and a huge (but still mostly unpublished) amount of documentary texts in Greek, Coptic and Arabic offer deep insights into the extent of change and continuity in early Islamic Egypt. The justifiably increasing specialisation renders it difficult to obtain an overview of the vast source material. Maged S. A. Mikhail engages in this arduous task for roughly the seventh to the tenth century.

Mikhail discusses a variety of aspects relating to the transition from Byzantine to Islamic Egypt. His focus is mainly on religion, language and identity. The argument is structured into twelve essayistic chapters which are backed up by rich endnotes. His conclusions are conveniently summed up in the last chapter. He emphasises his 'revisionist' approach, which means that he does not presuppose the existence of a 'Coptic' anti-Chalcedonian faction at odds with a 'Greek'