

covered is from the fourth to the eighth century AD. The sites are grouped according to provinces of late antiquity – *Palaestina Prima*, *Secunda* and *Tertia*, and *Phoenicia*. Each entry is meticulously researched, with a history of the site and its excavation and with all ornamental designs identified according to a schema set out at the beginning of the book, which conforms with the vocabulary first set out by Michael Avi-Yonah (†1974) in the 1930s and refined by Ruth and Asher Ovadiah in 1987.

The book as a whole is consequently one intended for reference use, and to this end the several indices are a welcome constituent. It is obvious that Madden has been meticulous and thorough in his documentation and bibliography. This is a welcome handbook for anyone wishing to discover the extent and nature of mosaic pavements in this period and region, though very few match in quality the extensive remains that have been found in Jordan, as at Madaba and other sites studied by the (late) Franciscan Fr Michele Piccirillo. The systematic descriptions of the abstract ornamental designs and of the figurative and animal representations indicate the main interest of the author, but many readers (like me) will find the most stimulating part of the enterprise to be the collection of inscriptions, some epitaphs but many donor dedications. These are happily (at least in the most part) given in Greek and with good translations. They range from three lines of unexpected sophisticated hexameters (cat. 15, Apollonia; Sozousa, dated to fifth/sixth century), through precise inscriptions with dates and the donors' name recorded, and then to basic prayers for salvation. The wealth of information given in these inscriptions could be usefully submitted to further and more extensive analysis. It is noticeable, for example, that the formula for a donor who wishes to remain anonymous ('whose name is known to God') is rare on pavements in this region, and the wish to record the names is the norm and prevalent habit. For anyone wishing to pursue the sociology of church building in the region, this is a very helpful and reliable collection of information.

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L'Empreinte chrétienne en Gaule du IVe au IXe siècle. Edited by Michèle Gaillard.

(Culture et société médiévales, 26.) Pp. 551. Turnhout: Brepols, 2014. € 95 (paper). 978 2 503 55044 2

JEH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046915002845

This volume is a collection of essays mainly written for a conference held at the University of Lille in 2010. Its principal aim was to promote the necessary dialogue between history and archaeology (p. 16). Therefore, it is surely no accident that the first item to appear in Gaillard's preface (written with Charles Bonnet), and the one that recurs most frequently throughout the book, is the *Topographie chrétienne des cites de la Gaule*. All of the essays, in different ways, engage with this concern, by focusing on the hermeneutical couple 'persistence and integration'. The collection falls into three parts. It begins with 'Les Héritages antiques' (pp. 21–147), where Roman law, diplomatic relationships, food system, episcopal models and royal kingship are the main subjects treated. Then, part II ('La Ville

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.

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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

JEH (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046915002407

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