

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Dirk JONGKIND, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus. Texts and Studies 5*; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007.**

This is the published version of Dirk Jongkind's doctoral dissertation, written under Peter Head at Cambridge and defended in 2005. This dense volume is a delight for the die-hard textual critic with an interest in scribal behaviour. Its results advance our understanding on various points on Codex Sinaiticus and also on the more general topic of scribal habits in ancient (early Christian) Greek manuscripts.

The general aim is to gain a better view of the activity of the scribes who wrote the manuscript, beyond its text and its relevance for our modern editions. The work of these scribes is to be analyzed, with an emphasis on A and D, ignoring the work of the later correctors on the manuscript (2).

The book is structured in five chapters, of which the first one surveys the past research on Codex Sinaiticus. Here are identified some topics on which the results of the ensuing chapters will bear significance: the provenance of the codex, the manufacturing of the codex, and the particular question of whether the manuscript was copied or written on dictation.

The second chapter deals with the appearance of the text in Sinaiticus, that is, with the non-textual characteristics of scribal behaviour in this particular manuscript. The issues tackled with are: the structure of the manuscript, the history of the identification of the scribes, and the interactions of the scribes in the manuscript.

The presentation reveals that beyond the general regulate appearance of the Codex Sinaiticus (four columns per page, constant number of lines, uniform bookhand) the scribes worked under no 'fixed procedure' (57), assuming responsibilities which vary, taking *ad hoc* decisions and approximating the text needed to fill a page or finish a quire.

With respect to the last feature, Jongkind finds Milne and Skeat's argument (with regards to the use of red ink in Psalms) that scribes were not able to calculate the space required by a given text 'dubious' (38) and sets out to prove that the evidence supports the opposite view. It is then perhaps surprising that the explanation offered for the peculiar situation of *Barnabas*' quires involves a several-pages-long wrong estimation of the space needed for the text (50-1).

However, Jongkind does shows how the way the texts are divided between the scribes and the irregularities in the places where the scribe has changed (e.g. the beginning and end of 1 Maccabees, the ending of Mark) are best explained by understanding that the scribes were in fact able to calculate the space taken by a text and also that they seem to have made decisions based on those calculations.

As an aside, Jongkind noticed the marks ‘which have escaped notice so far’ (32) on the middle folios of each quire. They are thought to have served in the binding of the manuscript, and are now referred to as *squiggles* on the Codex Sinaiticus website.

The third chapter conglomerates a number of studies on *nomina sacra*, ligatures, itacisms, paragraphs, the Eusebian apparatus, the numbering and *kephalia* written by the scribes in their work on Codex Sinaiticus.

A conundrum in analysing the scribal behaviour around *nomina sacra* is the impossibility to establish what is due to the scribe and what to his exemplar. Jongkind’s take is to start from texts written by two scribes. In such cases, the difference from one scribe to another in the treatment of the *nomina sacra* can be considered to indicate behaviour rather than the shared exemplar, although he recognizes that the question of which of the two might still reflect the exemplar remains open (83).

Starting from their use of *nomina sacra* (in a sample of 175.4 folios comprising 1 Chronicles, Judith, 4 Maccabees, XII Prophets, Psalms, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Pauline corpus, and Revelation), the three scribes are shown to behave along different patterns, even though ‘the system of *nomina sacra* is not consistently applied in any of the books’ from the sample (83): ‘scribe A does not differentiate between sacral and non-sacral referents for  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ,’ using mostly the *nomen sacrum* (79); ‘only in scribe D is there a clear distinction between the reverential and non-reverential use of  $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ’ (83); scribe B seems to prefer *nomina sacra* over the full form of the word (81).

The ligatures are deemed to serve an ornamental role rather than that of saving space (90), and the analysed paragraphs are found not to form a structure of the texts, as they function ‘to a much lower level’ (108): ‘the current situation in Sinaiticus is best seen as a result of both the individual practices of the scribes and influence from the exemplar, though the first of these factors seems to be more important’ (109).

The analysis of the Eusebian apparatus reveals that it ‘betrays a corruption in the transmission history of the apparatus between its inception and inclusion in *Sinaiticus*’ (120), being, thus perhaps a generation remove from the original.

The fourth chapter is an inquiry in the singular readings and scribal behaviour of two of the scribes who wrote Codex Sinaiticus, namely A and D. The introductory survey on singular readings covers 19th century (Tischendorf and Westcott-Hort, 131-4) and more recent authors (mainly Colwell and Royse, 134-9; the latter from his thesis, as the book was not yet published).

Jongkind’s selects a number of passages at the outset to analyse the behaviour of the two scribes with respect with their singular readings. These passages are ingeniously selected in an effort to surpass the same problem: the difficulty in distinguishing between what can be ascribed to the scribal habits of a given scribe and what to his exemplar.

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The first analysed passage is from 1 Chronicles, and is chosen because it is very likely that the corrections made in scriptorium were made against the exemplar from which it was written in the first place, due to an uncorrected large text intrusion (144-5, 163). Thus, the variants that are corrected in scriptorium against the exemplar belong clearly to the scribe who wrote them, and form a more stable window into his scribal behaviour, and are all analysed, even those who are not singular readings.

The other three sample passages (the Psalms, five books from the Pauline corpus, and the first 12 chapters of Luke) are chosen because they are all written by two scribes, D and A. The assumption being that they worked with the same exemplar (164), the variations in producing singular readings reflect a difference in scribal behaviour.

The analytical categories are, in each case, orthography, nonsense word forms, leaps, addition or omission of *verba minora* (small words as conjunctions and pronouns, 248), harmonisation, editorial readings, nonsense meanings, substitutions, transpositions, addition or omission of words or clauses, and more complex rewritings. A very large amount of analyses and calculations starting the data.

One might quibble with Jongkind's calculations when they start from a very small amount of data; e.g. in the Lukan analysed fragment, scribe D wrote 6 columns (as compared to A's portion of almost 10 folios) containing six singular readings "which would translate to 80 singular readings per 10 folios" (240). The presented data and the analysis are nonetheless persuading to this reviewer. The scribes are shown to have a different behaviour on virtually the same text: scribe D "is most particularly prone to substitution and harmonisation" (243). In Psalms, "scribe A produces many more singular readings than scribe D" (200), result confirmed in the analysis on Paul passages (219). Similarly, in Luke, "the text of scribe D approaches the exemplar more nearly than does that of scribe A" (241).

The general conclusions on singular readings are even more interesting: the evidence offered by Codex Sinaiticus confirms the tendency to omit rather than to add, and also the tendency to produce harmonisations to the immediate contexts. (241, 245) The former tendency, identified by Jongkind in Codex Sinaiticus, is to be added to Royse's same result on early papyri, and to Head's results on the fragmentary papyri (246).

With respect to the method of singular readings in general, the readings individually produced by the scribe in 1 Chronicles (departing from his exemplar) are not necessarily singular, as they appear in some of the few manuscripts with this text. This suggests that in the New Testament textual tradition, where there are far more manuscripts preserved, "the scribes must have made considerably more errors in copying the exemplar than actually show up as singular readings" (242).

The last chapter offers final reflections where the results are listed and the advance resulted from this book's research evaluated: Jongkind's advance from the work of Milne and Skeat, which he builds upon, is, apart from some punctual

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corrections, indeed a more complete image of the activity of the scribes and their individual profiles, “particularly of scribes D and A” (249, 254-5).

The results of Jongkind’s research are also relevant for our larger understanding of the codex. One of them is that these results do not support the theory that dictation was employed in the construction of the codex (250-2). Similarly, the basis for Skeat’s argument on the Caesarean origin of the codex is not supported by Jongkind’s results: the scribal variants of places name which allegedly indicate local knowledge are now explained by other means (the high number of proper nouns variants of scribe A, harmonisation to intermediate context). Furthermore, the not that pure form of the Eusebian apparatus seems to “suggest a certain distance from its source” (253).

As a note, in the numbering of the quires, Jongkind follows Milne-Skeat in using the number “visible in the top right corner of the first page of each quire” (2). The Codex Sinaiticus Project website numbers the quires according to the top left corner numbering of the same first quire page. This means that, beyond the Old Testament books, the reader will have to add 1 to Jongkind’s quire number to find it on the website.

Finally, this is a great volume and a great tool for the study of the scribes of Codex Sinaiticus, and, by extension, for the study of scribal behaviour in majuscule manuscripts, biblical or not. One cannot but hope to see similar volumes on the other three “biblical Uncial” manuscripts.

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