

**Annette Weissenrieder, ed., with André Luiz Visinoni. *The Old Latin Manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke: A New Edition of the Codex Vercellensis Luke Based on Multi-spectral Images*. ANTF 55. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024. ISBN 978-3-11-113821-3. Hardcover, pp. xxvi + 687, 89 color illustrations. €144.95.**

This book contains a new transcription, edition, and study of the text of the Gospel of Luke in Codex Vercellensis (VL3) based on multispectral images produced by the Lazarus Project together with the Early Manuscript Electronic Library (EMEL). Codex Vercellensis is the oldest manuscript transmitting the gospels in Latin: it was copied in the mid-fourth century and is held in the Archivio Capitolare di Vercelli. The codex suffered severe damage because of humidity and a fungal infection. Parts of the text that were formerly illegible have now been recovered, transcribed, and illustrated in this volume following the consultation of the multispectral images. The new transcription is the starting point for the study of the textual affiliation and language of the Codex Vercellensis Luke carried out in this monograph.

The book begins with an index of manuscripts (xiii–xxiv), which includes paleographical and codicological descriptions and remarks on the affiliation of the text. This section is followed by a preface (1–5) briefly explaining the motivations and interests, both paleographical and linguistic, that motivated this research. The book comprises seven chapters of various length: chapters 1–5 consist of paleographical, text-critical, and linguistic analyses of Codex Vercellensis, while chapters 6–7 contain the transcription of the manuscript and an edition of the text, respectively.

Chapter 1 (7–21) features a detailed paleographical and codicological examination of the manuscript. The current condition of the manuscript, the mise-en-page, and the format are described with the help of color images. The text in uncial script disposed in *scriptio continua*, the Western order of the gospels, the type of punctuation, and an early system of *nomina sacra* indicate that the manuscript can be dated between 341 and 350 CE. This conclusion is reached by comparing the shapes of its letters and ligatures with those of contemporary manuscripts, whose images are included in the chapter to provide readers with a visual comparison. The presence of paratextual features highlighting passages of theological significance shows that the manuscript was used during liturgy.

Chapter 2 (23–61) addresses the shortcomings of the previous editions of Codex Vercellensis. The mistakes in Irico's (1748) and Bianchini's (1749/1845) editions were replicated by editors who followed: sixteen instances in which the text of the previous editions can now be corrected are discussed in full in the chapter following the examination of the multispectral images. Some of these are orthographic variants (e.g., *com* instead of *cum* at Luke 2:21 and 3:21), but in other cases they represent variant readings unique to Codex Vercellensis and unattested in other Vetus Latina manuscripts (e.g., *inpleti* at Luke 4:23, whereas the rest of the Latin tradition has *repleti*). The table at the end of the chapter gives a synopsis of the readings attested in the previous editions side by side with those established by the multispectral images.

Chapter 3 (63–86) deals with the relationship of Codex Vercellensis with the Greek texts transmitted by P75 and P45, majuscules, Codex Bezae (05), and Codex Corinthianus (038). Seven cases of agreement with papyri concerning word order, omissions, and syntax are presented in tables, and some of them are discussed in the text. The textual relationship with the Greek text of the bilingual Codex Bezae is described in detail: the *status quaestionis* on the Latinization of the Greek text is first outlined, then the variations in word order and omissions that the Greek text has in common with the Latin text of the manuscript and with Codex Vercellensis are listed in tables and analyzed. Similarities between Codex Vercellensis, the majuscules, and Codex Corinthianus appear to be of minor importance. It can be concluded that none of these manuscripts is the *Vorlage* of Codex Vercellensis.

Chapter 4 (87–194) examines the relationship between Codex Vercellensis and the Latin texts of Codex Palatinus (VL2), Fragmenta Curiensia (VL16), Codex Bezae (VL5), Codex Veronensis (VL4), and Codex Amiatinus (A). Codex Palatinus and Codex Vercellensis are deemed to represent a similar stage of the Old Latin tradition, since they agree on phonetics, on the use of the demonstrative pronoun *ille*, and on the attestation of so-called African vocabulary. The Fragmenta Curiensia are shown to be most likely a copy of Codex Vercellensis, given that they have the same distinctive readings and omissions. While chapter 3 focuses on the relationship of Codex Vercellensis with the Greek text of Codex Bezae, here the relationship with the Latin text of the manuscript is assessed. The evidence examined supports the conclusion that the Latin text of Codex Bezae and Codex Vercellensis are related; for example, both texts have the rarely attested verb *circumlucere*. Conversely, the few similarities with Codex Veronensis are considered to derive from misinterpretations of the Greek source text.

Chapter 5 (195–305) contains a linguistic analysis of the text of Codex Vercellensis with reference to phonetics and orthography, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Special attention is paid to late Latin forms such as changes in noun declension classes and in verb conjugations and the reductions in the case system. Instances of language contact are also mentioned, such as the use of the genitive after the comparative adjective and the presence of lexical Graecisms. This extensive analysis of the vocabulary of the Codex Vercellensis Luke encompasses cases of contextual sensitivity (i.e., different translations of the Greek text according to the context) and instances of poetic terms and of technical words belonging to the semantic fields of architecture, medicine, everyday life, and religion. Most importantly, the use of African vocabulary, that is, words attested in manuscripts and patristic citations related to Africa, is detected in Codex Vercellensis Luke. This discovery questions the traditional scholarly assumption that the manuscript transmits a European form of text.

The transcription of the Codex Vercellensis Luke, included in chapter 6 (307–505), reproduces the text and layout of the manuscript with the division into two columns, rubrication, punctuation, and paratextual features. The so-called edition of Codex Vercellensis is contained in chapter 7 (507–624). The edition can be better defined as a collation with selected *Vetus Latina* witnesses. The text is followed by a critical apparatus that includes the readings of Codex Vercellensis compared with those attested by other *Vetus Latina* manuscripts, from which they are separated by a square bracket. An introduction to this chapter and a guide for users would have made the purpose of this edition clearer to the reader. Further explanation is also needed as to why only some of the *Vetus Latina* manuscripts listed in the index of manuscripts were included in the edition and how these were selected.

In summary, Weissenrieder has convincingly demonstrated the need for a new transcription of Codex Vercellensis to correct the shortcomings of the previous editions. The corrections are accompanied by images of the codex so that the reader can verify the changes proposed, and the data can be easily consulted in various tables. The book is a model of clarity and thoroughness and application of profound paleographical, text-critical, and linguistic knowledge. The explanations and arguments are developed systematically and compellingly, also in the more technical sections. Nonetheless, more terminological explanations would have been welcome: papyri are said to be “the earliest sources containing the original text of the New Testament” (64). It would be helpful to know what is meant by *origi-*

*nal* text (the text written by the evangelists or the “initial text”?). The term *conflation* appears to be used with reference to Greek readings and syntax (see 65 and 67) to denote “similarities” and not in the sense of “merging of two variant readings” with which it is usually employed in New Testament textual criticism. The word *literal* (148–49) is applied broadly, and a clearer definition would have helped precision. For instance, the term is used to refer to heterogeneous linguistic features, including the rendering of vocabulary (e.g., *intrare* instead of *ingredi*) and the interchange between verb classes, which are phenomena internal to the Latin language.

Occasionally, more evidence is needed for a convincing argument. For example, Codex Vercellensis is said to convey “the impression of a text that is rooted in oral rather than written transmission” (194) but proofs in support of this argument cannot be found in chapter 4. It is affirmed that “the text of *Vercellensis* replicates the Greek column of *Bezae* more closely than the Latin *Bezae* does” (80). Although this holds true in some cases, counterexamples can also be identified. For instance, the additions listed in table 11 (Luke 7:26; 8:45; 13:20; 16:8; 21:2; and 21:6) are rendered in the Latin text of Codex Bezae with translations matching the Greek text of the manuscript while Codex Vercellensis translates the additions differently.

A few contradictions can also be noticed: on page 190 it is argued that “the Codex Amiatinus derives from the Codex Vercellensis.” However, the conclusion that “the *Amiatinus* Vulgate manuscript does not have as many distinctive parallels with the *Vercellensis* ... and its grammar and vocabulary exhibit a number of innovations not found in the *Vercellensis*” (p. 194) seems to be in contradiction with the previous statement. On page 193 it is claimed that there is little evidence in support of Philip Burton’s affirmation that Codex Vercellensis has peculiar renderings (“we have found little evidence to support the notion that the *Vercellensis* is exceptional from the point of view of vocabulary and grammar”). However, on the next page (194), it is stated that “another feature which deserves attention [in *Codex Vercellensis*] is the presence of word choices unlike those otherwise found in the Old Latin texts.”

More definite and elaborate conclusions in chapters 3 and 4 would have strengthened the work’s arguments. Although the Greek and Latin texts of Codex Bezae and Codex Vercellensis are demonstrated to be connected (86), the direction of these influences needs to be investigated further. In the final remarks of chapter 4 (193–94), the Latin manuscripts examined are said to share some similarities with Codex Vercellensis, possibly

derived from the Greek source text, but it remains unclear why and to what extent they precisely relate to each other.

Several minor typos can be identified, for example, *locus sesperatus* instead of *desperatus* in the section “Abbreviations and Symbols,” words not italicized, and missing verbs. While such imprecisions are not unusual in a book of this size, in a few cases they have an impact on the meaning of the text. On page 227 the Vulgate is said to prefer the genitive to the ablative following verbs according to classical usage. However, the order of the cases in the sentence should be changed, considering that the use of the genitive instead of the ablative mirrors the Greek construction against the norms of standard Latin, as specified in the previous sentence.

This book makes an essential contribution to the fields of New Testament textual criticism and Latin linguistics and will interest scholars of biblical studies and the Latin language. It provides an indispensable bibliographical resource for New Testament text critics and represents a first step toward the completion of the *Vetus Latina* edition of Luke. Although this study is already exhaustive in its present form, I hope that it will be expanded in further directions. Considering that the citations of Novatian are “close to the *Codex Vercellensis*” (197), a comparison with the biblical text cited by the church fathers would allow readers to better understand the tradition of *Codex Vercellensis*. The scientific community would also benefit from new transcriptions and detailed studies of the other gospels in *Codex Vercellensis*. This would allow for a deeper analysis of different translation techniques in Luke and Mark versus John and Matthew as mentioned on p. 224 and p. 248.

To conclude, this book is highly recommended since it offers a thorough and definitive examination of the language and textual affiliation of the *Codex Vercellensis* Luke. This study has considerably advanced the research on *Vetus Latina* manuscripts and their relationship with Greek witnesses so that a broader view of the *Vetus Latina* tradition of Luke can now be attained.

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