commentary to avoid a need for constant reference back to earlier pages. Some of the mass of parallels accumulated seem to have little function in elucidating the argument. Much of the material on the Phoenix (157-64) is curious but only shows the isolation of Ezekiel's description outside any known literary tradition. But Jacobson's occasional admission after long discussion that "in truth all this does not amount to much" (e.g., p. 70) disarms criticism. The evidence on this difficult play is presented with clarity and fairness and the author can hardly be blamed for sometimes leading the reader on carefully plotted paths some distance beyond it.

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Thomas Franxman has set out to study the way that Josephus changed the Hebrew original in the Genesis portions of the Jewish Antiquities in the hope of discovering something about Josephus' theology and literary method as well as the position of his work within a living midrashic tradition. Such studies have been carried out before, but piecemeal. A thorough examination of this sort was a good idea and, though no startling discoveries result, the negative finds are valuable.

The book is descriptive rather than analytic, few general patterns emerging from Josephus and F. refusing to impose such patterns on the material without sufficient warrant. F. follows in detail Josephus' account of the Patriarchs down to Joseph, comparing the historian's version to the Hebrew text. He lists the parallels to and differences from Josephus' version in an assortment of targums, rabbinic midrashim, pseudepigrapha and, occasionally, other Hellenistit Jewish writers. The style of the book, rather like that of Josephus' Antiquities themselves, is as a result somewhat discursive and prone to frequent pauses to underscore the intention of the author in concentrating on this or that passage. The new conclusions reached are unimpeachable: Josephus followed the Genesis narrative quite closely, much that is original probably came straight out of his own imagination, and details that can be traced to near-contemporary midrash on Genesis found elsewhere are rarely used in the passages on which Josephus laid greatest emphasis (286-89). Most of the time Josephus simply concentrated on providing a more or less coherent narrative with no obvious message, proving original only in his invention of an "original type of unoriginality" (92).

That Josephus should emerge as quite so dull, and the changes he has introduced as quite so arbitrary, is however partly due to Franxman's presentation rather than Josephus himself. Some major innovations, like the habit of putting the direct speeches of the Hebrew into reported speech and vice versa, are comprehensible within the conventions of Hellenistic historiography about which F. has little to say. Other divergences from the Hebrew are often left described rather than explained. For instance, F. makes no systematic attempt to establish in particular cases the relationship between midrashic parallels in different sources, relying instead on a general hypothesis at the start of his study (30-31). He usually, though not always (cf. p. 54), refuses to hypothesise at all about the origins of Josephus' text when
direct evidence is lacking. Some clearer notion of the relationship of midrash in Josephus to that in such writers as Theodotus and Philo is surely possible. A more serious methodological concern attaches to F.’s treatment of parallels in the LXX. He is not at all clear about the relationship of Josephus’ text to the Alexandrian Greek translation although it is quite likely that Josephus’ whole paraphrase began with that translation, in which case it is misleading to attribute divergences from the MT to Josephus rather than to the LXX. F. ignores most recent work on the Septuagint, and, indeed, not a little recent scholarship even more directly pertinent to Josephus. The problem of Josephus’ relation to the LXX is compounded if the Hebrew text available to Josephus was itself divergent from the MT and perhaps more like our present LXX in some of the particulars that F. sets out to explain.

The reader does not, then, gain from this work a clear picture of Josephus’ theology or even of the chain of tradition of which he was doubtless part. F.’s occasional claim that a particular piece of exegesis is of exceptional importance tends to fall flat (e.g., pp. 164-69). F.’s thoroughness and objectivity do, however, convey the feel of the Antiquities in a way that more striking and speculative studies do not. It is good to learn how many apparently motiveless changes may have been brought about by using scripture to explain scripture, and to be reminded that an attempt to erect a stylistically ordered narrative may itself be an explanation of such changes, even if Josephus’ story is not always in fact consistent (153) and his grip on chronology is feeble (121). The dull explanations are dull, but they may well be right.

MARTIN GOODMAN


This is an introduction for students and interested lay readers to the contribution made by archaeology to the historical understanding of the development of Judaism and Christianity in Palestine during the first four centuries of this era. The aim of the authors is to provide a “point of entry” into a field too rarely tackled by students of these religions and to illuminate through discussion of particular outstanding problems the sort of methodological questions still debated among those actively concerned in this field. These are worthy but vague aims, and they have produced a volume of somewhat uncertain scope. There is no clear structure to the book (cf. p. 25: “speaking of Herod, it is important to mention evidence from the Second Temple”). In practice, the topics chosen have more relation to the expertise of the authors than to priorities of historical importance, hence chapters on Jewish burial practices (92-103) and synagogue architecture (140-52), and this has the considerable advantage of ensuring that the authors’ guidance in such matters is thoroughly trustworthy. So too, for the most part, is their judgement on the theories of other archaeological specialists, e.g., Goodenough (21), but it is the pressure of space in a small book treating a large topic that makes the frank admission about the occasional wilder assertion that “not all archaeologists and historians would agree to this reading of archaeological evidence” (25) less useful than a full explanation of the reasons for disagreement would have been. It is to be hoped that students will not try to pillage the book for hard evidence on early Christianity and Judaism but will follow the authors’ advice in seeking only stimulation, guidance and encouragement for further study.