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 even 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

ERIC M. MEYERS and JAMES F. STRANGE, Archaeology, the Rabbis and Early Christianity. SCM Press, London – Abingdon, Nashville, 1981. 207 pp., 13 figs., £4.50/$7.95.

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.
There are, naturally enough given the wide field discussed, many statements in the book with which other scholars will disagree. For example, I do not believe that arguments for a continuous Jewish-Christian presence in Palestine can be based with any validity on the suspicion that fourth-century churches must have been founded on earlier Christian traditions among local people (128). I find unconvincing all the suggestions that the proximity of Jewish sites to Christian ones is testimony to religious contact of any kind (10, etc.); present-day Jerusalem demonstrates well enough how communities can exist physically side by side but in separate mental worlds. In a way, however, such substantive disagreements matter less than unease about the general example set by the authors in the methods for using archaeological material. I find myself most inclined to dissent from Meyers and Strange when they cease to write simply and authoritatively about archaeology and turn to historical interpretation of the literary texts. It is not so much that the secondary works on those texts on which the authors rely seem to me often to be misguidedly chosen – Kimelman on the minim (32), Oppenheimer on the am-haaretz (36-38), Avi-Yonah on the urbanisation of Palestine (44-45) – but that it is a reflection of their use of archaeology that this should lead the authors so much astray. Their approach to archaeological evidence is precisely not that advocated by the new archaeology so popular in the United States and described by them in glowing terms as the attempt to recreate whole societies from archaeological evidence (23), but rather the older sort of application of new finds to the illumination of specific texts that classical archaeologists, lured by their wealth of literary sources, have been much more slow to shed than the rest of the archaeological world. The authors state, rightly, the need to change this orientation (33), but they have not done so. Furthermore, for a guide to students far more needs to be said on the limits of archaeology than the brief remarks in this book (28-30) permit. More is needed on the hazards of incomplete excavation, the inherent biases of surface surveys, and the dangers of large hypotheses based on limited material, like the assumption that ceramic forms are useful indications of cultural influences (46). Not least important should be the constant reminder that dated material always provides a terminus post quem rather than an absolute date, which the authors themselves occasionally overlook (131).

This book will, then, do a service to students by bringing little known material to attention. Readers should be warned that, despite the title, the authors sensibly avoid duplicating the efforts of others by saying almost nothing about Qumran, though they cheerfully cover the same ground as CRINT and Schürer in providing a worthy discussion of languages in Roman Palestine (62-91) in which the prevalence of Greek is probably over-estimated.

Martin Goodman


This is a record, dedicated to Joseph Aviram, of the convention held in Jerusalem in 1978. The editor has retained the atmosphere of the original meeting to the extent of including the speeches that welcomed the official opening (9-16). But he has also ensured that the volume will prove useful by expanding to eleven the original series of eight concise surveys of archaeological achievement within Israel over the thirty