especially in his rejection of Weiser's 'talking God' (p. xcix)—but this deserves to be explored further. It is good that the I.C.C. series has continued to use Hebrew type, but the particular fount adopted is dense and dark, most words are unpointed, and where they are pointed the points are hard to see.

If the format of the I.C.C. remains somewhat Dickensian—or indeed has become even more so than before—the Hermeneia series is very modern in presentation. The commentary follows a common German pattern, offering a translation with running textual notes in parallel columns, and then a more general discussion of the issues on following pages. Holladay does not entangle his own comments on the text nearly so much with the thoughts of other scholars, and footnotes and bibliographical references are attractively separated. A main peculiarity of his work, however, is that, although this is the commentary on the first half of the book, the introduction to the whole of Jeremiah has been postponed and will appear in the second volume (see p. xi). The introduction will contain Holladay's full statement on two central topics: the chronology of the prophet's career, and the literary history of the book. This being absent, all we have is a preliminary essay on the chronology (pp. 1-10); for the reasoning behind it, we shall have to wait. This means that a full comparison with McKane's ideas can at present hardly be carried out. But it looks as if Holladay, though certainly taking into account the variation of the Greek from the Hebrew, in general goes into it in much less detail than McKane: for instance, at Jer. 5:15, where LXX has a verse much shorter than MT, McKane (p. 123) takes up about fourteen lines discussing this, while Holladay (pp. 183 f.) scarcely touches upon the Greek text.

The Hebrew typography of the Hermeneia volume is excellently clear and readably pointed, even in the fount used for footnotes.

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The analyses of the sedarim Mo'ed and Neziqin, each of which takes up five volumes, bring to a close Neusner's magnum opus on the Mishnah after almost exactly ten years (the first volume of Purities appeared in 1974); the first seder was not prepared by Neusner, but by his pupils, and appears tractate by tractate. The arrangement of this work follows the guidelines which have proved successful since the seder Holy Things; after the translation and brief commentary of the individual tractates, the concluding volume develops each 'system' as a whole. The appended bibliographies (compiled by collaborators) summarize the present state of research. Having little connection with Neusner's analyses, they underline the claim to the innovative nature of his approach. (This can lead to the curious result that the bibliographical references to the abbreviated form 'Smith', which introduces a lengthy quotation from Morton Smith (Appointed Times V, p. 23), are missing in the bibliography.)

The first four volumes of Appointed Times contain a translation and commentary of tractates Shabbat (I), Erubin, Pesahim (II), Sheqalim, Yoma, Sukkah (III), as well as Besah, Rosh Hashanah, Taanit, Megillah, Moed Qatan and Hagigah (IV).
The concluding volume (V) begins with an anticipatory description of 'The System as a Whole', and goes on to a thematic analysis of the individual tractates ('The Formation of the Tractates'), allocating the individual thematic statements to the periods preceding 70 C.E., Yavneh (=70–c. 135), Usha (=c. 135–170), and post-Usha (c. 170–200). This tractate-oriented analysis is followed by a strata-oriented third part ('The Unfolding of the Law') which is directed towards the historical development of the halakhah concerning festivals, and at the same time tries to assign the individual tractates or considerable parts of them to the respective periods. It is noteworthy that Appointed Times as well as Damages lacks the fourth part, 'The System in Context', known from the other sedarim, which allots the seder its proper place within the general system of the Mishnah. The result of the fifth volume can be briefly summarized as follows.

(1) As in Purities and Women, but unlike Holy Things, the second seder contains traces of a festival halakhah prior to 70 C.E. These are confined exclusively to the subject of the preparation of food during the festival and belong to the context of Pharisic 'sectarian halakhah'. Tractate Besah belongs to this period.

(2) The Yavneh-stratum contributes only inessentially to the development of a system of festival halakhah; in this respect, Appointed Times clearly differs from Holy Things and Women. Only one part of the tractate Erubin can be attributed to this period.

(3) The system of the festival halakhah is almost exclusively the work of the Sages of Usha; the majority of the Appointed Times tractates go back to the Usha stratum and have no roots in earlier periods.

(4) The special achievement of the Sages of Usha is that in the second seder they combined the two antitheses of the cultic and the secular-village spheres. 'The Mishnaic division of Appointed Times forms a system in which the advent of a holy day, like the Sabbath of creation, sanctifies the life of the Israelite village through imposing on the village rules in the model of those of the Temple' (V, p. 15) ... 'So far as the division of Appointed Times sets forth a single message, it is to relate the village to the cult and to treat them as mutually complementary' (p. 219). The Sages of Usha, after the final expulsion from Jerusalem, were the first to be able to 'accept' the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and to reflect upon the relationship between the cult and the village community, 'on the sanctification of the other in the model of the one: ... The Ushans tear down the torn-down Temple walls and allow cultic sanctification to overspread the Israelite world. The disaster of ultimate destruction is transformed. Creation embodied in the cult yields from its ashes a new world' (p. 241).

This finding is immediately convincing. Nowhere is the part played by the Sages of Usha in the Mishnah as a whole worked out more clearly and more penetratingly than in Neusner's writings. Nevertheless, one cannot help but ask oneself, after reading through this seder, to what extent actual results of analyses are being summarized here, or whether on the contrary speculations are being expressed, based upon other and insufficiently discussed premises. The resolution of the opposite between cult and village is really based on nothing more than that in the second seder, tractates with cultic themes are combined with those in which the village sanctification outside the cult forms the focus. Likewise, one wonders what forms the actual basis for Neusner's thoughts concerning time and history, and especially on the perfection of creation 'through the natural reunion of opposites' (p. 23, cf. p. 16). There is nothing explicit about this in the second seder. In the final analysis it is a question of what is meant by the 'system' of the Mishnah. For Neusner, everything in
the Mishnah points to an intentional and systematic procedure on the part of the redactors, who at the same time transmitted the tradition, that is to a preconceived system to which all the details are subordinated and within which they obtain their meaning. On these premises, his findings are but logical (and the suggestive power of his language as well as the consistency of his thinking make it only too easy for one to follow him). If one does not, however, accept these premises, they are extraordinarily stimulating but in the final analysis merely speculation.

The five volumes of Damages follow the same scheme as Appointed Times. The first four volumes translate and explain the tractates Baba Qamma (I), Baba Meši'a (II), Baba Batra, Sanhedrin, Makkot (III), as well as Shebu'ot, 'Eduyot, Abodah Zarah, Abot and Horayot (IV). The last volume (V) develops, according to the three steps described above, 'the system as a whole', 'the formation of the tractates' and 'the unfolding of the law'. Three appendices reprint two lectures given in 1979 and 1984 respectively ( 'A Statement of Method' and 'Taking Things apart to see how they work') addressed to the Society of Biblical Literature, as well as a reply to his critics ('Reply to Critics. The Mishnah and the Smudgepots'). The findings of the fifth volume are as follows.

(1) Damages contains next to no material that can be traced back to authorities prior to 70 C.E. Neusner sees the reason for this as being that Damages is decidedly concerned with society as a whole and not with the particular interests of a sect.

(2) The Yavneh stratum also contributes little to the further development of the halakhic system of Damages. Tractate Shebu'ot and parts of tractate Abodah Zarah belong to the Yavneh period, but Shebu'ot follows a programme different from that included in the later Usha stratum. 'As we move back from Mishnah to its earlier periods of development, Yavneh mostly is a dead-end. Nothing goes backward from that period, except in a great leap to the Mosaic codes. But, of still greater consequence, little enough proceeds out of Yavnean times and on to the middle of the second century' (V, p. 148).

(3) The bulk of the material and the majority of the tractates of Damages are the work of the Sages of Usha. 'Mishnah's division of Damages nearly whole and complete comes forth in the middle of the second century' (p. 157).

(4) The message that the Sages of Usha wish to convey in Damages is the ideal of a stable, static society which reflects on what has remained to it after the catastrophe of the Bar-Kokhba revolt. 'Being is social, collective and institutional, not personal and heroic. No one is to rise, to become heroic, and no one is to fall either. The ideal of stasis and perfection in that unchanging stability applies as much to institutions and leaders as it does to wealthy and true value. ... There is no place for change, time, history, or individuals who make a difference and therefore shape history' (p. 42). This ideal is both realistic and Utopian: realistic in so far as it describes (in the Babot for example) practical halakhah of the rural population in Galilee in the middle of the second century C.E., and Utopian inasmuch (for example in Sanhedrin/Makkot) as a world is referred to which had never existed in this form nor probably ever would.

Here, too, the question arises of the relationship between the total design and the individual analyses, the system and its parts. It is surprising, for example, how in the end the 'bourgeois' group of small land-owners appears as the bearers of the ideals advocated in Damages, and perhaps even more surprising how tractates which do not fit in the system (Eduyot and Abot) are eliminated. 'Neither tractate permits the sorts of exegesis or historical analysis attempted in these projects of the history of Mishnaic law; and we therefore ignore them, because we have no contribution to make toward the analysis of their formal and historical character' (p. 18). Most impressive of all,
and this is valid not only for Damages but also for the other sedarim, is the way Neusner uses as bricks for his system details which he does not find in a seder, or which he finds but would not have expected; in short, how he derives the most important elements of his system from negation. However fascinating such a grand design may be and will also remain, in the end the question of its premises and criteria confronts us more urgently than ever.

The printing of the four volumes of Appointed Times and Damages was so protracted that by the time the reader reaches the end of Damages he lags far behind the author’s published state of research. (Vol. V appeared in 1985; the prefaces of the fifth volume of Appointed Times, as also of Damages, not only date from 21 September 1979 but—like the prefaces and introductions of the other volumes—are largely identical.) The synopsis of all the systems of the six sedarim of the Mishnah appeared already in 1981 under the title Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah.

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