This is a collection of thirteen rather heterogeneous articles on the history of Judaea in Hellenistic and Roman times. A list of their titles will demonstrate their variety: 'When did Scythopolis become a Greek City?'; 'The Hasmoneans—Logistics, Taxation and Constitution'; 'Jewish Urban Communities and Greek Influences'; 'The Troopers of Zamaris'; 'Ein Targhuna' (this article actually concerns Cyrenaica); 'The Roman Colony of Ptolemais—'Ake and its Territory'; 'Royal and Imperial Estates in the Sharon and Samaria'; 'For Whom did Apollodorus write the Poliorcetika?'; 'Tineius Rufus and Julius Severus'; 'The Roman Villa in Judaea: A Problem'; 'The Beginnings of the Limes Palaeestinae'; 'Syria-Palaestina as a Province of the Severan Empire'; 'Romanization and Indigenism in Judaea'. The origins and date of composition of these articles have to be surmised by the reader either by diligent research in periodicals over the last thirty years or from their internal evidence, since the author only notes that they were written 'in the course of teaching and after retirement... Not all have been published previously; others have been published, chiefly in Hebrew' (p. vii); my own deduction is that some of the studies belong, with minimal updating, to the 1960s (Chapter 1) and the late 1970s (Chapter 2), while others (e.g. Chapter 6) may be much more recent. All of them contain a mixture of literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence with informed speculation, on a variety of issues in the history of the Jews in relation to the Hellenistic world and Roman Empire.

MARTIN GOODMAN


This is a well-written, clear, densely argued and minutely documented history of the four years in which a Jewish state maintained its independence from the Roman Empire until the final catastrophe of A.D. 70. With elegance and force, Price describes the internal collapse of the government of Jerusalem and the disastrous disintegration of the rebel movement into competing factions. It is a familiar story, but it is told here with an attention to detail never previously attempted, and a praiseworthy attempt to clarify a narrative of events whose unfolding, unusually in studies of the ancient world, can be followed almost from month to month over the whole period.

Much of this history takes the form of an assemblage of evidence from Josephus and an explication of its significance. Price's use of Josephus' account is sensible and sensitive; on the whole, he relies on the detailed narrative but discounts Josephus' assignations of blame. But he also illuminates many points by referring to the allusions to these events in later rabbinic sources, and he makes sound use of the numismatic evidence. He is a classicist by training, and his general understanding of classical historiography and the wider history of the early Roman Empire stand him in good stead.

It is no criticism of Price's work to say that no new overall conception of the Jewish revolt emerges from this study. The mass of references to secondary literature on almost every page shows how well-trodden every aspect of this subject has become; even most of the subjects tackled in the fourteen appendices are traditional topics for students of Josephus' writings. Inevitably there are many details on which a different view could be taken but, to his credit, Price always directs the reader to studies which offer different interpretations, even if he does not himself always explain why he thinks they are wrong.
The impression that Price's historical approach is admirably cautious is explained by the origins of the book in a doctoral thesis (p. xi). What Price does not mention there, but perhaps might usefully have said, is that his thesis was submitted some five years or so ago and that in some respects he has been overtaken by other publications, not least my own, on the subject of the ruling class of Judaea. Since Price's study was entirely independent, our broad agreement on the main issues may perhaps be taken as an indication that we may both be correct, but that may be over-optimistic. To Price's credit, some bibliography up to 1991 has been added to a work conceived in the mid-1980s, but most such additions are only included for Price to express disagreement with them; in this respect his expressed desire to avoid loading his work with unnecessary references and excessively harsh polemics cannot be considered entirely successful.

The value of Price's book lies, then, in its thorough, detailed, level-headed and clear description of an exceptionally important period of Jewish history. The book should be much used and quarried for many years.

MARTIN GOODMAN


This major reassessment of the military dimension of Roman imperialism has now achieved an early revised (and slightly augmented) edition, and well deserves notice in these pages. Isaac adopts and justifies a regional approach but embeds this in a wider perspective. The Roman east was a vast area and the power of Parthia/Persia lurked in the background; as a particularly well-documented part of it, and one for which the author knows the archaeology exceptionally well, the Roman occupation of Palestine forms here a subject of intensive investigation. The principal arguments of his book—that the Roman army was concerned mainly with repressive policing rather than with lines of defence, that frontiers did not matter much, that extensions of Roman power were always on the cards and that the emperors nursed no 'grand strategy'—have an important bearing on the framework within which any historian of Palestine operates. From the Jewish evidence Isaac argues that there was much more continuous banditry and marauding than scholars have recognized, in other provinces, too, and even during the second and third centuries. He does not, however, undervalue the specific, indeed unique, religious elements which fuelled the Jewish revolts, and his account of the interplay between banditry and religious dissidence is valuable even if it cannot get to the bottom of this complicated matter. For the Talmudic period, his exploitation of rabbinic stories which reveal the impact of Rome will be a novelty to many Romanists and this material undoubtedly offers a fresh angle on the occupation. He is particularly instructive on the level of popular support and shelter often made available to bandits, and on listim in the Talmud. Some day, perhaps, the Talmudists will do the spadework necessary to make possible a truly critical use of Amoraic traditions and to get us beyond the anecdotal. How are we to decide what to make, for example, of the story in Pesikta de Rav Kahana (with a parallel in TJ Terumot) about the occasion when R. Abbahu was seated next to a dog by his host and then told to honour the dog because it had saved his wife from rape by biting off a marauder's genitals? For the moment, it is good to bring such material into the arena, as Isaac has done, even at the risk of seeming credulous. He is fortunate, moreover, in that his concern is more with atmosphere and attitude than with the historicity of any specific