DSS, Codex Vaticanus, the Lucianic MSS of the LXX, the Vetus Latina and the targums), Begg has produced a systematic and painstaking analysis covering the period from Jehoshaphat to Gedaliah. The work itself brings together a number of previously published articles, all of which have been updated and revised in the light of subsequent scholarship, most notably the various works on Josephus’ biblical paraphrase by Feldman.

The primary questions for consideration by Begg are as follows: which biblical and non-biblical sources did Josephus use; what factors influenced his use or non-use of material; in which text form(s) did Josephus have the material evidence; what literary methods did Josephus use to rewrite the evidence and how successful were they; was Josephus’ rewriting of the later monarchical period a distinctive one; and, finally, what messages might Josephus’ rewriting have conveyed to his audience of Jews and non-Jews? On the whole, the answers to these points are well argued and cogent.

However, unlike the majority of the work, the introduction is brief and fails to discuss various important facets of the text, which could have been usefully stated at the outset. Not least amongst these ‘facets’ is the question of Josephus’ audience. On Josephus’ intended audience for Antiquities, Begg refers the reader to a discussion in Feldman that presents the view of a ‘double audience’—that is, both Jewish and gentile—without outlining his own arguments for adopting this position (p. 3, n. 8). Where Begg identifies aspects of the text that ‘reveal’ a gentile or Jewish audience, his arguments are occasionally questionable. For example, Begg postulates that the omission of references to Jewish anti-Paganism ‘clearly seems intended . . . to cater for gentile readers’—despite the fact that this theme could be equally important for a Jewish readership (p. 46).

In summary, Begg finds that Josephus used his paraphrase of the biblical material covering the later Monarchic period as a ‘purposeful vehicle’ to convey messages to the Jewish and non-Jewish world, sharing many of the conclusions reached by Feldman in his work on Josephus’ biblical paraphrase. Begg concludes that, on the whole, Josephus stuck closely to his biblical sources, rarely inventing wholly new episodes, although he did utilise four distinct ‘rewriting techniques’. The questions that were outlined in the introduction could perhaps have been answered more explicitly, and a discussion of the nature of the texts available to Josephus would have been constructive—it is not explained in what manner Josephus might have known or used targumic evidence, for instance.

The study is best described as an examination of the textual relationship between Josephus and his various biblical sources, with less attention paid to the implications of the (unique) Josephan version. It should be commended for its clarity and comprehensiveness, whilst raising many interesting features of Josephus’ rewriting which will, undoubtedly, inspire further research. The volume also contains a substantial and wide-ranging bibliography.

University of Southampton

Steve Taverner


This collection of articles, all previously published at one time or another during the past thirty years, spans a wide variety of issues in the history of the Jews in the Roman world. As with other volumes in the Variorum series, the articles are reprinted in the original format and with the original pagination ‘in order to avoid confusion’.
(This admirable concern for authenticity is not advanced in this case by the misdating in the contents list of one article; for the date of article V on the ban on circumcision as a cause of Bar Kokhba's rebellion read 1995, not 1975.)

Some of the articles are straightforward history (e.g. IV on the Jews of Spain and VIII on the observance of Jewish festivals), but most concentrate more specifically on the legal basis of the political actions recorded in ancient narrative accounts. The attempt to find legal categories may seem optimistic at times. As Rabello himself states in his discussion of Herod's condemnation of members of his family (article 11), the king expected to get his way regardless of legal niceties. It is useful to have these scattered articles easily accessible in one volume.

Oriental Institute, Oxford


The use of cited texts within the earliest Christian writings is here compared with the position in contemporary Judaism and the Greek philosophical schools. Paul clings to the role of exclusive ‘text-broker’ to his congregation, a stance said to be derived from that of the Jewish guardians of scripture, known to us from the Gospels as ‘the scribes’. This attitude stands in sharp contrast to the ‘strikingly egalitarian textual polity’ of the Qumran sectarians, who made study of texts a requirement for all the community. Paul, as well as Ps.-Barnabas and Clement (who evince a skilful use of florilegia), are engaged in an ‘act of textual aggression’, namely prising power and authority away from the Jewish scribal caste. In so doing they are following in the footsteps of Jesus, whose threat to the interpretative monopoly of the scribes ‘led, in part, to his death’.

H. Gregory Snyder offers some original insights into the character of late Second Temple Judaism. What he sees as the intense reading and writing activity of the Essene sect based at Qumran is explained by the attachment to Jubilees, a text that places a premium on writing. Copying texts may have been a religious obligation for the sect. It was also an aid to study and a means of maintaining literacy in the community. These conclusions rest on a number of untested assumptions. Snyder makes a very sharp distinction between this Qumran sect and all the other Jews in Israel at the time, whose leaders apparently made considerable use of translations of the Biblical books into Greek and Aramaic, which, like other texts in antiquity, were ‘performed’ rather than read. They also rewrote the Bible in various ways, and these ‘re-presentations’ (such as Ps.-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities) were performed as entertainment at banquets held in the synagogues. This imaginative reconstruction, like much of the treatment of Judaism, goes far beyond the available evidence.

The chapter on Jewish and Christian groups is preceded by four short chapters on the reading and writing practices of Stoics, Epicureans, Peripatetics and Platonists. The two parts of the book do not really interact, but in a concluding chapter Snyder outlines a general theory. At one extreme a text may function as a teacher (Philo is held up as an example of this type; he is said to have intended his writings as a ‘virtual classroom’); at the other extreme, the teacher embodies or mediates the text (the other Jewish teachers, including Paul, are located here). Most of the philosophers belong in a broad intermediate category in which teachers and texts stand in a more balanced relationship to each other.