

which hitherto has not received the attention it deserves. Feldman has done more than most to counter the general neglect of Josephus as a biblical interpreter, and this commentary provides a very helpful format for bringing together, in particular, the insights of many of Feldman's previous studies of character portraits in Josephus' Pentateuch.

The task of understanding Josephus as a biblical interpreter—and especially of the Pentateuch—is a daunting one. It requires not only the ability to make sense of Josephus in his social, literary and political contexts as a late first-century Hellenistic-Jewish writer, but also of the wider world of 'rewritten Bible' which Josephus inhabits. *Antiquities* 1–4 raises fundamental questions about the nature of Josephus' sources and traditions as well as his own position as a writer and interpreter: which versions of the 'words of Moses' did he know; was he familiar with other sources of rewritten Bible; to what extent did he share in the culture of interpretation that is identified with rabbinic tradition; how did he view himself as an interpreter of Scripture? This commentary series states as its first principle that it does not intend to provide the last word on the interpretation of Josephus. And it is perhaps in that spirit that Feldman's introduction to *Antiquities* 1–4, though wasting no words, is very brief (a mere two pages) and does not say much about such questions. According to his introduction, Feldman's Josephus is familiar with 'the original Hebrew version' of the Pentateuch, the LXX, targums and some 'aggadic' traditions, while on matters of Jewish law Josephus' work is presented as being of interest to students of rabbinic literature. When it comes to the commentary, the Masoretic Text provides the usual standard of comparison, when determining the nature of Josephus' distinctive version of the Pentateuch. Much of the commentary highlights agreements and differences between Josephus and other writers, Jewish and non-Jewish, often as a matter of record rather than as evidence of Josephus' familiarity with such traditions—again, perhaps a feature of the open-ended nature of the approach represented by this series. Among Jewish parallel traditions, Feldman gives great attention to rabbinic literature. In doing so, he reflects a long-established and important line in Josephus scholarship, but also one which raises significant methodological problems—not addressed here—about the status of rabbinic evidence for historical enquiries about an earlier period in which rabbinic tradition does not appear to have dominated. By contrast, a work like the Temple Scroll, undoubtedly a product of the Second Temple Period and one of the most important and substantial witnesses to creative interpretation of the Pentateuch, receives very little attention at all.

In accordance with the stated goals of the project, the commentary also offers notes on the Greek and difficulties of interpretation, draws attention to major themes in Josephus' writings, and highlights characteristics of Josephus' work that appear to point to a hellenised Roman readership. Equipped with extensive indexes and bibliography, this volume is also testament to Feldman's service to Josephus scholarship in providing the reference tools for future generations.

University of Southampton

SARAH PEARCE

PHILIP A. HARLAND, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2003. xv, 399 pp. £12.01. ISBN 0800635892.

Harland's aim in this study is to 'provide a new—even revolutionary—angle of vision on the lives of both early Christian congregations and Jewish synagogues' by viewing them against the backdrop of the epigraphic evidence for pagan associations—i.e. the groups that go by titles such as *koinon*, *synodos* and *thia-*

*sos*. To that end, the work is divided into three parts: a general introduction dealing mostly with the composition, purpose and activities of associations, a central section ('Imperial Cults and Connections among Associations') in which the main focus is on the honours, cultic and other, paid by pagan associations to Roman emperors, their relations and officials, and a concluding chapter on synagogues and congregations. Although the title of the volume suggests that Harland's enquiry will cover the whole Mediterranean area, the focus is much narrower, namely, western Asia Minor. Chronologically, the study is not open-ended either, its avowed limits being 27 BCE (the inception of the Principate) and 161 CE (the death of the emperor Antoninus Pius). These geographical and chronological restrictions make considerable sense given Harland's main priority. This is to contextualise those Christian writings which enjoy a connection with early imperial Asia Minor—e.g. the Apocalypse of St John and 1 Peter.

Throughout the volume Harland loudly proclaims his own originality and noisily berates for their limitations many earlier scholars, some of them (e.g. J. Juster) of towering stature. But how original is Harland's own work, and does this study really make as serious a contribution to our understanding of Christian and Jewish communities in the early imperial period as the extravagant endorsements on the back cover of the book claim? As far as synagogues go, there is no 'new picture' here. In the area of Diaspora Judaism, Harland's scholarship is out of date: originality can be claimed by him only because he takes as his target an outmoded view of the subject, ignores a great deal of modern research and grossly exaggerates scholarly neglect of epigraphic material. Does any serious student of the Diaspora of the early imperial period these days believe that synagogues were 'isolated and introverted communities' jealously guarding their exclusivity in order to defend themselves against 'the syncretistic influences of an alien, Greco-Roman environment' (p. 8)? Harland's brief literature survey (*ibid.*) concludes with P. Trebilco's *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, published in 1991. But since that date a great deal of important work has been published on the Diaspora—e.g. J. Lieu, J. North and T. Rajak (eds), *The Jews among Pagans and Christians* (London, 1992), and M. Goodman (ed.), *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford, 1998), the latter containing an essay of particular relevance to Harland's theme—namely, A. Baumgarten's 'Graeco-Roman Voluntary Associations and Ancient Jewish Sects'. Had Harland taken into account works such as these, he would have realised that his own claims about the originality of his viewpoint were preposterous. As a result of the intense work on Jewish inscriptions that has taken place in the past decade, it is now accepted that Jewish communities formed an integral part of Graeco-Roman society, their *synagogai* (gatherings) heavily influenced in their structure, their behaviour and their ideology by the institutions, public and private, of the Greek city.

With regard to the Jewish epigraphic material that Harland discusses, there is a worrying lack of precision. In the well-known synagogal donor inscription from Akmonia in Phrygia (*MAMA* VI, no. 264 = Lifshitz no. 33), the Roman provincial aristocrat Julia Severa is not the recipient of honours from the Jewish community, as Harland twice asserts (pp. 6 and 228). It is the three synagogal office-holders who had restored the prayer-house (*oikos*), once erected by her, who are awarded a golden shield. Equally inaccurate is Harland's description of the famous donor inscription from the synagogue at Stobi in Macedonia (*CIJ* I<sup>2</sup> no. 694 = Lifshitz no. 10). Here we do *not* have a Jewish community honouring a benefactor, as stated on p. 32, but a prominent member of the Jewish community recording his benefactions to it and setting out his property rights in respect of the synagogue buildings. This misinterpretation of evidence well known to me makes me uneasy about the reliability of Harland's handling of material with which I am unfamiliar. How much of that has been skewed to bring it into alignment with his thesis? The lack of attention to detail that is evident throughout this

book, seen first in the mis-spelling of Paestum, Thyatira and Cenchreae on the map that follows the contents page, does not inspire confidence.

Those with an interest in the functioning of the imperial cult will find Harland's central section helpful. Particularly clear is his explanation of the various forms that emperor worship might take, and the documentation is rich. How useful students of Christian origins will find this book I am not competent to judge. Those with a serious interest in Diaspora Judaism will find nothing new here.

Edinburgh

MARGARET H. WILLIAMS

JUDITH M. LIEU, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity* (Studies of the New Testament and Its World). T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 2002. xiii, 263 pp. £32.75. ISBN 0-567-08909-6.

The volume consists of twelve essays written over a period of twelve years. All but two have been previously published, and they appear here in more or less the form in which they were originally published or delivered (the two unpublished pieces were originally addresses, one an inaugural address). They have very broadly as their central theme the issue of early Christian identity, particularly as this expressed itself in relation to the Judaism out of which it emerged.

Lieu divides the volume up into four parts. In the first part, entitled 'Disappearing Boundaries', she 'focuses on models in the historical reconstruction of early Jewish and Christian separation and interaction' (p. 3). In 'The Parting of the Ways: Theological Construct or Historical Reality', which originally appeared in 1994 and is probably the most widely quoted of the essays published here, Lieu argues for the inadequacy of the model of the parting of the ways for speaking about Jewish-Christian separation. It carries, she argues, a good deal of problematic theological freight, and from an historical perspective, while acknowledging variety within both religions, too easily assumes an abstract or universal conception of both. 'I would suggest', she writes, 'that the abstract or universal is, certainly for our period, problematic. What we need is a more nuanced analysis of the local and specific before we seek to develop models which will set them within a comprehensive overview' (p. 18). Lieu is convinced that the model of the parting of the ways has tended to play up the importance of the role of the God-fearers, semi-Jewish figures who supposedly provide a natural audience for Christian missionaries, a point upon which Acts is explicit. In 'Do God-fearers make Good Christians?', Lieu questions this assumption, and in 'The Race of the God-Fearers' goes on to show how the designation 'God-fearer' or 'God-fearing' was used by both Jew and Christian in apologetic self-presentations. In the final essay in the section, 'Ignoring the Competition', Lieu looks at the question as to why Christians did not pay as much attention to apparently competing religious cults as scholars have done, in the process pointing up the somewhat abstract, biblical presentation of Jews in these early Christian texts. For Lieu the Christians live in two worlds: a real world of competing cults only rarely glimpsed in the pages of their writings, and a more abstract imagined world constructed in their texts.

The second section is entitled 'Women and Conversion in Early Christianity and Judaism'. In the first essay Lieu examines the often glibly assumed idea that women converted to Christianity in large numbers because the latter was somehow more receptive to them. In particular she emphasises the fact that ancient Christian (and Jewish) texts about women were written by men and so have to be read in an appropriate manner. In the second essay she examines the degree to which the importance of the rite of circumcision diminished the covenantal status of women within Judaism and the