Europos. He investigates which languages can be connected to which ethnic groups in the city, and notes a general lack of Iranian and Semitic languages during Parthian rule. Greek seems to have been ‘the veritable lingua franca of the town’ (p. 249). Whether this common use of the Greek language, however, facilitated an exchange between the various cults attested in the city must remain a matter of debate.

Leah Di Segni provides the reader with a clear and detailed description of the survival of epigraphic Greek up to the early Islamic period. She mainly uses inscriptions from various churches in the Eastern Levant. This is supplemented by some thoughts on the use of Greek in Islamic inscriptions. She notes a ‘phenomenon of cultural resistance’ (p. 366) to linguistic change. The question of language and linguistic ability almost serves as a *cantus firmus* of the volume as several contributions challenge a simple notion of the often-employed term bilingualism.

Already in the introduction Fergus Millar asks whether the term should not be replaced by ‘dual-linguism’ as this might describe the various aspects of ‘language contact’ more adequately. Miller and other contributors to the volume (e.g. Tonio Richter) observe that it is possible for a society to employ two languages, while individual bilingualism can be absent in large parts of the population. These methodological considerations show that each case needs to be assessed individually and that findings from one location are not necessarily transferable to other cities. This is an important collection and a required reading for anybody interested in the period. The scholar of Semitics, in particular, will learn much about the interplay of Hebrew and related Semitic languages with the Greek language.

Anselm C. Hagedorn
Humboldt Universität zu Berlin

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This book began when the author was appointed to deliver the ‘Grinfield Lectures on the Septuagint’ at Oxford in 1995–1996. She had approached the task as did Arnoldo Momigliano during his lectureship in 1979–1980 as one seeking to talk about the Septuagint without mentioning it. What Rajak and her predecessor meant was that they wanted to approach the subject from an altogether different angle than that of the biblical scholar, who is too often the only voice in the field of Septuagint studies. Though she modestly claims not to have the wit or scholarship of Momigliano, Rajak brings her own vast learning as an historian of Hellenistic-Roman Diaspora Judaism that, this reviewer thinks, could stand alongside anyone else’s.

The book in many ways reads like a treatise on the Diaspora Judaism of the late Second Temple period and less like a typical work on the Septuagint. The latter are usually concerned on the one hand with textual criticism, and on the other with reception. Rajak sounds an optimistic note early on: ‘I venture to suggest that there is a great deal we can
take out of the text without worrying about textual obstacles’ (p. 20). She is of course right, but no one has yet done it in the way she does. She encourages the weary of heart not to conceive of the Septuagint as a complex organism the explanation of which lies only in the realm of specialist studies, but she also understands how the ‘complications can be crippling’ and how they have in fact ‘paralysed many’ (pp. 19–20). As a text critic myself, and thus a contributor to the Stygian (mis-)perceptions that surround the Septuagint, I welcome Rajak’s attempt to save the Greek Bible from studies (some of which I have written) that tend to create the impression that the Septuagint is a corpus useful only for biblical text criticism. The book opens on the topic with which it seems every writer on the Septuagint feels compelled to begin: The Letter of Aristeas. Against several recent repudiations of the historical value of Aristeas, Rajak’s is a more sophisticated and careful reading, leading us to a cautious appreciation for the work’s historical merits. But as Rajak shows, the so-called legend is much more than a source for the Septuagint’s origins (which is finally mentioned only in the 300\(^\text{th}\) paragraph, in a work of 327) and is instead ‘an embodiment of Alexandrian Jewish identity, a literary vehicle precisely for its collective memory’ (p. 51). Her reading of Letter of Aristeas, which plays an important role in her discussion for the first several chapters, goes beyond the very narrow concern of the actual translation; for this reason alone her book should be of great interest to historians of Judaism and classical antiquity. She does not hesitate to engage in some recent debates among Septuagintalists either. She persuasively debunks the so-called ‘interlinear model’ that has captivated the field in recent years. The model claims that the Septuagint translation was never meant to be used apart from the Hebrew, but was intended to be used as a supplement, as something like a crutch. Rajak gives six compelling reasons why, for all its merits, this model is unsatisfactory (pp. 143–52). One of these is that it is not necessary to presume the translation had only one single purpose; but the linguistic makeup of the Septuagint — it can in fact be read as an intelligible text apart from the Hebrew, and most of its structure would seem to suggest the translators failed if they intended an interlinear project — also demolishes the theory.

In the fifth chapter Rajak presses her post-colonial reading of the Septuagint’s function, arguing that the Greek Bible, as her corpus is named in the subtitle, became a form of cultural resistance. The translators of the Hebrew Scriptures and those who authored the original Greek compositions included in the Septuagint made choices in their renderings that the historian can exploit for insight into their attitudes to power. Two curious features of this argument are that the Hebrew Bible, as Rajak admits, already includes much of the subversion Rajak sees in the Septuagint; and that the author depends largely upon books in the Greek Bible which are only ‘biblical’ because Christians decided to include them together with the translations in later canonical collections. Rajak criticises the Christian bias of many Septuagint studies, but then fully accepts as part of the Septuagint books that were independent Jewish-Hellenistic works with no promise that they would ever become ‘biblical’. Still, Rajak’s argument is worth hearing, and should, this reviewer hopes, prompt
more investigations along these lines in an otherwise staid discussion on the function of the Septuagint in those first centuries. Rajak concludes that ‘the Greek Bible could serve as an effective manual for life under foreign rule, above all for those living in a country “not their own”’ (p. 208). Rajak’s rebels have created documents that would achieve accommodation to their Greek culture on the one hand, while preserving their religious and cultural identity on the other. Chapters six and seven treat the uses of Scripture in and the biblical culture of Hellenistic Judaism; chapter eight asks how Greeks and Romans encountered the Septuagint; and chapter nine’s subject is the Greek Bible between Jews and Christians.

The book is produced well, but there are a number of references in the footnotes that do not appear in the bibliography (e.g. Atikken 1999, Olszowy-Schlanger 1999, Grabbe 1988, etc.), and sometimes the author mentions the argument or comment by another without providing a reference for the reader to follow up (e.g. ‘Willy Peremans notes…’, p. 138). These minor quibbles aside, Rajak has made an invaluable contribution, showing clearly that, although the Septuagint may have been, for most of modern research, the reserve of biblical scholars, it deserves the attention of Jewish and classical historians, too.

T.M. Law
ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, OXFORD


This volume focuses upon the fascinating and often entertaining genre of talmudic legal narratives and makes some bold claims for re-imagining law and its relationship to narrative. Barry Wimpfheimer argues and interprets against the (largely) post-talmudic tendency to treat the complex narrative and legal tapestry of talmudic discourse as a sort of malady requiring a cure by sorting: separating the aggadah from the halakhah as if they could be distilled from the text, rendering the apparently incoherent and disorderly coherent and neat. He argues that the genre of the legal narrative is emblematic of talmudic discourse more broadly, and that both embody what he calls the ‘messiness of life itself’ (p. 2). Rather than attempting to tidy up the apparent chaos through categorisation, he seeks to read the complexity, and navigates its many facets as conduits towards a refreshing richness and depth of meaning. The superficiality of what we might term a separatist approach to Talmud ultimately pales in comparison with the multi-dimensionality of Wimpfheimer’s reading.

Significant contributions are evident in three broad areas, which might be termed: theory, praxis and theme. As concerns theory, Barry Wimpfheimer’s treatment of a wide range of theoretical approaches to gemara, as well as theories related to the problem of legal and narrative genres, is clear, readable and engaged. The reader has a strong sense of a scholar passionately in debate with major thinkers, who presents potentially