If these are personal quibbles and matters of relatively minor importance, there is one omission that is of much greater significance. The Hebrew used in Jewish prayer texts from the biblical, through the rabbinic and medieval, and into the modern world is undoubtedly of singular significance for the history of the language. Its vocabulary, grammar, structure and style differed from period to period, from group to group, and from rite to rite. A few scattered references to liturgy and prayers occur in the index, but, apart from a serious treatment of the liturgical Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls (2:558–61), there is little coverage of the topic that can in any way be regarded as adequate. Geoffrey Khan makes brief allusion to this inadequacy, and to that pertaining to aspects of medieval Hebrew, in his introduction (p. viii) and promises that the online version will be updated on an annual basis. It must therefore be supposed that my gripe about liturgical Hebrew will soon be addressed.

That having been said, there is much here for which to be grateful. The general editor, his associates and the contributors are to be congratulated for producing an outstanding work of reference that will be found universally useful for many years.

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There cannot be many scholars in academia worldwide who have attained renown as cultural and geographical historians, archaeologists, rabbinic leaders, liturgists, and institutional directors. If there are a few such, the chances that they have succeeded in publishing many seminal items, inspiring the younger generation, and maintaining good relations with a wide circle of colleagues, must be small indeed. If one adds to the required set of qualifying characteristics an ability to operate congenially within numerous religious and educational contexts – inside the Jewish world, as well as outside of it – the resultant list will not require more than the fingers of one hand for counting.

To his great credit, Lee Levine is one of such a small band. Having received his higher education in New York from a number of highly distinguished rabbis and scholars at Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and later at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (where he established close ties with Yigael Yadin), he and his wife, Mira, settled in Israel in 1971. He has, since then, taught and given academic
direction at the Hebrew University, and at what is now the Schechter Institute for Jewish Studies, both in Jerusalem, and has written or edited 23 volumes and almost two hundred articles. His most distinguished contributions have been his volumes *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Publications, 1989), *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (Yale University Press, 2000) and *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period* (Jewish Publication Society, 2002).

The current volume celebrates Levine’s lifetime’s achievements and is a worthy tribute from a great variety of scholars in the numerous fields in which the honorand has made his name. The English essays are divided into four parts, covering Hellenism, Christianity and Judaism; Art and Archaeology: Jerusalem and Galilee; The Rabbis; and The Ancient Synagogue. Those written in Hebrew are subsumed under the headings of Sages and Patriarchs; and Archaeology, Art, and Historical Geography. There is (more the pity) no more than the briefest of biographies, as well as a lengthy and helpful list of Levine’s publications, and a list of abbreviations, but the four editors have neither compiled indexes nor provided guidance as to the affiliations and interests of the 32 contributors.

Obviously, it will be useful for readers of this journal to know something about each contribution, but it will not be possible in the present context, nor perhaps even necessary given the scholarly credentials of the essayists, to do more than offer a list of who has tackled what. In Part 1, Albert I. Baumgarten compares Arnualdo Momigliano and Elias Bickerman; Shaye J.D. Cohen writes about the death of the mother and her seven sons in Maccabees; while the late Sean Freyne reconsiders Jesus and the Galilean *Am ha-Aretz*. There are also essays on Hellenism and Judaism by Erich S. Gruen; Porphyry on Judaism by Pieter W. van der Horst; the Bishops of Sepphoris in the fourth and fifth centuries by Hillel J. Newman; and the humanistic evaluation of religion by E.P. Sanders.

The topics tackled in the second part touch on ritual purity after 70 C.E (David Amit and Yonatan Adler); the tomb of Jason (the late Dan Barag); the Hippo-Stadium/Amphitheatre in Jerusalem (Amos Kloner and Sherry Whetstone); Aramaic ostraca of the late Second Temple period (Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron); the Bar-Kochba tetradrachm (Elishева Revel-Neher); and burial practices in Bet She’arim (Zeev Weiss). Perhaps not surprisingly, the next part is the longest in the volume and contains nine essays on the Rabbis. Aaron Demsky, Richard Kalmin and Hayim Lapin examine, respectively, Abbaye’s family origins, the miracle of the Septuagint in rabbinic and Christian literature, and rabbis as judges in later Roman Palestine, while the topics of early rabbinic homiletics, Judah Ha-Nasi’s relations with Babylonia, and the religious orientation of non-rabbis in second-century Palestine, are discussed by David Levine, Aharon Oppenheimer and Adiel Schremer, respectively. Daniel R. Schwartz writes on attitudes to martyrdom while the
brothers Schwartz – Joshua and Seth – deal with the geography and theology of the Sinai mountain and desert, and a comparison of rabbinic and Roman views of honour.

Given Levine’s major interest in the early history of the synagogue, the fourth part is especially appropriate here. Rachel Hachlili and Jodi Magness both write about Dura-Europos while Leonard V. Rutgers explains how the synagogue was seen as the foe in early Christian literature. The essay by Eric M. Myers focuses on the problem of the scarcity of synagogues in the early Christian centuries with special reference to Synagogue 1 at Nabratein.

In the first part of the Hebrew section, Isaiah Gafni offers his thoughts on the epistles of the patriarchs in Talmudic literature and Moshe David Herr on the formation and fate of aggadic Midrashim. The second part of the Hebrew section moves on to broader cultural matters. The history and geography of Gader, Migdal Gader and Hammat Gader occupy the attention of Motti Arad, while Rina Talgam has comments on the Zodiac and Helios in the synagogue. The question of Herod’s alleged megalomania, with special reference to the recent book by Kasher and Witztum (King Herod: A Persecuted Persecutor, Walter de Gruyter, 2007), is discussed by Ehud Netzer, while Oded Irshai concerns himself with the rabbinic identification of the Bezer in the wilderness mentioned in Deuteronomy 4:43.

As is to be expected with such treatments, there is no lack of helpful plates, drawings and diagrams, and the essays are closely argued and amply annotated. Students of the early periods of Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism will find much to interest and enlighten them in this volume. Given Levine’s impressive contribution to the development of just such interest and enlightenment, that is precisely how it should be.

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The vocabulary of the Septuagint often seems quite distinctive, although less distinctive than was once thought, before the discovery of the Greek papyri of Egypt revealed, thanks to the work of Adolf Deissmann and others, how often this was an illusion due to the limited and biased nature of the comparative material. In recent decades there has been a great deal of research into the influence of the Greek Pentateuch on later biblical books, and the influence of biblical Greek in general on other, Jewish and non-Jewish, literature. Still, there is room for a great deal more work. The