

(however the term ‘modern’ may be defined in various contexts). Indeed, comparisons between ‘now’ and ‘then’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ are raised frequently throughout the book. Nonetheless, there is little discussion of the author’s own critical perspective or how she situates her work vis-à-vis current scholarship on women and gender in antiquity (with a notable exception quoted above). Unfortunately, N. chose not to expound on recent redefinitions of gender roles that have been often raised within feminist (re)interpretations of antiquity — though not only there — or how they have helped reshape old-standing scholarly assumptions on ancient women’s lives over the last fifty years. Thus the reader remains generally uninformed as to what extent the author’s own viewpoint could have occasionally drawn on this varied and growing body of literature, or to what extent she is critical of it. Nonetheless, the book offers a comprehensive yet succinct review of women in antiquity appealing to a wide readership due to its excellent illustrations and flowing narrative.

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Jason von Ehrenkrook, *Sculpting Identity in Flavian Rome: (An)Iconic Rhetoric in the Writings of Flavius Josephus*, Society of Biblical Literature, Early Judaism and its Literature 33, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011. 226 pp. ISBN: 978-1-58983-622-8.

This book is a revised version of the author’s dissertation submitted at the University of Michigan, under the principal supervision of Gabriele Boccaccini. The hard work, careful scholarship, extensive references to the secondary literature, and attentive reading of the primary sources that characterize a first rate PhD thesis are evident throughout. The work is also typical of scholarship written in the aftermath of the “literary turn.” There is a strong focus on rhetorical analysis of Josephus’ works, on reading them against the background of Flavian Rome, and on insisting that much of what Josephus wrote concerning Jewish attitudes towards sculptures should not be taken as straightforward evidence of reality. Ehrenkrook (hereafter E.) intends to ‘problematize’ widely held scholarly views concerning absolute Jewish opposition to sculptures (e.g. 17, 64, 101-102) with a demonstration of the complexity of the matter (e.g. 5, 63, 97, 172). His goal is to show that Jewish rejection of statues was not a mark of disloyalty to the Empire (175).

The book has six chapters: (1) ‘Reading Idolatry in(to) Josephus (1-18);’ (2) ‘Jewish Responses to Images in Cultural Context (19-60);’ (3) ‘The Second Commandment in Josephus and Greco-Roman Jewish Literature (61-98);’ (4) ‘Sculpture and the Politics of Space in the *Bellum Judaicum* (99-136);’ (5) ‘Idealizing an Aniconic Past in the *Antiquitates Judaicae* (137-172);’ (6) ‘The Poetics of Idolatry and the Poetics of Identity (173-180).’ Two Appendices (‘Statuary Lexicon in the Josephan Corpus,’ and ‘The Second Commandment in Josephus’) and several indices complete the book.

In the first chapter, E. briefly reviews the history of scholarship on the topic and argues that Josephus is not to be taken as simply describing the situation concerning ancient Jewish views of idolatry, statues in particular, but was ‘shaping unique portraits of aniconism that contribute to larger rhetorical themes within each of his main compositions (4).’ Ancient Jews, E. argues, were embedded in a Greco-Roman discourse concerning iconism, and Josephus’ remarks need to be read with that background in mind (4-5). E. concedes that the archaeological and literary evidence do not quite cohere, but does not intend to offer a definitive answer to that puzzle (16), although he sets out to question the widely held view that up till 70 CE the typical polarization of “Jew” vs. “Image” does not tell the whole story (5).

In Chapter Two, E. analyzes archaeological and epigraphic evidence, including the account of Herod’s eagle in Josephus and concludes that ‘perhaps ... it is not unreasonable to suppose that at least for some Jews the statue was seen as relatively harmless, not necessarily a violation of the

second commandment (25).⁷ E. further suggests that the aniconic period in Jerusalem and Judea, attested to by archaeology, may be a regional phenomenon, not necessarily widespread among other ancient Jews (39), and compares selected Nabatean sites of the first century CE, notable for their nonfigurative art (43). At the same time, an excellent analysis of selected ancient Jewish sources, such as the Epistle of Jeremiah (49-55), shows how fully Jews understood the concepts and rituals associated with statues.

The third chapter takes up the history of exegesis of the second commandment. E. demonstrates that most ancient Jewish authors understood the prohibition as applying not to all images but only to those that were worshipped.

The fourth chapter treats Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*. E. shows that public space in major ancient cities was full of statues. Paul of Acts 17:16 found Athens a 'forest of idols,' and Rome was no different. In accordance with the boundaries of space common in the Greco-Roman world, statues were a mark of sanctity. However, in the *Bellum* Josephus manipulated those boundaries' function so that statues became elements of *profane* space and their *absence* an indication of sanctity (101): the lack of statues in Jerusalem and Judea was thus a mark of the holiness of the place. This may have been an imagined space that did not fully represent reality, but Josephus' Jerusalem in the *Bellum* was, nevertheless, a sculpture-less sacred haven in a world full of images (107). It was precisely this special place and its holy character which, according to Josephus, was desecrated by tyrants such as Herod, Pilate, and Caligula, although ideal Roman rulers, such as Titus, tried to preserve it. In the end, however, the Jewish rebels, whom Josephus detested and blamed for the destruction of the Temple (130-135), were the ones who perpetrated the ultimate violation of the sanctity of Jerusalem.

The fifth chapter takes up a different perspective on images that E. finds in the *Antiquitates Judaicae*. Some Greeks and Romans wrote of an ideal aniconic past: the worship of images was an indication of corruption in every sense of the word. Josephus portrayed the Jews as enjoying a long history free of the worship of images, as a way of linking Jews and Romans, at least with the ancestral Romans who served as the *exempla* of Romanness (138).

As this summary shows, the chapters of the book overlap and do not always merge as a coherent whole. Only in the final chapter, does E. articulate the critical issue that holds his arguments together: Jewish opposition to statuary, especially imperial statues, could be taken as a sign of disloyalty to the Empire (175). Josephus, according to E., needed to show that this Jewish opposition was not subversive from as many possible points of view as he could muster. All this was part of Josephus' attempt to mitigate the increasingly tense relationship between Romans and Jews. It 'marks him as one who remained deeply loyal to his people throughout his literary career in Rome (180).'

E.'s arguments and conclusions depend on his premise that Josephus's works should be read against the background of Flavian Rome. For example, in Chapter Four, the sacred character of Jerusalem as a sculpture-less haven leads E. to a discussion of Roman attempts to preserve that sanctity and of the Jewish rebels who defiled it, culminating in the destruction of the Temple. Yet, while Herod, Pilate, and Caligula defiled that statue-less sanctity, E. has no evidence to show that the rebels introduced statuary into Jerusalem. Therefore, E. has to digress into a discussion of the denunciation of effeminate and licentious 'Greekness' found among authors of that era. He cites Plutarch on Marcus Cato 'that Rome would lose her empire when she had become infected with Greek letters (*Cat. Maj.* 23.2-3).' The memory of Nero's philhellenism still lingered, so that 'Greekness' became considered a measure of illegitimacy in the empire (129-130). It was this effeminate and lustful greed, including cross-dressing, that Josephus attributed to John of Gischala and his followers (*BJ* 4.560-562). Only in this indirect way, by employing an assumption based on Flavian readings drawn from other contexts, can E. make his conclusions fit his argument, mask the missing evidence, and justify Josephus' blaming the rebels for violating Jerusalem's sculpture-less sanctity. Thus E. can conclude that according to Josephus, 'Roman rule need not violate the

limits of power and in fact can serve to reinforce the boundaries of authority that ultimately empower Jews *under* Rome — exemplified in Augustus and, even more so, in Vespasian and Titus (134).’

Chapter Five follows the same pattern as Chapter Four. The Romans idealized their past as a golden age that had been lost with their moral decline (139-142). Josephus’ Moses, as lawgiver of the Jews, created a constitution so excellent that it remained pure and uncorrupted. According to E.’s understanding of the context, Josephus’ summary of Moses’ achievement would ‘undoubtedly’ recall the Spartan Lycurgus, Solon of Athens, and Numa Pompilius of Rome. E. then compares Plutarch’s Numa and Josephus’ Moses, even though he must concede that there is no evidence that Josephus was acquainted with Plutarch, especially as most of the latter’s writings postdate *AJ*. However, E. solves this dilemma: ‘it is certainly reasonable to suppose that the Numa traditions standing behind Plutarch’s biography were well known in literary circles of Flavian Rome and had even left traces on Josephus’ image of Moses as *nomothetēs* (144).’ Context, again — supported by problematic rhetorical markers such as ‘undoubtedly’ and ‘certainly reasonable to suppose’ — supplies the link for which there is no direct evidence. Based on this foundation, E. can argue that both Numa and Moses were associated with legislation prohibiting images, and can conclude that Josephus’ portrayal of the ancient Jewish past echoed traditions of Rome’s aniconic golden age. Moses’ legislation thus is meant to correspond with the Roman notion of *mos maiorum*. Both legal systems collectively maintained societal order, stability, and harmony (172).

E.’s arguments will convince the reader if s/he is willing to accept the premise of a Flavian context for Josephus’ works in order to supply missing evidence to cover gaps in the direct evidence. To his credit, one must note that E. is in excellent company, as this method has proved its value in the works of other scholars.¹ I, however, am left wondering at what point that trend has been stretched too far.

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Botley, Paul, *Learning Greek in Western Europe, 1396-1529, Grammars, Lexica, and Classroom Texts*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 100, Pt. 2, Philadelphia, 2010. 270 pp. ISBN 978-1-60618-002-0.

The revival of ancient Greek in Western Europe appears to have been a decisive turning-point in the history of the Renaissance, and consequently in the progress of Western civilization. After nearly a millennium of occasional lingual and cultural encounters between the Latin West and the Greek East, Greek studies have become a conventional part of the Western educational curriculum since 1396, a phenomenon which cannot to be assumed as self-evident *ipso facto*.

The revival of Greek seems to have lasted about a hundred and thirty years (1396-1529). Without such a lingual and cultural process in the West, the last generations of Byzantine scholars would have had no partners to whom they could transmit Greek heritage, which they had devotedly kept for centuries until that period. The timing of this revival was most fortunate since nearly six decades after the launching of Greek studies in the West, the Greek capital of the East, Constantinople, fell to the Turks (1453). Within a few years the rest of the former Byzantine empire had been conquered, which marks the end of independent Greek culture in the East. Nonetheless, already by that date, a number of able native scholars had been active in the West.

¹ See, for example, J. Edmondson, S. Mason and J. Rives, *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.