

'Talmudic' texts, which can be read in medieval manuscripts, which are secondary. This magnificent volume marks a new era in the study of Judaism in Late Antiquity.

Fergus Millar

Oriental Institute, Oxford

B. Bitton-Ashkelony and A. Kofsky, *Christian Gaza in Late Antiquity*. Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture 3. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004. viii + 247 pp. ISBN 90 04 13868 4.

Late Antique Gazan monasticism is finally getting the attention it deserves as the rising number of dissertations and publications reveals. Let me mention only the recent edition of the voluminous correspondence of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza by François Neyt, Paula de Angelis-Noah and Lucien Regnault, as well as the works of Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, Cornelia Horn, Lorenzo Perrone and Jan-Eric Steppa.¹ The editors of the present collection of essays are already known for their proficiency in this field, especially through their important survey article of Late Antique Gazan monasticism.² They are currently preparing a monograph entitled *The Monastic School of Gaza* (see 'about the authors', 235-6). The present collection of thirteen essays, the third volume of the new Brill series, 'Jerusalem Studies in Religion and Culture', represents a selection of contributions from a conference on Christian Gaza in Jerusalem, October 2000, a conference that, most regrettably, fell victim to the surge of the second Intifada.

A concise introduction (1-4) informs the reader about the birth of the collection and briefly summarizes the papers. The papers progress chronologically from the fourth to the sixth century, and deal not only with monasticism (though that does stand in the spotlight) but also with Gazan and Palestinian Christianity in its late antique pagan setting. As such, the book is a synthesis of a broad spectrum of fields, among them archaeology, art history, classics, history, religious studies and theology. Though no paper is devoted specifically to Gazan Judaism, Jews and Samaritans appear on many a page. Numerous maps and pictures illustrate the archaeological papers. Finally, brief biographies of the authors (235-7), a list of illustrations (239-40), and indices of names (241-3) and places (245-7 [not 249 as indicated in the table of contents]) round off the book.

The very interesting opening essay by Nicole Belayche, 'Pagan Festivals in Fourth-Century Gaza' (5-22), examines the data for public pagan celebrations in the era before the Christianization of the city. In her usual thorough manner (cf. her recent study *Judaea Palaestina*, reviewed in *Scripta Classica Israelica* 22, 2003), she discusses the evidence for Hadrianic panegyrics, the

¹ Barsanuphe et Jean de Gaza. *Correspondance* (SC 426, 427, 450, 451, 468; Paris, 1998-2002); J. Hevelone-Harper, 'Letters to the Great Old Man: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza [Palestine]', (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University 2000); C. Horn, 'Beyond Theology: The Career of Peter the Iberian in the Christological Controversies of Fifth-Century Palestine', (Ph.D. thesis, Catholic University of America 2001); J.-E. Steppa, *John Rufus and the World Vision of Anti-Chalcedonian Culture* (Piscataway, NY 2002); L. Perrone, 'Dissenso dottrinale e propaganda visionaria: le Pleroforie di Giovanni di Maiuma', *Augustinianum* 29 (1989), 451-95.

² B. Bitton-Ashkelony and A. Kofsky, 'Gazan Monasticism in the Fourth-Sixth Centuries', *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 50, 2000, 14-62; id., 'The Monasticism of Gaza in the Byzantine Period', *Cathedra* 96, 2000, 69-110 (Hebrew); cf. A. Kofsky 'Peter the Iberian: Pilgrimage, Monasticism and Ecclesiastical Politics in Byzantine Palestine', *Liber Annus* 47, 1997, 209-22; id., 'Peter the Iberian and the Question of the Holy Places', *Cathedra* 91, 1999, 79-96 (Hebrew); id., 'Aspects of Sin in the Monastic School of Gaza', in J. Assman and G.G. Stroumsa (eds.), *Transformation of the Inner Self in Ancient Religions* (Studies in the History of Religions [Numen Book Series] 83), Leiden 1999, 421-37; id., 'The Byzantine Holy Person: The Case of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza', in M. Poorthuis and J. Schwartz (eds.), *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity* (Jewish and Christian Perspectives 7; Leiden 2004).

consualia, the *Brumalia* and the *Maiouma*, dismissing the possibility of a Gazan origin for the latter, *pace* Franz Cumont *et alii*.

In 'Games and Spectacles in Ancient Gaza: Performances for the Masses Held in Buildings Now Lost', Zeev Weiss collects the literary evidence for the Gazan theater and hippodrome that have not yet been discovered archaeologically (23-39). Archaeologists, geographers and historians of Roman and Byzantine legislation will greatly benefit from Leah di Segni's painstaking investigation of the epigraphic evidence for 'The Territory of Gaza: Notes on Historical Geography' (41-59). Similarly, the survey of 'The Monasteries of Gaza: An Archaeological Review' by Yizhar Hirschfeld (61-88) fills a gaping breach in the history of Byzantine Christianity of the Holy Land. Numerous photos and maps illustrate the remains of once-flourishing Gazan monasticism.

In the wake of Bernard Flusin,³ two articles examine the polemical aspects of two hagiographic compositions by John Rufus. In 'Heresy and Orthodoxy: The Anti-Chalcedonian Hagiography of John Rufus' (89-106), Jan-Eric Steppa analyses the role of the *Plerophoriae* in 'a struggle about history in which the combatants were armed with hagiography' (93). Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony's 'Imitatio Mosis and Pilgrimage in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*' (107-29) deals with John Rufus' *Life of Peter the Iberian*, focusing mainly on two motifs, the Ⲁⲓⲛⲏⲛⲏⲧⲏ (*aksenāyutā*) / Ⲭⲉⲛⲓⲧⲉⲓⲁ ... and the explicit and implicit parallels between Moses and Peter.

In his article, 'The Necessity of Advice: Spiritual Direction as a School of Christianity in the Correspondence of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza' (131-49), Lorenzo Perrone investigates the crucial importance of how surrendering one's own will to the will of God finds its Gazan expression in the practice of seeking spiritual and practical advice from the great fathers of Gazan monasticism.

François Neyt, 'La formation au monastère de l'abbé Séridos à Gaza' (151-63), examines the place of the Bible and the sayings and *vitae* of the desert fathers in monastic education. In the first part he offers examples of the special vigor and actuality of three modes of biblical interpretation (self-identification / figural, allegorical, and moral) in monastic reality. Perhaps the focus on oral education fostered a drive to internalize and literally incorporate the texts in the life-style of the monks. In the second part he shows the significance of the Egyptian monastic teachings to the Gazan traditions and refers briefly to the reading of Evagrius' *Kephalaia Gnostica*.

In a posthumous article, the late Dom Lucien Regnault, 'Moines et laïcs dans la région de Gaza au VIe siècle' (165-72), touches on a crucial issue with regard to the title of this collection. If the most important local Christian leaders did not live in Gaza but in its environment, what was their relation with the local population? This question is all the more interesting since Gazan monasticism differs from Egyptian and Judean monasticism particularly in its geographical proximity to secular civilization. According to Regnault, the concrete tone in the Gazan responses to the questions of laymen reveals that the geographical proximity expresses itself also in a proximity in life (not life-style).

In 'Barsanuphius and John of Gaza and the Origenist Controversy' (173-81), Daniël Hombergen reappraises the significance of the correspondence of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza for understanding the Palestinian dimension of the Origenist controversy, especially the role of Evagrius' writings. Unlike the *Lives of the Monks of Palestine* by Cyril of Scythopolis, the correspondence was written *before* the condemnations of Origen in 543 and 553. Richly annotated and well-written, this reader wished the paper did not end so quickly.

In 'What Happened to the Monophysite Monasticism of Gaza?' (183-94), Aryeh Kofsky speculates about one of the most tantalizing questions regarding Gazan monasticism: how did the transition from staunch anti-Chalcedonianism in the fifth century to Chalcedonianism in the mid-sixth century actually happen? Since there are practically no data for destruction or expulsion or

³ B. Flusin, 'L'Hagiographie palestinienne et la reception du concile de Chalcedoine', in: J.O. Rosenqvist (ed.), *AEIMΩN: Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Uppsala 1996), 24-47.

radical conversion, Kofsky collects a couple of hints for his suggestion that 'an outward Chalcedonian veneer' covered an inward monophysitism. His intriguing hypothesis would also explain how leading monophysite figures could become part of the Chalcedonian Sanctoale.

Somehow related to the thrust of Regnault's paper but not reaching the same depth, Yakov Ashkenazi's 'Sophists and Priests in Late Antique Gaza According to Choricus the Rhetor' (195-208) focuses on the relationship between the ecclesiastical administration in the city and pagan and Christian society, especially the famous school of Gaza.

Finally, Rina Talgam, in 'The *Ekphrasis Eikonos* of Procopius of Gaza: The Depiction of Mythological Themes in Palestine and Arabia During the Fifth and Sixth Centuries' (209-34), compares the depiction of pagan mythological elements in Christian and Jewish mosaics from Gaza (sophisticated composition), Sheikh Zuweid in Sinai (simple reproduction), Madaba and Sepphoris (degeneration).

In general, the quality of the papers is very high and the editors have carefully selected the various contributions. Some readers might have preferred a more detailed introduction that puts the papers in the context of current research. Also cross-references from one paper to another are lacking, most probably due to the missed opportunity of a face-to-face debate. I wonder if the quality and the interconnectedness of the collection could perhaps have been further improved by pre-distributing the papers among the 'participants'.

The main weaknesses of the book are of a technical nature. An index of subjects, scholars or sources would have been much appreciated for such a rich book, especially by time-constrained readers. For example, scholars of Jewish history might be interested in the countless references to Jews and Jewish life in Gaza and Byzantine Palestine without wishing to read through the entire book. Another drawback is the decision in favor of selected bibliographies at the end of each article instead of a cumulative bibliography at the end of the book. These selected bibliographies tend to be repetitive. An updated comprehensive bibliography on Christian Gaza remains a *desideratum*.

Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Judith M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Greco-Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. viii + 370 pp. ISBN 0 19 926289 6.

Judith Lieu has made important contributions to the study of identity patterns in the Greco-Roman world. Her present book, distinguished by a thorough and insightful analysis of wide-ranging literary evidence and suggestions raised in earlier research, will undoubtedly become a key point of reference for any further discussion of the issue. The investigation of Christian self-perceptions is conducted here *vis-à-vis* alternative — Jewish, Greek and Roman — patterns of constructed identities; the book's contribution to the study of Jewish perceptions of identity is especially noteworthy.

Besides the Introduction and Conclusions, the book comprises eight chapters: 'Text and Identity', 'History, Memory, and the Invention of Tradition', 'Boundaries', 'The Grammar of Practice', 'Embodiment and Gender', 'Space and Place', 'The Christian Race' and 'The Other'. As some texts and strategies turn out to be relevant to more than one aspect of the boundary drawing process, a certain overlap of discussion is inevitable. This review will therefore address a number of core topics rather than each chapter separately.

The problems connected to the textual character of the evidence naturally constitute one of the author's *foci* throughout the book. Lieu cautions against presupposing a defined community behind every composition, elaborating on key aspects of the newly created texts: both as reflecting the process of self-definition and as influencing its further phases. Following her predecessors, the