

Egypt. However, if the name was fashionable in Judaea as well, then this explanation, too, is questionable. In other words, historical and religious trends may explain some of the onomastic fashions in Egypt and Palestine, but not all of them. The fact remains that the name Joseph was popular in both areas.

Ilan seems to have overlooked another trend that can be observed in her database when compared with the corpus of Jewish names recorded by Ran Zadok for the pre-Hellenistic period. As Ilan emphasizes in her introduction (4-6), the names of the main biblical heroes Abraham, David and Solomon, Moses and Aaron, and Elijah, were not in use during the Second Temple period. Only the names of secondary heroes were (6), yet even this fact is remarkable, for some of the biblical names found in the *Lexicon* were not in use in pre-Hellenistic times. R. Zadok records only one Simon (the biblical son of Jacob), one Isaac, one Levi, one Saul, a few Benjamins — names which are far more preponderant in Ilan's *Lexicon*. Thus we can trace here the beginning of a new trend. Its cultural background and implications are still to be analysed. In particular, it must be asked whether the renewed popularity of the names of secondary biblical heroes can indeed be explained as a *literary* reference to the Bible, or as the result of some other factor. The former answer seems at least possible, but the case of the name Joseph cautions against associating the favour enjoyed by a name with the connotations associated with the corresponding biblical character.

Here are some further minor points. Mussies' suggestion, apparently followed by Ilan, that Greek names formed on the name of Zeus (Διογένης, Διόδοτος and the like) were acceptable to Jews because 'Zeus himself also personified for the Jews their one God' (11), is unnecessary. As the list gathered by Ilan on p. 10 clearly shows, Greek theophoric names referring to Greek deities were accepted by Jews as such. The reasons for Jews to use these names elude us but may have been quite mundane. A family may have wished to honour a local official or a benefactor by naming their son after him, regardless of the theophoric connotations of the name.

Section 2 of the introduction, 'Transliteration and Orthography', 16-32, is an important study of phonetic and morphological phenomena associated with the spelling of names. A comparison with similar phenomena observable in Greek papyri from Egypt would have been interesting. At least a reference to Francis Thomas Gignac's *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* I-II (Milan 1976-81) would have been useful. Thus, abbreviations in -ās are documented in Egypt and therefore cannot be explained as a product of the influence of Aramaic over Greek (26, #2.4.2.10). For instance, Ἀσκλᾶς stands for Ἀσκληπιάδης or Ἀσκληπιάδωρος.

The task of editing a technical book is always daunting. It would be unfair to hold against Ilan the numerous typographical errors throughout the text. Some of them, however, are regrettable, like the 110% (48.9% + 61.1%), p. 40, or the alphabetical *disorder* 287f., and further errors in restoring a nominative out of a genitive. On p. 257, the entry lemma gives the correct form Ἀθηναγόρας, but the discussion n. 2 wrongly refers to the suffix -γορος. The choice of the author not to harmonise the presentation of Greek names by accenting either all or none of them, though justified p. 17, lends an unnecessarily insecure character to the lists of the *Lexicon*. Let us hope that the author will be able to correct these typographical problems in a revised edition.

Sylvie Honigman

Tel Aviv University

Nicole Belayche, *Judaea-Palaestina. The Pagan Cults in Roman Palestine (Second to Fourth Century)*. Religion der Römischen Provinzen (RRP) 1. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001. vii + 386 pp. ISBN 3 16 147153 9.

In the shadow of the three monotheistic religions still guiding the lives of millions, polytheistic Palestine was always doomed to remain in the background. Other than a number of chapters on

Palestinian paganism in general works, mostly focused either on the Jews or on the Christians,¹ only archaeological site reports dealt with issues concerning pagan cults. Belayche's book therefore provides a welcome response to the urgent need for studies concentrated on gentile cults in Roman Palestine.

This state of research demands exceptional efforts of anyone embarking upon such an undertaking. Belayche had to define the principles guiding various stages of her work, having very few ready-to-use reference-points, and has performed very impressive pioneering labour. She has had to analyze enormous quantities of assorted sources, archaeological, epigraphical and literary, the latter two categories in a variety of languages. This evidence emanates from different cultural and ethnic circles, Semitic (both Jewish and non-Jewish), Greek and Roman. It is scattered in numerous publications, and even the preparation of a primary dossier calls for enormous energy and professional skills in several disciplines, all which Belayche deploys expertly in her research.

The framework of Belayche's book is based on a combination of legal and cultural principles. Having defined 'Places, Times and Method', in the introduction the author passes to the treatment of particular subjects in the seven chapters of her book: 'Ways of Romanization from 135 onwards', 'Jews and Polytheistic Semitic Traditions', 'Aelia Capitolina, a little Rome', 'Pagan Cults in other Roman colonies', 'The *περὶ τὰ εἶδωλα τῶν ἀνθρώπων μανία* in the Greek Cities of Philistine Origin', 'Pagan Cults in the Palestinian Cities of the Decapolis', 'The Nature and Future of Pagan Cults in Roman Palestine'. The book is illustrated with sixteen maps and more than forty drawings and photos, and accompanied by three indexes, of literary sources, of places and of subjects.

Belayche sets out her method from the very start: in terms of polytheistic cults, Palestine is 'a Roman province to study as ... a Roman province' (2). This approach clearly differs from the tendency, common in the modern literature and partially rooted in the ancient sources, to view every issue in the history of Palestine from the standpoint of either the Jews or the Christians. The author struggles to clarify the beliefs and cultic practices of the bulk of the country's population between 135 and the fourth century. She focuses on the discussion of the religious situation in the province of Palestine during that time span, avoiding lengthy excursions beyond these chronological and geographical limits.

This approach generally provides solid results. Belayche's analysis of most subjects is thorough and persuasive. When the sources allow, Belayche goes beyond collection and interpretation of the realia of cultic life — an achievement in itself — and reconstructs the religious behavior of the adepts of certain cults, as for instance, the cases of the cult of angels in Mambre (96-104) or the festival of Maiouma in Gaza (249-56). Belayche's treatment of numerous complicated problems, such as the much-discussed question of interaction/influence vis-à-vis independent development of cults, is consistently balanced and reliable. The intricate issue of pagan henotheism (216-18) serves as a good example of the successful implementation of the careful examination of sources and the local cultural background. The author arrives at the convincing conclusion that 'this speculative infrastructure, which had developed a "henology" of the divine, had not so far swept away from polytheism on the cultic level' (216), and that the tendency to search for the influence of monotheism in the cult of an exalted all-embracing divine personality is misleading.

As a result of her study, Belayche produces a map of the religious geography of Palestine (280). She demonstrates that 'pagan cults in Palestine were Graeco-Roman or thoroughly Graeco-Romanized' (281), and that the *civitas-model* brought about similar religious configurations in

¹ Such as: F.-M. Abel, *Histoire de la Palestine de la conquête d'Alexandre à l'invasion arabe*, Vols. 1-2, Paris, 1952; D. Flusser, 'Paganism in Palestine', *The Jewish People in the First Century*. Eds. S. Safrai and M. Stern, Assen-Amsterdam, 1974, 1065-100; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, A new English version. Eds. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black, vol. 2, Edinburgh, 1979, 29-80; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East*. Cambridge (Mass.)-London, 1993.

cities of different traditions, all of them congruous with the religious realities in the rest of the eastern Empire. As to Jewish-pagan religious interaction, this was in the author's opinion minimal: on the one hand, 'the importance of pagan motifs in Palestinian Judaism does not indicate any religious yielding'; and on the other hand, 'it does not seem that the impact of Jewish theological conception on pagan cults was of any real amplitude' (294). Belayche further argues that the christianization of the Empire in the fourth century 'did not hinder the continuation of pagan devotions' (297) in Palestine. Her conclusion is that Hellenism was perpetuated by Christianity as late as the sixth century, and some pagan cults were still alive then.

However, the author's methodology, for the most part fruitful and legitimate, also has its shortcomings. First of all, even if treated as such by the Romans themselves, Palestine was not entirely a Roman province like any other Roman province. For the purposes of a study of pagan cults, there are several major differences between Palestine and the rest of the Roman world. To begin with, conquered peoples rarely left such a profusion of literary sources as the Jews and the Christians did. Belayche uses these sources extensively, and is quite aware of their particular character (31-7). The dependence of modern research upon the rabbinical and patristic literature necessarily entails a viewpoint different from that adopted in studies of religion in other provinces. Belayche herself devotes a chapter to 'Jews and Polytheistic Semitic Traditions', where she discusses the interaction between pagans and Jews. Jews (and to a lesser extent Christians) were always present in Roman Palestine, in a way different from their presence elsewhere in the Mediterranean. Even though, as a result of her research, she reaches the conclusion that 'the mix of communities left them relatively impermeable on the religious front' (295), the author returns on several occasions to estimates of how great the impact of Jews and Gentiles on each other was. Thus a study of pagan cults in Palestine is bound to be different in its essence from a study of pagan cults in other provinces of the Roman Empire.

Another inconsistency visible in the book concerns the appreciation of Hellenism. On the one hand, the author states quite correctly that the occurrence of pagan iconographical motifs in Jewish contexts and even visits of Jews to the theater do not attest Hellenisation. On the other hand, for the fifth-sixth centuries she postulates the existence of 'Hellenism ... separated from its religious component' (309) and views architectural and decorative motifs as testifying to the perpetuation of paganism inside Christian culture. The reader is left at a loss, hesitant about whether the author regards adoption of aesthetic attitudes and styles as testifying to Hellenisation.

Palestine was not only the cradle of the monotheistic religions, it also belongs to a region which nurtured other religious phenomena of paramount importance for the entire Mediterranean world. Roman Palestine cannot be cut away from other countries and from other periods. The author's focus on the Roman period is quite legitimate, but her avoidance of even minimal discussion of the history of important cults is sometimes disturbing. Thus for instance, Belayche limits her discussion of the cult of Aphrodite Ourania-Atargatis-Derceto to a very short synopsis of literary sources and numismatic evidence (227-9). From the passage in Herodotus (1. 105) she mentions only that the temple of Heavenly Aphrodite in Ascalon was the oldest of all temples of the goddess. 'Behind the figure of Aphrodite there clearly stands the ancient Semitic goddess of love, Ishtar-Astarte', as Burkert puts it.² This Semitic goddess arrived in Greece from Phoenicia. However, Belayche chooses to disregard Herodotus' account of the foundation of Aphrodite's cult on Cythera, and hence the Greek worship of the goddess, by 'Phoenicians from this same land of Syria', as well as his allusion to the gender alterations connected to the cult of the Ascalonian goddess. These and other pieces of evidence on Aphrodite-Astarte-Atargatis are discussed in numerous modern studies, which highlight the extreme importance of the Ascalon sanctuary. Oddly enough, Belayche ignores all these publications, including the monumental study of the

² W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, translated by J. Raffan, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, 152.

Greek Aphrodite by V. Pirenne-Delforge³ and even chapters in *ANRW*.⁴ Aphrodite's oriental connections are conspicuous not only in Ascalon. They are extremely important for the understanding of many other Astarte-Aphrodite-Venus cults, for instance that of Tyche-Fortuna, associated with Aphrodite-Venus, in Aelia Capitolina, as Belayche herself acknowledges (151-3). And yet for 'the oriental Aphrodite' (152, note 339) the author cites the hundred-year-old *Lexicon* of Rocher.

These examples illustrate Belayche's firm decision to limit her research exclusively to Roman Palestine. However, although during the second-fourth centuries Palestine was a Roman province, many of her cults were Greek in nature or in attire. Belayche focuses her attention on Roman religion to such an extent that she even does not use, or cite in the bibliography, the most fundamental works on Greek religion, including those by W. Burkert, the leading authority on the subject. In many cases, such restriction leads to elimination of important aspects of the phenomena discussed.

In terms of style, a discrepancy between the titles of sub-chapters and their contents is not infrequent. For example, a sub-chapter 'Pagan cults in the mirror of rabbinical sources' (31-7) starts with a discussion of Christian sources. The reader is of course not supposed to conclude that all these belong to the same category. So why not introduce a separate sub-chapter? The discussion in the book abounds in deviations from the main line, which somewhat impede its reading, otherwise enjoyable and very rewarding.

Notwithstanding the remarks above, Belayche's study of the pagan cults in Roman Palestine is an important contribution both to the history of Palestine and to the history of ancient religion. It is the first, and a very successful, attempt to synthesize enormous quantities of material. This book was badly needed for decades, and will remain in use among students of antiquity for a long time to come. A book on paganism in Palestine during the Hellenistic period is still awaited.

Yulia Ustinova

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Ted Kaizer, *The Religious Life of Palmyra. A Study of the Social Patterns of Worship in the Roman Period*. Oriens et Occidens 4. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner 2002. 305 pp., 7 plates. ISBN 3 515 08027 9.

The last three hundred years of Palmyra's semi-independent existence are documented in the city's bilingual inscriptions, which serve as the basis for Kaizer (henceforward K.)'s study. The history documented by texts, monumental architecture and architectural decorations only forms the tip of an iceberg, diachronically as well as synchronically. Palmyra had to accumulate wealth for an extended period before she could begin spending her fortune ostentatiously.

Geography explains Palmyra's origins. These are not nearly half as old as time: they fall within the Persian period. When Ashurbanipal's troops, ca. 644 BCE, marched from the Euphrates to Damascus, slaughtering Arabs all the way, some of their encounters took place in the region of Palmyra (Tadmur), though the place itself is not mentioned.¹ The oasis may have had a permanent settlement, but it was of little concern for the world beyond its immediate neighbors. Commerce between Phoenicia/Southern and Central Syria and Babylonia hitherto took the detour via Northern Syria and Northern Mesopotamia. Ashurbanipal's campaign might possibly have inaugurated the direct desert route had the Assyrian empire not succumbed at the end of his reign and under

³ *L'Aphrodite grecque*, Athens-Liège, 1994 (Kernos Suppl. 4).

⁴ For instance, M. Hörig, 'Dea Syria-Atargatis', *ANRW* 2.17.3 (1984): 1536-81.

¹ M. Weippert, 'Die Kämpfe des assyrischen Königs Assurbanipal gegen die Araber: Redaktionskritische Untersuchung des Berichts in Prisma A', *Die Welt des Orients* 7 (1973/74) 39-85: E.A. Knauf, *Ismael*² (Wiesbaden 1989) 97-103.