

unpublished when she composed the article but now available. The material, among other things, illustrates the more general point made in the previous article: benefactions spread out among numerous donors, most with modest contributions, and credit often given to divine *pronoia* suggest that Jews placed their own spin on this Greek practice (pp. 456-61). The study represents a useful critique of recent scholarship that has stressed the blending of Sardian pagans and Jews. Rajak notes that Jewish civic officials in the city may have obtained their posts when they had become less desirable because of financial burdens and that the contiguity of the gymnasium complex to the synagogue may disguise chronological distinctions, i.e. that the synagogue came into its own only when the gymnasium had become marginal (pp. 453-6). Whatever one makes of these conjectures (they are far from definitive), Rajak has succeeded in redressing the balance and drawing out the more distinctively Jewish features of the Sardian community. Jews appear to have functioned quite successfully within the larger civic space, without compromising the sanctity of their synagogue.

The book concludes with a fascinating glimpse at the issue of Jew and Greek as perceived by certain key late 18th and 19th century thinkers. The piece, 'Jews and Greeks: The Invention and Exploitation of Polarities in the Nineteenth Century' (1999), focuses primarily on Herder, Heine, Renan, and Matthew Arnold. Rajak's starting point is Martin Bernal's celebrated exposure of 19th century Hellenism as the construct of European colonial and racist 'Orientalism' (p. 535). She accepts the basic thesis but properly complicates the polarity of 'Hebrew' and 'Hellene' by showing the involved, intricate, diverse, and often inconsistent attitudes held toward these concepts by the intellectuals whom she discusses. The dichotomy was complicated by interpretations of Christianity, producing some problematic and paradoxical opinions by no means to be reduced to a simplistic superiority of Greeks over Jews (pp. 540-55). This illuminating essay might better have come at the beginning, rather than at the end of the book. But in either place it provides an instructive, perhaps even wry, perspective upon current debates on the subject of Jews and Hellenic culture to which Tessa Rajak has contributed so much — and which this book will do much to advance.

Erich S. Gruen

University of California, Berkeley

Jane Taylor, *Petra and the Lost Kingdom of the Nabataeans*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001, 224 pp., maps. ISBN 1 86064 508 9.

This book is a paean, in prose and photographs, to the Nabataeans. The prose is sparkling and exuberant, and the photographs, most of them taken by the author herself, are gorgeous. The title is oddly chosen, for the book covers the entire sweep of Nabataean history and culture and devotes only one chapter exclusively to the magnificent capital city Petra; and the Nabataean kingdom is 'lost' in that it has ceased to exist, like all ancient kingdoms, although here Taylor may mean that much about the Nabataeans remains obscure and mysterious, and therefore 'lost' to the historical record. We are especially in the dark about the Nabataeans' religious beliefs and practices (apparently highly syncretistic), and their social and political organization and structures. In Petra we find remarkable buildings — temples, tombs, a splendid theater, political and commercial structures — but relatively little information about what was done in them. Most of what is known, or presumed, has been carefully considered by Taylor and assembled for a general audience in a well-informed and beautifully produced book, with the avowed purpose of bringing 'this brilliant but neglected people, long known to scholars, into a wider beam of light 2000 years after their heyday'.

The structure of the book is simple and logical: the first four chapters survey the chronological history of the Nabataeans from their first emergence in the written historical record (Diodorus

Siculus) as a nomadic tribe in the Arabian peninsula, via the establishment of their extensive and wealthy kingdom in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, to their incorporation into the Roman empire. Then follow four chapters on different topics, including a fairly detailed description of Petra; the Nabataean religion, neatly gathering all the available information and leading speculations about this mysterious subject; the Nabataean language and writing, a particularly well-informed and fascinating discussion, aptly subtitled 'speaking Arabic, writing Aramaic and carving inscriptions'; and Babatha, who merits a surprisingly long and detailed chapter because of the light her archive sheds on life in the region — particularly its administrative, judicial and economic aspects — and on the peaceable relations between Nabataeans and Jews. A final chapter and epilogue deal with the slow absorption of the Nabataeans into the Christian society of the later Roman empire and their traces in the Islamic world. The book is well-researched, with only occasional slips (e.g., Vitellius certainly was not 'celebrating Passover with the Jews' in 37 [p. 72], but rather had gone to Jerusalem to prevent anti-Roman agitation during the festival), and strikes a judicious balance between a detailed account of the Nabataeans and a description of the complex and dynamic historical and cultural background of the period, necessary for the general reader.

The book is a pleasure to read, although the prose occasionally becomes overexcited with superlatives and ebullient description. The word 'genius' occurs frequently, as well as 'remarkable', 'gifted' and 'brilliant'. But it is clear that these are signs not of an anxiety to form the reader's impression correctly but of the author's own enthusiastic love of her subject. Enthusiasm is well-deserved in some respects: Nabataean architecture and water installations, for example, are astonishing achievements. Yet the historical record, although sketchy, does not preserve a uniformly rosy picture of the Nabataeans, and thus in certain places Taylor feels compelled to apologize and forgive: Malichus' massacre of Herod's ambassadors was 'one of the few known acts of gratuitous brutality in the Nabataean kingdom' (p. 57); Aretas III's imitation of Seleucid coins was 'a temporary and localized act of cultural vainglory'. But this tendency is perhaps forgivable in a general book written to revive the memory of an 'unjustly forgotten' people.

Jonathan J. Price

Tel Aviv University

Clayton Miles Lehmann and Kenneth G. Holm, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima*, American Schools of Oriental Research. The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima. Excavation Reports Series No. V, Boston, MA, 2000. xx + 292 pp. + indices + 171 plates. ISBN 0 89757 028 6.

'Do you wish not to fear authority? Do good and you will receive praise from it' (Rom. 13, 3). If the inhabitants of the province Palaestina I had to visit the offices of their provincial administration in Late Antiquity, they were confronted with inscriptions quoting that and other biblical phrases. Roman rule had a new face: in the 5th and 6th centuries it depended not only on the Roman army and the cooperation of the local elites with those of the empire. It also received legitimacy from Christian doctrine.

That this took place not only in sermons and theological tractates but also in the daily routine of the Roman administration is one of the many astonishing results obtained in the last decades from excavations in Caesarea Maritima, site of the famous foundation and residence of Herod, and the administrative centre of Roman rule in Judaea until its end in the 7th century. Clayton Miles Lehmann and Kenneth G. Holm publish here the first crop of epigraphical findings, the 411 inscriptions found before 1992 (today we know of about 200 more). These numbers demonstrate impressively how many inscriptions could be found in a city of the Eastern part of the empire, provided that the city was not built over later and could be excavated systematically. Before