

comments on the very small number of Republican senators in the second and early first centuries BC who are actually attested by explicit evidence as owning houses in Rome (*Senatorial Wealth* [1975], 12, 18).

What of Andermahr's conclusions? The first and probably the most important will not surprise anyone who reflects on the vagaries of the surviving evidence: 'Senatorischer Grundbesitz in Italien war regional höchst unterschiedlich verteilt; in manchen Gebieten lassen sich zahlreiche Familien nachweisen, während anderswo entsprechende Zeugnisse vollständig fehlen' (43). But Andermahr provides some twenty tables, each with intelligent and succinct comment, analysing where senators owned land in Italy and correlating ownership and origin area by area. Her most important result is perhaps the large number of senators who are attested as owning land both in the close vicinity of Rome and elsewhere in Italy (91-94, Tab. 19). Andermahr is sensibly cautious and shows herself reluctant to draw far-reaching inferences, for example, about methods of farming and land exploitation, from the material which she has assembled and marshalled so ably. Hence, as she modestly and correctly observes in her concluding paragraph (125), 'die vorliegende Untersuchung lässt viele Fragen offen'.

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M. Pucci Ben Zeev, *Jewish Rights in the Roman World: The Greek and the Roman Documents Quoted by Josephus Flavius*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998. xvi + 520 pp. ISBN 3-16-147043-5.

Josephus quotes thirty official documents dealing with Jewish rights in Books XIV, XVI and XIX of his *Antiquitates Judaicae*: resolutions of the Roman senate, letters of Roman magistrates and promagistrates, decrees of several Greek cities and edicts of two Roman emperors, Augustus and Claudius. Modern scholars of the last three centuries have used these documents for the study of Jewish rights and status under Roman rule in the Late Republic and Early Empire. The documents have also been the subject of long debate concerning their authenticity and veracity. Ben Zeev's book is the most comprehensive and systematic study of these questions. Her general conclusion is that the documents are basically 'authentic' (more on this below), and not forgeries fabricated by Josephus or any of his sources. Hence, they offer reliable material for the reconstruction of Roman policy towards the Jews during the period under discussion.

The structure of the book is plain. In addition to an introduction which presents the problem of the documents and surveys briefly the history of the scholarly debate about their authenticity, it consists of two parts. The first is devoted to a meticulous examination of all the documents. The text and English translation of every document are given (those of R. Marcus, A. Wikgren and L.H. Feldman in the Loeb Classical Library, with very few changes) with full bibliography of scholarly publications pertinent to the particular document. This is followed by a detailed historical and philological commentary which, among other points noted, draws attention to

parallels attested in epigraphic and papyrological documents and literary sources in respect of the use of technical terms and formulaic phrases, as well as structural characteristics. Josephus' remarks concerning the document are taken into consideration when instructive.

On the basis of this exhaustive examination Ben Zeev concludes that, both for their formal features and for their content, the documents quoted by Josephus are similar to official documents known from inscriptions and papyri. The similarity extends to the general structure, language, vocabulary and style of the documents (p. 357). Especially noteworthy are various corruptions, some of which are certainly to be ascribed to errors of scribes in copying the manuscripts of the work by Josephus. A different explanation, however, is offered for the origins of others. As scholars have observed, corruptions are attested in many epigraphic and papyrological documents, themselves copies made from the original *senatus consulta*, letters of magistrates, *edicta*, etc.: 'the more a text was copied, the more mistakes occurred'. Ben Zeev sensibly concludes: 'it appears that Josephus did not quote authentic, original Roman and Greek documents, but their copies, or copies of copies, some of which, the Roman ones, had already been translated into Greek' (pp. 366-7). Josephus as well may have been careless and inaccurate in his copying, probably rather because of negligence than deliberately for apologetical purposes. It is significant that quite often there exists inconsistency between the details appearing in his comments and those in the documents quoted. In respect of these features, Josephus was in good company, as Greek and Roman historians usually did not use original documents; in those infrequent cases when they referred to or cited official documents they did not bother to provide full or exact copies (pp. 372-3; see R.K. Sherk, *Roman Documents from the Greek East*, Baltimore 1969, 5-6; M. Benner, *The Emperor Says: Studies in the Rhetorical Style in Edicts of the Early Empire*, Goeteborg 1975, 33-115). Essentially, therefore, the Josephan documents should be expected to contain some variations or deviations from the original documents, and not gross distortions (my rendering of Ben Zeev's position). Bearing in mind their character, they may be used as a reliable basis for drawing a table of Jewish rights under Roman rule from Julius Caesar through the reign of Claudius, with which the first part concludes (pp. 374-7).

Part two offers a detailed investigation of several topics, to a great extent in light of the analysis and conclusions of part one. The discussion also serves to corroborate those conclusions and to clarify some oddities to be found in Josephus' writing and the problems encountered in understanding the sources from which he took the documents which he quotes. More specifically, the questions and topics examined are the following: Did bronze tables concerning Jewish rights really exist? The answer is yes, in several places of the Jewish diaspora, notably at Antioch and Alexandria, and presumably at Rome as well. Where did Josephus find his documents? The answer: Josephus did not find them in Nicolaus of Damascus or in Philo, nor did Agrippa I have a collection of such documents made. Rather, there are indications that the documents originated from Jewish local archives in the diaspora, and there are several possible explanations for how Josephus obtained copies. What is the practical meaning of the right 'to live according to Jewish laws and customs'? An examination of the documents, as well as of a passage of Strabo quoted by Josephus,

papyrological material from the Judaeen desert, and various passages in the New Testament and the Talmudic literature, leads to the conclusion that 'The Jews, like most peoples living under the Roman government, were allowed to use their own juridical framework to a certain extent — an extent which was determined not only by Roman intervention but also by the interests of the Jews themselves' (pp. 437-8). Were Jewish rights given in perpetuity and held valid everywhere? The answer, following T. Rajak (*JRS* 74, 1984, 107-23), is that in principle the Roman government could revoke the rights at any time: for a certain period, forever or in certain places. In practice, however, this happened only twice, and exceptionally: under Caligula and Hadrian, and the banishments from Rome were local, temporary episodes. Finally, were the Jewish rights a privilege, that is, a legal exemption from common rules? Legally it was a mixed situation, for the Jews enjoyed both privileges and common rights, but this was not exceptional, for it was a common Roman practice to confer privileges, and 'most peoples enjoyed, *de facto* or *de iure*, the right to live according to their laws and customs' (pp. 452-3, 481-2).

With keen understanding of the nature of the problems she tackles, Ben Zeev proceeds in her research helped by a thorough knowledge and firm control of the text of Josephus. Perhaps even more important are the fruitful exploitation of the relevant material to be found in Roman legal documents, the lessons learnt from careful examination of the Roman archival and administrative systems, as well as the methodical application of the extensive epigraphic evidence bearing upon the subject. Needless to say, she is acquainted thoroughly with the relevant modern scholarship, no mean achievement considering the vast literature dealing with Josephus (not a few of the works referred to in the course of the book are not listed in the long bibliography at the end). Cautious and patient, she checks every possible point of view in her attempt to determine whether or not the documents are authentic. She takes seriously old and recent arguments against authenticity, and particularly acknowledges that those raised by H.R. Moehring ('The Acta pro Judaeis in the Antiquities of Flavius Josephus', in J. Neusner ed., *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults* III, Leiden 1975, 133-57) pose real problems (pp. 8-10, 361-3, 397-8). In the end she concludes — on the basis of what we know of the normal process of transmission of works from antiquity (beginning with the autograph) — that the Josephan documents stem from original official documents. Are her analysis and arguments persuasive?

Insofar as the answer to these questions depends on satisfactory explanation of mistakes, corruptions, inconsistencies and similar faults that have been argued to throw doubt on their authenticity, Ben Zeev shows convincingly, at least in my judgement, that the Josephan documents conform to what might be expected from copies distant several degrees from the original Roman and Greek documents of the same types. Equally convincing is her demonstration that it was quite normal to have copies of state documents made and deposited in the archives of cities in the provinces. Furthermore, documentary evidence shows that Jewish communities had their own archives; given the political uncertainties in those times, it was of prime importance for them to preserve copies of documents confirming rights bestowed on them. In other words, thanks to Ben Zeev's clarification of the documentary habits of the time and the arguments which she adduces — not all of them new — to explain the

interests of the Jews and of Josephus himself, the authenticity of the documents cannot be impugned on grounds of style, vocabulary, faulty factual and chronological details or lack of access to the original records.

Less persuasive is the treatment of claims based on the apologetic motivation behind Josephus' writing. Ben Zeev admits (who cannot?) that the historian's purposes are overtly apologetic, but is satisfied with saying that his bias is limited to the selection of documents favourable to the Jews: the picture that emerges is one-sided for he evidently avoided quoting documents unfavourable to the Jews (pp. 2-5, 371-2). The possibility that Josephus omitted or emended embarrassing sections which appeared in the original documents is mentioned only to be dismissed (p. 368). A discussion, even brief, of the general apologetic characteristics of Josephus' writing (see the fundamental study of G.E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition: Josephus, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography*, Leiden 1992 — not mentioned by Ben Zeev) could help us to understand the ways in which Josephus might have treated the documents with that purpose in mind. This, however, does not necessarily mean that he did so. Since all the other arguments against authenticity have been answered, one needs to present real positive proof to argue persuasively that Josephus fabricated or substantially distorted the documents for apologetic purposes. There is none. It can only be maintained, given the apparently one-sided picture of the documents, that our understanding of the Jewish rights and of Roman policy towards the Jews, so far as these are reflected in the Josephan documents, is partly deficient.

The most thorough and comprehensive investigation of its subject, well organized, balanced in reasoning and sound in the treatment of the evidence and competing views, Ben Zeev's book is a major contribution to the study of Jewish rights under Roman rule and of Roman policy towards the Jews and other subject peoples. Six detailed indices, including one of important Greek words, are a great help to the reader, and so is the rich bibliography.

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Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, Hellenistic Culture and Society 27, Berkeley - Los Angeles - London: University of California Press, 1998. xvii + 837 pp.

idem, *Studies in Josephus' Rewritten Bible*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 58, Leiden - Boston - Köln: E.J. Brill, 1998. xxi + 663 pp.

Since Josephus, who lived in the first century C.E., wrote about the thousands of years of history from Adam to the fall of Masada, most of what he wrote was necessarily based upon sources. Their identity, and his use of them, has been the focus of intense study over the past century and a half. However, whether understandably or perversely, most of that study has been devoted to Josephus' use of sources which no longer exist: those which he used for the late Hasmonean period, the Herodian period, and the first six-seven decades of direct Roman rule of Judaea in the first