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

century. Much less energy has been directed toward similar study of Josephus' use of his sources for the earlier period, which — mostly due to their canonization — managed to survive: the biblical books which supply just about all of his material for *Antiquities* 1-11, and the Letter of Aristeas and the First Book of Maccabees which, together, provide a large part of *Antiquities* 12-13 and take us down to the mid-Hasmonean period. Indeed, given the fact that study of Josephus has largely been the domain of historians in general, and of historians of the Second Temple period in particular, Books 1-11 have often been ignored, for two reasons: a) why should historians bother with a paraphrase if they have the original?, and b) why should historians of the Second Temple period bother with a narrative dealing with an earlier period?

In fact, however, there is much to learn from detailed study of the biblical part of Josephus' *Antiquities*. For it is obvious that Josephus' version of the Bible results from the interplay of four factors, each of which is a legitimate topic of historical interest: the biblical text which Josephus used; the cultural values and exegetical traditions which he incorporated; his own personal interests and biases; and the degree of freedom he allowed himself, along with the procedures he followed, in reworking his sources. The first two issues are very much alive in the past generation, especially under the impact of new evidence from Qumran concerning the biblical text and 'rewritten Bible'; the third — which focuses upon Josephus rather than his sources — has been very popular in recent decades; and the fourth too, although more prevalent in earlier and more Germanic generations, is still alive and well.

Since, just as the biblical narrative itself, much of Josephus' narrative in *Antiquities* 1-11 focuses upon individuals (a point frequently made clear by the use of eulogies or other 'packaging' — usually 'such, then, were the affairs of ...' — to punctuate the narrative), analysis of these books according to the figures discussed is an obvious move. In the two hefty volumes under review, Louis H. Feldman presents the harvest of about three decades of such work: forty-seven studies,[1] each dedicated to a biblical character, carefully compare Josephus' narrative to that in the Bible and, especially focusing upon the discrepancies, strive to lay bare the Bible as Josephus understood it and as he wished to present it to his readers. A long essay on 'General Considerations', which opens the Berkeley volume, and concluding surveys in both of the volumes, synthesize and attempt to systematize the conclusions of the various detailed pieces.

The books are a disappointment for anyone hoping to find clear rules. Thus, first of all, anyone who expects a simple answer to the elementary question, 'In what language did Josephus read the Bible — Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic?', not to mention more detailed questions concerning particular recensions of such versions, will be dismayed to find good evidence for each option. So, for example, a long note (*JIB*, 336) collects evidence that Josephus used both the Hebrew and the Septuagint text of Genesis for the Joseph story, but elsewhere (*SJRB*, 325, n. 1) Feldman points to Josephus' agreement at *Ant.* 9.117 with the Aramaic version of II Kings 9:20, against the Hebrew and Septuagint; in the latter connection, he quotes approvingly C.T.

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1 Twelve on major characters in *JIB*, thirty-five on more minor ones in *SJRB*.

Begg's conclusion (*Hebrew Union College Annual* 64 [1993], 108) that 'Josephus had available several different text-forms, corresponding to (proto-) Masoretic, "LXX", and (proto-)Targum Jonathan', just as he himself notes (*JIB*, 36) that 'it seems likely that for Esther, as elsewhere, Josephus availed himself of his trilingual competence in consulting the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic versions'. Can we really imagine Josephus' desk crowded with all of these? Or that he had them all in his head? And, if we can, what implications would this have for our usual disposition to assume Josephus, as other ancient historians, used one main source at a time? Given the doubts pertaining both to the nature of the versions available in the first century and to the impact of Christian copyists who may have striven to bring Josephus' account into line with the biblical versions with which they were familiar, this whole field still seems wide open. Moreover, as Feldman himself underlines (*JIB*, 25), the very fact that Josephus is always paraphrasing and elaborating makes it difficult to know when his deviations from a biblical text derive from his use of another text and when from his own considerations (which may or may not have been identical with those of someone else who may or may not have created another biblical text which may or may not survive in some extant manuscript ...).

Similarly, those who would examine Josephus' rewritten Bible in order to learn about the culture and traditions which were important for him will find a very mixed picture. Here, it seems, there are two major competitors, each divided into two subsets. Namely: does Josephus' rewritten Bible show his culture and traditions to be Graeco-Roman or Jewish? And, within those alternatives, what of the breakdown between the Greek in which Josephus wrote and the Rome in which he lived? Or of the breakdown between the priestly religion of his fathers and the rabbinic religion which was replacing it in the generation in which he composed the *Antiquities*, the generation following the destruction of the Second Temple and, hence, the generation which heard the death knell of priestly Judaism? Here too, the facts of the matter, as Feldman presents them, are very mixed: not only Greek historians such as Thucydides and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose influence upon Josephus is well-known, but also Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, Virgil and Sallust, Jubilees and Philo, Talmud and midrash seem to echo in his writings. And here too we wonder what to make of all this. For on both sides, the conclusion is somewhat surprising.

Namely, on the Graeco-Roman side, can one really believe that Josephus, who first visited Rome when he was almost thirty, attained such a thoroughgoing education in Greco-Roman literature that he was capable of imitating it to the extent Feldman imputes to him? When, for example, Feldman writes (*SJRB*, 171-2) that the way Josephus' Gideon pacified the enraged Ephraimites (*Ant.* 5.231) 'is reminiscent' of the way Virgil's Neptune calms the storm created by Aeolus (*Aenid* 1.142-3), can one help but wonder whether the observation has not more to do with Feldman's familiarity with Latin literature?[2] After all, Feldman began his career not as a

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2 I borrow this formulation from the late E.E. Urbach, who in a lecture once observed that S. Lieberman's proof (apud I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* Leiden 1980, 241-4) that the authors of the mystical Hekhalot literature were familiar with the intricacies of rabbinic law proves only that Lieberman was.

Jerusalem priest and Galilean general but, rather, as a Harvard student of Latin literature.

Similarly, when one thinks of the difficulties of learning a language at the age of thirty,[3] and when one reads the poor quality of Josephus' Greek in his *Vita*, the only one of his works which we can really be sure he wrote himself, can one really believe that he was capable of echoing Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides (*JIB*, 172-6)? The present reviewer, for one, tends to remain more open to the possibility of coincidence or to Thackeray's old theory that Josephus was helped by literary assistants in the *Antiquities*, as he notes (*Against Apion* 1.50) he was for the *War*.

As for the Jewish side, the conclusion is surprising only insofar as it runs counter to a major thrust of recent scholarship, which has been to play up the distinction between priestly and rabbinic religion; to play up (accordingly) the discontinuity within Judaism engendered by the destruction of the Second Temple; and to assume (accordingly) that traditions found in rabbinic works, of the post-destruction centuries, may not (despite the rabbis' claim of Sinaitic origin for their oral tradition) be assumed to have existed in the pre-destruction period, and are certainly not to be expected in the writings of Josephus, who repeatedly expresses pride in his priestly ancestry (*War* 3.352; *Ant.* 16.187; *Vita* 1-6). Here Feldman's position is much the same as that of his predecessor at Yeshiva University, Samuel Belkin, who devoted his *Philo and the Oral Law* (1940) to the claim that Philo's commonalities with traditions found in later rabbinic works shows the basic antiquity of the latter. So, too, Feldman argues that Josephus attests to the antiquity of traditions found later in rabbinic literature.

Thus, for example, in a special introductory discussion of this question Feldman underlines, in detail (*JIB*, 71), the fact that although the Bible gives thoroughly negative accounts of the kings Jehoiachin, Jehoash and Zedekiah, Josephus portrays all three positively, as do some texts in later rabbinic literature, just as Zedekiah is rehabilitated by a Qumran text. Feldman's conclusion is that they all drew from 'a common tradition' (ibid., better than p. 73, 'a common basic source'). That indeed seems likely, and the fact that elsewhere Josephus explicitly refers to statements as being traditional ('it is said'), of which some are indeed found in rabbinic literature, bolsters our confidence. But such explicit references are not frequent. Therefore, just as with Belkin's Philo, so too with Feldman's Josephus we must always leave open the possibility that similar (or dissimilar) concerns brought different readers of the Bible, independently, to introduce similar revisions. Indeed, Feldman himself very frequently underlines the fact that Josephus deviates from rabbinic tradition. Although for Feldman, who assumes throughout that Josephus 'was well acquainted' or 'had considerable acquaintance' with rabbinic tradition (e.g. *SJRB*, 153, 203, 353, 416, 503), such underlining serves only as an opening foil to highlight Josephus' own

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3 Note Josephus' own comments on the Judaeans' difficulties with Greek (*Ant.* 20.263-4) and the fact that Feldman himself has repeatedly taken a minimalist view concerning the degree of Hellenization in Judaea. See, for example, his review of M. Hengel's *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (1989) in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 22, 1991, 142-4.

presentation, one wonders whether the alternative explanation might not be more frequently the correct one.

Given the various doubts concerning the biblical text Josephus used and the pagan and Jewish traditions which may have influenced his understanding and presentation of it, we would draw especial attention to Feldman's observations in another sphere: the relevance of Josephus' biblical narratives to his own life and career. Thus, for some examples, Feldman suggests that Josephus' account of Joab and his conflict with Abner was nuanced so as to make it reflect Josephus' own conflict with John of Gischala (*SJRB*, 209-13); his emphasis upon the functioning of such biblical heroes as Abraham and Moses as successful generals reflects not only the apologetic need to defend Jews against the general charge of pusillanimity (e.g. Apolloniuis Molon apud *Against Apion* 2.148) but also Josephus' own personal interest in the profession with which he began (*JIB*, 106-9), just as his reservations about Hezekiah, who opposed the Asyrian superpower of his day, taking a suicidal course from which only divine intervention saved him, are to be understood as Josephus' defense of his own surrender to Rome against those who would have fought to the end in the hope of miraculous salvation (*SJRB*, 365-6); his account of 'the rabble' in the days of Rehoboam reflects his opinion of the same in his own day (246); his portrait of Korah, who led a rebellion of Levites against the superiority of the priests, and his promotion of the priests over against the Levites in contrast to Chronicles which does the opposite (*SJRB*, 366), are to be read in connection with the agitation by Levites in his own day, which Josephus condemns at *Ant.* 20.216-18 (*SJRB*, 100, 366); his repeated construction of biblical stories in terms of *stasis* and its dire consequences (*JIB*, 140-3, 610-11; *SJRB* 82, 101-2, 171-2, 556) echoes his emphasis on that motif in his *Jewish War*; etc. Hence, as Feldman notes (*SJRB*, 91), 'it would seem that Josephus' motto in his recasting of the biblical narrative is, as it were, "De nobis fabula narratur"'. It remains a desideratum and a challenge, for historians of Josephus and his time, to put this recognition fruitfully to work.

Josephus' *Antiquities* is a major attempt by a Jewish writer to present the Jews and Judaism to the non-Jewish world. Feldman, in the present volumes, has undertaken to study this work as a collection of biographies. In this work, Josephus was faced with numerous dilemmas, which all, one way or the other, reflect the difficulty of rewriting in a western context, for Gentiles and under foreign rule, an eastern work which was written for Jews and bespeaks a belief in the rule by a divinity who had a special covenant with the Jews. That Josephus found it impossible to deal consistently with these dilemmas is not his fault; it was in the nature of the game. So too, accordingly, Feldman — an astute and painstaking student of Josephus — cannot give us rules to let us predict Josephus' treatment of this or that, no more than he can concerning Josephus' biblical text. Readers should not expect easy rules. But they should expect thorough work, and Feldman supplies it.

Thus, for example, if in his discussion of Josephus' Joseph Feldman first underlines the way Josephus imports God even into places where the Bible fails to mention Him, thus playing up Josephus' piety, the fifth of the cardinal virtues (*JIB*, 359-60), but then goes on to note (ibid. 360-61) the many places in which Josephus suppresses the biblical references to God in the same narrative (explaining that here as

elsewhere, 'Josephus takes pains to stress the accomplishments of his biblical heroes by deemphasizing the role of G-d in their actual achievements'), it is not Feldman's fault that Josephus is serving two masters. That is the way it was for Jews who wished to survive in the first century. We should be very grateful to Louis Feldman – for whom 'on the one hand' and 'on the other hand', 'however' and 'to be sure' are among the most common phrases — who has so thoroughly analyzed this difficult material, which pulls in so many directions, and laid it out so clearly.

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Hannah M. Cotton and Ada Yardeni eds., *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Naḥal Ḥever and Other Sites with an Appendix Containing Alleged Qumran Texts* (*The Seiyâl Collection* II), Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVII, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997. xxiii + 381 pp. + 33 figures + 61 plates. ISBN 0-19-82695-3.

The sumptuous and attractive volume under review contains the full publication of several dozen papyri from the Judaean Desert. These are all documentary texts, as the term is used by papyrologists in contradistinction to literary texts. That is to say, they were written to be read by a limited number of potential readers, not for publication. In this volume, specifically, we have mainly legal documents — marriage documents, loans, sales, and the like — as well as a few lists and one or two letters. The explicitly dated Aramaic documents all fall in the narrow range of 131-134/5 CE; those datable by palaeography could range up to two centuries earlier. The dated Greek papyri range from 109 or so to 131 CE. The volume joins two earlier volumes, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert. Volume II: *Les Grottes de Murabba'at*, eds. P. Benoit, O.P., J.T. Milik, and R. de Vaux. O.P. (Oxford 1960) (*P.Mur.*) and *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri*, ed. Naphtali Lewis. Aramaic and Nabatean Signatures and Subscriptions, eds. Yigael Yadin and Jonas C. Greenfield (Jerusalem 1989) (*P.Yadin*), as the standard publications of papyrus documents from the Judaean Desert.

The editors of this volume must be warmly commended for having made their documents available to the scholarly public, in specialized learned journals and other fora, well in advance of their publication in this volume, and for not having withheld their texts and interpretations until the time-consuming production of the present volume was completed. They have also included here texts, mainly Aramaic, previously published by other scholars. This, then, is not the first publication of the important texts and of most of the interpretations, but rather the definitive one. The great contribution of the present volume is to make the texts easily accessible, and, in the case of Yardeni's contribution, available to the English-reading public. The presentation of the texts in a single volume releases the scholar from the inconvenience of photocopies, and the (nearly) continuous numbering finally makes reference to the texts simple and unambiguous (of which more below). We are further provided with a foreword, two prefaces, several introductions to various groups of texts and a