

forms of Arabic letters, and the multiple interpretations which individual forms can have, mean that a wide variety and large number of difficulties arise: for example, the ordering of forms found in the manuscripts. The editors stress, rightly, that the present state of research in the field now permits the production of a dictionary of this sort, despite the inadequate quality of many existing text editions and the fact that many important texts still have not been edited at all. But a work such as this cannot be other than interim.

The basis of the dictionary was provided by Arabic texts whose Greek originals have survived, and is founded on the material in the various glossaries included in published editions. This has led to a certain imbalance: medicine is very well represented, not only because of the sheer bulk of the works of Galen and Hippocrates which were translated into Arabic but also because the editors of these texts in their Arabic versions actually included glossaries in their editions. In order to offset this imbalance somewhat, the editors have also included word-by-word glossaries of selected texts from other areas prepared specially on cards for this project, as well as sporadic gleanings by the editors themselves.

The work is very user-friendly: it is divided into a number of clearly defined sections, and cross-reference between them is easy. In the future, presumably it will be, or become possible to update existing fascicles in some cumulative manner. The work is arranged basically as an Arabic-Greek dictionary, but it is provided also with a Greek-Arabic glossary, and there are indices of Greek proper names and transliterated words, of variant passages in the two languages and of Greek quotations. The list of sources is full (at least as full as it can be at present) — here especially updating will be necessary and welcome.

The usefulness of such a work needs no emphasis, and it is clear that its potential importance extends far beyond the lexicographic, and also beyond those broader aims that the editors outline for themselves. If philologists and other textual scholars will learn much from this work, historians too will benefit greatly from the availability of this material in this form. One important result of all this should be not only to encourage further research in the field of translation and transmission itself (as well as contributions to the dictionary), but also to stimulate work on related questions in the broader historical fields associated with the translation movement in the eighth to the tenth centuries. If there is, nonetheless, a fear, it is that alluded to by the editors in their Preface to what will certainly become a standard work of frequent reference: in expressing the hope that other scholars will be willing to contribute suggestions, criticisms and additional material for future fascicles, they hint at the possibility that the completion of the project may lie far in the future. Let us hope not.

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Amy-Jill Levine, ed., *Women Like This — New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Graeco-Roman World* (*Society of Biblical Literature — Early Judaism and its Literature* 1), (Scholars Press, Atlanta 1991)

This book is a collection of new studies on a topic which since the late 1970s has been the subject of intensive research and debate — the history of Jewish women in the period which shaped both Judaism and Christianity for the next two millennia. The eleven articles in the volume cover a large array of literature — including the major Jewish writings and some Christian compositions pre-dating the rabbinic *corpora* (conspicuously missing are the works of Josephus) — in which women make an appearance.

The novelty of the book is the serious attempt made by the different authors, most of whom seem extremely well-versed in recent feminist critique of the relevant sources, to avoid pre-conceived notions regarding the attitudes towards women prevalent in the texts under discussion. Such an attitude should probably be attributed to the fact that feminist studies of Judaism in late Antiquity and early Christianity have now come of age. Most of the articles in the book deal with sources previously discussed by other authors, and often comprise a response to earlier work. Two of the studies are actually a modification or even a complete re-evaluation of the authors' own work from the early 1980s.

The first article, by Claudia V. Camp, examines anew the reality of women's existence as portrayed in the writings of Ben Sira, whose attitude to women has been minutely discussed by W.C. Trenchard in his excellent, comprehensive literary study.¹ Camp's article adds an intriguing social dimension to Trenchard's all-too conventional presentation. She places Ben Sira within his native Mediterranean setting and explains his attitude in this context. Her use of anthropological models of "Honour and Shame" in Mediterranean societies is fascinating.

The second article, by Judith R. Wegner, is a re-working of a paper she had written in 1982,² which was at that time the first attempt to study Philo from a feminist perspective, and suffered from the common ills of such articles, duly covering the ground but offering little of substance. Responses to such articles usually provide more interesting reading because the questions they pose are more worthwhile. In this case it is Wegner herself who reformulates her agenda by asking whether Philo's famous negative attitude to women should more suitably be attributed to his Hebraic or to his Hellenistic background. Her conclusions, however, sound more apologetic than historical. Like many Jewish scholars dealing with similar topics before her,³ Wegner ultimately blames Philo's misogyny wholly on Hellenism and thus, in effect, "rehabilitates" Judaism.

The two next articles, by Robin Darling Young on the mother who sacrificed her seven sons in *II Maccabees*, and by Betsy Halpern-Amaru on pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, are examples of topics which have not previously been tackled by feminist scholars. As is usual in such cases, both these articles are more descriptive than innovative. This is particularly true in the case of Darling Young's article. Halpern-Amaru was obviously unaware when writing her paper that pseudo-Philo's women were at the same time being evaluated by another scholar.⁴ It is therefore interesting to note that both these articles on pseudo-Philo basically ask the standard question posed when a text is first confronted from a feminist point of view — whether it exalts or denigrates women. Interestingly, while van der Horst concludes that pseudo-Philo most surprisingly assigns male roles to his heroines, Halpern-Amaru claims that, compared to their biblical counterparts, "... all strong female characters are associated (in pseudo-Philo) with motherhood" (106). These diametrically opposite conclusions show that feminist research in this field is still in its preliminary stages and has not yet formulated any common working hypotheses.

¹ *Ben Sira's view of Women* (Chico CA, 1982).

² "Images of Women in Philo", *SBL 1982 Seminar Papers* (Missoula 1982), 551-563.

³ E.G.T. Friedman, "The Shifting Role of Women from Bible to Talmud", *Judaism* 36 (1987), 479-487.

⁴ P.W. van der Horst, "Portraits of Biblical Women in Pseudo-Philo's 'Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum'", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 5 (1989), 29-46.

The next three articles — Randall D. Chestnut's study of revelations to women in *Jubilees*, *Joseph and Asenath* and the *Testament of Job*; Beverly Bow and George W.E. Nickelsburg's study of women in *Tobit*; and Richard I. Pervo's study of Susanna, Asenath and Judith as heroines of novels — are all partly repetitions of ideas already published by these authors. They constitute good and in-depth surveys of the material at hand but offer no fresh insights.

Both of the next articles in the book, Adele Reinhartz's treatment of Mary and Martha and Stephan Davies' study of women in the Third Gospel, confront problems in the interpretation of early Christianity within the context of Judaism. Reinhartz' biographical confession that she is a Jew and therefore open-minded enough to suggest a new historical reconstruction of the Mary and Martha story, actually yields a disappointing result. Her conclusion, that the picture of the sisters portrayed by the Gospels is in the main historical, seems to indicate no more than that Jewish study of early Christian sources has yet a long way to go.

Davies' article is perhaps the most intriguing in the entire book, since it is an admission of an earlier misinterpretation of the material in the Gospel of Luke, probably as a result of unsophisticated feminist exegesis.¹ Davies had assumed with many others that the fact that Luke mentions women more frequently than the other Gospels necessarily makes him a feminist, perhaps even a woman. Following Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza's critique of this attitude,² Davies has revised his opinion and argues that it is in fact impossible to imagine that a woman has composed the Gospel.

Davies' article sets the scene for the last two contributions in the book, that of Mary R. Lefkowitz, an established feminist critic in Classics, and that of Ross S. Kraemer, by no means a newcomer to this field. The two argue both sides of a common question: did ancient Jewish or Christian women write literature, and if they did, was it preserved? While Lefkowitz, drawing on her classical background, argues against the proposition, Kraemer, with her vast knowledge of later Christianity, answers the question in the affirmative. Both articles are exciting and serious scholarship and leave one unsure as to which is more persuasive.

Amy-Jill Levine has edited a valuable book in the study of Jewish women's early history. I wish to point out, however, that the book assumes that the reader has some background in feminist critique, an assumption which is by no means always justified. For example, on page 1, in her introduction, Levine quotes Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza's book *In Memory of Her* by a common abbreviation (not found in the abbreviations listed on page vi), *Memory*. It should be noted that neither the National Library in Jerusalem nor indeed any university library in Israel possesses a copy of this standard work.

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¹ Although in his *magnum opus* (*The Revolt of the Widows: The Social World of the Apocryphal Acts* [Carbondale 1980]) he claims women's authorship for other Christian documents, without mentioning Luke among them.

² *In Memory of Her* (New York 1983), 50.