STRATA

Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society

Volume 35

2017

The Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society
2nd floor, Supreme House
300 Regents Park Road
London N3 2JX

Strata: Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society

Please send correspondence and books for review to:

The Secretary
The Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society
2nd floor, Supreme House
300 Regents Park Road
London N3 2JX
UK

Strata is published annually. To subscribe, please consult the Society's website at www.aias.org.uk or use the form at the back of this volume.

Please submit articles to the editor at: editor@aias.org.uk. Format material according to the 'Notes for Contributors' found at the back of this volume. Book reviews should be sent to the book reviews editor at strata.reviews@aias.org.uk

Contents

Book Reviews

Book Reviews

Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* Revised edition. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017. Pp. xxii + 365. £21.99. ISBN: 9780567670434

The volume under review is a second, revised edition of book that appeared in 2007. While the aims and general structure of the new edition are by and large the same, the new research that has appeared since the first edition, and manner in which the author, Lester Grabbe, relates to it, makes the revised version a worthwhile endeavour.

Prof. Grabbe intended this volume as an introduction to how one can study the history of Israel – both from a methodological and theoretical point of view, but also based on a review of the primary sources that are available for the historian, whether textual, archaeological, or other. That said, this volume is much more than that: if I had to recommend one text book for college level students of the ancient history of Israel and Judah, and of the Iron Age Southern Levant in general, I would, without hesitation, recommend this volume. While not all topics are covered in a broad and even manner befitting an introductory historical survey, the measured, well-balanced, up to date and informed discussions on all the issues that are covered are, in my opinion, what a college level student should be reading. This is so for the discussion on the principles and methods of analysis (Chapter 1), the overview of the 2nd Millennium (Chapter 2), the three chapters (Chapter 3-5) on the Iron Age, and the summary chapter.

As in previous publications by Lester Grabbe, I am always impressed by his in-depth knowledge of the historical sources, the up-to-date archaeological finds, his sound theoretical and methodological foundations, but most importantly, that his views do not seem tainted by the highly divisive camps in the study of ancient Israel. While he definitely is not conservative in his outlooks and used a highly critical perspective when studying the biblical text and other sources, he is far from being positioned in the so-called "minimalist" camp. Time and again, his judicious assessments of the relevant data and sources are both refreshing and insightful.

The volume is all the more important in light of several volumes that have appeared in recent years, which attempt to summarize the history of ancient Israel. Time and again, I have found that these volumes are either not up to date on the relevant data, are not cutting edge on method and theory, are too entrenched in factional views of the history of ancient Israel (whether conservative or minimalist), and in some cases, when dealing with some topics, what might be seen as attempting to revive long-dead debates.

Thus, in summary, not only do I recommend this volume as text book for college level courses in biblical and ancient near eastern history, I think scholars dealing with the various topics covered in this volume would benefit from reading Grabbe's even handed overviews and assessments for these issues. Perhaps, in the future, this volume can be expanded to a full-scale history of ancient Israel – but in the meantime – I would choose this volume over those currently available.

Aren M. Maeir
Bar-Ilan University

Mark Toher, *Nicolaus of Damascus. The Life of Augustus and The Autobiography. Edited with Introduction, Translations, and Historical Commentary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. xii + 488. £99.99. ISBN: 9781107075610.

Scholar, statesman, apologist, a man so 'sweet' of temperament that he had a type of date named after him, the polymath Nicolaus is one of the more unlikely figures to emerge from the court of Herod the Great. Nicolaus was also one of the more prolific writers from antiquity. The late tenth century encyclopaedia, the *Suda*, lists several works: an extensive *Universal History* in eighty books, a *Life of Caesar* (sc. Augustus), and an *Autobiography*. From elsewhere we know of a work of ethnography and commentaries on Aristotle. Not one of these works has survived intact. What relics we have of Nicolaus' oeuvre are due to the labours of a group of scholars and copyists operating in the court of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus. The fragments of the *Life of Caesar* are perhaps the most tantalising of all these remains, providing us with a contemporary portrait of the man who did more than any other to shape the political character of the next three hundred years of the Roman Empire – Augustus.

Toher's edition of the fragments of the *Life of Caesar*, and of Nicolaus' *Autobiography* is a welcome addition to scholarship. Toher, whose distinguished contributions to the study of Nicolaus stretch back thirty years, is the natural candidate to produce such a commentary. The result does not disappoint.

Toher's introduction provides a detailed account of Nicolaus' life and outlines the nature of the two works in question and their textual traditions. Historical and historiographical 'problems', such as the the chronology of Nicolaus' career and the composition of his works are dealt with securely. Most notably, Toher presents a compelling argument for dating the *Life* after Herod's death in 4 B.C.E, and perhaps even as late the last years of Augustus' reign, against Jacoby and others who have dated the *Life of Caesar* to the 20s B.C.E. Structurally, Toher shows how the *Life* owes much to the late-Classical and Hellenistic tradition of encomiastic biography, and offers a stimulating comparison of the *Life* with Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. As one might expect from a historian of the Peripatetic persuasion, Toher demonstrates Nicolaus' affinity with Aristotelean ethical theory. Like his coeval Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Nicolaus' stylistic models were firmly classical, and the commentary brings out numerous linguistic parallels to classical authors. Nicolaus' putative debt to the lost autobiography of Augustus is wisely downplayed.

In what is such a full introduction, it is a pity that Toher's treatment of the *Excerpta Constantiniana* is cursory, and more could have been said about the methods of the excerpters as well as the nature of the project. Here some more recent scholarship has been neglected, which has implications for points of detail as well as interpretation. For example, the Tours Codex of the *Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis*, has been cogently dated by Andreas Németh 970s or 980s, rather than to eleventh century as maintained by Toher following the traditional designation.

More seriously, whether we may still dismiss Constantine's project as '*anti histoire*', as Toher does (following Paul Lemerle), seems more contentious now than it did thirty years ago.

Toher has adopted a sensibly conservative attitude to the Greek text, and has opted to follow (in the main) the text of Nicolaus printed in the *editio maior* of the *Excerpta Constantiniana* by Büttner-Wobst (for the *Excerpta de virtutibus et vitiis*) and de Boor (for the fragments preserved in the *Excerpta de insidiis*), rather than that printed by Jacoby in the *Die Fragmente der grieschichen Historiker*. Textual concordances are given to the most accessible editions of Nicolaus by Jacoby and by Karl Müller (in the venerable *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*). Toher's translation, which is printed facing the Greek text (with *apparatus criticus*), is clear and accurate, and serves as a crutch for those readers with little or no Greek. Given this feature of the volume, it would perhaps have made sense had the commentary provided *lemmata* in Greek *and* English, rather than just the Greek.

The commentary, purportedly a 'historical commentary', is in fact far more ambitious than what this descriptor may suggest. Indeed, Toher provides ample consideration of textual and philological points of interest, which some readers may find superfluous. Ultimately, a historical (or historiographical) commentary

should ask two questions of the text: What does this passage tell us about the work of the author? and What does this passage tell us about the subject of the work? Toher's commentary succeeds in addressing these two questions. Moreover, given the importance of Nicolaus' narrative for the events of March 44 B.C.E., this section of Toher's commentary is a highlight and satisfies expectations. However, this reviewer feels that the commentary on the *Life*, as a whole, might have been tighter, and that some of the linguistic points or unexamined stylistic parallels could have been omitted without diminishing the value of the commentary. On very rare occasions there are slips. A subscription by the scribe of the Tours MS directing the reader to the collection περὶ ἑλληνικῆς ἱστορίας (pp. 156, 228), is misunderstood as being an erroneous reference to a 'Greek History' by Nicolaus; whereas in fact the excerptor is referring to the (now lost) collection of excerpts 'Concerning *pagan* history'.

The commentary on the *Autobiography* is far sparser, and gives (perhaps the false) impression of being something of an afterthought.

Cambridge University Press has produced a generally handsome volume, although this reviewer did note some typesetting errors, especially in the section dealing with the *Autobiography*, which will hopefully be removed from future printings. Spelling follows the North American convention (*e.g.* honor, theater), which will doubtless rankle with some of Toher's more sensitive Anglophone readers.

These niggles aside, this is an important and useful contribution to scholarship. In terms of its scope and thoroughness, Toher's endeavour has superseded the previous two English language commentaries and translations of the *Life*. It may be hoped that Toher's volume, like the best commentaries, represents the beginning of a dialogue, rather than the last word on its subject.

C.T. Mallan
St Benet's Hall and The Queen's College, Oxford

Yosef Garfinkel, Igor Kreimerman and Peter Zilberg, *Debating Khirbet Qeiyafa: A Fortified City from the Time of King David.* Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2016. Pp. 269. ISBN: 9789652211064.

For anyone wanting to know about the site, this volume is the best introduction, but readers should be aware this is the work of an enthusiast, convinced of his interpretation of the site he has excavated, arguing vigorously against his critics. Although sure Khirbet Qeiyafa was a fortified Judaean city in the kingdom of

David, at the heart of this book Garfinkel presents the primary archaeological results of his work as Ch. 3, 'The Archaeology of Khirbet Qeiyafa' (pp. 36-98). The plentiful photographs, drawings and descriptions provide a unique picture of a tenth century town. Khirbet Qeiyafa enjoys the great advantage of presenting an early Iron Age II occupation level untouched by later building for six hundred years. The hilltop site, on the north side of the valley of Elah between Socoh and Azekah, was surrounded by a stone wall, still standing three metres high in places, which prevented erosion of structures built close inside it. Excavations at several points revealed houses built with their inner rooms as its casemates, their walls up to two metres high containing a considerable depth of debris. The broken pots, often almost wholly restorable, and other objects imply a sudden destruction, although the place was not burnt, nor were any human remains found. Iron and bronze swords, axes and other tools seem to have been deliberately hidden, suggesting the inhabitants fled with the hope of returning.

Beside the wall, two gateways and about a dozen houses, three areas are described as 'cultic installations' because they contained natural stone blocks standing on end, other unusual structural features (a bench, a 'high place', a stone basin), pottery libation vessels and, in Room G of Building 10, a terra-cotta model 'house' shrine and another in stone. These shrines are the earliest of their type recovered in situ in the Holy Land, the stone one having particular interest for its recessed door frame and the imitation beam ends above it. (Garfinkel and Madeleine Mumcuoglu have written a book about this: Solomon's Temple and Palace: New Archaeological Discoveries, Jerusalem: Biblical Archaeology Society and Bible Lands Museum, 2016.) The excavator notes that the site yielded no clay figurines, as so many others have done.

Setting the scene for his account of the excavations, Garfinkel has a chapter explaining briefly his methods and how relating archaeological discoveries to biblical narratives raises problems. That leads to Ch. 2 which commences with a defence of each word in the book's title, then explores 'Scientific Paradigms of King David', opposing 'minimalist' views, maintaining Iron Age IIA began about 1,000 B.C.E., and that Khirbet Qeiyafa belonged to the kingdom of Judah. 'Methodological Considerations' occupy Chs 4 and 5, dealing with questions of objectivity, falsifiability, economy and the place of the Bible, criticising various recent writers for their misuse of these methods, but concluding that the Bible does not have priority over archaeological data.

In Chs 6-8, Garfinkel responds to critics of his Stratigraphy and Chronology, setting out the problem the 'Low Chronology' faces in the light of Carbon 14 dates provided by olive pips at the site.

Peter Zilberg contributed Ch. 9, 'The Debate on Writing and Language (pp. 157-72), concentrating on the 'best known discovery', the ostracon found in 2008. He

surveys attempts to identify its language by ‘Identification of diagnostic elements according to the different proposed readings’, listing seven which take the first letters as ’l t’ś. He follows Haggai Misgav’s initial interpretation as ‘Do not do/ make’ and argues at length that the verb is Hebrew (or possibly Moabite) against C. Rollston’s contention that its language cannot be decided. To support his case, Zilberg adduces the reading of the next letters as w῾bd ’t, the direct object marker ’t being Hebrew and Moabite. While noting ‘the text is broken here’ (pp. 164-65), he fails to mark the t as completely restored, although he does so on p. 160. At the outset Zilberg lists a ‘large number’ of authors who have written about the ostracon, naming but taking no notice of the arguments of those who understand the opening letters differently. He includes Emile Puech’s ’l t’šq: w῾bd ’[l] in his list, ignoring the reviewer’s reading’l t’š as a personal name, ‘the goddess (or Ellat) helped’, followed by another name ‘and Obed’(following Ed. Cook). A computerised analysis has since supported that proposal (Levy and Pluquet: 2016; cf. Richelle, 2016). In an essay which emphasizes ‘Methodologically speaking, one should … present as many distinctive features as possible …’ (p. 160), depriving readers of knowledge of alternative readings is a major flaw.

Happily, the second inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa, found in 2012, is easier to understand. Incised on the shoulder of a jar before firing in firm, regular letters, it reads ‘X Ishba῾al son of Beda῾’, with only traces of the first word. Recovery of these two inscriptions is significant for the history of writing in the Holy Land, for so few specimens are available from about 1,000 B.C.E.

Whether the occupants of Khirbet Qeiyafa were Philistines, Canaanites, Israelites of Judahites is the question Ch. 10 investigates, the last being preferred, while Ch. 11 considers the site’s ancient name, looking at five proposals, deciding for Shaarayim. Israel Finkelstein’s idea that the site was part of a ‘Kingdom of Saul’ is discounted in Ch. 11. The last two chapters assess the ‘Contributions of Khirbet Qeiyafa to Iron Age Archaeology and History’ and ‘The Biblical

Tradition, Khirbet Qeiyafa and King David’. The former helpfully sets the discoveries in their broader context, the latter knits together material and textual records. Archaeology reveals a hill- top town deliberately constructed, occupied perhaps for a single generation, then abandoned and apparently looted. Without written sources, one might imagine a local chief had selected the site to establish his seat, his death resulting in his followers deserting the place in the face of a stronger man, or being deported. Marrying biblical texts with archaeological findings is the

climax of Garfinkel’s presentation. About 1,000 B.C.E. King David controlled Jerusalem, Hebron and Khirbet Qeiyafa, which was built to protect the border with Philistine Gath. Hundreds of locally made jar handles with a finger impression on each attest administration, maybe tax collection, for a central authority, while a badly damaged large building on the highest point may have been ‘the central

governor's palace', both suggesting a superior power in Jerusalem. He goes beyond the evidence, however, when he asserts his site proves the existence of the Kingdom of Judah in the tenth century B.C.E. (p. 107). At best it may indicate that it was part of a larger entity; only through biblical interpretation may he conclude that entity was the Kingdom of Judah.

Although he claims to approach the biblical narratives without preconceptions, Garfinkel readily treats some episodes as mythological or legendary. He mistakenly labels the marriage of Pharaoh's daughter to Solomon legendary because it is known pharaohs in the fourteenth century B.C.E. did not do so (p. 112). Yet in the tenth century the 21st and 22nd Dynasty pharaohs did give their daughters to other rulers and officials. Narratives which include 'miracles' he does not treat as historical, yet many ancient kings report divine interventions in their affairs. Ancient people attributed events which were opportune and otherwise inexplicable to them to their gods. Modern scholars may have other explanations but should not treat the reports as unhistorical.

Interpretation of Khirbet Qeiyafa will continue to stimulate debate which the valuable bibliography covering the many studies of the site will foster. Few excavations have been so fully published and discussed, so all who study the time of King David will be greatly indebted to Yosef Garfinkel.

Alan Millard
University of Liverpool

Bibliography

Levy, E. and Pluquet, F., (2016). 'Computer experiments on the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon, *'Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 31 August 2016. Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of EADH. 1-21; http://dsh.oxfordjournals.org

Richelle, M., (2015). 'Quelques nouvelles lectures sur l'ostracon de Khirbet Qeiyafa,' *Semitica* 57: 147- 162.

Jean-Baptiste Humbert, Alain Chambon, and Jolanta Młynarczyk, *Khirbet Qumrân et Aïn Feshkha: Fouilles du P. Roland de Vaux: IIIa: L'archéologie de Qumrân*. Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus, Series Archaeologica 5A. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016. Pp. 536, incl. 179 figures and 113 plates. €400.00. ISBN: 9783525540541.

A much-awaited volume, this is the third in a series of reports whose remit is the publication of Roland de Vaux's excavations at Qumran and 'Ein Feshkha. The present work is the first of two projected volumes on the site's stratigraphy,

and it focuses on loci or structures surrounding the main and western buildings. These include the triangular annexe to the east of the main building (*e.g.*, L44, L45, L59, L60, L61, L64, L65, L80, L84); a series of stepped pools, installations, and open spaces to the southeast (*e.g.*, L68, L69, L70, L71, L75); the long hall and adjacent room with the large pottery stockpile (i.e., L77 and L86/87/89), and the esplanade to the south (i.e., L90, L93, L94, and L98); the large cistern and stepped pools to the southwest (i.e., L83, L85, L91), and adjacent loci (*e.g.*, L81, L83, L85, L88, L95, L96, L97); and the various open spaces and water features to the northwest (*e.g.*, L130, L131, L132, L135, L138). The stratigraphic analysis is preceded by a few random chapters discussing the general interpretation of the site, the cemetery, the animal bone deposits, the long walls that characterize the landscape between Qumran and ʻEin Feshkha, the effect of earthquakes on the site, and the significance of the various ash layers, among others. This comprises the bulk of the book, and it is authored by Jean- Baptiste Humbert, with the technical assistance of Alain Chambon.

The volume also includes a final report by Jolanta Młynarczyk on the ceramic lamps from Qumran and ʻEin Feshkha. Młynarczyk presents a catalogue of all the lamps, accompanying photographs and illustrations, and a typology. There is also a short study by Hervé Monchot on the animal bone deposits. In the absence of the faunal remains themselves, which were not retained following excavation, Monchot examines and extracts important zooarchaeological data from the available photographs.

This book is truly a treasure trove of data, most of which is indispensable for our understanding of Qumran. Each locus is discussed in great detail on the basis of de Vaux's excavation notes, photographs, and field drawings. Humbert does an admirable job of engaging with all this material, and his reconstruction of the stratigraphy—helpfully illustrated through several annotated diagrams—is noteworthy and commendable, even if at times debatable. Critically, his commentary often clarifies key elements of de Vaux's excavation. For instance, the stratigraphic profile of the loci in the triangular annexe is now clearer than ever, as is the situation in the northwest enclosure, wherein lies the largest concentration of animal bone deposits. Of great significance is the publication of a number of plans and section drawings which still include the original annotations, most importantly the elevation readings. These are gems in their own right as they allow us to do three-dimensional reconstructions of the loci in question. Furthermore, the pottery from each locus is illustrated and described briefly, including details such as pottery type, fabric, provenance, date of registration, and possible stratigraphic context. Of note is the publication of several additional sherds which were collected but not catalogued by de Vaux. It is evident that the site's ceramic corpus is much richer typologically than previously thought. There is a wide range of plates, bowls, cups,

cooking pots, casseroles, jugs, juglets, jars, and lamps, among others. Interestingly, one of the uncatalogued fragments is a base of another possible inkwell (KhQ4638, from L129 [cf. p. 440, Pl. 91:21]). Now, therefore, scholars have a host of new data with which to work. Moving forward, one cannot study Qumran without having this edition close at hand.

This notwithstanding, there are a few reservations about the volume that cannot go unexpressed. Humbert makes drastic changes to de Vaux's work, including the addition of several new loci, whose count is now at L189 (cf. p. 139, Fig. 57); the introduction of wall and installation numbers (cf. Pls I–XII), which infuses the subject with a new dose of numerical 'vocabulary'; and, most especially, the revision of the site's chronology and interpretation, which means that Humbert's Qumran looks fundamentally different from de Vaux's Qumran. This would not have been problematic except for the fact that the volume purports to publish *de Vaux's* excavations. All these changes, therefore, have robbed us of de Vaux's voice—in a report which is intended to publish his work, no less—and they add an extra layer of interpretation that is unnecessary for the expressed purpose of this volume. This is not to say that factual errors should not have been corrected, but major changes which depart so radically from de Vaux's reading of the site— irrespective of whether or not he was right—should have been reserved for an independent monograph or, at least, for a distinctly separate section in the volume. As such, the volume reads more like a critical edition *based on* de Vaux's excavations at Qumran than an actual final report on the excavations, and because of this it also suffers from an absence of boundaries between raw data and interpretation, which is the hallmark of an archaeological report proper. The fact that data and interpretation are so intricately intertwined is somewhat problematic given that the volume will inevitably be treated as an authoritative voice on the site's stratigraphy.

By way of example, I discuss briefly Humbert's conclusions regarding the destruction of the pottery stockpile in L89 (pp. 327–342). Humbert does a great job of elucidating the stratigraphy of L77 and L86/87/89, no easy task considering the gaps in de Vaux's field notes. However, rather problematically, Humbert revises the date of destruction of L89, pushing it forward to after the mid-1st century CE (de Vaux had linked the damage with the earthquake of 31 BCE). The argument is complex, but in a nutshell, it involves a detailed reading of the local stratigraphy coupled with the numismatic evidence, whose interpretation, however, seems unduly influenced by prior conceptions about Qumran. Humbert sees the site as a place where Jews from around the Dead Sea came to celebrate Passover (hence the animal bone deposits) and make first-fruit offerings in L77 and L86/87/89 (pp. 59–64, 71–75). According to Humbert, this function of the site developed in the late 1st century BCE, following the remodelling

and expansion of what was previously a Hasmonaean villa, and thus his idea only works if L89 was still up and running after 31 BCE. Early in the book, Humbert also argues that much of the earthquake damage attested at Qumran comes from seismic events that occurred after the site had been abandoned, and thus he minimizes the importance of the earthquake of 31 BCE (pp. 25–33). This argument works reasonably well in some instances, except that Humbert pushes it too far, practically denying this earthquake any impact whatsoever on the site. This gives Humbert the licence to push forward the date of destruction of L89 into the 1st century CE. Ultimately, he anchors his dating to a set of coins minted in the time of Herod Agrippa I and emperor Nero retrieved from L86 and L87.

The problem here is that the coins have no direct relationship with the pottery in L89 and, thus, no bearing on its destruction. It must be recalled that L86 was blocked off from L87 and L89, meaning that it became a separate space with its own localized stratigraphy. As for the coin of Herod Agrippa I in L87, KhQ1436, this came from the upper level of the locus (cf. p. 342, where the coin's context is listed as 'niveau supérieur', although the coin is placed incorrectly in the lower level in Humbert's reconstruction of the stratigraphy), and so it must have been registered on 16/03/1954 or 17/03/1954, placing it at a level above that of the pottery stockpile in L89.

Importantly, this means that its deposition postdated the construction of the upper partition wall between L87 and L89, which in turn postdated the destruction of the pottery stacks there.

Therefore, KhQ1436 cannot date the time when L89 went out of use, leaving us with the typology of the pottery itself as the only possible indicator. On the basis of numerous parallels in the region, the pottery can be dated to the last third of the 1st century BCE. Significantly, forms typical of the 1st century CE are attested in other loci at Qumran but not in L89. All evidence, therefore, points to the late 1st century BCE as the date when the pottery in L89 was damaged. In this specific instance, Humbert's reconstruction is unpersuasive, and it is symptomatic of the premature amalgamation of data and interpretation mentioned above.

Several others of Humbert's conclusions are open to debate. These include the interpretation of L34 as a Hellenistic bath, L64 as a lime kiln (rather than a pottery kiln), L112 as a latrine, and the long walls between Qumran and 'Ein Feshkha as *erubim*. The interpretation of the site, first, as a Hasmonaean villa and, then, as a cultic centre, a hypothesis which Humbert has proposed more than two decades ago, has not earned widespread support in the scholarly world either. But this is not the place to discuss these views, and it is beside the point—any interpretation will always be subject to debate. I only mention them because, once again, these notions lead to a somewhat distorted presentation of de Vaux's results.

I end with a note on de Vaux's work itself. The rich documentation presented in this volume stems from and is a testament to de Vaux's rigorous field methodology, and thus a vindication of his work at Qumran, which is often criticized unjustly. Surely enough, the practice then was not up to scratch with contemporary archaeological standards, but the quality of de Vaux's work was still high for the time. The annotated plans and published section drawings showcase the fact that de Vaux did not dig haphazardly and that his excavations were driven by a stratigraphic sensibility. Furthermore, thanks to the dates of registration and a relatively detailed field notebook, the stratigraphic context of artefacts can be reconstructed somewhat accurately. At the same time, the volume reveals that the stratigraphy of the site is more complex than de Vaux's synthesis lets on, something which a number of scholars have already commented upon in recent years. This volume should clarify a few debated issues, but it will not settle the chronology debate as dateable evidence from critical contexts (*e.g.*, foundation trenches or fills) remains highly elusive.

The brevity of this review does not do justice to this rich and important volume, and the above criticisms are not meant to diminish or undermine the significance of the work—quite the contrary. A work of this kind is produced expressly so that readers can engage critically with it. We should therefore be grateful to Humbert for spending what must have been years, if not decades, digesting and making sense of all these data. And while we may disagree on a few issues, there is no denying the valuable work he has done. Volume IIIb cannot come soon enough!

Dennis Mizzi
University of Malta

Honora Howell Chapman and Zuleika Rodgers (eds), *A Companion to Josephus*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. Chichester, West Sussex, UK; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2016. Pp. xvi + 482. £120. ISBN: 9781444335330.

The Greek writings of the first century Jewish-Roman historian from Jerusalem, Flavius Josephus, are essential reading for all with an interest in the Roman Hellenistic and Roman Near East. They are basic sources for history, geography, religious life and much more. In the early days of biblical archaeology, Josephus was the indispensable basis and guide, as he had been before that for countless travellers, and even before that for Crusaders and pilgrims. Still today, when the relationship between field archaeology and written sources has been transformed, and when many kinds of new questions are being asked, Josephus has a key role as

a point of reference and a generator of questions and investigations. His works will be familiar to many readers of this journal, and they will have been encountered by almost all. Whether you are a scholar with a shelf-full of Josephan studies, or an occasional browser, or a complete novice, or anything in-between, *A Companion to Josephus* is undoubtedly a volume for your attention. For those wanting to own one key work on the author, I would suggest that this is now the way to go. In an age when, for approaches to all kinds of topics and persons, *Companions* seem to have become an academic format of choice, for reasons perhaps more to do with the contemporary publishing trade than the needs of students and readers, this one stands out within the genre.

The usefulness and success of this volume has perhaps something to do with the nature of the subject. Josephus's works were produced over a period of some twenty years, and they range very widely in their character and subject matter, from a history of the Jewish revolt against Rome of 66-73/4 CE in which the author had himself participated, with a notable transition to the Roman side; to the twenty-book Jewish *Antiquities* that run from creation to nearly his own time; to a defence of his own life and career that was appended to the *Antiquities*; and finally to the *Against Apion*, a two-book defence of Judaism against hostile Greek critics still current in Rome. Moreover, Josephus has had an afterlife second to none, widely copied, read and prized through the Christian centuries because of the light he shed (or sometimes seemed to shed) on the world of Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity. His account of the destruction of the Temple as a punishment for the sins of the Jewish rebels gave him particular validity. Eventually, Josephus was rediscovered by Jews, who continued to debate the question of his treachery, but could not do without him as the illuminator of their past. This *Companion* responds in generous measure to the recent growth in scholarly interest in that long and remarkable later reception of the historian, an area in which both editors have special expertise, allocating to it the long final section ('Part IV: Transmission and Reception History'), consisting of ten chapters, and absorbing a third of the volume's four hundred and fifty odd pages.

It is most welcome that pathbreaking scholarship, often being done by younger scholars, is for the first time brought before a wider public here. It is in the *Jewish War,* the later books of the *Antiquities* and the *Life* above all, that the relationship with regional studies comes into play, and these central subjects are very well catered for among the thirty chapters. Steve Mason, the general editor of the major ongoing Brill Josephus series of translations and commentaries, and the author of a major new large scale study of the Jewish War, contributes excellent chapters on the *Jewish War* and the *Life* to the first section ('Part I: Writings'), a helpful more general chapter on Josephus as historian to the second section ('Part II: Josephus's Literary Context). Mason's special concern with the structuring of Josephus's

narrative, and for its rhetorical and literary aspects, including the distinctive use of speeches, of irony and of parallelisms, results in important insights, and also warnings, that are important for anyone engaging with Josephus for any purpose. Every statement in these ancient writings needs to be assessed in the light of its literary context; almost nothing should be taken at face value. That is of course not to say that everything should be doubted, but only that the care required in the handling of any text must here be accentuated.

It is 'Part III: Themes' that we find a chapter specifically devoted to archaeology, though regrettably the archaeology of Jerusalem, or Jerusalem and Judaea, are not covered. The Galilee (with the Golan) is in the expert hands of Zeev Weiss. In his substantial chapter, with extensive bibliography, he points out the value of the presentations in Josephus's *Life* and parts of the *War* of the political, demographic and economic geography of the areas, especially in respect of their Jewish populations. He then proceeds to a brief review of each of the main Josephan sites that have been excavated. The character of each site and the most important archaeological findings yielded by it are summarized, with a few final observations on evidence for economic activity and trade. Yodefat (Jotapata), appropriately enough the first to be considered, is viewed as one of three typical 'rural settlements', rather than as the site of the famous siege of 67 and of Josephus's notorious surrender. Gamla (Gamala) follows and then a paragraph on Magdala/Tarichaeae which will need updating in the light of recent work. The conclusion on the rural settlements stresses similarity in visual appearance, but a suggestive diversity of economic base and therefore of standard of living and cultural exposure, as well as 'various degrees of liberalism and parochialism vis-à-vis the surrounding non-Jewish society.' Even rural Galilee cannot be envisaged as a backwater of simple unchanging peasant subsistence. Some inhabitants were able to rise to wall paintings or similar decorations in their houses. A helpful discussion of Josephus's varied use of the term *polis* accompanies the studies of larger urban settlements, which are suitably illustrated, though with rather grainy black and white photographs. It is possible that, of these only Tiberias, had proper Greek-style civic institutions, though the exact status of Sepphoris (the site famously associated with Weiss himself) in the revolt period remains unclear.

The thematic subsequent sections of Weiss's study, which offer résumés of the state of our knowledge on 'material culture and behavioural patterns in city and village', will surely prove particularly useful. The focus is on items and structures specifically associated with Jewish life, and the conclusions are formulated around the definition and assertion of Jewish identity, as emerging from this selection of material evidence (there is no room for a closer definition of the prevailing non-Jewish culture). The damage done to the region by the revolt is estimated as 'limited', with life in non-participating settlements going

on unharmed. One might be inclined to question this assessment, not least through renewed critical scrutiny of the Josephan narratives. Again, while Weiss does not minimize the postwar change wrought by the presence of Roman soldiers, he perhaps overestimates the speed and smoothness of the transition to the post war 'new spirit'. It is on this note that his study ends.

David A. Kaden's much shorter chapter on the Herodian Temple in Josephus is concerned specifically with Josephus, and even more specifically with literary and technical divergences between the description in *Jewish War* 5.184-247 and *Jewish Antiquities* 15:388-245. Many hypotheses have been put forward about the discrepancies. Consideration of the literary context in the two works and of the author's changed social setting is taken by Kaden as going most of the way to explain the discrepancies, but he does not give himself the space to persuade the reader entirely. Archaeology plays virtually no part, and while, in the case of the Temple itself, this is of course inevitable, some attention might have been paid to the important discoveries in areas surrounding the Temple Mount in relation to what Josephus tells us. The Mishnaic and Talmudic accounts, which provide yet further discrepancies, are outside the scope of the piece.

Expert and up-to-date historical summaries in Part III from which many readers, including the archaeologically-minded, will benefit, are Jonathan Roth's on Josephus as a military historian, Erich Gruen on the Hasmoneans in Josephus, Jan Willem van Henten on Herod the Great in Josephus, Albert Baumgarten on the Jewish sects, and James McLaren on the priesthood. In Part II, the literary section, Helen Bond presents a helpful conspectus of the issues surrounding Josephus's connections with the New Testament. In Part IV, Daniel Schwartz gives a thought-

provoking and unique insight into the shifting perspectives of twentieth century Hebrew- language writing on Josephus, in which Masada inevitably plays a significant role. There are important potential articulations here with the equally fascinating story of the early archaeology of Eretz Israel.

This selection by no means covers all the fine contributions to the *Companion*. But the review should not conclude without informing the reader that the *Companion* has not overlooked its readers' entertainment. The splendid final chapter, contributed by editor Honora Chapman, is entitled 'Josephus Comicus' and is concern with popular culture, in the form of two films. We are reminded of one of our great debts to Josephus, who, in the *Jewish War,* expresses his passionate hatred and disgust for the factions among the rebels and vents his ire on their appalling offences and crimes. The unforgettable scene in the 1979 *Monty Python's Life of Brian (of Nazareth)*, when Reg the rebel leader of the People's Front of Judea says he detests the rival Judean People's Front more than the Romans, and then both groups turn screaming

on an unfortunate lone member of yet another party, the Popular Front, could not have existed without Josephus's Jewish parties.

The editors are to be congratulated on a timely volume, which gives a lively and interesting picture of important advances in the recent study of Josephus and which will undoubtedly make a significant difference to the way his writings are viewed and used. The *Companion* will surely have a long life. The book is generally well produced, but larger, darker print would have made for easier reading and a better appearance.

Tessa Rajak
University of Reading and
University of Oxford