even if the latter half were read as a separate book (note the significant parallels with G.'s 1998 study, *Heritage and Hellenism: The Reinvention of Jewish Tradition*, though G. does not self-plagiarize), it would still be a stimulating study in its own right.

G. has written a *tour de force*, a synthesis that will be required reading for anyone interested in the cities of the eastern Mediterranean. If one seeks a coherent interpretation of Diaspora-Jewish life, one cannot find a better guide than G. Even where one might disagree, his carefully wrought and well-documented analysis will provide a reference point for some time to come.

York University, Toronto STEVE MASON

VARIA JUDAICA

J. R. BARTLETT (ed.): *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*. Pp. xi + 249, ills. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. Cased, £50. ISBN: 0-415-18638-2.

Time was when the Jewish Diaspora of the Graeco-Roman period commanded little scholarly attention. For reasons that need not be discussed here, there was a complete change in the 1980s. That decade saw a dramatic upsurge in interest, and in the 1990s not a year went by without several books connected with the subject, some of them of major importance, entering the public domain. While a few of these were individually authored (e.g. David Noy's *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe* [Cambridge, 1993 and 1995], John Barclay's *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* [Edinburgh, 1996] and Isaiah Gafni's *Land, Center and Diaspora* [Sheffield, 1997]), several were edited collections of seminar and conference papers—e.g. J. Lieu, J. North, and T. Rajak's *The Jews among Pagans and Christians* (London and New York, 1992), J. W. van Henten and P. W. van der Horst's *Studies in Early Jewish Epigraphy* (Leiden, 1994), B. Isaac and A. Oppenheimer's *Studies on the Jewish Diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods* (Tel-Aviv, 1996), M. Goodman's *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford, 1998), and S. Jones and S. Pearce's *Jewish Local Patriotism in the Graeco-Roman Period* (Sheffield, 1998). The peak years of activity were 1996–8, and it was during that period that Sean Freyne conceived the idea for a conference in Dublin entitled *Jews in the Hellenistic and Roman Cities*. Although that meeting took place in 1997, it was not until 2002 that the papers and lectures delivered at it were finally published. Briefly introduced by Sean Freyne himself (Chapter 1), they form the contents of the book under review.

I think that it would be helpful to the would-be purchaser and/or reader if I started by stating what this volume is not. It is not, despite its title, particularly concerned with Jews in an urban context. The city figures very little in most of these papers, and in some (most notably the chapter on the Essenes) not at all. Nor do these essays make much use of the new epigraphic and archaeological data for the Jewish Diaspora, although one of the main reasons for holding this conference (p. 1) was the desire to see this fresh material exploited and given greater prominence! As for the important questions raised by Freyne (pp. 3–4) about 'acculturation, enculturation, assimilation and strategies of ethnic-identity maintenance that are particularly acute in the case of the Jews', these remain largely unaddressed in this volume.

So if we do not have here either what the title states or what the prime mover behind the whole project wanted, what do we have? The answer is an extremely heterogeneous collection of papers, most, but not all, of them relating in some way or other to the

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.511 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Jewish Diaspora. One is entirely archaeological—'Aspects of Everyday Life in Roman Palestine with Special Reference to Domicile and Ritual Baths' (Eric Meyers, Chapter 12). Two are based mainly on epigraphic evidence—'Synagogue and Community in the Graeco-Roman Diaspora' (Tessa Rajak, Chapter 3) and 'Synagogue Communities in the Graeco-Roman Cities' (Anne Fitzpatrick-McKinley, Chapter 5). Five have a literary focus—narrow in the case of 'The Hellenistic City of Jerusalem' (Lester Grabbe, Chapter 1), 'The Jews in the Hellenistic Cities of Acts' (Fearghus Ó Fearghail, Chapter 4), and 'The Essenes in Greek Sources—Some Reflections' (John Dillon, Chapter 8), but wide ranging in John Barclay's 'Apologetics in the Jewish Diaspora' (Chapter 9) and Jonathan Dyck's 'Philo, Alexandria and Empire: The Politics of Allegorical Interpretation' (Chapter 10). The remaining three papers—'Population and Proselytism: How Many Jews Were There in the Ancient world?' (Brian McGing, Chapter 6), 'Jewish Calendar Reckoning in the Graeco-Roman Cities' (Sacha Stern, Chapter 7), and 'Ethnic Continuity in the Jewish Diaspora in Antiquity' (Gideon Bohak, Chapter 11)—defy easy categorization.

Notwithstanding the diversity of the contents and their mismatch with both the title and the introduction, this collection is not without value. With one exception, the contributions are of a high quality. Those interested in studying the Jews in the Graeco-Roman world will find much in the individual essays that is both informative and stimulating. The volume, taken as a whole, provides a useful addition to the earlier collections of seminar and conference proceedings noted at the beginning of this review.

Edinburgh MARGARET H. WILLIAMS

THE DEMOGRAPHY OF EGYPT

W. SCHEIDEL: *Death on the Nile. Disease and the Demography of Roman Egypt*. Pp. xxx + 286, maps. Leiden: Brill, 2001. Cased, €73. ISBN: 90-04-12323-7.

In this engaging book, Scheidel aims to bring together the study of ancient demography and the medical history of the Roman world, which until now have been studied separately and using different approaches. But this is not an easy task. The study of population structures in the ancient world is notoriously difficult due to our lack of precise evidence. On the other hand, highly theoretical approaches, which depend more on methodology that evidence, are surely as unreliable.

However, evidence from Egypt, especially that provided by census returns, has been used with great effect recently in demographic study, and it is to this that S. turns. His focus is the underlying factors affecting demography—death and disease—and their effects on mortality rates and patterns, age structure and life expectancy, and population size and demographic change. The book is divided into three large chapters treating these issues; the author's findings are supported by copious figures and tables, two appendices offer detailed treatment of months of death recorded in epitaphs and the recording of exact ages in census returns, and are followed by a very full bibliography.

Chapter 1 is founded upon the substantial body of evidence provided by Greek and Coptic funerary epitaphs recorded on inscriptions and mummy labels. Despite an uneven geographical distribution of this evidence, S. is able to provide a convincing picture of the age-specific incidence of deaths, which unsurprisingly is high in the lower

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https://doi.org/10.1093/cr/54.2.511 Published online by Cambridge University Press