



Review

Reviewed Work(s): Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt, with an Index of the Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica by William Horbury and David Noy

Review by: Roger S. Bagnall

Source: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 115, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1995), pp. 324-325

Published by: American Oriental Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/604696>

Accessed: 12-06-2017 14:22 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



American Oriental Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the American Oriental Society*

rabbi's interpretation of Isa. 52:13–53:8. Van der Horst (p. 146, nn. 180, 183), following Strack-Billerbeck, identifies R. Eleazar as Eleazar bar Qappara, although he notes alternatives: Eleazar ben Pedath, active between 250 and 280 (so E. E. Urbach) or Eleazar of Modiim (so W. D. Davies). In any case, the attestation of the opinion in Origen and some rabbinic authority of the second or third century constitutes, according to van Unnik, the earliest evidence for this positive assessment of the diaspora itself. It is, he believes, a late development, probably associated with claims and counterclaims about the significance of the diaspora in Jewish-Christian debates.

Theological claims about the significance of the diaspora form the focus of the final chapter of van Unnik's study. His most interesting point here consists of a correction of Jules Isaac, *L'Enseignement du mépris: Verité historique et mythes théologiques* (Paris: Fasquell, 1962) (English translation: *The Teaching of Contempt: The Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism* [New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1964]). In this work, Isaac had noted Christian polemical claims that the Jewish diaspora punished Jews for the death of Jesus. He argued that these polemical claims were the source of the negative assessment of the fact of diaspora generally. Van Unnik, certainly no supporter of those dangerous polemics, corrects Isaac on what he takes to be the central point of his own study. It was not Christians, but Jews of the Hellenistic period themselves who viewed the fact of the diaspora in negative terms. They did so not because of the social and economic facts of life in the diaspora, but because scripture itself indicated that dispersion was an act of God designed to punish transgression of the covenant and to call the people of Israel to repentance.

So far, van Unnik. His editor, Pieter van der Horst, has added to the essay notes with references to more recent treatments of the issues that van Unnik raised. Van der Horst also prefaces the essay with a review of van Unnik's life and work and a bibliography of his publications. Two appendices are also added, designed to supplement van Unnik's treatment. The first records the passages in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, a text not treated by van Unnik, on the theme of dispersion. The second contains the results of a search through the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* for any instances of the word group *diaspora-diaspeiro* that escaped van Unnik's attention. Most of these additions come from patristic sources and offer evidence to support his position.

Van Unnik's lucid and learned lectures, enhanced with the supplements provided by van der Horst, offer a fitting tribute to an important scholar. The point that van Unnik made has been confirmed by many subsequent scholars, but his arguments remain well worth following.

HAROLD W. ATTRIDGE

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt, with an Index of the Jewish Inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica. By WILLIAM HORBURY and DAVID NOY. Cambridge: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1992. Pp. xxiv + 378; 32 plates.

The title might lead one to think that this is an epigraphical corpus, and some of its characteristics encourage that view: texts, lemmas, translations, apparatus, commentary, indices, plates. On the other hand, the authors have apparently not seen the originals of any of the inscriptions, and they make no significant contribution to their texts. Everything textual (including inconsistent accentuation) is copied from earlier editions, mainly the *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum* and the *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* (there are just sixteen items not in one of these, none previously unpublished), without indication of palaeographical data like numeral markings and without showing (except in vertical bars) the original distribution of texts into lines. Museum inventory numbers are lacking. In short, it would be difficult to justify either the existence or the form of the book from an epigraphical point of view, and there is not much point in reviewing it further from that perspective.

The apparent purpose of the book, although this is never said, is to provide a convenient working collection of the Jewish inscriptions from Egypt with bibliographies, indices, and commentaries that will help those interested in Jewish studies to derive the maximum benefit from this body of material. The bibliographies are very full and might have been pruned of places where inscriptions are mentioned only casually. The commentaries are indeed full and valuable (but not well cross-referenced), and the indices include many nice features not usually found in corpora: provenance, exact and approximate dates (almost nothing after the early second century A.D., and some of that dubious), type of text (epitaphs naturally dominate), onomastic features, ages, relationships, literary references cited in the commentaries, formulas, linguistic features, and so on. Separate indices on the same model treat the Jewish inscriptions of the Cyrenaica, published in G. Lüderitz and J. M. Reynolds, *Corpus jüdischer Zeugnisse aus der Cyrenaika*. The one obvious gap here is a general subject index. Whatever one may think of the importance of such an index in a normal volume of documentary texts (cf. P. van Minnen, *BASP* 30 [1993]: 15), it seems of the utmost desirability in a volume where the commentaries are the main focus and almost the sole original contribution.

The authors' criteria for inclusion are set out on pp. x–xi: (1) use of mainly Jewish names; (2) use of Jewish religious language and institutions; (3) use of Hebrew; and (4) provenance from Tell el-Yehoudieh (Leontopolis). They acknowledge the doubtfulness of the Jewishness of some of what they include, but the problem is deeper. They seem to have adopted a "Jewish until proven not" policy, as with no. 116, a votive dedication from the Fayum to θεῶι μεγάλῳ μεγάλῳ ὑψίστῳ, about which they comment, "In the case of the present inscription, the evi-

dence is ambiguous but does not seem to justify a rejection of the possibility that Theos Hypsistos is the Jewish God.' That seems to me unwise and to have led to inclusion of several very unlikely cases (others include nos. 120 and 141 [where there is absolutely no basis for supposing Jewish character and good reason not to]). A more severe policy of relegation to appendix one ("Inscriptions not Considered to be Jewish"—but why not just omit?) would have improved the volume.

There are numerous points of text and comment in which the volume is wrong or dubious. Many have been noted in the excellent review by H. Cuvigny in *REG* 106 (1993): 655–57 (who, however, wrongly refers to the numeral in no. 12 as an age; it is the year date, and the correct reading appears to be *zeta*, 7, from the plate), to which the reader is referred. As Cuvigny notes, an error in citing a name in no. 130 shows that the editors have sometimes used onomastic repertories without checking the original citations, and in general the citation of papyrological evidence is scanty and inexpert.

There is much of value in this volume, and most users will no doubt learn a good deal from it. It must, however, be used with considerable caution, including the checking of earlier editions before relying on the texts themselves.

ROGER S. BAGNALL

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Medicine and Hygiene in the Works of Flavius Josephus. By SAMUEL S. KOTTEK. *Studies in Ancient Medicine*, vol. 9. Leiden: E. J. BRILL, 1994. Pp. xiii + 217.

This volume represents the author's attempt to correct a long-standing omission in the history of medicine, namely a comprehensive study of references to medicine, healing, and hygiene in the works of Josephus, references which were last studied by Max Neuburger in 1919. Kottek's reasons for reconsidering references to medicine in Josephus are justified: to wit, that Josephus' recounting of biblical history does not always coincide with the Bible, often adding relevant additional information. Furthermore, Josephus' remarks regarding healing or disease often reflect attitudes found in the Midrash and Aggadah, remarks which represent important additions to the medical lore of his era. Kottek has carefully documented rabbinic parallels to passages in Josephus which have not been previously cited.

Medical lore, however, is not the same as medicine. Little of the information to be gleaned from Josephus about disease, *materia medica*, or even hygiene, is of value to the history of medicine, since the data are so vague. Josephus was not a trained physician, nor had he any particular expertise in describing symptoms, and the results are as unsatisfactory for the

historian of medicine as descriptions of the plague of Athens by Thucydides: no real diagnosis of ancient disease is possible. Even in cases where information is available, such as Herod's final illness, the symptoms described are too general to allow for more than an imprecise diagnosis. Kottek reviews (p. 188) Josephus' account of Herod's symptoms ("slight fever, itching, abdominal pains and infection, suppuration in the genital area, edema of the legs, strained breathing"), and previous modern diagnoses of cirrhosis of the liver, arteriosclerosis, cancer, or diabetes, to which Kottek adds his own suggestion of renal failure. The problem with Kottek's own diagnosis is shared by all the others, namely that there is no evidence that Josephus' information on Herod's symptoms was based upon the observation of physicians.

Josephus' own lack of medical training is occasionally obvious in his descriptions of medical treatment. Referring to Hezekiah's illness (*Ant.* X, 25–26, based upon II Kings 20:7 and Isa. 38:21), Josephus refers to the fact that Hezekiah was attended by physicians but neglects to mention the crucial bit of medical evidence, namely that the king's abscess or lesion (if that is what he had) was treated by applying a cake of pressed figs (p. 32). Yet, the external application of figs was known from both Babylonia (*Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, S:376) and Egypt (mentioned by Kottek, p. 126 n. 5).

The chapter headings offer typical examples of unfulfilled promise. The chapter on "Diseases and Epidemics" (chapter two), for instance, contains relatively few data on ancient pathology or epidemiology, but correctly describes Josephus' own preoccupation with leprosy, the ten plagues in Egypt, and the plague of the Philistines. These descriptions, although of general historiographic interest, have little in detail to offer the historian of medicine. The same can generally be said of the chapter on "Hygiene and Public Health" (chapter three), which discusses bathing, circumcision, exercise and rest, diet, and matters of personal purity, which are all of interest to the sociology of ancient Israel but offer scant medical information. The impression is often given that the author is stretching a point in trying to find medical references in Josephus, especially in his chapter on "medical metaphors" (chapter seven), where Kottek cites Josephus' description of two hills as "breasts" (pp. 144–45), under the subheading "anatomy."

Chapter four, on "War Injuries and Traumatology," holds out the promise of a discussion of surgery and wound treatment, but the result is actually a catalogue of individuals or groups who suffered wounding or death, mostly in anecdotal or historical contexts. It is interesting to note that Kottek could not find a single incident in Josephus of the use of venesection as a treatment (see p. 25), since the use of bloodletting became common in Greek medicine but is unattested in Babylonian medicine. The few references to venesection in the Talmud (see J. Preuss, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, trans. F. Rosner [New York: Sanhedrin Press, 1978], 34f., 248ff.) are not substantiated by Josephus.