

*Über die Ursprünglichkeit des Judentums: Contra Apionem.* By Flavius Josephus, edited by Folker Siegert. (Schriften des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum 6). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008. 2 volumes. Pp. 218; 211. Hardback. €139.00. ISBN 978-3-525-54206-4.

Study of *Contra Apionem* has been booming in recent years. After a decade bracketed by a collection of articles on this work edited by Feldman and Levison in 1996 and another authored by Haaland in 2006, and punctuated by Kasher's 1996 Hebrew translation of the work, Gerber's 1997 monograph on the portrayal of Jewish law in *C. Ap.* 2, the 1999 Aarhus Josephus-Colloquium, and Labow's 2005 monograph on *C. Ap.* 1, this boom peaked in 2007 with the appearance of Barclay's massive translation of and commentary upon the entire work. Barclay, fortunately, had pre-publication access to this Münster team's work, and now the publication of the latter has put the study of this apologetic work onto a completely new and more dependable basis.

These two volumes, which take their place alongside the same *Arbeitskreis'* 2001 edition of Josephus' *Vita*, are a treasure for students of Josephus and a model of philological labor. Although the work opens with a long *Einleitung* that addresses standard introductory issues (title, date, sources, literary and historical issues, reception), and later on includes 77 pages of *Sachanmerkungen* (by Manuel Vogel) on the book, which despite that modest characterization are often quite rich, the book's major contribution lies in the field of textual criticism. This comes in three parts: a detailed discussion in vol. I of the witnesses and the relations among them, culminating in a stemma of the entire tradition; an appendix in vol. II, which describes various witnesses in detail, especially the two "new" ones (see below); and—filling more than 100 pages of vol. I—a section-by-section translation of the work, in each case detailing the textual witnesses and decisions in a way that amounts to a critical apparatus for the entire work. That critical apparatus, taken together with the text of Niese's 1889 *editio maior*, which is reprinted (without his apparatus) at the end of vol. II, will allow these volumes, as Barclay notes (lxiii), to supply "the standard text of *Apion* for the foreseeable future."

To make the importance of this work clear, we must realize that Niese was convinced that (as Thackeray later summarized the matter in his introduction to the Loeb edition, xviii) "For the *Contra Apionem*... we are dependent on a solitary imperfect MS., viz., L [...], of which all other extant MSS. appear to be copies." This opinion derived primarily from the fact that all manuscripts share the same lacuna at 2.52-113, as well as from other commonalities. Accordingly, Niese's edition, which served as the basis for all subsequent work, was based upon L alone, along with indirect evidence supplied by Eusebius and the Latin translation. Moreover, Niese's use of Eusebius was limited by the quality of the editions then available, and the weight that could be ascribed to the Latin version was

limited by it being only a translation, and often not a very good one at that. Thus, even when many of Arlenus' readings agreed with the Latin, against L, and gave better sense, Niese could reasonably deem it warranted to dismiss them as being no more than that editor's conjectural retroversion from the Latin. In short, apart from L Niese had relatively little to go on. He supplemented the evidence, of course, with numerous conjectures (typically in the apparatus of his *editio maior* and in the text of his *editio maior*), just as did many scholars before and after him; an idea of the number of such conjectures is given by the three-page *Endapparat* in the present work, which lists scores and scores of conjectures that were not listed in the main apparatus because the Münster editors deemed the Greek text *akzeptabel* as is. Obviously, the very number of such conjectures indicates just how difficult and insecure the text of this little apologetic work is—or was.

The present work changes the textual picture significantly, in three main ways. First, it points to two manuscripts which, although relatively late (15th-16th century), are independent of L. Niese knew of both of them, but was convinced that they derived from L; Siegert and his team have established their independence of L. Second, they have also established that one of those two manuscripts, S(chleusingensis—it survived in a school library in Schleusingen, Thüringen), was the *Vorlage* for Arlenus' *editio princeps*, a point which not only upgrades the authority of the latter but also—the third point—upgrades the authority of the Latin version since, as noted, that version often agrees with Arlenus' Greek. One way or the other, the importance of S cannot be overstated. As Siegert puts it, "an weit über hundert Stellen hat nur er eine akzeptable Lesart" (I, 68), and just as Arlenus' conjectures turn out to be what he read in his *Vorlage*, so too numerous subsequent conjectures, by scholars unfamiliar with S, turn out to be readings supplied by that manuscript (II, 31).

Finally, the Münster team also had, of course, the advantage of using Mras' 1954 edition of Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, which includes significant quotations from *Contra Apionem*. Especially given the fact that in general Eusebius' works were transmitted more accurately than Josephus' (I, 70), his quotations enjoy the authority of independent witnesses.

Building on the basis of such premises, the present volumes put work on this book on a foundation much more stable than formerly possible. Thus, for some examples, ranging from relatively low key to more significant: (1) at 1.204 Niese read αὐτοῦ ("his") with L and Eusebius, adding no comment; but the rhetoric would be better with αὐτοῦ ("his own"), Thackeray indeed made the emendation, and now we know that S had that reading all along (I, 139). (2) At 1.35 Niese, following L, offered ἐπὶ τὰς αἰχμαλώτους although that hardly makes sense and although, as he noted, Arlenus read ἔτι, which could easily be rendered—and now we know that S reads ἔτι (I, 103) and so that is the text followed by Barclay. (3) At 2.245 Josephus says, according to L, followed by Niese and Thackeray,