to Mount Moriah postbiblical interpretation says that Abraham knew where to sacrifice his son because he saw a luminous cloud above the mountain. This interpretation fits in with the Chronicler’s identification of Mount Moriah with the temple hill. As to the Exodus cloud the author shows that various traditions (the cloud as a column at the crossing of the Red Sea, as a column-guide during Israel’s journey, as a protecting cover over Israel, as covering the ark and the temple, as oracular cover in defense of Moses and Aaron, as oracular column and as vehicle of Moses’ ascension) have been combined in later interpretation. This part is concluded by the theme of the Eschatological cloud, which is elaborated in rabbinical writings: the historical motif became a literary one and the literary a symbolical. The Eschatological cloud (the cloud of glory) covers Israel as a canopy or as a garment. On the other hand the Eschatological cloud appears in the description of the final judgment in Dan. 7 as the vehicle of the Son of man, who is identified with the Messiah in intertestamental and rabbinical literature. In this section the author pays attention to the conception of the two Messiahs, known e.g. from the Qumran writings. Ad B. The cloud of the Transfiguration is a theophanic cloud from which God speaks (cf. Exodus), and at the same time a covering cloud which reminds of Old Testament and Jewish traditions. In the report of Christ’s Ascension (Acts 1:9) the cloud indicates not only Christ’s disappearance but also his entry into the celestial sphere. Later on this cloud was equated with the vehicular cloud of the Son of man’s return. The third section deals with some New Testament passages referring to Christ’s coming with power and glory and to the glorification of the believers. The appendix on the Holy Spirit stresses that for the Christian the cloud of glory of ancient Israel has become the spirit of glory. This book is the first extensive monograph on the theme of the biblical cloud. It offers a careful and thorough investigation into this rarely studied subject. One minor remark may be made. At p. 29 the author says: “As a matter of fact the targum translates it (vid. hizr) as ‘myn’ only in Job 38:25 (late!), but the Job targum from Qumran cave 11 reads ‘myn’ here. I noted some printing errors which were overlooked in the correction, e.g. p. 34: prw instead of prw; p. 35; l pne kl r5 instead of l pne kl r5; also p. 35: twice sbwtb instead of skwth; wtrdpnw instead of wtrdpnw; mbr instead of mbwr; p. 204, note 869: Neophyt instead of Neophyti, and some others, especially in French quotations).

J.

Jacob Neusner, Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. The Tradition and the Man. Part I: The Tradition; Part II: Analysis of the Tradition. The Man (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity, Vol. III and IV), xx + 500 and xiv + 528 pp. respect., E. J. Brill, Leiden 1973, cloth f 240._ (Jacob Neusner of Brown University has contributed much to the scholarly world in his studies of the rabbinic tradition. He is a pioneer in the application of form-critical method to an analysis of this tradition. Tracing the development of sample bodies of the rabbinic tradition, he seeks characteristic forms, techniques and tendencies in the formation of what makes up this tradition. His first attempt Development of a Legend: Studies on the Traditions Concerning Yohanan Journal for the Study of Judaism, Vol. VI, No. 1
** ben Zakkai** was a relatively modest one, of necessity so, since the body of traditions here was far too small to permit any full measure of form-critical and form-historical inquiry. The traditions centering on Yohanan ben Zakkai are limited in number and have only a very few formal or substantive traits in common. A study on Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, however, opens wide the opportunity to observe fixed forms, to trace mnemonic patterns to the extent that such exist and to chart the development of variant traditions. Both in quality and in quantity the body of material available here is substantial, really the first substantial body of attested material on an individual master.

An important innovation in Neusner’s approach to the analysis and study of the rabbinic literature centering around Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus — an approach already seen in his earlier works but considerably refined here — is the different weight he gives to historical material derived from different sources. Up until now most scholars have assigned almost equal historical value to materials derived from the various sources, whether early or late. Neusner correctly points out that not all historical material can be treated indifferentially. There is obviously more importance to be attached to legal than to midrashic material, and more importance to earlier legal material than to later.

What amazes one is the completeness of Neusner’s handling of the traditions about Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus. He classifies them into legal, historical and biographical, and exegetical and theological traditions. In each division he assembles, lists and explains every single tradition. He charts and arranges the same material in a variety of patterns, to the extent even that one may wonder whether there is not sometime needless repetition. The amount of hard work that has gone into this must be enormous. In addition, Neusner often summarizes for the benefit of the reader important scholarly analysis of the source material, such as Professor Saul Lieberman’s explanation of the background to Rabbi Eliezer’s trial for heresy (Vol. I, p. 403). Upon occasion, Neusner gives his strictures, like that on the historical value of literary approaches to aggadah (I, p. 446). He also takes pains to analyze all the differences between various versions of any given statement. He records all the sources of any given passage in proper chronological order, and one gets to see the development and changes from the early sources to later ones (although he does not exhaust all the possibilities of elaboration, such as differentiation between sources stemming from the school of R. Ishmael and those stemming from that of R. Akiba).

Neusner divides the material dealing with Rabbi Eliezer into two broad classifications — the tradition and the legend. The tradition emerges primarily from the legal material, which has the strongest claim on credibility. The legend stems primarily from the biographical material. In a more detailed classification, he lists, in accordance with historical importance, as follows: 1. The best traditions (Yavnean period). 2. The better traditions (Akiban period). 3. The fair traditions (Judah the Patriarch, Mishna-Tosefta period). 4. The poor traditions (Talmudic and midrashic periods). These are analyzed as well in accordance with the forms in which they appear and in their