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Jewish Travel in Antiquity. By CATHERINE HEZSER. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, vol. 144. Tübingen: MOHR SIEBECK, 2011. Pp. x + 529. €139.

The phenomenon of travel, i.e., people journeying from one place to another, seems like an elementary, almost requisite act of creatures possessing two or more strong legs, especially if accompanied by adventurous curiosity; as such, it dates to the earliest phases of human existence. Crossing territories, departing from one place and arriving at another, brought change in geographic and cultural sceneries and facilitated new encounters, exposures, and threats; it led to great revelations, progress, and achievements, as well as war and devastation. No wonder that some of the oldest myths in history relate to expeditions of individuals or nations (The Tower of Babel, Jason and the Argonauts, Odysseus, and Abraham, to name but a few). Just the same, modern-day travels infiltrate almost every corner of our lives, from magazines, travel guides, and cookbooks to literature and film.

Within this context, the interest of scholars in the traveling habits of the ancients should come as no surprise, resulting in a steady stream of publications. In the 1860s, when Ludwig Friedländer, himself a wandering Jew of sorts, wrote the definitive chapters on “Verkehrswesen” and “Die Reisen der Tourism” in his three-volume tour de force, *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms*, he engaged an already established line of inquiry on the subject, not only of his great teachers—Mommsen and Burckhardt—but going back to Winckelmann, a century or so before him. Scholars of ancient Judaism followed similar paths, both hitting the road themselves (as early as the fourteenth-century Spanish Jewish investigator and scholar Estori of Florenza) and writing about the travels of their ancestors. In his now-classic work about Jewish life in the Late Roman world, *Talmudische Archäologie*, Samuel Krauss devoted the entire eighth section to “Trade and Transport” (Handel und Verkehr; vol. II, pp. 316–423), meticulously detailing all rabbinic sources pertaining to the physical and human aspects of these phenomena.

In the book under review, Catherine Hezser sets out to reconstruct the entire spectrum of travel experiences for Jews in the Roman world. Well recognizing her debt to Krauss, even if critical of his work (see, for example, p. 11), but rather oblivious to the broader drama of travel studies, Hezser divides her book into two parts. Part one discusses “The Material Basis for Travel,” and contains five chapters dealing with mundane, though central, aspects of voyaging, such as roads (chap. 2), places to stay along the journey (chap. 3), and ways to travel by land (chap. 4) and sea (chap. 5). Somewhat out of place, although quite interesting nevertheless, this part opens with an analysis of ancient Jews’ various perceptions about space (chap. 1).

The second part of the book is misleadingly called “The Literary Representation of Travel,” as it covers much more; the first two chapters of this part indeed take on the representation of travel in narrative (in the impossibly long and thus hard-to-digest chap. 1) and legal literature (chap. 2). But the next four chapters investigate central historical, not literary, topics in the realm of Jewish travel: the connections between Roman Palestine and the Parthian-turning-Sassanid empires (chap. 3), pilgrimage (chap. 4), the mobility of women (chap. 5), and finally travel and trade (chap. 6). To these Hezser adds an introduction and a conclusion as well as a detailed bibliography of secondary literature (but not of primary sources) and two indexes to references and subjects. One may find this organization rather confusing, especially that of part 2, but also the placement of chapter 1 in part 1; indeed, the book could have benefitted from a stricter editorial hand.

Hezser is an avid reader of ancient sources and research literature. She consumed a tremendous amount of material and was able to produce a detailed study on a topic that has not been covered in its entirety before. Some may question her writing method, by which long paraphrasing abridgments of previous scholarship constitute large portions of the current work (see for example pp. 313–22, which

summarize several recent books on Persia, or the bulk of the discussion on the road network, pp. 54–88, which wholly depends on the work of others). But one cannot overlook the advantages to this practice; after all, many of those who may wish to know something about Jewish travel will not bother reading the books Hezser did, and so will benefit from her toils.

At times, however, the plain enumeration of multiple modern views on a certain subject does not amount to much other than exhausting reading. Such is the case, for example, in the numerous opinions Hezser tirelessly lists regarding the identity of the pilgrim from Bordeaux (pp. 31–32), whom speculative historians have identified as almost every possible type of character in the fourth-century Mediterranean (although no one has yet suggested that he was a dog). Such précis leaves the reader with an uncomfortable feeling of undigested consumption. Similarly, on occasion Hezser stumbles upon subjects that require more nuanced examination, as for example in a section that labels the bathhouse as a travel destination of rabbis (pp. 234–37), which is analogous to a reporter finding an American tourist in a Berlin supermarket and thus labeling supermarkets a travel destination of Americans. On the other hand, the (too few) instances where Hezser shares her judicious and sharp evaluations of some of the scholarly literatures she covers—as for example when she rejects Oppenheimer’s fantastic conjectures about the area of Jewish settlement in Babylonia (pp. 323–24)—make one wish they appeared more often.

On the whole, the book is a mixed bag. On the positive side, it gathers much of the relevant information on the subject; the author, equipped with a sound critical approach, weaves ancient sources and modern scholarship together, organizes them in a mostly logical and accessible way, and offers a thematic narrative to cement the material into a cohesive and coherent text. As such, the book should serve as a helpful resource for those venturing into the vast realm of travel. At the same time, one cannot escape the feeling that it was all done too quickly, and that the project could have profited from further study, deliberation, and consideration of its central topics. With the space limitations of this review in mind, the following is a brief discussion of just one example of the book’s conceptual and methodological limitations:

The title of the book defines its chronological framework as “Antiquity.” In the introduction, Hezser refers to “the Roman and Byzantine empires in the first centuries CE” (p. 1) and to “Graeco-Roman” (p. 2) society as the contextual backdrops of her study. But then, on the next page, she redirects her gaze and defines the “focus” of the book as “the Land of Israel” and “on rabbis, from whose perspective the majority of the literary sources of the first five centuries C.E. are formulated” (p. 3). On that same page, Hezser develops a chronological model that claims that “[w]hereas Second Temple Judaism was centered on the Jerusalem Temple and the priests as its functionaries, post-70 rabbinic Judaism was decentralized, with rabbis residing at various locales.” The chronological dimension of the book becomes even fuzzier when on occasion Hezser refers to it as “Late Antiquity” (e.g., p. 19), a time span that begins at the earliest in the days of the emperor Diocletian at the end of the third century. So which is it: Antiquity, post-70, or Late Antiquity?

Furthermore, Hezser’s usage of the rubric “rabbinic Judaism,” especially for the immediate post-70 era, seems rather misleading. For at least a hundred and fifty years after the Roman destruction of the Second Jewish Temple in 70 C.E., a huge span of time, the entire structure of “rabbinic Judaism” amounted at best to sporadic and informal learning circles, led by independent legal scholars (known as *hakhamim*), who were not organized in any substantial way and surely did not constitute a defined entity that could be labeled “Judaism,” neither in their mind (as far as we can tell) nor in any documented source. “Rabbinic Judaism” in the first two centuries exists only in the imagination of theologically inclined scholars who reconstruct the beginning of the story based on how it ended hundreds of years later. In the same vein, there are no existing rabbinic sources from the first 200 years of the Common Era, unless one wishes hypothetically to reconstruct all sorts of oral traditions embedded in third-century rabbinic texts, such as the Mishnah and the Tosefta, a rather conjectural practice.

Besides, it seems that Hezser does not follow her own rabbinic-centered model, as she goes back time and again to discuss material and sources from the Second Temple period, not as a prelude to the later eras, despite her claim that it is not her “focus” (e.g., pp. 36, 44–45, 61, 333, 338, and more).

Finally, a puzzling lacuna in Hezser's model is her overlooking of the most famous and best documented travelling Jew in the first few centuries of the Common Era, Saul of Tarsus, also known as Saint Paul. Here is a Jew who spent his entire adult life, some thirty or forty years, trekking throughout the Mediterranean, back and forth from Asia Minor to Judaea, Arabia, Syria, Greece, and Italy, perhaps as far as Spain. His own letters and the semi-biographical writings about him, such as the Book of Acts, offer a treasure trove of Jewish travel information. But Hezser relegates Paul to the realm of Christianity, a conceptual and methodological error no less egregious than the ones she finds in Krauss, devotes meager attention to the writings associated with him, mainly in the chapter on spatial conceptions (pp. 41–44), and fails to use him for what he is—a Jewish traveler in Antiquity par excellence.

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Millionenjahrhaus: Zur Konzeption des Raumes der Ewigkeit im konstellativen Königtum in Sprache, Architektur und Theologie. By STEFANIE SCHRÖDER. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2010. Pp. 396, plates. €84.

Mit der vorliegenden Untersuchung zum Phänomen „Millionenjahrhaus“ liegt nach der im Jahr 2002 erschienenen Arbeit von M. Ullmann (*König für die Ewigkeit—Die Häuser der Millionen von Jahren* [Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag]) eine zweite monographische Behandlung dieses schwierigen Problems vor.

In einem einleitenden Teil werden die bisherigen Standpunkte zur Bedeutung des Begriffes „Millionenjahrhaus“ (Mjh.) referiert sowie die Methode dargelegt, nach der vorgegangen werden soll. Diese Methode knüpft an den kunstgeschichtlichen Raumbegriff an, geht aber nach Aussage der Autorin methodisch und inhaltlich darüber hinaus. Im weiteren gliedert sich die Untersuchung entsprechend der drei Betrachtungsebenen Sprache, Architektur und Theologie. Im Anhang finden sich zunächst Bemerkungen zu den Mjh.-Belegen, die üblichen Verzeichnisse (Literatur, Abbildungen, Register) und eine tabellarische Zusammenstellung der Mjh.-Belege. Es folgt ein Katalog der sogenannten Terrasentempel in Theben-West sowie Luxortempel und Karnaktempel mit Darstellungen und Beschreibungen.

Auf der sprachlichen Ebene analysiert die Autorin zunächst die Namen der Tempel auf der West- und der Ostseite Thebens und unterscheidet hier zwischen einem Hauseigentümersnamen und einem Hausnamen. Des weiteren sieht sie einen entscheidenden Unterschied zwischen den Totentempeln auf der Westseite und den Anlagen der Ostseite darin, daß erstere in ihren Hausnamen entweder den König oder Amun als Eigentümer des Mjh. benennen, während auf der Ostseite immer Amun der Eigentümer des Mjh. ist. Die Anlagen auf der Ostseite sind bauliche Erweiterungen des Amuntempels, der in Gänze als Mjh. zu verstehen ist.

Das *hwt* innerhalb des Terminus *hwt n.t h.h.w m rnp.wt* steht für ein symbolisches Haus. *h.h.w m rnp.wt*, „Jahrmillion“ ist eine unzählbare Größe, bei deren endloser Dauer es sich um Nichtzeitlichkeit und damit um Zeitlosigkeit handelt. Das Mjh. ist ein zeitloses Haus. „Haus“ bedeutet hier nicht zeitlose Architektur, sondern ein Territorium, das von einer Dauer ist, die kein Maß kennt und somit außerhalb der Wahrnehmungswelt liegt, d.h. das Jenseits. Somit ist das Mjh. ein jenseitiger und göttlicher Ort im Diesseits. Das Mjh. dient dem Pharao, seine Person in die göttliche Sphäre zu erheben. Durch das Mjh. ist er in göttlichen Gefilden, ist selbst zeitlos und damit göttlich.

Auf der architektonischen Betrachtungsebene legt Verf. zunächst dar, daß methodisch nicht der Weg über eine Analyse der Bildprogramme der Räume oder über eine bauliche Strukturanalyse zur Deutung und Bestimmung der in Frage kommenden Tempel beschränkt werden soll, sondern der übergeordnete Zusammenhang zu bestimmen ist. Da „Mjh.“ nach Ansicht der Verf. kein Terminus für eine bauliche Anlage ist, stellt sich nicht die Frage, was für eine Architektur das Mjh. sei, sondern wie sich die Idee des Mjh. in der Architektur ausdrückt. Nur bei den Totentempeln bildet das Mjh. einen bestimmten