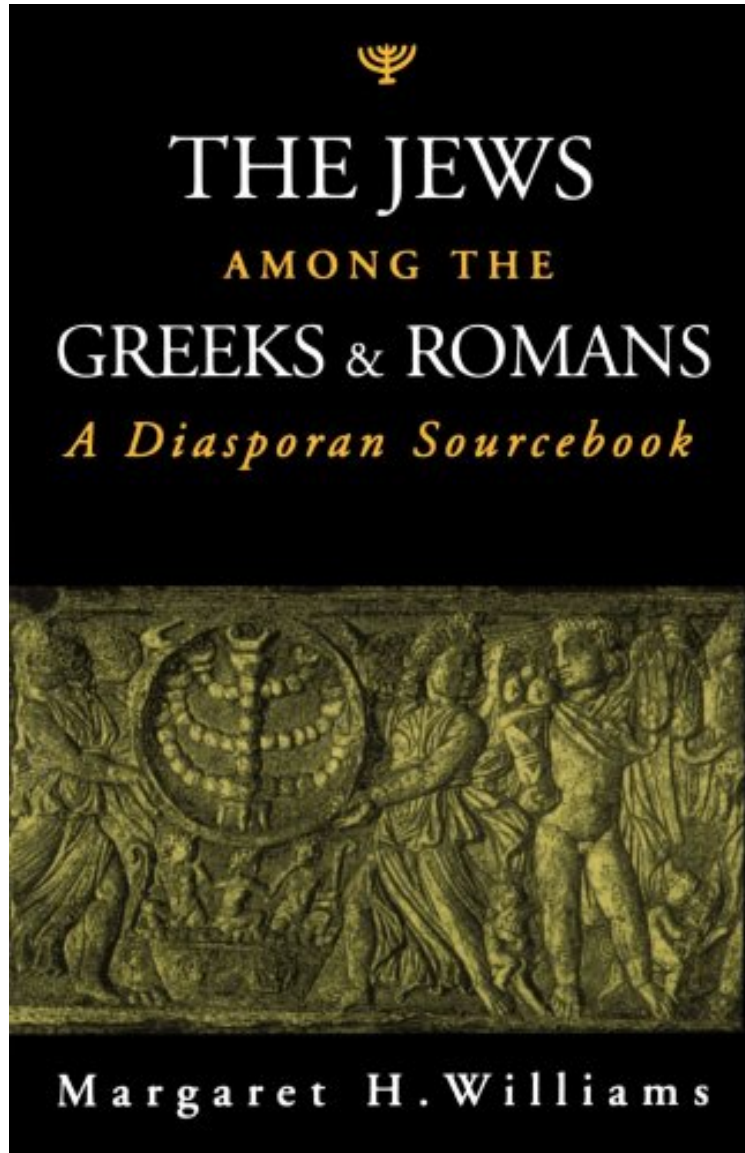


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The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook

Margaret Williams

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Margaret Williams : The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Jews among the Greeks and Romans: A Diasporan Sourcebook:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Highly Useful Sourcebook By Stefano Nikolaou There are a number of sourcebooks on Hellenistic Judaism out there but you can't beat this book by Margaret Williams in terms of

affordability, organisation and the range of texts included. First, affordability is self explanatory. Second, the organisation. There are seven sections to this book: I - The Jewish Diaspora in the Hellenistic and Early Roman Imperial Periods II - Life Inside the Jewish Diasporan Community III - Diasporan Jews and the Jewish Homeland IV - Jewish Interaction with Greek and Roman Authorities V - The Jews among the Greeks VI - The Jews among the Romans VII - Pagans and Judaism: Academic and Real-Life Responses I don't know about you but this is certainly the best organisation of source material that I have seen. Finally, the sources. Williams has the standard literary sources. There is Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, Dio Cassius, Josephus, Philo, etc - no real surprises there! There are also a number of standard extracts from Rabbinical literature and Christian literature. However, it is the epigraphic sources that are outstanding and very informative. The Aphrodisias inscriptions (VII.11-12) that refer to 'Godfearers' is referred to a lot and now I have the actual text. There are also a number of inscriptions that refer to proselytes (VII.26-33), which indicates how widespread conversions were. There is a host of donor and commemorative inscriptions that illustrate the operation of synagogues (II.28-108). These sources show the importance of women in the community as elders, archons and patrons, something you don't pick up from the literary sources. The famous Theodotos Synagogue Inscription is included (III.2), which shows that Diaspora Jews had established their own synagogues in Jerusalem. Finally, there are three interesting grave inscriptions from 4th century Rome that use Proverbs 10.7 that show Jews were still using the Septuagint as well as Aquila's Old Testament translation (V:42-44). I would have liked more evidence of what bible versions Jews were using as I find it interesting but also lack evidence. Also included in this book are some Egyptian papyri like tax documents and Alexandrian nationalist literature. Tax receipts for the Jewish tax show a decline in the Egyptian Jewish population after the revolt under Trajan (IV.54-64), probably due to massacres carried out as reprisals. One document is from 'The Acts of the Pagan Martyrs' (V.82) in which Alexandrian officials petition the emperor (rather rudely) to reject citizenship rights for the Jews. There are also legal texts from the Codex Theodosianus on the increasing constricted rights of the Jews as the Empire became increasingly Christian. This is a great sourcebook that greatly enhances my understanding of the New Testament. I hope some of my discussion on the content will inspire the prospective buyer to consider this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I agree with Stefano Nikolaou's review that Williams' source material ... By Robert Arango I agree with Stefano Nikolaou's review that Williams' source material is well organized and that the epigraphic sources are quite informative. However, most of the book sources material from Josephus and Philo. Williams appears biased against Gentile sources, which she claims reflect only "stereotypes, and those largely unflattering." The unanswered question here is, "Why?" Never addressed is how and why the Jews obtained privileges unavailable to other ethnic or religious groups. Unless one is a specialist on the subject, I would suggest that reading Josephus and Philo themselves sufficiently covers the material for the general reader. And, reading the Gentile sources will provide a more complete understanding of the role of the Jews among the Greeks and Romans.

As one of the few groups in the Greco-Roman world to resist cultural assimilation, the Jews remained an object of fascination throughout antiquity. Greek and Roman writers devoted much space to them, but few bothered to learn the facts about Jews, preferring to report stereotypes and rumor. Evidence does exist, however, to show what real Jews were like in antiquity and how they interacted with the Greeks and Romans, both pagan and Christian. In *The Jews among the Greeks and Romans*, Margaret Williams assembles, assesses, and contextualizes literary and archaeological evidence relating to Jewish communities outside the land of Israel. The sourcebook covers the period beginning with the Diaspora that resulted from the chaos of Alexander the Great's death in 323 BCE and concluding with the demise of the Jewish Patriarchate around 420 CE. This was a time which saw, first, the rapid opening up of opportunities for Jews and then, in the century after Constantine, the gradual but inexorable raising of barriers against them. Newly translated from the Greek and Latin, the documents cover a broad array of topics, including religion, customs, festivals, repression, citizenship, military service, economics, intermarriage, and conversion from Jew to Gentile and Gentile to Jew. While previous collections have concentrated on literary texts, the present volume gives prominence to papyrological and epigraphic source material. Composed in accordance with Greco-Roman epigraphic conventions but written by Jews, these texts some only recently discovered constitute an extraordinarily rich source of information about the values and practices of Jews in antiquity.

.com In the aftermath of Alexander the Great's death in 323 B.C. and the resultant civil war among claimants to his throne, writes historian Margaret Williams, many Jews left Judea and settled in the Hellenistic cities of the eastern Mediterranean. During the Pax Romana and the various campaigns in Judea in the 1st century A.D., the Diaspora spread even further--to Spain, the Crimea, and the interior of Europe. They recorded their travels; so, too, did various chroniclers of the Roman Empire. Williams gathers their testimonies in this primary-source reference work, which touches on matters such as the establishment of synagogues in Jewish townships, Jewish interaction with Greek and Roman authorities, and funerary customs, among many other topics. --Gregory McNamee "Collects and translates into English sources for the history of the Jews in the Western Diaspora during the Greco-Roman period, emphasizing epigraphic materials, a particular strength of this collection in comparison to other sourcebooks... An excellent

introduction to Jewish experience in the lands of the Western Greco-Roman Diaspora." (Religious Studies)Language
NotesText: English (translation)