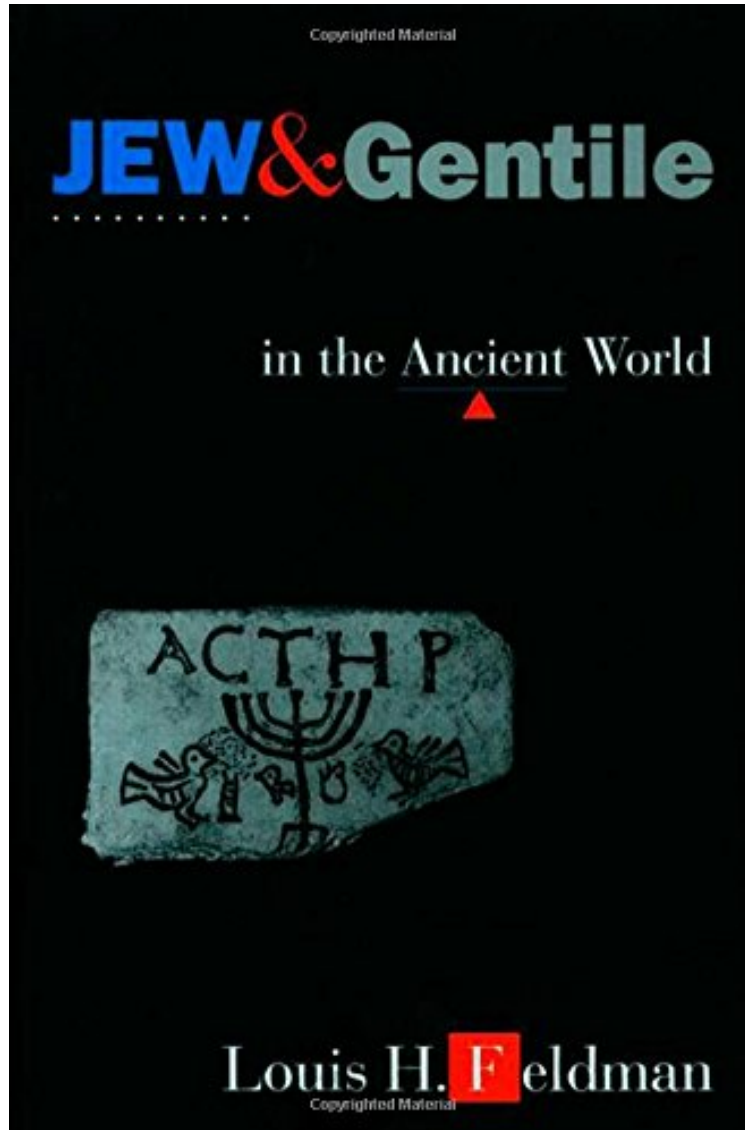


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Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World

Louis H. Feldman

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Louis H. Feldman : Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World:

11 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant and ThoroughBy A CustomerDr. Feldman accomplished many things with this book. For one, he gathered together an enormous amount of material that only someone as knowledgeable and as thorough as he could do. The sources cited in the text and the footnotes represent an

overwhelming amount of material. His encyclopedic knowledge of ancient texts makes him the right man for this monumental task, one that he accomplished gloriously. Additionally, he added some wisdom and restraint to some overly interpretive colleagues. How much can really be deduced from a particular text? Does this text represent the mainstream of its time or an aberration? Would the author know enough to state anything authoritative on this subject? These are some of the questions Dr. Feldman asks when not only citing ancient sources but analyzing them to extract what can be known about the ancient world. This book is a difficult read but is well worth the effort. 13 of 22 people found the following review helpful. Scholarly, thorough and readable. By N. PI purchased this book originally to get insight into what scholarly material was available for this formative and terribly important period in Jewish and Western history. As it appears from the book, much is available, and much that is unexpected. Anyone believing first century Jewish/gentile relationships to be nothing more than isolation and conflict are to be surprised. An aside is that much of the book validates Rabbinic Judaism as "a" source of history, but it only stands out if you have some background in the issues (attempts at cooperation are few). I highly recommend it. 4 stars because the author's religious "affiliation" is dangerously obvious from the hyphenation of G-d's name in the text; in narrow minds, this could cast doubt on his ability as an objective scholar.

Relations between Jews and non-Jews in the Hellenistic-Roman period were marked by suspicion and hate, maintain most studies of that topic. But if such conjectures are true, asks Louis Feldman, how did Jews succeed in winning so many adherents, whether full-fledged proselytes or "sympathizers" who adopted one or more Jewish practices? Systematically evaluating attitudes toward Jews from the time of Alexander the Great to the fifth century A.D., Feldman finds that Judaism elicited strongly positive and not merely unfavorable responses from the non-Jewish population. Jews were a vigorous presence in the ancient world, and Judaism was strengthened substantially by the development of the Talmud. Although Jews in the Diaspora were deeply Hellenized, those who remained in Israel were able to resist the cultural inroads of Hellenism and even to initiate intellectual counterattacks. Feldman draws on a wide variety of material, from Philo, Josephus, and other Graeco-Jewish writers through the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, the Church Councils, Church Fathers, and imperial decrees to Talmudic and Midrashic writings and inscriptions and papyri. What emerges is a rich description of a long era to which conceptions of Jewish history as uninterrupted weakness and suffering do not apply.

From Scientific American Feldman is a worldclass expert in the difficult but vitally important area of the intersection of Jewish and Gentile cultures in the Greco Roman world. His encyclopedic knowledge of pagan, Jewish, and Christian writings of the period is nothing less than breathtaking. Scholars are deeply indebted to his writings, which are unfailingly accurate and unfailingly fair. Our ... debt to him is only increased by this latest exciting work. "The most comprehensive recent study of relations between Jew and Gentile in the ancient world. It will take its place with the classic works . . . as an indispensable resource for the study of Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman world."--John J. Collins, Journal of Biblical Literature From the Publisher Relations between Jews and nonJews in the Hellenistic Roman period were marked by suspicion and hate, most studies of that topic maintain. But if such conjectures are true, asks Louis Feldman, how did Jews succeed in winning so many adherents? Systematically evaluating attitudes toward Jews from the time of Alexander the Great to the fifth century C. E., Feldman finds that Judaism elicited strongly positive responses from the nonJewish population, and he challenges the conception of Jewish history as years of uninterrupted weakness and suffering.