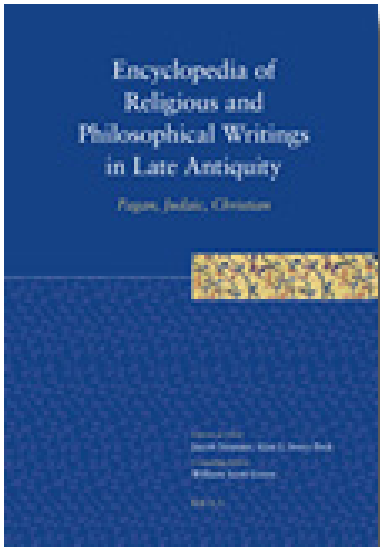


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Neusner, Jacob, and Alan J. Avery-Peck, chief eds.

Encyclopedia of Religious and Philosophical Writings in Late Antiquity: Pagan, Judaic, Christian

Leiden: Brill, 2007. Pp. xii + 467. Hardcover. \$299.00.
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This encyclopedia offers helpful introductions to over seven hundred texts written between the fourth century B.C.E. and the sixth century C.E. The texts discussed include major Greco-Roman, gnostic, Judeo-Greek, Judeo-Coptic, apocryphal, pseudepigraphic, talmudic, targumic, Qumran, New Testament and early Christian, and Samaritan literature. The style is accessible for general readers, but the contents are also naturally suited to the research interests of students and specialists.

The ancient writings are arranged alphabetically according to the most commonly used titles in English translations, in most cases. If the more common usage is an original-language title, such as in the case of rabbinic writings, then that serves as the entry title, with an accompanying English translation. Alternate titles are signaled within each entry. Each entry cross-references other relevant entries. Sometimes a brief bibliography indicating a general treatment of the text follows. Expansion of the bibliographies would have enhanced the value of this handsome volume. One can find entries by author through the ancient author index. The indexes also include the listing of entries and the authors of the entries.

According to the editors, the definitions for each entry reflect scholarly consensus. Each one indicates a document's authorship, provenance, importance, language, place and date of composition, and details of extant manuscripts and printed editions. There is also a summary of the content of the work, notice of its religious or philosophical importance, as well as its social setting and relevant historical context. Finally, the influence of each work upon subsequent religious thinking is noted. Specialist readers will have quibbles with viewpoints expressed as the consensus view, especially in cases where there is no indication that the so-called consensus view has been or is being challenged or, in some cases, has already changed or that the matter is undecided. Is the fact that these matters represent interpretive decisions and thus call for nuance and indication of uncertainty on various points not an equally important thing to learn when consulting this kind of specialized encyclopedia?

Naturally, a work like this must make decisions about what to include and what can be excluded. However, missing are some entries one might judge to be significant for research, that perhaps might be considered if there is a revised edition. For example, although Cicero's works are listed, among others, there are no listings for some relevant contemporary rhetorical and epistolary sources that were influential for speakers and writers of the first centuries of the current era, such as the arguably best representations of typical Hellenistic rhetorical theory, *On the Theory of Public Speaking (Ad Herennium)*, traditionally attributed to Cicero, although no longer, and *The Institutio Oratoria*, by Quintilian. For typical letter-writing theory, missing is *On Style and Epistolary Types*, by (Pseudo-)Demetrius, and *Epistolary Styles*, by (Pseudo-)Libanius. Also missing are some works by Cynics of the period covered, of which there are so few to begin with, such as *The Epistles of Heraclitus* and *The Epistles* of the following, all of which are also frequently referred to as written by Pseudo-, including Pseudo-Anacharsis, Pseudo-Crates, Pseudo-Diogenes, and Pseudo-Socrates and the Socratics, and the various works attributed to Teles.

The editors and authors represent leading scholars. The editors for various specializations represented, in addition to the chief editors, include Robert M. Berchman, Francesca Calabi, Bruce Chilton, Alan D. Crown, Paul V. M. Flesher, George W. E. Nickelsburg, and Gary G. Porton. Consulting editors include William Scott Green, Louis Feldman, and Ithamar Gruenwald. In addition to the entries each editor contributed, authors include Meir Bar-Ilan, Albert Baumgarten, Theodore A. Bergren, Fred J. Booth, Christian M. M. Brady, Monica L. W. Brady, Jay Bregman, Randall D. Chestnutt, Sidnie White Crawford, Irith Davidzon, Everett Ferguson, John Finamore, Robert Fortna, Joel B. Green, Erich S. Gruen, Daniel J. Harrington, Matthias Henze, Robert A. Kraft, Emilie F. Kutash, Mary Joan Winn Leith, Amy-Jill Levine, Anthony LoBello, Carol A. Newsom, Jeffrey Pettis, Eileen Schuller, David Shepherd, Willem Smelik, Stephen A. Stertz, Patrick Tiller, Jan

Willem van Henten, Lucas van Rompay, James C. VanderKam, Matthias Vorwerk, Frederick W. Weidmann, and Benjamin G. Wright III.

To highlight the kind of information that is herein available, although one must allow for variety between entries and contributors, consider the listing for *Against Apion* (19–20), which covers the topic in approximately seven hundred words.

One is immediately informed of the Latin title and the author, including dating the author and his historical setting and credentials. We learn that Josephus was “a Jew of noble origins who lived in Jerusalem and Rome” (19), although we do not get a reference that tells us on what basis that judgment is made, the order of his residencies, and why he was in either location. Would it not be helpful to mention that Josephus describes himself to be of notable priestly heritage and royalty, his father an eminent man in Jerusalem, and of his exemplary education in his youth (*Life* 1–12)? In order to read his rhetoric with some awareness of Josephus’s own interested point of view on matters, should we not learn something about his role in the Judean revolt, how and why he came to be in Rome, and the nature of his position there?

The next information is about the manuscript tradition, always helpful to have, the date of the work, although no discussion of the disputes involved in that decision, and thus the range of possibilities. That there were older titles to the work is noted, which is important for anyone wanting to do further research to know to explore. That kind of information represents what makes this encyclopedia different from some others one might seek out.

Next is a reference to the historical background of the work, the war of 66–70 C.E., and that from this comes the probable concern raised by “either anti-Judaic sentiments or gentiles’ adherence to Judaism,” which the work seeks to refute (20). It might be useful here to have chosen or included “Judean” and cognates, to help the reader focus on the largely geo-ethno-political dimension of Josephus’s and his presumed readers’ interests, rather than just the religious dimension highlighted by the choice of “Jews,” “Judaic,” and “Judaism,” and the tensions that just this ambiguity captures. Will the reader seeking an encyclopedic entry for *Against Apion* know that “the war of 66–70 C.E.” is the Judean revolt and have a sense of the social and political dynamics involved? Will he or she know that Roman and other Diaspora Jews were not generally involved in that revolt or that the emperors Vespasian and Titus wrapped their propaganda around this victory over Judeans in subsequent years, including taxation of all Jews, along with using the spoils from that war to build monolithic structures in Rome like the temple to Jupiter and the Coliseum, so that popular sentiment and stereotypes of local Jews, including the nature of their relationship with Judeans, were undergoing a major, negative change? In any case, it seems that discussing Josephus’s concerns for his non-Jewish readers’ perceptions after

the revolt because of increasingly dangerous Roman social opinion about these seemingly perpetually rebellious people, and the religious tradition from which that disposition ostensibly springs, would be helpful for one turning to this entry.

The next discussion is about each of the books that make up *Against Apion*. That is followed by explaining what we learn about the sources Josephus uses in this apology. The broad range of sources from Egyptians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, and Greek mythology to which Josephus appeals in his arguments leads to the observation that the patron to whom he dedicated this apologetic work, Epaphroditus, may have made available to Josephus his enormous library. Many works lost to us are referenced by Josephus, and it is surmised that he probably used compiled reports of the administrative documents of Jerusalem or imperial document registers. We learn that Josephus implicitly references Letter of Aristeas and 3 Maccabees and was likely acquainted with the work of Philo of Alexandria or an ancient source from which he had drawn. Some of his references to events and teachings based on Scripture are not known to us from the Bibles available to us.

Next we learn about the reception history of this work. Porphyry is the only “pagan” writer to cite directly from it. The only complete work that survives does so in a Latin translation. Origin quoted that version and in some ways modeled his own *Against Celsus* on it; it was also cited by Eusebius and Jerome. The reader is informed that the Greek versions were incomplete because the church fathers did not want to repeat the anti-Jewish charges that the work engages. One may wonder if that judgment is correct.

The entry finishes with reference to the *JET* text, a bibliographic reference to L. H. Feldman and J. R. Levison’s *Josephus’ Contra Apionem: Studies in Its Character and Context with a Latin Concordance to the Portion Missing in Greek*, cross-reference entry titles that will be of interest to the reader, and the name of the author of this entry.