



Jewish Women Philosophers of First-Century Alexandria: Philo's 'Therapeutae' Reconsidered

By Joan E. Taylor

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The "Therapeutae" were a Jewish group of ascetic philosophers who lived outside Alexandria in the middle of the first century CE. They are described in Philo's treatise *De Vita Contemplativa* and have often been considered in comparison with early Christians, the Essenes, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. But who were they really? This study focuses particularly on issues of history, rhetoric, women, and gender in a wide exploration of the group, and comes to new conclusions about the "Therapeutae" and their relationship with the Jewish allegorical school of exegesis in Alexandria. The volume includes a new translation of *De Vita Contemplativa*.

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Review

Review from previous edition 'This book is very well researched and original ... The lasting value of this book is twofold. It explores the status and activities of the Therapeutrides in more detail than earlier scholarship, thus reconstructing an important aspect of first-century Judaism. It also raises intriguing questions regarding the spreading of this phenomenon, which thus far cannot be answered with certainty. Beyond these issues related to women, the book is important because it reads one text of Philo against the grain and attempts to reconstruct a type of Judaism that differed in some significant respects from his own. This contributes to our understanding of the diversity of Alexandrian Judaism and may perhaps invite others to recover yet more forms of Judaism between the lines of Philo. Scripta Classica Israelica

About the Author

Joan E. Taylor is Honorary Research Fellow in the Department of History at University College London and Honorary Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Waikato University, Hamilton, New Zealand.

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