
*The Keepers* is a concise and informative introduction to the history and religion of the Samaritans, that branch of the Israelite–Jewish religion that has endured from antiquity to the present among a tiny minority in Palestine and Israel. The book is written in an engaging style that will appeal to a public that would not read specialized works on the subject. At the same time, the information contained in the work is reliable and the authors are careful in their discussions of unsolved (and often unsolvable) issues. In an epilogue, Anderson and Giles underline that there remains a “host of unanswered questions about the history and culture of the Samaritan community” and that this book is “only a beginning” (p. 145).

The authors’ inspiration to write the book derives, at least in part, from their work on the large collection of Samaritan manuscripts and artifacts in the Chamberlain–Warren Collection at Michigan State University. The origins of the Collection are told in Chapter 1 in an engrossing style worthy of a detective story that draws the reader further and further into the book. The Collection is named after the American millionaire and churchman E. K. Warren (from Three Oakes, Michigan) and his son-in-law, F. W. Chamberlain. Warren met the Samaritans for the first time in 1901 during a visit to Palestine. He later bought from them manuscripts (Pentateuchs, liturgical texts, and a copy of *Tibat marqe*, a midrashic composition) and artifacts (marble inscriptions and a Torah scroll case) and supported them financially; from 1913 on he was chairman of the Samaritan American Committee. When he died in 1919, most of the manuscripts he had bought were sent to a museum in Three Oakes. In 1950, when the museum closed, they were given to Michigan State University. It was only in 1968 that they were rediscovered, studied, and described by R. T. Anderson, and in 1978 Anderson published a catalogue of the Collection for the use of scholars, entitled *Studies in Samaritan Manuscripts and Artifacts: The Chamberlain–Warren Collection* (American Schools of Oriental Research, Monograph Series, 1).

After briefly introducing the Samaritans, the authors outline in Chapter 2 the various views on the thorny issue of the origin of the Samaritans. They rightly emphasize that Samaritanism as a distinct religion did not arise as a result of the Assyrian conquest in the eighth century B.C.E. Rather, the separation of Judaism and Samaritanism “developed over centuries, culminating in a series of fateful events and decisions during the second century B.C.E.” (p. 16). The other subjects treated by the book are: Samaritan history according to the successive periods (from antiquity to the modern era, Ch. 3–7), the Samaritan Pentateuch (Ch. 8), and Samaritan religion (Ch. 9). The last chapter, Chapter 10, closes the circle by returning to the Chamberlain–Warren Collection and giving additional descriptions of its contents (some items were already described in previous chapters in
their historical context) and, in the process, making connections to what is known about particular Samaritans mentioned in the Chamberlain–Warren manuscripts from other sources.

Only in a few instances one would have wished for a more nuanced or more complete treatment. Sometimes the term “Samarians,” that is, inhabitants of Samaria, should have been used rather than “Samaritans,” that is, members of a religion separate from Judaism. Thus it is stated: “Oppressed by Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, the Samaritans had minimal resources [for temple building]” (p. 130); but Samaritans in the strict sense of the term did not yet exist during these time periods, as the authors themselves point out in the chapters on Samaritan origins and on the Persian period. In connection with the discussion of the numerous honorific titles employed by the Samaritans in acrostics and bills of sale of Pentateuch manuscripts, the authors state that most of these titles have never been translated and remain “in various degrees of obscurity” (p. 114). Although they do mention translations by E. Robertson and A. Cowley, there is also an extensive list in R. Pummer, *Samaritan Marriage Contracts and Deeds of Divorce* (vol. 2, pp. 257–72). In their discussion of the question of the existence of a Samaritan temple, Anderson and Giles claim that the Delos inscriptions from the third and second centuries B.C.E. (according to paleographical criteria) speak of a “temple [on] Argarizin” (p. 129). But the inscriptions refer to the “hallowed (consecrated) Argarizein” (*eis hieron [hagion] Argarizein*) rather than to a temple; and, in fact, on page 29 Anderson and Giles use the translation “holy Argarizein.” But these are minor points that do not detract from the value of the work.

In sum, the book is a welcome addition to the literature on the religion, culture, and history of the Samaritans; one that makes the subject interesting and accessible to a wide readership. In addition, it is beautifully produced and almost free of printing errors. Maps; photographs; boxes in the text highlighting certain topics or presenting primary texts in English translation or excerpts from secondary sources; the rendition of inscriptions and colophons in Hebrew and English; and a thorough bibliography arranged according to themes as well as an index of subjects and authors all serve to enhance its usefulness. The work admirably fulfills its purpose as an introduction to Samaritanism that is readable and engaging and will be appreciated by a broad audience.

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Baskin’s book should be required reading, along with the works of Neusner, Boyarin, Wegner, Hauptman, Brooten, and Kraemer, for those interested in Jewish women in late antiquity. It is methodologically sophisticated, yet not jargonis-
tic or overly determined by method or theory. Its limitations are a result of the characteristics of the rabbinic documents, notoriously difficult to use for a comprehensive study on any topic; the vastness and variety of editorial styles of the rabbinic corpus virtually assure that one will both miss relevant data and confront an unmanageable variety of opinions on any given topic.

Many have demonstrated that rabbinic Judaism is “male-centered.” Baskin adroitly argues that this was the result of a deliberate decision by the rabbis, which led to the creation of women as “ancillary beings” (p. 1). She demonstrates that the rabbinic “insistence on female alterity and marginalization underlies and informs midrashic traditions concerning the ‘second’ sex” (p. 2). Baskin selected the midrashic and aggadic texts, terms she uses interchangeably, because in her view they “frequently preserve a more nuanced and complex view of women and their activities than the impersonal dictates of halakhic discourse” (p. 5), and they appear to her as “more reflective of the complexities of actual human relationships as they are lived, while the halakhah appears to point toward an ideal, but not yet achieved, condition of order” (p. 7).

In Chapter 1, Baskin collects and analyzes an array of passages that place women on the edges of rabbinic culture. She addresses works by Gruber, Neusner, and Boyarin that explain this phenomenon and juxtaposes them with the studies of Brooten and Kraemer. Baskin concludes that “in their desire to eliminate women from the sphere of communal authority, the rabbis were not simply sanctifying accepted traditions and norms of life but constructing a congenial reality of their own [based on] their vision of an ideal society, believed to conform to the divine will . . .” (p. 42). This conclusion underlies the rest of the study.

Chapter 2, “Constructing Eve,” maintains that within the covenantal relationship between God and the People Israel, women and men are treated differently. This disparity, Baskin argues, stems from the dissimilar ways in which God created Adam and Eve in Genesis 2. Chapter 3, “Eve’s Curses,” demonstrates that the “various disadvantages which were seen as part of the female condition . . . were a consequence of women’s inherent physical, emotional, and intellectual deficiencies” (p. 65). Among Baskin’s more interesting insights is her argument that the three commandments given especially to women—niddah, hallah, and hadlaqah—all center on separation (p. 73). While the rabbinic tradition does know some exceptionally talented and intelligent women—Beruriah and Yalta, for example—“rabbinic social policy required that even these extraordinary women be distanced from the actual exercise of such male prerogatives as communal study, public rituals, and worship, or the formation of the halakhah” (p. 87).

In Chapter 4, “Fruitful Vines and Silent Partners,” Baskin explores the rabbinic views of marriage, the woman’s role as wife, and the placement of the female almost solely within the domestic sphere, “where they could provide for their husbands’ needs and nurture children at the same time” (p. 89). Marriage is not a contract between equals (pp. 99–105), and rabbinic discussions of women’s sexuality are primarily limited to ways of controlling it. Baskin demonstrates “a hermeneutics of suspicion informed all rabbinic ruminations on their other halves; the supposed sexual unreliability of women was never forgotten” (p. 118). Chapter 5 delves into the rabbinic discussions of the matriarchs, who were often barren for
a time, and these, in Baskin’s words, “suggested that compassion and faith should prevail over dissolving a loving marriage” if there were no children (p. 119). However, if individual women might be suspect at times, Chapter 6 explores the logical conclusion that groups of women could pose a severe threat to males and their centrality within rabbinic culture.

Baskin clearly illustrates the rabbinic image of woman as “other,” as less perfect/desirable than the male, and as a possible threat to the ideal world created by the male imagination. Her book accordingly contributes significantly to the current debate on Jewish women in late antiquity, a debate in which she actively participates. At the same time, while Baskin makes a good case for the importance of her view as the literature’s prevalent picture, others will disagree. Determining the pervasiveness of the image she discerns throughout the entire rabbinic corpus is virtually impossible, especially as Baskin’s study is itself limited to the non-halakhic sources.

Even accepting the general accuracy of Baskin’s approach, much remains to be done. The question of historical development is not asked here at all, and so we can’t yet discern whether the rabbinic ideas changed over time, developed within a document, or the like. Similarly, while Baskin hints at differences between the attitudes in Babylonia and the land of Israel, she fails to use the geographical variations as a starting point for further analysis. And, the question of the attitude of the halakhic corpus remains central. Still, even as these questions remain, we must appreciate what Baskin has provided us.

The idea that the rabbinic culture is male-centered or that the rabbis treated women as “inferior, other, deficient, or whatever” is not new to anyone who has seriously dealt with the rabbinic corpus. However, what Baskin has done that no one else has done in English is to bring together a vast array of rabbinic passages which express and develop women’s “otherness” and to argue persuasively that this resulted from the rabbis’ conscious decision. Baskin has given us an excellent study of women in rabbinic Judaism and Jewish culture of late antiquity. Hers is a serious and well informed voice that must be engaged in any future conversation on this topic.

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This book contains a full review of Jewish marriage in antiquity, beginning with biblical injunctions, but focusing primarily on postbiblical material and specifically on rabbinic literature. It is divided into three parts: 1. Thinking about Marriage, in which Satlow describes how and why Jewish marriages were planned, 2. Marrying, in which he describes the process of marriage itself, and 3. Staying
*Married*, in which married life and its consequences are at issue. In each of these parts Satlow correctly attempts to draw a line between the ideals of marriage as portrayed in the sources and what actually went on, as far as these allow us a glimpse of reality.

In this book Michael Satlow establishes himself as the foremost scholar of Jewish marriage in antiquity. Yet, he is clearly also interested in the present, and he is very forthcoming about this. He starts his book by stating that a “careful study of the past can contribute . . . to the contemporary discussion of marriage” (p. xvi), and ends it with a long epilogue justifying the relevance of his study for marital debates within Jewish society in America today (pp. 265–71).

In other, less explicit terms, Satlow’s work is a product of our times. His study is free from any apologetics in his description of ancient Jewish marriage practices. He has no problem describing polygyny as the marital norm for Jews (pp. 189–92). He elaborates on the shockingly practical, economic/contractual rather than romantic/sentimental character of Jewish marriage at the time (pp. 233–42). He even states, against most Jewish commentators, that “in ancient Semitic law and among Jews in the prerabbinic period, the right to divorce was bilateral: a husband or wife could initiate a divorce” (p. 214).

The other indication that this study was written in the 1990s is Satlow’s use of relatively new methodological presuppositions. He constantly distinguishes between rabbinic documents that date from early and late times, which do not complement one another but, rather, stand in chronological tension, and prove development or reaction rather than painting a stable picture of reality. Furthermore, rabbinic literature was composed in two very different geographical locations and under two different regimes—in Roman Palestine and in Persian (Sassanian) Babylonia. Satlow is continuously alert to this fact and would never confuse a source from one place or time with the other. All scholars of rabbinic literature today take these presuppositions for granted, but it was not always so, and for the question of marriage, this is the first study that consistently adopts this approach.

The distinction between Palestinian and Babylonian sources informs Satlow’s most important and consistent thesis throughout the book. He asserts that although the Palestinian and Babylonian rabbis were in constant dialogue with one another on the meaning of Jewish marriage, in the final analysis they endorsed two completely different approaches to the issue, driven by the two cultures in which they lived. The Palestinian rabbis, living in the Greco–Roman world, saw the purpose of marriage as the founding of a “household.” This means that marriage was inherently good. The Babylonian rabbis, who lived under Persian–Sassanian rule and in a Zoroastrian culture, viewed marriage as an outlet for a man’s sexual urges. It is thus fundamentally a concession. Satlow’s argument throughout the book flows from this premise and one is impressed by the parallels he brings to support his claims, not just from the well-researched Greco–Roman culture, but also from the Sassanian world.

All this is intended as praise for the book. My two last comments are in the form of critique. The first is the apparent mistrust of the Orient displayed by the author. He suggests that as far removed from our marital ideals as Palestinian Jew-
ish marriage may appear, its Babylonian variety epitomizes all that we abhor. For example, Satlow discusses sayings on marriage attributed to Babylonians and to Palestinians, writing: “In Palestine, according to the tradition . . . a wife is either . . . bad or . . . good” but for the Babylonians “all wives to some extent are evil” (p. 9). Thus, if women, according to the Babylonians, are evil, then so is marriage. Wives should be treated with disgust and contempt. This will hardly allow for a marriage of trust that we in the West envision. This identification of a resounding Babylonian negation of women informs the rest of Satlow’s study. I do not doubt that Satlow has indeed shown a deep cultural rift between Babylonian and Palestinian rabbis, but I suspect the language of revulsion he uses toward the Babylonian customs stems from his modern sensibilities regarding the Orient. Although the Greco–Romans are hardly the Christian west, and Zoroastrian Persia was certainly not today’s Islamic world, geographically, they did occupy respectively the same spaces that these cultures occupy today. Satlow’s presentation of these marriage customs reflects our modern world in a disturbing way. I am sure the Babylonians deserve a more nuanced treatment and a less stereotypical interpretation than they received here.

Finally, I want to touch on Satlow’s difficult relationship with feminist studies. Although living in an age when feminist studies dominate the academic scene, and although this is Satlow’s second book touching specifically on issues that involve women to a great extent,¹ Satlow chooses to distance himself from this discipline. This decision also reflects on the way the entire book is composed. It begins on the very first page. There, Satlow cites a rabbinic tradition and paraphrases it with the words, “Our darshan clearly states that a man should marry . . .” and then states why. Yet, he never discusses the reasons that women should marry. This attitude is evident throughout the book. Here is, in my opinion, the most resounding example: Satlow interprets “rape” as a strategy couples may have adopted to circumvent parental authority and marry (pp. 124–29). I find this suggestion a male fantasy that completely ignores the real dangers of rape and the extremely traumatic character of biblical and postbiblical rape laws primarily for the raped woman—who is now compelled to marry the rapist.

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Alexander Samely, Senior Lecturer in Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Manchester University, has written what I would describe as one of the most detailed

¹. His first book is Tasting the Dish: Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality (Atlanta: Brown Judaic Studies, 1995), 303.
and precise descriptions of the Mishnah’s use of scriptural sources. His book, *The Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture in the Mishnah*, a fifteen-chapter work with a glossary of important rabbinic and linguistic terms, two appendices, an excellent bibliography, and thorough indices shows the work of a meticulous scholar and incisive and insightful reader of the Bible and mishnaic corpus.

Samely’s thorough description of the Mishnah’s hermeneutics of scriptural interpretation generates a prodigious number of phenomena too manifold and varied to present individually. This review will, therefore, confine itself to a general overview of Samely’s work. In fairness to the readers of this review and to Samely, however, I will provide a digest of Chapters 1–6 in order to give some sense of what Samely has accomplished.

Samely begins his work with a hermeneutic orientation and introduction. There he cautions the reader against applying the canons of contemporary reading of the Bible to rabbinic reading of it. While this may be obvious to those whose field of study is rabbinic literature, this warning is important because we must understand what rabbinic scriptural interpretation is and is not. Namely, it is a variety of interpretation, though contemporary critical–historical scholarship might consider it too distant from the “plain meaning” of the text to qualify. Nevertheless, it is not, as some scholars of rabbinic literature have claimed, some form of etymology or philology.

In his introductory chapter (Ch. 1) Samely also speaks of “resources” of rabbinic interpretation. “Resources” is a term Samely uses to describe particular hermeneutic actions the Mishnah uses in interpreting the scriptural text. He prefers this term to “methods” because “methods” implies a universality of approach, and as his book confirms, rabbinic interpretation is exceptionally flexible and often uses more than one hermeneutic action to achieve its interpretational results. In the following chapters, Samely catalogues these resources by type and number, for example, Topic0. He describes the hermeneutic action that a “resource” indicates and provides a mishnaic example for it. Thus, a Topic0 resource is one in which there is a “Tacit use of a specific assumption rooted in the Mishnaic discourse for explication of a Scriptural expression” (p. 411). An example of this appears in mBava Qama 9:11 where Numbers 5:8 is applied to a convert rather than to a native Israelite without kin. This interpretation depends, as Samely points out, on the mishnaic assumption that the only person without kin within the Jewish community is a convert whose legal ties to his or her biological family members are, according to mishnaic law, sundered (p. 78). Samely ends his opening chapter with a description of the Mishnah, the point that Scripture does not set the order of topics for the Mishnah nor does it appear in all mishnayot, an overview of prior scholarship on rabbinic interpretation of Scripture, and a short description of the contents of Chapters 2–14. In the interests of brevity, I will not review all of these chapters. I will, however, review the essence of Chapters 2–4.

Chapter 2 is of great importance to the work. Here Samely introduces us to the linguistics term “co-text,” which is the environment in which a word or phrase appears. Samely points out that placement of Scripture into a mishnaic co-text constantly acts to remove (or reduce) Scripture’s ambiguities (p. 32). Another important feature of Scripture’s appearance in Mishnah is that it generally does not
appear whole. Rather, Mishnah creates and uses segments of Scripture in its interpretations (p. 33ff). This separation of Scripture from its original co-text neutralizes that co-text and opens Scripture to almost limitless meaning. Samely posits that this may be the point where rabbinic theology and interpretation meet: The divinely authored text by definition should provide infinite meaning and, therefore, an inexhaustible source of potential interpretations (pp. 54–55). Consequently, the meaning of Scripture in Mishnah will ultimately be determined by imposing rabbinic/mishnaic perspective onto the text. How this happens takes up Chapters 3–4. The example of Topic0 I cited above provides a sense of Samely’s points in these chapters.

Chapter 5, titled “Scripture’s Words, Mishnah’s Speech,” describes how the Mishnah uses Scripture to express itself. An example of this sort of expression occurs when Mishnah creates terminology that depends on scriptural references. Thus, for example, the Mishnah speaks of the obligation of sending away the dam before one takes chicks or eggs as נָשַׁל שֶׁלֶךְ. This mishnaic term borrows from words used in Deuteronomy 22:6–7. Thus Mishnah expresses itself using Scripture. Samely calls these resources “USE.” Samely supplies many other examples of USE resources, but, again, this review is not the place for an exhaustive treatment of these examples.

Chapter 6 provides examples of what Samely calls “Biblical Events Illustrating Normative and Descriptive Schemata.” In cases where Mishnah uses biblical events, they often provide the basis for halakhic norms. The mishnaic use of these scriptural events tends to deemphasize some elements of the original scriptural context. Mishnah then provides new features for the event that support its discourse. Thus, R. Yehudah uses the case of David following Abner’s bier (2 Samuel 3:31) to prove that a Jewish king may leave his palace to honor someone in this way (mSanhedrin 2:3). The Sages, who hold that the king may never leave his palace, cite the original context of the narrative (the scriptural “co-text”) to refute R. Yehudah’s opinion. Samely provides the name NORM for this resource (p. 149–152).

I could continue to describe the essence of the various chapters, but I believe this summary of several chapters gives the sense of the work. Those who are interested in rabbinic literature can easily see the value of Samely’s work as a major contribution to an aspect of the phenomenology of the Mishnah. Yet, for all its value, Samely’s work has one major shortcoming: the writing style makes for extremely difficult reading. There is a tremendous amount of technical linguistics terminology in addition to his own specific terminology for the categorization of the “resources” he identifies. Added to this, his resource example, which often provides a picture worth a thousand words, usually follows rather than precedes his detailed but abstract description of the resource. A quote from Samely’s book should give the readers of this review a sense of what might stand in the way of their easily penetrating Samely’s work. Here is his definition of a “resource” he calls “Cotext5” and a citation of his discussion of its hermeneutic function.

**Cotext5:** Explication of the meaning of an expression in the light of the biblical co-text, where the latter is linked by cohesive signals or narrative connectedness beyond the clause.
The existence and frequency of the Cotext5 resource provides a perspective in three important respects:

It shows that the “atomistic” Cotext1 approach, while prominent, is very far from universal in Mishnaic hermeneutics. (It also demonstrates indirectly that the neutralizing resource Cotext1 is not the result of negligence or misunderstanding, which would be intrinsically unlikely in any case.) (p. 41)

I have tried to be fair in selecting a representative citation by starting at the beginning of a section that defines a resource, rather than starting in medias res. The definition itself is rather opaque, and when Samely proceeds to compare Cotext5 with what he described earlier as Cotext1, he calls upon the reader to remember what the Cotext1 resource was like and how it was defined. True, one can turn to Appendix I for a quick reminder, but there one will find this: “Cotext1: Neutralizing the semantic effect of the biblical co-text at the sentence, clause, or phrase-boundary, leading to a readjustment or, if necessary, dissolution of grammatical dependencies.”

The technical difficulty of this work raises two serious questions: 1. For whom was the book written? and 2. Do the benefits of reading the work outweigh the difficulties of working one’s way through the text? Most rabbinics scholars, for better or worse, do not have the technical academic linguistics and literary training that easily facilitates handling *Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture in the Mishnah*, and yet they are the most interested and best-equipped audience to appreciate the phenomena that Samely analyzes. Those academics specifically trained in linguistics and literary analysis and criticism might be interested in the phenomena that Samely describes. They, however, do not for the most part have knowledge of any genre of rabbinic literature, let alone the Mishnah, or much preparation for reading it. For them, the technical halakhic issues that occupy much of the mishnaic discourse discussed in Samely’s book are likely to be too arcane and legallyistically oriented to manage.

Samely states in his conclusion that his work creates a type (as in the Greek usage) of analysis and description that can be used with appropriate modification in the study of “the interpretation of Homer by the Greeks, the Muslim commentaries on the Qur’an, or the interpretation of Scripture by the Church Fathers . . . .” (p. 393). This suggests that *Rabbinic Interpretation of Scripture in the Mishnah* is for everyone. It appears to me, however, that it is best suited for those with good rabbinics and linguistics backgrounds or, lacking those accomplishments, considerable perseverance.

In sum, Samely’s book is a treasure trove of analysis and cataloging of the Mishnah’s ways of interpreting the TaNaKh. Even the academically trained reader, however, must be prepared to work hard to mine its gems.
Book Reviews


This book discusses cults surrounding sainted figures in Islam, and secondarily in Judaism, from many points of view. It urges researchers to go beyond “the traditional methods of interpreting Jewish and Islamic texts,” and to probe the “human dimension of spirituality.” It maintains that studying the practices, beliefs, and idiosyncratic deeds directed to sainted personages—both alive and dead—allows us to explore spiritual paths along which we meet the poor as well as the powerful, and both the theologian and the unschooled believer.

“Cult of saints” is a compact phrase, but each chapter unpacks one aspect of the phenomenon, pointing to its multifaceted nature and to the variation within it. The first chapter discusses how space becomes sacred. While precise origins are rarely known, often there is a combination of popular attraction to a place with some striking physical feature and the evocation of a tradition linked to a text-based or historical spiritual hero. The second chapter explores aspects of sainthood, examining both theological notions and the associations of notions of baraka (cognate of Hebrew berakha) in social and religious contexts. In contrast to Muslims, Jews appear to have actively related to saints without a doctrine of sainthood. The next and longest chapter, “Experiencing the Holy,” discusses pilgrimages and the rituals embedded within them. It considers the ambivalence inherent in practices, which implies that they are substitutes for the obligatory or more established visits to Mecca or Jerusalem. Drawing upon Arnold Van Gennep and Victor Turner, it documents the range of human needs, emotions, crises, ideas, and social stations that become engaged in pilgrim behavior. Next is a short chapter on Jewish pilgrimage. Data on Jews appear throughout the study, while this discussion explores the overlap—or absence thereof—between Muslim and Jewish notions of ziyara (visits to a shrine). It cites material depicting pilgrimages of special importance to Jews (often simultaneously with their being the focus of Muslim visits), such as the tomb of Samuel near Jerusalem and of Ezekiel in southern Iraq, and places where Elijah is claimed to have appeared throughout the Middle East. The last chapter (excluding a brief conclusion) focuses on pilgrimage “places.” It contains a typology that organizes the range of physical attributes of sites that have become sanctified “ranging from cairns to elaborate mausoleums, tomb complexes, and domed shrines (qubba)” (p. 262). This discussion underlines a general point of the book, demonstrating both how widespread “the” cult of saints is (I would drop the definite article), but also how necessary it is to study the subject in its diverse and specific manifestations.

The bulk of the book deals with Muslim life and brings many extended quotes documenting the ubiquity and significance of socioreligious relations with saints. Like many of the topics and notions discussed, the word “saints” is used as shorthand for a range of terms and concepts, which the author lays forth, illustrating different nuances and contextual meanings. As part of this approach, we learn of different theological stances regarding sainthood or the practice of ziyara. It is clear that the learned tracts are relating to popular religious expressions that predated Islam and continued to develop after it became hegemonic in the regions.
Different attitudes are linked to the Sunni–Shi‘i divide, and the influence of Sufism is discussed. The attention to saints among Jews (often, but not only, termed tzaddikim), serves to underline that one is dealing with a widespread phenomenon which elite literati could not eliminate from their purview. It is not clear why Christian groups are not included in the study, particularly as they are occasionally mentioned and because some of the shrines are traditionally attributed to Christian figures like St. John the Baptist, known as Yahya b. Zakariya.

Information on Jews is also presented extensively. Jews shared some saints conceptually with Muslims (Elijah is known as al-Khadir), and also visited some of the same sites (the tomb of Ezekiel in Kifl was the site of Yom Kippur worship but Muslims were not absent from the scene). The material often derives from existing collections. For example we are exposed to Petahiyah of Regensberg through Elkan Adler’s volume on travelers, and we are given an English version of part of Zvi Ilan’s publication of a fourteenth-century Geniza document (caution may be in order in some instances, e.g., on p. 243 what should be Iyyar is rendered Adar). The book cites other contemporary work, notably by Elhanan Reiner, and a reference to Issachar Ben-Ami recalls more recent Maghrebi saint adoration. Zvi Yehudah’s historical work on Jewish–Muslim rivalry in relation to the Ezekiel site is overlooked, as is Yoram Bilu’s anthropological investigations in Israel that reveal the multilayered personal meanings that are entailed in relations to saints and bear relevance to past eras. It is interesting to speculate (beyond the stated purpose of the book), about what is it that awakens scholars of Judaica from time to time to attend to this “peripheral” topic, linked to the geographical spread and location of Jews. Meri’s work suggests that the subject may not be as marginal as one thinks, but a vital dimension of religious imaginations that deserves further study.

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The two books before us expand the horizons of Maimonidean studies, on the divergent planes of literature and politics. James Diamond’s study of Maimonides’ use of the Bible and midrash is a tour de force of literary analysis, while Menachem Lorberbaum offers in part a view of Maimonides’ attitude to political authority of considerable relevance today.

The title of Diamond’s book is very apt, in that Maimonides’ hermeneutical
practices are often keyed towards concealing his true views on the nature of the Deity and His relation to the world. It does not help that much to have Maimonides confess in the introduction to the Guide that he will be crafty and deceptive, for which of his often apparently conflicting positions is the one he really holds? The scriptural and midrashic sources that Maimonides brings in alleged support of a given claim can often strengthen a contrary position, *vehamevin yavin*, only the wise will understand. This is the dimension of Maimonides’ work, the ubiquitous presence in it of traditional proof texts, that James Diamond addresses, and his impressive treatment of these sources assists in making all of us wiser.

Diamond is concerned primarily with Maimonides’ handling of the issue of Divine Providence, and focuses primarily on Maimonides’ treatment in Guide I:15 of the biblical tale of Jacob’s ladder. The chapters in the Guide that lead up to this, as discussed in Chapter 4 of Diamond’s book, and the “seven units” of images and terms associated with the ladder that constitute Chapter 5, are the heart of this study. They offer a highly persuasive reading of Maimonides’ utilization of sources, showing his interpretive boldness and creativity. As Diamond remarks, “Maimonides’ use of midrash can be described as the allegorization of allegory” (p. 3).

Diamond understands correctly that Maimonides’ view of Divine Unity precludes change and affect in God, removing Him from personal relationships with mankind. Divine Providence accordingly is expressed for Maimonides in the workings of the natural world, knowledge of which he regards as equivalent to reception of that providence. Diamond’s achievement lies in showing how Maimonides construes the bible and rabbinic sources, which treat God in personal and human terms, to support a deistic interpretation.

For all his impressive interpretation and marshalling of sources, Diamond attempts to avoid taking sides philosophically on the many issues that are connected to this understanding of Divine Providence. He explicitly excuses himself from “entering the debates” over Maimonides’ positions on creation and the status of ethics (pp. 98, 196). When given, philosophical explanations are mostly presented summarily. His distinction, for example, on page 189, note 50, between God’s relation to eternity *a parte ante* and *a parte post* requires considerable qualification.

This, then, is not a work of philosophical argument so much as it is one of literary support of such argument. This support can never be conclusive in its own right, though it does make a powerful case for believing it reveals the true Maimonides. Diamond is writing for an educated audience, some of whom will wince at the uninformed transliteration of Hebrew words that appear in the book (*middah* for *middah*, *r’osh* for *ro’sh*, *malkhiyot* for *malchuyot*, etc.). Diamond is not an Arabist (this is particularly evident in the manner in which he consults only secondary texts for a particular reading at p. 183, n. 10), and his Hebrew may need work. He does, however, have full control of the midrashic and commentary literature that are at the heart of his book, and cracks the code resoundingly.

Menachem Lorberbaum has written a book that “explores the emergence and elaboration of the fundamental political concepts of medieval Jewish thought, primarily concepts related to political agency, political life as a distinct domain of hu-
man activity, and constitutional politics” (p. xi). This may come as something of a surprise to those who are more accustomed to viewing medieval Jewish thought as opposed to such attitudes. Lorberbaum, however, establishes a significant engagement with these issues, exemplified through analysis of attitudes towards monarchy and the law.

The monarchy and law in question are Jewish, but the entailments of the positions taken bear upon the Jewish attitude towards gentile rulers and the larger non-Jewish polity in which Jews have lived. Though Lorberbaum eschews discussing the present political situation in Israel, much of his analysis has contemporary significance for the crisis in the relation of politics and religion there.

As Lorberbaum points out in his introduction, the biblical view of political rule legitimates monarchy but places God above the mortal sovereign as the true king of a theocratic state. The failings of and disappointments with the Hasmonean kings undoubtedly led the rabbis to distance themselves and the law from theocratic and monarchic models of leadership while at the same time recognizing the practical necessity of according a king extrajuridical status.

Medieval Jewish thinkers sharpened the implicit dichotomization of rabbinic attitudes towards the political scope of Jewish law, acknowledging the authority of extra-halakhic, or as Lorberbaum calls them, “secular” norms. Maimonides in the twelfth century is seen as attempting to balance competing normative and ideal attitudes towards political agency, while R. Nissim Gerondi (the RaN) in the fourteenth century is presented as a culminating voice of extreme secularization, explicitly advocating a dual legal system.

Lorberbaum considers the views of Gerondi and his predecessors, Nahmanides and Solomon b. Abraham ibn Adret (RaSHBA), as providing the theoretical justification for the consolidation of a Jewish communal self-government independent of rabbinic authority. In a final chapter, Lorberbaum considers Abravanel’s rejection of these views and Spinoza’s extreme adoption of them.

Maimonides, Lorberbaum demonstrates, explicitly recognizes the limitations of legal precepts, always geared to theoretically typical instances, providing means therefore to suit the general to the specific case. One such means is the ability of jurists to invoke “temporary decisions,” hora’at sha’ah, whereby the mitigating conditions of contingency come to the fore (p. 39). Kings, too, enjoy such discretionary powers, Maimonides acknowledges, a view borne in upon him by his convictions regarding the role of monarchy in assuring a stable society. Thus the king, however respectful he ought to be of the law and the Sanhedrin, can act outside of their purview when he judges it necessary.

In Lorberbaum’s view, Maimonides distinguishes between commands that govern ritual behavior and those that govern civil behavior, the king given latitude with the latter. This latitude is extended to the right of kings to prescribe royal laws in fiscal and other matters, as well as in criminal cases. This establishes a dual and potentially competing legal system with that of the Sanhedrin/rabbinate, Lorberbaum asserts. He regards this as a failing in Maimonides’ political theory that is only partially resolved by his messianic doctrine.

Lorberbaum presents Gerondi within the context of changing halakhic attitudes to communal legislation in Christian Spain in the thirteenth and fourteenth
centuries; changes that increasingly empowered townspeople (*benei ha-‘ir*) to de-
cree and enforce statutes, creating eventually a new legal domain, that of public
law (p. 95). Utilizing examples from all areas of life, Lorberbaum contends that
the *kahal* was treated as a distinct legal persona, with the right to enact and enforce
takkanot (ordinances).

Lorberbaum traces this process through the writings of Nachmanides and
Adret as well as Gerondi, delineating a progressively more explicit division of le-
gal authority and political leadership. The preservation of social order is the pri-
mary concern for these men, which under the prevailing conditions renders the
civil and criminal laws of the Torah inoperative and opens the door, in the name of
tikkun ha-medinah, to communal government (p. 122).

Gerondi’s political views are elicited from the collection of sermons known
as *Derashot ha-Ran*, particularly the eleventh sermon. Neither a kabbalist nor a
philosopher, Gerondi subscribes to a traditional religious worldview, one that re-
gards God’s will as the primary cause of all events in the universe. Yet Gerondi, in
Lorberbaum’s opinion, also distinguishes between Torah law and temporal law,
recognizing politics as an autonomous domain of action (p. 130).

Gerondi’s idealization of the sacral character of Torah law is far removed
from Maimonides’ utilitarian treatment of that law, and Lorberbaum regards it as
problematic for a political philosophy. He sees Gerondi as implicitly conceding
that society cannot be run by Torah law.

This book thus presents two models of medieval Jewish political thought that
offer precedents for distinguishing between theocratic and secular law. Lorber-
baum writes clearly and persuasively, and one only regrets that the second part of
the book, dealing with Gerondi and his predecessors, quotes from sources that are
for the most part available only in their original Hebrew. Analysis has here pre-
ceded full translation, a task that ought to be addressed soon.

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Jose Luis Lacave. *Medieval Ketubot from Sefarad*. Hispania Judaica 11, ed. H.

Professor Jose Luis Lacave collected thirty *ketubot* (marriage contracts)
from various medieval Hispanic kingdoms. These *ketubot* were found in different
libraries and archives. Most of the documents have been published before, some
of them by Lacave himself. Three are published here for the first time.

The author examined the *ketubot* and made a detailed comparison between
them. Twelve *ketubot* are from Catalan (most of these are from Barcelona); four
are from Majorca; nine are from Navarre (most of these from Tudela); four are from
Castile; one is from Toledo. All were written during the thirteenth through fifteenth
centuries.
In the first chapter the author gives a general description of the documents and the texts. This description includes: the name of the library; catalogue number; date of signing of the document; size of the parchment; general context; kind of script; first publication, and so forth.

In the second chapter the author deals with the historical background of each document. He provides details of the date, dowry, dowry increment, usual gift, and the separate gift. Additional information is supplied about the groom and his family, the bride and her family, the witnesses, the guaranties, and the judges.

The third chapter discusses the structure and content of the ketubot, their decoration, and their preamble. He also gives information about the formularies of the date, the place where the ketubah was signed, and other formularies of the Jewish contract as an acquisition, and the signatures of the witnesses.

The next chapter includes an analysis of the dowry’s parts and a comparison between them. We also read about a unique formula that is written on the same parchment together with the text of the ketubah, “the receipt for the dowry.” The groom acknowledges having received all the money stipulated in the dowry.

The fifth chapter deals with the conditions of the ketubah. The chapter is divided into several sections. The first section discusses the ketubah’s guarantee, that is, that the groom commits himself and his property to fulfill what is stipulated in the ketubah. The next section deals with the separate gift. The following section deals with the bride price (mohar) and the question of whether it is required by biblical sanction or rabbinical law. The chapter concludes with some other conditions of the ketubah including oath, fine, trust, and others.

The sixth chapter contains a brief discussion about the levirate ketubah.

In the last part of the book the author brings the text of the ketubot and displays photographs of each document.

Professor Lacave, a leading expert on the material remains of Spanish Jewry, has provided very important research in his book. He enriches us with instructive information culled from the collection of ketubot. Here are a few examples. Since the signatures of the same witnesses appear on many documents, we can assume that these people were professional notaries (p. 31). The Barcelona 2 ketubah was signed in Barcelona only one year before the assault on the juderia of Barcelona (August, 1391) (p. 32). The Majorca 3 ketubah was signed six months before the assault and sacking of the Jewish quarter in this city (p. 47). The bride mentioned in the Barcelona 4 ketubah died without children a few years after the wedding (p. 34). In many cases numerous witnesses signed the ketubah (pp. 47, 49). The author claims that the two family names Azafar and Amarillo are one and the same (p. 60). A grandson of the bride’s father was probably the famous fish trader of Tudela (p. 63). One of the ketubot was signed in the city Segura de Leon, which was a leading economic force in the province of Badajoz. It was probably for that reason that Isaac Abravanel took refuge there and lived there for a while (p. 71). When one bride presented her ketubah before the court, demanding her dowry, the court ordered two converted Jews to translate it into Castilian (p. 72). Against Maimonides’ ruling (Ishut 10:14), no less than half of our ketubot are dated on Friday, which was probably the day on which the rabbinical court met (pp. 77–78). The author notes a development related to titles of the groom. In the
thirteenth and fourteenth centuries his name is preceded by the title “Rabbi,” whereas at the end of the fifteenth century he is called “the pleasant young man” or “the charming young man” (p. 79). In one case the bride was preceded by the title: “the gracious gazelle” (p. 80). The professions of the parties and their antecedents were not customarily indicated. Only in two cases do we read that one of the parents was a physician (p. 80). The place of residence is mentioned only when the parties live in different places (p. 80). Like other contracts, the ketubah must conclude with the formula “and everything is firm and stable” (p. 81). Likewise, it includes the acquisition formula “and we the witnesses have received the acquisition from Rabbi So-and-So” (p. 82). The author also analyzes the differences among the ketubot of the different kingdoms. In the Navarrese ketubot the witnesses bring the groom’s speak in the first person; the female is referred to “this wife of mine” and not “the bride” as in some other provinces (p. 87). A very important question is whether there is any connection between the amount of the dowry that was brought by the bride and the dowry increment, which is the groom’s additional obligation; according to the Catalan ketubot, there is (p. 91). As mentioned above, the receipt for the dowry was sometimes written on the same parchment as the ketubah. This was common in Catalonia but less so in Navarre (p. 95). Also the groom waives making any claim in the future to any amount of the dowry (p. 97). In order to reinforce the guarantee, the contract may include an endorsement of the guarantee by a guarantor, generally, the groom’s father, so that if the groom does not pay his debt, the bride can collect it from the guarantor (p. 105). In some cases the groom reinforces his guarantee by an oath (p. 106). One of the interesting phenomena in our collection is the separate gift, an issue discussed by previous scholars. Here we can see that the amount of this gift is not equivalent to the whole amount of the ketubah but only to the dowry increment or even less (p. 205). There was also historical development here: In our collection this gift is written on the same parchment as the ketubah, in contrast to what was done in previous centuries. Among the additional conditions in the ketubah we find the groom’s promise not to marry another wife while still married to the first one; not to divorce her against her will; and not to leave the place where the couple live without her consent (p. 134). Another clause deals with the dowry. It states that if the wife dies without children, the husband is obliged to return to her family an amount equal to half of the dowry (p. 135). Only in a few regions do we find the stipulation in which the groom’s brother promises to grant halizah to the bride should circumstances requiring this arise (p. 151).

At this point I would like to make some comments.

1. Generally, it would have been better to have combined the two first chapters into one.


3. The sentence: “A widow without children” (p. 69) is incorrect. Correct is: “A widow, whose late husband died without children”.

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4. In connection to the *ketubah*, the translation “shoshbin” as “an agent” is superior to “best man” (p. 84).

5. “The dowry remains by law, the property of the husband in case of divorce . . .” (p. 86). According to Talmudic law (*Yebamot* 66b) the wife can demand this property as a part of the *ketubah* payment.

6. The author writes that the *ketubah* was signed “between the betrothal and the wedding” (p. 144), but he does not explain why. This follows the Talmudic rule (*Ketubbot* 83a) that a husband who wishes to waive his rights must do so before the wedding.

7. The self-imprisonment mentioned in some *ketubot* (pp. 242; 244) was not analyzed by the author. This is a very important subject that was dealt with by RIVASH (responsum no. 484).

8. The clause about the Sabbatical year mentioned in some *ketubot* (pp. 171; 174), discussed by some scholars, could be a great contribution to research.

9. Polygyny was dealt with by Professor M. A. Friedman. Lacave mentions the subject (p. 134), but does not analyze it nor mention Friedman’s discussions.

Finally, some technical comments:

1. It would have been helpful to include a map with the regions and cities mentioned in the documents.

2. There are many printing errors, especially in the Hebrew text. I supply only a few examples: On page 87, the text should read: מַהֲמַר פָרָחָה; on page 89, the text should read: נְהַשָּׁשִׁית; on page 93: בְּגַלְגַּל רוּק אֵאָרְחָא; on page 110: חַמְשֵׁב הָעַתָּן; on page 111, the words: מַגְרִים לגָּרַר רַחְפְּמוֹד נַכְּר אֵמֶר לְגָּרַר רַחְפְּמוֹד are not in the right place; on page 113, the Hebrew text was truncated; on page 128, in the first Hebrew paragraph: הַרְוָלָה, מַחֲוָה, מַעֲרָדָה, רַעְשֶׁרִי; on page 167: רַחְפְּמוֹד, and so forth.

Despite these shortcomings, Lacave’s book greatly expands our knowledge of the Jewish marriage contract. This book is a very significant contribution to the study of Jewish law, including such issues as Jewish society, the Jewish family, the interaction between Jews and their surroundings, and so forth.

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It is perhaps unorthodox to begin a book review by citing something from the acknowledgments. In this case, however, I think it is quite apt. Describing his early foray into the study of Jewish mysticism, Lawrence Fine writes, “It was [Alexander] Altmann who said to me, in one of the earliest conversations I had with him after I arrived at Brandeis, that ‘nobody understands Lurianic Kabbala, not even Scholem,’ referring, of course to the preeminent historian of Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem.” It is a comment, I imagine, that Scholem may have
even agreed with! In any case, Fine’s book is an attempt, and one of the best to date, to try to make sense of the labyrinthine world of Lurianic Kabbala. Scholem argued that Lurianic metaphysics was a system developed as a response to historical phenomena, that is, the Jewish expulsion from Spain, and was largely a creative interpretation of, and commentary on, the Zohar. Neither Scholem nor his student Isaiah Tishby devoted any significant space to the historical context of Lurianic Kabbala or its particular cultural milieu, or the possibility of external influences on this mystical circle. Both assumed Luria had historiosophic and not cultural/historic concerns. This trajectory has, until recently, been the accepted framework of Lurianic scholarship.

Over the course of the past twenty years, this perspective has changed significantly. Among others, Fine has published scholarly articles that challenged Scholem’s idea that Luria’s central concern was metaphysical and historiosophic. Throughout his work Fine argues that Luria, while a superb metaphysician, was in fact focused on people, particularly on his own circle of students, and was not the disinterested, albeit charismatic, ascetic Scholem made him out to be.

Fine states his thesis clearly enough: “This book regards Lurianic Kabbala as an embodied phenomenon. By this I mean primarily two related things. First, people were at the heart of the Lurianic enterprise . . . Second, Luria and his disciples were far more interested in the life of praxis—both at the individual level and at the level of social community—than in speculative or theoretical matters” (p. 9). This claim, which underlies the entire project, is groundbreaking because Scholem’s thesis, which had its own ideological foundation having nothing to do with Luria, has largely framed our reading of the material in question. I must briefly return, once more, to the acknowledgments to posit that Fine’s own approach is no more objective than Scholem’s was. Fine states, “As I look back, I believe my interest in studying intentional community had something important to do with my own experiment in community during the early 1970s [referring to his time with Havurat Shalom in Somerville, Massachusetts].” So, just as Luria served Scholem’s mid-century Zionism quite well, Luria serves Fine’s late-century Diaspora “Jewish Renewal” approach quite well. This is no critique but, in fact, a compliment—to Scholem and Fine and, I suppose, to Luria. The extent to which a thinker’s work can be employed in light of one’s being-in-the-world is a testament to the elasticity and durability of its message. The impact and influence of personal and historical context is, of course, inevitable and even constructive as long as the textual tradition explored is done with precision, care, and open-mindedness. Such is the case with both scholars mentioned here.

Since, according to Fine, “the person” stands at the center of Luria’s work, it is appropriate that he begin with the person, that is, Luria himself. The problem with this, and perhaps the reason no one has yet attempted to reconstruct Luria’s life and personality from a scholarly perspective (hagiographies abound, but those mostly muddy the waters), is that we know very little about his life. We know little about his life before coming to Safed from Egypt, and he only lived in Safed a short 18 months before dying of a plague in the summer of 1572. To confront this, Fine paints a fine picture of Egypt during the period of Luria’s youth as the only possible way of imagining (and all we can do is imagine) what Luria’s early life

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must have been like. He reproduces a few important letters and court documents in which Luria is mentioned, giving us at least an external sense of the person. Trying to counter Scholem’s contention that Luria was a man who lived in the cosmos, Fine argues that, as far as we know, he was an upstanding member of the Jewish community in Cairo (pp. 37–39), served on its rabbinical court, and was involved in commercial trade.

My only question about these initial chapters is that Fine sets Luria deeply in an Islamic context but does not investigate, or even discuss, the likely Islamic influences on this thought. There is no entry for “Islam” or “Muslim” in the index and most of the references for “Sufism” relate to medieval predecessors of Luria (e.g., Bahya ibn Pakuda). There is a reference to Sufi influence on grave veneration (p. 275), but given the intellectual context of Luria’s life in Egypt, which Fine presents in the first chapter, Safed’s tolerant Ottoman context, and our knowledge of an existing Sufi circle in Safed connected to Ibn Arabi (Safed was a fairly small community at that time), it is surely possible that Islamic influence spread farther than the particular custom of grave veneration. While this is surely not a crucial point, I think that it would work to Fine’s benefit to deepen his revision of Scholem’s historiosophic thesis by placing Luria more solidly in the “real world” of culture and ideas.

In Chapter 4, Fine gives us a lucid and well-informed description of Lurianic myth. His ability to clearly explain the complexity of this system without getting overly entrenched in the never-ending details is a tribute to both his writing and his thinking. In some places, however, this style also results in washing over what this reviewer believes are important points. For example, on page 144 he discusses the project of tikun though ritual observance (mitzvot). This is central to Fine’s thesis that Luria’s focus on metaphysics is primarily in its service to piety. While there are two full chapters devoted to tikun, the reader, especially one unfamiliar with this world of ideas, is left without a theoretical discussion of what tikun actually is, not as it relates to mitzvot or to prayer, but more generally; what does Luria mean by the term tikun? There is one paragraph that begins this explanation, but it does not go far enough.

Fine’s chapter on gilgul (the reincarnation of souls) is one of the best and most important chapters in the book. It places this important yet under-explored trope as a lens through which Luria contextualizes his own vocation and his own circle as replaying the drama of the near (rabbinic) and distant (biblical) past. In fact, what Fine argues, and he does so convincingly, is that the complex story of the gilgulim of biblical chapters in the Lurianic corpus is all, or mostly, about contemporary figures and his belief in his circle as holding the possibility of redemption. Scholem’s historiosophic thesis is significantly weakened, when the personalities of Luria’s disciples become the main focus of his attention and not simply an interesting footnote to Lurianic cosmology. To put gilgul as the centerpiece of the Lurianic system, Fine redirects our attention away from mythic history and toward Lurianic psychology.

There are a few issues I would like to raise in this fine study. First, on page 188, Fine takes up the question of Luria’s relationship to the law. This is a crucial issue, both for Fine’s thesis and for the study of Lurianic Kabbala more generally.
Here Fine argues that what may have saved Kabbala in general from the dustbin of Jewish history is its “orthodoxy.” He states, “For all their novel—even radical—mythic and theological notions, the Kabbalists had remained committed to the meticulous observance of the mitzvot, the precepts or commandments that constitute the basic stricture of Jewish law.” Kabbalists, he continues, could “get away with” what critics deemed “offensive and bizarre conceptions of God” because they remained halakhic Jews. On the surface, there is little one could argue with here. We know that Kabbalists adhered to traditional conceptions of halakhah and that their descendants, to this day, continue to do so. However, isn’t the hypernomian turn, that is, the turn toward piety as obligation, also deviance, especially when it determines that the stricter behavior is not only recommended but also mandatory? Given historical circumstances, largely resulting from the emergence of Hasidism in eastern Europe and the popularization of Lurianic custom through Sephardic leaders such as R. Joseph Hayyim of Baghdad and R. Hayyim Sofer, author of Kaf Ha-Hayyim on the Shulkhan Arukh, traditional Jewry east and west has largely, albeit not totally, accepted Lurianic “custom” as normative. But one who reads Luria’s works will notice that these behaviors are presented as not merely suggested stringencies but, in fact, obligatory as part of the tikun to which Fine alludes in his book. So, while I agree with Fine descriptively, I think that many Kabbalists did not simply adhere to halakhah, traditionally defined, but, particularly in the case of Luria, conflated halakhah and custom in a way that revolutionized halakhic practice. The line dividing law and piety is effaced when the pious behavior is conflated with “the law.” The fact that most of his innovations were stringencies (humrot) is not an adequate response. Arguably, taking humrot and making them obligatory is theoretically no less problematic from an “orthodox” perspective than making obligatory nomos voluntary. I for one do not think Luria was “orthodox” at all if by that we mean one who accepts the authority of tradition as the ultimate criteria of religious behavior.

Second, up to this point I have not touched upon the most recent thesis regarding Lurianic Kabbala, espoused by Moshe Idel. In numerous studies, Idel has argued that Scholem’s thesis is mistaken regarding the centrality and trajectory of Lurianic teaching. That is, he argues that Luria’s influence, both in practice and in theory, was far less than Scholem claimed, most specifically regarding Sabbateanism and Hasidism, and that ecstatic influences were far more predominant. Idel’s larger project of revising Scholem’s history of Kabbala views Scholem’s error regarding Luria as a fundamental flaw in his historiography. On page 5, Fine cites Idel’s thesis and then proceeds to question it. However, his challenge begins with the word “nevertheless,” hardly the language of critique, yet continues to make the case for widespread Lurianic influence. In the footnotes to this page Fine copiously cites Idel’s major essays where his thesis is developed without any comment. If Fine adheres to Idel’s thesis regarding the dissemination of Lurianic Kabbala, this is fine.

However, I think Fine’s underlying thesis, and one of the things that make his book so important, is that he offers an important challenge to Idel’s revision of Lurianic influence. That is, Fine’s revision of Scholem challenges Idel’s position on the marginality of Luria, which, of course, is based on Scholem! By arguing
that Luria’s lasting contribution to Judaism, and the one he may have held in highest esteem, was not metaphysical but, rather, was about “devotion and practice” (including custom and law) (p. 5), and, as such, spread to a much wider audience than the illuminati, Fine is offering his reader another way of assessing the significance of Luria.

Physician of the Soul presents to date one of the more comprehensive studies of the Lurianic school and an intriguing challenge to Idel’s revision of Lurianic Kabbala. It should be taken with utmost seriousness by scholars in the field and scholars in religion. Its lucidity and accessibility make it a book for both experts and non-experts in the study of Jewish mysticism. It will have lasting and significant impact on the study of Lurianic Kabbala and its influence, and on the study of Kabbala more generally.

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Can medieval Jewish poetry teach us history? Asked differently, can scholars draw on medieval poetry (piyyutim) to reconstruct historical events? In Beautiful Death, Einbinder narrows down this matter to the case of Ashkenazic martyrological poetry. To answer this question, Einbinder has analyzed over seventy Hebrew poems from northern France, England, and Germany; they span the period following the First Crusade (1096), ending with the Rindfleisch massacres of 1298 in Germany and King Philip IV’s expulsion of the French Jews in 1306.

In Einbinder’s opinion, the Ashkenazic poetry of martyrdom has not received sufficient scholarly attention. While historians “rarely considered” these martyrlogical poems for their studies of “everyday life” in northern Europe (pp. 1–2), scholars of poetry focused on the medieval Hebrew poetry from Spain and other Muslim countries. The latter scholars considered the Ashkenazic works to lack literary merit (p. 6). Beautiful Death is set to prove that Ashkenazic martyrological poems constitute both an important source of information for historians and a beautiful literary genre in their own right. Einbinder argues that a great deal can be learned from these poems because developments in the literary conventions mirror alterations in the violence toward Jews and in the Jewish responses.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the role martyrological poetry played in medieval Jewish society. After the Second Crusade, martyrological poetry presented a new type of martyr (p. 18). In contrast to the indiscriminating massacres of 1096, the new martyr was the victim of judicial procedures. Another change emerges in the laments of the French poets about the martyrs burned at Blois in 1171. These laments focus solely on “an elite corps of scholar–martyrs” (p.18). The motif that runs through four of the eight laments on Blois is the martyrs’ incombustible na-
tures. Their public and fiery ordeal is embellished by allusions to the Sinai revelation. By the thirteen century, the motif was replaced by Ezekiel’s vision of the wheel. The shift in symbols marks a change in the method of execution from burning to death on wheels, and to a more personal martyrdom (pp. 27–28; 32).

According to Einbinder, these poems functioned on three levels: 1. as a form of cultural resistance to conversion in northern France; 2. as “texts” for the “textually skilled” young male students of the Tosafist schools, and as “performed” for a wider audience sensitive to extratextual effects, such as music, rituals, and gesture; 3. as anticonversionary and polemical works, for conversion to Christianity temporarily increased (pp. 19, 38).

Einbinder gives two main reasons for her distinction between the semiesoteric and popular functions of the Tosafists’ poems. Only the sophisticated and educated Tosafist could read and fully understand these poems. Illiterate women and even literate males would miss the full meaning of the embedded symbols. Her second reason for seeing the poems as texts for the Tosafist is their need for an “image of rabbinic fortitude” (p. 62), since “the weakest link in the chain of resistance [to conversion] was among the intellectual elite” (p. 184, and again: “young, educated Jews who were particularly susceptible to conversionary pressures,” pp. 59, 72, 133).

In the chapters that follow, Einbinder elaborates on these arguments to the verge of redundancy. This includes her Epilogue, which reads more like her initial overview than as a conclusion. Her distinction between the two audiences seems artificial. These poems incorporated contemporary motifs already known to their Jewish and Christian contemporaries. The poets embellished these popular circulating images by biblical verses and metaphors to the best of their literary skills. Take for example the motif of the Blois’ martyrs singing *Alenu le-shabeah* in the fire. Jewish martyrology incorporated the *Alenu* at a time Christians claimed to have heard their martyrs singing the *Te Deum Laudamus*.

The same is true about the motif of the Sinai revelation. The Latin literature of the First Crusade already compared the crusaders to the Israelites on their way to the Holy Land, and this is how many of the participants are said to have viewed themselves. If the relatively less educated Christian crowd was familiar with such motifs (through public preaching and art, for instance), the chances are good that the generally more literate Jewish male understood them as well. Jewish women, as Einbinder observes, could become familiar with these popular motifs in other ways. After all, the Hebrew and the vernacular poems owe their survival, some in the form of liturgy, to their popularity due to their use of popular motifs.

Nor should we be surprised by the featuring of the Tosafist martyr in texts written by Tosafists. In reality, Tosafists were among ordinary Jews who were made to choose between conversion and death. As Einbinder comments, the “‘typical’ Blois martyr was not a scholar” (p. 51). The featuring of the Tosafists in several poems does not necessarily indicate, as Einbinder suggests, that the young intellectuals or the “scholar-rabbi” were the “weakest link” in the chain of resistance to conversion. R. Yom Tov in England and the Rosh family in Spain are a few examples that show that Tosafists played a leading role in the martyrdoms at their communities.
Of course, historians should not ignore poetry. Einbinder, therefore, should be appreciated for giving Ashkenazic Jewish poetry the attention it deserves. She managed to sort carefully through these works and to present them in an organized fashion. She captured the poems’ main themes, making several useful comments. Historians, however, are likely to resort to speculation when no other types of sources are available. Einbinder’s discussion on Samson of Metz actually demonstrates this point (Ch. 4). Also problematic is Chapter 6, on a Jew named Jonathan. Here Einbinder relies on polemical Latin liturgy and two early modern anti-Jewish Christian accounts that followed it to tell “us something about the imaginative world of medieval Jews” (p. 157, my emphasis), or what Jews may have “believed” in (p. 158). Based on Jonathan’s story, Einbinder argues, Jews may have believed that holy books could protect them from the flames when being executed. Such polemical works should not be taken at face value. They were designed to ridicule Judaism and support a common medieval Christian belief that God would perform miracles only for Christians. For lack of historical accounts, this chapter is highly speculative.

In short, for the historian poetry can complement other historical documents. Medieval poetry works well as a complementing source when one is already familiar with the historical background in which it was written. Without sufficient historical accounts, it is unlikely that poetry alone would enable us to reconstruct historical events accurately.

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Considerable attention has been focused on Habsburg Jewry, especially the Jews of Vienna, before World War I. Several works have also dealt with the Jews of Austria and the other Habsburg successor states during the interwar years. Until now, no books have explored in depth the experiences of Austrian Jewry during the First World War. This past year, however, two books, Marsha L. Rozenblit’s Reconstructing National Identity: The Jews of Habsburg Austria During World War I and David Rechter’s The Jews of Vienna and the First World War, appeared to fill this lacuna in the scholarly literature. Although these books cover the same period and share much the same material, their scope and approach are very different.

Reconstructing National Identity is the more ambitious and broader of the two works. It is a very well researched, focused, and carefully thought-out study.
of the impact of World War I on the identity of the German-speaking Jews of Habsburg, Austria. From the outset, the author posits a tripartite identity for Austrian Jewry before, during, and even after World War I: They were Austrian by political loyalty; German (or Czech or Polish) by cultural affiliation; and Jewish in an ethnic, as well as a religious, sense. It is hard to miss Rozenblit’s thesis, since she constantly reiterates it while demonstrating and documenting it quite convincingly throughout the book.

Reconstructing National Identity effectively combines the methodologies of cultural, social, and political history in portraying a complex Jewish society during wartime. Rozenblit utilizes a wide range of primary and secondary sources, especially archival materials, newspapers, letters, and memoir literature. Given the widespread press censorship during the war, much of this primary material is difficult to deal with, yet Rozenblit handles it extremely well. The book covers a wide geographical range, with its focus constantly shifting from Vienna to Bohemia and Moravia, then to Galicia and Bukovina, while analyzing the multiple identities of Eastern and Western Jews, Liberals, Jewish Nationalists, and Orthodox. Some chapters also provide a thought-provoking comparative perspective on Jewish identities, contrasting Austrian Jewry in a multinational state with French and German Jews on the one hand and Hungarian Jews on the other.

Rozenblit constantly emphasizes the loyalty of Habsburg Jewry to Austria and their devotion to Kaiser Franz Josef. But she also stresses the fact that during World War I, while fighting valiantly on behalf of their country, Jewish soldiers were also fighting on behalf of their fellow Jews in Russia. She demonstrates that Austrian Jews were much more enthusiastic about fighting a “holy war” against Russia than serving on the Italian front. The author discusses at length Jewish responses to escalating anti-Semitism during and immediately after the war and the disappointment expressed by many Jews that their loyalty went unrecognized.

My two favorite chapters in this book bring to life everyday activities during wartime as seen from a Jewish perspective. In Chapter 3, “Mobilizing the Home Front,” Rozenblit vividly portrays the plight of Jewish refugees from Galicia and the efforts of various Jewish communities, particularly Jewish women, to help them. In Chapter 4, “The Experiences of Jewish Soldiers,” she deals with the relationship between Jewish soldiers on the front, their families, and the organized Jewish communities of Austria, exploring the role of chaplains and the provision of kosher food within the Habsburg army, as well as the varied Jewish identities and experiences of soldiers from diverse backgrounds.

Marsha Rozenblit’s main conclusion is that the Jews of Habsburg Austria tried to maintain their tripartite identity during and after the war, despite the breakup of multinational Austria–Hungary into multiple nation-states. Most Jews, she claims, still clung to the idea of being loyal citizens of the new states in which they lived, speaking German, Czech, and so forth as the case might be, but identifying themselves as Jews rather than as Germans or Czechs by ethnicity or nationality. This solution worked reasonably well in interwar Czechoslovakia, but not in the new Republic of Austria or elsewhere. Rozenblit argues that although the overall situation changed dramatically as a result of the war, Jewish identity, for the most part, did not.

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David Rechter’s *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War*, a study in the ethnopolitics of the Jewish community of Vienna during World War I, is a slimmer volume with a much narrower focus and approach. The work started out as the author’s doctoral dissertation at Hebrew University, under the supervision of Ezra Mendelsohn, Jonathan Frankel, and Robert Wistrich, who are among the leading authorities on Jewish political history. This book is quite competently researched and written, but it does not contain a great deal that is really new to anyone familiar with Austrian Jewish politics in the early twentieth century. It relies heavily on the archival materials at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem and the Jewish newspapers published in Vienna during the war, as well as secondary sources.

This work should really be entitled *Jewish Politics in Vienna* rather than *The Jews of Vienna*, but I admit that I already usurped that particular title for my own book, published by Indiana University Press in 1991, before I shifted my emphasis from political to social history. Rechter’s study demonstrates some of the pitfalls of writing a purely political history of a Jewish community, especially during wartime, without much social context. The Galician Jewish refugees who were in Vienna, but not really of Vienna, remain statistics; Jewish soldiers are barely mentioned, although they appear on the cover photo; mass movements—whether youth movements or Jewish Congress movements—are posited, but not fully documented; and since no elections or referenda were held during the war, the focus remains entirely on a handful of Jewish leaders, whether Jewish Nationalist, Liberal, or Orthodox, who might, or might not, represent the views of the Jews of Vienna. While reading this book, at times it’s hard to remember that there was actually a war going on.

Rechter’s study, which treats Vienna as the embodiment of all of Austrian Jewry, seems to miss the mark on occasion and to overstate its arguments. As a minor quibble, I have to point out that, unlike his fellow Zionist precursor Jehuda Haj Alkalaj, Zvi Hirsch Kalischer was not born in Sarajevo but in Posen, a different borderland. Rechter ignores the involvement of Jews, especially members of the younger generation, in the Austrian Social Democratic Party and often seems to exaggerate the importance of the Jewish Nationalists during and immediately after the war. In his chapter on “Warring Youth,” he emphasizes the role of Siegfried Bernfeld in the development of an Austrian Jewish youth movement under Zionist auspices during World War I. However, Bernfeld did not remain a Zionist for very long, and neither did many of the youth who belonged to the organization he had created before the war. His efforts did not lead to a strong and viable Zionist youth movement in Vienna. Before the war, some students at the University of Vienna were very active Zionists, but during the war, most male students were serving in the army; they were the real “warring youth.” After the war, more Jewish young people in Vienna became involved in socialist than in Jewish Nationalist politics. Rechter certainly did not support his assertion that Jewish politics during and after the war can be seen as a “children’s crusade” (p.101).

Similarly, in the chapter he calls “In Pursuit of Unity,” Rechter chronicles the total lack of unity among Viennese Jews during and after World War I. Unlike the American Jewish Congress that successfully emerged during the war, the Con-
gress movement in Austria never got off the ground, but instead got bogged down in internal disagreements between the Viennese Jewish Nationalist leader Robert Stricker and the Prague Zionist spokesman Siegmund Kaznelson. Neither the Liberals nor the Orthodox ever supported the idea of a Jewish Nationalist-dominated Congress. Just as the youth movement equaled Bernfeld, the Congress movement equaled Kaznelson; both attempts failed to develop into anything meaningful. Rechter, who seems to believe the rhetoric of the Jewish Nationalist press, exaggerates the significance of the Jewish National Council and its temporary success in implementing some of its program immediately after the war. His final chapter, “A Jewish Revolution” merely proves that no real revolution took place within the Jewish community of Vienna after World War I, despite the revolutionary upheaval all around.

Perhaps it is unfair to compare a narrow study in communal politics by a more junior scholar, based on his dissertation, with the work of a senior scholar, who created a fascinating synthesis within a broader framework. Marsha Rozenblit and David Rechter agree on the staunch loyalty of Austrian Jewry to Franz Josef and the multinational empire and both adopt a Zionist interpretation of Jewish identity and politics in Austria during and after the war, but Rozenblit’s analysis of the data seems more nuanced and evenhanded than Rechter’s. Instead of emphasizing the centripetal force of Vienna, Rozenblit compares the attitudes and behaviors of Viennese Jews with those of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia, as well as in Galicia and Bukovina. Sometimes, as Rechter would have it, Viennese Jewish leaders, whether Liberals or Jewish Nationalists, were indeed the spokesmen for all of Austrian Jewry during and immediately after World War I, but in other instances, Rozenblit proves convincingly that that was certainly not the case. Reconstructing National Identity is a path breaking study that makes an important contribution to our knowledge of twentieth-century Jewish and Central European history and our understanding of World War I and Jewish identity. The Jews of Vienna and the First World War provides a more limited contribution to the existing scholarship on Viennese Jewry and Jewish politics. Although it sheds light on Jewish youth movements, as well as Liberal and Jewish Nationalist communal politics in wartime, Rechter’s competent research will undoubtedly be overshadowed by Rozenblit’s landmark study.

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This is a translation and slight modification of Dat ve-Ziyyonut: Imutim Ris-honim (1990), a Hebrew collection of articles previously published by Yosef Salmon. In this English volume, some sections of the Hebrew edition were omit-
ted, some were altered, and two recent articles were added. The thirteen articles address the period from 1818 (the writings of Hatam Sofer) until 1922 (the founding of Ha-Po’el ha-Mizrachi) and ask how religious Jews—especially those who were drawn toward the hope of restoring the Jewish people to Zion—dealt with the challenges presented by the increasingly secular Jewish national movement. This question is at the center of Salmon’s body of research on East European Zionism.

Salmon fixes his gaze on the elite: rabbis who were vying with each other to lead the Zionist movement toward tangible success without compromising religious ideals, religious figures who wielded influence in the Yishuv, and secular or less religious Zionist activists. He focuses on the junctures in the history of Hibbat Zion that required policy decisions in which religious tradition would be honored, transformed, or breached. Such junctures were frequent during the 1880s and 1890s, when secularized Jews began to advocate for mass migration to Palestine and to agitate for educational and cultural reforms that would prepare young Jews for a country of their own. Some religious leaders looked approvingly at the modification of religious norms—for example, the adoption of agricultural labor by Ashkenazic newcomers to Palestine and the concomitant diminution of the ideal of the Torah scholar wholly supported by the donations of Diaspora Jews. Every compromise and acceptance of change by Hibbat Zion religious leaders enabled them to keep their hand in the directorship of the movement, but also brought down upon them harsh rabbinic denunciations and the loss of support from religious Jews.

Reading Salmon’s articles, one gets the impression that the disunity of the rabbinic leadership, the anti-Zionism of key rabbis, and the immense difficulty of reconciling religious tradition and nationalism led to the erosion of religious influence in the Zionist movement. A more balanced examination of the growing secularism of Zionism would require attention to factors beyond the religious world: the Russian political and legal realities that affected the movement, as well as the relative importance of its regional centers; the concerns of ordinary Hibbat Zion members and contributors; the social and economic environment inhabited by the settlers; the greater organizational skills of secular Jews; the advantages that a secular approach conferred in directing the transformation of the Yishuv, and so on.

The narrowness of Salmon’s focus could be excused, however, were it not for his neglect of basic research conventions. He is noticeably remiss in embedding his work within existing scholarship—the studies by Jonathan Frankel, Joseph Goldstein, and Ehud Luz come to mind. In Salmon’s articles, the reader learns of the viewpoint of a historical figure through paraphrase and summary, and the footnotes typically include only a reference to the primary source material; the reader lacks longer quotations from the original work, references to other research, and solid evidence for why Salmon attributes a particular motive for or agenda behind the individual’s stated beliefs. For example, Salmon propounds the view (in Chapters 1 and 2) that Zevi Hirsch Kalischer arrived at his messianic ideology in reaction to the Reform movement’s rejection of messianic concepts (in Chapter 3 he makes the same claim for David Gordon). He has little evidence to support this conclusion and does not mention the work of scholars who show otherwise. In contrast, when Gideon Shimoni discusses Kalischer’s messianism in *The Zionist Ide-
ology (1995), he credits Salmon for suggesting the influence of Reform, as well as the opposing viewpoint expounded in my own research and in the groundbreaking study of Kalischer by Jacob Katz. The reader is informed of the basic scholarship, the different explanations, and Shimoni’s perspective.

Salmon also tends to be reductionist. In Chapter 2, he assesses the reaction of “traditional Jewry” to Kolonisations-Verein fuer Palästina by surveying the opinions expressed by the editors and contributors to the Hebrew press (particularly Ha-Maggid, Ha-Mevasser, and Ha-Levanon). He assumes that each press represents a well-defined ideology or interest group, which together comprise the bulk of religious Jewry. Had he considered the scholarship on the Hebrew press, he would have described a more complex picture. Salmon incorporates his own interpretations in his summaries of editorials and opinion pieces without designating them as such.

Oddly enough, Salmon neglects to provide the reader with tools he himself has generated. In his article (Chapter 7) on the pro-Hibbat Zion tract Shivat Ziyyon, he provides some historical background and then generalizes about the opinions expressed in the book, without referring to the new edition of Shivat Ziyyon issued in 1998, for which he wrote an introduction, notes, and indices.

Despite those problems, Salmon’s articles arouse the reader’s interest in the subject. The most useful and original material in the volume deals with the last two decades of the nineteenth century (Chapters 4–11), and these are a good starting point for further research.

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In the last decade or so, new research on Jewish displaced persons in occupied Germany has pushed the traditional boundaries of “Holocaust studies” (1933–1945) toward the postwar period. Indeed, the displaced persons or “DP” experience—the temporary settlement in Germany of the She’erith Hapleitah (“Surviving Remnant”) from the liberation of concentration camps in the spring of 1945 to the late 1940s—provides important insights into post-Holocaust Jewish life. The impact of trauma and loss, the final divorce between Jews and East-Central Europe through migration to Israel and the New World, the rise of Zionist consciousness, the shaping of a Jewish national collective in transit, the regeneration of Jewish demography and culture in the DP camps, and the relationships between Jews and Germans in occupied Germany are some of the many themes
explored by recent DP historiography—by now a subfield of postwar Jewish history.

Although different in nature and scope, the two books under review, Zeev Mankowitz’s *Life Between Memory and Hope* and Ruth Gay’s *Safe Among the Germans*, both center on the singularity of Jewish refugee life after the war. A very unlikely prospect during the war, mass migration of the remnant of European Jewry to occupied Germany brought Jewish life back to the German space. The dramatic twist of fate provoked by V-Day turned Germany into a safe sanctuary for 60,000 Holocaust survivors freed from the camps or converging to the American zone from Eastern Europe. All in all, 250,000 Jews, Polish in their large majority, moved to Germany, illegally or semi-illegally, between 1945 and 1949. As Ruth Gay writes in her introduction, “The decision of Eastern European Jews to settle in Germany at that time seemed unthinkable to the rest of the world in view of the nearly realized intent of the Nazi regime to kill every one of them.” But the title of her book is somewhat misleading when applied to the postwar occupation period (1945–1949). Jews were indeed “safe” in Germany after May 1945, but did not for the most part live “among Germans.” Their sense of safety derived primarily from the protective environment provided by the extraterritorial DP camps of the American and British zones of occupation, which separated Jews from Germans and turned Jewish victims into “victors” by association. This spatial isolation, however, was hardly hermetic, since various forms of interactions—black market activities, the enrollment of Jewish students in German universities, or the highly symbolic hiring by Jewish women of German nannies—occurred between Holocaust survivors and the German population.

As safe havens for survivors and Jews fleeing the resurgence of anti-Semitism in their “home” country (such as the Kielce pogrom of 1946), DP camps became sites of physical, cultural, and political regeneration. This episode of autonomous Jewish reconstruction has for a long time been repressed by trauma-inspired literature as well as by early Zionist narratives, which for different reasons have cultivated the image of survivors as passive victims denied historical agency. In this respect, the accounts provided by Ruth Gay and Zeev Mankowitz are reminders that mourning and powerlessness do not fully convey the survivor experience in Germany. Equally important was the active Jewish struggle for rebirth and regeneration, both demographic and intellectual. Emblematic of the way survivors simultaneously addressed past and future is a Yiddish song composed by the Happy Boys, a Jewish music band popular in the DP camps. As Ruth Gay points out, their nostalgic *Es bengt zich nuch a hajm* (One Longs for Home) gradually shifts away from the past as it summons new beginnings: “Now one must live because the time has come!”

Whereas *Life Between Memory and Hope* is a thorough historical investigation based on a wide array of primary sources and exclusively focusing on the period 1945–1948, *Safe Among the Germans* is a general overview of Jewish life in Germany from the Holocaust to the 1990s. Historians of the period should not expect to find new material or new arguments in Ruth Gay’s otherwise elegantly written book. Michael Brenner, Frank Stern, and Jeffrey Herf have written more specialized historical accounts on Jews in West and East Germany since 1945.
Book Reviews

However, one can still enjoy Gay’s engaging narrative as well as her fruitful use of secondary sources, often giving voice to heretofore anonymous historical witnesses. Overall, Gay’s aim is to highlight what she views as a success story: the reemergence, against all odds, of Jewish life and culture in postwar Germany. The author aptly describes a closing of a cycle, while carefully refraining from romanticization. She shows how “native” German Jews (amounting to only 8,000 in 1950) struggled to reconstruct a post-Holocaust identity. Departing from their pre-war belief in the German–Jewish symbiosis, survivors defined themselves more ambiguously as “Jews in Germany.” Upon their return home, they encountered the cold indifference of their former German “neighbors,” but also faced the ostracism of Jews in the outside world who scorned their desire to remain on the “blood-soaked soil” of Germany. Moreover, “native” German Jews experienced tense relations with Jewish outsiders—the 12,000 Eastern European DPs who stayed in Germany after the closing of DP camps in the early 1950s.

In Chapters 4 and 5, the most interesting part of the book, Ruth Gay treats another type of East–West divide. Following the end of the airlift in 1949, Jews in East and West Berlin dramatically parted ways, and Gay offers a fascinating account of the many difficulties faced by the Jewish community in the “antifascist” German Democratic Republic. Yet a steady trickle of escapes to the Federal Republic gradually emptied East Germany of most of its Jewish population, reduced to less than 2,000 souls in 1956. Jumping ahead to the post-reunification era, a final chapter focuses on “New Generations in Germany,” on the vibrancy of Jewish culture (symbolized notably by the revival of klezmer music) and the impact of Russian immigration. For Ruth Gay, the 100,000 Jews who today live “safe among the Germans” are neither a “remnant” community nor an anomaly, but a dynamic and legitimate center of Jewish life in the West.

If the DP experience is treated by Ruth Gay as an introduction to the broader postwar period, the return to life of Holocaust survivors in occupied Germany is the primary focus of Zeev Mankowitz’s book. This is, to date, the most comprehensive study of the She’erith Hapleitah, enriched by a thorough examination of primary sources in Yiddish, such as the survivor press. It is a story written from the perspective of the historical actors (“She’erith Hapleitah as subjects rather than as objects of history”) and a fine analysis of their motivations. The first part of the book explores the dual origins of the She’erith Hapleitah. The Surviving Remnant was created both from below and from above: it was an early attempt by survivors to organize themselves after the liberation of the camps as well as a result of relief policies stressing the necessity of assisting Holocaust survivors in separate Jewish camps.

Mankowitz’s analysis of the community of survivors revolves around a central question: How did they return to life and grapple “with the weight of the past, the strains of the present and the shape of a different future”? Against the claims of post-Zionist writers who have described survivors as victims of cynical Zionist designs, Mankowitz presents strong evidence of the rise of Zionist consciousness in the camps. Although competing with Bundism or Orthodox Judaism, Zionist sentiment (as well as anti-British attitudes) was prevalent among survivors even before the arrival of official Zionist “emissaries” in the camps. Yet the predomi-
nance of Zionism did not diminish the lure of America, especially after the U.S. Congress passed the DP Act in 1948. As Mankowitz shows in his discussion of Samuel Gringauz, a leading figure of the Landsberg DP camp in Bavaria, Zionism could also be perceived as a language of rebirth and a “new humanism,” above and beyond the personal duty to live in the newly created State of Israel.

The concept of “Life Reborn” was also tied to an institutional and educational project. Mankowitz examines the role of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in integrating Jewish repatriates and “infiltrates” from Eastern Europe into the She’erith Hapleitah. Education and vocational training (for surviving children and adults alike) also played a regenerative role in healing the “deep scars of the past left on body and soul.” But the most manifest embodiment of rebirth was demographic. As survivors rediscovered intimacy and sexuality, an extraordinary baby boom took place in the camps: “Every third woman was either pregnant or pushing a baby carriage,” noted a relief worker in 1946. This theme is currently being pushed further by historians interested in adding a gender dimension to the history of survivors. Reproductive politics could be framed as a symbolic form of “revenge” against the Germans, epitomized by the proud parading of prams in front of German eyes. As Mankowitz shows in a chapter on Jewish attitudes toward Germany, violent revenge against Germans remained marginal, even if often fantasized. For survivors, settling scores was more a memory issue than it was a retributive one. In a section on commemoration, Mankowitz describes how She’erith Hapleitah organized public remembrance through the creation of memorial days later amended—and appropriated?—by the specific commemorative needs of the State of Israel.

Overall, this outstanding work combines intriguing questions, solid research, and moving testimonies. It restores dignity and “life” to the history of survivors and opens up a subsequent question: the nature of post-Holocaust Jewish resilience and its role as a core value in Israeli society after 1948.

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Historians of the Third Reich have long noted that Nazi Germany’s actions on the battlefield and occupation policies were governed both by conventional military and radical ideological considerations. Much attention has been devoted to the problem of separating the two strands analytically, to determining which actions and policies should be labeled as primarily one or the other and which elements within the regime thought and behaved mainly according to conventional versus ideological notions. In recent years it has become common to place German military operations before June 1941 under the “conventional” rubric and to
date the “ideological” war from the invasion of the Soviet Union, which began in that month. On the other hand, whereas the German army was once widely thought to have constituted a bastion of conventional thinking even after the ideological war had been launched, scholars have increasingly implicated it in the perpetration of ideologically rooted crimes (particularly the murder of Jews on the eastern front).

Alexander Rossino’s detailed study of the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 challenges the common belief about the origin of the ideological war even as it reinforces the trend toward implicating the Wehrmacht. In his words, “the morally corrosive influence of National Socialism...manifested itself in the deadly racial—political policies that the SS, police, and German army implemented against Poland’s civilian population, both Christian and Jewish,” from the very outset of the September campaign (p. xiii). Moreover, what Rossino represents as the unprecedented brutality of that campaign should not be understood simply as a response to battlefield exigencies made possible by earlier German tactical and technological breakthroughs but as a premeditated, coordinated effort to destroy the foundations of Polish society and ethnically cleanse captured areas that were to be incorporated into the German Lebensraum. To his mind, there is a direct link between the manner in which German forces acted toward Polish Jews during the opening of World War II and the systematic mass killing of Jews throughout Europe that followed the invasion of the U.S.S.R. two years later: “The brief war with Poland in September 1939 was the first step in the overall escalation of National Socialist racial...policies...that ultimately resulted in genocide” (p. 235).

Historians of twentieth-century European Jewry thus have an interest not only in this particular book but also in the broader historiographical discussion of the conventional and ideological aspects of Nazi policies. Indeed, sophisticated contemporary Jewish and Polish observers, such as Moshe Kleinbaum and Jan Karski, tended to interpret German actions during the September campaign and the ensuing months in which the German occupation regime took shape in conventional terms, stressing the arbitrariness and immediate instrumental value of German behavior. If Rossino’s analysis of those same actions is correct, then those observers were actually given ample indication that the German occupiers were behaving not arbitrarily but with a clear, long-range, catastrophic ideological goal in mind. His work might thus be used in support of their claims by those who take the Jewish leadership to task for not seeing the handwriting on the wall soon enough.

But is Rossino’s analysis correct? Much of it depends upon public and private statements by Hitler, Himmler, Heydrich, and other eventual architects of the final solution. Rossino tends to take such statements at face value, although several decades of historical analysis would suggest that such is not always a reliable practice. When he infers ideological goals from actions instead of words, as he does when examining German reprisals against Polish insurgents, for example, he is on sounder ground, but his conclusions speak mainly to German policy toward Poles, not Jews. Rossino notes correctly that German forces drove Jews en masse from the western Polish provinces that were to be annexed directly to the Reich and that even some Jews from the remaining Polish territories were pushed over
the demarcation line into the Soviet occupation zone, but these (long-known) facts do not prove that in 1939 the leaders of the Third Reich already foresaw that the entire General gouvernement would eventually be made judenrein, let alone that all of its Jews would be murdered. There is greater novelty in the evidence he presents of Wehrmacht–SS cooperation in the persecution and deportation of Jews during the first month of the war. It may indeed be true that “the seeds of successful collaboration between the army and the SS [in the mass killing of Jews] later in the war were sown in Poland in September 1939” (p. 120), but Rossino has not shown that that future collaboration was foreordained.

The great merit of this book is that it demonstrates the extent to which norms of brutality toward occupied civilian populations were present in the German army from the very outset of World War II. The data Rossino has unearthed on this score may necessitate revision of some current opinions concerning the decisive role of the Soviet campaign in the process of brutalization. However, it would not be wise to use this book as a basis for understanding the origins of the final solution, let alone for evaluating the behavior of Jewish leaders in Poland before actual mass killing began.

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Zionism—the Israeli national constitutive myth that powerfully shapes that country’s politics, society, and culture—is currently under attack from Israeli social scientists. An academic–political stream known as post-Zionism is reexamining and questioning nearly all of Israeli society’s “sacred cows” as it exposes the coercive, silencing, and exclusionary force of the Zionist master narrative and its contribution to intense conflicts and cultural and social distortions. This is the context in which the book at hand should be read. It critically examines the Zionist ethos from a cultural anthropological perspective, and explores the cultural mediums through which the Zionist narrative passes as it undergoes a process of fragmentation through simulation.

The book is based on the author’s rereading of his own five very different ethnographic studies conducted during the last decade. It includes a short prologue, an introduction and a conclusion, as well as five chapters, each of which is based on research conducted in a different social–cultural arena. The first chapter centers on the attempts by residents of a deprived community to cleanse it of its stigmatic label; the second deals with the delegations of youngsters sent to traverse Poland and visit its Holocaust sites; and the third looks at a satirical program produced and aired during the first Gulf War. The fourth chapter examines the rebellion of Tel Aviv youths as represented in a popular movie, and the fifth discusses
the commemoration of Yitzhak Rabin, showing how youths staked a claim in the national collective memory.

The somewhat shaky rationale given for uniting these separate research projects lies in the concept of “simulation,” borrowed from Baudriallard, and which the author extends “to denote text that plays with representation” (p. 5). The book demonstrates how the Zionist myth is deconstructed in different cultural arenas in which simulation plays with and disguises reality and the myths therein. It contends that Zionism as a constitutive myth does not appear as a culturally coherent story because it is “shredded into pieces of cultural idioms, buzz words, ironical slogans and recreational venues” (p. 101).

The central idea is that simulations of the myth enable it to be embedded within the day-to-day cultural tapestry without being eradicated, thus allowing for its digestion by society at large. The idea of simulation or “simulacrum” as such is not new in cultural analysis. Its importance here lies in Hazan’s contention that the focus on fragments of myths and dreams enables us to better understand how myths reach and are absorbed by people in their everyday life, and how myths are deconstructed through the manufacturing of simulations.

However, there is a danger that the sweeping use Hazan makes of the concept of simulation will blur the distinction between reality and myth. At the same time, we can ask whether the dominant mode by which Zionism reaches various audiences in Israel today is through simulation. I would argue that Zionism, nationalism, and Jewishness are still represented and communicated as total destinations, and not, as Hazan claims, as “tourist-like nostalgic excursions” (p. 101). Further, it would have been worth asking under what conditions the simulation deconstructs, or, alternatively, strengthens the Zionist ethos in different collectives or cultural arenas. It would seem that the book over-generalizes with regard to the complex relationship between reality, ethos, and simulation in different contexts.

As the book’s subtitle indicates, Hazan studies the literal and metaphorical ties between the Zionist myth and its simulation through observations of youth and youthfulness in Israel. This contrasts with Hazan’s important cultural anthropological work on old age, to which he devoted many years, but shows that Hazan continues to give center stage to “voices from the margins,” with the aim of understanding cultural and social phenomena.

Like others who have studied youth in Israel—by and large structural–functionalist sociologists who made a significant contribution to the field in Israel and outside it1—Hazan is right in assuming that as a nationalist society, Israel is highly sensitive to its children and is almost compulsively preoccupied with their commitment and willingness to take part in the national struggle. He is also correct to presume that images and expressions of youth and youthfulness that are rooted in Zionism have been adopted by other age groups in Israel.

Research on youth in Israel dwindled in the 1980s, following the strength-

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ening of the post-Zionist stream and the introduction of critical and interpretive approaches to social research. The field of the anthropology of youth came to be, and has remained, almost neglected in Israel, despite several important works on the subject. In this sense, Hazan’s use of cultural anthropological theory in explaining the affinity between the Zionist myth and youth culture is most welcome. However, Hazan does not analytically conjoin the anthropology of youth and cultural anthropology. I argue that such a union is essential for understanding youth as a cultural category, the cultural practices of youth, and the ways in which young people produce and negotiate cultural forms. This problem seems to stem from the fact that the five research projects in the book were not originally intended to study youth and youth cultures, but were made into such ex post facto. Sometimes it appears that the author has not sufficiently considered whether youth constitutes the context for the research, or its subject. In other words, it is not quite clear whether youth serves as an arena in which to demonstrate how simulations deconstruct the Zionist ethos, or whether Hazan is showing us how Zionism in a global, postmodern age shapes Israeli youths.

There is a further troublesome point: Hazan describes Israeli youth as postmodern, cosmopolitan, and postcolonial, yet does not explain what this means. Which youth is he talking about? The youths in the book have neither voice nor face; they remain abstract and generalized. However, as in any other society, the space of young people in Israel is not monolithic, and is occupied by various identities with interrelationships, not free from conflict, based on ethnicity, gender, religion, and class.

One could assume that in such a divided space, the Zionist dream is simulated in different ways. Given that research on the rifts and interrelations between different groups of youths could teach us much about society in general, this point is lacking from the book. This volume is concise and condensed, and full of the latest “post” anthropological jargon and concepts. Because of conceptual meandering, repetitions of the same idea in different phrasings, and an assumed prior knowledge of Israeli society, it is not a very user-friendly book. At least some of the burden of reading could have been lightened by more rigorous editing. The book is thus suited to an anthropological or more widely social-scientific audience, and not for a popular one. Reading the introduction—the most abstract part of the volume—at the end would render Hazan’s theoretical arguments and his critical, insightful observations of Israeli (Jewish) society much clearer.

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*Our Lives are but Stories* is a welcome and appealing addition to the small but valuable corpus of studies of Jewish women whose ethnic heritages, as much as their Judaism, shape their life experiences and their narratives telling of those experiences. Joining books such as Lisa Gilad’s *Ginger and Salt: Yemeni Jewish Women in an Israeli Town* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989); Jael Silliman’s *Jewish Portraits, Indian Frames: Women’s Narratives from a Diaspora of Hope* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001); Joelle Bahloul’s *Le Culte de la Table Dressée: Rites et Traditions de la Table Juive Algérienne* (Paris: A. M. Métailié: Diffusion, Presses universitaires de France, 1983); Rachel Simon’s *Change Within Tradition Among Jewish Women in Libya* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992); and my own *Women As Ritual Experts: The Religious Lives of Elderly Jewish Women in Jerusalem* (New York: Oxford University Press 1992), Schely-Newman’s *Our Lives are but Stories* makes a substantial contribution to the study of Jewish women of Asia and North Africa.

Structured around the narratives of four women, each of whom is identified by name, and with each of whom Schely-Newman is well-acquainted over a period of many years (one of the women is her mother), *Our Lives are But Stories* follows the normative life-cycle of Tunisian-born Jewish women from childhood, through marriage, motherhood, immigration to Israel, and old age.

Schely-Newman notes that the storytelling style of Tunisian women has shifted: Whereas in Tunisia women’s stories tended to be fictional, her interviewees now tell “real” stories of their own lives and of the lives of their neighbors and kin. The goal of women’s storytelling, however, has not changed. “These personal narratives continue to serve as an enculturation tool, and though the narrators are modest in their demeanor and traditional in their views, their narratives are nevertheless pregnant with sexual meanings and symbolism. Within the context of changing cultures, personal narratives can be interpreted as subversive. The women may explicitly support the hegemonical patriarchal structure of society, while their stories and narration may at the same time challenge and even reject the same social order” (p. 18).

Throughout the volume, Schely-Newman emphasizes not only the content of the stories, but also their form and the contexts in which they are told. Tunisian women’s stories are not recited in the format of soliloquies or lengthy speeches, but rather in short phrases embedded in conversation with the group of listeners, who also are expected to add their own voices of assent, repetition, clarification, modification, free association, or disagreement. As such, the stories both reflect the women’s culture and create it through the process of dialogue.

Presenting the stories in dialogue form allows Schely-Newman to avoid reifying these women, each of whom emerges as a complex character whose life has been made up of both grand events (such as immigration) and small events (such as baking bread). Significantly, the grand events sometimes are related through little reminisces (such as buying an outfit for one’s toddler), while the seemingly small events take on great importance in, for instance, a story linking a
Sabbath bread-baking incident to a critique of men whose cruelty to their wives can result in loss of life (pp. 93–94).

Still, as Schely-Newman emphasizes, “The older women do not attempt to change power relations between genders or to redefine their sphere of activity. Instead, they use narration as a way of preserving their autonomy in matters of procreation” (p. 96). And again, “The women’s stories are thus not an account of what has happened, good or bad, but a metacomment on the social order. By voicing their concerns women set an example for their daughters about ways of resistance within the traditional setting itself” (p. 150).

Ostensibly, this book is more about language and storytelling than an ethnographic account of the lives of Tunisian-Israeli women. As such, it should be of interest to readers concerned with questions of gender and narrative, as much if not more than to readers looking for information about the experiences of North African Jewish women.

Having said that, I do feel that this volume will be of most use to readers seeking to understand a generation of Jewish women whose lives have been framed by decades of radically changing gender roles and expectations. Thus, I would have been interested in hearing Schely-Newman’s thoughts on how the daughters and granddaughters of these women (the younger generation for whom these women’s stories “set an example”) hear what the older women say. I also would have been interested in Schely-Newman’s reflections concerning ways in which the Tunisian-Israeli women not only resemble the Moroccan, Yemenite, and Kurdish women whose lives have been described in the books listed in the first paragraph of this review, but also her insights regarding ways in which they may differ. The Tunisian women, for instance, went to school, unlike the women studied by Gilad and myself. What does their (albeit sketchy) literacy mean in their lives, and what does it mean in terms of their storytelling? The Tunisian women asked to see what Schely-Newman would write about them. How did they respond? Did they offer a metacommentary on her metacommentary of their metacommentary?

All in all, Our Lives are but Stories is an accessible and interesting book and should make an excellent addition to reading lists of courses on women and culture, women and narrative, gender and the life cycle, Jews of Israel or of North Africa, and Jewish women.

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The scope of research devoted to the entrance of European Jews into the modern civic realm has expanded steadily in the last two decades. Historians have
turned their attention to communities formerly considered only marginally important because of their small size, their location at the periphery of Europe’s most significant political and cultural developments, or their failure to correspond to the models of emancipation and enlightenment derived from the historical experience of French and German Jews. This new direction in Jewish historical writing has generated an ever-increasing body of social–historical data and is marked by a growing emphasis on regional factors, particularly urban–rural differences, and a new appreciation for class and gender as categories of analysis. The result—a more highly nuanced picture of modernization—has firmly discredited the dominant Germanocentric perspective favored by previous generations of historians. Now, thanks to the publication of Lois Dubin’s outstanding book, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste*, our understanding of the forces that shaped modern Jewish society and culture has been advanced appreciably. Dubin has succeeded in producing a balanced reassessment of much of the conventional thinking about periodization, modernization, and the role of Haskalah and Emancipation.

Dubin’s study of the north Italian Jewish community of Trieste in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries rests on an exhaustive investigation of the political, socioeconomic, cultural, and intellectual realms. Its primary objective is to reconstruct the complex relationship between the state and the Jews. Dubin analyzes the efforts of the absolutist state to reform the Jews’ legal and political status and carefully demonstrates how these developments and the process of internal transformation, particularly with respect to communal institutions, cultural orientation, and religious behavior, were so crucially intertwined. Her second goal is to relate the foregoing to the larger context of modern Jewish history. Dubin places the unique story of Trieste within a broadly conceived comparative–analytical framework; in so doing, she has brought greater clarity and precision to the relationship between socioeconomic change and legal equality, and to the distinction between acculturation and ideological change.

Trieste offers a splendid case study of modernization. The Jewish community was formally constituted in 1746, although the ghetto had been established a half-century earlier. Its rapid population growth—by 1818 it had become the largest religious–ethnic minority in the city—coincided with the dramatic expansion of the Trieste economy. Encouraged to settle in Trieste to assist in the development of the free port, the Jews received economic privileges no different from those enjoyed by the city’s other residents. They were permitted to own real and movable property, and to be occupied freely in commerce, manufacturing, and artisanship. Roughly half of Trieste’s Jews were engaged in international commerce and finance, and the most successful Jewish merchants assumed a leading role in the city’s commercial firms.

The most fascinating aspect of Trieste, and ultimately its most instructive, was its multifaceted cultural and political identity. Politically, the northern Adriatic port city was under Habsburg control, but culturally it remained Italian, a duality that Dubin has approached with considerable perspicacity. By investigating the relationship between the royal authorities in Vienna and their representatives in Trieste, Dubin skillfully charts the main policy considerations in the absolutist state and, more importantly, the mechanics of policymaking throughout the regimes of
Maria Theresa, Joseph II, and Leopold II. Her analysis of Jewish efforts in 1779–1780 to reach the executive level of the Borsa dei Mercanti—the trade association that mediated between the merchants and the government—reveals the conflicting views of Viennese and Triestine authorities, concerns over the growing prominence of the Jewish commercial class among the city’s elite, and the limits of Vienna’s power. Vienna supported the Jewish argument that exclusion from the executive board violated the principle of equal opportunity so fundamental to the free port, and eventually Karl von Zinzendorff, the governor of Trieste, was persuaded that the Jews could not be deprived of this right, though the majority of Christian Borsa members objected. Dubin shows how this relatively small matter exemplified political differences between Vienna and Trieste, and local Jewish–Christians tensions as well.

On the basis of correspondence between government authorities and the Jewish communal leadership, Dubin has masterfully reconstructed the intensive deliberations concerning the attainment and maintenance of privileges contained in the Statute of 1771, which set the stage for Joseph II’s far-reaching toleration edicts. Her discussion of Joseph’s toleration policy toward the Jews is most impressive. In addition to providing a valuable comparison of the edicts issued separately for each part of the monarchy in the 1780s, she offers important insights into the three-way negotiations between the Trieste Jewish community, Zinzendorff, and the central authorities in Vienna, showing how each formulated its positions and how the local context demanded certain adjustments in the legislation. The Edict helped create a new climate of opinion that eventually enabled Triestine Jews to join the executive ranks of the Borsa, and, generally, confirmed that these economic rights verged on political power. These and other facets of the legal and economic standing of Triestine Jewry are all firmly grounded in extensive research in the government and community archives in Trieste and Vienna, and are consistently presented within the general socioeconomic and political context.

The foregoing advances, and the tensions they occasionally engendered, were characteristic of a type of community that Dubin has fittingly designated as a “port Jewry,” of which Amsterdam, Bordeaux, Hamburg, Livorno, and London represent additional examples. Shaped by state efforts to promote maritime commerce, such Jewish communities were valued for their contributions to the common good, and they were therefore not expected to submit to the process of radical transformation demanded in typical Ashkenazic settings. Owing to the religious and cultural diversity that was characteristic of port cities, the Jewish population encountered less hostility than elsewhere. The notion of economic utility, imbued with the moral dimension of virtue, made it possible for Jews to be included in the civic realm without undergoing political emancipation. One may legitimately ask whether conditions in Trieste and other port cities were so exceptional as to render their histories inapplicable to the experiences of the vast majority of Jews in Europe. While port Jewries enjoyed conditions that diverged from the modernization experienced by more mainstream Jewish communities, their distinct stories decisively expose the inadequacy of the dominant explanatory paradigm. In Dubin’s book this idea, though not new, receives its most thorough substantiation to date. But more importantly, her detailed analysis of the relationship of the state and
the Jewish community, and of the Jews’ response to their changing economic and political milieu, clarifies how the usual paradigms work under diverse circumstances, and thereby sheds light on the larger European picture.

By examining the Jewish community’s response to the cultural implications of economic change in late-eighteenth-century Trieste and to political developments in the Habsburg Empire, Dubin makes her most important contribution. Initially, she shows that the state had already displayed interest in the education of Trieste’s Jewish youth a decade before Joseph II issued the Edict of Toleration. Maria Theresa’s Statute of 1771 outlined provisions requiring the community to supervise the examination of teachers and students and to ensure that the youth study Italian and German; in 1776 attempts were made to extend normal schooling to Jews in Trieste and elsewhere. Seeing continuity between these tentative efforts and the subsequent establishment of the Jewish community’s own normal school in 1782, Dubin turns her attention to the relationship of the community to the Berlin Haskalah. While Trieste’s support for educational reformer N. H. Wessely is well known and has been amply documented, it has never been adequately assessed. Dubin is the first to subject the corpus of letters exchanged between communal leaders and Wessely, and especially the views of Rabbi Formiggini and his rabbinic colleagues, to an in-depth investigation that is informed by local and Habsburg politics. Her analysis reveals that although their support for the inclusion of general studies in the school curriculum was unwavering, the Trieste rabbis could not agree either to the attempt to delineate an autonomous realm of human knowledge as separate from Torah studies or to any effort that might diminish the primary status of the Torah. While their endorsement of the Haskalah was qualified, their defense of modern education acknowledged its undisputed economic and social utility, as well as its compatibility with the contemporary and historical experiences of Italian Jewry.

Dubin has convincingly demonstrated that although Triestine Jewry emerged as an exponent of Haskalah and was viewed in central Europe as the embodiment of its ideals, Wessely’s Trieste supporters were not maskilim in the conventional sense. Rather, “this was a case of convergence, not identity, and of mutually reinforcing but essentially independent trends” (p. 136). In Trieste, a different dynamic was at work. In contrast with the situation in Ashkenazic communities in middle Europe, cultural openness in Trieste was not a product of a rupture with tradition, but was continuous with the Italian ideal of the rabbi-poet-doctor that personified the much-revered synthesis of general and religious studies. Trieste’s positive self-image and affirmation of the Renaissance model, together with the process of acculturation that was endemic to all port Jewries, rendered the adoption of an ideology of cultural transformation unnecessary. With this portrayal of the Trieste Jewish community, Dubin has taken a middle position between historians who define modernization in ideological terms and those who see it as the functional equivalent of acculturation.

The culmination of Dubin’s efforts is her chapter on the Habsburg marriage reforms and the challenges they posed to religious and communal autonomy. To test the reaction of Trieste’s leadership to the stresses and strains of modernization, she reconstructs and analyzes two cases of individuals who contested Judaism’s
traditional laws of marriage, one involving a father who objected to the marriage of his daughter on the grounds that she was a minor according to Habsburg law, and the other relating to a request by a kohen and a divorcée to marry civilly. In the first case, the father tried to evade the Jewish community and Jewish law by petitioning the state to annul the marriage. Ruling that Jewish law could not override the civil law of the state, Vienna pressured the rabbi, Raffael Tedesco, to declare the marriage invalid. However, the rabbi’s unwillingness to comply with the state’s demand was strongly supported by the community’s lay leaders, and ultimately the father was forced, out of concern for his daughter’s future marriage prospects, to withdraw his objection to divorce. In the second case, the state similarly upheld the couple’s request for a civil marriage ceremony, against the strident opposition of communal leaders. Dubin’s painstaking description and discussion of these complex issues in Jewish law are first-rate, as is her analysis of what was at stake for the individuals concerned, the community, and the state.

With these detailed accounts, and the erudite explication that accompanies them, Dubin offers readers entrée into a world that is rarely seen from up close. An elegantly written work of mature and thorough scholarship, The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste represents a critically important contribution to understanding the multifaceted and multicolored interaction of the state and the Jewish community at the dawn of the modern era.

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In Beyond Auschwitz, Michael Morgan has in effect woven together two different kinds of narratives. The first narrative is utterly ordinary; thankfully, the second is utterly extraordinary.

In the ordinary narrative, Morgan traces American Jewish philosophical and theological responses to the Holocaust from 1945 to the early 1980s. While the bulk of the book treats the work of five post-Holocaust thinkers—Richard Rubenstein, Eliezer Berkovits, Irving Greenberg, Arthur Cohen, and Emil Fackenheim—Morgan insists on reading these figures in their postwar American Jewish context. Morgan begins by showing how the work of Hannah Arendt and the writings of Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi led Americans to be critical of universals and to open themselves to the uniqueness of the Shoah. He also shows how the vast majority of early postwar American Jewish theology, using Buber and Rosenzweig as aids in a spiritualist gaze upward, at first ignored the particular details of the Shoah, enveloping them into an abstract rhetoric of “crisis.” In this way, more than other accounts of post-Holocaust Jewish thought, Beyond Auschwitz is able to give the reader a sense of the extent to which post-Holocaust theology both appropriated and
interrupted the rhetoric of American Jewish thought in the 1940s and 1950s. But while this narrative is useful for its breadth and its ability to clarify the often difficult arguments of post-Holocaust theology, a reader who knows Morgan’s own acuity as a Jewish thinker may wonder what exactly is specifically philosophical in this book that would make it qualitatively different from a work of intellectual history.

The second narrative that Morgan has offered answers this question. In looking broadly at the history of American Jewish thought and culture during this time period, Morgan succeeds in verifying the argument of Emil Fackenheim about the relationship between thought and history. As early as the 1961 essay “Metaphysics and Historicity,” Fackenheim had used Hegelian and existentialist philosophy to argue that statements about that which transcends history are not invalidated by the doctrine of historicism. In showing that human existence is committed to both naturalism and idealism, Fackenheim warned of the pitfalls both of the thorough avoidance of history that we find in Buber and Rosenzweig and of the purely naturalist thought of Richard Rubenstein. Throughout the bulk of Beyond Auschwitz, the reader gets only hints that this second narrative is the fundamental one. Although Morgan states up front that his thesis is that “the novelty and significance of post-Holocaust Jewish thought concerns the relation between history and identity and not the particular theological results that these thinkers develop” (p. viii), the need to tell the ordinary narrative of post-Holocaust American Jewish thought gets somewhat in the way of this thesis. It is primarily in Morgan’s conclusion that we get a sense that the very existence of post-Holocaust Jewish thought and its struggle in thinking putatively timeless theological truths alongside the unique historical event of the Shoah is evidence for the dialectical return to history with which thinkers such as Andreas Huyssen and Richard Rorty have characterized postmodernity and its simultaneous rupture and continuity with the past.

This means that Morgan reads for the tension between transcendence and historicity throughout, in order to show that Fackenheim’s concerns are woven into the fabric of the American Jewish theological narrative. In the opening chapter on Hannah Arendt, Morgan brackets the issue of whether her analyses are correct or not. By turning to the 1960s debates about Eichmann in Jerusalem, Morgan shows (p. 26) that the importance of the work is that it “raised to consciousness a whole set of convictions about universal principles and the particularity of historical situation.” The chapter on early postwar American Jewish theology treats the appropriation of Buber and Rosenzweig as sources for the rise of the rubric of “covenant theology.” Although historically situated as a preliminary response to the Shoah, Morgan (p. 57f.) judges it unsatisfying because it was not dialectical enough. If the majority of religious Jews in the late 1940s and the 1950s were invested in the conviction that an individual’s identity in covenant can lead him or her to do and know the good, this only occluded the issues of human finitude and the human capacity for evil that Irving Kristol notably raised in his 1947 review of Milton Steinberg’s Basic Judaism. Finally, in the chapter on religious critics of post-Holocaust theology in the 1970s, Morgan deflates most of their dismissals of history by claiming that they, too, are historically situated by the rise of the New Left.

These chapters are the most successful in Beyond Auschwitz. In showing how the conversations in American Jewish theology are really conversations about the di-
alectical twists and turns of the relationship between revelation and history, the reader is prepared to go along with Morgan when Fackenheim himself is presented as the culmination and synthesis of post-Holocaust thought, in his expression of this dialectic leading to a post-Holocaust faith that always expresses itself in a “groping, troubled affirmation” (p. 195). And Morgan finds dialectical and historicist structures throughout the writings of Rubenstein, Berkovits, Greenberg, and Cohen. While this means that he is able to read them all with a generosity that is not always to be found in post-Holocaust thought, such generosity might appear to be grounded primarily in their potential to verify Fackenheim’s arguments. Despite their strengths, Rubenstein is too naturalist (p. 67) and voluntaristic (p. 107); Berkovits does not notice his own perspectivalism (p. 118); Greenberg’s Zionism is insufficiently theological (p. 135); and Cohen’s historicism is not quite radical enough (pp. 150–51). Morgan’s critique of Michael Wyschogrod is less compelling, mostly because it is primarily an assertion (p. 204) that Wyschogrod shows “a deep resistance to the historicity of Jewish existence and to its hermeneutical character.” Although Morgan might have pointed out more clearly that this assertion carries weight because the entire story that Morgan tells is an argument against Wyschogrod’s view, what is really called for in settling the debate between Wyschogrod and Fackenheim is a sustained analysis of the differing analyses of Heidegger found in Fackenheim’s To Mend The World and Wyschogrod’s The Body of Faith.

However, this is a minor cavil. Framing the story of American postwar theology as a story of the dialectic between revelation and history allows Morgan to offer a philosophical argument as well as a historical narrative. Because his argument is grounded in history, and not in technical readings of Hegel, Schelling, or Rosenzweig, it has a power that gives hope that its readers will learn what I believe to be its two primary lessons: First, the current popularity of Jewish spirituality is now the greatest vehicle by which American Jews forget what the Holocaust can teach about the historical dimension of our existence. Contemporary Jews, now “beyond Auschwitz,” make leaps of faith and have a spiritual confidence that neither the fact of the Holocaust, nor philosophy, nor especially the history of American Jews’ grappling with how to conceptualize Judaism after the Holocaust, can possibly justify. The second lesson comes from the decision to read Fackenheim as a postmodern thinker. For Morgan, while the Holocaust bids us to affirm objectivity, the content of this objectivity is always revisable and up for grabs (p. 217): “all traditional narratives of Jewish life and Jewish history must be reevaluated, for any one might turn out on reflection to be a tool of oppression or a medium of distortion.” In this broadly pragmatic shift—one that implies that readers can and should question even the Zionism and the fragmentary messianism that we find in To Mend The World—Morgan offers his readers a welcome path beyond the usual contours of Fackenheim’s thought.

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Comparative analysis, especially in the field of religious studies, is widely recognized as among the most difficult of intellectual tasks. How does one do justice to the complexity of both subjects? How does one set the terms of the comparison in a way that accurately captures both similarities and differences? How does one place those similarities and differences in a broader context so that their significance comes to the fore? And how does one present both halves of the comparison in a way that will be equally accessible to readers presumed to be familiar with only one or the other? These challenges are still more formidable when the subjects being compared are “Jewish bioethics” and “Catholic bioethics,” each of which draws on a long ethical tradition, encompasses a wide range of views, and continues to evolve.

Given the complexity of the task, it is especially gratifying to read Aaron Mackler’s comparative study of Jewish and Catholic bioethics. Mackler, a prominent Jewish ethicist teaching in a Catholic institution (Duquesne University), is ideally situated to undertake this project and he succeeds admirably. Among its many merits, this book is extremely well researched, clearly written, and, given the limitations of its scope, surprisingly comprehensive. At every point, Mackler demonstrates the breadth of his learning, his sensitivity to the spectrum of views within each tradition, and his willingness to draw carefully nuanced conclusions about both the (largely) shared values and the (partially) divergent views that characterize contemporary Jewish and Catholic bioethics.

The structure of the book is straightforward: an introduction devoted to shared values of the two traditions, two chapters on methodology in Catholic and Jewish ethics, comparative analyses of five key issues (euthanasia, end-of-life treatment, abortion, in vitro fertilization, and access to health care), plus a conclusion devoted to points of convergence and divergence between the traditions. Mackler’s treatment of access to health care and rationing is especially helpful, since these issues remain high on the public policy agenda yet often receive scant attention in the scholarly literature. The clarity of Mackler’s presentation, together with the very extensive bibliography and index, will make this book an ideal text for introductory courses in comparative religious ethics. Indeed, the only other roughly comparable volume would be Edmund Pellegrino and Alan Faden’s Jewish and Catholic Bioethics (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999), and that anthology offers a sampling of key essays, rather than a systematic and cohesive comparison of the two traditions.

Mackler’s analysis highlights those basic religious and moral values that Jewish and Catholic bioethicists share—concern for human dignity, the value of life, the imitation of God, love of neighbor, divine sovereignty and human stewardship of the earth, the value of healing, community, justice, and autonomy—while noting that these receive somewhat different emphases and interpretations among different thinkers within and across the traditions. Mackler also notes that several factors enter into the decision-making process for both Jewish and Catholic bioethicists (reason and experience, scripture and tradition, authoritative teach-
ing), while carefully delineating the characteristically divergent methods employed (mostly natural law and magisterial teaching for Catholics; mostly halakhah and tradition for Jews). Setting out matters in this way, Mackler is able to demonstrate that there is substantial overlap between the views of Jewish and Catholic bioethicists on many issues, though similar views may be justified in somewhat different terms. Moreover, the spectrum of views may overlap, though on some issues (e.g., abortion) Catholic thinkers tend to be more conservative while on others (e.g., euthanasia) Jewish thinkers are overall more conservative.

For all its merits, Mackler’s discussion would benefit from a somewhat sharper distinction between traditional and contemporary views of these issues. By moving rather seamlessly between classical thinkers (e.g., Maimonides or Aquinas) and contemporary writers (including both traditionalist and liberal ones), Mackler makes it harder for the reader to discern the radically different methodological assumptions that underlie many contemporary positions. In addition, Mackler overlooks the distinctive contributions of feminists to these discussions, which, though limited, merit special recognition. His overview of contemporary Jewish movements and their views also inexplicably overlooks Reconstructionism.

More significantly, Mackler might have deepened his analysis of these two traditions by focusing more explicitly on the theological categories that they share (creation, revelation, and redemption, perhaps) as well as those that figure more prominently in one tradition or the other (grace for Catholics; mitzvah for Jews). Mackler touches on these matters in his conclusion, but one senses that a more thorough treatment of these theological perspectives would help explain the traditions’ varying attitudes toward nature, technology and the complex dialectic between passive acceptance of God’s will for us and active attempts to alter our medical conditions. This might also have helped to explain, rather than merely summarize, the diverse views represented within each tradition.

But these shortcomings do not detract significantly from the value of the book. This is complex terrain indeed, and Mackler here proves himself a very conscientious and trustworthy guide. In providing us such a well-conceived and carefully researched introduction to this material, he enables us to appreciate both the ways in which these two religious traditions of bioethics complement one another and the ways in which both together can contribute to the broader societal discussion of these issues.

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Many of the pioneers and settlers who came to America held the Bible in their right hands and were strongly inspired by this “Good Book.” They believed
they had come to the “New Promised Land,” and consequently gave Biblical names to the new towns and villages, as well as to their children. It was, therefore, almost natural that the remote land in the east, known as the Holy Land, Palestine, the Promised Land, or The Land of Israel, had, and probably still has, a very special place in American culture and society.

Yet, being so far away, most Americans could not even conceive of making such a long, expensive, and dangerous journey. Hence the geographical image of the Holy Land was based upon indirect media such as maps, travelers’ books, paintings, models, photographs (especially stereographic ones), lectures, homilies, and other sorts of media. These image-creating media became highly important and influential in American society, and their story is told in this book.

The heart of the book is dedicated to several types of such image-making media, and therefore it is in fact a book about the people and organizations that produced them among Americans. It is a study of those promoters of images as agents of knowledge, ideas, and concepts. It describes and analyzes their operations and motivations, their manipulations and ideologies, their successes and failures, and their impact in creating the conceptual image, or, actually, various images, of the Holy Land within certain circles of American society.

The book tells the story of those people, some of them in great detail. It seems to me that this is its main virtue. The description of the large-scale model of Jerusalem at the St. Louis World’s Fair (1904) is extremely vivid and attractive. It is well told, depicting the atmosphere when Madame Lydia Mameroff von Finkelstein Mountford gave her biblical shows (pp. 56–59) and how the “Biblical strongman Samson died from gunshot wounds” (p. 66). The same is true for the details quoted from the letters of Charles Foster Kent, describing his travels in Palestine, which included what he ate and how many mosquito bites he suffered (p. 93ff.). Many other such incidents are described throughout the book.

The book is arranged in five chapters: The first tells the history of the Chautauqua institution in upstate New York, where a large park was built in the shape of a three-dimensional map of Palestine. This park played a central part in the famous educational activity that took place there. The second chapter describes the large-scale model of Jerusalem built in the St. Louis World’s Fair and contrasts it with the modern “New Holy Land” in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. The third chapter discusses the parlor tours where lectures and stereoscopic photographs were used in order to create a “real” geographic image of the Holy Land. The author analyzes in detail how this “real” image was, of course, manipulated by the photographers, editors, and lecturers to convey their own ideas and values.

The fourth chapter is entitled “Landscape and Democracy,” but its main focus is William Foxwell Albright and other members of the American School of Oriental Research. Here the author describes how “science,” that is, archaeology and Bible studies, were also used to promote values and sociopolitical positions. The fifth chapter is apparently about maps and the power of cartography in image making, but it is focused on the historical atlases of Coleman (1850) and Wright and Filson (1945). These two atlases were distributed in large numbers, and each of them was popular for many decades. As maps are believed by many to be “scien-
tific” and “objective” documents, these two atlases were powerful in promoting ideas and creating value-laden images of the Holy Land.

Although the book is very well written, and the stories of those many people and institutions, image-makers, map-makers, model-makers, scholars, theologians, entrepreneurs and travelers are fascinating, four shortcomings should be pointed out:

1. The book overlooks almost everything that is not American, and thus discusses the American arena omitting the larger context. Alas, the rediscovery of the Holy Land by western civilization, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was not limited to America. On the contrary, much of the important activity took place in Europe and in England. This overwhelming European activity also had a strong impact on the American activity in numerous ways.

2. Even within the American context, the book deals only with Protestant groups and institutions. However, in some of the Catholic Universities in the United States there were, and still are, important centers for Bible and Ancient Semitic languages. Moreover, in the same years that Albright and his followers were active in biblical archaeology, Nelson Glueck surveyed both sides of the Jordan and the Negev desert. Did he, and others, have no impact in creating and distributing alternative images of the Land of the Bible? Does black traditional music, especially spirituals like “Jordan river is deep and wide / Milk and honey on the other side” not reflect a geographic conceptual image of the “Promised Land”?

3. The book describes and analyzes several channels of image making like models, photography, cartography, archaeological and biblical studies, and so forth. However, it overlooks some other channels such as literature and visual arts. Mark Twain, certainly a different voice compared to Protestant romanticism, is mentioned only briefly, while Herman Melville, one of the famous American authors who traveled to Palestine, is not mentioned at all. The same is true for painting and lithography, which were common at the time, and had a considerable visual impact.

4. Finally, there are some important issues that are missing even if we accept the line of discussion chosen by the author. Among the models, the complicated model of the Temple Mount, built by C. Schick and bought by the Ashmolean Museum in Harvard in 1904, which was probably exhibited also in St. Louis, is not even mentioned. The same is true for the first American traveler to Palestine in

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4. H. Goren and R. Rubin, “Conrad Schick’s Models of Jerusalem and its Monuments,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 128 (1996): 103–124. There were also other models of Jerusalem that were on exhibit in the US.
the nineteenth century, John L. Stephens, who made some interesting discoveries\(^5\) and for American settlers in Palestine,\(^6\) in addition to other issues that could, and probably should, have been discussed in such a book.

In conclusion, discussion of the process and development of the image of the Holy Land in American society, and particularly the use of “surrogate travels,” is very interesting,\(^7\) especially in the American context where this concept is still strong and alive (as in EPCOT, in Disney World). This book would have been even better had it been more comprehensive.

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Jewish music study is a loosely unified field that brings together strands from several scholarly traditions. Researchers trained in historical musicology typically use document study, note analysis, and contemporary aesthetic writings to examine how questions of “Jewishness” manifest themselves in the works of selected composers. Ethnomusicologists frequently utilize ethnographic fieldwork methods developed for studying musical practices of Jewish communities within a broad cultural and symbolic system. Jewish music researchers in Israel commonly focus on comparative cultural projects intended to illuminate stylistic or song-based pathways of transmission from one age or culture to the next. Cultural theorists tend to situate music as a medium for negotiating the borders between Jews and other groups. And with the lay public in mind, specialists and nonspecialists alike have generated numerous popular textbooks claiming to cover “Jewish music.” Each of these disciplines asks different questions about the nature of sound within Jewish contexts; yet central to all is the question of how the sound it-

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self reflects concepts of Jewish life—providing researchers with a richly evocative common ground for substantive and interdisciplinary study.

In this review, I will look at books from three trajectories of Jewish music research: Schiller’s publication, centered in the methods of historical musicology, examines key Jewish-themed works of three major twentieth-century composers; Katz’s presentation of the letters of comparative musicologist Robert Lachmann provides insight into the state of ethnographic music research in pre-state Israel; and Edelman’s textbook—consciously aimed at a lay audience—aims to provide an introduction of the field.

Studying the music of self-identifying Jewish composers provides researchers with great challenges: What is significant about labeling these composers as Jewish in the first place? How do sound and identity correspond with each other? What can be said about these composers’ non-Jewish music? Perhaps the most significant pitfall is the inevitable attempt to translate written notes into a recipe for Jewishness (see Eric Werner’s The Sacred Bridge [1959] and volume one of Sholom Kalib’s The Musical Tradition of the Eastern European Synagogue [2002] among many others). Fortunately, David Schiller has managed to sidestep many of these issues in his careful and well-documented study Bloch, Schoenberg & Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music. Schiller, an Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia School of Music, uses the multifarious concept of assimilation as the unifying factor in his analyses of Ernest Bloch’s 1933 Sacred Service, Arnold Schoenberg’s 1946 A Survivor from Warsaw, and Leonard Bernstein’s 1963 Kaddish symphony. Fully aware of assimilation’s packed nature within twentieth-century American–Jewish discourse, he examines the meaning of each composer’s attempts to fit openly Jewish subject matter into what he terms “non-Jewish” musical forms (i.e., oratorio, cantata, and symphony, respectively). For each composer, he claims, this process partook of a different philosophical approach and Jewish/non-Jewish worldview. Although Schiller does not entirely fulfill his book’s promising premise, his work is the best I have yet read in seeking and framing questions of “Jewishness” in Western concert music.

From the outset, it is clear Schiller has done his research and developed solid analytical chops—two factors often lacking in studies of this sort. The thoroughness of his approach, combined with an engaging writing style, leads to some marvelously informed and well-documented discussions about each composer and his representative work. In addition, by intelligently utilizing a wide range of thinkers to center his study—from Sergio Della Pergola to Francois Lyotard for theoretical background, and Theodor Adorno, Kurt List, Andre Ungar and others for contemporary critical response—Schiller can engage in broader questions of Jewish identity and memory while creating a forum for discussion of Jewish western composition accessible to scholars outside the core of Jewish musicology.

The most successful and best-conceived chapter of the book focuses on Bloch’s Sacred Service. Schiller’s access to Bloch’s letters from the time he composed Sacred Service help shine new light on the composer’s religious outlook and philosophy, and provide several valuable and direct references to his compositional procedures for setting the service. Schiller then offers a strong sociomusical analysis of the piece, beautifully weaving together philosophical, cultural, musi-
cal, liturgical, and historical sources to provide fresh insights into the origins, importance, and impact of *Sacred Service*.

Schiller’s chapters on Schoenberg and Bernstein, while well constructed, fall short of the standard established by the Bloch chapter. This is most noticeable in the background Schiller provides for each composer. As opposed to Bloch’s revealing letters and deep complex of literature, the material Schiller provides on Schoenberg and Bernstein appears limited mainly to secondary and published primary materials. Schiller struggles to fill in Bernstein’s background in particular, often resorting to secondary works written decades after the fact in order to gauge his composition and religious philosophies. Though intelligently arranged, these sources simply cannot provide the same rich, convincing portrait afforded Bloch.

Schiller’s musical analyses provide for interesting and worthwhile reading; at the same time, they seem overly brief—perhaps due to the rarity with which these pieces have been analyzed in the past. The author’s tendency to emphasize one or two main points in each case is illuminating (particularly with the Schoenberg case, in which he convincingly notes the connection between the use of an augmented triadic figure and an underlying subtext of divinity) but leaves many unanswered questions, as well as a hunger for more detail and nuanced description. The Schoenberg and Bernstein chapters also rely heavily on twelve-tone musical analysis; although Schiller takes up such analytical challenge with aplomb, providing solid explanations and strong writing, those readers not acquainted with the twelve-tone system will find these passages opaque.

To conclude the book, Schiller curiously begins by juxtaposing a number of passages taken verbatim from earlier in the book. One can only think cynically that Schiller compiled the start of the conclusion for those who do not read the inner chapters; for someone who has read through the whole book, however, they feel like a jarring recap. Nonetheless, once through these pages, Schiller sails along to a brief but thought-provoking conclusion: to Bloch, Jewish music had a racial quality; to Schoenberg, it was intrinsically modern; and to Bernstein, it was by nature postmodern and disjointed. Schiller’s presentation clearly makes these ideas worthy of consideration, and has hopefully paved the way for others to continue scholarly discussion of this high caliber.

Contributing significantly to another strand of Jewish music research is Ruth Katz, Professor Emeritus of Musicology at Hebrew University. In her book *The Lachmann Problem*, Katz fills in one of the most significant lacunae in the story of Jewish music research (as well as the history of ethnomusicology): the tale of Robert Lachmann, comparative musicologist and founder of what is today the Hebrew University National Sound Archives. Lachmann has long been regarded as a significant but little-known figure in the Jewish music world. Editor of the first international journal of comparative musicology, author of the posthumous monograph *Jewish Cantillation and Song in the Isle of Djerba*, and well-regarded authority on Arabic music, Lachman died from a long illness in 1939, cutting short a blooming career and relegating him to the shadows of Jewish music history. *The Lachmann Problem* represents Katz’s valiant (and nearly hagiographic) attempt to return the man to his rightful place in Israeli and Jewish musicology.

Katz literally tells Lachmann’s story in dramatic form. After a compulsory
introduction providing an undistinguished background on the rise of Nazi Germany and the creation of Hebrew University, Katz launches into the Lachmann narrative by presenting three “acts” and an epilogue. In each act, she reprints what appear to be the full (translated) texts of most of Lachmann’s extant letters from his files at Hebrew University and The Jewish National and University Library, interspersed with comments meant to provide context. At times this technique works nicely, particularly once Lachmann begins to struggle for his archive’s financial existence at the unsympathetic hands of Hebrew University. Yet at its worst (particularly toward the end), the comments become overly adulatory and take away from the impact of the primary materials.

Most important, however, is that the letters concerning Lachmann tell their own story. Summarily dismissed as a librarian at the Prussian State Library in 1933 by the Nazi regime, Lachmann successfully applied for work at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Upon his arrival from Berlin, however, Lachmann met great frustration in establishing and maintaining his proposed Archive of Oriental Music. Although warmly endorsed by then Chancellor Judah L.Magnes, Lachmann ultimately received little funding from the University and was repeatedly refused full affiliation with the University proper. The letters illuminate his story in great detail, including the slow growth of Lachmann’s Palestinian recording project, Magnes’s consistent but finally fruitless support, and Hebrew University’s own hands-off (and, as intimated by Katz, passively hostile) attitude toward musical study in higher education. That Lachmann died before he could reach stability represents to Katz a tragedy, both for Lachmann and for the study of music in Israel.

Accompanying the main storyline are several other important document collections. An epilogue reprints Lachmann’s correspondence with American musicologists, including Charles Seeger and fellow expatriates Germans Curt Sachs and George Herzog. A series of appendices illuminate other chapters of Lachmann’s life and philosophy: important personal documents from Germany; letters to his parents describing the 1932 Cairo Conference on Arabic music; twelve radio talks on “Oriental Music,” complete with a CD of what Katz believes to be the original examples; and four “Lectures on Eastern Music” delivered to university students in the 1930s. Each of these additions provides new and welcome insight into Lachmann’s all-too-brief transplanted career, enriching our portrait of him and his work—and hopefully, in the process, rewriting Jewish musical history.

To say that Katz intends through her book to restore Lachmann to the consciousness of Jewish music researchers, however, would be an understatement. Rather, the dramatized style of presentation, the book’s separation into “acts,” and Katz’s repeated reference to Lachmann as a “hero” in her epilogue intimate a desire to elevate Lachmann to legendary status. Katz’s impetus to celebrate his story and achievements to this degree is curious, and seems unnecessary to this reader. Perhaps, in creating this volume, Katz also aims to dispel doubts of Lachmann’s legitimacy within a more local academic circle. In any case, we dissipate any further opposition to Lachmann’s status.

A third prominent strand of Jewish music literature comprises textbooks designed for the general public. These works, created with the confidence that Jewish music holds a broad popular appeal, have rarely been successful. Rather than
pointing out the challenges and nuances of the field, they tend to propound a mythology of Jewish music as a unified and “safe” narrative. Such remains the case with Marsha Bryan Edelman’s *Discovering Jewish Music*, a self-described general survey of Jewish music for nonspecialists with a particular focus on the twentieth century. Had Edelman limited herself to the last century (or even the last half century), this book might have emerged as a pleasant, light, and informative work based on personal knowledge and engagement, perhaps appropriate for synagogue adult education classes. Instead, however, Edelman attempts to cover the entire span of Jewish music history, with deeply flawed results.

To this reviewer, the ideal popular Jewish music text would present the current state of the field in accessible language. While Edelman’s language is certainly accessible, her presentation is far from current. Though it includes some classic sources, Edelman’s list of references seemingly ignores most of the last twenty years of Jewish music research, including major books and essays by Kay Kaufman Shelemay, Edwin Seroussi, Philip Bohlman, Mark Kligman, Joachim Braun, Eliyahu Schleifer, Geoffrey Goldberg, and Israel Adler (not to mention work by earlier Israeli musicologists Hanoch Avenary and Edith Gerson-Kiwi). Her tendency to rely selectively on older works, whose methods and conclusions are currently under much critical scrutiny, is puzzling and frustrating, and results in a book already well behind the academic curve.

Edelman’s lack of secondary sources is particularly noticeable in the book’s first three and one-half chapters, which span Jewish music from biblical times to the Enlightenment. She is clearly out of her element here, summarizing the first couple thousand years of Jewish music history through a limp web of anecdotal evidence, overreliance and undercontextualization of scriptural sources, and unsupported assertions. Subsequent chapters on the St. Petersburg folklore society and the Yiddish theater are better organized, but rely heavily on other sources (Albert Weisser’s 1954 *The Modern Renaissance of Jewish Music* in the former case, and Nahma Sandrow’s 1977 *Vagabond Stars* in the latter) to the point that some passages have become mere thinly veiled rewordings of their sources.

Edelman’s strongest chapters come at the end of the book, where she deals with more recent events. Here she is on surer footing, due perhaps to her personal involvement with the music she covers. Depth of understanding, as elsewhere in the book, is not the objective; rather, Edelman aims mainly to outline and illustrate significant movements, events, compositions, and artists within the context of American and Israeli Jewish history. And to her credit, she does not end with a “decline of Jewish music” lament often self-righteously intoned during discussions of modern Jewish music “trends” (see, for example, recent works by Sholom Kalib and Joseph Levine). Instead Edelman lets the material speak for itself, allowing the reader to revel in Jewish music’s continued richness and variety.

In her attempts to bring the reader into contact with the music she describes, Edelman includes over 160 notated musical examples, ranging from anonymous (and undocumented) chant patterns to samples of full piano and vocal scores. Sixty-five of these examples also appear as short audio segments on the accompanying CD. In one sense, notations and their musical samples are quite helpful for readers to experience the music themselves—a notoriously difficult feat for a print
publication. Yet while the audio examples are an attractive idea, they feel overly brief here (most are under a minute long), and seem better suited for accompanying a popular lecture than immersing a new reader. That many of Edelman’s sound sources are out of print, moreover, means most listeners will never be able to hear some of the music she presents in anything but a minimal context, which is unfortunate.

The realm of Jewish music history texts is a highly variable one, with several clamoring for attention but few if any that can currently address the needs of a dedicated course in the subject. Amnon Shiloah’s *Jewish Musical Traditions* (1992) is strong in its scholarship and cultural focus, but has a difficult writing style and tends to minimize the art music scene. Peter Gradenwitz’s 1996 *The Music of Israel* (2nd edition) has a considerable scholarly apparatus, but focuses mainly on Europe and Israel, eschews the role of the United States, and adheres to currently questionable concepts of what makes music “Jewish.” And Abraham Z. Idelsohn’s *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (1929), while still unsurpassed in its breadth and critical approach, can be unwieldy, does not cover the seventy-five years since its publication, and feels similarly dated. Within this context, Edelman’s book is welcome in concept, but disappointing in execution. May the day arrive soon when Jewish music pedagogy publications can again rise to reflect the frontline of academic scholarship.

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Itzik Gottesman’s *Defining the Yiddish Nation* will be indispensable to anyone interested in the collection of Jewish ethnographic materials. Focusing on the early twentieth century in Poland, Gottesman discusses the underlying ideology, the methodology, and the practice of folklore study.

Gottesman traces Jewish folklore studies back to the influence of J. G. Herder and nineteenth-century nationalism. He points out, however, that while the “folk” in other European cultures referred to the peasants, “the Jews had no peasantry” (p. xiii). Moreover, Yiddishists did not follow the model of building a future on the distant historical past; for the most part, they were not adherents of Zionism. They had more in common with the “dialect nationalism” of Shimon Dubnov, in whose view “the Jewish diaspora was the highest stage of development a nation could attain” (p. xvi). Instead of relying on a territorial approach, then, the Yiddish folklorists developed “a language-based nationalism” (p. xvii).

Many scholars of Judaic Studies are aware of the ethnographic expeditions by I. L. Peretz (1890) and S. Ansky (1911–14). Gottesman places these well-known instances in their broader cultural context, showing the wide range of work that
was done by folklorists based in Warsaw and Vilne. He also shows how Peretz’s neo-Hasidic tales and folktales—“a turning point in the interest in folklore by the Yiddish intelligentsia” (p. 106)—were part of a larger phenomenon.

The three main sections of *Defining the Yiddish Nation* are devoted to the collectors in Warsaw, the collectors in Vilne, and the rise of the YIVO Ethnographic Commission. The collection of folk songs takes a prominent place, with the Warsaw group representing more popular books such as those by Menakhem Kipnis, and the Vilne group developing more sophisticated scholarly methods.

Some episodes described by Gottesman make clear how foreign the ethnographic enterprise seemed to common people. Once when Shmuel Lehman was collecting, early in World War I, he:

heard a twelve-year-old girl sing a Yiddish love ballad and asked her to sing it for him. Since it was dark, she asked him inside a nearby apartment, which was not her home. When the landlady heard such words as “prison,” “shot,” and “bride and groom,” she chased them out. The girl led him to her home, in a broken-down building. By the time they arrived, a large crowd of grown-ups and children had gathered to see, “some kind of fool, a nut who has come to write down songs.” . . . When he finally was able to get up to leave, the whole gang mocked him with song and animal sounds. (p. 26)

Lehman admired the “folk” from a distance.

In one of the most interesting sections of the book, Gottesman portrays Shmuel Zaynvil Pipe, who was an active YIVO folklore collector in the 1930s. His views are summed up in this passage: “if I don’t collect, I feel as if something is missing . . . . I feel impelled to record. Why should a Yiddish word, or song or a game be lost when it can be saved?” (p. 147). Pipes also raised worthwhile methodological questions: Does folklore exist only among the lower classes? What makes a folk song “authentic”?

This loving account of ethnographers in Eastern Europe is tinged by melancholy. The section on Pipe, for example, ends:

As Pipe prepared to return to Sanok, in August 1939, he wrote [his brother] Oyzer of his plan to marry Nekhame Epshteyn that winter. Only two more letters arrived from Pipe via Romania to his brothers in Israel. He was killed in the German extermination camp of Zaslaw, near Sanok, in 1943, at the age of thirty-six. He had an opportunity to escape, but would not leave his parents (p. 157).

We are left with a sense of the tragic heroism of men and women who were collecting Jewish folklore while their own destruction was imminent.

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In the preface to *The Hope Fulfilled*, a history of the Zionist movement from the 1880s to 1948, Leslie Stein writes that, unlike other voluminous publications that have dealt with the history of modern Israel, he has attempted to provide a concise description of the events that led to the founding of the State of Israel. Focusing primarily on the political, military, and diplomatic aspects of Zionist history, this 275-page (sans glossary and index) volume is indeed a succinct yet thorough description that gives the student of Zionist history a sound introduction to the origins and history of the movement.

Stein’s book offers a rather traditional account of Zionist history. As other histories of Zionism have done before, Stein traces both the development of the *Yishuv* in Eretz Yisrael and the evolution of the Zionist movement as a political body. As well, he tends to follow the conventional periodization of Zionist history, beginning with what he describes as the first nationalist wave of Jewish immigration in 1882, and then dividing Zionist history according to the different *aliyot*—waves of Zionist immigration to Israel—and according to the changes in British attitudes vis-à-vis the Zionist project. What sets this book apart from other such histories of Zionism, in my mind, is the ease with which Stein’s narrative flows and the vividness with which he portrays certain critical events in the history of Zionism. When he describes the first Zionist congress, for example, he provides the reader with such a rich and lively picture of the clash of characters, ideologies, and backgrounds that the reader can clearly understand the carnival-like atmosphere that dominated the event.

Also in his preface, Stein claims that his main goal was to provide the reader with a balanced narrative (p. xi). It is unclear to me what a balanced historical narrative is or should be. Unlike an editorial newspaper page, a historical narrative is not supposed to mediate between conflicting sides of a political or ideological debate. Every choice that a historian makes—which events to describe, what sources to draw on—is politically and ideologically charged; and Stein’s book makes clear, not balanced, choices, which is what a historian is ultimately expected to do. Stein writes the history of Zionism from the perspective of modern Jewish history. He traces the emergence of the Zionist movement to events that shaped the lives of eastern-European Jews at the end of the nineteenth century and he describes the Zionist settlement of Israel from the point of view of the Jewish settlers. The Arab point of view in this narrative, however, is barely represented. (It is perfectly legitimate to write the history of Zionism from a predominantly Jewish perspective just as it is entirely acceptable to write the history of Palestinian nationalism from an Arab perspective).

While Stein’s choice of perspective is utterly reasonable, his choice of sources is somewhat problematic. This book, which is based solely on secondary sources, was written in 2003, but it might just as well have been written in the early 1980s. The controversies and debates launched by the emergence of the New Israeli Historians and the post-Zionist critics that have completely altered the contours of Zionist historiography over the past two decades are all but absent from Stein’s
book. It would be very difficult to justify the fact, for example, that after the studies of Benny Morris on the question of the Palestinian refugees (Morris’s work is not alluded to in this book), Stein only dedicates two paragraphs to this critical episode in the history of the formation of the State of Israel. Furthermore, even the more traditional Zionist historians today would be wary of the type of hagiographic prose that Stein resorts to at times, like when he assesses the veracity of the account of Yoseph Trumpeldor’s final words: “Whether Trumpeldor actually explicitly stated that ‘It is no matter; it is good to die for our country’ is of no consequence; all his living actions clearly indicated that that was, in fact, his credo” (p. 151).

The post-Zionist debates, whether one accepts the post-Zionist claims or rejects them (and there are more indications that contemporary Israeli historians are moving away from many of the post-Zionist assertions), have certainly broadened the scope of Zionist historiography. Traditionally almost limited to the realm of diplomatic/military history, Zionist historiography has in recent years come to encompass more social and cultural aspects. Regrettfully, social and cultural analyses of Zionist history are mostly absent from Stein’s account. For a student interested in a lucid and engaging, yet traditional, political and diplomatic account of the years leading to the creation of modern Israel, The Hope Fulfilled would be a good choice; it will not fulfill, however, the needs of a student interested in a more contemporary exposition of Zionist history that presents the Zionist experience from a more complex and multilayered vantage point.

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The books under review deal with two towns in Galicia, territory that was part of the Habsburg Empire from 1772 until 1918. The first town, Brzezany, is located today in the Ukraine; the second, Jaśliska, a small town, is now in Poland. Despite different starting points, both books attempt to solve the riddle of the past and present relations between Jews and their neighbors, relations that are noted for their ambivalence and complexity.

For Shimon Redlich, a historian and native of Brzezany, the return home is not merely part of a larger research project, but first and foremost an attempt to revive childhood memories that have long been suppressed. Redlich’s book is arranged chronologically, with each chapter commencing with personal and family memories, then continuing with a description of the historical events, and concluding with the testimonies of the inhabitants: Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians. In the

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relevant chapters, Redlich even makes an effort to include testimonies of Germans from the period of German occupation, with the help of documents from German archives. The story of Brzezany that emerges from the book is in fact the story of the complex system of relations between Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians, who lived side-by-side in the town. During the Habsburg period, which appears in the book merely as background, the members of the different groups lived in relative harmony, “together and apart,” according to the book’s title. But relations deteriorated after the period of the First World War, with the radicalization of the different nationalist movements and the frequent regime changes.

After the split-up of the Habsburg Empire and the reconstitution of an independent Poland, Brzezany became once again a Polish town. The Western Ukrainian Republic, which existed for eight months during 1918, fanned the hopes for national independence among the Brzezany Ukrainians, but these faded after the Ukrainians were defeated by the Poles. The failure left indelible marks that would turn to hope whenever Poland was in danger of being conquered. Redlich labels the period between 1919 and 1939, when Brzezany was under Polish political framework, “the good years.” The Jews who had undergone a process of Polish acculturation during the last years of the Habsburg regime attended Polish gymnasiums and maintained friendly relations with the Poles. Although there was Polish anti-Semitism during the period, most of the Jewish survivors whose testimony Redlich collected did not experience personal discrimination or resentment; on the contrary, they describe their childhood in glowing terms. Religious and communal life flourished, as well as Jewish politics and culture. The middle class dressed well, spent summers on holiday, and generally lived a comfortable life. There were still restrictions in higher education and anti-Semitic incidents, but the atmosphere was not of catastrophe, nor could people foresee what lay in store.

Relations between Ukrainians and Poles were not so bad at the outset of the Polish period, but tensions sharply rose after the death of Josef Pilsudsky and the radicalization of Polish nationalism. Brzezany’s Poles remember fondly the interwar period as one in which they constituted the city’s elite, obtained the most desirable positions, and, above all, felt pride at their national independence and the city’s Polishness.

Redlich was four years old when the Soviets occupied the city in 1931. The two years of Soviet rule (1939–41) witnessed a reversal of fortunes for the city’s main ethnic groups. The Poles were filled with fear, the Ukrainians rejoiced at the prospect of an improvement in status, and the Jews were ambivalent, with the elders apprehensive and the communist youth viewing the Soviet takeover as the realization of their dream. In the city all the Polish symbols were destroyed; the Soviet educational system replaced the Polish, the language of instruction changed, and Soviet parades filled the streets. At first, new opportunities in the universities and in employment led the Jews and Ukrainians to be optimistic about their futures. But Soviet surveillance, arrests, and exiles produced an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, and the Polish accusation of Jewish collaboration with the Soviets fanned insecurities.

With the German occupation of the town (1941–1944) matters went from bad to worse for the Jews. (Redlich survived the war hiding in a Ukrainian woman’s attic.) Traumatic memories of the Soviet occupation, bolstered by German accu-
sations of Jewish Bolshevism, led some Ukrainians to carry out pogroms against Jewish targets. Polish anti-Semitism was less prominent in this region than in others. The city itself became German, with German street names. Life was better under German than under Soviet rule for the Poles, many of whom were familiar with German language and culture from the period of Habsburg rule. The Ukrainians, for their part, viewed the Germans as liberators and hoped that Hitler would establish a free Ukraine.

Both Poles and Ukrainians relate in their testimonies that they were aware of the mass murders committed against the Jews and saddened by them, but they could do little since they were occupied in their own struggle for survival. The Ukrainian testimonies do not mention the pogroms; on the contrary, they emphasized the sympathy they felt for the Jews. Only around 2% of the Jewish population of Brzezany survived.

The next chapter describes the transition of East Galicia to Russian control (1944–1945). During this period the relations between Poles and Ukrainians deteriorated even further, and many Poles left. The demographics of East Galicia changed completely, with only 5% of the original inhabitants remaining.

In the last chapter of the book Redlich describes his return to Brzezany, which he views as part of the universal trend of returning to one’s birthplace. Poles and Ukrainians also return to visit in Brzezany, but every one returns to his own past and memories—to his own Brzezany. Redlich’s story is not only a historical tale and analysis of a quarter-century of the history of Brzezany, but an attempt to offer an explanation of the animosity between local residents who had lived side by side in the past. It appears that with the aid of the healing that he seeks and finds for himself, through the reconstruction of his childhood memories, he attempts to remove a bit of the great shadow of the Holocaust from the history of East Europeans and to show how, once, Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews lived together in relative harmony. He does not withhold his empathy from any group, as he describes how the fickle history of Brzezany turned its inhabitants into pawns of larger forces, despite the fact that he takes care to place the tragedy and loss that the Jews experienced in its unique place.

Rosa Lehman’s book is very different from Redlich’s. Her choice of Jaśliska does not stem from a personal or family connection, but from her declared aim of focusing on a small town as the subject of her research. Lehman claims that the study of Polish Jewry has been based hitherto upon their position in the large cities. She seeks to balance this picture by taking the story of one small town and treating it as a case study that will provide a broader perspective. Lehman employs what she calls “the framework of patron-client relations” to explain the complicated system of relations between Poles and Jews. She realizes, of course, that the framework relates historically only to the relations under feudalism, but she feels that it continued to influence through the creation of stereotypes. As a historian, I am not competent to pass judgment on the sociological or anthropological theories underlying Lehman’s decision, or on the benefit of employing theoretical constructs, at least from the reader’s point of view, to analyze fluctuating relations.

I am likewise not competent to evaluate the professional ethics of Lehman’s decision not to disclose to her Polish interviewees and translators that her main re-
search interest was the Jewish past of the town. Instead, she presented herself as a sociologist interested in the history of the town and its families (p. 17). She writes: “The reason why I did not make the research topic explicit was that I expected it to be a sensitive one . . . . All in all, I was positively surprised by the enthusiasm with which the informants engaged in storytelling about the Jewish past of their community.” Professional ethics aside, this lack of full disclosure strikes me as questionable at best.

Lehman uses a good deal of archival documentation and historical research to reconstruct the early history of the town as well as the beginning of Jewish settlement there. She cites statistical data, provides a map of Jewish residential areas, and weaves together testimonies and oral traditions. After this historical reconstruction she devotes several chapters to the system of Polish–Jewish relations, arranging them thematically, for example, “Spatial Integration,” “Economic Relations,” “The Social Boundary and the Image of the Jew,” and so forth. She examines the gap between the “facts” and the positive and negative stereotypes held by adults and youths, and she shows how these “facts” and stereotypes continued to persist side by side. Stereotypes served, in her opinion, to protect the ethnic boundaries between Jews and Poles.

An especially interesting chapter is devoted to the story of the conversion of a local Jewish woman to Catholicism, and includes an interview with the convert and her daughter. Although at first glance in this case it appears that the lines between Jews and Poles were blurred, Lehman considers the fact that these women continued to be called “converts” a sign that the ethnic boundaries were still intact, despite everything.

Another chapter is devoted to the destruction of the Jewish community not only during the German period but also during the communist and post-communist periods, as well. As for guilt feelings and the acceptance of responsibility for at least some of the horrors of the Holocaust, Lehman claims, on the basis of studies that she cites, that responsibility is understood differently in the West than in Poland (p. 184): Whereas in the West everybody bears responsibility for what happened to the Jews of Europe, in Poland moral guilt requires a sense of direct, personal involvement. The claim seems rather strange to me.

There are several factual errors; for example, on page 97 we are informed that during the Austrian period “education was not compulsory and the official language was German” whereas in fact education had been compulsory de jure since 1869, and Polish was an official language in Galicia since the Ausgleich of 1867. On pages 32 and 33, the first partition of Poland is said to have taken place in 1773, but in footnote 20 of the same chapter the correct date is given—1772.

To sum up: Lehman succeeds in convincing the reader of the ambivalent nature of the relations between Jews and Poles. But her introduction of sociological and anthropological constructs places an unnecessary burden on the reader.

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Think of the intensity and notoriety of Sylvia Plath in the English-speaking world, and multiply it several times: that is Yona Wallach for the Hebrew-speaking world today. The most passionate and flamboyant figure in postwar literary Israel, Wallach was born on a small farming village in 1944, lived there most of her life until her death of breast cancer in 1985, and after her death has become a cultural legend. In life Wallach experimented with sex, drugs, and madness (she checked herself into a mental hospital in 1964 and remained for three months, deliberately exploring what the subconscious yielded), was a compelling live performer of her poems, and was typically surrounded by worshipful younger writers. In her art she was yet more experimental. Her poetry combines mysticism, sexuality, an ecstatic love of nature and a correspondingly powerful mistrust of society and its conventions, a fascination with language and the breakdown of language, an insistence on the validity of freedom and will. Steeped in biblical allusions, mythology, fairy tales, and kabbalistic imagery, she often twists and turns her sources with playful or violent irony. Her lexicon swerves through extremes of exaltation and crudeness. Her verse sometimes is traditionally rhymed, more often unpredictably and jazzily ragged, her imagery is often surreal, her narratives elliptic, her syntax fractured—yet thrillingly readable.

While Zafrira Lidovsky Cohen’s bibliography lists numerous reviews and essays on Wallach’s work, and a best-selling biography, hers is only the second full-length book on the poet. Unlike Lily Rattok’s more exclusively feminist study, Angel of Fire, Cohen casts a wide net. Contextualizing the poet in terms of the waves of modern Hebrew poetry since Bialik, she gives due weight to Wallach’s female forebears, especially Dalia Ravikovich and Dalia Herz, and to the themes of female struggle and sexual war that form a major thread of Wallach’s writing. But she also tells us that Wallach was ravished by Walt Whitman’s expansive creative energy. Ultimately, she does not see Wallach as a poet of victimization but as a poet of triumphant self-exploration. Again, although her study makes massive use of postmodern literary theory, Cohen argues that Wallach rejected the postmodern view of language as merely socially constructed, trapping us in “petrified meanings” (p 41). For Wallach, language is potentially sacred, issuing from the depths of the unconscious, which in an early poem “unfolds like a fan” (“The Unconscious Unfolds,” quoted on p. 85). In one of her last collections, Wallach writes, “Let the words act in you/let them be free/they will enter you inside/making forms ... because they are nature and not an invention/and not a discovery for they are yes nature” (“Let the words,” quoted pp. 36–37). That words are always “pregnant with meaning” for Wallach, “is never in doubt,” Cohen declares. Cohen rightly claims that Wallach’s poetry is layered and often duplicitous in its meanings, showing in many cases how surface sense becomes inverted when we pay attention to the allusions. In “Cornelia,” for example, a girl seems to be passively exploited by the devil who makes her “pick nettles” and then by “men” who “did to her” because of her “nettle rash.” But Cohen points out that Cornelia’s name contains the root for the Hebrew krn, “radiate,” used of Moses when he descend-
ed Sinai, and alludes as well to the Greek myth of Core, who became queen of Hades. Citing the one use of “nettles” in the Bible, Isaiah 55:13, “instead of the nettle shall the myrtle tree come up,” Cohen argues convincingly that we can see this poem as one that celebrates Cornelia’s sexuality and mocks both devil and “men.”

In another poem, “Cecilia,” Cohen finds allusions to multiple biblical and talmudic sources. The ecstatic and frightening nocturnal vision of “And We Were Like Lunatics” is both filled with allusions to prophecy and clairvoyance and an account of the discovery of a divine self within. Wallach’s famously provocative and often violent erotic fantasies, like “When You Come to Sleep With Me Like God” and “Tefilim,” are at the same time meditations on politics, on spirituality, and on the possibilities of “authentic existence” beyond the constraints of biology. Cohen’s close-reading strategies are a powerful aid for anyone who hopes to probe the complexity of Yona Wallach’s work. Even where one disagrees with specific interpretations, Cohen forces the reader to think beyond the obvious. The method works less well with Wallach’s late poetry, in which the poet abandoned dramatic situations and indulged herself in ambitiously philosophical streams of consciousness that seem to defy coherent analysis. Many of these poems are simply too long for close reading. But Cohen is surely right in her general claim that however nihilistic the poems may seem at first glance, their actual aim is “to destroy and recreate, wreck and establish, annihilate and reconstruct” a “transcendent reality” (p. 219). Any future critic of Yona Wallach will have to reckon with this strongly argued book.

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