
The purpose of Wright’s study is to trace “the evolution of the depictions of Baruch ben Neriah . . . from the biblical materials through the early Jewish and Christian texts and traditions that either mention Baruch or were allegedly written by him” (xi). The book succeeds admirably. In three main chapters, Wright collects and analyzes most of the material about Baruch from the first mention of him in Jeremiah as the prophet’s scribal assistant to works as late as 3 Baruch that picture him as a recipient of apocalyptic visions. A fourth chapter contains traditions about Baruch in Jewish, Christian, and Muslim sources into the Middle Ages.

Wright argues that different communities intentionally molded the persona of Baruch to fit their images of an ideal leader. His chapter titles set out a gradual transformation of the figure of Baruch from “The Scribe” (Chap. 1) to “The Sage” (Chap. 2) to “The Apocalyptic Seer” (Chap. 3). So, for example, one of the earliest interpretations of (at least one form of) the book of Jeremiah, the Greek translation in the Septuagint, makes Baruch the prophetic successor of Jeremiah, an idea that is at best implicit in the Masoretic text. This elevation of Baruch from scribal assistant to prophetic successor “provides at least part of the reason for the increasing prominence of Baruch in later Jewish and Christian texts” (37).

Wright successfully shows that the developments in the character of Baruch are essentially grounded in the biblical accounts, but as the idea of what makes a scribe or prophet changes, Baruch gets constructed along those lines. Thus, the *Book of Baruch*, written somewhere in the late second century BCE to the first century CE, expands the protagonist’s role as a scribe specializing in writing to that of a scribe who is also a sage or wisdom teacher, a position most notably embodied in the Jerusalemite scribe and wisdom teacher, Jesus ben Sira. As a sage, Baruch gives wisdom teaching, and the book that bears his name includes a poem praising Wisdom (3:9–4:4) in which access to God’s wisdom comes only through obedience to the Mosaic Torah. Along similar lines, Baruch’s role as Jeremiah’s prophetic successor leads to the composition of works like 2 Baruch in which he receives revelations from God providing him access to matters otherwise unknowable to ordinary human beings. In each of these cases, Wright argues that these developments in the persona of Baruch reflect community interests and needs. So, Baruch the sage reflects the growing importance of the scribe-sage as a community leader in Second Temple Jewish society, and Baruch the seer provides the explanations and comfort for the suffering of the Jewish people in the wake of the destruction of the Temple by the Romans.

While Wright’s study reveals the contours of the picture of Baruch as it develops over time, the way he structures the book highlights the complicated nature
of identifying specific social positions or roles such as sage or seer or scribe in Second Temple Jewish society. In many cases these roles overlap, and it is difficult to separate them as distinct positions as Wright does in his book. Indeed, Wright frequently has to refer in one place to a role he has discussed somewhere else. For example, he notes in Chapter 3 that the Book of Baruch portrays Baruch as following in the footsteps of Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Ezra when he gathers the people to hear the “word of the Lord.” In this way he speaks with a prophetic voice, and thus, the sage also acts as prophet (which he discusses in Chap. 2), a role that Ben Sira also adopts (see Sirach 24). In the same chapter, Wright discusses the Paraleipomena of Jeremiah in which Baruch receives angelic revelations about the fate of Jerusalem (the subject of Chap. 4). In Chapter 4, Wright analyzes 2 Baruch, which often portrays Baruch as an inspired interpreter of Torah, a function more characteristic of the scribe-sage than of the recipient of apocalyptic visions. Wright is certainly aware of these complications, and I suspect that because the book is intended for a general rather than for a scholarly audience Wright made each chapter focus on a single ideal type.

One final issue further underscores the complex relationships between the various roles that Baruch plays in the traditions about him. Wright notes at the very beginning of the book that Baruch may very well have come from a family of priests. In a number of places Wright comments on the intercessory role that Baruch plays. In one remarkable passage in 2 Baruch, Baruch leaves the people to go to the ruined Temple in Jerusalem to get further information from God. He says to them, “God forbid that I should forsake you or leave you. I am going alone to the Holy of Holies so that I may ask from the Holy One on your and Zion’s behalf if I may be enlightened some more, and afterward I will return to you” (82). By going to the Holy of Holies alone—essentially to act as an intermediary between God and the people—Baruch takes on a high priestly role. Yet, Wright does not concentrate anywhere on Baruch’s priestly or intercessory role, although he mentions it often.

Overall, however, Wright pulls together and synthesizes a large quantity of material. He is to be commended for bringing such widely diverse traditions into a study that is readily accessible to the general reader. Scholars often work in a world where they are almost completely concerned with communicating the results of their investigations to other scholars. More and more, though, scholars are looking to find avenues for bringing their work to the continually growing non-specialist audience that is interested in ancient Judaism and Christianity. One of the strengths of this book is that specialists and interested nonspecialists alike will find it engaging and informative.

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Genocide, a neologism coined during World War II and now enshrined in international law, reflects an ancestral phenomenon as old as human history, if not older. It is a secularized version of what our predecessors understood by holy war, just war, and jihad as divine sanctions of murder and mayhem. The twentieth century anachronistically has applied the term to the Armenian massacres of World War I, and the United Nations today struggles how not to apply its definition to similar actions such as the tragic events in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Sudan, let alone threats of mass terrorist murder by a bevy of religious killers. While our contemporary market is nearly saturated with books on the rebirth of jihad in its current terrorist manifestation, and a number of studies have examined the biblical antecedents of genocide, Louis Feldman offers a unique perspective on several ancient rereadings of a revered text that can be read as potentially genocidal.

Feldman examines three first-century Jewish texts—Philo’s oeuvre, Pseudo-Philo’s Liber Antiquitorum Biblicarum (LAB), and the works of Josephus Flavius—none of which paradoxically influenced Jews directly for the next fifteen centuries on the question of the commandment to destroy Amalek and other similar biblical texts that describe or advocate mass murder. But “Remember Amalek!” is only the surface commandment in this discussion. Feldman identifies a number of other cases of mass murder in the biblical corpus beginning with the story of Noah, a moralized version of the Flood story that permeated the ancient Near East. Sodom and Gomorrah, too, represented an ethical interpretation of the total destruction of the inhabitants of these two cities. More selected mass murders included the slaying of the first-born Egyptians—including the animals, which raises interesting theological and philosophical questions. Philo offers a sophistic and dismissive response to the question why animals lacking free will were also killed. Other incidents, such as the commandment to exterminate the seven invading (archaeology) or resident (biblical) peoples of Canaan, the slaying of the Hivites of Shekhem, the annihilation of the subjects of Sihon and Og, and the ruthless sack of Jericho. Within the Israelite family there is the problem of the priests of Nob whom David slew. (No discussion of the near extermination of the tribe of Benjamin is found however.) All of these questions had to be dealt with by analysis or by omission among the three authors. The last major ethical question is the story of Pinhas (Feldman follows the Latin LAB and calls him Phinehas), whom God praises for his zealously, clearly an embarrassment to Josephus, who witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem as a result of zealous insurgents who cited Pinhas as their icon.

These three corpora are usually designated as “rewritten Bible” and hence constitute a precious insight into the ways that first-century Jews in the face of Roman power, whether wary of it as in the case of Philo or in fear of it as in the case of LAB and Josephus, adjusted their inherited sacred texts—still pre-Tanakh—to the realities of the Roman Imperium. Hence they danced around the evolving equation of Esau/Edom with Rome, although more could have been said by the author.
on this enigmatic point. The importance of these three texts to contemporary Jewish scholarship obscures their recent import. Until the nineteenth century, few Jews were aware of them, let alone studied and commented on them. Except for Sefer Yosippon, in which appear the names of Philo (called Yedidyah) and Josephus (known as Joseph ben Gurion ha-Cohen), their memory would have been lost completely from the Hebrew record. Hence Feldman’s careful and comprehensive analysis of these three texts is an important contribution to our ongoing interest in these individuals and their corpus of interpretations.

Philo the philosopher was primarily interested in applying the middle platonic methodology of allegory to rewrite ancient texts to the contemporary taste. Just as his sophist and philosophical colleagues were careful to sublimate the violence of their sacred texts (e.g., Homer’s two epics), so, too, Philo rewrote the biblical stories occasionally ignoring the more problematic examples. Josephus also had to make an apologetic representation of the Bible as well as the recent history of the Jews in light of his privileged status as an honored guest in the emperor’s villa. His continued rewriting of his wartime career indicates how deep was the antagonism to his position among Jews subject to the Roman Imperium. His interpretation of the question of genocide in the texts bears the interesting and serious comparison that Feldman provides. Pseudo-Philo, an enigmatic figure extant only in a (perhaps fourth-century) Latin translation of the Greek, which appears to be based on a first-century Hebrew original, is a pious God-fearing Jew who has few difficulties with such texts that appear to him to be justifiable punishments by God who was prone to burn off the gloss of iniquity from his creation.

Feldman’s detailed analysis and description of their attitudes towards the texts of destruction in the Scriptures adumbrates later discussions by the rabbis about similar instances elsewhere in Scripture (none of the three, for example, touch on the problem at the end of the Book of Esther despite its relationship to Amalek). And following the rabbinical discussions are the modern secular discussions by scholars and others about the nature of genocide traditions and the role of sacred scriptures in their justification and development. Unfortunately, genocide has been one of the central consequences of modern nationalism occasionally justified by resort to scriptural justification in the mix of authorities that constitute the transition from a religious society to a secular one. The transition of Jewish society in the first century from an independent power to a subdued minority may shed some light on such transitional shifts and allow for some useful observations and perhaps remedies to the chronic chaos contemporaneously designated under the rubric of genocide.

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David Noy has labored in the past decade to update J. B. Frey’s *Corpus inscriptionum iudaicarum* (vol. 1 [Rome 1936; revised by B. Lifshitz, New York, 1975]; vol. 2 [Rome, 1952]). He has already produced two volumes on the North Mediterranean (the Balkans and southern Italy, 1993, and Rome, 1995) and another for Greco-Roman Egypt (with William Horbury, 1992).

Noy offers in this volume (No. III of the *IJO*) the Jewish Inscriptions of Syria and Cyprus, completing a project initiated by Hanswulf Bloedhorn for the *Karte B VI 18* of the Tübingen *Atlas des Vorderer Orients*. Earlier volumes of *IJO* include (1) Eastern Europe and (2) North of Syria, that is, Kleinasien, edited by Walter Ameling. These studies are a welcome tool to scholars and students. When completed, Noy’s corpus will be a basic reference text for research into Jewish settlement and communal structure as well as epigraphy. In the meantime the *Bulletin of Judeo-Greek Studies* provides biannual updates on bibliography and occasionally publishes new inscriptions.

As with earlier volumes, this one has a cutoff date of 700 CE. (Hence his 1993 volume excludes the Hebrew epitaphs of Southern Italy, and scholars will have to search out the seminal studies of Cesare Colafemmina for these.) The geographical range includes the Roman province of Syria and Mesopotamia (as far east as Dura-Europus) in the second and third centuries, excluding those sites within the borders of Modern Israel, although one may find Eretz Yisrael inscriptions in the corpus (e.g., Syr 5, p. 6, and the relevant epigraphy of Beth Shearim) and west to Cyprus. The volume throws interesting light on some of the best-known centers of Jewish life in Syria.

Scholars familiar with Noy’s previous volumes are aware of his thoroughness: all inscriptions in Hebrew, with Jewish symbols or terminology, or names whose presence indicates a synagogue or a Jewish graveyard, or pertaining to Samaritans—or any part of above—is included by definition. Other languages include Greek, Aramaic, local Semitic dialects, and Persian. Spurious or doubtful epitaphs are in appendices. Hence we can be confident for the nonce that all the basic texts are included in the volume, thus superseding other collections with varying criteria for inclusion, that is, *CIJ*, and L. Roth-Gerson’s (Hebrew) collection of Greek inscriptions from Syria (Jerusalem, 2001).

A few comments and observations about the texts: in general, the argument based on the Jewishness of a name raises the question of Jewish assimilation. Jews are notorious for adopting names of the dominant culture—even if theophoric or religiously identified: for example, Eshbaal, Hyrcanus, Isidore, Peter, Paul; hence one should be wary of assuming a priori the opposite in individual cases (e.g., p. 4).

Syr 27: *pino* means “I drink” rather than “I am hungry” while the reverse reads *ετηκεν* (rather than the editor’s *ἐτηχεν*), possibly from *τηκω* “I pine”, which gives a possible reading of “Lord, help Salome, whom Ester [Ἀστήρ]
“pined for” (rather than “whom Ester bore). The reading of ACΘHP in Syr6 is not strong enough to assume a misspelling in Syr27. The three vertical I’s on the obverse remain a mystery. The ibis (?) and the snake recall Josephus’s midrash on Moses and the Ethiopians.

Syr 30: Can Sambati . . . be a female archon? Greek usually writes B as “MP”; here the M closes a syllable making the B emphatic rather than a V [Hence from Shabbat?]. The date reads 30 March 416, not 316.
Syr 35 line 2: The aleph looks like a ligature for ש while line 3 illustrates the difficulty of Hebrew epigraphy.

Syr 40 recalls the late antique “Synagogue of the Hebrews” in Corinth.
Syr 50 notes that three generations in Palmyra carry the same name, Samuel.
Syr 51 from Palmyra remembers the “only banker recorded in Antiquity”.
P. 116 notes that Antioch preserves only one clearly Jewish inscription.
Syr 73: Unfortunately there is no picture of the menorah.
Syr 75: Symbol 2 on p. 120 looks like a line drawing of a rosette.
Syr 76 is an interesting amulet from Aleppo now in Jerusalem.
Syr 77 parallels the well-known medallion in the Jewish Museum of London. A picture of both in tandem would be useful.
Syr 81: אם is clearly one word; Jastrow has sub עב emphatic עב [engraving].
Zigzag line above letters begs for a picture showing the context.
Syr 82 and Syr 83: More letters can be read on these graffiti.
Syr 88: Ἄρσαχος is known from Josephus as the king of the Parthians. Perhaps we can read “Both Abram of Arsaces and Silas of Salmon helped”.
Syr 104: ᾲδην transliterates Greek Αστήρ.
Syr 105: Ἁλίθη transliterates Greek Ἂλιθιά.

The Dura graffiti and inscriptions provide grist for speculation as summarized by Noy and indicates the necessity for reader caution.

Cyp 2 is printed backwards. The menorah style is similar to Greece and Southern Italy eighth to eleventh centuries.

Cyp 3: The translation of τὸ πᾶν ἐργὸν τῆς Ἐβραϊκῆς (hedera) as “the whole building of the Hebrew (community?)” is debatable. ἐργὸν means “work” while Ἐβραϊκῆ is the standard designation for the Jewish Quarter in Byzantium. The inscription may read as: “Yose, presbyter, son of Synecius, renovated all the work of the Jewish Quarter.” The suggested (hedera) and commentary is superfluous. The verb in plural, if not a mistake (unacceptable to a literate presbyter), suggests that both father and son renovated the quarter.

Cyp 4: It is a little premature to say that “it [Kition] is the origin of the Hebrew term Kittim”. Most scholars, however, follow Josephus who contributes this etymological midrash (Antiquities I, 128).

The preceding comments do not detract from the thankless labor that the editor, his colleagues, and his predecessors have exerted to recover and present these valuable shreds of evidence. The volume’s seventeen pages of bibliography and eighteen pages of indices make this a user-friendly reference volume. Noy de-
serves best wishes for continued strength to complete the presentation and discussion of all ancient Jewish inscriptions.

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In the present study, Hindy Najman addresses two fundamental aspects related to Second Temple Jewish literature: pseudepigrapha and the rewritten Bible. Pseudepigrapha as a literary genre signifies texts which claim as their author some privileged individual from the past. In reality, however, the attribution of authorship to some ancient figure masks the present-day composition of the text. The term rewritten Bible, in its broadest use, refers to the interpretive reworking of the scriptural text and story through such means as expansion, deletion, harmonization, and conflation. The final product retains the narrative sequence of the scriptural account though in a significantly modified form. Both of these literary techniques seemingly have at their base a manipulation and subversion of the integrity of the scriptural story and text. Pseudepigrapha asserts for a latter day author the authority and prestige of an ancient figure; rewritten Bible presents itself as a new and improved scripture.

Najman’s study sets out to explore the nature of the relationship between the older text and the current reworked version. Is the latter intended to replace and supersede the former, deliberately passed off as an ancient text in order to attain authority for the current composition? (2–3). Indeed, most contemporary scholarly approaches assume that the anonymous authors obscured their own contributions “to secure for new myths or laws an authority that they would not otherwise possess” (4). However, as Najman observes, much of our reading of ancient texts is conditioned by modern conceptions of authorship and text production. She argues that we must inquire how the ancient writers who hid their labors behind pseudepigraphic ciphers or “rewritten” narratives conceived of their own role in the creation and continued production of scriptural writings (10). Namely, what do the texts themselves reveal about their compositional intentions and the relationship between the reworked text and its scriptural base?

Najman focuses her study on a restricted corpus of literature—those that center on the figure of Moses. Here she has in mind works that assume for themselves Mosaic authorship (Deuteronomy and Jubilees) and those in which Moses is portrayed as crucial to the text production (the Temple Scroll and the relevant sections of Philo discussed). Deuteronomy, itself an elaboration of other parts of the Torah, is the earliest text to assume for itself Mosaic authorship. Ascription of
Mosaic authority and authorship continues in the exilic and postexilic periods and is most apparent in Moses’ elevated status in Second Temple texts. In light of the questions discussed above, should one see a work such as *Jubilees* as a “fraudulent” attempt to subvert and usurp the authority of the Torah? All the more so, is Deuteronomy the “pious fraud” that early source critics assumed it to be?

Drawing on the insights of Michael Foucault, Najman suggests that the Mosaic texts should best be understood as an “example of discourses that are inextricably linked to their founders” (12). In such discourses, later authors claim to possess the authentic understanding of the founder. In ancient societies, ascribing one’s work to the founder provided the most effective way of authenticating one’s own understanding. Najman cites the self-reflective remarks of Iamblichus and Tertullian to this effect (12–13). For Najman, Mosaic Discourse seeks “to rework an earlier text in a way that one claims to be an authentic expression of the law already accepted as authoritatively Mosaic” (13). Thus, ascribing a contemporary law or ideology to Moses is not a subversive appropriation of Mosaic authority. Rather, as a participant in an ongoing Mosaic Discourse, the author is asserting that the present text is in accord with the authentic teachings of Moses.

What qualifies a text as a participant in this Mosaic Discourse? Najman identifies four features that must be present, or somehow alternatively represented, for a text to be classified as a contributor to ongoing Mosaic Discourse (16–17): (1) the new text assumes the authority associated with the earlier reworked and expanded tradition; (2) the new text presumes a status as Torah; (3) the new text sees itself as a re-presentation of the revelation at Sinai; (4) the new text is ascribed to Moses either as the author or as a significant figure.

With this model, Najman examines Deuteronomy, *Jubilees*, the Temple Scroll, and the portions of Philo that treat Moses to determine the nature of their participation in this ongoing Mosaic Discourse. Deuteronomy represents the first attempt to engage in this Mosaic Discourse; it, in turn, provides the model for all later participants. Likewise, Najman argues that *Jubilees* and the Temple Scroll, though presented as pseudepigraphic rewritten Bible, are not intended to replace earlier Mosaic traditions. Rather, as participants in the Second Temple period Mosaic Discourse, they supplement earlier Mosaic traditions. In doing so, they claim to possess the correct interpretation and understanding of earlier Mosaic traditions, namely the Torah. Najman also places Philo as a participant in Mosaic Discourse, though admittedly in a dramatically different fashion than either *Jubilees* or the Temple Scroll. Like *Jubilees* and the Temple Scroll, Philo sees himself as “an inspired interpreter, initiated by Moses,” whose own interpretations are “copies of Mosaic originals” (107). Though other aspects of the Mosaic Discourse model are not present, this is enough to mark Philo as a participant in the Mosaic Discourse of the Second Temple period.

Najman has presented a provocative thesis. Based on the model developed, Najman demonstrates the existence of an ongoing Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism. It remains to be seen whether such a model can successfully be applied to other types of literature and the existence of other sustained discourses can be established. In doing so, we must caution against typological definitions that span across broad corpora of literature. The employment of pseudepigrapha
and the practice of rewritten Bible need not be universal through time and space. Nonetheless, Najman’s finding have set the stage for a rethinking of commonly held assumptions about pseudepigrapha, rewritten Bible, and the general categories of Second Temple Jewish literature.

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Chapter 1 introduces Jacobs’ methodology. He summarizes the main critical approaches to Jerusalem as a Christian Holy Land in the fourth to the sixth centuries, and outlines the purpose and usefulness of postcolonial criticism as applied to the Christian writings and geography. The book is laid out thematically and at times in sequence, reflecting the central premise of the book, that “the colonizer and colonized cannot remain fixed binary subjects in the perpetually shifting contest of power and identity” (9).

Part 1 deals with the Christian literature. Chapter 2 sets out how the Christians developed a totalizing discourse to construct knowledge and power and to identify deviant others. Jacobs quotes from Eusebius of Caesarea, whose Christianizing version of Jewish history integrated the Jews into the scope of Christian identity; Cyril of Jerusalem, whose complete Christian being in the Catecheses comes into being in direct opposition to the Jews; and Epiphanius of Salamis, whose Panarion identifies the Jews as the ultimate heresy. Thus “the new Christian self is inextricably bound up in the certain knowledge of the Jewish other” (54–55). Chapter 3 discusses Jerome’s hatred for the Jews and reliance on them for instruction, contrasting his use of his knowledge of Hebrew and contemporary Jewish sources to exert religious and cultural authority over the Jews with that of his predecessor Origen, who aimed to define more clearly the Jewish–Christian differences, thereby grounding Christianity’s own legitimacy. Jerome’s detractors Rufinus of Aquileia and Augustine of Hippo point out that this intimate knowledge permits not only domination but also allows the boundaries to be permeable: Knowing and becoming may be confused.

Part 2 explores the appropriation of the land as a Biblical space. Chapter 4 discusses pilgrimage narratives, in which the holy land took on sacred and material importance. A veneer of Christianity overlays the land through the historicization of the native population in the narrative of the pilgrim from Burdigala, in which dead Old Testament (OT) figures haunt the land; through a process of textualization in the narrative of Egeria, in which she imposes textual OT figures on the empty land; and through the aesthetization of the land in the narrative of Piacenza, in which Christians appropriate the place for their own pleasure in its Jewishness. Chapter 5 discusses the further appropriation of the land by the process of
monumentalization and piety. The imperial presence is imposed on the land through building projects and the piety and imperial pomp of the female members of the imperial household triumphs over Jerusalem asceticism. In the desert Christian ascetics opened up and resettled empty yet significant spaces, and there was a conquest and appropriation of relics, which are traced back to “old” Jerusalem. The intense interest, however, gave space for the Jews to subvert and resist, as well as be seen as forever “the other” who will rise up when they can, even when uprisings are caused by others such as the Persians in the 614 sack of Jerusalem.

In his conclusion, Jacobs summarizes the debate between rhetoric and reality. The literature was initially considered to give no more than a stereotypical picture of Judaism, contributing nothing meaningful about Jewish–Christian relations. Jacobs argues convincingly that they in fact contributed to the creation of a new world, in which we see the interplay of power and resistance.

This is an extremely well-researched, well-written book and is a significant contribution to the field.

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Kessler’s erudite book aims to prove not only that exegetical encounters occurred between the ancient rabbis and the early church fathers in both directions, but also that “to understand properly Jewish or Christian exegesis in late antiquity it is essential to understand each other’s interpretations and the influence of one upon the other” (182). He begins by reviewing the shortcomings of previous approaches to Jewish–Christian interaction in late antiquity. Kessler then puts forward what he terms the exegetical approach, suggests some controls on this method, and proceeds to test his hypothesis by conducting a verse-by-verse examination of Genesis 22. In each chapter, he first surveys a few major early interpreters, such as Philo and Josephus, and then compares Rabbinic and early Christian interpretations on Genesis 22 in some detail. There is also a final chapter that examines ancient artistic renderings of Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac.

This is a book from which any scholar of the Bible and postbiblical Jewish and Christian interpretation will learn much. However, the author has fallen short of demonstrating his thesis. Although Kessler brings forth a few very compelling instances that strongly suggest Jewish awareness of a Christian interpretive move or vice versa, all too often the evidence demonstrates not how these communities are interconnected, but rather, how they “are divided by a common Bible” (112, citing J. Kugel).

At times, Kessler’s assumptions concerning potential interactions between the rabbis and church fathers leads him to ignore other more mundane explana-
tions for certain exegetical moves. For example, he argues that the rabbis portray Isaac as a mature adult to counteract the widespread Christian reading that he was a child, an interpretation that Kessler argues is driven by the Christian typology that Isaac the child’s deed is consummated in Christ the mature adult. But one need not assume any exegetical encounter at all to explain the Rabbinic tendency to turn Isaac into an adult. In fact, it likely stems from the rabbis’ assumption that Sarah’s death in Genesis 23 occurred in direct proximity to the events of Isaac’s near sacrifice, perhaps because word of it reached her. In Gen 23:1 Sarah is reported to have died at 127 years old. If she bore Isaac when 90 (Gen 17:17), this would make Isaac 37, a figure that occurs in many rabbinic texts. Furthermore, as Kessler himself notes, certain prerabbinic works already conceive of Isaac as a mature adult (e.g., Josephus and Judith). It may be true, as Kessler states, that the rabbis’ drive to make Isaac a willing participant in the sacrifice could have contributed to the need to turn him into a mature adult, but in any case these interpretations could have developed from a set of internal rabbinic theological ideas with no influence from Christian interpreters.

On the Christian side, Kessler presents some possible examples of attempts to counter the idea that Isaac was a mature adult. However, it is the Christian propensity to engage in typological reading, not the rabbinic notion that Isaac was a willing adult, that generate the vast majority of such Christian exegeses. Even when one finds the occasional reaction against or borrowing from the rabbis, this sheds little light on the social particularities of Jewish–Christian interaction.

In fairness, Kessler admits that some of his arguments for influence are less than conclusive. While such nuancing is welcome, his method is at times problematic. For example, he cites the use of the word “stake” (or “cross” in his translation) found in GenRab 56:3 as evidence that the rabbis had drawn this image from Christian exegetes (113). Then he argues that this midrashic comment’s terseness indicates that later rabbis sought to suppress this Christian connection. Here Kessler claims that the existence of this word and the fact that it is in a terse midrash show two differing instances of exegetical encounters. If both use and nonuse imply an encounter, is there any way to disconfirm such an encounter?

The truth is that many of his examples show no exegetical encounter whatsoever, as even Kessler acknowledges. However, these instances still are of great value in terms of understanding each religion’s unique theological interpretation of the Bible. It is unclear to this reader why Kessler does not set out to accomplish the more modest goal of teaching the reader that Jews and Christians can gain tremendous insight into their own tradition by understanding the sister tradition’s interpretations.

There are also a few minor irritations in Kessler’s language as well as in technical aspects such as the printing and indexing. A number of times Kessler speaks of the Rabbis, noting that God “abhorred sacrifice” (46, 55), when he means human sacrifice. On page 104 he implies that Jephthah’s daughter is named Seila even within the biblical account. In his chapter on ancient artistic renderings, several of the plates are reproduced in such poor fashion that this middle-aged reader could make out few if any of the details in them. And most frustrating is the fact that many of the rabbinic references found within the notes are not indexed (for
example, the references in notes 37–39, pp. 88–89). Occasionally, references in
the text, such as the one to Pseudo-Philo (p. 136), are also not indexed. In the com-
puter age, there is no excuse that such a scholarly book has been made less acces-
sible to the researcher by poor indexing of the primary sources.

None of the above criticisms detracts from the fact that this is a learned
and carefully researched book that does indeed enhance our knowledge of rab-
binic and early Christian biblical interpretation. In a few places Kessler has es-
tablished how one tradition’s exegetical insights were employed or countered by
the sister tradition. More important, Kessler has further reinforced the value of
careful scholarly study in unpacking the development of these two faiths and how
both faiths grew out of a common biblical heritage and closely related interpre-
tive systems.

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Cynthia M. Baker. Rebuilding the House of Israel: Architectures of Gender in Jew-

Cynthia Baker’s Rebuilding the House of Israel is one of a handful of stud-
ies that seek to interpret Jewish culture during late antiquity by setting rabbinic
sources and archaeological remains from the Land of Israel in dialogue. Baker is
a careful and perceptive reader of both the primary tannaitic sources that she dis-
 discusses and of the material record. In fact, the body of the book, in which she dis-
 cusses the domestic context (well titled “The Well-Ordered Bayit: Bodies, Houses
and Rabbis in the Ancient Galilee”) and the marketplace (“Men, Women and the
Shuk: Cultural Currencies on the Open Market”) is a well-written description and
analysis of the preserved evidence. Baker shows, for example, that rabbinic no-
tions of privacy and the placement of windows within extant structures reflect sim-
ilar interests. More important, she shows the ways that various spaces, both public
and private, were used by ancient Jewish women, and how gender issues played
out within environments constructed by Jewish men and women in Roman Pales-
tine. The impetus for this study was not ultimately Rabbinic literature or archae-
ology, however. It is what Baker sees as a misconception in recent scholarship.
Baker argues against a position whereby Jewish women in antiquity were starkly
limited to the domestic realm, while the public realm (and even elements of the
private) were reserved for men.

Baker’s methodological discussion (“Space, Material Discourses and the Art
of Cultural Production”) is noticeably different from the rest of the book. Here her
prose is far less clear. This section is clearly addressed to initiates of the postmod-
ern discourse. Baker ties the “architectures of gender” to the supposed “rebuild-
ing” of Judaism by that “small handful of Jewish voices”—the ancient rabbis—
whose classical period continued from the late first into the fourth centuries. She then provides an image of the household and village life of women. Most of the architectural evidence adduced by Baker dates to the fourth through sixth or seventh centuries. Although it is true that Jewish culture in late antiquity was extremely conservative, this chronological disconnect between the literary and archaeological sources should be dealt with explicitly, especially because Baker accepts notions of “non-Rabbinic Judaism” developed by the Goodenough/Smith school. Baker’s study would have been enriched and strengthened through comparison with parallel Semitic languages and the ample evidence for non-Jewish housing in Palestine and in neighboring regions. Deeper interaction with Amoramic literature and Byzantine-period sources would have added significantly, because these do date to the same time as the buildings that Baker discusses. In addition, Baker might have engaged more seriously the tools of modern Talmudic research. There is little evidence that she consulted either manuscript traditions nor the medieval and modern critical literature (other than Albeck’s Mishnah and Lieberman’s Tosefta ki-fshutah).

Cynthia Baker’s Rebuilding the House of Israel: Architectures of Gender in Jewish Antiquity provides important insights into the role of women in Jewish “places” in rabbinic Palestine. Baker has shown that the place of Jewish women during late antiquity was truly in the home, as well as in the marketplace, and in all other areas where Jewish culture flourished during these pivotal centuries.

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About 35,000 books and articles have been published thus far on the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS). The vast majority deal with the literature found in the eleven caves in the vicinity of Qumran and only a few deal with the archaeological remains of Khirbet Qumran nearby. The site was exhaustively excavated a few times in the past fifty-four years. The first that also determined the nature of its interpretation was carried out during 1951 to 1956 by Fr. Roland de Vaux from the French school of biblical studies at Jerusalem, the Ecole Biblique. Most of the site was unearthed during this excavation. The latest excavations were carried out in the past ten years and thus far with extremely meager publications.

The prevailing theory since the onset of the excavations was that the scrolls were written by a sectarian, communal, monastic and celibate group called the Essenes at the site of Qumran.

Yizhar Hirschfeld of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem follows a small number of scholars who challenge this interpretation. Because the scrolls, the site,
and the Essenes are all entwined into a cohesive theory, it is virtually impossible
to dismiss one without revising the others. Hirschfeld logically addresses every-
thing, and naturally, not all with the same degree of success.

In spite of some flaws, his archaeological revision is perhaps the best part of
his entire attempt. One such a flaw is the lack of a chapter that presents a thorough
history of the research. Readers are frequently lost between what Hirschfeld pro-
poses as new and what is traditionally interpreted and known.

To offer a new interpretation, Hirschfeld dismisses de Vaux’s excavations en-
tirely as “unscientific” and useless. The reason he gives is that, contrary to what is
used today, de Vaux assigned the same loci numbers to single architectural units,
although discerning several sequential floors in the same unit. This means that the
finds assigned to loci numbers may originate from different strata, hence different
periods. For example, the jewelry found at the site—conventional women’s adorn-
ment with no elevation reported—can be assigned to the Essenes’ celibate society,
which creates a severe conceptual problem. But this problem can be eliminated if
the jewelry is assigned to the upper stratum of the Roman military, or to a Bedouin
shepherd. In fact loci numbers are not so critical as long as the elevation of each
find and basket are recorded. This data, matched with the elevation of the floors,
would retrieve the finds’ assemblages and indicate their precise association. Can
this information be retrieved? Hirschfeld does not say.

Having dismissed de Vaux’s stratigraphy, Hirschfeld moves on to suggest a
new stratigraphy based on architectural alterations and remodeling. Instead of the
three “periods” suggested by de Vaux, he suggests four different strata with archi-
tectural differences. The first occupation level, stratum I, dates from the late Iron
Age, seventh through sixth centuries BCE. No distinctive architecture was ascribed
by Hirschfeld to this period. The next, stratum II, is assigned to the Hasmonean
period. It consists of a small fort (0.34 acre) protected by a strong tower reinforced
by a revetment wall. The fort contained a courtyard, a pool, and a mikveh. Stratum
III is assigned to the Herodian period, the period when the site reached it peak. The
military stronghold was changed into a manor, a local Judean version of a Villa
Rustica, owned by a patrician family from Jerusalem. New wings were added in
different directions, and the site contained local industry as well as a center for produc-
tion of the precious balsam ointment. Stratum IV marks the period after the Jew-
ish Roman war in which Qumran served as a station for a small Roman garrison
until the Bar Kokhba revolt in 132–35 CE.

As evidence for his proposal, Hirschfeld presents the different strata in an
archaeological context, hence the name of the book. The Hasmonean fort is, there-
fore, similar in concept to other known forts. In this respect the town of Stratonos
Pyrgos, the former name of Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast, perhaps had a
similar appearance.1

However plausible, this proposal remains a hypothesis and requires presen-
tation of the entire array of evidence. All pertinent walls have to be carefully

recorded and analyzed. Thus far, only a few nonsufficient samples are presented in the book.

The context of the Herodian fortified manor is the culmination of the book and the one that instigated the research. Hirschfeld finds that the fortified manor is similar to several known elsewhere and particularly to Horvat ‘Aqav at Ramat Hanadiv on the southern Carmel range, which he excavated for several years.

Placing Qumran in the context of Herodian estates would place the DSS out of context—and indeed this is what they are in this book! The eleven caves were not the library where scrolls originally were placed, a fact that almost nobody questions. What were the exact circumstances by which the scrolls arrived at the caves and what was their original context are the next key questions. Instead of concluding with the true and simple answer that “We don’t know,” Hirschfeld invents a story that is on the verge of science fiction and reads like a novel. He suggests that the owners of the library, Sadducees in his opinion, decided to take the scrolls out from “the doomed city to someone close to them, apparently of the same social status, the owner of the estate at Qumran. He may have also supplied the jars in which some of the scrolls were found . . . we can imagine that a whole convoy of pack animals was needed to deliver them to Qumran. The owner of Qumran, probably familiar with the area, helped locate the most suitable caves in which to conceal the scrolls. . . .” (243). All that is needed to add is that this took place in the middle of the night under the pale light of the moon. . . .

Hirschfeld’s next challenge is the Essene identification with the DSS sect. Hirschfeld excavated twenty-eight poor cells next to ancient cultivated terraces at a distance of 200 meters from Ein Gedi. Based on a combination of reading two first-century CE records—though not eyewitness—Philo and Pliny the Elder, he suggests that these cells were the home of the Essenes. The cells (most probably shelter for seasonal workers) look poor enough to Hirschfeld to be identified with the description of the Essenes by Philo. Pliny the Elder provides the location: “below the mountains of Ein Gedi.” While Philo’s tendency toward overstating is well attested, the sources of Pliny the Elder remain a mystery. Some suggest that he accompanied Vespasian, and others suggest that he derived his information from Roman military records. Pliny also errs elsewhere. Out of the four places he mentions around the Sea of Galilee, only two are placed correctly. Therefore Pliny should not be taken as reliable evidence. In sum, the accepted identification of the DSS sect and the Essenes still holds fast.

Except for minor historical inaccuracies and a mild polemical tone, the book is nicely written, illustrated with high-quality, full-page photographs, numerous drawings and plans that clearly enhance the text.

To sum up, Hirschfeld’s most important achievement is that he thinks outside the box. This is the right recipe for scholarly progress. Challenging conformity is an important merit and the courage to speak up is valuable. However, much more work still needs to be done if one wishes to collapse the standard theory sur-

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rounding the identification of the triad of the DSS sect, the Essenes and Khirbet Qumran.

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In this bold and ambitious book, Rachel Elior seeks to trace the early history of Jewish mysticism, from biblical through rabbinic times. In the course of ten chapters, the author covers a wide range of material, with special attention devoted to Ezekiel, *1 Enoch*, the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, and of course the Hekhalot texts. While not all scholars will be convinced by the analysis presented here, one should welcome this latest installment in the author’s wide-ranging and creative efforts to understand better the origins and later developments of Jewish mysticism.

Elior’s work posits that the ancient Jewish mystical tradition—which in essence conceives of a temple in heaven—was formed and joined by three groups of “secessionist” priests (ix, 31–33): (1) those, like Ezekiel, who were expelled from the first temple in 586 BCE; (2) the (Zadokite) priests who were forced from the second temple during the conflicts of the second century BCE; and (3) those, like the Merkabah mystics, who emerged from the rubble of the Second Temple’s destruction in 70 CE. But in an argument stated early on and then expanded throughout the book, Elior posits that there is a fundamental continuity between these stages of early Jewish mysticism, such that we can speak of a continuous literary tradition, composed by secessionist priests (15–17).

Some of Elior’s arguments for the continuity of the tradition she seeks to analyze are compelling. Much of Elior’s analysis—including the bulk of chapters 3 through 6—focuses on the 364-day solar calendar known from, among other texts, *1 Enoch*, *Jubilees*, and the *Temple Scroll*, these being documents that Elior attributes to secessionist priests. Following in the footsteps of Annie Jaubert,1 Elior argues that the impact of, and evidence for, the 364-day calendar, with its sevenfold pattern, can be seen not only in these and other ancient Jewish texts, but even in various passages of the Hebrew Bible, notably priestly traditions (34–62 and 82–87; see esp. 44–52). This calendar is closely tied to what Elior understands to be a core mystical idea: the correspondence between the heavenly and earthly temples requires adhering to a calendar that clearly and predictably coordinates earthly holidays with astronomical signs (82–110). Elior has noticed many echoes of

“solar” traditions missed by earlier scholars, and those who would minimize the popularity or influence of the 364-day calendar in ancient Judaism need to reckon with Elior’s analysis.

Elior is also correct, I think, to emphasize the priestly contribution to the literature at the heart of her interest. The alignment of priests with angels (see esp. 165–200) and the earthly temple with the heavenly one is certainly a key feature of much of second temple Jewish literature, and the supposition that priests were involved with the production and dissemination of this literature is reasonable enough, even convincing.

Yet, there is a problematic tension between our author’s two overall aims. On the one hand, she seeks to understand the mystical tradition as created by a series of priestly protests—those who imagine a temple in heaven are those who can no longer (by choice or force) participate in the tangible sacrifices of the earthly temple. However, in her quest for continuity, she seeks to find evidence for this priestly tradition in practically every strain of Jewish literature from the Second Temple period. Virtually every ancient Jewish text relating in some fashion to a heavenly temple, the 364-day calendar, or other mystical, priestly, or liturgical themes is attributed to the broad movement of secessionist priests, regardless of whether the work can be reliably dated to one of the three specific stages of priestly protest that her book focuses on. But if these ideas are as widespread and as continually held as she claims, how can we possibly be certain that all of these texts and ideas were created by secessionist priests? For all we know, at least some of this literature could have been produced by priests, Levites, or even Israelites who were perfectly at home in an earthly temple that they believed corresponded to a heavenly one. Mysticism is not necessarily the exclusive reserve of the oppressed, the expelled, or the self-exiled. Our extant sources do not allow us to know with certainty what a mystical text composed by an officiating second temple priest might have looked like. But if we wanted to imagine the characteristics of such a text, we might do very well to think of something along the lines of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. To be fair, Elior might be willing to grant this point, as she does speak at times of older priestly traditions preserved within the secessionist literature (e.g., pp. 83–84). But the clearer statements in this book all focus on the mystical creativity of the secessionist priests, over against those who served in the temple.

A second problem pertains to the calendar disputes. Elior argues that the 364-day, 52-week calendar establishes a fixed and unchanging correspondence between heaven and earth. This stands in stark contrast to the traditional Jewish lunar calendar, which is subject to constant and chaotic human manipulation (44–45, 55–56, 86–87, 106–08, 220–21). Elior’s argument here too is marred by overstatement. On the one hand, Elior overlooks the fact that the moon is also in the heavens, so that a lunar calendar too can serve to connect sacred seasons with the cosmos. On the other hand, Elior overstates the virtues of the “solar” calendar. If the 364-day calendar had been truly fixed and unchanging (in accordance with Jubilees 6:31–32), then it would not in fact have maintained a correspondence between heaven and earth at all, for the calendar would lose more than a day a year against the true solar year. The inadequacy of even a 365-day calendar was well known in antiquity, as attested by the institution of the Julian calendar with its quad-
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...rennial leap year in 46 BCE and the subsequent reform of the 365-day Egyptian civil calendar in 22 BCE. Indeed, Elior assumes that the 364-day calendar must have been intercalated in some fashion (43, 92–93 n. 17, 103) to keep up with the sun. But it is not adequately explained precisely how this calendar could have been periodically intercalated so as keep up with the sun while still preserving its “fixed, eternal, cosmic, sevenfold and fourfold symmetry” (44). If we look beyond the exaggerations, we can recognize that Elior is onto something here too. Ancient Jewish calendar disputes were about more than just dates and numbers. The differing calendars likely reflected distinct ideas about how ancient Jews understood the relationship between heaven and earth.

Despite its overstated arguments, this is a book that should be read by those who are interested in the history of Jewish mysticism, the Jewish temple cult and, indeed, second temple or early rabbinic Judaism broadly speaking. This is an ambitious, broadly conceived, work, one that covers a lot of ground and tries to synthesize a wealth of material. It’s all too easy to find points of disagreement with such a work. So it should also be said to Elior’s credit that it is primarily through such broadly conceived projects that scholarship can really move forward.

The work under review here translates a book published in Hebrew in 2002 by Magnes Press, bearing the title Temple and Chariot, Priests and Angels, Sanctuary and Heavenly Sanctuaries in Early Jewish Mysticism. Minor changes in structure and format will frustrate those who wish to quickly compare the two editions. While the English matches the Hebrew reasonably enough, many readers of this journal may choose to consult the Hebrew if for no other reason than the fact that the Magnes Press publication provides an index of textual citations. In place of this invaluable index, the English edition much less helpfully presents readers with advertisements for other Littman Library publications.

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Jewish mystical and magical texts are remarkably relevant to some of the most central historiographical themes of early modern Europe; they are also remarkably esoteric and confounding to any nonspecialist. Providing a remedy to this incongruity, J. H. Chajes makes a major contribution to both Jewish and general early modern historiography with his first book, on Jewish spirit possession and exorcism. His work offers a useful narrative of the development of Jewish exorcism traditions, presenting the complex subject in terms that make it more ap-

proachable without over-simplification. At the same time, Chajes lends the material depth and relevance through sensitive analysis of the chronologically and geographically local circumstances of the most significant early modern treatments of the phenomenon. The appendix alone would be an offering of some significance, consisting of eleven original translations of early modern accounts of spirit possession, and this quality of presenting important raw material runs throughout the volume. Competent and detailed legwork is evident in the exposition of various exorcists’ techniques from the ancient world and Middle Ages, through Luria’s unique methods in sixteenth-century Safed, and up to later seventeenth-century attitudes to possession and demonology. Much of this material is in the first chapter, “The Emergence of *Dybbuk* Possession,” which argues that “there was something new in the sixteenth century” as a long percolation of diverse traditions culminated in the formation of the “classic” view of the *dybbuk* in a period of unprecedented frequency of possession and exorcism events.

The second chapter then swoops in closely on the Safedian context, dwelling on the physical and historical characteristics of the city to overcome the unfortunately necessary reliance on accounts that were written or published a century later than the events themselves. Self-consciously anthropological as much as historicist, Chajes reads the possession narratives closely with an eye to the “spiritual economy” of the city, convincingly elucidating the relationships and conditions that are only hinted at in the texts, and often wisely admitting of several spiritual, cultural, and interpersonal possibilities at once. The third chapter, “The Task of the Exorcist,” delves into the details of the exorcism techniques themselves, beginning with Luria’s innovations and then contrasting these with more traditional, magical incantations to which later practitioners returned. Later chapters explore more perspectives on possession, as Chajes exposes the large role of spiritually powerful early modern women in “*Dybbuk* Possession and Women’s Spirituality,” and explains Menasseh ben Israel’s use of Jewish traditions about spirit possession as a tool against skepticism in soon-to-be-enlightened seventeenth-century Amsterdam, in “Skeptics and Storytellers.”

Each such perspective is well chosen for its relevance to salient characteristics of the early modern period and the relationship of the Jewish minority to those characteristics. As Chajes points out, the early modern period has long been known as a time of profusion of possessions and exorcisms in the Christian west. The phenomenon has been evaluated by general historians in connection with the interrelated factors of gender, witchcraft, social and economic tensions, and religious change. Although many of these previous frameworks for understanding possession apply mainly or exclusively to Christian contexts, Chajes complicates matters by showing that Jews, too, experienced a sudden rise in an interest in demons and possession. He rejects the “influence model” as “largely predicated upon a view of Jewish culture as foreign to its local environment. Seeing Jews as integral to their local environment allows us to see them as full participants in broad cultural movements and mentalities that were no more owned by Christians than by Jews” (8). Unfortunately, Chajes is unable to explore this complex relationship fully, but the comparative perspective undoubtedly informs many of his choices throughout the book.
Between Worlds is also rich with material relevant to fascinating questions about the early modern history of Jews in particular. Women’s spirituality, the modernizing role of kabbalah and magic, and the role of the Sephardi diaspora both in early exiles and later exconversos in Amsterdam, are all illuminated as Chajes throws a spotlight on specific examples. At times, one wishes for more extensive analysis of the material thus exposed: there is hardly more than passing reference to the important recent debates about the impact of the expulsion on Jewish culture, especially mysticism, and Chajes only touches on considerations of elite versus popular religious practices and knowledge as he considers the role of gender in dybbuk possession. Even in the chapter on women’s spirituality, the emphasis is on showing off the raw material, while comparative or phenomenological analysis is relegated to brief comments.

Ultimately, these several viewpoints over the valley of the possessing spirits give only partial impressions of underlying connections or driving historical factors. However, as Chajes points out, this complex territory was previously so barren that he must devote much energy to planting the first seeds. Even as he discusses the potential of such a comparative approach, he makes the disclaimer that his remarks will necessarily be “provisional and speculative” (7). This book does show that there is prodigious fruit to be had from the shoots; some indication of the growing interest in this area is also given by the felicitous publication of Matt Goldish’s collection of diverse essays on the subject, Spirit Possession in Judaism: Cases and Contexts from the Middle Ages to the Present (Wayne State University Press, 2003) at nearly the same time. It appears that more scholarly attention to Jewish spirit possession can be expected, and in the meantime, Chajes has provided an inestimable service by bringing this material to light with sensitivity and aplomb.

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Christopher Browning is perhaps most widely known for his seminal study of the motives of the “ordinary men” who perpetrated the systematic murder of European Jewry at the behest of the Third Reich. Nevertheless, in the past two decades he has devoted much of his attention to studying the processes and decisions that led the Reich to make systematic mass murder its official policy and to provide the impetus and means for its implementation. Now he has brought his empirical findings and interpretations together in a single volume that provides the most rigorous, cogent, and lucid analysis currently available of this crucial problem in the history of the encounter between Nazi Germany and the Jews.
The book was commissioned in the early 1980s as part of Yad Vashem’s comprehensive history of the Holocaust. It was envisioned as the second of three volumes examining the evolution of Nazi Jewish policy, following one devoted to the interval between the establishment of the Third Reich in 1933 and Germany’s invasion of Poland six years later and preceding one surveying the so-called final solution’s actual execution. These three works, in turn, were to provide a backdrop for a series of country-focused studies concentrating largely on victims and bystanders. Only some of the country-focused studies have been completed, and they have been published only in Hebrew. Browning’s is the first of the three perpetrator-focused volumes to appear in any language.

To understand the book’s scope and argument, this context must be kept in mind. Indeed, some readers may be disturbed by the title’s seeming suggestion that “the origins of the final solution” are to be found no earlier than September 1939. Browning has worked around this editorially imposed difficulty by construing the notion “final solution” strictly and delimiting his focus accordingly. Because the term appeared in Nazi documents only after that date, in the context of plans for mass expulsion of Polish and other Jews to a territory beyond areas designated for German settlement, the book’s first task must be to determine the connection between the conquest of Poland and Nazi thinking about how to eliminate the ostensible Jewish danger once and for all. And because the sense of the term was eventually transmuted from expulsion to systematic total killing, the course and causes of the transmutation must be the book’s central theme. Hence the book does not purport to explain the entire complex of phenomena commonly grouped together as “the Holocaust” but only the thinking and actions of the Nazi regime’s leaders and agents during the interval when they themselves spoke of finally solving the Jewish question.

Much has changed during the twenty years of the book’s gestation in the way historians approach that subject. When Browning began his study, the intentionalist-functionalist debate was at its height. Browning was an early critic of both positions: unlike the functionalists he believed that the total murder of European Jewry was always a possible outcome of Hitler’s world view, but he also rejected the intentionalist notion that the Nazi regime aimed with systematic deliberation at that outcome from the start. Today most historians have joined Browning in maintaining that by late 1941 Nazi leaders had moved from a Hitler-inspired determination to solve the Jewish problem one way or another to the conviction, similarly encouraged by Hitler, that the only acceptable way to accomplish this goal was to kill every Jewish man, woman, and child within the regime’s reach. Most also agree that that movement occurred gradually and in stages, with changing conditions on the eastern front serving as a principal catalyst for the testing and elimination of alternative approaches. What remains at issue (in a voluminous literature of which Browning is a master) is the set of contexts that gave rise to increasing radicalization and ultimately induced the regime to pursue mass murder. Browning argues that the matrix for radicalization was “the euphoria of victory.” Indeed, he states, “the vision of the [ultimate] Final Solution . . . crystallized in the minds of the Nazi leadership” between mid-September and late October 1941, at a time when the German army was advancing against Leningrad, Moscow, and Kiev, and
Hitler anticipated imminent Soviet collapse (424, cf. 327). In this heady atmosphere, he suggests, Nazi leaders believed they could remake Europe however they wished, including realizing Hitler’s prophecy of a continent cleansed of Jews.

The “euphoria of victory” thesis remains hotly contested. Browning marshals much evidence for his position while noting different interpretations. In the end, as he admits, some speculation must enter the debate, because the paper trail is not complete. His case is strong but hardly airtight. For example, the dating to October 1941 of the notion that mass killing was the preferred way to deal with Jews throughout Europe seems persuasive, but Browning notes that at that time it remained unclear whether systematic killing would begin the following spring or after the war. The decision to begin even before spring 1942 must then have been taken subsequently, and something other than victory euphoria, which dissipated during November 1941, must have brought it on. Browning does not offer a way out of this problem.

Other points can be debated as well. Some recent research has indicated that mass killings of Jews perpetrated by groups of Romanians, Croats, Ukrainians, Balts, and Poles during the first weeks after Germany’s June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union may have started some Nazi officials thinking about making total murder their own policy. Browning does not consider this argument (although Jürgen Matthäus, whom Browning invited to contribute a chapter parallel to his on the evolution of Nazi policy in the wake of the Soviet invasion, gives it some guarded credence). Also, although Browning engages suggestions in the literature that decisive pressure to adopt systematic killing as Reich policy may have come up the chain of command from military and civilian personnel in the east, he still prefers a top-down analysis and does not fully rebut some seemingly telling pieces of evidence pointing to a greater role for local officials.

These quibbles, however, are minor compared to the book’s surpassing achievement as a work of incisive analysis, intelligent synthesis, and clear explanation.

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Immediately following his acknowledgments, Cohen begins his volume with an invitation that aims to evoke our interest in the Jews of St. Thomas. This chapter structure—in which the volume commences with what is in essence a justification for its publication—elicits an intriguing question about the study of Jewish life. Cohen is asking us to consider why one should be interested in this (and by implication, any?) small community of Jews. His subsequent introductory chapter
poses a second fundamental question. It asks whether, in an age in which prevailing historical models have been subject to critical reexamination, a history that is organized by chronology rather than by theme can have scholarly value. The core of his response to these questions is that the St. Thomas Jewish community is an unusual instance of “accumulative ethnicity” (xxii) and thus constitutes a pattern in Jewish ethnicity worthy of scholarly attention. The narrative is arranged in chronological sequence to convey this pattern. Its unfolding temporal structure allows the reader to watch Jewish ethnicities emerge both from, and in place of one another. In raising these questions, Cohen brings a reflexive stance to the narrative. Yet, socially constructed memory seems to lie at the heart of the notion of accumulative ethnicity. Most Jews currently living on St. Thomas are transplants from the American mainland. Might the volume’s framework also represent an American search for roots, and for roots that are special?

It is after 1790 that St. Thomas becomes home to more than a few individual Jews. Western Portuguese Sephardic Jews arrive from the Dutch colony of St. Eustatius (following Rodney’s attack) and from St. Domingue (escaping the battles for its independence from France). Several Jews from Morocco arrive contemporaneously. They are fleeing an ascending sultan’s retribution for the loyalty shown to his predecessor. This heterogeneous pattern of immigration continues into the present. Sephardic Jews arrive sporadically over the next century from Curacao, in the 1850s and 1860s from Venezuela, and Ashkenazic Jews arrive from Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth century. More have been arriving from the U.S. following World War II, and others now are arriving from the State of Israel. Each small influx of Jews brings its own cultural traditions, which alter without erasing the patterns of Jewish worship and the social relations that they encounter in St. Thomas. This leads to changes in Jewish communal life that are accumulative more than transformative. Each new group of arrivals has been small in number, thus unlikely to replace previous traditions. Heterogeneity in cultural dispositions has required compromises. The continuing small size of the Jewish population—rarely surpassing 500—has meant that the proportion of ongoing to new residents has remained large enough to preserve preexisting practices until the mid-twentieth century.

In many ways, this is a story about individuals, families, their social networks, and their reappearances in varied settings as much as it is of a community. Take, for example, Elijah Levy-Yuly (who so displeases the sultan referred to above), his bondservant, Elias Sarquy, and their descendants. After escaping to Gibraltar, Levy-Yuly frees Sarquy, who settles in St. Thomas by 1795, and, after Levy-Yuly’s death, is followed to St. Thomas by Levy-Yuly’s wife, daughter, and son, Moses Elias Levy (having dropped Yuly from his name). The families then follow differing trajectories. Sarquy will remain a respected member of the St. Thomas Jewish community until his death in 1849. He enters into business with a Portuguese Sephardic Jew, owns an impressive amount of property in 1803 (20,048 square feet), and his wife owns a business in 1807. Moses Elias becomes a dry goods merchant on St. Thomas, a supporter of a state for Jews in the U.S., and raises his two sons to be secular, proto-Zionists. At some point, the business partner of Moses Elias is Emanuel Benjamin, a Portuguese Sephardi and cousin of Judah
P. Benjamin (who will become secretary of state for the confederacy). When a fire destroys his business in 1831, Moses Elias Levy moves to Florida and attempts to establish a homeland for Jews there. A Florida county bears the Levy name in his honor. David, one of his sons, converts to Christianity, changes his surname to Yulee, and becomes the first U.S. senator from the state of Florida. Intriguing interconnections such as these are found throughout the volume. They provide a sense of continuity to events that might otherwise have seemed fragmented, and a close look at the mechanisms of accumulative ethnicity.

Although many of the congregation’s files have been lost, Cohen has conducted a diligent search for documents that could compensate for the gaps. He has drawn on a variety of archival sources as well as interviews with current residents to achieve a remarkably broad picture of Jewish life on St. Thomas. These sources shape the type of narrative that he is able to present, a narrative that while sympathetic and accessible avoids the nostalgic sentimentality too often found in histories prepared with congregational support. And, while the notion of accumulative ethnicity may reflect a kind of wishful thinking (i.e., of memory), it also receives a good deal of detailed support.

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In the early modern and modern periods, the occupational profile of Jews in the West diverged dramatically from that of their neighbors and fellow citizens. Commerce, rather than agriculture or artisanal or industrial manufacturing, provided the arena in which Jews labored to make a living. From an economic perspective, this was not a problem. It did not place Jews at a competitive disadvantage. Indeed, the opposite was true. In the context of industrialization, urbanization, and mass consumption, buying and selling was more profitable than toiling in a field, workshop, or factory. Having been forced into a narrow range of occupations earlier in their history, Jews in the West now found themselves in an advantageous position economically. However, for Gentiles, who rarely viewed Jews in a disinterested light, the Jewish distinctive occupational profile was problematic and often viewed as symptomatic of a more profound pathology. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with Jews becoming citizens of the states in which they lived and moving rapidly into the middle class, their economic distinctiveness became a central feature of the debate about their fate and future, what was known at the time as the “Jewish Question.”

Derek Penslar’s *Shylock’s Children* is an expansive treatment of the history of this discourse about Jews and its impact on the self-understanding of Jewish
elites and their conduct of communal policy. In tracing the origins of modern Gentile anxiety about Jewish economic activity, Penslar begins with Greco-Roman and early Christian hostility to trade, attitudes that took shape when there was little that was distinctive about Jewish economic activity. In the medieval period, Christian theological investment in the idea of Jewish misanthropy, along with the association of Jews and money lending, gave birth to notions of Jewish avarice, materialism, and oppression, while, in the early modern period, the concentration of Jews in low-status, marginal occupations—money lending, pawn broking, petty trade—strengthened these sentiments. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the freeing of social and economic life from earlier restraints, a transformation that benefitted Jews, those who saw themselves as victims of this transformation identified Jews as the creators and bearers of modernity and its troubles.

Penslar’s explanation of the development of Gentile ideas about Jewish economic behavior is richer and more complex than these few sentences suggest. His explanation weaves its way back and forth between changes in material circumstances and shifts in values and ideas. It is both balanced and satisfying. While his themes and materials are not novel, his treatment of them is consistently intelligent and instructive. In this regard, let me single out his discussion of German responses to the marked increase in both very rich and very poor Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Court Jews, on the one hand, and beggars, bandits, and vagabonds, on the other). To shelter the essentialism of their view of Jews from evidence to the contrary, German writers mentally collapsed the gap between the two extremes, asserting that both exhibited the same economic sensibility. In the early modern German imagination, rich and poor Jews behaved similarly in the marketplace because they shared common values, which, in turn, derived from a common unitary mentalité, or essence. All were thieves, profiteers, manipulators, scoundrels, rogues, and the like. In Penslar’s words: “The Court Jew and the Jewish bandit were typologically similar; both were pariahs who, coming from the margins of German society, used unconventional methods to improve their status. Anti-Semitic sensibility grasped this similarity, but, by placing it within a pre-existing stereotype of the Jew as usurer, merely transformed and strengthened preexisting prejudices against Jewish economic behavior” (21).

Penslar is less concerned with the history of this discourse, however, than with its impact on Jewish identity and policy from the haskalah on. The disturbing truth that emerges from his account is that western Jewish leaders everywhere, including westernized Jews in Eastern Europe, internalized the Gentile belief that Jewish economic life was flawed (in one way or another) and called for its reformation or complete overhaul. While less likely to accept the idea that Jewish commercial ethics were corrupt, they did accept the notion that the overrepresentation of Jews in commerce was a liability, in large part because it created a bad impression among non-Jews. Maskilim, Zionists, Bolsheviks, and western philanthropists alike believed that too many Jews labored with their minds and not enough with their hands. They repeatedly launched schemes to turn Jewish peddlers, shopkeepers, and salesmen into manual laborers, farmers, craftsmen, and, later, indus-
trial workers. It is now clear, of course, that theirs was a monumental misunderstanding of macroeconomic trends. As Penslar notes, Jewish proponents of occupational restructuring “rarely showed the slightest awareness” that the sectors of the economy in which they wished to direct Jews were in the long run less secure than trade (121). Fortunately for their descendants, most Jews ignored the advice of their leaders on this score.

In the second half of the twentieth century, interest in the economic regeneration of the Jews vanished. As Penslar explains, in the years between the French Revolution and World War II, thinking about the place of the Jews in Europe was linked to anxieties about industrial capitalism and its social consequences. When Europeans came to terms with modernity, however reluctantly and incompletely, commerce lost much of its stigma and Jewish concentration in business much of its problematic character. (The proliferation of American-style business schools in Europe in recent decades is eloquent testimony to this shift in sentiment.) It is not clear how far Penslar wishes to push his notion of the “inextricable linkage” between the “Jewish Question” and “anxiety about the new industrial order” (262). If I understand him correctly, it accounts for more than the rise and fall of the discourse of Jewish economic dysfunction. More broadly, it would seem to help explain why societies with politically assertive industrial and commercial bourgeoisies who were confident about the universality of their values (the United States and Great Britain) displayed less anti-Semitism than societies in which liberal capitalism was less firmly rooted. After all, even in Germany’s brief heyday of political liberalism in the 1860s, when publicists and intellectuals hailed commerce and industry as the saviors of the nation, there was a marked decrease in public concern about Jewish economic distinctiveness. At this time, Penslar writes, “the German middle class’s most popular journal, Die Gartenlaube, portrayed Jews in a most positive light, in keeping with its generally high opinion of commerce as an ennobling activity and its association of parasitism not with Jews but with the idle aristocracy” (139).

What we have here is a revival, reworking, and extension of Salo Baron’s insights about the connection between early capitalism and toleration, briefly developed sixty years ago in the final chapter of his three-volume work The Jewish Community (1942). Because Baron did not complete his magnum opus and thus never fleshed out his thinking about this connection, his work has not been influential in shaping the historiography of the modern period. This is a shame, for Baron saw linkages that have eluded later historians, especially those who have focused on the haskalah and other reformist movements as agents of change. Penslar’s revival and deployment of these ideas is most welcome.

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In his *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, Moshe Idel envisioned a reordering of scholarly inquiry into Kabbalah, in which the intellectual divisions between the world of the traditional kabbalists and academic scholars would be bridged. The writings of Moshe Halamish, while not conceived with the specific purpose of fulfilling such a mandate, nonetheless create a realm of discourse in which traditional models are, at least, not outraged. Halamish writes in such a way that a dialogue with the traditional purveyors of Kabbalah may be at least envisioned.

Like many scholars emerging from Israel in the last century, Halamish initially devoted himself to addressing unanswered questions and unexplored gaps in the body of writings left by Gershom Scholem. In carving up of turf that characterizes the structure of the “Jerusalem School” of Kabbalah study, Halamish has concentrated on prayer. His authority and expertise in that area has been amply demonstrated in the recent Hebrew anthology of his collected writings on the subject: *Kabbalah: In Liturgy, Halakhah and Customs* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2000).

This volume, *The Kabbalah in North Africa*, seeks to fill another gap in contemporary scholarship. Recent allegations of an anti-Eastern bias among scholars of Kabbalah remain undemonstrated and probably unfair. The truth, however, is that the religious communities of the non-Ashkenazic world remain relatively unserved by scholarly studies, with the exception of the *oeuvre* of Meir Benyahu and the studies of specific figures by younger scholars such as Boaz Huss and Yoni Garb. There is an absence of comprehensive treatments such as Jacob Elbaum’s *Openness and Insularity: Late Sixteenth Century Jewish Literature in Poland and Ashkenaz* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990) detailing the religious life and intellectual activity of large areas of the Sephardic world.

This overview seeks to illuminate the contributions of the mystical communities of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria—an area that was no less a cradle of mystical thought and practice than the Pale of Settlement. As an introduction and guide to the flourishing of Kabbalah in those communities, from its origins to the present, this modest work is indispensable. Halamish describes the ways in which mystical ideas entered North Africa and traces the growth of different mystical circles and the communities that nurtured them. He lists as many mystical figures as possible, from illustrious figures such as Shimon Lavi and Abraham Azulai to shadowy figures alluded to in a few emendations to a single manuscript. He describes the paths through which the ideas of the Safed Kabbalists Isaac Luria and Shalom Sharabi were introduced into various North African communities, and the extent of their reception among different circles of mystics.

Halamish describes the ways in which kabbalistic ideas and practices shaped and influenced the daily life and folk religion of different North African communities. He shines a strong and vivid light on the community in Djerba, an island off the coast of Tunisia that was predominantly Jewish. In separate chapters, Halamish surveys the effects of mysticism on daily life in the different Jewish communities of the cosmopolitan cities on the coast as well as the wilder reaches of the Atlas
Mountains. He discusses the impact of Kabbalah on Jewish Law (halakhah) and ritual. In addition to entering daily life through those conventional venues, there was an efflorescence of practical Kabbalah in the form of shamanistic and healing practices and an explosion of gravesite pilgrimage after the practices of the Safed kabbalists. There was prodigious composition of scriptural commentaries, theoretical literature, religious poetry, prayers and devotional tikkunim, or specialized rites. In these chapters, a picture emerges of a series of communities in which Kabbalah served as the popular religion, being incorporated into Jewish life with less of the self-consciousness or angst of communities across the Mediterranean.

Although it only begins to scratch the surface of its subject, this modest volume should point scholars towards many rich and hitherto neglected areas of further research. For that reason alone, it deserves the widest possible circulation.

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Unlike the Sephardim, who accepted the concept of taqiyya and the practice of marranism to cope with forced conversions under Islam, the Ashkenazim, especially the Jewish communities of Germanophone Central Europe, developed an uncompromising rejection of Christian baptism. Instead of marranism and deception under Islam, the Ashkenazim, in the persecutions of the Crusades and after, developed a strong sense of martyrdom and detested baptism, whether forced or voluntary, as ritual and spiritual defilement and pollution. The small number of Jewish converts to Christianity were not so much sinners but apostates (meshumadim or the vertilgten). Given this Ashkenazi tradition, it is not surprising that converts were marginalized in Jewish historiography and scholarship. Nevertheless, as Carlebach argues persuasively in this book, they played a significant role in Jewish–Christian relations in early modern Germany; and given the fact that conversions rose rapidly in the late eighteenth century, it is all the more important to understand the prehistory of Jewish conversion and integration in Germany after Emancipation.

Carlebach’s study is based on an exhaustive analysis of the autobiographical writings of converts in German-speaking lands between 1500 and 1750. Before she embarks on a thorough examination of these texts, Carlebach provides a helpful framework in the first two chapters, in which she contrasts the notion of conversion in the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities and briefly discusses the negative images of the convert in the medieval confrontation between ecclesia and synagoga. Chapter 3 focuses on the sixteenth century as a turning point in conversion and offers incisive analysis of the writings of the three major converts: Vic-
tor von Carbon, Johannes Pfefferkorn, and Anton Margaritha. Chapter 4 follows the chronological unfolding and tells the story of the Sabbatai Zvi movement and the impact of failed messianism on conversion in the Holy Roman Empire.

The next six chapters (5–10) form the heart of the book and represent Carlebach’s original contribution. Based on a careful reading of conversion autobiographies, anti-Jewish writings, and Christian Hebraica, Carlebach presents the major themes of this book: the divided self of the convert, as revealed in autobiographies, with the permanent tension between the Jewish and Christian selves; the professions of the converts, who tended to be recruited from second-ranking religious positions in the Jewish communities and whose prospects for social advancement after baptism remained bleak throughout the early modern period; an especially good analysis of the family rupture occasioned by conversion, especially in disputes over child custody and child baptism; a short discussion of language and identity; the examination of the contributions converts made in their writings on Jewish rituals; and lastly, the rivalry between Jewish converts and Christian Hebraists. The final chapter looks at the convert in the age of Enlightenment, when fewer obstacles stood in the way of social integration.

The nature of Carlebach’s sources helps to determine the shape of the analysis. The self-referential nature of convert writings, the high-degree of intertextuality (Margaritha’s Der Gantz Jüdisch Glaub, 1530 was cited into the late eighteenth century by both converts and Christian Hebraists, for example), and the ahistorical character of exempla citations in the writings all make for a rich and nuanced textual analysis. Particularly impressive in this regard is Carlebach’s sensitive reading of the issues of language, identity, and the larger interplay between the residual Jewish self and the new identity striven after in convert writings. The combination of Christian prejudice toward Jewish converts and the need felt by the latter to bridge their two communities implied that the convert could never escape his Jewish identity during the early modern period. While self-referential sources privilege the interpretation of self and text, they can sometimes provide information on the real lives of converts. In her discussion of family rupture, for example, Carlebach skillfully draws on other courses to contextualize the cases of family dispute, but the social picture remains rather sketchy, a shortcoming that could have been compensated for if judicial sources in city archives had also been used.

All in all, within the declared goals of Divided Souls, Carlebach has given the reader an insightful and sensitive interpretation of the writings by converts in early modern Germany. She has further contextualized this reading within the larger milieu of Jewish–Christian relations. This is an impressive intellectual achievement that leaves the reader wishing to know more about the social world of the convert.

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This volume is an ambitious and wide-ranging (perhaps too wide-ranging) study of the interrelationship between medicine and German-speaking Jews throughout the ages. In essence it deals with two separate but intertwined issues: German-speaking Jews in the medical profession and the use of medical discourse to analyze and evaluate the Jewish people. The book covers a wide area both chronologically and geographically. “German Jews” is interpreted very broadly and includes a number of East European figures who either wrote in German or were trained in German universities. Although the bulk of the volume (Chaps. 4–7) deals with the period from around 1870 to the beginning of World War I, the first three chapters “begin at the beginning” (the Middle Ages) and carry the story up to the late eighteenth century.

This book is a broadening of Efron’s earlier work, *Defenders of the Race: Jewish Doctors and Race Science in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, widening the chronological frame and narrowing the geographic area while expanding beyond the racial aspects of the scientific and medical analysis of the Jews. Efron’s analysis is heavily influenced by the currently popular school of study of the body often associated with the name of Sander Gilman. Efron claims, with considerable justification, that his findings shed light on broader aspects of Central European culture, especially the nature of modern Jewish identity and of modern anti-Semitism.

*Medicine and the German Jews* is based on a wide variety of primary and secondary sources in English, Hebrew, German, and Yiddish. Efron generally handles his sources well, though occasionally he misses the nuances of some of the German and Yiddish original sources he quotes. The book is marked by numerous fascinating digressions into the general history of the medical profession or wider aspects of Jewish culture (e.g., a discussion of the feldshers [medical healers without formal medical school training] or Jewish diet and its relationship to health).

To my mind, the sections of the book that deal with the role of medicine in constructing the image of modern European Jews are stronger than the sections of the history of Jews in the medical profession. The first chapter, on the emergence of the medieval Jewish physician, seems overly general and covers a vast topic too sketchily. In the second chapter, the lengthy section on the early modern polemic against Jewish doctors (45–57) was particularly interesting. It seems to justify Efron’s claim that sixteenth-century Germany “developed a vocabulary and a canonized set of beliefs about the Jewish physician that remained a permanent fixture of German anti-Semitism into the modern period” (46). The third chapter, on “Haskalah and Healing,” concentrates on a close analysis of the writing of three Jewish physicians of the eighteenth century: Elcan Wolf, Moshe Markuze, and Markus Herz. I found Efron’s analysis of Herz’s attack on the Jewish tradition of early burial in the context of late eighteenth-century fears about burial alive particularity illuminating. Despite the interesting content in Markuze’s work, I won-
dered about the inclusion of his work written in Yiddish by an East European doctor (even if trained in Prussia). If, as Efron claims, the Haskalah doctors set an agenda for later Jewish criticisms of tradition, one wonders why he skips to the late nineteenth century with virtually no chronological bridge between his three Haskalah doctors and the nineteenth-century *fin de siècle*.

The heart of the book is in Chapters 4 to 6: “The Jewish Body Degenerate?,” “The Psychopathology of Everyday Jewish Life,” and “In Praise of Jewish Ritual.” The clever titles give only an approximate idea of the contents of each chapter. Chapter 4 deals at length with the contradiction between medical statistics, which showed Jews to be healthier than the rest of the population, and the widespread image of “an enduring Jewish type—the sickly Jew.” After detailed discussion about the lower instance of alcoholism and tuberculosis among Jews, their lower infant mortality rate and longer life expectancy, Efron gives a fascinating gender-based analysis. The image of the male Jew was “feminized,” depicting him as lacking the “manly” vice of alcoholism but instead, like women, having a hysterical concern about his own health.

Jews as urban, rootless, and homeless did not fit into the image of national greatness based on a healthy peasantry or knightly warriors construed by *fin de siècle* European nationalism. Chapter 5 analyzes the image of Jews as neurotic, hysterical, and disproportionately prone to mental illness. The sixth chapter deals with medical and scientific debates about Jewish rituals such as kashruth, ritual slaughter, and circumcision. Again he shows the contrast between the generally positive opinions or medical experts and the overwhelmingly negative image propagated by anti-Semitic publicists. The seventh chapter, dealing with Jews in the *fin de siècle* medical profession, returns to the earlier theme of polemical attacks on Jewish physicians and connects them with the huge increase in the numbers of Jewish doctors in the period.

Not only are the sections of the book dealing with Jews in the medical profession less original than the sections on medical views of the Jews, but they also include more errors. Although the errors do not generally invalidate the general argument of these parts of the study, they do show a lack of care in dealing with statistics. In one example, Efron misreads a statistic that 59 percent of Jewish university students studied medicine as if it showed that 59 percent of medical students were Jews. There are also occasional chronological or geographical misstatements such as Efron’s reference to the “emancipation discussion” in 1743, almost forty years before the discussion began. Despite such errors, the book is full of fascinating facts and insights. It helps us understand anti-Jewish hostility in a new way and adds significantly to our understanding of the ways in which the modern image of Jews has been constructed.

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The author, an Israeli folklorist who teaches at the University of Haifa, has had the excellent idea of scrutinizing the various “legends of origin” of Polish Jewry. She makes use of works by Hebrew and Yiddish authors, published in modern times but based on folk material of considerable antiquity, and of materials collected by ethnographers of pre-Holocaust Jewish Eastern Europe and by researchers in Israel. Her linguistic skills are admirable (she discusses material in German and Polish as well as both Jewish languages), and her book, while it does not altogether avoid professional jargon, is definitely accessible to the nonspecialist.

This short volume is divided into five chapters. The first chapter discusses “name midrashim,” that is, stories that derive the very name of Poland from the Hebrew words *po-lin*, meaning “dwell here.” The second deals with “legends of acceptance,” that have to do with the various ways in which the Jews were greeted on their arrival by their Polish hosts. In this case the author detects two models: one emphasizing the close and friendly relations between Jews and Poles and the other placing more emphasis on the voluntary segregation of the Jews from their non-Jewish neighbors. Chapter 3 is devoted to tales concerning Abraham Prochownik, the Jewish gunpowder merchant whom the ninth-century Poles wished to make their king, and Chapter 4 takes up the story of Esterke, the legendary mistress or wife of the fourteenth-century king, Casimir the Great. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the various legends that grew up around the founding of Polish synagogues.

Bar-Itzhak believes that these legends of origin have much to teach us about Jewish attitudes towards their own community and toward the country in which they lived, and she succeeds in convincing the reader. Indeed, as a historian I can only welcome the author’s important observation that these ancient legends have evolved over time, that they have meant different things to different generations of Polish Jews, and that the published versions of these legends must be understood in their proper historical and social context. This context, however, is not always fully demarcated. Bar-Itzhak is surely right to insist that the version of the Jews’ first arrival in Poland published in 1861 by Marek Dubs in the Jewish-Polish journal *Jutrzenka* reflects this journal’s integrationist stance and its desire to emphasize the amicable and mutually beneficial aspects of the early relations between Jews and Poles, but she does not tell us very much about the “integrationist camp” then emerging within Galician and Russian-Polish Jewry. Nor am I convinced that the eighteenth-century Galician memoirist Dov Ber of Bolechów (here rendered Bolichow), who published a version of this story that promotes the “segregationist model” of early Polish-Jewish coexistence, should be called a *maskil* (46). She is, however, surely right to read all of these legends as, among other things, a species of Jewish apologetics. In her summary she notes that they served to bestow a “spiritual and religious stamp of approval to the very act of settlement in and continued presence in Poland” to demonstrate the Jewish presence on Polish soil since
time immemorial, emphasize the important Jewish contributions to the welfare of
the Polish state (including the Jews’ magical ability to insure the proper amount of
rain), and point out that good relations had existed between the “hosts” and their
“guests,” although these relations soured over time (159).

The author devotes a good deal of space to a close reading of the reworking
of some of these tales by Shmuel Yosef Agnon, the great Galician-born Hebrew
writer. This seems, at first glance, a rather unexpected exercise for a folklorist—
Agnon, after all, was a highly sophisticated author and an impeccable representa-
tive of Jewish “high culture,” not exactly a representative of the “folk.” None-
theless, Bar-Itzhak’s analysis of his renditions of the legends of Polish Jewry
constitutes, for this reader, the highlight of her book. We are shown how Agnon,
while basing himself on the ancient tales, subverts them by suggesting in various
subtle ways that Jews and Poles were not destined to live together in harmony, and
that the only proper course for modern Polish Jewry was to seek redemption in the
Land of Israel. In other words, Agnon rejected the idea—suggested in the name of
midrashim—that Poland was a sacred space for Jews and imparts to the various
legends a Zionist sensibility. As far as he is concerned, “the pact [between Jews
and Poles] is likely to be breached because of the disparity between pagan Polish
materialism and the Jewish view that real life depends upon the life of the spirit”
(85). His version of the Esterke story—according to which the king of Poland fell
madly in love with a simple Jewish girl and, as a result, treated his Jewish subjects
with exemplary generosity—makes the same point. We have here, then, another
fascinating example of how the ideological bent of the teller of the tale informs the
tale itself, bending it to his particular world view—“segregationist” in the case of
the traditionalist Dov Ber of Bolechów, “integrationist” in the case of Dubs, and
Zionist in the case of Agnon.

The book is enhanced by a large number of interesting illustrations, although
it must be said that not all of them are closely related to the text. The artistic rep-
resentation of the arrival of the Jews in Poland and the Esterke story were themes
taken up by several prominent Polish artists of Jewish origin, including Aleksander
Lesser and Maurycc Gottlieb. On the Polish side, no less a figure than Jan Matekjo,
the greatest representative of nineteenth-century nationalist art, devoted a re-
markable and highly idiosyncratic canvas to the “reception of the Jews in Poland”
in 1096, in which a Jewish delegation to the court of Wladyslaw Herman in Plock
is led by the Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela! An analysis of the visual rendi-
tions of these “legends of origins” would no doubt serve as a fascinating supple-
ment to Bar-Itzhak’s analyses of the texts. For the time being, we can be grateful
to her for demonstrating that these stories have much to teach us about the inter-
nal world of Polish Jewry.

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The first thing a reader should know about this book is that it was written from Jerusalem. No Jewish city in history, certainly no diaspora city, can hope to compete with Jerusalem. Looking down from Jerusalem, New York looks decidedly grim. As Lederhendler notes with admirable brevity, the “events of May–June 1967 threw into relief the apparent gulf between Israelis (who could fend for themselves) and Jews (who could not)” (190). Diaspora condemns Jews to mere ethnic existence, to life as one group among others. In the 1960s New York Jews recognized “that Diaspora life had become existentially problematic” (190). They faced “cultural despair,” decline of community, and a loss of nerve that challenged their earlier, “utopian” optimism about urban life, its freedom, and its Jewish possibilities (87).

The second thing a reader should know is that this reviewer’s book, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews* (1981) is explicitly challenged. Lederhendler invites an “ongoing collegial exchange” in his preface (xvi). This review is offered in that spirit. I have been waiting for at least a decade for such a book to appear that both builds on my work on ethnicity in the interwar decades and seeks to extend the story and revise it. Lederhendler, however, writes not as a social historian but as a cultural historian. I confess at the onset that I find Lederhendler’s cultural tack elusive and frustrating, leaving me wondering why certain individuals get a lot of attention (Nathan Glazer, Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, and Saul Bellow) and others (fill in your own list of important novelists, essayists, philosophers, rabbis, musicians, artists, critics) don’t. I should state my conclusions at the outset: Lederhendler does not convince me of “the Jews’ inability to maintain and transmit the urban ethnic lifestyle that their parents had invented” (202).

Despite the title, the book focuses on the 1960s, specifically the half-decade from 1964 to 1969 when New York succumbed to riots, bitter conflict between African Americans and Jews over public education, and a breakdown in city services. Jewish population in the city plummeted during the 1960s. This late and short-lived departure for the suburbs reduced the city’s Jewish population from approximately 2.1 million to 1.2 million. What is striking about Jewish participation in “white flight” is how rapid it was and how brief, unlike the movement of other whites, who started leaving in 1950 and continued to leave after 1970. Thus Jews remain a significant percentage of the city’s white population, and a majority of the metropolitan area’s Jewish population continues to live in New York. Suburbanization provides the context for Lederhendler to explore the weaknesses of Jewish culture, the fragmentation of Jewish politics, the vapidity of religious activity, and the failure of Jewish labor unions to integrate a new working class into the promise of urban life.

Lederhendler’s indictment is powerful. He characterizes Jewish culture in the 1960s as one of “retrieval,” burdened by nostalgia for a lost part in Eastern Europe and the Lower East Side. Judaism, too, flounders in the 60s, despite an impressive array of religious thinkers living and writing in New York. Lederhendler is not interested in institutional development, although he mentions briefly the enormous numbers of national and international organizations headquartered in the city. Nor is he concerned with congregational rabbis, despite their intellectual prominence.
(e.g., Milton Steinberg) and leadership (e.g., Emmanuel Rackman). Theological pessimism accompanied political pessimism and cultural pessimism. All moved resolutely toward an inward, postintegrationist, Judaism. Lederhendler argues that Jews sought “civility” in politics. He prefers this term to liberalism as it also defends the legitimacy and authority of law, a position shared by Jewish neoconservatives as well as liberals. The pursuit of civility fragmented Jewish politics and that ultimately gave Jews more power. Indeed, Jews emerge from the 1960s more firmly entrenched in positions of authority than in previous decades. Ultimately, Lederhendler agrees with Nathan Glazer’s extraordinarily ahistorical statement: “Even if all the Jews had gone to Argentina or Canada, New York would still be New York, and Buenos Aires and Montreal would still only be pretty much what they are” (50). In short, Jews didn’t shape New York, though the city did influence their ethnic life because they came as immigrants with such weak ethnicity.

So what’s wrong with this picture? Well, if one assumes that diaspora Jewish life is not hopelessly ineffectual, then one must ask how the impressive cultural achievements of New York Jews in the postwar decades emerged. As a social historian, I look to lived realities: the communities of artists and writers, the congregations and institutions that sustained religious thinkers and intellectuals, the audiences that attended concerts and performances and purchased books and magazines. New York Jews nourished all those writers and sociologists who attacked them for their bourgeois pretensions, their lack of religious zeal, and their hopeless love affair not with “civility” but with America. New York Jews also continued to produce labor leaders on the left who organized African American and Puerto Rican workers (e.g., local 1199) and who struggled against national antiurban policies that encouraged suburbanization through massive highway subventions and the GI bill.

Changes and conflicts occurred in the city. Jews moved out of old occupations into new ones; they moved out of old neighborhoods into new ones; they tore the city down and built it up. But neither change nor conflict spell decline (though there are strong currents in American and Jewish culture that bemoan both). Ethnicity is interactive. Jews come to understand themselves in relation to other Jews and to non-Jews among whom they live. In the postwar decades, New York Jews had to reconfigure their identity as Americans in relation to Israel and as Jews in relation to African Americans and Puerto Ricans. But shared values, attitudes, ways of living and, yes, moral community endured among New York Jews. Were Avrom Reisin to return to the city today, he could easily pen his poem that praised not only the multitude of “countries” and “tongues” but also the experience of being “nowhere a stranger” and “everywhere, a free man.” The languages may be different (Israeli Hebrew or Yiddish) but the fundamental New York Jewish diasporic experience endures.

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Jerusalem is an ancient venue that has been not only a symbol of peace and a focus of religious belief but also a city of dispute. For centuries, indeed millennia, it has been a magnet for conflict between diverse groups with divergent religious interests and others with competing political and/or national claims. It is sacred to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and claimed as a national capitol by both Israelis and Palestinian Arabs. Since the mid-1950s it has been a central issue of the Arab–Israeli conflict that emerged to be even more problematic after the Six Day War of 1967, in which Israel gained full control over the entire city that had been divided between it and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the first Arab–Israeli war of 1948–1949. In recent years it has become the ultimate issue among the final settlement stumbling blocks for an Israeli–Palestinian peace. It has served as a pretext for Osama bin Laden and as a concern for Muslim regimes as diverse as Iran and Saudi Arabia because of Jewish control over Muslim holy places, in this instance the third holiest site in Islam, after Mecca and Medina.

The author has taken on himself a difficult and complex task: to examine Jerusalem as a contested city; he deals with various aspects of the city and its political history in Arab–Israeli relations since the 1960s. Using a multidisciplinary approach (history, political science, geography, city planning, sociology, and international relations) he seeks to dispel many of the myths that shape the discourse and to examine the political and religious fault lines relating to Jerusalem. He presents the geographical and urban reality and its historical background; he describes how Jerusalem fared during the Israel–Egypt peace negotiations of 1977–79; he analyzes the Israeli–Palestinian negotiations from the early 1980s to the Declaration of Principles negotiated in Oslo and signed in Washington in 1993. He considers the role and the concerns of both the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as those of Jordan, concerning the city’s Islamic holy places. Klein also analyzes the Palestinians’ position and relations between their local representatives and national institutions. He discusses the “Palestinian identity of East Jerusalem” as well as Israeli policy and actions under both Labor and Likud governments.

Klein is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University and a Board Member of B’tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories that is generally critical of Israeli government policies and actions in the occupied territories. He is also a Researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies. As with most writers on the subject of Jerusalem and the Arab–Israeli conflict the author (indeed, the reviewer as well) is not wholly objective or dispassionate, and one might ask whether anyone can be. His views are those of the left-of-center in Israel’s political spectrum and these are reflected in his work. The blurb on the book jacket notes: “indeed the Al-Aqsa Intifada was precipitated by a visit to Jerusalem’s most holy Muslim site by Ariel Sharon.” This not only points to the contemporary importance of the city, but also clearly identifies the perspective of the author, who does not note that Sharon’s vis-
it was to a Jewish holy site on the Temple Mount and approved by the Israeli Government.

The book is dense, loaded with arguments, data, information, analyses, and points of view. There are lots of details (it is well, if not overly, documented—sometimes to the point of obscuring the story and the analysis). It makes for difficult reading; the arguments are hard to follow, and the organization of the work is trying. It provides the reader with a wealth of usually accurate and useful information, but despite, or perhaps because of, the overwhelming amount of information provided, the author has a problem in communicating clearly his ideas and proposals as the reader is overwhelmed with references and notes. Nevertheless various assertions remain undocumented. Curiously, while the city is holy to all three monotheistic faiths, there is little discussion of Christian or Jewish holy places. Indeed the index does not even list the Temple, and the Temple Mount listing provides a cross-reference to the section on Islamic Holy Places. Although he seeks to dispel myths, he seems to contribute to some even while deflating others. Primary sources are not often used although he notes a wide range of documents and sources in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. Israeli and Hebrew language secondary sources are widely and liberally used even to the point where discussion of United States policy is often based on and refers to Israeli newspaper sources. This is particularly surprising given the ready availability of official and primary U.S. government sources in print and online. His maps are good and useful. The author purports to describe the reality of the situation as a basis for a future practical solution. The work further amplifies the issues in concern but does not offer a compromise solution that is possible and practical.

The author’s optimism about the future abounds. He argues that “the foundation laid at Camp David will constitute a reference framework for all future arrangements, since its basis is solid” (5). Nevertheless, he admits that “when guns are blasting and people dying it is hard to see how the two sides can begin to negotiate again, in order to complete what they began in Camp David” (5). The aftermath of Camp David II with the al-Aksa Intifada and escalation in the early months of 2002 seem to endorse this sentiment and raise serious doubts about optimism concerning the future of Jerusalem. Specialists and students will find this work contributes some new ideas and perspectives on old issues.

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Alfonso de la Torre (ca.1417–60), a person of somewhat obscure background, wrote Visión delectable de la filosofía artes liberales, metafísica y filosofía
moral (or Visión deleytable as Girón-Negrón insists) ca. 1440 at the urging of the prior of Navarre, who was close to the crown prince Carlos de Viana. An unusual philosophical work for a Christian author, it does not conform to standard Scholastic doctrine, but is clearly dependent to a very great extent on the Guide for the Perplexed (Moreh nevukhim) of Maimonides. As such, the work, and this detailed analysis of it, is of particular interest to students of Jewish philosophy. At the outset, let it be said that Girón-Negrón has done a thorough and brilliant job in this book, a revision of his doctoral dissertation. He was aided by Jewish advisors in understanding and translating Hebrew texts, but one assumes that, as is the case with many Spanish scholars, his knowledge of Arabic is his own. He also has done an extensive amount of reading in secondary Jewish literature. (There are some errors, nevertheless; e.g., the philosopher Abraham Bivagch, not “Bibago,” did not engage in a “philosophical discussion” with Juan II of Aragón; rather, it was with an unnamed Christian “sage,” and it was a polemical debate, not a philosophical discussion.)

Girón-Negrón devotes the first chapter to background and possible sources, including a discussion of Scholasticism in fifteenth-century Spain. He discusses briefly (17–18) the scholarly consensus that the author is identical with a student from Burgos who had earned his degree in theology at the University of Salamanca, and presumably moved to Navarre where he wrote his work, probably in 1440. Of particular interest is the question of his possible converso background (19 ff.). For some inexplicable reason, however, the author sides with the view of Marcel Bataillon that Alfonso was not the same as the “Bachiller de la Torre” of Burgos, as a result of alleged “aragonisms” (use of some Aragonese terms) in his work, arguing that the fact that he knew little Hebrew, if at all, suggests a second-generation converso background (21). Yet he himself admits that the “aragonisms” can easily be explained on other grounds. It is a great leap of logic to assume, also, that merely because he seems not to have known Hebrew he had to be a “second-generation” converso, for in the fifteenth century a great many Spanish Jews, much less conversos, did not know Hebrew or knew it very poorly. The issue of whether a converso could have studied at the particular college of Salamanca that the “bachiller” attended, because of a supposed prohibition on persons of “Jewish blood” studying there (the limpieza de sangre statutes), is dismissed (22) by siding with Sicoff and attacking the contrary views of Asensio; however, it is by no means so simple. Nor is it correct (n.75) that the distinguished scholar Domínguez Ortiz “also sides with Sicoff”; he did not (see on this my Conversos, Inquisition, and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain [University of Wisconsin Press, 1995; revised paper ed., 2002], p. 230 and n. 72, and also elsewhere there for information about Alfonso de la Torre; it is unfortunate that the author did not use this book). Nor, contra Salinas Espinosa, cited in the same note, do we have any evidence of Jews or conversos who studied at Salamanca at this time.

Girón-Negrón makes an interesting suggestion that, in addition to Maimonides, the polemical treatise of Hasdai Crescas, Bitul ʾikarei ha-noẓrim, which was originally written in Catalan, was known to Alfonso (27). In addition to the possibility of the influence of the Spanish Muslim philosopher Ibn Ṭufayl (that Carreras y Artau referred to him as “Jewish” was no doubt a slip of the pen, or
editorial error), and the possibility of a Spanish version of his work should not be overlooked—a work by Bartolomeo Fazzio (d. 1457), “Dialogues de felicitate vitae” (unpublished, manuscript at Madrid B.N.) ought to be considered (he is not mentioned by Girón-Negrón).

The lengthy second chapter details the author’s religious philosophy, also in connection with possible Jewish influences, including speculation on Kabbalah. This is also not without some errors. Enrique de Villena said nothing about “kabbalistic” amulets attributed to various Jewish scholars (153; he misread his source), Ibn Adret most definitely did not “espouse talismanic magic . . . as an efficacious means of astral manipulation” (155; cf. Responsa of Ibn Adret II, No. 281). Yet these are minor faults in what otherwise is an exceptional tour de force in correctly demonstrating for the first time the extent of Alfonso’s dependence on Maimonides, a dependence, which was almost total. Alfonso, of course, used the Spanish translation by the converso Pedro (Díaz) de Toledo (available now in a critical edition by Moshe Lazar, 1989; see also I. Bar-Lewaw, “Pedro de Toledo,” in Homenaje á Antonio Rodríguez Moñino [Madrid, 1966] 1:57–64; an important article not cited by Girón-Negrón; nor was Pedro’s other translation, Plato’s Phaedo [Libro llamdo “Fedrón,” ed. Nicholas G. Round, 1993], consulted; could it be demonstrated that Alfonso knew this work?).

There are some minor editorial problems, such as the failure to correct some understandable (for one whose first language is not English) grammatical errors, and the misprint of the letter nun for gimmel throughout in the quotation from Shevet Yehudah (219).

This book should be of great interest to those who wish to see the influence of medieval Jewish philosophy on Christian thought, and its apparent continued influence on at least some converso circles. In that respect, it should be noted (as the author does not) that Carlos de Viana, the prince for whom Alfonso wrote the work, was himself of Jewish descent.

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This is a compelling, meticulously argued, subtle, and literate book on an important subject—although the question of what that subject is remains oddly open. Gary Weissman interprets a number of authoritative and popular representations of the Holocaust (principally those by Elie Wiesel, Lawrence Langer, Stephen Spielberg, and Claude Lanzmann) as evidence of their—and presumably their audiences’—post-Holocaust “efforts to experience the Holocaust” and somehow to recapture that horrific reality in feeling. These efforts, Weissman shows in a measured discussion that contrasts with the high-pitched register of much Holo-
caust writing, encounter what he sees as fundamental difficulties—and not only because of Primo Levi’s chilling reminder that if direct experience is a requirement for authenticity, the only true witnesses of the Holocaust are not those who survived but those who died. The difficulties he identifies vary in the works discussed, and his book’s concluding chapter, in which he ends up questioning the warrant for any “fantasies of witnessing,” provides only a brief conspectus. He thus leaves his readers to make their own way back to the Holocaust from the post-Holocaust—from which, when the survivors are gone, everyone will set out.

This careful line of argument seems to me to lend itself to an even broader rendering of the same evidence. Weissman directs his criticism against attempts to feel the Holocaust anew—more generally, against claims for that as the exclusive criterion of authentic access to the Holocaust. But it is arguable that the true object of his critique is not the fantasy of current attempts to experience the Holocaust—a fantasy defined by its failure—but a broader denial of all accessibility whatever to the Holocaust. For the insistence on direct experience follows from a prior claim of the Holocaust’s basic incomprehensibility: for all their other differences, the figures Weissman discusses, from Wiesel to Lanzmann, assert in common that there is no understanding or explaining that event. The one route left to them for addressing the Holocaust (as they see it) is then through experience, or feeling—unmediated contact in contrast to the mediations of analysis or reason. The sharp dichotomy assumed here between understanding and feeling is itself questionable, but it is the assumption which appears in it of the inadequacy of all mediated Holocaust-representation that leads into the special pleading (or fantasy) on behalf of a form of unmediated experience—one which also turns out (by the claimants’ own lights) to fail.

The widely held thesis that Weissman attacks thus comes to this: All attempts to explain the Holocaust are bound to be inadequate; the most that can be hoped for, then, is to convey something of the experience—but this, too, must fail because feeling and emotion, even at their fullest, are also inadequate witnesses: They, too, turn out to be mediated. And Weissman’s own counter-thesis then emerges: Against the claim that the Holocaust is incomprehensible or inexplicable, understanding and explanation are held to be preconditions (and possible, at least to some extent) for access to the Holocaust. It is because the exclusionary appeals to experience deny this that the inconsistencies which impede them recur.

The fallacy that Weissman brings to light in this way comes out clearly in an otherwise slight incident which he recounts: A dispute between Elie Wiesel and Alfred Kazin over the latter’s questioning whether a particular episode in Wiesel’s *Night*—the hanging of a young boy in the camp—was historically accurate. Wiesel’s reaction to this challenge was sharp (and ad hominem). Underneath his polemic, however, Weissman identifies a substantive issue: Wiesel’s assumption of the privileged authority of the eyewitness (himself) versus the merely historical claims of the scholar (Kazin). This claim of first-person privilege, we are reminded, also grounds Wiesel’s conception of nonfiction: His book, *Night*, which on the basis of both internal and external evidence is a novel—libraries typically catalogue it as fiction—is held by Wiesel himself to be historically factual (or even more truthful than that). Weissman sees in this stance Wiesel’s conception of the
Holocaust as metahistorical, beyond analysis or understanding—an assumption to which Weissman attributes the inconsistencies and fissures in much of Wiesel’s writing; the unmediated access alleged in Wiesel’s retrieval of the past turns out in fact to be mediated in the present, by literary or historical or ideological obtrusions or by language itself. Weissman finds similar lines of reasoning—and difficulties—in Langer’s (inconsistent) privileging of “Holocaust Testimonies,” in Spielberg’s concealments and omissions in Schindler’s List, and in Lanzmann’s stark insistence—notwithstanding his own Shoah—on the Holocaust’s incomprehensibility. (Just what else, the question persists, would Lanzmann consider the import of Shoah to be?)

Even after the many previous readings of the figures and works Weissman discusses, his critique of them is instructive—so much so that I have here gone beyond the reviewer’s normal commission by broadening his argument. Indeed, his objections to what has become a near-canonical conception of Holocaust discourse which assert that the event’s unintelligibility for anyone who was not in it suggest a number of more general questions. Unlike many—arguably, most—writers on the Holocaust, Weissman’s answer to three principal such questions would almost certainly be no:

1. Is any descriptive or analytic account (even of trivial events, a fortiori of momentous ones) fully adequate to the events themselves? (Consider how often such expressions appear as “Words fail me . . . .” “Nothing I say can measure up to . . . .,” and so forth. Indeed, those locutions represent a standard figure of speech: The preteritio—“No description can come close. . . .”—has been applied to events as large as the Holocaust and as slight as victory in a basketball game.

2. Is personal experience of an event or situations necessary to be able to explain, describe, or understand it? (This claim has at times been made for virtually every type of significant event or experience: sorrow, love, ecstasy, religious belief, dying, fear, beauty. And yet, of course, the efforts of representation—and their achievements—are all around. Is it true in general that one cannot fully grasp or analyze an event or experience without actually living it? Perhaps, but there also are ways of understanding or explaining events and experiences less than fully but significantly—even the Shoah (see again Question 1). (Weissman underscores the often-ignored point that victims of the Holocaust would rarely have seen themselves as experiencing the Holocaust; brutalized and murdered, they still experienced that individually or in small groups.)

And then

3. Is the history of the Holocaust as history more difficult to represent—or to understand or to explain—than other complex historical events, for example, the French Revolution or the American Civil War? Perhaps it is the Holocaust’s moral enormity that is held to be impossible to comprehend; but what then of radical or even ordinary evil on a smaller scale? In the platonist/rationalist tradition of ethics, all wrongdoing, even the most trivial, is unintelligible, irrational: Is this what makes representation of the Holocaust so difficult? But why accept that platonist view?
The negative answers to these three leading questions shape an agenda for future discussions of Holocaust-representation. Again, these attributed answers go beyond Weissman’s explicit statements—but even without this extension, I would underscore the acuteness of his critique of important figures in Holocaust thought who otherwise have largely escaped criticism (certainly as a group). If my elaboration of his views goes too far, readers may (I hope in any event, will) turn to Weissman’s own account. To be sure, he might prefer to reach that goal by a less circuitous route—but only a book well worth reading could reach it this way either.

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Several years ago I had the good fortune to meet Iris Parush, and I asked how she, a scholar of Hebrew literature known best for her interest in canon formation, turned to the topic of women readers in Eastern Europe. She explained that it was her work on the writer and critic David Frischmann that piqued her interest in the topic. The emotional and contradictory rhetoric of this refined thinker led Parush to embark on an enormous and important research project. *Reading Jewish Women: Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society* is the result of her work. It is a remarkable book for its scope and depth, but most of all for its perspective. One of Parush’s main conclusions is that one of the unexpected consequences of Jewish women’s exclusion from the traditional Jewish educational system was that they were free to pursue a secular education. Parush dubs this phenomenon “the benefits of marginality,” as it was women’s very marginality that paradoxically allowed them access to literature denied to their brothers. I would suggest that, similarly, Parush’s status as a scholar of literature, and thus marginal to the major historical debates and concerns, endows her with a degree of creativity from which we all benefit.

The concept of Jewish women as readers is not new. Anyone familiar with the literature of the Eastern-European Jewish past knows to expect the dual images of the pious older woman with her *tsena-urena* and the vibrant younger woman engrossed in Tolstoi or Schiller. Parush’s contribution is not in bringing to light new sources. Certainly her knowledge of the literature of the period is great, and she uncovered and read an impressive number of memoirs by both men and women. She also mined the Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian language journals of the late nineteenth century, but what she really adds is a new perspective.
Through sensitive and careful readings of the contemporary autobiographies, Parush compares the “reading biographies” of men and women. In doing so she demonstrates that the well-known eureka moment of Jewish men on first encountering scientific texts or maskilic autobiography did not exist for women. Jewish women were able to assimilate secular literature into their lives without a breach with their past. Many scholars have read these same memoirs over the years, but Parush’s unique training and interest in books allowed her to pay attention to both what and how people read to reach this important insight.

Parush quite correctly devotes separate chapters to the educational training and reading paths of women who read in Yiddish, European languages, and Hebrew. Although many women passed from one category to another, this division allows Parush to focus on important distinctions. Thus, whereas women had to rely on men to teach them Hebrew, in quite a few cases the reverse was true for European languages. Parush uses this finding to write at greater length on women as agents of social change.

The final chapter returns to Parush’s original inspiration, David Fischmann. Parush shows how, despite the very real pain, anxiety, and even rage of Frischmann and others over women’s trespass into the sacred sphere of Hebrew, ultimately concerns over the decline of readership led to their embrace of women as both readers and writers of Hebrew literature. Parush’s acute reading skills and comfort with the array of sources are particularly impressive in this essay.

Parush’s unique literary engagement endows the book with indisputable merit. At the same time, the nonstandard approach leads to certain difficulties. Most significant is that learning about Jewish life in Eastern Europe mainly from the maskilim can create misconceptions. Parush frequently refers to the “war between the maskilim and the haredim” in a manner that is both anachronistic and overly deterministic. Although it is certainly true that traditional Jews and their detractors had conflicts during the nineteenth century, to speak of a war between two opposing camps is to reflect a later reality back on the 1860s. Parush does not use dates very frequently and seems to assume a commonality between the experiences of men and women born in the 1830s and the 1870s. Equally disturbing, she credits both the traditionalists and the progressives with a degree of cohesion and autonomy that they certainly did not have. She writes of rabbis barring Jews access to Hebrew grammar and of maskilim deliberately creating schools for girls without proper Judaic curricula as if neither of these groups operated within an educational tradition and within communities with their own expectations. These misunderstandings can be distracting to the historian, but they do not detract from the overall import of the book.

We have the Tauber Institute for Jewish Studies and Brandeis University to thank for bringing out this important work in English. Although the English translation does not fully capture the beautiful literary quality of Parush’s Hebrew style and includes the odd choices to leave both “Laaz” and “haredim” untranslated, as well as some highly idiosyncratic transliterations of names and places (e.g. Havulson, Telshie), it remains quite readable.
Without a doubt, this book is a seminal contribution to the study of East European Jewry. Scholars of this period, and especially historians, would be well advised to consider Parush’s novel approach and findings.

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In the Early Modern period, the Jewish people did not develop theater arts comparable to that of other cultures. One reason often given to explain this absence of theatrical tradition is the virulent denunciations of theater by the rabbis, who likened it to idolatry and heresy, and condemned it as being incompatible with monotheism. The biblical injunction (Ps.1:1): “Blessed is the man that sits not in the seat of the scornful” has often been cited as condemning the theater, interpreting the Hebrew word *lezîm*, not as mocking or impious, but as buffoon or jester, and by extension, actor. Ahuva Belkin attempts to explain this cultural fact while at the same time challenging the argument that Jews did not create any theatrical tradition. From the Middle Ages on, Ashkenazi society produced many forms of popular entertainment, the most accomplished of which was the *Purim-shpil*. Belkin’s work, which makes use of the pioneering studies of Yiddish theater by B. Gorin, Y. Shatsky, I. Shipper, and Ch. Shmeruk, offers much new and original material.

Unlike some historians, for whom Purim plays had no artistic value, she reminds us to what extent these plays offer a privileged access to many fundamental aspects of Ashkenazi culture. The vernacular language, more than Hebrew, became a space for linguistic creation, social criticism and a questioning of values. Using different methods of investigation, Belkin reveals the complexity, diversity, and plasticity of the *Purim-shpil*, with reference to the social history of the Jews, the sociology of Ashkenazi culture, the history of art forms and cultural transfers between Jewish society, and the surrounding societies. Above all, she opens the study of the *Purim-shpil* to a multitude of domains, including the history of mentalities, the anthropology of Ashkenazi culture, comparative history of theatrical traditions in Europe, and the theory of literary forms. Tracing the historic evolution of the *Purim-shpil*, whose oldest written source goes back only as far 1697, she presents the theatrical genre as a fusion of disparate elements from different eras. She retraces its emergence and evolution from ancient improvisations on the jubilation following the hanging of Haman, as well as from medieval parodies of *derashot* and burlesque sketches on daily life in Jewish communities.

From an anthropological viewpoint, (J.G. Frazer, A. van Genep, V. Turner) the *Purim-shpil* tradition is likened to a rite of passage connected with the change of seasons and the carnival-like transgressions that accompany it. Although related to the reading of the Scroll of Esther in the synagogue, Purim time remains an occasion for
a cluster of rituals and practices concerned with social contention, the breaking of taboos and the portrayal of a topsy-turvy world. The author analyzes the complex dialectic that exists between respect and transgression: respect of religious themes and codes concerning the reading of the Book of Esther and the transgressions evident in parody, laughter, social criticism, and carnival-like inversion. Based on the studies of M. Bakhtin, the author defines the characteristic features of popular Jewish culture relative to oral forms, insults, obscenity, the corporal, and the grotesque. She analyzes the poetic forms used in festive reversal, including parodies of sacred texts, wordplay, burlesque monologues, and verbal-sparring matches. The texts play on the clash between the most extreme elements of Jewish culture: sacred and transgression, pure and impure, high culture in Hebrew, and popular culture in Yiddish. The political and social dimensions are also of great importance. Theatrical performances offer an outlet for passions, conflicts, and social frustrations, as shown in the diatribes against the learned and the rich, against rabbis and community leaders. With the denunciation of Haman inspired by the Targum Sheni, Purim also affords an occasion to target anti-Jewish stereotypes circulated by Christians and to reappropriate them, the better to combat them and stigmatize their irrational aspect.

The work contains a great deal of information about the actors, staging, and conditions of the performances. There were some professional actors, but for the most part, the plays were written and acted by cantors and yeshivah students, craftsmen, or ordinary householders. They were presented either in private homes or on an improvised stage in a public place. The author goes beyond the borders of Jewish culture, using a comparative approach to illustrate the phenomena of cultural permeability. She shows how the Purim-shpil was influenced by the celebrations and theatrical genres of the surrounding societies, in particular such forms as the Commedia dell’arte and the biblical dramas of the Christian world. Belkin presents a universal grammar of theatrical forms linked to carnival and celebration, many ingredients of which we find in the tradition of the Purim-shpil. The eighteenth century saw the gradual decline of Purim plays and the birth of modern theater, which began to be recognized and respectable, while still plunging its roots in the themes, characters, and writing of the Purim-shpil. The work of Itzik Manger, evoked at the end of the book, bears witness to the existence of a tradition that went through multiple mutations and, in every era, nourished the Jewish imagination. Belkin has produced a scholarly, original, and innovative work which, beginning with an exhaustive study of the Purim-shpil, shows the modernity of popular forms of Ashkenazi culture.

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This important study of Franz Rosenzweig is among the first book-length forays into the silence surrounding Martin Heidegger in modern Jewish thought.
In seeking to establish an elective affinity between these two thinkers, Gordon subverts the firewall established by Karl Löwith between Rosenzweig’s passion for eternity and Heidegger’s focus on the pure temporality of human existence (*Dasein*). In doing so, he bucks the link in contemporary Jewish philosophy between Rosenzweig and Levinas, in which an ethics based on a good beyond Being upends ontology as first philosophy. In Gordon’s reading, eternity is to the Jewish people as *Dasein* is to Being. Jewish existence, understood ontologically, not metaphysically, assumes the uncanny, ungrounded, and self-sustaining character of Heideggerian authenticity. Ontologically radical, eternity thus becomes like time, a *this-worldly* framework, constituting the ultimate horizon of redemption.

The match between Rosenzweig and Heidegger is an uneven philosophical, cum cultural mix-up. Gordon illuminates common philosophical features shared by both thinkers: the antiplatonic élan, the critique of scientific positivism and historicism, the introduction of archaic elements to irradiate modern consciousness, the significance ascribed to the individual and death, time and language, being and nothingness. To be sure, critical readers will note that all these hallmarks identified were such standard fixtures of late Wilhelmine culture as to render the presence of Heidegger and Weimar superfluous. In “Vertauschte Fronten” (1929), Rosenzweig notes the affinity between himself and Heidegger. But I suspect that here, as elsewhere, Rosenzweig was inclined to overdraw tenuous associations between himself and others (e.g., Hermann Cohen, Judah Halevy).

The conversation between Rosenzweig and Heidegger depends on fundamental contrasts raised and then dropped by Gordon, most notably the difference between beings and *being*. For Rosenzweig in part I of *The Star of Redemption*, world and “man” and even God are *ontic* phenomena. Unlike Heidegger, Rosenzweig never pursues the *ontological* question of Being and questions regarding the type of being we are. Nor, conversely, is Rosenzweig particularly engaged by “the nothing” that for Heidegger constitutes an existential condition of possibility. Rosenzweig does not accord “primacy” to “nothing,” as Gordon insists he does (174), because for Rosenzweig, nothing refers not to the naught of our existence but to our first knowledge and its operation prior to what we can formally know about God, world, and person. The key term that marks the thought of God, world, and “man” is neither *all* nor *nothing*, but *something*.

The more important insight raised by Gordon concerns time. In subverting Löwith’s scheme, Gordon goes beyond the basic point that for Rosenzweig eternity is enmeshed in temporal structures. His more radical counterclaim that theology and ontology are “identical” with time is one that flattens the one into the other (235). Comparing the circular flow of time to blood, a central image of Jewish peoplehood for Rosenzweig, Gordon neglects the fact that for Rosenzweig time stops dead and coagulates. Death has lost its theatrical character as a cosmic, ontic event (166). As the utmost ontological *possibility* defining human being-in-the-world, it becomes too much like time. And so almost does God. Very late in the text, Gordon concedes that Rosenzweig’s understanding of God remains atemporal (190, 235). Had this atemporal dimension been introduced earlier and less grudgingly, the mismatch between Rosenzweig and Heidegger would have assumed an altered cast.
In drawing a line connecting Rosenzweig and Heidegger—Rosenzweig and German modernism—Gordon insists that Rosenzweig was not a Jewish thinker and that Judaism was for him “merely [a] medium” (307, 36, 311–13). Flouting the fundamental importance that both Rosenzweig and Heidegger ascribed to linguistic form in relation to content, Gordon’s claim is based on one isolated prooftext in “The New Thinking,” where Rosenzweig asserts that The Star of Redemption, is not a Jewish book. In refusing to read this statement critically (as what? the desire to reach out to a broader readership? wounded vanity that only Jews had bothered to purchase the book, most of whom never saw anything in it past a call to keep kosher kitchens?), Gordon ignores the aggressive particularism that first drove Rosenzweig to Judaism; and he feeds the very parochial division between Judaism and “Germanism” that Rosenzweig rejected out of hand after the publication of his magnum opus.

Rosenzweig and Heidegger remains a remarkable book. Its chief virtue is to drag the former into German studies and continental philosophy and the latter into modern Jewish thought. Gordon has broken a serious taboo by violating the philosophical and historical antipathies and loyalties expressed by Löwith and Levinas regarding Heidegger and the Holocaust. If Gordon carries modern Jewish thought towards a still active and important philosophical center, many in the field will continue to dig in their heels. They will maintain a critical distance for good philosophical reasons, not just for the political ones dismissed too quickly by Gordon (19). However, they will have to do so simultaneous to this groundbreaking work to reflect seriously about time, space, and language.

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For too long, scholars have denied that “Jewish political thought” constitutes a viable field of study. Without a sovereign state, scholars argue, Jews lacked occasion to debate the questions of power, obligation, and authority that preoccupy Western political theorists. The Jewish Political Tradition offers a devastating rebuttal to this argument, for it reconstructs a continuous and vibrant tradition of Jewish political thought. Edited jointly by Michael Walzer, an eminent political theorist, and Israeli scholars associated with the Shalom Hartman Institute, this ambitious anthology (two of four volumes have now been published) pairs primary texts spanning Jewish history with commentary by contemporary scholars. Uncovering political reflection in genres previously ghettoized as legalistic or theological (e.g. Midrash, responsa, biblical exegesis), the editors open up an exciting field for research. But The Jewish Political Tradition is not merely of scholarly
interest. Inviting readers “to join the arguments of the texts, to interpret and evaluate, to revise or reject, the claims made by their authors,” the editors insist that the tradition remains a vital resource for contemporary Jews (8). Indeed, the project makes an audacious (and salutary) contribution to Israeli debates: Against advocates of a state ruled by halakhah, the editors contend that traditional Jewish texts sanction toleration, pluralism, and the secularization of politics.

In Volume II, the broad question of membership is addressed in chapters on election, social hierarchy, gender hierarchy, converts, heretics and apostates, and gentiles. One of the volume’s great achievements is to remind us that “Who is a Jew?” is itself a political question, the subject of controversy, debate, and negotiation. Although Jewish thinkers offer myriad answers to the question, their debates generally revolve around two axes: Thinkers both delineate communal boundaries and articulate (or, in later periods, interrogate) hierarchies within the community’s borders.

The editors link “the possibility of pluralism” to these exercises of boundary drawing (3). To the editors’ chagrin, certain strands within the tradition advocate chauvinism, zealotry, and dogmatism. To their credit, the editors forthrightly acknowledge the ethnocentrism of figures like Yehuda Ha-Levi, whose “genetic account of election” imputes racial superiority to Jews (12). Other strands prove more hospitable to exchange with gentiles, and pluralism among Jews. For example, commentator Donniel Hartman reads Maimonides’ tolerant approach to Karaites as a template for interdenominational coexistence. Although Maimonides deems Karaite theology heretical, he preaches tolerance of individuals whose deviance is not their own fault—who were born and raised as Karaites. Moreover, in a responsa, Maimonides concedes that Karaites are monotheists who share select Rabbanite goals (e.g., praising God, eliminating idolatry) and therefore deserve respect. Hartman exhorts contemporary orthodoxy to adopt the latter, ostensibly less patronizing argument for tolerance as a model for interaction with nonorthodox Jews: To foster “mutual accommodation,” the orthodox should celebrate nonorthodox Jews’ monotheism and downplay their “heretical” beliefs and practices (359).

Hartman’s Maimonidean recipe for tolerance is preferable to dogmatism and heresy hunting, which also have traditional warrants. However, nonorthodox Jews may judge Hartman’s conciliatory approach an insufficient foundation for pluralism: To the “heretic,” arguments with normative Judaism may have greater weight than areas of consensus. When Hartman dismisses the heretic’s challenge as incidental, compared to his or her monotheism, he insulates orthodoxy from radical criticism. Hartman’s commentary is symptomatic of the volume’s approach to pluralism. Although contributors uphold diverse religious and political viewpoints, the volume’s organization does not always reflect this diversity. Too often, debates about membership are reconstructed from the perspective of the pious. For example, in the chapter on “Heretics and Apostates,” the premodern authors are all stalwarts of normative Judaism. The editors devote an entire section to “Rabbanite Attitudes Toward Karaites” but omit Karaite attitudes toward Rabbanites. Volume I, on “Authority,” does excerpt a Karaite text. But in Volume II, the editors’ selections validate normative Judaism’s decisions about who remains inside, and who is heretical.
Other chapters offer a more expansive view of tradition, enfranchising voices once deemed marginal. Volume II registers women’s protests against “religiously-sanctioned hierarchical distinctions” and documents secular Zionist redefinitions of Jewish peoplehood (109). While the editors depict secular Zionism as a challenge to orthodox criteria of membership, at times they risk enshrining Zionism as a new orthodoxy. According to the editors, premodern Jews defined membership largely through a theological lens. With the advent of modernity, new membership criteria emerge to challenge, and ultimately shatter, the religious monopoly. The editors trace this modern renegotiation to Zionism: “But ethnic, like religious, membership had no secular referent in Jewish history from 70 CE until the end of the nineteenth century, when Zionist writers worked out a new understanding of Jewish nationhood” (6). When the editors credit Zionists with development of secular identity, they elide the contribution of Bundists, Yiddishists, and secular humanists. Indeed, the volume implicitly privileges the state of Israel as the most fertile ground for the Jewish political tradition: four of six chapters conclude with (admittedly fascinating) examples from Israeli case law. Immersed in Israeli debates, the editors overlook one of their most powerful insights: Throughout Jewish history, the absence of sovereignty did not mean the absence of politics, because politics takes many forms. More attention to debates in the contemporary “diaspora” would highlight ways that Jewish membership diverges from Western citizenship. Further, in the absence of an institution, such as the Israeli Supreme Court, which was established to resolve “the hard questions of membership,” “diaspora” debates remain open-ended and, in a strong sense, political (7). Without a binding legal arbiter, individuals must assume responsibility for negotiating the bounds of their own communities. Of course, this remarkable volume is an invaluable resource, and source of inspiration, for these ongoing debates, whether they take place in Israeli courts or American synagogues, universities, and community centers.

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Marianne R. Sanua offers a balanced examination of a largely unexplored topic, the Jewish Greek subsystem that developed on American college campuses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and thrived until the closure, merger, or reorientation of many of these organizations in the 1960s and early 1970s. One of the first studies to take the Greek system seriously and recognize it for the social and cultural force it was during its heyday in the early part of the twentieth century, Sanua’s book provides readers with rare access to the aspira-
tions, concerns, and ideals of a large segment—estimated between one fourth and one third—of the American Jewish college-going population of this time period.

Sanua begins her book by justifying her focus on the Greek system—one can almost hear through her prose the challenges she must have faced along the way from those who did not take the Greek system or its Jewish subsystem seriously enough to warrant study. She states that fraternity and sorority records provide a wealth of material through which to track how so many Jewish collegians managed to surmount the obstacles of recent arrival, limited means, anti-Semitism, and closed college admissions policies, among other challenges, to climb the ladder to middle-class prosperity within a short period of time. In addition, because they detail the actions and concerns of a large segment of the college-going Jewish population, these records allow Sanua to focus on “ordinary” Jewish people—the men and women who went to college, married, raised families, worked in businesses and in the professions, and otherwise represented the typical Jewish-American bourgeoisie—rather than just on the religious leaders, labor leaders, radicals, or intellectuals who were the sources and foci of most other identifiably Jewish writings at this time. Finally, given that these records were written by Jewish Greeks for the eyes of their fraternity brothers or sorority sisters only, the memos, letters, speeches, journal reports, magazine articles, and other documents of Greek-society life contain a candidness and a freedom that did not exist outside of Jewish-only or largely Jewish organizations. As such, these records provide Sanua with a window into the desires and concerns of an important, yet understudied, segment of the Jewish population, and she mines them for much that they have to offer.

Founded to provide support and solidarity to Jewish collegians who were excluded from membership in the historically Christian Greek-letter organizations that ran the extracurriculum on many college campuses, the Jewish fraternities and sororities developed to fill a wide variety of needs: They offered room and board for those who might be barred because of their religion from the local rooming houses; they offered social outlets and introductions to members of the opposite sex who might make appropriate dating partners and even potential marriage mates; they offered vocational training and access to jobs and internships; and they offered a sense of familiarity to Jewish students who had left their hometowns and familiar environs and traveled to faraway parts of the country in search of a college education at an institution that welcomed or at least tolerated their enrollment. Overall, these organizations offered both tacit and overt instruction to their members in how to be “good Americans”—how to blend in as much as possible with the mainstream campus culture around them, in the hopes that this would alleviate anti-Semitism. “The rules were: watch your manners, behave like ladies and gentlemen, avoid impropriety, keep your head low, be good and loyal citizens, and contribute to the welfare of your community” (249).

Just how Jewish these organizations were and should be, and whom they claimed as members, were highly contested questions. By and large, their answers depended on which group was in question and who within the group was doing the answering. Some fraternities, such as Zeta Beta Tau, were founded specifically as Jewish organizations, with a constitution and ritual steeped in Jewish tradition; oth-
ers, such as Pi Lambda Phi, explicitly shunned sectarianism; still others, such as Phi Epsilon Pi, chose to leave the issue up to individual members to decide, and they decided differently at different points in time. Some groups appealed to native-born, relatively well-off, German-Jewish collegians. Others attracted the children of more recently arrived, less well-off Russian immigrants. Sanua’s exploration of these distinctions among the groups and the ways the different fraternities and sororities chose to separate themselves from coreligionists they labeled “hopeless”—usually because they looked “too Jewish” or spoke too loudly or with an accent—make for some of the more interesting and complex discussions in the book. Internal prejudice and shunning at the hands of fellow Jews hurt as much as, if not more than, that encountered at the hands of non-Jews. Sanua’s skill at dealing with this issue enables the reader to understand both how those excluded by their own must have felt, and yet at the same time recognize how important it must have seemed to many Jewish Greeks to set themselves off from and above those they considered coarse or vulgar, in the vain belief that fine manners and proper comportment would help them prove their worth to others, especially non-Jews, on campus.

Indeed, much of the history of the early Jewish Greek subsystem as explored by Sanua is filled with tension. For example, the Jewish fraternities (and, to a lesser extent, sororities), like their non-Jewish counterparts, made much of the vocational access they enabled, with insiders not only advising fellow fraternity members on careers and strategies but also providing them entrée to desirable internships and jobs. But not only did the Jewish groups aid their members in seeking careers; at the same time they trod an almost contradictory path—going to great lengths to keep many of their own out of some professions, in the belief that the oversaturation of Jews in fields such as medicine and law would contribute to anti-Semitism and lend credence to myths of Jewish world domination. Another tension Sanua explores nicely deals with how Jewish Greeks both welcomed and resisted the dropping of “sectarian clauses” (also called “exclusionary clauses” because they named who could or could not join an organization) in the post–World War II era. On one hand, as men and women who themselves struggled against prejudice, Jewish Greeks largely considered the lowering of barriers a good thing; on the other hand, the very raison d’être of their organizations, to provide solidarity to those shut out of the historically Christian Greek societies, would disappear if the older and more established groups agreed to take in Jewish members.

Going Greek is best when it explores broad themes and questions within the Jewish collegiate Greek system—how the different groups responded to anti-Semitism and closed door admissions policies; the ways the different organizations wrestled with how “Jewish” a Jewish fraternity should be; how the fraternities and sororities responded to external events, such as the Depression, the rise of Hitler, and the two World Wars. There are times in the book when the author seems to get bogged down in details, as though once she found this treasure trove of undiscovered (by scholars) documents, Sanua wanted to use them all. In addition, she provides far more insight into the mechanisms of the men’s organizations than she does into the women’s—a fact she recognizes but does not adequately explain.
Still, this is an important, provocative, and highly readable study, and it deserves close attention by scholars and lay readers alike.

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Israel, and before that the idea of a Jewish state in the traditional homeland, has long captured the imagination of many, if not always most, American Jews. The close connection between Jews in Israel and the United States intensified as the events of the last century unfolded, especially the Holocaust, the struggle for Israel’s independence, and then the unending effort to safeguard that independence and ensure security. The 1967 Six-Day War, the run-up to which conjured up images of another calamity, had a profound effect in the Diaspora, driving home the reality of Israel’s precarious security and the state’s central importance in modern Jewish life. That watershed produced a relatively short-lived period when it seemed that American Jews were united in their support for Israel. But, since 1977, that “sacred unity” has been called into question as sharp divisions have appeared—exacerbated by controversial Israeli government decisions and the pressures of the peace process since 1991.

In retrospect, one wonders whether the brief decade from 1967 to 1977 was a unique respite from habitual Jewish disunity and infighting. After all, both before 1948 and during the first nineteen years of the State’s existence, American Jews exhibited considerable ambivalence and diversity of opinion. And, since 1977, there have been what Seliktar calls “deep divisions” that weakened what had become an Israel-centered civil religion. By the turn of the century, as control of the Israeli government seemed to be shifting dramatically every few years, the intensity of the conflict between supporters of the two main Israeli orientations were more intense than ever.

Of course, all these developments did not occur in a vacuum. American Jews were part of a relationship involving the governments of Israel and the United States. In what Seliktar calls a triadic relationship, American Jews acted politically to try to influence the policies of the two governments, while each government tried to use American Jews to further its goals vis-à-vis the other government. This process has led to a crisis within American Jewry, whereby the community finds it increasingly difficult to speak with one voice and to confront political realities with a display of unity.

Seliktar does reach some important conclusions. One has to do with the way in which American Jews have reacted to the frequently changing signals emanating from Jerusalem since 1977. Given their well-known penchant for liberalism, American Jews have generally been comfortable with Labor-led governments in
power and considerably less at ease when Likud has been at the helm. This is due in part to the stylistic differences of expression between the two parties but also to substantive differences. For most of the twenty-seven years since 1977, whenever Likud has been in control there have been significant divergences between Israeli policy and American policy, thereby creating tension. The current period, with Ariel Sharon and George W. Bush leading their respective governments, is probably atypical for the extent of policy convergence. But this has not lessened the cognitive dissonance felt by so many American Jews with what Seliktar calls a “liberal-universalist” orientation. Nor has it eliminated the gap between them and fellow Jews with a “nationalist-Orthodox” orientation, which of course parallels the Israeli situation.

Seliktar helps us to understand the triadic relationship through a painstaking examination of the entire period since 1948. Much of that is familiar ground, but she provides continuity to the analysis by virtue of her impressive command of the innumerable organizations that have appeared on the American Jewish scene over the decades. Some of them have come and gone, while others have demonstrated staying power. But when viewed in their totality, her point about the lack of unity within the community is evident. However, many of these organizations are elite bodies that lack extensive grassroots memberships. Is it possible that American Jews at the individual level are not as concerned with the details of policy as their organizational leaders? That might have been the case thirty or forty years ago. But now there is public opinion data that indicate that the rank and file of the community frequently is divided except in a very basic sense (the existence of a secure Israel) and that increasing numbers are less involved with Israel than was the case in the past.

Ultimately key questions for American Jewry are whether the younger generation will commit to the political struggle on behalf of Israel to the same extent that their parents have and whether they will find the present turf and ideological battles between organizations relevant.

One final observation: the value of this worthy effort is seriously diminished by an embarrassing number of spelling, word usage, and factual errors. Even proper names are misspelled. How did a reputable publisher countenance such a poor job of copyediting?

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