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Book Notes

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Book Notes

American Jewish Life

It Happened in the Catskills: An Oral History in the Words of Busboys, Bellhops, Guests, Proprietors, Comedians, Agents, and Others Who Lived It, by Myrna Katz Frommer and Harvey Frommer. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004. 245 pp. \$26.95. ISBN 0-299-20604-1.

This book captures the flavor of the “Borscht Belt,” that vacation area just “ninety minutes from Broadway.” Summer romances, mambo time, menus with seven kinds of herring, musical and comedic greats getting their start, bungalows, and big hotels like Grossinger’s all are remembered here. Through the power of oral history, more than a hundred voices share stories that span nearly a century.

Jews of South Florida, edited by Andrea Greenbaum. Hanover: University Press of New England/Brandeis University Press, 2005. 236 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 1-58465-309-4.

The tri-county area of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach is home to more than 625,000 Jews—about 10 percent of American Jews. The South Florida Jewish community is distinguished from other Jewish communities in the U.S. by its diverse population. Like the post-war generation of snowbirds, tens of thousands of retirees currently live in “gated communities” and maintain strong ties with the communities they left behind. But the community also has a distinctive Latin flavor. Hispanic Jews have moved to South Florida from several Latin American nations, and these Spanish-speaking Jews maintain their cultural heritage even as they have adapted to life in the United States. South Florida is also home to the largest community of Holocaust survivors in the country. More recent Jewish immigrants from Arab nations, the Soviet Union, and Israel have added to the distinctive diversity of Jewish life in South Florida. *Jews of South Florida* offers a history of the development of Jewish life in the region, from its modest start at the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Ancient World and Archaeology

Alcimus, Enemy of the Maccabees, by Benjamin Edidin Scolnic. Lanham: University Press of America, 2005. 184 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 0-7618-3044-8.

This book discusses Alcimus, High Priest of Judaea in the years after Hanukkah, who has been basically unknown to scholars. Alcimus' enemy Judas Maccabaeus and his Hasmonean descendants considered Alcimus to be an evil man, and the ancient sources express that prejudice. This study evaluates Alcimus' heritage and loyalty to traditions in a positive light.

Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context, edited by Carol Bakhos. Leiden: Brill, 2005. 244 pp. \$112.00. ISBN 90-04-13871-4.

This volume explores the ways in which Jews lived within the Hellenistic and Greco-Roman contexts and how they negotiated their religious and social boundaries. Scholars demonstrate that the Jewish encounter with Hellenism led not to a conscious struggle with alien forces but rather in many instances to an active re-tailoring and re-shaping of tradition in light of their material, ideological, and philosophical surroundings.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader. Part 3: Parabiblical Texts, edited by Donald W. Parry and Emanuel Tov. Leiden: Brill, 2005. 649 pp. \$49.00. ISBN 90-04-12647-3.

This edition presents all the non-biblical Qumran texts classified according to their genres, together with English translations. Of these texts, some twenty have not been previously published. The Hebrew-Aramaic texts in this edition are mainly based on the FARMS database of Brigham Young University, which, in its turn, reflects the text editions of the ancient scrolls (mainly *DJD*) with great precision, including modern diacritical signs.

Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity, by Steven Weitzman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005. 193 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-674-01708-0.

Surviving Sacrilege focuses on ancient Judaism between the destruction of the First Temple (by the Babylonians) in 586 BC and the destruction of the Second Temple (by the Romans) in 70 CE. Throughout this period Jews faced the challenge of preserving their religious traditions in a world largely out of their control—a world ruled first by the Persians, then by the Hellenistic Seleucid Kingdom, and finally by the Roman Empire. Weitzman argues that its expression in storytelling, fantasy, imitation, metaphor, and magic allows a culture's survival instinct to maneuver within, beyond, and even against the limits of reality.

Biblical and Rabbinic Literature

Ezekiel the Priest: A Custodian of Tôrâ, by T. J. Betts. New York: Peter Lang, 2005. 191 pp. \$64.95. ISBN 0-8204-7425-8.

As one of the most significant figures in ancient Israel, the priest had numerous responsibilities, the most important of which was the exposition of the Mosaic Tôrâ. The ministry of Ezekiel, a prophetic priest, offers a glimpse of how one priest carried out his duties as a custodian of Tôrâ. *Ezekiel the Priest* provides the possibility of a deeper understanding of the pastoral ministry of priests as teachers of God's word during Old Testament times through the example of one ancient Israelite priest.

The Five Books of Moses: An Easy-to-Read Torah Translation, by Sol Scharfstein. Jersey City: KTAV, 2005. 534 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 0-88125-853-9.

Scharfstein's idiomatic translation of the Five Books of Moses conveys its content in modern language. The English translation is presented side by side with the original text, making this volume a useful tool for those who are learning biblical Hebrew. The weekly readings and their divisions are all clearly designated, and each book of the Torah is preceded by a brief introduction that explains its most important aspects.

If the Egyptians Drowned in the Red Sea, Where Are Pharaoh's Chariots?: Exploring the Historical Dimension of the Bible, by Benjamin Edidin Scolnic. Lanham: University Press of America, 2005. 198 pp. \$31.00. ISBN 0-7618-3147-9.

Benjamin Edidin Scolnic evaluates the biblical texts in the light of the archaeological information we possess at this time. He does not so much seek to prove or disprove the Bible, but rather attempts to find middle ground through the exploration of its historical dimension.

The New Cambridge Paragraph Bible with the Apocrypha, King James Version, edited by David Norton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 1868 pp. \$75.00. ISBN 0-521-84386-3.

The standard editions of the 1611 King James Bible (or Authorised Version) currently available give, with little variation, the text as established by the Oxford edition of 1769. In this new edition of the King James Version the text has been collated with the translators' original work in order to give the reader as closely as possible the exact text that the translators decided on. It has also been given consistent modern spelling and presentation in order to make it easier to read and study than standard editions. The text is presented in paragraph form, with marginal notes.

The Old Testament: A Brief Introduction, by Christoph Levin. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. 191 pp. \$22.95. ISBN 0-691-11394-7.

The book explains the development of the Old Testament canon, as well as the editorial history underlying its various parts. Levin surveys fundamental changes that have taken place in Old Testament scholarship, noting that the accepted view has been called into question both by literary scholars and by archaeologists. He points out that many of the Old Testament writings are thought to have originated later than previously believed, and argues that our knowledge about the exodus from Egypt, the Israelite conquest of Palestine, and the opposition between belief in Yahweh and Canaanite religion can no longer be seen as securely established. While the book treats the Old Testament as part of the cultural and religious history of the Ancient Near East, it also reminds readers that it emerged not as a history of ancient Israel but as the Holy Scripture of Judaism.

Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures, by J. Harold Ellens and Wayne G. Rollins. Westport: Praeger, 2004. 381 pp. \$300.00. ISBN 0-275-98349-8.

Thirty-four experts from seven countries show how the various schools of psychology interpret the scriptures, from sexual laws and beliefs about shame to the personalities of Jesus, Job, and the prophet Ezekiel. A range of psychological perspectives is chronicled, demonstrating a broad spectrum of applications from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament.

A Textual History of the King James Bible, by David Norton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 387 pp. \$95.00. ISBN 0-521-77100-5.

David Norton has recently re-edited the King James Bible for Cambridge, and this book arises from his intensive work on that project. Here he shows how the text of the most important Bible in the English language was made and how it changed in the hands of printers and editors until, in 1769, it became the text we know today. Using the manuscript work of the original translators and the results of computer collation of electronically held texts, Norton has produced a scholarly edition of the King James Bible that restores the authority of the 1611 translation. This book describes this background, explains Norton's editorial principles, and provides lists and tables of variant readings. It serves as a companion to the New Cambridge Paragraph Bible.

A User's Guide to Bible Translations: Making the Most of Different Versions, by David Dewey. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. 239 pp. \$13.00. ISBN 0-8308-3273-4.

A User's Guide to Bible Translations traces the history of Bible versions in English from Wycliffe and Tyndale to the English Standard Version and Today's New International Version, with explanatory glances at the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts and brief introductions to translation theories along the way. David Dewey sheds light on the difference between word-for-word and meaning-for-meaning translations, the controversy over gender accuracy, and issues of theological bias.

What Have They Done to the Bible?: A History of Modern Biblical Interpretation, by John Sandys-Wunsch. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005. 378 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-8146-5028-7.

John Sandys-Wunsch documents the changes that have taken place in biblical exegesis since 1500. He concludes that after the Renaissance it was the application of historical considerations to both the internal (textual tradition, biblical languages) and external (secular society, academic freedom) factors of the biblical tradition that was the main source of the modern approach to the Bible.

Biography, Autobiography, Memoirs, Diaries

Redemption: The Life of Henry Roth, by Steven G. Kellman. New York: W. W. Norton, 2005. 371 pp. \$25.95. ISBN 0-393-05779-8.

Steven G. Kellman chronicles the life of Henry Roth, whose first work, *Call It Sleep*, is a novel of the immigrant experience, from his birth in 1906 in the Austro-Hungarian Empire to his emergence as a literary curiosity in New Mexico just before his death in 1995.

Education and Teaching

Talmud, Curriculum, and the Practical: Joseph Schwab and the Rabbis, by Alan Block. New York: Peter Lang, 2004. 233 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8204-6181-4.

This book explores the seminal curriculum work of Joseph Schwab in the light of a Rabbinic Judaism to which Schwab did not—or could not—refer, but which Alan Block asserts might be central to a fuller understanding of Schwab's prescriptions for "The Practical." Using the language and methods of Rabbinic Judaism and Schwab's eclectic arts, *Talmud, Curriculum, and The Practical* opens a practical perspective onto American

education, studying and redefining issues confronting education at the beginning of a new century and a new millennium.

History and Politics

From Optimism to Hope: A Collection of BBC Thoughts for the Day, by Jonathan Sacks. London and New York: Continuum, 2004. 148 pp. \$14.95. ISBN 0-8264-7481-0.

Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, presents a "Thought for the Day" on a popular morning BBC radio news show, in which he addresses a current issue. This book is a selection of the author's favorite "thoughts for the day."

Nationalizing a Borderland: War, Ethnicity, and Anti-Jewish Violence in East Galicia, 1914–1920, by Alexander Victor Prusin. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005. 181 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 0-8173-1459-8.

This study examines the factors in the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia between 1914 and 1920 that led to the rise of xenophobic nationalism and to the ethnocide of World War II. From Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, and Austrian archival sources, Prusin argues that while the violence inflicted upon Jews during that period may at first seem irrational and indiscriminate, a closer examination reveals that it was generated by traditional negative views of Jews and by the security concerns of the Russian and Polish militaries in the front zone. This violence, Prusin contends, served as a means of reshaping the socio-economic and political space of the province by diminishing Jewish cultural and economic influence.

Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, by Nicole Chareyron. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. 287 pp. \$45.00. ISBN 0-231-13230-1.

As medieval pilgrims made their way to the places where Jesus lived and suffered, they experienced, among other things: holy sites, the majesty of the Egyptian pyramids (often referred to as the "Pharaoh's granaries"), dips in the Dead Sea, unfamiliar desert landscapes, the perils of traveling along the Nile, the customs of their Muslim hosts, Barbary pirates, lice, inconsiderate traveling companions, and a variety of difficulties, both great and small. In this study, Nicole Chareyron draws on more than one hundred firsthand accounts to consider the journeys and worldviews of medieval pilgrims.

Poverty and Charity in the Jewish Community of Medieval Egypt, by Mark R. Cohen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. 288 pp. \$39.50. ISBN 0-691-09272-9.

This book studies poverty in a premodern Jewish community, from the viewpoint of both the poor and those who provided for them. Based on papers found in the Cairo Genizah, the book provides testimony about how one large and important medieval Jewish community dealt with the constant presence of poverty in its midst.

Sephardic Identity: Essays on a Vanishing Jewish Culture, by George K. Zucker. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005. 230 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-7864-2021-9.

These essays are divided into sections exploring the history of Sephardic Jews, their sociology, anthropology, language, literature, and performing arts. Topics include the possibility that the Sephardim are Judaized Arabs, Berbers, and Iberians; the role of Spanish exiles in the Ottoman Empire; Sephardic remnants in Greece; Sephardic philosophy; the literature of New Christians (the community that arose out of forcibly converted Jews) whose works reveal Jewish roots; the Judeo-Spanish press in Salonika; and the influences of Sephardism on contemporary Argentine literature.

A Vanished World: Medieval Spain's Golden Age of Enlightenment, by Chris Lowney. New York: Free Press, 2005. 320 pp. \$26.00. ISBN 0-7432-5469-5.

Chris Lowney's book offers a historical reminder: Muslims, Christians, and Jews once lived together in Spain, creating a centuries-long flowering of commerce, culture, art, and architecture. *A Vanished World* chronicles this period of human history and achievement, encompassing both the agony of jihad, Crusades, and Inquisition, and the glory of a multireligious, multicultural civilization that forever changed the West.

Holocaust

Beyond Justice: The Auschwitz Trial, by Rebecca Wittman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005. 336 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 0-674-01694-7.

In 1963, West Germany held a trial of former guards who had worked at the Nazi death camp Auschwitz. Using the pretrial files and extensive trial audiotapes, Rebecca Wittmann offers a reinterpretation of Germany's first major attempt to confront its past. She recounts the testimony of survivors, former SS officers, and defendants. Constrained by West German murder laws, the prosecution had to resort to standards for illegal behavior that echoed the laws of the Third Reich. This provided a

legitimacy to the Nazi state. So although the prosecution succeeded in exposing SS crimes at the camp for the first time, the public absorbed a distorted representation of the criminality of the camp system. The Auschwitz trial ensured that rather than coming to terms with their Nazi past, Germans managed to delay a true reckoning with the Holocaust.

The Execution of the Hangman of Riga: The Only Execution of a Nazi War Criminal by the Mossad, by Anton Kuenzle and Gad Shimron. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004. 144 pp. \$55.00 (c); \$25.00 (p). ISBN 0-85303-533-4 (c); 0-85303-525-3 (p).

Here a former senior Mossad agent describes an operation carried out in 1964–65 to identify, locate, and execute the notorious Nazi war criminal Herbert Cukurs, who was personally responsible for the murder of over 30,000 Latvian Jews.

Left Behind in Nazi Vienna: Letters of a Jewish Family Caught in the Holocaust, 1939–1941, edited by H. Pierre Secher. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004. 309 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-7864-1864-8.

In 1938 when Hitler annexed Austria, making it part of his Greater German Reich, approximately 185,000 Jews lived in Vienna. These Jews had only a short time to make plans to emigrate; the editor and his parents were among the few individuals who were fortunate to gain entrance into the United States. The Sechers unavoidably left behind five members of their immediate family who were still waiting to receive visas, but they firmly believed that the remaining members of their family would be well out of reach of Nazi policies (they were not). The major part of the book is a chronological arrangement of the many letters exchanged between the father and mother and those individuals left behind in Vienna.

Murder Most Merciful: Essays on the Ethical Conundrum Occasioned by Sigi Zierling's The Judgment of Herbert Bierhoff, edited by Michael Berenbaum. Studies in the Shoah. Lanham: University Press of America, 2005. 260 pp. \$37.00. ISBN 0-7618-3203-3.

Murder Most Merciful is a collection of essays that consider Sigi Zierling's play, *The Judgment of Herbert Bierhoff*. In the play, Zierling tells the story of a loving father and his decision during the Holocaust to take the life of his beloved daughter to avoid her deportation. Scholars continue to grapple with the ethical questions Zierling raised. Commentary from the book's contributors, including Holocaust survivors, scholars, rabbis, philosophers, and historians, results in a moral and theological exchange on the crucial issues of martyrdom, euthanasia, and the guilt of the innocent.

Murderous Medicine: Nazi Doctors, Human Experimentation, and Typhus, by Naomi Baumslag. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2005. 272 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0-275-98312-9.

More than 1.5 million concentration camp prisoners died of typhus, a preventable disease. German doctors, fueled by their racist ideology and their medieval approach to the disease, used the disease as a form of biological warfare against Jews, Slavs, and gypsies, but only a handful of doctors were ever prosecuted for their crimes. Against all odds, Jewish health providers struggled to avoid the worst through innovative steps to save lives. This study explores the role of the International Red Cross in typhus epidemics during and after World War I and World War II.

Remembering Belsen: Eyewitnesses Record the Liberation, edited by Ben Flanagan and Donald Bloxham. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005. 139 pp. \$65.00 (c); \$29.50 (p). ISBN 0-85303-604-7 (c); 0-85303-605-5.

This book brings together eyewitness reports from those who liberated the camp, aid workers, and those who suffered there. There are also chapters on the trial of the former guards and the historical background to the camp.

Saving the Forsaken: Religious Culture and the Rescue of Jews in Nazi Europe, by Pearl M. Oliner. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. 264 pp. \$32.50. ISBN 0-300-10063-9.

Pearl M. Oliner examines data on Christian rescuers and nonrescuers of Jews during the Holocaust to determine which factors played the most influential role in their behavior. Drawing on interviews with more than five hundred Christians—Protestant and Catholic, very religious, irreligious, and moderately religious rescuers and nonrescuers living in Nazi-occupied Europe, Oliner offers a sociological perspective on the values and attitudes that distinguished each group. She presents several case studies of rescuers and nonrescuers within each group and then interprets the individual's behavior as it relates to his or her group. She finds that the value patterns of the religious groups differ significantly from one another, and she is able to highlight those factors that appear to have contributed most toward rescue within each group.

Say the Name: A Survivor's Tale in Prose and Poetry, by Judith H. Sherman. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005. 170 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 0-8263-3432-6.

The experiences of a fourteen-year-old girl imprisoned in the Ravensbrück concentration camp during World War II. Illustrated with drawings made secretly by other camp inhabitants.

The World Hitler Never Made, by Gavriel D. Rosenfeld. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 524 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 0-521-84706-0.

What if the Nazis had triumphed in the Second World War? What if Adolf Hitler had escaped Berlin for the jungles of Latin America in 1945? Gavriel Rosenfeld's study explores why such counterfactual questions on the subject of Nazism have proliferated in recent years within Western popular culture. Examining a wide range of novels, short stories, films, television programs, plays, comic books, and scholarly essays that have appeared in Great Britain, the United States, and Germany since 1945, Rosenfeld shows how the portrayal of historical events that never happened reflects the evolving memory of the Third Reich's real historical legacy. He concludes that the shifting representation of Nazism in works of alternate history, as well as the popular reactions to them, highlights their subversive role in promoting the normalization of the Nazi past in Western memory.

Israel

American Presidents, Religion, and Israel: The Heirs of Cyrus, by Paul Charles Merkley. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004. 279 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0-275-98340-4.

This book explores the connection between the religious backgrounds and beliefs of U.S. presidents and their policies toward Israel. From Truman to Ford, U.S. presidents relied, in part, on their religious and moral commitments to support their policies and views toward Israel. Beginning with Carter, however, presidents have stressed a secular approach that rises above the religious and theological fray. And yet, even in the context of this attempted fair-mindedness, U.S. presidents reveal their personal religious and moral beliefs in their responses to the issue of Israel. Merkley argues that while faith alone does not determine action, religious belief does play a role in the policies that U.S. presidents, and the nation, adopt toward Israel.

The Birth of Surrogacy in Israel, by D. Kelly Weisberg. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005. 291 pp. \$59.95. ISBN 0-8130-2809-4.

Conservative religious and political influences at play in Israel make it an unlikely setting for progressive reform; however, the Surrogate Mother Agreements Act catapulted Israel to the forefront of public attention as the only country where surrogacy is legal, remunerated, and government-supervised. Weisberg examines the social forces that contributed to the law, documenting the clash between religious groups, which paradoxically favored a law on reproductive freedom, and feminist groups, which op-

posed it. She assesses the new law, discusses what other countries can learn from Israel's example, and explores its implications for the globalization of surrogacy. She also considers generally the role of religion and law in social change.

Britain's Naval and Political Reaction to the Illegal Immigration of Jews to Palestine, 1945–1948, by Fritz Liebreich. London and New York: Routledge, 2005. 370 pp. \$125.00. ISBN 0-714-65637-2.

This book provides a shift in the analysis of Britain's policy towards the illegal post-war Jewish immigration into Palestine. It charts the development of Britain's response to Zionist immigration, from the initial sympathy, as embodied in the Balfour Declaration, through attempts at blockade, *refoulement*, and finally disengagement.

Company C: An American's Life as a Citizen-Soldier in Israel, by Haim Watzman. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. 387 pp. \$26.00. ISBN 0-374-22633-4.

When American-born Haim Watzman immigrated to Israel, he was drafted into the army and, after eighteen months of compulsory service, assigned to *Company C*, the reserve infantry unit that would define the next twenty years of his life. In this account of the first Intifada, the period of the Oslo Accords, and Israel's reoccupation of the West Bank as lived by citizen-soldiers in the field, Watzman examines our obligations to country, friends, family, and God.

Operation Solomon: The Daring Rescue of the Ethiopian Jews, by Stephen Spector. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 279 pp. \$28.00. ISBN 0-19-517782-7.

In "Operation Solomon" more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews were airlifted to Israel in little more than a day. Stephen Spector here offers an account of this story, based on over 200 interviews and exclusive access to confidential documents.

Jewish Life Elsewhere

Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry, Vol. 17: The Shtetl: Myth and Reality, edited by Antony Polonsky. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004. 482 pp. \$45.00 (c); \$29.95 (p). ISBN 1-874774-75-7 (c); 1-874774-76-5 (p).

The majority of Polish Jews always lived in the villages and small towns known as shtetls. Much of what we know of life in the shtetls comes from literary accounts rather than from historical research. This volume redresses that imbalance, with leading experts investigating the social and

economic history of the shtetl as well as the way in which shtetl life has been reflected in Hebrew, Polish, and Yiddish literature.

Sephardic & Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times, edited by Zion Zohar. New York: New York University Press, 2005. 343 pp. \$65.00. ISBN 0-8147-9706-7.

Sephardic Jews trace their origins to Spain and Portugal. They enjoyed a renaissance in these lands until their expulsion from Spain in 1492, when they settled in the countries along the Mediterranean, throughout the Ottoman Empire, in the Balkans, and in the lands of North Africa, Italy, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, mixing with the Mizrahi, or Oriental, Jews already in these locations. Sephardic Jews have contributed some of the most important Jewish philosophers, poets, biblical commentators, Talmudic and Halachic scholars, and scientists, and have had a significant impact on the development of Jewish mysticism. *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry* presents an introductory overview of their history and culture over the past 1500 years through a chronological and thematic survey of topics ranging from the origin of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry and their history to kabbalah, philosophy, and biblical commentary, and Sephardic Jewish life in the modern era.

Jews and Non-Jews

The Lie That Wouldn't Die: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, by Hadassa Ben-Itto. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005. 390 pp. \$69.50. ISBN 0-85303-595-4.

Over the 100 years that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* have been disseminated, the forgery has been exposed again and again, but the lie will not die. Now former Supreme Court Judge in Israel Hadassa Ben-Itto follows the *Protocols* into lawyers' chambers and into courtrooms in Switzerland, in South Africa, in Germany, in the United States, and in Russia and presents a critical analysis of legal proceedings and courtroom drama.

Judaism: Jewish Thought and Philosophy

Is Scripture the Origin of the Halakhah? by Jacob Neusner. Studies in Judaism. Lanham: University Press of America, 2005. 217 pp. \$34.00. ISBN 0-7618-3117-7.

The Halakhah constitutes a coherent construction of category-formations defined by topics purposively amplified. These category-formations

everywhere pursue a cogent analytical program. Is Scripture the origin of the Halakhic system, which defines the norms of Judaism? At stake is not the starting point of discrete bits of legal data. At issue is the origin of the comprehensive *structure* comprised by the Halakhic category-formations, by these topics and no others. It is natural to treat Scripture as the baseline and the Halakhic category-formations as the variable when seeking the origin of the system. But the Halakhic system viewed as a coherent statement does not originate in Scripture. Important parts of that statement do, important parts do not. But the system viewed whole does not.

Jewish Values in a Changing World, by Yehuda Amital. Jersey City: KTAV, 2005. 231 pp. \$18.95. ISBN 0-88125-881-4.

This volume discusses general issues, such as the importance of natural morality and what it means to fear God in today's world, as well as deeply personal matters, such as dealing with crisis and developing the ability to make decisions independently. Rabbi Amital's philosophy is marked by its insistence on the importance of the interpersonal commandments, of being a *mensh*, and of respecting all people created in God's image. He believes that religious life does not contradict one's humanity, but rather must flow from it.

Judaism and Theology: Essays on the Jewish Religion, by Louis Jacobs. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005. 262 pp. \$62.95. ISBN 0-85303-567-9.

In the essays presented in this book, the author addresses contemporary Jewish religious life in the various communities and the attitudes of Jewish thinkers to other religious faiths. Essays also discuss the relevance and irrelevance of Hasidism in theological terms for the modern believing Jew; the theological question of whether praying for the downfall of the wicked is advocated, permitted or forbidden; the meaning of holy places; problems regarding the sanctity of human life and modern conditions of violence and of Zionism; and whether there are female as well as male angels.

Moses Maimonides: The Man and His Works, by Herbert A. Davidson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 567 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0-19-517321-X.

This book offers a look at Maimonides' life and works: the course of his life, his education, his personality, and his rabbinic, philosophical, and medical writings. At a number of junctures, Davidson points out that information about Maimonides which has been accepted for decades or centuries as common knowledge is in actuality supported by no credible evidence and often is patently incorrect. Maimonides' diverse writings are frequently viewed as expressions of several distinct personas bundled into

a single human frame; the present book treats his writings as expressions of a single, integrated, albeit complex, mind.

Musar for Moderns, by Elyakim Krumbein. Jersey City: KTAV, 2005. 147 pp. \$18.95. ISBN 0-88125-875-X.

Musar is the branch of Torah which is devoted to ethical self-improvement through study and conscientious practice. This book introduces musar as it endeavors to guide the reader in trying to overcome obstacles to serious spiritual progress, while addressing the concerns and conflicts that typify the intellectual climate in our materialistic, media-saturated century.

Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals: Eating and Embodiment in Medieval Kabbalah, by Joel Hecker. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005. 282 pp. \$44.95. ISBN 0-8143-3181-5.

Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals is a study of mystical eating practices and experiences in the kabbalah. Focusing on the Jewish mystical literature of late-thirteenth-century Spain, author Joel Hecker analyzes the ways in which the Zohar and other contemporaneous literature represent mystical attainment in their homilies about eating. What emerges is not only consideration of eating practices but, more broadly, the effects such practices and experiences have on the bodies of its practitioners.

Rabbinic Thought in the Talmud, by Louis Jacobs. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2005. 216 pp. \$62.95. ISBN 0-85303-568-7.

This book first provides four detailed understandings of the nature and scope of the Babylonian Talmud. This is followed by seven examinations of the Talmudic method as seen from the complete unit of the Talmud, the Sugya. Here the author advances his view, now widely accepted, that the Talmudic Sugya is not simply a plain account of the various arguments but a contrived statement in which one point leads to another in a dynamic way. Further essays address the *kal va-homer*, the economic background of the Babylonian Talmud, Montefiore ad Loewe's *Rabbinic Anthology*, and the works of post-Talmudic scholars. The book is highly technical and of interest chiefly to Talmudic scholars.

Theology of Normative Judaism: A Source Book, by Jacob Neusner. Studies in Judaism. Lanham: University Press of America, 2005. 156 pp. \$26.00. ISBN 0-7618-3116-9.

This anthology treats the following topics, providing access to the important Talmudic statements on them: Mythic Monotheism: Creation, the Nature of Man, the Fall; Torah; Israel and the Nations; "You Shall

Be Holy, for I the Lord Your God am Holy”; Sin and Atonement; and Resurrection and Eternal Life. Each topic is broken up into its principal components and expounded and illustrated by primary sources in English translation.

Judaism: Practical Aspects of Living

Food and Judaism, edited by Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro. Omaha: Creighton University Press, 2005. 345 pp. \$21.95. ISBN 1-881871-46-0.

Food is not simply a popularly imagined and well-known manifestation of Jewish culture. For Jews, food has been a means of exclusion, persecution, and assimilation by the larger society. Equally important, it has been an instrument of community, reparation, and renewal of identity. *Food and Judaism* presents a wide range of research on the history and interpretation of Jewish food practices and meanings.

The Jewish Kitchen: Recipes and Stories from Around the World, by Clarissa Hyman. Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2004. 160 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 1-56656-519-7.

Interspersed between the international recipes are the stories of nine Jewish families and their communities. They tell of travel across continents and oceans, family celebrations and religious festivals, reunions and separations, war and peace.

Jewish with Feeling: A Guide to Meaningful Jewish Practice, by Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, with Joel Segel. New York: Riverhead Books, 2005. 267 pp. \$23.95. ISBN 1-57322-280-1.

For decades, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi has been helping Jews of all ages and beliefs to find a Judaism that moves their hearts, minds, souls, even their bodies. With teachings and stories from many traditions, as well as numerous practical suggestions, *Jewish with Feeling* is Zalman’s approach to awakening the soul.

Passover Splendor: Cherished Objects for the Seder Table, by Barbara Rush. New York: Stewart Tabori and Chang, 2004. 96 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 1-58479-399-6.

Barbara Rush explores the various components of the Seder table as they have varied and evolved through the years, through different cultures, and through different artisans’ eyes.

Thirteen and a Day: The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Across America, by Mark Oppenheimer. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. 256 pp. \$24.00. ISBN 0-374-10665-7.

Since its emergence here a century ago, the bar or bat mitzvah has become a distinctively American rite of passage, so much so that, in certain suburbs today, gentile families throw parties for their thirteen-year-olds, lest they feel left out. How did this come about? To answer that question, Mark Oppenheimer set out across America to attend the most distinctive b'nai mitzvah he could find, and *Thirteen and a Day* is the story of what he found—a look at American Jews today.

Language

Yiddish: A Linguistic Introduction, by Neil G. Jacobs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 327 pp. \$80.00. ISBN 0-521-77215-X.

Yiddish, the language of Ashkenazic Jewry, arose some 900–1200 years ago as a result of contact with indigenous varieties of medieval German. This introduction provides an overview of all aspects of Yiddish language and linguistics, including syntax, phonology and morphology, along with its history, its dialectology, and the sociolinguistic issues surrounding it.

Literary Criticism

The Anthology in Jewish Literature, edited by David Stern. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 350 pp. \$65.00. ISBN 0-19-513751-5.

From the Talmud to the latest collection of short stories, the anthology has been a ubiquitous presence in Jewish literature throughout its history. This volume presents a study of the genre and of the different functions it serves as a literary form and as a medium of canonization. The book comprises eighteen essays devoted to anthological works in Jewish literature from the Bible to the present. Taken together, they define a new field of study and rehabilitate a literary genre whose importance has not previously been recognized.

Philip Roth: New Perspectives on an American Author, edited by Derek Parker Royal. Westport: Praeger, 2005. 303 pp. \$39.95. ISBN 0-275-98363-3.

This volume provides coverage of all of Roth's works. Each chapter introduces the work or works under discussion, provides a brief summary of the story, and moves on to an analysis of its various literary elements and its significance in Roth's overall body of work. While each chapter focuses on the central issues in the specific work, several larger themes that

run throughout many of his writings are addressed, including the rise of suburbanization in post-war America, the problems and prominence of the family, American (Jewish) ethnicity, comedy and satire, the costs of literary celebrity, the promises and failures of the American dream, and others.

Selected Writings. Vol. 2, Part 1, 1927–1930; Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931–1934, by Walter Benjamin, edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005. 870 pp. \$18.95 each. ISBN 0-0674-01588-6; 0-674-01746-3.

In the frenzied final years of the Weimar Republic, amid economic collapse and mounting political catastrophe, Walter Benjamin emerged as the most original practicing literary critic and public intellectual in the German-speaking world. Volume 2 of the *Selected Writings* is now available in paperback in two parts. In Part 1, Benjamin is represented by two of his greatest literary essays, “Surrealism” and “On the Image of Proust,” as well as by a long article on Goethe and a generous selection of his wide-ranging commentary for Weimar Germany’s newspapers. Part 2 contains, in addition to the important longer essays, “Franz Kafka,” “Karl Kraus,” and “The Author as Producer,” the extended autobiographical meditation “A Berlin Chronicle,” and extended discussions of the history of photography and the social situation of the French writer, previously untranslated shorter pieces on such subjects as language and memory, theological criticism and literary history, astrology and the newspaper, and on such influential figures as Paul Valéry, Stefan George, Hitler, and Mickey Mouse.

Literature: Fiction, Drama, Poetry

Classic Yiddish Stories of S. Y. Abramovitsh, Sholem Aleichem, and I. L. Peretz, edited by Ken Frieden. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004. 283 pp. \$19.95. ISBN 0-8156-0760-1.

This is a collection of the best short fiction by three classic Yiddish authors.

The Five: A Novel of Jewish Life in Turn-of-the-Century Odessa, by Vladimir Jabotinsky, translated by Michael R. Katz. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005. 201 pp. \$45.00. ISBN 0-8014-8903-2.

The Five is a novel of the decadent fin-de-siècle written by Vladimir Jabotinsky, a controversial leader in the Zionist movement. The author paints a picture of Russia’s decay and decline, a world permeated with sexual-

ity, mystery, and intrigue. The book is Jabotinsky's elegaic paean to the Odessa of his youth, a place that no longer exists.

Her Body Knows: Two Novellas, by David Grossman, translated by Jessica Cohen. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005. 264 pp. \$25.00. ISBN 0-374-17557-8.

A fevered storyteller and a captive audience revisit the past together in each of David Grossman's new novellas, trying to make sense of a betrayal that neither one can put to rest.

Proletpen: America's Rebel Yiddish Poets, edited by Amelia Glaser and David Weintraub, translated by Amelia Glaser. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005. 409 pp. \$45.00. ISBN 0-299-20800-1.

This anthology translates a little-known body of Yiddish poetry by American Yiddish proletarian writers who identified with the American Left from the 1920s to the early 1950s.

Selections, by Paul Celan, edited and with an introduction by Pierre Joris. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 230 pp. \$50.00. ISBN 0-520-24168-1.

This anthology offers a broad collection of Celan's writing in English translations, along with commentaries by major writers and philosophers. The selection is based on Celan's own 1968 selected poems, though enlarged to include both earlier and later poems, as well as two prose works, *The Meridian* and *Conversation in the Mountains*. The volume also includes letters to Celan's wife, the artist Gisèle Celan-Lestrange; to his friend Erich Einhorn; and to René Char and Jean-Paul Sartre.

The Tree of Life: A Trilogy of Life in the Lodz Ghetto. Book One: On the Brink of the Precipice, 1939, by Chava Rosenfarb, translated by the author in collaboration with Goldie Morgentaler. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004. 314 pp. \$16.95. ISBN 0-299-20454-5.

This first volume of the trilogy *The Tree of Life* describes the lives of the novel's ten protagonists in the Lodz Ghetto before the outbreak of World War II. The author, herself a survivor of the Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen, creates characters who struggle daily to retain a sense of humanity and dignity.

Why She Married Him: A Novel, by Myriam Chapman. New York: Other Press, 2005. 324 pp. \$23.95. ISBN 1-59051-175-1.

Inspired by an unpublished memoir by the author's grandmother, found years after her death, the novel is set in Paris in the early 1900s. *Why She Married Him* tells the story of Nina Schavranski, a beautiful young Rus-

sian Jewish émigré at a crossroads in her life. The answer to the question of why she marries Abraham Podselver, a struggling fashion illustrator with socialist dreams, lies in the sum of Nina's experiences—her first real love, her family's struggle to make it out of the ghetto in Paris, and their life in Yekaterinoslav in Ukraine, where they enjoyed a comfortable, cultured life until a series of bloody pogroms forced them into exile.

The Woman from Hamburg and Other True Stories, by Hanna Krall. New York: Other Press, 2005. 260 pp. \$19.00. ISBN 1-59051-136-0.

Hanna Krall, born in Warsaw, worked as a reporter until 1981, when martial law was imposed. Her literary reports based on interviews with survivors, both Jewish and Gentile, became popular but had to be published through the underground press in Poland and smuggled abroad. Here she uses these testimonials as the basis for the fictionalized *The Woman from Hamburg*. These stories illuminate the moral complexities facing those who survived the Holocaust.

Zipporah, Wife of Moses: A Novel, by Marek Halter. New York: Crown Publishers, 2005. 278 pp. \$23.00. ISBN 1-4000-5279-3.

Marek Halter returns with the second novel in his Canaan trilogy to honor the forgotten women of the Old Testament.

Middle East

Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel, by Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu-Baker. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. 221 pp. \$50.00 (c); \$19.95 (p). ISBN 0-5220-24441-9 (c); 0-520-24557-1.

This historical and political analysis of the Arab-Israeli conflict combines the perspectives of two segments of the Middle Eastern puzzle: Israeli Jews and the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Written jointly by an Israeli anthropologist and a Palestinian family therapist, the book merges the personal and the political as it explores the various stages of the conflict, from the 1920s to the present.

Exile and Return: Predicaments of Palestinians and Jews, edited by Ann M. Lesch and Ian S. Lustick. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005. 358 pp. \$45.00. ISBN 0-8122-3874-5.

The Israeli, Palestinian, and American contributors to this volume consider the failure of the Oslo peace process, the years of bloody violence that ensued, and a renewed awareness of the centrality of the Palestinian refugee question and the issues of demography and justice it raises with

respect to any peace settlement. They explore the political meaning of the past delivered into the present by Palestinians whose personal and collective lives were forever transformed by the Nakba (catastrophe) of 1948, and by Israeli Jews whose sense of their own security and identity has been inseparably bound to centuries of persecution and an image as a people whose suffering arose from its exile from the Land of Israel twenty centuries ago.

Jordanian Jerusalem: Holy Places and National Spaces, by Kimberly Katz. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005. 224 pp. \$59.95. ISBN 0-08130-2844-2.

Kimberly Katz explores the role of Jerusalem's holy places in the process of creating a distinct national identity in Jordan from 1948 to 1967. The time period marks Jordan's control over Jerusalem, including the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish holy sites in the Old City. Katz shows that the governing Hashemite leaders co-opted the religious importance of Jerusalem to refashion Jordan's image following the 1948 War in Palestine around the holy places, located in the newly enlarged kingdom.

Maneuvering Between the Headlines: An American Lives Through the Intifada, by Helen Scharly Motro. New York: Other Press, 2005. 190 pp. \$20.00. ISBN 1-59051-159-X.

This book is both witness to and documentation of contemporary Israeli history through the lens of the author's personal life. She paints both Israelis and Palestinians with compassion as she depicts the absurdities to which hatred can lead, as well as the efforts of dedicated individuals to encourage both sides to reconnect.

A Strange Death: A Story Originating in Espionage, Betrayal, and Vengeance in a Village in Old Palestine, by Hillel Halkin. New York: PublicAffairs, 2005. 388 pp. \$26.00. ISBN 1-58648-271-8.

In 1917, the members of a spy ring who sought to assist the British in driving the Turks from Palestine were betrayed. Two were hanged; one shot herself to escape torture and died a lingering death four days later. It was said that four of the women of the town of Zichron were seen laughing hysterically as the arrests of their neighbors were carried out. Each met a strange fate: one died prematurely, the second went mad, the third was an invalid and the fourth lived out her life in disrepute. When Hillel Halkin heard this story of the village that he lived in, it inspired him to begin a journey into the past. His friends and neighbors each offered a different version of the events of 1917, and Halkin discovered that each of them was in some way affected by the legendary fate of the spy ring.

Psychology and Social Welfare

Stereotypes and Prejudice in Conflict: Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish Society, by Daniel Bar-Tal and Yona Teichman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 483 pp. \$85.00. ISBN 0-521-80797-2.

Focusing on the issue of Arab representation in the Israeli-Jewish society, this study describes the negative intergroup psychological repertoire about the enemy (Arabs) that evolves in the context of intractable conflict (Arab-Israeli conflict). This analysis is of special importance because the negative psychological intergroup repertoire feeds the continuation of the conflict, and thus, serves as a major obstacle to conflict resolution and the peace making process. The major challenge of changing the negative psychological intergroup repertoire is emphasized.

Reference

A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations, edited by Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 507 pp. \$195.00. ISBN 0-521-82692-6.

This reference work explores and defines the many factors which characterize the relationship between the two traditions. The editors have brought together over 700 entries—including events, institutions, movements, people, places and publications—contributed by more than 100 scholars. The *Dictionary* offers a focus for the study and understanding of Jewish-Christian relations internationally, both within and between Judaism and Christianity.

Judaica Reference Sources: A Selective, Annotated Bibliographic Guide, by Charles Cutter. 3rd ed. Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2004. 365 pp. \$50.00. ISBN 1-59158-133-8.

This updated edition of *Judaica Reference Sources* revises and expands coverage of virtually every aspect of Jewish life, knowledge, history, culture, religion, and contemporary issues.

Religious Studies

The Reluctant Parting: How Did the Followers of Jesus Stop Being Jewish? by Julie Galambush. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005. 288 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 0-06-084498-1.

The Reluctant Parting tells the story of how the New Testament authors fought—ultimately in vain—to preserve their legitimacy as members of the Jewish community. Biblical scholar Julie Galambush, a former Baptist

minister who converted to Judaism, reveals the diversity within first-century Judaism and how an intra-Jewish debate about what it means to be Jewish included the followers of Jesus as one Jewish sect among many.

Spirituality and Law: Courting Martyrdom in Christianity and Judaism, by Abraham Gross. Lanham: University Press of America, 2005. 148 pp. \$26.00. ISBN 0-7618-2997-0.

Spirituality and Law is an evaluation of martyrdom impulses in Christianity and Judaism. Author Abraham Gross analyzes the spiritual yearning of martyrdom in each religion over a period of 1,500 years, from the 2nd to the 16th century. Special attention is given to the Roman period, 9th century Cordova, and 13th–15th century Franciscans.

The Star of Redemption, by Franz Rosenzweig, translated by Barbara E. Galli. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005. 459 pp. \$65.00. ISBN 0-299-20724-2.

Fusing philosophy and theology, this book assigns both Judaism and Christianity distinct but equally important roles in the spiritual structure of the world and finds in both biblical religions approaches to a comprehension of reality. The major themes and motifs of *The Star* are the birth, life, death, and immortality of the soul; Eastern philosophies and Jewish mysticism; the relationship between God, world, and humanity over time; and revelation as the real biblical miracle of faith and path to redemption.

Society and Culture

Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror, by Mia Bloom. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. 251 pp. \$26.50. ISBN 0-231-13320-0.

Mia Bloom examines the use, strategies, successes, and failures of suicide bombing in Asia, the Middle East, and Europe and assesses the effectiveness of government responses. Bloom considers how terrorist groups learn from one another, how they respond to counterterror tactics, the financing of terrorism, and the role of suicide attacks against the backdrop of larger ethnic and political conflicts. The motives of individuals, whether religious or nationalist, are important, but the larger question is, what external factors make it possible for suicide terrorism to flourish? Bloom describes these conditions and develops a theory of why terrorist tactics work in some instances and fail in others.

Selecting by Origin: Ethnic Migration in the Liberal State, by Christian Joppke. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005. 330 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0-674-01559-2.

In a world of mutually exclusive nation-states, international migration constitutes a fundamental anomaly. States have been inclined to select migrants according to their origins; the result is ethnic migration. But Christian Joppke shows that after World War II there has been a trend away from ethnic selectivity and toward non-discriminatory immigration policies across Western states. Joppke presents case studies of the United States, Australia, Western Europe, and Israel.

Women's Studies

Jewish Women and Their Salons: The Power of Conversation, by Emily D. Bilski and Emily Braun. New York: The Jewish Museum and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005. 266 pp. \$50.00. ISBN 0-300-10385-9.

From their debut in Berlin in the 1780s to their emergence in 1930s California, Jewish women's salons served as welcoming havens where all classes and creeds could openly debate art, music, literature, and politics. This book explores the history of these salons where women of intellect resolved that neither gender nor religion would impede their ability to bring about social change.

Women with a Mission: Religion, Gender, and the Politics of Women Clergy, by Laura R. Olson, Sue E. S. Crawford, and Melissa M. Deckman. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005. 190 pp. \$37.50 ISBN 0-8173-1460-1.

Women clergy now account for approximately 10 percent of religious leaders in the United States. As their numbers grow, so too does their political influence. This book examines the effects of gender, professional experience, and religious belief on the political attitudes and activism of clergywomen.