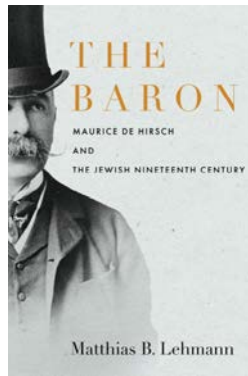


REVIEWS OF TITLES FOR ADULTS

Lehmann, Matthias B. *The Baron: Maurice de Hirsch and the Jewish Nineteenth Century*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2022. 380 pp. \$35.00 (9781503630307) HC.

As documented in Matthias Lehmann's new book, Maurice de Hirsch was a prominent banker, railway maker, philanthropist, and Jew. That last, of course, kept him out of the top echelons of elite culture. This book is divided into four parts, documenting his life and family, his railway projects, his general philanthropy, and his attempts to set up an agricultural colony in Argentina in order to "solve" the issue of Jews being expelled from Russia and other areas. In many ways, Hirsch's actions highlight the view from the "top" of Jewish society, but also from the upper class more broadly, as far as the situation for the Jews in Eastern Europe. The first two parts are more biographical, whereas the latter two have more of a global historical focus and will be of great value to scholars studying Jews, class, and migration during the 19th century. This title is recommended for research libraries.

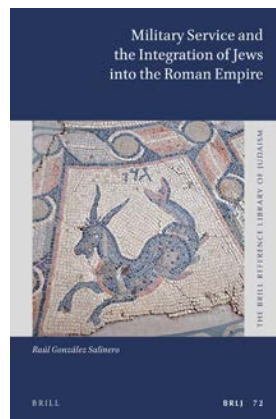


Michelle Margolis,
AJL President,
Columbia University, NY

Salinero, Raúl González. *Military Service and the Integration of Jews into the Roman Empire*. Boston: Brill, 2022. 222 pp. \$127.00 (9789004506756) HC.

The participation of Jewish soldiers in the armies of ancient foreign lands, especially Rome, may seem culturally incongruent, given the repression, as well as bloody wars and confrontations. But this interesting book reveals the presence of Jews who did serve, and in many functions, local or regional militias, police, mercenary or auxiliary forces, frontier guards, and actual combat, during the post-Biblical era.

Chapters chronologically cover the Roman Republic (1st century BCE) to the time of Justinian (6th century CE), and the emergence of Diaspora Jews as a large and visible population among indigenous and military settlers. The author draws on contemporary sources, including Josephus, Roman law and literature, funerary inscriptions, Egyptian papyri, Christian and Rabbinic authors, and provides photos of archaeological sites and tombs with epigraphic tributes to the deceased's achievements. Avoiding over-idealization of Jewish history, he



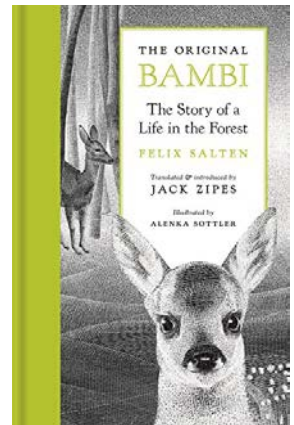
offers some explanation as to why young males were willing or able to enlist: Hellenization, economic opportunity, slavery, or recruitment as a form of manumission. The Senate in fact, created a unit for Jewish freedmen. (There were even Jewish gladiators.) In addition, the lack of rabbinic authority, which had not yet crystallized, diluted adherence to *Torah* law. Nevertheless, religious accommodations were often made, for example, to allow the observance of kashrut and Shabbat, although conflicts arose over paganism and polytheism, and many Jews who distanced themselves from the mainstream in their host countries sought or gained exemption.

This book is readable and intensely researched; however, the one big frustration is the number of footnotes that appear in Greek or Latin. Clearly this book is intended for scholars of antiquity rather than average readers; for that reason, it is suitable chiefly for academic libraries.

Hallie Cantor,
Acquisitions Associate,
Yeshiva University, NY

Salten, Felix. *The Original Bambi: The Story of a Life in the Forest*, translated and edited by Jack Zipes. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2022. 192 pp. \$24.95 (9780691197746) HC.

Despite its contemporary association with Disney, the story of *Bambi* was always so much more than a children's story. In this new translation, Jack Zipes, a noted scholar of fairy tales, contextualizes the story within Salten's early twentieth-century Jewish, Austrian, political, and environmental experiences. In his introduction, Zipes critiques the American cultural misappropriation of *Bambi* as a story of sentimentality and male elitism. Taking the reader through the many complex twists and turns of Salten's life, Zipes argues that the story is, at its heart, an autobiographical statement about the power wielded by oppressors over the innocent.



The story is influenced by Salten's navigation of the challenges to his identity as a proud Austrian when his status as a Jew became more important in the shifting political sphere. Salten was a champion of animal rights, while also engaging in hunting for sport, a contradiction which Zipes explores as a fascinating glimpse into the complexity and nuance of human belief and behavior. The translation itself is lyrical and unsettling in equal measure, which, if Zipes' introduction is any indication, Salten would have approved of. Reading the text after the introduction infuses the story itself with the feeling of an anguished cry about so many

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