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literal sense of the Old Testament takes us back to the perspective on Jews and their history in Jiménez de Rada's anti-Jewish *Dialogue libri vite* and his *Breviarium catholice historie*, as well as Nicholas of Lyra's more recent *Postilla literalis*, a work acquired by the cathedral on the instructions of Tenorio.

Nickson traces the building of the different parts of the cathedral from its plan and initial stages under Jiménez de Rada, through its evolution under different archbishops and master builders, in times of wealth and penury for the see of Toledo, until the completion of its basic structure by 1381 and the enhancement of its interior spaces under Archbishop Tenorio. But what emerges from this study is far more than the meticulous architectural history of a cathedral, though it is that. It is also the biography of that building and its deep entwinement with the city that housed it, through the liturgical feasts and festivals celebrated there by its clergy and citizens; the cults of the saints worshipped in its chapels and at its altars; and the dead it memorialized in tombs, epitaphs, and the charters in its archives. Nickson's cathedral is built of more than just stone; it is found in relics and tombs; in crosses and liturgical vestments; in embroidered textiles from England and Merinid war banners; in the inventories of its books and objects; and in the cartularies, charters, manuscripts, and early printed books that reveal its construction and describe its use, most notably among the latter, Blas Ortiz's *Summi templi Toletani* (1549), which serves as a vade mecum for Nickson throughout the volume. And it is the story of the people who built it, used it, donated to it, and were buried in it—archbishops and master builders, kings and queens, canons and nobles, citizens and scholars. Nickson brings all of these to life.

A word must also be said about the extremely high production value of this volume. The Toledo cathedral is an enormously complicated visual and material space, and the wealth of excellent photographs in black and white and color, including *comparanda* with other structures, supplemented with key diagrams that show the evolution of the building as it grew, allow a reader to make a virtual journey through its precincts and to follow Nickson's engrossing narrative and nuanced arguments. Both the author and Ellie Goodman at the Pennsylvania State University Press deserve commendation for creating a volume that is as beautiful and usable as it is illuminating and interesting.

Nickson posed three challenges with this book: to revitalize the practice of medieval architectural history, to insert Toledo into its rightful place in Spanish and medieval art history, and to inspire further scholarship along the expansive lines outlined in this volume. To this reviewer, he has accomplished the first two and is sure to succeed with the third.

LUCY K. PICK, *University of Chicago*.

NIDITCH, SUSAN. *The Responsive Self: Personal Religion in Biblical Literature of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015. vii + 190 pp. \$50.00 (cloth).

When one thinks of religion as it is presented in the Hebrew Bible, one thinks, almost immediately, of community and institutions. Narratives of sacred history, legislation governing the temple and its priesthood, prophetic oracles on national destiny—indeed, the Hebrew Bible itself, by its very existence—all attest to collective religious identity. Personal religious sentiments and experiences must be retrieved from the textual remains created and curated by the ancient community. Susan Niditch, in the sensitive readings she presents in this book, successfully undertakes this scholarly act of recovery.

The concept of “lived religion,” based mainly on the writings of Meredith McGuire and Robert Orsi, sets Niditch’s agenda (3–8). She identifies and appropriates key concepts from McGuire’s work, especially the emphasis on material religion, descriptions of the self, and the physical human body. From Orsi, Niditch draws the observation that, for the religious individual, practically every interaction with a fellow human can be saturated with meaning. This implies that the boundary between sacred and profane is blurry, as is the boundary between “official” and “unofficial” religion. Religious individuals understand themselves through tradition, so the scholarly quest for personal religion in ancient Israel requires examining this interface. As Niditch demonstrates, taking up this challenge holds the promise of revealing how individuals draw on tradition and innovate from within it.

The book’s seven main chapters apply these theoretical priorities to groups of biblical texts. Regarding prophecy, for example, this perspective highlights “the emotional and personal experience of the seer as well as the cultural media that make such an experience believable to him and to the audience” (108) alongside “the material and embodied dimensions” of the prophets’ symbolic visions and sign acts (101). Throughout, Niditch uncovers expressions of Israelite selves: in different perspectives on transgenerational punishment refracted through the “sour grapes” proverb in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 18, in Job’s physical pain, in the personal laments, in the Nazirite vow, and in a recreation of the sensory experience of death and mourning at Khirbet Beit Lei. Everywhere, readers are reminded to consider what particular religious expressions might have meant to ancient individuals.

From the very outset, Niditch situates her readings in a diachronic context by observing that later biblical texts, written when Judea was subject to Babylonian and then Persian dominion, tend to “privatize and personalize religion” (1). Job and Qohelet concern themselves with the fate of the individual, not the nation. Similarly, compared to the earlier story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38), the later book of Ruth shows an interest in the individual by drawing its characters much more fully through emotionally charged dialogues and self-disclosures. For Niditch, this individualizing tendency reflects, to some extent, the particular upheavals of the Neo-Babylonian and Persian periods and their “theological, political, and cultural challenges” (3). Later authors coped by turning inward, toward the self, and by transforming the preexilic traditions that they inherited. Thus, reading this literature through the lens of personal, lived religion affords nothing less than a glimpse into how national calamity played out in individuals’ experiences.

Texts that deal most explicitly with the challenges of exile and destruction, such as the “sour grapes” adage or the use of the personal lament to tell the stories of Jeremiah and Nehemiah, support Niditch’s claim. The personal-religious dimensions of these texts readily connect to the exilic or postexilic circumstances of their composition. One might well apply Niditch’s observations to texts not included in this book, such as Habakkuk’s lament-like complaint to God in the face of the Chaldean threat (Habakkuk 1) or the argument between the prophet and the exiled Judeans in Egypt in Jeremiah 44. In that latter narrative, the prophet gets the final word, but the popular position gets a good airing, too, which leaves readers to ponder who, exactly, has the stronger claim. Just as Niditch interprets Ezekiel’s detailed yet distant opening vision as “reflecting the uncertainty of the period of the exile” (114–15), one can easily attribute this narrative’s theological uncertainty and its own blurring between the official and the popular to the postexilic *geist*.

It is important, however, to remember that earlier periods of biblical history might have given rise to similar personal religious expressions. For example, Niditch suggests particularly exilic reasons for why later prophets make extensive use of symbolic acts: the flourishing of a once less prestigious, indirect form of prophecy due to “ten-

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sions and transformations of the social fabric in the face of invasion, war, and displacement” and “beliefs about the hiddenness of God, who departs in the face of the people’s sin” (105). But, as even Niditch acknowledges, preexilic prophecy established the tradition of the sign act, such as Hosea’s marriage or Isaiah’s nakedness. These earlier prophets lived through disruptions like the Syro-Ephraimite War, the fall of Samaria, and Sennacherib’s predations of the Judean countryside. Did these upheavals lead to the sign acts, as the final exile did later, or could the sign act have been a prophetic expression throughout the history of biblical prophecy, independent of traumatic background events? Similar questions arise from Niditch’s invocation of postexilic socioeconomic circumstances to interpret the Nazirite vow as a priestly means of controlling personal religious expressions, especially for women.

Questions like these will, no doubt, provoke further study among scholars of the Hebrew Bible, who should welcome Niditch’s fresh perspectives on well-known texts and topics. Notes have been kept to a minimum and away from the main pages but provide enough information, together with the useful bibliography, for anyone who wishes to pursue further research. More broadly, this book contributes to the field of religious studies by providing valuable applications of general theories on religion. Finally, Niditch’s accessible style makes this book an excellent entry point for anyone in the educated reading public looking to explore current scholarship on the Hebrew Bible.

SHALOM E. HOLTZ, *Yeshiva University*.

NOVAK, DAVID. *Zionism and Judaism: A New Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. xviii+254 pp. \$103.00 (cloth).

David Novak’s *Zionism and Judaism: A New Theory* offers an apologetics to Zionist claims. This apologetics unfolds through his redirection of the discussion of Zionism from political to theological realms. The upshot is a theology abstracted from history, geopolitics, and ethics of engagement. His failure to confront the histories of colonization of Palestine, the Jewish-Israeli Occupation of Palestinians, the suffering and pain of non-Jews, and the elastic complexities of the Jewish-Israeli human topographies renders the urgent political and sociocultural issues of Israel and Palestine irrelevant to a theological Zionist argument.

The book begins with the question “Why Zionism?” (chap. 1), which surveys and categorizes Jewish responses to arguments that Judaism and Zionism are antithetical and thus irreconcilable philosophically. The intention is to authenticate the moral claims of the State of Israel by discrediting Jewish anti-Zionist critiques (13–17, for example). The second chapter, “Was Spinoza the First Zionist?,” examines the legacy of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza, who was considered by many secular Zionists to foreshadow the movement’s radical break from traditional Judaism (25, 35). Novak, however, challenges this narrative, showing how Spinoza was far from offering a wholly secular modality of Zionism and Judaism-qua-denominationalism. Novak concludes that Spinoza’s secularist admirers misunderstood the depth of his ontological claims and grounding in the tradition. While Spinoza opposed any manifestation of a “clerical class,” or an awaiting for a messianic intervention, he posited that “a reestablished Jewish state could be ‘Jewish’ only if its character was ‘theocratic’ in the sense that God and His law . . . must be sovereign” (46). Novak finds critical insights in this Spinozian rereading and employs them to establish his own philosophical argument, which considers the Jewish meanings of Zionism and the Zionist po-