

Goldman, Samuel. *God's Country: Christian Zionism in America.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018. 248 pp. \$34.85. (9780812250039).

This book is a careful history of American Christian Zionism. While he devotes very little space to its origins outside the country, the author traces the history of this set of ideas as it developed in the United States. What makes it such a rewarding read is that it shows its long history and the depth and breadth of its presence. Its depth is indicated by the role this movement has played in the country's understanding of itself. Regarding breadth, some may find surprising the variety of outlooks within Christian Zionism as described by Dr. Goldman. For example, some believe in the modern Jewish state as a partial fulfilment of eschatological prophecy while others do not. Also, advocates have ranged from conservative evangelicals like Jerry Falwell to liberal Protestants such as Reinhold Niebuhr. The author describes himself in the introduction as "a minimally observant Jew who admires Israel but considers America his country" and disavows belief "in the literal fulfillment of prophecy." While not in the least an apology for Christian Zionism, the book does confront distortions, and oversimplifications of it. This measured tome would be a good addition for collections on Zionism and Jewish-Christian relations.

Shmuel Ben-Gad, Gelman Library, George Washington University

Goodman, Martin. *A History of Judaism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018. 656 pp. \$39.95. (9780691181271).

This is a magisterial work. Unlike a traditional history of the Jewish people, Goodman writes a history of Judaism – an intellectual history of Jewish ideas that is complex and that takes into account the long span of Jewish history and ideas and their interaction with surrounding cultures and civilizations.

The book begins with Josephus and Greco Roman times but immediately looks backwards with a treatment of Israel's interaction and relationship with the great powers of the Ancient Near East, formation of the bible, and classical modes of Jewish worship. These are all treated in Part I called Origins. Part II takes the reader on a journey through the critical years of 200 BCE to 70 CE when much of the myriad of strands of Judaism that exist and have existed begin to take shape. Part III focuses on the formation of Rabbinic Judaism that begins with the destruction of the second temple (70 CE) until the beginning of the pre-modern era (1500 CE). Part IV picks up at the dawn of modernity and the European Renaissance and continues through the formation and growth of Hasidut to the year 1800. Part V focuses on the challenges and reactions to the Enlightenment and the State of Israel and spans from 1750 to present times.

Goodman writes an instant classic and is as good as any one volume history of Judaism available on the market. It is a highly recommended read.

David Tesler, Yonkers, NY

Heilman, Samuel C. *Who Will Lead Us? The Story of Five Hasidic Dynasties in America.* Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017. 318 pp. \$29.95. (9780520277236).

This fascinating book covers five Hasidic dynasties (Munkács, Boyan/Kopyczynitz, Bobov, Satmar, and Lubavitch) that were rebuilt on American soil and the respective outcomes following the passing of their Rebbes. Chapters provide the origins of each dynasty and court – East European towns, founders, and descendants – where leadership was passed down from father to son, and sometimes son-in-law. Women played a role, as Rebbes' wives or widows often wrangled for positions for male relatives, or even alongside them, as in the case of the Satmarer Rebbetzin. The original Rebbes, remnants of Nazi or Communist Europe, possessed traits such as scholarship, piety, lineage, and charisma, essential to the revival of their legacies. Problems with succession stemmed from extinct bloodlines (childlessness or heirs predeceased); lack of suitable candidates; or too many candidates, resulting in family feuds and sibling rivalries.

The author, whose research includes interviews with Rebbes and prominent disciples, admittedly tries to maintain respect without veering into hagiography, though at times seems cynical, pointing

out hypocrisy – e.g. rescue of anti-Zionist leaders by Zionists – or reading into actions. He narrates how some crises were resolved peacefully (Munkács, Boyan), while others heatedly led to separate courts (Satmar, Bobov) or no successor (Lubavitch). However, he ends optimistically by lauding the contemporary leaders, who have had to fill massive shoes, and their achievements – thanks to which he sees Hasidism as the growing face of ultra-Orthodoxy.

This book is worthwhile for insights into these insular societies; societies that many may find inspiring. Recommended for academic libraries with Judaica collections.

Hallie Cantor, Yeshiva University, New York, NY

Hezser, Catherine. *Rabbinic Body Language: Non-Verbal Communication in Palestinian Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity*, Boston, MA: Brill, 2017. 300 pp. \$152.00. (9789004339057).

Hezser examines forms of rabbinic non-verbal communication as a mode of “self-fashioning” in the context of Graeco-Roman and ancient Christian literary sources and in connection with the material culture of Roman and early Byzantine Palestine. The author considers how “rabbis fashioned themselves as similar to and, at the same time, different from Hellenistic, Roman, and Christian intellectuals.” In a comprehensive and systematic way, Hezser brings together and analyzes non-verbal communication in the Palestinian Rabbinic literature of late antiquity focusing on such things as posture, tone, gesticulation, and other physical movements. She demonstrates that a close examination of types of clothing, hair style, demeanor, gait, and manner of speech all shed light on social status, character, identity, and philosophic outlook. Certain types of non-verbal communication amongst particular religious and social strata of the rabbinic elite were deployed to enhance rabbinic individuality, power and authority, constituting a system of silent language.

This book can be viewed as a first step rather than a comprehensive treatment of rabbinic non-verbal communication. Future scholars may extend its scope to analyze symbolic actions in halakhic rituals, for instance keeping the right hand elevated over the left when giving the *Birkhat Kohanim* or holding the Kiddush cup in the palm of the hand when reciting Kiddush or *havdala* as significantly noted in Sefer HaZohar. Highly Recommended.

David B Levy, Touro College, NYC

Hirsh, David. *Contemporary Left Antisemitism*. London: Routledge, 2018. 314 pp. \$145.00. (9781138235304).

Over the past decade, BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanction) has become part of our lives. This dense volume from Britain attempts to analyze and counteract it. David Hirsh is a sociologist from London’s Goldsmiths University. Over the past decade, he argues, the British intellectual Left has moved away from rational arguments and toward general antisemitism, frequently in the guise of opposition to Israeli policy. The book utilize both direct examples and theoretical analysis to expose the lies. Chapters 1-3 provide instances of growing antisemitism. They include the careers of Ken Livingstone, Jeremy Corbyn, and others who have masked their beliefs in the guise of support for Palestinian causes (and other issues); they argue that their actions are appropriate criticisms of Israel. Hirsh explores the rise of BDS in British academia, and demonstrates its ties to anti-colonial movements. He describes the 2012 court case accusing the University and College Union of antisemitism (in which he was a participant). Rather than condemn the hatred, the court completely vindicated the Union (using Ken Livingstone’s arguments). Chapter 7 analyzes the relationship between antizionism and antisemitism. In addition to the real-world discussion, Hirsh provides important philosophical discussion of contemporary antisemitism and analyzes the differences between antisemitism and appropriate disagreement. Finally, the author examines British Jewry’s views of Israel, and their current dilemma of belief, action, and commitment.

A book such as this one aimed at the American situation and current instances of antisemitism would be extremely useful. Because Hirsh is solely focused on Britain, his arguments are less relevant than they might

Copyright of AJL Reviews is the property of Association of Jewish Libraries, Inc. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.