Jewish Studies

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Complete Catalogue
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Neighbors
The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland
Jan T. Gross

A landmark book that changed the story of Poland’s role in the Holocaust

On July 10, 1941, in Nazi-occupied Poland, half of the town of Jedwabne brutally murdered the other half: 1,600 men, women, and children—all but seven of the town’s Jews. In this shocking and compelling classic of Holocaust history, Jan Gross reveals how Jedwabne’s Jews were murdered not by faceless Nazis but by people who knew them well—their non-Jewish Polish neighbors. A previously untold story of the complicity of non-Germans in the extermination of the Jews, Neighbors shows how people victimized by the Nazis could at the same time victimize their Jewish fellow citizens. In a new preface, Gross reflects on the book’s explosive international impact and the backlash it continues to provoke from right-wing Polish nationalists who still deny their ancestors’ role in the destruction of the Jews.

Hidden Heretics
Jewish Doubt in the Digital Age
Ayala Fader

A revealing look at Jewish men and women who secretly explore the outside world, in person and online, while remaining in their ultra-Orthodox religious communities

What would you do if you questioned your religious faith, but revealing that would cause you to lose your family and the only way of life you had ever known? Hidden Heretics tells the fascinating, often heart-wrenching stories of married ultra-Orthodox Jewish men and women in twenty-first-century New York who lead “double lives” in order to protect those they love. While they no longer believe that God gave the Torah to Jews at Mount Sinai, these hidden heretics continue to live in their families and religious communities, even as they surreptitiously break Jewish commandments and explore forbidden secular worlds in person and online. Drawing on five years of fieldwork with those living double lives and the rabbis, life coaches, and religious therapists who minister to, advise, and sometimes excommunicate them, Ayala Fader investigates religious doubt and social change in the digital age.

The internet, which some ultra-Orthodox rabbis call more threatening than the Holocaust, offers new possibilities for the age-old problem of religious uncertainty. Fader shows how digital media has become a lightning rod for contemporary struggles over authority and truth. She reveals the stresses and strains that hidden heretics experience, including the difficulties their choices pose for their wives, husbands, children, and, sometimes, lovers. In following those living double lives, who range from the religiously observant but open-minded on one end to atheists on the other, Fader delves into universal quandaries of faith and skepticism, the ways digital media can change us, and family frictions that arise when a person radically transforms who they are and what they believe.

In stories of conflicts between faith and self-fulfillment, Hidden Heretics explores the moral compromises and divided loyalties of individuals facing life-altering crossroads.
Rabbis, Sorcerers, Kings, and Priests
The Culture of the Talmud in Ancient Iran
Jason Sion Mokhtarian

Rabbis, Sorcerers, Kings, and Priests examines the impact of the Persian Sasanian context on the Babylonian Talmud, perhaps the most important corpus in the Jewish sacred canon. What impact did the Persian Zoroastrian Empire, as both a real historical force and an imaginary interlocutor, have on rabbinic identity and authority as expressed in the Talmud? Drawing from the field of comparative religion, Jason Sion Mokhtarian addresses this question by bringing into mutual fruition Talmudic studies and ancient Iranology, two historically distinct disciplines. Whereas most research on the Talmud assumes that the rabbis were an insular group isolated from the cultural horizon outside their academies, this book contextualizes the rabbis and the Talmud within a broader sociocultural orbit by drawing from a wide range of sources from Sasanian Iran, including Middle Persian Zoroastrian literature, archaeological data such as seals and inscriptions, and the Aramaic magical bowl spells. Mokhtarian also includes a detailed examination of the Talmud’s dozens of texts that portray three Persian “others”: the Persians, the Sasanian kings, and the Zoroastrian priests. This book skilfully engages and demonstrates the rich penetration of Persian imperial society and culture on the Jews of late antique Iran.

American JewBu
Jews, Buddhists, and Religious Change
Emily Sigalow

A revealing look at the Jewish American encounter with Buddhism

Today, many Jewish Americans are embracing a dual religious identity, practicing Buddhism while also staying connected to their Jewish roots. This book tells the story of Judaism’s encounter with Buddhism in the United States, showing how it has given rise to new contemplative forms within American Judaism—and shaped the way Americans understand and practice Buddhism.

Taking readers from the nineteenth century to today, Emily Sigalow traces the history of these two traditions in America and explains how they came together. She argues that the distinctive social position of American Jews led them to their unique engagement with Buddhism, and describes how they incorporate aspects of both Judaism and Buddhism into their everyday lives. Drawing on a wealth of original in-depth interviews conducted across the nation, Sigalow explores how Jewish American Buddhists experience their dual religious identities. She reveals how Jewish Buddhists confound prevailing expectations of minority religions in America. Rather than simply adapting to the majority religion, Jews and Buddhists have borrowed and integrated elements from each other, and in doing so they have left an enduring mark on the American consciousness.

American JewBu highlights the leading role that American Jews have played in the popularization of meditation and mindfulness in the United States, and the profound impact that these two venerable traditions have had on one another.
The Holocaust and the Nakba
A New Grammar of Trauma and History
Bashir Bashir, Amos Goldberg, Elias Khoury, Jacqueline Rose, Refqa Abu-Remaileh, Gil Anidjar, Omer Bartov, Omri Ben-Yehuda, Tal Ben-Zvi, Alon Confino, Yochi Fischer

In this groundbreaking book, leading Arab and Jewish intellectuals examine how and why the Holocaust and the Nakba are interlinked without blurring fundamental differences between them. While these two foundational tragedies are often discussed separately and in abstraction from the constitutive historical global contexts of nationalism and colonialism, The Holocaust and the Nakba explores the historical, political, and cultural intersections between them. The majority of the contributors argue that these intersections are embedded in cultural imaginations, colonial and asymmetrical power relations, realities, and structures. Focusing on them paves the way for a new political, historical, and moral grammar that enables a joint Arab-Jewish dwelling and supports historical reconciliation in Israel/Palestine.

This book does not seek to draw a parallel or comparison between the Holocaust and Nakba or to merely inaugurate a “dialogue” between them. Instead, it searches for a new historical and political grammar for relating and narrating their complicated intersections. The book features prominent international contributors, including a foreword by Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury on the centrality of the Holocaust and Nakba in the essential struggle of humanity against racism, and an afterword by literary scholar Jacqueline Rose on the challenges and contributions of the linkage between the Holocaust and Nakba for power to shift and a world of justice and equality to be created between the two peoples. The Holocaust and the Nakba is the first extended and collective scholarly treatment in English of these two constitutive traumas together.

The Question of Zion
Jacqueline Rose

Zionism was inspired as a movement—one driven by the search for a homeland for the stateless and persecuted Jewish people. Yet it trampled the rights of the Arabs in Palestine. Today it has become so controversial that it defies understanding and trumps reasoned public debate. So argues prominent British writer Jacqueline Rose, who uses her political and psychoanalytic skills in this book to take an unprecedented look at Zionism—one of the most powerful ideologies of modern times.

Rose enters the inner world of the movement and asks a new set of questions. How did Zionism take shape as an identity? And why does it seem so immutable? Analyzing the messianic fervor of Zionism, she argues that it colors Israel’s most profound self-image to this day. Rose also explores the message of dissidents, who, while believing themselves the true Zionists, warned at the outset against the dangers of statehood for the Jewish people. She suggests that these dissidents were prescient in their recognition of the legitimate claims of the Palestinian Arabs. In fact, she writes, their thinking holds the knowledge the Jewish state needs today in order to transform itself.

In perhaps the most provocative part of her analysis, Rose proposes that the link between the Holocaust and the founding of the Jewish state, so often used to justify Israel’s policies, needs to be rethought in terms of the shame felt by the first leaders of the nation toward their own European history.

For anyone concerned with the conflict in Israel-Palestine, this timely book offers a unique understanding of Zionism as an unavoidable psychic and historical force.
The Right Wrong Man
John Demjanjuk and the Last Great Nazi War Crimes Trial
Lawrence Douglas

Now the subject of the Netflix documentary The Devil Next Door

The incredible story of the most convoluted legal odyssey involving Nazi war crimes

In 2009, Harper’s Magazine sent war-crimes expert Lawrence Douglas to Munich to cover the last chapter of the lengthiest case ever to arise from the Holocaust: the trial of eighty-nine-year-old John Demjanjuk. Demjanjuk’s legal odyssey began in 1975, when American investigators received evidence alleging that the Cleveland autoworker and naturalized US citizen had collaborated in Nazi genocide. In the years that followed, Demjanjuk was stripped of his American citizenship and sentenced to death by a Jerusalem court as “Ivan the Terrible” of Treblinka—only to be cleared in one of the most notorious cases of mistaken identity in legal history. Finally, in 2011, after eighteen months of trial, a court in Munich convicted the native Ukrainian of assisting Hitler’s SS in the murder of 28,060 Jews at Sobibor, a death camp in eastern Poland.

An award-winning novelist as well as legal scholar, Douglas offers a compulsively readable history of Demjanjuk’s bizarre case. The Right Wrong Man is both a gripping eyewitness account of the last major Holocaust trial to galvanize world attention and a vital meditation on the law’s effort to bring legal closure to the most horrific chapter in modern history.

Jewish Emancipation
A History across Five Centuries
David Sorkin

The first comprehensive history of how Jews became citizens in the modern world

For all their unquestionable importance, the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel now loom so large in modern Jewish history that we have mostly lost sight of the fact that they are only part of—and indeed reactions to—the central event of that history: emancipation. In this book, David Sorkin seeks to reorient Jewish history by offering the first comprehensive account in any language of the process by which Jews became citizens with civil and political rights in the modern world. Ranging from the mid-sixteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first, Jewish Emancipation tells the ongoing story of how Jews have gained, kept, lost, and recovered rights in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, the United States, and Israel.

Emancipation, Sorkin shows, was not a one-time or linear event that began with the Enlightenment or French Revolution and culminated with Jews’ acquisition of rights in Central Europe in 1867–71 or Russia in 1917. Rather, emancipation was and is a complex, multidirectional, and ambiguous process characterized by deflections and reversals, defeats and successes, triumphs and tragedies. For example, American Jews mobilized twice for emancipation: in the nineteenth century for political rights, and in the twentieth for lost civil rights. Similarly, Israel itself has struggled from the start to institute equality among its heterogeneous citizens.

By telling the story of this foundational but neglected event, Jewish Emancipation reveals the lost contours of Jewish history over the past half millennium.
Parting Ways
Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism
Judith Butler

Judith Butler follows Edward Said's late suggestion that through a consideration of Palestinian dispossession in relation to Jewish diasporic traditions a new ethos can be forged for a one-state solution. Butler engages Jewish philosophical positions to articulate a critique of political Zionism and its practices of illegitimate state violence, nationalism, and state-sponsored racism. At the same time, she moves beyond communitarian frameworks, including Jewish ones, that fail to arrive at a radical democratic notion of political cohabitation. Butler engages thinkers such as Edward Said, Emmanuel Levinas, Hannah Arendt, Primo Levi, Martin Buber, Walter Benjamin, and Mahmoud Darwish as she articulates a new political ethic. In her view, it is as important to dispute Israel's claim to represent the Jewish people as it is to show that a narrowly Jewish framework cannot suffice as a basis for an ultimate critique of Zionism. She promotes an ethical position in which the obligations of cohabitation do not derive from cultural sameness but from the unchosen character of social plurality. Recovering the arguments of Jewish thinkers who offered criticisms of Zionism or whose work could be used for such a purpose, Butler disputes the specific charge of anti-Semitic self-hatred often leveled against Jewish critiques of Israel. Her political ethic relies on a vision of cohabitation that thinks anew about binationalism and exposes the limits of a communitarian framework to overcome the colonial legacy of Zionism. Her own engagements with Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish form an important point of departure and conclusion for her engagement with some key forms of thought derived in part from Jewish resources, but always in relation to the non-Jew.

Butler considers the rights of the dispossessed, the necessity of plural cohabitation, and the dangers of arbitrary state violence, showing how they can be extended to a critique of Zionism, even when that is not their explicit aim. She revisits and affirms Edward Said's late proposals for a one-state solution within the ethos of binationalism. Butler's startling suggestion: Jewish ethics not only demand a critique of Zionism, but must transcend its exclusive Jewishness in order to realize the ethical and political ideals of living together in radical democracy.

Maimonides
Life and Thought
Moshe Halbertal

Maimonides was the greatest Jewish philosopher and legal scholar of the medieval period, a towering figure who has had a profound and lasting influence on Jewish law, philosophy, and religious consciousness. This book provides a comprehensive and accessible introduction to his life and work, revealing how his philosophical sensibility and outlook informed his interpretation of Jewish tradition.

Moshe Halbertal vividly describes Maimonides's childhood in Muslim Spain, his family's flight to North Africa to escape persecution, and their eventual resettling in Egypt. He draws on Maimonides's letters and the testimonies of his contemporaries, both Muslims and Jews, to offer new insights into his personality and the circumstances that shaped his thinking. Halbertal then turns to Maimonides's legal and philosophical work, analyzing his three great books—Commentary on the Mishnah, the Mishneh Torah, and the Guide of the Perplexed. He discusses Maimonides's battle against all attempts to personify God, his conviction that God's presence in the world is mediated through the natural order rather than through miracles, and his locating of philosophy and science at the summit of the religious life of Torah. Halbertal examines Maimonides's philosophical positions on fundamental questions such as the nature and limits of religious language, creation and nature, prophecy, providence, the problem of evil, and the meaning of the commandments.

A stunning achievement, Maimonides offers an unparalleled look at the life and thought of this important Jewish philosopher, scholar, and theologian.
Jesus in the Talmud
Peter Schäfer

Scattered throughout the Talmud, the founding document of rabbinic Judaism in late antiquity, can be found quite a few references to Jesus—and they're not flattering. In this lucid, richly detailed, and accessible book, Peter Schäfer examines how the rabbis of the Talmud read, understood, and used the New Testament Jesus narrative to assert, ultimately, Judaism's superiority over Christianity.

The Talmudic stories make fun of Jesus' birth from a virgin, fervently contest his claim to be the Messiah and Son of God, and maintain that he was rightfully executed as a blasphemer and idolater. They subvert the Christian idea of Jesus' resurrection and insist he got the punishment he deserved in hell—and that a similar fate awaits his followers.

Schäfer contends that these stories betray a remarkable familiarity with the Gospels—especially Matthew and John—and represent a deliberate and sophisticated anti-Christian polemic that parodies the New Testament narratives. He carefully distinguishes between Babylonian and Palestinian sources, arguing that the rabbis' proud and self-confident countermessage to that of the evangelists was possible only in the unique historical setting of Persian Babylonia, in a Jewish community that lived in relative freedom. The same could not be said of Roman and Byzantine Palestine, where the Christians aggressively consolidated their political power and the Jews therefore suffered.

A departure from past scholarship, which has played down the stories as unreliable distortions of the historical Jesus, Jesus in the Talmud posits a much more deliberate agenda behind these narratives.

What's Divine about Divine Law?
Early Perspectives
Christine Hayes

How ancient thinkers grappled with competing conceptions of divine law

In the thousand years before the rise of Islam, two radically diverse conceptions of what it means to say that a law is divine confronted one another with a force that reverberates to the present. What's Divine about Divine Law? untangles the classical and biblical roots of the Western idea of divine law and shows how early adherents to biblical tradition—Hellenistic Jewish writers such as Philo, the community at Qumran, Paul, and the talmudic rabbis—struggled to make sense of this conflicting legacy.

Christine Hayes shows that for the ancient Greeks, divine law was divine by virtue of its inherent qualities of intrinsic rationality, truth, universality, and immutability, while for the biblical authors, divine law was divine because it was grounded in revelation with no presumption of rationality, conformity to truth, universality, or immutability. Hayes describes the collision of these opposing conceptions in the Hellenistic period, and details competing attempts to resolve the resulting cognitive dissonance. She shows how Second Temple and Hellenistic Jewish writers, from the author of 1 Enoch to Philo of Alexandria, were engaged in a common project of bridging the gulf between classical and biblical notions of divine law, while Paul, in his letters to the early Christian church, sought to widen it. Hayes then delves into the literature of classical rabbinic Judaism to reveal how the talmudic rabbis took a third and scandalous path, insisting on a construction of divine law intentionally at odds with the Greco-Roman and Pauline conceptions that would come to dominate the Christianized West.

A stunning achievement in intellectual history, What's Divine about Divine Law? sheds critical light on an ancient debate that would shape foundational Western thought, and that continues to inform contemporary views about the nature and purpose of law and the nature and authority of Scripture.
What Are Jews For?:
History, Peoplehood, and Purpose
Adam Sutcliffe

A wide-ranging look at the history of Western thinking since the seventeenth century on the purpose of the Jewish people in the past, present, and future

What is the purpose of Jews in the world? The Bible singles out the Jews as God's "chosen people," but the significance of this special status has been understood in many different ways over the centuries. What Are Jews For? traces the history of the idea of Jewish purpose from its ancient and medieval foundations to the modern era, showing how it has been central to Western thinking on the meanings of peoplehood for everybody. Adam Sutcliffe delves into the links between Jewish and Christian messianism and the association of Jews with universalist and transformative ideals in modern philosophy, politics, literature, and social thought.

The Jews have been accorded a crucial role in both Jewish and Christian conceptions of the end of history, when they will usher the world into a new epoch of unity and harmony. Since the seventeenth century this messianic underlay to the idea of Jewish purpose has been repeatedly reconfigured in new forms. From the political theology of the early modern era to almost all domains of modern thought—religious, social, economic, nationalist, radical, assimilationist, satirical, and psychoanalytical—Jews have retained a close association with positive transformation for all. Sutcliffe reveals the persistent importance of the "Jewish Purpose Question" in the attempts of Jews and non-Jews alike to connect the collective purpose of particular communities to the broader betterment of humanity.

Shedding light on questions of exceptionalism, pluralism, and universalism, What Are Jews For? explores an intricate question that remains widely resonant in contemporary culture and political debate.

Historical Atlas of Hasidism
Marcin Wodzinski

The first cartographic reference book on one of today's most important religious movements

Historical Atlas of Hasidism is the very first cartographic reference book on one of the modern era's most vibrant and important mystical movements. Featuring seventy-four large-format maps and a wealth of illustrations, charts, and tables, this one-of-a-kind atlas charts Hasidism's emergence and expansion; its dynasties, courts, and prayer houses; its spread to the New World; the crisis of the two world wars and the Holocaust; and Hasidism's remarkable postwar rebirth.

Historical Atlas of Hasidism demonstrates how geography has influenced not only the social organization of Hasidism but also its spiritual life, types of religious leadership, and cultural articulation. It focuses not only on Hasidic leaders but also on their thousands of followers living far from Hasidic centers. It examines Hasidism in its historical entirety, from its beginnings in the eighteenth century until today, and draws on extensive GIS-processed databases of historical and contemporary records to present the most complete picture yet of this thriving and diverse religious movement.

Historical Atlas of Hasidism is visually stunning and easy to use, a magnificent resource for anyone seeking to understand Hasidism's spatial and spiritual dimensions, or indeed anybody interested in geographies of religious movements past and present.

• Provides the first cartographic interpretation of Hasidism
• Features seventy-four maps and numerous illustrations
• Covers Hasidism in its historical entirety, from its eighteenth-century origins to today
• Charts Hasidism's emergence and expansion, courts and prayer houses, modern resurgence, and much more
• Offers the first in-depth analysis of Hasidism's egalitarian—not elitist—dimensions
• Draws on extensive GIS-processed databases of historical and contemporary records
Yeshiva Days
Learning on the Lower East Side
Jonathan Boyarin

An intimate and moving portrait of daily life in New York’s oldest institution of traditional rabbinic learning

New York City’s Lower East Side has witnessed a severe decline in its Jewish population in recent decades, yet every morning in the big room of the city’s oldest yeshiva, students still gather to study the Talmud beneath the great arched windows facing out onto East Broadway. Yeshiva Days is Jonathan Boyarin’s uniquely personal account of the year he spent as both student and observer at Mesivtha Tifereth Jerusalem, and a poignant chronicle of a side of Jewish life that outsiders rarely see.

Boyarin explores the yeshiva’s relationship with the neighborhood, the city, and Jewish and American culture more broadly, and brings vividly to life its routines, rituals, and rhythms. He describes the compelling and often colorful personalities he encounters each day, and introduces readers to the Rosh Yeshiva, or Rebbi, the moral and intellectual head of the yeshiva. Boyarin reflects on the tantalizing meanings of “study for its own sake” in the intellectually vibrant world of traditional rabbinic learning, and records his fellow students’ responses to his negotiation of the daily complexities of yeshiva life while he also conducts anthropological fieldwork.

A richly mature work by a writer of uncommon insight, wit, and honesty, Yeshiva Days is the story of a place on the Lower East Side with its own distinctive heritage and character, a meditation on the enduring power of Jewish tradition and learning, and a record of a different way of engaging with time and otherness.

The Rebellion of the Daughters
Jewish Women Runaways in Habsburg Galicia
Rachel Manekin

An in-depth exploration of the flight of young Jewish women from their Orthodox homes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

The Rebellion of the Daughters investigates the flight of young Jewish women from their Orthodox, mostly Hasidic, homes in Western Galicia (now Poland) in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In extreme cases, hundreds of these women sought refuge in a Kraków convent, where many converted to Catholicism. Those who stayed home often remained Jewish in name only.

Relying on a wealth of archival documents, including court testimonies, letters, diaries, and press reports, Rachel Manekin reconstructs the stories of three Jewish women runaways and reveals their struggles and innermost convictions. Unlike Orthodox Jewish boys, who attended “cheders,” traditional schools where only Jewish subjects were taught, Orthodox Jewish girls were sent to Polish primary schools. When the time came for them to marry, many young women rebelled against the marriages arranged by their parents, with some wishing to pursue secondary and university education. After World War I, the crisis of the rebellious daughters in Kraków spurred the introduction of formal religious education for young Orthodox Jewish women in Poland, which later developed into a worldwide educational movement. Manekin chronicles the belated Orthodox response and argues that these educational innovations not only kept Orthodox Jewish women within the fold but also foreclosed their opportunities for higher education.

Exploring the estrangement of young Jewish women from traditional Judaism in Habsburg Galicia at the turn of the twentieth century, The Rebellion of the Daughters brings to light a forgotten yet significant episode in Eastern European history.
The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000
Todd M. Endelman

In Todd Endelman's spare and elegant narrative, the history of British Jewry in the modern period is characterized by a curious mixture of prominence and inconspicuousness. British Jews have been central to the unfolding of key political events of the modern period, especially the establishment of the State of Israel, but inconspicuous in shaping the character and outlook of modern Jewry. Their story, less dramatic perhaps than that of other Jewish communities, is no less deserving of this comprehensive and finely balanced analytical account.

Even though Jews were never completely absent from Britain after the expulsion of 1290, it was not until the mid-seventeenth century that a permanent community took root. Endelman devotes chapters to the resettlement; to the integration and acculturation that took place, more intensively than in other European states, during the eighteenth century; to the remarkable economic transformation of Anglo-Jewry between 1800 and 1870; to the tide of immigration from Eastern Europe between 1870 and 1914 and the emergence of unprecedented hostility to Jews; to the effects of World War I and the turbulent events up to and including the Holocaust; and to the contradictory currents propelling Jewish life in Britain from 1948 to the end of the twentieth century.

We discover not only the many ways in which the Anglo-Jewish experience was unique but also what it had in common with those of other Western Jewish communities.

Children of a Vanished World
Roman Vishniac, Mara Vishniac Kohn, Miriam Hartman Flacks

Between 1935 and 1938 the celebrated photographer Roman Vishniac explored the cities and villages of Eastern Europe, capturing life in the Jewish shtetlekh of Poland, Romania, Russia, and Hungary, communities that even then seemed threatened—not by destruction and extermination, which no one foresaw, but by change. Using a hidden camera and under difficult circumstances, Vishniac was able to take over sixteen thousand photographs; most were left with his father in a village in France for the duration of the war. With the publication of Children of a Vanished World, seventy of those photographs are available, thirty-six for the first time. The book is devoted to a subject Vishniac especially loved, and one whose mystery and spontaneity he captured with particular poignancy: children.

Selected and edited by the photographer's daughter, Mara Vishniac Kohn, and translator and coeditor Miriam Hartman Flacks, these images show children playing, children studying, children in the midst of a world that was about to disappear. They capture the daily life of their subjects, at once ordinary and extraordinary. The photographs are accompanied by a selection of nursery rhymes, songs, poems, and chants for children's games in both Yiddish and English translation. Thanks to Vishniac's visual artistry and the editors' choice of traditional Yiddish verses, a part of this wonderful culture can be preserved for future generations.


A major exhibition titled “Children of a Vanished World: Photographs by Roman Vishniac” is scheduled at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. The show will open to the public on March 7 and run through June 4, 2000.
The dramatic story of the last stand of a group of Jewish rebels who held out against the Roman Empire, as revealed by the archaeology of its famous site

Two thousand years ago, 967 Jewish men, women, and children—the last holdouts of the revolt against Rome following the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple—reportedly took their own lives rather than surrender to the Roman army. This dramatic event, which took place on top of Masada, a barren and windswept mountain overlooking the Dead Sea, spawned a powerful story of Jewish resistance that came to symbolize the embattled modern State of Israel. Incorporating the latest findings, Jodi Magness, an archaeologist who has excavated at Masada, explains what happened there—and what it has come to mean since. Featuring numerous illustrations, this is an engaging exploration of an ancient story that continues to grip the imagination today.

A major history of the shtetl's golden age

The shtetl was home to two-thirds of East Europe's Jews in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, yet it has long been one of the most neglected and misunderstood chapters of the Jewish experience. This book provides the first grassroots social, economic, and cultural history of the shtetl. Challenging popular misconceptions of the shtetl as an isolated, ramshackle Jewish village stricken by poverty and pogroms, Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern argues that, in its heyday from the 1790s to the 1840s, the shtetl was a thriving Jewish community as vibrant as any in Europe.

Petrovsky-Shtern brings this golden age to life, looking at dozens of shtetls and drawing on a wealth of never-before-used archival material. Illustrated throughout with rare archival photographs and artwork, this nuanced history casts the shtetl in an altogether new light, revealing how its golden age continues to shape the collective memory of the Jewish people today.

For many years Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) has been the object of intense debate. After her bitter critiques of Zionism, which seemed to nullify her early involvement with that movement, and her extremely controversial Eichmann in Jerusalem (1963), Arendt became virtually a taboo figure in Israeli and Jewish circles. Challenging the "curse" of her own title, Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem carries the scholarly investigation of this much-discussed writer to the very place where her ideas have been most conspicuously ignored. Sometimes sympathetically, sometimes critically, these distinguished contributors reexamine crucial aspects of Arendt's life and thought: her complex identity as a German Jew; her commitment to and critique of Zionism and the state of Israel; her works on "totalitarianism," Nazism, and the Eichmann trial; her relationship to key twentieth-century intellectuals; her intimate and tense connections to German culture; and her reworkings of political thought and philosophy in the light of the experience of the twentieth century.

How the Jewish people went from farmers to merchants

In 70 CE, the Jews were an agrarian and illiterate people living mostly in the Land of Israel and Mesopotamia. By 1492 the Jewish people had become a small group of literate urbanites specializing in crafts, trade, moneylending, and medicine in hundreds of places across the Old World, from Seville to Mangalore. What caused this radical change? The Chosen Few presents a new answer to this question by applying the lens of economic analysis to the key facts of fifteen formative centuries of Jewish history. Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein offer a powerful new explanation of one of the most significant transformations in Jewish history while also providing fresh insights into the growing debate about the social and economic impact of religion.
The Origins of Jewish Mysticism offers the first in-depth look at the history of Jewish mysticism from the book of Ezekiel to the Merkavah mysticism of late antiquity. The Merkavah movement is widely recognized as the first full-fledged expression of Jewish mysticism, one that had important ramifications for classical rabbinic Judaism and the emergence of the Kabbalah in twelfth-century Europe. Yet until now, the origins and development of still earlier forms of Jewish mysticism have been largely overlooked.

In this book, Peter Schäfer sheds new light on Ezekiel’s tantalizing vision, the apocalyptic literature of Enoch, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the writings of the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo, the rabbinical writings of the Talmudic period, and the esotericism of the Merkavah mystics. Schäfer questions whether we can accurately speak of Jewish mysticism as a uniform, coherent phenomenon with origins in Judaism’s mythical past. Rather than imposing preconceived notions about “mysticism” on a great variety of writings that arose from different cultural, religious, and historical settings, he reveals what these writings seek to tell us about the age-old human desire to get close to and communicate with God.

Creating Judaism
History, Tradition, Practice
Michael Satlow
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How can we define “Judaism,” and what are the common threads uniting ancient rabbis, Maimonides, the authors of the Zohar, and modern secular Jews in Israel? Michael L. Satlow offers a fresh perspective on Judaism that recognizes both its similarities and its immense diversity. Presenting snapshots of Judaism from around the globe and throughout history, Satlow explores the links between vastly different communities and their Jewish traditions. He studies the geonim, rabbinical scholars who lived in the ninth to twelfth centuries; the intellectual flourishing of Jews in medieval Spain; how the Hasidim of nineteenth-century Eastern Europe confronted modernity; and the post-World War II development of distinct American and Israeli Jewish identities. Satlow pays close attention to how communities define themselves, their relationship to biblical and rabbinic texts, and their ritual practices. His fascinating portraits reveal the amazingly creative ways Jews have adapted over time to social and political challenges and continue to remain a “Jewish family.”

Hasidism
A New History
David Biale, David Assaf, Benjamin Brown, Uriel Gellman, Samuel Heilman, Moshe Rosman, Arthur Green, Gadi Sagiv, Marcin Wodzinski
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A must-read book for understanding this vibrant and influential modern Jewish movement

Hasidism originated in southeastern Poland, in mystical circles centered on the figure of Israel Ba’al Shem Tov, but it was only after his death in 1760 that a movement began to spread. Today, Hasidism is witnessing a remarkable renaissance around the world. This book provides the first comprehensive history of the pietistic movement that shaped modern Judaism. Written by an international team of scholars, its unique blend of intellectual, religious, and social history demonstrates that, far from being a throwback to the Middle Ages, Hasidism is a product of modernity that forged its identity as a radical alternative to the secular world.

Origins of the Kabbalah
Not Assigned
Gershom Gerhard Scholem, David Biale, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, Allan Arkush
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With the publication of The Origins of the Kabbalah in 1950, one of the most important scholars of our century brought the obscure world of Jewish mysticism to a wider audience for the first time. A crucial work in the oeuvre of Gershom Scholem, this book details the beginnings of the Kabbalah in twelfth- and thirteenth-century southern France and Spain, showing its rich tradition of repeated attempts to achieve and portray direct experiences of God. The Origins of the Kabbalah is a contribution not only to the history of Jewish medieval mysticism, but also to the study of medieval mysticism in general. Now with a new foreword by David Biale, this book remains essential reading for students of the history of religion.
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