

Focusing on Jewish Religious Life. 1500-1900. Hrsg. von Antony Polonsky. (Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry, vol. 15.) The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization. Oxford-Portland 2002. XVI, 557 S., s/w Abb.

The 15th volume of "Polin" is a collection of articles, some of which were given as lectures at a 1999 conference in Cracow. The focus of the articles is the early modern period, with Jewish mysticism and mystical movements as the dominant subject. Especially prominent are the articles dealing with Frankism, such as Jan Dóktór on non-Christian Frankists, Sid Leiman on R. Jonathan Eibescheuetz's attitudes toward the Frankists, and Michał Galas on the influence of Frankism on Polish culture. Harris Lenowitz writes on the propaganda of the Frankist movement, especially the struggle over images. These articles enrich our knowledge of the Frankist movement and open additional avenues of research in our attempt to understand it.

The other major subject in the volume is Hasidism. Some of the articles deal with the doctrines of specific hasidic *tsadikim*, such as Yoram Jacobson's article on Rabbi Judah Arie Leib Alter of Gur and his doctrine of chaos and creation; others focus on more general topics such as Karl Grözingers article on the *tsadik* and *ba'al shem*, or Susanne Galley's on the childhood of *tsadikim*. David Assaf analyzes the various interpretations offered by hasidim and enlighteners concerning the fall of the Seer of Lublin, and shows that it was the hasidim's romantic explanation that struck roots in historical memory. Another article dealing with mystical matters is Roland Goetschel's essay on the concept of the Messiah, the Son of Joseph, in the writings of Rabbi Zaddok Hacohen.

Two of the articles in the volume provide us with a glimpse into Jewish spirituality in the 18th century from different angles. Gershon Hundert shows how the invention of the printing press led to the dissemination of inexpensive and readily-understood mystical pamphlets. This in turn led to the continuing formation of mystical strata in the various communities and the composition of prayer books with a mystical flavor. Judith Kalik attempts to determine Polish attitudes towards Jewish spirituality in the 18th century and claims that these attitudes, ranging from anti-Jewish and anti-Talmudic to more enlightened, were based on various conceptions imported from the West. In her opinion, the Frankist movement influenced in no small measure the attitude of the Polish authors to Judaism.

A relatively small portion of the volume is devoted to subjects that have nothing to do with mysticism, such as Krzysztof Pilarczyk's article dealing with the publication of the Talmud in the 16th and 17th centuries, the article of Stefan Schreiner on the Karaite Isaac of Troki, and the place of rabbinic literature in his writings, and the articles by Hanna Węgrzynek on 16th-century accounts of Purim festivities and Margarete Schlüter on the influence of Sherira Gaon on Krochmal.

The articles are given a broader historical context by Antony Polonsky in the introduction, which surveys chronologically the different stages in the development of Jewish religious life in Poland and provides appropriate background. The volume concludes with two sections that have become regular features: "New Views" and "Review Essays," in addition to several book reviews. The former contains a wealth of topics, from "The *Shtadlan* of the Polish-Lituanian Commonwealth" by Scott Ury, to "My Jedwabne" by Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, a graduate student in the field, who is a native of Jedwabne. Noteworthy in the latter section is Robert Wistrich's, "The Vatican Documents and the Holocaust: A Personal Report." W. was a member of the International Catholic Jewish Historical Commission that was created in December 1999 to re-examine Documents of the Holy See Relating to the Second World War. In sum, this is an important collection of articles both for students interested in the history of the Jews in Poland and for scholars who are interested in following the central developments in this area.

Jerusalem

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