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Jehuda Reinharz and Yaacov Shavit, *Glorious, Accursed Europe: An Essay on Jewish Ambivalence*

Sean Martin

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exploited by the Catholic missionaries in order to promote the evangelization of the Andeans.

A good example is the analysis of death at the stake. Death by fire was considered rather an act of cruelty than an act of justice by the local population. The destruction of the body meant the destruction of the soul as well. Understanding this attitude, the missionaries realized that if their work was about saving souls, death by fire should be abandoned as a method of administering justice. The importance attached by the Andeans to the preservation of the bodies of the dead was taken into account when transforming the traditional burial and mourning rites into an acceptable set of customs compatible with Catholic doctrine. As in other aspects of evangelization, flexibility and thoughtfulness were required and they indeed helped quicken the assimilation of Christian principles by the Andeans.

Ramos's book adds an important layer to the manifold aspects of the encounter between victors and vanquished. It demonstrates, once more, that what may look like a complete success for Christianity was not merely a result of coercion, but rather the result of adoption and adaptation by both sides, with a hybrid religious doctrine as the outcome.

Jehuda Reinharz and Yaacov Shavit, *Glorious, Accursed Europe: An Essay on Jewish Ambivalence*, Brandeis University Press: Waltham, MA, 2010; 301 pp.; 9781584658436, \$39.95 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Sean Martin, *Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio, USA*

Writing in *Glorious, Accursed Europe*, the historians Jehuda Reinharz and Yaacov Shavit describe the differences between the *Ostjuden* (Eastern Jews) and German Jews. They quote a letter from the cultural Zionist leader Ahad Haam to the historian and activist Simon Dubnow. Ahad Haam wrote, 'we can speak no longer of a single Jewish people, but rather of Jewish peoples' (62). In this elegantly written work, Reinharz and Shavit present the challenges Jews faced in the modern period and explain how the Jewish elite came to identify not only with the peoples of the nations among whom they lived – the English, French, Germans, Poles and Russians, among others – but with the idea of Europe itself. Ahad Haam's remark about the differentiation within the Jewish community highlights a feature of Jewish history that is at once both compelling and inexplicable: How did Jews maintain an identity as Jews, across borders of all kinds, while adapting to remarkably different political, economic and social circumstances? Reinharz and Shavit are interested in a slightly different question: How did Jews develop such a strong association with an entire region, with the continent of Europe, a region Jews came to see, as they discuss in great detail, as both glorious and accursed?

Reinharz and Shavit have written an engaging account of the views of leading Jewish writers and political figures, illustrating how and why these leaders sometimes described Europe as the place where Jews could fulfil their deepest aspirations or, alternatively, as 'poison'. The authors argue convincingly that the Jews'

experience in Europe and among Europeans affected Jews significantly, influencing Jewish political ideas and social behaviors. They write in their conclusion:

Our claim has been that despite the unique character of the various national European cultures in which Jews lived, and by which they were influenced, the Jewish elite was thoroughly familiar with Europe's overarching cultural background and absorbed a significant part of it. The Jews in Europe were therefore, to one extent or another, European Jews. (192)

The evidence the authors present for this well-qualified claim is persuasive.

This is accessible intellectual history, and readers with an interest in the topic will learn much about general trends, such as Jews' interest in modernity and technology, and about the views of specific individuals, such as the Zionist leader Max Nordau and the Yiddish poet and journalist Uri Zvi Greenberg. The authors focus on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, presenting definitions of Europe and explaining why Jews both had reason to embrace Europe and to keep their distance from cultures which tolerated and encouraged anti-Semitism. An especially interesting section, subtitled 'Who Cried Wolf?', discusses the work of Zeev Jabotinsky, David Ben Gurion and Greenberg, three thinkers who are often seen as having predicted the fate of Jews in Europe during World War II.

Without denying the importance of more parochial studies of Jewish history, Reinharz and Shavit emphasize the ties of the Jewish elite across borders, the importance of the larger Jewish community for Jews throughout Europe, and the attraction of modernity, of new developments in political thought, science, and technology. They pay close attention to attitudes towards America and Palestine as well, recognizing that their message regarding the European nature of Jewish identity might be most important for Jews living both in the New World and in the old, Zionist homeland.

This intellectual history does have its limits, however. The scope of this work prohibits Reinharz and Shavit from examining manifestations of identity from Jews who were not part of the elite or discussing perceptions of Europe expressed in popular culture. In addition, Reinharz and Shavit have neglected East European views and views of Eastern Europe (though a separate chapter concerns views of France, England and Germany). For example, one wonders about the authors' views of the much more recent historiography of Jews in Russia and Poland, historiography that has often described in significant detail the ways in which these Jewish communities were affected by local political and social circumstances.

Reinharz and Shavit have drawn attention to a topic that we might take for granted; they ask us to consider the continuing effect of Europe on the Jewish community and to not forget that Jews have viewed Europe with ambivalence. While recognizing that Jews are deeply rooted in Europe, the authors remind us that the Jewish relationship to Europe has been a dynamic one and is still subject to change.