

political legitimation from Scripture, particularly adopting the Mosaic model to counter Niccolò Machiavelli's and Paolo Sarpi's theories of the state.

While this analysis delves deeply into Possevino's concept of Catholic authority and the structure of the volume is clear, some readers may find some passages a bit redundantly theoretical for a study that could well stand on its own merits. Nevertheless, the reader will appreciate the main themes of this research, which are promising, rich, and likely just the beginning of a larger exploration.

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doi:10.1017/S000964072300327X

***Hebrew between Jews and Christians.* Edited by Daniel Stein Kokin. Studia Judaica. Forschungen zur Wissenschaft des Judentums 77. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023. vi + 357 pp. \$118.99 hardcover, E-book.**

The history of any language is often understood either as a history of its speech community, or as a history of its phonetical, lexical, morphological, syntactical, and stylistic changes over time. Yet these approaches do not always do justice to the complex developments of what a language was in different cultural contexts through centuries, especially if this is a language so loaded with multiple legacies and spanned across several traditions as Hebrew is.

The collected volume *Hebrew between Jews and Christians*, edited by Daniel Stein Kokin, reflects the recent increase in scholarly interest in what a language *means* as a cultural phenomenon beyond what it *expresses* as a linguistic code. The book opens with an insightful Introduction by the editor who mentions that it is crucial to recognize that “Hebrew itself has played a significant role” in the relations between Judaism and Christianity, and that the volume is “an academic treatment of this role committed to examining the two religious traditions as equal partners in this story across the *longue durée*” (1). Moreover, while there is “the great quantitative difference” in the use of Hebrew by the two traditions, “both Jews and Christians have used engagement with Hebrew as a means of thinking about, reaching, and also critiquing one another” (17). This engagement—across centuries, confessions, intellectual trends, cultural and political contexts—is ultimately the link that connects this volume's contributions.

The contributions are set in chronological order. The book starts with the studies of late antique topics—rabbinic discussions of the possible multilingual revelation of the Torah as a way to either fully comprehend the true meaning of Scripture, or to inform other nations of its laws and potentially hold them accountable (Steven D. Fraade) and the views on the primordial language attested in the Syriac tradition—in particular, in Jacob of Edessa (633–708 CE, Alison G. Salvesen). Irvén M. Resnick continues with a survey of medieval Christian ideas about the Hebrew language—as one that is simultaneously sacred as the language of God and angels, and suspicious and dangerous as a language of Jews. The chapter is nicely counterbalanced by Gabriel Wasserman's contribution, which explores the medieval Jewish views on Aramaic—a liturgical language

along with Hebrew but not quite as prestigious, and paradoxically, the one that may reach God directly, bypassing angelic intermediaries. The upper chronological end is represented by the chapters by Yael Almog devoted to the notions of Hebrew in the thought of the late-eighteenth-century German intellectuals Hamann and Herder; by Thomas Willi on the Aramaic studies of Gustaf Dalman (1855–1941); by Shalom Goldman on the spiritual and scholarly life of Paul Levertoff (1878–1954); and by Liora R. Halperin on changes in the sacred and secular roles of Hebrew in the Yishuv era.

Although all chapters are cross-linked in multiple ways, the volume's true *tour de force*, in terms of the density of interrelated discourses, is the central block of seven articles devoted to the Christian and Jewish Hebraism in the early modern period. Their authors take different approaches but ultimately are engaged in a dynamic conversation of the same closely related group of intellectuals and texts. Irene Zwiep focuses on Elijah "Baḥur" Levita (1469–1549) and his studies of Hebrew grammar that came up as a result of an inner-Jewish Ashkenazi-Sephardi dialogue. Melanie Lange takes this discussion a step further and explores the Christianizing strategies employed by Sebastian Münster (1488–1552), a prominent Christian Hebraist of the time, in his edition of Levita's linguistic treatise *Sefer ha-Baḥur*. Similarly, Ilona Steimann discusses the "conversion" of Jewish books to Christianity by Hartman Schedel (1440–1514)—a physician and chronicler from Nuremberg and a Hebrew book collector who did not know the language, but his very ignorance suggested para-textual ways to transform and "improve" the codices—by adding prophetic inscriptions and typological woodcuts, "in accordance with his ideas about Jews and Judaism" (160).

Saverio Campanini develops another important theme that has already emerged from a different angle in Zwiep's contribution and that will reappear in the chapters by Stephen G. Burnett on Luther's Hebrew scholarship and his attitudes to Judaism and by Guido Bartolucci on post-Tridentine Catholic scholars of Hebrew. Campanini speaks about a "typology" of the Hebrew language acquisition among Christian intellectuals in this period. This has never been a neutral act, but one infused with a theological significance. Besides the noticeable change that "it became possible for Christians to be instructed in Hebrew by other Christians without recruiting Jewish teachers or even Jewish converts" (141), Campanini mentions the newly developing confessional distinctions in Hebrew learning—while the Catholics "choose tradition over philology, the protestants, on the other hand, chose philology over tradition" (153). The contributions by Burnett and Bartolucci on, respectively, the situation among the Protestant and Catholic intellectuals complicate this observation further. This ultimately resonates with the very title of the book—"Hebrew between *Jews* and *Christians*." Both entities are in plural, suggesting that there have always been multiple different groups of "Christians" and "Jews" and that their ideas of Hebrew were as much a product of the inter-religious polemics as of intra-confessional discussions and distinctions.

The development of national discourses added another layer of complexity, as evident in Halperin's contribution. Similarly, Stefan Schorch explores the peculiarities of Hungarian Christian Hebraism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The linguistic theory of the time that Hebrew and Hungarian are closely related on the basis of some grammar similarities between the two languages, though totally untenable today, became an important mechanism to channel sentiments of national identity and even to claim some of Hebrew's holiness for Hungarian. This emphasizes that the cultural *significance* of Hebrew goes beyond the *knowledge* of this language (cf. Steimann's chapter) and that language fantasies are no less important for cultural history than linguistic realities.

The broad chronological frame of the book should not intimidate scholars who, like myself, are interested in ideas about languages, but focus more narrowly on a specific period. The articles are appealing and accessible, and the shared themes reverberate through the entire volume, which is a valuable addition to this currently growing field.

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doi:10.1017/S0009640723002913

***Benjamin Colman's Epistolary World, 1688–1755: Networking in the Dissenting Atlantic.* By William R. Smith. Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. xvi + 284 pp. \$119.99 hardcover/softcover, \$89 e-book.**

Benjamin Colman (1673–1747) is best remembered as the minister of Boston's Brattle Street Church. In the historiography of New England, the church's 1698 founding signaled a change in colonial Congregationalism. Under Massachusetts's new charter (1691), religious alternatives to the traditional church establishment gained protections, and the church's organizers took the opportunity to establish Brattle Street along slightly different lines. While it aligned with many congregational practices, it also embraced broader access to baptism and omitted the requirement that prospective members relate (and be judged for) their conversion experiences. The church was also determined not to hold itself aloof from other Protestants with broadly similar beliefs, supporting a more tolerant approach to religious difference. These attributes made Brattle Street attractive to Bostonians who wanted to have their children readily baptized, to avoid publicly recounting their personal faith experiences, and to interact with those of other Protestant orientations on an equal footing. Benjamin Colman, a Boston-born and Harvard-trained clergyman, returned from his post in Bath, Somerset (England) to lead the church. The values Colman expressed by accepting the position as Brattle Street's minister also shaped his decades' long correspondence—an epistolary record that stands at the center of William R. Smith's book.

Colman embodied, in Smith's estimation, a new sensibility among Protestant leaders on both sides of the Atlantic. Having traveled to England as a young man, master's degree in hand, Colman was exposed to the culture of Dissent then emerging in England after the Glorious Revolution. Dissent was a new legal category created out of the revolutionary settlement, in which Protestants outside of the Church of England were tolerated within England; the settlement further endorsed the idea of multiple establishments within the empire, each with local authority. One tie that bound all Protestants in Britain and the empire was their shared hostility to Catholicism. This loosening of the restrictions on nonconformity prompted dissenters of various stripes (especially Presbyterians and Congregationalists, known in England as Independents) to work closely together. Colman wholeheartedly supported this change, and indeed found friendships among his Presbyterian colleagues. He returned to Boston in 1699 with numerous contacts in England and Scotland with whom he