

coherent philosophy or to place it more fully and revealingly within the philosophical traditions of the past, a task that Lang is clearly capable of performing but one that he foregoes for reasons of space limitation. No doubt for the same reasons, extended readings of Levi's most important texts are absent in this chapter (and elsewhere in the book). Foregoing detailed, broadly focused textual analysis, Lang typically abstracts his author's ideas from the books in which they are developed instead of explicating them over the course of their development in these books. By proceeding in this way, Lang's reflections on Levi as a "natural philosopher," while always interesting, are registered at somewhat of a remove from the works themselves. Separating "the writer" from "the thinker" may have certain advantages schematically, but it detracts from the coherence and diminishes the effect of Levi's actual literary practice.

Over many years, Berel Lang has shown himself to be one of his generation's most dedicated and astute scholars of the Holocaust, and there is no doubting the seriousness of his engagement with Levi. He is moved by Levi's life and writings, and in a more expansive study, he could have done even more to illuminate both. "Jewish Lives," the Yale University Press series within which this book appears, however, seems to have confined him within a format that is too restrictive to allow him to do full justice to his thinking about this author. One leaves this book grateful for what one has learned from it, but also wishing that the author had been at liberty to give us still more.

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Aomar Boum. *Memories of Absence: How Muslims Remember Jews in Morocco*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013. 240 pp.
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Morocco's Jewish past has long provided historians with magnificent stories—stories of kabbalists, diplomats, mountaineers, and merchants, all interacting closely with their Muslim counterparts. A sense of Morocco's Jewish present, however, has proved somewhat harder to grasp. Some see Moroccan Jewish history as having ended with the emigration of most of the country's Jews during the last century. Yet the physical near-absence of Jews from today's Morocco—a population once numbering a quarter of a million, now in the low thousands—has done surprisingly little to diminish their significance in national narratives. While this situation is not unique to Morocco (see how antisemitism outlasted Jews in parts of Eastern Europe), the particular texture of the memory of Muslim-Jewish relations in Morocco, and the history from which it derives, may be.

Aomar Boum's *Memories of Absence: How Muslims Remember Jews in Morocco* sets out to account for why, after years of collective amnesia, Moroccans

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are now beginning to remember their Jewish population. In pursuit of this project, Boum traces the way that Moroccan perceptions of Jews have changed (and continue to change) over time, between generations, and according to the imperatives of a deeply-rooted monarchy. The book is highly original in part because the author has chosen to focus on the post-independence period, and so provides valuable insights into the construction of the Moroccan nation during the anticolonial struggle and its aftermath. Work on the post-independence period is the exception not only in Moroccan Jewish history, but in Moroccan history generally, as a consequence of both the inaccessibility of more recent archival sources and the political risks of scholarship under an authoritarian regime, particularly for local historians. (The recent shift by Moroccan scholars toward an *histoire du temps présent*, closely tied to human rights initiatives, is very promising, but it is too early to know its results.)

Boum dispenses with these challenges by cultivating his own oral sources, which he then sets against a background of reread and reinterpreted colonial ethnographies. He does a particular service by identifying and in some cases translating hard-to-access Arabic sources that are especially revelatory of attitudes towards Jews and Judaism in Morocco. These include newspaper articles, magazine interviews, and important legal documents. This interdisciplinary approach is characteristic of the growing field of Moroccan Jewish studies, here complemented with interesting and well-placed ethnographic detail. The opening vignette in which a local café owner in a small Saharan village is repeatedly referred to as Ariel Sharon by his customers is especially revealing (and funny).

Boum's focus on the rural south of Morocco, particularly the Sus and the Draa—the southwest and southeast of the country, respectively—is also original. Some anthropological studies notwithstanding, the Sus and the Draa have been largely unstudied by scholars of Jewish history since the colonial period; in fact, most of the research carried out on Moroccan Jews in recent decades is documented in monographs on a handful of decidedly urban sites, including Fez, Essaouira, Marrakesh, Tangier, and Meknes. The book's geographic orientation also allows Boum to situate himself in the research (this is his home region), and to complicate the history of Morocco's Jewish minority by introducing the Berber and Haratine populations into the story. (The Haratine are a distinct social group in southern Morocco with roots in sub-Saharan Africa.) While the Berber-Jewish relationship has received previous attention, particularly from Bruce Maddy-Weizman, the current work is the only one I am aware of to consider the Haratine experience in Morocco in direct comparison to that of the Jews. (The comparison might be taken even further than it is in this book, given the inclusion by the author of customary law documents equating the two groups.)

Few works on Moroccan Jews in any language exploit Arabic and Berber language sources, and as a result often fail to fully situate their subject within local environments. The current work, however, suffers from no such shortcomings. On the one hand it fits into a small but growing body of deeply contextualized work on Moroccan Jews by scholars based in Moroccan universities (including the historians Mohammed Kenbib, Jamaâ Baïda, and Mohamed Hatimi), yet on the other it benefits from the ability to explore topics involving

Jews that are still too politically or socially fraught to be touched by those in the Moroccan academy, including a reassessment of Morocco's role in WWII, normalization with Israel, Berber activism, etc. Along similar lines, Boum's attention to Muslims' "memories of absence" also complements an important body of work by Israeli anthropologists (Shlomo Deshen, André Levy, Alex Weingrod, et al.) who have studied how Moroccan Jews remember Moroccan Muslims in Israel, based on relationships (real or imagined) that are likewise recalled in the absence of "the other." Several films have also tackled this topic, one that Boum himself has written about elsewhere. This book was a somewhat painful personal reminder of the limitations of archival research in Morocco carried out by an "outsider." Of course, being an "insider" carries its own significant burdens, and the author, an American professor of Moroccan Haratine background, deals with these in a straightforward way so that they become an important part of the story. *Memories of Absence* also includes an innovative historiographic discussion, especially valuable in its weighing of the advantages and dangers of colonial scholarship.

A great part of this book's overall value comes from its deep contextualization of the life of Jews in the societies in which they lived. While this approach is indicative of a well-established "pro-diasporic" turn in Jewish studies, few scholars working today have the local knowledge and skill set to apply it to the Arab-Islamic world. (Judging by student interest in the topic, though, those numbers may be growing.) At the same time, the author does not shy away from asking and answering hard questions about the nature of "Moroccanness" on the local, regional, and national level—what it consists of, who it encompasses and why, its internal contradictions, and its changing definitions. By bringing his expertise and innovative scholarly approach to an understudied population in an understudied area of Morocco, by bridging the respective challenges of outsider and insider status, Boum has made an important contribution to the study of Moroccan Jews, and, more broadly, of Moroccan history.

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MODERN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY AND THOUGHT

Daniel B. Schwartz. *The First Modern Jew: Spinoza and the History of an Image*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012. 288 pp.
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Resurrection is not commonly the lot of dead dogs, yet Spinoza—the "dead dog" of the mid-eighteenth century, to use Lessing's expression—has been not only resurrected, but actually turned into a second Christ, perhaps even an