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calviniano, lo scrittore piemontese imbastisca le sue trame partigiane, colte proprio da Calvino, nel caso di *Una questione privata*, con reminiscenze dei motivi ariosteschi della follia e della *quête* su tutti.

L'ultimo capitolo s'intitola *Appunti sulla persistenza del Furioso* (197–207) e si svolge tra le persistenze e le rimozioni ariostesche degli ultimi decenni. Le ultime sono inevitabili, vista la mole di autori da prendere in esame e la forza e l'intensità della mitopoiesi ariostesca, mentre le prime si svolgono nel segno del grande fascino che i versi di Ariosto esercitano sulla scrittura romanzesca coeva. L'autrice si muove con sicurezza tra illuminanti incursioni nel cinema *furioso* (177–82) e nel teatro *furioso* (173–77) nonché nel fumetto. Qui *Paperin furioso* e la versione di Crepax emergono su tutti, componente inevitabile questa, vista l'importante tradizione iconografica che da sempre accompagna l'*Orlando furioso*).

Il volume, in maniera pertinente, si chiude con le osservazioni che delineano il capolavoro ariostesco come “simbolo di accoglienza e di condivisione, della solidarietà disinteressata, della curiosità verso l'altra sponda del Mediterraneo” (212) in un'epoca di muri e di fili spinati e di porti chiusi, ma anche “l'époque du simultané, [...] l'époque de la juxtaposition, [...] l'époque du proche et du lointain, du côte à côte, du disperse” (Foucault, “Des espaces autres,” in *Dits et écrits*, vol. IV, Paris, Gallimard, 1994, 752–62), che è quindi più che pronta a immergervisi per assimilarne la lezione.

La grande quantità di aggiunte al canone critico ariostesco dovuta all'anniversario è soprattutto territorio degli specialisti. Il volume di Trovato spicca per aver trovato la cifra interpretativa dell'Ariosto a noi coevo attraverso percorsi analitici di lettura anche noti (Calvino) ma senza mai mancare a spingere la ricerca verso una componente nuova e d'innegabile merito.

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JEWISH STUDIES

Francesca Bregoli and David B. Ruderman, eds. *Connecting Histories: Jews and Their Others in Early Modern Europe*. University of Pennsylvania Press. Philadelphia. 2019Pp. VII, 318.

In the vast body of scholarship on Jews, they are mostly studied as the subject of othering by representatives of majority cultures. This edited volume is turning the tables and instead focuses on “the Jews and their others in early modern Europe.” Although the former is a field of great importance in its own right, this

book nevertheless marks a major shift that highlights a whole new focus on Jewish agency in recent Jewish studies scholarship. Jews, in the medieval, early modern or modern periods, should never be reduced to mere subjects of external categorizations and policies, but rather studied as an entangled religious-ethnic cultural community with its own policies and strategies. Jewish history is not simply a story of Jewish reactions to supposedly outside influences, but no less one of Jewish creativity, political and cultural agency.

Already in 1986 David Biale published his seminal book *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books), that stressed Jewish political agency throughout the ages. In the slipstream of the “cultural turn,” the doyen of Jewish history in the United States, David B. Ruderman, has made a similar case for the cultural domain. While initially a specialist in early modern Italian Jewry, he has since broadened his field of expertise to early modern Jewry at large, authoring a truly impressive bookshelf of major studies in the field, culminating in a relatively short, but concise and challenging synthesis, titled: *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). The edited volume under review here is closely knit to this key text in that it seeks to strengthen one of its major arguments: early modern Jewry not only experienced a knowledge explosion and a serious crisis of rabbinic authority, but also more and more intensive intellectual exchanges with “others.” Who are these Jewish “others” and how are the borders demarcated between “self” and “other”? That is what this volume seeks to answer in thirteen short chapters.

The book is divided into three parts, each covering another group of “others”, respectively Jewish and non-Jewish others, while finally focusing on the very specific case of Iberian *conversos* and their others. Already the titles of these three sections demonstrate the hybridity of early modern Jewry: others were found within and outside the fold, whereas the category of *conversos* is confusing established categories even more. In her very fine programmatic introduction, Francesca Bregoli outlines the importance of “connectedness” and “cultural exchange” for studying early modern Jewry. She weaves her plea for “connecting histories” into the body of existing Jewish studies scholarship and in more general historiographical developments, most notably Sanjay Subrahmanyam and the French *histoire croisée* approach. At the same time, she rightly stresses that “connectedness” not necessarily means “connection” and that ambiguities and asymmetrical relations shaped early modern Jewish experiences to a high degree (19).

The first part consists of five essays delving into the diasporic nature of early modern Jewry. Here we encounter connections in language, rituals,

printing industry and spirituality. Linguistic knowledge as a major form of cultural capital is a common tread in many chapters. Rebekka Voß shows how a Yiddish folktale was informed by a shared German-Yiddish understanding of colour symbolism that got lost once translated into Hebrew for other Jewish audiences. Debra Kaplan demonstrates how internal socioeconomic boundaries shaped Ashkenazi community life and funerary rituals, whereas Pavel Sládek stresses the importance of traveling rabbis and the hierarchies of the printing industry. Andrea Gondos argues that kabbalistic popularizations simultaneously bridged and stressed elite and lay readers within and without Jewish communities. Moshe Idel's chapter stands out in that he gives more of a methodological reflection warning against reductionism in history writing.

The second part focuses on non-Jewish others, although these almost exclusively are restricted to Christians. Given the significance of early modern Jewish communities in the Balkans, most notably Salonika, it is a missed chance not to include Jewish-Muslim and Jewish-Christian-Muslim encounters as well. That being said, the six chapters in this part are all exemplary in sketching the ambiguities of Jewish-Christian interactions. Fabrizio Lelli delves into the question how extensive the debate between Pietro Aretino and Elijah Halfan has been over the secrets of the kabbalah, whereas Michela Andreatta neatly analyses one of Leon Modena's Hebrew poems meant for a Christian audience. Joseph Davis studies naming practices in Glikl's famous Yiddish memoirs, favouring intra-Jewish connections over non-Jewish ones. Lucia Raspe, in turn, compares Jewish and Christian narratives on the origins of the Jewish community of Worms, while Rachel Greenblatt uncovers a truly fascinating repertoire of Jewish ritual processions in Prague. Gerhon Hundert convincingly demonstrates the economic and cultural agency of the Polish Jewish merchant Dov Ber Birkenthal of Bolechów.

The last part, as said before, concentrates on the Iberian *conversos*, especially those who stayed behind on the peninsula and continued their lives as "New Christians." In both essays, by Jesús de Prado Plumed and Claude Stuczynski, the complexities of these "former Jews" are used to challenge fixed categories. In societies without Jews, they functioned as "Jews," sometimes also using their Jewish ancestry as a form of cultural capital, as was the case with Alfonso de Zamora. But, on the other hand, the *conversos* should not be too easily portrayed as "Jews in waiting," as many of them truly adhered to Catholicism, even while sometimes cherishing parts of their family's Jewish past.

Bregoli and Ruderman succeed in bringing together a very fine collection of essays that, while covering a wide variety of subjects, still makes a compelling case for studying the myriad ways in which early modern Jews demarcated borders,

while simultaneously crossing them and connecting themselves to internal and external “others.” In geographical terms Italy and Central Europe stand out in this volume, whereas surprisingly the Jewish metropole of Amsterdam and the Western Sephardic diaspora network are almost entirely absent. This absence is, in my humble opinion, the only significant flaw in an otherwise exemplary volume that I wish in the hands of Jewish and non-Jewish early modernists alike.

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Shira Klein. *Italy's Jews from Emancipation to Fascism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 369.

Klein's volume comprises eight chapters, plus introduction and conclusions. Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the emancipation and post-emancipation period; chapters 3 and 4 on Fascism, the Racist Laws and the persecution; chapters 5 and 6 on Italian Jewish Refugees respectively in the United States and in Palestine; chapters 7 and 8 on the postwar. Obviously, the book's title is somewhat restrictive in that the author takes readers on a journey that does not end with Fascism but goes deep into the postwar. The author wants to demonstrate that after the emancipation Italian Jews did not assimilate to the point of abandoning all forms of Jewishness; that their love of Italy stems from the emancipation, which would explain why “most Italian Jews in the interwar period supported Fascism” (2); that “Jews, the very victims of wartime racism, played a role in bolstering the *brava gente* idea” (2). Nobody could argue against the methodological and heuristic value of an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of the process of emancipation and integration to better understand Jews' reactions to Fascism and to the so-called myth of the good Italian. The book's periodization is in fact an original feature and arguably the only strength of a regrettably very poorly executed project.

Klein claims that “the conventional wisdom is that Italian Jews assimilated, or abandoned their Jewish identity, after gaining equality” (2). Whereas in the 1980s and 1990s scholars working on Western European Jewry have deconstructed Simon Dubnov's interpretive paradigm, Italian Jewish scholars — Klein argues — have not moved from their outdated positions (9). Had the author paid more attention to Italian scholarship, she would have known that in Italy it was not Dubnov, but Arnaldo Momigliano's *parallel nationalization* thesis, and Antonio Gramsci's interpretation of it, that represented the dominant paradigm that was in fact recontextualized, and in many ways rejected in those same years (e.g., Francesca Sofia, Mario Toscano, later Simon Levis Sullam). Although the