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“Babylonia.”

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on the other hand, were disillusioned with Zionism, which they associated with a secularism that produced social problems. Aviad notes the extent to which the ultraorthodox faculty of the yeshivot for ba'alei teshuvah disparage Western culture and are in some cases also anti-Zionist. She reports on the importance ba'alei teshuvah attach to being authentically Jewish, and she concludes that, for the most part, they come to feel more integrated and confident than they did before they became religious.

DANZGER covers much of the same ground as Aviad but provides a more comprehensive history and description of the American orthodox context. The author conducted more than 200 interviews in the United States and Israel and was a participant observer in ba'alei teshuvah yeshivot. He found that although secularism had a strong hold on American Jews, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, which emphasized ethnic identity, and the emergence of an antiestablishment counterculture spawned a group of Jewish hippies who were open to learning about orthodoxy. Orthodox groups in Israel and the United States responded by creating ba'alei teshuvah yeshivot and implementing strategies for recruitment: extending invitations to homes, instituting outreach programs for adults, and running special activities for young people. Danzger discusses typical curricular distinctions in the education of male and female ba'alei teshuvah, and cultural differences between "black hat" and "knitted kippah" yeshivot are also described.

Danzger identifies several themes in the "return" narratives of ba'alei teshuvah. Some find that what they considered success in their former lives is no longer meaningful. Others, described as seekers, see divine providence operating in their lives. Some ba'alei teshuvah become religious because of a fiancé, sibling, or other family member. The author also describes some of the difficulties ba'alei teshuvah face in orthodox life and belief, and he notes a tendency among them toward "exaggerated conformity." His informants stress that family relations can become problematic but that maintaining ties with parents and religious relatives as well as integration into orthodox communities is critical.

DAVIDMAN focuses on previously secular American women in the process of returning to Orthodoxy (*ba'alot teshuvah*). The participants in her ethnographic study were predominantly single women, some studying at Bais Chana, a Lubavitch residential seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and the others taking part in outreach activities sponsored by Lincoln Square Synagogue, a modern Orthodox congregation on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. The Bais Chana women were for the most part in their 20s, those at Lincoln Center about ten years older. Davidson immersed herself in these communities to learn firsthand about the processes of ideological conversion and socialization and to discover how women who were part of these communities viewed their experiences.

Both groups of women began to return to Orthodoxy in response to discontent and a subjective feeling of meaninglessness. The Lincoln Square women saw themselves as making a rational choice, whereas the Bais Chana women believed that their return was determined by divine providence. Similarly, the Lincoln Square participants were less likely than those from Bais Chana to express their religious turn in spir-

itual terms. The desire to live traditional lives as wives and mothers was a strong motivating factor for both groups of women. The religious leaders at Lincoln Square Synagogue accommodated to modernity whereas those at Bais Chana resisted it.

DAVIDMAN and GREIL investigate the impact of gender on the experience of return by comparing responses to interviews with 26 ba'alei teshuvah and 25 ba'alot teshuvah at Lincoln Square Synagogue. They describe three distinct search paths—accidental, casual, and committed—and identify gender differences in the paths taken. Women were somewhat more likely than men to have had an accidental search, whereas men were more likely to have had a committed search. Women were more likely than men to have discovered Lincoln Square through a personal contact. Both men and women were drawn to this Orthodox synagogue because of its sense of community. Men found particular satisfaction in participating in public worship. Women who were disturbed about gender roles in Orthodoxy were more likely to have left the synagogue or remained nonobservant than men who were uncomfortable with gender roles.

Like Davidman, KAUFMAN examines the lives of middle class ba'alot teshuvah. She had "loosely structured conversations" with 150 predominantly married, newly Orthodox women living in five U.S. cities. She found some differences in the socioeconomic backgrounds and spiritual orientations of the hasidic and nonhasidic participants. Even though many of these women did not identify with feminism, they incorporated many feminist values into their identities as Orthodox Jewish women. They celebrated their roles as wives and mothers and found meaning in living sex-segregated lives. Kaufman notes commonalities (as well as distinctions) between these newly Orthodox women and the trend in American feminism that has emphasized gender difference.

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Ba'al Shem Tov, Israel ben Eliezer *see* Israel ben Eliezer Ba'al Shem Tov

Babylonia

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The Southwest Asian empire of Babylonia flourished in the lower valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers from roughly 2100 B.C.E. to 689 B.C.E. and then again in the "Neo-Babylonian Period" as Chaldea from 625 B.C.E. to 538 B.C.E. The obvious importance of Babylonia for biblical studies and later Jewish history provided the original impetus for scholarly investigation of the history and culture of this region, but the continuing publication of cuneiform archival materials from Babylonia and its environs has made it the subject of serious study in its own right. In fact, while there remains a great deal we do not know about Babylonia, the very numerous studies that have been written from a wide variety of perspectives make it one of the most exhaustively studied cultural entities of the ancient world.

BRINKMAN investigates the political history of Babylonia from the second dynasty of Isin (c.1158 B.C.E.) to the death of Shalmanezzar V (c.722 B.C.E.). He considers the written and archaeological sources, establishes a chronological framework for the period including the proper dynastic sequence, and supplies a detailed diachronic narrative of political events. In addition, Brinkman provides an in-depth analysis of the role of large foreign populations such as Kassites, Sutiens, Chaldeans, and Arameans. Since the last two of these peoples are especially prominent in the Hebrew Bible, this work will benefit students of biblical studies considerably. Moreover, it is an invaluable source of historical and political context for the events leading to the eventual destruction of Samaria. Brinkman also treats the government and army in a separate section of the book and supplies several useful appendixes and a lengthy bibliography.

CONTENAU's focus on the everyday life of the Babylonians makes this work unique among the sourcebooks on Babylonian history and culture. After establishing the geographic limits and the factors that shaped Babylonia, he explores the region's people and nearly every possible aspect of Babylonian life. Topics covered include the societal structure, family life, architecture and the plastic arts, homes and furnishings, clothing, food and drink, agriculture, business, and standards of exchange. In addition, Contenau provides an in-depth discussion of the intellectual achievements and religion of the Babylonians, devoting ample space to the Mesopotamian ontology and their belief in the power of words as well as to music and cultic practices. The subject matter and breadth of this pocket-size work breathes life into the ancient records, effectively presenting a people rather than a mere assemblage of cuneiform texts and ceramic wares.

FRAME details the written and archaeological sources for the period between 689 and 627 B.C.E. and discusses the various players of the period: Akkadians, Chaldeans, Aramaeans, Elamites, and others. The focus of his work is Babylon under the reigns of the Assyrian monarchs Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal. Frame also examines the Babylonian state, the institution of the monarchy, the administration and military complex, as well as Babylonian foreign policy. Also supplied are several useful appendixes on economic texts, Babylonian officials, the difficulty of precise dating, and a few specific campaigns of Ashurbanipal. Frame's bibliography offers an impressive array of sources for advanced research. The period under Frame's microscope is an important one for biblical studies, and this work provides a richer context than can be found in comparative works attempting to cover a multiplicity of ancient Near Eastern societies.

HOOKE's small survey of the fundamental aspects of Babylonian and Assyrian religion is premised upon the author's assertion that "some knowledge of Babylonian religion is indispensable for a proper understanding of the development of Hebrew religion." Hooke's optimistic view concerning our ability to reconstruct the nuances of Babylonian religion and the importance of a full understanding of the religion for elucidating Israelite cultic and religious practice informs the subjects he discusses and the organization of the book. He outlines the textual and archaeological sources, the cultural background of the religion, the pantheon, temple buildings and personnel, rituals, Babylonian and Assyrian mythology, religion and daily life, divination, and astrology. Though it is somewhat naive in its monolithic treatment of the subject and is in need of an update, the book retains value both as a broad introduction to Babylonian religion and for its comparison of Babylonian and Assyrian religious practices. Hooke also supplies an appendix containing select ritual texts.

NEUSNER's chronologically presented series picks up where several of the other works cited here leave off, around 140 B.C.E. His historical study is divided into the following units: the Parthian period; the early Sasanian period; from Shapur I to Shapur II; the age of Shapur II; and later Sasanian times. Throughout, Neusner aims to "synthesize existing knowledge of the subject and, at a number of points, to add to that synthesis." He continues the works of previous scholars in tracking the influence of developing Parthian culture upon the Jews of Babylon. Omitted from his study are certain aspects of the history of Babylonia that are well treated elsewhere, for example, Parthian-Roman relations and Parthian cultural history. His work is filled with talmudic citations, many of which have seldom been interpreted historically.

OATES introduces readers to the chronology, geography, economy, people, and institutional powers of Babylon, as well as to the textual sources for its study. She divides her internal investigation of Babylon into four distinct periods: from Sargon of Agade to the Larsa kings, the Old Babylonian period, the Kassite and Chaldean period, and from the post-Kassite period to Hellenistic Babylon. One of the distinctive aspects of Oates's book is its reliance on both textual and archaeological evidence to tell a more complete story of Babylon. The nearly 140 illustrations distributed throughout the book also make for an interesting visual accompaniment and allow Oates

to achieve her aim of leading "the general reader to further knowledge and the serious student to more analytical sources."

SAGGS (1995) focuses on the history and culture of ancient Babylon. Following a chapter on the rediscovery of Babylon, from which students of biblical studies will benefit much, Saggs clarifies the prehistory and later historical periods of Babylon. Though the book is organized according to the various periods into which scholars divide Mesopotamia in history, Saggs's emphasis is on the people and their culture, though Babylonian literature is given less space than the social, historical, and economic overviews of the city and its environs. With photographs, maps, chronological charts, and a select bibliography for advanced reading, this book is the perfect starting point for the study of Babylonia.

SAGGS (1902) is more comprehensive than the above introduction and also boasts a very large selection of high-quality photographs. After a chronological construction of the history of Babylon, Saggs develops several diachronic thematic studies on such topics as law and statecraft, administration and government, trade and commerce, magic and religion, the religious role of the king, literature, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. Saggs concentrates to a greater degree than other works on this subject on the complex relationship between the powers of Babylonia and its northern neighbor and frequent aggressor, Assyria. In fact, this work is essentially a study of both ancient powers. This perspective allows Saggs to present the political history of the region with remarkable clarity. Two of the work's distinguishing features are a chapter devoted to the prehistoric period of the region and a chapter on the physical and intellectual legacy of ancient Babylon, both of which make accessible a larger context for understanding the city and its people. For students seeking a deeper knowledge of the subject, Saggs also provides a select bibliography at the end of the book divided by chapter.

SCOTT B. NOEGEL

Baeck, Leo 1873–1956

Posnan-born German rabbi and theologian

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Wiener, Theodore, *The Writings of Leo Baeck, a Bibliography* (Studies in Bibliography and Booklore, vol. 1, no. 3), Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College Press, 1954

Leo Baeck was born in Posen (Posnan) to a rabbinical family. His formal education prepared him to be a rabbi, but he emerged as a community leader, a teacher, and a philosopher as well. His intellectual capacity to rephrase the questions of Judaism and to provide contemporary answers, and his moral strength to share the fate of his community during the Holocaust made him the leader of German Jewry and an exceptional personality of the 20th century.

ALTMANN's subject is Baeck's relationship to the mystical tradition. Baeck discovered the significance of the mystical tradition in modern Jewish thought early in his career, but his attitude developed over the years from rejection to incorporation of this dimension into his theology. Altmann traces this development, showing how the Kabbalah was treated in Baeck's dissertation as a "mental delusion," and how this view remained the same in his published work *The Essence of Judaism*. During his debate with Protestant scholar Adolf von Harnack, Baeck is seen slowly recognizing the mystical trend of thinking. He explains that Jewish mysticism stems from the harshness of Jewish life and is a form of escapism. In an essay published in 1911, *Die Parteien im gegenwaertigen Judentum*, he differentiates between Jewish mysticism and so-called mere mysticism. He presents three major trends of postbiblical Jewish religious history: talmudic, philosophical, and mystical. He saw mysticism as part of normative Judaism. In *Wege im Judentum* he goes one step further: man for him become a cosmic being. He had discovered the essential nature of the Kabbalah. The second, much enlarged edition of *The Essence of Judaism* (1922) is shown by Altmann to represent a new orientation. His appreciation of mysticism and its relation to the ethical aspects of Jewish philosophy are expressed. "Mystery" is recognized as creating a fruitful polarity with "commandment," and a final statement of his view on mysticism is given in his last major work, *This People Israel*.

BAKER offers a full account of Leo Baeck, his career, his life, and his historical background. The thorough exploitation of extensive sources, including interviews, archival materials, memorabilia, Baeck's own writings, and secondary literature, makes this book a well-documented and intimate biography. The index and the detailed notes render the book additionally useful.

BAMBERGER's lecture introduces Baeck as a man. Beyond his public image, the reader becomes familiar with the personality of Baeck. Bamberger raises questions that contemporaries asked and answers them from the perspective of someone who knew Baeck well. Bamberger's point is that Baeck was not a popular speaker who offered easy or entertaining sermons; rather, he made heavy intellectual demands upon his congregation. This book presents a deeply personal picture of Baeck.

FRIEDLANDER's book on Baeck's theology also describes the Jewish community in which he worked—its institutions, factions, and orientations. He states that Baeck's greatest achievements were his contributions toward reestablishing