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Marion A. Kaplan, Deborah Dash Moore, eds. *Gender and Jewish History.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. viii + 416 pp. $80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-35561-4; $27.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-253-22263-3.

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How Gender Analysis Has Transformed Early Modern and Modern Jewish Studies

Each of the twenty-two chapters in this volume, which honors the brilliant scholarship, feminist activism, and dedicated pedagogy of Paula E. Hyman, reveals how the use of gender as a central category of analysis yields new understandings of early modern and modern Jewish life and culture. This valuable anthology appeared before Hymanâs untimely death in late 2011 and was presented to her by its editors and contributors at the 2010 meeting of the Association for Jewish Studies. In gathering together and contextualizing important and innovative essays that reflect diverse historical settings, time periods, and methodological approaches, Marion A. Kaplan and Deborah Dash Moore have created a worthy tribute to Hymanâs pioneering role in establishing gender as an essential component in the scholarly interpretation of the Jewish experience. *Gender and Jewish History* also includes an introduction by its editors, an afterword by Richard I. Cohen that details Hymanâs significant contributions to the study of the Jews of modern France, and a bibliography of Hymanâs publications.

The editors have arranged these essays into three categories, each representing an area where Hyman made important and influential contributions. The first division, âWomenâs Culture in Modern Jewish History,â collects eight chapters with a wide chronological and geographical span. These include Elisheva Carlebachâs chapter, âBlood into Water: Custom, Calendar, and an Unknown Yiddish Book for Women,â which offers a fascinating examination of a now obscure early modern womenâs custom connected with the changing of the seasons. Rebecca Kobrinâs discussion of the murder of a pregnant Jewish housemaid in 1875 New York City sheds light on Jewish womenâs fraught roles as domestic servants in Jewish homes and the ways in which class, gender, and sexuality shaped Jewish daily experience. She convincingly argues that studies of the Jewish family must include explorations of the larger Jewish household milieu and its diverse participants. Among the other valuable essays in this section are Marsha Rozenblitâs overview of Jewish courtship and marriage in 1920s Vienna and Dalia Oferâs delineation of the ways in which attention to gender has transformed scholarship about the Holocaust. While Ofer emphasizes that gender was always subordinate to racism in the Nazi determination to annihilate all Jews, her essay convincingly argues that listening to womenâs stories and incorporating discussions of the different ways in which men and women experienced the Shoah has expanded and nuanced understandings of this tragic epoch in crucial ways.

The second third of the book, entitled âGendered Dimensions of Religious Change,â contains six essays that examine the roles of gender in shaping changing patterns of religious observance. Michael Meyer addresses this phenomenon in relation to women in the thought and practice of the European Reform movement and concludes that âReformers produced a fundamen-

tal change in the nature of Judaism itself, transforming it into a religion that was far more feminine in character as well as bourgeoisâ (p. 153). David Ellenson analyzes how German Orthodox religious leaders Samson Raphael Hirsch and Esriel Hildesheimer played decisive roles in reconfiguring traditional attitudes about textual education for women. Ellenson suggests that Hirschâs and Hildesheimerâs stated positions that women should be encouraged to study the Hebrew Bible and Jewish ethical teachings, even while they maintained restrictions on womenâs study of rabbinic writings, represent âan expansion in this area of Jewish law and thus constitute an important chapter in the evolving role of women in Jewish communal and religious lifeâ (p. 168). An essay by Todd Endelman, building on a theme from Hymanâs 1995 monograph, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women*, considers how gender shaped manifestations of radical assimilation such as conversion and intermarriage, both in perception and in practice. Many community voices in nineteenth-century Western Europe blamed women for the rise in acculturation and secularization that accompanied increased Jewish integration into the larger society, a project that Jewish leadership had largely supported, at least initially. Endelman shows that these accusations are at odds with the historical record and he agrees with Hyman that they represent a male deflection of responsibility to a relatively powerless surrogate. In general, nineteenth-century Jewish women, who tended to be sheltered at home with relatively little contact with the gentile world, were significantly less likely than men to encourage strategies of assimilation or to leave the Jewish community. Chava Weissler offers a quite different approach to women and religious change in her essay about vernacular Kabbalah and embodiment. Comparing womenâs practices in early modern Sabbateanism in Eastern Europe and in the contemporary Jewish Renewal movement, Weissler writes that in both instances the âavailability of kabbalistic materials in the vernacular (Yiddish in one case, English in the other) led to a process in which non-scholars adapted kabbalistic sources and used them to enrich their own spiritual livesâ (p. 216). In each case, as well, female embodiment played a central role as a medium of experiencing the divine presence and, as such, challenged mainstream models of Jewish practice and theology.

The seven chapters in âJewish Politics in American Accents,â the volumeâs third division, utilize a range of methodological perspectives to address aspects of Jewishness and gender in the United States. These approaches involve studies of women who were involved in creative work in the visual arts. Lauren Stern, for example, in ââToo Good to Have Been Made by a Womanâ: American Jewish Women as Political Activists from the 1920s to the 1940s,â analyzes how American Jewish women artists of this era, generally secularized individuals with strong left-wing political affiliations, attempted to build reputations, in the face of a virtually overwhelming disdain for female artistic potential. Some, who were married to artists, sacrificed their own aspirations to support their husbandsâ careers; others were able to overcome the overt discrimination of their male peers and the marketplace, but generally at great personal cost. As Stern notes, âBy virtue of their status as artists and their outspoken political views and affiliations, these American Jewish women were outsiders many times overâ (p. 278). Deborah Dash Mooreâs richly illustrated essay discusses American Jewish womenâs involvement in photography, a field with far fewer gender barriers than the other fine arts, here, too, its Jewish practitioners were involved in a range of progressive politics. Moore focuses on five female photographers, all part of the mainly Jewish-membership New York Photo League (founded in 1936), who mainly worked in the first half of the twentieth century and whose major photographic contributions were in the area of âstreet photography.â Moore explores the mediating role of the cameraâs lens, which allowed women to âcapture performances of public selves at less-guarded momentsâ âat a time when gender constrained most womenâs gazeâ (p. 283). She also convincingly demonstrates how these photographers were able to âpresent a vision of the city as accessible, varied, interconnected, a source of sensibility and value worthy of contemplationâ (p. 302). Beth Wengerâs chapter, âConstructing Manhood in American Jewish Culture,â is also of special interest in this section. Wenger provides a historical survey of constructions of American Jewish maleness over the course of the twentieth century; these definitions were and continue to be fluid, responding to both Jewish cultural patterns and anxieties and prevailing American norms at given points in time. She concludes that, âthroughout the course of American Jewish history, both Jews and other Americans returned to the idea that Jewish men required improvement, whether in body or mind, in their drive to make a living, or in their commitment to Jewish culture. In every generation, the fears and aspirations that Jews held about American life and those that Americans held about Jews were inscribed upon Jewish men, resulting in constantly evolving notions of American Jewish manhoodâ (p. 363).

Gender and Jewish History succeeds on its own terms as a valuable and multifaceted compendium of contemporary research that is propelled and enriched by questions about gender. As such, it is also a fitting tribute and memorial to Paula E. Hyman, who ensured through her own academic contributions, her interactions and collaborations with colleagues, and her devoted training of students, that scholarly attention would be paid to the roles, nuances, and centrality of gender constructions, representations, and interactions in Judaism and Jewish life.

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