

Other topics addressed by Satlow, such as the metaphorical use of marriage, can only be mentioned briefly here. Satlow argues that post-biblical Jews were uncomfortable with the biblical metaphor of a marriage between God and Israel because it did not fit their view of marriage as the basis for forming an *oikos*, and that the Biblical covenant with its mutual obligations may have been 'too egalitarian' for Jewish men in Hellenistic and Roman times (cf. p. 47). But should biblical society have been less patriarchal and more egalitarian than later Jewish society? Other arguments brought forth in this connection are the intimate bond between God and Israel envisioned in the marriage metaphor and the possible discomfort with applying the metaphor to contexts other than the relationship between two individuals, in contrast to early Christians who saw the church as Christ's bride. The metaphor rarely appears in rabbinic texts except in a number of parables.

At the end of the study, the question of what made ancient Jewish marriage Jewish is taken up again. Satlow suggests that ancient Jews marked their practices as Jewish 'through a complex process of reading their own traditional texts and practices through the lens of their host cultures. Traditional texts, customs, and rituals served as a kind of "toolbox" ... Through the use and adaptation of these tools, Jewish communities made marriage Jewish' (p. 268).

Despite the methodological and argumentative shortcomings mentioned above, the book is a very good introduction to the various issues connected with Jewish marriage in antiquity, especially for the non-specialist reader, and will certainly engender comparisons with marriage in modern society.

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CARLOS DEL VALLE RODRÍGUEZ, *Historia de la gramática hebrea en España*, vol. 1: *Los orígenes (Menahem, Dunas y los Discípulos)* (España Judía, serie Gramática hebrea). Aben Ezra Ediciones, Madrid, 2002. 665 pp. No price given. ISBN 84-88324-15-4.

In undertaking to write a *Historia de la gramática hebrea en España*, Carlos del Valle Rodríguez has taken upon him, as he himself acknowledges (p. 11), 'una ardua labor', an arduous task. In the intended *History* del Valle aims to give an exhaustive description-cum-analysis of what he deems to be the most prominent Jewish contribution to Western culture: medieval Hebrew grammar. Over the past few decades, the author has devoted numerous books, editions and articles to this chapter in the history of linguistics, including a monograph on the early Hebrew School in Umayyad Cordoba. It is with a description of this tenth-century corpus, in which the basis for a scientific grammar of Hebrew was laid, that he opens his *Historia*.

Though ultimately concentrating on the School of Cordoba in the period between 940 and the early 990s, del Valle takes ample time to contextualise this movement, which of course did not originate out of the blue. In order to better highlight its particularities and dependencies, he offers background information on foreign (i.e. the classical, Syriac and Arabic) grammatical traditions, as well as on internal Jewish developments elsewhere in the Diaspora (i.e. the writings of the Masoretes, Saadia Gaon in Baghdad and the tenth-century North African Hebrew linguists). These chapters (1–6, pp. 29–210) take the form of more or less independent literary histories, which do not always appear to have explicit relevance for our understanding of the Cordoban School. The same can be said of chapter 7 (pp. 211–47), where the immediate cultural

context of early Iberian Hebrew grammar is mapped out, again in the form of a lapidary survey of important Andalusian '*personajes*' (with much attention given to the famous *wazir* and patron of the arts Chasdai ibn Shaprut) and their literary output.

The heart of the book (pp. 249–370) consists of a systematic presentation of the small but coherent corpus brought forth by the earliest Cordoban grammarians. First we encounter an exhaustive introduction (chapter 8) on the life and work of the *protagonistas* Menachem ben Saruq, Dunash ben Labrat and their respective disciples. In a series of treatises, critiques and counter-critiques (which neatly reflect the dynamics of this new field of study), they formulated the first rudiments of Iberian Hebrew linguistics. Both in Menachem's *Machberet* and in the series of *Teshuvot* ('Answers') that was triggered by it, lexicography had been the main structuring principle. In the actual entries, the morphological and lexical analyses of the 'holy tongue' were still largely undifferentiated. In chapters 9–12, del Valle presents the results of his having scanned all those separate entries for phonological, morphological and syntactical observations, which he systematises and describes in great detail.

In five appendices (pp. 373–590) the author then offers, in his own Spanish translation, the most significant parts of the five Hebrew works that are the subject of his monograph (i.e. the *Machberet*, the *Teshuvot* by Dunash, the *Talmide Menachem*, and Dunash's disciple Yehudi ben Sheshet's, and Dunash's own polemics against his teacher Saadia). A bibliography and no less than six indexes (pp. 601–65) complete the work.

Judging by this first volume, del Valle's *Historia de la gramática hebrea en España* is an ambitious project. This becomes especially clear from the various 'proportions' in volume one. First of all we cannot help but notice that the size of this volume is inversely proportional to that of the—relatively modest—medieval corpus that lies at its root. This is further reflected by the structure of the book. While it takes the author some 120 pages to actually analyse the contents of his corpus, the introductory chapters and various scholarly apparatuses take up another 540.

In his *Historia de la gramática hebrea*, Carlos del Valle Rodríguez has not so much written a systematic *exposition of*, as built a *monument for*, early 'Spanish' Hebrew linguistics. In its execution this monument is encyclopaedic in a CD-ROM-like fashion. As the individual sources have each been edited, translated and analysed by previous scholarship (notably by the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and by historians of linguistics in Israel and Spain, among whom del Valle occupies a prominent position), the chief merit of this 'paper CD-ROM' lies in its making accessible, via multiple entrances, the earliest cluster of Iberian-Jewish linguistic polemics as a whole.

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JEFFREY HOWARD CHAJES, *Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism*. University of Penn Press, Philadelphia, 2003. 278 pp. £26.00. ISBN 0812237242.

This revised PhD dissertation (Yale, 1999, under David Ruderman) is an important contribution to the study of spirit possessions and exorcisms in Jewish society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its aim is, in the author's words (p. 9), 'to provide thick description as well as sustained comparative-historical analysis' of a wide range of sources which shed light on this important topic. This is done through detailed analyses of specific aspects of the problem.

In the first two chapters, Chajes seeks to learn why there was such an explosion of spirit possessions and exorcisms in sixteenth-century Safed. His conclusion is a