

make itself felt within the Reggio family. A rearrangement of the chapters might also have brought out more effectively the underlying theme of the constant mobility of many Jews in this period, and the instability of a life dependent on a ruler's beneficence (the case of the Ferrarese Jews is a particularly good example of how tolerance could be withdrawn with a change of regime). Instead it is left to the reader to pick out the broader, Braudelian, significance of these studies, and to draw conclusions which extend beyond the individual microhistories.

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GILYA GERDA SCHMIDT, *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901: Heralds of a New Age*. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York, 2003. 296 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 0815630301.

At first glance, amidst the heavy ideological hubbub of the Fifth Zionist Congress, a modest exhibition of eleven Jewish artists seems an ancillary subject for investigation. However, as Gilya Schmidt details in *The Art and Artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress, 1901: Heralds of a New Age*, the exhibition was in fact situated at the crux of a critical fault line. Divisions between cultural and religious Zionists rumbled from the movement's outset, with religious Zionists apprehensive that culture would eclipse and possibly replace religion within the movement. By the Second Zionist Congress the movement's leadership already found it necessary to pledge that Zionism would not take any actions conflicting with Jewish tradition (p. 10). In this context, the exhibition organised by Martin Buber and Ephraim Moshe Lilien was a dramatic, *de facto* victory for the cultural Zionists.

Through her study of the art and artists of the congress, Schmidt intends to plumb the sociological forces behind this surging tide of cultural Zionism and, more generally, 'the transition of the Jewish spirit to modernity' (p. xv). While Schmidt does shed light on these forces, her efforts to offer a 'cultural history' at times slacken to a side-effect as she gets enmeshed in almost hagiographical accounts of the artists' lives (p. xv). Thus we are told that the Dutch master Josef Israels 'took up a place as person and as artist just below the angels for those people who knew him' (p. 64). The German impressionist Lesser Ury is rendered in similarly rapturous tones as one 'able to break free—to soar into the wild blue yonder that he described so majestically in his works' (p. 131). Further swooping among the heavens is supplied by Moshe Lilien, whose 'spirit tried to soar above the mundane' (p. 154). If not quite beatified like Israels, Ury, and Lilien, the other artists of the exhibition—Eduard Bendemann, Maurycy Gottlieb, the etcher Hermann Struck, Solomon Kischinewski, the architect Oskar Marmorek, the sculptor Alfred Nossig, and the painters Jehudo Epstein and Alfred Lakos—are still portrayed by Schmidt in glowing, often anecdotal prose. Though the style of these tributes sacrifices something of academic rigour, it does make the book an enjoyable read; one which should kindle enough scholarly interest to fill the lacunae left by Schmidt's analysis.

Most prominent among these deficiencies is a cogent discussion of how the art and artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress might challenge and expand our notion of Jewish art in general. While Schmidt clearly recognises the necessity of such a discussion—turning to it at both the beginning and end of her volume—her ambiguous phraseology clouds the waters of this already murky topic. The 'focus on interiority' that Schmidt reads into the works of almost all the exhibition's major artists is at best a turbid trope (p. 192); perhaps an echo of Jewish aniconism, with its attendant notions of Jews as 'inherently' inimical to the sensual, external world. Even more dubious is

Schmidt's assertion that 'in spite of [their] diversity of backgrounds and aspirations, all eleven [artists] shared one thing: their intrinsic Jewishness that they expressed in their art' (p. 239). Schmidt construes this 'intrinsic Jewishness', or 'being Jewish in one's soul', not just as a quality that unites the artists of the Fifth Zionist Congress but as a 'criterion for the creation of Jewish art' (pp. 239, 241, 242). In positing this 'intrinsic' quality, Schmidt not only elides the individual experiences of the artists she surveys—Bendemann converted to Christianity!—but those of Jews in general. There is no monolithic, transhistorical essence that defines '“the Jewish experience,” wherever and in whatever time period it occurs' (p. 244). And rather than express and reinforce this historiographical myth, a central task of Jewish art might be to break down just such scholarly idols. It is beyond Schmidt's purview to present a fully fledged theory of Jewish art, but by propagating misconceptions about Jewish art she belies the strengths of an otherwise solid entrée into an important new subject.

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VICTOR TUNKEL, *The Music of the Hebrew Bible: The Western Ashkenazic Tradition*. The author, London, 2004. 115 pp., illustrations, musical examples, glossary, annotated bibliography, indexes. £20.00. ISBN 0954660714.

This volume explores the Jewish tradition of biblical cantillation, fulfilling a twofold purpose. Firstly, it outlines the history and meaning of the Masoretic *t'amim*. Secondly, it explores the western Ashkenazic tradition of chanting the Torah, the melodic system used within most British synagogues.

As Tunkel observes in his foreword, this book is primarily aimed at a Jewish readership, oriented towards those who wish to expand upon a basic knowledge of cantillation. In just over a hundred pages he covers remarkable ground, leading the reader through complex theories of interpretation, giving a comprehensive set of musical examples illustrating correct interpretation and identifying problematic areas in current practice.

Despite this practical focus, however, the material covered here is of significant value to those engaged in the wider study of the Hebrew Bible. The system of *t'amim* is laid out in a lucid and logical manner, together with examples indicating how the correct interpretation of the *t'amim* can resolve grammatical ambiguities. Further, Tunkel's exploration and notation of western Ashkenazic cantillation fills a significant gap within the wider Jewish music literature. This volume provides the only reliable notation of this system as currently practised, and in doing so reasserts the continued presence of this tradition alongside the eastern Ashkenazic system, widely used in both the USA and Israel, upon which most previous studies have focused. While Tunkel is rightly cautious about encapsulating an oral tradition in written notation, of particular interest is his inclusion and analysis of variations (and common mistakes), and his comparison of modern practice with historical sources, both of which illustrate the evolution of the western Ashkenazic tradition.

If a criticism is to be levelled at this volume, it must be that the musical examples only relate to the cantillation of the Torah itself. The five other sets of melodies relating to the chanting of the Prophets and texts read on holidays are omitted; thus only a partial picture of western Ashkenazic cantillation is provided. Despite this omission, however, this volume will be of value to anyone seeking to expand upon a basic knowledge of the *t'amim* or to explore contemporary musical practice in British synagogues.

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