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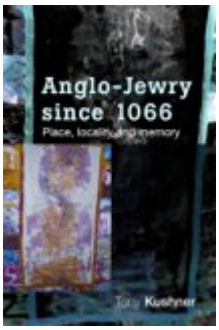
Tony Kushner. *Anglo-Jewry since 1066: Place, Locality and Memory.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009. ix + 274 pp. $89.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7190-7654-1.



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In his fascinating book *Anglo-Jewry since 1066*, Tony Kushner analyzes both the history and the memory of history of Jewish communities in the south of England. Wide ranging in time and impressive in source base, Kushner develops the theme of a hierarchy within the Jewish Diaspora; some places "are seen to possess less significance than others" (p. 258). In an effort to redress this imbalance and to explore the richness and variety of Jewish life and its presence and absence in the historical record, Kushner looks at Anglo-Jewish history through the lens of Hampshire. Kushner explores "the social and cultural construction of place identity, teasing out the interplay between the 'local' and the 'global'" (p. 20). He cautions, however, that emphasis on the regional and local can eclipse global connections and diasporic networks. Kushner emphasizes his findings, perhaps more than necessary, in a series of case studies focusing on Portsmouth, Winchester, and Southampton, and uncovers intriguing episodes in the life of these communities. Kushner's review of the many versions of that history helps elucidate how depictions of Jews--the remembering and forgetting of Jews in the historical record--have shaped perceptions of British Jews. Many sources minimize not only the presence of Jews, but also their rootedness in parts of Britain. This can both sanitize the record of antisemitism and underplay the extent to which immigrants and minorities shaped the histories of communities in which they lived.

Kushner begins with a historiographical overview of local history studies and some of the changing approaches to such works. Can one, queries Kushner, maintain a notion of a locale's uniqueness without "falling prey to introverted visions of the essence ... of places" (p. 4)? The book's eight chapters are chronological, beginning with the medieval period and moving to the present. Kushner's most innovative contribution is the way he weaves together an examination of episodes in the history of Jewish life in Hampshire with his analysis of how and why that experience has been remembered, re-remembered, or forgotten. In chapter 2, Kushner explores the varied

ways scholars have understood Hampshire's true essence, its distinct identity, and the place of Jews within that identity. As he analyzes writing on Hampshire Jews, Kushner reminds readers that local Jewish studies face a "triple marginality"--they receive limited attention within British and Jewish history, and works on British Jews have paid little attention to provincial settlements (p. 42). Kushner accepts Bill Williams's challenge to take local/provincial contexts seriously, an approach few have undertaken.[1] Kushner uncovers an intriguing range of primary and secondary sources dealing with Jews; many popular accounts suggest that communities welcomed their Jewish minority, or that past mistreatment gave way to enlightened acceptance.

In chapter 3, Kushner turns to Winchester. Although there is a limited historiography of Winchester's Jews, "rich" memory work of the medieval community exists (p. 53). The city has been prominent in the construction and reconstruction of "Englishness," and both physical and literary sites of memory have generated a variety of interpretations of the relationship of Jews to Winchester (p. 55). The extent and tone of the many references to Jews vary, reflecting a mix of pride and ambivalence, but rarely lacking "prejudice or romance" (p. 59). Discussions over changing street names reveal a range of attitudes to Winchester's Jews.[2] Without a record of the controversies over names, the complex history and memory, even the former presence of Jews, would have disappeared. Descriptions of Winchester's medieval Jewish community could be quite offensive, and negative characterizations reappeared in local guides until World War II. Even when denied, repetition of ritual murder charges "further emphasised their [Jews'] otherness and danger to medieval society" (p. 79). Both antisemites and philosemites helped create and perpetuate images of Jews. To Hilaire Belloc, Jews symbolized "extreme commercial control" (pp. 82-83). Barbara Carpenter Turner, a key figure in post-World War II Winchester heritage, wrote approvingly of Jews and their "entrepreneurial talent" (p. 84). Yet she included negative characterizations of Jewish usurers whom she saw as crucial to Winchester, yet not fully of Winchester. As late as 1997, an English heritage pamphlet depicted the Jewish community as powerful and ignored the marginal status of England's medieval Jews. The best works contextualize the medieval Jewish community within the power politics of the city, note Jewish connections to other towns and countries, and demonstrate the role of Jews in everyday life in Winchester.

Chapter 4 shifts our attention to Portsmouth Jewry--and the memories from the nineteenth century and after--"as both a part of and apart from the town's dangerous 'sailortown' community" (p. 123). As a naval town, Portsmouth evoked images of patriotism and vice. Descriptions of the Jewish community placed them in both worlds. In 1766, a schism developed. It was probably in part a struggle over the chief rabbi's authority, and also resulted from tensions between the center and the periphery and the growing self-confidence and divisions that had emerged within Portsmouth Jewry. Half of Portsmouth's Jews wanted independence from London and to function as head of a regional Jewish center. Kushner contends that seeing Portsmouth as part of a complex diasporic network, rather than in isolation or in relation to London, offers a more nuanced understanding of Jewish relations within Portsmouth. Beyond the Jewish community, nineteenth-century historians described Jews as part of the colorful groups who inhabited "The Point," a notorious part of Portsmouth (p. 130). Often, maritime literature represented Jews as alien and dishonest; only "the resourcefulness of 'Jack Tar'" limited the damage they inflicted (p. 142). Several other narratives emphasized friendly relations between Jews and others or suggested that persecution of Jews gave way to tolerance.

Memory and amnesia also characterize the historical record of Southampton. In a perceptive

discussion, Kushner analyzes the memorialization of three Jews who lost their lives in World War I and explores how "Jewishness has been concealed from consideration of the past" (p. 202). Of the three men, two were from recently arrived Eastern European families. Their names appear on plaques in the synagogue. The third, Charles Emmanuel, a young man from a long established family, appeared on Southampton's Cenotaph. The Cenotaph was a Christian memorial, and Kushner contends that the unwillingness of the committee to have a nondenominational space, where Jews, as Jews, could be part of "local memory work," not only was insensitive, but also marginalized the memory of prewar Jewish settlement in Hampshire. Another profound example of marginalization is the virtually lost memory of Southampton's key role in housing transmigrants during the early years of the twentieth century. Although Southampton has a self-image as a multicultural locale, no public space acknowledges Southampton's central role in the world population movement. Even internal Jewish memory work, such as the 150th celebration of Southampton's synagogue (1983), depicted its past selectively. They did not mention Jewish involvement in the unsavory Canal Walk. That area's transiency and its association with poverty made it "subject to the active process that is collective amnesia" (pp. 242-243).

Kushner certainly demonstrates that there is a richness to previously neglected Jewish communities and their study reveals important patterns in Jewish life that we tend to overlook when we focus on areas where the majority settled and remained. As Kushner notes, micro-history allows for "more inclusive narratives to emerge" (p. 259). Jews were part of the "local imagination," impelling residents to consider "a world beyond." As Kushner's study reminds us, not only was there fluidity to Jewish settlement and identity, but it also ebbed and flowed "between the local and the global" (p. 260). The experience of all settlers, even those who stayed only a few days, affected them and the people around them. Yet, Kushner asserts, transmigrants have largely been written out of history; their short-term presence was "perhaps, too unsettling for inclusion in Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as local and national narratives of the past" (p. 260). The absence of memory work associated with the Jewish past, though, reinforces a myth of past homogeneity and fails to recognize how integral Jews were to the local world. One might, however, ask if that temporary presence felt as consequential for those with deeper and more stable ties. British Jews, too, have contributed to this process, literally, for example, by removing remains from a cemetery and by "downplaying the significance of provincial life" (p. 261). Certainly, minority history should not become a form of defense and it is important to rescue the forgotten without romanticizing them. Whether present, absent, or passing through, Jews were part of the local world; and their invisibility or alien representation fails to do justice to the richness of the past. Importantly, Kushner reminds us that other groups have had the same experience.

Kushner has not only recovered significant information about Jews, and perceptions of Jews, but also traced the lineage of ideas and their change over time. His title is perhaps more encompassing than his scope, and some will ask how representative those histories are and how many people's experiences they reflect. Kushner's focus, though, on smaller and lesser-known communities fills in historical gaps, and suggests ways in which scholars can use case and local studies to elucidate important relations between the center and the periphery to deepen our understanding of Jewish memory and memory of Jews. Kushner adeptly draws on local histories, archival sources, literature, and guidebooks, and offers a penetrating look at how and why writings on Jews have included or excluded individuals and events from their versions.

Kushner not only encourages us to move beyond the well-worn areas of Anglo-Jewish history, but also asks us to rethink the importance of the local and its relationship to the global. There is a tension between comprehensive histories that cover communities large and small--which treat the fullness of Jewish experience--and the extent to which any experience is representative. Without dismissing Kushner's engaging detective work and the ways it enhances our knowledge of Jews and their many networks in provincial locales, the history of the memory (or lack thereof) of Jewish presence seems to be the more important story he tells.

Notes

[1]. Bill Williams, *The Making of Manchester Jewry: 1740-1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976).

[2]. The changing names of "Jewry Street" allow one to trace attitudes toward, and memory of, Winchester's medieval community. References to the street in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries appear in various records. The street became Gaol Street with the rebuilding of the prison in the mid-eighteenth century and once again became Jewry Street in 1830. In 1856, the Pavement Commissioners nearly changed the name once again. As Kushner notes, had the inhabitants been uncomfortable with the name, they would have sided with the Pavement Commissioners, who favored a change (pp. 59- 61).