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Carsten Schapkow. *Vorbild und Gegenbild: Das iberische Judentum in der deutsch-jüdischen Erinnerungskultur 1779-1939.* Köln: Böhlau, 2011. 448 pp. ISBN 978-3-412-20766-3.

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Projections on Jewish Others in Times of Upheaval

Reading Schapkow's book should be a joy for anybody interested in the area of Jewish history, with a specific focus on ethno-history, and with intra- and inter-ethnic relationships. His book offers a fascinating plethora of material and sources, which allow for insights into one Jewish group's perception of another, and further, how the perception of the one Jewish group–Iberian Jews–by another group–German Jews–is influenced by the respective relationships to the non-Jewish majorities in general, the (changing) ruling classes, and problems concerning the dynamics of identity and how they develop over time. With a topic as wide and complex as his, it is to Schapkow's credit that he found a structure to accommodate his endeavors, and to present his book in a readable, coherent, and understandable fashion.

Schapkow's key question is how German Jews perceived Jews on the Iberian peninsula between 1779 and 1939.[1] This long period is riddled by religious and societal upheaval; an era influenced by the tangible effects of the globalization of trade, the European empires that colonized the furthest corners of the globe, industrialization across Europe, and, hand-in-hand with this, increasing urbanization and the beginnings of modern nation-states. All these underpinned the need to reorganize Jewish communities, identities, and praxis in German-speaking territories. This era also marks the birth of academic disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, and sociology, reflecting the effect of societal and social change across the old continent on conceptualizing and theorizing humanity, its cultures, and societies. Jews in German-speaking territories and beyond were deeply involved in these processes, as academics, thinkers, intellectuals, business men, and last but not least as they gained a foothold in politics. As Schapkow correctly outlines, these changes constituted increasingly tangible breaks in existing identity structures, posing the problem: what to do, and where to look for role models?- Thus, at this time the importance of Jews from the Iberian peninsula gained momentum. These had a moving history that paralleled the potential, imaginary fate of German Jews. Iberian Jews benefited in the so-called golden age, they experienced the change of regimes from Muslim to Christian, the Inquisition, expulsion, pressures to convert, Morrano lifestyles, and the establishment of communities in places they fled to. In other words, Jews from the Iberian peninsula offered to German Jews a much-needed Jewish role model and blueprint at the same time, with which they could identify and draw on as Jews, but which they could criticize and reject at the same time. In as much as Iberian Jews were needed by German Jews, they served a definite psychological function as a smoke screen for desires as much as for anxieties.

Schapkow elaborates on the one-way image of Iberian Jews by breaking his book down into three main chapters. The first chapter concerns the Haskalah (Jewish enlightenment), the second the issue of Iberian Jews as carriers of European culture within the burgeoning *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (scientific study of Judaism, and Jews), and the third chapter is dedicated to the changing perception of Iberian Jews amongst their German co-ethno-religionists. This structure allows Schapkow to elaborate on his claim that Iberian Jews served a vital function in the self-perception and soul searching of German Jews. During the period of the Haskalah, the perception of Iberian Jews was positive: they were defined by their accomplishments under Muslim rulers, and admired for not giving up their identity as Jews. Iberian Jews, at this point in time, were the epitome of functioning in a majority society, blending in the mix but not assimilating in to the extended conversation. During the era of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, this perception began to change: Iberian Jews were viewed more critically. Indeed, about 200,000 of the total of 600,000 converted (p. 25). The fear of assimilation that was common amongst German

Jews found a smoke screen in the new Christians, who were defined by their upward social mobility and their function as the interface between the remaining Jews and their non-Jewish surroundings. These Jews mirrored the predicament of German Jews at the time, for whom conversion opened doors into mainstream society that otherwise would have remained closed. Beginning with the increase in violent anti-Semitism and pogroms in eastern Europe, the Iberian Jews changed again in the perception of German Jews: now, they were interpreted as a warning sign of a failed integration; effectively, all their efforts to fit in with the majority society had been in vain, culminating in their persecution, and expulsion. This interpretation, or better, reinterpretation, of the Iberian Jews supported as well the burgeoning political Zionism amongst German Jews, and the argument for a Jewish state.

In sum, Schapkow provides a well-argued, nuanced, and detailed description that vividly elaborates on the one-way relationship of German Jews to Iberian Jews. It is exactly this one-way relationship that is so intriguing about his book, because it allows for following identity processes of German Jews who projected their wishes, fears, desires, and rejections on their co-religious co-ethnics, which makes for a different dynamic than projections on their German surrounding. Given this dynamic, it is somewhat ironic that post-Shoah the loss of the German Jewish symbiosis was widely decried, culminating in publications that range from autobiographies to historical accounts, which seem to replicate the pattern of perception by other Jews: German Jews became the Iberian Jews of a different era.

It is to the credit of Schapkow's detailed work that it points to various areas that it could not cover, and which remain under-researched to date. What was the connection on the every day between Iberian Jews and German Jews? How did their interaction take place, and what were points of contention, or agreement? Furthermore, how did less prominent German Jews perceive them?- And what did the Iberian Jews make of them, and their own function as a smoke screen? All these issues will hopefully be covered in studies to come. Thus, Schapkow's work points to new directions. At the same time, it underlines that scholarship on Jewish intra-group relations, which are the focus of much Israeli social science research, needs to consider the historical base of the current situation of inner Jewish dynamics. What we see now, might after all fit within an intra-Jewish continuum.

Note

[1]. It is problematic that Schapkow uses the term German Jew indiscriminately and does not offer an explanation of what he means by German Jews. Given the difference between the (changing) geography of German territories and the much wider use of German language, this would have been useful.

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