Humor is the most celebrated of all Jewish responses to modernity. In this book, Ruth Wisse evokes and applauds the genius of spontaneous Jewish joking—as well as the brilliance of comic masterworks by writers like Heinrich Heine, Sholem Aleichem, Isaac Babel, S. Y. Agnon, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Philip Roth. At the same time, Wisse draws attention to the precarious conditions that call Jewish humor into being—and the price it may exact from its practitioners and audience.

Wisse broadly traces modern Jewish humor around the world, teasing out its implications as she explores memorable and telling examples from German, Yiddish, English, Russian, and Hebrew. Among other topics, the book looks at how Jewish humor channeled Jewish learning and wordsmanship into new avenues of creativity, brought relief to liberal non-Jews in repressive societies, and enriched popular culture in the United States.

Even as it invites readers to consider the pleasures and profits of Jewish humor, the book asks difficult but fascinating questions: Can the excess and extreme self-ridicule of Jewish humor go too far and backfire in the process? And is “leave ‘em laughing” the wisest motto for a people that others have intended to sweep off the stage of history?

Ruth R. Wisse is the Martin Peretz Professor of Yiddish Literature and professor of comparative literature at Harvard University.

Library of Jewish Ideas
Cosponsored by the Tikvah Fund

June 2013. 296 pages. 14 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-14946-2 $24.95 | £16.95
FORTHCOMING

Jews and the Military
A History
Derek J. Penslar

“This book recovers the history of the Jewish soldier in the diaspora—from the seventeenth century to the middle of the twentieth century—and connects this to the early military history of the state of Israel. Combining a consummate command of the extant scholarship with sophisticated analysis, and encompassing a broad array of questions and sources, it is social and cultural history at its best. There is absolutely nothing like it in any language.”
—David Sorkin, City University of New York, Graduate Center

“This book offers a new comparative history of state policy toward Jewish army service and rethinks modern Jewish political culture through the lens of military service. Demolishing the myth of diaspora Jewish pacifism, Penslar shows that attitudes toward soldiering and citizenship in Israeli political culture were anticipated in diaspora Jewish assimilationist and integrationist visions. Jewish historians, historians of modern Europe, and many others will want to read this book.”
—Kenneth B. Moss, Johns Hopkins University

Jews and the Military is the first comprehensive and comparative look at Jews’ involvement in the military and their attitudes toward war from the 1600s until the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. Derek Penslar shows that although Jews have often been described as people who shun the army, in fact they have frequently been willing, even eager, to do military service, and only a minuscule minority have been pacifists. Penslar demonstrates that Israel’s military ethos did not emerge from a vacuum and that long before the state’s establishment, Jews had a vested interest in military affairs.

Derek J. Penslar is the Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History at the University of Toronto and the Stanley Lewis Professor of Israel Studies at the University of Oxford.

November 2013. 360 pages. 17 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-13887-9 $29.95 | £19.95

NEW

One of Jewish Ideas Daily’s Best Jewish Nonfiction Books for 2012

Inheriting Abraham
The Legacy of the Patriarch in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
Jon D. Levenson

“In Inheriting Abraham, one of the world’s leading Bible scholars, Jon D. Levenson, has given us an incisive and deeply challenging account of the three Abrahams of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic theology. It may be, he suggests, that we are divided by a common ancestry and that we need to understand our differences no less than our commonalities. A brilliant, well-argued, and much-needed work.”
—Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

A stunning achievement that is certain to provoke debate, Inheriting Abraham traces how each community has come to revere Abraham as an exemplar of its own distinctive spiritual teachings and practices. This probing and compelling book also reveals how the increasingly conventional notion of the three equally "Abrahamic" religions derives from a dangerous misunderstanding of key biblical and Qur’anic texts, fails to do full justice to any of the traditions, and is often biased against Judaism in subtle and pernicious ways.

Jon D. Levenson is the Albert A. List Professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard University.

Library of Jewish Ideas
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2012. 264 pages.
Cl: 978-0-691-15569-2 $29.95 | £19.95

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Maimonides
Life and Thought
Moshe Halbertal

“Insightful and learned. Halbertal is perhaps the leading philosopher of Jewish law today. His book on Maimonides, like his other writings, reflects wide erudition and is written clearly and sharply.” —Warren Zev Harvey, professor emeritus, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

“Displaying the marvelous depth and clarity that mark all his work, Halbertal explains in abundant detail the transformations that Maimonides sought to effect in the Jewish world. He provides incisive interpretations of both legal and philosophical writings, yet he is also a biographer, binding together Maimonides’ life, self-perception, and intellectual agenda. This is an exceptionally rich book, one that offers fresh perspectives for experts and a highly accessible introduction for general readers.” —David Shatz, Yeshiva University

Maimonides was the greatest Jewish philosopher and legal scholar of the medieval period, a towering figure who has had a profound and lasting influence on Jewish law, philosophy, and religious consciousness. This book provides a comprehensive and accessible introduction to his life and work, revealing how his philosophical sensibility and outlook informed his interpretation of Jewish tradition.

Moshe Halbertal is professor of law at New York University and IDC Herzliya in Israel, and professor of Jewish thought and philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

December 2013. 472 pages. Cl: 978-0-691-15851-8 $35.00 | £24.95

The Bible in Arabic
The Scriptures of the “People of the Book” in the Language of Islam
Sidney H. Griffith

“This book opens up a new world. With consummate learning and characteristic intellectual courtesy, Sidney Griffith reveals an Arabic civilization of unexpected diversity, where Muslims, Jews, and Christians continued to debate, for a thousand years, the conflicting messages of their three, intricately intertwined scriptures. We emerge the richer for this generous vision of the religious texture of the medieval Middle East.” —Peter Brown, author of Through the Eye of a Needle

From the first centuries of Islam to well into the Middle Ages, Jews and Christians produced hundreds of manuscripts containing portions of the Bible in Arabic. Until recently, however, these translations remained largely neglected by biblical scholars and historians. In telling the story of the Bible in Arabic, this book casts light on a crucial transition in the cultural and religious life of Jews and Christians in Arabic-speaking lands.

Sidney H. Griffith is Ordinary Professor in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures at the Catholic University of America.

Jews, Christians, and Muslims from the Ancient to the Modern World

June 2013. 272 pages. 6 halftones. Cl: 978-0-691-15082-6 $29.95 | £19.95

ALSO by MOSHE HALBERTAL
On Sacrifice
AND
Concealment and Revelation
Esotericism in Jewish Thought and its Philosophical Implications
See both on page 9.

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NEW

Worldly Philosopher
The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman
Jeremy Adelman

“This is an exceptional book. Hirschman’s intellectual and political journey is described with sharpness and perspicacity. Family life, cultural encounters, and the imprints of a lifetime highlight the importance and significance of one of the most creative intellectuals of the twentieth century, who had a profound influence on so many people around the world, including myself.”
—Fernando Henrique Cardoso, former president of Brazil

Worldly Philosopher chronicles the times and writings of Albert O. Hirschman, one of the twentieth century’s most original and provocative thinkers. In this gripping biography, Jeremy Adelman tells the story of a man shaped by modern horrors and hopes, a worldly intellectual who fought for and wrote in defense of the values of tolerance and change. This is the first major account of Hirschman’s remarkable life, and a tale of the twentieth century as seen through the story of an astute and passionate observer. Adelman’s riveting narrative traces how Hirschman’s personal experiences shaped his unique intellectual perspective, and how his enduring legacy is one of hope, open-mindedness, and practical idealism.

Jeremy Adelman is the Walter Samuel Carpenter III Professor of Spanish Civilization and Culture and director of the Council for International Teaching and Research at Princeton University.

May 2013. 760 pages. 39 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-15567-8 $39.95 | £27.95

FORTHCOMING

Muslims and Jews in France
History of a Conflict
Maud Mandel

“Using a wide variety of sources and focusing on local events in Marseille, Mandel deftly shows how a specifically French history interacts with international events to produce conflicts between Jews and Muslims. She provides new and important insights into the nature of the conflict, the political groups that produced it, and the ways in which perceptions of each group have been shaped.”
—Joan Wallach Scott, author of The Politics of the Veil

This book traces the global, national, and local origins of the conflict between Muslims and Jews in France, challenging the belief that rising anti-Semitism in France is rooted solely in the unfolding crisis in Israel and Palestine. Maud Mandel shows how the conflict in fact emerged from processes internal to French society itself even as it was shaped by affairs elsewhere, particularly in North Africa during the era of decolonization.

Mandel examines moments in which conflicts between Muslims and Jews became a matter of concern to French police, the media, and an array of self-appointed spokesmen from both communities: Israel’s War of Independence in 1948, France’s decolonization of North Africa, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the 1968 student riots, and François Mitterrand’s experiments with multiculturalism in the 1980s. She takes an in-depth, on-the-ground look at interethnic relations in Marseille, which is home to the country’s largest Muslim and Jewish populations outside of Paris. She reveals how Muslims and Jews in France have related to each other in diverse ways throughout this history—as former residents of French North Africa, as immigrants competing for limited resources, as employers and employees, as victims of racist aggression, as religious minorities in a secularizing state, and as French citizens.

In Muslims and Jews in France, Mandel traces the way these multiple, complex interactions have been overshadowed and obscured by a reductionist narrative of Muslim-Jewish polarization.

Maud Mandel is associate professor of Judaic studies and history and director of the Program in Judaic Studies at Brown University.

February 2014. 256 pages. 15 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-12581-7 $35.00 | £24.95

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FORTHCOMING
A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations
From the Origin to the Present Day
Edited by Abdelwahab Meddeb & Benjamin Stora

“There is no other volume like this. Its comprehensiveness should make it a major source of information and ideas on this important topic for some time, and the contributors include some of the best-known writers in the field.”
—Oliver Leaman, University of Kentucky

This is the first encyclopedic guide to the history of relations between Jews and Muslims around the world from the birth of Islam to today. Richly illustrated and beautifully produced, the book features more than 150 authoritative and accessible articles by an international team of leading experts in history, politics, literature, anthropology, and philosophy. Organized thematically and chronologically, this indispensable reference provides critical facts and balanced context for greater historical understanding and a more informed dialogue between Jews and Muslims.

Abdelwahab Meddeb is professor of comparative literature at the University of Paris-X (Nanterre). Benjamin Stora is University Professor at the University of Paris-XIII (Villetaneuse), where he teaches the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century North Africa and the history of North African immigrants in Europe.

October 2013. 848 pages. 14 halftones. 25 color illus. 22 tables.
Cl: 978-0-691-15127-4 $75.00 | £52.00

NEW
Winner of the 2012 National Jewish Book Award in Scholarship, Jewish Book Council
One of Jewish Ideas Daily’s Best Jewish Nonfiction Books for 2012

The Chosen Few
How Education Shaped Jewish History, 70–1492
Maristella Botticini & Zvi Eckstein

“Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein have written a remarkably interesting book with a new hypothesis about the occupational structure of the Jews. The authors adduce serious evidence for their hypothesis, which lays stress on the requirement introduced nearly 2,000 years ago for universal male literacy among the Jews. This is a fascinating and persuasive combination of history and economics, worth reading by all, even the unhappy few who like neither history nor economics.”
—Stanley Fischer, governor of the Bank of Israel

Maristella Botticini is professor of economics, as well as director and fellow of the Innocenzo Gasparini Institute for Economic Research (IGIER), at Bocconi University in Milan. Zvi Eckstein is the Mario Henrique Simonson Chair in Labor Economics at Tel Aviv University and professor and dean of the School of Economics at IDC Herzliya in Herzliya, Israel.

The Princeton Economic History of the Western World

2012. 344 pages. 4 line illus. 29 tables. 11 maps.
Cl: 978-0-691-14487-0 $39.50 | £27.95

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NEW
Finalist, 2012 National Jewish Book Award in History, Jewish Book Council

The First Modern Jew
Spinoza and the History of an Image
Daniel B. Schwartz

“This is a spectacular book, deeply researched and brilliantly written, on a riveting subject—the historical reception of Spinoza from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. Schwartz demonstrates his command of European philosophy, modern European Jewish history, Hebrew and Yiddish literature, and Zionist culture. A tour de force.”
—David Biale, University of California, Davis

Daniel B. Schwartz is assistant professor of history at George Washington University.
2012. 288 pages. 10 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-14291-3 $39.50 | £27.95

FORTHCOMING PAPERBACK
Honorable Mention, 2011 PROSE Award for Excellence in Theology & Religious Studies, Association of American Publishers

How Judaism Became a Religion
An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought
Leora Batnitzky

“[Batnitzky’s] book adds both shrewdness and humility to the search for modern Jewish identity and the claims often made about the purity of these identities.”
—Edward Ruehle, Jewish Voice and Herald

Leora Batnitzky is professor and chair in the Department of Religion at Princeton University, where she also directs the Tikvah Project on Jewish Thought.
October 2013. 224 pages.
Pa: 978-0-691-16013-9 $19.95 | £13.95
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Mark Chaves

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—Paul J. Olson, Sociology of Religion

Mark Chaves is professor of sociology, religion, and divinity at Duke University.
September 2013. 160 pages. 24 line illus. 1 table.
Pa: 978-0-691-15966-9 $17.95 | £12.50
Cl: 978-0-691-14685-0 $22.95 | £15.95

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A Book Forged in Hell
Spinoza's Scandalous Treatise and the Birth of the Secular Age
Steven Nadler

“A Book Forged in Hell raises the important question of how appropriate it is to view Spinoza as a philosophical founder of contemporary secularism and especially of contemporary liberalism. It also raises the question of whether Spinoza should be understood as a Jewish thinker, if so, to what extent.”
—Zachary Micah Gartenberg, Jewish Review of Books

Steven Nadler is the William H. Hay II Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

December 2013. 304 pages. 1 halftone.
Pa: 978-0-691-16018-4 $17.95 | £12.50
Cl: 978-0-691-13989-0 $29.95 | £19.95

NEW PAPERBACK
History Lessons
The Creation of American Jewish Heritage
Beth S. Wenger

“History Lessons offers a remarkable trove of historical literature built upon fact and myth, mostly authored outside the academy, but instructive in understanding how American Jews constructed a new identity in their adoptive land.”
—Hadassa Kosak, Journal of American History

Beth S. Wenger is professor of history and director of the Jewish Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Erich S. Gruen is the Gladys Rehard Wood Professor of History and Classics (emeritus) at the University of California, Berkeley.

Martin Classical Lectures
2012. 432 pages. 8 halftones.
Pa: 978-0-691-15635-4 $24.95 | £16.95
Cl: 978-0-691-14852-6 $57.50 | £39.95

press.princeton.edu
FORTHCOMING
The Book of Job
A Biography
Mark Larrimore

“A most useful and enjoyable addition to the Joban literature.”
—Bruce Zuckerman, author of Job the Silent

The Book of Job raises stark questions about the nature and meaning of innocent suffering and the relationship of the human to the divine, yet it is also one of the Bible’s most obscure and paradoxical books, one that defies interpretation even today. Mark Larrimore provides a panoramic history of this remarkable book, traversing centuries and traditions to examine how Job’s trials and his challenge to God have been used and understood in diverse contexts, from commentary and liturgy to philosophy and art.

Offering rare insights into this iconic and enduring book, Larrimore reveals how Job has come to be viewed as the Bible’s answer to the problem of evil and the perennial question of why a God who supposedly loves justice permits bad things to happen to good people.

Mark Larrimore directs the Religious Studies Program at Eugene Lang College The New School for Liberal Arts.

October 2013. 240 pages. 12 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-14759-8 $24.95 | £16.95

NEW
The Dead Sea Scrolls
A Biography
John J. Collins

“This up-to-date and concise handbook introduces readers to profound discussions of theological, historical, and canonical issues, and to the savory details and gossip surrounding the discovery and publication of the scrolls.”
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John J. Collins is the Holmes Professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation at Yale University.

2012. 288 pages. 8 halftones.
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NEW
One of Jewish Ideas Daily’s Best Jewish Nonfiction Books for 2012
The Book of Genesis
A Biography
Ronald Hendel

“This is an illuminating account, broad in historical scope and rich in interdisciplinary perspective, of the varied life that the book of Genesis has lived through almost three millennia. The writing is lucid and engaging, and the story of the multifarious receptions of this seminal text is deeply instructive.”
—Robert Alter, author of The Art of Biblical Narrative and The Art of Biblical Poetry

Ronald Hendel is the Norma and Sam Dabby Professor of Hebrew Bible and Jewish Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

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FORTHCOMING

Cultural Exchange
Jews and Christians in the Medieval Marketplace
Joseph Shatzmiller

“This valuable book supports the view that medieval Jews in northern Europe, Iberia, and other Mediterranean societies were open to the style and iconography of their Christian neighbors, despite the protest of Jewish and Christian authorities. While other books on medieval Jewish economic activity, religious customs, and illuminated Hebrew manuscripts have made this case, no other book provides a comprehensive state of the field for researchers and general readers alike.”
—Ivan G. Marcus, Yale University

Joseph Shatzmiller is the Smart Family Professor of Judaic Studies at Duke University.

July 2013. 192 pages. 14 halftones. 2 line illus. 14 tables.
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The Scandal of Kabbalah
Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice
Yaacob Dweck

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Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker
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—Shai Secunda, Talmud Blog

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Paula Fredriksen

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Paul Reitter

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Michael Brenner
Translated by Jeremiah Riemer

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—Publishers Weekly Religion Book Line

“This is an excellent overview of Jewish history—a well-written, up-to-date survey for college students and the general reader. Considering the scope of the coverage, the book is remarkably concise.”
—Robert Seltzer, H-Net Reviews

2012. 440 pages. 92 halftones. 1 table. 5 maps.
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—New Yorker

“Showing how Islamic culture from antiquity has been composed of interrelated, ‘multiracial’ groups, Lewis’s erudite introduction discusses the emergence of Arabic languages and the status of poets.”
—Library Journal

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Alice Calaprice is a renowned expert on Albert Einstein and was a longtime senior editor at Princeton University Press.
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Helen Dukas became Einstein’s secretary in 1928 and, after his death in 1955, was a trustee of his literary estate and the archivist of his papers. Banesh Hoffmann was a British mathematician and physicist who collaborated with Einstein on research in the general theory of relativity.
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David E. Rowe is Professor of the History of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, and a former member of the Einstein Papers Project. Robert Schulmann, a former Boston University history professor, is former head of the Einstein Papers Project.
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