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 vividly describes Maimonides’s childhood in Muslim Spain, his family’s flight to North Africa to escape persecution, and their eventual resettling in Egypt. He draws on Maimonides’s letters and the testimonies of his contemporaries, both Muslims and Jews, to offer new insights into his personality and the circumstances that shaped his thinking. Halbertal then turns to Maimonides’s legal and philosophical work, analyzing his three great books—Commentary on the Mishnah, the Mishneh Torah, and the Guide of the Perplexed. He discusses Maimonides’s battle against all attempts to personify God, his conviction that God’s presence in the world is mediated through the natural order rather than through miracles, and his locating of philosophy and science at the summit of the religious life of Torah. Halbertal examines Maimonides’s philosophical positions on fundamental questions such as the nature and limits of religious language, creation and nature, prophecy, providence, the problem of evil, and the meaning of the commandments.

A stunning achievement, Maimonides offers an unparalleled look at the life and thought of this important Jewish philosopher, scholar, and theologian.

2013. 400 pages. Cl: 978-0-691-15851-8 $35.00 | £24.95
New

The Golden Age Shtetl
A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe
Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern

“This book ushers in the golden age of shtetl scholarship. Challenging the homogenized and sanitized images of East European Jewry that followed its near obliteration, Petrovsky-Shtern combs the archives to reveal how the Jews who lived in these market towns enjoyed great opportunities amid the political tensions between Poland and Russia. A book to be grateful for.”
—Ruth R. Wisse, author of No Joke: Making Jewish Humor

“The Golden Age Shtetl turns upside down the nostalgic image of the shtetl as a decaying Jewish village, presenting the historical shtetl as a place where Jews enjoyed prosperity and stability. Drawing on huge archival evidence, this pathbreaking study challenges our historical mind and provides an innovative account of the Jewish experience in nineteenth-century Russia.”
—Israel Bartal, author of The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881

The shtetl was home to two-thirds of East Europe’s Jews in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, yet it has long been one of the most neglected and misunderstood chapters of the Jewish experience. This book provides the first grassroots social, economic, and cultural history of the shtetl. Challenging popular misconceptions of the shtetl as an isolated, ramshackle Jewish village stricken by poverty and pogroms, Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern argues that, in its heyday from the 1790s to the 1840s, the shtetl was a thriving Jewish community as vibrant as any in Europe.

Petrovsky-Shtern brings this golden age to life, looking at dozens of shtetls and drawing on a wealth of never-before-used archival material. The shtetl, in essence, was a Polish private town belonging to a Catholic magnate, administratively run by the tsarist empire, yet economically driven by Jews. Petrovsky-Shtern shows how its success hinged on its unique position in this triangle of power—as did its ultimate suppression. He reconstructs the rich social tapestry of these market towns, showing how Russian clerks put the shtetl on the empire’s map, and chronicling how shtetl Jews traded widely, importing commodities from France, Austria, Prussia, and even the Ottoman Empire. Petrovsky-Shtern describes family life; dwellings, trading stalls, and taverns; books and religious life; and the bustling marketplace with its Polish gentry, Ukrainian peasants, and Russian policemen.

Illustrated throughout with rare archival photographs and artwork, this nuanced history casts the shtetl in an altogether new light, revealing how its golden age continues to shape the collective memory of the Jewish people today.

2014. 448 pages. 50 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-16074-0 $29.95 | £19.95

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Poetic Trespass
Writing between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine
Lital Levy

“Poetic Trespass is one of the most important studies of contemporary Hebrew literature in recent years. Focusing on how a variety of writers in Israel/Palestine transgress the lines that separate Hebrew and Arabic, Lital Levy’s compelling, provocative, and productive book enriches our understanding of more than a century of literature in both these languages. It is bound to appeal to scholars across fields who are interested in Jewish studies, the history of Israeli-Palestinian relations, and the history of the Middle East.”
—Amir Eshel, Stanford University

Blending history and literature, Poetic Trespass traces the interwoven life of Arabic and Hebrew in Israel/Palestine from the turn of the twentieth century to the present, exposing the two languages’ intimate entanglements in contemporary works of prose, poetry, film, and visual art by both Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel.

November 2014. 336 pages. 9 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-16248-5 $39.95 | £27.95

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The Jews of Islam
Bernard Lewis
With a new introduction by Mark R. Cohen

“As we might expect from the foremost and most prolific of today’s Orientalists . . . The Jews of Islam is an elegant and masterly survey.”
—Alain Silvera, New York Times Book Review

“Lewis refuses . . . simplistic approaches and tries to explain the complex and often contradictory history of Jewish-Muslim relations over fourteen hundred years. He does this in prose that combines eloquence, dispassion, and wit.”
—Norman A. Stillman, New York Review of Books

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—Norman A. Stillman, New York Review of Books

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Jews and the Military
A History
Derek J. Penslar

“This book shatters the conventional image of diaspora Jews as a people who shun warfare. With exemplary scholarship and a gimlet eye for telling historical evidence, Derek Penslar analyzes Jewish participation in armies from the seventeenth century to the present. Wide-ranging in its scope, original in its argument, and elegant in its presentation, this is the work of a master historian at the peak of his powers.”
—Bernard Wasserstein, author of On the Eve: The Jews of Europe Before the Second World War

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.

2013. 376 pages. 17 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-13887-9 $29.95 | £19.95

New

Muslims and Jews in France
History of a Conflict
Maud S. Mandel

“Mandel deftly analyzes the polarization of positions concerning Muslims and Jews in France while giving a dramatic example of how social reality and language may themselves conflict. As she points out, social violence between the two groups has been rare, while the increasing polarization of discourse has proceeded apace. Sure to raise some hackles, her book is a provocative must-read.”
—Nancy L. Green, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris

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.

2014. 272 pages. 1 map.
Cl: 978-0-691-16355-0 $19.95 | £13.95
Pa: 978-0-691-15569-2 $29.95 | £19.95

Forthcoming Paperback

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

“For more than three decades, Jon Levenson has been quietly developing a biblical theology that would revolutionize Jewish understanding and worship, if only more Jews were to learn of it. Inheriting Abraham is his most accessible book yet—a model of how exacting scholarship can be written for the well-educated layman.”
—D. G. Myers, Jewish Ideas Daily

“The polychromatic image of Abraham that emerges from Levenson’s patient, subtle tracing of this textual history is fascinating.”
—Martin Jaffee, Jewish Review of Books

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November 2014. 264 pages.
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No Joke
Making Jewish Humor
Ruth R. Wisse

“One of the most interesting and insightful books about comedy I’ve ever read. I learned a lot, and I laughed a lot.”
—B. J. Novak, writer and actor, The Office

“The funniest thing since we let the goyim into show business.”
—David Mamet

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 have called Jewish humor into being—and the price it may exact from its practitioners and audience.

Library of Jewish Ideas
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2013. 296 pages. 14 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-14946-2 $24.95 | £16.95

New
One of the Outstanding Reference Sources for 2014, Reference and User Services Association, American Library Association

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

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.

This one-of-a-kind encyclopedic history is also available as an enhanced e-book for the iPad.

2013. 1152 pages. 203 color illus. 49 halftones. 7 maps.
Cl: 978-0-691-15127-4 $75.00 | £52.00

New
Masters of Fire
Copper Age Art from Israel
Edited by Michael Sebbane, Osnat Misch-Brandl & Daniel M. Master

The catalogue for the exciting exhibition at New York University’s Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, Masters of Fire presents a comprehensive overview of the little-known yet extraordinary Chalcolithic culture, which existed in the southern Levant from 4500–3600 BCE.

Masters of Fire focuses on the people of the southern Levant who harnessed the power of metallurgy during the fourth millennium BCE. Artisans produced extraordinary copper objects while other craftsmen molded pottery and stone into complex anthropomorphic burial containers, statuettes, and ritual objects. Taken together, these artifacts reveal the first stratified culture known in the ancient Near East. Highlights of the exhibition include a selection of material from the Nahal Mishmar hoard, an unprecedented collection of copper prestige and ritual objects, organic materials from the Cave of the Warrior, and an exceptional group of ritual figurines.

A copublication with the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University

2014. 184 pages. 212 color illus. 2 halftones. 7 line illus.
Cl: 978-0-691-16286-7 $49.95 | £34.95
In late antiquity, as Christianity emerged from Judaism, it was not only the new religion that was being influenced by the old. The rise and revolutionary challenge of Christianity also had a profound influence on rabbinic Judaism, which was itself just emerging and trying to shape its own identity. In *The Jewish Jesus*, Peter Schäfer reveals the crucial ways in which various Jewish heresies, including Christianity, affected the development of rabbinic Judaism. The result is a demonstration of the deep mutual influence between the sister religions, one that calls into question hard and fast distinctions between orthodoxy and heresy, and even Judaism and Christianity, during the first centuries CE.

2014. 368 pages. 5 halftones. 1 table.
Pa: 978-0-691-16095-5 $24.95 | £16.95
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In *How Judaism Became a Religion*, Leora Batnitzky boldly argues that this question more than any other has driven modern Jewish thought since the eighteenth century. Ever since the Enlightenment, Jewish thinkers have debated whether and how Judaism—largely a religion of practice and public adherence to law—can fit into a modern, Protestant conception of religion as an individual and private matter of belief or faith. Batnitzky tells the story of how Judaism came to be defined as a religion in the modern period—and why Jewish thinkers have fought as well as championed this idea.

2013. 224 pages.
Pa: 978-0-691-16013-9 $19.95 | £13.95

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In *The Chosen Few*, Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein offer a powerful new explanation of one of the most significant transformations in Jewish history while also providing fresh insights to the growing debate about the social and economic impact of religion.

2014. 368 pages. 5 halftones. 1 table.
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New Paperback

Sin
The Early History of an Idea
Paula Fredriksen

“An erudite study.”
—Library Journal

“Incisive and pellucid.”
—Robert A. Segal, Times Higher Education

Ancient Christians invoked sin to account for an astonishing range of things, from the death of God’s son to the politics of the Roman Empire that worshipped him. In this book, award-winning historian of religion Paula Fredriksen tells the surprising story of early Christian concepts of sin, exploring the ways that sin came to shape ideas about God no less than about humanity.

2014. 220 pages. 4 halftones. 1 line illus.
Pa: 978-0-691-16090-0 $16.95 | £11.95
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New Paperback

Honorable Mention, 2011 PROSE Award for Excellence in Philosophy, Association of American Publishers

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

 “[Nadler] has definitely succeeded in writing an extremely rewarding and engaging book.”
—Library Journal (starred review)

“This is a groundbreaking analysis of an incendiary text.”
—Booklist

When it appeared in 1670, Baruch Spinoza’s Theological-Political Treatise was denounced as the most dangerous book ever published. Religious and secular authorities saw it as a threat to faith, social and political harmony, and everyday morality. Yet Spinoza’s book has contributed as much as the Declaration of Independence or Thomas Paine’s Common Sense to modern liberal, secular, and democratic thinking. In A Book Forged in Hell, Steven Nadler tells the fascinating story of this extraordinary book: its radical claims and their background in the philosophical, religious, and political tensions of the Dutch Golden Age, as well as the vitriolic reaction these ideas inspired.

2013. 288 pages. 10 halftones.
Pa: 978-0-691-16214-0 $24.95 | £16.95
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—Joan Acocella, New Yorker

"[Larrimore] is subtle and superbly thorough as he navigates his way not just through Jewish, Christian and secular readings but also the uncertainties about the text and the misconceptions that have grown up around it."
—Brian Bethune, Maclean's Magazine

2013. 296 pages. 12 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-14759-8 $24.95 | £16.95

The Dead Sea Scrolls
A Biography
John J. Collins

“One could scarcely imagine a better concise guide to the Scrolls than John Collins’s The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Biography. Collins, who teaches at Yale, writes with clarity and liveliness, and throughout his account exercises great judiciousness, a quality that has not always been prominent in discussions of this subject.”
—Robert Alter, London Review of Books

2013. 288 pages. 8 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-14367-5 $24.95 | £16.95
**Forthcoming**

**Defining Neighbors**
Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter
Jonathan Marc Gribetz

“In this meticulously researched book, Gribetz offers a fresh look at early relations between Zionists and Arabs in Palestine. Examining what he terms their ‘textual conversation,’ he highlights the role of religion and race in the development of mutual perceptions. The British used religion to separate the communities; race could have served to break down barriers of identity. Gribetz reminds us that the way people understand each other is not fixed or immutable.”

—Ambassador (Ret.) Daniel Kurtzer, Princeton University

“This book is a truly extraordinary scholarly accomplishment. From this point forward, anybody who wants to understand the origins of the Arab-Israeli conflict will not be able to do so without consulting Gribetz’s work.”

—Israel Gershoni, Tel Aviv University

October 2014. 296 pages. 4 halftones.
Cl: 978-0-691-15950-8 $35.00 | £24.95

**New**

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

“The Bible in Arabic represents the work of a scholar at the height of his powers. Griffith demonstrates widespread mastery of his subject: his expertise spans not only Christian Arabic translation and interpretation of the Bible, but also Jewish and Islamic Arabic literature as well. The result is a book that fills a conspicuous gap in our knowledge: it will surely become a standard in the field.”

—Stephen Davis, Yale University

“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*

2013. 272 pages. 6 halftones.
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Cultural Exchange
Jews, Christians, and Art in the Medieval Marketplace
Joseph Shatzmiller

“The book’s arguments shine through and the exploration of cross-fertilization, most particularly the frescoes and decorations discovered in medieval and early modern Jewish houses in Swiss and German lands, is a tour de force. This important and creative book brings fresh information and insights to bear on fundamental issues of cross-cultural interaction.”
—William Chester Jordan, Princeton University

“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

2013. 208 pages. 29 halftones. 1 line illus. Ct: 978-0-691-15699-6 $35.00 | £24.95

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Garth Fowden

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—Sidney H. Griffith, Catholic University of America

“Fowden presents a powerful and compelling new model for an integrated view of late antique and early medieval Christian, Jewish, and Muslim history that replaces traditional distinctions between East and West. Before and After Muḥammad is an ambitious book, one that has the potential to shift fundamental paradigms.”
—Anthony Kaldellis, Ohio State University

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Michael Brenner
Translated by Jeremiah Riemer

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—Publishers Weekly Religion Book Line

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