

es of otherwise imprecise terminology (e.g., “double-wide sheets” to introduce bifolios) may represent an interest in more relatable language. Specialists will appreciate the detailed presentation of data—elaborate discussion, copious high-quality illustrations (often at high magnification), tables, extensive footnotes, and rich appendices.

The outcome of this remarkably close scrutiny is most valuable as a compendium of codicological data and as a model for approaching future studies of painted decoration in Islamic manuscript cultures. It is highly recommended reading for anyone pursuing a deeper knowledge of Islamic manuscript production.

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Coming of Age in Medieval Egypt: Female Adolescence, Jewish Law, and Ordinary Culture. By EVE KRAKOWSKI. Princeton: PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2018. Pp. xvi + 350. \$39.95, £32.95.

Volume three of *A Mediterranean Society*, S. D. Goitein’s magisterial study of the documents of the Cairo Geniza, appeared in 1978. It was dedicated to “The Family” and included chapters on betrothal and wedding, marriage, husband and wife, divorce, parents, and children. As was Goitein’s custom in “The World of Women,” the volume’s closing section, he offered conclusions and a social historian’s reflections on the significance of the material. Except for Mordechai Friedman’s Hebrew-language study of Jewish polygyny as reflected in the Geniza documents (1986) it would be forty years until another scholar ventured to author a book devoted principally to women in Geniza society (I exclude important but unpublished doctoral dissertations), in this case young women on the verge of young adulthood.

Eve Krakowski’s *Coming of Age* represents a surpassingly rich contribution to the social and legal history of the Jews in Fustat (Old Cairo), Egypt, during the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods and especially to the study of Jewish women in an Islamicate society. The book’s introduction (pp. 1–32) provides an excellent primer on Geniza studies (for those less familiar with the field); surveys previous Geniza research on adolescent young women, the family, and legal history; and defines Krakowski’s interest in what she deems “ordinary” lives: “those parts of life that were not obvious religious flashpoints: the ideas, dispositions, and material practices that Geniza Jews took for granted when they were *not* praying, giving charity, or appearing before a rabbinic judge” (p. 19). Its eight chapters, divided into three parts (“Women in Patronage Culture” on kinship and family, “Unmarried Daughters” on the place

of adolescent girls in society, “Becoming a Wife” on the transition into a first marriage), engage the reader in close study and interpretation of Geniza material through the lens of prescriptive rabbinic legal rulings and their interplay with more complex social norms and practices evidenced in epistolary texts, community documents, court records, and responsa. The conclusion (pp. 294–303) briefly rehearses Krakowski’s findings regarding the centrality of kinship relationships in the lives of young women, in dialectical relationship with the dictates of rabbinic tradition and Jewish legal practice. She determines that while young women observed rabbinic law “women’s adolescence was not structured by” it (p. 299).

Digitalization and search engines enable Geniza scholars of Krakowski’s generation to sift through hundreds and thousands of documents, identify writings connected to their subjects, and then proceed to analyze the relevant documentary and literary record and present what is learned from this effort. The nature of the textual material Krakowski studies permits her to narrate select but compelling aspects of the lives of her subjects, that is, to tell the reader about young women from different urban economic strata and what resources and what agency, such as it was, were available to them (“In most cases the bride’s moment of active agency recorded in Geniza contacts was thus a pro forma legal performance directed and determined by her relatives and by court or communal officials” [p. 232]) while illuminating the social norms and practices regulating their transition from childhood to adulthood. In the process Krakowski offers an important informed corrective to Goitein’s picture of the “Geniza society” family and its young women, specifically his description of families “as cohesive extended patrilineal clans.” For Krakowski, family bonds rather than “the shape of the broader family group” were far more significant factors in young women’s lives (pp. 36–37).

Krakowski’s complete control of Geniza studies and the documentary material and her mastery of rabbinic tradition and its varied literary sources make for an exceptionally impressive marriage. For her reader she weds a portrait of life as it is lived in all its variety and complexity to the conservative prescriptions of Jewish law mediated by the more fluid judgments of jurists and their communities’ practices. For example, marriage rather than puberty in accordance with rabbinic law marks the achievement of adulthood in Geniza society. The classical rabbinic sources and their subsequent guardians in Geniza society, the Iraqi ge’onim as well as their luminous authorities such as al-Fāsī and Maimonides, “speak” in the dramas of individual, family, and communal life but they do not have the only say and do not always have the final say. Krakowski frames this tension as “Rabbinic law on the page and on the ground” (pp. 105–9).

What can Krakowski's work teach us about similarities between the minority community of Egyptian Jews and their Muslim and Christian neighbors, especially regarding the experience of young women? Following other Geniza social historians of the past two generations, Krakowski reveals throughout *Coming of Age* the benefits of a comparative approach to her subject. Indeed, she cites Goitein's critical observation "that Geniza Jews 'mingled freely with their neighbors, and therefore cannot have been much different from them.'" (p. 19) The consequences of this social mingling were significant for each of the confessional communities: the Jews' Arabization, interactions with Muslims, and access to Islamic courts meant inter alia that "Geniza scribes also draw on a different repertoire of Judeo-Arabic terms and phrases, one that is neither gaonic nor even Jewish, but rather echoes the technical language of Islamic law" (p. 105). Krakowski further demonstrates the relevance of her method and findings for understanding the lives of Egyptian Muslim and Christian young women with their own bonds of kinship and nuanced observance of their respective communities' sacred law. Thereby she provides evidence for studying social relationships in medieval Islamic society as Islamicate rather than strictly Islamic.

Eve Krakowski's captivating volume is a sign of how far Geniza studies has come from its textual recovery period through Goitein's herculean synthesis. It is also a demonstration of the ways in which Geniza research lies at the intersection of Jewish social history and legal history and Islamic social and legal history. Krakowski's work, and that of her generation of Geniza scholars, defines the maturation of the field of inquiry by transcending disciplinary and areal boundaries because, above all, the documentary material requires it.

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Kontaktzone Vorderer Orient und Ägypten: Orte, Situationen und Bedingungen für primäre griechisch-orientalische Kontakte vom 10. bis zum 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr. By IRIS VON BREDOW. *Geographica Historica*, vol. 38. Stuttgart: FRANZ STEINER, 2017. Pp. 394, maps. €44 (paper).

In the past few decades it has become increasingly apparent thanks to the works of Walter Burkert (e.g., *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* [1992]), M. L. West (*The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* [1997]), and the undisciplined Martin Bernal (*Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* [1981–2006]) that Classical Greek civilization owed much to the first-mil-

lennium cultures of Western Asia and Egypt. However, the means by which this transfer of intellectual property took place still remain unclear.

It is the aim of Iris von Bredow in the book under review to shed light on this question through the application of contemporary theories of communication. The volume opens with a useful sketch of the archaeological and textual evidence for the history of Greece, Egypt, and the Near East during the twelfth through sixth centuries BCE (part I), followed by a lucid presentation of current sociological scholarship (primarily German-language) dealing with the acquisition of cultural elements by foreigners (parts II–III). In a nutshell, this process may be divided into three stages, which succeed one another along with increasing length of contact of the outsider with the donor culture, and not all of which are necessarily achieved by any particular visitor or immigrant. These stages are borrowing, adaptation, and acculturation (pp. 204–9).

Part IV describes the varieties of situation in which a Greek of the first half of the first millennium theoretically might have undergone exposure to Egyptian or Levantine civilization, while part V considers the actual possibilities for Greek contact and borrowing from North Syria (ninth–eighth centuries), Phoenicia (ninth–sixth centuries), the Israelite kingdoms, the Philistine cities, and finally Saite Egypt.

Given the relative paucity of Near Eastern or Egyptian artifacts on the Greek mainland, and of Greek archaeological material in most of the pre-Hellenistic Levant or in Egypt before the establishment of Naukratis in the seventh century, von Bredow is largely reliant on Greek literary sources referring to the archaic period—primarily the Homeric poems (see pp. 159–62) and the *Histories* of Herodotus. In particular, she examines the experiences of Menelaus in Egypt and Sidon and of Odysseus in mythical Phaeacia, as related by Homer. From this evidence she concludes that the Greek participants in early contacts were mostly aristocrats and their followers, and that these contacts were military in nature—that is, mercenary service (pp. 227ff.) or piracy (pp. 324–31). In von Bredow's estimation, the profession of merchant did not even exist in the Greek world prior to the second half of the seventh century (p. 297), so that trade cannot have played a major role in cultural diffusion during the period she is studying.

When she is writing of archaic Greece, von Bredow's arguments seem in general plausible, but given the exiguous data, in the end they remain—as she herself admits, "suppositions" (*Vermutungen*, p. 211). In particular, her consideration of the transfer of literary genera and their contents relies on what seems to this reviewer an overestimation of the degree of literacy in both archaic Greece and the Levant (pp. 209–11).

Von Bredow herself is less at home in the east, as evidenced by her faulty and inconsistent transcriptions of personal names from cuneiform sources, and by such