

correspondences between months in Hebrew and modern calendars. All these appendixes are very helpful (especially the table of Hebrew script variation) for further practical work with the Sephardic texts. In addition, the index of the names of persons, works and places (both in Russian and Hebrew) gives an opportunity to use this manual effectively.

One of the remarkable peculiarities of this manual is that it is based on the research material in the field of Sephardic books which has been investigated by the author (the list of his books and articles are given in Bibliography). This short but highly practical and helpful manual may be a good pattern for similar handbooks on the specific fields of Jewish studies.

Dmytro Tsolin

NADIA VALMAN, LAURENCE ROTH, EDS. **Three Articles on Jewish Art, Body and Identity: A Case Review on**

The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Jewish Cultures.

London: Routledge, 2014. 414 p.

ISBN 978-0415473781

Plurality and diversity have not always been valued in academic circles, and Jewish Studies among them were no exception until the late 20th century. However, postmodern social studies take new approaches and visions. As soon as any society reaches a certain point in its life, the study of it cannot keep operating the terms of ancient books and principles, and the society has to be studied in synergy with other societies, communities and new terms. The *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Jewish Cultures* edited by Laurence Roth and Nadia Valman, and published in 2015, contains articles on most new researches concerning Jewish Studies worldwide. Diverse and different, created by scholars from different cultures, countries, research areas and origins, these texts are divided into three parts following to the principle of terms definition, theory narratives and case studies. While the common field of all those texts is indisputably rich, in the following review we will direct our attention to three of them, representing one part of the *Handbook* each.

The first article recommended by this review is “Art History” by Samantha Baskind and Larry Silver, presented in the first part (“Defining terms: disciplinary perspectives”) of the named handbook. The article starts with *Raphael Soyer and the Search for Modern Jewish Art* in 2004, and while analyzing artistic works of a Russian-Jewish emigrant Raphael Soyer who, according to art scholars’ works, had never identified himself as a Jewish painter or portraitist, Samantha Baskind has extensively researched the topic of Jewish art and art made by Jews.

Although the importance of artists’ cultural identities seems from a personal perspective to be a crucial point of Baskind’s earlier work, by 2006 the *Encyclopedia of*

American Jewish Artists appears, where the topic of Jewishness is rather seen by the author as a wide artistic field than as a category of ethnic self-identity in the strict sense of the term. The next studies in this field was *Jewish Art: A Modern History* (2011). This was a voluminous book on contemporary Jewish art in both the State of Israel and the Diaspora, written in collaboration with Larry Silver, which was given good reviews in both academic and generalist circles, and a work in a much more sophisticated, popular yet not always noticed topic of *Jewish Graphic Novels* (2010) had shown new approaches to the vivid but perhaps undeterminable discourse of Jewish art. *Jewish Art: A Modern History* volume was not just a mere gathering of critical art overviews but rather a consideration of who and how in the contemporary Jewish art narratives and those presented in the art history of the 20th century. Another relevant and possibly even painful narrative was shown by Baskind in the last year's *Jewish Artists and the Bible in Twentieth-Century America*, referring not only to the worldly-known visual art masters like Chagall but also to those locally-known creators. All those questions – the one of self-identity of artists and their works, the image of Jewish art they create in both narrowly scholarly and generalist areas, the definition of “Jew,” “Jewish,” “Jewishness” in the artistic and other fields, the ways Jewish artists and “Jewish” topics are seen and let themselves be seen by a Jewish and a non-Jewish eye, the fact that the Jewish art can also be made by a non-Jewish artist or at least by that who does not understand oneself as this, and the ways of interaction of the named subjects with the art of other nations, communities, topics and self-identities – are also present in the article by Baskind and Silver written for the current handbook.

Given the most different and diversified examples of “Jewish artist” identities and “Jewish” topics in visual art, Baskind and Silver show that there is still no regular definition for Jewish art in the 21st century. This is not always understood as a negative phenomenon. Starting with case studies and moving towards classical 20th-century topics like re-thinking Biblical texts, re-viewing the Holocaust influenced (or even Holocaust-caused) narratives and re-writing the figure of a Jew in their (i.e. *his*, *hers* and other non-binary gender identities of the persons who see themselves in any sense as a part of “traditionally Jewish”) everyday culture – but also to the new-built identities of the urban, queer and postmodern narratives, Baskind and Silver create a masterpiece in a form of an almost classically sage commentary. To fully understand the plurality of views hidden in the few pages of the article, one must follow the quotations and meet the Jewish art *in corpora*, deepen into the ocean of individual views, performing styles and self-identifications as if the contemporary Jewish art discourse indeed was – in all its variety and diversity – a loyal successor not just to classical Jewish art (if this definition of this term is possible), but also to the Hebrew Bible commentaries, where any possibility of existent senses and narratives can be found.

In the field where one cannot say for sure what is Jewish from the art's perspective and also what is art from Jewish perspective, the unspeakable is born, which hides between the strophes of Baskind's and Silver's article. Where the scholars hesitate in defining visual artworks as non-Jewish or yet Jewish (or even perhaps *too* Jewish), and

while the boundary between those is democratically indeterminable, the readers appears to feel they have read not an essay on questions and possible answers on Jewish art, but a voluminous and stunning work on plurality, intercultural history and maybe even a manifesto of a 21st-century self-identity. The one you cannot easily explain with words but can definitely express using the languages of visual arts.

While in the first reviewed article the postmodern, contemporary scholars' voices are clearly heard, pushing the explorer's journey away from classical Jewish studies as they were performed until the late 90s of the 20th century, what we see in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's text "Bodies" ("Part II. Theorizing contemporary Jewish cultures"), is an overview of classical approaches towards bodily issues in both Jewish traditions and traditional Jewish studies from the perspective of the newest narratives. She explores the image, the place and the descriptions of a human (and precisely Jewish) body in terms of folklore and folk-life which Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has studied. Covering English literature, performance and Yiddish culture at the universities of Canada and the United States, commentaries on Hebrew Bible, Biblical studies, anthropology, ethnography, Jewish studies, 20th-century history and Holocaust history, performing art and everyday community and individual life, the author creates a multi-dimensional picture of an endless yet until today almost undiscovered, avoided or even forbidden ground of Jewish corporeality.

Starting with exploring museum and media spaces connected with Jewish case histories and images (e.g. *Image before My Eyes: A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, 1864–1939*, with Lucjan Dobroszycki, reissued 1995), the author continues to study and gather tiles of images in the inter-textual space of art, memory and everyday life, though in mutual transformations and inter-functioning with other social spheres of post-modernity (e.g. *The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times*, co-edited with Jonathan Karp, 2007 and *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, co-edited with Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz, 2006). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's searches go far beyond classical academic studies and start a refreshing breeze of new ideas, where not only historical contexts of a text written under restrictions and circumstances of the past is the center of attention, but also the re-reading (or rather re-feeling and re-living) of medieval and contemporary Jewish masculinities (and their relation to the physical world), child-rearing practices, sexuality, gender studies and women studies, the history of anti-Semitism, Jewish/Arab identity controversies, and/or correlation and in the very first place the phenomenon of human body as it just is become of highest importance.

It appears that as early as in the 1890s, the question of the Jewish body and bodies was not much considered as a topic of studies any different from a rather unilateral way of the Nazi-supported race theory. The question of the negative image of Jewish appearance in European folklore present in classical ethnographic studies was by no means an unimportant topic and obtained a denial by the scholars of Jewish origin and religious scholars of biblical texts. Even today the only body studied by some scholars, presumes the author, is the body of the Holy Scripture. On the other hand, examples are given to show

that today a different trend is visible. The followers of this trend do not only see the text as a body, but also read a body as a (or even *the*) text. And here the sense of “corporeality,” “physical appearance,” and “bodies” becomes very diverse. The author raises questions of race and culture, of new-built identities in the Diaspora, Palestine Jews and peoples with Jew-related self-images, of new and traditional points of view and methods useful to form wider and deeper fields in body studies, and after all the possibility of an objective body – and Jewish body – image’s existence. To answer these questions while living at a speed of postmodern societies one must not only have enough knowledge in all possible contemporary Jewish studies’ topics, but also probably in the first line be very certain of one’s own subjectivity.

And this is where we could cast our minds back to one of the hypothesis which Laurence Roth and Nadia Valman had given in the *Handbook*’s introduction’s text: it is possible that Jewishness is not who you *are* but what you *do*.

In the third part of *The Routledge Handbook*, which is headed as a section on “Case studies in contemporary Jewish cultures,” among other case studies the phenomenon of Dana International is presented from the point of view of analyzing the Mizrahi, Arab and worldwide medias’, political groups’ and different social communities’ of the Middle East and Palestine reactions to the performing of this artist (“Mizrahi/Arab/Israeli/queer: the cultural politics of Dana International” by Ted Swedenburg). The part of the book is fully dedicated to social life, mixed identities, popular culture, counterculture and queer studies, and once again disputes around the question of what being Jewish means.

So is Ted Swedenburg’s article. In the first half of the 1990s, the author had been fruitfully working on researches on Palestinian conflicts and identities built in the geographical area (e.g. *Displacement, diaspora, and geographies of identity*, 1996 or *Memories of Revolt: 1936–1939 Rebellion in the Palestinian Past*, 1995). Later, in the end of 20th century and beginning of the new millennium his works became more concentrated on the images in Palestinian popular culture and popular music influenced and caused by (or, in contrary, influencing) the oppositions and mutual reactions of Mizrahis’ and Western Jews’ worlds, of Jews and Arabs, of Hebrew speakers and Arabic speakers, and traditional and modern communities.

Although the topic of Dana International has already been present in earlier works of Swedenburg (e.g. “Saida Sultan/Danna International: transgender pop and the polysemiotics of sex, nation, and ethnicity on the Israeli-Egyptian border,” 1997), the article printed in *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Jewish Cultures* is not a summary of them, but rather an essay on the multilingual and multicultural meaning of Dana International’s songs and performing. In the first line the transsexual performer is shown not as a queer prophet (LGBTIQ, or even simply *gay* as Swedenburg puts it several times). She is rather seen as a guide for young representatives of both Jewish and non-Jewish origin, who pushed the boundaries of their closed communities into the larger multicultural world. Starting as a burlesque parody performer, in the text of Ted Swedenburg, Dana Intentional ends as a national icon not only to the LGBTIQ movement, but also to those who are willing to re-think the tradition of Mizrahi

music and make it more popular, and to the Arabic-speaking Jews. The singer plays a deliberative, cultural, and educational (and among others – sex-educational) role, and also creates a modern and positive image of Mizrahi music for the Western world and the same of the Western culture for the youth of closed Palestinian communities. Whereas the reaction towards Dana International shown by traditional Middle East social leaders stays predictably negative and hostile, Swedenburg's article shows the reader how a different freedom of choice and self-expression can be understood and reached. Maybe the interaction of cultures, as the authors of this book's introduction have noticed, is after all the only way to preserve one's own culture.

The *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Jewish Cultures* is not only an interesting collection and not simply a reader on contemporary social and academic movements concerning Jewish studies worldwide – it is also a useful example, if not a methodological pattern to use while seeking for answers to questions of national identity and communities building. This is true especially for scholarly circles in the new-constructed post-colonial countries, where the space of definitions and images of folklore, community and private life, self-identity and opinions on history in the international context are only beginning to be built.

Oleksandra Uralova

LEAH HOCHMAN **The Ugliness of Moses Mendelssohn. Aesthetics,
Religion, and Morality in the Eighteenth Century.**

London: Routledge, 2014. 210 p.

ISBN 978-1317669975

Конфлікт моральної й естетичної свідомості є однією з актуальних філософських проблем, що має тривалу історію обговорення у творах Платона, Канта, Гегеля, Шопенгауера, Кіркегора, Ніцше, Шелера, Голосовкера та інших. Суть цього конфлікту полягає в драматичності людського вибору між моральним учинком та естетичною насолодою. З одного боку, етичні вимоги, котрі людина обирає як життєві орієнтири, реалізуються у формі морального самопримусу – на відміну від естетичних уподобань, що виникають довільно й невимушено. З іншого боку, колективні естетичні уявлення формують канон естетичних цінностей, характерних для певного суспільства чи, ширше, певної історичної доби. Цей канон привабливого чи відрозливого потужно впливає на світогляд окремої особи. Як ідеологічний продукт, естетичні цінності, прийняті в суспільстві, не тільки кшталтують індивідуальний смак людини, але й можуть конфліктувати з універсальними моральними принципами¹. Ця супереч-

¹ Див.: Валерій Жулай, “Особливості діалогічного відношення в естетичній сфері (Тут-присутність як екзистенційний досвід і естетична форма)”, у Віталій Даренський та ін., *Диалог sub specie ethicae* (Київ: Парапан, 2011), 233–252.