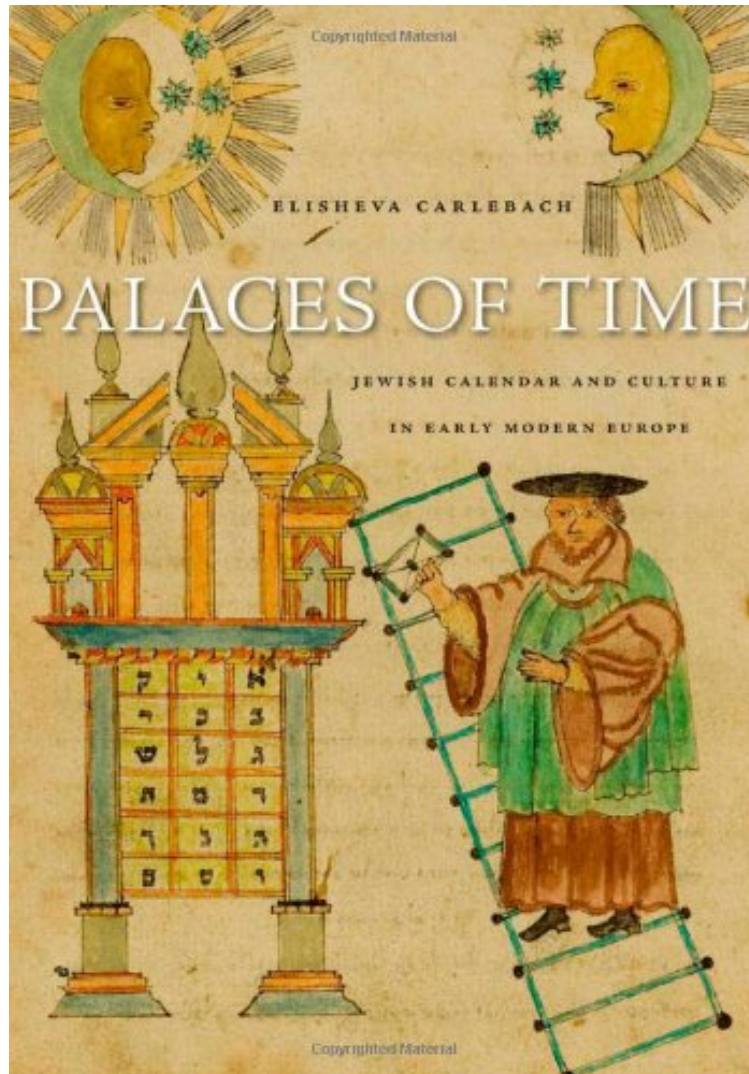


[E-BOOK] Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe

Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe

Elisheva Carlebach

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Elisheva Carlebach : Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Diaspora TimeBy Mr. Jack LawsonWe take for granted time as a natural and cultural regulator of the life of society and of each individual but the calendar is in large measure man-made. In the past, high cultures had their own. This is a wonderful book, erudite and yet entertaining in every way. The design and manufacture are a credit to Harvard University Press. Text and illustrations are glorious. Palaces of

Time grips the reader as tightly as any thriller, a remarkable achievement for such a thoughtful book. It makes a delightful gift but don't start reading, be warned: you won't put it down. The only heaviness is the sadness of the cyclical persecutions by Christians and the reaction of Jewish communities to oppression and discrimination. In itself a regrettable episode of history which explains the tensions in today's world. Although outside the scope of the book, I would have liked to read an early chapter describing the ancient Jewish perception of sacred time which explains the solar-lunar calendar, the Sabbath, the festivals, the day divided by sunrise and sunset and thus the unequal length of hours in summer and winter. The Essenes were, I think, the last to hold to this based on the Book of Jubilees. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. ImpressiveBy Jeffrey L. CzeislerGreat book, impressive scholarship. Well-written and covers the topics thoroughly and clearly. There are few books on this subject of this quality. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Time oyBy Samantha MorseThe illustrations are the only thing worth perusing this book for. The author takes one idea and then says the same thing over and over and over again.The book promised a lot, but the history expressed in this book would be better off filling a small pamphlet, not repetitiously covering hundreds of pages.

From one of the leading historians of the Jewish past comes a stunning look into a previously unexamined dimension of Jewish life and culture: the calendar. In the late sixteenth century, Pope Gregory XIII instituted a momentous reform of Western timekeeping, and with it a period of great instability. Jews, like all minority cultures in Europe, had to realign their time-keeping to accord with the new Christian calendar. Elisheva Carlebach shows that the calendar is a complex and living system, constantly modified as new preoccupations emerge and old priorities fade. Calendars serve to structure time and activities and thus become mirrors of experience. Through this seemingly mundane and all-but-overlooked document, we can reimagine the quotidian world of early modern Jewry, of market days and sacred days, of times to avoid Christian gatherings and times to secure communal treasures. In calendars, we see one of the central paradoxes of Jewish existence: the need to encompass the culture of the other while retaining one's own unique culture. Carlebach reveals that Jews have always lived in multiple time scales, and demonstrates how their accounting for time, as much as any cultural monument, has shaped Jewish life. After exploring Judaica collections around the world, Carlebach brings to light these textually rich and beautifully designed repositories of Jewish life. With color illustrations throughout, this is an evocative illumination of how early modern Jewish men and women marked the rhythms and realities of time and filled it with anxieties and achievements.

From Publishers WeeklyStarred . Carlebach, professor of Jewish history at Columbia, takes a narrow subject--sifrei evronot (European Jewish calendars/almanacs) of the 15th to 18th centuries--and mines it for its considerable riches. She demonstrates how these works reflected both Jews' values and beliefs and their interaction with the external Christian society. She notes, for example, how some calendars recorded Christian holy days that Jewish tradesmen needed to know of, while subverting their meaning (a minor change in the Hebrew spelling of "all saints day" reversed its meaning). Carlebach is also particularly good at delving into Jewish folk beliefs as found in the calendars. She is equally illuminating on the calendars' iconography, illustrated by a 1716 calendar that shows the biblical Jephthah's daughter as a teenage European aristocrat. A couple of minor omissions are an explanation of the 19-year cycle of the Jewish lunar calendar and the omission of some Hebrew terms from an otherwise useful glossary. This well-organized and extensively researched book is a magnificent piece of scholarship and a pleasure to read, demonstrating the calendars' importance "as mirrors and agents of change,... indexes of acculturation, and... matchless reflections of the Jewish experience." 56 color illus. (Apr.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. A remarkable and pioneering study of the Jewish calendar and its significance. Brilliantly researched, gracefully written, and timely -- in every sense of the word. (Jonathan D. Sarna, author of American Judaism: A History)In a brilliant tour de force, Carlebach presents a masterful and penetrating analysis of the Jewish calendar as literature and material object, and as a dynamic, complex expression of cultural values, religious competition, social discipline, and personal meaning. (Lois Dubin, author of The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste)Focusing on the measure and meaning of time, Elisheva Carlebach has produced a work of enormous importance for all those interested in the convergence of humanistic and scientific knowledge. (Jay Berkovitz, author of Rites and Passages: The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Culture in France, 1650-1860)This study of fascinating, richly illustrated manuscripts and early printed books opens up new horizons in the history not only of the Jewish calendar but also of the Hebrew book, Jewish daily life, personal piety, and the engagement of early modern Jews with surrounding Christianity. (Sacha Stern, author of Calendar and Community: A History of the Jewish Calendar, 2nd Century BCE to 10th Century CE)Carlebach takes a narrow subject--sifrei evronot (European Jewish calendars/almanacs) of the 15th to 18th centuries--and mines it for its considerable riches. She demonstrates how these works reflected both Jews' values and beliefs and their interaction with the external Christian society...Carlebach is also particularly good at delving into Jewish folk beliefs as found in the calendars. She is equally illuminating on the calendars' iconography, illustrated by a 1716 calendar that shows the biblical Jephthah's daughter as a teenage European aristocrat...This well-organized and extensively researched book is a magnificent piece of scholarship and a pleasure to read, demonstrating the calendars' importance "as mirrors and

agents of change,...indexes of acculturation, and...matchless reflections of the Jewish experience." (Publishers Weekly (starred review) 2011-01-24)If you've ever wondered about the Jewish year and its history, Elisheva Carlebach's marvelous new book, *Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe*, has much to offer you. A preeminent specialist on the Jews of early modern Germany, Carlebach concentrates on what became of the calendar in the early modern period. In the 16th century and after, technical literature about time, which had once been treated as an esoteric knowledge reserved for an elite, became widely available to Jews for the first time, and Carlebach traces this process in detail. But as she reaches back to explain the distant origins of early modern debates and practices and sets the calendars into their larger contexts, *Palaces of Time* provides even more than it promises: a fascinating and provocative introduction, full of surprises, to the Jewish experience of time. Richly documented and sumptuously illustrated, the book tells a sinuous and sometimes wild story, one in which books of many kinds, in all their grubby materiality, play central roles...The book is exemplary. *Palaces of Time* is cultural history at its finest: a minutely observant, vivid, and passionately enthusiastic guide book to a world of experience that we--or at least most of us--have lost. (Anthony Grafton *Tablet Magazine* 2011-04-14)*Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe*, shows that Jews developed some of the most important theories and discovered some of the most fundamental mathematical underpinnings of early calendar setting. (Menachem Wecker *Jewish Press* 2011-08-10)Calendars are the kind of object that are usually taken for granted, that are almost invisible to our everyday glance; therefore they are a perfect subject of analysis for cultural history. Very little good cultural history has been produced about Jewish subjects, and Elisheva Carlebach's book sets a very high standard for the field. Tackling a subject that is ubiquitous but also obscure, Carlebach looks at the topic of Jewish calendars from a number of perspectives. The actual calendrical aspects of the Jewish calendar, the references to non-Jewish dates that were incorporated into many calendars, the startling artistic traditions that are found in many early modern Jewish calendars--each subject is analyzed on its own, and placed in a diachronic and synchronic historical context, explaining how it developed from internal Jewish traditions while incorporating and responding to outside occurrences. Highlights include handwritten calendars from colonial America, symbolic pictures of elephants and bare-bottomed men, informative curses of Christian saints and statistics of fair attendance in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Despite the ostensibly obscure subject matter, *Palaces of Time* is as far from arcane as can be, written in language that is enjoyable and accessible. The numerous color photographs of Jewish calendars make the volume even more enjoyable and easier to follow. (Pinchas Roth *Jewish Book Council* 2011-11-28)This meticulous study of manuscripts and printed books deals with Jewish ways of keeping time, especially during the 16th to 18th centuries in Western and Central Europe. (R.S. Kohn *Choice* 2011-12-01)[An] admirable book, beautifully produced and brimming with fascinating pictures and extraordinary facts...[Carlebach] weaves a thoroughly-researched tale of adventures and frequent mishaps in cross-cultural negotiation between Jewish communities and their host societies over several centuries; dealing also with ideological battles, where Christian polemicists attacked Judaism through calendar issues. Anti-Semitic coercion even extended to calendar censorship which could prohibit publicizing rival foreign trade fairs and the sometimes amusing if not plain derogatory nicknames given to gentile festive days. The ubiquitous pocket luach, now so often replaced by an electronic version or a glance at the inside cover of a newspaper for notification of upcoming times and dates, is also dealt with in fascinating detail, its humble transience marked by tribulation and the acute survival instinct of our people under Nazi occupation in Tunisia in 1940 in Judaeo-Arabic and French, or secretly printed in Soviet-ruled Vilna. The book deals with much else of interest, giving a unique view and one of visual delight, ranging from weird and wonderful manuscript illustrations to a table with appropriately depicted "Zodiac man" giving propitious dates for bloodletting from a calendar published in Sulzbach as late as 1789. A worthy contribution to an under-researched subject presented with brio and elegant erudition, certainly one of the most important works of its kind to appear in recent years. (Yerachmiel Rubin *Jewish Tribune* 2012-06-07)About the AuthorElisheva Carlebach is Salo W. Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture, and Society at Columbia University.