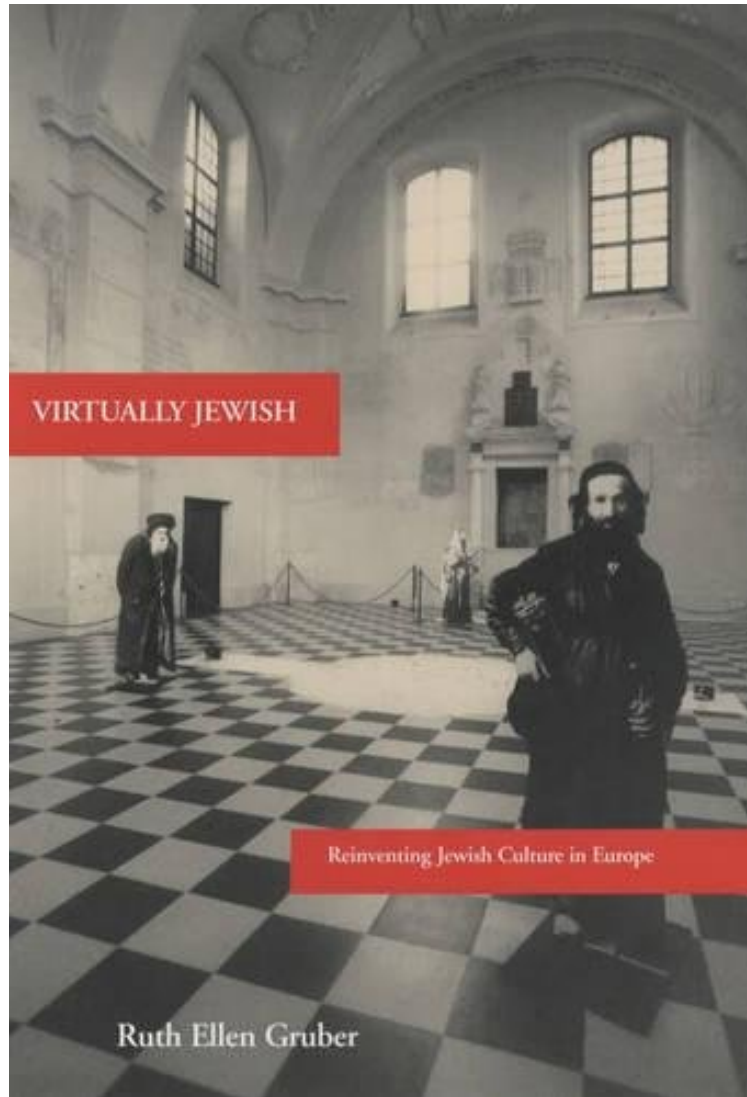


[Download free ebook] Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe

Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe

Ruth Ellen Gruber

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1902035 in Books 2002-01-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.25 x 1.25 x 6.251, 1.24 #File Name: 0520213637338 pages | File size: 46.Mb

Ruth Ellen Gruber : Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Gerald RAn enlightening read, praise-worthy prose, well researched.6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An excellent look at a complicated and intriguing phenomenonBy Yaakov Ben ShalomA colleague of mine (also a professor) recommended this book to me, and I am glad that he did. This book is a first-rate portrayal of the complicated world of European philosemitism and strange

attempts to re-create a lost European Jewish world. As a graduate student working on German-Jewish history, I lived for several years in Germany, and I witnessed this complicated and somewhat peculiar phenomenon first-hand. Gruber explains so well what I witnessed and have struggled to explain to others. In particular, I would recommend Part 1 to my students and to others wishing to find suitable course reading on this topic. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A heartwarming, scholarly masterpiece

By A Customer Ruth Ellen Gruber is the acknowledged authority on Central Europe's Jewish renaissance since the fall of communism and this is her best work so far. Drawing on years of hands-on experience and passionate commitment to uncovering hidden stories, she explores the paradox that Jewish life and culture is vigorously alive in regions where actual numbers of Jews are comparatively few. She examines everything from music to food, scholarship to jokes, culture to kitsch, and shows intimate knowledge of countless Jewish communities thriving throughout Eastern Europe. She describes how Jewishness in the region has triumphed over the twin traumas of the Holocaust and Communism to reconstitute a vibrant culture recognised and admired throughout the Jewish and non-Jewish world. This is a great book, sensitive, scholarly and life-affirming, of interest to anyone who cares about roots, history and survival. I loved it.

More than half a century after the Holocaust, in countries where Jews make up just a tiny fraction of the population, products of Jewish culture (or what is perceived as Jewish culture) have become very viable components of the popular public domain. But how can there be a visible and growing Jewish presence in Europe, without the significant presence of Jews? Ruth Ellen Gruber explores this phenomenon, traveling through Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Italy, and elsewhere to observe firsthand the many facets of a remarkable trend. Across the continent, Jewish festivals, performances, publications, and study programs abound. Jewish museums have opened by the dozen, and synagogues and Jewish quarters are being restored, often as tourist attractions. In Europe, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, klezmer music concerts, exhibitions, and cafes with Jewish themes are drawing enthusiastic--and often overwhelmingly non-Jewish--crowds. In what ways, Gruber asks, do non-Jews embrace and enact Jewish culture, and for what reasons? For some, the process is a way of filling in communist-era blanks. For others, it is a means of coming to terms with the Nazi legacy or a key to building (or rebuilding) a democratic and tolerant state. Clearly, the phenomenon has as many motivations as manifestations. Gruber investigates the issues surrounding this "virtual Jewish world" in three specific areas: the reclaiming of the built heritage, including synagogues, cemeteries, and former ghettos and Jewish quarters; the representation of Jewish culture through tourism and museums; and the role of klezmer and Yiddish music as typical "Jewish cultural products." Although she features the relationship of non-Jews to the Jewish phenomenon, Gruber also considers its effect on local Jews and Jewish communities and the revival of Jewish life in Europe. Her view of how the trend has developed and where it may be going is thoughtful, colorful, and very well informed.

From Publishers Weekly After two out of three European Jews were slain in the Holocaust, only a small number of Jews remains in Europe. How is it, then, that there is a widespread and growing infatuation with Jewish culture there? Gruber (*Upon the Doorposts of Thy House; Jewish Heritage Travel*), who has traveled extensively throughout Europe, attempts to explain this phenomenon. (She should not be confused with the prolific Ruth Gruber, whose account of 1,000 Jewish refugees placed in a military camp in Oswego, N.Y., in 1943 became the subject of a CBS miniseries in 2000.) Gruber finds persuasive evidence of interest in what she calls "Things Jewish," grouping them into three categories: Jewish archeology, which refers to cemeteries, synagogues and ghettos, either restored or rebuilt; "Museum Judaism," which includes Jewish heritage travel as well as Jewish museums; and Yiddish music, also known as Klezmer. Through direct observation, Gruber seeks to describe and understand how these expressions of Jewish culture have become popular even though there are so few Jews left in Europe. While she does not provide a definitive answer, she suggests, among other reasons, that the embrace of Jewish culture by non-Jews in Europe may signify atonement for the Holocaust, adherence to a multicultural ideal or a way to redefine "personal identity and national histories." Whatever the explanation, Gruber asserts that a "virtual Jewish world" has been created by "virtual Jews." This thoughtful narrative is rich in documentation and provocative in the issues it poses. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. "[A] delightful, thoughtful, insightful, and provocative look at the new Jewish culture phenomena in Europe, a land now largely bereft of Jews."--Ari Davidow, "klezmershack.com From the Inside Flap" A richly documented and insightful deliberation on the dilemma of what to do in places where Jewish culture once flourished, but Jews are no longer to be found or are very few in number.... Even where there seems to be a resurgence of Jewish life, it is fragile and fraught. At the same time, Jews from the United States and Israel have their own problematic relationship to the killing fields of Europe and to efforts to 'preserve' the last traces of a Jewish past. This is an altogether fascinating subject and no one is better prepared to write about it than Gruber. "Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, author of *Destination Culture*" Virtually Jewish is a riveting exploration of a significant contemporary phenomenon. Half a century after the Holocaust and a decade after the fall of Communism, Europeans are grappling with the legacies of their past as they seek to redefine who they are. Combining firsthand reporting and informed analysis, Ruth Ellen Gruber opens the door to a fascinating and sometimes troubling reality. Above all, it's a good

read."Sylvia Poggioli, Senior European Correspondent, National Public Radio"Ruth Gruber is absolutely the right person to describe the manufacture of virtual Jewish culture in present-day Europe. The phenomenon is tangled, fluid, and ever-changing, but this book, crammed with acute observations, unravels the subject and pins it down brilliantly. Here is a veritable gold mine of descriptive data. Subtle and nuanced in its presentation... Virtually Jewish is required reading for anyone interested in the contemporary Jewish world and will doubtless fascinate many people far beyond it."Jonathan Webber, University of Oxford"Virtually Jewish brilliantly and insightfully examines the big picture of Jewish culture in Europe today. Essential reading for anyone seriously interested in this topic, especially as it relates to the current klezmer music scene."David Krakauer of Klezmer Madness!, internationally renowned musician and recording artist