played on the old cosmographer's credulity and fooled him with forged maps and tall tales, may have played a significant role in preventing Thevet from publishing his later works, but their mockery was also a commentary on the changing times. The kind of naïve travel adventures that had once gained Thevet praise from the poets of the Pléïade were no longer capable of winning him an audience.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY Barbara B. Diefendorf

Ilana Zinguer, ed. *L'Hébreu au Temps de la Renaissance.* (Brill's Series in Jewish Studies, 4.) Leiden, New York, and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1992. 260 pp. $71.50.

Ilana Zinguer, who teaches French literature at the University of Haifa, has assembled an interesting selection of essays on various aspects of Hebraic studies in the Renaissance in this volume. Of the eleven contributors, most are French or specialize in French literature in the Renaissance while several are European scholars of Hebrew or Semitic studies. Despite the editor's proximity to the centers of Jewish scholarship in Israel, however, the volume displays minimal awareness of and contact with that scholarship or scholarship stemming from North America. The result, as Ilana Zinguer readily acknowledges in her introduction, is less than a systematic treatment of the study of Hebrew in the Renaissance, neither on the part of Christians nor especially on the part of Jews. While it is certainly possible to focus on the Christian study of Hebrew alone, the reader might wonder whether such a partial picture accurately portrays the complex motivations of Catholics and Protestants in studying Hebrew and their equally complex interactions and collaborations with a living Jewish community deeply engaged in the study and production of Hebrew books.

The volume begins with a study of Robert Olivétan, the first translator of the Old Testament into French, but then shifts to Italy, focusing on the Hebraic interests of Giannozzo Manetti and Pico della Mirandola; the Hebrew translations of philosophy and science by Jews (the small contribution by Giuliano Tamani is the one essay to consider the direct involvement of Jewish savants in the diffusion of Hebraic wisdom among Christians); the translation of Hebrew to Ladino by Converso scholars situated in Ferrara by the middle of the sixteenth century; and the musings of M. Pier

Francesco Giambullari on the Hebraic roots of Etruscan as gleaned from the creative fabrications of the notorious Annius of Viterbo. The two essays that follow address the unrelated subjects of the desacralization of Hebrew by Christian scholars of the late sixteenth century and whether there was a reading public of Hebrew in France outside the small coterie of Christian Hebraic specialists. The volume concludes with three essays on the place of Hebrew and the Old Testament in the writings of François Rabelais, Antoine de la Roche and Agrippa d'Aubigné, and Jean de Lery.

There are few great surprises in any of these essays, but several significantly expand on the work of others or offer promising starts in new areas of research. Christoph Droge's essay on Manetti based on his doctoral dissertation discusses intelligently the Hebraic component of his humanist scholarship. Jean-Pierre Rothchild's study of "le grand public" of Hebrew letters in France would have infinitely more value if compared with the public of Hebrew letters in Italy and Germany. As a region virtually lacking a living Jewish culture, the opportunities for acquiring Hebrew books and studying Hebrew texts with Jews in France was naturally limited, especially when compared with the other two. Katia Campbell's intelligent discussion of the Hebraic enigmas in Rabelais seems convincing, at least to this non-Rabelais scholar. And Marguerite Soulié's study of the polemical poetry of two Protestant writers and Ilana Zinguer's examination of Lery's *Voyage en Terre de Bresil* point to the wider influence of Hebrew and Biblical motifs in sixteenth-century literature.

Despite the value of these individual discussions, the book as a whole does not adequately address the real significance of the study of Hebrew in the intellectual and spiritual agendas of the Renaissance, the Protestant and Catholic Reforms. The study of kabbalah by Christians and Jews is virtually ignored. Despite the short essay of Antonella Ansani on Pico, and significant recent research on his and his contemporaries' Hebraic interests, the volume omits almost entirely this critical factor in the study of Hebrew among the Florentine circle, Egidio of Viterbo, Francesco Giorgio, Cornelius Agrippa, Johann Reuchlin and many others throughout Europe. The encounter with Hebrew and Rabbinic texts on the part of certain German and Dutch Protestant scholars is also passed over. Nor do any of the contributors reflect on the impact of the Converso community on the Hebraic interests of Bodin, Montaigne, and other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thinkers.

The volume, despite its many omissions, does point, together with the recent overview of Frank Manuel, to the significance of the Hebraic factor in the study of European culture in early modern Europe and to the need for a more systematic and comprehensive examination of the subject, where Christian and Jewish involvements are integrally linked and evaluated.

YALE UNIVERSITY David B. Ruderman

Hava Tirosh-Rothschild. *Between Worlds: The Life and Thought of Rabbi David ben Judah Messer Leon.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991. viii + 385 pp. $22.95.

This study of an outstanding "Renaissance" Jewish thinker, David ben Judah Messer Leon (c. 1470–1535), documents his life and analyzes his thought. Beyond this, the book presents the most comprehensive reconstruction to date of the intellectual situation of Jewish thinkers in early sixteenth-century Italy and its cultural dependencies in the Ottoman Empire. In particular, the book explains the motives for their efforts to formulate a Jewish theology and examines the methods by which they did so. David was active at the height of these efforts and responded to others who were engaged in them.

Born in Venice to the physician, philosopher and knight, Judah Messer Leon, David was educated in the curriculum of rabbinic texts, as well as in the liberal arts and scholastic philosophy, from both Hebrew and Latin sources. He studied under his father in Naples and then served as teacher, rabbi, judge and physician in Padua and then, after 1495, in Constantinople, in Salonika by 1504, and in Valona, in Albania, from 1510. David's participation in communal life after he arrived in the Ottoman Empire involved him in four major disputes, which are recounted here.

David's scholarship exemplifies a characteristically Italian-Jewish program of learning. Tirosh-Rothschild says, "The syncretist fusion of halakhah, philosophy, humanism, and Kabbalah was uniquely characteristic of Jewish culture in Renaissance Italy. It is found nowhere else" (133). David ben Judah Messer Leon wrote many books, only a few of which survive, on philosophical topics, including a commentary on Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*; as well as biblical commentary, legal responsa, an encomium of women, a book of theology, and other works on music and poetry,