Jewish Emancipation: A History Across Five Centuries by David Sorkin (review)

Simon Rabinovitch

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rick, "Sodomitical Scandals and Subcultures in the 1720s," *Men and Masculinities* 1, no. 4 (1999): 365–84; Jeffrey Merrick, "Sodomites and Police in Paris, 1715," *Journal of Homosexuality* 42, no. 3 (2002): 103–28. See also the work of French historian Michel Rey: Michel Rey, "Police and Sodomy in Eighteenth-Century Paris: From Sin to Disorder," in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Gert Hekma and Kent Gerard (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989); Michel Rey, "Parisian Homosexuals Create a Lifestyle, 1700–1750: The Police Archives," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 9 (1985): 179–91.

5. Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001). Since then, I have used the files of the moral police in the Archives de la Bastille a great deal, thanks in part to Merrick's liberal guidance.

6. For the ways early Americans used natural history to consider sexual difference, including extended discussion of Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* and its transatlantic reception, see Greta LaFleur, *The Natural History of Sexuality in Early America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2018).

7. For a discussion of gender and sexuality in Buffon's aesthetic theory, see Jennifer Tsien, *The Bad Taste of Others: Judging Literary Value in Eighteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 165–73. The induction speech can be found in French: Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, "Discours de réception du comte de Buffon, August 25, 1753,» Académie française, accessed May 2021 at *https://www.academie-francaise.fr/discours-de-reception-du-comte-de-buffon*. For an English translation, see Georges-Louis Leclerc, comte de Buffon, "Discourse on Style," in Rollo Walter Brown, ed., *The Writer's Art by Those Who Have Practiced It* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1921), 277–87.

8. Jeffrey Merrick, "Male Friendship in Prerevolutionary France," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10, no. 3 (2004): 407–32.

9. For the French edition of this poem, see Restif de La Bretonne, *Le Nouveau Dom Bougre à l'assemblée nationale ou l'abbé Maury au bordel: et autres pamphlets érotico-politiques,* ed. Branko Aleksić (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 2007).

10. Jeffrey Merrick, "Father, Lackey, Son, Friend, and Voltaire: Pederasty and Publicity in Pre-Revolutionary France," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 43, no. 3 (2019): 41–60; Jeffrey Merrick, "The Marquis de Villette and Mademoiselle de Raucourt: Representations of Male and Female Sexual Deviance in Late Eighteenth-Century France," in *Homosexuality in Modern France*, ed. Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996).

11. Laurence L. Bongie, *Sade: A Biographical Essay* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998), 15. For the manuscript report of the comte de Sade's detention, see Lieutenancy general of police of Paris, "Arrest report of the comte de Sade," 9 September 1724, Archives de la Bastille MS 10255 fol. 7r, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, at *https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53116238f/f15.item*#, accessed June 2021.

12. Jeffrey Merrick, "New Sources and Questions for Research on Sexual Relations between Men in Eighteenth-Century France," *Gender & History* 30, no. 1 (2018): 9–29.

SIMON RABINOVITCH, *Northeastern University*

David Sorkin, *Jewish Emancipation: A History Across Five Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2019). Pp. 528; 17 b/w illus., 11 maps. $35.00 cloth.

"Jewish emancipation" has a bit of a bad rap. The phrase has come to be associated with, at best, highly contingent political rights in Europe and the futility of Jewish "assimilation," and at worst, failure in the form of the Holocaust. The

success of individual Jews in joining the professions, in economic advancement, and in cultural contributions in places where emancipation was most far-reaching has also been seen as contributing to the birth of modern antisemitism and the antisemites' fear of Jews' infiltration from within European society. But what was, or is, "Jewish emancipation?" Despite the word's connotations today of freedom from bondage by grand declaration, the term "emancipation" as applied to Jews follows the meaning applied to other persecuted religious groups, such as Catholics in England before 1829, and refers to the rather haphazard and variable process of Jews gaining legal rights and joining the body politic. As David Sorkin argues in *Jewish Emancipation: A History of Across Five Centuries*, when viewed as a long-term process affecting all modern Jews, emancipation is "the principal event of modern Jewish history" (354); to understand modern Jewish history, we therefore need to zoom out and understand the process of how states and Jews struggled to define Jewish rights, individually and as a group. We also need to understand that how states changed the way they governed the political rights of Jews fit into more general processes of modern state formation—as Sorkin convincingly argues, Jewish emancipation cannot be separated from the development of modern citizenship, and modern citizenship cannot be separated from the process in which Europe de-corporated its laws and society. When states first created the concept of citizenship, they did not simply shake off the old corporate privileges—religion provided the hierarchy around which modern citizenship was built.

While Sorkin identifies regions with politically similar states (he divides Europe into western, central, and eastern parts, and also discusses the Ottoman Empire and the Atlantic world), his main point is that emancipation is hyper-local; in no two places does the process of Jews gaining political rights unfold the same way. Sorkin argues that much of the groundwork for civil equality, and how the process of emancipation would unravel in a given place, was built when societies were still governed by group privileges and disabilities. In city-states where Jews made up one of several merchant colonies, the privileges Jews gained on par with others translated into civil equality as states adopted modern notions of citizenship. Sorkin begins with an overview of how, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a number of European commercial hubs—Ancona, Venice, Livorno, Bordeaux, Hamburg, Amsterdam, and London—gave Jews, or sometimes New Christians who reverted back to Judaism, considerable group privileges. Historians have long focused on Amsterdam's role as an early harbinger of Jewish modernity, but Sorkin suggests that what made Amsterdam, along with London and Bordeaux, remarkable, is that in the transition from corporate legal rights to citizenship, the Jews' corporate parity transformed into equal citizenship.

Jews gained similar corporate privileges on par with Christian burghers in cities and towns in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, especially those owned by members of the Polish nobility, but the partitioning of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century put the fate of Jewish rights in the hands of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. In contrast to western and eastern Europe, the Holy Roman Empire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries granted far-reaching individual rights to a tiny Jewish elite, while resisting the extension of corporate privilege and seeking to limit the presence and visibility of Jews. It is Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II (r. 1765–1790) who would provide a model of contingent emancipation: with each legislative act increasing their privileges, Jews were expected to reciprocate through integration in dress, language, and military service. Joseph II's model of a finely managed, localized, and progressively radical process of integrating the Jews through legislation was taken up by other eighteenth-century monarchs and

applied in Galicia (the Habsburgs' slice of partitioned Poland). What is often seen as an inverse approach to that of Joseph II, the French National Assembly's sudden and "unconditional" emancipation of the Jews, Sorkin argues, was in fact a years-long, if not decades-long process, made highly conditional by Napoleon's attempt to reconcile Jewish and French civil law.

Approximately the final third of Sorkin's book is devoted to the "post-emancipation" period (beginning in about 1870) and to responses to Jewish emancipation by both Jews and non-Jews. Sorkin discusses Jewish mobilization in defense of political rights, for collective well-being, for new political ideologies, against antisemitism, and in defense of religion. Sorkin ably demonstrates the paradox of both Jewish nationalism and antisemitism, to borrow from the Israeli historian Shlomo Avineri, as post-emancipation movements. The development of Jewish minority rights in Europe (somewhat prefigured by the legal framework of the Ottoman Empire), followed by the abrogation of these national rights and the careening reversal of Jewish individual rights in the mid-twentieth century throughout Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East shifted the ongoing dynamics of Jewish emancipation toward state sovereignty. This shift did not, however, occur with the finality that many presume. In much of post-war Western and Central Europe, Jewish rights, and property where possible, were restored, whereas Jewish rights in Eastern Europe declined. In North Africa and the Middle East, decolonization, Israeli independence, and state discrimination made life impossible or intolerable, leading to mass migration. My overview here, however, flattens what was a complex and variegated series of discreet emancipations, de-emancipations, and re-emancipations that all together make up the "Jewish emancipation" of Sorkin's conception.

One of Sorkin's central points, though it comes only in the book's final two chapters, is that the process of Jewish emancipation continued, and still continues, in the two places where many consider "emancipation" not to have taken place at all: Israel and the United States. Israel, the product of "autoemancipation" (or *selbstemanzipation*, a term coined in the book of that title by Leon Pinsker, a Jewish doctor from the Russian Empire who became a leader of the Love of Zion movement), became a state to give Jews power over their own fate so that they would no longer have to exist at the whim of others' emancipatory moods. But Sorkin is at pains to point out that the inequalities and hierarchies within the Jewish state ensure that the process of emancipation continues there. I am uncertain that all of the examples provided in this chapter are about the process in which Jews gained, lost, and regained political rights—Sorkin's definition of Jewish emancipation—rather than examples of a new state's patchy and sometimes contradictory record at providing the equality for all that is promised in its founding document. But Sorkin is entirely on-point in his observation that in the state's approach to populations it saw as less socially, intellectually, or politically developed (i.e., less European), "Israel practiced its own version of emancipatory regeneration" (337). From a historiographical perspective, the choice to include Israel in a book on Jewish emancipation is important; how can one separate the ways that a state whose raison-d'être is Jewish refuge and sovereignty treats the collective and individual rights of its citizens from the historical process of Jewish emancipation? In the United States, Jews faced resistance to immigration and other forms of exclusion, against which they organized and struggled as part of a broader movement for equality, in coalition with groups including Catholics and Blacks. It is fitting to end a book on a half-millennium of Jewish emancipation in the two places where the vast majority of the world's Jews live today, and do so with rights to their politi-

cal and social equality secure (albeit in Israel, Sorkin would argue, incomplete). The poignant question both communities face is the same: "With their own rights apparently in place, do they remain concerned for the equality of all members of society?" (353).

It is difficult to do justice in a review to a book as comprehensive as *Jewish Emancipation*. Much of the book takes an almost encyclopedic approach, covering cities, states, and regions, in each thematic, geographic, or period-based chapter. The many closely focused points of examination—tiny St. Eustatius in the Caribbean gets its due, as does oft-ignored Romania—add up to a bigger view of Jewish emancipation where Jewish collective and individual rights oscillate in relationship to the military competition between empires, new ideas about citizenship, counter-emancipation movements, and ultimately, new dilemmas of hierarchy in Israel and the United States (a short conclusion helpfully outlines his "Ten Theses on Emancipation"). Sorkin's book is a gift to those of us who teach survey classes in modern Jewish history. Its chapters provide a resource for explaining the process of Jewish political integration, including through creating a separate Jewish politics, across space and time. It will also be a resource to anyone hoping to understand state modernization in early modern and modern Europe.

GERMANO MAIFREDA, *University of Milan*

Peter Garnsey, translator and editor, *Against the Death Penalty: Writings from the First Abolitionists—Giuseppe Pelli and Cesare Beccaria* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2020). Pp. 226. $35.00 cloth.

The interest of Anglophone historiography in late eighteenth-century Italian intellectual life has markedly increased in the last two decades. The recent publication of philologically rigorous critical editions—which stand on the shoulders of Franco Venturi's tireless commitment in the second half of the twentieth century—have contributed significantly to this recuperation. These include new and ongoing editions of the complete works of Cesare Beccaria and Pietro Verri, which, with path-breaking tomes such as Sophus A. Reinert's *The Academy of Fisticuffs: Political Economy and Commercial Society in Enlightenment Italy* (2018) and *The Economic Turn: Recasting Political Economy in Enlightenment Europe*, coedited by Reinert and Steven L. Kaplan (2019), indicate the important and expanding field in which Peter Garnsey's *Against the Death Penalty* is a welcome and valuable addition.[1]

Garnsey's recent interest in the Italian Enlightenment developed from his previous work on the ideology of slavery and related debates about property among philosophers, jurists, and theologians from classical antiquity to the late nineteenth century. His insightful book *Thinking about Property: From Antiquity to the Age of Revolution* (2007) highlighted the historical interrelation of the ideas of slavery and property crimes. His interest in the ways that property crimes were punished in the early modern era has developed into *Against the Death Penalty*, both a study of imprisonment as a punishment and a history of the concept of penal servitude, with particular attention to both Cesare Beccaria's conceptualization