

however, the competition of religious norms and the emphasis placed on the fundamental significance of the individual's conscience created scope for ambiguity, dissembling, and dissent.

Political authority was still legitimised by divine writ and remained so throughout the early modern period. Yet the evolution of norms defined by the needs of the community and the common good made claims that lay at the core of conflicts between communal organisations and monarchical authority. Over the long term, monarchs gained the advantage because of their ability to organise and consolidate their administrations. Especially their ability to style themselves as ultimate judicial authorities immeasurably enhanced their power in the eyes of their subjects. Yet rulers constantly struggled with law enforcement and were in constant negotiation with those whom they ruled.

Thirdly, parallel to religious and political norms, social norms also developed in response to the growing complexity and internal differentiation of society. The key value of honour was fundamental in the early modern period and crucially important to the networks of family, patronage, and friendship, which held society together. Throughout their lives, individuals had to negotiate a path through a variety of social roles and associated social norms, through phases in which their honour was at stake. While these norms were informal, the price of failing to respect them at any stage could be life-changing.

The three categories of norms were not discrete, and they intersected at many points. In the second part of his book, von Thiessen shows how each operated and interacted with the others. Everywhere, he suggests, there were areas of ambiguity. The gulf between ideal and reality was both recognised and tolerated, or at least regarded as the inevitable result of human imperfection.

After the mid-eighteenth century, however, von Thiessen argues, a fundamental change occurred. The Enlightenment represented a new way of thinking, which aspired to clarity and certainty. The old norms and values prevailed well into the nineteenth century but, progressively, the modern state ceased to tolerate ambiguity and strove instead for transparent rules that applied uniformly, were defined in legislation and enforced by the state. In a final twist, von Thiessen suggests that postmodernity has exposed the achievement of certainty as but a self-delusion of modernity. Perhaps, he concludes, the modern system of norms was but a short-lived *Sonderweg* of the West. Early modern ambiguity is perhaps closer to the reality experienced by most human societies.

The spirits of Foucault and Bauman pervade this book. Von Thiessen's range of reference and engagement with the historiography of early modern Europe is, however, much broader and more penetrating. That makes his book valuable for scholars, even if they end up remaining sceptical about the new master narrative of the West which it proposes.

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Rescue the Surviving Souls: The Great Jewish Refugee Crisis of the Seventeenth Century

**By Adam Teller. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.
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Given the devastating demographic consequences of the Thirty Years' War for Central European populations, 1648 is often considered a major turning point towards intense

state formation, mercantilist economic programs, and planned population growth. Jewish history is integrated into this broader historical narrative mostly through the figure of the court Jew, Jewish men and women in high courtly positions who paved the way for more tolerable living conditions for their communities. Interdependence between noble aspirations and successful Jewish economic networking is said to have created unprecedented chances for Jewish individuals to integrate into European societies, at first economically and then, with the dawn of Enlightenment, increasingly socially and culturally, which ultimately led to their emancipation and/or assimilation.

Adam Teller challenges and reframes this success story twofold by decentering the focus of European Jewish history eastwards and by shifting it from individual to communal networks. His study ties into a growing body of literature that questions the idea of a uniform Jewish path of progress after 1648 towards modernity and emancipation. Central European Jewish history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so Teller argues, cannot be properly understood without examining the major communal consequences, financial drain, and migratory effects that the East European wars (the Cossack uprising of 1648 and the Northern Wars of 1654–1670) had on the interconnected Jewish populations of Europe and the Ottoman Empire. For all of them, war was not over in 1648, and neither was one of its major challenges: refugee management. The aftermath of the Thirty Years' War, Teller maintains, was not a turning point in Jewish history but a defining moment that consolidated European Jewish economic, communication, and philanthropic networks, and accelerated the formation of transregional Jewish communal identities for decades if not centuries to come.

Since the West European expulsions of the late medieval/early Renaissance period, East European Jews made up the overwhelming majority of European Jews. They remained culturally and economically connected to western European Jewish centers through rabbinic, philanthropic, and trade networks forming a diverse but shared Jewish ethnic identity (*Ashkenazim*). Following the expulsion of Iberian Jews in the late fifteenth century, the diaspora communities in the Mediterranean (*Sephardim*), who were largely under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, developed parallel networks that presumably intersected with Ashkenazi networks. One major way, as Teller shows for the first time, was through the rescue efforts and philanthropic support for thousands of Jewish refugees from Poland-Lithuania. He argues that “the need for concerted action on behalf of Polish Jews strengthened the ties . . . and significantly increased the range of intercommunal cooperation” between Ashkenazi and Sephardi centers while bringing them maybe for “the first time into purposeful contact with each other” (3, 4). While Teller is cautious with numbers, he estimates that at least 30,000 Polish Jews were displaced and had to rely on the support and collaboration of Jewish networks like never before.

Teller centers his study around three refugee migration routes: internal migration within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (part I of the book), eastwards through the East European slave trade to the Ottoman Empire (part II), and westwards into the Austrian hereditary lands, the Holy Roman Empire, and the United Provinces of the Netherlands (part III). Throughout his study, the author relies heavily on first-hand accounts from literary, autobiographic, travelogue, and epistolary primary sources. This choice serves well his intention to personalize the refugee experiences, to show the diversity of refugee populations' experiences, and to shift the attention towards the coping and relief strategies that refugees found amidst their difficult journeys. It most certainly increases the book's readability and makes the suffering, trauma, but also the agency of Jewish refugees more accessible to the reader. This is an approach that one would hope will be a model for future refugee studies of the past and present.

The unsung heroes of Teller's book appear in part II. Here Teller reconstructs the horrific march on foot of Polish captives to the Crimean shores, from where they were shipped to the slave markets of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike most other enslaved East Europeans, Polish Jewish captives had reason for hope: they often were ransomed by local Sephardi

communities in Istanbul, who drew on their experience with pirate ransom in the Mediterranean. It can be considered a major contribution of Teller's book to uncover this testimony of generosity and solidarity between the two ethnic minority groups. Too many historians have considered them mostly oblivious if not antagonistic towards each other's fates, overlooking these important interactions that helped create a transregional and transethnic sense of Jewish belonging.

Teller follows several professional emissaries who were sent from Istanbul throughout the European mainland to raise funds for ransoms, elegantly providing the reader with a topography of charity networks through their travel itinerary. Almost always the emissaries' way led through northern Italy, where Venice was the major clearing center. From there, they continued through the urban centers of the Holy Roman Empire, eastern France, up to Amsterdam. Throughout parts I and III of this book, Teller adds nuance and detail to the refugee migration to the West, for which we have better source transmission. He argues that Polish Jewish refugees received a rather harsh welcome and little support in traditional Ashkenazi communities like Frankfurt, in comparison to centers with mixed Jewish populations like Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Vienna. While Teller sees the causes for this in the "narcissism of small differences" à la Freud, there would be more to argue for the precarious and micromanaged Christian surroundings in which Ashkenazi urban communities lived. In combination with their ongoing welfare efforts for the masses of local vagrant poor, it left them little room to maneuver. What Teller convincingly argues, though, is that the Polish refugee crisis created a pattern of difficult reception of East European Jewish refugees in the West that would repeat itself in future centuries and set in motion a process of stigmatization and Othering of East European Jews in the Ashkenazi world.

Teller's book is recommended reading for Central European historians who might not have been aware of the profound Jewish refugee crisis that unfolded and was successfully overcome by concerted Jewish efforts throughout Europe and the Mediterranean in the seventeenth century. The parallels that can be drawn to other forced ethnic refugee migrations, to trauma-coping practices within refugee communities, and to the need for philanthropic collaboration through transregional communal infrastructures could not be timelier for our understanding of the continuities of the seventeenth century as well as our own time.

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Armer Adel in Preussen 1770–1830

By Chelion Begass. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2020. Pp. 457. Cloth €99.90. ISBN: 978-3428156528.

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The association between nobility and poverty has had a long tradition in late-nineteenth-century German literature, not least in the novels of Theodor Fontane, who tells us about the poignant attempts of the Poggenpuhl family to make ends meet and keep up appearances. It has found less reflection in historical research, where a focus on powerful noble elites has often relied on the survival of rich, sometimes privately held archival materials.