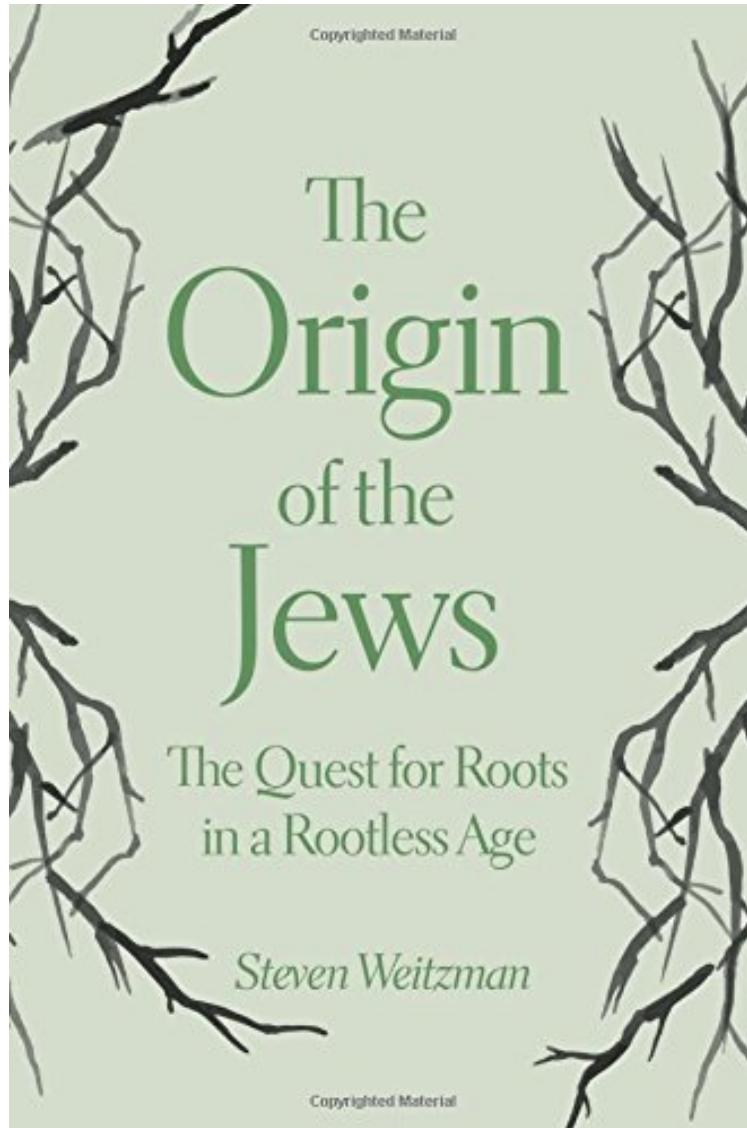


[Read ebook] The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age

## The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age

*Steven Weitzman*

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



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#266549 in Books Ingramcontent 2017-05-30Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.30 x 1.20 x 6.40l, #File Name: 0691174601408 pagesThe Origin of the Jews The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age | File size: 44.Mb

**Steven Weitzman : The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Origin of the Jews: The Quest for Roots in a Rootless Age:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book is well-researched and although I don't agree with ...By MaLinda W. McLendonThis book is well-researched and although I don't agree with all of it, it does give a different point of view that I needed to know.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy C. P. Hathaway

III Great 19 of 20 people found the following review helpful. A book about the history of history: an account of how people have thought about Jewish origins. By Savonarola Brown Retired for 3 years, I read a lot of nonfiction. Many books are not worth the time to read: either they dumb down the material, or they are too skewed by opinion, poorly reasoned and using highly selective facts. Many other books are poorly written and get lost in the weeds of academics. Rarely do I find myself reading a book which is intelligent, engaging, informative and well reasoned. Steven Weitzman's *Origin of the Jews* is such a book. Weitzman approaches his material with honest academic caution, weighing different ideas considering their pros and cons and leaving most issues unresolved, rather than accept a theory that remains speculative. He covers six disciplines to show how different fields have approached the subject. Genealogy, linguistics, archaeology, psychology, sociology and genetics. Each get a chapter, presented in a roughly chronological order. He includes insightful cross references, showing how scholarly fields don't develop in isolation. Included in these chapters are summaries of several major theories: Wellhausen and his Documentary Hypothesis; the crucial importance of the Babylonian Exile, Persia and the work of Ezra and Nehemiah; Shaye Cohen and his idea of the role of the Hellenistic age, and Shlomo Sand's work on a modern origin are all covered. There are however some weaknesses. The section on Sigmund Freud seems to me pointless. It could have led to more discussion of origins as illusions, used to support our egos. Also, there are some missing discussions. No mention is made of Mordecai Kaplan who proposed understanding Jewish history as an evolving civilization with notable epochs (biblical, Talmudic, medieval and modern). Jacob Neusner, and his work on the importance of Babylonian/Persian era on the emergence of Jewish rabbinic teachings. And a third scholar whose work would be interesting in the context of Jewish origins is Thomas McEvilley's *The Shape of Ancient Thought* which investigates connections between Greek and Indian thought and the uncertainty of cross cultural influences. There is also little discussion of similar origin theories in late antiquity studies. Throughout the book, Weitzman clearly presents contemporary ideas of postmodern thinkers like Deleuze and Foucault and nonlinear, non-developmental perspectives which can upset our conventional understanding. This contributes to his discussion of the uncertainty in all these discussions. With all that said, what I appreciated most is Weitzman's honesty in describing the uncertainty in all these subjects. Let me be clear, this is not the typical academic caveats. It certainly reads like a sincere recognition that certainty may evade us, but the discussion can go on.

The first major history of the scholarly quest to answer the question of Jewish origins. The Jews have one of the longest continuously recorded histories of any people in the world, but what do we actually know about their origins? While many think the answer to this question can be found in the Bible, others look to archaeology or genetics. Some skeptics have even sought to debunk the very idea that the Jews have a common origin. In this book, Steven Weitzman takes a learned and lively look at what we know or think we know about where the Jews came from, when they arose, and how they came to be. Scholars have written hundreds of books on the topic and have come up with scores of explanations, theories, and historical reconstructions, but this is the first book to trace the history of the different approaches that have been applied to the question, including genealogy, linguistics, archaeology, psychology, sociology, and genetics. Weitzman shows how this quest has been fraught since its inception with religious and political agendas, how anti-Semitism cast its long shadow over generations of learning, and how recent claims about Jewish origins have been difficult to disentangle from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He does not offer neatly packaged conclusions but invites readers on an intellectual adventure, shedding new light on the assumptions and biases of those seeking answers and the challenges that have made finding answers so elusive. Spanning more than two centuries and drawing on the latest findings, *The Origin of the Jews* brings needed clarity and historical context to this enduring and often divisive topic.

"Admirably balanced and dispassionate."--Benjamin Balint, *Wall Street Journal*[A] multicourse intellectual feast. . . . Weitzman's facility with making complex points accessible to the lay reader, and his ease with synthesizing a wide range of research and prior analyses, make this an invaluable resource for both novice and scholar. His rigorous critiques will resonate even for those readers with little or no prior interest in the book's central questions."--*Publishers Weekly*"An accomplishment for the academy."--*Kirkus*"Weitzman has done his homework; he has read widely and writes well. He has done an excellent job at presenting technical material in an accessible manner. . . . As the subtitle of the book says, we live in a rootless age. People everywhere, not just Jews, seek their roots, their ancestry, their genetic makeup. We yearn to discover who we are; alas, our tools are not always up to the task. But there is pleasure in the pursuit, and we should be grateful to Weitzman for being a reliable guide."--Shaye J.D. Cohen, *Moment Magazine*"Weitzman's courageous and illuminating book is essential reading for anyone who wonders or cares about what it really means to be a Jew."--Jonathan Kirsch, *Jewish Journal*"Jews have been around since antiquity, and so their origins are not so easy to lay hold of. As of now, no one can say how and why being a Jew got started. But in his new volume *The Origin of the Jews*, Steven Weitzman makes a valiant effort to survey some partial answers."--David Mikics, *Los Angeles of Books*"It is a brilliant book, not only in execution but also in conception. How is it brilliant in conception? As far as I know, it is unique. . . . Among its other virtues, Weitzman's writing has a humility and softness

about it that is rare in academic work, making the book a pleasure to read."--David Hillel Ruben, Jewish Chronicle

"Thoughtful, intricate and wide-ranging."--Devorah Baum, Times Higher Education

"A remarkable model of intellectual curiosity, breadth and depth of knowledge, rigor and candor, [Weitzmans] book is a tour de force."--The Jerusalem Post

"An extraordinarily complex oeuvre written in clear, readable script is certainly something unusual to encounter. Steven Weitzman has achieved this feat, in the monumental task he has set himself."--Emma Klein, Tablet

"Erudite but never turgid, extremely well written and utterly engaging. It is a brilliant book, not only in execution but also in conception. . . . Among its other virtues, Weitzman's writing has a humility and softness about it that is rare in academic work, making the book a pleasure to read."--David-Hillel Ruben, Jewish Chronicle

From the Back Cover

"Positioning himself between those who seek origins and those who regard such quests with postmodern skepticism, Weitzman sheds light on variegated accounts of Jewish origins in different realms--from genealogical research and biblical scholarship to archaeology, psychoanalysis, and genetic research. A brilliant book--profoundly original and engaging, exhibiting a rare spirit of exploration. We will all be learning from it for a long time."--Ilana Pardes, author of *Agnons Moonstruck Lovers*

"Weitzman is a spirited and empathetic guide on an expedition through the quest to understand Jewish origins, from biblical studies to the latest investigations in population genetics. He unfailingly confronts the challenges of his inquiry with candor and erudition. The book gathers a remarkable exchange among diverse lines of scholarship in a single captivating conversation."--Noah Rosenberg, professor of biology, Stanford University

"The long duration of the history of the Jews is paralleled by an almost equally long tradition of searching after their roots. This quest is masterfully narrated and keenly analyzed by Weitzman, who enlists a rich array of disciplines ranging from biblical philology and archeology to psychoanalysis and genetic science. His elegantly accessible prose and imaginative scholarly thinking combine to make this immensely informative book a pleasure to read."--Galit Hasan-Rokem, professor emerita, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

"Compellingly argued and very original. Only a scholar whose mind is as fertile as Weitzman's and whose curiosity is as intense as his could have pulled off a book like this with such success."--Saul M. Olyan, author of *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences*

"Weitzman's scholarship is sound and informative."--Ronald Hendel, author of *The Book of "Genesis": A Biography*

About the Author

Steven Weitzman is the Abraham M. Ellis Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages and Literatures and Ella Darivoff Director of the Herbert D. Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. His books include *Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom* and *Surviving Sacrilege: Cultural Persistence in Jewish Antiquity*.