בס״ד

*Goy*: The State of the Question, the State of the Discourse

Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Goy: Israel’s Multiple Others and the Birth of the Gentile*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. viii + 333 pp.

Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, *From a Holy Goy to a Shabbat Goy: The Emergence and Persistence of the Jews’ Other*, Jerusalem: Carmel, 2021. xiv+ 185 pp. [Hebrew]

The question of “Who is a Jew?” is one of the basic questions in Israeli society. Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, however, think that the basic question for Israel and for the Jews is really “Who is a goy?” or more precisely, “*What* is a goy?” Rosen-Zvi and Ophir have been working on this question for a decade. Their first publication on the subject, to the best of my knowledge, was a 2012 article in *Haaretz*.[[1]](#footnote-1) This was followed by a number of scholarly articles, culminating in two books, one in English in 2018 (*Goy: Israel’s Multiple Others and the Birth of the Gentile*; hereafter *Goy*) and the other in Hebrew (*From a Holy Goy to a Shabbat Goy: The Emergence and Persistence of the Jews’ Other*; hereafter *Goy Kadosh*), published a year ago. The tremendous intellectual effort they have devoted to the *goy* project has generated not only scholarly discussion but an intense public debate as well. The two books, written for different audiences and with different emphases, have the same purpose. *Goy* is a thoroughly academic book that examines the meanings of the term *goy* in detail from the Bible through Tannaitic literature. *Holy Goy*, by contrast, is a significant work of popular scholarship. Its first nine chapters present, succinctly and fluently, the main arguments of the English book. The heart of *Holy Goy* is its final three chapters, which deal with the *goy* in post-rabbinic literature, and, in particular, with the ways that the cultural inheritance of rabbinic literature is expressed in the laws of the State of Israel and the attitudes of the state and Jewish society to non-Jews.

The goal of the following review is not to present Ophir and Rosen-Zvi’s main arguments along with a measure of (respectful) criticism, as is customary. Such reviews already exist in abundance, and due to the many responses to the book, one can assume that the readers of this publication know them quite well.[[2]](#footnote-2) In what follows, I intend to describe the state of the academic and public discourse about the *goy* considering the claims and questions that Rosen-Zvi and Ophir have raised. I have deliberately chosen to say “the state of the discourse” and not “the state of the question,” because Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s work is not intended only to present a scholarly proposal about the history of *goy* as a legal and cultural category but also ‒ perhaps especially ‒ to expose the concept of the *goy* in such a way as “to change the thinking and behavior of the public” (*Goy Kadosh*, 180). Just as Ophir and Rosen-Zvi’s work has a dual nature, scholarly and popular, the following survey, too, will examine the state of discussion in both realms.

Let me begin with a brief description of Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s most important new idea: Non-Jews became *goyim* only at a comparatively late stage in Jewish history. The Bible tells the history of the people of Israel; according to it Israel is one people (*am*) among many other peoples (*ammim*), with whom it has a complicated relationship. Rosen-Zvi and Ophir argue that the Bible does not have a single, explicit, exclusive category for everyone who is not a Jew/Israelite, and therefore there is no single way to treat those who do not belong to the people of Israel. The Bible recognizes different levels of connection between the people of Israel and other people residing among them. There are biblical verses that describe the obligation to worry about the economic well-being of the *ger* or “resident alien,” that is, one who is not part of the Israelite community but resides in the land or nation of Israel (*Goy*, 28–31). Similarly, the non-Jewish peoples themselves do not fit into a single mold. There is a broad range of references to the various other peoples, from the obligation to expel or exterminate the seven nations who dwell in the land of Canaan (*Goy*, 42–45) through the prohibition to hate the Egyptians who enslaved the Israelites for centuries according to the Bible (*Goy Kadosh*, @). The biblical world, then, is a complex one, with no explicit dichotomy between Jew and *goy*.

According to Ophir and Rosen-Zvi, the complex, non-uniform relationship toward non-Jews continues into Second Temple literature. Real change begins with Paul the apostle. The efforts of the apostle to the Gentiles to bring the message of Jesus to the non-Jewish masses led him to formulate anew the status of non-Jews who abandoned paganism but neither accepted nor needed to accept the yoke of the commandments which obligated the Jews (*Goy*, chapter 5; *Goy Kadosh*, chapter @). In Tannaitic literature, with or without connection to Paul, the distinction between Jews and non-Jews was fully crystallized.[[3]](#footnote-3) The latter were called *goyim*, and under this name, the differences between the various non-Jewish peoples were blurred and ultimately vanished. More significantly, the characterization of non-Jews as an entity defined by what they were not, as opposed to what they were, opened the door to the creation of a series of rules whose goal was to separate and distance them by drawing an unbridgeable boundary between Jews and *goyim*. Along with drawing this line in all realms of life (business dealings, purity and impurity, neighborly relations, marriage, and so on), a closely supervised, one-way street leading across the line was instituted — conversion (*Goy*, chapter 6; *Goy Kadosh*, chapter @).

In the Hebrew volume, *Goy Kadosh*, the authors add three chapters that deal with attitudes toward the *goy* after the Talmudic age. Chapter 10 briefly describes the approach of Rabbi Menahem b. Solomon ha-Meiri, the fourteenth-century commentator and halakhic arbiters. Ha-Meiri argues that the rabbinic *goy* no longer exists, since the Talmudic rabbis engaged in idolatry. For ha-Meiri, the religious reality of his period demands a new, more positive relationship with Christians and Muslims. The second half of Chapter 10 briefly describes a dispute among contemporary Orthodox Jews, a dispute that is both halakhic and cultural, about whether the prohibition of violating the Sabbath in order to save the life of a non-Jew is still valid today. *Goy Kadosh*’s next chapter critically describes how Israeli law and the discussion in Jewish-Israeli society are in fact warped by the Jew-*goy* binary created by the Sages.

The last chapter is simultaneously theoretical and political. The authors suggest a typology of “the Other.” They agree that every group needs an Other in order to formulate its own independent identity. The *goy*, however, is an Other of a very specific kind, an Other who is not merely a non-Jew but an enemy of everything and everyone that is Jewish. Given that the rabbinic *goy* blurs and erases the differences between the various non-Jewish peoples, conflict with any non-Jewish country or group “paints” all the *goyim* as enemies. That being so, the authors recommend examining afresh the discussion about the *goy* discourse in Israeli-Jewish society. Reading between the lines, it is clear that the authors hope it will be possible for some Jews, and especially some Israeli Jews, to adopt a different attitude toward otherness and *goyishness*.

The English book stimulated considerable interest and responses in the scholarly sphere. There can be identified two mains critiques. One involves the claim that the Jew-*goy* binary is not an invention or innovation of Paul or the rabbis but is already present throughout the Second Temple period and perhaps even in the biblical period. Christine Hayes argues that two different modes of conceiving of non-Jews already exist side by side in the Bible.[[4]](#footnote-4) One mode, which she called a“macro-level”, implies that everyone who is not a Jew is to be ostracized in every way. This approach is parallel to the dichotomous view that Rosen-Zvi and Ophir attribute to Paul and the rabbis. Alongside this approach, throughout antiquity, a “micro-level” concept existed which avoided making sweeping generalizations about nations or individuals and permitted a certain measure of flexibility regarding community boundaries. Naturally, Hayes’ main focus is demonstrating the existence of the macro-level concept in Second Temple literature. According to her, Ezra and Nehemiah’s prohibition of intermarriage (Ezra 9–10, Neh 10:31–32 and 13:23–30) is a general prohibition involving anyone who is not Jewish. The same applies to the intermarriage prohibition in Jubilees 22:6–22 and 30:7–14.

Like Hayes, Hanan Birenboim relies on these two examples to argue that completely dichotomous approaches distinguishing Jew and *goy* are found in the Second Temple period.[[5]](#footnote-5) Based on the work of sociologists who study ancient societies, Birenboim explains that the Jewish community in Babylonia (or at least Ezra, Nehemiah, and their circles) adopted a dichotomous approach that divided humanity into pure (Jews and their offspring) and impure (all the rest). This division was designed to establish a barrier clearly distinguishing Jew from non-Jew. As a result, marriage with a *goy* or bringing a *goy* into the sacred was understood to be a desecration.

A careful reading of Ezra teaches us a great deal about the theoretical and exegetical points in dispute between Ophir -Rosen-Zvi and the camp represented by Hayes and Birenboim.[[6]](#footnote-6)

When this was over, the officers approached me, saying, “The people of Israel and the priests and Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the land whose abhorrent practices are like those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites: They have taken their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons, so that the holy seed has become intermingled with the peoples of the land; and it is the officers and prefects who have taken the lead in this trespass. (Ezra 9:1–2)

Indeed, both Rosen-Zvi and Ophir admit that in the episode of the foreign wives, Ezra sought to create a general ban against foreign wives (*Goy Kadosh*, 40; *Goy*, @), yet the way it is formulated in the book of Ezra teaches about the difficulties inherent in such a ban. First, as many have already observed, Ezra creates a kind of halakhic midrash, based on sexual prohibitions scattered around the Bible in various places.[[7]](#footnote-7) Ammon, Moab, and some of the peoples of Canaan appear in Ezra’s list, along with two other great peoples, the Egyptians and the Amorites. But Ezra does not formulate a single prohibition that distinguishes between Jews and *all* the non-Jews. Moreover, the opposition between “the peoples of the land” and “the holy seed” contrasts two concepts that are really in quite different categories. “The holy seed” refers to biological and genealogical category; by contrast, “the peoples of the land” relates to geographical category. In fact, at the beginning of the Persian period, the various groups are described geographically. “The peoples of the land” are those who reside in the land of Israel, as opposed to “the returnees from exile,” that is, those who came back from the Diaspora (Ezra 4:1–4, 6:21). When Ezra arrives in Yehud (the administrative Persian name of Judea), three generations after the first returnees, the terms “returnees from the Diaspora” or “children of the Diaspora” have long since lost their meaning. In an attempt to find another way to name the difference between “ours” and “not ours,” the term “the holy seed” is invented. Yet the ideological framework is still not mature, so Ezra, in contrast to this biological/genealogical expression, presents one with geographic meaning and a biblical quality. We may speculate that perhaps Ezra’s lack of ideological clarity expresses the actual historical reality. In this reality, as became clear to Nehemiah, marriage and other interactions between the various populations continued to exist at all levels of society (Neh 13:23–39).[[8]](#footnote-8)

Ophir and Rosen-Zvi argue that the same level of ambiguity toward non-Jews continued throughout most of the Second Temple period. Yet it seems to me that there is a distinct change in the attitude toward non-Jews found in the book of Jubilees, as Hayes, Birnboim, and others have written. The story of Shechem and Dinah leads Jubilees to present an essential prohibition against sexual connections between Jews and non-Jews:

If there is a man in Israel who wishes to give his daughter or his sister to anyone who is from the seed of the nations, he is to die. He is to be stoned because he has done something sinful and shameful within Israel. The woman is to be burned because she has defiled the reputation of her of her father’s house; she is to be uprooted from Israel… For this is the way it has been ordained and written on the heavenly tablets regarding any seed[[9]](#footnote-9) of Israel who defiles (it): ‘He is to die; he is to be stoned’ (Jubilees 30:7–9, Vanderkam translation)

In contrast to the book of Ezra, there is nothing here about “peoples of the land,” and the various peoples in the Bible do not appear by name. To be sure, there is a clear distinction between the “seed of Israel” and “the seed of the *goyim* (nations),” and the contrast between the two groups is both biological (“seed”) and ethnic (Israel, *goyim*). There is no doubt that Jubilees has solved Ezra’s terminology problem, and constitutes a serious step toward creating a binary Jew-*goy* distinction. Yet is the *goy* of Jubilees really the same as the rabbinic *goy*, as Birenboim and Hayes argue? It would be hard to deny that the term *goyim* and its contrast with “Israel,” at least in this passage, show a binary opposition between Israel and non-Israel, and that the differences between the various *goyim* (in the sense of “nations”) do not interest the author of Jubilees. The prohibition of intermarriage relates to anyone who is not Jewish. Nevertheless, according to Rosen-Zvi and Ophir, the innovation of Paul and the rabbis includes an additional aspect – the individualization of the *goy*. The conflict between *goyim* and Jews is not only a conflict of groups, but a contrast between each individual *goy* and each Jew. This perspective does not yet exist in Jubilees, as is clear from Jubilees’ need to use the somewhat complicated expression “a man from the seed of the *goyim*.” The *goy* as individual, defined by his non-Jewishness, does not yet exist. People are classified by their ethnic backgrounds, and not by the extent of their not belonging to the Jewish people. Jubilees, then, is an intermediate stage on the way to the creation of the *goy*.

In conclusion, Rosen-Zvi and Ophir obligate us to read Second Temple literature with fresh eyes. The tendency of some of their critics to see in every mention of the word *goy* or of a hostile relationship with non-Jews evidence for the earliness of the binary Jew-*goy* division obscures complicated historic process. At the same time, there can be no doubt that real changes occurred not only in relationship to non-Jews but also in the method of their conceptualization, as witnessed by the comparison between Ezra and Jubilees. Elsewhere in the book, Ophir and Rosen-Zvi note that though various texts from the Second Temple period certainly display the three things that define the Talmudic category *goy*, we do not find all three together (*Goy*, 113, 141–142). It seems, then, that we must examine the Second Temple material anew in view of Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s indicators, to which it may be possible to add additional characteristics of the *goy*-Jew opposition.

***Goy* and Jew in Rabbinic Literature: Completely Opposite?**

Rosen-Zvi and Ophir argue that once the *goy* was created as the ultimate Other in rabbinic literature, a field of discourse arose that concealed the complexity characteristic of the Bible and the literature of the Second Temple period. The sharp distinction between Jew and *goy* left no room for intermediate categories, let alone any sort of continuum (*Goy*, p. 180). The boundary between Jew and *goy* can be crossed (albeit in just one direction) by the process of conversion, a process overseen by the rabbis at every step, beginning with locating appropriate candidates right through the ceremony marking the transition (*Goy*, pp. 180–185).

Various arguments have been raised against this dichotomous description. For present purposes, it will be enough to cite Yair Furstenberg on the Samaritans.[[10]](#footnote-10) Furstenberg shows that in rabbinic literature, the Samaritans still enjoy an intermediate status. Even though they are not recognized as Jews in every circumstance, in certain areas, they nonetheless are considered to have the same status as Jews. For example, their word can be trusted with regard to certain commandments and certain aspects of the purity laws.

Ophir and Rosen-Zvi do not discuss the amoraic literature, but it is important to note that the Babylonian Talmud attributes the following to the school of Rabbi Ishmael: “If one translates the verse *and thou shalt not give any of thy seed to set them apart* [Lev 18:21] as *thou shalt not give any of thy seed to impregnate an Aramean woman*, he is silenced with rebuke. In the school of Rabbi Ishmael it was stated: The text speaks of an Israelite who has intercourse with a Samaritan woman and begets from her a son for idolatry” (B. Meg. 25a, citing M. Meg. 4:9). Even though the rabbis state clearly that one’s Jewishness is determined by one’s mother, if the father is a Jew and the mother a *goy*, the child is not considered completely non-Jewish. He and his father both still have certain Jewish religious obligations.

**History and Ideology**

Rosen-Zvi and Ophir explain that their goal is to pinpoint the phenomenology of the appearance of the *goy* by means of textual analysis, and that they do not intend to discuss the historical circumstances that led to the conceptual changes. Two researchers have attempted to fill this gap. Yair Furstenberg argues that the rabbis adopted Roman citizenship as their model. According to this model, Roman citizenship applied to everyone who was a member of the “Roman legal community.” Thus, a Jew was considered by the rabbis to be one who kept the commandments and observed rabbinic law. Together with this Furstenberg argues, the Roman model enables the existence of hybrid models. Indeed, the rabbis themselves recognize hybrid categories that soften the binary distinction. As I have already noted, Furstenberg understands the Samaritans to belong to this category.

Peter J. Tomson deals with the formation of the Jew-*goy* opposition in Paul.[[11]](#footnote-11) According to him, Paul, too, did not invent the distinction between Jew and *goy* out of nowhere. The Jewish world in first-century CE Palestine already had a confrontational approach toward *goyim* as such. This approach, with stemmed from the ongoing conflict with the Roman Empire, led to a binary us/them distinction. Paul took this perspective and applied it to his own theological and missionizing needs.

In conclusion, we must note the critique of Elad Lapidot, which deals with what he considers the Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’ narrow reading of rabbinic literature.[[12]](#footnote-12) According to Lapidot, Rosen-Zvi and Ophir read rabbinic literature through a much later nationalistic lens: “‘The Jews’ is the great constant of this book, persisting from Old Testament to Tel Aviv, as an ahistorical collective, undisturbed by text and politics, what the book calls ethnos, goy.”[[13]](#footnote-13) Lapidot argues that evidence for the Jews as a nation is anachronistic and stems from the two writers’ Israeli identities. That, says Lapidot, is why the two ignore the fact that (according to the rabbis) conversion is a halakhic procedure involving the convert’s obligation to observe halakhah, not a political procedure for exchanging one national identity for another, as it is described in Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s book.

**From the Ivory Tower to the Agora**

The scholarly dispute over the accuracy of Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s historical thesis is secondary in the authors’ eyes to the social, cultural, and political questions they raise about Israeli society and the State of Israel in the present day. The last part of the Hebrew volume is directed at these questions.[[14]](#footnote-14) The authors assert that the State of Israel, its laws, its bureaucracy at Ben Gurion Airport and in the offices of the Population and Immigration Authority, and Israeli society in general have internalized the Jew-*goy* binary. It is not merely that Israel has adopted halakhic definitions to determine “Who is a Jew,” but that it is continually reinforcing the dividing line between Jews and non-Jews, or, more precisely, the ways of crossing the boundary. The state encourages non-Jewish immigrants to convert while they are serving in the military. On the other hand, the government firmly opposes the non-Jewish presence in Israel. The government has established a special law and an enforcement unit whose purpose is to promote the removal of guest workers and non-Jewish refugees. The authors emphasize that in contrast to Western countries, which encourage those members of the population who are not native-born to assimilate by internalizing the majority culture, Israel does everything it can to prevent this from happening. Even though non-Jewish immigrants from the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union) and the children of refugees and foreign workers may not know any culture other than Israel’s, they are treated as foreigners, as a threat; in other words, they are and remain *goyim*. Rosen-Zvi and Ophir maintain that the unwillingness of Israel’s government and society to make it possible for non-Jews to assimilate into Israeli-Jewish society stems from the fact that Israeli-Jewish society, despite being largely secular, has wittingly or unwittingly adopted the rabbinic Jew-*goy* dichotomy as a fundamental characteristic of its identity. This claim also explains why many Jews, despite their not being religious, find intermarriage unacceptable. The authors conclude their Hebrew book with a brief treatment of the question of whether it is possible that relations with the Palestinians and the Arab countries may also be influenced by the *goy* discourse.

Naturally, scholars of antiquity have not discussed the political aspects or cultural implications of the work of Rosen-Zvi and Ophir. The two most important responses were written by a scholar of religion with a popular blog and a rabbi with a prominent public profile, and both were published in the popular press. Dr. Tomer Persico considers just the English volume and so could not respond to the claims of the Hebrew book, which was published several years after his article appeared.[[15]](#footnote-15) Persico argues that despite the burden of the rabbinic *goy*, the Jewish world of today is liberating itself from the Jew-*goy* binary, in stark contrast to the claim of Ophir and Rosen-Zvi in their Hebrew volume. Persico claims that the modern nation-state erodes the halakhic aspect of the *goy* discourse. In the United States, Jews see themselves as full partners in the great liberal project, and the high rate of intermarriage is a confirmation and realization of this recognition. In Israel, according to Persico, there is a return to the biblical world, in which various groups are accepted as part of the nation in proportion to their own feeling of partnership in the national project. The wider public, therefore, is not ready to accept the possibility that soldiers of the IDF who are not halakhically Jewish may not be buried together with their comrades in a Jewish military cemetery.

The critique of Rabbi Avraham Stav is focused on the Hebrew volume.[[16]](#footnote-16) Toward the end of that book, Rosen-Zvi and Ophir tell of a disagreement they had with an important historian after the publication of the English volume. According to them, the historian did not dispute their facts, but was unwilling to accept the idea hinted at in the book that “it might be possible to get rid of the idea of the *goy*.” According to him, “The Jews cannot remain a people among the peoples without the *goy*.” To this claim Rosen-Zvi and Ophir retort, “Our job is to show how absurd this approach is” (*Goy Kadosh*, 165). In the last chapters of the book, they call explicitly for a reappraisal of the *goy* discourse in Israeli society with the understanding that the *goy* is not inherent to Judaism or Jews, but a late invention stemming from particular historical circumstances. The State of Israel no longer needs it according to Rosen-Zvi and Ophir. Rabbi Stav is, to the best of my knowledge, the only one who is not interested in disagreeing with the facts that the authors present but with Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s theological, halakhic, and cultural demand. In a way that is surprising and yet not so much surprising, Rabbi Stav “celebrates” the *goy* discourse and the creation of the Other by the rabbis. According to him, the rabbis displaced the Jew to a different plane of existence, a higher and more meaningful plane, and by means of this displacement created the essential difference between Jew and *goy*. I have no intention of analyzing this assertion in depth, but it is based on a deeply-rooted tradition of thinkers and exegetes from the Middle Ages to the present day who see the Jew as qualitatively different from the *goy*. The dichotomy of the Jew and the *goy* is not a political one but an ontological one.[[17]](#footnote-17) However, Rabbi Stav does not grapple with the ethical argument that Rosen-Zvi and Ophir present. The Jew-*goy* binary was certainly an important means of self-defense of the Jewish minority against a society with a non-Jewish majority, but in the State of Israel, using the *goy* discourse this way is unjust. Rabbi Stav tries to remove the basis for the political claim by transferring it to the metaphysical plane: the Jews “chose” to live on a different plane, and for that reason ceased to be like all the other nations. The problem with this is that the Zionist project, of which Rabbi Stav certainly sees himself as a part, intended to return the Jews to being a people like all the others.

Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s books and articles sparked a highly interesting scholarly controversy that extends far beyond the ivory tower. They understand quite well how problematic is the great leap from Tannaitic society of the second century CE to twenty-first-century Israel. I believe and hope that a more detailed investigation of the *goy* discourse in the Middle Ages and in modernity can pave the way for an unraveling of the *goy* discourse in Israeli society. For now, I will content myself with just one example that is missing from Rosen-Zvi and Ophir’s books. One of the boldest innovations of the first Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uuziel, was the creation of a status called “seed of Israel.”[[18]](#footnote-18) According to the accepted halakhah, the child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother is an outright *goy*. Rabbi Uuziel granted such children the status of “seed of Israel.” Such a person is a hybrid entity on whom certain obligations devolve and, more importantly, who deserves to be protected and cared for by the Jews, in contrast to the indifferent or negative relationship toward the *goy*. Rabbi Uuziel’s innovation stemmed from the contemporary reality in which there are not a few individuals who grew up as Jews because of their fathers but who are not halakhically Jewish. There is no doubt that Rabbi Uuziel’s “seed of Israel” still conforms with the Jew-*goy* discourse, but it represents an attempt to make this discourse more flexible.

In conclusion, the stormy reaction to both their scholarly book and their popular one show that Rosen-Zvi and Ophir have succeeded in holding up a mirror to the scholarly and intellectual community. It may be that it is not complete and perhaps not quite precise, but it is nonetheless a mirror that reveals a bothersome truth. Rosen-Zvi and Ophir are not simply archaeologists of knowledge who aspire to create a picture of the past, nor are they photographers of the situation in the present. Their hope, which I share, is that the light they shed on the *goy* will illuminate a way forward. About the precise route, and even the ultimate goal (if there is one) we scholars, readers, and plane people will continue to argue. In any case, the more detailed the scholarly work becomes, the more broadly knowledgeable we are about the complexities of the *goy* discourse and its history, the more we can and must remake the halakhah, the demands of the conversion procedure, and what really happens at Ben Gurion Airport and in the offices of the Population and Immigration Authority.

1. Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, “Did St. Paul Invent the Goy?”, *Haaretz*, October 12, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A detailed survey can be found in Jeffrey P. García, “The Rabbinic Goy Takes Center Stage,” *Hebrew Studies* 60 (2019), pp. 473–487. *Ancient Jew Review* posted a forum about the book in which scholars from diverse fields examine the authors’ claims; see <https://www.ancientjewreview.com/read/2019/2/18/goy-an-ajr-forum>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The authors refrain from historical explanations for the changes that occurred in the characterizations of the term *goy* (*Goy*, 22, 266–266; *Goy Kadosh*, @). On a possible connection between Paul/Christianity and the Sages see Ishay Rosen-Zvi, “The Creation of the Goy in Rabbinic Literature,” Teuda 26 (2014): 361–438 at 423. [Perhaps also in *Goy Kadosh* @.] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Hayes has devoted two articles to the subject: Christine Hayes, “The Complicated Goy in Classical Rabbinic Sources,” in *Perceiving the Other in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, eds. Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, Wolfgang Grünstäudl, and Matthew Thiessen (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), pp. 147–167; ibid., “Review of Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi. Goy: Israel’s Multiple Others and the Birth of the Gentile,” *AJS Review* 44 (2020), pp. 190–192. See also her article in the *Ancient Jew Review* forum(above, n. 1). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Hanan Birenboim, “‘One Nation on Earth’: On Jews and Gentiles in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods,” *Zion* 86 (2021), pp. 331–353. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. I have relied principally on the articles cited in the previous two notes by Hayes and Birenboim, since they focus in detail both on the arguments of Ophir and Rosen-Zvi and on discussion of the primary sources. Similar arguments can be found in García, “The Rabbinic Goy,” p. 481; Malka Z. Simkovich, “Review of Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi. Goy: Israel’s Multiple Others and the Birth of the Gentile,” *SCJR* 14 (2019), p. 2. [<https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/scjr/article/view/11897>]. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See especially Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985, pp. 114–129, and the literature cited by Ophir and Rosen-Zvi, *Goy*, p. 59 n. 6 and Birenboim, “Goy,” pp. 334–335 n. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Yonina Dor, *Have the foreign women really been expelled? Separation and Exclusion in the Restoration Period*, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2006 (Hebrew) argues that in fact the divorce rituals described in Ezra and Nehemiah were intended to make the continued presence of those women and their children possible. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Replacing Vanderkam’s translation of “descent,” which has a broader meaning. It would seem better to translate “seed,” in accordance with the suggestion of Werman. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Yair Furstenberg, “The Status of the Samaritans in Early Rabbinic Law and the Roman Concept of Citizenship,” *Zion* 82 (2017), pp. 157–192. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Peter J. Tomson, “Paul, the Rabbis, and the Gentiles: Conversing with Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi,” *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 76.2 (2022), 131–150. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Lapidot’s critique was accompanied by a response from Ophir and Rosen-Zvi and a response by Lapidot to their response: Elad Lapidot, Adi Ophir, Ishay Rosen-Zvi & Elad Lapidot, “Goy: Israel’s Multiple Others and the Birth of the Gentile,” *Political Theology* 21 (2020), pp. 151–156. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid., 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. See also Adi Ophir and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, “The ‘Goy’ and the Jewish State,” *Alpayyim Ve-Od* 2 (2019): 39–61 [Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Tomer Persico, “How the Jews Invented the Goy,” *Haaretz*, November 9, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Avraham Stav, “What is the Purpose of the Jew-*Goy* Distinction,” *Makor Rishon*, September 9, 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For a discussion of the *goy* in twentieth-century Jewish thought, see Avinoam Rosenak, “War and Peace in Jewish Thought in the Face of the ‘other’,” *Daat* 62 (2008), pp. 99–125. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Ouziel, *Piske Ouziel Bi-She’elot ha-Zman*, #64. On Rabbi Ouziel’s approach to conversion, see Benny Lau, “Musar ha-nevi’im be-shiqule pesiqato she ha-Rav Ouziel be-nose ha-giur,” *Akdamot* 21 (5768), 96–109 (Hebrew). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)