**Suggestions for Book Proposal**

Thank you for the opportunity to advise you on submitting a proposal for the publication of a translation of this fascinating book. The book is beautifully and compelling written and the case for its publication in translation could be more forcefully conveyed in the proposal.

The following are some suggestions to improve your book proposal. The below points will be followed by a suggested restructuring of the proposal, noting where sections can be replaced and additional information could be added.

1. Start with a **book description** of three paragraphs. The abstract you included is dry and does not do justice to this interesting book! I suggest translating the two full paragraphs on p. 14 of the book [starting with ספר זה]. The third paragraph of this description should be the paragraph on p.16 [starting with המחקר יתאפיין]. These paragraphs better capture the essence and content of the book.
2. Add a section on **market consideration**. This should spell out for the press who you see as the intended readers for this book.
3. I formatted the **table of contents** to fit on one page, making it more pleasing to the reader. I also made a few corrections here to capitalization and punctuation.
4. The **chapter descriptions** should be much more concise, as the press requests chapter description of only one paragraph each. I shortened the descriptions accordingly.
5. Include a section on **apparatus**. In this section, estimate the number of words of the English translation in the main text, the footnotes, and the apparatus. Also note in this section whether you intend to cite primary sources in Hebrew in addition to translation.
6. Add a section discussing **comparable and competing scholarship** and how your work relates to it. See below for suggestions on what you could include here.
7. Add a paragraph on the **status of the book** – detail when and how long a translation would take to be prepared.
8. The proposal guidelines ask you to name 3-4 individuals who could serve as **reviewers** for the book.

Casting Lots, God and Man

From the Bible to the End of the Renaissance

***Book Description***

[three paragraphs. I suggest translating the two full paragraphs on p. 14 of the book [starting with ספר זה]. The third paragraph of this description should be the paragraph on p.16 [starting with המחקר יתאפיין].]

***Market Consideration***

[Spell out for the press who you see as the intended readers of the book – who should the book be marketed to? Is it scholars of philosophy, religion, and/or Jewish studies specialists? What scholarly fields would this book appeal to?]

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# *Chapter Descriptions*

***Chapter One: Four Justifications for Lot Casting***

The first chapter is dedicated to the conceptual analysis of various justifications of lot casting. The usage of lots is portrayed as a “Naked Act”—an action which, when performed, does not reveal the world views attributed to it. I describe four systems of justification (or reasoning) that characterize various descriptions of lot-casting: the rational justification, mantic justification, justification as play, and the psychological reason. According to the rational justification, the lot is characterized as a random device, equal and impartial, which may make it a preferred tool of decision-making to address questions of “allocative justice.” A completely different approach regards the casting of lots as having metaphysical, or “mantic” meaning. As I shall demonstrate, there are numerous literary appearances in which the lot’s “decision-making” is attributed to a greater force than that of the caster. This approach assumes that its outcome isn’t arbitrary or accidental; a super-human force appears when the system of human control reaches its limit. A third justification for lot-casting is based on theories of “play and culture,” according to which the lot-caster does not perform this act for rational or magical reasons, but in order to fulfil the human inclination to play. The fourth method of reasoning I call “psychological,” which sees lots as used when lot casters face autonomous, meaningful decision-making and consequently transfer the decision-making to a mediating tool—the lot. Alongside the analysis of various reasoning systems I also elucidate the principal and practical oppositions to lot-casting.

***The History of Lot Use in Jewish Culture***

The second and main part of the book deals with the appearance of lots in historical corpora Jewish literature from different eras. The conceptual discussion that preceded will serve as a means for interpreting these texts. The discussion is structured in a typological manner, which suits the attempt to use the philosophical-conceptual analysis of the phenomenon as a tool for understanding those corpora.

# *Chapter Two: Mantic Uses of the Lot*

This survey of the mantic reasoning for the lot starts with the Bible and continues through the Middle Ages. The Bible describes the lot as an established and powerful advisory tool used for many political uses, such as judgement, appointments, and embarking on war. Biblical “lots” reflect struggles for the ruling hegemony. The fullest embodiment of the mantic use of the lot is expressed in the Priestly enterprise of the *Urim* and *Thummim*. However, the Bible at times implied reservations at the priestly lots, and the *Urim* and *Thummim* were eliminated at an early stage of biblical inner-historiography. In Second Temple literature, beside extensive mantic descriptions (real and literary) of the use of lots, we note a systematic differentiation between the “lot” and the *Urim and Thummim*. In Qumran the lot metamorphosed from a real instrument into a “value concept.” Its use was stripped from man and handed over to God. Rabbinic literature expresses conflicting positions on the mantic character of the biblical lot, and keeps the use of the lot apart from formal institutions of government and law. The lot had no place—real or as a value—in the rabbinic framework of *Halakhah*. The second part of this chapter follows the medieval Jewish tradition of “lots books,” analyzing the Judaizing of this genre from its Greek origin and how scribes and editors reconciled the use of these books with Jewish law. Finally, I point out the expansion of the term “lot” itself so that it identified with bibliomantic technique.

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# *Chapter 3: Selecting People*

The next chapters deal with other appearances of the lot, where its nature is not explained. In the third chapter, on the selection of people using lot-casting, I analyze death lots in biblical and Second Temple literature, showing that they clearly fall under the rational justification, and argue that Josephus’s descriptions of the lots at Yodfat and Masada can be understood as “cynical rationalism.” Discussing the Temple lots used to divide the work shifts of the Priests and Levites, I demonstrate that earlier sources interpret the use of the lots in a rational manner, but that at early stages of the Hasmonean period, there was a deliberate effort to assign mantic meaning to the outcomes. Relatedly, I discuss the debate during the Second Temple period concerning lot-based public appointments based on a democratic ethos. Philo opposed this act, and the sages rewrote biblical passages to undermine mantic faith in the lot. In later sources, appointments by lot became rare in Jewish society, but occasionally appeared in Christianity. In the second part of the chapter, I trace the major role played by the idea of the divine use of lot to determine human fate. I analyze the myth of the election of Israel by divine lot from the ancient allusion of Deut 32:8–9, to the Qumranic concept that God chooses individuals as the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, to Gnostic texts that reverse the myth’s meaning and use it to undermine the election of Israel, to pagan polemicists such as Celsus and Julian, who reintroduced this myth, and a few late midrashim that re-adopted it.

# *Chapter 4: Division of Territory and Goods*

In this chapter, I also differentiate between various biblical approaches: alongside passages that bear explicit witness that the lot is a rational act, there are proverbs and psalms that assign the lot a mantic meaning and even understand the word “lot” (*goral*), as fate. Later sources from the Second Temple period, as well as the Mishnah, Talmud, and later midrashic sources, contain controversy on how to interpret both the biblical text and the practical division of land using a lot, and alongside the rationalist approach these texts also discuss miracles associated with lot-casting. I then discuss the symbolic interpretation for the lot-cast division of territory as it appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls. I show how the passages regarding the settlement were interpreted allegorically in order to fit the Qumran lot theology. I propose that in the annual ceremony that restores the biblical census, the crossing of the Jordan, and the division of the land of Israel using a lot, the “land” is not physical anymore but spiritual. The end of this chapter deals with the paradigmatic value of the settlement chapters in rabbinic *halachic* literature. While the Palestinian tradition tends more toward the attribution of mantic meaning to the lot, the Babylonian Talmud is more reserved. The mantic approach was more dominant in medieval Ashkenazic rulings, whereas the majority of Sephardic rulings (in medieval and modern times) characterized the lot in a more rational way.

# *Chapter 5: Lot-Casting on the Day of Atonement*

The fifth chapter, on the sacramental lots cast by the high priest during his service on the Day of Atonement, begins with the service itself: I point out the differences in “internal grammar” between the biblical ceremony and that of Second Temple and rabbinic literature. By comparing it to parallel ceremonies in the ancient Near East, I note that if the biblical text contained any use of lots, it was explicitly rationalist. Echoing Second Temple literature, I retrace the mantic conception applied to the drawing of the lot from the urn and place it in a wider cultural context. The second part of this chapter deals with the allegorical meanings given to the lots of the Day of Atonement. Here, I complete the picture of the Qumranic lot­ theology, noting that in the writings concerned with the Day of Atonement, the dichotomy between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness is expressed using an allusion to the lot of the goats. The rest of the chapter follows the history of this sharp dichotomy in the succeeding polemics of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. Throughout this discussion I show that following the inter-sectoral polemics of the Second Temple period, the interreligious Jewish-Christian dispute was often based on the question of the identity of the “sacrificed goat” and the “scapegoat.”

# *Chapter 6: Games of Chance*

In this chapter, I follow the appearances of lottery games in Jewish culture, beginning with the carnival-esque holiday of Purim, which the book of Esther ties to the vicissitudes of a lot. I then describe how, under Hellenistic and Roman influence, games of chance infiltrated Jewish culture. While in tannaitic literature treats the dice player as a criminal, from the talmudic period a distinction is made between the addicted gambler and the amateur player. I discuss the negative attitude toward lottery games in rabbinical *halachic* and Musar literature. In modern times games of chance as leisure are common in Jewish circles, particularly during holidays, and the phenomenon of addiction to gambling requires the involvement of the community. The vivid character of R. Aryeh Modena of Venice, who was forced to personally deal with his compulsion for gambling, developed a special play-based approach regarding games of chance. As a supplement to this chapter I look at a Purim lottery held in the home of R. Yair Bacharach, who wove various sources discussed in my book into his halakhic works.

***Apparatus***

[Insert separate estimated word counts for the main text, footnotes, and bibliography in English. Our rough estimate for translation to English is 40% more words than Hebrew.]

The book includes:

* A bibliography
* A list of abbreviations
* An index of primary sources

[Note here whether you wish to include primary texts in Hebrew or another original language, in addition to translation.]

***Comparable and Competing Volumes***

[Briefly describe here your book’s innovation in applying a conceptual frame to the question of lot-casting throughout early Jewish culture, an approach that has not been taken before.

Include brief descriptions of the relevant literature on lot-casting in Judaism (as noted in footnotes 2 & 3 of chapter 2, and possibly others) and spell out how your coverage expands and differs from these studies. Make sure to provide the publisher and date of publication of each of these works.

Briefly discuss how your approach that sees a pluralism of justifications for lot-casting, and views it a “naked act” contributes to scholarship on the phenomenon in general. Note here the scholarship you mention in footnote 3 of chapter 1, and other scholarship, if relevant (making sure to provide publisher and date of publication of each work you mention), and how your work advances the scholarly discussion of the lot.]

***Status of the Work***

The volume has been published in Hebrew by Bar-Ilan University Press and the Shalom Hartman Institute. [Note how long you estimate it would take to prepare a translation. Our estimate for the time it would take to translate is approximately 2,500 words a week.]

***Reviews***

[Please provide names and contact details for three to four people you feel would competently review your material and whose opinion you value. Since you wish to appeal to an English-reading audience, it would be best to include some scholars outside of Israel here.]