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The Myth of the New Jew

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Summaries

Zohar Shavit
The Habitus of the “New Jew” of the Haskalah Movement

The article deals with the change in the habitus of the Jews that members of the Haskalah movement introduced into traditional Jewish society in the German-speaking lands at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. It focuses on the persons and historical processes that made this change possible and analyzes several of the components of daily practices, most of them quite trivial. The first part of the article describes the circumstances that made the constitution of a new habitus possible, namely, the coincidence between the interests and programs of two groups within Jewish society, a group of financial entrepreneurs and a group of cultural entrepreneurs, both of which were part of the Haskalah movement who shared, to some degree, a common vision of Jewish society that accorded with the policy and economic programs of the absolute monarchy in Prussia. The second part of the article deals with the maskilic programs that led to the creation of the new habitus, focusing on the concrete directives and instructions given to Jewish children and young adults through the maskilic texts. The children and young adults were expected to internalize them and to use them as guidelines for their everyday behavior and new daily practices regarding the organization of their lives.

Guy Miron
Between Two Worlds: Modern Orthodoxy in Germany as a New Form of Jewish Identity

The article presents the main features of the German Jewish Modern Orthodox identity. Modern Orthodox Jews integrated as citizens in their European homeland – Germany – but aspired to separate themselves from the mainstream Liberal Jewish community. Their attitude towards German culture was quite open, and a new type of rabbi emerged, who was much more sensitive to the changing needs of the community. Modern Orthodox German Jews were particularly concerned with the challenge presented by the East European Jewish immigrants to Germany. The article argues that their identity, like other forms of modern Jewish identity, was at least partly influenced by the pressures that the German state and society exerted on the Jews to adapt themselves to the surrounding society.