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***American Zion: The Old Testament as a Political Text from the Revolution to the Civil War.* By Eran Shalev. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013. x + 239 pp. \ \$40.00 cloth; \ \$28.00 paper.**

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Protestant naturalist, Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), who had earlier attacked Voltaire as a virtual Spinozist and materialist in a text of 1760 and supported the royal suppression of the *Encyclopédie*, applauded Voltaire for his *Dieu, Réponse de Mr de Voltaire au Système de la nature* (1770). Voltaire attacked atheism, insisting on belief in God and divine providence and the need of the majority of society to remain under ecclesiastical supervision. In the 1770s and 1780s, this sufficed to modify earlier hostility toward him considerably. Thus, Nicolas-Sylvestre Bergier (1715–1790), the most formidable and effective Catholic ecclesiastical writer to answer d’Holbach, similarly shifted his sights for the remainder of his career as a leading Christian apologist from deism, and Voltairean anti-clericalism, to attacking atheism and materialism as a social and moral as well as metaphysical danger.

Bergier answered d’Holbach not by citing scripture or ecclesiastical authority, but by retaliating using the tools of philosophy and science. In the wider context of Enlightenment historiography, Curran’s book deserves to be especially cited for its efforts to bring a large proportion of late eighteenth-century Christian apologetics into the sphere of the (moderate) Enlightenment and correct the excessively crude image of so-called *anti-philosophes* as propagators of Counter-Enlightenment. In this context he pertinently criticizes D. M. McMahon’s *Enemies of the Enlightenment* (2001) which performed a good service by drawing attention to a large group of Catholic polemicists who had been unjustly neglected but at the same time was profoundly mistaken and deeply unhelpful in designating this group of writers adherents of the Counter-Enlightenment. Bergier, Lamourette, and many if not most of these writers decidedly more properly belong within the mainstream ranks of the (moderate) Enlightenment.

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American Zion: The Old Testament as a Political Text from the

***Revolution to the Civil War.* By Eran Shalev. New Haven, Conn.:**

Yale University Press, 2013. x + 239 pp. \$40.00 cloth; \$28.00 paper.

Scholars have long recognized that an important strain of American nationalism constructs the United States as a “redeemer nation” based on equating it typologically with ancient Israel and exercising a millenarian

appropriation of the Mosaic national covenant. In *American Zion*, Eran Shalev advances an “expanded sense” of the Old Testament’s role in forming a “national and political culture” (2). Between approximately 1770–1830, he contends, lay and clerical writers elaborated an earlier European discourse about the “Hebrew republic” into a distinctive political hermeneutic that wove “America into the Bible and the Bible into America” (143). In demonstrating how generations of early American republicans fashioned scripture into a political text, Shalev has produced a marvelously trenchant study of their religious nationalism.

One of *American Zion*’s greatest virtues is its chronological care in linking ideological developments to politico-cultural change. As resistance to Britain heated up, American Whigs calibrated their civic humanist rhetoric to include biblical Israel along with Greece and Rome in exemplifying the promises and perils of republican government. This process continued during the 1780s as supporters of the Constitution cited the Israelite polity, refigured as having comprised twelve (or sometimes thirteen) “states,” for modeling a federal republic that was both structurally balanced and, unlike other cases from antiquity, ordained by God, thereby sanctioning the newly proposed arrangement as simultaneously well-wrought and divinely favored. By 1800, parsing Old Testament politics had become so normative that “pseudobiblicism,” a genre of political commentary cast in the cadences of the King James Bible, flourished among pundits who hoped that its “ontologically privileged language” (85) would give their own observations special credence. Constant references to the United States as a second Israel culminated in the notion, particularly vivid after the War of 1812, that the United States had become the new Israel, a viewpoint that granted special cogency to arguments identifying Indians as the Ten Lost Tribes and endorsed the claims of religious groups, most notably the Mormons, to possess an Israelite pedigree. After 1830, however, social transformations associated with the Market Revolution and the Second Great Awakening underwrote the ascendance of an alternative political theology grounded in the New Testament. The dynamics of this hermeneutic played out most prominently during the debate over slavery, in which each side justified its stand by soliciting Gospel examples—what *did* Jesus do? To slaveowners, Christ condoned slavery as legal and just, while abolitionists held that his ministry to the downtrodden and sacrifice for “bleeding humanity” demonstrated precisely the opposite. Historicizing biblical slavery unintentionally undermined the logic equating the Hebrew and American republics by morally distancing them; if biblical slavery was far less heinous than the South’s chattel system, then the United States could no longer claim to be Israel redux.

The full impact of Shalev's argument builds as the book progresses, albeit not without some analytical hiccups. He rightly underlines the importance of "biblical republicanism" while also acknowledging that this discovery does not noticeably change our knowledge of republican ideology. More originally, his insistence that Americans in the early republic regarded their country as the successor to ancient Israel substantially deepens our understanding of the cultural context surrounding the Book of Mormon's origin. For one thing, it will now be impossible to consider that scripture outside the corpus of pseudo-biblical writing that surely provided its literary template; too, its narrative of ancient Israelites landing in the New World appeared precisely when debates about the origins of the American Indians—fueled by the publication of Elias Boudinot's *A Star in the West* (1816)—had temporarily (but momentarily) elevated a reading of the United States as Israel literally instantiated in the Western Hemisphere above conventional exegesis, which rendered the relationship between the two lands as metaphorical. In this setting, Mormons' seemingly outlandish proclamation of their Israelite genesis was in fact unremarkable. Convincing in its own terms, Shalev's treatment does not, however, solve the "'Joseph Smith problem'" (111), that is, how a putatively unlettered backwoodsman could have produced such a masterpiece. That Smith probably was exposed to pseudo-biblical works neither refutes the Mormon argument that he received a divine revelation which cannot be reduced to its context nor quiets skeptics who attribute his inspiration to more mundane sources; in either case, Smith's familiarity with a body of literature that Shalev stresses was political, not providential, fails to illuminate the theological and narrative content of the prophet's vision. The assertion that civic humanist ideology could not have "enjoyed widespread appeal" because "only a fraction of eighteenth-century Americans benefited" from a classical education (17) does not ring true against repeated assertions that, for instance, the "cultural ethos of the founding era was neoclassical" (103). One must ask how much the American Zion was a regional rather than a national construct, since the preponderant documentation comes, as the author admits, from northern—especially New England—sources, despite his determined effort to adduce southern ones.

These qualifications notwithstanding, Shalev's thesis about the Old Testament's importance is ultimately convincing, largely because he so carefully historicizes it. Hebrew scripture came to political prominence during the late eighteenth century both because Calvinism's influence in Anglo-America had resulted in elevating the covenant's salvific importance over that of Jesus, and because the Old Testament's immersion in theopolitics made it far more meaningful to individuals seeking constitutional models in scripture than did the New Testament's relative

indifference to political forms. As evangelicalism remade the antebellum religious landscape and slavery replaced state-formation as the dominant political issue, Christ and the New Testament became more relevant. Shalev's greatest contribution lies in demonstrating not only how much American nationalism owes to the Old Testament but also the specific ways in which it does. The trope of being a chosen people derives not simply, or even principally, from covenantal millennialism but rather from a deeply exegetical identification of the United States as biblical Israel put forth during the nation's founding—a historical circumstance that explains how and why a population with few Jews and an emergent sense of profoundly Christian identity nevertheless encoded the Hebrew republic so strongly into its national DNA.

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Sacred Song and the Pennsylvania Dutch. By **Daniel Jay**

Grimminger. Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2012.

xxi + 213 pp. \$85.00 cloth.

This is a study of the chorale and tune books the Pennsylvania Dutch produced between 1786 and 1883. By “chorale book” Daniel Grimminger means “any book that contains German chorales solely,” and by “tune book” he means “a printed score that may contain genres outside of the German chorale repertoire” (9). He provides a complete list of the books under consideration in the introduction (Table 1, pp. 4–5).

While “Pennsylvania Dutch” has often been applied to “Amish and Mennonite separatists,” Grimminger applies it here to the whole group of ethnic Americans who spoke “Pennsylvania Dutch” which he defines as “a peculiar form of Low German, resembling the dialects of the Palatinate region from whence many Germanic immigrants came in the colonial and early republic eras of American history” (10). Not to be confused with the “Netherlands Dutch,” “Pennsylvania Dutch” is used here to refer to all the “Germanic people of Pennsylvania” (9). This includes *Kirchenleute*, Lutherans, and Reformed who sometimes worshiped in union churches, *Sektenleute*, the “Plain People”—Amish, Mennonites, Brethren, and Ephrata Cloister folks who came from the sixteenth century Swiss and German Anabaptists (12), and *Brüdergemein*, the “‘Unitas Fratrum’ or ‘Moravian