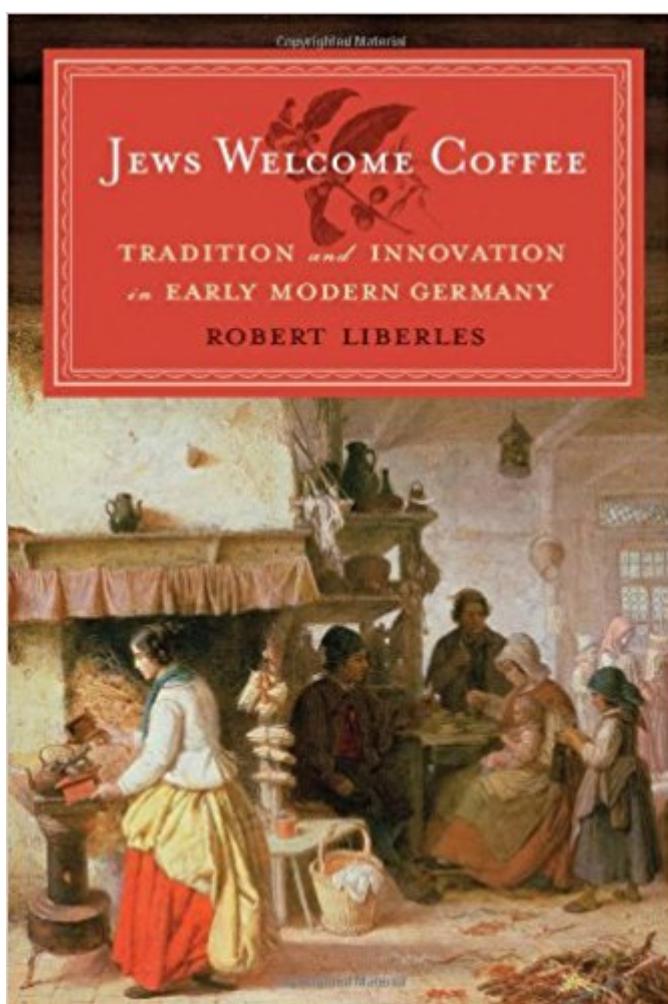


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# **Jews Welcome Coffee: Tradition And Innovation In Early Modern Germany (The Tauber Institute Series For The Study Of European Jewry)**



## Synopsis

Tracing the introduction of coffee into Europe, Robert Liberles challenges long-held assumptions about early modern Jewish history and shows how the Jews harnessed an innovation that enriched their personal, religious, social, and economic lives. Focusing on Jewish society in Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and using coffee as a key to understanding social change, Liberles analyzes German rabbinic rulings on coffee, Jewish consumption patterns, the commercial importance of coffee for various social strata, differences based on gender, and the efforts of German authorities to restrict Jewish trade in coffee, as well as the integration of Jews into society.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Liberles teases out unique insights into the financial, religious, and social structure of the Jewish community of early modern Germany through their ties to coffee. But, the greatest benefit of reading his book is realizing how a single edible can be treated as a lens for historical research, proving: Ideas alone do not change history, sometimes food does.”  
“Jews Welcome Coffee tells a surprisingly high-stakes story about the way a single beverage transformed the existing Jewish culture in Europe, and how its status went from a prohibition to an addiction.”  
“Liberles does articulate intriguing ideas about an interesting pocket of intersection between history, culture, and religious law. Liberles’ research is thorough and

diverse throughout, and each chapter of Jews Welcome Coffee presents an entirely new lens through which to examine the history of coffee consumption as we know it today. *Jewish Book World* “Jews Welcome Coffee does an excellent job not only giving background information about its subject, but in portraying the daily life of those who drink it . . . it is filled with thought-provoking insights about how small changes in culture can affect all members of a society.” • The Reporter, Vestal, NY

“This book, the first of its kind on the topic of Jews and coffee, uses the introduction and gradual acceptance of coffee to analyze changes in Jewish society. In a lively and highly readable manner, Liberles has uncovered hitherto unused archival data to show how very traditional Jewish cultures made room for the new product to serve their purposes. Amusing and interesting, he highlights rabbinic and legal struggles around coffee—prohibitions against coffee as well as addictions to it.” • (Marion Kaplan, Skirball Professor of Modern Jewish History, New York University) “Robert Liberles here shows the initially skeptical reader that so mundane a subject as coffee can cast significant light on broad trends and bitter conflicts within modern Jewish history. Utilizing a neglected cache of archival materials, he demonstrates how the introduction of an unfamiliar and attractive beverage was able to affect the political, economic, and especially the private lives of eighteenth-century European Jews. This is an appropriately stimulating volume, not to be missed by any reader interested in new approaches to Jewish history.” • (Michael A. Meyer, Hebrew Union College) “Liberles has uncovered a fascinating new chapter in the social, cultural, and economic history of Jews in early modern Western Europe. Based on a rich array of archival sources and written in a most engaging style, Jews Welcome Coffee will be welcomed by scholars and lay readers alike.” • (Elisheva Carlebach, Salo Baron Professor of Jewish History, Culture, and Society, Columbia University)

The book is an interesting and amusing survey of early modern responses (and responsa) to coffee, especially as they involved Jews in Germany. Unfortunately, for shipping it was shrink-wrapped violently into a sort of heavy-duty plastic skin, and it arrived with a two-inch wave in the upper right corner. It was a gift for my favorite coffee addict, so it was too bad it arrived damaged. Lousy packing method.

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