Although the impact of Latin scholasticism on medieval Jewish thought was noted by Moritz Steinschneider over a century ago, it has merited relatively little interest. Most specialists in medieval Jewish philosophy have focused their attention on religious philosophy, including philosophical commentaries of scripture, which, though occasionally influenced by Christian thought, almost never mention Christian thinkers by name. Moreover, Jewish thought in Christian lands developed mostly internally because of linguistic limitations and social restrictions. The works of Christian scholasticism were written in Latin, which was little studied by the Jews, outside of Italy. This was in marked contrast to the Jews living in the world of Islam, where Arabic was the *lingua franca*.

The scholar who did most to challenge this internalist assumption of late medieval Jewish philosophy was Shlomo Pines, who argued that direct or indirect scholastic influence could be found in fourteenth-century Jewish writers such as Levi Gersonides, Jedaiah Bedersi, Joseph ibn Kaspi, and Hasdai Crescas, despite the fact that they do not mention scholastic authors. Pines’ provocative thesis set off a hunt for scholastic influence, and an argument about its extent, which continue to the present.

The present volume deals mainly not with the question of scholastic influence on works of Jewish religious philosophy, but rather the phenomenon of “Hebrew scholasticism,” i.e., the tradition of scholastic philosophy of the High Middle Ages that was written in, or translated into, Hebrew, for a Jewish audience. Together with other scholars (notably, Jean-Pierre Rothschild), Mauro Zonta has provided an extremely valuable service by rescuing from near-oblivion a tradition of scholasticism prevalent among fifteenth-century Spanish and Italian Jewish intellectuals. His conclusion that “…Hebrew scholasticism, far from being limited to isolated thinkers and translators, was one of the most discussed subjects in Jewish philosophy during the fifteenth century” (p. 174) may be a slight exaggeration. But the evidence of the works presented in this book, combined with references to the works no longer extant, significantly alters the conventional view that fifteenth-century rationalist Jewish thinkers were primary theologians rather than philosophers, and that they produced no pure works of philosophy.

The most striking counter-example to the conventional view is Abraham Bibago (Bivach), who headed a religious academy in Saragossa in the 1470s.
Bibago indeed wrote a fairly conservative work on religious philosophy, entitled *The Path of Faith*. But *pace* Julius Guttmann, there is no evidence that its conservative tendencies were due to the “persecutions and pressures” of the Jews during this period. On the contrary, Bibago’s conservatism derives in part from his encounter with Christian thought, as has been shown recently by scholars such as Abraham Nuriel and Allan Lazaroff. His reticence in citing Christian thinkers in the *Way of Faith*, coupled with the loss of most of his purely philosophical works, implied to some that his familiarity with Christian thinkers was limited. Now that Zonta has edited and paraphrased his incomplete “Treatise on the Plurality of the Forms” in the present work, one can only be surprised at his extensive familiarity with scholastic philosophical authorities. Bibago cites explicitly from Albert of Saxony, Alexander Bonini of Alexandria, Jean Letourneur, Nicholas Bonet, Aquinas, Ockham, and Scotus, and mentions other writers such as Francis of Meyronnes, Gerald Odonis, and Peter Aureol, among others. Based on the “Plurality of the Forms” Zonta rightly labels Bivach a “Hebrew Scotist,” though not a slavish one. He suggests that some of Bibago’s citations of Averroes in his *Path of Faith* are taken from the Latin version of the Long Commentary on the *De Anima* (p. 114, n. 22).

Similarly, although the Catalanian scholar Abraham Shalom (d. 1492?) was known to have translated some Latin scholastic writings into Hebrew, his work of religious philosophy, *The Abode of Peace*, refers only occasionally to his own translation of the thirteenth-century *Philosophia Pauperum*, and otherwise makes no explicit mention of Christian authorities; hence, the extent of his knowledge of Christian sources has been hitherto unknown. Zonta edits and summarizes (pp. 202–208) the correspondence between Shalom and Eli Habillo (Jabillo), a prolific Jewish translator of scholastic works. Shalom in his response outlines the method of the quaestio and relies heavily on the “sage Marsilyo,” probably Marsilius of Inghen, although the questions on logic translated by Shalom, and attributed by him to the aforementioned sage, do not correspond to any of Marsilius’s logical writings extant in Latin. And in his response to Shalom’s response, Habillo states that he is unaware that Marsilius wrote on logic, but that in any event, Marsilius and his “companions,” Albert of Saxony and John Buridan, misunderstood Aristotle. Perhaps Habillo is showing off his knowledge a bit, but it is clear that both authors feel at home in scholastic practices. Zonta translates several passages from introductions of Eli Habillo to his translations that shed light on his level of knowledge of Latin sources. He also devotes another section to Barukh ibn Ya’ish, a Spanish translator and commentator active in the period 1480–1490, with selections from his (or his student’s) commentary on the *Nichomachean Ethics* and his commentary