to the mīmāṃsā's astute analysis of injunctions and their precise relation to sanctions.

Day's entire system could have been organized along more indigenous lines utilizing the interpretative categories of the mīmāṃsakas who could readily distinguish between religious and legal rules, between binding injunctions (vidhis) and mere laudatory passages (arthavādās) such as the one cited from Manu. A Western scholar seeking a useful guide to sources on punishment with all its dimensions, or pursuing recognized distinctions among Indian concepts will not be disappointed by this book. But his ability to understand the subtlety and depth of Indian normative thought will be only marginally enhanced.

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The Hebrew Letters of Prester John represent only one chapter in the complicated history of the legend of Prester John. Throughout the Middle Ages, the idea of a powerful and pious Christian ruler controlling a vast empire on the other side of the Muslim world fascinated and gave hope to Christian Europeans. Indeed, the Portuguese exploration of Africa, India, and the Far East was to a considerable degree motivated by the search for this mythical King. Although Ethiopia, where a Christian Kingdom did in fact exist, eventually was fixed upon as Prester John's true home, prior to the fifteenth century, China, Central Asia, and southern India had all been considered as probable sites for his kingdom. From the twelfth century onward letters ascribed to Prester John began to circulate. Today these letters are found in numerous versions and a variety of languages including Latin, Old French, Italian, Provençal, German, and Hebrew. While at first glance it might seem surprising that Hebrew versions of so aggressively Christian a text should exist, the letters' popularity was such that they apparently transcended confessional barriers. Moreover, the mention of a kingdom of Jews near that of Prester John meant that it was easy to connect the letters with contemporary Jewish hopes and speculations concerning the Ten Lost Tribes.

It is doubtful if there are anywhere two scholars more suited to the task of placing the Hebrew versions of the letters in their proper context than Professors Edward Ullendorff and C. F. Beckingham. Although the prin-
Principal purpose of their book is to present a critically edited text and annotated translation of the three Hebrew versions so far discovered, the authors offer the reader much more. In addition to the letters, the book includes an historical introduction (1-11) and introduction to the Hebrew Letters and sources (13-36), fragments of a possible fourth letter (147-151), a discussion of Eldad Ha-Dani (153-159), an index of themes and motifs (161-172) and facsimiles of Latin, Old French, and Italian versions of the letters (184-238). The work is characterized by careful scholarship of the highest order throughout. As the authors explain, each of the three letters presents slightly different challenges to the scholar. The first text edited and translated is "Prester John's letter to the Pope in Rome," which exists in a printed text from Constantinople (1519) and in a number of manuscripts. Ullendorff in agreement with L. Olschki identifies Pope Alexander III (r. 1159-81) as the addressee. Beckingham demurs from this view. A. Neubauer's rather surprising claim that the Hebrew text was based on a Latin original is a tremendous oversimplification of an extremely complex problem. The second letter of Prester John is addressed to the Emperor Frederick: either Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155-90) or his grandson Frederick II (r. 1211-50). The only manuscript of the text known to exist is dated ca. 1271 and is found in the Adler collection of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York. Neubauer's claim that the text was translated into Hebrew from an old French or Provençal original is plausible, but only if one understands the term "translate" in a general sense. The third letter, to Pope Eugenio IV (r. 1431-1447), is found in a single manuscript, Parma 402. The superscription dates the text to 1442, while De-Rossi dates the manuscript ca. 1474. The Italian model for the Hebrew text is revealed through proper names, technical terms, misunderstandings etc. MS. Parma 402 is, in fact, an especially rich source of Hebrew material on Prester John. As the authors note, this manuscript also contains a fragment of a letter which closely resembles, but is by no means identical to, the letter to Frederick. In this context they might also have mentioned a text dated 1455 and ascribed to the leaders of the Jewish community in Jerusalem, which also appears in MS. Parma 402. Prester John figures prominently in this document, both in the main body of the text and in a letter ascribed to the "community leaders from the lands of the East" which it quotes. Finally, a word should be said concerning the short text which the authors describe as a "sort of introduction" to a fragment of Prester John's letter to the Pope (31-4). As I have discussed elsewhere in greater detail, (Journal of Jewish Studies, Autumn 1985) this "introduction" is in fact a poorly copied excerpt from Abraham Farissol's Iggeret Orhot Olam. A number of troublesome points which appear in the text can be solved on the basis of this identification.