construe morality in terms of a social contract. Whether this "contract altruism" is based on a more naked Hobbesian self-interest or the more subtle self-interest of a Rawlsian free chooser, morality serves self-interest by allowing arrangements that enable isolated selves to pursue their own interests. If morality not simply identical with self-interest, that is, distinctive, altruism might be possible, say, in the form of Kantian impartiality. But, says Grant, Kantian emphasis on the independence of the moral agent "establishes expectations of altruistic concern at a minimal level; primary duties involve avoiding infringing on other moral agents. Positive acts of benevolence are essentially above the call of duty" (p. 116).

Other ethics, particularly feminist ethics, resist the idealization of altruism as self-sacrifice and instead urge an ethics of care and an ideal of mutuality that may be altruistic by virtue of its focus on the other to whom we are socially related and with whom we identify in our care. Yet, feminist promotion of mutuality is accompanied by a promotion of self-assertion in order to correct the self-sacrifice women are socialized to exhibit. This, Grant argues, crowds out heroic self-sacrifice and excludes serious altruism.

Since Grant thinks all of these approaches eclipse the distinctiveness of altruism, he turns to Christian agape, the roots of modern altruism. Grant offers an important treatment of Anders Nygren's famous handling of agape that may commend a reconsideration of it (*Agape and Eros* [Chicago, 1953]). Critics of Nygren often replace his account of agape with eros or philia. According to Grant, "proponents of *eros* make their case only by adopting something of the coloration of *agape,* and advocates of *philia* require the initiative of *agape* to achieve the mutuality they prize" (p. 177). With Nygren, Grant insists on the distinctive theological significance of agape. Because altruism is "finally a matter of the reality and claim of alterity" (p. 234), genuine altruism is possible only indirectly and unintentionally. Morality "cannot finally take alterity seriously because morality is centered on our own activity" (p. 237). A religious vision, however, recognizes "that our lives are grounded not only in others like ourselves, but in the divine Other," thereby "confronting alterity in its fullest form" (p. 237). The "indirection that is involved in religion" gives altruism its true home because "unintentional altruism is most natural for the transcendent sponsorship of the religious level, where we are delivered from ourselves" (p. 250).

Grant might have clarified and sustained this conclusion better by attending to a wider range of Christian voices on agape. Noticeably absent, for example, is the work of Søren Kierkegaard. Moreover, Grant muddles the contribution Christian ethics makes to debates about altruism by failing to develop Christian ethical debates about the relation of faith and morality and by moving to a more generic appeal to religion. Nevertheless, the book is an engaging and valuable addition to the literature on altruism.

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SATLOW, MICHAEL L. *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001. xxvi+431 pp. $55.00 (cloth).

The mid-1980s inspired a flowering of historical studies of the family based on the application of social-scientific methodologies. Scholars of Jewish history were quick to make their own contributions to the topic, largely in the form of conference papers and anthologies. The present monograph is the most ambitious and extensive work on the perceptions and realities of family in a particular period

of Jewish civilization. Although its primary focus is on the Judaism of midrashic and talmudic eras (roughly, from the first to the seventh centuries C.E.), it makes frequent reference to evidence emanating from earlier centuries, citing Elephantine papyri, Apocrypha, Qumran scrolls, and other records from the Second Commonwealth. With respect to the talmudic era itself, Satlow is careful to supplement the rabbinic texts with archeological data (especially the Babatha archives from Nahal Hever) and comparative data from both Greco-Roman and Zoroastrian-Persian milieus. In general, Satlow seems to have framed his topics to conform with comparable studies of the family in ancient Roman culture. He demonstrates throughout an impressive familiarity with the full range of pertinent scholarly studies on Jewish history, rabbinic literature, and ancient social history.

To my mind, the book's strongest chapter is its first, in which he sifts through diverse rabbinic rationales for the institutions of marriage and the family and discerns substantial differences between Palestinian and Babylonian perspectives: the former focuses on the social obligation of establishing a household, while the latter values marriage as a vehicle for achieving personal purification and spiritual salvation. Satlow correlates these attitudes with those current in the respective non-Jewish environments, among the Stoics and Zoroastrians. The facts fit together into a tour de force that lays the foundations for the other topics examined in the volume.

The book proceeds to tackle a broad range of topics related to perceptions of marriage, the process of creating a union, and the social reality of the family. Satlow attempts throughout to apply the methods and questions that served him well in the opening chapter, paying attention to possible divergences between Palestinian and Babylonian attitudes, as well as to the non-Jewish and nonrabbinic comparative evidence. The results are, on the whole, very remarkable, though one is occasionally left with the feeling that the sweeping conclusions are not quite borne out by the cited evidence. In general, I would have appreciated a greater readiness to admit that the legal, homiletical, and exegetical genres that make up most of rabbinic literature are not always sufficient to provide the kind of comprehensive descriptions of attitudes that classical social historians can base on explicit philosophical or literary writings. The valuable attempts to identify distinctive Babylonian approaches would have benefited occasionally from more systematic philological analysis of the pericopes in which the earlier rabbinic dicta are unraveled from their editorial reworkings. Observation about the dearth of certain themes in Babylonian sources (e.g., use of marriage as a religious metaphor, discussed in chap. 2) should take into account the general scarcity of aggadic discourse in extant Babylonian rabbinic literature.

Satlow approaches the literary evidence with a considerable measure of suspicion, particularly on the question of how faithfully the rabbinic assumptions reflect the real life practice of average Jews. For the most part, this type of skepticism is laudable; however, there are occasions when his predilection for the unconventional seems to tip the scales unduly in favor of interpretations that defy established scholarly or religious opinion. Thus (to take some examples from chap. 8), while the precedent of Babatha does raise valid challenges to the widespread claim that talmudic Jews did not practice polygyny, I could not find reasonable justification for his assumptions of widespread concubinage among ancient Jews, or that the institutions of the "Hebrew bondman and bondwoman" were anything more than academic concepts required for the exposition of Exod. 21:1–11 (pp. 194–295). Similarly, I could not discern legitimate grounds for Satlow's serious

consideration (p. 231) of the notion that the Hebrew Bible knew of love only as a legalistic, contractual obligation.

In most respects, the quality of the English in *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* is quite refined and elegant. It should be noted however that the author has a tendency to make use of American colloquialisms that can become irritating.

The above reservations should not be allowed to obscure the basic fact that *Jewish Marriage in Palestine* is a mature and nuanced work of scholarship that succeeds in integrating competent philological study with sophisticated social-scientific methodologies. It will likely become the basis for future scholarly discussion of this important topic.

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HUBBARD, JAMIE. *Absolute Delusion, Perfect Buddhahood: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Heresy.* Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001. xvii+333 pp. $45.00 (cloth); $22.95 (paper).

Acknowledging that new religious movements are both shaped by and transform their historical context, and that in China the relationships between such movements and the state have often been turbulent, Jamie Hubbard offers in this book an intriguing study of the Three Levels Movement (San-chieh chiao) and the teachings of the sixth-century Chinese Buddhist leader, Hsin-hsing (540–594), around whom the movement formed. He provides insights into the sect's soteriological ideas and practices and a convincing hypothesis about why it was suppressed by emperors five times over a span of nearly 200 years during the Sui and T'ang dynasties and its texts were excluded as heretical from the Buddhist canon.

In contrast to previous interpretations that have emphasized how Hsin-hsing's teachings departed from the normative Buddhism of his day, Hubbard highlights the continuities and the Chinese master's efforts to present his ideas within the mainstream of monastic tradition. While part 1 of the study offers a general outline of Hsin-hsing's life and work, part 2 focuses more specifically on his rhetoric concerning the age of the dharma's decline (*mo-shih*) and his advocacy of the practice that arises in accord with the capacity (*tui ken ch'i hsing fa*). Advancing a more existential than temporal notion of decline, Hsin-hsing believed in the "absolute delusion" of all beings at the common, ordinary "third level" of degeneracy. Nevertheless, as Hubbard shows in part 3, he paradoxically affirmed the "perfect buddhahood" of all sentient beings, requiring both universal respect for all beings and the equal veneration of all buddhas and bodhisattvas. This latter view distinguished the San-chieh movement from other sects, most notably Pure Land, that narrowed the path of refuge by relying solely on the saving power of a single buddha. Part 4 examines Hsin-hsing's highly recommended religious practice for the degenerate of supporting the charitable lending institution and cultic center known as the "Inexhaustible Storehouse." Based on classical Buddhist notions concerning merit transfer and the bodhisattva's skillful means to alleviate suffering, the Inexhaustible Storehouse made interest and record-free loans to the poor, who were encouraged to repay the loans whenever feasible. Considered also in part 4 are the reasons for the various suppressions of the Three Levels Movement, which are traced not to doctrinal but to political issues in China, and for Hubbard's summary judgment that Hsin-hsing's form of Buddhist inclusivism