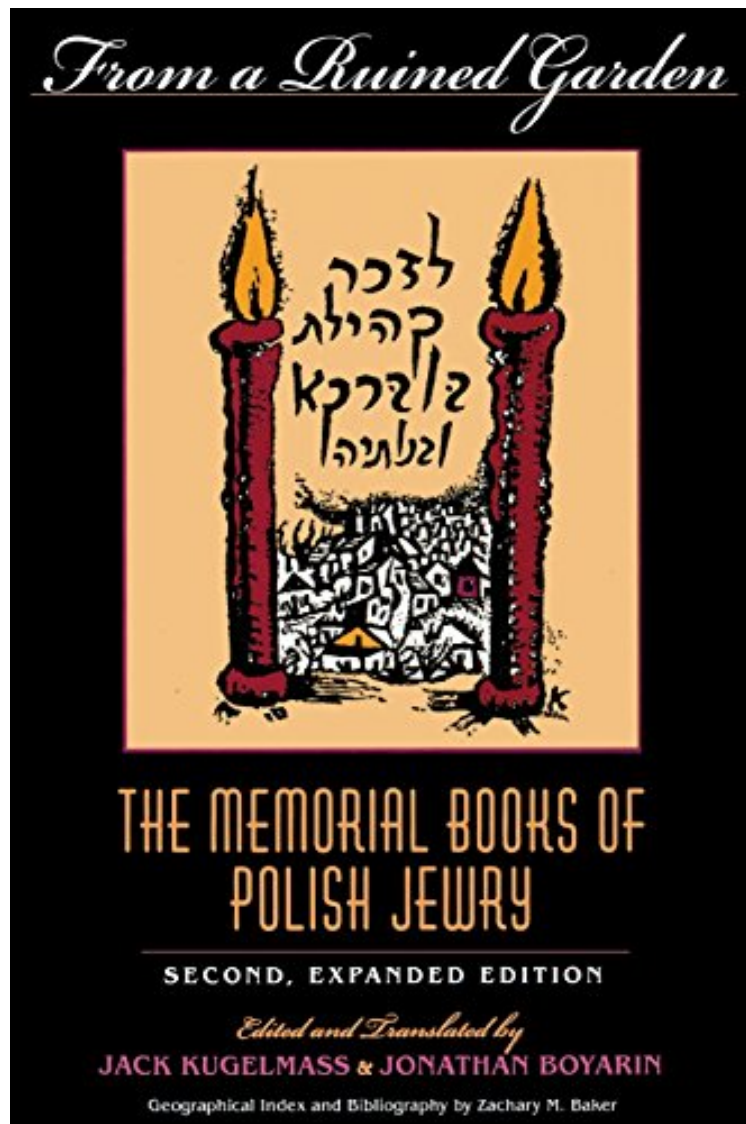


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From a Ruined Garden, Second Expanded Edition: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry (Indiana-Holocaust Museum Reprint)

From Jonathan Boyarin

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my time, and all praised From a Ruined Garden, Second Expanded Edition: The Memorial Books of Polish Jewry (Indiana-Holocaust Museum Reprint):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Works of witness to the Polish Jewish world destroyed By Shalom Freedman This book contains selections from seventy of the more than five-hundred Memorial books of Jewish communities in Poland. As the editors make clear in their introduction 'the memorial books' aim to make certain that the destroyed world of Polish Jewry will not be forgotten. The books provide in some sense a record of the town they are written about, and often a picture of the people themselves. They connect up with the Jewish traditional Literature of Lamentation. In the words of the authors, "The memorial books came to be seen as substitute gravestones." The memorial books are structured on a continuum from simple acts of naming to highly elaborated acts of narrative." The authors make clear that even a list of names serves the purpose of remembering. In their introduction the authors quote Shlomo Pultusker, "When I review in thought my life in Rozhan, events, splinters of half-forgotten memories, appear before my eyes. People, formerly flesh and blood and everyday Jews, were transformed by the tragic events into figures similar to heroes in the dramas one reads. Of all the people of that time, individuals stand out whose names stick in memory.. And to these people, most of whose remains lie in no cemetery, may my humble words about them serve as an eternal monument and redeem them from merciless oblivion. With trembling and fear of God I write my modest words, which are no more than a pale reflection of what was in reality." Three million Polish Jews were murdered in the Shoah. These books are the fragmented, inadequate witness of what they were. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. This book vividly describes a destroyed world By A Customer Rarely is a book published that causes an entirely new genre of studies to open up. This was the result of the first edition of this book printed in 1983. Before 1983, some scholars, librarians, and genealogical researchers knew of *yizkher bikher* in general, but up to that time there had not been a major focus on these books as social, historical, and genealogical sources of first-hand knowledge of destroyed communities, to some extent because of language barriers. But as more lay persons began searching their roots in the late 1970s, with interest building in the 1980s and exploding in the 1990s, they started to tap into these remarkable books. The publication of *From a Ruined Garden*, containing over 70 translated excerpts from Polish *yizkor* books, illuminated for many lay persons the lost world depicted in these books from which they had been cut off because they could not read them in their original languages, primarily Yiddish and Hebrew. The first edition has long been out of print, but again, in another bit of fortunate timing, a second, expanded edition has been published. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Reassembles the mosaic of pre-Holocaust Jewish life By Ari Davidow What this book does, like nothing else, is to recreate the diversity of Jewish life in Eastern Europe prior to the Holocaust. Carefully selected excerpts from hundreds of memorial books in the YIVO library, this book isn't just about some shtetl, but about Zionists and Misnagdim and town councils and about town that, well, "most towns have a town fool, our town was so small that our village idiot was only half-crazy."

An indispensable sourcebook... Emphasis falls on the variegated, often joyful, culture of the Polish Jews, on what existed before the garden was ruined." Geoffrey Hartmann, *The New Republic* From these marvelous selections, one can see an entire culture unfolding." Curt Leviant, *New York Times Book Review* This newly revised version of the classic study... is a pleasure for the eye and the soul! One of the seminal studies of the impact of the Shoah on European Jewry, it is even more moving in its new incarnation than in its original version. More than a collection of studies of books of remembrance and mourning, this volume asks how one can mourn for a world lost and still live in the present and the future." Sander L. Gilman Kugelmass and Boyarin have done a splendid job of combing the vast memorial book literature to select the most revealing accounts of Jewish life in interbellum Poland. Ordinary people speak in this volume with an immediacy and poignancy that cannot help but touch the reader. In the time since it first appeared, *From a Ruined Garden* has become a classic. Its reappearance in an updated and expanded form is most welcome." Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett In this magnificent collection, the editors combine a profound feel for the vanished world of Polish Jewry, the anthologists skill at selecting the telling example, and the anthropologists sophisticated understanding of how these testimonies should be read. A marvelous introduction to this rich literature." Peter Novick Polish Jewish survivors of the Holocaust compiled memorial books to preserve the memory of their destroyed communities. They describe daily life in the shtetl as well as everyday life during the Holocaust and the experiences of returning survivors. These memories paint a haunting picture of a way of life lost forever.

"An indispensable sourcebook... Emphasis falls on the variegated, often joyful, culture of the Polish Jews, on what existed before the garden was ruined. - Geoffrey H. Hartmann, *The New Republic* "An indispensable sourcebook ... Emphasis falls on the variegated, often joyful, culture of the Polish Jews, on what existed before the garden was ruined." - Geoffrey Hartmann, *The New Republic* "From these marvelous selections, one can see an entire culture unfolding." - Curt Leviant, *New York Times Book* "This newly revised version of the classic study ... is a pleasure for the eye and the soul! One of the seminal studies of the impact of the Shoah on European Jewry, it is even more moving in its new incarnation than in its original version. More than a collection of studies of books of remembrance and

mourning, this volume asks how one can mourn for a world lost and still live in the present and the future." - Sander L. Gilman "Kugelmass and Boyarin have done a splendid job of combing the vast memorial book literature to select the most revealing accounts of Jewish life in interbellum Poland. Ordinary people speak in this volume with an immediacy and poignancy that cannot help but touch the reader. In the time since it first appeared, *From a Ruined Garden* has become a classic. Its reappearance in an updated and expanded form is most welcome." - Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett "In this magnificent collection, the editors combine a profound 'feel' for the vanished world of Polish Jewry, the anthologist's skill at selecting the telling example, and the anthropologist's sophisticated understanding of how these testimonies should be read. A marvelous introduction to this rich literature." - Peter Novick

About the Author
Jack Kugelmass is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, author of *The Miracle of Intervale Avenue: The Story of a Jewish Congregation in the South Bronx* and *Masked Culture: The Greenwich Village Halloween Parade*, and editor of *Between Two Worlds: Ethnographic Essays on American Jewry*.
Jonathan Boyarin, an anthropologist and ethnographer, is author of *Polish Jews in Paris: The Ethnography of Memory*, *Storm from Paradise: The Politics of Jewish Memory*, and *Thinking in Jewish*.
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