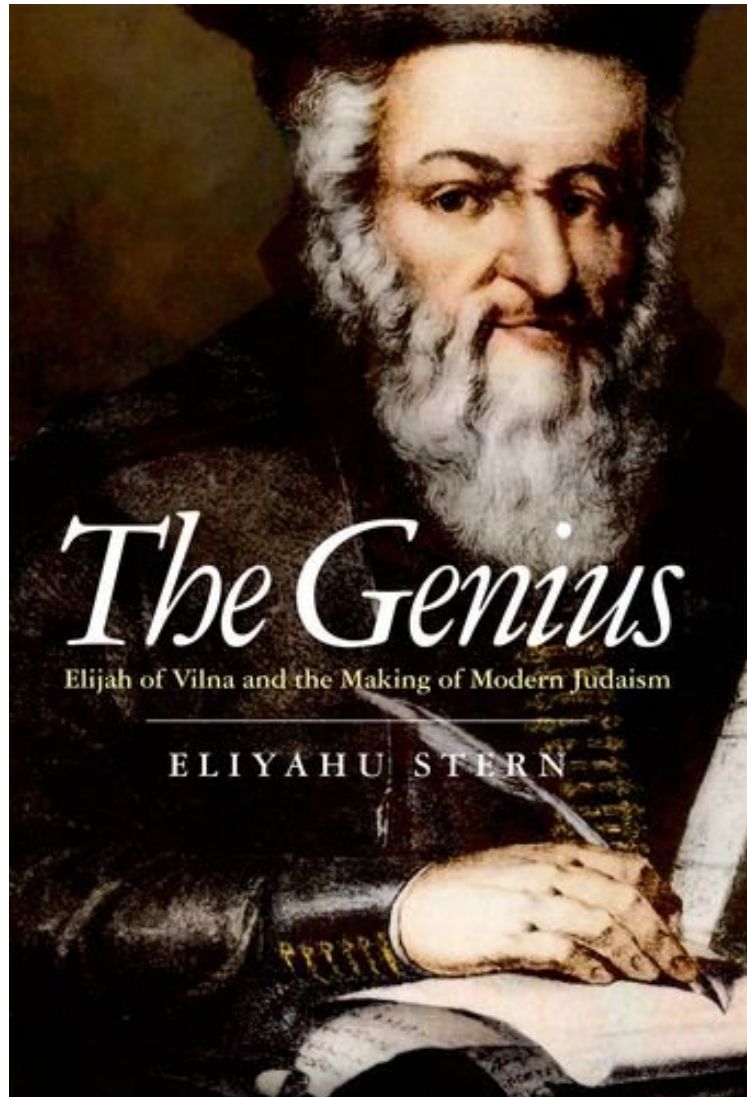


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## The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism

*Eliyahu Stern*

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**Eliyahu Stern : The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Genius: Elijah of Vilna and the Making of Modern Judaism:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two StarsBy DrinVery dense...hard to read.3 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A well-researched compilation documenting the influence of a Brilliant Torah ScholarBy R.R.PaulsonA Well-researched Compilation documenting the Influence of a Brilliant Torah Scholar.I have no quarrel with the extensive and meticulous documentation the author presented. I would have better liked a style that would

have given us more feeling and insight into the personal life and personality of the Gaon.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy daniel harrisgreat

Elijah ben Solomon, the "Genius of Vilna, was perhaps the best-known and most understudied figure in modern Jewish history. This book offers a new narrative of Jewish modernity based on Elijah's life and influence. While the experience of Jews in modernity has often been described as a process of Western European secularization with Jews becoming citizens of Western nation-states, congregants of reformed synagogues, and assimilated members of society Stern uses Elijah's story to highlight a different theory of modernization for European life. Religious movements such as Hasidism and anti-secular institutions such as the yeshiva emerged from the same democratization of knowledge and privatization of religion that gave rise to secular and universal movements and institutions. Claimed by traditionalists, enlighteners, Zionists, and the Orthodox, Elijah's genius and its afterlife capture an all-embracing interpretation of the modern Jewish experience. Through the story of the Vilna Gaon, Stern presents a new model for understanding modern Jewish history and more generally the place of traditionalism and religious radicalism in modern Western life and thought.

Stern's study will become the first resort for anyone seeking to understand the place of Elijah of Vilna in the modern Jewish experience. This is a learned, innovative and important book that, for the first time, situates the Gaon in both his time and his place. Moreover, the work contributes significantly to a re-evaluation of the emphases appropriate to the study of Jewish history in the modern period. Gershon David Hundert, McGill University