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Phillip I. Ackerman-Lieberman

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Phillip I. Ackerman-Lieberman : The Business of Identity: Jews, Muslims, and Economic Life in Medieval Egypt (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Business of Identity: Jews, Muslims, and Economic Life in Medieval Egypt (Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture):

The Cairo Geniza is the largest and richest store of documentary evidence for the medieval Islamic world. This book seeks to revolutionize the way scholars use that treasure trove. Phillip I. Ackerman-Lieberman draws on legal documents from the Geniza to reconceive of life in the medieval Islamic marketplace. In place of the shared practices broadly understood by scholars to have transcended confessional boundaries, he reveals how Jewish merchants in Egypt employed distinctive trading practices. Highly influenced by Jewish law, these commercial practices served to manifest their Jewish identity in the medieval Islamic context. In light of this distinctiveness, Ackerman-Lieberman proposes an alternative model for using the Geniza documents as a tool for understanding daily life in the medieval Islamic world as a whole.

"Ackerman-Lieberman's principle innovation is to look closely at legal documents as evidence for the legal principles by which merchants organized their partnerships . . . [This] book offers an important historiographical intervention in Geniza studies and medieval economic history. For legal historians, his approach is most useful as an interrogation into the models that often implicitly shape our understanding of the relationship among different legal orders and legal practices that coexisted in legally pluralist environments." (Jessica M. Marglin *Law and History*)"In this deeply learned study of medieval Egypt, Phillip Ackerman-Lieberman details the ways in which Jews immersed themselves in Muslim culture and institutions, not to create a symbiosis of Judaism and Islam, but to forge a particular and nuanced minority identity as Jews. This is a landmark book, challenging prevalent misconceptions about Jewish history and offering remarkably original insights into the formation of minority cultures." (Susannah Heschel, *Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies*)"This combination of intricate legal history and far-reaching historiographical considerations makes an important contribution to Genizah studies, economic history, and the study of religious minorities." (Pinchas Roth)About the AuthorPhillip I. Ackerman-Lieberman is Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies and Law, and Affiliated Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and History at Vanderbilt University.