

Simcha Emanuel, *שבתי לוחות: ספרים אבודים של בעלי התוספות* (Fragments of the Tablets. Lost Books of the Tosafists). Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2006. 387 pp. Bibliography, indexes.

Many books were lost during history, but Jewish books probably more than others (p. 16). Of many texts we have never even heard. Books were lost for a great variety of intellectual and other reasons (pp. 304–319). As Emanuel emphasizes, at times only an imponderable circumstance saved a book for posterity. There are various estimates of the ratio of the number of Hebrew manuscripts extant today to that of the manuscripts that have ever existed, but obviously it remains a matter of conjecture (p. 18). By contrast, it is a (surprising) fact that, as Emanuel writes, the number of lost books that he discusses in this volume, although only a part of the lost books of the Tosafists, far exceeds the number of extant books (p. 304). Paradoxical as it may appear on first sight (see the nice story, p. 50), Emanuel has set himself the task of reconstructing some of the lost books as best he could. He employs a variety of methods (e.g., quotations), of which one deserves special mention: the so-called European *geniza*. In many European

libraries and archives, Hebrew manuscripts were used as binding materials. In recent decades researchers have begun to gather these fragments systematically and retrieve the texts they convey (these are referred to as: books within books; see <http://www.hebrewmanuscript.com>). While (as could be expected on probabilistic considerations) most retrieved texts are from books that have come down to us, some are unique and contain texts that had been unknown (p. 40). The substance of this very erudite book consists of the attempt to gather all possible information on a considerable number of writings by the Tosafists (see the list on pp. 348–350).