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Brody, Robert. Sa'adyah Gaon. Translated from Hebrew by Betsy Rosenberg. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013. 180 pp. \$36.50 (9781904113881).

The author, a professor of Talmud at Hebrew University, provides a systematic overview of the writings of one of the greatest Jewish thinkers. This is preceded by a chapter each on Sa'adyah's environment and life. While I wish there was a bit more about Sa'adyah's arguments for creation out of nothing, this relatively brief book is meant as an introduction and, on the whole, Dr. Brody does a good job of balancing brevity with giving a non-superficial sense of Sa'adyah's thought. This is no small feat given the breadth of Sa'adyah's concerns. How many know, for example, that in addition to his philosophical and halakhic endeavors, he also strove to have Hebrew regain its position as a vernacular? The book succeeds in providing a portrait of Sa'adyah as a man, at least in his role as public intellectual, with a deep sense of mission: rationalistic, religious, and polemical. Recommended.

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