



Athens in Jerusalem: Classical Antiquity and Hellenism in the Making of the Modern Secular Jew

Yaacov Shavit

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From the 18th Century on, Jews seeking to acquire a modern identify began to take a new interest in classical antiquity and Hellenistic civilization as a key to the secular Jewish culture they sought to develop. It was of course not the 'real' classical Greece to which they aspired but rather its idealized image as perceived through contemporary eyes, but this image became an important element in the search for a new Jewish self-awareness. For the modernizing Jew, "Greek" became a metaphor for the secular culture of modern Europe in its various forms.

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