erudition, a vast range of scholarly work, often arriving at cautious, informed and moderating positions. As he states at the outset, 'the fragmentary and sometimes vague evidence at our disposal does not sit easily with definite conclusions' (p. 36).

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Helena Waddy, *Oberammergau in the Nazi Era: The Fate of a Catholic Village in Hitler's Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 350. £22.50 (hbk).

Amidst of the ravages of an epidemic, the people of Oberammergau, a village nestled in the Bavarian highlands, vowed in 1633 to re-enact the Passion of Christ every ten years. They have faithfully kept to their vow into the present, in which a cast of 2,000 perform the Passion Play before hundreds of thousands of visitors. In 1934, Adolph Hitler was one of those attendees, observing afterwards how the play 'revealed the muck and mire of Jewry'.

In her study of Oberammergau during the Third Reich, Helena Waddy offers a rich and detailed examination of the uneasy interaction of Nazism with the village's heritage and the Catholic piety which nourished it. Using a broad array of village and regional records and newspapers, she shows how the commitment to fulfil the seventeenth-century pledge was interwoven into village economic, social and political dynamics. The book painstakingly details how the complex mixture of motives, goals, family and religious attachments led some villagers to enthusiastically promote Nazism, others to expedient or passive acceptance, and a few to cautious dissent, particularly as Nazi policies sought to undermine Catholic ritual and organisational life. Involved in all such decisions was Oberammergau's identity as the 'passion play village'. Even loyal Nazis would risk their careers and perhaps lives to intercede with their superiors, half-heartedly enforce or even ignore directives they felt compromised the village's commitment. The play's influence, through relationships formed over the years with Jewish vacationers and businessmen, fears of bad international publicity as well as Christian sensibilities, could extend as far as a general scepticism and hesitancy regarding Nazi anti-Semitism and policies.

Although the book is narrowly focused on Oberammergau it also casts light on broader aspects of the Nazi era. Particularly telling is the awkward position in which Oberammergau's Passion Play tradition placed Nazi leaders. On one hand, the play represented the type of German folk heritage to which

the Nazi myth appealed; thus Hitler's attendance and endorsement. It was also, however, a product and symbol of Catholic devotion the Nazis tried to undermine as a competitor for the hearts of the German people. To further complicate matters, as Waddy observes, the play's text and dramatic rendering made comprehensible Hitler's anti-Semitic interpretation, thereby demonstrating the uneasy place of Christianity itself before Nazi atrocities.

Waddy's understanding of the people of Oberammergau leads her to contest Daniel Goldhagen's depiction of the German people in the Third Reich as *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (Knopf, 1996). While she may be right to challenge Goldhagen's harsh judgement – and she is not alone in doing so – she may at times be too muted in her critique of Oberammergau's citizens. She may also exaggerate the case in her tendency to equate opposition to Nazi religious policies and sensibilities with resistance. Still, in the light of Nazi totalitarian ambitions, any dissent could be a form of confrontation.

Oberammergau in the Nazi Era is unabashedly a micro history of a Bavarian Alpine village with a unique identity. It greatly enriches our understanding of a village famous for its vow to perform the Passion Play, but also of the complexity of life in the Third Reich, and how local commitments and traditions could limit the effectiveness of Nazi rule. Yet, as Professor Waddy is careful to note, while the people of Oberammergau may not have been Hitler's willing executioners, neither were they overly active or vocal in their opposition. In this Oberammergau shared in the guilt of the rest of Nazi Germany.

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Benjamin D. Sommer, *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. xv+334. $88.00.

The Bodies of God beautifully outlines the debate which emerged in the Hebrew Bible between texts which assume a fluid notion of divine embodiment and selfhood and texts which emphasise instead divine unity of body and self. Sommer begins by showing how, in the ancient Mediterranean world, gods were imagined as possessing bodies, whether such bodies were material or merely had form without substance. There were, however, opposing conceptions of divine embodiment. He identifies a fluidity model, according to which gods could be present simultaneously in various kinds of bodies at multiple sites, both in heaven and on earth, and a non-fluidity model, according to which gods were only capable of having one body, either in