Judaic Traits in Funerary Customs of the Shona of Zimbabwe: A Comparative Case Study

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Death since time immemorial remains one of the greatest challenges that humanity is faced with hence, the attempt to mitigate it through ritual activity. The failure to conduct such rituals leaves death's strike unanswered, letting thus mortality to have the last word. This work looks at the burial rituals of the Jews and the Shona as a case study and the author explores some aspects which are shared in common. He succeeds in arguing that the similarities are not a coincidence but bear testimony to a common origin. He dwells on three theories to advance this thesis, the Lemba theory, the Rusape Jews theory and the Kushite theory. However, the author is realistic and does not shy away from highlighting some weaknesses of the proposed theories. The work is indeed a rich source for Jewish and Shona funerary customs and provides an interesting perspective for reading and understanding the Scriptures. It goes without saying that those interested in the pursuit of cultural studies as well as inter-biblical studies have a lot to benefit from this work. -Rev. Dr Frederick Chiromba, Harare.