

of this literature and its authors. It is a remarkable achievement that belongs in any collection dealing with contemporary religion—Jewish or otherwise.

Shaul Stampfer

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Judaism: Hellenistic through Late Antiquity

KABBALAH: A NEUROCOGNITIVE APPROACH TO MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES. By Shahar Arzy and Moshe Idel. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015. Pp. vii + 206. Cloth, \$50.00.

Moshe Idel is one of the leading academic researchers of kabbalah in our generation. Shahar Arzy is the head of a computational neuropsychiatry lab and teaches at the Hebrew University. The result of their joining forces is a fascinating, unconventional, and important book that attempts to explain the physiological background of certain ecstatic phenomenon. The book deals with the reasons a neurocognitive approach to mystical experiences can contribute to our understanding of aspects of ecstatic experiences in Jewish mysticism and the neurocognitive mechanisms of Jewish mystical ecstasy, and analyzes different types of experiences of disassociation from the body. Two appendices, one on functional networks in the human brain for nonspecialists in brain science and one on Abraham Abulafia for nonspecialists in Kabbalah, follow the conclusion of the book. The focus of the authors is on technique and experience and not on theory, whether neurological or kabbalistic. They bring many cases, describing the experience in each and then offering neurological explanations of the phenomena. They emphasize that their insights cannot explain all ecstatic phenomenon and that this is a developing field. This attempt to bring together two disparate disciplines should appeal to many. It should be of particular interest to students of religion who are also interested in psychology or the natural sciences, but even those focused on religion will find this book stimulating. It is absorbing and easy to read, and indicates how much more can be learned in the future by adopting interdisciplinary approaches to familiar fields.

Shaul Stampfer

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

SHARING THE BURDEN: RABBI SIMHAH ZISSEL ZIV AND THE PATH OF MUSAR. By Geoffrey D. Claussen. SUNY Series in Contemporary Jewish Thought. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015. Pp. xiii + 245. Cloth, \$80.00; paper, \$24.95.

The Musar movement was an East European Jewish religious movement that developed in the nineteenth century in the Lithuanian lands and in nearby regions. It

called for intensive study of Jewish ethics and for a focus on the implementation of a moral discipline in daily life. At the outset, the musar movement was controversial in Jewish circles because it implied that study of the Talmud alone is not sufficient for religious fulfillment and moral improvement, but it gradually entered the mainstream. While it started in an urban environment (Kovno/Kaunas), its rise to influence happened in nineteenth century Lithuanian yeshivot. It has had a long term impact in yeshiva circles, though today much of the intensity has been lost. Rabbi Simha Zissel Ziv (Broida, 1824–1898) played a key role in providing an institutional framework for attracting young men to the study of ethics. For many years, the Musar movement received little attention outside of limited orthodox Jewish circles, but its relevance to contemporary concerns has been increasingly recognized in recent years, though there are relatively few systematic and academic studies of Musar. Claussen's coherent and readable monograph, based on a 2011 PhD dissertation written at the Jewish Theological Seminary, is a welcome addition to this literature and should be very relevant to students of a variety of disciplines in religious studies. The author deals with the rabbi's biography and his ethical vision, with Musar and philosophical thought, and with the challenge of moral improvement and developing the capacity to love. Claussen appreciates Ziv's contributions but he also maintains a critical stance and avoids superficial generalizations and hagiographical comments. The reader of this comes away not only with a deep understanding of a past movement but with a sensitivity as to how a concern for moral values can be taught and expressed in daily life. This is an important contribution not only to understanding modern East European Jewish thought but also to general issues of ethics and religious modernization.

Shaul Stampfer

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

EARLY CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH NARRATIVE: THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN SHAPING NARRATIVE FORMS. Edited by Ilaria Ramelli and Judith Perkins. *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, 348. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. Pp. xiii + 373. €134.00.

This volume aims to show that religion played a significant role in the forms taken by antique and late antique novels, with a particular focus on Jewish and Christian narratives. Two chapters study elements of the wider Greco-Roman world and thereby extend the topic of study into the social matrices in which early Judaism and Christianity are to be located. The breadth of topics covered in the volume is impressive, but this proves to be both one of the book's strengths and one of its weaknesses. Enough texts are discussed that it will be difficult for most readers studying early Jewish or Christian texts not to find one or more of the chapters to be intriguing

and relevant. Yet the assortment of topics provides little coherence when reading the book from beginning to end. Moreover, it is unclear how the aim of the volume is to be demonstrated, namely, to show that religion plays a role in shaping narrative forms. It seems more accurate to say that religion plays a significant role in narratives than to claim that narrative forms are affected by religious outlooks. Finally, the quality of the essays in the book is uneven. For example, Wills provides a robust discussion of how to differentiate between the prose genres of history and novel in early Jewish literature, while MacDonald's contribution consists mostly of summaries of texts that are available elsewhere. The book is targeted at scholars of early Judaism and Christianity. Essays on specific texts will be of interest to those studying the same texts.

Jonathon Lookadoo
University of Otago

JUDEANS AND JEWS: FOUR FACES OF DICHOTOMY IN ANCIENT JEWISH HISTORY. By Daniel R. Schwartz. Kenneth Michael Tanenbaum Series in Jewish Studies. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014. Pp. xiii + 173; plates. Cloth, \$50.00.

This volume contains three Shoshana Shier lectures delivered at the University of Toronto in 2010, an additional study on Heinrich Graetz, and a general conclusion. As such, it is a very stimulating book to read and a valuable resource but not an overview of or a general introduction to a topic. The common theme of the book is dichotomies, and Schwartz focuses on the choice of authors between the term "Judean," which emphasizes geography as a basis for identity, and "Jews," which emphasizes religion and culture. The first section deals with basic differences in values and outlook between the writing of 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. Schwartz shows how the terms used by the authors of each text can be analyzed and mined to reveal their respective concerns. This is model textual analysis. The second section deals with priestly and rabbinic law and provides a lucid description of Pharisees and Sadducees. This section is richly documented, and while it is possible that not all readers will follow all the discussion in its entirety, the conclusions are very clear. The third section deals with Josephus and the differences in point of view between his early works and later works. This discussion as well can easily be employed as a model of textual analysis for students of religion and of historiography. The last section skips forward in time to deal with Heinrich Graetz, a key nineteenth-century German Jewish historian whose bestselling history of the Jews was revised and reprinted several times. Schwartz, through very close reading, shows how differences in terminology and presentation reflect the different issues that Graetz sought to address in his history. There is much to be learned here about the need for self-awareness on the part of historians

of religion in general. Schwartz avoids one-sided presentations and often points out the price that has to be paid in accuracy and clarity even when the "best" choice is made. His reflections after years of research will have long-term value for specialists in religious history and second temple Judaism. This is not a book for beginners but has much to offer both serious students and veterans of research on the history of Jews and Judaism.

Shaul Stampfer
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Judaism: Medieval/Early Modern Jewish Studies

THE SECRET FAITH OF MAESTRE HONORATUS: PROFAYT DURAN AND JEWISH IDENTITY IN LATE MEDIEVAL IBERIA. By Maud Kozodoy. Edited by Ruth Mazo Karras. The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. Pp. 314. Cloth, \$59.95.

This book offers readers a unique perspective: that of a medieval Iberian Jew who was forcibly converted to Christianity in 1391. Kozodoy analyzes the writings of Profayt Duran, a Jew involved in philosophical and scientific studies, before and after his conversion to ascertain the nature of his Jewish identity throughout his life. Utilizing manuscript data from Duran's city of Perpignan, Kozodoy highlights the delicate dynamics involved in shifting religious identities and how they affected interpersonal relations including long-standing business associates and disciples. In the first part of the book, Kozodoy deftly weaves Duran into the historical context and the intellectual currents of his period, demonstrating his engagement with Maimonidean rationalism, Gersonidean cosmology, arithmetic, and medicine. The second part examines Duran's treatment of Christianity, and his authorship of anti-Christian polemics. Duran's ability to satirize and disparage Christian theology in an epistle that appears to praise his newfound faith speaks to his sophisticated rhetorical capabilities. In his epistle, "Be Not Like Your Fathers," Duran employs the conventional Iberian literary techniques of ornamentation and biblical allusion to imbue his verses with biting significance. His other polemical work, *Kelimat Ha-Goyim*, attacks Christian doctrines directly using Christian sources including Scriptures, the Church Fathers, and other medieval Christian authorities. The final section of Kozodoy's book focuses on Duran's postconversion works that culminate with the *Ma'aseh Efod*, a work that demonstrates Duran's acceptance of his new identity through an understanding of Judaism as an internal state of being that endures despite the trappings of his external religious identity.

Dana Fishkin
Touro College, NY