

Well versed in the materials and deft in expository style, B. avoids many sloppy historical shortcuts, as when, for example, he extends consideration of martyr saints beyond late antiquity and into the mission fields of the Middle Ages. At the same time, his reliance on the Protestant Reformation as a terminal point exaggerates both its influence and theological homogeneity, thereby underrating the critical work of Renaissance authors who foreshadowed the emergence of the Bollandists.

In its systematic section, the volume covers such topics as shrines, pilgrimage, relics, miracles, art, literature, the sanctoral calendar, and saintly typology. B. attends sensitively to matters of historiography, as in his evaluation of the quantitative analysis of saints that was so common toward the end of the previous century. His conclusion offers insightfully summarized reflections on the Augustinian question that gives the volume its title.

The back matter is especially valuable: the bibliography is extensive and the index thorough. In short, B.'s work is astonishingly comprehensive, and the balance he strikes between narration and analysis is admirable.

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The Torah, the Gospel, and the Qur'an: Three Books, Two Cities, One Tale. By Anton Wessels. Translated from the Dutch by Henry Janson. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013. Pp. xxi + 312. \$28.

Wessels attempts a noble task, reading the three monotheistic scriptures (the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Bible, the Qur'an) as a single, harmonious narrative, to model how these religions might get along. In doing so, however, he loses the sense of the individual scriptures. To bring these disparate texts into a single, coherent narrative, he imposes an external structure. W.'s own structure is Christian—he is a Presbyterian minister. Because he reads the texts harmoniously, he explains away, minimizes, or ignores their disparities. Muslims will find the book unsatisfactory because of its christological leanings and occasional sermonizing. Jews will be unsatisfied because W. minimizes the importance of Jewish identity and the Jewish connection to the land. In sum, his narrative focuses on “universal salvation.”

W. treats the Qur'an as a source of divine wisdom. Although apparently not a reader of Arabic, he has made careful study of the Qur'an in his native Dutch. He claims his book as a tale of two cities (good and evil) but tries to hold together too many different kinds of comparisons for this to be a useful structure. The cities keep changing and share little that might make them one story. He adds historical summary, he reviews the Deuteronomic History, and he reflects on the nature of kingship. None of this refers to the “tale of two cities.” The book is rather a collection of essays around the topic of the Bible and the Qur'an.

Although certainly not a fundamentalist, W. places too much credence in the historicity of stories in the Bible, particularly concerning Abraham and the reign of Solomon.

I especially liked W.'s treatment of the Hijra, the historic pilgrimage of the early Islamic community from Mecca to Medina. He fruitfully compares it to Abraham leaving Mesopotamia, to the Exodus, and to Jesus' sojourn into the desert.

W. is well intentioned but misrepresents the various texts, making them more univocal and peaceful/tolerant than they actually are. I recommend instead Kaltner's *Ishmael Instructs Isaac: An Introduction to the Qur'an for Bible Readers* (1999) for a less troublesome approach to this difficult and sensitive topic.

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New Heavens and a New Earth: The Jewish Reception of Copernican Thought. By Jeremy Brown. New York: Oxford University, 2013. Pp. xviii + 394. \$74.

Copernicus's revolutionary shifting of the center of the universe from our earth to the sun deeply disturbed religious thinkers. As Brown indicates at the outset of this masterful and definitive volume, no accurate or comprehensive history of its Jewish reception exists. Such a study must locate and interpret obscure rabbinic texts written in a convoluted literary Hebrew, alluding to the complex intellectual worlds of talmudic (chap. 2) and Kabbalistic thinking, and then present them in the context of the larger history of religion and science, interpreting both fields to outsiders. In all this, B. is extremely successful. As a learned Jewish layman (and a professor of emergency medicine), he carefully accumulated the data for this project (many illustrations come from his personal collection of rare books); as a gifted writer, he manages the complexity of this wealth of data very well, generating a roughly chronological and lucid narrative.

Like Christians, Jewish thinkers assessed the Copernican revolution against biblical discourse, presumptions drawn from Greek thought, postbiblical authoritative geocentric religious traditions, and received scientific understandings. However, into the 19th century, Jews were largely (with important exceptions) excluded from the Christian academic world. B.'s challenge, then, is to discern where and how Jews learned about this unsettling theory, how they dealt with it when they did, and why they made their individual choices. No single definitive presentation influenced all Jews, but there was growing awareness of the issue with recurring arguments in favor and against. B.'s tracing of these arguments is meticulous; many readers might choose to skim. Eventually, especially with 19th-century scientific answers to major objections, almost all Jews, like their neighbors, accepted the heliocentric model, either by rejecting or by reinterpreting the source of religious objections.

B. suggests a wider significance to this history: Darwinian evolution remains under attack; if human behavior is genetic or biochemical, then is sin an operative category? The methods Jews applied in struggling with Copernican thought should allow positive religious integration of newer scientific theory as well.

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