

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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