

Browne's medical, scientific, and figurative engagements with skin as barrier, boundary, and text, and two concluding influence studies that might have seemed less out of place if joined by additional examples of Browne's afterlife: Rosenstein on Browne and Borges (focusing primarily on issues of imitation and translation) and Miller on Browne and Sebald (via the antiquarian project of the search for truth).

The experience of reading the collection in its entirety reproduces in some ways the experience of reading Browne himself. What seems certain in one place gets questioned in another, and we return repeatedly to certain key concerns and questions, encouraged each time to rethink what we first thought. To a degree unusual in collections, these essays speak to and enrich one another, even when they disagree. Several of the contributors have written on Browne before, in works cited often in the essays here (particularly Preston, Barbour, Post, Parry, Silver, and Guibbory). Along with the essays by Shuger and Nelson, their contributions seem likely to become standard treatments of these respective texts or subjects. Furthermore, six contributors (Murphy, Barbour, Nelson, Preston, Killeen, and Edwards) appear in another recent collection, though in each case writing on a different text or subject from what they write on here: *'A man very well studied': New Contexts for Thomas Browne*, ed. Kathryn Murphy and Richard Todd (Leiden: Brill, 2008). The two collections complement one another, with the Brill collection strong on such issues as Browne's time in Leiden, his responses to the civil wars, and the early translation of his works. Both together are indispensable, and it seems appropriate that a writer known for amplification requires two collections to capture the full range and complexity of his achievement.

Achsah Guibbory. *Christian Identity: Jews and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. xi + 328 pp. + 11 illus. \$110.00. Review by WILLIAM E. ENGEL, THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH: SEWANEE.

Achsah Guibbory's new book is a wide-ranging account of the presence of Jews in England from the Renaissance to the Restoration. At the same time it is a lucid assessment of the dominant metaphors

associated with Israel having a destiny as a “chosen people,” with themes ranging from bondage and deliverance, to exile, captivity, and redemption. Guibbory deftly bridges the traditional academic disciplines of literary criticism, history, and religious studies to substantiate some very specific claims about the formation of early modern Christian identities. She succeeds in this endeavor both because of her astute critical judgments about how to weigh the textual evidence and also because of her years of painstaking archival research. Readers of this journal will be familiar with her award-winning *Ceremony and Community from Herbert to Milton* (1998) as well as her groundbreaking essays published in *Milton and Gender* (2004) and in *Milton and the Jews* (2008).

Much of the success of this book can be attributed to Guibbory’s eschewing any reductive template treating Jews simply as “the Other” (220). Such an approach, she discloses early on, is inadequate for taking into account the historical shifts of the period and tends to collapse the range of English attitudes toward Jews, which would prevent us from “recognizing that some English people felt certain kinds of continuity and identity with the ancient Jews, and occasionally with contemporary ones” (2-3). Fully cognizant of recent studies of the Bible in the seventeenth century (most notably by Christianson and by Shuger) and of Philo-Semitism (by Katz, by Rosenblatt, and by Shoulson), Guibbory argues persuasively that the Hebrew Bible was “foundational to English Protestant Christianity”—a tool of “both the powerful and the powerless—helping to imagine the nation” and also “inspiring ideals of justice and equality” (295).

Her exposition is built on queries posed periodically that are as far from rhetorical questions as Elijah is from the priests of Baal. Three examples will serve: “What values did the English see in the ancient Jews, to whom early modern English writers repeatedly returned as they defined their present experience and institutions, or sought to reform them?” (1); “But what exactly was a ‘commonwealth?’” (167); and, “Was there a place in England for Jews who continued to think of *themselves* as God’s Israel?” [original emphasis] (220). Her responses carefully reconstruct the original contexts of the key debates, for example regarding the readmission of the Jews into England in 1655.

With special attention initially to the writings of Calvin, Foxe, and Hooker, *Christian Identity* moves ultimately to Milton’s major prose

and later poems, and then Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis* and *Absalom and Achitophel*. Guibbory judiciously sifts through then current ideas about Jews and Israel seen as historical realities, as politically charged symbols, and as the basis for Christianity. She investigates how they reflected the polemics of Christian writers who sought to tap into the range of meanings afforded by Old Testament heroes and villains as well as, more generally, the notion of Israel as a nation. Along the way, she provides cogent close readings of Herrick's *Hesperides*, Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*, and Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. Also of note is her subtle treatment of William Prynne, Oliver Cromwell, Gerrard Winstanley, Margaret Fell, George Fox, and Menasseh Ben Israel, as well as of self-proclaimed prophets such as John Rogers, Abiezzar Coppe, and Anna Trapnel.

Notwithstanding the many figures discussed, readers never lose sight of the guiding principle implicit throughout—that knowing more about how Christians thought about Israel sheds light on issues still of great consequence. The epilogue nods in passing to the importance of Handel's Old Testament oratorios for Hanoverian England, to the sense of Biblical destiny that inspired the American Revolution, to the Balfour Declaration of 1917 which led to the establishment of a Jewish homeland, and to the famous poem on the Statue of Liberty written by Emma Lazarus who was, we are reminded, “from an old Sephardic family that was among the first Jewish settlers in America” (297).

Another virtue of *Christian Identity* is its organization. Even though some of the material already has appeared in different forms, this book is all of one piece. It is organized with an eye toward doing much more than simply identifying uses of the Hebrew Bible as typology which tends to gloss over “the complexity of Christian relations with the Old Testament or Jewish Israel and its narratives” (18). Accordingly, the first two chapters concern the development of Israelite narratives prevalent in English histories and institutions. The third looks at Puritan preachers and the invocation of Israelite history. The fourth, focusing on the other side, looks at Royalists who insisted they were Israel and depicted their opponents as Israel's biblical enemies. The fifth chapter concerns the political experimentation and alternatives for society leading up to and following the execution of Charles I.

This conduces gracefully, in the sixth chapter, to a detailed exploration of the Jewish presence in millenarianism while the seventh examines the controversy surrounding the readmission of the Jews into England. A final chapter assesses what happened when the Church and monarchy were restored.

The 18-page bibliography is complemented by a serviceable ten-page index. The main headings give a good idea—at a glance—of some of the important issues covered in this book as well as suggesting how, conceptually, they have been broken down and treated. There is no heading for “Bible,” but instead one for “Hebrew Bible” and another for “New Testament” (with individual books arranged alphabetically rather than canonically). The topical design of the index thus reinforces a principal consideration of this book, namely, how interest in biblical Israel “intensified the problem of Christian-Jewish relations, since ingrained theological anti-Judaism was at odds with the growing English experience of identification with ancient Jews” (13). This is an important book both because of its explicit recognition of the complexity and fluidity of Christian identity and also because of what it reveals about the specific ways the Reformation precipitated a renegotiation of the relations between Christianity and Judaism in the West.

Noam Reisner. *Milton and the Ineffable*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. Xiii + 321 pp. \$95. Review by PETER E. MEDINE, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.

As the title suggests, Noam Reisner’s book addresses itself to the subjects and critical interests dealt with by Rudolph Otto (*The Idea of the Holy* [1917;1978]), Michael Lieb (*Poetics of the Holy* [1981]), and Stephen M. Fallon (*Milton Among the Philosophers* [1991]). The book moves away from the historicist and political readings of Milton’s poetry which have loomed large over the last several decades. Echoing Lieb, Reisner summarizes his argument when he says that he wishes to examine Milton’s “poetics of the ineffability.” The examination rests on an analysis of the “crisis of mimesis in relation to apophatic discourse which Milton inherits from the humanist-Protestant tradi-