

of Jewish life in the early twentieth century. This volume is full of insights on the complex relationship between nationalism and religion and is richly documented. While not a full introduction to central European Jewish life, this book certainly should be in any collection dealing with that topic or of religion in times of war.

*Shaul Stampfer
Hebrew University*

THE JEWISH LABOR BUND IN POLAND, 1915-1939: FROM ITS EMERGENCE AS AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL PARTY UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF WORLD WAR II. By Emanuel Nowogrodzki. Rockville, MD: Shengold, 2001. Pp. xi + 336. \$22.95, ISBN 0-88400-214-4.

This book deals with the Bund, the Jewish socialist party, during the interwar period in Poland. During that time, the Bund was one of the strongest frameworks in the Jewish community and played a major role in Jewish life. It was militantly anti-religious and its activity was one of the factors that accelerated secularization among the Jews. The author was himself a prominent activist in the Bund. He wrote this book in Yiddish in the post-WWII years and it was translated after his death. It is part of a planned larger work that he was not able to complete. Unfortunately it lacks footnotes and an index and had the author been able to complete his book, he would have no doubt dealt with this matter. Although there are a growing number of objective scholarly monographs on the Bund, this study is valuable precisely because it is subjective and gives an insight as to how the Bund leadership saw itself. Of special interest is how the author vividly explains the Bund's opposition to Jewish orthodoxy and also describes how and why the Bund also struggled to defend the supply of kosher meat and Sabbath observance. Most of the Bund literature is in Yiddish and the translation of this book adds a great deal to our understanding of the realities of Polish Jewry before WWII. It should be of service to studies of the holocaust as well as of the internal kulturkampf and of militant secularism in East European Jewry.

*Shaul Stampfer
Hebrew University*

FROM FRANKFURT TO JERUSALEM: ISAAC BREUER AND THE HISTORY OF THE SECESSION DISPUTE IN MODERN JEWISH ORTHODOXY. By Matthias Morgenstern. *Studies in European Judaism*, 6. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002. Pp. xiv + 384. \$146.00, ISBN 90-04-12838-7.

One of the key polemics in modern Jewish orthodoxy has been between supporters of secession of orthodox Jews from the general (and not so observant) Jewish community and supporters of communal unity. Isaac Breuer, grandson of Samson Raphael Hirsch who was the founder of German Jewish neo-orthodoxy, was a central exponent of secession in the first half of the twentieth century. In this very original study, Morgenstern surveys the dispute over secession and describes the stages, context and implications of the controversy for German Jewry. Then he goes on to discuss the career of Breuer who developed separatist views but went on to support Jewish settlement, on his terms, in Palestine and recast many of his grandfather's views. Many of the issues raised in the book are equally relevant today although German Jewish orthodoxy is only a historical memory. The book is well translated—it is in English and not "Englished" German. Morgenstern is quite successful at giving a balanced presentations of all sides of very complex issues and offers a vivid picture of Breuer who had a many sided personality. This book is essential for an understanding of modern orthodoxy and of German Jewry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. A must for libraries, it should also come out in a popular edition so that students could buy copies.

*Shaul Stampfer
Hebrew University*

JEWISH RUSSIANS: UPHEAVALS IN A MOSCOW SYNAGOGUE. By Sascha L. Goluboff. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003. Pp. 208; photographs, maps. \$19.95, ISBN 0-8122-1838-8.

This is an ethnographic study of the transformation of a Moscow synagogue in the mid 1990s in the wake of an influx of Jews from central Asia and Georgia. To do this, the author describes, with great perception, the characteristics of all the Jewish groups involved. She also describes and analyzes events in the synagogue and her encounters with the synagogue community. Goluboff is acutely aware of the historical context. Her comparison of contemporary synagogue dynamics with realities under the communist regime is very original and enlightening. She also presents perceptive observations on the values of Jews from Georgia and central Asia. Goluboff is refreshingly honest about the limited degree to which an observer can create a complete description of a society. She has few illusions about the people she describes but she also is aware that they have many sides. This well written book is essential reading for anyone interested in

Jewish life in post-communist Russia and it is quite unique in its approach to post-communist Jewry. It is also very relevant to students of contemporary religious life in Russia in general and to the social study of religion.

*Shaul Stampfer
Hebrew University*

Islam

THE LITERATURE OF AL-ANDALUS. Edited by Maria Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells. Cambridge History of Arabic Literatures series. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. 507; plates. \$150.00, ISBN 0-521-47159-1.

If al-Andalus is seen by many as the golden age of Jewish poetry and one of the golden ages of Islamic civilization, we may well be said to be in the golden age of Andalus scholarship. This exquisite volume features twenty-six learned essays on different facets of al-Andalus. Far more than simply "literature," the volume also deals with music, philosophy, and architecture. And literature is by no means ignored. There is no better single volume to consult in reading about everything Andalusian ranging from Tbn 'Arabi and Judah Halevi to Ibn Hazm and Mozarab literature. Almost every essay presents the most trusted and recent scholarship. The real value of this book is to both Islamicists and Europeanists. To Islamicists, it will be a great tool in realizing that the story of Islamic civilization cannot begin and end in Middle East. Spain is not an offshoot of the main current of Islamdom, but a main stream. To scholars of medieval Europe, this volume will be an invaluable asset in documenting the fruitful interactions of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Spain and Sicily (which is also covered in the volume). The learned debates will no doubt allow—even force—scholars to re-imagine their conceptions of both "Islam" and "Europe." The volume's great cost will sadly limit its readership to research libraries, and one can hope that Cambridge will produce the book in paperback. Nonetheless, it is mandatory for all libraries, and highly recommended to all scholars of Islam and Europe.

*Omid Safi
Colgate University*

THE ARABIC ROLE IN MEDIEVAL LITERARY HISTORY: A FORGOTTEN HERITAGE. By María Rosa Menocal. The Middle Ages Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987, 2004. Pp. 200.

\$19.95, ISBN 0-8122-1324-6.

Menocal is particularly good problematizing categories such as the designation of the medieval as backward vis-à-vis the modern. She clearly demonstrates that the Renaissance results in a rethinking of what came before: an elevation of Greek and Latin heritages at the expense of other then forgotten and buried heritages. She is particularly astute in documenting how the medieval heritage must be re-imagined to include the contribution of Arab scholars in the twelfth century. Through her work, the boundary between Arab/Islamic civilization and Europe ends up being less of a rock solid barrier and more of a fluid membrane, with goods, ideas, and peoples moving back and forth. She carefully and objectively documents the resistance—even prejudice—of many European (particularly Spanish) scholars in acknowledging these close links. Menocal is strongest when she deals in the realm of literature, and she is quite persuasive in her reading of courtly love poetry as one of the important means whereby Islamic and European poetic traditions cross-pollinated. Her most controversial findings have to do with tracing the lines of connection closer to one of the doyens of the Western canon, Dante. For her part, Menocal states clearly that unlike some post-moderns, her task is not that of dismantling the canon, but of expanding it to reflect a more accurate historical picture. Her work is highly recommended to scholars of Islam, medieval Christianity, as well as those interested in definitions and contestations of civilizations. A superb piece of scholarship that richly rewards close readings.

*Omid Safi
Colgate University*

WOMEN OF SUFISM: A HIDDEN TREASURE. Edited by Camille Adams Helminski. Boston: Shambhala, 2003. Pp. 308. \$18.95, ISBN 1-57062-967-6.

Gershom Scholem, the great scholar of Jewish mysticism, once stated there was no evidence of women's activity in pre-modern Kabbalah. The world of Christian mysticism, on the other hand, is filled with the stories of female mystics. We can state with confidence now that the cosmos of Islamic mysticism is more akin to that of Christianity in being significantly populated by female luminaries. Helminski is deeply invested in this book. Along with her husband, Kabir, she started the Threshold Society which served as a branch of the Mevleviyye (Mawlawiyya) Sufi order that traces itself to Hazrat Mawlana Jalal al-Din (d. 1273), known in the West as Rumi. In the context of her spiritual leadership, she has worked

with many female aspirants. The work here nicely fills the gap between purely devotional works and specialist-oriented scholarly productions. Helminski draws on many scholarly sources, especially recent masterpieces such as R. Cornell's impressive *Early Sufi Women* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 1999). Yet Helminski is more invested in compiling a vast repertoire of writings by and about Sufi women. The volume covers material from the life of women at the time of Prophet Muhammad to female mystics who live into the twenty-first century. The volume is recommended for public libraries, and devotees of Sufism everywhere. Those seeking the manifestations of divine grace in lives of Muslim women can now safely bypass the works of Nurbakhsh and M. Smith, and go to Helminski's work. Scholars can still read Helminski alongside R. Cornell.

*Omid Safi
Colgate University*

WESTERN MUSLIMS AND THE FUTURE OF ISLAM. Tariq Ramadan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. Pp. 272. \$29.95, ISBN 0-19-517111-X.

Time magazine identified Ramadan as one of the 100 most important thinkers for the next century. While many, including this reviewer, are automatically skeptical of such lofty praises towards anyone, this book clearly establishes him as a leading member of contemporary Muslim thinkers. Ramadan's forte is in thinking about the vital issue of Islam and modernity. As is the case with a number of other thinkers, Ramadan calls for an interpretation and practice of Islam that is reconciled with the Western cultural context. He does so with great care and sophistication, calling on traditional Islamic concepts such as Ijtihad (the effort to come up with new legal understandings). Unlike many previous reformers, he pays close attention to the need for incorporating spirituality into a new modern Islamic identity. Significant sections of this book came from Ramadan's earlier volume, *To Be a European Muslim*. Still, this volume does represent an important and thorough advance in Ramadan's own thought, and it deserves a very close reading. Had it not been for the department of Homeland Security blocking Ramadan's visa to come to the US and assume a teaching position at Notre Dame, his ideas might have found a sympathetic audience in the US, as they have in Europe. The book is primarily addressed to a Muslim audience, but the wider non-Muslim audience will also benefit from it. It is mandatory reading for Islamicists, and strongly recommended to all libraries.

*Omid Safi
Colgate University*

TO BE A EUROPEAN MUSLIM. Tariq Ramadan. London: The Islamic Foundation, 1999. Pp. 274. \$19.95, ISBN 0-86037-300-2.

Ramadan is best-known for being the grandson of the famous twentieth-century Muslim reformer, Hassan al-Banna. Lost in the fame of his heritage is that Ramadan is easily one of the most significant European Muslim intellectuals. This volume marks the transition of Ramadan's publications from French to English. Ramadan works out his own niche in the universe of contemporary Muslim thinkers, but it is safe to say that he strives to work out an understanding of Islam that is open to including a layer of identity as a Westerner. Unlike most reformers, he is somewhat critical of traditional Salafism, and slightly open to Sufism. The volume is hard to find, and it has since been replaced by the more thorough *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* (see previous Review). As such, lay readers may be directed toward that volume, but researchers may well wish to read both, to document this important thinker's evolution. Recommended for specialists.

*Omid Safi
Colgate University*

RACHID GHANNOUCHI: A DEMOCRAT WITHIN ISLAMISM. By Azzam S. Tamimi. Religion and Global Politics Series. Edited by John L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Pp. viii + 268. \$55.00, ISBN 0-19-514000-1.

A common strategy of dismissing liberal Muslim thinkers is to portray them as isolated intellectuals with little or no impact on wider Muslim communities. This approach clearly does not fit Ghannouchi, who stands out among contemporary Muslim intellectuals for being both a first rate critical thinker as well as a prominent leader of the Tunisian Islamic movement Ennahda. It is perhaps telling of the current status of politics in the Arab world that this movement is currently banned, and Ghannouchi himself exiled. Ghannouchi is both a democrat and an Islamist. His main theme in this book is that for Muslims to achieve democracy, it is not necessary to embrace secularism. In doing so, he follows in the footsteps of generations of Muslim reformers who move beyond the Seyyed Qutb-style dismissal of democracy. Instead, Ghannouchi and his followers insist that democracy is merely a tool, not an all-encompassing ideology, and thus may be deployed within an Islamic political sphere. Ghannouchi is particularly interested in the potential of democracy to preserve public liberties in such an Islamic state, as evidenced in his Arabic volume *al-*