

believed, on the early Reformation. Covering the early years of Martin Luther through 1522, Harline (history, Brigham Young Univ.) offers glimpses into the thoughts and actions of the reformer, his colleagues, and his critics. Harline does not provide notes to his sources, but instead includes an extensive, categorized bibliography of sources and further readings. These materials may ultimately not be useful to those wishing for further research, because the citations are not annotated nor given any kind of rank by the author to serve as a guide for where to begin.

Summing Up: ★★ Recommended. General readers.—*E. E. Boyd, United Lutheran Seminary*

55-3184 BL2775 CIP
Houk, James T. **The illusion of certainty: how the flawed beliefs of religion harm our culture.** Prometheus Books, 2017. 381p index ISBN 9781633883239 pbk, \$19.00; ISBN 9781633883246 ebook, contact publisher for price

Houk (anthropology, Our Lady of the Lake College) examines the relationship of religion—fundamentalist religions in particular, especially fundamentalist religion associated with so-called Young Earth Christians—to culture. Houk argues that fundamentalists work with an epistemology that requires a level of certainty that is merely an illusion, thereby doing damage to society. His critiques are strong and worth taking seriously. In an extended argument, the author attempts to defend doubt (in part 1); deconstruct the illusory fundamentalist sources of belief by appealing to a wide array of empirical work (parts 2 and 3); critique the false assumptions that such fundamentalist epistemologies give to sacred scriptures (part 4); and undermine the traditional arguments for the existence of God (part 5). Houk's project is large, and many will find his argument compelling. The book has two major flaws. First, it ignores what is regarded by philosophers of religion as one of the most powerful arguments against the research program in which Houk engages—viz., Alvin Plantinga's evolutionary argument against naturalism. Second, Houk fails to engage the strongest philosophical arguments—raised by followers of Plantinga's "Reformed epistemology"—in support of warranted belief in God. Be that as it may, Houk's book will prove interesting to a broad audience, including those who find it wanting in places. **Summing Up:** ★★★ Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*A. Jaeger, Benedictine College*

CC 55-3185 BP189 CIP
Knysh, Alexander D. **Sufism: a new history of Islamic mysticism.** Princeton, 2017. 389p bibl index ISBN 9780691139098 cloth, \$29.95; ISBN 9781400887972 ebook, contact publisher for price

In this excellent and original book, Knysh (Islamic studies, Univ. of Michigan) manages to provide not only a thorough history of Sufism but also insight into how Sufism has been approached by scholars. In a bid to be as "objective" as possible, the author strives to convey both insider and outsider interpretations of the ascetic, mystical tradition by demonstrating his lack of a stake in the subject. Knysh builds on the theoretical works of giants such as Edward Said, Richard King, and Patricia Crone, and demonstrates the multiplicity of traditions within Sufism and how they have influenced each other. The author argues that both insiders and outsiders stand to gain in terms of insights from the other, and illustrates how this tradition has been sustained in the past and how it might serve in a more pluralistic future. The book serves to bring to the center a significant but often misrepresented component of the Islamic tradition. It is a timeless reference for present and future scholars. **Summing Up:** ★★★ Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*C. A. Barnsley, Transylvania University*

CC 55-3186 BP131 CIP
Lawrence, Bruce B. **The Koran in English: a biography.** Princeton, 2017. 247p index ISBN 9780691155586 cloth, \$26.95; ISBN 9781400887798 ebook, contact publisher for price

Muslims consider only the Arabic Koran as sacred, but English translations have proliferated in recent years. Lawrence (emer., religion, Duke Univ.), a non-Muslim, discusses the earliest translations—into Latin, German, and English—and their impact in the Renaissance and Reformation. Chapters focus on translators connected to South Asia—Marmaduke Pickthall, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Maulana Muhammad Ali, and others—and to the recent, enormous impact of Saudi Arabia on English Koran editions in mosques and in general circulation. Readers will be fascinated with Lawrence's treatment of the impact of American collegiate Koran studies and the flourishing of online Korans. In the final chapter Lawrence discusses Sandow Birk's curious *American Qur'an* (2016), which largely uses John Medows Rodwell's 1861 translation and adds American-themed graphics. An appendix lists full and partial translations (some 45 have appeared in the 21st century). Written with style, this accessible volume is indispensable for those, be they Muslim or non-Muslim, eager to understand the Koran's translations. Snippets of a forthcoming verse Koran translation Lawrence is preparing with Rafey Habib are a highlight of the present volume. **Summing Up:** ★★★ Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty and professionals; general readers.—*S. Ward, University of Wyoming*

CC 55-3187 BL535 CIP
Moreman, Christopher M. **Beyond the threshold: afterlife beliefs and experiences in world religions.** 2nd ed. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018. 337p bibl index ISBN 9781442274945 cloth, \$95.00; ISBN 9781442274952 pbk, \$37.00; ISBN 9781442274969 ebook, \$35.00

Moreman (philosophy and religious studies, California State Univ., East Bay), editor of *Routledge Companion to Death and Dying* (2018), provides an accessible overview of different spiritual traditions' beliefs about the state of the human body and soul after death. The book covers the major world religions—Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism—but Moreman expands this second edition (the first edition appeared in 2008) to include African traditions. In addition, he includes the beliefs and practices of individuals such as mediums and those who have had near-death experiences, looking at how they have shaped cultural views of the afterlife. What is most helpful about this book is that it presents these traditions in a fair, informative, and balanced way without getting lost in more technical debates or theological questions that might be of more concern to specialists. Moreman's inclusiveness makes the book relevant for those interested in cultural studies as well as those studying religion and dying. **Summing Up:** ★★ Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates; general readers; professionals.—*A. W. Klink, Duke University*

55-3188 BS1700 CIP
Orlov, Andrei A. **The greatest mirror: heavenly counterparts in the Jewish pseudepigrapha.** SUNY Press, 2017. 300p bibl index ISBN 9781438466910 cloth, \$95.00; ISBN 9781438466927 ebook, contact publisher for price

This book fills a lacuna in the understanding of an fascinating yet enigmatic collection of writings of an obscure genre of Jewish pseudepigrapha dealing with heavenly counterparts of human beings. Orlov (Marquette Univ.) demonstrates a thorough command not only of Jewish pseudepigrapha and the Hebrew Bible but also of early Christian apocalyptic literature and Greco-Roman writings dealing with similar themes. He also reveals his scholarly acumen by demonstrating his