

Pour les lecteurs de cette revue, la place accordée aux Juifs et au Judaïsme présente sans doute un intérêt particulier. On pourra consulter la section III B, 3 («Palästina und Syrien», coll. 191-194, nos. 3161-3223), V, 6, 2 («Judentum», coll. 385-390, nos. 6336-6418), «Register», s.v. Israel (col. 706), Judaea (707), Palästina (709), Judentum (716). Notons aussi le grand nombre des savants israéliens dont les travaux sont cités. La liste qui suit donnera une idée de leur contribution, sans prétendre à l'exhaustivité: A. Aloni, D. Asheri, M. Avi-Yonah, Y. Barzel, A. Ben-David, H.H. Cohen, Z. Falk, I.F. Fikhman, A. Fuks, M.L. Heltzer, R. Katzoff, D. Mendels, A.M. Rabello, Z. Rubensohn, D. Schaps, E.E. Urbach, R. Yaron, Z. Yavetz.

Bien entendu, il est impossible, pour un ouvrage d'une telle ampleur, d'éviter complètement les omissions et les déficiences. Ces dernières sont d'ailleurs mineures,¹⁹ et ne diminuent en rien la valeur de cette «Bibliographie», qui sera un instrument de travail indispensable à tout «Altertumsforscher». En guise de conclusion nous voudrions citer les paroles mêmes de H. Heinen dans son 'Vorwort' (x): 'Ich schliesse mit dem Wunsch, die vorliegende Bibliographie möge einen Beitrag zur internationalen Kommunikation unter den Sklavereiforschern leisten, und hoffe, dass der reiche Ertrag der Altertumswissenschaften auch den Erforschern anderer Epochen und Gesellschaften zugute kommen wird'.

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Guy G. Stroumsa, *La Fin du Sacrifice. Les mutations religieuses de l'Antiquité tardive*. Préface de John Scheid (Collection Collège de France), Paris: Odile Jacob, 2005. 213 pp. ISBN 2-7381-1634-5.

The religious transformation of the ancient world from what one may call, for want of a better word, 'paganism' (or, to pay homage to fashionable plurality, 'paganisms') to the dominance of Christianity (Christianities) belongs to those big historical questions that challenge anew almost every generation of scholars. In recent years there have been several attempts to question, and improve upon, the answers provided by an earlier age, including Peter Brown's numerous books (e.g. *The Body and Society*, 1988) and Ramsay MacMullen's magisterial triptych (*Paganism in the Roman Empire*, 1981; *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, 1984; *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*, 1997). Rodney Stark has made an ambitious attempt to replace theories of religion by Durkheim and Weber with his novel concept of a 'religious economy' and to apply it to Antiquity (*The Rise of Christianity*, 1996), while Keith Hopkins has proposed a postmodernist take on the 'Christian revolution' (*A World Full of Gods*, 1999).

Guy Stroumsa's succinct new essay (originally a series of four lectures delivered in February 2004 at the Collège de France) is a welcome and thought-provoking addition to this growing body of literature. Developing a set of ideas Stroumsa has set out in previous books and papers, it does not simply rehearse the well known topics of the debate but rather attempts to shift its focus: its theme is not so much the rise of Christianity but rather those fundamental *mutations religieuses* underlying it. Stroumsa sketches his view in four brisk chapters: The first ('Un nouveau souci de soi', 23-60) describes the emergence of the ideal of paying attention to oneself, of cultivating and transforming the self, particularly as espoused by Christian theologians and ascetic 'virtuosos'. In this, as in the other chapters, Stroumsa's easy command of the extensive bibliography — in sev-

¹⁹ Aux nos. 6715 et 8998, sont mentionnés deux articles de L. C. Ruggini. Il s'agit en fait de Lelia Cracco-Ruggini; le nom est donc à corriger dans le texte et dans le «Register».

eral modern languages and spanning diverse academic cultures — manages to arrange unexpected dialogues between scholarly positions that have often been worked out in isolation.

The theme of ‘*souci de soi*’ is, of course, particularly connected with Michel Foucault’s seminal proposals; Stroumsa suggests that Foucault’s view is unbalanced because it lays too much stress on the ascetic suppression of the self in ancient Christianity (57). The second chapter (‘*L’essor des religions du livre*’, 63-101) pursues the enquiry by highlighting the growing role of texts and of textual communities in the religious scene of Late Antiquity. Several aspects of this development are looked into: the formation of canons; the concept of ‘religions of the book’; the emergence of a new culture of private, devotional, ‘interiorized’ reading and meditation; the relation between oral and written tradition (particularly in Judaism); the Manichean emphasis on both religious universalism and the importance of writing for the authentic transmission of religious truth.

The third chapter (‘*Transformation du Rituel*’, 105-144) explores the significance of the end of sacrifices in Antiquity. Stroumsa points to the revolution inaugurated by Constantine and formulated by his son Constantius II in *CTh* XVI,10,2 which abolishes the ‘folly of sacrifices’ (*sacrificiorum ... insania*). The focus of this chapter is, however, on Judaism and its abandonment of sacrifices in the wake of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE. The consequences of this historical event — quite marginal from the perspective of educated Roman contemporaries — were both momentous and far reaching. Stroumsa subtly explores the ambiguous relationship of both (Rabbinic) Judaism and Christianity towards sacrifices: on the one hand, both religious traditions have abolished the sacrificial cult, but on the other hand, they remain ‘religions sacrificielles’ (116). Whereas this last claim seems entirely plausible with regard to Christianity which both spiritualizes and metaphorizes the sacrificial cult, I must leave it to the experts to ponder whether it also applies to Rabbinical Judaism. Stroumsa’s own observations could equally suggest that Rabbinical Judaism — despite its theological concern with the destroyed temple — was, by and large, even more radical than early Christianity in trying to replace and supersede the sacrificial cult.

The fourth chapter (‘*De la Religion civique à la Religion communautaire*’, 147-186) elaborates some conclusions suggested by its predecessors: the movement towards a new conception of the self and towards the ideological centrality of holy books and reading, taken together with the movement away from sacrificial cults, leads to the emergence of a new kind of community, ‘*l’invention de communautés scripturaires*’. Here St. refers to — amongst others — the work of John Scheid, who has observed a similar transformation of Roman religion as a consequence of the expansion of the Roman empire. St. concludes his book with an appendix comparing three types of teachers: the pagan philosopher, the Talmudic sage and the Christian monk (‘*Du Maître de Sagesse au Maître Spirituel*’, 189-213).

St.’s book is rich in suggestive and subversive arguments. He provides neither a complete theory nor a comprehensive description of religions in Late Antiquity. Rather, he proposes a novel set of ideas that presents the religious landscape of Late Antiquity as the not-so-distant and not-entirely-alien predecessor of our fragmented, individualistic, media-dependent, globalized modernity. Not every reader will readily concede that St.’s selection of important transformative trends is exhaustive: for example, his bold and calculated neglect of the confrontation between polytheism and monotheism may possibly raise a few scholarly hackles. Some of the unexpected vistas opened here may occasionally suggest views different from those favoured by the author: when, for example, St. points out that it is precisely Judaism that is at the origin of the *mutations religieuses* of Late Antiquity, one is inclined to agree (185). But — the question is inevitable — when did Judaism become the laboratory of religious transformation? Or, to put it differently, what kind of Judaism? Is there not something to be said for the older view (as advocated by, amongst others, A.v. Harnack in his still useful masterpiece [*Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums*, 1924]) that insists on the pivotal role of Hellenistic Judaism?

However, even the sternest critic must concede that St. has successfully not only staked out the territory for further scholarly argument, but also set a standard for the kind of scholarly engagement that may advance it: conversant in many scholarly disciplines and idioms (various philologies, ancient history, patristics, and Judaic studies, to name but a few), conscious of their strengths, yet alert to their limitations and prejudices.

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William Harmless, *Desert Christians. An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, xxiv + 488 pp. ISBN 0-19-516223-4 (pb.)

Why waste words? — this is a thoroughly admirable book. William Harmless — noted for his previous study on Augustine (*Augustine and the Catechumenate* [1995]) — has produced a volume as readable as it will be useful. Writing under the influence, almost inspiration, of Derwas Chitty's seminal study *The Desert a City*, the author has produced a very different work, both in feel and in its structure, but which complements the earlier masterpiece. It is difficult to imagine a future course syllabus or a graduate reading list on monasticism in the early Church which does not feature this new volume prominently.

Harmless organizes the book's thirteen chapters in five principal parts: [1] The World of Early Monasticism; [2] Antony and Pachomius; [3] The Desert Fathers; [4] Monastic Theologians and [5] Reflections. The opening chapters (1-2) are very much intended as background, discussing the origins and growth of Egyptian Christianity as well as the major theological and ecclesiastical developments of Christianity during the fourth and fifth centuries; the closing chapter (13) presents reflections and varied theories on monastic origins. The heart of the book is chapters three through thirteen with their discussion of the seminal figures and texts in the world of early monasticism. The centerpiece of the entire structure is the third section dedicated to the *Sayings of the Fathers* (*Apophthegmata Patrum*) — three masterful chapters which take the reader to the very heart of the experience and the spirituality of the Egyptian desert. At the conclusion of each of the book's chapters, in addition to the voluminous endnotes on the text, are a detailed, up-to-date bibliography and appendices taking up specific points of interest and problems in the study of the literature.

Indeed, with a book so wide in its range of competence and authority, it may seem somewhat churlish to tarry here on those matters which lie outside its purview. This note of ingratitude, however, is motivated by the volume itself: a work entitled 'Desert Christians' and subtitled 'An Introduction to the Literature of Early Monasticism' encourages the reader to expect an introductory account of the early monastic phenomenon in all its geographical breadth. In fact, as noted already in the preface, the volume concentrates heavily, indeed almost exclusively, on Egyptian monasticism and its literature. Discussions of figures and literature outside the Egyptian orbit are restricted largely to phenomena and texts which have been introduced for comparative purposes. Once again, the work's subtitle could have remedied this misunderstanding easily.

That having been said, there is more than ample room to delight in what the volume does offer the reader. Harmless is a careful yet deeply enthusiastic guide to both the texts and the figures who populate and stand behind them. While the body of the book's chapters is of a consistently high level, it is frequently the appendices, often agonizingly brief, where Harmless presents the reader with some of the most intriguing problems and subtle analyses. Among the noteworthy achievements of the volume as a whole is the thoroughgoing integration of current, innovative research by both French and English-speaking scholars.

As a broad introductory survey, this work should not really be expected to have a central 'theme' or 'thesis' as such, but there are two emphases which underlie Harmless's overall treat-