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Rotschild's book is considerably useful not only because it fills a gap in the scholarship devoted to medieval Jewish philosophy but also because it reconstructs a significant chapter in the Hebrew reception of the *Liber de causis*, a work to which Moses ben Sabbatai owed much of his own version of Neoplatonized—in fact mystically inclined—Aristotelianism. In the Jewish tradition we count five Hebrew versions of the *De liber de causis* (all of them at some point investigated by Rothschild), including one by Judah Romano, a French translation of which is here offered as one of the appendixes. The *Liber de causis* did not have less significance, though, for some of the representatives of early kabbalah. In fact, the most influential kabbalistic appropriation of Proclus's text was the one by Abraham Abulafia (1240–91), who had been among the hearers of one of Italy's most enthused supporters of Maimonides, the philosopher and talmudist Hillel of Verona (ca. 1220–ca. 1295). As Saverio Campanini has shown, in his *Imre shefer* (Words of beauty) Abulafia quoted the *Liber de causis* (from Latin) to argue for the confluence of philosophy and kabbalah in negative theology and, in fact, to reiterate the doctrine of the *sefirot*. It seems, thus, that Proclus's work could also bridge mysticism and rationalism in ways that departed from Moses ben Sabbatai's own thought but rose from his same intellectual milieu—ways that, moreover, were bound to become consequential for later philosophical reflections produced within Italian Jewish circles in the Renaissance.

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Thomas More's Vocation. Frank Mitjans.
Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2023. xii + 302 pp. $75.

This detailed study of Thomas More's formative years demonstrates how More's life choices were governed from the outset by his literary interests and his unswerving religious faith. *Thomas More's Vocation* opens as a tour of London: Tower Hill, where More was beheaded; Lincoln's Inn, where he studied law; St. Lawrence Jewry, where he gave lectures on Augustine's *City of God*; the Palace of Westminster, where, as the new Speaker of the House of Commons, he defended freedom of speech in 1523; and Chelsea Old Church, his last parish church.

An enigmatic Latin sentence, taken from a text called "the October letter," serves as the uniting thread running through a great part of the book, and, Mitjans proposes, reveals More's early and unwavering vocation. Linking More's life to his writings, the second chapter recalls his meeting and friendship with

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Erasmus and John Colet, his love of the classics, his enthusiasm for Lucian, and his use of Boethius. However, throughout the book, Mitjans highlights More's independent attitude towards his sources. The influence of Augustine is then finely analyzed in a number of More's works—namely *Utopia*, the *Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, and some later works. Moreover, not only Augustine's *City of God* but also John Chrysostom's idea of the city and his stress on the importance of human work are shown as constitutive of the way More devised the utopian city life.

After two more chapters devoted to More's early works, from his Latin epigrams to his *Life of Pico*, the focus is on "Some Books Recommended by Thomas More," such as Bonaventure's *Life of Christ*, Gerson's *Imitation of Christ* and *Monotessaron*, Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, and Thomas Aquinas's various works. It was More's vocation to have chosen a combination of the active life with the contemplative, a trend that was becoming more common as, Mitjans notes, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries witnessed a "consistent process of assimilation by the laity of techniques and materials for spiritual advancement that had historically been virtually the preserve of religious orders" (140–41). Laity versus priesthood is the topic of a whole chapter, which tackles More's correspondence with his fellow European humanists, such as John Colet. More's stay at the London Charterhouse (1499–ca. 1504) is a period in his life that has been understood differently by his various biographers, his supposed hesitation between priesthood and marriage remaining a moot point.

About his lectures on Augustine's *De civitate Dei,* when More was only twenty-one, Mitjans comes to the conclusion that "Erasmus is our best guide," for he explained how More took up *De civitate Dei*'s central theme of the two cities. The eighth chapter ends on Vives's praise of More. The topic of More's dilemma is resumed when Mitjans focuses on his double attraction to literature and spirituality, action and contemplation. The author highlights how that dilemma had been part of More's outlook since his younger years, until "he chose the life of service to society *and* the contemplative life of a Christian" (207, emphasis in original). More and marriage is the topic of the tenth chapter, with views taken from Augustine and Erasmus's *Enchiridion milites christiani*, among others. This is followed by the last chapter, entitled "Life's Pilgrimage," devoted to Thomas More's sainthood. Though his study concerns More's younger years, Mitjans proposes a final analysis of his last work, *De tristitia Christi,* reflecting on the analogy between a life of prayer and a pilgrimage. Before offering documentation on More's two epitaphs as an appendix, *Thomas More's Vocation* concludes on More's awareness that "the Christian vocation implies a mission toward others," but "though such awareness requires a personal and individual response, 'the first point is to love but one alone,'

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it brings with it, at least in the case of More, the realization that such a vocation is 'common to the whole Christian people'" (254).

Thomas More's Vocation is a well-documented analysis of More's early writings and intentions, with particular emphasis upon Christian perspectives of interpretation. Nonetheless, this study will be equally useful to scholars who work on More's writings and to readers who wish to be enlightened about More's spirituality.

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Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of Early Modern Drama. Richard Dutton.
Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. xxiii + 387 pp. $125.

In this important exposé of the Master of the Revels in Tudor and Stuart drama, Richard Dutton articulates topics we are all too familiar with: censorship and the regulation of words. It is easy to draw parallels today with the issues that come to light regarding the Office of the Masters of the Revels. At the onset of Dutton's meticulously researched text, the reader is provided with "A Brief History of Early Modern Theatrical Censorship and Control." In doing so, the author contextualizes the power of the stage in Elizabethan and Jacobean sociopolitical spheres. Following an examination of the nuances of licensure and its pitfalls in his introduction, Dutton considers the roles of the Masters of the Revels and raises questions about their authority. After placing his study within the context of notable early modern scholarship on censorship, Dutton reiterates his own position on the Masters of the Revels as "enablers" rather than a state-controlled faction (11).

In his first chapter, Dutton highlights a system of control by the Privy Council under Edward VI and Queen Mary, and the implications of an updated Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds under Elizabeth I in 1574. As a result, for players and stage plays, the place of performance shifted outside of the liberties of the city. However, the prosperity of the Elizabethan stage exposed a need for regulation. Here is where Edmund Tilney enters the scene.

The ensuing chapters outline Tilney's role as Master of the Revels. Through this esteemed position, he licensed public drama and removed controversial matter, but did not suppress an exchange of views. Dutton notes the disappearance of Tilney from records through the mid-1590s. What follows is an engaging revelation of the timing of Tilney's disappearance and the disintegration of the Lord Strange's Men and the Queen's Men. Dutton

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