*Le Complotisme Protestant Contemporain: A propos d'une thèse sur la tribu de Dan* (*Contemporary Protestant Conspiracy Theories: Concerning a Thesis on the Tribe of Dan*). By Christophe Colera. Éditions L'Harmattan, 2019. 204 pages. € 20,5 softcover; ebook available.

This book performs a rhetorical analysis of the website "Mystery, Babylon The Great: Catholic or Jewish?" (https://watch.pairsite.com/mystery-babylon.html) as part of a sociological investigation of the nature of conspiracy arguments. Christophe Colera positions his argument as a sociological one both by noting the political implications of such arguments—he credits them with a role in the election of President Donald Trump—and by situating it as an element of a social "field" in the sense that the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu proposed it. The introduction provides rationales for a sociologist following the lead of Max Weber to study an obscure website with spurious factual claims and undetermined authorship. There is no evidence apart from the website itself of either "Barbara Aho" or her husband, credited as its authors. They may simply be another fictive element among the imaginings that drive the website's narrative.

Colera is particularly interested in how a born-again Christian applies esoteric literature, such as the writings of Helena Blavatsky and Aleister Crowley, at face value to construct their conspiracy theory. As such, Colera sees the website not only as an opportunity to examine the "doxa" that underlies various YouTube videos that present current events as revealing the Devil's handiwork, but also, and more tentatively, as a way of understanding the claims of esoteric literature by seeing what they look like when inverted from their original function as writings opposed to Christianity to tools for a born-again Christian to construct secular history as diabolical history.

The bulk of the book is a detailed exegesis of the website, which presents an apocalyptic historical narrative that stretches from biblical Israel to the present, using the purported apostasy of the biblical tribe of Dan as an esoteric key to an unholy chronology that leads up to the current era as one that will usher in the Antichrist. Beginning with the apostasy of the Tribe of Dan, going through their absorption of Egyptian esotericism, to their later manifestations in Roman Catholicism, the Merovingians, the Knights Templar, and the Illuminati, Aho's website presents a linear vision of history as a demonic corruption of God's plan. Colera's analysis of this particular Christian narrative often treats "Christianity" as a discernable whole, which he backs up with selective quoting of scripture. His purpose here is to draw the website's argumentation into closer proximity to Christianity as a whole than most Christian practitioners would care to admit, but this strategy ignores the extent to which contemporary scholarship has dissolved "Christianity" into "Christianities." At various points, Colera reflects the upside-down

logic of the narrative back onto contemporary academic protocols, for example, by treating structuralism and Braudel's idea of "long history," as similar exercises in attempting to create meaning beyond the empirically immediate. However, he also maintains an implicit commitment to a secular perspective as, for example, his comparison of the patent ignorance of the website's author(s) with that of the founders of Islam, Mormonism, and New Age spirituality.

This book will be useful to scholars of esoteric religions, Evangelical Christianity, and the place of the Internet in contemporary society. Given that members of the Republican Party focused on questions concerning pedophilia during Ketanji Brown Jackson's Supreme Court nomination hearings—which the journalist Amanda Marcotte has taken as sign that the anonymous website QAnon is driving the political agenda of one of the two major American political parties—it remains timely in a political sense. Colera sees his contribution as primarily a disinterested study, although he acknowledges its political implications.

My primary criticism of the book is that Colera's purported objectivity leads him to insist that we must give the authors of the website credit for restricting their antisemitic logic to merely a portion of the Jewish people. He might well have investigated how such a "narrow" antisemitism depends on and legitimates the general antisemitic logic that has fueled violence for centuries. This serious objection aside, the book remains a useful entry into a mode of thinking that is far more pertinent than academic pursuers of reasoned discourse might wish to admit.

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*Common Phantoms: An American History of Psychic Science.* By Alicia Puglionesi. Stanford University Press, 2020. 336 pages. $90.00 hardcover; $28.00 softcover; ebook available.

Before there was parapsychology, there was psychical research. Emerging and spreading across Western countries during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, psychical researchers sought to explore unusual mental phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance but without necessary recourse to the explanations offered by Spiritualism. In the United States, the subject was largely formalized through the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR), founded in 1885 as an offshoot of its British counterpart. Under the guidance of the prominent psychologist and philosopher of religion William James—a figure who looms large in this study—the ASPR gathered vast amounts of material from correspondents throughout the United States, much of which the society was unsure what to do with.