

it is open to abusive power through greed and avarice. Particularly insightful is D.'s treatment of the psalms of lament as the weapon of the weak and poor: "Lament is the ultimate form of truth-telling in the quest for justice" (113). Also noteworthy is a chapter on Luke–Acts as breaking down the barriers of social location (who should be invited to the banquet), of hatred and division (Samaritans), and of rich and poor (parables of the rich fool, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus). "No New Testament writing deals more extensively with the dangers of wealth, the proper use of possessions, and concern for the poor than Luke–Acts" (205).

Fourth, the Pauline and Johannine writings focus on communities of friends that counter the dominating ethos (cultural and political) of the Roman Empire. The trial before Pilate in John is about witness to truth that counters empire (262). The Book of Revelation likewise unmask the dominant ideology and warns the followers of Christ of that ideology's seductive power. The controlling metaphor is the "slain lamb," a symbol of nonviolence. "In the face of violence, the vocation of the Christian, then and now, is faithful witness and resistance to the divinization of power and prosperity" (273).

Fifth and finally, confronted with violent texts (treated on 113–15), D. cites Sandra Schneiders's contention that we must dialogue with each text about its subject matter (284) so that the word of God that is truly salvific (see Vatican II's *Dei verbum* no. 11) may be effective in our contemporary world (288–89).

The book is well written and readable with numerous citations of biblical texts. While there are a few very minor glitches (e.g., repetition of text on 14, 163–64; E. P. Sanders rather than James Sanders on 49), the book has many interesting insights and is a treasure trove for all who are interested in deepening their understanding of social justice in the Bible.

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*The Oxford Handbook of the Psalms*. Edited by William P. Brown. New York: Oxford University, 2014. Pp. xix + 661. \$150.

This work is an excellent introduction to the Psalms, one of the best-loved and most distinctive books of the Bible. Indeed, the volume's 42 essays are so comprehensive and of such outstanding quality that one can only see as overly modest the claim of its editor, a noted Psalms scholar, that "this volume aims to touch upon, rather than cover, the myriad bases of Psalms study and interpretation, both past and present" (ix). Much more accurate is his statement that this work is designed for both scholar and student, since both advanced researchers and beginners will profit from its content. Not least among this work's valuable resources is B.'s introductory essay, which provides a useful guide to both the Psalms' interpretive history and the essays that follow.

Indicative of the comprehensive nature of this work are the titles of the volume's ten sections: Ancient Near Eastern Backgrounds, Language of the Psalms,

Translating Psalms, Composition of the Psalms, History of Interpretation and Reception: A Sampling, Interpretive Approaches, Culturally Based Interpretations, Theologies of the Psalms, Anthropologies of the Psalms, and Practicing the Psalms. Spanning these sections are a number of concerns that characterize Psalms scholarship today.

A contemporary, scholarly question is how one understands the individual psalms as both historical and poetic texts. Separate articles on the Psalms' Mesopotamian, Canaanite, and Egyptian parallels (and an additional article on iconographic resources) richly treat the ancient Near Eastern background of these texts, while a number of other essays explore the origins and role of the Psalms in the historical context of ancient Israel. Essays in a number of sections explore the language and poetics of the individual psalms and their genres, often with thought-provoking insights from such fields as comparative anthropology and cognitive linguistics.

Two somewhat different concerns of recent scholarship have been the way individual psalms came to be part of the larger book of Psalms, and the interpretive significance of that book's final shape. Such redaction-historical and canonical issues are the focus of a number of essays throughout this volume. Worthy of special note in this regard is Peter W. Flint's article on the impact that the Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls have had on our understanding of these issues, especially since Flint has also supplied two very useful appendices that catalogue the psalms and related material found in these scrolls.

Another important focus of modern Psalms scholarship has been an interest in these texts' history of interpretation and reception. Essays in several sections address this topic from a variety of perspectives, including both textual commentary and such practices as worship, singing, pastoral care, monastic usage, and ethics. One of the great strengths of the volume is its detailed attention to both Jewish and Christian traditions; there is also an informative essay on the Islamic interaction with the Psalms. With regard to the present interpretation and reception of the Psalms, this volume manifests a special openness to "culturally based interpretations" from a number of different world settings. Feminist interpretation of the Psalms is also well represented, both in its own comprehensive essay and as an element of a number of other articles. Several of these essays wrestle insightfully with the difficult issue of the Psalms' sometimes violent language.

Readers may find the sections "Theologies of the Psalms" and "Anthropologies of the Psalms" of particular interest. Much has been written on these topics in recent years, and it is clear that the Psalms provide special resources for understanding both the divine and human participants in their dialogue. It is also true, however, that whatever is said about one of these participants inevitably has significant implications for what can be said about the other. So while the essays in these sections certainly have a different emphasis, they also complement one another in important ways.

The section entitled "Theologies" contains one essay devoted to "Jewish Theology of the Psalms" and another to "Christian Theology of the Psalms." Given this formulation, it is not surprising that these essays not only provide many insights into views of God found in the Psalms; they also make an important contribution to the larger conversation that Jewish and Christian scholars are currently having about the nature of

biblical theology and whether it constitutes a descriptive/historical or a constructive/confessional discipline.

This review began by noting the volume's usefulness as a comprehensive introduction to the Psalms and Psalms scholarship. Another advantage of this collection is that even those most familiar with the Psalms will find themselves intrigued by essays published here on topics that go beyond readers' usual interests. The consistent excellence of these offerings (and their expansive bibliographies) means that one will find here many fruitful paths to explore.

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*Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation.* By Joy A. Schroeder. New York: Oxford University, 2014. Pp. vii + 359. \$74.

The book presents an exhaustive, wide-ranging, and meticulous analysis of the reception history of the biblical figure of Deborah (Judges 4–5) in Jewish and Christian imagination. Schroeder examines a wealth of primary texts spanning over 2,000 years, beginning with the earliest patristic homilies on Judges and concluding with such unconventional texts as 21st-century lesbian fictional retellings of Deborah's biography. In between, S. engages with medieval Christian allegory, rabbinic midrashim, the writings of female mystics, tractates about the Tudor dynasty, Handel's oratorio *Deborah*, the speeches of female preachers in 19th-century North America, and modern biblical commentaries, to name some examples. In this vast variety of literature, S. explores the ways preconceptions about gender roles have influenced the interpretation and representation of Deborah, the only woman in the Bible described as a "judge" in Israel.

S.'s research is to be commended for its thoroughness and complexity of analysis: not only does S. examine each instance of Deborah's interpretation within its historical context, but she also draws together some common themes in the reception history of Deborah. The dual focus enables S. to establish a cogent argument that interpreters exploited the "gaps" of the narrative in Judges 4–5 in order to shape an image of Deborah that would reinforce their existing ideas about women's inherent capacities or limitations, and at the same time hold normative force for their respective readerships. S. claims that the majority of interpreters domesticated the valiant Deborah as part of an agenda to keep women in their traditional societal "place," but S. also demonstrates how other interpreters used Deborah as an exemplary female figure who could shine a light on new possibilities for women in the religious, cultural, and familial spheres of life.

One strength of S.'s book is that it includes the broadest possible range of literature (and artwork) to fall under the category of biblical "reception history." Often in the scholarship on the Bible's reception history we see only a privileged set of genres included in the category of *Wirkungsgeschichte*, and these often constitute the so-called "high" literary forms deemed worthy of analysis in their own right (religious sermons,