

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.

Harry P. Nasuti
Fordham University, New York

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,

literature, paintings, etc.). S. includes these genres, of course, but also incorporates lesser-known (and lesser-valued) genres often neglected by scholars. For example, S. examines treatises by women of 17th-century European salons written to counter misogynistic pamphlets, and she discusses contemporary Christian devotional writings about Deborah that evince a polemical stance toward gender issues in political life, such as the debates over 2008 US vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin. S.'s broad range of analysis gives the reader a comprehensive picture of how Deborah's example in Judges 4–5 was used either to validate or to deny women's claims to different kinds of authority (teaching, preaching, prophesying, and working outside the home or specifically in judicial roles)—and this across divergent strata of society.

S. discovered that although female authors generally used Deborah to advocate for women's expanded role in society, male authors generally altered the biblical portrait of Deborah to downplay her independence and thus circumscribe women's roles. Such a deemphasis, however, was not always the case. A number of modern conservative Christian female authors tended to refashion Deborah as a submissive housewife (secondary to Barak in the biblical story), whereas some male authors regarded Deborah as a fully authoritative judge and military leader to whom Barak owed submission.

One drawback of S.'s book is the relatively sparse attention given to Jewish sources. In several places S. engages too briefly with these sources when it seems that they warrant more sustained and complex analysis (47–48, 92–93, 103–4, 156–57, 162–63, 196–97). Yet her work would benefit from a dialectical approach on precisely this point. As early as the *fin de siècle*, Jewish apologetic writings were using the figure of Deborah to refute the Christian assumption that the patriarchal "Old Testament" debased women, but that Jesus elevated and liberated them (177). Eventually, Christian protofeminism would express a more thoroughgoing anti-Jewish bias (as S. is aware, 178). It seems the tension lay in Christian women's desire *not* to hold Deborah up as an "exception" but to advance her as a normative model for women, while at the same time presenting the New Testament as the theological supersession of the "Old Testament" as well as the emancipation from "ancient Hebrew patriarchy"—which required assuming that Deborah *was* indeed an exception of a different kind.

On the whole this is an engaging, accessible, and expertly researched work. Highly recommended.

Ruth Sheridan
Charles Stuart University, Australia

The Jesus Movement and Its Expansion: Meaning and Mission. By Seán Freyne. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. Pp. xii + 383. \$35.

Context is crucial in biblical interpretation. Context not only influences interpretation; it also determines its meaning. To really understand the Jesus movement and appreciate its rapid expansion, one needs to know the Galilean context where it all began.