

With the influx of various text-oriented approaches to the biblical text, one wonders whether the Documentary Hypothesis, despite its continued defense, will ever again reign as the almost worldwide mainstream that it used to be. Despite these critical remarks, this volume is an in-depth, cutting edge defense of pentateuchal source criticism that will certainly give impetus to the ongoing discussion, whose aim is to understand Numbers within the formation of the Pentateuch as Torah.

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Joy A. Schroeder: *Deborah's Daughters: Gender Politics and Biblical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp. xiii + 359. ISBN 978-0-19-999104-4. \$74.00 cloth.

In this study of reception history, Schroeder ambitiously presents the interpretive traditions of Judges 4–5, the story of Deborah. Deborah is prophet, judge, and military leader in Israel under Canaanite oppression, as well as a poet. Schroeder believes the story of Deborah presents a “problem” for readers, because it has “disturbed traditional cultural assumptions and expectations about women’s roles through the centuries” (p. 3). Accordingly, Schroeder states that her work is a history of “how Deborah’s story was used in gender debates” (p. 4).

Schroeder begins with early Judaism and Christianity, touching on patristic, Montanist, and rabbinic materials. She suggests that Jewish sages were “far more inclined” than Christian authors to criticize the “arrogance” of Deborah’s interactions with Barak, and to present her as an example of what women should not be (p. 23). Christian writers largely viewed Deborah as an exception in her leadership role, yet praised Deborah for her purported domestic virtues.

There is more interpretive variety in the Middle Ages (chapter 2). In this period, male interpreters expounded the text under female patronage, while female “mystics” such as Hildegard of Bingen gained prominence. Deborah’s story was frequently read as one to provide encouragement to women in spite of their sex, although not inspiration or precedent. This chapter is also the first to include analysis of artistic depiction of Deborah in the period in question (pp. 63–67).

Chapter 3 presents 16th-century writers’ understanding of Deborah, including Luther, Cajetan, and John Knox. Schroeder again finds that most interpretations in this era see Deborah’s political and religious roles as extraordinary and exceptional to “normal” affairs. Many interpreters attribute her success to God’s commission and miraculous intervention, not Deborah’s native abilities.

Schroeder then moves into early modern period in chapter 4, which with chapter 5 documents the beginning of female interpretation of Judges 4–5. Here, a shift occurs to view Deborah as an example of the admirable *natural* abilities of women. As literacy increased, male interpreters began writing with a female audience in mind. These chapters cover much material, but there is an increasing acknowledgment of Deborah’s *public* role, as women took on more social leadership. This offered inspiration to women who, according to Schroeder, “sought to repel misogynistic attacks and vanquish their liter-

ary enemies" (p. 138). Nevertheless, even female interpreters "domesticated" Deborah by downplaying her apparent approval of the brutal violence in the biblical narrative.

In chapter 6, Schroeder surveys 20th and 21st century interpretations, full of "incisive feminist critique" of patriarchy, although views in this period are variegated. Here, Deborah becomes a spokeswoman for "feminism, peace activism, liberation theology, and lesbian rights" (p. 246). In a helpful concluding chapter, Schroeder outlines her understanding of how themes throughout two millennia of interpretive history recur on both "sides" of the gender debates.

There is a wealth of information in this volume. Judges 4–5 present an extremely terse text that leaves many interpretive questions unanswered. This makes Schroeder's study particularly interesting as it overviews how interpreters have "filled the gaps." Yet Schroeder seems to view the reception history of Judge 4–5 with gendered lenses as much as any interpreter reads the text itself. Her stated purpose is to review how the text has been "used in gender debates . . . *against* women, *for* women, and *by* women" (p. 4, emphasis original). One wonders to what extent she projects a context of actual debate onto history, particularly the premodern era. In doing so, Schroeder presumes women in all historical periods would agree with her as to what counts as "for" or "against" women in general. That being said, Schroeder is primarily descriptive in her work, making it a very useful survey of ideological and social change over time.

The volume would have benefited from attention to the textual history of Judge 4–5 alongside its reception history. The poem in Judge 5 is one of the knottiest text-critical sections of the OT. No doubt various readings (in various languages) would have prompted differing interpretations, certainly in the early Church using the LXX as compared with the HB of Judaism. This issue admittedly becomes less important to Schroeder's study over time as the text stabilized and was more uniformly read in English. Of course, to some extent focus on textual history presumes that interpreters are led by the text in front of them rather than (or in addition to) their ideology and power interests. Schroeder seems to share such a concern when she states, "all too often, exegesis says more about the interpreter than it does about the text itself" (p. 5). In this sense, reception historical inquiries prove only so valuable to those whose primary interest is the text.

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Csilla Saysell. *According to the Law: Reading Ezra 9–10 as Christian Scripture*. Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement 4. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2012. Pp. xiv + 256. ISBN 978-1-57506-703-2. \$39.95 paper.

This University of Durham dissertation (directed by Walter Moberly) seeks to understand the forcible divorce of foreign wives in Ezra 9–10 from a Christian perspective. The book falls into two parts: the first provides a detailed exegesis of the text, and the second explores avenues of application.

Saysell's exegesis primarily treats the legal background to the divorce. She understands the Ezran community to be reasoning from two distinct rationales.