

JUDITH

Editorial Consultants

Athalya Brenner-Idan

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

Editorial Board

Mary Ann Beavis

Carol J. Dempsey

Gina Hens-Piazza

Amy-Jill Levine

Linda M. Maloney

Song-Mi Suzie Park

Ahida Pilarski

Sarah J. Tanzer

Laurens Wilkins Lawrence

WISDOM COMMENTARY

Volume 16

Judith

Jennifer L. Koosed
Robert Paul Seesengood

Amy-Jill Levine
Volume Editor

Barbara E. Reid, OP
General Editor



A Michael Glazier Book

LITURGICAL PRESS
Collegeville, Minnesota

www.litpress.org

A Michael Glazier Book published by Liturgical Press

Scripture texts in this work are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

© 2022 by Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, Minnesota. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever, except brief quotations in reviews, without written permission of Liturgical Press, Saint John’s Abbey, PO Box 7500, Collegeville, MN 56321-7500. Printed in the United States of America.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Koosed, Jennifer L., author. | Seesengood, Robert Paul, author. | Levine, Amy-Jill, 1956– editor. | Reid, Barbara E., editor.
Title: Judith / Jennifer L. Koosed, Robert Paul Seesengood ; Amy-Jill Levine, volume editor, Barbara E. Reid, OP, general editor.
Description: Collegeville, Minnesota : Liturgical Press, 2022. | Series: Wisdom commentary ; volume 16 | “A Michael Glazier Book.” | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: “This commentary investigates the book of Judith through a feminist lens, informed by critical masculinity studies, queer theory, and reception criticism”— Provided by publisher.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022009224 (print) | LCCN 2022009225 (ebook) | ISBN 9780814681152 (hardcover) | ISBN 9780814681404 (epub) | ISBN 9780814681404 (pdf)
Subjects: LCSH: Bible. Judith—Feminist criticism. | BISAC: RELIGION / Biblical Commentary / Old Testament / Historical Books | RELIGION / Biblical Studies / Old Testament / Historical Books
Classification: LCC BS1735.52 .K66 2022 (print) | LCC BS1735.52 (ebook) | DDC 229/.24—dc23/eng/20220606
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022009224>
LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022009225>

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
List of Abbreviations	ix
List of Contributors	xi
Foreword: “ <i>Tell It on the Mountain</i> ”—or, “ <i>And You Shall Tell Your Daughter [as Well]</i> ”	xiii
Athalya Brenner-Idan	
Editor’s Introduction to Wisdom Commentary: “ <i>She Is a Breath of the Power of God</i> ” (Wis 7:25)	xvii
Barbara E. Reid, OP	
Authors’ Introduction	xxxvii
Judith 1:1–4:15 The Masculine Machinations of War	1
Judith 5:1–6:21 Achior, a Different Kind of Man	25
Judith 7:1–9:14 Judith Takes Center Stage	41
Judith 10:1–11:23 High Femme Warrior	73
Judith 12:1–13:10a Wielding the Master’s Tool	97
Judith 13:10b–16:25 Judith Triumphant	131
Conclusion	163
Works Cited	173

Index of Scripture References and Other Ancient Writings 187

Index of Authors and Subjects 193

Acknowledgments

We like Judith. It has been a joy to have her as a companion for these past few years, to read her book, view paintings that take her as their subject, and think about all the different ways she has been understood over the centuries. We have enjoyed speaking about her with other people and learning about her more from our Contributing Voices, many of whom have also given us the pleasure of actual, not just scholarly, conversation and friendship.

We would like to thank the editors of the Wisdom Commentary series. Seung Ai Yang shepherded us through the process from the beginning. Her encouraging messages kept us on track. Amy-Jill Levine stepped in at the end to read the manuscript. Her insightful comments and astute suggestions pushed us to think more deeply and write more clearly about our intriguing heroine. Barbara Reid has overseen it all with great attention to every detail. Our editors have made this a much better book.

The sabbaticals granted to us by Albright College were invaluable; Rob took one during the spring of 2017, and Jennifer followed with one during the spring of 2018. In both cases, funding not only supported time but also facilitated access to critical scholarly resources, venues, and books (and took some of the load from the endlessly patient interlibrary loan librarians of Albright's Gingrich Library). Thank you to our campus and department colleagues for your support.

Parts of this manuscript had early hearings by local congregations. Thanks to the people of Keshet Zion Synagogue; Calvary United Church of Christ; Friendship Circle of the Jewish Federation of Reading; and

First Presbyterian Church in Pottstown. Jennifer also gave the presidential address of the Mid-Atlantic Society of Biblical Literature in 2018 on Judith in the #MeToo Era. Thank you, everyone, for your insightful questions, keen interest, and enthusiastic support; this is also a better book because of you.

Continuing to draw the circles of community, we want to thank our family. Poor Simon has had to tolerate serially distracted parents, grumbling intermittently about proofreading, scholarly arguments, or obscure Greek. Abigail, at least, has had the small conciliation of Judith as a middle name, shared with her paternal grandmother whom she never got to meet but has learned to love nevertheless. Along with the rest of our family, they have given us their patience, encouragement, and, above all, love. Their love creates a space apart from our work, where the energy and confidence necessary for it are cultivated.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ANE	Ancient Near East
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BCE	Before the Common Era
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CE	Common Era
CEJL	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
FCB	Feminist Companion to the Bible
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
IFT	Introductions in Feminist Theology
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JFSR</i>	<i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement series
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
NABRE	New American Bible Revised Edition
NIV	New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OTE	<i>Old Testament Essays</i>
PL	Patrologia Latina
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Contributors

Dr. Robin Gallaher Branch received her PhD in Hebrew studies from the University of Texas at Austin in 2000. She was a Fulbright Scholar in 2002 and 2003 at North-West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa, and continues to serve there as a research associate. She is an adjunct professor in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Christian Brothers University and publishes in diverse media on biblical subjects.

Dr. Steed Vernyl Davidson is professor of Hebrew Bible and dean of the faculty at McCormick Theological Seminary. He teaches from the perspective of postcolonial biblical criticism in order to draw attention to the legacies and continuation of European colonialism and their implications for biblical interpretation.

Dr. Rhiannon Graybill is associate professor of religious studies at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. She researches gender, sexuality, and sexual violence in and around the Hebrew Bible.

Ms. Jessica Jernigan graduated from Bryn Mawr College with a degree in religion. She is a writer and an editor. Her work has appeared in *Women's Review of Books*, *Bitch*, and *Electric Literature*.

Dr. Linda Learman teaches in the Women's and Gender Studies program and the English Department at Adrian College. Her work focuses on writing studies and pedagogy as well as feminist studies.

Rev. Barbara K. Peronteau is ordained in the United Church of Christ and is the interim pastor at St. James Lutheran Church (ELCA) in San Leandro, California. She earned her MDiv from Union Theological Seminary;

completed CPE at Reading Hospital, Reading, Pennsylvania; and received two certificates for intentional interim ministry from the Art of Transitional Ministry. She is one of only a handful of fabulous trans women clergy serving the Church in the pulpit.

Dr. Caryn Tamber-Rosenau is instructional assistant professor of Jewish studies and religious studies at the University of Houston. She is the author of *Women in Drag: Gender and Performance in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature* (Gorgias, 2018).

Dr. Melissa C. Stewart is a professor of religion in the Department of Philosophy, Religion, and Leadership at Adrian College in Michigan and director of the Institute of Study Abroad. Her research focuses on Protestant views of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and on interdisciplinary team teaching.

Foreword

“Tell It on the Mountain”—or, “And You Shall Tell Your Daughter [as Well]”

Athalya Brenner-Idan

Universiteit van Amsterdam/Tel Aviv University

What can Wisdom Commentary do to help, and for whom?

The commentary genre has always been privileged in biblical studies. Traditionally acclaimed commentary series, such as the International Critical Commentary, Old Testament and New Testament Library, Hermeneia, Anchor Bible, Eerdmans, and Word—to name but several—enjoy nearly automatic prestige, and the number of women authors who participate in those is relatively small by comparison to their growing number in the scholarly guild. There certainly are some volumes written by women in them, especially in recent decades. At this time, however, this does not reflect the situation on the ground. Further, size matters. In that sense, the sheer size of the Wisdom Commentary is essential. This also represents a considerable investment and the possibility of reaching a wider audience than those already “converted.”

Expecting women scholars to deal especially or only with what are considered strictly “female” matters seems unwarranted. According to Audre Lorde, “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.”¹ But this maxim is not relevant to our case. The point of this commentary is not to destroy but to attain greater participation in the interpretive dialogue about biblical texts. Women scholars may bring additional questions to the readerly agenda as well as fresh angles to existing issues. To assume that their questions are designed only to topple a certain male hegemony is not convincing.

At first I did ask myself: is this commentary series an addition to calm raw nerves, an embellishment to make upholding the old hierarchy palatable? Or is it indeed about becoming the Master? On second and third thoughts, however, I understood that becoming the Master is not what this is about. Knowledge is power. Since Foucault at the very least, this cannot be in dispute. Writing commentaries for biblical texts by feminist women and men for women and for men, of confessional as well as non-confessional convictions, will sabotage (hopefully) the established hierarchy but will not topple it. This is about an attempt to integrate more fully, to introduce another viewpoint, to become. What excites me about the Wisdom Commentary is that it is not offered as just an alternative supplanting or substituting for the dominant discourse.

These commentaries on biblical books will retain nonauthoritative, pluralistic viewpoints. And yes, once again, the weight of a dedicated series, to distinguish from collections of stand-alone volumes, will prove weightier.

That such an approach is especially important in the case of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament is beyond doubt. Women of Judaism, Christianity, and also Islam have struggled to make it their own for centuries, even more than they have fought for the New Testament and the Qur’an. Every Hebrew Bible/Old Testament volume in this project is evidence that the day has arrived: it is now possible to read *all* the Jewish canonical books as a collection, for a collection they are, with guidance conceived of with the needs of women readers (not only men) as an integral inspiration and part thereof.

In my Jewish tradition, the main motivation for reciting the Haggadah, the ritual text recited yearly on Passover, the festival of liberation from

1. Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984, 2007), 110–14. First delivered in the Second Sex Conference in New York, 1979.

bondage, is given as “And you shall tell your son” (from Exod 13:8). The knowledge and experience of past generations is thus transferred to the next, for constructing the present and the future. The ancient maxim is, literally, limited to a male audience. This series remolds the maxim into a new inclusive shape, which is of the utmost consequence: “And you shall tell your son” is extended to “And you shall tell your daughter [as well as your son].” Or, if you want, “Tell it on the mountain,” for all to hear.

This is what it’s all about.

Editor's Introduction to Wisdom Commentary

“She Is a Breath of the Power of God” (Wis 7:25)

Barbara E. Reid, OP

General Editor

Wisdom Commentary is the first series to offer detailed feminist interpretation of every book of the Bible. The fruit of collaborative work by an ecumenical and interreligious team of scholars, the volumes provide serious, scholarly engagement with the whole biblical text, not only those texts that explicitly mention women. The series is intended for clergy, teachers, ministers, and all serious students of the Bible. Designed to be both accessible and informed by the various approaches of biblical scholarship, it pays particular attention to the world in front of the text, that is, how the text is heard and appropriated. At the same time, this series aims to be faithful to the ancient text and its earliest audiences; thus the volumes also explicate the worlds behind the text and within it. While issues of gender are primary in this project, the volumes also address the intersecting issues of power, authority, ethnicity, race, class, and religious belief and practice. The fifty-eight volumes include the books regarded as canonical by Jews (i.e., the Tanakh); Protestants (the “Hebrew Bible” and the New Testament); and Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Eastern

Orthodox Communions (i.e., Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach/Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, including the Letter of Jeremiah, the additions to Esther, and Susanna and Bel and the Dragon in Daniel).

A Symphony of Diverse Voices

Included in the Wisdom Commentary series are voices from scholars of many different religious traditions, of diverse ages, differing sexual identities, and varying cultural, racial, ethnic, and social contexts. Some have been pioneers in feminist biblical interpretation; others are newer contributors from a younger generation. A further distinctive feature of this series is that each volume incorporates voices other than that of the lead author(s). These voices appear alongside the commentary of the lead author(s), in the grayscale inserts. At times, a contributor may offer an alternative interpretation or a critique of the position taken by the lead author(s). At other times, they may offer a complementary interpretation from a different cultural context or subject position. Occasionally, portions of previously published material bring in other views. The diverse voices are not intended to be contestants in a debate or a cacophony of discordant notes. The multiple voices reflect that there is no single definitive feminist interpretation of a text. In addition, they show the importance of subject position in the process of interpretation. In this regard, the Wisdom Commentary series takes inspiration from the Talmud and from *The Torah: A Women's Commentary* (ed. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Andrea L. Weiss; New York: URJ Press and Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, 2008), in which many voices, even conflicting ones, are included and not harmonized.

Contributors include biblical scholars, theologians, and readers of Scripture from outside the scholarly and religious guilds. At times, their comments pertain to a particular text. In some instances they address a theme or topic that arises from the text.

Another feature that highlights the collaborative nature of feminist biblical interpretation is that a number of the volumes have two lead authors who have worked in tandem from the inception of the project and whose voices interweave throughout the commentary.

Woman Wisdom

The title, *Wisdom Commentary*, reflects both the importance to feminists of the figure of Woman Wisdom in the Scriptures and the distinct

wisdom that feminist women and men bring to the interpretive process. In the Scriptures, Woman Wisdom appears as “a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty” (Wis 7:25), who was present and active in fashioning all that exists (Prov 8:22-31; Wis 8:6). She is a spirit who pervades and penetrates all things (Wis 7:22-23), and she provides guidance and nourishment at her all-inclusive table (Prov 9:1-5). In both postexilic biblical and nonbiblical Jewish sources, Woman Wisdom is often equated with Torah, e.g., Sirach 24:23-34; Baruch 3:9-4:4; 38:2; 46:4-5; 2 Baruch 48:33, 36; 4 Ezra 5:9-10; 13:55; 14:40; 1 Enoch 42.

The New Testament frequently portrays Jesus as Wisdom incarnate. He invites his followers, “take my yoke upon you and learn from me” (Matt 11:29), just as Ben Sira advises, “put your neck under her [Wisdom’s] yoke and let your souls receive instruction” (Sir 51:26). Just as Wisdom experiences rejection (Prov 1:23-25; Sir 15:7-8; Wis 10:3; Bar 3:12), so too does Jesus (Mark 8:31; John 1:10-11). Only some accept his invitation to his all-inclusive banquet (Matt 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24; compare Prov 1:20-21; 9:3-5). Yet, “wisdom is vindicated by her deeds” (Matt 11:19, speaking of Jesus and John the Baptist; in the Lukan parallel at 7:35 they are called “wisdom’s children”). There are numerous parallels between what is said of Wisdom and of the *Logos* in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1-18). These are only a few of many examples. This female embodiment of divine presence and power is an apt image to guide the work of this series.

Feminism

There are many different understandings of the term “feminism.” The various meanings, aims, and methods have developed exponentially in recent decades. Feminism is a perspective and a movement that springs from a recognition of inequities toward women, and it advocates for changes in whatever structures prevent full flourishing of human beings and all creation. Three waves of feminism in the United States are commonly recognized. The first, arising in the mid-nineteenth century and lasting into the early twentieth, was sparked by women’s efforts to be involved in the public sphere and to win the right to vote. In the 1960s and 1970s, the second wave focused on civil rights and equality for women. With the third wave, from the 1980s forward, came global feminism and the emphasis on the contextual nature of interpretation. Now a fourth wave may be emerging, with a stronger emphasis on the intersectionality of women’s concerns with those of other marginalized groups and the increased use

of the internet as a platform for discussion and activism.¹ As feminism has matured, it has recognized that inequities based on gender are interwoven with power imbalances based on race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, physical ability, and a host of other social markers.

Feminist Women and Men

Men as well as nonbinary people who choose to identify with and partner with feminist women in the work of deconstructing systems of domination and building structures of equality are rightly regarded as feminists. Some men readily identify with experiences of women who are discriminated against on the basis of sex/gender, having themselves had comparable experiences; others who may not have faced direct discrimination or stereotyping recognize that inequity and problematic characterization still occur, and they seek correction. This series is pleased to include feminist men both as lead authors and as contributing voices.

Feminist Biblical Interpretation

Women interpreting the Bible from the lenses of their own experience is nothing new. Throughout the ages women have recounted the biblical stories, teaching them to their children and others, all the while interpreting them afresh for their time and circumstances.² Following is a very brief sketch of select foremothers who laid the groundwork for contemporary feminist biblical interpretation.

One of the earliest known Christian women who challenged patriarchal interpretations of Scripture was a consecrated virgin named Helie, who lived in the second century CE. When she refused to marry, her

1. See Martha Rampton, "Four Waves of Feminism" (October 25, 2015), at <https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>; and Ealasaid Munro, "Feminism: A Fourth Wave?," *Political Insight* (September 2013), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/2041-9066.12021>.

2. For fuller treatments of this history, see chap. 7, "One Thousand Years of Feminist Bible Criticism," in Gerda Lerner, *Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 138–66; Susanne Scholz, "From the 'Woman's Bible' to the 'Women's Bible,' The History of Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible," in *Introducing the Women's Hebrew Bible*, IFT 13 (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 12–32; Marion Ann Taylor and Agnes Choi, eds., *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters: A Historical and Biographical Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

parents brought her before a judge, who quoted to her Paul's admonition, "It is better to marry than to be aflame with passion" (1 Cor 7:9). In response, Helie first acknowledges that this is what Scripture says, but then she retorts, "but not for everyone, that is, not for holy virgins."³ She is one of the first to question the notion that a text has one meaning that is applicable in all situations.

A Jewish woman who also lived in the second century CE, Beruriah, is said to have had "profound knowledge of biblical exegesis and outstanding intelligence."⁴ One story preserved in the Talmud (b. Ber. 10a) tells of how she challenged her husband, Rabbi Meir, when he prayed for the destruction of a sinner. Proffering an alternate interpretation, she argued that Psalm 104:35 advocated praying for the destruction of sin, not the sinner.

In medieval times the first written commentaries on Scripture from a critical feminist point of view emerge. While others may have been produced and passed on orally, they are for the most part lost to us now. Among the earliest preserved feminist writings are those of Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), German writer, mystic, and abbess of a Benedictine monastery. She reinterpreted the Genesis narratives in a way that presented women and men as complementary and interdependent. She frequently wrote about the Divine as feminine.⁵ Along with other women mystics of the time, such as Julian of Norwich (1342–ca. 1416), she spoke authoritatively from her personal experiences of God's revelation in prayer.

In this era, women were also among the scribes who copied biblical manuscripts. Notable among them is Paula Dei Mansi of Verona, from a distinguished family of Jewish scribes. In 1288, she translated from Hebrew into Italian a collection of Bible commentaries written by her father and added her own explanations.⁶

Another pioneer, Christine de Pizan (1365–ca. 1430), was a French court writer and prolific poet. She used allegory and common sense

3. Madrid, Escorial MS, a II 9, f. 90 v., as cited in Lerner, *Feminist Consciousness*, 140.

4. See Judith R. Baskin, "Women and Post-Biblical Commentary," in *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, ed. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Andrea L. Weiss (New York: URJ Press and Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, 2008), xlix–lv, at lii.

5. Hildegard of Bingen, *De Operatione Dei*, 1.4.100; PL 197:885bc, as cited in Lerner, *Feminist Consciousness*, 142–43. See also Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

6. Emily Taitz, Sondra Henry, Cheryl Tallan, eds., *JPS Guide to Jewish Women 600 B.C.E.–1900 C.E.* (Philadelphia: JPS, 2003), 110–11.

to subvert misogynist readings of Scripture and celebrated the accomplishments of female biblical figures to argue for women's active roles in building society.⁷

By the seventeenth century, there were women who asserted that the biblical text needs to be understood and interpreted in its historical context. For example, Rachel Speght (1597–ca. 1630), a Calvinist English poet, elaborates on the historical situation in first-century Corinth that prompted Paul to say, “It is well for a man not to touch a woman” (1 Cor 7:1). Her aim was to show that the biblical texts should not be applied in a literal fashion to all times and circumstances. Similarly, Margaret Fell (1614–1702), one of the founders of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, addressed the Pauline prohibitions against women speaking in church by insisting that they do not have universal validity. Rather, they need to be understood in their historical context, as addressed to a local church in particular time-bound circumstances.⁸

Along with analyzing the historical context of the biblical writings, women in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries began to attend to misogynistic interpretations based on faulty translations. One of the first to do so was British feminist Mary Astell (1666–1731).⁹ In the United States, the Grimké sisters, Sarah (1792–1873) and Angelina (1805–1879), Quaker women from a slaveholding family in South Carolina, learned biblical Greek and Hebrew so that they could interpret the Bible for themselves. They were prompted to do so after men sought to silence them from speaking out against slavery and for women's rights by claiming that the Bible (e.g., 1 Cor 14:34) prevented women from speaking in public.¹⁰ Another prominent abolitionist, Isabella Baumfree, was a former slave who adopted the name Sojourner Truth (ca. 1797–1883); she quoted the Bible liberally in her speeches¹¹ and in so doing challenged cultural assumptions and biblical interpretations that undergird gender inequities.

7. See further Taylor and Choi, *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters*, 127–32.

8. Her major work, *Women's Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed by the Scriptures*, published in London in 1667, gave a systematic feminist reading of all biblical texts pertaining to women.

9. Mary Astell, *Some Reflections upon Marriage* (New York: Source Book Press, 1970, reprint of the 1730 edition; earliest edition of this work is 1700), 103–4.

10. See further Sarah Grimké, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838).

11. See, for example, her most famous speech, “Ain't I a Woman?,” delivered in 1851 at the Ohio Women's Rights Convention in Akron, OH; Modern History Sourcebook, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/sojtruth-woman.asp>.

Another monumental work that emerged in nineteenth-century England was that of Jewish theologian Grace Aguilar (1816–1847), *The Women of Israel*,¹² published in 1845. Aguilar's approach was to make connections between the biblical women and contemporary Jewish women's concerns. She aimed to counter the widespread notion that women were degraded in Jewish law and that only in Christianity were women's dignity and value upheld. Her intent was to help Jewish women find strength and encouragement by seeing the evidence of God's compassionate love in the history of every woman in the Bible. While not a full commentary on the Bible, Aguilar's work stands out for its comprehensive treatment of every female biblical character, including even the most obscure references.¹³

The first person to produce a full-blown feminist commentary on the Bible was Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902). A leading proponent in the United States for women's right to vote, she found that whenever women tried to make inroads into politics, education, or the work world, the Bible was quoted against them. Along with a team of like-minded women, she produced her own commentary on every text of the Bible that concerned women. Her pioneering two-volume project, *The Woman's Bible*, published in 1895 and 1898, urges women to recognize that texts that degrade women come from the men who wrote the texts, not from God, and to use their common sense to rethink what has been presented to them as sacred.

Nearly a century later, *The Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), appeared. This one-volume commentary features North American feminist scholarship on each book of the Protestant canon. Like Cady Stanton's commentary, it does not contain comments on every section of the biblical text but only on those passages deemed relevant to women. It was revised and expanded in 1998 to include the Apocrypha/Deuterocanonical books, and the contributors to this new volume reflect the global face of contemporary feminist scholarship. The revisions made in the third edition, which appeared in 2012, represent the profound advances in feminist biblical scholarship and include newer voices (with Jacqueline E. Lapsley as an additional editor). In both the second and third editions, *The* has been dropped from the title.

12. The full title is *The Women of Israel or Characters and Sketches from the Holy Scriptures and Jewish History Illustrative of the Past History, Present Duty, and Future Destiny of the Hebrew Females, as Based on the Word of God*.

13. See further Eskenazi and Weiss, *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, xxxviii; Taylor and Choi, *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters*, 31–37.

Also appearing at the centennial of Cady Stanton's *The Woman's Bible* were two volumes edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza with the assistance of Shelly Matthews. The first, *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), charts a comprehensive approach to feminist interpretation from ecumenical, interreligious, and multicultural perspectives. The second volume, published in 1994, provides critical feminist commentary on each book of the New Testament as well as on three books of Jewish Pseudepigrapha and eleven other early Christian writings.

In Europe, similar endeavors have been undertaken, such as the one-volume *Kompendium Feministische Bibelauslegung*, edited by Luise Schottruff and Marie-Theres Wacker (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007), featuring German feminist biblical interpretation of each book of the Bible, along with Deuterocanonical apocryphal books, and several extrabiblical writings. This work, now in its third edition, was translated into English.¹⁴ A multivolume project, *The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*, edited by Mary Ann Beavis, Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Puerto, and Adriana Valerio, is currently in production. This project presents a history of the reception of the Bible as embedded in Western cultural history and focuses particularly on gender-relevant biblical themes, biblical female characters, and women recipients of the Bible. The volumes are published in English, Spanish, Italian, and German.¹⁵

14. *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*, trans. Lisa E. Dahill, Everett R. Kalin, Nancy Lukens, Linda M. Maloney, Barbara Rumscheidt, Martin Rumscheidt, and Tina Steiner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012). Another notable collection is the three volumes edited by Susanne Scholz, *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect*, Recent Research in Biblical Studies 7, 8, 9 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013, 2014, 2016).

15. The first volume, on the Torah, appeared in Spanish in 2009, in German and Italian in 2010, and in English in 2011 (Atlanta: SBL). The other available volumes are as follows: *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2014); *The Writings and Later Wisdom Books*, ed. Christl M. Maier and Nuria Calduch-Benages (2014); *Gospels: Narrative and History*, ed. Mercedes Navarro Puerto and Marinella Perroni; Amy-Jill Levine, English ed. (2015); *The High Middle Ages*, ed. Kari Elisabeth Børresen and Adriana Valerio (2015); *Early Jewish Writings*, ed. Eileen Schuller and Marie-Theres Wacker (2017); *Faith and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Religious Communities*, ed. Michaela Sohn-Kronthaler and Ruth Albrecht (2019); *The Early Middle Ages*, ed. Franca Ela Consolino and Judith Herrin (2020); *Prophecy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. L. Juliana Claassens and Irmtraud Fischer (2021); and *Rabbinic Literature*, ed. Tal Ilan, Lorena Miralles-Maciá, and Ronit Nikolsky (2022). For further information, see <https://www.bibleandwomen.org>.

Another groundbreaking work is the collection *The Feminist Companion to the Bible Series*, edited by Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993–2015), which comprises twenty volumes of commentaries on the Old Testament. The parallel series, *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings*, edited by Amy-Jill Levine with Marianne Blickenstaff and Maria Mayo Robbins (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001–2010), contains thirteen volumes. These two series are not full commentaries on the biblical books but comprise collected essays on discrete biblical texts.

Works by individual feminist biblical scholars in all parts of the world abound, and they are now too numerous to list in this introduction. Feminist biblical interpretation has reached a level of maturity that now makes possible a commentary series on every book of the Bible. In recent decades, women have had greater access to formal theological education, have been able to learn critical analytical tools, have put their own interpretations into writing, and have developed new methods of biblical interpretation. Until recent decades the work of feminist biblical interpreters was largely unknown, both to other women and to their brothers in the synagogue, church, and academy. Feminists now have taken their place in the professional world of biblical scholars, where they build on the work of their foremothers and connect with one another across the globe in ways not previously possible. In a few short decades, feminist biblical criticism has become an integral part of the academy.

Methodologies

Feminist biblical scholars use a variety of methods and often employ a number of them together.¹⁶ In the *Wisdom Commentary* series, the authors will explain their understanding of feminism and the feminist reading strategies used in their commentary. Each volume treats the biblical text in blocks of material, not an analysis verse by verse. The entire text is considered, not only those passages that feature female characters or that speak specifically about women. When women are not apparent in the narrative, feminist lenses are used to analyze the dynamics in the text between male characters, the models of power, binary ways of thinking, and the dynamics of imperialism. Attention is given to how the whole text functions and how it was and is heard, both in its original context

16. See the seventeen essays in Caroline Vander Stichele and Todd Penner, eds., *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse* (Atlanta: SBL, 2005), which show the complementarity of various approaches.

and today. Issues of particular concern to women—e.g., poverty, food, health, the environment, water—come to the fore.

One of the approaches used by early feminists and still popular today is to lift up the overlooked and forgotten stories of women in the Bible. Studies of women in each of the Testaments have been done, and there are also studies on women in particular biblical books.¹⁷ Feminists recognize that the examples of biblical characters can be both empowering and problematic. The point of the feminist enterprise is not to serve as an apologetic for women; it is rather, in part, to recover women's history and literary roles in all their complexity and to learn from that recovery.

Retrieving the submerged history of biblical women is a crucial step for constructing the story of the past so as to lead to liberative possibilities for the present and future. There are, however, some pitfalls to this approach. Sometimes depictions of biblical women have been naïve and romantic. Some commentators exalt the virtues of both biblical and contemporary women and paint women as superior to men. Such reverse discrimination inhibits movement toward equality for all. In addition, some feminists challenge the idea that one can "pluck positive images out of an admittedly androcentric text, separating literary characterizations from the androcentric interests they were created to serve."¹⁸ Still other feminists find these images to have enormous value.

One other danger with seeking the submerged history of women is the tendency for Christian feminists to paint Jesus and even Paul as liberators of women in a way that demonizes Judaism.¹⁹ Wisdom Commentary

17. See, e.g., Alice Bach, ed., *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002); Carol Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross Shepard Kraemer, eds., *Women in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Irene Nowell, *Women in the Old Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997); Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003); Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan, *Women in the New Testament* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001); Bonnie Thurston, *Women in the New Testament: Questions and Commentary*, *Companions to the New Testament* (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

18. J. Cheryl Exum, "Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1.8–2.10," in *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, FCB 6, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 75–97, at 76.

19. See Judith Plaskow, "Anti-Judaism in Feminist Christian Interpretation," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, vol. 1, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza with Shelly Matthews (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 117–29; Amy-Jill Levine, "The

aims to enhance understanding of Jesus as well as Paul as Jews of their day and to forge solidarity among Jewish and Christian feminists.

Feminist scholars who use historical-critical methods analyze the world behind the text; they seek to understand the historical context from which the text emerged and the circumstances of the communities to whom it was addressed. In bringing feminist lenses to this approach, the aim is not to impose modern expectations on ancient cultures but to unmask the ways that ideologically problematic mind-sets that produced the ancient texts are still promulgated through the text. Feminist biblical scholars aim not only to deconstruct but also to reclaim and reconstruct biblical history as women's history, in which women were central and active agents in creating religious heritage.²⁰ A further step is to construct meaning for contemporary women and men in a liberative movement toward transformation of social, political, economic, and religious structures.²¹ In recent years, some feminists have embraced new historicism, which accents the creative role of the interpreter in any construction of history and exposes the power struggles to which the text witnesses.²²

Literary critics analyze the world of the text: its form, language patterns, and rhetorical function.²³ They do not attempt to separate layers

New Testament and Anti-Judaism," in *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 87–117.

20. See, for example, Phyllis A. Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994); Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo, eds., *Women and Christian Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

21. See, e.g., Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, rev. ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), whose aim is to engage in biblical interpretation not only for intellectual enlightenment but, even more important, for personal and communal transformation. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (*Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001]) envisions the work of feminist biblical interpretation as a dance of Wisdom that consists of seven steps that interweave in spiral movements toward liberation, the final one being transformative action for change.

22. See Gina Hens-Piazza, *The New Historicism*, GBS, Old Testament Series (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

23. Phyllis Trible was among the first to employ this method with texts from Genesis and Ruth in her groundbreaking book *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, OBT (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978). Another pioneer in feminist literary criticism is Mieke Bal (*Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* [Bloomington: Indiana University

of tradition and redaction but focus on the text holistically, as it is in its present form. They examine how meaning is created in the interaction between the text and its reader in multiple contexts. Within the arena of literary approaches are reader-oriented approaches, narrative, rhetorical, structuralist, post-structuralist, deconstructive, ideological, autobiographical, and performance criticism.²⁴ Narrative critics study the interrelation among author, text, and audience through investigation of settings, both spatial and temporal; characters; plot; and narrative techniques (e.g., irony, parody, intertextual allusions). Reader-response critics attend to the impact that the text has on the reader or hearer. They recognize that when a text is detrimental toward women there is the choice either to affirm the text or to read against the grain toward a liberative end. Rhetorical criticism analyzes the style of argumentation and attends to how the author is attempting to shape the thinking or actions of the hearer. Structuralist critics analyze the complex patterns of binary oppositions in the text to derive its meaning.²⁵ Post-structuralist approaches challenge the notion that there are fixed meanings to any biblical text or that there is one universal truth. They engage in close readings of the text and often engage in intertextual analysis.²⁶ Within this approach is deconstructionist criticism, which views the text as a site of conflict, with competing narratives. The interpreter aims to expose the fault lines and overturn and reconfigure binaries by elevating the underling of a pair and foregrounding it.²⁷ Feminists also use other post-

Press, 1987]). For surveys of recent developments in literary methods, see Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, eds., *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008); Michal Beth Dinkler, *Literary Theory and the New Testament*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

24. See, e.g., J. Cheryl Exum and David J. A. Clines, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993); Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, eds., *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994).

25. See, e.g., David Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Three Structural Analyses in the Old Testament*, JSOTSup 7 (Sheffield: University of Sheffield Press, 1978).

26. See, e.g., Stephen D. Moore, *Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994); *The Bible in Theory: Critical and Postcritical Essays* (Atlanta: SBL, 2010); Yvonne Sherwood, *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

27. David Penchansky, "Deconstruction," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Steven McKenzie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 196–205. See, for example, Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise:*

modern approaches, such as ideological and autobiographical criticism. The former analyzes the system of ideas that underlies the power and values concealed in the text as well as that of the interpreter.²⁸ The latter involves deliberate self-disclosure while reading the text as a critical exegete.²⁹ Performance criticism attends to how the text was passed on orally, usually in communal settings, and to the verbal and nonverbal interactions between the performer and the audience.³⁰

From the beginning, feminists have understood that interpreting the Bible is an act of power. In recent decades, feminist biblical scholars have developed hermeneutical theories of the ethics and politics of biblical interpretation to challenge the claims to value neutrality of most academic biblical scholarship. Feminist biblical scholars have also turned their attention to how some biblical writings were shaped by the power of empire and how this still shapes readers' self-understandings today. They have developed hermeneutical approaches that reveal, critique, and evaluate the interactions depicted in the text against the context of empire, and they consider implications for contemporary contexts.³¹ Feminists also analyze the dynamics of colonization and the mentalities of colonized peoples in the exercise of biblical interpretation. As Kwok Pui-lan explains, "A postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible needs to investigate the deployment of gender in the narration of identity, the negotiation of power differentials between the colonizers and the colonized, and the reinforcement of patriarchal control over spheres

The Subject of the Bible's First Story (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993); David Rutledge, *Reading Marginally: Feminism, Deconstruction and the Bible*, BibInt 21 (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

28. See David Jobling and Tina Pippin, eds., *Semeia 59: Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London: Verso, 2007).

29. See, e.g., Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger, ed., *Autobiographical Biblical Interpretation: Between Text and Self* (Leiden: Deo, 2002); P. J. W. Schutte, "When They, We, and the Passive Become I—Introducing Autobiographical Biblical Criticism," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 61 (2005): 401–16.

30. See, e.g., Holly E. Hearon and Philip Ruge-Jones, eds., *The Bible in Ancient and Modern Media: Story and Performance* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009).

31. E.g., Gale Yee, ed., *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Warren Carter, *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context* (London: T&T Clark, 2005); *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Judith E. McKinlay, *Reframing Her: Biblical Women in Postcolonial Focus* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2004).

where these elites could exercise control.”³² Methods and models from sociology and cultural anthropology are used by feminists to investigate women’s everyday lives, their experiences of marriage, childrearing, labor, money, illness, etc.³³

As feminists have examined the construction of gender from varying cultural perspectives, they have become ever more cognizant that the way gender roles are defined within differing cultures varies radically. As Mary Ann Tolbert observes, “Attempts to isolate some universal role that cross-culturally defines ‘woman’ have run into contradictory evidence at every turn.”³⁴ Some women have coined new terms to highlight the particularities of their socio-cultural context. Many African American feminists, for example, call themselves *womanists* to draw attention to the double oppression of racism and sexism they experience.³⁵ Similarly, many US Hispanic feminists speak of themselves as *mujeristas* (*mujer* is Spanish for “woman”).³⁶ Others prefer to be called “Latina feminists.”³⁷ As a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative, many today use Latinx or Latine. *Mujeristas*, Latina and Latine feminists emphasize that the context

32. Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 9. See also Musa W. Dube, ed., *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000); Cristl M. Maier and Carolyn J. Sharp, *Prophecy and Power: Jeremiah in Feminist and Postcolonial Perspective* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); L. Juliana Claassens and Carolyn J. Sharp, eds., *Feminist Frameworks and the Bible: Power, Ambiguity, and Intersectionality*, LHBOTS 630 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017).

33. See, for example, Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Luise Schottroff, *Lydia’s Impatient Sisters: A Feminist Social History of Early Christianity*, trans. Barbara and Martin Rumscheidt (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Susan Niditch, “My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man”: *Hair and Identity in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

34. Mary Ann Tolbert, “Social, Sociological, and Anthropological Methods,” in *Searching the Scriptures*, 1:255–71, at 265.

35. Alice Walker coined the term (*In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Womanist Prose* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967, 1983]). See also Katie G. Cannon, “The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness,” in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Letty M. Russell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 30–40; Renita J. Weems, *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women’s Relationships in the Bible* (San Diego: Lura Media, 1988); Nyasha Junior, *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015).

36. Ada María Isasi-Díaz (*Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996]) is credited with coining the term.

37. E.g., María Pilar Aquino, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodríguez, eds., *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

for their theologizing is *mestizaje* and *mulatez* (racial and cultural mixture), done *en conjunto* (in community), with *lo cotidiano* (everyday lived experience) of Latina women as starting points for theological reflection and the encounter with the divine. Intercultural analysis has become an indispensable tool for working toward justice for women at the global level.³⁸

Some feminists are among those who have developed lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) interpretation. This approach focuses on issues of sexual identity and uses various reading strategies. Some point out the ways in which categories that emerged in recent centuries are applied anachronistically to biblical texts to make modern-day judgments. Others show how the Bible is silent on contemporary issues about sexual identity. Still others examine same-sex relationships in the Bible by figures such as Ruth and Naomi or David and Jonathan. In recent years, queer theory has emerged; it emphasizes the blurriness of boundaries not just of sexual identity but also of gender roles. Queer critics often focus on texts in which figures transgress what is traditionally considered proper gender behavior.³⁹

Feminists have also been engaged in studying the reception history of the text⁴⁰ and have engaged in studies in the emerging fields of disability theory and of children in the Bible.

38. See, e.g., María Pilar Aquino and María José Rosado-Nunes, eds., *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Explorations for a Just World*, Studies in Latino/a Catholicism (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007). See also Michelle A. Gonzalez, "Latina Feminist Theology: Past, Present, and Future," *JFSR* 25 (2009): 150–55. See also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed., *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*, The Bible and Women 9.1 (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), who charts feminist studies around the globe as well as emerging feminist methodologies.

39. See, e.g., Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Mary Rose D'Angelo, "Women Partners in the New Testament," *JFSR* 6 (1990): 65–86; Deirdre J. Good, "Reading Strategies for Biblical Passages on Same-Sex Relations," *Theology and Sexuality* 7 (1997): 70–82; Deryn Guest, *When Deborah Met Jael: Lesbian Feminist Hermeneutics* (London: SCM, 2005); Teresa Hornsby and Ken Stone, eds., *Bible Trouble: Queer Readings at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship* (Atlanta: SBL, 2011); Joseph A. Marchal, "Queer Studies and Critical Masculinity Studies in Feminist Biblical Studies," in *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Schüssler Fiorenza, 261–80.

40. See Sharon H. Ringe, "When Women Interpret the Bible," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 5; Taylor and Choi, *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters*; Yvonne Sherwood, "Introduction," in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Feminists also recognize that the struggle for women's equality and dignity is intimately connected with the struggle for respect for Earth and for the whole of the cosmos. Ecofeminists interpret Scripture in ways that highlight the link between human domination of nature and male subjugation of women. They show how anthropocentric ways of interpreting the Bible have overlooked or dismissed Earth and Earth community. They invite readers to identify not only with human characters in the biblical narrative but also with other Earth creatures and domains of nature, especially those that are the object of injustice. Some use creative imagination to retrieve the interests of Earth implicit in the narrative and enable Earth to speak.⁴¹

Biblical Authority

By the late nineteenth century, some feminists, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, began to question openly whether the Bible could continue to be regarded as authoritative for women. They viewed the Bible itself as the source of women's oppression, and some rejected its sacred origin and saving claims. Some decided that the Bible and the religious traditions that enshrine it are too thoroughly saturated with androcentrism and patriarchy to be redeemable.⁴²

In the Wisdom Commentary series, questions such as these may be raised, but the aim of this series is not to lead readers to reject the authority of the biblical text. Rather, the aim is to promote better understanding of the contexts from which the text arose and of the rhetorical effects it has on people in contemporary contexts. Such understanding can lead to a deepening of faith, with the Bible serving as an aid to bring flourishing of life.

Language for God

Because of the ways in which the term "God" has been used to symbolize the divine in predominantly male, patriarchal, and monarchical modes, feminists have designed new ways of speaking of the divine. Some have called attention to the inadequacy of the term *God* by trying

41. E.g., Norman C. Habel and Peter Trudinger, *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*, SBLSymS 46 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008); Mary Judith Ress, *Ecofeminism in Latin America*, *Women from the Margins* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

42. E.g., Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: A Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon, 1985).

to visually destabilize our ways of thinking and speaking of the divine. Rosemary Radford Ruether proposed *God/ess*, as an unpronounceable term pointing to the unnameable understanding of the divine that transcends patriarchal limitations.⁴³ Some have followed traditional Jewish practice, writing *G-d*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has adopted *G*d*.⁴⁴ Others draw on the biblical tradition to mine female and non-gender-specific metaphors and symbols.⁴⁵ In *Wisdom Commentary*, there is not one standard way of expressing the divine; each author will use her or his preferred ways. The one exception is that when the tetragrammaton, YHWH, the name revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:14, is used, it will be without vowels, respecting the Jewish custom of avoiding pronouncing the divine name out of reverence.

Nomenclature for the Two Testaments

In recent decades, some biblical scholars have begun to call the two Testaments of the Bible by names other than the traditional nomenclature: Old and New Testament. Some regard "Old" as derogatory, implying that it is no longer relevant or that it has been superseded. Consequently, terms like Hebrew Bible, First Testament, and Jewish Scriptures and, correspondingly, Christian Scriptures or Second Testament have come into use. There are a number of difficulties with these designations. The term "Hebrew Bible" does not take into account that parts of the Old Testament are written not in Hebrew but in Aramaic.⁴⁶ Moreover, for Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox believers, the Old Testament includes books written in Greek—the Deuterocanonical books, considered Apocrypha by Protestants.⁴⁷ The term "Jewish Scriptures" is inadequate because these

43. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon, 1993).

44. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet; Critical Issues in Feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 191n3.

45. E.g., Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991); Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992). See further Elizabeth A. Johnson, "God," in *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, ed. Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 128–30.

46. Gen 31:47; Jer 10:11; Ezra 4:7–6:18; 7:12–26; Dan 2:4–7:28.

47. Representing the *via media* between Catholic and reformed, Anglicans generally consider the Apocrypha to be profitable, if not canonical, and utilize select Wisdom texts liturgically.

books are also sacred to Christians. Conversely, “Christian Scriptures” is not an accurate designation for the New Testament, since the Old Testament is also part of the Christian Scriptures. Using “First and Second Testament” also has difficulties, in that it can imply a hierarchy and a value judgment.⁴⁸ Jews generally use the term Tanakh, an acronym for Torah (Pentateuch), Nevi’im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).

In Wisdom Commentary, if authors choose to use a designation other than Tanakh, Old Testament, and New Testament, they will explain how they mean the term.

Translation

Modern feminist scholars recognize the complexities connected with biblical translation, as they have delved into questions about philosophy of language, how meanings are produced, and how they are culturally situated. Today it is evident that simply translating into gender-neutral formulations cannot address all the challenges presented by androcentric texts. Efforts at feminist translation must also deal with issues around authority and canonicity.⁴⁹

Because of these complexities, the editors of the Wisdom Commentary series have chosen to use an existing translation, the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which is provided for easy reference at the top of each page of commentary. The NRSV was produced by a team of ecumenical and interreligious scholars, is a fairly literal translation, and uses inclusive language for human beings. Brief discussions about problematic translations appear in the inserts labeled “Translation Matters.” When more detailed discussions are available, these will be indicated in footnotes. In the commentary, wherever Hebrew or Greek words are used, English translation is provided. In cases where a wordplay is involved, transliteration is provided to enable understanding.

Art and Poetry

Artistic expression in poetry, music, sculpture, painting, and various other modes is very important to feminist interpretation. Where possible, art and poetry are included in the print volumes of the series. In

48. See Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, 193–99.

49. Elizabeth Castelli, “*Les Belles Infidèles*/Fidelity or Feminism? The Meanings of Feminist Biblical Translation,” in *Searching the Scriptures*, 1:189–204, here 190.

a number of instances, these are original works created for this project. Regrettably, copyright and production costs prohibit the inclusion of color photographs and other artistic work.

Glossary

Because there are a number of excellent readily available resources that provide definitions and concise explanations of terms used in feminist theological and biblical studies, this series will not include a glossary. We refer you to works such as *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, edited by Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson, and volume 1 of *Searching the Scriptures*, edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza with the assistance of Shelly Matthews. Individual authors in the Wisdom Commentary series will define the way they are using terms that may be unfamiliar.

A Concluding Word

In just a few short decades, feminist biblical studies has grown exponentially, both in the methods that have been developed and in the number of scholars who have embraced it. We realize that this series is limited and will soon need to be revised and updated. It is our hope that Wisdom Commentary, by making the best of current feminist biblical scholarship available in an accessible format to ministers, preachers, teachers, scholars, and students, will aid all readers in their advancement toward God's vision of dignity, equality, and justice for all.



Acknowledgments

There are a great many people who have made this series possible: first, Peter Dwyer, retired director of Liturgical Press, and Hans Christofersen, editorial director of Liturgical Press, who have believed in this project and have shepherded it since it was conceived in 2008. Editorial consultants Athalya Brenner-Idan and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza have not only been an inspiration with their pioneering work but have

encouraged us all along the way with their personal involvement. Volume editors Mary Ann Beavis, Carol J. Dempsey, Gina Hens-Piazza, Amy-Jill Levine, Linda M. Maloney, Song-Mi Suzie Park, Ahida Pilarski, Sarah Tanzer, and Laurress Wilkins Lawrence have lent their extraordinary wisdom to the shaping of the series, have used their extensive networks of relationships to secure authors and contributors, and have worked tirelessly to guide their work to completion. Four others who have contributed greatly to the shaping of the project are Linda M. Day, Mignon Jacobs, Seung Ai Yang, and Barbara E. Bowe of blessed memory (d. 2010). Editorial and research assistant Susan M. Hickman provided invaluable support with administrative details and arrangements at the outset of the project. I am grateful to Brian Eisenschenk and Christine Henderson who assisted Susan Hickman with the Wiki. I am especially thankful to Lauren L. Murphy and Justin Howell for their work in copy-editing; and to the staff at Liturgical Press, especially Colleen Stiller, production manager; Stephanie Lancour, production editor; Julie Surma, desktop publisher; Angie Steffens, production coordinator; and Tara Durham, marketing director.

Authors' Introduction

Judith: the beautiful woman who infiltrates the enemy's camp as a secret agent, charms the general to get close to him, avoids his attempts at seduction and instead incapacitates him with wine (the ancient soporific), takes his own sword, and cuts off his head while he lies drunk on his bed. In Carey Moore's words, Judith is "the saint who murdered for her people."¹ The stuff of legend. The fantasy of the abused. The revenge of the oppressed. The story of Judith still intrigues with its steely heroine who manages the grisliest of actions with the most elegant poise.

Through the ages, Judith has fired the imagination, even as she has been at the center of questions and controversies. Judith is a part of the Septuagint (LXX)—the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures that began to circulate in Greek-speaking Jewish communities starting in the second century BCE. Although written by and circulated among Jews, popular and perhaps considered Sacred Scripture in at least some Jewish communities, the book was not a part of the Jewish canon that came into its final form in the first or second century CE. Because the Christian canon built on the Greek versions of Jewish texts, Judith was a part of the Christian canon; thus, Christian copyists preserved this Jewish text. Yet, as Christianity split into denominations in the sixteenth century, its canonical status in Christianity changed. Retained in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox canon, albeit as deuterocanonical (second canon), Protestants cut it out

1. Carey A. Moore, *Judith*, AB 40 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 31, 261. This favorite appellation appears throughout Moore's commentary.

altogether. Although Martin Luther considered Judith “a fine, good, holy, useful book, well worth reading,”² he was so flummoxed by its historical errors he could not recommend it for the canon, relegating it to apocryphal status. In particular, he could not get the historical information in Judith to align either with books that were undoubtedly Sacred Scripture (like Jeremiah and Ezra) or with important biblical commentators like the first-century Jewish philosopher Philo. In response, Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians both reaffirmed the canonical status of Judith in the Council of Trent (1546) and the Synod of Jerusalem (1672). Even without canonical imprimatur, many rabbis and Protestant leaders still knew and read Judith, and it was influential in Jewish and Protestant communities especially in the Middle Ages and early Reformation period.

Judith’s fluctuating canonical status reflects the theological, ethical, and historical debates to which she has been subjected, debates sometimes steeped in sexism. Judith’s moral character became a subject of debate as part of the Power of Women *topos* that circulated and grew popular right around the time that Luther drops Judith from the Protestant canon. In this late medieval representational theme, a woman inverts normative gender hierarchies by using her wit, cunning, beauty, and/or sex appeal to dominate a man. Writers on the theme often disparaged these women and encouraged men to assert and maintain patriarchal control.³ Susan Smith argues, however, that at the time the theme was not always negatively coded and was sometimes used to celebrate powerful women. Instead of being unequivocally sexist or celebratory, the Power of Women *topos* became a “site of contest through which conflicting ideas about gender roles could be expressed.”⁴ Judith’s detractors emphasize her duplicitousness, her sexual provocations, and her violence as acts of “moral turpitude.”⁵ Maybe (male) commentators are worried that they too will lose their heads to a woman as beautiful as she is deadly. As one of the few biblical books that is named after its female protagonist (she joins here the ranks of Ruth, Esther, and Susanna), she has also come to the attention of feminist interpreters, who also are divided on their assessment. She challenges the very meanings of “masculinity” and “femininity,” even as she conforms

2. *Luther’s Works*, vol. 35: *Word and Sacrament I*, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1960), 337.

3. Susan L. Smith, “Woman on Top,” in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Margaret Schaus (London: Taylor & Francis, 2006), 844.

4. *Ibid.*, 845.

5. Edwin Cone Bissell, *The Book of Judith*, *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament* (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1886), 163, as cited in Moore, *Judith*, 65.

to stereotypes of the femme fatale. Feminists have either decried Judith as the embodiment of this sexist stereotype or celebrated Judith's gender-bending power. Along with feminist biblical scholar Pamela Milne, many have asked, "What shall we do with Judith?"⁶

This commentary will investigate the book of Judith through a feminist lens, informed especially by masculinity studies, queer theory, and reception criticism.⁷ These interrelated and interlocking albeit not identical approaches do not yield a uniform perspective; rather, they reveal a multifaceted figure in a multifaceted story. The book of Judith and the character continue to compel because neither is easily categorized or explained. We do not propose to solve any of the interpretive cruxes, especially the feminist question of whether or not Judith is subversive. Instead, we will highlight different aspects of the story, present analysis and options for interpretation from a feminist perspective, and thus allow readers to know Judith, the book and its protagonist, more intimately and so to make up their own minds.

Overview of the Book of Judith

The book of Judith tells the story of an Israelite woman named Judith who saves her city, Bethulia, from an invading army led by the Assyrian general Holofernes by cutting off the general's head with his own sword. Although named for the heroine, the book does not introduce Judith until roughly halfway through the story. The first half, chapters 1–7, concerns the powers and propaganda of ancient empires. The story opens with the emperor Nebuchadnezzar of Assyria waging war against King Arphaxad of the Medes. Nebuchadnezzar summons support from vassal states to the west, including the regions of Galilee, Samaria, and Judah. These states refuse to muster, "for they were not afraid of him" (1:11). Once Nebuchadnezzar defeats the Medes, he determines to seek revenge for the insult to his honor by sending a massive army of over 120,000 foot soldiers and over twelve thousand supporting cavalry led by

6. Pamela J. Milne, "What Shall We Do with Judith? A Feminist Assessment of a Biblical 'Heroine,'" in *A Feminist Companion to Tobit and Judith*, FCB 20, 2nd ser., ed. Athalya Brenner-Idan with Helen Efthimiadis-Keith (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 117–36.

7. For the interconnections among masculinity studies, queer theory, and feminist interpretation, see Joseph A. Marchal, "Queer Studies and Critical Masculinity Studies in Feminist Biblical Studies," in *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*, ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 261–80. Deryn Guest's *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012) explores the similarities and tensions between gender, masculinity, queer, and feminist theories.

Holofernes (2:5). The army advances west with transport animals, food animals, chariots, and “a mixed crowd like a swarm of locusts” (2:20) that leaves desolation in its wake. Nebuchadnezzar specifically commissions Holofernes to destroy all local sacred spaces so that everyone “should worship Nebuchadnezzar alone” (3:8).

Hearing of Holofernes’s advance and the destruction he wrought, especially to temples and shrines, the people of Israel become terrified and prepare, both militarily and spiritually, for his approach. They gather in food, secure towns, and fortify hilltops and the mountain passes. The mountain roads are so narrow that the invading soldiers can only advance two abreast, and so the local strategy renders Holofernes’s greatest asset—his superior numbers—less effective. The Israelites also pray and fast and put on sackcloth and ashes. Making his only appearance in the book, the God of Israel hears their prayers and has “regard for their distress” (4:13).

Learning of this mobilized resistance, Holofernes flies into a rage and demands to know everything about these recalcitrant people. Enter Achior, the leader of the Ammonites in service to Nebuchadnezzar. When he steps forward to inform Holofernes of the Israelites’ sacred history from Abraham to the return from Babylonian exile, he gives voice to the book’s theological perspective. His speech ends by warning the general that as long as the people remain without sin, their God will defend them and they will never be defeated. Therefore, he urges Holofernes to turn aside lest the Assyrians “become the laughingstock of the whole world” (5:21). Instead of responding with prudence, Holofernes responds with pride by first proclaiming Nebuchadnezzar the only “lord of the whole earth” (6:4) and then by expelling Achior from the camp. Achior is taken by Holofernes’s slaves, bound, and left in the plain near the town of Bethulia (Hebrew: “Virgin-ville”⁸). The locals find him and bring him to the magistrates. To his Israelite interlocutors, Achior recounts what happened and how Holofernes vowed to destroy them all. The scene ends with the people even more terrified than they were before.

Holofernes begins his campaign against Bethulia. The geographical advantages—the high hills and the narrow mountain passes—now become liabilities; what geography gives, it also takes away. Bethulia, a walled city, received its water from only one source—an external spring. Instead of his typical blitzkrieg, Holofernes decides (on the advice of his commanders) to capture the spring and to use the hills to lay siege to the town—the people of Bethulia are to be defeated by hunger and thirst rather than by military strike.

8. See <https://books.openedition.org/obp/1045?lang=en>.

The population of Bethulia is increasingly desperate as their water supplies dwindle and then dry up. Hoping that the Assyrians will treat them less harshly, they approach their leader Uzziah and beg him to surrender. Uzziah quiets the crowd with a compromise: wait five more days and if the siege is not over, he will surrender the town. At this point, almost halfway through the book, Judith appears (8:1).

The second half, chapters 8–16, follows Judith and her actions. This beautiful, wealthy, and pious widow was not present at the meeting between Uzziah and the townspeople, but she soon hears of it. Using her community standing to summon Uzziah and the other leaders, she rebukes them with a speech that expresses more of the book's theological perspective: the people of Bethulia have not sinned; rather, God is testing them. Judith asserts that she and her slave will, with God's help, save the city before the five days have elapsed.

After the men leave, Judith prostrates herself and offers a passionate prayer to God in which she invokes her ancestor Simeon and his revenge of his sister Dinah's rape. Her prayer also invokes "the God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forsaken, savior of those without hope" (9:11). She then bathes (where she found water is not recounted), perfumes herself, and puts on her most beautiful clothing and jewelry. She takes a sack of food and dishes with her, bids goodbye to the town elders, and she and her slave exit Bethulia's gates.

Judith is soon found by the Assyrian patrol who are entranced by both her wise words and her beautiful face. They take her directly to Holofernes's tent. She flatters the general, explains that the Bethulians learned of Holofernes's strength from Achior, and tells him that Bethulia is a sinful town that has taken for their own food the tithes that belong to God. Therefore, God is about to hand them over to destruction. Like his soldiers, Holofernes too is smitten by both her words and her looks. Holofernes gives her what she requests: to eat her own food on her own dishes, to have a private tent, and to have permission to leave the camp in the evenings to pray. After four days, Holofernes arranges a private banquet for just himself, his personal attendants, and Judith. After all, he says, "If we do not seduce her, she will laugh at us" (12:12).

Now, the story comes to its climax. Judith attends the banquet with the general, who is so excited by the prospect of sex with this beautiful woman that he drinks more than he had ever drunk in his life. Late into the evening, Holofernes's attendants withdraw, leaving the general and the widow alone in his tent. Instead of making his move, the drunken Holofernes passes out, and Judith seizes her opportunity. After a quick prayer to God, Judith grabs Holofernes's own sword, pulls up his head by his hair, and cuts it off with

two strikes to his neck. Her slave is waiting outside with the bag in which they had carried their food. Judith conceals the head in this bag and, with her slave, leaves the camp, as per her established routine. She returns to Bethulia triumphant with their enemy's severed head.

Judith continues to direct the action as she commands the head to be hung from the city walls, orders the able-bodied men to take up arms, and summons Achior. The Ammonite soldier sees the general's head and faints in alarm. When he is revived, Judith recounts her story; Achior praises her and the God of Israel, and by circumcision he joins the Israelite people.

As the morning dawns and the Assyrian army realizes that Holofernes is dead, they panic and retreat. The Israelites rally, then slaughter the retreating army. The Bethulians, who do not participate in the rout, take the Assyrian camp. The rest of the victorious Israelites soon join them, and all loot the camp for several days.

The celebration of Judith and her victory begins. The women take a prominent role in this celebration as they dance, wave wands, and crown themselves with olive wreaths. The men follow the women in a parade around the town. Judith leads them all in a victory song all the way to Jerusalem, where the celebration continues for another three months. In the end, Judith returns home with her slave. Although she has suitors, she never remarries. Venerated by her people, Judith dies at the auspicious age of 105. "No one ever again spread terror among the Israelites during the lifetime of Judith, or for a long time after her death" (16:25). In other words, they all lived happily ever after.

A Brief Character Analysis of Judith

The book of Judith's truly remarkable heroine is first described as a devout, shapely, beautiful, and wealthy widow (Jdt 8:4, 7).⁹ As her story progresses, she exhibits

additional characteristics showing her the equal of Israel's finest warriors, although in a different way. Indeed her beheading of Holofernes—in his own tent, with his own sword, and surrounded by his own heretofore victorious army, no

9. Material for this selection came from my earlier work on Judith in *Bible History Daily*. See Robin Gallaher Branch, "Judith: A Remarkable Heroine, Parts 1 and 2" (<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/judith-a-remarkable-heroine/> and <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/judith-a-remarkable-heroine-part-2/>).

less!—marks her as a political savior in Israel on par with David.

Judith is introduced with a lineage virtually unparalleled in the biblical text (Jdt 8:1-2). A descendant of Simeon, her genealogy includes sixteen progenitors and doesn't even make it back to Simeon! The genealogy, a significant textual marker, establishes her as a formidable literary character. In an interesting psychological insight, her prayer for help with her plan to save Israel and to assassinate Holofernes begins with a remembrance of Dinah's shame (Gen 34:2; Jdt 9:2-4). Judith expresses determination to erase this early, but still remembered, defamation.

Her covenant heritage combines prayer and action. Judith ranks along with Deborah (Jdg 4-5), the wife of Manoa (Jdg 13:23), Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10), Naomi (Ruth 1:20-21), and Abigail (1 Sam 23-31) as theologians in the Old Testament; they all comment on God's character and actions. Other women wordsmiths in the biblical text are Lady Wisdom (Prov 8-9) and the Beloved in Song of Songs. In terms of verbosity, however, Judith exceeds them all. Her monologues and prayers highlight her theology. She credits God for the victory over the Assyrians and the killing of Holofernes (Jdt 16:5-6). Her theology includes possession and shows her leadership. In her closing prayer, she sings of "*my*

territory," "*my* young men," "*my* infants," "*my* children," and "*my* maidens" (16:4; italics added).

Judith knows her power over men. Throughout the book, it seems Judith merely smiles and men collapse (10:7, 14, 19, 23). Wisely appealing to their senses of sight and smell, she mesmerizes them. Her weapons of warfare are sensual and material.

Judith used her assets—her spiritual training as a member of the covenant and the gifts God gave to her at birth and throughout life—to save her people. I would argue as well that she used her gifts for God's glory. Few women are given the gift of being attractive to men in general. Judith initially downplayed that gift. Perhaps she did not know how to handle it. She chooses to wear sackcloth around her waist and dress in widow's clothing (8:5), perhaps reflecting an inability to handle the gift of being breathtakingly attractive. She chooses to fast and remain celibate. She hides her sexuality and her known ability to attract men. Yet, it is exactly the gift of lovely face and form that saves her people and the temple. At the end of the story she is even more devout, shapely, beautiful, and wealthy. She interacts with people; she lets them see her beauty and enjoy it; she joyfully celebrates for weeks with her grateful nation. She loves and is beloved in return.

Robin Gallaher Branch

Strange Histories

Judith is a vivid and gripping tale, but it is not a historical account. It has characters from history, and it describes some common experiences of warfare, but Judith blends empires and enemies to create a general soup of Jewish conquest and survival narrative. Problems begin with the first verse, “It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh. In those days Arphaxad ruled over the Medes in Ecbatana” (1:1).¹⁰ Despite the bounty of names, dates, and places—Nebuchadnezzar, Arphaxad, Assyrians, Medes, Nineveh, Ecbatana, “the twelfth year”—the account is nonsensical. The names are (almost) all attested, but the relationships among them are (almost) all ahistorical. Nebuchadnezzar did reign from about 605 BCE to 562 BCE, but he reigned over the Neo-Babylonian Empire, not the Assyrian. The great city Nineveh, the royal seat of the Assyrians during the reign of Sennacherib, was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar’s father Nabopolassar in 612 BCE; the historical Nebuchadnezzar may have heard stories from his father about its ruin, but he never reigned from there. Arphaxad is otherwise unknown (although information about the Medes is incomplete), and the Median Empire allied itself with Babylon and so was not the enemy of Nebuchadnezzar. By the time we reach the end of the verse, it is with relief that we find a fact: Ecbatana was indeed the capital of the Median Empire, at least under the Median king Phraortes, who reigned from 675 BCE to 653 BCE. The bizarre mish-mash must have been as jarring to the text’s early audiences as the statement “It happened at the time when George Washington reigned in Tenochtitlan and Winston Churchill ruled over the Chinese” would be to people today.

There are, however, points of contact with Israelite history. In the first verse, Assyria and Babylon, empires that conquered Israelite lands, are conflated. The Assyrians conquered the northern territories of Israel and took the capital, Samaria, in 721 BCE, effectively erasing ten of Israel’s twelve tribes from history. Refugees from the north flooded the south, and a few years later the Assyrian army followed them by moving against the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The Assyrian armies laid waste to the countryside, and in 701 BCE Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem. Although the Assyrians ultimately failed to take the city, the

10. Unless otherwise noted, translations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

siege lasted years and brought enormous suffering to the people. In the next wave of ancient Near Eastern power politics, the Babylonians under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah, seized Jerusalem, and destroyed the temple in 586 BCE. The Babylonian army then forced tens of thousands of Judahites into exile into Babylon.¹¹ These traumatic events are all deftly signaled in the first few words of the book of Judith.

The Medes too affected Israel's life. Although Arphaxad is otherwise unknown, both Isaiah (Isa 13:17; 21:2) and Jeremiah (Jer 25:25; 51:11, 28) mention the Medes, and Media is one of the four kingdoms symbolized in Daniel 2:36-45 by the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The kingdom also is part of the interpretation of the "handwriting on the wall" in Daniel 5:25-28, and it is symbolized by the second beast at the beginning of Daniel's apocalyptic revelation (Dan 7:5). Although there is no historical evidence that the Medes engaged Israel in battle, they left a threatening impression on Israel's imagination. In addition, the Medes appear to be the forerunners of the Persians, and the Persians did play a pivotal role in Israel's history. The Persian Empire conquered the Babylonians at the end of the sixth century BCE, and then King Cyrus repatriated waves of conquered Jews to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. The Jews lived under Persian rule from 538 to 333.

Both Holofernes (or Orophernes) and Bagoas the eunuch (his closest attendant), Persian names, appear in court records. The historian Diodorus of Sicily (90–30 BCE) mentions two men named Holofernes: the first was a Cappadocian aristocrat who participated in the Persian campaign against Egypt during the reign of Artaxerxes III Ochus in the fourth century BCE; the second, also a Cappadocian ruler, lived in the second century BCE and was known for his drunkenness and his penchant for destroying other peoples' temples.¹² A person named Bagoas plays a larger role in Diodorus's narrative. He is described as Artaxerxes's closest companion, "a wily and devious figure, a brave, powerful eunuch who eventually assassinates Artaxerxes and his son(s)."¹³ Like the use of real people and places in Judith 1:1, the names Holofernes and Bagoas may be gesturing to known people and events to evoke memories of violence and intrigue.

11. See David M. Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014) on the effects of these national disasters on the biblical Scripture.

12. Deborah Levine Gera, *Judith*, CEJL (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 35 and 139.

13. *Ibid.*, 36.

Some commentators have attempted to explain the inaccuracies in Judith's history by positing that the author was misinformed or that a long and complicated history of composition confused the original wording. The salvation history the Ammonite Achior recounts in chapter 5 undercuts those justifications. Achior's summary is a faithful reproduction of the historical narrative of the Hebrew Bible (particularly as interpreted by the theology of Deuteronomy: when Jews avoid idolatry, they are unbeatable; when they do not, they are conquered). Achior even explains the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the subsequent captivity under the real Nebuchadnezzar (albeit without mentioning the Babylonians by name; see 5:17-18). He ends with the return from their exile, resettlement in Jerusalem, and the restoration of the temple. These last events are recounted in such a way that they imply a quick succession, perhaps even collapsing the Babylonian assault with the Persian restoration, events that spanned at least a century. The time may be telescoped, and the empires' names left unsaid, but the narrative is not only convergent with biblical texts but also supported by material and inscriptional evidence. The author of Judith is not ignorant of either the biblical meta-story or Israel's history. Therefore, Judith's historical inaccuracies are deliberate, so much so that it seems the book intends to signal itself as fiction.

Judith's opening historical review contains echoes of the story of Xerxes's invasion of Greece in books 7–8 of Herodotus's *History* (430 BCE),¹⁴ echoes that invite comparison and bring into sharper relief the ways the writer of Judith makes history strange. As we will argue, the historical inaccuracies are not just a wink at the audience, intimating the fictional nature of the story; the historical inaccuracies are part of a wider project that advances ideologies of national identity, ones that are inextricably bound to ideologies of gender.

Hailed as one of the first examples of a sustained narrative history in Western literature, the *History* narrates the invasion of the Greek islands and mainland by the Persian king Xerxes in the fifth century BCE. After establishing his rule, Xerxes determines to expand his glory and assembles an army unlike any seen before. This army advances east,

14. Herodotus, *The History*, trans. David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Mark Stephen Caponigro argues that the similarities are so striking that the author of Judith must have known Herodotus's work. See "Judith, Holding the Tale of Herodotus," in *"No One Spoke Ill of Her": Essays on Judith*, ed. James C. VanderKam, EJL 2 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 47–59.

ravaging the coastline of Turkey (and the northern edge of Galilee) to cross the Hellespont and invade Europe. Herodotus describes how the army struggles to advance southward along the Greek peninsula but finds itself restricted to the narrow coastline or fraught mountain passes.

It is at one of these mountain passes that the Greeks stage their first major resistance to Xerxes's army. Because of the treacherous terrain, Xerxes's army is forced to march one or two abreast. Greeks, more familiar with the geography, harass the Persians' progress from high points along the way. The Greeks' plan involved moving people residing in the central plains and Athenian region to safer zones in the southern peninsula while having their navy attempt to cut the supply lines behind the advancing Persian army. Though the terrain slowed Xerxes's advance, the Greeks needed more time. In a famous narrative, integral to Greek notions of national identity, three hundred Spartan soldiers under the command of Leonidas mounted a resistance at the small fortified Greek outpost at Thermophilae (Greek: "fire gate," so named for the volcanic and hot springs in the region).

The Spartans held off Xerxes's army for over three days. They were defeated when a Greek-speaking mercenary in Xerxes's army came forward and volunteered to show a commando team how to attack the Spartans from the rear. Betrayed, the entire detachment of Spartans was killed, but in their valiant defense they checked the advance of Xerxes's armies long enough to allow tens of thousands of Greek citizens to reach safety. The Greeks honored their sacrifice with songs, poems, and a permanent monument at the site. They were eventually able to halt the advance of Xerxes at Salamis (a major harbor city, not far from Athens) by a decisive naval battle. With his ships destroyed, Xerxes's massive army became his liability; unable to resupply and harassed by Greek land and sea forces, he retreated back into Turkey. The small but plucky Greek forces had repelled the western world's largest standing army.

A modern historian of warfare might not be quite as surprised by the Greeks' victory. The Greeks had several advantages. They had a rigorous and effective military including strong land and sea forces. They had a common language and sense of identity that facilitated collaboration among the city-states in an organized resistance. They knew the terrain well, and the landscape—a central plateau surrounded by rugged, steep, volcanic mountains—was not conducive to a large invasionary land force. The Greeks were fighting for field, family, and home. They did not have to take any territory, merely to hold it; they did not have to defeat Xerxes's entire army, merely to eliminate its supply lines.

Reading Herodotus, however, we get a very different explanation. Herodotus persistently valorizes the Greeks and argues that they defeated the greater numbers and weaponry of the Persians because the Greeks were more civilized. The Greek educational systems, Herodotus asserts, produced a literate and disciplined male citizenry. Greek democracy, Herodotus argues, also gave every man a stake in the outcome and produced a deep devotion to the polis, a devotion that led many to sacrifice their all for their homeland. The Persians, by contrast, were mercenaries hired in service of Xerxes's ego. They fought for no ideals or values. Herodotus portrays them as either slavish and craven or domineering and cruel. They lacked order and discipline and would break ranks in either anger or fear. They spoke an unspeakable language (the Greek word for foreigners, βαρβάρων, is roughly translated as "babblers"). In short, they lacked civilization; the lack was so acute that, again and again, Herodotus questions their manliness, equal in his mind to full humanity. In other moments, he suggests they are rude, unintelligent, untamed, and savage beasts. The Greeks won, Herodotus argued, in the same way that the human huntsmen can defeat savage animals.

There are several parallels between Herodotus and Judith. In overview, both narrate an advancing, numberless horde attacking noble and plucky peoples who seek shelter among their homeland's rugged hills. In each, a great Mesopotamian empire pushes eastward in order to assuage the ego of a tyrant. In each, this army is checked in the hill country by a small group in a fortified outpost. In each, the invading army is ultimately defeated by an ideology. For Herodotus, the Greek civilization itself secures victory. For Judith, it is Jewish fidelity to God.

Both Herodotus and Judith are stories that use "history" in the service of wider ideologies.¹⁵ Despite Herodotus's title as "the father of history," his narratives also employ fiction and flash.¹⁶ They are not histories in the

15. On Herodotus's ideologies, see John D. Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); and François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Some of Hartog's thesis has recently been softened; for example, Michèle Rosellini and Suzanne Saïd, "Women's Customs among the 'Savages' in Herodotus," in *Herodotus*, vol. 2: *Herodotus and the World*, ed. Rosaria Vignolo Munson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 213–44; and Rosalind Thomas, "Ethnicity, Genealogy, and Hellenism," in *Herodotus*, 2:340–42.

16. On Herodotus's mixture of fiction and history, see Detlev Fehling, "The Art of Herodotus on the Margins of the World," in *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Traditions, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing*, ed.

modern, academic sense of the word. In both, the narrative of invasion and resistance is a way of articulating a larger debate about identity and the clash of ideologies. Both stories use similar narratives and themes to argue for constructions of identity so powerful that they can subvert physical limitations and traditional constructions of "power." Right belief, the right adherence to ethnic ideals, is more powerful than military strength. It may be a hidden power, but it is, nevertheless, very real.

Gender is a key component of the right ideology advanced in both stories. In ancient Greek communities, gender difference manifested in power differentials that correlated to wealth and social status. Masculinity existed on a continuum with rich, upper-class, male citizens at the high end. Masculinity was the result of control, precision, and discipline; it was the essence of civilized behavior. Herodotus draws out differences between the "manly" Spartans and the "effeminate" barbarians. In Herodotus, barbarians *as an outcome of the very essence of being a barbarian* are less masculine, which in this case also means less human, than the Greeks. Herodotus is not just writing a history. He is arguing, implicitly, for a particular configuration of power and authority. What appears to be unstoppable strength (the Persians leading a massive army) is, in fact, stoppable by superior civilization and discipline, the true hallmarks of "real men."

Jewish tradition, especially in Jewish Greek-speaking communities, participated in Greek constructions of masculinity but with some notable variations influenced by Jewish theology. Masculinity, again, is equivalent to power, which includes the elaborate projection of honor and deference. In Judith, both Holofernes and Nebuchadnezzar act in support of their pursuit of male honor. Nebuchadnezzar is seeking revenge for having been spurned. Holofernes is angry that such a small band of resistors is thwarting his larger army; he is particularly enraged by the suggestion from Achior that he and his soldiers cannot prevail against the weak and numerically insignificant Israelites. In the end, the Assyrian defeat is even more radical in its comment on true power than the Persian defeat. Holofernes, and by implication Nebuchadnezzar, is defeated and thus emasculated by a single woman.

The book of Judith is not arguing that women are more masculine (and therefore more powerful) than men; it is arguing that the ultimate male power and honor is God's. Judith is the conduit of that power because of

Zweder von Martels, *Brill Studies in Intellectual History* 53 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 1–15; and *Herodotus and His "Sources": Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art*, *Arca Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs* 21 (Leeds: Francis Carrus, 1989), 53–54.

her confidence and her discipline, both of which arise as a result of her faith and her piety. Her female body and seductive words exacerbate the Assyrian humiliation and serve to bring God's power into even sharper relief. The narrative, like Herodotus's *History*, offers a particular appraisal of power and, by implication, masculinity. What appears to be an invincible force and the ultimate expression of (male) honor and power is undone by what appears to be an insignificant people (the Jews), by hill folk, by a single woman. What appears to be unstoppable strength is, in fact, stoppable by superior theology. In a move similar to Herodotus's assertions that Greek cultural superiority is really the source of significant strength and power, Judith argues that Jewish religious superiority can defeat the strongest army of the most dominant empire, even through the work of a woman. Judith, imitating Herodotus, is implicitly also arguing that Jewish biblical values and covenant fidelity are equivalent to Greek artistic, cultural, intellectual, and democratic values.

Both Herodotus and the author of *Judith* use historical narrative as a vehicle for a type of national aggrandizement linked to ideologies of gender. There are, however, significant differences in their projects. Elaborations, exaggerations, and fabrications aside, the clash between Persian and Greek forces actually happened; the battle between Assyria and the Israelites depicted in the book of *Judith* did not. Greece became a significant world power, and Herodotus was, in part, telling the history of this rise in political fortunes. Israel never was and never became a significant world power; instead, Israel was the nation conquered over and over again by Near Eastern and Mediterranean empires for millennia. As such, the temporal dissonances of *Judith*, the strange histories with their ideological agendas, ring in other registers.

We will show in our reading of *Judith* that the problems with history, so obvious in the first verse, continue throughout the narrative to the very last line (for example, when exactly did Judith free her slave?). These more subtle chronological glitches help produce a story that runs counter to the typical grand narratives of history (like the ones told by Herodotus), narratives that tell the stories of kings and generals, dramatic clashes on the battlefield, momentous world events. This grand narrative is unsettled by a widow from a small and insignificant people who, along with her slave, upends a world superpower with little more than her wits, her beauty, her faith, and a borrowed sword. There may be a re-domestication of Judith at the end, but it is one that leaves traces of the radical sexual warrior and gender troubler that emerge in the spaces and gaps produced by a history out of joint.

Judith 1:1–4:15

The Masculine Machinations of War

Nebuchadnezzar's War (1:1–3:9)

The book of Judith opens when the crushing cogs of global war (at least, war that encompasses the known spaces of civilization that the biblical text imagines) begin to grind as the result of honor and pride among a few elite men.

In the clash of empires recounted in the first three chapters of Judith, we hear nothing of the thousands of people whose lives were upended and ended during every battle. Soldiers, most of them civilians, expected to join armed conflicts whenever need arises, are a part of this nameless, faceless, voiceless mass, but the ravages of war are not confined to the soldiers who carry out the orders of these powerful and distant men. The violence spills out and covers the land. Men and women, young and old, soldier and civilian—all are subject to its destruction.

Thus is the logic of empire: the often-arbitrary decisions of a very few privileged men (and sometimes women) affect the lives—indeed, end the lives—of so many nameless people. Nebuchadnezzar acts initially because of his desire for more glory. When his interests are not supported by lesser kings, he acts because of his pride and anger. His actions consume people in Israel simply because they are in the way; their cities and nation lie along the easiest route for his Assyrian armies to get to their

^{1:1}It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh. In those days Arphaxad ruled over the Medes in Ecbatana. ²He built walls around Ecbatana with hewn stones three cubits thick and six cubits long; he made the walls seventy cubits high and fifty cubits wide. ³At its gates he raised towers one hundred cubits high and sixty cubits wide at the foundations. ⁴He made its gates seventy cubits high and forty cubits wide to allow his armies to march out in force and his

infantry to form their ranks. ⁵Then King Nebuchadnezzar made war against King Arphaxad in the great plain that is on the borders of Ragau. ⁶There rallied to him all the people of the hill country and all those who lived along the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Hydaspes, and, on the plain, Arioch, king of the Elymeans. Thus, many nations joined the forces of the Chaldeans.

⁷Then Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, sent messengers to all who lived in Persia and to all who lived in the west, those who lived in Cilicia and Da-

victims. Nebuchadnezzar is not a god, but for the tens of thousands of people whose lives he irrevocably altered, without ever having seen or known them, he may as well have been.

Nebuchadnezzar's Campaign against Arphaxad (1:1-16)

Nebuchadnezzar was the ferocious emperor of the Babylonians, responsible for the destruction of the temple and the subsequent exile of thousands of Judeans in 586 BCE; he was not, contrary to the opening verse of the book, the emperor of the Assyrians involved in a campaign against the Israelites after their return from exile (see Achior's speech, which recounts the exile and the return in 5:19). Nineveh, "the great city," was the capital of the Assyrian Empire built up by Sennacherib during his reign (705–681 BCE) but destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar in 612 BCE. Nineveh was a notorious watchword in the ancient Near East, a shorthand for brutality (for example, the entire book of Nahum is an oracle against Nineveh, especially 3:1, 19; Nineveh is also Jonah's focus). Even though Nebuchadnezzar and Nineveh are not historically linked, here they are brought together as if Hitler ruled over the gulag. Ecbatana was a grand city and the Median capital, but Arphaxad is otherwise unattested. The author of *Judith* could not be more clear that what follows is a work of fiction; it is as if the book began with the opening, "Once upon a time . . ."

mascus, Lebanon and Antilebanon, and all who lived along the seacoast, ⁸and those among the nations of Carmel and Gilead, and Upper Galilee and the great plain of Esdraelon, ⁹and all who were in Samaria and its towns, and beyond the Jordan as far as Jerusalem and Bethany and Chelous and Kadesh and the river of Egypt, and Tahpanhes and Raamses and the whole land of Goshen, ¹⁰even beyond Tanis and Memphis, and all who lived in Egypt as far as the borders of Ethiopia. ¹¹But all who lived in the whole region disregarded the sum-

mons of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, and refused to join him in the war; for they were not afraid of him, but regarded him as only one man. So they sent back his messengers empty-handed and in disgrace.

¹²Then Nebuchadnezzar became very angry with this whole region, and swore by his throne and kingdom that he would take revenge on the whole territory of Cilicia and Damascus and Syria, that he would kill with his sword also all the inhabitants of the land of Moab, and the people of Ammon, and

The author continues to build the fantasyland, brick by brick. The hewn stone walls of Ecbatana are magnificent but not historical. Although ancient Ecbatana has not been carefully excavated since it is still inhabited (the contemporary city is called Hamadan and is located in Iran), there are no signs of such great fortifications. Herodotus tells of elaborate and colorful concentric walls that ringed the city, built by Deioces in about 700 BCE, but these may be as fictional as Ecbatana's walls in Judith. Apparently, descriptions of Ecbatana were prone to exaggeration.¹ The purpose of the construction details in verses 2-4 is not to provide historical data but to inspire awe and set up a contrast. King Arphaxad had great power and wealth; his cities were impressively fortified and his armies terrible. Yet, Nebuchadnezzar will defeat him. How do the little provinces of Samaria and Judea stand a chance? The more awesome Arphaxad's forces are, the more fearsome Nebuchadnezzar.

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar made war against King Arphaxad" (1:3); their armies clashed on the plain bordering Ragau, with all the neighboring peoples joining the Assyrian forces. Next, Nebuchadnezzar summons to the fight all the peoples in the west—from Lebanon to Jerusalem, from Egypt to Ethiopia. The book is replete with geographic details, but much like its historical challenges, it has geographical inconsistencies and inaccuracies

1. Deborah Levine Gera, *Judith*, CEJL (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 118–19.

all Judea, and every one in Egypt, as far as the coasts of the two seas.

¹³In the seventeenth year he led his forces against King Arphaxad and defeated him in battle, overthrowing the whole army of Arphaxad and all his cavalry and all his chariots. ¹⁴Thus he took possession of his towns and came to Ecbatana, captured its towers, plun-

dered its markets, and turned its glory to disgrace. ¹⁵He captured Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragau and struck him down with his spears, thus destroying him once and for all. ¹⁶Then he returned to Nineveh, he and all his combined forces, a vast body of troops; and there he and his forces rested and feasted for one hundred twenty days.

as well. Just as what appear to be historical “facts” are often fictions, so too are many of the geographic particulars because the author is pursuing goals other than topographical accuracy. Although the contours are correct, there are numerous questions about the precise location of the place names listed in verses 7-10. The larger point nevertheless obtains: Nebuchadnezzar has influence over a great sweep of territory. Already in ten short verses, almost every conceivable type of feature—hills, rivers, plains, seacoasts—is named. All are under Nebuchadnezzar’s dominion. Or, at least, so he thinks. He attempts to rally this vast and variegated area with all of its peoples to his cause. They do not, however, rally. Instead, they “refuse to join him” (literally: “disregard his word”). In the Hebrew texts of the Bible, this phrase is used only in relation to God or God’s messengers (Num 15:31; 2 Sam 12:9; 2 Kings 19:21).² Considering the author’s biblical literacy, the phrase here could be the first instance of one the primary themes of the book: the competition between God and Nebuchadnezzar, between the God of Israel and the man who would be proclaimed god of all the world.

Nebuchadnezzar, with his divine aspirations, expected his word to command multitudes. Yet, people refuse to join his war because they do not fear him. The implication is that he is not a god; he is only a man, and not as much of a man as he thinks. His messengers return in disgrace and Nebuchadnezzar rages (1:11-12). Although the entire episode and the subsequent action it compels can be understood as the opening sally in the rivalry between God and Nebuchadnezzar, we also recognize how the plot is predicated on emotions (fear, anger, shame) all deeply embedded in ideologies of masculinity.

2. *Ibid.*, 127.

The Assyrian Army

For the first fourteen chapters in the book of Judith, the Assyrian army is synonymous with invincibility, brutality, ruthlessness, devastation, terror, and unprecedented victories.³ That changes suddenly in the last two chapters. How, then, in the final analysis, is the Assyrian army remembered? The answer is terse: it is remembered ignominiously and with ridicule. The story of its fall proves fascinating.

As a vast secondary character, the army serves as a nameless, limitless crowd of faces, tents, and weapons. In literary terms, its thousands function as a unit.⁴ The army, however, is a flat, static, one-dimensional character because it does not develop or change during the story.⁵ The Assyrian army functions well as a killing, burning, and looting machine.

And the majority of the chapters of the book of Judith provide overwhelming textual verification that the Assyrians deserve their world renown as skilled killers. This army knows

well how to slaughter, pillage, and loot; it prefers to leave no survivors.

The vast Assyrian army—numbering at first 120,000 and then ballooning to 170,000 (Jdt 2:15, 7:2)—successfully slashes and smashes its way west from Nineveh. In a cut-and-burn pattern, the Assyrian army seems to have zigzagged its way in record time from Nineveh to the Great Sea. But the narrator records an impossibility. From Nineveh, Holofernes's army travels three hundred miles in three days to Bectileth (Jdt 2:21)! Furthermore, this impossible feat takes place on foot!

Why does the narrator offer this? Possible explanations are these: the narrator does not know geography or cities, or the narrator is confused, or the verses are out of order.⁶

I offer another view: I think the narrator presents this impossibility as humor, as yet another indication that the book of Judith is not an accurate historical tale but a moral folk tale.

Robin Gallaher Branch

3. The army is an agent of physical conflict; see Joseph Lostracco and George Wilkerson, *Analyzing Short Stories*, 7th rev. ed. (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 2008), 19.

4. Robin Gallaher Branch and Pierre Jordaán, "The Significance of Secondary Characters in Susanna, Judith and the Additions to Esther in the Septuagint," *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 20 (2009): 402.

5. Lostracco and Wilkerson, *Analyzing Short Stories*, 14.

6. Carey A. Moore, *Judith*, AB 40 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 137.

The importance of masculinity to the characterizations and the plot of Judith is signaled by people's response to Nebuchadnezzar's martial summons. Nebuchadnezzar is "one man" (1:11), and the word "man" (ἄνθρωπος) thrusts us into an analysis of men and masculinity in the text and in the world that produced the text. "Masculinity" describes the ways in which any given culture defines and delimits the proper behavior of a man; as one part of a binary opposition, masculinity is always also intertwined with femininity—the ways in which any given culture defines and delimits the proper behavior of a woman. There is never a single version of masculinity (or femininity) in any given culture; rather, masculinities are differently defined depending on other identity positions (race, religion, ethnicity, class) as well as dominant and subordinate masculinities.

Feminist interpretation has always analyzed the ideologies of femininity but generally has regarded men only insofar as they relate to the women; hence, the nearly nonexistent feminist analysis of the book of Judith's first seven chapters. Whereas this focus on women provides a necessary corrective in the history of biblical interpretation, ultimately women and femininity can be understood only with equal attention to men and masculinity. In addition, feminist scholars risk reinscribing some of the very ideas they critique when they look only at women in discussions of gender and sexuality; without an equal and concomitant examination of masculinity, men will still emerge as the neutral party against which all others are defined. For these reasons and more, feminist interpreters do well also to employ the lens of masculinity studies.⁷

The context of war is essential to the constructions of gender that the book of Judith presents. As Caryn Reeder summarizes:

A particularly influential construction of masculinity, and thus also femininity, in the Greco-Roman world was shaped by warfare. From Homer to Polybius to Tacitus and beyond, to be a man meant to face the enemy and fight with courage. Alternatively, being a woman (or womanish) was equated with inactivity and cowardice. Men fought while women remained in the home, weaving, weeping, and waiting for the men to return. This conception of masculinity and femininity

7. For more on the importance of masculinity studies for feminist interpretation, see Jennifer L. Koosed, "Moses, Feminism, and the Male Subject," in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 223–39. See also Rhiannon Graybill, *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 11–12.

reflected the broader gender dichotomies of the Greco-Roman world. Men had the power, and thus enacted the violence of war; women and womanish men were powerless victims of that violence. As a result of this construction of gender, warfare itself became gendered. The victors won recognition as real men—but the defeated were emasculated, denigrated to the level of “women.”⁸

The equation between masculinity and war (and martial defeat with failed masculinity) is also clear in the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern texts.⁹ In these contexts, Nebuchadnezzar is the representation of hegemonic masculinity, a sociological term that names the ideal form of masculinity, the one that ranks above all other gender expressions, in any given culture. As the emperor and commander of the army, Nebuchadnezzar is the most powerful man in his male-dominated society. By the end of chapter 1, he will have defeated the Medes even with their extraordinary martial array and Ecbatana’s imposing fortifications. The narrator recounts the victory as if Nebuchadnezzar alone were responsible. At the beginning of verse 13 we hear of the king and “his forces,” but the plural soon slips into the singular: “Thus *he* took possession of his towns and came to Ecbatana, captured its towers, plundered its markets, and turned its glory into disgrace” (1:14; emphasis ours). The battles against Arphaxad culminate with the Median king’s own capture and death, seemingly, again, at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar alone: “He captured Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragae and struck him down with his spears, thus destroying him once and for all” (1:15). Nebuchadnezzar appears to absorb his entire army into himself—collapsing the many into a single masculine pronoun. The image is of terrifying strength and overwhelming violence that consumes everything in its wake. This is what it means to be a man—powerful, strong, death-dealing.

It is, in fact, violence that defines, establishes, and perpetuates the male-dominated society in both the text and the world. Male domination is manifest not just in men’s control over women but also in some men’s control over other men. Just as the male-female hierarchy is maintained by violence and the threat of violence, so too is the male-male hierarchy.

8. Caryn A. Reeder, “Gender, War, and Josephus,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 46 (2015): 67–68.

9. Harold C. Washington, “Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Hebrew Bible: A New Historicist Approach,” *BibInt* 5 (1997): 330–31. See also Cynthia R. Chapman, *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

In these patriarchal systems, all men, but especially elite men, secure enormous capital. "In such a context, violence or its threat become a means to ensure the continued reaping of privileges and exercise of power. It is both a result and a means to an end."¹⁰ In martial contexts, the violence is extreme: real men kill.¹¹

Yet, to return to verse 11, even in this portrait of the apex male, a chink appears in the armor. The provinces to the west are called but refuse to come; they are summoned but refuse to be afraid. They call Nebuchadnezzar "one man" and so strip him of the multitudes he commands and leave him vulnerable and alone. Since Nebuchadnezzar can conquer only through other people's bodies, when those bodies refuse to comply with his commands, he has nothing. His power is not intrinsic or biological but instead external to him, constructed and conferred on him by his society. Likewise, his masculinity does not derive from some deep inner core of identity, but it is also external to him, in relation to others. Ironically, the hallmark of Nebuchadnezzar's masculinity is his ability to control multitudes, but since his masculinity is external to him, it is really, ultimately, out of his control.

Along with power and privilege, Nebuchadnezzar also has an immense sense of entitlement. The refusal of the western provinces to rally to his battle cry threatens his power as well as his sense of self. How dare they say no? Nebuchadnezzar responds with rage and the promise of death to those who disobey (1:12).¹² In the Hebrew Bible, anger is an emotion ascribed exclusively to God and men; women are never angry.¹³ Writing in a contemporary context but in words that resonate with the Hebrew evidence, Michael Kaufman notes, "Many of our dominant forms of masculinity hinge on the internalization of a range of emotions and their

10. Michael Kaufman, "The Seven P's of Men's Violence," in *Men's Lives*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, 9th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2013), 544.

11. Susanne Scholz uses the phrase "real men kill" to describe the men in the book of Judges in "Judges," in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 119.

12. Herodotus's *History*, book 7, opens with King Darius of Persia smarting from his defeat at the famous battle of Marathon. As a result, he was "now even more full of wrath and more resolved to march upon Greece" (*The History*, trans. David Grene [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987], 466).

13. Ellen van Wolde, "Sentiments as Culturally Construed Emotions: Anger and Love in the Hebrew Bible," *BibInt* 16 (2008): 14.

redirection into anger.”¹⁴ For an alpha male, most emotions are unacceptable, but rage is not only allowed but a marker of his dominant masculinity.¹⁵ A man’s rage fuels the fire of violence. Nebuchadnezzar vows, in language that positions him as the only actor, to kill every inhabitant of Cilicia, Damascus, Syria, Moab, Ammon, Judea, and Egypt (Jdt 1:12).

An additional component of this complex of masculinity, power, and violence is the concept of honor. Honor and shame systems were a part of many ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean societies and play a role in the texts that these societies produced; these systems were also gendered. When Nebuchadnezzar’s messengers return from the west, they are not only “empty-handed” but also “in disgrace” (1:11). The refusal creates humiliation—a particular form of masculinized honor is at stake. Issues of honor and shame will continue to surface in Judith as the threat to the temple is considered a matter of honor¹⁶ and as military defeat is construed as emasculating and denigrating (see Reeder’s citation above). Hence, the genocidal threat against the different peoples of the west is seemingly excessive, but it is actually commensurate with the threat the west’s refusal represents. The entire patriarchal system with its gender ideologies and hierarchies is at stake.

Before Nebuchadnezzar can avenge his honor, he must first, through his proxy Holofernes, carry out the original military campaign, the one in which the west refused to participate. The campaign against King Arphaxad is a rousing success as the Medes are not only defeated but also “disgraced” (Jdt 1:14). The chapter ends with Nebuchadnezzar

14. Kaufman, “Seven P’s of Men’s Violence,” 545.

15. In the Greco-Roman context, anger had a different gendered valence. By the first century CE, the hallmark of masculinity was self-control, and anger, even the anger of an emperor in a time of war, was unacceptable. Instead, women were understood to be prone to anger. See Colleen Conway, *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 24, 27, 163. As Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson argue about 4 Maccabees (written in the first century), since self-control is an essential element of Greco-Roman masculinity, the king Antiochus’s inability to rule his anger compromises his masculinity. (“Taking It Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees,” *JBL* 117 [1998]: 253–55.) If the association with masculinity and self-control predates the first century, Nebuchadnezzar’s anger in Judith may also be a critique. In chapter 1, Nebuchadnezzar loses his head metaphorically; in chapter 10, his agent will make the metaphor literal.

16. Ellen Juhl Christiansen, “Judith: Defender of Israel—Preserver of the Temple,” in *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 72, 79.

and his men celebrating this victory with feasting (really, drinking) for 120 days (1:16). Real men work hard and then play hard. Then, as now, “power” is expressed by the ability to provide pleasure without regard to consequence. The excessive victory celebrations foreshadow the means of Nebuchadnezzar’s defeat and add an ironic twist. The Assyrian victory is celebrated with drink; it will be drink that will bring the Assyrians down.

Nebuchadnezzar’s Campaign against the West (2:1–3:10)

Sometime after the victory against Arphaxad and, presumably, after recovering from the hangover that would have resulted from four months of imbibing, Nebuchadnezzar decides it is time to fulfill his vow of revenge. The western campaign begins. This military assault starts in Nebuchadnezzar’s eighteenth year, perhaps coincidentally, perhaps a subtle way of invoking for readers the real bloodbath the historical Nebuchadnezzar ordered when the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem, also in the eighteenth year of his reign (Jer 32:1; 52:29). The fictional Nebuchadnezzar calls all of his advisers together to plot the destruction of everyone who disobeyed him, a disobedience that all agree is wicked and worthy of the punishment of death (Jdt 2:1-3).

Holofernes is now introduced. He is the chief general, second only to Nebuchadnezzar, and he will act for Nebuchadnezzar for the rest of the book. Nebuchadnezzar commissions him with a long speech that echoes divine speech: “Thus says the Great King, the lord [κύριος] of the whole earth” (2:5). The speech is also full of graphic violence as Nebuchadnezzar paints a picture of world domination: “I am coming against them in my anger, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of my troops, to whom I will hand them over to be plundered” (2:7). He declares this in an image that makes each soldier an emanation of his rage and his control—he sends the soldiers *and* he hands over their victims. The wounded will fill the ravines, and the dead will clog the rivers; the living will be captured and sent away to the very ends of the earth (2:8-9). Nebuchadnezzar ends by swearing, not by some other god, but by his own power and kingdom (as he will do again in 1:12). In biblical literature, there is no king who swears in a comparable way—the formula is used only by God (God swears by God’s own life in Num 14:21 and Ezek 5:1, for example; God swears by God’s own holiness in Amos 4:2).¹⁷

17. Gera, *Judith*, 145.

Jdt 2:1–3:10

²¹In the eighteenth year, on the twenty-second day of the first month, there was talk in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, about carrying out his revenge on the whole region, just as he had said. ²He summoned all his ministers and all his nobles and set before them his secret plan and recounted fully, with his own lips, all the wickedness of the region. ³They decided that every one who had not obeyed his command should be destroyed.

⁴When he had completed his plan, Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, called Holofernes, the chief general of his army, second only to himself, and said to him: ⁵“Thus says the Great King, the lord of the whole earth: Leave my presence and take with you men confident in their strength, one hundred twenty thousand foot soldiers and twelve thousand cavalry. ⁶March on

against all the land to the west, because they disobeyed my orders. ⁷Tell them to prepare earth and water, for I am coming against them in my anger, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of my troops, to whom I will hand them over to be plundered.

⁸Their wounded shall fill their ravines and gullies, and the swelling river shall be filled with their dead. ⁹I will lead them away captive to the ends of the whole earth. ¹⁰You shall go and seize all their territory for me in advance. They must yield themselves to you, and you shall hold them for me until the day of their punishment. ¹¹But to those who resist show no mercy, but hand them over to slaughter and plunder throughout your whole region. ¹²For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, what I have spoken I will accomplish by my own hand.

¹³And you—take care not to transgress

Nebuchadnezzar never explicitly deifies himself; it is Holofernes who will later make such deification explicit. Nevertheless, the king does use language in ways that subtly imply his divine status. Holofernes’s later declarations are not just examples of the enthusiasm of a loyal subject.

Nebuchadnezzar’s last words in the book of Judith command Holofernes to be obedient, and his language again is reminiscent of God’s ordering of obedience (2:13; see, for example, Num 22:18). He then retreats from the story, becoming a distant power whose will is made manifest through his agents. The stage is now set for Nebuchadnezzar and YHWH to commence their proxy war, battling through the actions of their representatives, Holofernes and Judith, respectively.

Holofernes, now center stage, prepares for war. Consistent with the book’s historical and geographical inaccuracies, the author uses hyperbolic numbers for the retinue that follows Holofernes into battle: 120,000

any of your lord's commands, but carry them out exactly as I have ordered you; do it without delay."

¹⁴So Holofernes left the presence of his lord, and summoned all the commanders, generals, and officers of the Assyrian army. ¹⁵He mustered the picked troops by divisions as his lord had ordered him to do, one hundred twenty thousand of them, together with twelve thousand archers on horseback, ¹⁶and he organized them as a great army is marshaled for a campaign. ¹⁷He took along a vast number of camels and donkeys and mules for transport, and innumerable sheep and oxen and goats for food; ¹⁸also ample rations for everyone, and a huge amount of gold and silver from the royal palace.

¹⁹Then he set out with his whole army, to go ahead of King Nebuchad-

nezzar and to cover the whole face of the earth to the west with their chariots and cavalry and picked foot soldiers.

²⁰Along with them went a mixed crowd like a swarm of locusts, like the dust of the earth—a multitude that could not be counted.

²¹They marched for three days from Nineveh to the plain of Bectileth, and camped opposite Bectileth near the mountain that is to the north of Upper Cilicia. ²²From there Holofernes took his whole army, the infantry, cavalry, and chariots, and went up into the hill country. ²³He ravaged Put and Lud, and plundered all the Rassisites and the Ishmaelites on the border of the desert, south of the country of the Chelleans.

²⁴Then he followed the Euphrates and passed through Mesopotamia and destroyed all the fortified towns along the

troops; twelve thousand archers; innumerable camels, donkeys, mules, sheep, oxen, goats; rations for everyone; gold and silver. These vast numbers of men, animals, provisions, and riches "cover the whole face of the earth to the west" (2:19), "like a swarm of locusts, like the dust of the earth" (2:20). It confounds the imagination to picture so many under the direction of a single man.

Holofernes marches these multitudes from Nineveh to the plain of Bectileth in only three days to reach the first victims of Nebuchadnezzar's wounded ego. Although Bectileth is unknown, upper Cilicia is not, and the distance from Nineveh to upper Cilicia is about three hundred miles—impossible to traverse in three days, especially for a massive army. Whereas some commentators see here proof of a corrupted text or the writer's ignorance of geography,¹⁸ we find another example of exag-

18. Moore, *Judith*, 137–38, 145.

brook Abiron, as far as the sea. ²⁵He also seized the territory of Cilicia, and killed everyone who resisted him. Then he came to the southern borders of Japheth, facing Arabia. ²⁶He surrounded all the Midianites, and burned their tents and plundered their sheepfolds. ²⁷Then he went down into the plain of Damascus during the wheat harvest, and burned all their fields and destroyed their flocks and herds and sacked their towns and ravaged their lands and put all their young men to the sword.

²⁸So fear and dread of him fell upon all the people who lived along the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre and those who lived in Sur and Ocina and all who lived in Jamnia. Those who lived in Azotus and Ascalon feared him greatly.

^{3:1}They therefore sent messengers to him to sue for peace in these words: ²⁴"We, the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, the Great King, lie prostrate before you. Do with us whatever you will. ³See, our buildings and all our land and all our wheat fields and our flocks and

herds and all our encampments lie before you; do with them as you please. ⁴Our towns and their inhabitants are also your slaves; come and deal with them as you see fit."

⁵The men came to Holofernes and told him all this. ⁶Then he went down to the seacoast with his army and stationed garrisons in the fortified towns and took picked men from them as auxiliaries. ⁷These people and all in the countryside welcomed him with garlands and dances and tambourines. ⁸Yet he demolished all their shrines and cut down their sacred groves; for he had been commissioned to destroy all the gods of the land, so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar alone, and that all their dialects and tribes should call upon him as a god.

⁹Then he came toward Esdraelon, near Dothan, facing the great ridge of Judea; ¹⁰he camped between Geba and Scythopolis, and remained for a whole month in order to collect all the supplies of his army.

generation and error designed to invoke the fantastic. Geographic errors continue: the path of the army zigs and zags, crosses and then recrosses the Euphrates, approaches the coast from two different and mutually exclusive directions. As they go, they slaughter, burn, and plunder. Far from distracting a knowledgeable reader, the geographic oddities add to the campaign's characterization. This slaughter is fast and furious; it is also manic, as the army destroys everything in its frenzied path. The path of the army is erratic, just like an angry abuser lashing out in unpredictable ways. One emotion elicits another—the people to the west finally fear Nebuchadnezzar (2:28).

*Judith and Columbus's
Mistaken Journeys*

Two verses from Judith make a surprising appearance in a compilation of biblical texts by Christopher Columbus, called *Libro de las Profecías*. In making a case to restore the goodwill of the Spanish crown to finance further voyages to discover a maritime route to Asia, Columbus began the production of an extravagant publication to prove the theological necessity for these voyages. Drawing largely on his medieval theological mind-set, Columbus equates the route to the east with gaining the economic wealth needed to finance the reconquest of Jerusalem ahead of the end of the age. Biblical geography provides Columbus with both the theological and the navigational arguments about maritime routes. From his reading of the Bible, Columbus is convinced that the "islands of the Indies" lie slightly west of Asia. He draws on Judith largely for its mention of "Tharsis" as reflected in the Latin Vulgate 2:12, 13 (Jdt 2:21, 23). These

verses are among the several that Columbus piles together to prove his point that "Tharsis" is a city but mostly referred to as an island in the Bible. Along with Jonah 1:3, he uses Judith 2:12, 13 (Vulg) to prove it is a city.¹⁹ Although there are several textual problems with these verses and newer translations do not regard Tarsus as the referent in this verse, Columbus's concerns here are to use ancient geography as represented in the Bible as incontrovertible proof of global topography. In doing so, he also is fascinated with the narrative of the king of Assyria's military conquests over a broad swath of territory. The wealth of the city and its geography are important for his argument. That "Tharsis" is a wealthy city, worthy enough to be pillaged by the king, proves his point of the necessity of the Christian imperialism he advocates to the Spanish crown. The picture of imperialism achieved by military and economic mechanisms pulls these problematic verses from Judith into Columbus's attention.

Steed Vernyl Davidson

To this point in the narrative, Holofernes is little more than an agent of his lord and king. He has yet to speak, and the actions ascribed to him are, for the most part, under the direction of Nebuchadnezzar. Insofar as he is Nebuchadnezzar's agent, he shares in much of the portrait of mas-

19. Delno C. West and August Kling, *The Libro de las Profecías of Christopher Columbus* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991), 243.

culinity derived from the king. Masculinity becomes a form of currency in this gendered economy. It can be transferred and traded in trust, even if it must also be carefully budgeted, secured, and maintained. Obeying his lord and in so doing receiving Nebuchadnezzar's masculinity, Holofernes becomes another example of hegemonic masculinity. He commands a vast army and so becomes the subject of a concentrated array of verbs denoting death and destruction. The actions were taken by his whole army, but the verbs are singular, as if Holofernes alone accomplished the deeds. In just five verses (2:23-27), he ravaged and plundered and destroyed and seized and killed and burned and plundered again and burned some more; he destroyed and sacked and ravaged and put all the young men to the sword. The sheer number of verbs furthers the construction of masculinity present in the book of Judith: real men command, real men act, and real men kill.

The people are afraid. They send messengers to Holofernes and prostrate themselves; they proclaim themselves slaves of Nebuchadnezzar and hand over to him all that they possess (3:1-4). The language is of utter abjection, even feminization. Still, Holofernes does not speak but responds with action. He moves down the coast, and the people meet him with celebrations, presumably because they believe that he has accepted their surrender (3:6-7). Holofernes is seeking, however, not just their subjugation; not even surrender can stop the rage of Nebuchadnezzar. The goal of the military intrusion is political submission *and* theological capitulation; all of the peoples' holy places are demolished "so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar alone" and call him god (3:8). The contrast between the dancing people, playing tambourines and throwing flowers, with the army still not sated is startling. Again, Holofernes is the subject of a number of verbs of destruction: he "demolished" and "cut down" (3:8), "plundered" and "destroyed" (4:1).

Although not explicitly stated in Nebuchadnezzar's commission (2:5-13), Holofernes announces that he has been commanded to establish the worship of his king (3:8), which also elevates his own worth, for now he is second only to a god. In contrast to more typical polytheistic arrangements, Nebuchadnezzar is not one god among many but the only god (henotheism if not actually monotheism), a move that puts him in direct opposition to YHWH, who also demands exclusive worship (see, for example, Exod 20:2). Certain forms of monotheism lead to dualistic hierarchies that manifest also in the human community and foment violence against others. Hence, feminist theologians have approached monotheism with caution, offering both critique and correction. Monotheism

can promote an all-encompassing unity that honors the diversity within; monotheism can promote an exclusivist doctrine that demands conformity and uses violence to enforce that conformity.²⁰ Especially dangerous is exclusivist monotheistic theology wedded to state imperial power, as we see here in Nebuchadnezzar's war, as we see in our own time with the rise of Christian nationalism in the United States.

The victory over the peoples of the coasts is complete. After this great victory, Holofernes and his men rest and resupply (3:10). Our attention now turns to the Israelites, who, for the first time in the story, are more than just another people on the list bound for destruction. Now, we hear their voices.

Fear is a powerful motivator, and the narrative is imbued with fear. As Deborah Levine Gera notes, "Almost everyone in *Judith* is afraid and acts out of fear."²¹ Fear of the Lord is a biblical theme; it is a virtue that leads to righteous living, it defines the proper attitude one should have before God, and it includes such sentiments as awe and respect (see, for examples, Exod 1:17; Lev 19:14; and Prov 1:7). Nebuchadnezzar also commands an obedience born in fear, but this fear is contrasted with a proper fear of God. The plot begins with a lack of fear (1:11) that results in a failure to comply; the Assyrian response is ruthless violence. The military assault produces the fear that was initially missing. "Fear and dread" fall on all the people of the seacoast (2:28). Soon, hearing the reports, the people of Israel will also be afraid (4:2; 7:4). Imperial powers frequently use their military forces as a mechanism of control: "State terrorism [is] the intentional use or threat of violence by state agents or their proxies against individuals or groups who are victimized for the purpose of intimidating or frightening a broader audience."²² This violence can be directed at people in other states or against the state's own people. The victims are the vehicles for "the communicative power of

20. For an early exchange about the power and peril of monotheism from a feminist perspective, see Marcia Falk, "Toward a Feminist Jewish Reconstruction of Monotheism," *Tikkun* 4 (July–August 1989): 53–56; and Lawrence S. Hoffman, "A Response to Marcia Falk," *Tikkun* 4 (July–August 1989): 56–57.

21. Gera, *Judith*, 127.

22. Richard Jackson, Eamon Murphy, and Scott Poynting, "Introduction," in *Contemporary State Terrorism: Theory and Practice*, ed. Richard Jackson, Eamon Murphy, and Scott Poynting (New York: Routledge, 2010), 3. See also Timothy Howe and Lee L. Brice, eds., *Brill's Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

violence”;²³ a key element of Nebuchadnezzar’s revenge is the terror that ripples out from the epicenter of his violent attacks.

Israel’s Responses (4:1-15)

In chapter 4, the narrative focuses on one particular people: Israelites living in Judea. Nebuchadnezzar’s horde has swarmed the hill country, conquered cities, and left desolation behind. The people of Israel hear and are afraid. They express their worry for Jerusalem and its temple; the threat of the destruction and desecration of their holy items terrifies them, and this fear is set in the context of their having recently returned from exile and reconsecrated their holy items (4:1-3). The focus on the reconsecration of the temple instead of the rebuilding that took place immediately after the return from exile may be another signal that the book of Judith was written in a Maccabean context. The language of “re-consecration” is similar to the language used in 1 Maccabees 4:38, which describes the rededication of the temple after the victory of the Maccabees over Antiochus IV. It is as if the return from the Babylonian exile (533 BCE) has been conflated with the rededication of the temple after Antiochus IV’s desecration (165 BCE). The social context of Judith is the space where one lives after a hard-won victory over an existential threat.

The Judeans send word to the surrounding environs including to Samaria: “So they sent word to every district of Samaria, and to Kona, Beth-horon, Belmain, and Jericho, and to Choba and Aesora, and the valley of Salem” (4:4). This verse displays again the book’s deliberate geographical idiosyncrasies. Out of the eight places listed, only three can be located.²⁴ While some scholars again search tirelessly for clues that would indicate their exact locations, others simply attribute the list to the author’s fertile imagination. The mix of known and unknown, real and imagined, is an aspect of the author’s approach to the fantastic. The inclusion of Samaria, and, even more, the positioning of Judith’s hometown Bethulia in Samaria (4:6), is an interpretive crux since Samaria was a separate territory inhabited by Samaritans and not Judeans. Tensions between Judeans and Samaritans were exacerbated by the fact that their religious beliefs and practices were remarkably similar, but the Samaritans had their own cultic center (Mount Gerizim rather than

23. Jackson, Murphy, and Poynting, “Introduction,” 3.

24. Gera, *Judith*, 172–74.

Jdt 4:1-15

^{4:1}When the Israelites living in Judea heard of everything that Holofernes, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Assyrians, had done to the nations, and how he had plundered and destroyed all their temples, ²they were therefore greatly terrified at his approach; they were alarmed both for Jerusalem and for the temple of the Lord their God. ³For they had only recently returned from exile, and all the people of Judea had just now gathered together, and the sacred vessels and the altar and the temple had been consecrated after their profanation. ⁴So they sent word to every district of Samaria, and to Kona, Beth-horon, Belmain, and Jericho, and to Choba and Aesora, and

the valley of Salem. ⁵They immediately seized all the high hilltops and fortified the villages on them and stored up food in preparation for war—since their fields had recently been harvested.

⁶The high priest, Joakim, who was in Jerusalem at the time, wrote to the people of Bethulia and Betomesthaim, which faces Esdraelon opposite the plain near Dothan, ⁷ordering them to seize the mountain passes, since by them Judea could be invaded; and it would be easy to stop any who tried to enter, for the approach was narrow, wide enough for only two at a time to pass.

⁸So the Israelites did as they had been ordered by the high priest Joakim and the senate of the whole people of

Mount Zion in Jerusalem), priesthood, and Pentateuch. In a strange twist, then, Judeans call to Samaritans for help in defending the temple (4:5), and Judith the “Jew” lives in a Samaritan town.

The fragmentary telescoping of historical references in the book of Judith, and in chapter 4 in particular, reminds readers of Israel’s multiple tribulations. Since the Assyrian assault, exacerbated by the Babylonian exile and beyond, the people of Israel struggled with issues surrounding community boundaries: intermarriage, conversion, ritual precision. Questions concerning who is (or is not) a part of the community appear in a range of Persian and Hellenistic literature (e.g., Ezra–Nehemiah, Ruth, Esther and its additions) and will reappear in Judith as well, as our heroine lives in Samaria, she keeps kosher, and the Ammonite Achior converts. In addition, the issue of profanation of the temple is neither a trivial nor distant memory to Judith’s original community. Questions of God’s fidelity and intervention in national affairs and problems around Israel’s relationship to other nations continued to arise in the Hasmonean restoration. Judith’s first audience was the inheritors of a land hard-won through armed rebellion, the purpose of which was to secure the liberties not only of self-governance but also of religious ritual. Many, no doubt,

Israel, in session at Jerusalem. ⁹And every man cried out to God with great fervor, and they humbled themselves with much fasting. ¹⁰They and their wives and their children and their cattle and every resident alien and hired laborer and purchased slave—they all put sackcloth around their waists. ¹¹And all the Israelite men, women, and children living at Jerusalem prostrated themselves before the temple and put ashes on their heads and spread out their sackcloth before the Lord. ¹²They even draped the altar with sackcloth and cried out in unison, praying fervently to the God of Israel not to allow their infants to be carried off and their wives to be taken as booty,

and the towns they had inherited to be destroyed, and the sanctuary to be profaned and desecrated to the malicious joy of the Gentiles.

¹³The Lord heard their prayers and had regard for their distress; for the people fasted many days throughout Judea and in Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty. ¹⁴The high priest Joakim and all the priests who stood before the Lord and ministered to the Lord, with sackcloth around their loins, offered the daily burnt offerings, the votive offerings, and freewill offerings of the people. ¹⁵With ashes on their turbans, they cried out to the Lord with all their might to look with favor on the whole house of Israel.

believed they had done the impossible—defeating the Greeks—only by God’s aid, and that aid was bestowed on them because of covenantal loyalty. Yet, now that hostilities were over and Jewish rule restored, pressures of economic rebuilding and governance meant that some sort of negotiated space needed to be constructed between Israel and the other nations.

Jews living among those nations were wrestling with fraught questions of their own. Jews were building lives among pagans, entering a period of relative tolerance and economic freedom. Yet they needed to determine how best to maintain Jewish identity and their connection to the new Hasmonean state. Although the book of Judith is set in Israel, it reflects many of the tensions experienced in the diaspora.

Judean/Samaritan relations also find expression in Judith. The author places Bethulia in the territories of Samaria yet leaves all of the tensions between Judea and Samaria unremarked; these Samaritan territories instead rally to the high priest’s call to arms. Rather than identifying the inhabitants of Samaria as somehow other—which is how both communities regarded each other ever since the Assyrian conquest, mutual hostilities evident in Ezra–Nehemiah, John 4, and Luke 9—the book of Judith assumes either friendly Samaritans or Jewish settlements in Samaria.

Alternatively, since the text never actually names the people who live in Samaria “Samaritans,” the text may erase the Samaritans altogether by assuming everyone who lives in Samaritan territory is actually Jewish. Either way, the text asserts a unity that did not exist in reality.

The temple authorities and the high priest Joakim (4:6-7) devise the plan for saving Jerusalem, a plan dependent on this unity. The political organization this passage assumes, one where the high priest wields considerable power, resonates within the historical context of the Hasmonean rule. Priest-kings directed the people not just liturgically but also in terms of economic, political, and martial matters; a senate also made decisions and directed action (see 4:8). During the Hasmonean era, a ruling council (γερούσία), translated here as “senate,” was formed, and it continued to have liturgical and political power until the destruction of the second temple (this group of men is also called the Sanhedrin).²⁵ In the book of Judith, the high priest and the senate in Jerusalem order the people to fortify the cities, store provisions, and seize the mountain passes to cut off entry to the plains. The people obey.

*Joakim*²⁶

Joakim appears twice (Jdt 4:6-8; 15:8-10). A remote leader and a flat character in the sense that he does not grow or change during the course of the story, Joakim leads via letter from Jerusalem. Mieke Bal observes that narration presents a point of view, a certain way of seeing, an angle, if you will, on events as they are presented—whether historical, factual, or fictitious.²⁷ Here Joakim’s letter presents a point of view of alarm, haste,

fear, and worship. Although obviously not a soldier, Joakim does lead according to his skillset and vocation. He and others wear sackcloth around their loins, put ashes on their turbans, and cry out “to the Lord with all their might to look with favor on the whole house of Israel” (4:14-15). His activities dominate chapter 4. Joakim’s genius as a figurehead is to lead an already religious people into national penitence and supplication by example.

25. Gera, *Judith*, 178–79.

26. This section takes material from Robin Gallaher Branch, “Joakim, Uzziah, and Bagoas: A Literary Analysis of Selected Secondary Characters in the Book of Judith,” *OTE* 25 (2012): 57–83; see esp. 65–67, 79.

27. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 100.

Weeks later, when the coast is clear and the Assyrians are routed and slain, Joakim and the Israelite council visit Bethulia (15:8). The text makes it plain they come to see for themselves “the good things the Lord had done for Israel, and to see Judith and to wish her well” (15:8). Significantly, Joakim and his delegation are unlike other men in the tale who, upon first sight of Judith, are struck by her beauty. The clerics remain textually silent about this aspect of Judith; instead, Joakim loads Judith with accolades reserved for Israel’s heroes—and for God.

In my many readings of the book of Judith, I have wondered this: When all is said and done, is Joakim a coward? My musings and answers go back and forth. On the one hand, there is no evidence the people of Bethulia wished he were on site with them; furthermore, there is no evidence that he made any attempt to come until the Assyrians were defeated. On the other hand, while Joakim did not send water from Jerusalem to Bethulia, maybe that was impossible because of the presence of the Assyrians and the presence of the children of Esau and the people of Moab (7:8). Yet, it would seem that the Bethulians controlled some sort

of access to the passes. What I found clear was this: In a siege, Joakim lacked the capacity to strategize or to plan an attack. Those are telling deficiencies in a leader. Joakim’s gift seems to be the ability to pontificate, write orders, and make pronouncements.

The text, however, clearly validates his gift of pronouncements, for these pronouncements validate Judith. In one voice he and the members of the Israelite council bless and laud Judith. Note this singular honor: they come to the conqueror; the conqueror does not go to Jerusalem. Theirs is a public blessing. They give Judith accolades surpassing virtually any other person in Scripture, accolades that touch on those reserved for God: “*You* are the glory of Jerusalem, *you* are the great boast of Israel, *you* are the great pride of our nation! *You* have done all this with *your* own hand” (15:9-10a; italics added). Usually, God receives the credit for battle, and this does happen in 15:8. Elsewhere, however, as in the Song of Moses and Miriam and in Deborah’s Song, all credit for the victory goes to God (Exod 15:1-21; Judg 5). By Joakim’s decree, Judith and God share the credit in this story.

Robin Gallaher Branch

Fanciful geography in this chapter conveys levels of symbolic meanings. The passes described as so narrow they will permit only two people at a time (4:7) do not exist, but narrow passes are a feature of a number

of Greek stories, including Herodotus's account of Thermophilae.²⁸ The town of Bethulia is called on explicitly to block these mountain passes (4:6). The narrative situates Bethulia south of Esdraelon and near Dothan, in the hill country of Samaria, strategically located atop a hill that controls the pass to Jerusalem. Bethulia is, however, an unknown appellation, and there is no known town that matches all of these geographical criteria. Bethulia seems best understood as a fictional town of symbolic import. The Greek "Bethulia" sounds like the Hebrew בתולה ("virgin" or "young woman"). Israel is sometimes called בתולה בת-ציון ("virgin daughter of Zion") in the Bible (2 Kgs 19:21; Lam 1:15 uses a similar appellation). It is not unusual for a city or state to be personified as a woman, and the designation "virgin daughter of Zion" carries connotations of tenderness and affection. In this way, Bethulia may also stand in for the whole people. The hilltop location indicates a place often associated with shrines and connection with God.²⁹ The symbolic virgin needs protecting from the Assyrian army, but she also needs to block her passes to prevent the storming of Jerusalem. The threatened violation of the community body through military conquest is figured as the threat to a woman's body through rape.

As they rush to follow Jerusalem's commands, we also see the people calling on God (4:9-12). First, "every man of Israel cried out to God" (4:9), thus establishing a patriarchal frame for what is otherwise a collective lament. Next, men with "their wives and their children and their cattle," Israelite and non-Israelite, paid worker and slave alike, clothe themselves in sackcloth, cover their head with ashes, and repeatedly entreat God for salvation. Finally, in Jerusalem, the people prostrate before the temple, covering the altar with sackcloth as if it too were in great distress (4:12). These verses recall the repentance of the city of Nineveh as described in the book of Jonah where the entire city—"human beings and animals" (Jonah 3:8)—fast and wear sackcloth to avert the destruction of God. Calamity is a great equalizer, affecting all living creatures alike, no matter one's ethnicity, class status, or species classification. Together they are all vulnerable bodies; together they all desire safety; together they all cry out for salvation. Again, though, the focus comes back to the men. The men express concern about "their infants" and "their wives," who will be taken away as booty to be raped and to be enslaved (4:12). They are

28. Gera, *Judith*, 178.

29. Toni Craven, *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 76.

worried about the loss of their cities but also the loss of their honor as their defeat would be celebrated by “the malicious joy of the Gentiles” (4:12). The assault to family (particularly the raping of wives and the loss of children, presumably to be enslaved and therefore also subject to rape) is a breach of individual male honor, much like the desecration of the temple is a loss of collective (again, male) honor.

Chapter 4 in the book of Judith is setting up several of the book’s ideological theses. The first concern is faithfulness and its relationship to God’s promise of deliverance. The second is that God will use seemingly powerless people (in this case, a widow) to effect salvation. Judith presents an inversion of conventional authority and power, which is also an inversion of conventional, hegemonic masculinity as represented by the Assyrian king and general. Simply challenging hegemonic masculinity is not alone a feminist stance, however, especially if we understand feminism as addressing issues of gender alongside other important identity positions like class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion. The patriarchal frame keeps reminding the reader that free Israelite men, their cries and concerns, are really the focus of the story.

Our feminist lens, however, helps us shift our focus to bring other figures into sharper relief. We wonder about the slaves. They have put on sackcloth. Are they also praying that the wives of their owners be spared the degradation of slavery? There is an unintended irony created by the images of slaves crying out to avert their own owners’ enslavement. The textual myopia over the issue of slavery is one of the issues that complicates the book’s feminist legacy. We see a similar unintended irony in the lament of the cattle.³⁰ The cattle wear sackcloth, a garment made of the skins of other animals’ hides, generally goat or camel, as they participate in the entreaties to God to prevent the death of their human compatriots. The priests then amp up their sacrificial schedule, offering “the daily burnt offerings, the votive offerings, and freewill offerings” (4:14), all rituals that involve the killing and immolation of animals in

30. Interrogation of the ways the human community treats the nonhuman community fits into the feminist purview, especially given the interrelatedness of environmental degradation, animal cruelty, and the abuse of women. See Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (New York: Continuum, 2015) for an analysis of how misogyny and animal abuse are impulses of the same patriarchy. Ken Stone’s biblical interpretive work also focuses on the interrelatedness of gender, sexuality, and animal ideologies; for a recent example, see Stone, “Affect and Animality in 2 Samuel 12,” in *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible*, ed. Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019), 13–36.

order to get the attention of God. Thus, the cattle participate in prayers that involve the wearing of dead animals and the burning of dead animals in order to prevent not more dead animals but more dead humans (the ones who have been killing all the animals). Just as the Assyrian assault may not ultimately matter to those already enslaved (and may bring a grim satisfaction in seeing the slave owner become the slave), the Assyrian threat may not matter much to the animals either—they are dead either way.

God does respond to the people's entreaties. The book of Judith notes that God "heard their prayers and had regard for their distress" (4:13). Such notice is reminiscent of other situations where God hears and responds, for example, Exodus 2:23-25; Numbers 20:16 and 21:3; and Deuteronomy 26:7 (the later three examples all using the same phrasing in the LXX that we find in Judith). Unlike the situations in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, however, where God's response is salvific action (for example, in Exodus God goes on to commission Moses and send the plagues), God does not directly act to bring about salvation in Judith. From this point on, we must infer God's actions, for God neither speaks nor produces any miraculous events.

After the note that God has heard, the narrative shifts focus to Joakim and the Jerusalem priests who, in their sackcloth and ashes, sacrifice continuously to God and continue to cry out. The chapter ends with another ironic moment since the people cannot know if God had earlier noticed their desperation, hears them now, or will act. The irony continues, as it does in the book of Esther, where the faithful reader, rather than the narrator, finds divine intervention in the plot.

Works Cited

- Adams, Carol J. *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory*. New York: Continuum, 2015.
- Aguilar, Grace. *The Women of Israel*. England, 1845; New York: D. Appleton, 1872.
- Anderson, Janice Capel, and Stephen D. Moore, eds. *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
- Aquino, María Pilar, and María José Rosado-Nunes, eds. *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Explorations for a Just World*. Studies in Latino/a Catholicism. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007.
- Aquino, María Pilar, Daisy L. Machado, and Jeanette Rodríguez, eds. *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.
- Astell, Mary. *Some Reflections upon Marriage*. New York: Source Book Press, 1970. Reprint of the 1730 edition; earliest ed. 1700.
- Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake*. New York: Random House, 2003.
- . *The Year of the Flood*. New York: Doubleday, 2013.
- Bach, Alice, ed. *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Bal, Mieke. "Head Hunting: 'Judith' on the Cutting Edge of Knowledge." In *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*, edited by Athalya Brenner, 253–85. FCB 7. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.
- . *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- . *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.
- Barucq, André. *Judith, Esther*. 2nd ed. Paris: Cerf, 1959.
- Baskin, Judith R. "Women and Post-Biblical Commentary." In *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*, edited by Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Andrea L. Weiss, xlix–lv. New York: URJ Press and Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, 2008.

- Beavis, Mary Ann, Irmtraud Fischer, Mercedes Navarro Puerto, and Adriana Valerio, eds. *The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*. <https://www.bibleandwomen.org>.
- Belfy, Jeanne Marie. "'Judith' and the Louisville Orchestra: The Rest of the Story." *College Music Symposium* 31 (1991): 36–48.
- Bellis, Alice Ogden. *Helpmates, Harlots, and Heroes: Women's Stories in the Hebrew Bible*. 2nd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007.
- Benedetti, Laura. "Reconstructing Artemisia: Twentieth-Century Images of a Woman Artist." *Comparative Literature* 51 (1999): 43–61.
- Benjamin, Mara H. "Tracing the Contours of a Half Century of Jewish Feminist Theology." *JFSR* 36 (2020): 11–31.
- Benshoff, Harry M. *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997.
- Bird, Phyllis A. *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Bissell, Edwin Cone. *The Book of Judith*. The Apocrypha of the Old Testament. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1886.
- Boccaccini, Gabriele. "Tigranes the Great as 'Nebuchadnezzar' in the Book of Judith." In *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, edited by Géza G. Xeravits, 55–69. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.
- Børresen, Kari Elisabeth, and Adriana Valerio, eds. *The High Middle Ages. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.
- Branch, Robin Gallaher, and Pierre Jordaán. "The Significance of Secondary Characters in Susanna, Judith and the Additions to Esther in the Septuagint." *Acta Patristica et Byzantina* 20 (2009): 389–416.
- Branch, Robin Gallaher. "Judith: A Remarkable Heroine, Parts 1 and 2." *Bible History Daily*. <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/judith-a-remarkable-heroine/>; <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/judith-a-remarkable-heroine-part-2/>. First published 2012; updated August 12, 2016.
- . "Joakim, Uzziah, and Bagoas: A Literary Analysis of Selected Secondary Characters in the Book of Judith." *OTE* 25 (2012): 57–83.
- Brettler, Marc Zvi. "The Canonization of the Bible." In *The Jewish Study Bible*, edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, 2153–58. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Brison, Ora. "Judith: A Pious Widow Turned *Femme Fatale*, or More?" In *A Feminist Companion to Tobit and Judith*, edited by Athalya Brenner-Idan with Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, 175–99. FCB 20, 2nd ser. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.
- Brooten, Bernadette J. *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

- Burke, Sean D. *Queering the Ethiopian Eunuch: Strategies of Ambiguity in Acts*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Camp, Claudia. *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1981.
- Cannon, Katie G. "The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness." In *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, edited by Letty M. Russell, 30–40. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985.
- Caponigro, Mark Stephen. "Judith, Holding the Tale of Herodotus." In "No One Spoke Ill of Her": *Essays on Judith*, edited by James C. VanderKam, 47–59. EJL 2. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.
- Carr, David M. *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.
- Carter, Warren. *The Gospel of Matthew in Its Roman Imperial Context*. London: T&T Clark, 2005.
- . *The Roman Empire and the New Testament: An Essential Guide*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2006.
- Castelli, Elizabeth. "Les Belles Infidèles/Fidelity or Feminism? The Meanings of Feminist Biblical Translation." In *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, vol. 1, edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza with the assistance of Shelly Matthews, 189–204. New York: Crossroad, 1993.
- Chapman, Cynthia R. *The Gendered Language of Warfare in the Israelite-Assyrian Encounter*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004.
- Christiansen, Ellen Juhl. "Judith: Defender of Israel—Preserver of the Temple." In *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, edited by Géza G. Xeravits, 70–84. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.
- Ciletti, Elena. "Judith Imagery as Catholic Orthodoxy in Counter-Reformation Italy." In *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, 345–68. Cambridge: Open Book, 2010.
- Ciletti, Elena, and Henrike Lähnemann. "Judith in the Christian Tradition." In *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, 41–65. Cambridge: Open Book, 2010.
- Claassens, L. Juliana, and Carolyn J. Sharp, eds. *Feminist Frameworks and the Bible: Power, Ambiguity, and Intersectionality*. LHBOTS 630. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017.
- Claassens, L. Juliana, and Irmtraud Fischer, eds. *Prophecy and Gender in the Hebrew Bible*. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2021.
- Clines, David J. A. *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.

- Clover, Carol J. *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender and the Horror Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Consolino, Franca Ela, and Judith Herrin, eds. *The Early Middle Ages. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2020.
- Conway, Colleen. *Behold the Man: Jesus and Greco-Roman Masculinity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . *Sex and Slaughter in the Tent of Jael: A Cultural History of a Biblical Story*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Craven, Toni. "Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith." *Semeia* 8 (1977): 75–101.
- . *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith*. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Crawford, Sidnie White. "Esther Not Judith: Why One Made It and the Other Didn't." *BR* 18 (2002): 22–31, 45.
- . "In the Steps of Jael and Deborah: Judith as Heroine." In *"No One Spoke Ill of Her": Essays on Judith*, edited by James C. VanderKam, 5–16. EJJL 2. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.
- Creangă, Ovidiu. "Introduction." In *Hebrew Masculinities Anew*, edited by Ovidiu Creangă, 1–16. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2019.
- D'Angelo, Mary Rose. "Women Partners in the New Testament." *JFSR* 6 (1990): 65–86.
- Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: A Philosophy of Women's Liberation*. Boston: Beacon, 1985.
- Dinkler, Michal Beth. *Literary Theory and the New Testament*. AYBRL. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019.
- DiPalma, Brian Charles. "Scribal Masculinity and the Court Tales of Daniel." In *Hebrew Masculinities Anew*, edited by Ovidiu Creangă, 229–48. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2019.
- Dolce, Rita. *"Losing One's Head" in the Ancient Near East: Interpretation and Meaning of Decapitation*. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Dube, Musa W., ed. *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2000.
- Duran, Nicole. "Having Men for Dinner: Deadly Banquets and Biblical Women." *BTB* 35 (2005): 117–24.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso, 2007.
- . *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 3rd ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008.
- Efthimiadis-Keith, Helen. *The Enemy Is Within: A Jungian Psychoanalytic Approach to the Book of Judith*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- . "Judith, Feminist Ethics, and Feminist Interpretation." In *A Feminist Companion to Tobit and Judith*, edited by Athalya Brenner-Idan with Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, 141–63. FCB 20, 2nd ser. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.
- Elder, Linda Bennett. "Judith's *Sophia* and *Synesis*: Educated Jewish Women in the Late Second Temple Period." In *Biblical and Humane: A Festschrift for*

- John F. Priest, edited by Linda Bennett Elder, David L. Barr, and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, 53–69. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.
- Elliott-Smith, Darren. *Queer Horror Film and Television: Sexuality and Masculinity at the Margins*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2016.
- Enslin, Morton S., and Solomon Zeitlin. *The Book of Judith*. Leiden: Brill, 1972.
- Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn, and Andrea L. Weiss, eds. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. New York: URJ Press and Women of Reform Judaism, The Federation of Temple Sisterhoods, 2008.
- Exum, J. Cheryl. "Second Thoughts about Secondary Characters: Women in Exodus 1.8–2.10." In *A Feminist Companion to Exodus to Deuteronomy*, edited by Athalya Brenner, 75–97. FCB 6. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994.
- Exum, J. Cheryl, and David J. A. Clines, eds. *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993.
- Falk, Marcia. "Toward a Feminist Jewish Reconstruction of Monotheism." *Tikkun* 4 (July–August 1989): 53–56.
- Fehling, Detlev. *Herodotus and His "Sources": Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art*. Arc Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 21. Leeds: Francis Carrus, 1989.
- . "The Art of Herodotus on the Margins of the World." In *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction: Studies on Fiction, Literary Traditions, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing*, edited by Zweder von Martels, 1–15. Brill Studies in Intellectual History 53. Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- Feinstein, Eve Levavi. "Bathing in the Hebrew Bible." Bible Odyssey. <https://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/people/related-articles/bathing-in-the-hebrew-bible>.
- Fell, Margaret. *Women's Speaking Justified, Proved and Allowed by the Scriptures*. London, 1667.
- Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*. Translated by Lisa E. Dahill, Everett R. Kalin, Nancy Lukens, Linda M. Maloney, Barbara Rumscheidt, Martin Rumscheidt, and Tina Steiner. Edited by Luise Schottroff and Marie-Theres Wacker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Fewell, Danna Nolan, and David M. Gunn. *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible's First Story*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.
- Fischer, Irmtraud, and Mercedes Navarro Puerto, with Andrea Taschl-Erber, eds. *Torah. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.
- Franco, Mark. *Martha Graham in Love and War: The Life in the Work*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Taboo of Virginity." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited by James Strachey, 191–208. London: Hogarth Press, 1957.
- Frymer-Kensky, Tikva. *Reading the Women of the Bible*. New York: Schocken Books, 2002.

- Garrard, Mary D. *Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Gehman, Henry Snyder, ed. *The New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970.
- Gera, Deborah Levine. "The Jewish Textual Traditions." In *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, 23–39. Cambridge: Open Book, 2010.
- . *Judith*. CEJL. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014.
- . "Shorter Medieval Hebrew Tales of Judith." In *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, 81–95. Cambridge: Open Book, 2010.
- Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann. *Women in the New Testament*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.
- Glancy, Jennifer A. "Judith the Slaveholder." In *A Feminist Companion to Tobit and Judith*, edited by Athalya Brenner-Idan with Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, 200–211. FCB 20, 2nd ser. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.
- Gonzalez, Michelle A. "Latina Feminist Theology: Past, Present, and Future." *JFSR* 25 (2009): 150–55.
- Good, Deirdre J. "Reading Strategies for Biblical Passages on Same-Sex Relations." *Theology and Sexuality* 7 (1997): 70–82.
- Graybill, Rhiannon. *Are We Not Men? Unstable Masculinity in the Hebrew Prophets*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- . "Day of the Woman: Judges 4–5 as Slasher and Rape Revenge Narrative." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 30 (2018): 193–205.
- Grimké, Sarah. *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman*. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838.
- Guest, Deryn. *Beyond Feminist Biblical Studies*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2012.
- . *When Deborah Met Jael: Lesbian Biblical Hermeneutics*. London: SCM, 2005.
- Habel, Norman C., and Peter Trudinger. *Exploring Ecological Hermeneutics*. SBLSymS 46. Atlanta: SBL 2008.
- Halberstam, Judith. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.
- Hartog, François. *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.
- Hearon, Holly E., and Philip Ruge-Jones, eds. *The Bible in Ancient and Modern Media: Story and Performance*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009.
- Hens-Piazza, Gina. *The New Historicism*. GBS, Old Testament Series. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.
- Herodotus. *The History*. Translated by David Grene. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Herodotus and His "Sources": Citation, Invention, and Narrative Art*. Arca Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 21. Leeds: Francis Carrus, 1989.

- Hezser, Catherine. *Jewish Slavery in Antiquity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Hodes, Stuart. *Part Real, Part Dream: Dancing with Martha Graham*. Concord ePress, 2011.
- Hoffman, Lawrence S. "A Response to Marcia Falk." *Tikkun* 4 (July–August 1989): 56–57.
- Hopkins, Denise Dombkowski. "Judith." In *Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, 383–90. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Hornsby, Teresa, and Ken Stone, eds. *Bible Trouble: Queer Readings at the Boundaries of Biblical Scholarship*. Atlanta: SBL, 2011.
- Howe, Timothy, and Lee L. Brice, eds. *Brill's Companion to Insurgency and Terrorism in the Ancient Mediterranean*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.
- Ilan, Tal, Lorena Miralles-Maciá, and Ronit Nikolsky, eds. *Rabbinic Literature. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022.
- Isasi-Díaz, Ada María. *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.
- Jackson, Richard, Eamon Murphy, and Scott Poynting. "Introduction." In *Contemporary State Terrorism: Theory and Practice*, edited by Richard Jackson, Eamon Murphy, and Scott Poynting, 1–11. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Janes, Regina. *Losing Our Heads: Beheadings in Literature and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.
- Jobling, David. *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Three Structural Analyses in the Old Testament*. JSOTSup 7. Sheffield: Sheffield University, 1978.
- Jobling, David, and Tina Pippin, eds. *Semeia 59: Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.
- Johnson, Elizabeth A. "God." In *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*, edited by Letty M. Russell and J. Shannon Clarkson, 128–30. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.
- . *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*. New York: Crossroad, 1992.
- Junior, Nyasha. *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015.
- . "Womanist Biblical Interpretation." In *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World: An Introduction to Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Katharine Doob Sakenfeld*, edited by Linda Day and Carolyn Pressler, 37–46. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.
- Kaufman, Michael. "The Seven P's of Men's Violence." In *Men's Lives*, edited by Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner, 542–47. 9th ed. Boston: Pearson, 2013.
- Kessler, Gwynn. "Teaching Rape, Slavery, and Genocide in Bible and Culture." In *Rape Culture and Religious Studies: Critical and Pedagogical Engagements*,

- edited by Rhiannon Graybill, Meredith Minister, and Beatrice Lawrence, 55–72. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019.
- Kitzberger, Ingrid Rosa, ed. *Autobiographical Biblical Interpretation: Between Text and Self*. Leiden: Deo, 2002.
- Koosed, Jennifer L. *Reading the Bible as a Feminist*. Brill Research Perspectives. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- . “Moses, Feminism, and the Male Subject.” In *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, edited by Yvonne Sherwood, 223–39. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Kraemer, Ross Shepard, and Mary Rose D’Angelo, eds. *Women and Christian Origins*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- LaCocque, André. *The Feminine Unconventional: Four Subversive Figures in Israel’s Tradition*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1990.
- LaCugna, Catherine Mowry. *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991.
- Lang, Judith. “The Lord Who Crushes Wars: A Study of Judith 9:7; 16:2 and Exodus 15:3.” In *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, edited by Géza G. Xeravits, 179–87. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.
- Lerner, Gerda. “One Thousand Years of Feminist Bible Criticism.” Chap. 7 (pp. 138–66) in *Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Levine, Amy-Jill. “A Jewess, More and/or Less.” In *Judaism Since Gender*, edited by Miriam Peskowitz and Laura Levitt, 149–57. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- . “The New Testament and Anti-Judaism.” In *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, 87–117. San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 2006.
- . “Sacrifice and Salvation: Otherness and Domestication in the Book of Judith.” In *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*, edited by Athalya Brenner, 208–23. FCB 7. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.
- Llewellyn, Kathleen M. “The Example of Judith in Early Modern French Literature.” In *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, 213–25. Cambridge: Open Book, 2010.
- Lorde, Audre. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.” In *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, 110–14. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984, 2007.
- Lostracco, Joseph, and George Wilkerson. *Analyzing Short Stories*. 7th rev. ed. Dubuque, IA: KendallHunt, 2008.
- Luther, Martin. *Luther’s Works*. Vol. 35: *Word and Sacrament I*. Edited by E. Theodore Bachmann. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1960.
- Maier, Christl M., and Nuria Caldich-Benages, eds. *The Writings and Later Wisdom Books*. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

- Maier, Cristl M., and Carolyn J. Sharp. *Prophecy and Power: Jeremiah in Feminist and Postcolonial Perspective*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.
- Marchal, Joseph A. "Queer Studies and Critical Masculinity Studies in Feminist Biblical Studies." In *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*, edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 261–80. *The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.
- McFague, Sallie. *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.
- McKinlay, Judith E. *Reframing Her: Biblical Women in Postcolonial Focus*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2004.
- McKnight, Edgar V., and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, eds. *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994.
- Merideth, Betsy. "Desire and Danger: The Drama of Betrayal in Judges and Judith." In *Anti-Covenant: Counter-Reading Women's Lives in the Hebrew Bible*, edited by Mieke Bal, 63–78. Sheffield: Almond, 1989.
- Meyers, Carol. *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Meyers, Carol, Toni Craven, and Ross Shepard Kraemer, eds. *Women in Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.
- Mikalson, John D. *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Miller, Chanel. *Know My Name: A Memoir*. New York: Random House, 2019.
- Miller, Geoffrey D. "A Femme Fatale of Whom 'No One Spoke III': Judith's Moral Muddle and Her Personification of Yahweh." *JSOT* 39 (2014): 223–45.
- Milne, Pamela J. "A Self-Response: What Would I Do with Judith Now?" In *A Feminist Companion to Tobit and Judith*, edited by Athalya Brenner-Idan with Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, 137–40. FCB 20, 2nd ser. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.
- . "What Shall We Do with Judith? A Feminist Assessment of a Biblical 'Heroine.'" In *A Feminist Companion to Tobit and Judith*, edited by Athalya Brenner-Idan with Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, 117–36. FCB 20, 2nd ser. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015.
- Montague, George T. *The Books of Esther and Judith*. New York: Paulist Press, 1973.
- Montley, Patricia. "Judith in the Fine Arts: The Appeal of the Archetypal Androgyne." *Anima* 4 (1978): 37–42.
- Moore, Carey A. *Judith*. AB 40. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985.
- Moore, Stephen D., and Janice Capel Anderson. "Taking It Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees." *JBL* 117 (1998): 249–73.
- Moore, Stephen D. *The Bible in Theory: Critical and Postcritical Essays*. Atlanta: SBL, 2010.
- . *Poststructuralism and the New Testament: Derrida and Foucault at the Foot of the Cross*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994.

- Munro, Ealasaid. "Feminism: A Fourth Wave?" *Political Insight* (September 2013). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/2041-9066.12021>.
- Narito, Z. C. "The Book of Judith." In *Women of Courage: Asian Women Reading the Bible*, edited by Oo Chung Lee, Man Ja Choi, Sun Ai Lee-Park, Elli Kim, Mirza Rodriguez, and Debra Goodsir, 53–62. Seoul: SaDange, 1992.
- Navarro Puerto, Mercedes, and Marinella Perroni, eds.; Amy-Jill Levine, English ed. *Gospels: Narrative and History*. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015.
- Newman, Barbara. *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard's Theology of the Feminine*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Niditch, Susan. "Eroticism and Death in the Tale of Jael." In *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel*, edited by Peggy L. Day, 43–57. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989.
- . "My Brother Esau Is a Hairy Man": *Hair and Identity in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . *A Prelude to Biblical Folklore: Underdogs and Tricksters*. Champaign: University of Illinois, 2000.
- Nowell, Irene. *Women in the Old Testament*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997.
- Penchansky, David. "Deconstruction." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation*, edited by Steven McKenzie, 196–205. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Pippin, Tina, ed. *Ideological Criticism of Biblical Texts: Semeia* 59 (1992).
- de Pizan, Christine. *A Medieval Woman's Mirror of Honor: The Treasury of the City of Ladies*. Edited by Madeleine Pelner Cosman. New York: Persea Books, 1989.
- Plaskow, Judith. "Anti-Judaism in Feminist Christian Interpretation." In *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, vol. 1, edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza with the assistance of Shelly Matthews, 117–29. New York: Crossroad, 1993.
- Pollock, Griselda. "Feminist Dilemmas with the Art/Life Problem." In *The Artemisia Files: Artemisia Gentileschi for Feminists and Other Thinking People*, edited by Mieke Bal, 169–206. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968.
- Prouser, Ora Horn. "The Truth about Women and Lying." *JSOT* 61 (1994): 15–28.
- Pui-lan, Kwok. *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Rampton, Martha. "Four Waves of Feminism." October 25, 2015. <https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>.
- Reeder, Caryn A. "Gender, War, and Josephus." *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 46 (2015): 65–85.
- Reis, Pamela Tamarkin. "Uncovering Jael and Sisera: A New Reading." *SJOT* 19 (2005): 24–47.
- Ress, Mary Judith. *Ecofeminism in Latin America*. Women from the Margins. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.

- Ringe, Sharon H. "When Women Interpret the Bible." In *Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Roitman, Adolfo D. "Achior in the Book of Judith: His Role and Significance." In *No One Spoke Ill of Her: Essays on Judith*, edited by James C. VanderKam, 31–45. EJL 2. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.
- Rosellini, Michèle, and Suzanne Saïd. "Women's Customs among the 'Savages' in Herodotus." In *Herodotus*, vol. 2: *Herodotus and the World*, edited Rosaria Vignolo Munson, 213–44. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. Boston: Beacon, 1993.
- Rutledge, David. *Reading Marginally: Feminism, Deconstruction and the Bible*. BibInt 21. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. *Just Wives? Stories of Power and Survival in the Old Testament and Today*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
- Schmitz, Barbara. "Holofernes's Canopy in the Septuagint." In *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, 71–80. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2010.
- Schneiders, Sandra M. *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*. Rev. ed. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999.
- Scholz, Susanne, ed. *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect*. Recent Research in Biblical Studies 7, 8, 9. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013, 2014, 2016.
- . "From the 'Woman's Bible' to the 'Women's Bible,' The History of Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible." In *Introducing the Women's Hebrew Bible*, 12–32. IFT 13. New York: T&T Clark, 2007.
- . "Judges." In *Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, 113–27. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Schottroff, Luise. *Lydia's Impatient Sisters: A Feminist Social History of Early Christianity*. Translated by Barbara and Martin Rumscheidt. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.
- Schottroff, Luise, and Marie-Theres Wacker, eds. *Feminist Biblical Interpretation: A Compendium of Critical Commentary on the Books of the Bible and Related Literature*, translated by Lisa E. Dahill, Everett R. Kalin, Nancy Lukens, Linda M. Maloney, Barbara Rumscheidt, Martin Rumscheidt, and Tina Steiner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
- Schuller, Eileen, and Marie-Theres Wacker, eds. *Early Jewish Writings. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth, ed. *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement*. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

- . *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroad, 1994.
- . *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet; Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York: Continuum, 1994.
- . *The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
- . *Wisdom Ways: Introducing Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.
- Schutte, P. J. W. "When *They*, *We*, and the Passive Become *I*—Introducing Autobiographical Biblical Criticism," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 61 (2005): 401–16.
- Shaw, Susan M., and Janet Lee. *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.
- Shemesh, Yael. "The Stories of Women in a Man's World: The Books of Ruth, Esther, and Judith in Feminist Interpretation." In *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect*, edited by Susanne Scholz, vol. 1, 248–67. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013.
- Sherwood, Yvonne. *A Biblical Text and Its Afterlives: The Survival of Jonah in Western Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- . "Introduction." In *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.
- Slaughter, Thomas P. *Exploring Lewis and Clark: Reflections on Men and Wilderness*. New York: Knopf, 2003.
- Smit, Peter-Ben. *Masculinity and the Bible: Survey, Models and Perspectives*. Brill Research Perspectives. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Smith, Susan L. "Woman on Top." In *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Margaret Schaus, 844–45. London: Taylor & Francis, 2006.
- Sohn-Kronthaler, Michaela, and Ruth Albrecht, eds. *Faith and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Religious Communities*. The Bible and Women: An Encyclopaedia of Exegesis and Cultural History. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019.
- Sojourner Truth. "Ain't I a Woman?" Modern History Sourcebook. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/sojtruth-woman.asp>.
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *The Woman's Bible*. Part 2. Seattle: Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion, 1974.
- Steinberg, Naomi. "Social Death as Gendered Genocide: The Fate of Women and Children." *BibInt* 26 (2018): 23–42.
- Stocker, Margarita. *Judith: Sexual Warrior; Women and Power in Western Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Stone, Ken. "Affect and Animality in 2 Samuel 12." In *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible*, edited by Fiona C. Black and Jennifer L. Koosed, 13–36. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2019.
- . "Gender Criticism: The Un-Manning of Abimelech." In *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, edited by Gale A. Yee, 183–201. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.

- Taitz, Emily, Sondra Henry, and Cheryl Tallan, eds. *JPS Guide to Jewish Women 600 B.C.E.–1900 C.E.* Philadelphia: JPS, 2003.
- Tamber-Rosenau, Caryn. *Women in Drag: Gender and Performance in the Hebrew Bible and Early Jewish Literature.* Biblical Intersections 16. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018.
- Taylor, Marion Ann, and Agnes Choi, eds. *Handbook of Women Biblical Interpreters: A Historical and Biographical Guide.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Thomas, Rosalind. "Ethnicity, Genealogy, and Hellenism." In *Herodotus*, vol. 2: *Herodotus and the World*, edited by Rosaria Vignolo Munson, 339–59. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Thurston, Bonnie. *Women in the New Testament: Questions and Commentary.* Companions to the New Testament. New York: Crossroad, 1998.
- Tilford, Nicole. "Judith and Her Interpreters." In *Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley, 391–95. 3rd ed. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012.
- Tolbert, Mary Ann. "Social, Sociological, and Anthropological Methods." In *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*, vol. 1, edited by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza with the assistance of Shelly Matthews, 255–71. New York: Crossroad, 1993.
- Trible, Phyllis. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality.* OBT. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978.
- van Henten, Jan Willem. "Judith as a Female Moses: Judith 7–13 in the Light of Exodus 17, Numbers 20 and Deuteronomy 33:8–11." In *Reflections on Theology and Gender*, edited by Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes and Athalya Brenner, 33–48. Leuven: Peeters, 1994.
- . "Judith as Alternative Leader: A Rereading of Judith 7–13." In *A Feminist Companion to Esther, Judith and Susanna*, edited by Athalya Brenner, 224–52. FCB 7. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995.
- van Wolde, Ellen. "Sentiments as Culturally Construed Emotions: Anger and Love in the Hebrew Bible." *BibInt* 16 (2008): 1–24.
- . "Ya'el in Judges 4." *ZAW* 107 (1995): 240–46.
- Vander Stichele, Caroline, and Todd Penner, eds. *Her Master's Tools? Feminist and Postcolonial Engagements of Historical-Critical Discourse.* Atlanta: SBL 2005.
- von Bingen, Hildegard, *De Operatione Dei*, 1.4.100; PL 197:885bc, as cited in Lerner, *Feminist Consciousness*.
- Walcott, Derek. *Omeros.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.
- Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1967, 1983.
- Washington, Harold C. "Violence and the Construction of Gender in the Hebrew Bible: A New Historicist Approach." *BibInt* 5 (1997): 324–63.
- Weems, Renita J. *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets.* OBT. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- . *Just a Sister Away: A Womanist Vision of Women's Relationships in the Bible.* San Diego: Lura Media, 1988.

- Weingarten, Susan. "Food, Sex, and Redemption in *Megillat Yehudit* (the 'Scroll of Judith')." In *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across the Disciplines*, edited by Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann, 97–125. Cambridge: Open Book, 2010.
- West, Delno C., and August Kling. *The Libro de las Profecías of Christopher Columbus*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991.
- Wetter, Anne-Mareike. "*On Her Account*": Reconfiguring Israel in *Ruth*, *Esther*, and *Judith*. London: T&T Clark, 2015.
- Wills, Lawrence M. *The Jewish Novel in the Ancient World*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Wojciechowski, Michael. "Moral Teaching of the Book of Judith." In *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, edited by Géza G. Xeravits, 85–96. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.
- Xeravits, Géza G. "The Supplication of Judith (Judith 9:2-14)." In *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*, edited by Géza G. Xeravits, 161–78. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012.
- Yee, Gale. "'I Have Perfumed My Bed with Myrrh': The Foreign Woman ('išša zārā) in Proverbs 1–9." *JSOT* (1989): 53–68.
- . ed. *Judges and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995.
- Zakovitch, Yair. "Sisseras Tod." *ZAW* 93 (1981): 364–74.

Index of Scripture References and Other Ancient Writings

Hebrew Bible

Genesis

12	94
19	31
19:38	30, 140
24:2	52
27–28	68
27	lx
30:1	159
31:47	xxxiii
34	li, 38, 63
34:2	xliii
34:13-15	65
34:30	65
38	lx
39:4	52
39:12	104
49:5-7	65

Exodus

1	lx
1:17	16
1:18-21	68
2:23-25	24
3:14	xxxiii
4:25	141

7:8	21
11:7	92
13:8	xv
15	li, 153
15:3	66, 154
15:8	21
15:20-21	57, 152
17	47
18:8-12	140
20:2	15
22:20-21	51
29:12	66

Leviticus

14:1-9	101
19:14	16

Numbers

1:8	50
5:15	120
14:2-3	47
14:21	10
15:31	4
20:1-13	47
20:16	24
21:3	24

22–24	li
22	35
22:18	11

Deuteronomy

4:26	46
10:18	52
12	31
14:29	52
15:12	159
22	155–56
23:3-6	31
23:3	140
24:17	51
26:7	24
30:19	46
31:28	46

Joshua

2	lx
2:9-13	31
2:9-11	140
2:10	31

Judges

3	110
---	-----

3	lxi
3:25	142
4-5	xliii, lx, 110, 123- 27, 135, 137
4	lxi, 21
4:4	154
4:6-9	127
4:9	67
4:14, 22	127
4:17-22	lii, 123
4:17	123, 154
4:18	124
4:19	124
4:20	124
5	153
5:1, 12, 24	154
5:24-30	123
5:24	124, 139
5:25	124
5:26-27	124
5:17	135
5:30	127
11:34	152
13:23	xliii
16	171
1 Samuel	
2:1-10	xliii
10-11	159
17:50-51	119
18:6-7	152
23-31	xliii
25	lx, lii, 61
2 Samuel	
11:4	76
12:9	4
13	lii, 110
13:19	62
14	lii, 61
20	61

1 Kings	
1:5	66
17-18	60
2 Kings	
6	44
18-20	50
19:21	4, 22
22	lii
25	44
Ruth	
1:16	94
1:20-21	xliii
3:1	77
3:3	77
Ezra	
3:3	76
4:7-6:18	xxxiii
7:12-26	xxxiii
Esther	
1	lii
1:10-17	106
2:8, 14	105
2:10	68
4:4-17	105
4:16	lii
5:1	lii
6:14-7:10	107
6	lii
9:10, 15, 16	149
15:5	88
Psalms	
68:4	60
68:5	52
94:10, 12	59
135:7	60
149:5-7	111
Proverbs	
1:7	16

1:20-21	xix
1:23-25	xix
3:12	59
5:19	103
8-9	xliii
8:22-31	xix
9	107
9:1-5	xix
9:3-5	xix
23:31	103, 108
Ecclesiastes	
8:14	59
Job	
2	59
5:17	59
Isaiah	
3:16	79
13:17	xlvi
21:2	xlvi
42:6	140
49:6	140
52:10	140
54:4-8	52
60:1-14	141
60:3	140
66:24	155
Jeremiah	
10:11	xxxiii
25:25	xlvi
32:1	10
51:11, 28	xlvi
52:29	10
Lamentations	
1:1	52
1:15	22
Ezekiel	
5:1	10

23:40	76	1:12	lxvii, 8-10, 28	4:10	38
Daniel		1:13	7	4:11	62
1-6	33	1:14	9	4:12	22-23, 46, 63, 135
1:8	liii	1:15	7	4:13	xxxix, 24
1:19	103, 108	1:16	10, 39	4:14-15	20
2:4-7:28	xxxiii	2:1-3:10	10-17	5:1-6:21	25-39
2:36-45	xlvi	2:2	28, 36	5-6	lvii
5	99	2:5-13	15	5:1-24	25-35
5:25-28	xlvi	2:5	xxxix, 10, 86	5:1	25
7:5	xlvi	2:7	10	5:2	25, 28
13:15	76	2:8-9	10	5:3	27
13:18	110	2:13	11	5:4	28
Amos		2:15	5, 42	5:5-21	liii, 29, 58, 140
2:6-7	59	2:17-18	86	5:5	90
4:2	10	2:19	12	5:6-8	31
Jonah		2:20	xxxix, 12	5:9-16	32
1:3	14	2:21	5, 14	5:11	32
3:8	22	2:21-28	86	5:13	31
Nahum		2:23-7	15	5:17-18	xlvi, 32
3:1, 19	2	2:23	14	5:19-19:1	li
Zechariah		2:28	13, 16, 51	5:19	32
8:21-23	141	3:1-4	15	5:20-21	30
10:1	60	3:6-7	15	5:20	90
Apocrypha		3:7	liv	5:21	xxxix, 32, 104
Judith		3:8	xxxix, liii, 15	5:22	34
1-7	xxxix, lvi, lvii	3:10	16	5:23	35
1:1-4:15	1-23	4:1-15	17-24	6:1-13	35-37
1-4	lxvii	4:1-3	17	6:2	35, 58
1:1-3:9	1-17	4:1	15, 51	6:3	35, 143
1:1-16	2-10	4:2	16	6:4	xxxix, 35, 36, 43
1:1	xliv, xlv	4:3	32	6:5-6	30
1:3	3	4:4	17	6:5	36, 139
1:5, 13	66	4:5	18, 44	6:7	37
1:7-10	4	4:6-8	20	6:9	36
1:11-12	4	4:6-7	20	6:10	30
1:11	6, 9, 16, 51	4:6	lv, 17, 22	6:11	37
		4:7	21	6:14-21	37-39
		4:8	20	6:15	38
		4:9-12	22	6:16	38
		4:9	22, 39		

6:17	39	8:7	50, 52, 168	9:12	58, 67
6:19	39	8:8	51, 167	9:13	68
6:20-21	102	8:9-36	52-62	10-12	107
6:21	39, 45	8:10	52, 146	10-11	lxvii
7:1-9:14	41-71	8:13	169	10:1-11:23	73-95
7:1-18	41-43	8:14	58	10:1-19	73-82
7:2	41, 86	8:15-17	58	10:1-5	74-80
7:4	42	8:17-27	169	10:2	52, 75, 102
7:5	42	8:17	58	10:3-4	lii, 79, 168,
7-9	lxvii	8:18	58-59		170
7:8	21	8:19	58	10:3	75, 77
7:2	5	8:21	58	10:4	77, 79
7:4	16	8:23	58	10:5	80
7:13	43	8:27	59	10:6-19	80-82
7:14	43	8:28	45, 167	10:6	80
7:15	43	8:29	170	10:7	xlirii, 80
7:18	42	8:30	59	10:8	81
7:19-32	44-48	8:31	45, 47, 60	10:9	81, 132
7:19	44	8:32	60	10:10-20	132
7:21-22	39	8:32-33	169	10:10	81, 132
7:22	44	8:33-34	60	10:12	57, 81
7:23	44, 46	8:33	60, 169	10:13	81
7:25	46	8:35	61	10:14, 23	80, 168
7:27	46	9-16	liv	10:14	xlirii
7:28	46	9:1-14	62-69	10:15	82
7:30	47	9:1	li, 62, 100,	10:16	82
7:32	47		133	10:17	132
8-16	lvi, lvii	9:2-4	xlirii	10:19	xlirii, 82
8:1-10:8	48	9:2-3	62	10:20-11:23	82-95
8:1-8	48-52	9:2	li, 50,	10:20-11:4	82-89
8	lv		63-64	10:21-22	87
8:1-2	xlirii	9:3	67	10:21	82, 120
8:1	xxxix, lvi,	9:3-4	64	10:23	xlirii, 87,
	49	9:4	65-66		139
8:2-3	50	9:5-6	66	11:1	88
8:2	50	9:7	66, 154	11:2	88
8:4-8	146	9:8-9	81	11:3-4	88
8:4-6	168	9:8	66-67, 135	11:3	88
8:4, 7	xlrii	9:9	67	11:5-19	89-93, 146
8:4	50	9:10	67	11:5	84, 89, 90,
8:5-6	50	9:11-27	lii		105
8:5	xlirii	9:11	xxxix, 57,	11:6	89
8:6	39		67	11:7-8	89

11:8	90, 147	12:20	107, 147	14:18	143, 145
11:9	90	13:1-10	109-30	14:19-15:2	148
11:10	90	13:1	lii, 110,	14:19	148
11:11-13	90		146-47	15:1	148
11:13	91, 99	13:2	111	15:2	148
11:14	lv, 90	13:3	110	15:3-4	148
11:16-17	91	13:4-5	111	15:6-7	149
11:16	84, 92	13:5	111	15:8-16:20	149-56
11:17	84, 92	13:6-7	111	15:8-10	20-21
11:19	92	13:7-8	112	15:9	149
11:20-23	93-95	13:7	111	15:10	136, 149,
11:20-21	146	13:9	155		151
11:20	93	13:10-20	132-36	15:11	151
11:21	93	13:10	132	15:12-13	152
11:22	93	13:11-16:20	lxviii	15:12	38, 57
11:23	103, 105,	13:11	132	15:13	liv, 57, 152
	146, 168	13:12-13	132	16:1	li
11:24	94	13:12	132	16:2	66
12:1-13:10	lxviii,	13:13	38, 148	16:4	154
	97-130	13:14	133	16:5-6	xliii
12:1-9	98-102	13:15	lxi, 133	16:5	154
12:2	liii, 98	13:16	146	16:6	154
12:3	100	13:17	136	16:8	154
12:4	100	13:18	136	16:9	154
12:5	101	13:20	136	16:13	157
12:6-7	101	14	liii	16:15, 16	154
12:8	145	14:1-10	136-49	16:16	155
12:9	101, 146	14:3	137-38	16:17	155
12:10-13:10	lii	14:4-5	149	16:18	155
12:10-20	lii, 102-9	14:4	138	16:19	152, 155
12:10-12	146	14:5	140, 145	16:20	155
12:10	39	14:6	36, 138	16:21-25	157-61
12:11	52, 145	14:7	139, 150	16:21-22	146
12:12	xxxix,	14:8	139	16:22	157
	102-3, 169	14:10	140	16:23-24	159
12:13	105, 145,	14:11-15:7	142-49	16:23	54, 157,
	147	14:13	142		159
12:14	lii, 106	14:14-18	lii	16:24	158
12:15	106, 147	14:14-16	147	16:25	xlvi, 167
12:16	106, 109	14:14	142		
12:17	107	14:15	137	Wisdom of Solomon	
12:18	107, 109	14:16	142	7:22-23	xix
12:19-20	146	4:17	147	7:25	xix

8:6 xix
10:3 xix

Ben Sirach
(**Ecclesiasticus**)

6:34 61
8:9 61
11:20 108
15:7-8 xix
24:23-34 xix
39:5 61
51:26 xix

Baruch

3:9-4:4 xix
3:12 xix
38:2 xix
46:4-5 xix

1 Maccabees

2:39-41 91
3:7 136
3:47-54 liv
4:38 17
7:39-50 liv

Susanna

1:37, 57, 58 103, 108

New Testament

Matthew

1:5 77
4:10 139
11:19 xix
11:29 xix
12:3-4 91
14:6-11 107
22:1-14 xix

Mark

6:25, 28 131

8:31 xix
14:8, 11 131

Luke

1:28 136
7:35 xix
9 19
14:15-24 xix
24:14-15 108

John

1:1-18 xix
1:10-11 xix
3 19

Acts

20:11 108
24:26 108

1 Corinthians

7:1 xxii
7:9 xxi
14:33 133
14:34 xxii

Hebrews

11:21 139

James

5:18 60

*Non-Canonical Jewish
and Christian
Literature*

2 Baruch

48:33, 36 xix

4 Ezra

5:9-10 xix

13:55 xix
14:40 xix

1 Enoch

42 xix

Jubilees

11-12 31

*Classical, Rabbinic,
and Ancient Near
Eastern Literature*

Aeneas Tacticus

On Siegecraft

1 44

Chariton

Chaereas and Callirhoe
106

Herodotus

History

1:46-51 92
7 8
7-8 xlvi

Homer

Iliad

18 (XVII) 74

Josephus

Jewish War

5.562-66 91

Mishnah

b. Sanh.

74a 91

Yoma

85b 91

Index of Authors and Subjects

- Abigail, xliii, lii, lx, 61
 Abra (the traditional name of Judith's
 slave), 52, 117–19
 origins of the name, 52
 Abraham, xl, 31
 treatment of slaves, 52
 Absalom, lxii, 62
 Achilles, 74–75
 Achior, xl, xli, xlii, xlvi, xlix, lii, lvi–
 lvii, lx, lxvii, lxviii, 2, 18, 29–39, 41,
 45, 58, 86, 90, 91, 92, 100, 102, 104,
 131–32, 136–42, 150
 Adam, 122
 Adams, Carol J., 23
 Aguilar, Grace, xxiii
 Ahasuerus, 106
 Alexander Janneus, lv
 Allori, Christofano, 56
 Ammonites, 30–31
 Achior as an Ammonite, xl, 30, 31,
 140
 Amnon, 110
 Anderson, Janice Capel, xxviii, 9
 Anielewicz, Mordechai, 144
 anointing, anointed, 77–78, 79, 170
 Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), liv–lv, 9,
 17
 apocryphal books (deutrocanonical),
 lvii–lix
 Aquino, María Pilar, xxx, xxxi
 arming of the hero (epic trope),
 73–75, 78
 Arphaxad, xliv, xlv, lxvii, 2–3, 7, 9, 10
 Artaphrenes, 28
 Artaxerxes, xlv
 Astel, Mary, xxii
 Atwood, Margaret, 164–66

 Ba'al, 60
 Babylon, Babylonians, xliv–xlv, xlvi,
 liv, 2, 10, 32, 44
 Bach, Alice, xxvi
 Bachmann, Theodore, xxxviii
 Bagoas, xlv, lii, 52, 102, 104–6, 107–8,
 110, 142–43, 145–48
 Bal, Mieke, xxvii, lxv, 20, 30, 78, 114,
 129–30, 145, 171
 Balaam, lii, 35
 Balak, lii
 Barak, 125, 127, 154
 Barr, David L., 61
 Barucq, André, 91
 Baskin, Judith R., xxi
 Bathsheba, 76

- Baumfree, Isabella, xxii
 Beavis, Mary Ann, xxiv, xxxvi
 beheading, xlii–xliii, lxiv, 95, 97, 107,
 109, 113, 119–21, 123, 126, 129, 131,
 137, 143, 164
 Belfy, Jeanne Marie, 163
 Bellis, Alice Ogden, 171
 Belshazzar, 99
 Ben-ammi, 30
 Ben Sira (Ben Sirach), xviii, xix, lix,
 lxi, 61
 Benedetti, Laura, 115
 Benjamin, Mara H., xxvii
 Benshoff, Harry M., 126
 Beruriah, xxi
 Bethulia, xl–xlii, lv, lvii, lxviii, 17, 19,
 21–22, 37–38, 41–42, 88, 90–92
 Judith's return to, 132–37
 siege of, 42–48, 69–70
 victory celebration, 149–51
 "Virgin," xl, 22, 65, 135
 biblical history
 summarized in Judith, 31–33
 Bird, Phyllis A., xxvii
 Bissell, Edwin Cone, xxxviii
 Black, Fiona C., 23
 Boaz, 77
 Boccaccini, Gabriele, lv
 Blickenstaff, Marianne, xxv
 Børresen, Kari Elisabeth, xxiv
 Bowe, Barbara E., xxxvi
 Branch, Robin Gallaher, xlii–iii, 5,
 20–21, 30, 44–45, 53, 56–57, 97, 145,
 148
 Brenner [-Idan], Athalya, xxv, xxvi,
 xxxv, xxxix, li–lii, 47, 55, 68, 78, 89,
 121, 143, 153, 170
 Brine, Kevin R., lxii, 83, 121, 136
 Brison, Ora, 60, 78, 158–59
 Brooten, Bernadette, xxxi
 Burke, Sean D., 104–5, 142
 Butler, Judith, lxviii, 26, 108
 Calduch-Benages, Nuria, xxiv
 Camp, Claudia, 61
 Cannon, Katie G., xxx
 canon, xxxvii–xxxviii, lvii–lxi
 Caponigro, Mark Stephen, xlvi
 Caravaggio, 97, 115, 117, 119
 Carr, David M., xlv
 Carter, Warren, xxix
 Castelli, Elizabeth, xxxiv
 Chabris, 38
 Chapman, Cynthia R., 7, 87
 Chariton, 106
 Charmis, 38
 Chisholm, Kami, 79
 Choi, Agnes, xx, xxii, xxiii, xxxi
 Choi, Man Ja, lxiv
 Christiansen, Ellen Juhl, 9, 64, 135
 Christoffersen, Hans, xxxv
 Ciletti, Elena, lxii, 83, 94–95, 121–22,
 136, 150
 circumcision, xlii, lvii, lxvii, 65, 102,
 113, 140–42
 Claasens, L. Juliana, xxiv
 Clark, William, 160
 Clarkson, J. Shannon, xxxiii, xxxv
 Clines, David J. A., xxviii, 33
 Clover, Carol J., 124, 126
 Columbus, Christopher, 14
 commentaries, feminist scholarship
 in, xiii–xiv, xxi–xxv
 conversion (Achiôr), lx, 136–41
 Conway, Colleen, lii, 9, 124, 135
 Cosman, Madeleine Pelter, lxii
 Craven, Toni, xxvi, lvi, lvii, lix, lx, 22,
 34, 48, 54, 68, 109, 111, 154
 Crawford, Sidnie White, 61, 135
 Creangă, Ovidiu, 29
 Croesus, 92
 Ctesias, 142
 Cyrus the younger, 142
 Dahill, Lisa E., xxiv
 Daly, Mary, xxxii
 D'Angelo, Mary Rose, xxvii, xxxi
 Daniel (biblical character), lii–iv, 33

- Daniel (biblical book)
parallels to Judith, lii–liv
Darius of Persia, 8, 28, 142
David, xxxi, xliii, 33, 62, 77, 117,
119
Davidson, Steed Vernyl, 14, 93, 112
Day, Linda M., xxxvi
Day, Peggy L., 113, 135
de Groot, Christiana, xxiv
de Pizan, Christine, xxi–xxii, lxiii
Deborah, xliii, lii, 67, 123, 127, 137,
153–54, 157
deception (Judith's), 64–65, 67–68,
89–95
Dei Mansi, Paula, xxi
Deioces, 3
Delilah, 122, 171
Dempsey, Carol J., xxxvi
van Dijk-Hemmes, Fokkeliën, lii
Dinah, xli, xliii, li, 38, 63–67, 102
Dinkler, Michal Beth, xxviii
Diodorus of Sicily, xlv
DiPalma, Brian Charles, 33
Dolce, Rita, 119–20, 129, 133, 137
Donatello, 97
drag (performative dress), lxviii, 79
Dube, Musa W., xxx
Duran, Nicole, 125
Durheim, Tara, xxxvi
Dwyer, Peter, xxxv

Eagleton, Terry, xxviii, xxix
Ecbatana, xlv, 2–3, 7
Edomites, 42, 81
Efthimiadis-Keith, Helen, xxxix, lxxv,
34, 53, 55, 78, 140, 143, 170
Eglon, lii, 110, 142
Ehud, lii, lxii, 110, 142
Eisenschenk, Brian, xxxvi
Elijah, 49, 60
Elliott-Smith, Darren, 126
Enslin, Morton S., 62, 108, 155
Ephriam, 49
Esau, 21, 68

Eskenazi, Tamara Cohn, xviii, xxi,
xxiii
Esther (biblical character), xxxviii, lii–
iii, lix, lx–xi, 68, 88, 94, 106, 121–22,
157, 171
Esther (biblical book)
parallels to Judith, lii–liiii, 24, 105,
149
Ethiopia, 3
eunuchs, 104–6, 142, 144, 145, 146
Eve, 111–12, 117, 122, 136
Exum, J. Cheryl, xxvi, xxviii

Falk, Marcia, 16
Fehling, Detlev, xlviii
Feinstein, Eve Levavi, 76
Fell, Margaret, xxii
feminism
and biblical interpretation, xx–xxv
early scholarship, xx–xxii
major modern scholarship,
xxiii–xxv
definition of, xix–xx
history, xix
and Judith, lxx–lxxvi, lxix, 170–72
methodologies, xxv–xxxii
and slavery, 23, 52–56, 172
feminist language for God, xxxii–
xxxiii
femme fatal (construct), xxxix, lxii,
lxiii, 68–69, 77–78, 95, 111–12,
122–23, 154
Fewell, Danna Nolan, xxviii, 125
Fischer, Irmtraud, xxiv
Fontana, Lavinia, 97
Franco, Mark, 163, 172
Freedman, David Noel, 62, 127–28
Frymer-Kensky, Tikva, xxvi

Gabriel, 136
Galizia, Fede, 98
Gandhi, Mahatma, 144
Garrard, Mary D., 114–16, 119, 123
Gehman, Henry Snyder, 145

- gender, xlix–xl, 134–35, 149, 153
 masculinity, 25–29, 33
 as performance, lxviii, 25–29, 79–80, 126, 156
- genre
 of genealogy, 49–50
 of horror, 124–27
 of Judith, lvi–lvii
- Gentileschi, Artemisia, lxviii, 56, 97–98, 113–19, 123
- Gentileschi, Orazio, 113–14, 116, 118
- geography, xl, xlvii, 14, 21, 32
 geographic problems in Judith, 3–5, 12–13
- Gera, Deborah Levine, xlv, li, liv, lxvii, lix, 3, 10, 16–17, 20, 22, 32, 41, 47, 51, 61–62, 68, 74, 90–91, 92, 98–101, 106–7, 111, 121–22, 132, 135, 138, 141–42, 149, 153, 157
- Getty-Sullivan, Mary Ann, xxvi
- Gideon, 49
- Glancy, Jennifer A., lxxv, 54, 80, 159–60, 172
- Goliath, 117, 119
- Gonzalez, Michelle A., xxxi
- Good, Deirdre J., xxxi
- Goodpasture, Diane, 98
- Goodsir, Debra, lxiv
- Graham, Martha, 163–66, 172
- Graybill, Rhiannon, 6, 63, 124–26, 141
- Greene, David, xlvi, 8, 28
- Grimké, Angelina, xxii
- Grimké, Sarah, xxii
- Guest, Deryn, xxxi, xxxix, 127
- Gunn, David M., xxviii, 125
- Habel, Norman C., xxxii
- Halberstam, Judith, 126
- Hannah, 159
- Hanukkah, 49, 122
- Hartog, François, xlviii
- Hasmoneans, Hasmonean, lv, lix, 18, 19, 20, 29, 49
- s.a. John Hyrcanus
- Hathor, 67
- Hawkins, Erick, 163
- Hearon, Holly E., xxix
- Hebbel, Friedrich, 113
- Heber the Kenite, 124, 139, 154
- Hector, 74–75
- Helen of Troy, 93, 111
- Helie, xx–xxi
- Henderson, Christine, xxxvi
- Henry, Sondra, xxi
- Hens-Piazza, Gina, xxvii, xxxvi
- van Henten, Jan Willem, li, 47–49
- Hephaestus, 74
- Herod Antipas, 107
- Herodotus, xlvi–l, 8, 22, 28, 92, 107
 ideology and nationalism in, xlix–l
 parallels to Judith, xlvi–xlix
 Thermophilae, battle of, xlvii, 22
- Hezser, Catherine, 53–55
- Hickman, Susan M., xxxvi
- Hildegard of Bingen, xxi
- historicity of Judith, xlv–xlvi
 inaccuracies, xlv–xlvi
- Hodes, Stuart, 164
- Hoffman, Lawrence S., 16
- Holofernes, xxxix–xl, xli–xlii, xliii, xlv, xlix, lii, lvi–lvii, lxxvii–iii, 10–12, 14–16, 25–37, 41–43, 44–45, 51, 56–57, 58, 67, 69–70, 73, 75–76, 78, 79–95, 97–98, 100–28, 131–43, 145–49, 151–52, 158, 164–66, 168–69
 masculinity of, 15, 33–34, 82–83, 102–4
 queered, 84–87, 107–9, 155–56
 proxy for Nebuchadnezzar, 9, 15
- Hopkins, Denise Dombkowski, lvii, 51
- Horace, 84
- horns (in ancient near eastern myth and image), 66–67
- Hornsby, Teresa, xxxi
- horror, 123–27

- Howell, Justin, xxxvi
Hrabanus, 95
Huldah, lii
Hyman, Charles, 163
Hyrchanus – see John Hyrcanus
- Isasi-Díaz, María, xxx
- Jackson, Richard, 16–17
Jacob, 65, 68, 70
Jacobs, Mignon, xxxvi
Jael, lii, lx–lxiii, 67, 74, 110, 113, 123–27, 135, 137, 153–54, 157
Janes, Regina, 109, 113
Jernigan, Jessica, 52, 98, 115, 119
Jerome, liii, 68, 94, 157
Jerusalem
 celebration in, xlii, 152, 155
 conquest of, xlv–xlvi, 10, 32, 44
 Judith as “glory of,” lxii, 21, 149–50
 threat to, 17, 20, 22, 58, 66, 135
Joakim, 20–21, 24, 136, 149
Jobling, David, xxviii, xxix
John Hyrcanus, lv
Johnson, Elizabeth A., xxxiii
Jonah, 2, 22
Jordaan, Pierre, 5
Joseph, 49, 52, 104, 128
Josephus, lix, 91
Jubilees, 31
Judges
 parallels to Judith, lii
Judith (biblical book)
 and activism, 144, 166–70
 in art and dance, lxxiii, 56, 97–98, 113, 115, 116–19, 123, 163–65, 172
 Bacchae, similarity to, 152–53
 canonization, xxxvii–xxxviii, lvii–lxi
 citation of Genesis 34, 63–67
 overview and synopsis, xxxix–xliii
 and pedagogy, 166–70
 sexist interpretation of, lxii–lxiii, 127–29
 structure, lvi
Judith (biblical character)
 beauty, 51, 77–78, 80–82, 94–95, 112, 119, 122, 125, 154
 character overview, xlii–xliii
 connection to Simeon, xliii, xli, li, 38, 50, 63–67, 102, 113
 divine warrior, 150–51
 ethical ambiguity, lxiii–lxiv, 143–44, 170–71
 as femme fatal, see femme fatal
 genealogy, 49–50
 as general, 137–38
 speech to elders, 58–61
 widowhood, 50–52
- Junior, Nyasha, xxx
- Kain, Louise, 163
Kalin, Everett R., xxiv
Kaufman, Michael, 8–9
Kessler, Gwynn, 63
Kim, Elli, lxiv
Kimmel, Michael A., 8
King, Jr., Martin Luther, 144
Kitzberger, Ingrid Rosa, xxix
Klimt, Gustav, 123
Kling, August, 14
kol isha, rabbinic proscription, 133
Koosed, Jennifer L., lxvi, 6, 23
kosher, liii, 18, 80, 98–99
 pekuaḥ nefesh, 91
Kraemer, Ross Sheperd, xxvi, xxvii
Kwok, Pui-lan, xxix, xxx
- LaCugna, Catherine Mowry, xxxiii
LaCocque, André, 159
Lähnemann, Henrike, lxii, 83, 94–95, 121–22, 136
Lancour, Stephanie, xxxvi
L’Amour, Sugar, 79
Lang, Judith, 66, 154

- Lang, Pearl, 164
 Lapsley, Jacqueline E., lvii, 8, 51, 95, 121, 164
 Lawrence, Beatrice, 63
 Learman, Linda, 69, 166, 170
 Lee, Janet, 166–67
 Lee, Oo Chung, lxiv
 Lee-Park, Sun Ai, lxiv
 Leonidas, xlvii
 Lerner, Gerda, xx, xxi
 Levi, 63, 65–66
 Levine, Amy-Jill, vii, xxiv, xxvi, xxv, xxxiv, xxxvi, 48, 65, 89, 120–21, 152–53, 158, 161
 Levitt, Laura, 48
 Lewis, Meriwether, 160
 LGBTQIA/Queer biblical criticism, xxxi
 Llewellyn, Kathleen M., lxii
 Lostracco, Joseph, 5, 29
 Lot, 30, 140
 Lorde, Audre, xiv, 68
 Lukens, Nancy, xxiv
 Luther, Martin, xxxviii
- Maccabees, Maccabean, 9, 17, 48–49, 122, 136
 context for Judith's composition, lv, 17
 parallel content, liv–lv, 9
 Machado, Daisy L., xxx
 MaddAddam Trilogy, see Atwood, Margaret
 Maier, Christl M., xxiv, xxx
 Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers, xxviii, 61
 Maloney, Linda M., xxiv, xxxvi
 Manasseh (Judith's husband), lxix, 50, 62, 70, 77, 120–21, 157–59
 Mantegna, Andrea, 56
 Marchal, Joseph A., xxxi, xxxix
 von Martels, Zweder, xlix
 Mary (mother of Jesus), 95, 117, 136, 150
 Mary Magdalene, 117
 masculinity, masculinity studies, xxx–viii, xxxix, xlix, l, lvi, 6–10, 15, 23, 26–29, 35, 50, 60, 83–84, 86–87, 93, 107–9, 149, 157, 171
 Achior, 139, 141
 and feminism, 6
 in Herodotus, xlix
 male honor, xlix, 13, 23
 sexual expectations, 102–4
 toxic concerns (e.g., anger, power, shame), 9–10, 41–43, 63, 166
 Matthews, Shelly, xxiv, xxvi, xxxv
 McFague, Sallie, xxxiii
 McKenzie, Steven, xxviii
 McKinlay, Judith E., xxix
 McKnight, Edgar V., xxviii
 Merari, 49, 154
 Merideth, Betsy, 78, 171
 Messner, Michael A., 8
 #MeToo, viii, 166
 Meyers, Carol, xxvi, xxx
 Michelangelo, 119
 Mikalson, John D., xlviii
 Miller, Chanel, 129
 Miller, Geoffrey D., 150
 Milne, Pamela J., xxxix, lviii, lxiv, 77–78, 143–44, 170
 Minister, Meredith, 63
mikveh, lx, 101
 s.a. ritual bathing/washing
 Miriam, 21, 57, 153–54, 157
 Moabites, lix, 31, 42, 81, 140
 Montague, George T., li
 Montley, Patricia, lxiii
 Moore, Carey, xxxvii–iii, liii–iv, lviii, lx, lxiv, 5, 12, 34, 58, 60, 62, 68, 79, 82, 94, 99, 101, 104–5, 108, 127–28, 134, 139, 141, 157, 159
 Moore, Stephen D. xxviii, 9
 Moses, xxxiii, li, 21, 24, 32, 47–48, 50, 92, 141, 153–54, 160
 Munro, Ealasaid, xx
 Munson, Rosaria Vignolo, xlviii

- Murphy, Eamon, 16–17
Murphy, Lauren L., xxxvi
- Nabopolassar, xliv, 2
Narito, Z. C., lxiv
Navarro, Mercedes Puerto, xxiv
Nebuchadnezzar, xxxix–xl, xliv–vi,
 xlix, liii–iv, lvi, lxvii, 1–4, 6–17,
 25–26, 28, 32–36, 45, 51, 66–67,
 86–87, 88–89, 91–92, 94, 95, 99, 102,
 105, 140, 143, 148–49, 167–68
Newman, Barbara, xxi
Newsom, Carol A., xxiii, lvii, 8, 51,
 95, 121, 164
Nicanor, liv, 49
Niditch, Susan, xxx, 68, 113, 135
Nineveh, xliv, 2, 5, 12, 22, 131
 Jonah's oracle against 22
 Nahum's oracle against, 2
Noah, 50
Noguchi, Isamu, 163
Nowell, Irene, xxvi
- Osiris, 67
- Park, Song-Mi Suzie, xxxvi
Penchansky, David, xxviii
Penner, Todd, xxv
Peronteau, Barbara K., 69, 71
Perroni, Marinella, xxiv
Perseus, 117
Peskowitz, Miriam, 48
Pharisees, lix–lx, lv
Philo, xxxviii, lix
Pilarski, Ahida, xxxvi
Pippin, Tina, xxix
Plaskow, Judith, xxvi
Pollock, Griselda, 114–15
Potiphar's house, 52
Potiphar's wife, 104
Poynting, Scott, 16–17
Propertius, 84
Propp, Vladimir, 145
Prouser, Ora Horn, 68
- Puah, lx, 68
Purim, 122
- queer theory, xxxi, xxxix, lxvi, lxviii,
 78, 85–87, 104, 107, 126, 155–56,
 171
- Rachel, 159
Rahab, lx, lxvii, 31, 140
rape, 22–23, 30, 41, 62–64, 81, 104,
 108, 113–14, 118, 124–26, 128, 129,
 154
 s.a. Dinah and Judith, citation of
 Genesis 34
Rampton, Martha, xx
Rebecca, lx
Reeder, Caryn, 6–7, 9
Ress, Mary Judith, xxxii
Ringe, Sharon H., xxiii, xxxi, lvii 8,
 51, 95, 121, 164
ritual bathing/washing, lx, 76, 101–2
Robbins, Maria Mayo, xxv
Rodríguez, Jeanette, xxx
Rodriguez, Mirza, lxiv
Roitman, Adolfo D., 34
Rosado-Nunes, María José, xxxi
Rosellini, Michèle, xlviii
Rosenthal, Jean, 163
Rubens, Peter Paul, 117
Ruether, Rosemary Radford, xxxiii
Ruge-Jones, Philip, xxix
Rumscheidt, Barbara, xxiv, xxx
Rumscheidt, Martin, xxiv, xxx
Russell, Letty M., xxx, xxxiii, xxxv
Ruth, xxxi, xxxviii, lii, lx, lxi, 31,
 76–77, 94, 140, 171
Rutledge, David, xxix
- Sacher-Masoch, Leopold, 122–23
Saïd, Suzanne, xlviii
Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob, xxvi
Salome, 131
Salome Alexandra, lv
Salvina, Jerome's letter to, 157

- Samaritans, Samaria, xxxix, xlv, lv,
 lx, 3, 17–20, 22, 32, 44
 and relationships with
 Jews/Judeans, 18–20
- Samson, 122
- Sanhedrin, 20
- Schaus, Margaret, xxxviii
- Schmitz, Barbara, 83–84
- Scholz, Anton, lviii
- Scholz, Susanne, xx, xxiv, 8, 171
- Schottroff, Luise, xxiv, xxx
- Schneiders, Sandra M., xxvii
- Schuman, William, 163
- Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth, xxiv,
 xxvi–vii, xxix, xxxi, xxxiii, xxxv,
 xxxix, lxiv
- Schuller, Eileen, xxiv
- Schutte, P. J. W., xxix
- Septuagint (abbrev. LXX), xxxvii, liii,
 lviii, lix, lx, 24, 88, 94, 104, 132, 136
- Shalmaneser III, 35
- Sharp, Carolyn, xxx
- Shaw, Susan, 166–67
- Shemesh, Yael, 171
- Sherman, William, 163
- Sherwood, Yvonne, xxviii, xxxi, 6
- Shiphrah, lx, 68
- Simeon, xliii, li, 38, 50, 63–67, 102, 113
 revenge of sister's rape, xli
- Sirani, Elisabetta, 97–98
- Sisera, lx, 67, 110, 113, 124–28, 135
- Slaughter, Thomas, 166
- slavery, xxii, lxviii, 23, 46, 52–56, 67,
 80, 154, 172
 manumission of Judith's slave,
 159–61
- Smit, Peter-Ben, 28
- Smith, Susan L., xxxviii
- social privilege, 168–69
- Sojourner Truth, xxii
- Speght, Rachel, xxii
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, xxiii, xxiv,
 xxxii, lxiii
- Stark, Elizabeth, 79
- Steffens, Angie, xxxvi
- Steinberg, Naomi, 63
- Steiner, Tina, xxiv
- Stewart, Melissa, 69, 166, 170
- Stiatessi, Giovanni Battista, 114
- Stiller, Colleen, xxxvi
- Stocker, Margarita, lii, lxiii, 77, 113,
 123, 151, 164
- Stone, Ken, xxxi, 23, 86
- Surma, Julie, xxxvi
- Susanna, liii, 76, 86, 103, 110, 111, 112,
 171
- Swetman, Joseph, lxii, 122
- Taitz, Emily, xxi
- Tallan, Cheryl, xxi
- Tamar, lii, lx, 62
- Tamber-Roseneu, Caryn, 74, 78–79,
 87, 104, 109, 156
- Tanzer, Sarah, xxxvi
- Tassi, Agostino, 113–15, 116, 118–19
- Taylor, Marion Ann, xx, xxii, xxiii,
 xxxi
- Tekoa, wise woman of, lii, 61
- Thomas, Rosalind, xlviii
- Thurston, Bonnie, xxvi
- Tilford, Nicole, xlii, 95, 121, 122, 164
- Tolbert, Mary Ann, xxx
- Trible, Phyllis, xxvii
- Trudinger, Peter, xxxii
- Turner, Nat, 144
- Uzziah, xli, 38, 44–45, 47, 48, 52,
 59–61, 136, 138, 148
- Valerio, Adrianna, xxiv
- Vander Stichele, Caroline, xxv
- Vanderkam, James C., xlvi, 34, 135
- Varro, 84
- Vashti, 106
- Vulgate, liii, 14, 37, 68, 157
- Wacker, Marie-Theres, xxiv
- Walcott, Derek, 111–12

- Walker, Alice, xxx
war, warfare, 35–36, 41–43, 66
 context for Judith, xxxix, xlv,
 1–5
 gender and, 6–7, 87
 Persian wars, xlvi–xlviii
 sexual violence and, 62–63, 125
 siege, 44–45
Washington, Harold C., 7, 63
Weems, Renita, xxx, 59
Weiss, Andrea L., xviii, xxi, xxiii
West, Delno C., 14
Wetter, Anne-Mareike, 48
widow, widowhood, 50–52, 75–76,
 94, 157–59
Wilkerson, George, 5, 29
Wilkins Lawrence, Lauress, xxxvi
Wills, Lawrence M., 155–156
van Wolde, Ellen, 8, 124
Wojciechowski, Michael, 68, 143
Woman Wisdom, xviii–xix, 61
 v. “Strange Woman,” 61
Xenophon, 142
Xeravits, Géza G., lv, 9, 62, 66, 135
Xerxes, xlvi–viii, 28, 88

Yang, Seung Ai, vii, xxxvi
Yee, Gale, xxix, 61, 86
York (enslaved man on the Lewis and
 Clark expedition), 160–61

Zeitlin, Solomon, 62, 108, 155
Zionism, 164

Authors

Jennifer L. Koosed is professor of religious studies at Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania. She is the author of several books, including (*Per mutations of Qohelet: Reading the Body in the Book* (Continuum, 2006), *Gleaning Ruth: A Biblical Heroine and Her Afterlives* (University of South Carolina, 2011), and *Reading the Bible as a Feminist* (Brill, 2017). She is also the editor of several works, including *The Bible and Posthumanism* (SBL Press, 2014) and *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible* (with Fiona C. Black; SBL Press, 2019).

Robert Paul Seesengood is associate dean for first year and general studies and professor of religious studies at Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania. He received his ThM (New Testament) from Princeton Theological Seminary and his PhD (History of Ancient Christianity) from Drew University. He is a frequent lecturer, an editor, and an author of several essays and monographs, including *Philemon* (Bloomsbury, 2017), *Paul: A Brief History* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), and, with Jennifer L. Koosed, *Jesse's Lineage: The Legendary Lives of David, Jesus and Jesse James* (T&T Clark, 2013).

Volume Editor

Amy-Jill Levine is university professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies, and professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School and College of Arts and Science; she is also affiliated professor, Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge, United Kingdom. Her recent publications include *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2006) and *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi* (HarperOne, 2014). Dr. Levine is also coeditor of *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Series Editor

Barbara E. Reid, general editor of the Wisdom Commentary series, is a Dominican Sister of Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is the president of Catholic Theological Union and the first woman to hold the position. She has been a member of the CTU faculty since 1988 and also served as vice president and academic dean from 2009 to 2018. She holds a PhD in biblical studies from The Catholic University of America and was also president of the Catholic Biblical Association in 2014–2015. Her most recent publications are *Luke 1–9* and *Luke 10–24* co-authored with Shelly Matthews (WCS 43A, 43B; Liturgical Press, 2021), *Wisdom's Feast: An Invitation to Feminist Interpretation of the Scriptures* (Eerdmans, 2016), and *Abiding Word: Sunday Reflections on Year A, B, C* (3 vols.; Liturgical Press, 2011, 2012, 2013).