

and sexual innuendos, the last of which are obfuscated in translations. She interprets the Hebrew text in ways accessible to a lay audience. Similarly, many of the texts she discusses are likely unfamiliar to many, so she mixes summary and analysis so that she is not talking over the heads of readers; and visual works are reproduced in black and white. She first discusses ancient retellings, including the book of Judith as a reworking of the Jael story, and moves quickly through ancient and medieval performances (Sisera as the devil, Jael as the church or as type of Mary) to the age of print. In the early modern period, Jael represents a brave moral example to women or cautionary tale for men (seductive slayer). Conway then examines Renaissance paintings that generally strive to domesticate Jael's precedent of female-against-male violence by continuing prior moralizing interpretation. In nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writing, Jael represents female dissatisfaction with restrictive social roles, and sympathy for her violent act is often expressed, especially by women writers. Later in the twentieth century, feminist storytellers use Jael to convey anger against patriarchy.

In her concluding reflections, Conway notes that as she spoke of her work with inquiring and educated people outside biblical studies, almost no one knew the story or was even familiar with Judges generally. This cultural forgetfulness is also thematic in A. S. Byatt's short story "Jael," which Conway also analyzes. Conway suggests that reception historical works offer one way to discover how Western culture continually returns to biblical traditions to speak to contemporary situations and that biblical material thereby acquires an accumulated authority that individual voices lack. Conway offers a well-written analysis that offers both thoughtful reflections on reception history as a method and insights into how one biblical story has consistently informed discussion of gender, sex, and violence across centuries and genres. It may be of interest to both biblical scholars and laypeople in an affordable volume.

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Retrieving Apologetics. By Glenn B. Siniscalchi. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016. 287 pages. \$28.00.

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In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the place of apologetics as a theological enterprise in response to the challenge of atheism and secularism in Western cultures. To this end, Siniscalchi focuses his work on the "urgent need to discuss the possibility of reasoned defences of Christianity in

the light of the challenges posed by relativists" (8). *Retrieving Apologetics* by Siniscalchi is a solid contribution to this renewal of theological apologetical engagement. Siniscalchi's interest is grounded in a classical approach to apologetics, which has more in common with neo-Scholastic methodologies than contemporary "experiential" approaches (12). Given this approach, this work occasionally reads as a "manual" for "apologists," with the text interspersed with various exhortations to "the apologist" to develop particular apologetical styles, methods, or postures.

Siniscalchi argues that the dialogical approach, which has become the dominant mode of engagement with other traditions, other religions, and "the world" in general since Vatican II, needs to be balanced with a greater focus on apologetical methods. Indeed, Siniscalchi argues, "The Council Fathers were concerned to endorse the validity of apologetics" (18). Further, Siniscalchi analyzes the apologetical contributions of recent popes. This is one of the weaker chapters of the book, and highlights a concern with the work as a whole. With such a strong emphasis on the task of apologetics itself, which is developed with greater confidence in the second half of the book, there can be a lack of nuance about the dynamics of apologetics in a contemporary world. For example, Siniscalchi does not address seminal speeches by Benedict XVI at Regensburg (2006), Westminster (2010), and Berlin (2011), or the "style" of Pope Francis, which generates its own apologetic curiosity. In Siniscalchi's discussion of papal apologetics, and within his overall theme of the "urgent need to discuss the possibility of reasoned defences of Christianity," these broader themes of Popes Benedict XVI and Francis provide key examples and insights, both in content and method. An extended treatment of *Lumen Fidei* would have added to the scholarly weight of this chapter, and broadened the vision of ecclesial apologetics.

Siniscalchi is much more at home exploring philosophical and metaphysical dynamics of apologetics. Here he provides a structured and methodological approach to answering modern scientific, philosophical, and anthropological arguments against Christian faith. It must also be pointed out that Siniscalchi uses terms such as "Christian faith" and "Catholic Christian faith" interchangeably, and a greater ecumenical sensitivity to the usage of this terminology would bring greater clarity to the text.

In developing his apologetical method, Siniscalchi draws upon a contemporary form of the *via notarum*, defined as the *via empirica* argument, which seeks to highlight the personal strengths, collective benefits, and historical contribution of the Christian faith, and by which the apologist "is justified in claiming that Catholicism has worked as a leaven to improve any society that embraces it" (198). While Siniscalchi is careful not to entertain a triumphalist tone, there perhaps lurks underneath the text a yearning to return to

unquestioned ecclesiastical authority and superiority, with observations such as “All other things being equal, ecclesial vitality and institutional integrity can be found in greater measure in the Catholic Church” (199).

Siniscalchi demonstrates an obvious passion for a reinvigorated Catholic apologetics. This is commendable, as is the work itself. Some of the book’s argumentation might be too specialized for a general audience, but nevertheless, there are sections that will serve to pique the interest of a reader with basic theological knowledge. The accessibility of the work would be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of subject and author indexes. Overall, Siniscalchi offers a comprehensive approach to classical apologetics in the modern age, even if at times, this approach appears to be too theologically self-referential and fails to incorporate more nuanced and complex forms of scientific and anthropological augmentation. Siniscalchi’s work deserves recognition for its contribution to the ongoing task of the church rediscovering its apologetical voice in the noisy world of intellectual and philosophical debate.

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Art + Religion in the 21st Century. By Aaron Rosen. London: Thames & Hudson, 2015. 256 pages. \$60.00.

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“When you enter the world of art you are, like it or not, entering the realm of religion” (7). Aaron Rosen, professor of religious studies at Rocky Mountain College, argues that the relationship between religion and the arts has often been characterized as strained and strange; and at times the two have been “typecast as mortal enemies” (9). Yet, Rosen, like many other contemporary writers, seeks to overcome these worn stereotypes and misperceptions. Rosen’s stunningly illustrated *Art + Religion in the 21st Century* looks at the widespread engagement of contemporary art with religion.

Rosen’s introduction acknowledges that the conflict between the two fields is often played out in culture and politics, but he argues that both art and religion lose out, as neither is better understood (15), and thus the two miss a “tremendous potential for reciprocity” (17). While artist provocateurs exist, they are actually rare in regard to religious content. Rosen argues that many more artists “seriously engage with religious traditions, themes, and institutions ... and are much more interesting” (17). Thus Rosen’s “goal is to give ... an indication of the most interesting and relevant things that twenty-first century art has to say about religion” (20).