

Mediterranean. In that respect, Kloppenborg has provided a rich example of the fruitful cross-pollination of biblical scholarship with wider fields of ancient studies.

David Pettegrew
 Messiah University
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***Josephus's The Jewish War: A Biography.* By Martin Goodman.**
 Lives of Great Religious Books. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University
 Press, 2019. xi + 186 pp. \$24.95 hardcover.

Perhaps no other work by a non-Christian author influenced the development of Christians more than Josephus's *The Jewish War*. In this short book, Martin Goodman traces the history of the reception, usage, translation, and reaction to Josephus's retelling of the revolt against Rome and the subsequent destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish Temple in 70 CE. Leaving aside the numerous questions of factual accuracy and hidden motivations that modern scholarship has been concerned with, Goodman steps back to consider how the various approaches to the work, across centuries and from different communities, reflect the way the book exists today. The study demonstrates the messy reality of interpretation: that it is never in a vacuum and is always birthed from a particular circumstance. As a result, the work is more than a study of *The Jewish War*; it is a survey of the evolution of Jewish history.

The book begins with a brief overview of the life of Josephus and the composition of *The Jewish War*. His other works are mentioned throughout, but the focus remains largely on the text that covers that period of revolt and Roman response from 64 to 73 CE. Following the opening exposition, the work divides into three chronological periods that examine the use (and sometimes abuse) of Josephus's history. The first, covering up to 1450, demonstrates clearly that the polemical approach taken by Christian writers was more than likely the reason the work survived antiquity. Goodman does an excellent job showing how the work was manipulated via translations, first into Latin, then Hebrew, and then into a myriad of other versions. The reception history was not merely of interpretation but, on occasion, wholesale creation, whether by the anonymous author of *De excidio urbis Hierosolymitanae* or in the later Hebrew book *Sefer Yosippon*. It is fascinating to watch as Goodman demonstrates how the understanding of the Greek original was shaped by these later byproducts, the Hebrew version especially (31–35). The creation of the Hebrew version, though drawn from a Christian triumphalist narrative in a bastardized Latin translation, validated the work for many Jews in the late medieval period and beyond. This validation, through a circular manner, gave Josephus greater credibility as the modern period dawned.

Chapter 3 explores the reception during the initial age of print and into the Enlightenment. Goodman traces the numerous printings of Latin, Hebrew, and Greek versions and attempts to create scholarly editions of variants. This period also sees the first questions about Josephus the person and whether his split allegiance (if one considers it to be such) should affect the reading of the work. Though not a sacred text in either the Christian or the Jewish tradition, *The Jewish War* achieved a unique position in both, holding a place of veneration. As Jewish scholars began to stand on equal terms with

Christian ones, they produced their own texts and commentaries. Chapter 4 is where the book becomes something truly outstanding. Goodman delves deeply into Jewish debates about Josephus. In an age when revolution returned to the world, empires were spreading across continents, and the dream of a Jewish homeland was reborn, Josephus was understandably the subject of much debate. Goodman discusses how Josephus became a founding document for Zionists, even while it was a regular practice in Jewish schools to subject Josephus to mock trials for his betrayal of his people, including one in the Vilna Ghetto in March of 1943 (82). The tension between these two uses manifests in the ending of the book that mirrors *The Jewish War*: Masada.

Goodman explains how the archaeological work at Masada, combined with the new Israeli national narrative, fed into a circular interpretative framework. The story of Josephus was used as a guide by archaeologists and mythmakers. Even when Josephus's tale was questioned by new evidence, his story remained revered (125–133). This is not to say that serious excavation work and textual analysis was not done, merely that the history of reception and interpretation of texts made sacred—like *The Jewish War*—is always done in the present tense.

While Goodman's work is a brief one, it is richly sourced and deeply considered in its approach. The work does assume a baseline knowledge of the stories in the text, though there is an appendix of selections drawn from *The Jewish War*. It will be useful for scholars working on Josephus, of course, but also for anyone interested in Jewish-Christian relations, history of the book, or Zionism. Reception history, particularly of such a disputed work as *The Jewish War*, adds greatly to our understanding of how we can never reach back all the way to the past without the intervening centuries being attached.

Robert McEachnie
University of North Carolina—Charlotte
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The Body and Desire: Gregory of Nyssa's Ascetical Theology.
By Raphael A. Cadenhead. Christianity in Late Antiquity. Oakland:
University of California Press, 2018. xii + 267 pp. \$95.00 cloth.

Can one find a compelling theory of desire in a corpus of works as large, as amorphous, and, well, as *old* as Gregory of Nyssa's? Raphael Cadenhead, in his provocative entrée into the guild of Cappadocian scholarship, argues the affirmative. Cadenhead discovers a dynamic "ascetical theology" in Gregory's works, one uniquely attentive to the transformations undergone in both bodily and spiritual maturation. He notes the fluid gender language in Gregory's works but reads it differently than such recent scholars as Verna Harrison, Virginia Burrus, and Sarah Coakley (the supervisor of the doctoral thesis from which the book came). Gregory is not integrating more or less stable feminine qualities into male qualities (*pace* Harrison) nor destabilizing gender distinctions altogether (*pace* Burrus and, differently, Coakley). Rather, Cadenhead sees Gregory as rather conventional in his view of "ordinary," non-ascetic gender relations but radical in his account of the spiritually advanced male ascetic. In Cadenhead's view, Gregory "schematizes the soul's transition in identity from male to female within a framework