

Psalms: Books 2–3. By Denise Dombkowski Hopkins. Wisdom Commentary 21. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016. vii + 410 pages. \$39.95.
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Denise Dombkowski Hopkins' *Psalms: Books 2–3* is the first of three volumes to be published on the Psalter in the much-anticipated Wisdom Commentary series. Overall, this groundbreaking series will be comprised of fifty-eight distinct volumes treating each book of the Bible from a feminist perspective. Certain features distinguish the project as a whole, including its use of principally women authors (although “feminist men” also contribute, xxii) and its emphasis on the “world in front of the text” in its analysis (xxi). Perhaps most notably, each volume of the series includes multiple voices in addition to that of the main author. The insights of these additional contributors appear in gray insets alongside the main commentary and sometimes represent conflicting viewpoints. This is meant to underscore the point that no one interpretation holds sway, while emphasizing interpretive diversity and collaboration (xxii). Another compelling innovation of the series will be an online bibliography for each volume that will continue to be updated after publication.

Within this unique format, Dombkowski Hopkins identifies her own interpretive approach to the Psalter as primarily rhetorical and intertextual, while also utilizing ideological and postcolonial methods. This means that she relies on “intertexts” to draw out the relationship between the Psalms and biblical women in other parts of the canon, rather than simply seeing these poems in relation to David or other biblical men named in the text. The canonical intertextuality of the psalm superscriptions supplies the license for this approach, and Dombkowski Hopkins takes it further by working to “‘imagine a superscription’ whenever possible” (xliii).

This approach works better with some Psalms than others. At times, the intertextual connections seem, indeed, imaginative but also stray beyond exegetical warrant. For example, Dombkowski Hopkins reads Psalm 73 with Bathsheba's experience in 2 Samuel 11 because of one common verb, namely, “wash/bathe.” While it is fascinating to consider Psalm 73 as the words of Bathsheba, doing so strains interpretive legitimacy, even when the focus lies in contemporary reception of texts. At its best, however, this methodological focus on intertextuality leads to genuinely illuminating perspectives on the most well-known Psalms. One sees this particularly well in the analysis of the penitential Psalm 51. Here, the psalm's superscription explicitly provides the intertextual connection to 2 Samuel 12, in which the prophet Nathan emphasizes the victims (Bathsheba, Uriah, and the child that dies) that receive little to no attention in Psalm 51, a prayer that focuses solely

on the confessing David's relationship with God. Thus, this canonically spotlighted intertextual contrast mandates analysis. The exclusion of these victims in both the psalm and its subsequent interpretive history demands the critical eye and reconstructive effort that Dombkowski Hopkins and contributor Katherine Brown offer on this psalm.

The strength of this volume lies precisely here, in thinking about the Psalms in ways that people have not often thought about them, that is, in and with the voices of women. The commentary's accessibility and its emphasis on the "world in front of the text" seem ideal for pastors and preachers who seek to connect these ancient poems with the contemporary realities of women's lived experiences. Biblical scholars might notice the lack of detailed attention to technical issues of text and translation (though occasional "Translation Matters" insets help here), as well as the general lack of engagement with scholarship on the Psalms beyond what is written or translated into English. However, these minor issues do not diminish the achievement of bringing a unique and profoundly necessary feminist perspective to the Psalms, which have been long neglected in this regard. No doubt this perspective and this volume must be engaged by all scholars, who will find long-held interpretations being challenged, and discover new meanings emerging from these ancient liturgical poems.

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Sex and Slaughter in the Tent of Jael: A Cultural History of a Biblical Story. By Colleen M. Conway. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. xii + 213 pages. \$29.95.

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Conway avoids calling her work a reception historical analysis of Judges 4–5, although readers may perceive it that way. Her book begins with a thoughtful discussion of "reception history" and a critique of the notion of origins. There is no "original" text passively received, but rather various cultural performances of Jael and Sisera offered in various forms across time. Rather than offering a comprehensive catalogue of references to these figures, Conway focuses on substantive retellings from several historical periods and genres and generally eschews passing allusions to the story.

Although she does not locate the origins of Jael in Judges 4–5, Conway begins the volume with an analysis of the biblical traditions as the earliest performances of the story. Her discussion of the two versions elucidates commonalities and differences between them, and highlights ambiguities, gaps,