

Collaborations

Jewish and Christian feminist biblicists

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Introduction

CHRISTIAN FEMINISTS INCREASINGLY BENEFIT from the biblical research of Jewish feminists. Both groups have been rereading the Hebrew Scripture with a conscious use of feminist methodology for the last twenty years.

Christian feminists have under-utilized two decades of research by Jewish feminists for several reasons. First, the emergence of anthologies has masked Jewish particularity and commingled contributions of Jewish, Protestant and Catholic exegetes. Second is the matter of academic focus. While Christian feminists are trained in Hebrew and Greek, they typically do not study rabbinics. When Jewish feminists cite rabbinic texts, potentially significant for interpreting the Gospels, Christian scholars lack the training to make authoritative use of this research. Though exceptions exist, most Jewish feminists do not undertake interpretation of Christian literature or apply their research to the Gospels.¹

A third reason for invisibility of Jewish feminist research is the undercurrent of 'ownership' of sacred texts by Christians. The relation of Hebrew Scripture to the New Testament is a tension in Catholic theology and crystallizes the unfinished business of inter-faith dialogue.² Christian theologians bypass Jewish concerns as non-applicable and interpret the Old Testament as Christ-oriented.

A fourth reason for the lack of familiarity is that articles by male biblicists seldom cite women's scholarship in footnotes, much less that of Jewish feminists. Even when they cite a title, men typically fail to describe women's arguments.

Women anthologized: a theological thrust

Women's biblical and theological publications acquired critical mass in the 1980s and early 1990s via source-books and anthologies which included scores of feminist contributors. This fact tells two stories. First, there have never been so many academically trained women

undertaking a feminist critique of the Bible. Second, there has been a corresponding resistance to their scholarship from editorial boards of professional journals.

The resistance is suggested by a statistic I compiled based on *New Testament Studies*, *Journal of Biblical Literature* and *Theological Studies* from 1994 to 1996. Articles on feminist themes or pieces by women fell between 4 and 7 per cent of the total. It is no surprise that the 1990 edition of the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* was hardly different in methodology from the first edition in 1968.³ A lone woman appeared among 119 authors and 80 articles. By 1990, there was scant progress, given the women who had acquired academic training in a quarter of a century. Only eight women's names appeared in 83 articles. Four authored their own entries. The other four co-authored with men, despite their own publishing records. Feminist methodology was suppressed, despite its vigour in the 1980s. The bibliography in 1990, however, added a section on 'Targumic and rabbinical works'.

In the mid-1980s, feminists of all faiths sought redress. They solicited the support of publishing houses and banded in women-edited anthologies. The collections followed three tracks. The first was theological, decrying the exclusivity of male references for naming God, challenging the subordination of women in household and religious institutions, resisting the marginalization of women's experience, and formulating interpretative methods to subvert androcentric tradition in biblical texts. An early example was Rosemary Ruether's *Religion and sexism*.⁴ In *Weaving the visions*,⁵ Jewish and Christian biblical scholars invited by Judith Plaskow and Carol Christ joined a project aimed at spiritual empowerment of the female self in institutional life, indigenous culture, formation of sexual identity, and domestic relations. Religious ritual, biblical imagery and liturgical language for God were addressed in this larger context.

Historical thrust

A second type of anthology was historical, retrieving data external to the Bible and compiling information about women left out of commentaries. Historical research focused in the 1970s on the lives of both wealthy and ordinary women in ancient Greece and Rome. Sarah Pomeroy reviewed data on Hellenistic and Roman women, including the economically poor, but bypassed treatment of Jewish women in the Mediterranean and women associated with biblical culture.⁶

Another source-book, translating snippets from classical authors, was Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen B. Fant's collection of *Women's life in Greece and Rome*.⁷ Also providing information on Jewish women were Leonie J. Archer⁸ and Judith R. Baskin.⁹ The most frequently cited anthology remains Amy-Jill Levine's *Women like this*.¹⁰

These works, a response of feminist scholars of classics and religion to the political movement of the 1970s, create a backdrop of women's daily lives in the ancient world. The backdrop is significant for interpreting Hebrew Scripture, Second Temple literature, and the portrayal of Jewish women in the Gospels. Data from these studies has not been integrated in male-authored lexicons, commentaries and biblical encyclopaedias, nor commonly utilized by New Testament exegetes.

Biblical thrust

A third type of feminist anthology, arising in the 1980s, provided scriptural commentary on both Testaments. Christian feminists predominated as editors, but included Jewish contributors.¹¹ Examples were Letty Russell's *Feminist interpretation of the Bible*¹² and anthologies of Adela Yarbro Collins¹³ and Peggy Day.¹⁴ This research had several aims: to break the silence of women as authorities on the Bible, to subvert the androcentric representation of women in sacred texts as theologically or historically normative, to replace exclusively patriarchal views of women's religious experience, and to provide a new fund of knowledge about Scripture based on a critical feminist hermeneutic.

Biblical commentary projects of the 1990s

A breakthrough in feminist scholarship was achieved in a one-volume *Women's bible commentary* edited by Carol Newsom and Sharon Ringe which treated canonical texts of the Old and New Testaments.¹⁵ Among forty-one contributors were several Jewish feminists: Drorah Setel, Judith Romney Wegner, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Amy-Jill Levine, Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Carol Meyers. Each contributor provided an introduction which summarized consensus scholarship. Then they focused on scenes with female characters, and examined themes such as the divinity in female imagery, woman's sexuality, hints of her status and power expressed or suppressed, harmful gender language, family roles, activities in worship, her use as a symbol, and polemics against her work as teacher or prophet.

Contributors analysed how androcentric authorship both determined and deformed the presentation of women.

Conversely, Jewish feminists collaborated with non-Jewish contributors in Jewish-led projects. Notable because of the corpus of biblical literature to be addressed is the Feminist Companion series published by Sheffield Academic Press edited by Athalya Brenner from 1993 to the present.¹⁶ Latest in this series is the anthology *Reading the Bible*, a collection of essays on interpretative strategies, compiled by Brenner and Carole Fontaine.¹⁷

Contemporaneously, a project edited by Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Searching the Scriptures*, presented a first volume of methodological essays. Focusing on the New Testament, a slate of twenty-six academics reflected on the challenges of doing feminist biblical interpretation within the scholarly and pastoral constraints of different cultures, ethnicities and geographies.¹⁸

The second volume, inaugurated by Schüssler-Fiorenza's introduction, 'Transgressing canonical boundaries', features commentaries, not only on canonical Gospels and epistles, but on sixteen religious documents which stand outside the New Testament canon. These ancient texts were authored by or favourably presented women. They are categorized variously as apocryphal, pseudo-epigraphical, inter-testamental, Nag Hammadi, Hellenistic, Jewish or heretical.¹⁹ The thirty-eight contributors represented an international coalition of Jewish, Catholic and Protestant feminists.

Following this trend is the New Testament anthology of 1999 edited by Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger, *Transformative encounters*.²⁰

Historical, context-based research of Jewish feminists

Jewish feminists broadened the prevailing academic norm of locating 'women in the Bible' in the commercial structures, laws and religious practices of Greece and Rome. Only occasional voices in European biblical scholarship prior to the 1980s, such as David Daube, had acknowledged a distinctive Jewish culture in the ancient world.²¹ Protestant and Catholic biblical scholars, echoing the anti-Semitism of European exegetes, could only offer distorted readings of the New Testament. Lacking appreciation for Jewish scholarship, they equated time-specific legal provisions of Jewish law in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, for example, with Jewish life during the period of the Gospels.²²

Rachel Biale's *Women and Jewish law* focused on the Talmud, explaining prescriptions of Jewish religious law as they applied to

women's experience.²³ These included prescriptions for devotional observance, study, marriage, divorce, childbearing, menstruation, incest, rape and the life cycle. While Biale's focus was not biblical exegesis, she provided a feminist reading of law applicable to New Testament texts. Her explanation of 'niddah' or the menstruant, in the context of many Jewish prescriptions which safeguarded the dignity of women, has been under-utilized.

Bernadette Brooten's study of Jewish women's prominence in synagogue life highlighted inscriptions about women already known to exist throughout the ancient world.²⁴ Her work is regarded as a classic, countering assumptions that women were socially invisible and always subordinated to men. Women, rather, were recognized as heads of synagogues, leaders, elders, mothers of the synagogue, priests and donors. Carol Meyers pioneered archaeological research and cataloguing of women's artefacts, such as female statuary, musical instruments and bas-reliefs, which help interpret the social and religious prominence of women in the ancient Near East, as well as in the Hebrew Scripture.²⁵

Ross Kraemer's *Maenads*, on women's religious activities in the Graeco-Roman world, gave translations of literary texts from philosophers, poets and dramatists, along with documentary papyri, epitaphs and dedicatory inscriptions.²⁶ The references include religious activities by Jewish women and female converts to Judaism, as well as Christian, Jewish and Egyptian women who were not culturally Greek or Roman. This earlier project was expanded in the later narrative commentary *Her share of the blessings*, which treated women's devotion to Adonis and Isis, and Jewish women's religious activities in the Graeco-Roman diaspora.²⁷ Fully half of *Her share* deals with the religious behaviour of women in Christian communities of the Pauline, gospel and patristic periods, and cites their leadership roles, prophetic activity, teaching authority and condemnation for heresy.

Judith Romney Wegner, holding a civil law degree, published *Chattel or person*.²⁸ She argued that women, though subject to many forms of social and economic subordination in antiquity, were nevertheless accorded status as persons in the Mishnah. Wegner's study undercut assumptions that Jewish law oppressed women and regarded them only as property. Her project was significant, like Biale's, for correcting Christian bias denigrating Jewish law as the source of the oppression of women in the New Testament.

The introduction of Tal Ilan's *Jewish women in Greco-Roman Palestine* reviews men's and women's scholarship about Jewish women

in the biblical, Second Temple, mishnaic and talmudic periods.²⁹ Her organization mirrors themes in rabbinic literature concerning the uniqueness of women's life cycle, their role as daughters and wives, their virginity, menstruation, sexual relations, pregnancy and childbirth; chastity codes, adultery, divorce, widowhood and inheritance; their legal and public roles, and an interesting section on maidservants, proselytes, prostitutes and witches. Ilan relies principally on rabbinic sources, but also cites the Hebrew Bible, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha and Josephus, and occasionally correlates gospel texts.

Suspecting the text: approach of Christian feminists

When distinguished denominationally, Protestant and Catholic feminist scholars, whether of the Old or the New Testament, have tended to produce text-based studies which re-examine language and lexicology, providing reinterpretation of narratives about women. With women's textual presence (or absence) brought to the foreground, these rereadings tend to take one of two directions.

First, they can approach biblical texts with a hermeneutics of suspicion, determined to expose the damaging consequences for women. The biblical text ignores women's point of view, conceals women's emotional reactions, suppresses memory of their leadership, and distorts portraits of women so they will serve patriarchal interests. For the New Testament, this approach was embodied by Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza's *In memory of her*.³⁰ Antoinette Wire examined the resistance to women's prophetic activity in Corinth, concluding that their participation was substantive, a fact deduced by analysing Paul's rhetoric aimed at controlling prophecy.³¹ Jane Schaberg³² and Elaine Wainwright³³ take an approach suspecting the text, but they also presume Jewish culture is normative for interpreting the New Testament.

Mary Rose D'Angelo blends a suspicious but investigative feminist posture, an historical review of ancient writers, with lexical analysis of passages concerning women in the New Testament. In a recent study, she argues that pollution associated with menstruation was a view held by Greek and Roman authors, and not specific to Jewish culture.³⁴

Christian exegetes of Hebrew Scripture who presume the text must be unmasked in order to be revelatory include J. Cheryl Exum.³⁵ Phyllis Trible's familiar study of 'texts of abuse' concerned the rape of Tamar, sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, exile of Hagar and mutilation of the concubine in the Book of Judges.³⁶ Sandra Schneiders summarizes the rationale:

. . . the biblical text is not only frequently blind to the oppression of women in the Israelite and early Christian communities, but the text itself is pervasively androcentric and patriarchal, frequently sexist, and even misogynist. In other words, not only does the text frequently fail to supply women with resources for liberation; it is often enough itself the problem, demonizing women, degrading female sexuality, erasing women from the history of salvation, legitimating their oppression and trivializing their experience.³⁷

Dignity stories: more trusting approaches

More typically, Christian feminist exegetes highlight the roles of women as exemplary matriarchs, leaders and teachers, in what may be called 'dignity stories'. For example, Kathryn Darr's *Far more precious than jewels* reviews traditions about Ruth, Sarah, Esther and Hagar, using rabbinic and midrashic commentary.³⁸ In her use of Jewish sources, Darr exemplifies progress by Christian academics. A similar result is represented by Eileen Schuller's tracking of re-told stories about women from the Book of Exodus.³⁹

By contrast, Janice Nunnally-Cox attempts to reclaim the stories of biblical women, but stripped of their Jewish culture as though ethnicity is irrelevant.⁴⁰ Her biographical sketches typify an attitude of Christian ownership of the Old Testament. Such treatments unwittingly propagate a negative view of Judaism because authors must conclude that Jesus made women's situation 'better' than it was 'before', as though the plight of women in the Bible was the fault of Judaism. Naïvely, Cox assumes, 'Into this world, then, comes Jesus, and with him we see the beginnings of change'.⁴¹

Resisting anti-Judaism: Gimbutas v. Frymer-Kensky

In research touched by the 'goddess movement', some feminists have blamed Judaism for patriarchal oppression in Christianity. They propose that monotheistic Judaism squelched the matriarchal religions of the ancient world. Suppression of the female deity in religion resulted in oppression of women in society, to which Christianity fell heir. This assumption has engendered a nostalgic effort to recover the supposed 'original dignity' embodied in worship of the female deity, as articulated by Maria Gimbutas.⁴² Gimbutas hypothesized that Judaeo-Christian religion substituted the worship of a male deity over the more ancient reverence for female divinity, resulting in women's subordination to men.

Tikva Frymer-Kensky, scholar of ancient Near Eastern religions, challenged Gimbutas' view by noting there was a strict 'division of labor' between male and female deities in ancient religions which reinforced rather than elevated the inferior position of women.

The religion of Israel's contemporaries was not one in which gods and goddesses had equal roles and import. There was no longer possible a choice between monotheism and the goddesses, but rather one between monotheism and a male-dominated polytheism.⁴³

She resisted the conclusion that Hebrew Scripture invented patriarchy, noting, as did other Jewish feminists, that the 'social system reflected in the Bible did not originate in Israel, nor is it substantially different in the Bible than elsewhere in the ancient Near East. Society was structured along gender lines.'⁴⁴

On the other hand, a drawback of Frymer-Kensky's approach is her defence of women in Hebrew Scripture, as though their stories had never been coloured by androcentric distortion and male-serving didacticism. She maintains, 'Like the mothers in Sumerian mythology, biblical mothers are always beneficent and supporting figures. There are no evil mother-figures in the Bible. On the contrary, mothers are always supportive of their children and loyal to them.'⁴⁵

Anti-Judaism in Christian feminist exegesis

The problem of negative attitudes toward Judaism by Christian feminists was raised by Judith Plaskow over twenty years ago.⁴⁶ In 1990, Susannah Heschel protested that not much progress had been made.⁴⁷ Plaskow cautioned both Jewish and Christian feminists, however, against an interpretative reflex which would exalt a feminist perspective at the expense of denigrating the Other.⁴⁸

Paganism plays essentially the same role in the Tanakh that the Pharisees play in the New Testament: Each is set up as the despised Other over against which the superior new religion defines itself. The parallels between Christian treatment of Judaism and Jewish treatment of paganism should themselves alert Jews to the danger of unthinking contempt for another tradition and the need to examine the historical reality that underlies prophetic invective.⁴⁹

Plaskow wrote a subsequent essay on the impulse by Christian feminists to vindicate Christianity by 'laying its patriarchal elements at

the feet of Judaism'.⁵⁰ Schüssler-Fiorenza's response situated the issue in the context of the power-imbalance in the Jewish-Christian interreligious dialogue.⁵¹ She acknowledged 'the obstinate persistence of veiled or explicit anti-Judaism in popular feminist arguments for the liberatory uniqueness of Jesus'.⁵² She contended that 'the reproduction of the modern kyriarchal sex/gender system is the right hand and the reproduction of anti-Judaism the left hand of kyriocentric Christian theology'.⁵³ She reviews the anti-Jewish structure of male-authored studies of the historical Jesus, which tend

to make [Jesus] appear un-Jewish or anti-Jewish. This proclivity tends to reproduce feminist Christian identity as inescapably intertwined with anti-Judaism because it asserts Christian identity as intrinsically bound to the historical man Jesus of Nazareth who acted against the Torah of Moses.⁵⁴

She further notes, '[O]ur knowledge of first-century Judaism is still very limited because of a lack of scholarly interest in the question'.⁵⁵

Luise Schottroff attributes anti-Judaism in Christian exegesis to a differentiation made by historians of Christianity between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, a division already suggested in the writings of church fathers in the second century CE, and to an assumption of 'Gentile Christianity free of the law' which 'is, historically speaking, a fiction for New Testament times and is theologically highly problematic, since it is the very core of Christian anti-Judaism'.⁵⁶

More recently, Katharina von Kellenbach criticizes the last decade of Christian scholarship for its perpetuation of anti-Judaism.⁵⁷ The substructure of Christian theology itself must be changed so it no longer represents Judaism as antithetical to Christianity, Jews as scapegoats and sinners, and Judaism as a prologue to Christianity. Obstacles to overcoming the prejudice arise from lack of education, trivializing the issue when compared to sexism, racism, poverty and environmental concerns; belittling the after-effects of the Holocaust, and equating Judaism with patriarchal oppression. The teaching of respect, the antidote, can come about with greater exchange and dialogue among Jews and Christians, proceeding on the premise that Judaism was and continues to be 'an evolving and dynamic community'.

Conclusion: continuing challenges

Jewish feminist historians and exegetes have made significant contributions to the reinterpretation of Hebrew Scripture. They have also provided New Testament feminists with invaluable historical, archaeological and lexical resources for contextualizing New Testament texts in their Jewish and Hellenistic cultural setting. One of the challenges for Christian New Testament feminists is to acquire linguistic resources which will render accessible the research of Jewish feminists.

Jewish feminists have not in the main pursued the exegesis and interpretation of Christian literature written in Greek, even though their historical research often overlaps with the period of early Christianity. However, their work in Jewish intertestamental literature and rabbinic texts makes them invaluable research partners with Christian feminists. The work of both Jewish and Christian feminists has been under-utilized and marginalized by male biblicists.

The outcome of feminist scholarship overlaps, but also diverges, with Jewish feminists providing more historical, legal and cultural data that fleshes out the portrait of women in late biblical, Second Temple, and rabbinic periods. In their research on rabbinic treatment of women-related themes, Jewish feminists have not focused on application to texts in the Gospels and epistles.

If collaboration with Jewish women is to bear more fruit, Christian feminists must awaken to the ways their Christology unwittingly nurtures anti-Semitism. The substructure of Christian theology itself perpetuates anti-Semitism. Paradoxically, women New Testament scholars are still marginalized in projects led by Christian male biblicists to amend anti-Judaism in New Testament interpretation.⁵⁸ Collaborating with Jewish feminists to resist sexism in both traditions, Christian feminists still have power to replace the teaching of contempt with the teaching of respect for Judaism.

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NOTES

- 1 Exceptions are Amy-Jill Levine who works on the Gospel of Matthew and Adele Reinhartz, on John.
- 2 See essays responding to this concern in C. A. Evans and D. A. Hagner (eds), *Anti-Semitism in early Christianity: issues of polemic and faith* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993). For the history of Jewish-Christian tensions, see Claudia Setzer, *Jewish responses to early Christians: history and polemics 30–150 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).
- 3 R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, R. E. Murphy (eds), *The Jerome biblical commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968); *The new Jerome biblical commentary* (1990).
- 4 R. Ruether (ed), *Religion and sexism: images of women in the Jewish and Christian traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).
- 5 J. Plaskow and C. P. Christ (eds), *Weaving the visions: new patterns in feminist spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989).
- 6 S. B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, whores, wives, and slaves: women in classical antiquity* (New York: Schocken, 1975).
- 7 M. Lefkowitz and M. B. Fant (eds), *Women's life in Greece and Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).
- 8 L. Archer, 'The role of Jewish women in the religion, ritual and cult of Greco-Roman Palestine' in A. Cameron and A. Kuhrt (eds), *Images of women in antiquity* (Detroit, 1985), pp 273–287. Archer became an ideological foil for T. Ilan, below.
- 9 J. R. Baskin (ed), *Jewish women in historical perspective* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991).
- 10 A. J. Levine (ed), 'Women like this': *new perspectives on Jewish women in the Greco-Roman period* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1991).
- 11 Jewish feminists appearing in various anthologies include Adele Reinhartz, Leila Leah Bronner, Shoshannah Gershonson, Blu Greenberg, Marcia Falk, Barbara Geller Nathanson, Miriam Peskowitz, Sarah Tanzer, Regina Schwartz, Adele Berlin, Naomi Steinberg, and Judith Hauptman among others.
- 12 L. Russell (ed), *Feminist interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985). One Jewish professor, T. Drorah Setel, contributed with the Christian OT exegetes Phyllis Trible, Cheryl Exum and Katharine D. Sakenfeld, with NT scholars Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza and Sharon Ringe.
- 13 A. Y. Collins (ed), *Feminist perspectives on biblical scholarship* (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985), included Drorah Setel, Bernadette Brooten and Esther Fuchs.
- 14 P. L. Day (ed), *Gender and difference in Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).
- 15 C. A. Newsom and S. H. Ringe (eds), *The women's Bible commentary* (London: SPCK/Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1992).
- 16 See *Feminist companion to the Song of Songs* (1993), *Exodus to Deuteronomy* (1994), *Wisdom literature* (1995), *Latter Prophets* (1995), *Hebrew Bible in the New Testament* (1996), and *The New Testament* (1996).
- 17 A. Brenner and C. Fontaine, *Reading the Bible: approaches, methods and strategies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).
- 18 E. Schüssler-Fiorenza (ed), *Searching the Scriptures*, Vol I: *A feminist introduction* (New York: Crossroad, 1993).
- 19 E. Schüssler-Fiorenza (ed), *Searching the Scriptures*, Vol II: *A feminist commentary* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), pp 1–13.
- 20 I. R. Kitzberger (ed), *Transformative encounters: Jesus and women reviewed* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).
- 21 D. Daube, *The New Testament and rabbinic Judaism* (University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1956; reissued Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, n.d.). A refugee to England from Nazi Germany in the 1930s, Professor Daube studied under C. H. Dodd at Cambridge. With W. D. Davies, a colleague also trained by Dodd, Daube wrote and co-edited several exegetical projects in

the 1950s and 1960s. As 'corridor scholars' sympathetically exploring convergences between Jewish and Christian sacred texts in the post-World War II period, they established a new basis for biblical exegesis, aimed at reversing anti-Semitic bias in the work of Catholic and Protestant academics.

22 Supersessionist biases are enshrined in standard references such as G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (eds), *Theologisches wörterbuch zum neuen testament* (Stuttgart, 1932–1979). The OT lexical background for a NT term is duly provided, but then theologically dismissed as if irrelevant to a Christian perspective. The bias reveals itself by a mechanical citation of OT references, and lack of reliance on Jewish tradition as a theological norm.

23 R. Biale, *Women and Jewish law: an exploration of women's issues in halakhic sources* (New York: Schocken, 1984). See 'Niddah: laws of the menstruant', pp 147–174.

24 B. J. Broton, *Women leaders in the ancient synagogue* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars, 1982).

25 C. Meyers, *Discovering Eve: ancient Israelite women in context* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

26 R. S. Kraemer (ed), *Maenads, martyrs, matrons, monastics: a sourcebook on women's religions in the Greco-Roman world* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

27 R. S. Kraemer, *Her share of the blessings: women's religions among pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman world* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

28 J. R. Wegner, *Chattel or person: the status of women in the Mishnah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

29 T. Ilan, *Jewish women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996). First pub. as *Jewish women in Greco-Roman Palestine: an inquiry into image and status* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995).

30 E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, *In memory of her: a feminist theological reconstruction of Christian origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983).

31 A. Wire, *The Corinthian women prophets: a reconstruction through Paul's rhetoric* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). See appendix, 'Women who speak for the divine – selected texts from the early empire', cataloguing references to Roman, Jewish and Greek women's prophetic activity.

32 J. Schaberg, *The illegitimacy of Jesus: a feminist theological interpretation of the infancy narratives* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987).

33 E. Wainwright, *Shall we look for another? A feminist rereading of the Matthean Jesus* (New York: Orbis, 1998).

34 M. R. D'Angelo, 'Gender and power in the Gospel of Mark: the daughter of Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood' in J. C. Cavadini (ed), *Aspects of the miraculous in early Judaism and Christianity* (Notre Dame, Indiana and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999).

35 J. C. Exum, *Fragmented women: feminist (sub)versions of biblical narrative* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

36 P. Trible, *Texts of terror: literary-feminist readings of biblical narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984). Corresponding to this approach is Jewish feminist Mieke Bal's *Lethal love: feminist literary readings of biblical love stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

37 S. Schneiders, *The revelatory text: interpreting the New Testament as sacred Scripture* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), pp 181–182.

38 K. D. Darr, *Far more precious than jewels: perspectives on biblical women* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 1991).

39 E. Schuller, 'Women of the Exodus in biblical retelling of the Second Temple period' in P. L. Day (ed), *Gender and difference in ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), pp 178–194.

40 J. N. Cox, *Fore-mothers* (New York: Seabury, 1981).

41 *Ibid.*, p 100.

42 M. Gimbutas, 'Women and culture in goddess-oriented old Europe' in Plaskow and Christ (eds), *Weaving the visions*, pp 63–72. Gimbutas' seminal work is *The gods and goddesses of old Europe, 7000–3500 BC: myth, legends and cult images* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

- 43 T. F. Kensky, *In the wake of the goddesses: women, culture and the biblical transformation of myth* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1992), p 6.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p 120.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p 121.
- 46 J. Plaskow, 'Christian feminism and anti-Judaism,' *Cross Currents* 33 (1978), pp 306–309.
- 47 S. Heschel, 'Anti-Judaism in Christian feminist theology', *Tikkun* 5 (May-June, 1990), pp 25–28, 95–97.
- 48 J. Plaskow, *Standing again at Sinai: Judaism from a feminist perspective* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990).
- 49 *Ibid.*, p 149.
- 50 J. Plaskow, 'Anti-Judaism in feminist Christian interpretation' in E. Schüssler-Fiorenza (ed), *Searching the Scriptures*, Vol I, pp 117–129.
- 51 E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, 'The power of naming' in *Jesus, Miriam's child, Sophia's prophet: critical issues in feminist Christology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), pp 67–96.
- 52 *Ibid.*, p 71.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p 72.
- 54 *Ibid.*, p 85.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 L. Schottroff, *Lydia's impatient sisters: a feminist social history of early Christianity*, trans B. and M. Rumscheidt (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995), p 12.
- 57 K. von Kellenbach, 'Overcoming the teaching of contempt' in A. Brenner and C. Fontaine (eds), *Reading the Bible*, pp 190–202. She cites three German-language anthologies aimed at reform, edited by C. Kohn Ley and I. Korotin, by L. Siegele-Wenschkewitz, and by C. Schaumberger.
- 58 In *Anti-Semitism in early Christianity: issues of polemic and faith*, of seventeen contributors, only one is female. In *Explorations: rethinking relationships among Protestants, Catholics and Jews* vol 12, no 1 (1998), published by the American Interfaith Institute and World Alliance of Interfaith Organizations, contributors are eight men, including Jaroslav Pelikan, Irvin Borowsky, Edward Cardinal Cassidy and Krister Stendahl, but no women. On the editorial list of forty well-known biblical scholars, only two are women: Mary C. Boys and Beverly Gaventa.