

Athalya Brenner and Fokkeli Van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible*. Biblical Interpretation Series 1. Leiden, New York, Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1993. Pp. 211. \$65.75.

As the first volume in Brill's biblical interpretations series, Brenner and Van Dijk-Hemmes bring recent feminist literary theory to discussions about authority and gender in biblical scholarship. As Brenner explains, "What we wish to uncover are the gender positions entrenched in a text to the extent that its *authority* rather than its *authorship* can be gendered" (p. 6). They do this by calling attention to "F" (feminine) and "M" (masculine) voices within the Hebrew Bible. In so doing, they critically assess the asymmetrically gendered power relationships depicted within specific texts. Although their use of "F" and "M" to symbolize these gendered traces tends to gloss over the messy interplay among and between voices, it does offer a useful partial strategy for rethinking the issue of authority.

In her opening essay Van Dijk-Hemmes offers the model of "women's culture" as a way of accounting for "the roles, activities, preferences and rules of behavior *prescribed* for women and 'those . . . which arise from the life of women themselves'" (p. 26). Using this methodology, she builds on S. D. Goiten's early efforts (1957, 1988) to find traces of women's texts in the Hebrew Bible. Through her revised reading she finds "F" traces in songs of various kinds, wisdom and warning literatures, prophecy and soothsaying, laments, vows, prayers, and naming speeches. In the second section of the book Brenner offers more elaborate feminist readings for "F" and "M" voices in specific biblical texts. She reads for the "F" voice in Prov. 1-9 and for "M" authority in Qoheleth 3:1-9.

In the final section, "Divine Love and Prophetic Pornography," both authors provide pointed readings. Van Dijk-Hemmes looks at Ez. 23, while Brenner compares Jeremiah to *The Story of O*. Although powerful, these readings might have been enhanced by a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between "F" and "M" positions even within these more egregiously abusive texts. As it stands, their definition of pornography, which, as Brenner states, "deals with the objectification and degrading of 'women' in a manner that makes abuse of females acceptable or even commendable" (p. 185), does not fully address the complexity of pornography. Clearly absent from their account is any recognition of the possibility of a pornographic "F" voice that claims her own sexual agency. Neither of their readings acknowledges more recent sex-positive feminist writings about desire and sexuality.

Even with these reservations, their text remains quite valuable. As a feminist text that brings together Jewish and Christian biblical scholarship, it offers a powerful model for doing collaborative work. Even while maintaining their separate projects, Van Dijk-Hemmes and Brenner offer readers a powerful joint statement about the engendering of biblical texts. By maintaining their own voices they demonstrate the ways in which collaboration need not erase differences, thereby offering ecumenical readers a powerful model for reimagining ecumenical work. In their text "ecumenical" signifies an acknowledgement of the differences within feminist biblical scholarship as well as those between Jewish and Christian scholars.

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Geza Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. 244. Paper.

This book by the Professor Emeritus of Jewish Studies at Oxford University is the latest in his trilogy on Jesus, which began with *Jesus the Jew* (1973) and *Jesus and the World of Judaism* (1983). It is not a discussion of scholarly theological interpretations but a systematic analysis of the mainly synoptic context and content of Jesus' traditional teaching and religious vision, written mainly for students of the history of ancient religions and cultures. The eight chapters of this study, organized in the style of a handbook, form a threefold analysis: Jesus' relationship to the essential features of the Judaism of his time, Jesus' eschatological vision of God as king and Father, and Jesus defined as "a religious man."

Readers will immediately appreciate the author's informed precision and the thoroughness of his analyses both of the received opinions and of the authentic features of the extant portraits of the historical Jesus. The meaning of "the law," e.g., is given a strikingly clear definition as Vermes attends to the pre-Pauline characterization of Jesus as observant Jew as this is known in the