

"Tracing Esther's Beginnings" in *Esther, Judith and Susanna*) use theory as a way of illuminating texts. Tarlin builds on the work of Althusser, Lacan and Silvermann to show how the Elijah stories challenge the construction of readers as male 'subjects'. Beal uses Derrida's notion of erasure to show how the erasure marks, left by the removal of Vashti, point to the patriarchal order of the text, and expose "the limits and rupture-points in the order of patriarchal domination" (110) in the text. These sorts of readings are exciting and show that feminist biblical study is constantly growing in depth and scope.

The one volume in this series which I found disappointing is *Esther, Judith and Susanna*. While many of the papers in this volume are enjoyable (especially those that deal with gender differentiation, castration, and Holofernes's decapitation), I found the grouping of these three biblical women in one volume specifically problematic. Why these three? In Brenner's introduction to this volume, she lists several similarities between the three stories: all are relatively late, all depict Jewish women in a situation of foreign rule, all three texts make women visible. But then she goes on to compare them in terms of their ability to cause destruction, and their sexual behavior (they are all beautiful and in each case the story revolves in some way around their sexuality). But it seems strange that in a series of feminist writings, these women are grouped along traditional stereotypical/dualist lines (women as sexual beings; harbingers of death). Without some sort of exposition to justify this choice as one deliberately designed to highlight the androcentric biases in the three texts, it seems as though the volume supports the idea that groupings along traditional axes are normative.

Despite this oversight, it must be said that this collection is well organized, and user-friendly. The sections are clearly defined, and papers grouped accordingly. As well, each volume has an excellent bibliography (while one might wish for a little more current feminist theory, the biblical studies material is quite comprehensive) which compiles the references in the footnotes of the various papers. All in all, the *The Feminist Companion to the Bible* is a valuable resource for scholars, ministers, and students alike.

Erin Runions

McGill University

---

*Patriarchal Politics and Christoph Kress, 1484–1535, of Nuremberg.* By Jonathan W. Zophy. *Studies in German Thought and History. Volume 14.* Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992. ISBN 0-7734-9605-X. Pp. 291.

---

A monograph that comes with a good working bibliography and a general index deserves a scholar's attention. Whether it sustains interest beyond that depends on the subject matter, the writing style, the accuracy of the material, and the validity of the analysis. Zophy's descriptive analysis of the city of Nuremberg viewed through the career of one of its prominent citizens during a period of fifty-one years, 1484–1535, has several features to commend itself to the student of

early modern history. For one, the author details highlights in the life of Christoph Kress, placing them within the larger context of reform activities in German-speaking territories. For another, Zophy does not limit his attention to political or religious activities in isolation, but treats the work of Kress as one contribution to the emergence of evangelical politics in Nuremberg. Third, and somewhat incidentally, the reader is afforded a glimpse of how one of the prominent cities in the Holy Roman Empire faced the religious and political changes that were sweeping Europe at the time.

The study is further enhanced by ten illustrations scattered throughout the volume and by two appendices, one of which offers a chronological table, while the other is a copy of Christoph Kress's last will and testament. Unfortunately, somewhat indifferent editing has allowed a number of typographical errors, especially of foreign terms, to creep into the critical apparatus.

By the standards of the day, the career of Kress as tradesman, city father and representative of the city of Nuremberg in foreign lands was as predictable as it was successful. In early manhood he was apprenticed to an Italian businessman and spent some time in London. By the time he entered matrimony, he was ready to serve his city as one of its leading councillors—a position he maintained for some twenty-two years until his relatively premature death in 1535.

During his political career, Kress made a name for himself in successfully fighting baron-knights of the largely impoverished lesser nobility who made a living from robbing merchant caravans. Even though Kress seems to have identified with the Lutheran cause, as early as 1521, Zophy portrays him as a conservative man. Nonetheless, he was to play a leading role in defence of the Lutheran Confession at the 1530 Diet of Augsburg, which earned him recognition among the evangelicals and respect among his Catholic opponents for his statesmanlike sense of fairness and impeccable conduct.

At his death, the Nuremberg poet Hans Sachs eulogized Kress in a poem, and prominent dignitaries like Landgrave Philip of Hesse and King Ferdinand sent their tributes. The active yet relatively tranquil life of Christoph Kress provides a miniature mirror of the affluent dignity with which cities like Nuremberg weathered the storms of the far-reaching changes in the early modern era.

E. J. Furcha

McGill University

---

*Collected Works of Erasmus. Volume 50: Paraphrase on the Acts of the Apostles.* Trans. & Annotated by Robert D. Sider. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995. ISBN 0-8020-0664-7. Pp. xxvi+389.

---

Anyone who has ever doubted Erasmus's serious intentions as a reforming scholar should take a careful second look at the *Annotations and Paraphrases of Scripture* he produced. The latter, especially, were intended to get his readers involved in the drama of salvation history. In the process of his reading of Acts Erasmus probed the motives of some key players in that story and explored the