

M. MORGENSTERN, CH. BOUDIGNON, and CH. TIETZ (eds.), *Männlich und weiblich schuf Er sie. Studien zur Genderkonstruktion und zum Eherecht in den Mittelmeerreligionen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

This collection of 22 essays by as many authors (including the editors who wrote an instructive introduction) deals with the construction of gender and matrimonial law in the religions of the Mediterranean region. Thus the focus is mainly on Judaism, Christianity and Islam; the time span of the essays ranges from antiquity to the modern era. The essays originate in three symposiums held in Aix-en-Provence, Jerusalem and Tübingen in 2007 and 2008.

The basic idea behind the concept of the volume draws on the conviction that the relationship between man and woman is not founded on “natural” settings as the quotation

from Genesis 1:27 in the title might suggest, but rather on historical and socio-cultural conditions. As gender differences are mainly a social construct, new light is shed on texts that deal with man and woman. Gender construction, however, also plays a major role in contemporary political discourse, especially in the context of various forms of immigration into European societies. In these movements one can easily observe that "gender" is to a high degree religiously encoded.

Against this background, scholars of Religious Studies, theologians and historians from various sub-disciplines (stemming from eight countries of the European Union and the Mediterranean area) present their research on historical constructions of gender with a lively awareness of the political relevance of their essays. However, starting with the biblical idea of the creation of the human being as male and female and its reception history in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the contributors approach their topics from a historical distance, thus hoping to get deeper insights into contemporary issues from a historical perspective. The essays deal with texts from sacred texts of all three religions (Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Qur'an) but also from exegetical literature (Talmud, Kabbalah) and especially from juridical literature (Halakha, Shariah, Roman-Catholic Church Law, Codex Theodosianus, and Codex Justinianus). The exegesis of the relevant texts and their practical application in various contexts are demonstrated in several examples from different chronological periods and Mediterranean regions. The essays are grouped into three parts (main texts and their interpretation; juridical and social contexts; transformations), with indices of texts and persons. The three editors introduce briefly the overall concept of the symposiums and the volume, with a grateful acknowledgment of research grants sponsored by the European Union.

It is not possible to discuss or even abstract all 22 essays here; hence the following comments refer to those articles that might be of particular interest to readers of *Henoch*. The first essay (Joachim J. Krause) presents "Aspects of Matrimonial Law in the Pentateuch and the Pentateuch as a Source for Matrimonial Legislation." After a minimal definition of marriage and methodological considerations, he characterizes briefly the three main sources: the Covenant Code (Exod 20:22 – 23:33), the Deuteronomic law code (Deut 12-26), and Leviticus 18 and 20. He then introduces the Hebrew terminology in law and narrative texts and identifies the following aspects of matrimonial law in the Pentateuch: monogamy vs. polygamy, endogamy vs. exogamy, and the societal presupposition of patriarchy. In his conclusion, Krause states that the Pentateuchal texts do not lead to a single coherent system but are nevertheless used as the starting point for (social) legislation in ancient Judaism.

Anders Klostergaard Petersen analyzes gender and sexuality in early Christianity. He starts his search for a framework of understanding with Clement of Alexandria and his warning against effeminacy. While Clement clearly mirrors the gender system of his time, the Greco-Roman value system, it is often assumed that earlier Christian positions differ from it. However, as Petersen demonstrates in this study and other works, this is not the case. He summarizes basic terms of the Greco-Roman understanding of sexuality and the general perception of gender and sex in the Greco-Roman world. Against this background, he interprets several New Testament texts (1 Corinthians; Luke; 1 Timothy) and concludes that the earliest forms of Christian belief corroborated the basic understandings of the Greco-Roman gender system. Although stemming from a Jewish context, the texts are also deeply rooted in Greco-Roman culture.

Serge Ruzer analyzes the negotiating of the proper attitude to marriage and divorce in the New Testament as well as in Qumranic and rabbinic sources ("Marital Halakha and Eschatology: Patterns of Early Christian Discourse and their Jewish Setting"). The

aim is to compare the specifics of the approach to religiously motivated marriage law propagated in the respective communities. He concludes that there is a correlation between an eschatological agenda and the opinions on marriage, and, conversely, the stance on marriage provides an important indication of the nature of the community's eschatology.

Matthias Morgenstern compares Jewish marital law and the Christian discourse on virginity. He focuses especially on the tractate Ketubboth in the Jerusalem Talmud. Firstly, he has to note a discontinuity in Jewish marital law of Mishnah and Talmud to the prescriptions of the Hebrew Bible and the time of the Second Temple, supporting this point with several examples, including the teaching about the Levirate marriage. Next, Morgenstern sketches the influence of Roman law on Jewish marital law and asks, thirdly, about the possibility of Christian influence. Against this background, Morgenstern develops the hypothesis that the discourse about virginity in rabbinic literature (in the tractate Ketubboth) can be better understood as a reaction against the ideas and ideals of virginity in contemporary Christianity.

Christiane Tietz focuses on the reception of Gen 1:27 in the history of Christian theology. She analyzes how Christian theology defined the relationship between the two clauses that God created humankind in his image and that God created them male and female. She also explores how the difference of the sexes relates to the idea of equality of all human beings. Regarding the early church, Tietz compares Origen and Gregory of Nyssa against Augustine; for the Middle Ages she refers to Thomas Aquinas; and for the Early Modern Age she treats Martin Luther. Regarding the 20th century, Tietz demonstrates how Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth used the terminology of freedom and commitment in order to describe analogy and difference between humans and God. She closes with Feminist theological and Gender theoretical interpretations of Gen 1:27 and concludes with the description of an interesting development: while in earlier times the original human being was an androgynous creature in order to be understood as an image of God, the newest interpretations point to sexual differences within God himself in order to understand God as the "model" of human beings.

Edouard Robberechts discusses the relationships between man and woman in the Kabbalah. He starts with the basics of the Kabbalah in biblical and Talmudic interpretations. The two reports about the creation of human beings lead to a tension about the understanding of women: is the woman on an equal level with the man or, as some interpret the second account, an appendix of the man? This tension intensifies in the Kabbalistic speculations. Robberechts concludes that the Kabbalah finally tends to a relational unity, a pluralistic unity (the unity of the ten *sephirot*). Plurality, or better, duality already existed before creation, since before the world came into being, there was the Holy One and His name alone (see *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 12:6). The dual unity as the basic principle of creation leads to the hope of the Kabbalah that the Messianic time will provide a harmonization of the tension between men and women in the sense of a full acknowledgement of the fundamental equality of man and woman.

The other essays also deserve closer study, but due to space restraints, it is only possible to mention the name of the contributor and the title of the essay: Patrick Laurence, "Der *Codex Theodosianus*: eine sexistische Gesetzgebung?"; Rosa Maria Parrinello, "The Justinian Legislation regarding the Wives of the Monks and Its Context: The Letters of Barsanuphius and John of Gaza"; Mariachiara Giorda, "Frauen in den ägyptischen Klöstern der Spätantike: einige familiäre Funktionen"; Christian Boudignon, "Darf der König seine Nichte heiraten? Ein politisch-religiöser Disput über Inzest und Ehepolitik im Byzanz des siebten Jahrhunderts"; Yehoshua Frenkel, "Marriage and Family in Mamluk Palaces"; Miriam Frenkel, "Slavery in Medieval Jewish Society

under Islam: A Gendered Perspective”; Éric Chaumont, “Der Begriff der *‘awra* nach Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-Qaṭṭān al-Fāṣī (gest. 628 A.H./1231 n. Chr.)”; Richard Puza, “Die Ehe von Katholiken in einer multikulturellen und multireligiösen Welt: Die kirchenrechtliche und liturgische Basis mit einem Vorschlag für die liturgische Gestaltung katholisch-jüdischer Ehen”; Hans-Peter Grosshans and Simone Sinn, “Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen. Protestantische Transformationen im christlichen Verständnis der Geschlechterdifferenz”; Alexandra Wörn, “Marriage, Scripture and the Place of Women in Early Modern English Feminist Writings: Some Reflections”; Peter Yeshayahu Balog, “The Metaphysics of Jewish Parenthood According to S.R. Hirsch and Isaac Breuer”; Richard Puza. “Die kirchenrechtlichen Grundlagen des männlichen Priesteramts”; Lisa Anteby-Yemini, “Israeli Jewish Weddings: between Religious Law and Innovation”; Ari Ofengenden, “Man-Woman, Prophet-Priest: Charisma and Chauvinism in Hebrew Modernism”; Françoise Saquer-Sabin, “Frauen, Ehe und Erotik in der israelischen Literatur hebräischer Sprache”; Moez Khalfaoui, “Female Apostasy in Islam: Historical Debate and Current Challenges.”

The essays cover a wide variety of topics all circling around the construction of gender in religious communities and the related marital law that emerged in these communities. However, one will not find a basic overview of developments over larger time-spans or epochs; as such, the articles are rather intended for specialists than for a more general audience. A noteworthy advantage of the volume consists of the mixture of historical, theological, and cultural-anthropological approaches. On the one hand, the biblical theologian will learn much about phenomena analogous to well-known biblical concepts in the Mediterranean religions that build upon the bible, but which also develop a variety of idiosyncratic stances toward marriage, gender and sex. On the other hand, cultural anthropologists will learn to understand issues about gender constructions better by including the question of religion and its power in creating gender differences and marital restrictions.

*Thomas Hieke, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz*