



JR
C | RELIGION & CULTURE

Volume 26, Number 1 & 2

Sexed Religion

JR
C

RELIGION & CULTURE

Volume 26, no. 2



The JRC would like to acknowledge the support of sponsors
from within the Concordia University community:

Dean of Students
(Concordia Council on Student Life Special Projects Committee)
Department of Religion
Research & Graduate Studies
Faculty of Arts & Sciences
Office of the Vice-President Services

We would also like to offer our special thanks to:
Lynda Clarke, our very supportive department Chair;
Tina Montandon and Munit Merid, administrators extraordinaire;
The executive staff of the CRSA, for letting us drop by all their wine
and cheese events; all of our referees, readers and everyone else who
gave their time to the publication of this journal.



RELIGION & CULTURE

A Canadian Graduate Student Journal

2016 Volume 26, no. 1 & 2

Journal Committee

Executive Committee

Alexander Nachaj	<i>Editor-in-Chief</i>
Elyse MacLeod	<i>Article Editor</i>
Joseph E. Brito	<i>Publication Editor</i>
Georgia Carter	<i>Book Review Editor</i>

Editorial Board

Anthony Easton
Laurel Andrew
Dalia Ramirez Cote

Faculty Advisors

Marc P. Lalonde
Marcel Parent
Steven Lapidus
Carly Daniel-Hughes
André Gagné
Jean-Michel Roessli

The Journal of Religion and Culture is produced
by the Graduate Students of the Department of Religion at Concordia University.

© 2016 Journal of Religion and Culture,
Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec.

ISSN 1198-6395
Journal of Religion and Culture Volume 26, no. 1 & 2 (2015/2016)

All rights reserved. No part of this journal may be used or reproduced in any matter
without the express written permission of the editors except in the case of brief quotations
embedded in critical articles and reviews.

For information:
Journal of Religion and Culture,
Department of Religion (FA-101)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve O.,
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1M8

JRC logo designed: Christopher Burkart
Book design: Joseph E. Brito
Front cover artwork: Noémie Jean-Bourgeault
The type face of this journal is Minion Pro,
designed by Robert Slimbach,
issued as a digital Open Type font
by Adobe Systems, Mountain View California, 2000.

Content

- 101 *A Tribute to Donald L. Boisvert*
Steven Lapidus

Articles

- 103 *The Courage to Be Yourself:*
A Que(e)rying of Contemporary Protestant Existentialist
Theology
Jordan Wadden
- 120 *The Reproduction of Saint Sebastian as a Queer Martyr*
in Suddenly, Last Summer and Lilies
Nikola Stepic
- 135 *Discipleship and Gender*
in The Gospel According to Thomas:
A Narrative Analysis of Salome and Mariam
Through The Implicit Narrator
Joseph E. Brito

Book Reviews

- 157 ***Unmanly Men:
Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts***
Alexander Nachaj, reviewer
- 159 ***Muslims in the Western Imagination***
Parnia Vafaeikia, reviewer
- 162 ***Humanism:
Essays on Race, Religion, and Popular Culture***
Amin Mansouri, reviewer
- 164 ***Pastrami on Rye:
An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Deli***
Claire English, reviewer
- 167 **Call for Papers 2016/17
*Religion, Ideology and Violence:
Imagination, Display and Deployment***

Book Reviews

Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts
 Brittany E. Wilson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 360 p.
 \$74 CND (Hardcover).

Brittany E. Wilson's *Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts* is an important work that seeks to examine performative elements of gender in the Ancient world without retroactively applying categories and models that would be ill-fitted for the historical context in question. Remarking that scholars have done well to focus on the often underappreciated role of women and femininity in the gospels, Wilson seeks to address what has been a comparative lack of emphasis on examining men as men in the gospels. Specifically, her interest is in the "Lukan male" and how this understanding of masculinity both came into dialogue and conflict with Roman masculine norms and the cultural expectations of what it meant for a man to be a man. As a guiding question, Wilson seeks to understand how the author of Luke-Acts' (that is, the New Testament Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles) picture of God's power intersects with the larger canvas of cultural ideals concerning the necessity for men to wield power.

Focusing on what she determines to be an inherent contradiction between Roman society's understandings of the ideal male and the rather subversive (for the time) understandings of masculinity demonstrated in Luke-Acts, Wilson asks how would readers of this gospel have reacted to these passages and the characters within? While the purpose of her book is not to unearth the definitive way in which these figures were received, by focusing on how the depictions of these men were in dialogue with current social norms of masculinity, we can at least examine some of the varieties of ways they could have been received.

In the initial methodological sections of the book Wilson outlines a strong working definition for masculinity as a "configuration of historically located social and personal practices that fall within the larger realm of gender relations" (21), stressing cultural norms over biological givens. Inevitably, any focused study on masculinities will need to encounter and address some of the methodological issues raised by Connell in his pivotal *Masculinities*—namely, his concept of "hegemony" as an unstable apex of

conflicting behavioural expectations placed on men. Wilson does so by situating her study in its historical context by preferring the term "elite masculine norms", reminding her reader that the ancients did not have concepts of gender as we do today but rather worked along a spectrum of manly/unmanly behaviour.

Christian masculinities, when compared alongside elite Roman norms, are decidedly unmanly. While Wilson outlines several exceptions found within Luke-Acts, such as the Martyrdom of Stephen and Peter's powerful transformation in Acts, the majority of the men depicted positively in these books have a much more complex relationship with power and expectations. The bulk of this book is thus devoted to her analysis and discussion of four male figures from the Lukan texts who exhibited certain culturally "unmanly" traits: Zechariah, the father of Mary who temporarily lost his speech; the Ethiopian eunuch, an emasculated outsider; Paul, who lost both his sight and self-control after the apparition of Jesus; and lastly, Jesus himself, focusing on the passion narrative. Her chapters on Zechariah and the Ethiopian Eunuch are particularly engaging, as both are minor characters often overlooked in broader studies of Luke-Acts.

Shedding light on these odd men and their performative discourse with cultural norms is key to unravelling the author of Luke-Acts' understanding of not only ideal Christian portrayals of manhood, but also God's. Wilson makes it clear that in Luke-Acts God does not behave as other men do; God, rather than being a supporter of elite masculine norms, acts as a destabiliser of elite protocols. For men to become true disciples of this God, they have to be willing to give up, including the ideals of one's own manhood. The end result is a Lord and Saviour who at once looks and acts rather unmanly according to Roman society's expectations for masculinity.

Wilson's monograph is a most welcome addition to early Christian studies, and contributes to the broader discussion of Christian masculinities and religious men. Her careful methodology, close study of masculinities and conclusions can also be applied to other contexts, not limited in the least to ancient texts, as a similar approach could equally be used to examine literary depictions of men, masculinities and their engagement with cultural norms in both the Medieval and Modern times.

Alexander Nachaj
Concordia University