

***A Journey of Two Psalms: the reception of Psalms 1 and 2 in Jewish and Christian Tradition.***  
**Edited by S. E. Gillingham.** Pp. xx + 344. With illustrations. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN 9780199652419 (hardback). **£35.**

Professor Gillingham's thoughtful and engaging study of the reception history of Psalms 1 and 2 develops from her previous reception historical work on the Psalter and makes a considerable contribution to Psalms study in general. Immensely readable, beautifully presented, and thoroughly researched it is a joy to read and combines detailed insights with broad relevance. It will provide the reader with both specific input into these two texts as well as an impressive overview of Psalms studies through the centuries.

Gillingham outlines her aims clearly at the outset: first, to add to debates on the importance of the opening two psalms by means of reception historical study; second, thereby to examine the relationship between Jewish and Christian views of these psalms; and third, to test the thesis that the Temple is a theme that ties both together. After careful textual work which relates these two psalms with Psalms 19A and 19B, and consequently introducing the Temple theme as a motif common to both Psalms 1 and 2, she moves on to the body of the study.

The next nine chapters are structured more or less chronologically, with appropriate separate treatments of Jewish and Christian readings of the two psalms. Thus Jewish and Christian studies alternate at first, from Ancient Judaism (Chapter 2) to Early Christianity (Chapter 3); then Rabbinic and Medieval Judaism (Chapter 4) before the Early Middle Ages and the Reformation (Chapter 5). The following five chapters then combine Jewish and Christian traditions according to a more thematic arrangement: Liturgy is the subject of Chapter 6, while Chapters 7-9 cover the reception of Psalms 1 and 2 in visual, musical, and literary spheres respectively. Finally Chapter 10 relates much of what has gone before to academic discourse in Psalms study, before Gillingham's conclusion neatly ties up all the threads of her explorations.

Gillingham's use of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin is of the highest quality, both relevant and clearly communicated; with such a wide range of citations from different languages and sources one might realistically expect to find more than the single typographical error which simply omits a space between Hebrew words noticed by this reader (p. 73). This demonstrates the superlative care and precision that is consistent throughout this book. High-quality reproductions of artistic and musical exegeses of these psalms resonate with the authorial and editorial polish herein. Emboldening each author or tradition as they are introduced, Gillingham makes cross-referencing straightforward and swift, and gives a sense of the thoroughness of the survey and the development of a narrative. She modestly frequently insists that the texts she considers are just a selection, but to this reader's mind this is at the very least a considerably extensive selection. The vast theological ground covered also helps orientate readers who may know little of the reception history of the Psalter in any particular area. Thus a reader who might normally concentrate on a closely textual approach might find their outlook broadened in a welcome fashion by awareness of the treatment of the Psalms by different scholars throughout different ages and cultures.

Following through her thinking on Torah and royal themes in relation to the Temple motif, Gillingham charts where these influences diverge and converge across the centuries and exegetical traditions. Each section within a chapter is summarised; each chapter closes with a concise conclusion. The development of her thought is easy to pursue. Tracing her themes with consistent application of her methods, she in turn evaluates and seeks to make sense of the theological content and method espoused in all these traditions. Her observations on their different uses of the two texts are fascinating and often eye-opening, informing a reader's understanding of these varying cultures as well as the two psalms in focus. She catches the imagination in a variety of ways, for instance by her acknowledgement that while these psalms are prominent in illuminated psalters, they are rarely evidenced as an important part of the worshipping life of a community (p.156).

Gillingham furthermore highlights the *rapprochement* between Jewish and Christian readings of these psalms in her chapters on art, music, and poetry (p. 260), and thus contributes yet more to the growing popularity of reception historical study by the suggestion that it has the potential to bring different religions and cultures together (or at least deepen understanding of difference). Her second aim has thus been clearly achieved. As for her third aim, in her conclusion she recognizes that the Temple theme may not have been as prevalent as first expected (p. 288), yet she can successfully employ it in the service of her second aim, by pursuing the fairly recent metaphorical understanding of the Psalter as the Temple and the first two psalms as a gateway into it (p. 290).

All this, and more, indicates the fulfilment of her first aim. This book could indeed be read as a gateway into reception historical study not just of the Psalms but a demonstration of its usefulness as a method in Biblical studies in general. It could also be read as a gateway into Psalms studies just as Psalms 1 and 2 are depicted as a gateway into the Psalter. This book deserves to delight a broad readership and to inform a considerable range of scholarship both Biblical and beyond.