accusations of witchcraft (2 Cor 11:3,13-15) to lead to his opponents' dismissal from the group (see J. Neyrey, *Paul, in Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letters* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990] 203-6, 215).

The existence of 1 Thess 2:14-16 has been a painful thorn in the side of Jewish-Christian relations. In this fine volume S. has put us all in her debt by placing this problematic text in its likely polemical context.

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RICHARD SCHNECK, S.J., *Isaiah in the Gospel of Mark I-VIII* (BIBAL Dissertation Series 1; Berkeley: BIBAL, 1994). Pp. xii + 339. Paper $19.95.

Schneck, professor of Sacred Scripture at the Catholic University of Ecuador, wrote this doctoral dissertation at Xavier University in Bogotá to investigate whether Isaiah is the dominant prophetic influence on Mark.

Purely for ease in handling the material, his six chapters cover Mark 1, 2–3, 4, 5–6, 7, and 8. After investigating the citations and allusions as they can be discovered from the MT, the LXX, Targums, and Qumran usage, S. concludes to eighteen occurrences of Isaiah in Mark 1:1a,2–3,10,11; 2:7,16–20; 3:27; 4:12,24; 5:1-20; 6:34-44,52; 7:6-7,32; 8:17b,25. Thus, every chapter of Mark 1–8 has at least one citation of Isaiah or allusion to Isaiah. In each case, S. has researched carefully the vocabulary, grammar, and genre of both Mark and Isaiah, investigated the context of the passages in both authors, and dialogued with an impressive range of contemporary commentators on Mark. The result is the most exhaustive investigation of parallels between Isaiah and Mark currently available.

The book has several significant weaknesses. The dissertation format, with its overwhelming citation of all opinions, makes for difficult reading and sometimes hides from the reader which position S. is actually pursuing (the first paragraph on p. 30 remained obscure after three readings). Second, S. develops no clear pattern showing when Mark was using the MT, when the LXX, when the Targum, so that one has the impression that whichever text supports a parallel must have been the text Mark had in mind. Third, sometimes an aggregation of evidence whose individual components are tenuous add up to the impression of aggregated improbabilities instead of proof, as in all four alleged parallels to Isaiah in Mark 5–6.

Nevertheless, I would judge that S. has proved his thesis that Isaiah is Mark's favorite prophetic book. Those who consult the book for individual passages will find a mine of contemporary opinions, all judiciously weighed. BIBAL Press has set a high standard for a text almost free of errors and for sturdy binding; one looks forward to future numbers.

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DAVID SEELEY, *Deconstructing the New Testament* (Biblical Interpretation Series 5; Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1994). Pp. xvi + 201. Nlg 120, $68.75.

This is both a good volume and a curious volume, far more traditional than the title suggests. In reading it I was reminded of a certain panel discussion concerning methods of interpretation which included, among other persons, a practitioner of

traditional historical criticism as well as a deconstructionist in the manner of the Yale critics. I recall the admiration expressed by the latter for the arguments of the former —the preponderance of *aporias* in the text. In the end, however, the rationales offered for such findings were quite different: while for the historical critic such ruptures served as evidence of a process of literary accretion, for the deconstructionist they represented a collapse in the rhetoric or ideology of the text. In effect, both historical criticism and deconstruction engage in de-construction of the text; how they do so is a different matter. On this score the present volume is much closer to historical criticism than to deconstructive criticism; indeed, in many ways I find it to be a thoroughgoing, traditional exercise in source, tradition, and redaction criticism. That, I might add, is also its forte.

The historical impulse is evident from the start. A lengthy introduction not only contains no full-fledged exposition of deconstruction, its Derridean origins, and subsequent developments with a critical self-location of the author within such a trajectory but also offers a much too ready, though appreciative, dismissal of Stephen Moore, a logical interlocutor, as a scholar engaged in either a "survey . . . of options" or a "free-wheeling meditation." One finds instead a commitment to avoid "technical jargon" and to engage in "exegesis," or the "customary discourse" of biblical studies, an exposition of the close affinity between biblical studies and Derridean concerns, and an inkling of the driving force and values behind the proposed reading.

The last is helpful. By highlighting tensions and conflicting viewpoints, Dr. Seeley argues, deconstruction brings out variety and difference—an "enhanced understanding of our histories, our cultures, and ourselves." Lying in the background is the specter of univocity and control, of redaction criticism and its "offspring," narrative criticism, with their focus on unity and coherence. Thus, deconstruction stands for a "more subtle, sophisticated, and rigorous" return to historical criticism, with a view of the text in terms of dominant and dissenting voices inscribed and in tension.

The heart of the book, then, consists of a reading of Matthew, Mark, Luke-Acts, John, and Paul that focuses on "fissures, disjunctures, breaks, and seams" (deconstruction does have a method!) and posits multiple voices behind such ruptures. Such a reading concludes with a straightforward historical rationale for the ruptures: the different voices reflect and address different historical and theological circumstances in the early Christian communities, with the final product, the present text, invariably emerging as a deliberate, authorial sort of compromise in the recording of such voices. In the final chapter S. offers an overarching reconstruction of early Christian history, from the historical Jesus, through the early followers, to the later churches; in so doing, he locates the multiple voices uncovered in the preceding chapters along this developmental trajectory.

A number of comments are in order. First, the close reading of texts, with its atomistic emphasis on fissures and disjunctures, is excellent—a sharp warning to any claims for unity and coherence. Second, as S. himself realizes, though ever so fleetingly, the strategy advanced is as objectivist or positivistic as historical criticism ever was: the ruptures are *in the text,* are passed over by narrative critics, and are duly recorded by deconstruction. As such, the construct of the objective, universal, and disinterested critic remains very much at work in this enterprise. Third, there is an

implicit charge here that is true only up to a point: while narrative criticism may impose unity and coherence on a text, thereby silencing other voices inscribed in that text, it has no aversion to foregrounding diversity and difference between and among texts. Finally, while the present texts are deconstructed, the voices behind them are not; they emerge as seemingly unified and coherent positions, readily accounted for by historical and theological circumstances. In fact, even the final overview of early Christian history has more than a measure of unity and coherence to it.

In sum, this is a mild version of deconstruction, much more in line with traditional historical criticism, not only in terms of the "customary discourse" of the discipline but also with regard to its basic positivistic, historicist, and theological élan. At the same time, it is also an excellent exercise in "exegesis," with the sharp and insightful attention to detail and conflict characteristic of historical criticism at its best. Finally, this is a work whose driving values of diversity and difference are much in order and much appreciated.

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MARION L. SOARDS, *The Speeches in Acts: Their Content, Context, and Concerns* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994). Pp. xii + 218. Paper $22.99.

In this ambitious work Soards undertakes a comparative analysis of all the speeches in Acts both internally, among the speeches themselves, and externally, in relation to other ancient Hellenistic discourses. This study seeks to advance the interpretation of the speeches of Acts "to a more comprehensive level" (p. 10) than that attained by standard previous studies of an isolated set of speeches categorized according to speaker, audience, or stylistic features. S.'s main discovery is that the speeches of Acts contain numerous repetitive elements (vocabulary, style, emphases) which, taken together, provide a unifying frame around an otherwise sprawling account of Christian outreach to diverse people and places. In brief, "through the speeches . . . Luke shows the reader of Acts the essential unity of early Christianity" (p. 16).

Over half of the book is concentrated in the second chapter's serial analysis of all thirty-six speeches of Acts (by S.'s count), each following the same basic pattern. First, by way of introduction, S. briefly sketches the narrative setting of each speech, identifies its rhetorical strategies (heavily dependent on G. A. Kennedy), and provides a detailed topical outline. Then, in the analysis proper, S. pinpoints the speech's addressees before discussing its main contents. For the most part, S. does not explicate the meaning of these contents (although he tackles some interpretive issues in footnotes) but rather offers a catalogue of key terms and themes which appear elsewhere in the speeches. By repeatedly cross-referencing a number of the same common elements in the various speeches, S. builds his case for the overall coherence of this material.

In the third chapter, S. explores connections between the speeches in Acts and other samples of ancient literature, specifically, (1) Greco-Roman historiography,