John Sandys-Wunsch. *What Have They Done to the Bible? A History of Modern Biblical Interpretation*. Collegeville MN: Liturgical Press, 2005. xx + 378 pp. Paper. ISBN 9780814650288. $39.95.

This book turned out not to be what this reviewer thought it would be. From its title, I had expected a history of interpretation that would begin in the early 19th century and work through the major interpreters to the present day. I had expected that "modern" would mean "contemporary." However, in this book "modern" is used in one of its other senses, namely, pertaining to the post-Renaissance period. This book turned out to be a history of how modern, i.e. contemporary, biblical interpretation evolved, starting in the Renaissance, and concluding with Julius Wellhausen in the late 19th century. In this way, John Sandys-Wunsch is making an implicit argument about contemporary biblical interpretation, namely that the pattern set by the late 19th century is still being worked through. By tracing the development of biblical interpretation in the "modern" era, we are led to believe that the biblical interpretation of the past 150 years has only refined the work of earlier "modern" interpreters.

This implicit argument is far more interesting to me than the explicit argument of the book, which is two-fold. Sandys-Wunsch argues that the questions and discussion of issues that began in the Renaissance has had an impact on later biblical interpretation; that is, biblical interpretation as we know it began in the Renaissance. Secondly, biblical interpretation has not developed in a straight progression, but has changed in fits and starts, and has had many interesting side trips along the way. Throughout the book, Sandys-Wunsch continually ties later interpreters and their concerns back to the work of their predecessors, showing how the later work related to the earlier, whether as a continuation or as a refutation. Many interpreters who ended up being idiosyncratic, anomalous, or anachronistic are also highlighted. In this way, Sandys-Wunsch is able to demonstrate his two-fold main argument.

The book begins with a chapter that gives some basic terminology and introductory explanations of questions such as the nature of the biblical text, the formation of the canon(s), and other insights of critical examination of the Bible. Sandys-Wunsch is working with the two-

testament Christian Bible, but shows sensitivity to the study of the single-testament Jewish Bible. In his preface, and in his epilogue, he locates himself as a reader (ordained Anglican), which is helpful. He also locates himself as a reader in terms of his scholarship: he asserts that knowledge of the history of interpretation should prevent relativism or a pre-occupation with the now.

After the first chapter, the book continues on through the history of interpretation. Chapter 2 deals with the Renaissance, chapter 3 with the "Baroque" period of 1600–1660, chapter 4 with the period 1660–1700 and chapter 5 with 1700–1750—together these two chapters deal with the Enlightenment. Chapter 6 deals with 1750–1800, and chapter 7 deals with the 19th century, although only in part. Since the 19th century saw the implications of the previous three centuries of scholarship coming to full fruition, only some of the trends are noted; the chapter ends with figures such as Wellhausen and Loisy, who lived into the 20th century. Each of these chapters begins with a brief discussion of the major events in the intellectual and ecclesiastical history of the period under examination, and continues with a discussion of the contributions of a number of scholars. In many ways these chapters are reference tools.

Sandys-Wunsch has endeavoured to read the work of the various scholars in their original languages, and to trace original editions of the works if at all possible. While indebted to other scholars of the history of interpretation, he makes his own assessments of each scholar and his contributions. He writes with charm and wit, which makes the book more lively than one might expect. This book would be an ideal textbook for a course on the history of interpretation at the senior undergraduate or seminary level: it gives the major figures and their accomplishments in a way rather reminiscent of a reference book, yet there are excellent summaries and analyses of each period. I might note that there is a dearth of women scholars in this book, and the work of scholars such as Marion Taylor has shown us the contributions of major 18th and 19th century women interpreters. Taylor's book would be a good complement to this one (Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir [eds.], *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth Century Women Writ-*

ing on Women in Genesis [Waco TX: Baylor University Press, 2006]).

Sandys-Wunsch clearly sees the historical-critical method as the culmination of the development of biblical scholarship from its origins in the Renaissance. By the very organization of the book, I think it is implied that the past 150 years continue the pattern that had been set by the mid-19th century. In this book, each chapter is devoted to only two (perhaps three) generations of scholars; yet we have seen six generations pass since the mid-19th century. Has biblical scholarship not changed in that time? Or are we still working through the same questions? I think the current (and previous) generation of biblical scholars in fact has seen the end of the historical-critical method as the dominant one in Euro-American biblical scholarship, with a concomitant fracturing of the critical landscape. In that sense, one might see this book as a rear-guard action of the historical critics, defending the rightness of this line of inquiry, just as this book in part chronicles the efforts of the rear-guard during the Enlightenment to preserve the Bible from the early historical-critics. Whether this book is a summary or a eulogy depends very much on where one sits as a biblical scholar in the early 21st century.

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