

The 'Old Testament' as the origin of the patriarchy

A comparison of the German and Swedish debate

HANNA LILJEFORS



VERTAISARVIOITU
KOLLEGIALT GRANSKAD
PEER-REVIEWED
www.tsv.fi/tunnus

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30752/nj.125918>

ABSTRACT • This article explores and compares two similar debates in Germany and Sweden during the 1980s, in which feminists blamed the Hebrew Bible, or 'Old Testament', for being the origin of the patriarchy. In Germany, the psychologist and pedagogue Gerda Weiler articulated the discourse in several writings, which led to a scholarly debate on anti-Jewish tendencies within Christian feminist theology. In Sweden, the debate mainly became a media event, initiated by the author Birgitta Onsell. Instead of criticising the discourse, as in the German debate, other actors reinforced it, for example by highlighting Jesus as a feminist and a contrast to the Old Testament religion. The article further examines ideological consequences of the discourse, including the interdiscursive link to the notion of Judaism as responsible for the patriarchal moral that enabled the Holocaust, also expressed in the public sphere in Germany and Sweden.

Introduction

Anti-Judaism has stained Christian feminist theology since the days of Elisabeth Cady Stanton and *The Women's Bible*, a publication from 1895 later criticised for its anti-Jewish bias (Plaskow 2014).¹ In the 1970s and 1980s, a discourse describing the Hebrew Bible, often understood as the 'Old Testament', as the origin of the patriarchy was taken up and developed within Western academic feminist biblical interpretation.² Scholars from

fields such as archaeology, anthropology, psychology, and biblical studies continued the discourse (cf. Scholz 2017: 49–54; Day 2012; Ruether 2005: esp. chapter 1). The aim of this article is to describe and compare the debates that followed the accusation in Germany and Sweden.³ I will argue that, although the same discourse caused dispute in both countries, the debates had very different outcomes owing to the different arenas

2010: 358). The discourse in question thus represents the Hebrew Bible as the origin of the patriarchy. I will here mainly use the non-confessional term the 'Hebrew Bible', but the term the 'Old Testament' when referring to the discourse, since that is the term actors, that is to say, those who engaged in the debates, tend to use.

- 1 Susannah Heschel (1995b: 12) defines anti-Judaism as 'the tendinous denigration of Judaism for the purpose of elevating, through contrast, another religion or ethnic group' (mainly Christianity).
- 2 I use Norman Fairclough's definition of a discourse as 'a particular way of representing certain parts or aspects of the (physical, social, psychological) world' (Fairclough

- 3 I would like to thank docent Hanna Stenström for her insightful feedback on an early draft of this article.



Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

in which the debates took place, as well as which actors participated in them. The main difference can be summarised as the challenge and transformation of the discourse in the German setting, and the reproduction and the strengthening of the discourse in the Swedish. Further, I shall analyse the discourse's ideological consequences from a reception-critical perspective.⁴

The discourse: the Old Testament as the origin of the patriarchy

During the so-called second wave of feminism, the observation of the presence of goddess worship in pre-biblical religions and the lack of goddess worship in the Hebrew Bible led (mainly Christian) feminist scholars to the conclusion that the patriarchal bias in ancient Israel had caused the suppression of the goddess (Scholz 2017: 49–54). This conclusion resulted in a feminist scholarly quest to recover the goddesses and the presumed matriarchal societies in ancient South-West Asian cultures. Several Christian feminist scholars further speculated if perhaps the male god in the Old Testament was the cause of women's societal oppression in history as well as in the present. If the misogynous Old Testament religion had eradicated a previous matriarchal, or at least egalitarian, religion and culture, would not that make the Old Testament the origin of the patriarchy? In the 1970s and 1980s, books seeking to liberate women as well as goddesses from the androcentric god and

religion of the Old Testament proliferated (see Heschel 1990: 26; Scholz 2017: 49). The probably most influential representative of the discourse was the American art historian Merlin Stone's book *When God was a Woman* from 1976.⁵ Stone described the Hebrew Bible as a male attempt to rewrite history and change feminine symbols to masculine. According to Stone, pre-biblical matriarchal cultures held a goddess as the ultimate divine power who had created humankind, but the patriarchal writers of the Old Testament instead attributed this creative ability to a male god.

The main argument that constitutes the discourse is that pre-biblical societies included the worship of female gods, and that they were characterized by gender equality, peace, and harmony. However, foreign invaders brought with them a new patriarchal religion and eradicated all of these features, using violence and the tales of what became the Old Testament. The Old Testament introduced the worship of a single male god, and a religion and culture characterised by gender inequality, use of violence, and disharmony. Stone and others shared the basic assumption that the so-called shift from goddess religions to the religion described in the Hebrew Bible became the origin of, and has continued to legitimise, the patriarchal oppression of women (for similar publications, see Scholz 2017: 50).

Christian feminists who reproduced the discourse tended to draw on anti-Jewish stereotypes. For example, the claim that Jesus was a feminist, first articulated by Leonard

4 By *reception criticism* I mean the field within biblical studies that seeks not only to describe biblical interpretations, but also criticise them, to analyse their ideological consequences, and explore if they help construct or maintain relations of dominance. Cf. Morse 2015: 243–54, 2020: 8, 127, 257; Liljefors 2022: 39, 44, 58–9.

5 Another example is the American theologian Mary Daly's book *Beyond God the Father* from 1973, in which she criticised the androcentric language for God and sexist tendencies within the Christian tradition.



Some feminists wondered if perhaps the Old Testament was responsible for the emergence of the patriarchy. *The Expulsion of Adam and Eve*, after Domenichino, Italian (1581-1641). Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Ireland, Milltown Gift, 1902.

Swidler in 1971, could only be argued persuasively on the basis of a negative view of Judaism (Plaskow 2014: 86). Therefore, they portrayed Judaism as the antithesis to Christianity: Judaism equals sexism while Christianity equals feminism (p. 85).⁶ Jesus's attitude towards women, interpreted as positive, was described as unique in his context (i.e. Jesus was 'un-Jewish'), while at the same time Paul's putative negative attitude towards women was described as a result of his Jewishness (Plaskow 2014:

6 Actors sometimes assume that the Hebrew Bible equals Judaism, or that Judaism equals the so-called Old Testament religion (cf. Svartvik 2004: 54). To state the obvious, Judaism is not the same as Israelite religion, nor is Judaism limited to the Hebrew Bible or to be considered a primitive form of Christianity (cf. Selvén 2017).

89).⁷ Post-Christian feminists also drew on this tradition, replacing the charge against Judaism of deicide with the charge of the killing of the goddess. In what follows, I will illustrate how the discourse was reproduced and debated in Germany and Sweden during the mid-1980s.

Germany and the example of Gerda Weiler

That patriarchy entered Western societies with the Hebrew Bible was a common notion during the 1970s and 1980s among German feminists, especially among those who engaged in research on ancient matriarchal culture (Heschel 1995a: 137-8). They argued that

7 For analyses of a similar construction of the gay-friendly Christian Jesus and the homophobic Jewish Paul, see Svartvik 2006: 276; Marchal 2017.

the Old Testament hampered both goddess worship and egalitarian social structures by introducing a male monotheistic deity whose demand for exclusive loyalty led to religious intolerance, violence, and war. The idea was popularised in Germany by Gerda Weiler, perhaps the best-known example of a writer who reproduced the discourse in the German setting.⁸ Weiler (1921–94) was a psychologist and pedagogue (with a Catholic background), who in 1984 published a book concerning an earlier goddess religion entitled *Ich verwerfe im Lande die Kriege: Das verborgene Matriarchat im Alten Testament*. In the book, Weiler sought to unravel the ancient goddess that the patriarchal religion of the Hebrew Bible had allegedly tried to hide away. Weiler argued, referring to Stone, that behind the stories in Genesis, such as the creation stories and the stories of the patriarchs, lay much older myths about the creation of woman, women's divine powers and a matriarchate. In these myths, the so-called great goddess was the focus of worship. By cunningly reversing these older myths, men malevolently constructed the religion of the Hebrew Bible with the sole purpose of eradicating female power, both divine and human. The Hebrew Bible thus led to a shift, from a peaceful and equal matriarchal culture to a violent and misogynous patriarchal culture, a shift in both myth and reality, with severe negative effects on women's lives. Weiler argued that pre-biblical women enjoyed greater respect and fewer restrictions than women living after this 'shift'. She described male supremacy and violence against women as typical characteristics of deuteronomistic monotheism, resolute in its patriarchal oppression:

8 For more examples of German authors who reproduced the discourse, see Hommel 1987.

The victorious march of the Deuteronomist *Geisteshaltung* (ideology) in Judah accomplished the radical oppression of woman. The scope of misogynous polemic in the Old Testament reaches from the instructions of petty restrictions of women's rights in everyday life to the justification of the brutal murder of women. (Weiler 1984: 386, trans. von Kellenbach 1994: 93)

Weiler further distinguished between a matriarchal YHWH and a patriarchal YHWH, and described a tension between a peaceful and forgiving god and a violent war-god (the patriarchal YHWH). For Weiler, the latter coincided with the Jewish god. She argued: "There is no "Father in Heaven" without "Matricide"!" (Weiler 1984: 103, trans. von Kellenbach 1994: 114). Weiler wrote several books on related themes and travelled the German-speaking countries to give lectures on the subject, in particular at Protestant academies and feminist institutions. She also appeared on radio and television.

However, the book gradually met with criticism, first articulated by the scholar of religious studies, and self-identified Christian, Katharina von Kellenbach. Her review of the book in *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* (1986) initiated a German scholarly debate on anti-Jewish tendencies within Christian feminist scholarship. Von Kellenbach developed her argument in her often-cited *Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings* (1994). She there systematically described a broader pattern of anti-Judaism expressed by specifically Western Christian feminist scholars. Von Kellenbach accused Weiler of portraying Judaism as a 'viciously sexist religion whose patriarchal message had conquered the whole world. She [Weiler] stereotyped Judaism as militaristic, legalistic and intolerant and alleged that Judaism



Eva Moberg and others argued that the 'Old Testament God' not only legitimised but encouraged war and genocide. *Battle of Jericho*, by Johann Heinrich Schöpfung (1609-1684). Oil on panel, before 1684. Prague Castle Picture Gallery.

“exterminated” matriarchal cultures and killed the Goddess’ (von Kellenbach 1994: 8). Other German scholars also characterised Weiler’s argumentation as anti-Jewish, since she regarded the origins of Judaism as the rise of the patriarchy. The debate stormed in three issues of the German journal for ‘religiously interested women’ *Schlangenbrut* in 1987, and eventually led to a firm stand on the part of German Christian feminist theologians against anti-Judaism (Egnell 2006: 192). Numerous books, articles, conferences and lectures on the topic were published and organised (cf. Schaumberger and Maassen 1987; Siegele-Wenschkewitz 1988; Jensen *et al.* 1988; Siegele-Wenschkewitz 1991). Weiler’s interpretation, according to critics, was especially problematic coming from a post-Holocaust, German, feminist. Weiler was also criticised for using a problematic quotation, which blended biblical motifs with Nazi ideology: ‘The kingdom of Yaweh is obviously supposed to be an empire which he reigns himself as a king, while Israel supplies his civil servants, his court, and his *Herrenrasse*... The content of the covenant is aimed at making Israel head and master

over all peoples’ (Weiler 1984: 356, trans. von Kellenbach 1994: 100).

The response from the scholarly community eventually forced Weiler to edit her book. In 1989, it was reprinted as *Das Matriarchat im Alten Israel*. In the new edition, Weiler downplayed some of her most controversial propositions. The new edition also included an afterword in which she addressed the criticism, took a stand against anti-Judaism and argued that sexism, racism, and anti-Judaism are equally problematic and that one should not contrast feminism and anti-Nazism, since they both aim at equality.⁹

Despite her adjustments, Weiler’s work continued to be the subject of debate, forcing the feminist scholarly community in Germany to face how at least certain types of feminism had incorporated anti-Jewish notions. Notable critics of the discourse

9 Other feminists expressing the discourse were also criticised, of whom many opposed the critique. Weiler stands out since, at least to some extent, she attempted an apology. Cf. Heschel 1995a: 147–8.

were, in addition to von Kellenbach, the self-identified Jewish religious scholars Susannah Heschel and Judith Plaskow (cf. Heschel 1995a, 1995b, 2002; Plaskow 1978, 1991). In Germany, as in other countries, the discussion on anti-Judaism within feminist theology became a new field of Jewish–Christian dialogue (cf. Siegele-Wenschkewitz 1991). The reception of the discourse thus led to a transformation of the same, in the aftermath of the scholarly debate.

Sweden and the example of Birgitta Onsell

In 1985, one year after the publication of Weiler's first edition of the book discussed above, the discourse became the focal point of a heated debate in Sweden. There, the debate did not mainly concern goddess research, as in Germany. Instead, the discourse was articulated in relation to a debate partly concerning a coming new translation of the Christian Bible, and partly concerning a broader debate on gender equality. Nor did the debate take place within academia. Rather, it was the teacher and author Birgitta Onsell (1925–2012) who introduced the discourse into the Swedish public sphere.

Onsell was a self-identified Christian, although critical of and placing herself outside any Christian church. In 1985, she published the book *Galna gudar och glömda gudinnor* (Crazy Gods and Forgotten Goddesses, Onsell 1985a) as well as a debate article in Sweden's main daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, with the title 'Dags att göra upp med manskuden' (Time to settle the accounts with the male god). It was the debate article that gained the most attention. With references to Stone, Onsell argued that: 'With the help of Merlin Stone and the Old Testament texts we can ask if there is not perhaps a direct connection between the Lord on high and

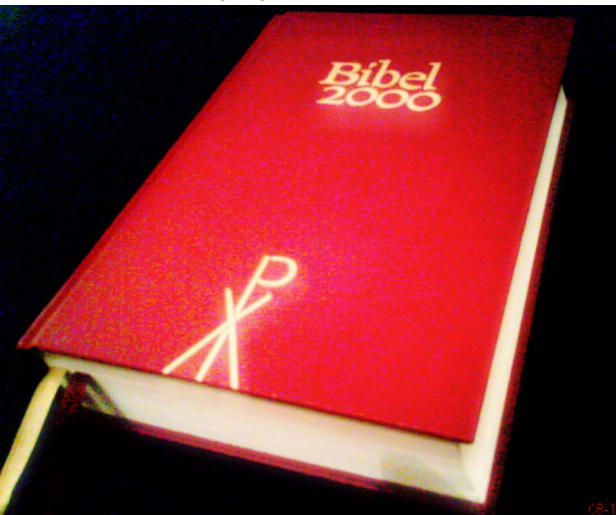
the lords of hardcore porn' (Onsell 1985b).¹⁰ Onsell argued that the Old Testament and its misogynous god were responsible for the patriarchy and its negative influence throughout history and on contemporary Swedish society, including the pornographic industry, discrimination on the job market, and men's violence against women. Because of this, the new Christian Bible translation, financed by the Swedish state to be used by, among others, the state church (Church of Sweden), needed to incorporate a foreword explaining and taking a stand against the patriarchal Old Testament.¹¹

The article started a public debate that went on for over a decade, mainly in Sweden's three main daily newspapers *Aftonbladet*, *Dagens Nyheter*, and *Svenska Dagbladet*. Onsell wrote extensively on the subject, publishing several books (Onsell 1994, 1999a, 1999b) and debate articles, all depicting the peaceful, gender-equal, pre-biblical goddess culture, and the catastrophic consequences of the Old Testament's new derogatory perception of women. Onsell was an important contributor to the writing of a motion in the Swedish parliament, arguing for the foreword mentioned above (Motion 1989/90: Kr407 *Gamla testamentets kvinnosyn* [The Old Testament's View on Women]). Her demand gained a lot of media attention and she was frequently interviewed in the daily press.

Onsell claimed that the misogynous Old Testament stood in contrast not only to a pre-biblical goddess religion but also to Jesus's message of equality, both characterised by their

10 Translations from Swedish to English are mine.

11 The translation was published, without a foreword, in 1999, and the Church of Sweden ceased to be a state church in 2000.



Should the new Swedish Bible translation, *Bibel 2000*, be sold with a warning regarding the problematic depiction of women in the Old Testament?

respect for women. She further emphasised that the violent god and religion of the Old Testament had eliminated the goddess and a religion based on love and equality, a religion Jesus tried to re-establish. Onsell portrayed Jesus as a feminist who took a stand against his misogynous contemporaries, rejecting his (Jewish) culture and religion, and as someone who had more in common with the pre-biblical goddess religion than the Old Testament. She argued that the church needed to 'tear down the wall of Moses' and 'make Christianity Christian' (Onsell 1988). Her argumentation thus depicted Jesus as a positive antithesis to the Old Testament and its religion, an argumentation with links to anti-Jewish stereotypes expressed in the Christian history of ideas.

In the public debate that followed, mainly in media but also in seminars organised by associations such as the Workers' Educational Association (Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund), Onsell met with criticism, especially for her demand for a foreword to the new bible translation (for an in-depth analysis of the debate, see Liljefors 2022). Gun-Britt

Sundström, for instance, an author working with the translation team, reasoned that there would not be many books left to publish, if texts with patriarchal leanings were banned (Sundström 1988, 1989a, 1989b). Another example is the movie star Claire Wikholm, who argued that the idea of a foreword is problematic; who would write it, and what would it say (Wikholm 1995)? In addition, several Christian religious authorities contested Onsell in two ways. Firstly, a minority pointed out that the Old Testament view on women was more complex. Secondly, a majority of the religious actors agreed with Onsell that the Old Testament view on women is upsetting but that this is not a problem since Jesus's positive view on women has replaced the Old Testament. Thus, in the debate that followed, an interdiscursive link to a discourse on supersessionism can be discerned, more explicitly so than in the Weiler debate.¹² No critical voice was raised over the anti-Jewish tendencies that could be detected in the debate.

Germany and Sweden compared

To me, there are two main differences in the reception of the discourse in the German and Swedish settings. The first has to do with the arenas in which the debates took place, and the types of actors who had access to them. In Germany, the debate mainly took place in the scholarly arena, with both Christian as well as Jewish scholars participating. Feminist scholars who reproduced the discourse, but mainly feminist scholars who were critical

12 R. Kendall Soulen defines supersessionism as 'the traditional Christian belief that since Christ's coming the church has taken the place of the Jewish people as God's chosen community, and that God's covenant with the Jews is now over and done' (Soulen 2005: 413).

and challenged it, engaged in the debate. Furthermore, scholars with knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and its historical context, as well as scholars with a familiarity with anti-Judaism, took part in the debate.

In Sweden, the debate mainly became a media event, in which only actors considered by the newspapers to be newsworthy had access to the platform, including representatives from the state church, journalists, and cultural celebrities. These were all more or less linked to a Christian tradition, and interpreted the Hebrew Bible from this premise. Jewish, as well as scholarly, voices were almost non-existent in the debate.¹³ Only a couple of articles by scholars from relevant backgrounds were published. The historian of religion Jan Bergman co-wrote a short debate article, arguing that: 'Although the articles by Birgitta Onsell include some details that scholars do not recognise', it is at the same time 'a good thing that it is finally known and recognised how "our" religion has affected the development of the patriarchy' (Bergman and Bergman 1988). Also, the biblical scholar Hanna Stenström had a debate article published, in which she criticised Onsell for reading the Bible in a fundamentalist way (Stenström 1992).¹⁴

The debate was affected by media logic, which limited the opportunity for scholars to take part in it. There is a theoretical possibility that scholars tried to get debate

articles published, but that the newspapers' editorial boards rejected them. News articles reporting from organised public debates on the matter show that there were critical voices raised against Onsell that did not get access to the debate pages. There was also a growing interest in Onsell's persona: the lone woman who dared criticise the Old Testament god as well as the state church. This growing media interest gained Onsell access to the platform in which the debate took place, including having thirteen debate articles published in three of Sweden's main daily newspapers.

A second difference has to do with the socio-historical contexts of the debates, which had an effect on what became the main issues of the debates. In the German debate, the focal point of the discussion became the anti-Jewish notions the discourse was accused of reproducing. This could have to do with the first difference, that it became a scholarly debate and that scholars were more aware of the anti-Jewish aspects of the discourse. In addition, it could relate to the fact that the debate took place in Germany. The memory of the Holocaust was possibly more vivid and perhaps there was a more profound awareness concerning anti-Judaism and its consequences. In Germany, the debate thus led to a resistance and transformation of the discourse because of the debate's focus on the oppression of Jews and a scholarly debate on anti-Judaism within mainly Christian theology.

In Sweden, no actor accused Onsell of expressing anti-Jewish stereotypes, at least not in the media material. Instead, the Swedish media debate came to focus on gender equality within the Church of Sweden, whether or not a foreword to the Old Testament was necessary, and how the Church of Sweden should deal with its patriarchal heritage (from the Old Testament) and take Jesus feminism seriously. The debate was

13 In a short news article covering a public debate on the Old Testament's view on women, two self-identified Jews (Aron Katz and Hans W. Levy) are interviewed (Rehnberg 1988).

14 Also, the biblical scholar Inger Ljung was interviewed in connection with the debate, supporting the discourse (Larmen 1989). In her book *Silence or Suppression*, published in the same year, she gave a more nuanced critique of the Hebrew Bible (Ljung 1989).

affected by a broader contemporary debate concerning gender equality in Swedish society, such as in the pornographic industry. The reception thus led to a reproduction of the discourse because of the debate's focus on societal structural oppression of women. In the debate, the Old Testament was attributed a role as scapegoat and the New Testament a role as solution. Onsell and others described Jesus as a feminist criticising the patriarchal religion and religious authorities of his time, which strengthened the discourse. This relates to the fact that several actors had a Christian background, critical to Christianity's patriarchal history, including misogynous texts in the Christian Bible (supposedly limited to the Old Testament; interestingly Paul was also described as a feminist in the debate), but not to Christianity as such. In Sweden as of yet, there has not been as extensive a scholarly debate on the matter as in Germany, though there are examples of scholars problematising the discourse (e.g. Egnell 2006; Stenström 2005; Svartvik 2006; Egnell and Stenström 2021; Liljefors 2022).

Ideological consequences of the discourse **Reinforcing an antisemitic ideology**

The discourse had problematic ideological effects. The claim that Judaism and its roots are the sole reason for the patriarchy became an argument that could be added to the anti-Jewish arsenal (von Kellenbach 1994: 121). As several scholars have pointed out, there 'is a specific female form of secondary antisemitism when matriarchal researchers blame Judaism ... for the destruction of patriarchy and depict it as an especially patriarchal religion' (Radonić 2015: 89). The discourse thus contributed to the reproduction of a relation of dominance, namely a majority group's (Christians') dominance over one minority group (Jews). This ideological

consequence can be illustrated by showing how the discourse became essential in the construction of an even more problematic discourse.

Brutality, power, and destruction are terms that reappear in feminist theologians' descriptions of the Old Testament god, with some even making connections between Jews and Nazism, using the Hebrew Bible as a motif (cf. Heschel 1995a, 1995b, 2002; Litchfield 2010). The Hebrew Bible is interpreted as demanding certain behaviours, producing a morality of obedience to divine authority. Later developments within Judaism are seen to strengthen such a morality, resulting in a religion characterised by legalism and authoritarianism. Although these stereotypes were not new, feminists drew 'the unique conclusion that Judaism's patriarchy is analogous to the morality of National Socialism' (Heschel 1995a: 136). The discourse thus centres around the argument that the combination of the violent god of the Old Testament and its demand for obedience has produced a climate that made the Holocaust possible. Since Judaism is the origin of the patriarchy, and Nazism in turn is the result of a patriarchal morality, Judaism is the enabler of Nazi ideology.

One German example of the discourse is the Christian feminist Christa Mulack, arguing: 'The omnipotence of the new God Jahwe had to gradually prove itself, in a terribly gruesome way. The books of the Hebrew Bible are full of the calls of Jahwe to murder nonbelievers', thus prompting genocide (Mulack 1988: 22–3, trans. Heschel 1995a: 138). In her book *Die Weiblichkeit Gottes: Matriachale Voraussetzungen des Gottesbildes* (1983) Mulack argued that the patriarchal religion became necessarily authoritarian and that the 'last consequence of this process ... presents itself in the Nazi system' (Mulack 1983: 248, trans. von Kellenbach 1994:

121). A couple of years later, in the book *Jesus: der Gesalbte der Frauen* (1987), Mulack again blamed Nazism on the male religion of Judaism, contrasting it with the female morality of Jesus. Mulack thus shifts the responsibility for the Holocaust from the perpetrators of violence, the Nazis, to the putative inventors of patriarchal religion, namely the Jews (cf. von Kellenbach 1994: 121). Heschel describes the analogy: 'Nazism is the result of the triumph of Jewish patriarchal morality over Jesus's feminist morality. German Christians are thus in no way responsible for the Holocaust; Jews are made by Mulack into victims of their own religion' (Heschel 1990: 96, 2002: 37). Mulack's argument was popularised in Germany in 1989 through the best-selling book *Jesus – der erste neue Mann* in which the journalist Franz Alt identified Nazism with Pharisaism, suggesting that Judaism was to blame for the Holocaust. The book has been described as 'the first anti-Semitic best-seller since 1945' (Heschel 1995a: 142).

The discourse on the Old Testament as not only the origin of the patriarchy, but subsequently also the reason for the Holocaust, reached beyond the German setting. In America, for example, the historian and goddess researcher Carol Christ argued in her book *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess* from 1987:

Amos contains an example of the persuasive prophetic intolerance toward other religions that has produced, among other horrors, a climate in which witches could be put to death in Europe, in which the genocide of Native Americans could be attempted by Europeans, and in which genocide of Jews could be attempted by the Nazis. (Christ 1987: 78)

Also in Sweden, a similar accusation was made in the media and the public debate. The feminist author Eva Moberg, basing some of her argumentation on Onsell, as late as in the year 2000 described the Old Testament god as a 'full-blooded Nazi', comparing the war crimes described in Numbers to the Holocaust, and the Old Testament to Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Although not explicitly accusing Judaism or the Old Testament of enabling the Nazi ideology or the Holocaust, Moberg highlighted the Old Testament's violence affirmative features, including glorifying and legitimise genocide and racism. In an article published in a Swedish journal focusing on questions regarding culture and society, *Ordfront Magasin*, Moberg argued:

The Lord ... is a full-blooded Nazi ... He is this according to seven criteria: 1. He demands racism. 2. He demands ethnic cleansing. 3. He demands ideological irreconcilability. 4. He opposes peace agreements. 5. He despises women deeply and perceives them to be mainly reproductive organs. 6. He adores violence and physical strength. 7. He has a chosen people that he gives a mission to to drive away or conquer all that stand in the way for their supremacy. This is not a malicious depiction. It can be attested with hundreds of quotations, and it appears throughout the entire spiritual and psychological climate that is present in the Old Testament. For a long time, it has been impossible even to talk about the great inner similarity between Nazism and the Old Testament God. (Moberg 2000a: 47)

The article quoted led to a debate, both in media and in public lectures mainly organised by different Christian associations. In *Dagens Nyheter*, a famous Swedish author, and self-identified Jew, Anita Goldman,

criticised Moberg for blaming Nazism on Jews, and for using the term ‘full-blooded Nazi’. Goldman argued that the term had antisemitic connotations (Goldman 2000). Moberg, in a response to Goldman, found the accusation preposterous, arguing that no other term, such as despot, could give justice to the Old Testament god, a ‘terrifying tyrant and mass murderer’, thus reinforcing her claim (Moberg 2000b). Moberg was further nominated for the Woman of the Year award by another newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, for having the courage to criticise the Old Testament god (Mårtensson 2000). The critique in the media was thus neither overwhelming nor uncontested.¹⁵ This, again, has to do with media logic, and that although scholars may have tried to get responses published, these may have been deemed not newsworthy by the newspapers in question.¹⁶ The fact that the connection between Nazism and the Hebrew Bible could be articulated in Sweden as late as in 2000 could relate to the lack of (published) critical responses to Onsell.

In both Germany and Sweden, the discourse on the Old Testament as the origin of the patriarchy was essential in the construction of the discourse on the Old Testament as the enabler or forerunner of

15 Hanna Stenström has described how, in a public debate organised by a feminist movement initiated by Onsell, *Upprörelsen* (a combination of the Swedish words for upset and movement), she had a surreal experience of arguing against Moberg and her Nazi terminology (Stenström 2005). Stenström has on several occasions argued for the need to address and adjust anti-Jewish tendencies within the feminist movement.

16 Stenström, for example, contacted *Ordfront Magasin* and tried to get a response published (Stenström, personal correspondence, 28.11.2022).

Nazism, although in different decades.¹⁷ One ideological consequence of the former discourse was thus the reinforcement of a broader antisemitic ideology.

Reinforcing a patriarchal ideology

The main problem with the discourse, I argue, is the fact that it reproduces anti-Jewish notions, as described above. But there are other problems as well. Here, I shall briefly elaborate on some scholarly responses concerning the historical (in)accuracy of the discourse, and underline how it was influenced by not only anti-Jewish stereotypes, but also a patriarchal ideology. In both Germany and Sweden, the discourse was reproduced by feminists, Weiler and Onsell, seeking to contribute to the transformation of oppressive structures within religion and society. However, regardless of their emancipatory claims, both Weiler and Onsell were in many ways affected by a patriarchal ideology.

From the mid-1980s, the discourse was criticised by scholars, who argued firstly that the patriarchy is older than the Hebrew Bible and Israelite religion. The historian Gerda Lerner, for instance, described a process in Mesopotamia where the once high status of the mother goddess became downgraded to a lower status of female goddesses in relation to their male partners. This was a process that stretched over thousands of years, as a part of a broader societal process, including changes in state organisation and economic relations

17 The Holocaust is still a recurring motif within European antisemitic discourse, depicting the State of Israel or Jews as the new Nazis, a motif known as the *Holocaust inversion*. See Gernstenfeldt 2007; cf. Iganski and Sweiry 2009; Klaff 2019.

(Lerner 1986: 7).¹⁸ Also, the biblical scholar Tikva Frymer-Kensky (1992) stressed that male gods came to dominate already in Sumerian religion, in which goddesses' functions and status became more limited. The marginalisation of the goddesses was a trend that started independently of Israelite religion, and negative views on women and goddesses expressed in the Hebrew Bible should be seen as a development of an already ongoing process. The writers of the Hebrew Bible adapted Sumerian, Babylonian, Canaanite, and Egyptian ideas, and the Hebrew Bible reflects narratives from surrounding cultures. Frymer-Kensky claimed that the patriarchal system described in the Hebrew Bible neither arose because of Israelite religion nor, in any substantial way, did it differ from that of comparable cultures. Scholars thus argued that the Hebrew Bible should not be understood as the uniquely misogynous black sheep of the history of religions, but should be seen in a broader socio-historical context.¹⁹

Secondly, critics stressed that the existence of goddesses in a pantheon does not automatically generate a matriarchate, or

18 Von Kellenbach later criticised Lerner, arguing that: 'For Lerner, Goddess worship remains superior to Hebrew monotheism even when the existence of Goddesses does not entail higher status for women' (von Kellenbach 1994: 94).

19 Scholars also stressed that much of the misogynous ideology within Judaism and Christianity has its roots in ancient Greece and a dualistic ideology. The Hellenistic religion in general, and Aristotle's view on women as incomplete humans in particular, contributed to the dominant position of the patriarchy in Western society (cf. Lerner 1986: 206). Hellenistic society was influenced by a patriarchal structure, despite the presence of female goddesses in the pantheon (Kraemer 1992: 28).

an egalitarian society.²⁰ On the contrary, relationships between deities could be hierarchical, and in turn be used to legitimise hierarchies between humans: a submissive goddess can justify the subjugation of women (Frymer-Kensky 1992: 25). Also, since goddesses tended to be characterised as motherly, fertile, caring *et cetera*, depictions of goddesses could be used to strengthen the gender order. Scholars thus emphasised that images of goddesses can be seen as not primarily strengthening women's rights but as reflecting patriarchal ideals (cf. Kraemer 1992: 76).

Thirdly, and more recently, scholars have stressed that people, owing to a lack of knowledge, run the risk of projecting their own wishes, norms, or prejudices on prehistory. In Sweden, the historian of religion Gabriella Gustafsson highlights how contemporary ideas on goddesses reveal more about currents in the present than about religious beliefs in the past. She claims that modern-day theologians depict popular versions of myths and images of ancient goddesses, and that the *Magna Mater* of antiquity does not have much in common with the modern concept of a universal goddess. Gustafsson further problematises the gender dichotomisation of the divine. She stresses that the inclination to change the gender of a deity from male to female is neither original and revolutionary nor problem-solving, but rather reproduces the problem of a gendered image of God (Gustafsson 2007).

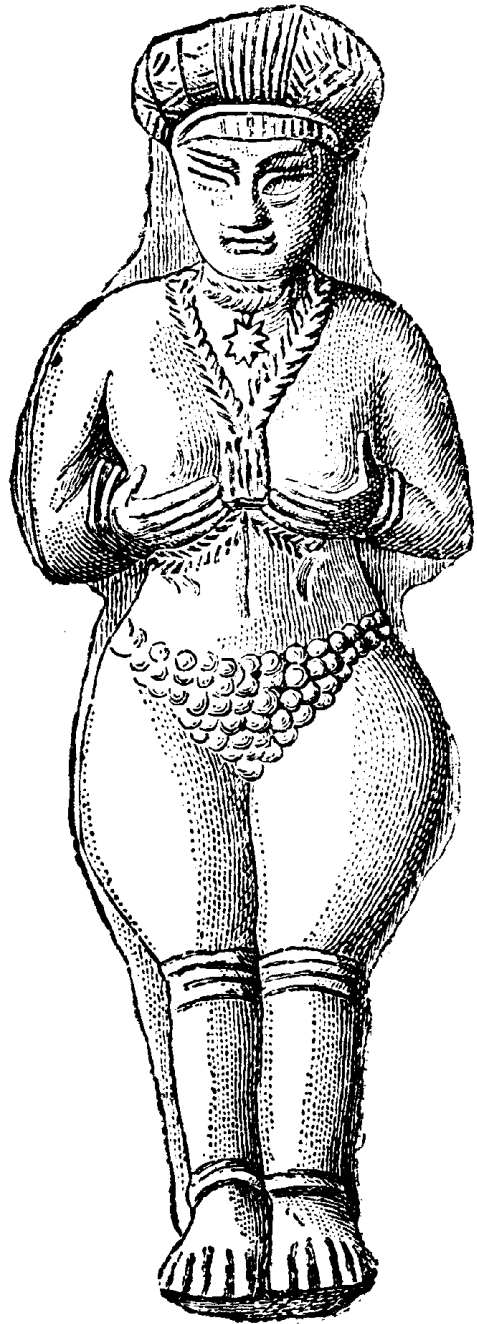
The gender-binary premise of matriarchal research continues to be criticised. The biblical scholar Francesca Stavrakopoulou, for instance, emphasises that it is uncritical to assume that the way ancient West Asian

20 For instance, Frymer-Kensky describes Ishtar as 'the supporter and upholder of the gender order' (1992: 80).

societies understood gender is coherent with how present-day Western societies understand it (Stavropoulou 2017: 498). Nor can one assume that gender constructions in the divine sphere reflected gender constructions in the human sphere. Stavropoulou further criticises the tendency to categorise ancient deities into male and female, since the border between these categories was fluid. She also identifies the pattern within goddess research of describing goddesses using a patriarchal gaze. The often naked body of the goddess tends to be reduced to a biological body, either nurturing or erotic. Stavropoulou labels the pattern *essential reductionism*, which she claims runs the risk of reproducing goddess caricatures (p. 500). She highlights a paradox in the research on ancient goddess worship:

In the quest to challenge and redress the marginalized presence and status of women (human and divine) in the societies from which the Hebrew Bible emerged, too many scholars have continued to perpetuate the Western, masculinist, and heteronormative gaze they seek to critique by replicating the reductive generalizations arising from binary gender constructions. (Stavropoulou 2017: 508)

Stavropoulou shows how descriptions of physical images of goddesses are influenced by an androcentric, sexist, Western language, for example when figurines or inscriptions are said to illustrate 'a very attractive carved topless goddess' (Stavropoulou 2017: 500). The critique thus concerns the connection between the depiction of the sensual, motherly, fertile, caring, biological female goddess, and a modern patriarchal ideology. This connection is especially apparent in Onsell's articles, in which she frequently describes and highlights the wonder, importance, and previous worship of the goddess's genitalia.



Stavropoulou argues that researchers tend to describe goddesses using 'the male gaze', limiting goddesses to being either erotic or nurturing female bodies. Image of a Babylonian Astarte-figure in the Swedish encyclopedia *Nordisk familjebok*, 1st (1876-99), 2nd (1904-26) or 3rd (1923-37) edition. Wikimedia Commons.

The underlying patriarchal ideology in the debates can be stressed in connection to Weiler's and Onsell's interpretations of both the Hebrew Bible and goddesses. For example, they both neglect Jewish and Christian feminists who have suggested more emancipatory readings of the Hebrew Bible.²¹ By only highlighting misogynous interpretations of the Hebrew Bible, Weiler and Onsell strengthen the idea that no alternative readings are possible. When assuming that it is impossible to make feminist readings of the biblical texts, for example to support women and their causes, they reinforce a traditionally patriarchal reading. Further, Weiler and Onsell assume that biblical portrayals of women are either patriarchal ideals or nightmares, while simultaneously assuming that descriptions of ancient goddesses are free from patriarchal or other ideological influences. In addition, their uncritical and idealised descriptions of goddesses tend to reinforce a binary gender construction. The male god is reduced to a warrior, the female goddess to being maternal and caring *et cetera*, not considering for instance that YHWH is described in the Hebrew Bible as both warrior and mother, and a goddess such as Ishtar is described as both the goddess of love and war (cf. Larsson 2021: 123–4; Kang 1989: 108).

By merely conveying patriarchal readings of the Hebrew Bible and at the same time attributing to goddesses characteristics that mainly concern fertility, sexuality, and care (thus reproducing modern gender stereotypes), both Weiler and Onsell are not only challenging a patriarchal ideology, but also reinforcing it.

21 For feminist biblical scholars who, contemporary with the debates, did emancipatory readings of the Hebrew Bible, see Bird 1974; Trible 1978; and Meyers 1988.

Conclusion

I have shown how a discourse blaming the patriarchy on the Hebrew Bible was expressed by feminists during the 1970s and 1980s. I have illustrated and compared the reproduction and reception of the discourse in Germany and Sweden through two examples, the Weiler and the Onsell debates. I argued that owing mainly to the different arenas in which the debates took place (within academia and the media), the discourse was either challenged and transformed (Germany) or reproduced and strengthened (Sweden). Further, I have highlighted how the discourse became an essential building block for the construction of a discourse blaming the Hebrew Bible, or even Judaism, for the Nazi ideology and the Holocaust. I argued that the discourse's ideological consequences are not only the challenge of a patriarchal ideology, but simultaneously a reinforcement of the same, as well as a reinforcement of an antisemitic ideology.

To conclude, there is a continuous need for feminist scholars from various fields and confessional backgrounds to seek, preferably in collaboration, to contribute to the transformation of discourses that reproduce relations of dominance, aware of the fact that also a liberating agenda can reproduce unjust and oppressive structures. I hope the examples given here have shown both the need and the possibility of doing so. ■

Hanna Liljefors holds a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible exegetics, gained at Uppsala University in December 2022. Her thesis concerns how the Hebrew Bible is debated, interpreted, and depicted in Sweden's main daily newspapers between 1987 and 2017. Her research interests are



biblical reception in the public sphere, as well as in newspaper media and on social media, in popular music, and in political debates. She is further interested in the development of the reception-critical field of biblical studies, as well as integrating reception studies with theories from the field of sociology of religion, such as mediatisation of religion and religious complexity. Photo: Roberth Björk.

References

- Bergman, Jan, and Kerstin Bergman. 1988. 'När griper kyrkan tag i feminismen?' (When will the Church grasp feminism?), *Dagens Nyheter* 11.5.1988.
- Bird, Phyllis A. 1974. 'Images of women in the Old Testament', in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster), 41–88.
- Christ, Carol. 1987. *Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers).
- Daly, Mary. 1973. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press).
- Day, Peggy L. 2012. 'Hebrew Bible goddesses and modern feminist scholarship', *Religion Compass* 6(6): 298–308, doi: <<https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2012.00356.x>>.
- Egnell, Helene. 2006. *Other Voices: A Study of Christian Feminist Approaches to Religious Plurality East and West* (Uppsala University).
- Egnell, Helene, and Hanna Stenström. 2021. 'Antijudiska fallgropar i liberal och feministisk teologi' (Anti-Jewish pitfalls in liberal and feminist theology), in *Tala väl: Predikokommentarer i Krister Stendahls anda* (Speak Well: Sermon Comments in the Spirit of Krister Stendahl), ed. Helene Egnell (Uppsala: Svenska Bibelsällskapet), 29–33.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2010. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge).
- Frymer-Kensky, Tikva. 1992. *In the Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture and the Biblical Transformation of Pagan Myth* (New York: Fawcett Columbine).
- Gernstenfeldt, Manfred. 2007. 'Holocaust inversion: the portraying of Israel and Jews as Nazis', *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs* 1.4.2007, <<https://jcpa.org/article/holocaust-inversion-the-portraying-of-israel-and-jews-as-nazis/>> (accessed 5.10.2020).
- Goldman, Anita. 2000. 'Bibeln kan läsas på många sätt' (The Bible can be read in many ways), *Dagens Nyheter* 17.2.2000.
- Gustafsson, Gabriella. 2007. 'Gudinnan och arketyperna: om nyandliga tolkningar av grekisk mytologi' (The goddess and the archetypes: on neo-spiritual interpretations of Greek mythology), *Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademin Konferenser* 64: 34–45.
- Heschel, Susannah. 1990. 'Anti-Judaism in Christian feminist theology', *Tikkun* 5(3): 25–8, 95–7.
- Heschel, Susannah. 1995a. 'Configurations of patriarchy, Judaism, and Nazism in German feminist thought', in *Gender and Judaism: The Transformation of Tradition*, ed. T. M. Rudavsky (New York University Press), 135–54.
- Heschel, Susannah. 1995b. 'Anti-Judaism / anti-Semitism', in *Dictionary of Feminist Theology*, eds. Letty M. Russell and Shannon J. Clarkson (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press), 12–13.
- Heschel, Susannah. 2002. 'Reading Jesus as a Nazi', in *A Shadow of Glory: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust*, ed. Tod Linafelt (New York: Routledge), 27–41.
- Hommel, Gisela. 1987. 'Jewish, Christian and Muslim women in dialogue: the Bendorf Conferences', *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe* 21(1): 43–28.
- Iganski, Paul, and Abe Sweiry. 2009. *Understanding and Addressing the 'Nazi Card'* (London: European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism), <<https://archive.jpr.org.uk/object-1259>> (accessed 18.10.2022).
- Jensen, Anne, Evi Krobath, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, et al. 1988. 'Stellungnahme feministischer Theologinnen zum Vorwurf des Antijudaismus', *Schlangenbrut* 21: 36.
- Kang, Sa-Moon. 1989. *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter).
- Kellenbach, Katharina von. 1986. 'Antisemitismus in biblischer Matriarchatsforschung? Rezension zu *Ich verwerfe im Lande die Kriege* von Gerda Weiler', *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* 3: 114–48.
- Kellenbach, Katharina von. 1994. *Anti-Judaism in Feminist Religious Writings* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press).

- Klaff, Lesley. 2019. 'Holocaust inversion', *Israel Studies* 24(2): 73–90.
- Kraemer, Ross Shepard. 1992. *Her Share of the Blessings* (Oxford University Press).
- Larmen, Marianne. 1989. 'Guds ord förtrycker kvinnan' (The word of God suppress women), *Dagens Nyheter* 18.8.1989.
- Larsson, Mikael. 2021. 'Trouble in God's household? Children and parents in the frame of Isaiah', in *La Maison de Dieu*, ed. Christian Grappe (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck), 81–132, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1628/978-3-16-161080-6>.
- Lerner, Gerda. 1986. *Women and History: The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford University Press).
- Liljefors, Hanna. 2022. *Hebreiska bibeln debatterad. En receptionskritisk studie av diskurser om "Gamla testamentet" i svenska dagstidningar 1987–2017* (The Hebrew Bible Debated: A Reception Critical Study of Discourses Concerning the 'Old Testament' in Swedish Daily Newspapers 1987–2017) (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma bokförlag).
- Litchfield, Sara. 2010. 'Feminist theology and the Holocaust', *Feminist Theology* 18(3): 332–40, doi: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0966735009360384>.
- Ljung, Inger. 1989. *Silence or Suppression: Attitudes Towards Women in the Old Testament* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International).
- Marchal, Joseph A. 2017. 'Pinkwashing Paul, excepting Jesus: the politics of intersecularity, identification, and respectability', in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood (Oxford University Press), 432–53, doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198722618.003.0025>.
- Mårtensson, Mary. 2000. 'Årets kvinna' (Woman of the year), *Aftonbladet* 8.3.2000.
- Meyers, Carol. 1988. *Discovering Eve* (Oxford University Press).
- Moberg, Eva. 2000a. 'Du skall inga andra gudar hava jämte mig' (Thou shall have no other gods before me), *Ordfront Magasin* 1–2: 44–50.
- Moberg, Eva. 2000b. 'Allt utvecklas, så även Bibeln' (Everything evolves, including the Bible), *Dagens Nyheter* 24.2.2000.
- Morse, Holly. 2015. 'What's in a name? Analysing the appellation "reception history" in Biblical studies', *Biblical Reception* 3: 243–64.
- Morse, Holly. 2020. *Encountering Eve's Afterlives: A New Reception Critical Approach to Genesis 2–4* (Oxford University Press).
- Motion 1989/90: Kr407. *Gamla testamentets kvinnosyn* (The Old Testament's View on Women), <https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/motion/gamla-testamentets-kvinnosyn_GD02Kr407> (accessed 11.12.2022).
- Mulack, Christa. 1983. *Die Weiblichkeit Gottes: Matriachale Voraussetzungen des Gottesbildes* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag).
- Mulack, Christa. 1987. *Jesus: der Gesalbte der Frauen. Weiblichkeit als Grundlage christlicher Ethik* (Munich: Kreuz Verlag).
- Mulack, Christa. 1988. *Am Anfang war die Weisheit* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag).
- Onsell, Birgitta. 1985a. *Galna gudar och glömda gudinnor* (Crazy Gods and Forgotten Goddesses) (Stockholm: LT).
- Onsell, Birgitta. 1985b. 'Dags att göra upp med manskuden' (Time to settle the accounts with the male god), *Dagens Nyheter* 28.4.1985.
- Onsell, Birgitta. 1988. 'Påskägget arv från gudinnan' (The Easter egg a legacy from the goddess), *Dagens Nyheter* 2.4.1988.
- Onsell, Birgitta. 1994. *Efter tusen år av tystnad* (After a Thousand Years of Silence) (Stockholm: Carlssons Bokförlag).
- Onsell, Birgitta. 1999a. *Avklädd Gud* (Undressed God) (Stockholm: Carlssons Bokförlag).
- Onsell, Birgitta (ed.). 1999b. *Någonting annat har funnits...* (Something else has existed) (Stockholm: Carlssons Bokförlag).
- Plaskow, Judith. 1978. 'Christian feminism and anti-Judaism', *Cross Currents* 28(3): 306–9, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24457968>.
- Plaskow, Judith. 1991. 'Feminist anti-Judaism and the Christian God', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7(2): 99–108, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25002158#metadata_info_tab_contents>.
- Plaskow, Judith. 2014. 'Anti-Judaism in feminist Christian interpretation', in *Feminism, Theology and Justice*, eds. Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Aaron W. Huges (Leiden: Brill), 83–96.
- Radonić, Lilijana. 2015. "You cannot be Jewish and feminist": from feminist antisemitism to post-feminist "post-Zionism", *Journal for the Study of Antisemitism* 7(81): 99.
- Rehnberg, Anna Maria. 1988. 'Debatt om Gamla Testamentet' (Debate on the Old Testament), *Svenska Dagbladet* 24.10.1988.

- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 2005. *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine: A Western Religious History* (Los Angeles: California University Press), URL: <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1p1p1p1>>.
- Schaumberger, Christina, and Monika Maassen (eds.). 1987. *Weil wir nicht vergessen wollen... zu einer Theologie im deutschen Kontext* (Münster: Morgana Verlag).
- Scholz, Susanne. 2017. 'Eve's daughters liberated? The Book of Genesis in feminist exegesis', in *Feminist Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Retrospect*, volume 1: *Biblical Books*, ed. Susanne Scholz (Sheffield Phoenix Press), 33–61.
- Selvé, Sebastian. 2017. 'The Bible in Jewish-Christian dialogue: a Jewish perspective', *The Expository Times* 128(6): 268–75.
- Siegele-Wenschkewitz, Leonore (ed.). 1988. *Verdrängte Vergangenheit, die uns bedrängt* (Munich: Kaiser Verlag).
- Siegele-Wenschkewitz, Leonore. 1991. 'The discussion of anti-Judaism in feminist theology: a new area of Jewish-Christian dialogue', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7(2): 95–8, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25002157#metadata_info_tab_contents>.
- Soulen, R. Kendall. 2005. 'Supersessionism', in *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, eds. Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn (Cambridge University Press), 413–14.
- Stavropoulou, Francesca. 2017. 'The ancient goddess, the biblical scholar, and the religious past: re-imagining divine women', in *The Bible and Feminism: Remapping the Field*, ed. Yvonne Sherwood (Oxford University Press), 495–513, doi: <<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198722618.003.0028>>.
- Stenström, Hanna. 1992. 'Replik om Upprörelsen' (Comment on Upprörelsen), *Svenska Dagbladet* 13.12.1992.
- Stenström, Hanna. 2005. 'Gudinnemördare eller systrar i kampen: anti-judiska motiv i feministiska teologier' (Goddesses killers or sisters in the fight: anti-Jewish motifs in feminist theologies), *Svensk Kyrkotidning* 101(8–9): 107–11.
- Stone, Merlin. 1976. *When God was a Woman* (New York: Dial Press).
- Sundström, Gun-Britt. 1988. 'Patriarkal bibel inte översättarnas fel' (Patriarchal Bible, not translators' fault), *Dagens Nyheter* 14.4.1988.
- Sundström, Gun-Britt. 1989a. 'Människor kunna icke leva utan kvinnor' (Humans cannot live without women), *Dagens Nyheter* 25.8.1989.
- Sundström, Gun-Britt. 1989b. 'Fler säger nej till kampanjen' (More say no to campaign), *Dagens Nyheter* 16.9.1989.
- Svartvik, Jesper. 2004. 'Teologi på andra sidan Hippos murar' (Theology on the other side of the walls of Hippo), *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 69: 51–70.
- Svartvik, Jesper. 2006. *Bibeltolkningens bakgator: Synen på judar, slavar och homosexuella i historia och nutid* (The Alleyways of Biblical Interpretation: The View on Jews, Slaves and Homosexuals in History and Present Times) (Stockholm: Verbum).
- Trible, Phyllis. 1978. *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press).
- Weiler, Gerda. 1984. *Ich verwerfe im Lande die Kriege: Das verborgene Matriarchat im Alten Testament* (München: Frauenoffensive).
- Weiler, Gerda. 1989. *Das Matriarchat im alten Israel* (Stuttgart: W Kohlhammer).
- Wikholm, Claire. 1995. 'Kärningen mot strömmen' (The shrew against the grain), *Aftonbladet* 1.3.1995.