psychological and gender assumptions to the fore.

Gary Burnett

The Diet of John the Baptist: 'Locusts and Wild Honey' in Synoptic and Patristic Interpretation
James A. Kelhoffer
WUNT 176; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005, 3-16-148460-6, €69.00, xxiii + 256 hb

In some personal remarks in his opening acknowledgments, James Kelhoffer notes two factors that set him on the research that he presents in this fine book. The first was a chance encounter with a dead locust and the revulsion he felt at the thought of eating it, the second the realization that existing scholarship offered little detailed discussion of John's diet as recorded in Mk 1.6c/Mt. 3.4c. The result is a careful analysis of these two texts and a detailed account of their patristic interpretation, together with a glance at some more recent Wirkungsgeschichte. Kelhoffer assesses each evangelist's quite distinctive presentation of John's diet to shed light on their own presentation of John, assesses the place of locusts and honey in ancient diets, and reflects on John's place in Second Temple Judaism. Given the differences that he finds between the synoptic accounts, he observes that it is hardly surprising that later interpretations of John's diet would vary. Two in particular were dominant: John as vegetarian (locusts are dealt with in various ways!) or as a model of ascetic practice for Christians to imitate. The book concludes with acute hermeneutical reflections, and some avenues for further research.

While sections on locust eating today and the nutritional value of locusts and honey may seem of more interest to anthropologists and food-scientists than to historians of early Christianity, this book contains much of value for those with historical and theological interests in the NT. It will be of use for readers with an interest in the quest for the historical Baptist, the redactional work of the evangelists and the development of the synoptic tradition, and the subsequent reception and interpretation of the NT, especially in the patristic period. The monograph is accessible to undergraduate students as well as to those working at a more advanced level.

Andrew Gregory

Getting the Gospels: Understanding the New Testament Accounts of Jesus' Life
Steven L. Bridge

In this book Steven Bridge deals with the four canonical Gospels. He endeavours to convey the 'real meaning' behind some of the narratives they contain, in order for the reader to gain a greater appreciation of what the Gospels are 'getting at' as they recount the life and ministry of Jesus. He divides the book into three sections: The Early Years, Jesus' Public Ministry, and Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection. In these sections he altogether examines 12 'case studies', which he selects from the four Gospels. So far the book is fairly typical of an introductory text book to the canonical Gospels. What makes the book distinctive (though not unique) is the way it uses secular, usually contemporary, analogies to help the reader grasp the messages of the Gospels. These secular analogies include an NBA basketball legend, the film Titanic, King Arthur's