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Anathea Portier-Young. *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism.* Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2011. xxiii + 462 pp. $50.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8028-6598-4.

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Rethinking the Imperial Context for Early Jewish Apocalypticism

This impressive monograph, a thoroughly revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation carried out under the direction of James L. Crenshaw at Duke University almost a decade ago, provides a new reading of the cultic crisis purportedly threatening the Jerusalem Temple in Judea during the first half of the second century BCE, a cultural schism whose main events are known almost exclusively from later apocryphal sources like 1 and 2 Maccabees or allegedly contemporary visionary (that is, "apocalyptic") compositions like the biblical book of Daniel, or early portions from what would later figure within the parascriptural collection of writings known by modern scholars as *1 Enoch*. Portier-Young's presentation is divided into three sections. Part 1 ("Theorizing Resistance") introduces the conceptual scaffolding, largely postcolonialist, which distinguishes her study of Second Temple Israelite history and literature from those of almost all her predecessors by furnishing the theoretical support for her reading of early Judean apocalyptic treatises as "resistance literature." Part 2 ("Seleucid Domination in Judea") explores the various state-sponsored mechanisms by which the Seleucid Empire suppressed and exploited the indigenous populations under its control. Much of this section, however, is dependent upon the historicity of what must be labeled "partisan" sources. Part 3 ("Apocalyptic Theologies of Resistance") focuses attention upon the divergent programs of resistance against imperial hegemony that are offered in Daniel and the Enochic apocalypses, respectively. A chapter summarizing the conclusions reached and an epilogue which suggests five trajectories for future study round out this handsomely produced volume.

Such a comprehensive effort is bound to generate a multitude of provocative insights regarding the character of Israelite literature originating during the Second Temple period, almost all of which was produced under imperial domination. The frequent resort to pseudonymity in these works, for example, is explained by Portier-Young as a type of resistance stratagem whose intent is to counter imperial decrees and rescripts by challenging the empire's autonomy and anchoring the Judean traditions in the distant past, where they are "embedded in creation, fixed for all time, and handed down … from long ago" (p. 35). She points out that pseudepigraphical ascription situates "writer and reader alike within a particular tradition, privileging an ancient and also living, organic discourse that displaces that of the empire" (p. 43). Such an explanation works well for the Judean apocalyptic compositions (such as those in *1 Enoch*) that she has primarily in view, but it remains unclear whether the pseudepigraphy rampant in other genres of literature such as psalmody, priestly instructions, or didactic works can be similarly clarified. The precise shape of Judean "ancestral traditions" in an age predating the physical existence of a canonical "Bible" could also be a problem, but it is one which the author happily recognizes: she correctly argues that the phrase "ancestral traditions" should not be facilely equated with either the Mosaic Torah or with canonical scripture (pp. 73-77; although she regresses to just such a facile equation on p. 307!), and she acknowledges the undoubtedly competing claims as to what constituted the "ancestral traditions" during the Second Temple era of Israelite history.

The author makes a compelling case for a carefully plotted program of Seleucid state-sponsored terror against Judea, especially during the reign of Antiochus

IV (175-164 BCE). Its intent was to demolish and then rebuild a "world and identity" for the Judeans in order "to assert the empire as sole power, reality, and ground of being" (p. 178). Even so, her translation(s) from Daniel (for example, pp. 178-85) sometimes veer into overly graphic paraphrase. At times the author is carried away by her own rhetorical flourishes. Her rather florid remarks about 1 Macc 1:55 (p. 206) are marred by a faulty understanding of the meaning of the Semitic root *qtr*, where the Semitic text underlying the Greek likely spoke of sacrifice in general, and not specifically "incense." Similarly, 1 Macc 1:62 does not "mandat[e] that Judeans eat impure food" (p. 206) or decree "that Judeans must eat pork" (p. 212). Finally, the massacre described in 2 Macc 6:11//1 Macc 2:29-38 should not be blithely accepted as historical, since it is blatantly modeled on the similar story found in Judg 9:46-49.

The biblical book of Daniel and three apocalyptic clusters found within what later became known as *1 Enoch* (the "Book of Watchers," the "Apocalypse of Weeks," and the "Animal Apocalypse") are held to be representative of the types of political opposition offered by Judeans against the claims of Seleucid hegemony. According to the author, the materials in Daniel advocate a program of nonviolent resistance, whereas the Enochic texts call for armed revolt. She argues convincingly that the "strength" and "power" associated with characters like Daniel and the repeatedly invoked "smart ones" (Hebrew: *maśkilim*) is not martial or military in nature, but consists instead in the possession and wielding of true knowledge and wisdom. God's "law" (Hebrew: *torah*; Aramaic: *dat*) is explicitly contrasted by Daniel with that sponsored by the empire and is pronounced to be sovereign over that of mere earthly kings. By contrast, the notion of God's "law" "in the biblical book of Ezra (where we find the same terminology) is subsumed *under* that of the king (pp. 245-46). These are excellent points which illustrate how different factions within Judean society during the Second Temple period were grappling with the overlapping issues of covenant loyalty, fealty to the ruling monarch, and divinely sanctioned "laws."

The author's discussion of the Enochic materials is less satisfactory. She (like many of her peers, unfortunately) seems to conceive of *1 Enoch* as a unified work of Jewish redaction, but this is an uncritical, anachronistic retrojection of the editorial shape and contents of the Ethiopic version of Enoch, a form extant only in medieval *Christian* manuscripts, back into pre-Christian history. For example, during her discussion of the Enochic booklet known as the "Book of Dreams," she seems to assume that *1 Enoch* 1-90 existed as a single literary continuum before the middle of the second century BCE (p. 367). Similarly (p. 310), how is it possible for a "book" which did not yet exist to "survive[s] … *in toto*"? Her choice of language betrays these unexamined assumptions, the latter of which also extend to an uncritical privileging of the biblical narrative formulation of antediluvian events over their alternate formulations in parascriptural literature such as that preserved in the Enochic works. She is, however, rightly cautious about the historical value of so-called Enochic Judaism (p. 294, n.50), a modern construct which basically re-inscribes the tired nineteenth-century scholarly bifurcation between competing "prophetic" and "priestly" camps for control of the national legacy, and she deftly critiques those who have proposed that Enochic literature is in some way antithetical to the literature that recognizes Moses as the chief religious authority by arguing that the Enochic corpus actually undermines imperial, rather than Mosaic, claims to authority. The author, however, errs when she avers, "covenant is mentioned explicitly only in *1 Enoch* 93:6" (p. 298): the same Ethiopic word (*šerʿat*; cf. Arabic: *šarʿia*) is also used in 93:4 and 99:2, and its semantic range is by no means restricted to that of the English "covenant." She probably misunderstood George Nickelsburg's less sweeping claim that 93:6 supplies the sole reference to the *Sinai* covenant (cf. the first volume of his *1 Enoch* Hermeneia commentary *ad loc.*).

For a work that teems with annotations, citations, and quotations in a variety of ancient languages and scripts, it is truly remarkable that only one misprint was noticed: on p. 367, n. 50, the reference to Deut 29:4 should read instead 29:3. Despite the quibbles voiced above, this is a vitally important contribution to our understanding of the Second Temple Judean discursive responses to imperial rule.

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