
Kulik's latest commentary on 3 Baruch is a welcome addition to the acclaimed Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature series (CEJL), as well as to the field of 3 Baruch studies and Judaic studies in general. As Kulik correctly describes, the book of Baruch "has been relatively neglected in modern scholarship" (3), but in more recent years we have seen it garnering more attention partly thanks to H.E. Gaylord's famous unpublished dissertation The Slavonic Version of III Baruch and D.C. Harlow's monograph The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch (3 Baruch) in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity. This latest commentary on 3 Baruch will prove to be another indispensable tool suitable for students and researchers alike.

3 Baruch is an extremely complicated text, not only owing to the esoteric nature of its story concerning a person's otherworldly adventure in the heavens, but also due to our lack of better manuscripts. Fortunately, Kulik presents the materials with such clarity that his book is highly readable. The commentary is divided into two main parts: (1) a 60-page introduction supplemented by an updated bibliography, and (2) a translation and commentary of 3 Baruch spanning 300 pages. The book concludes with 50 pages of convenient indices of references, names and subjects, and authors.

The introduction provides crucial information on the manuscripts, original language, date and provenance, content, message, and worldview of 3 Baruch. The most helpful of the lot is the section where Kulik attempts to retell a coherent story of 3 Baruch based on the extant content of the manuscripts available to us, supplemented by his
comments on concepts that may appear foreign to modern readers and helpful notes on some of the major differences between the Greek and Slavonic versions. What makes studying 3 Baruch so difficult is that its reader can become so entangled in the differences between the two versions that one often fails to see 3 Baruch as a whole. Therefore, Kulik's summary has done a great service to its readers and efficiently prepares them for the commentary that will focus more on the minute details. It is regrettable that Kulik's discussion of the original language and date of 3 Baruch is too brief, however. True, there is no decisive evidence that can help us determine the book's original language and date, but readers looking for an informative discussion of these issues must turn somewhere else. Provenance is another extremely difficult problem that has been haunting 3 Baruch researchers, but Kulik's handling of this problem is noteworthy and exemplary for future studies of 3 Baruch. While it is impossible to pinpoint the book's provenance, Kulik argues that "...the text is deeply rooted in Jewish lore and cannot be understood out of the context of traditions preserved in Jewish (and even specifically Rabbinic) literature. Thus, the question of whether its Jewish author believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the true messiah may seem irrelevant..." (13).

Just as with other commentaries in the series, Kulik's includes an English translation of both versions of the section of the text to be discussed, but some readers will be disappointed that the translation is not accompanied by the Greek and the Slavonic texts. In any case, the core of this commentary is Kulik's comments and notes, and they excel. As he notes early in the book, "the worldview, the message, and the very textual structure of 3 Baruch are enigmatic in many aspects... I will try to show, however, that the incomprehensibility of 3 Baruch is due to the fact that it is filled with non-explicit data, which may have been clear to its target audience while being hidden from modern readers" (4). As a competent scholar in Jewish, Christian, and Slavic texts, Kulik has
delivered on his ambitious promise through this well-researched and well-presented commentary. Indeed, the most impressive feature of this commentary is its knowledgeable author's ability to provide the background and foreground of certain words, themes, and concepts that may seem elusive otherwise.

Just like any great book, Kulik's commentary is not without some mechanical errors (e.g., "Baruch learns that the sun's crown is defiled through its rays by human sins, and and [sic] he learns that the Bird is exhausted by the sun's radiation" [17]). Nevertheless, it is undeniable that this book is a helpful tool, definitely a prominent one for Baruch researchers for many years to come.

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