

Grabbe, Lester L. *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*. 2 vol. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992. xxxi + 772 pp. Cloth, \$56.95.

Recent scholarship has produced tremendous upheavals in our understanding of Second Temple Judaism. Slowly but surely, specialized studies have revealed romantic and/or anti-Semitic biases undergirding earlier twentieth-century historical reconstructions, while others have eroded these pictures through direct engagement with the primary data. The once-sure results of critical scholarship have been replaced by a confusing morass of individual studies with few attempts at synthesis and little, if any, guidance for the uninitiated. Within this context, Lester Grabbe's two-volume tour through Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman eras should be welcomed as a tremendous aid, introducing pastors, professors, and students to the basic literature and issues of these formative eras, as well as an attempt to synthesize recent scholarship into a coherent and relatively complete position.

The strength of Grabbe's work is his systematic and thorough engagement with the primary sources and recent scholarship. Grabbe approaches each era with four sections: (1) a bibliographical guide, (2) a brief introduction to the sources, (3) a more focused discussion of specific historical issues within each period, and (4) a final synthesis. Only chap. 8, "Sects and Violence: Religious Pluralism from the Maccabees to Yavneh" (463-554), and a brief conclusion (607-616) deviate from this chronological and historical format by attempting to map ideological differences between groups and developments between eras. This format is extremely clear and "user-friendly." If nothing else, its clarity ensures the work's importance as a reference, facilitating quick and easy access to major literature, events, and persons within each historical era, as well as an entry into scholarly debates concerning the proper interpretation of this data.

Grabbe's own scholarship is also evident throughout. As a rule, he organizes his final syntheses around the major international rulers and policies. While this helpfully and rightfully places Judaism within the political, social, and religious milieu of the wider eastern and Mediterranean world, it tends to divert Grabbe's synthesis from Judean developments to short summaries of shifts within the imperial apparatus of the Achaemenids, Ptolemies, Antiochenes, and Romans. Judea and Judaism, meanwhile, fade into the background, hidden beneath the intrigues of powers beyond its borders.

As is not surprising in a work of this magnitude, the imprint and influence of certain scholars emerge within Grabbe's treatment of each era. One might detect the influence of Peter Ackroyd in volume one's treatment of the Persian period, with Grabbe's cautious emphasis on what we do not know compared to what we do. Philip Davies's revisionist scholarship plays a central role in Grabbe's reconstruction of Hellenistic Judea and Judaism. Finally, Jacob Neusner's important contributions form the backdrop for much of Grabbe's presentation of the Roman period. A

certain minimalist position therefore runs consistently throughout the two-volume work. This approach emphasizes the perspective of sources rather than our ability to delve "behind" the sources in order to establish historical "events."

Conceptually, Grabbe's most important contribution is to include the Persian period within the same historical continuum as the Hellenistic and Roman eras. Previous scholarship had largely isolated the Persian period from later developments, despite the fact that many formative institutions within Hellenistic and Roman-era Judaism emerged at this time. While one might have desired more depth in the social and ideological analysis of shifts and developments within and between the eras, Grabbe has laid the agenda before us for future thought, discussion, and research.

Indeed, Grabbe's volume is not the final word on the subject, nor does it claim to be. It is, however, an important beginning. By carefully laying out the data and the issues, and by offering a synthesis for dialogue and interaction concerning the historical development of early Judaism, Grabbe has served us well. It is a unique and essential resource for all those with an interest in the subject.

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Hill, Craig C. *Hellenists and Hebrews: Reappraising Division within the Earliest Church*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1992. x + 237 pp. \$24.95.

This publication is a revised version of Hill's Oxford dissertation, written under the direction of E. P. Sanders. It follows a path opened up by W. D. Davies when he questioned the trend locating Paul within a hellenistic cultural mix and argued for his Rabbinic Palestinian background. Davies' student, Sanders, then argued for the vitality of Rabbinic Judaism, exposing the prejudicial picture NT scholarship had painted of it. Now Sanders' student, Hill, argues against the prevalent denigration of Jewish Christianity by NT scholarship. For all three, F. C. Baur and his Hegelian Tübingen "school" serve as the foil against which the argument must be made.

Technically, the book wishes to exegete just one verse of Scripture: Acts 8:1b. In fact, on account of what has been built on this text, much more is involved. The scholarly consensus has been that the seven deacons of Acts 6 were, in reality, the leaders of a Hellenistic Christian community in Jerusalem. When one of them, Stephen, was martyred, those who had opposed him persecuted the other Hellenists, driving them out of Jerusalem, thereby unwittingly accelerating the Gentile mission, which advanced rather easily on account of its more liberal views on circumcision and the ritual law. Meanwhile, the Hebrews, led by the pillar apostles, remained in Jerusalem unmolested on account of their theological conservatism. Consequently, Paul had continuous difficulties with the