

Matthias Henze

Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel

Reading 'Second Baruch' in Context

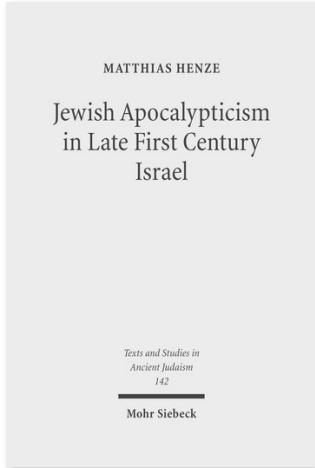
[Jüdische Apokalyptik im späten ersten Jahrhundert. Eine Untersuchung des *Zweiten Baruch*.]

Published in English.

The *Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch* or *Second Baruch* is a Jewish work of the late first century C.E., written in Israel in the aftermath of the Jewish War against Rome. It is part of a larger body of post-70 C.E. Jewish literature. The authors of these works had a difficult charge. They needed to re/imagine Judaism and its central symbols, take count of a thriving Diaspora, and articulate how Jewish life was to be lived from then on, without the benefit of a temple. Written at a time of religious reconstruction and mental reorientation, *Second Baruch* occupies a unique place in the history of early Jewish thought. In this highly original work, the author of *Second Baruch* developed an apocalyptic program that was intended for post-70 C.E. Judaism at large and not for a small dissident community only. The program incorporates various theological strands, chief among them the *Deuteronomic promise* of a prosperous and long life for those keeping the Torah and the *apocalyptic promise* of a new heaven and a new earth.

In this book, Matthias Henze offers a close reading of some of the central passages in *Second Baruch*, exposes its main themes, explains the apocalyptic program it advocates, draws some parallels with other texts, Jewish and Christian, and locates *Second Baruch*'s intellectual place in the rugged terrain of post-70 C.E. Jewish literature and thought. For modern readers interested in Judaism of the late Second Temple period, in the Jewish world from which early Christianity emerged, and in the origins of rabbinic Judaism, *Second Baruch* is an invaluable source.

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