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Adam Gregerman, *Building on the Ruins of the Temple: Apologetics and Polemics in Early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), pp. xiv + 266, €119.00.

This revised PhD dissertation, written under the guidance of the late Alan Segal, examines the ways in which selected Christian and Jewish writings discussed the implications of the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple for their ongoing perception of God's relationship with the groups to which they belonged. Against one school of thought, which would downplay the significance of that event, Gregermann wants to emphasise its importance for a developing set of apologetic arguments, put forward by Jews and Christians, who shared a set of assumptions about God's relationship to the world, but who arrived at different and sometimes contradictory conclusions in response to the events associated with the destruction. For Gregerman, these responses betray evidence of mutual knowledge on the part of Jew and Christian of their divergent interpretations, but only of a general and indirect kind. The book, then, is a contribution both to the subject of the development of Jewish and Christian apologetics as well as the question of Jewish-Christian interaction.

The book divides itself into seven chapters. In the introductory chapter Gregerman, inter alia, discusses a variety of methodological issues; and justifies the choice of ancient works he is going to examine (Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho*, Origen's *Contra Celsum*, Eusebius' *Demonstration and Lamentations Rabbah*), mainly on the grounds that they betray a strong interest in what might be termed an apologetic use of the destruction of Jerusalem and because they all have a Palestinian provenance. There then follow a series of chapters dedicated to the discussion of the Christian sources. After answering preliminary questions to do with the date, audience and purpose of the text concerned, Gregerman analyses the author's explanation of the destruction, dividing it into two sections, dedicated to the writing's views of the period preceding 70 and a justification of the destruction; and its view of the destruction and its consequences. What emerges strongly is the way in which all the writings discussed attach the legitimacy of gentile Christianity to a punitive interpretation of the events associated with 70, often seen as punishment for the killing of Christ by the Jews, and how the implications of that event are extended to the Jewish law and the gentile mission. The broad similarity of these arguments can in part be explained by the fact that later writers knew earlier writers, though neither Origen acknowledges his use of Justin, nor Eusebius, at least in the specific context under discussion, his use of either Justin or Origen. The influence of these positions on the New Testament, especially the Gospels and Paul, should be acknowledged

and also accounts for the similarities between them. While the different emphases between the writings are discussed, the abiding sense is of a broad agreement on the major themes.

The two chapters which follow these concern the rabbinic response to the destruction. In chapter 5 Gregerman outlines, *inter alia*, the way in which numbers of Rabbis sought to explain the fall of Jerusalem through a Deuteronomistic theology which accounted for suffering by reference to Israel's sin, and looked forward to future redemption. In his opinion, scholars of rabbinic literature have too easily accepted the view that the rabbis adopted this position. Responses were more diverse.

In the following chapter, which constitutes a close analysis of passages in *Lamentations Rabbah* which concern the destruction of Jerusalem he shows how '(t)heological beliefs about divine solicitude and the Jews' status as God's chosen people clashed with a bitter historical reality' to produce a range of responses contrary, or at least in tension with the Deuteronomistic view. Some of these admitted that Israel had transgressed, while others did not. Some accepted that the destruction was an act of God, while others sought to play this down in a kind of antitheodicy. In the midst of articulating such views doubts are expressed about God's capacity to fulfil his obligations to Israel in a variety of ways, or to act in a way compatible with a king. Such views come to have at one and the same time both a radical and conservative aspect, radical in that God's power and justice are challenged; conservative in that the possibly shocking implications of what is being asserted are not carried through consistently. In the end, and perhaps with anti-Jewish Christian assertions in the background, God is never seen to have forsaken Israel.

A final chapter presents the reader both with a summary of the book and a number of conclusions arising from it.

This is a thoughtful and carefully argued book, which draws attention to the ongoing importance of what some take to be a seminal event in Jewish history for both Jews as well as Christians. By and large what is said seems sensible and well founded. A few points and questions emerge. First, it is important to realise that Christians only really began to exploit the issue of the destruction of Jerusalem for their own polemic after the Bar Kokhba revolt, in whose wake Jerusalem became a pagan city with the name *Aelia Capitolina*, and Palestine an essentially pagan land, when they could be certain that the temple would not be rebuilt (the New Testament's more muted exploitation of the event has a reason behind it). This means that approaches to the destruction of Jerusalem inevitably blend memories from the events of 70 and 135. Related to this is the question of the nature of the role of the destruction in the development of Christian apologetic. While Gregerman has succeeded in showing that the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple

was important for the buttressing of certain Christian claims (in this respect note should be taken of the almost hysterical response of Christian authors, from Gregory Nyssa to Cyril of Alexandria, to Julian's decision to rebuild Jerusalem as a Jewish city), he has not discussed its role in creating particular Christian ideas – did the events of 70 make a difference to the nature of Christian polemic or simply bolster ideas which already existed?

The implications of Gregerman's book for the study of Jewish–Christian relations are interesting. He is clear that there is evidence of 'some form of clash', a mutual knowledge of arguments, but he sees this as resulting from indirect contact, perhaps through the hearing of public preaching and through third parties, and certainly not based upon any detailed knowledge of individual arguments ('they had an awareness of some of the claims of (Gentile) Christians or (rabbinic Jews, understandably viewed these as threatening, and therefore chose to shore up their own communities' counterclaims'). *A priori*, he is unwilling to countenance more detailed exegetical knowledge and so evidence for more direct encounter. The arguments in this area are complex but whether such a *carte blanche* case can be made is unclear, not least when Origen clearly gives evidence of such direct encounter (here, for instance the arguments of Philip Alexander as well as Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling are not considered at any length, and those works which are discussed are somewhat cursorily dismissed). Related to this observation is the whole question of the role and function of the arguments Gregerman so helpfully elucidates in his discussion of *Lamentations Rabbah*. Here what we seem to have (and Gregerman is not as clear as he might be on the extent to which these 'antitheodicy' ideas were influential or not) is evidence of internal Jewish debate about the implications of the destruction of Jerusalem for wider questions relating to the nature of God and his relationship to Israel, arguments which can look more like the kind of differences of opinion one finds in, let's say, the book of Proverbs, and Job, in the Hebrew Bible. The extent to which they give evidence of any knowledge of Christian arguments is surely a question. Gregerman suggests that they were in some ways affected by Christian arguments about the fall of Jerusalem and this accounted for aspects of their response. Their unwillingness in the end to submit to the idea that God had abandoned Israel was also itself a response to Christianity. But this, it seems to me, is not proven. What is perhaps more interesting is that so many years after 70 CE, the question of the implications of this event for a range of theological questions appeared so acute.

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