

Andrei A. Orlov, *Selected Studies in the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* (SVTP. 23) Brill: Leiden & Boston, 2009.

Professor Orlov has graced us with several works on the Slavonic pseudepigrapha, taking up the banner carried in the last generation by Émile Turdeanu. The present work complements and supplements his book *From Apocalypticism to Merkabah Mysticism: Studies on the Slavonic Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2007) reviewed in *JJS* 59.1, 2008, 140-143. We anticipate more stimulating insights from his pen in the future.

Part III of the present work is a select bibliography of the transmission of the Jewish Pseudepigrapha in the Slavic milieu, and scholars of the field will be very thankful to Andrei Orlov for this important and rich resource, extending from page 205 to 434. This is an extremely valuable tool for us all, to supplement his own earlier list and the excellent general pseudepigrapha bibliography by Lorenzo DiTommaso.¹

The first part of the book contains ten essays. Of them, all but two have been published or are in press. This is no reason for condemnation, and their gathering together lets them “talk” with one another, and provides a very good complement to the earlier work, and also to his fine book *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (2005). The application of sustained study to the Slavonic pseudepigrapha is, of course, most significant. Studies on *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *The Apocalypse of Baruch* and 2 *Enoch* are to be welcomed by all scholars of ancient Judaism, but also of the

¹ Lorenzo DiTommaso, *A Bibliography of Pseudepigrapha Research 1850-1999*, (JSP Supplement Series, 39, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001).

development of Slavic cultures, on which these works, presumably originally Jewish, have had sustained influence.

Orlov has developed a number of directions of of interest that run through much of his writing. He is convinced, basically correctly, of the lines of connection that run from the earlier Jewish apocalyptic and visionary texts including the apocalypses, into visionary material preserved in Hechalot and Merkabah mystical texts. He shows a consistently broad acquaintance with a considerable range of Jewish and Christian visionary material, and he is not timid about positing connections and continuities. It is striking that in this line of descent, the texts preserved in Old Church Slavonic have a very central place. *The Apocalypse of Baruch (3 Baruch)*, *2 Enoch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham* and *Ladder of Jacob* all are permeated with this particular type of material (absent or little represented, for example, in *Syriac Baruch* or *4 Ezra*). Of course, this is a generalization and exceptions can be found, but it is nonetheless striking that the works named do share these characteristics.

He has also had a great interest over the years in the Divine or Heavenly Face, and goes back in his research to the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian and *Prayer of Joseph* to illustrate this theme of the heavenly or angelic counterparts of earthly patriarchs. This is another trajectory of ancient Jewish religious belief that he has fruitfully explored, also in the present volume.

A third, rich lode that he has been mining is the implication of different attitudes to Adam and to Enoch and Noah in the texts as indicators of differing attitudes to these patriarchs and Orlov often speaks of such attitudes as being polemical,

representing the interests of one group against another. This book, then, is another stage in the building of the structure of the type of Judaism the fruits of which were preserved in the Slavonic tradition.

This last remark takes us to a final observation of the present review, beyond the recommendation that those interested in ancient Judaism cannot afford to miss this book. The preservation of this particular collocation of texts in Slavonic is striking. It would be extremely interesting to have a profile of the corpus of Jewish apocalyptic and visionary texts preserved in Slavonic. From this profile, which is quite different from the profile of the material preserved in Greek (from which the Slavonic was most likely translated), we may learn something about channels of transmission and cultivation of these texts in the first millennium CE. We may also learn something about the nature of early Slavonic Christianity and its willingness to accept and transmit works of this general character. Of course, I know that the preservation of this material could be pure happenstance, but the results of that “happenstance” are so striking that the issue of the Byzantine and early Slavonic transmission is raised sharply.

In conclusion, my feeling is that it is high time we saw new commentaries on all these writings. We already have Alexander Kulik’s fine works on *Apocalypse of Abraham*² and *Apocalypse of Baruch*. Perhaps they should be joined by a commentary on *2 Enoch* by Andrei Orlov.

² A. Kulik, *Retroverting Slavonic Pseudepigrapha: Towards the Lost Original of the Apocalypse of Abraham*. (Atlanta: SBL, 2004 and 2 ed. Leiden—Boston: Brill, 2005), and his new commentary on *3 Baruch* (A. Kulik, *3 Baruch: Greek-Slavonic Apocalypse of Baruch*. Berlin—New York: de Gruyter, 2010).