Berman does a credible job of helping readers discover that strand of radical political theory within the Pentateuch.

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4 Ezra, the text that is the subject of this book, is a Jewish apocalypse composed a generation or so after the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. The apocalypse, written pseudonymously in the name of Ezra, the biblical scribe, consists of three main parts: (1) a set of three dialogues between Ezra and the angel Uriel; (2) three apocalyptic visions that Ezra is granted; and (3) a final, seventh, episode that relates how Ezra oversees the writing of many books. Modern interpreters have long noticed that the book’s straightforward composition raises two fundamental questions: first, since by the end of their verbal exchange Ezra and Uriel remain far from an agreement, where do we find the author’s viewpoint in their dialogue? And second, how do the three main blocks of 4 Ezra—dialogues, visions, and epilogue—belong together? The purpose of Hogan’s book is to answer these questions that are foundational to any reading of 4 Ezra.

This lean and elegant study is a revised version of the author’s doctoral thesis, written at the University of Chicago under John Collins (see Collins’s recent “The Idea of Election in 4 Ezra,” Jewish Studies Quarterly 16 [2009]: 83–96). Hogan’s mastery of the languages and literature of the period and her thorough knowledge of the secondary literature is evident on every page. Rarely does one see a book that so successfully combines the apocrypha and the Dead Sea Scrolls in one study. The greatest strength of this well-focused book, however, is that Hogan clearly defines her thesis at the outset, carefully situates it within the history of scholarship on 4 Ezra (she likes Brandenburger, Harnisch, and Longenecker and remains critical of Stone), and never loses sight of her argument.

Hogan’s argument runs as follows: neither Ezra nor Uriel, nor some conflation of their viewpoints, represents the author’s views. The dialogues are a fictitious theological debate—Hogan does not want to decide whether such a debate actually took place in the first century or whether it is simply imagined by the author of 4 Ezra—in which two forms of wisdom theology are cast against each other in an attempt to reveal the inadequacy of both. Ezra represents the viewpoint of “covenantal wisdom,” a fusion of wisdom and covenant theologies, which Hogan also finds in the apocryphal books of Ben Sira and Baruch, both predating 4 Ezra. Uriel’s position, in contrast, is representative of an “eschatological wisdom” also attested in 4QInstruction from Qumran. Ezra’s and Uriel’s positions are here pitched against each other, so that the outcome of the dialogue is entirely negative; Ezra and Uriel embody “a breakdown” (37) of their respective wisdom theologies. The solution to this aporia comes in the visions and epilogue in the form of a third theology, which is distinctly apocalyptic. “The vision and the epilogue offer a way out of this intellectual quandary, showing that despair can be overcome by belief in divine revelation” (40). In other words, the solution proposed by the author of 4 Ezra...
to the wisdom debate of his time is not an intellectual one “but an illustration of the power of mythic symbolism to restore faith” (229).

Hogan calls 4 Ezra “a profoundly theological book” (231) that seeks to give “an adequate theological response to the crisis of faith brought about by the Destruction” (40). That Judaism was, indeed, plagued by “a crisis of faith” in the aftermath of the year 70, Hogan simply asserts. We may observe that the Rabbis of the first two centuries CE do not appear to be in much of a crisis mood. There is a tendency in scholarship to overinterpret 70 CE as a major crisis in the history of early Judaism. And yet, ironically, the very existence of books such as 4 Ezra and its twin apocalypse 2 Baruch suggest that there were more lines of continuity—particularly intellectual lines of continuity—than are often assumed.

What makes Hogan’s book and its argument attractive is its tightness. According to Hogan there are three distinct theologies in 4 Ezra: both covenantal and eschatological wisdom theologies are discredited, and apocalyptic theology is the answer. But the greatest strength of Hogan’s thesis is also its greatest weakness. Her rather strict division of the materials into exclusive “theologies” raises some important methodological questions: can we really assume with Hogan that behind each text in Second Temple Judaism lurks a distinct “school of thought” (42)? Hogan’s “eschatological wisdom” school, for example, is supported by a single text only, 4QInstruction (in fairness, she acknowledges that the evidence is weak; see 42 n. 4). She furthermore maintains that these schools were in “conflict” (the book’s title) and “competition” (41) with each other. Most scholars of early Jewish literature nowadays move in the exact opposite direction and observe a surprising fluidity and generous exchange of ideas among diverse texts. Even in Ben Sira, the poster child of the covenantal school, we find some eschatological elements (chap. 36).

For Hogan’s argument to work, not only do we need to assume that there were competing schools of thought in post-70 Palestinian Judaism, but these distinct “theologies” also need to be recognizable as such in 4 Ezra. It is here, I submit, that her argument is most vulnerable to criticism. 4QInstruction and Uriel’s voice in 4 Ezra strike me as rather different from one another in genre and worldview. By comparison, Uriel’s eschatological wisdom has much more in common with the eschatology of the apocalyptic visions in 4 Ezra. It is difficult to see, therefore, why the first two form a distinct “school of thought,” while the latter two are in conflict with each other. An overly schematic division of the material into hypothetical schools of thought runs the risk of separating texts that need not be separated, while finding conflict where there is none. MATTHIAS HENZE, Rice University.

WASSERSTEIN, ABRAHAM, and DAVID WASSERSTEIN. The Legend of the Septuagint from Classical Antiquity to Today. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. xvii+334 pp. $90.00 (cloth); $36.99 (paper).

As David Wasserstein states in his preface, “This book is an essay in tracing the life of the legend that grew up around the origin of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible” (ix). The legend in question is the story, found in the “Letter of Aristeas,” of the translation of the Torah into Greek by seventy-two Jewish scholars at the request of King Ptolemy of Egypt. The book was begun by Abraham Wasserstein and completed and published after his death by his