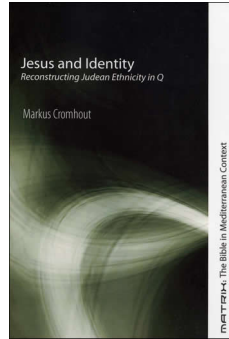


○ REVIEW OF MARKUS CROMHOUT, *JESUS AND IDENTITY: RECONSTRUCTING JUDEAN ETHNICITY IN Q*

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Cromhout's *Jesus and Identity* is a revision of his 2006 University of Pretoria doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Andries Van Aarde. His study is intended to 'investigate the question of Judean ethnicity' by focusing on 'the people presupposed by the hypothetical source known as Q'(1). He argues that the religious perspective of this presupposed community 'was a radically redefined "covenantal nomism"'(5).

In this introduction, Cromhout addresses the question of the translation of *Ioudaios*. Rejecting the arguments of Cohen and Dunn, Cromhout follows Esler's position that *Ioudaios* refers primarily to those from the region of Judea. Even those who settled in the diaspora would retain this designation since they would have historically identified with the people from the region of Judea. Accordingly, Cromhout argues for using the terms 'Judean' and 'Judeanism' rather than 'Jew' and 'Judaism'.

In chapter one, Cromhout argues that historical Jesus scholarship lacks an overall interpretative framework for understanding the 'Judeanness' of Jesus. Analyzing the work of John P. Meier and John Dominic Crossan on the historical Jesus, Cromhout argues that both authors, along with the 'Third Quest' for the Historical Jesus in general, operate with inadequate conceptions of Judaism and thus of Jesus' relation to it: 'to talk of Jesus' Judeanness has become widespread, but it is something quite void of real meaning' (63). Finally, he argues that, in spite of recent emphasis on diversity within Judaism, ethnic theory can provide a model of 'common Judeanism'.

Chapter two is devoted to adapting Dennis Duling's 'Socio-Cultural Model of Ethnicity' to serve as a guide for his Judean ethnic identity. Cromhout asks, rather broadly, 'What did it mean ... to be Judean?' To answer, he reviews E. P. Sander's notion of 'Covenantal Nomism' and James Dunn's 'Four Pillars' models. Though he concedes that both approaches 'tell us a lot about Judeanism' (68), they fail to recognize the ethnic factors in Judean identity. Using various insights

from these two authors, along with ethnic theory and Duling's model, Cromhout develops a 'Socio-Cultural Model of Judean Ethnicity' and argues that common Judeanism should be rightly referred to as covenantal nomism.

Chapter three elaborates on the model developed in chapter two by incorporating the spread of Hellenism into Judeanism especially with relation to religion, i.e. temple, synagogue, and home. His aim is to identify broadly what would have been typical of Judeanism, though not necessarily universal. He explores history, literature, and archaeology at length in order to reconstruct this 'common Judeanism'. He asserts that this commonality can serve as a standard against which the marginality of varying expressions of ancient Judean identity may be contrasted.

Locating Q in the region of Galilee, in chapter four Cromhout investigates Galilean identity in relation to the common Judeanism from the previous chapter. He addresses the ongoing debate concerning identity and distinctiveness between Galileans and Judeans. Relying on historical and archeological evidence from around the Lake of Galilee, he concludes that the covenantal nomism of 'common Judeanism' applies as well and as thoroughly to Galilee as to Judea proper and thus that there is a continuity between the people of Galilee and the people of Judea.

Chapter five analyzes the presentation of Jesus in Q with a view toward refining our understanding of Q's relation to 'Judeanism'. From a close discussion of relevant primary texts and an assessment of a variety of secondary scholarship, C. concludes that Q is a document in the midst of constructing, or reconstructing, Judeanism; its message of the kingdom and the eschatological centrality it accords to Jesus weaken the normative definitions of Judean identity (which C. thinks are essentially primordialist) and replace them with a more metaphoric, expanded notion of identity ultimately discontinuous with covenantal nomism. Q represents a Judean reform movement inspired by Jesus that, by virtue of its own inner logic, was destined to leave Judean ethnicity behind (p. 380).

Cromhout's study on Judean identity in Q is a tremendous accomplishment. His employment, and refinement, of social scientific models continues the forward progress of Social-Scientific Criticism. He makes a valuable contribution to the social-scientific study of early Christian identity by extending what Esler began in focusing on ethnicity. Perhaps the greatest contribution that Cromhout offers is his thorough overview of Israelite/Judean history as it relates to identity and identity (re)formation in chapter three.

Ironically, chapter three is also the focal point of the greatest weakness of the book. His thorough treatment of identity in Judean history requires an extremely large portion of the book's contents; chapter three runs 113 pages in length. The length of the chapter itself makes getting through it in one sitting hard enough, but combined with the variety of data contained in the chapter, it seems overly disjunctive. Chapter three would probably have been served better by dividing it into two chapters, one dealing with the historical aspect of Cromhout's discussion (pp. 117–147) and one dealing with the topical aspects of Judean identity such as temple, purity, synagogue, etc. (pp. 147–230).

Another weakness lies not necessarily with Cromhout's work in particular but with the difficulty of publishing doctoral dissertations in general. While Cromhout's writing style is clear and very readable, such is not always the case. More at issue with this work is the mixture of in-text citations and footnotes. I often found myself wanting to know which work the author was referring to, but could not simply glance down to find out. Instead, the parenthetical citations required

me to look up the reference in the back of the book. A trifling critique, I realize, but a nuisance nonetheless.

Finally, had I been asked (and clearly I was not), I would have suggested a couple of additional bibliographic references that I think would have proven helpful. Ray Laurence and Joanne Berry's *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire* along with Jonathan Hall's *Ethnic Identity in Greek Antiquity* may have helped Cromhout in the broader historical context of ethnic identity in the ancient Mediterranean. Likewise, Kenton Sparks' *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel* and Judith Lieu's *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* would have aided his direct application of ethnicity to the Israelites/Judeans and the early Jesus followers.

Despite these rather trivial critiques, Cromhout's work on Jesus and Identity deserves to be read by anyone whose interest lies in identity formation in the early Christian period. His work provides methodological soundness with thorough historical/cultural support on the way toward establishing a 'common Judean' identity. While we may continue to debate the extent of this commonality, Cromhout has at least provided us with a benchmark from which future work will certainly derive.