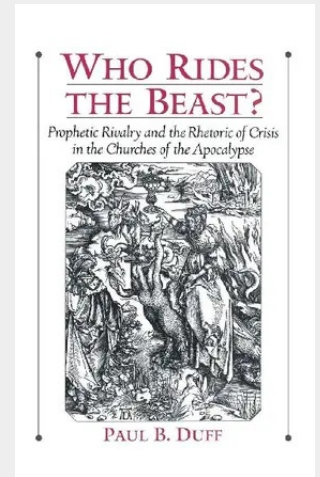


Who Rides the Beast?

Prophetic Rivalry and the Rhetoric of Crisis in the Churches of the Apocalypse

The Book of Revelation presents the reader with a frightening narrative world in which the people of God are tormented, threatened, and sometimes killed by various agents of Satan. Throughout the work, the Apocalypse points to Rome as the predominant demonic agent. Scholars have traditionally thought that Revelation was written in order to encourage believers to stand fast in the face of the Roman persecution of the early Church. More recently, however, it has been argued that no such crisis existed at the time the book was written. In this study, Paul Duff offers a different viewpoint on the origin of the Book of Revelation is a rhetorically sophisticated response to an internal leadership crisis within the churches. In support of this argument Duff marshals evidence from the social and economic context of the time, and from literary and rhetorical analyses of the text. The result is a work that substantially advances the implication of the current consensus and sheds new light on this influential yet enigmatic text.

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