

## • Book Reviews/Recensions/Buchbesprechungen

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### **Isaiah II.2: Isaiah 28-39 (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament)** **Willem A.M. Beuken**

Leuven: Peeters, 2000, xxxi + 420 pp., n.p.,  
pb., ISBN 90-429-0813-0

#### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Dieser Band in der HCOT Reihe (siehe auch EJT 9.1 [2000], S. 76-77, 89-91) ist eine ausführliche Untersuchung von Jesaja 28-39. Er bietet eine Textübersetzung, philologische Anmerkungen, eine Auseinandersetzung mit den Hauptproblemen der Jesaja-Interpretation sowie eine detaillierte Exegese. Dem historischen Kontext der Botschaft wird große Bedeutung beigemessen, doch auch die Endform des Textes wird untersucht, wozu sich Beuken der Redaktionskritik bedient. Er versteht sowohl Gericht als auch Errettung als Teile der ursprünglichen Botschaft Jesajas, sieht aber auch josianische und nachexilische Redaktionsschichten, so dass die Botschaft des Propheten letztlich durch eine nachexilische Linse gefiltert wird. Die Stärken des Kommentars liegen in der Kenntnis der enormen Literatur zu Jesaja und in der detaillierten Textanalyse.*

#### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Ce nouveau volume dans la série (cf. JET 9.1 [2000], p. 76s, 89-91) est une étude minutieuse. Après la traduction du texte, éclairée par des considérations philologiques, l'auteur présente les principaux problèmes d'interprétation, puis se livre à une exégèse détaillée. Il consacre une large place au contexte historique du message, mais fait aussi appel à la critique rédactionnelle pour rendre compte de la forme finale du texte. Il discerne à la fois des paroles de jugement et des promesses de salut remontant à l'enseignement d'Ésaïe, tout en considérant que le texte contient des couches rédactionnelles de l'époque de Josias, ainsi que de la période postexilique. Il considère donc que le message du prophète a été teinté par une optique postexilique. Les points forts de ce commentaire résident dans sa prise en compte des nombreux travaux consacrés au livre d'Ésaïe et dans son analyse détaillée du*

*texte.*

This is a further volume in the series *Historical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Other volumes in the series have been reviewed in *EuroJT* (see vol. 9.1 [2000], pp. 76-77, 89-91), so the nature and aims of the series need not be rehearsed here. Beuken's interpretation of this part of Isaiah accepts an Assyrian, or Josianic, redaction, but also places the final form of the book in the post-exilic period. He aims to take account of both these horizons in his exposition, and indeed of the idea of a text that has undergone a process of reinterpretation.

Chs. 28-33 constitute the basic text, built up on the five woe-cries directed against Israel, which are taken to be an original composition from before the exile. This composition includes the expansion of the fifth woe-cry, which envisages a kingdom of righteousness being established (32:1-8). These genuine oracles, therefore, correspond to the other major section of Isaianic prophecies, chs. 1-12, having characteristics, like it, of alternating judgment and salvation oracles.

Chs. 33-35 have various connecting functions within the book. Ch. 33 looks forward to the discomfiture of the nation that brought destruction on Israel, and the restoration of Zion; it thus anticipates chs. 40-55. Ch. 34 looks back to the oracles against the nations in chs. 13-23, confirming them. And ch. 35 once again looks forward to the second part of the book. Chs. 36-39 are regarded here as having a common original source with the parallel 2 Kings 18-20. They form a transition in their own way to chs. 40-55, and in them the key figures of Sennacherib, Hezekiah and Isaiah have prototypical roles.

While the Isaiah oracles belong to a time when the northern kingdom was falling to Assyria, it does not follow that Isaiah spoke only 'woe' messages, or that the notes of hope belong only to later strands: rather, 'It is the author's hope that the present commentary will succeed in showing that the actual message of Isaiah ben Amoz has to do with this "wonderful counsel of YHWH" (28:29; 31:5)' (p. 6).

The manner in which these chapters mediate Isaiah's message is complex, however. Beuken finds a contradiction between the pic-



ture in chs. 28-32 and 36-39. In the former sequence, as redacted, the fall of Jerusalem is taken as a fact, namely at the hands of the Babylonians. In the latter, the focus is on the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem, and therefore on the doctrine of Yahweh's faithfulness to it. The former view, which envisages the devastation and impoverishment of the city, he finds closer to the picture presented by Sennacherib himself, and the likely historical reality. The juxtaposition of the two views may be explained, he thinks, by the process of theological reflection. Isaiah's announcement of the fall of Jerusalem was seen to be fulfilled at the hands of the Babylonians, while the deliverance of the city under Sennacherib was remembered as a sign of God's ultimate faithfulness. The balance between salvation and judgment was thus carefully maintained by the redaction.

Even so, the same balance can be found within Isaiah's oracles themselves. An example of Beuken's interpretation may be found in his treatment of 29:1-14. He argues that the elements of judgment and salvation are so closely interwoven that it is impossible to separate them out into literary layers (with some commentators and against others). 'Within the context of the whole, judgement and salvation are simply different dimensions of God's "wonderful deeds" (three times in v. 14) ... Doom and salvation are not successive acts of Yahweh, but facets of his engagement with his people' (p. 76).

The point is supported by the redaction-critical structuring of the text according to the woe-oracles, but also by close exegesis. His analysis shows how inseparable are the larger concept of the meaning of this part of Isaiah and the interpretation of the minutiae of the text. The present verses have considerable capacity for being read in quite different ways (does this image mean judgment or salvation? Does that one refer to Jerusalem or to the enemy?). Beuken is a patient guide through the exegetical issues.

The great strengths of this commentary are its attention to the detail of the text, its balance between historical analysis and composition of the text, and its comprehensive orientation to the scholarly literature. The interpretation proceeds carefully through the necessary stages (translation, textual notes, introduction of main issues, detailed exegesis). I miss only some resumptive reflection at the end of each section. My question about the series' massive contribution on Isaiah is to what extent it will constitute a unified the-

ological interpretation, or pointers to 'canonical' interpretation.

Gordon McConville  
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EuroJTh (2001) 10:2, 170-172

0960-2720

### ***Jeremiah in Prophetic Tradition: An Examination of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Israel's Prophetic Tradition***

**Hetty Lalleman-de Winkel**

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Leuven: Peeters, 2000, 278 pp., DM 68,-;

EUR 34,76;

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### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*In Reaktion gegen eine voreilige Verortung des Buches Jeremia in der deuteronomistischen Schule versucht Lalleman in dieser Überarbeitung ihrer Dissertation nachzuweisen, dass Jeremia vielmehr innerhalb einer prophetischen Tradition zu interpretieren ist. Diese prophetische Tradition wird durch eine vergleichende Analyse einzelner theologischer Themen (Bußaufruf/Hoffnung, Bundestheologie und Rolle des Propheten) in den Büchern Amos, Hosea und Jeremia umrissen und in ihrer gedanklichen Fortentwicklung beschrieben. Jeremia folge in weiten Teilen dieser Tradition, wobei es aber zugleich unlösbar mit dem historischen Kontext und biographischen Werdegang des Propheten verbunden sei. Die Neueröffnung der Diskussion der traditions-geschichtlichen Verortung Jeremias ist berechtigt, wobei auf einer literarisch / rhetorischen Ebene sicherlich noch weitere, tiefergehende Einsichten zu erwarten sind.*

### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Dans cet ouvrage qui reprend sa thèse de doctorat, Mme Lalleman tente de situer la théologie de Jérémie au sein d'une tradition prophétique dont elle pense avoir repéré l'existence à l'aide d'une étude comparative des prophètes préexiliques Amos, Osée et Jérémie. Elle s'oppose à la thèse largement répandue selon laquelle la théologie du livre de Jérémie émanerait d'une rédaction deutéronomiste. Au contraire, cette théologie est solidement enracinée dans la situation historique et les circonstan-*