

which she wants to dispute—that it could have won such a place. Even where this rich volume fails to convince, it encourages fresh thought.

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GRAEME AULD

University of Edinburgh

a.g.auld@ed.ac.uk

Ethical Dimension of Cult in the Book of Isaiah. By BOHDAN HROBON. Pp. xiii + 256. (Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 418.) Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2010. ISBN 978 3 11 024748 0. €89.95.

THIS monograph, the author's D.Phil. thesis from the University of Oxford, examines the ethical aspects of Israel's cult, expressed by three select texts in the book of Isaiah. In contrast to previous scholars who regard the relationship between priests and prophets as either antithetical or complementary, Hrobon argues that priests and prophets of ancient Israel shared the *same* theology. The main purpose of the cult was to maintain God's presence among his people. Because God is holy, his presence requires purity. Grave sins, such as murder, idolatry, adultery, etc., cause defilement and thus bring about impurity, to both the people and the land, which no ritual can render pure. When impure people in an impure land performed the standard cult of YHWH, that cult became an abomination. In that situation, the only thing that the people could do to make the cult effective again and to ensure God's renewed presence was to stop committing the very acts that caused impurity and instead to plead with God for forgiveness. Thus, Hrobon argues, the prophetic zeal for ethical behaviour, such as their strivings towards justice and righteousness, was zeal for God's presence and, as such, a cultic concern. Likewise, the prophetic focus on ethical misbehaviour expressed their concern for the ways in which that kind of misbehaviour affected God's presence in the land.

The first chapter provides a concise history of research on various topics relevant to Hrobon's main thesis. He evaluates the arguments for and against seeing the theology of the priestly and the prophetic material as either antithetical or complementary. He also looks briefly at different theories pertaining to sacrifices, with focus on the connection between purity and sacrifice. Following mainly Klawans's theories, Hrobon maintains that

'grave transgression undoes what the daily sacrifice produces'. Hrobon also touches on the growth of the Pentateuch and argues that, even though the P source reached its final form in the post-Exilic period, it has pre-Exilic roots and embodies more ancient traditions. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the cultic concepts found in its laws were known in pre-Exilic Judah at the time of Isaiah ben Amos.

In the relatively short second chapter, Hrobon, following Ringgren, maintains that the prophetic and legal material in the Hebrew Bible share the same basic understanding of holiness. As to the book of Isaiah, Hrobon argues that although the concept of God's holiness changes throughout the book, the prophets' distinct emphasis can be explained as stemming from their distinct milieux (independent Judah, Judah under Babylonian rule, and Judah under Persian rule) rather than from fundamental differences in theology.

In the likewise short third chapter, Hrobon explores the cultic understanding of the land, i.e. the notion that, as God is the true owner of the land, and as he is holy, he cannot dwell in an impure land. If the land becomes defiled, God must abandon it. Hrobon shows that the cultic understanding of the land attested in the books of Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel is in line with that found in the Pentateuchal P source, and, furthermore, that the same understanding is present also in the book of Isaiah.

In the next three chapters, Hrobon investigates three key Isaianic passages (Isa. 1:10–17; 43:22–8; 58:1–14). Each chapter opens with a short discussion of the literary genre of the text and its probable dating and historical background. On the former issue, Hrobon argues that many scholarly interpretations are unduly influenced by an incorrect estimation of genre. For instance, the labelling of Isa 1:10–17 as a 'priestly Torah' or a 'prophetic Torah' has caused scholars to misread the actual text. Hrobon then offers a very detailed structural analysis and text-critical discussion of the text. While there is nothing wrong with this section, I would have wished for a more goal-oriented exegesis. As many of the textual and structural concerns discussed are of no immediate relevance to the ethical dimensions of the cult in these texts, they obscure the focus of the monograph. The same critique applies also to the following section where Hrobon offers a functional analysis of the text. While the analysis definitely provides insight into the ethical dimensions of the cult, as expressed by the text, the sheer volume of comments can easily lure the reader off topic. Hrobon ends each chapter with a translation of the text and a succinct summary of the

ethical dimension of the cult that is expressed in the text under discussion.

The volume concludes with a brief comparison of the three texts. Hrobon argues convincingly that, although they share the same basic theological understanding of the role of ethic and cult, the three texts differ as a result of their different historical backgrounds.

The volume contains two appendices ('Isa 1:10–17 and the Priestly Literature' and 'Isa 58–59 and Non-Isaianic OT Texts'), as well as an Index of Authors.

The monograph is well written and its overall claim convinces. My one concern is that some aspects of that claim are not that novel, as many scholars today recognize the lack of a strict dichotomy between Israel's prophets and Israel's cult and between moral and ritual concerns. It would also have been useful to have had a short discussion of the assumed sociological background of the texts. What kind of interaction existed between prophets and priests in the sanctuaries in Israel and Judah, and how did that interaction help shape the prophetic and priestly literature in the Bible?

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LENA-SOFIA TIEMEYER
King's College, Aberdeen
l.s.tiemeyer@abdn.ac.uk

An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature.

By STUART WEEKS. Pp. ix + 165. (T & T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies.) London and New York: T & T Clark, 2010. ISBN 978 0 567 18443 6. Paper £14.99.

PROBLEMS of definition and scope beleaguer the wisdom literature, and this is well expressed in this short guide to the subject. Weeks chooses to begin his discussion with the extra-Israelite literature that bears a family resemblance to Israelite wisdom. The problem here is, however, the circularity that these texts are being brought together artificially because of their resemblance to Israelite wisdom—there was no category of 'wisdom' in Egyptian or Mesopotamian circles and one wonders indeed, on close analysis of Weeks's caution in this guide, if there was even one for Israelite literature. Weeks says towards the end of the book 'wisdom literature is our category, not one bequeathed to us by the biblical