

RBL 12/11/2000

**Labahn, Antje.**  
***Wort Gottes und Schuld Israels: Untersuchungen zu Motiven deuteronomistischer  
Theologie im Deuterocesajabuch mit einem Ausblick auf das Verhältnis von Jes 40-55  
zum Deuteronomismus***

Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament 143

Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1999. Pp. 320, Cloth, DM 70,60, ISBN 3170158945.

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This Göttingen dissertation (Lothar Peritt, supervisor) attempts to establish the influence of deuteronomic or deuteronomistic theology in Second Isaiah by examining the interrelationship of the motifs “word of G-d” and “guilt of Israel” throughout Isaiah 40-55. Labahn’s study is motivated in the first instance by the observation that a variety of theological “streams,” e.g., Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Deuteronomistic movement, were active during the period of the Babylonian exile and the question as to whether or not there were any contacts between these various “streams.” It is also motivated by the observations by several scholars of traces of deuteronomistic influence in Isaiah (i.e., First Isaiah) and Deutero-Isaiah as well as in other prophetic books. Especially important are the recent redaction-critical studies of Deutero-Isaiah by Kratz, Steck, van Oorschot, and Berges that argue for several models of a multi-staged process of composition for Isaiah 40-55. Particularly important in her thinking is van Oorschot’s third redactional stage, which emphasizes language concerning obedience and blessing and the consequent recognition of the Dtn/Dtr notion that the commands of YHWH confront those who are faithless in Israel with punishment. Of course, such a conceptualization points to the fundamental themes of the “word of G-d” and the “guilt of Israel” in Deutero-Isaiah, and it raises the question of their interrelationship in the compositional history of these chapters. She notes at the outset that Deuteronomistic influence does not appear in the basic layer of Deutero-Isaiah insofar as the characteristic appearance of the messenger formula, *kōh āmar yhw̄h*, “thus says YHWH,” in Deutero-Isaiah’s oracles indicates a particular theology and terminology that does not correspond to Deuteronomic/Deuteronomistic (hereafter, Dtn/Dtr) theology. Instead, she focuses on the supposed later texts that appear within Isaiah 40-55. The later form of Deutero-Isaiah thereby emerges as the product of one of the many lines of development within the overall Dtn/Dtr movement during the exilic period.

Labahn begins her study with consideration of Isaiah 55, the so-called “epilog” of Deutero-Isaiah. Her analysis of verses 1-5 focuses on the well-known statements concerning YHWH’s offer to make an “eternal covenant” (*bērit ’ōlām*) with the exiles of Israel based upon “sure graces of David” (*hasdēdāwīd hanne ’ēmānīm*) and the role that David plays as a witness and leader for the nations. She traces the lexical links between this passage and the various statements of the Davidic promise in the Deuteronomistic history (e.g., 2 Sam 7; 22; 23; 1 Kgs 3; 11) as well as in the Chronicler’s work (2 Chr 1; 6) and the Psalms (Ps 89) to establish the Dtn/Dtr character of the language. The references to David’s role vis-à-vis the nations, however, points to new conceptualization within Dtr theology concerning the universal character of YHWH’s covenant. A similar analysis of verses 6-13 notes the use of the verb, *drš*, “to seek,” in the expression “seek YHWH when he is found,” in verse 6, which contrasts with the use of the verb *bqš*, “to seek,” in Deut 4:29 and Jer 29:13. This becomes the basis for the claim that verses 6-7 constitute a later Dtr text concerned with guilt, especially since the text allegedly conveys a call for individual repentance and shows lexical relations with the late Dtr-influenced historical overview in Nehemiah 9. The reference to YHWH’s word in verse 11 marks verses 8-11 as a late redactional layer that is concerned with YHWH’s word.

Overall, Isaiah 55 emerges as the product of successive stages of reflection and redaction. But one may question Labahn’s reasoning throughout this discussion in that her surgical precision slices through the literary qualities of this text to construct extensive doctrinal claims on individual words or expressions. Her claim that verse 7 conveys a doctrine of individual repentance overlooks the stylistic use of the masculine singular characterization of the “wicked” (*rāsā*) in the context of a masculine plural address that calls upon the audience of the text to seek YHWH. Likewise, the relationship with Nehemiah 9 is based upon the occurrence of the root *rhm*, “mercy,” in both texts. These are hardly sufficient bases to claim the presence of a redactional layer in two verses. The claim that verses 8-11 constitutes an even later redactional layer is based on the repetition of the terms found in verse 7, *derek*, “way,” and *maḥšēbôt*, “thoughts,” in verse 8, and the emphasis on YHWH’s sovereignty over heaven and earth which derives from purportedly late texts in Deuteronomy (4:36; see also 32:47). The argument at this point is very tenuous in that it is heavily dependent on the continental model for the three-stage composition of Dtr texts exclusively in the exilic period, and ignores the contentions for pre-exilic stages of composition that are prevalent in North American circles. The problem is compounded when she argues that the reference to the establishment of YHWH’s word in Isa 40:6b-8 derives from the same late redactional layer that forms a redactional envelope for Deutero-Isaiah. Her argument depends upon similarities between Isa 40:6b-8 and 2 Sam 7:25, which she assigns without question to the late-DtrG source of the exilic period. She is justified in claiming that Isa 55:8-11 and 40:6b-8 derive from the same hand. She is also justified in claiming an inner-prophetic development of the notion of the divine word that grows out of reflection on earlier statements concerning YHWH’s Torah in Isa 8:16, 20. Nevertheless, her arguments provide a rather thin basis to claim that such development takes place *within* Deutero-Isaian texts. Overall, her

arguments show little reflection on the textual character of Deutero-Isaiah, i.e., how does a text cohere and employ shifts in syntax and semantics to make a point with its reader. Instead, her arguments appear to presuppose a relatively incoherent text whose elements may be isolated, removed, and identified too quickly as the product of different hands.

Subsequent chapters trace Dtr influence throughout Deutero-Isaiah. Isaiah 51:7-8, for example, speaks of YHWH's Torah in the heart of the people, which once again takes up late Dtr terminology (Deut 30: 10; cf. Jer 31:33) to reflect upon Isa 8:16, 20. Yet the reference to the people's forgetting YHWH in Isa 51:13 likewise draws upon various DtrG texts to articulate Israel's guilt. The references to YHWH's election and love Israel/Abraham in Isa 41:8b- 10 point to a pervasive concern throughout Deutero-Isaiah that is based upon the Dtr concepts of YHWH's election and love of Israel. The notion of Israel's unshakable covenant of peace in Isa 54:10 is likewise based upon Dtr notions of YHWH's keeping covenant and fidelity (e.g., Deut 7:9, 12). The references to YHWH's giving the servant figure as a covenant of the people represents a post-Deutero-Isaian development of this concept.

Finally, a series of texts, including Isa 48: 1-11; 42:18-25; 43:22-28; 47:6-7; 46:8, 12-13; 48:17-19; and 50:1-3 are isolated from their literary contexts and identified as a late redactional layer concerned with the guilt of Israel. Again, the literary basis for the identification of this layer is the observation that the constituent text units are independent on the grounds of both form and content. In support of this contention (e.g., for Isa 48:17-19), she cites a standard group of scholars published primarily in German who argue along these lines (Duhm, Elliger, Schmitt, Westermann, Hermisson, Kratz, van Oorschot, Merendino, Beuken), but she does not consider seriously the many studies published in English that ask about the rhetorical interrelationship between the various sub-units of the text (e.g., Muilenberg, Melugin, Tull (Willey), Franke, Clifford, Conrad, Williamson, and the reviewer). Exegesis can no longer assume that the short, self-contained formal unit is inherently independent. This does not entail a naive rejection of redaction-criticism per se, but it does entail an assessment of the literary coherence of a text as a necessary prerequisite for redaction critical work. The lack of critical reflection on this crucial methodological principle is a fundamental requirement in the year 1999 and beyond; scholarship simply cannot presuppose that the methodological state of the field current in the 1960's and 1970's still prevails.

Labahn concludes by stating that two important idea complexes derived from Dtr theology appear in Deutero-Isaiah, one concerned with the word of G-d at the beginning and end of the work (Isa 40:5b, 6b-8; 55: 10-11) and one concerned with Israel's guilt that appears throughout the work (Isa 42:24-25; 43:24b, 27, 28b; 46:8, 12-13; 47:6-7; 48: Id, 4, 5b, 7b, 8-9; 48:17-19; 50:1-3). The guilt complex constitutes a full redactional layer, but she equivocates somewhat with regard to the word of G-d complex by identifying it as the limited work of a later tradent. Both represent later reflection on the Deutero-Isaian tradition, earlier prophetic works (particularly First Isaiah), and the

Dtn/Dtr tradition. Although her redaction-critical arguments are hardly persuasive, Labahn makes a considerable contribution, both to the study of (Deutero-) Isaiah and to the intertextual study of biblical texts, by pointing to Deutero-Isaiah's links with Dtn/Dtr. She thereby demonstrates the continuing engagement with earlier tradition on the part of this anonymous prophetic tradition.