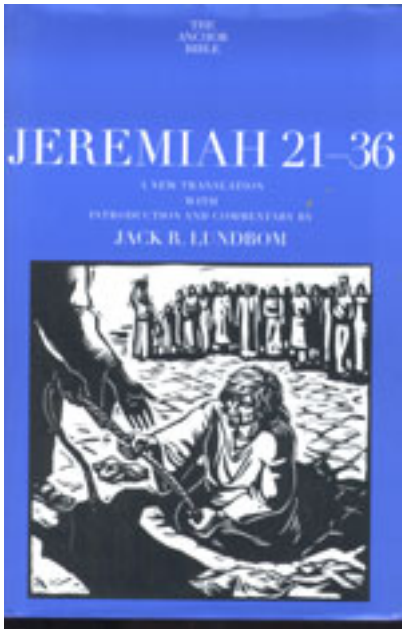


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**Lundbom, Jack R.**

*Jeremiah 21–36*

Anchor Bible 21B

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A commentary in the superlative Anchor Bible series may justly be expected to meet the following expectations: it should adjudicate highly technical philological and syntactical questions regarding the original text and relevant variants in other ancient versions; it should provide an intelligible close reading of the biblical text as a whole, such that the commentator's overarching theories and reading strategies are visible both in the broad view and in local instances of interpretation; it should demonstrate rigorous engagement with key theoretical and exegetical proposals of other scholars who have done important work on the relevant biblical material; and it should offer fresh insight into the meaning and rhetorical power of the text. By these lights, Jack R. Lundbom's learned volume, the second in his three-volume set on Jeremiah, is a valuable contribution to the series even if it may best be considered an invitation to further conversation rather than a definitive authority on the book of Jeremiah.

Lundbom focuses on literary artistry as a means of rhetorical suasion in the text of Jeremiah, offering cogent readings and intelligent discussions on every page. To understand better the many aspects of Hebrew poetry and prose that command Lundbom's attention, the reader should consult the helpful section on rhetorical criticism in volume 1 of his commentary. There he describes Jeremiah's skillful use of repetition

(anaphora, epiphora, inclusio, alliteration, and other sorts), accumulation, tropes (including metaphor, simile, euphemism), diverse forms of argumentation (arguments from lesser to greater, rhetorical questions, exaggerated contrasts), paronomasia, hyperbole, irony, and drama (including apostrophe and alternation of speakers). The structure of the commentary suggests that Lundbom is interested also in questions of audience—for each biblical passage, there is a “Message and Audience” section—but here the commentary stops well short of a sophisticated discussion of the notion of audience. Lundbom seems to construe “audience” simply as those who were historically present when oracles were delivered and those who may have encountered the written text later. Lundbom does not address higher-level questions regarding ways in which a complex piece of literature may construct the audience(s) it envisions, which may in fact be multiple implied audiences constructed for diverse rhetorical purposes. (Lundbom’s brief section “Finding the Audience” in vol. 1 provides a rudimentary discussion of some rhetorical effects on audiences but gives no orientation to the complexity of the notion of audience as such in contemporary rhetorical criticism.) The question of audience(s) in Jeremiah is a fascinating and important one, not least because of the searing internecine disputes clearly described in the book, so it is surprising that this commentary does not address the notion of audience in more detail.

The hermeneutical position of the commentary is staunchly historicist. Lundbom steadfastly refuses to address himself to questions concerning ideological constructions of the personae of the prophet and other figures in the book of Jeremiah, politicized notions of diaspora and home, and the possibility of fictive elements or submerged agendas in the book. Further, although many scholars have worked hard to elucidate divergent theological and political interests evident in the book of Jeremiah, Lundbom argues for a thoroughly unified theological message, repeatedly rejecting even well-pedigreed suggestions of discontinuity. His position may be summarized as follows. Material in the book of Jeremiah is almost all attributable to the historical Jeremiah or Baruch. Nothing remotely resembling large-scale later redaction has taken place in the book, although we may discern the occasional moving or shaping of material by Baruch (or “another compiler” like him, that is, some “colleague and friend” of Jeremiah [254]). Here it would seem that Baruch was very busy indeed, for Lundbom identifies the following as mid-level collections that were independently organized and then brought together into the final form of the book of Jeremiah: a first edition comprising Jer 1–20; an appendix to the first edition, Jer 21–23, including a “King Collection” and a “Prophet Collection”; the oracles against the nations (OAN); a “Zedekiah Cluster” of Jer 24 + 27–29; a “Jehoiakim Cluster” of Jer 25, 26, 35, and 36; and the Book of Restoration in Jer 30–33, itself having undergone at least two stages of expansion before reaching its final form. This literary activity is under no circumstances to be confused with a theory of Deuteronomistic

redaction in later times. Per Lundbom, the MT of Jeremiah should not be characterized as generally expansionist, even though a few MT plusses are demonstrable, because such a text-critical theory would presuppose wholesale later redaction; rather, the LXX reflects a badly flawed *Vorlage* and has suffered from haplography on a scale more catastrophic than many text critics have realized.

A minor note of criticism may be registered here. Lundbom's frequent appeal to LXX haplography is the only major theoretical point he makes in the text-critical notes. Missing is any sustained engagement with more comprehensive theories accounting for variants in the Jeremiah text traditions, aside from Lundbom's statement, "I . . . do not believe the claims made for two editions" (239). This lack of deeper engagement means that students of Jeremiah will not be able to consult this commentary for guidance on the larger text-critical issues, which is disappointing given that text-critical problems constitute a lively and important area of historical research in Jeremiah studies.

Two substantive critiques of the volume may be offered in the spirit of collegial dialogue and might, in fact, be welcomed by the author. First is the fact that Lundbom is pointedly dismissive of the two chief obstacles confronting any simple historicist understanding of the book of Jeremiah: the hermeneutical position that texts are inescapably and thoroughly shaped by ideologies that affect how personae, events, and voices within those texts are constructed (ideological criticism), and the hermeneutical position that later editing may have manipulated the traditions of Jeremiah in directions not anticipated by the historical prophet or first compiler (redaction criticism). Lundbom is clearly intent on not giving those two scholarly theories any traction whatsoever in his commentary. He chooses not to engage their chief proponents in any detail, dismissing their ideas briskly and singling out Robert P. Carroll and William McKane at least six times (inaccurately) as the "only scholars today" who maintain certain ideological-critical positions that he finds untenable. Lundbom characterizes readings of McKane as "contrived" and "convoluted" and those of Carroll as "imagination" and "fantasy" "not to be taken seriously," with a tone that some may consider to constitute a breach of scholarly courtesy. Yet Lundbom's protestations of coherence in some Jeremiah texts will seem strained to some. For example, of the notoriously disrupted text of Jer 25, Lundbom offers the unlikely opinion that "the chapter has its own integrity, and can be taken, in the MT at least, as an essential unity" (239).

Many intelligent readers have articulated a perception of heavy-handed politics and clear discontinuities within the book of Jeremiah. One may fairly point to weaknesses of particular scholarly strategies for interpreting the fierce intra-Judahite polemics and literary tensions that are so obviously a central part of the Jeremiah tradition, but one cannot with credibility dismiss those readerly experiences of ideological motivation and

textual disjuncture out of hand as imaginary. Now, it may have been precisely Lundbom's goal to conduct his readers through the book of Jeremiah without their ever having extended contact with ideological criticism and redaction criticism. My view would be that the scholarly discussion is set back several decades by this decision and that novices to Jeremiah studies are particularly ill-served, since they will not gain an adequate sense of the fuller hermeneutical conversation on these crucial issues. But given Lundbom's lack of sympathy with ideological criticism and his overt exasperation with the recent dominance of redaction-critical theories regarding the Deutero-Jeremianic prose, an objection that he does not engage these flourishing areas within Jeremiah scholarship may simply confirm that he is trying valiantly to redefine the terms of the discussion.

My second major critique is that significantly more fruit remains to be harvested from rhetorical criticism than Lundbom has demonstrated here. Lundbom's observations about rhetoric not infrequently function descriptively rather than analytically. Chiasms and other forms of repetition are noted and sometimes adduced as evidence for the delimitation of a particular unit of text, but often left unexplored is their specific force in particular literary contexts as means of persuasion, as performative of a function of closure, heightening, or reversal. Readers will not find here a coherent picture of how hyperbole works in the book of Jeremiah as a whole, an analysis of ways in which various forms of repetition may heighten the rhetorical effect of some key theological concept running through the book, or the like. Rather, Lundbom often provides simple description of the presence of rhetorical features (catchwords or chiasms here, *accumulatio* there) rather than incisive analysis of their effects even locally, much less writ larger throughout the book that he insists is so coherent literarily. Even given the constraints of the genre of commentary, one might have hoped for more attention to coherences and changes of diction across the book. My critique amounts to a call for an even more full-bodied rhetorical criticism, so on a positive note Lundbom's work may fairly be credited with having stimulated more interest in the subject about which he clearly is passionate.

Indeed, further research should explore in more depth the intersections of rhetorical criticism with diachronic views of the multivocality of the book of Jeremiah. As noted, Lundbom chooses not to engage closely the rigorous diachronic work of many scholars who have tackled problems related to the provenance and ideological force of the prose of Jeremiah. His position is uncompromising: redaction-critical approaches are wrongheaded in their basic assumptions of later editorial work and can only distract from an appreciation of the artistry of Jeremiah's and Baruch's handiwork. In this, Lundbom has redrawn some old, rigid hermeneutical battle lines: readers who are sensitive to the literary and theological power of the book of Jeremiah will understand that the material is

traceable to two figures, Jeremiah and Baruch (or someone just like him); all other readers—with McKane and Carroll as representative scapegoats—are gravely misguided in their notions about redactors and the potential lateness of texts. But these are not our only choices. That diachronic issues could have significant bearing on complex rhetorical purposes of the text is a possibility that Lundbom does not address—he seems to view redactional analysis as the intractable natural enemy of a literary sensibility attuned to the elegance of tropes in Jeremiah, the power of the prophet’s diction, and rhetorical artistry in the book as a whole. Other interpreters may be far more optimistic: there are important opportunities here for scholars to take up the rich promise of rhetorical-critical method and apply it to a more sophisticated, multivalent model for the final form of the book of Jeremiah.

Lundbom’s work thus presents a valuable challenge to those of us who maintain that ancient literature can be both rhetorically powerful and compositionally multivocal, historically authentic in several important senses while yet ideologically shaped in complex ways that give the lie to simplistic representationalism. Welcome indeed would be an analysis of the book of Jeremiah that looks unflinchingly at the discontinuities and disjunctures of that tumultuous text on literary, text-critical, and ideological levels, while also bringing to bear the kind of exegetical attentiveness to rhetorical artistry that Lundbom has urged in this fine and provocative commentary.