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**Saur, Markus**

***Der Tyroszyklus des Ezechielbuches***

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This monograph was accepted as the author's *Habilitationsschrift* by the University of Basel in 2007. It is a wide-reaching and detailed work centered on the oracles concerning the city of Tyre as found in Ezek 26–28. In particular, the monograph focuses on the ways in which these oracles further our knowledge of the history of Tyre as well as of the Israelites' relationship with and attitudes toward Tyre. As such, the book falls squarely into the historical-critical field of biblical research.

The book opens with a translation of Ezek 26–28, accompanied with detailed text-critical notes. Saur follows the view that the MT and the LXX are two distinct textual traditions. As such, one should refrain from harmonizing one text in accordance with the other. Saur further views the relationship between the two versions as temporal in that both the LXX and the MT are developments of the *Urtext*, with the LXX probably being the older of the two. Owing in part to the difficulty and the uncertainty involved in trying to reconstruct the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX or of the even earlier *Urtext*, Saur chooses to deal with the MT. Saur is, however, careful to assert that he is not subscribing to Greenberg's preference for the MT. In the cases where Saur regards the MT to be unacceptable, he emends it in accordance with the older, in his opinion, LXX. In some of these cases, I would have wished for more interaction with opposing views. In the case of Ezek 28:14–16, for

example, Saur simply states that the MT is untenable and therefore emends it in accord with the LXX. As the MT contains a coherent reading (see, e.g., the extended discussion by A. Wood in her recent monograph *Of Wings and Wheels* [BZAW 386, 2008]), Saur's discussion would have benefited from more interaction with the opposite viewpoint. Although a seemingly minor detail, each of the two textual traditions allude to different passages in the Hebrew Bible (see further below) and, as a result, create two clearly distinct interpretations of Ezek 28:11–19.

Saur then turns to literary concerns, offering a synchronic, a diachronic, and a form-critical analysis of Ezek 26–28. In his form-critical analysis, Saur highlights the various types of literature in Ezek 26–28. His distinction between the *Sitz im Leben* of the texts and their *Sitz in der Literatur* is particularly helpful. He discusses how the authors/redactors of Ezek 26–28 developed the more classical form of, for example, the oracle of judgment or the *qinah*. Likewise, Saur's synchronic analysis is very useful. He provides a detailed discussion of the macrostructures and the microstructures of Ezek 26–28, and he argues that the present form of the text is a carefully constructed and coherent whole.

In his diachronic examination of Ezek 26–28, Saur begins by providing an overview of German scholarship (Manchot, Hölcher, Zimmerli, Pohlmann). After a detailed discussion of the texts, he concludes that the text is composite in nature, with material spanning more than three centuries. In summary, two sections, Ezek 27:12–25a and 28:12–18\*, consist of material that originated outside the circle of Ezekiel/the Ezekiel school (Saur does not distinguish between the two). Ezekiel 27:12–25a may be a list of Tyre's trade connections (*Handelsliste*) that the Ezekiel school incorporated and edited to fit its own purposes. Likewise, this group added Ezek 28:12–18\*, originally an independent *qinah* over the king of Tyre. The bulk of Ezek 26–28, stemming from four different redactional phases (I, IIa, IIb, III), was composed by the Ezekiel school in the sixth century. Finally, the Alexandrian redaction in the fourth century B.C. added especially Ezek 26:5b, 8b–12, 14aγ.

Saur makes a good case for his dating scheme and pays careful attention to the nuances of the Hebrew text. At the same time, John Barton's words of the disappearing redactor come to mind when comparing Saur's synchronic and diachronic discussions. Also, I remain unconvinced as to the necessity of interpreting Ezek 26:5b, 8b–12, 14aγ as an example of *Fortschreibung* that transforms the original text about Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Tyre into an oracle reflecting the conquest of Tyre by Alexander the Great.

This brings me to some of my major criticisms of Saur's book. Saur's chief concern is history rather than literature, and one of his fundamental assumptions is that Ezek 26–28

contains material that can be used for reconstructing the history of Tyre. He maintains that, although the biblical texts are clearly polemical with their own theological aims, it is nonetheless possible to discover material that can contribute to a historical reconstruction. This view is based on the presupposition that events referred to in prophetic texts are directly related to actual historical events happening around the prophet. While this claim may be correct for some prophetic texts, it may be less so in other cases. I would therefore have appreciated a discussion of the validity of this methodology with specific regard to the oracles against the nations. In fact, Saur's monograph contains no real overview of research pertaining to the genre of oracle against the nations and its literary and theological role in biblical literature. In my view, a prophetic text about the destruction of Tyre does not necessarily imply the destruction of the city. Rather, it may be an example of wishful thinking, implying the very opposite: Tyre is strong, and an Israelite prophet *wishes* for its destruction. The same issue comes to the forefront later in the monograph when Saur discusses the reference to Tyre in the list of the cities and districts in Zech 9:1–8. Saur confidently dates this text to the period of Alexander the Great without ever really taking alternative interpretations into account. In my view, the attempt to understand Zech 9:1–8 as referring to a campaign of an earthly political ruler is questionable. It is in my view better understood as reflecting the mythological march of the theophany of YHWH.

Moreover, in Saur's diachronic analysis of Ezek 26–28, Saur never interacts with those, primarily Anglo-Saxon, scholars who, on diachronic grounds, date the bulk of the book of Ezekiel to the sixth century B.C. (e.g., Paul Joyce, Andrew Mein). In fact, works of these scholars do not even appear in the bibliography. These omissions turn out to be symptomatic of Saur's monograph as a whole. Saur stays consistently within the German field of scholarship: nearly all footnotes refer to German publications, and there is very little interaction with Anglo-Saxon scholarship. In particular, Saur never consults Daniel Block's major two-volume commentary on Ezekiel, and Moshe Greenberg's equally, if not more, important commentary is only mentioned in passing in the beginning of the book.

Saur then gives his reader a more than one-hundred-pages-long history of Tyre, with focus on its political relationships. In writing this history, he combines textual (Mesopotamian, biblical, and Greco-Roman texts) as well as archaeological evidence. Saur provides a good and balanced history in which he discusses the reliability and the applicability of the various textual sources.

In the following section, Saur goes methodically through Ezek 26–28 and explores how the biblical material can contribute to our understanding of the political, social, cultural, and religious history of Tyre. As mentioned above, he argues that Ezek 26:7\*–8a, 13–14\* speak about Nebuchadnezzar's thirteen-year-long siege on Tyre, while Ezek 26:5b, 8b,

12–14a<sup>y</sup> add to our knowledge of the conquest of Tyre by Alexander the Great. Likewise, Saur provides a long and detailed discussion as to how the list of trade connections in Ezek 27:12–25a furthers our understanding of the role of Tyre in Mediterranean trade. Finally, Saur explores the ways in which Ezek 28:11–19 contributes to our understanding of the religion of Tyre. For example, it is possible that the biblical text provides information of Tyrian religious ceremonies. Saur argues further that the specific choice of symbols in Ezek 28 possibly relates to the Tyrian royal ideology and its belief in the king as the representative of the city god Melchart.

In the next section, Saur explores the role of Tyre in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. He demonstrates that there are two distinct ways in which a biblical text relates to Tyre. On the one hand, many of the early biblical texts describe Tyre in a positive light, as an important neighbor the splendor and the influence of which were to be admired (e.g., Hos 9:13; Pss 45:12; 87:4, as well as the account of Hiram and Solomon in 1 Kgs 5). On the other hand, later postexilic texts tend to describe Tyre in a more negative light, where Tyre is regarded as having behaved in a less than brotherly behavior toward Judah following the fall of Jerusalem, merely seeking its own profit (e.g., Ezra 3:7; Neh 13:16; Isa 23; Zech 14:21). Saur aptly uses the term *Hassliebe* to describe Israel's feelings toward Tyre: we detect both admiration and disdain, both inferiority complex and fantasies of superiority.

The final part of the monograph is devoted to the intertextual relationship of Ezek 28:11–19, on the one hand, and Gen 2–3 and Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–13, on the other. The discussion is solid and detailed. However, this is yet another example where Saur's lack of interaction with Anglo-Saxon scholarship becomes noticeable. In particular, the discussion would have benefited from taking into account Terje Stordalen's highly relevant book *Echoes of Eden* (Peeters, 2000). Furthermore, as already commented upon above, his failure to at least consider the reading of the MT makes his discussion less useful than it could have been.

All in all, despite the mentioned shortcomings, this is a solid and carefully executed piece of research, providing lucid and informative discussions not only about the history of Tyre but also its literary and its religious roles in biblical literature. As such, it deserves a full hearing.