



**Kowalski, Beate**

***Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel in der  
Offenbarung des Johannes***

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Kowalski's study, a *Habilitationsschrift* submitted to the Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck in 2003, is a recent contribution to the ever-growing stream of articles and monographs exploring the way the New Testament authors utilized earlier biblical texts. Focusing on the relationship between Ezekiel and Revelation, she seeks to provide not only a thorough exegetical investigation of allusions and other types of connections between the documents but also an informed discussion of the theological and hermeneutical ramifications of the reception of Ezekiel in Revelation.

In the introduction Kowalski takes readers on a brief tour into the history of research on John's reception of the Old Testament in general and the book of Ezekiel in particular, justifying the need for a comprehensive *Gesamtstudie* of the two documents. This is followed by a relatively short overview of the ways the Old Testament is used in Revelation. It is the subsequent discussion of methodological issues, however, that is likely to interest the reader of the introduction the most.

At the heart of every "Old Testament in Revelation" study is the question of how one recognizes or determines an allusion to another document. Surveying briefly earlier studies that have attempted, with various degrees of success, to develop a methodology of establishing allusions, Kowalski concludes that the definition of "allusion" is a

fundamental preliminary decision that determines the results of studies such as hers. Furthermore, she contends that since the use of the Old Testament in Revelation differs from its use in other Scriptures, a definition specifically tailored to Revelation is needed. Well aware of the dangers of an atomistic approach, she proceeds to offer her criteria for determining allusions and emphasizes the need for being alert for their presence on different levels (linguistic, stylistic, structural, contextual, communicative). Yet though her discussion is filled with insights and common sense, it is not significantly different from those of the many scholars who have joined the quest for the criteria for discerning allusions in Revelation. Moreover, literary critics and allusion theorists would challenge the notion that allusions in Revelation function somehow fundamentally differently from allusions in other texts.

Part 1 of the book consists of approximately two hundred pages of word-level analysis of allusions to Ezekiel in Revelation. Beginning in Rev 1, Kowalski goes through the whole document, verse by verse, and examines “every” proposal for an allusion either given in the indices of NA<sup>27</sup> or UBS<sup>4</sup> or found in exegetical literature. Each proposal is presented in a clear and accessible format: first the verse(s) of Revelation in question in Greek, together with the corresponding verse(s) of Ezekiel both in Greek and Hebrew, with agreements and/or similarities in wording underlined; then a list of references to the literature where the allusion is proposed; and, finally, a closer examination of the texts. The results are summarized and further analyzed at the end of part 1, where the reader finds various helpful tables (the longest being eleven pages long) and charts, together with a discussion of the language of John’s sources, a topic where no consensus exists. Kowalski maintains that although some of Revelation’s allusions to Ezekiel can only be actualized through an LXX-like Greek text and some only through an MT-like text (ninety-six verses of Rev containing allusions that could be actualized through either text), it does not necessarily follow that John had both the LXX and the MT in front of him as he was writing.

When it comes to the interpretation of Revelation, it is very unlikely that two scholars reach identical conclusions, and this certainly applies to any study of its allusions. Although Kowalski offers careful and balanced analyses of various proposals, the reader may of course take issue with this or that particular reading of the text. Furthermore, often the analysis could have been supplemented by a discussion of the purpose for which the allusion is employed by the author or perhaps by a digression into the Old Testament pseudepigrapha or the Dead Sea Scrolls, whose reception of Ezekiel may well illuminate the way it is used in Revelation. These observations, however, in no way diminish the value of Kowalski’s contribution. Her analysis is comprehensive; she is well-versed in secondary (especially in non-Anglo Saxon) literature; and she is consistent with her methodology throughout.

If the book were to end after part 1, it would already be a valuable source for students of Revelation. Yet there is more to come. In part 2 (almost two hundred pages), divided into five sections, Kowalski examines the connections between Ezekiel and Revelation on the structural level. In the first section she compares the overall structure of both documents, noting similarities especially in terms of the importance and placement of their vision narratives and the settings (exile, Patmos, desert, the Jerusalem temple, heaven) of those narratives. She also discusses the phenomena of the doubling of certain elements in both documents. The comparison of the two documents continues in the second section, which focuses on the authors and their *Sitze im Leben*, their audiences, and their purposes for writing. The third section examines the reception of certain larger segments of Ezekiel in Revelation (e.g., call narratives and visions of God/Christ, the sealing of the redeemed, the measuring of the temple, Gog and Magog, and the vision of the New Jerusalem). This analysis is complemented by the fourth section, which gives attention to five important individual motifs appearing in both documents: prophet(esse)s, city as a woman, theophany signs, scroll, and God's plagues. The fifth section concludes part 2 by summarizing its findings.

Again, while certain parts of Kowalski's analysis may perhaps appear less convincing than others, she does a thorough job in comparing the documents from different perspectives and clearly demonstrates the influence of the book of Ezekiel on John's composition. Consequently, the (already quite sizable) list of certain allusions to Ezekiel in Revelation is further enlarged by twenty-five structural allusions. Her discussions are systematic, logical and helpful and are supplemented with extensive footnotes (a total of 1,250 for the book) packed with information. There are also a number of tables and charts that make the various analyses more accessible.

Part 3 focuses on the theological and hermeneutical implications of the results of the earlier parts. Reflecting on the manner of John's reception of Ezekiel, Kowalski points out that the Apocalypse is not an interpretation of the Old Testament but rather a revelation of Jesus Christ, for John uses no known Jewish exegetical methods of interpretation in his approach to Ezekiel. Likewise, John should not be understood as offering the fulfillment of Ezekiel but rather as renewing and upholding the promises found therein. Revelation could perhaps best be characterized as a Christian *Weiterlesen* (rather than *Wiederlesen*) of the Old Testament. These remarks are complemented by Kowalski's comments on the relationship between the Old Testament traditions and the original vision John claims to have had. She concludes that the reception of Ezekiel in Revelation supports the view that John indeed had a real vision but that his written account of that vision has been shaped by biblical models and by his unique, metaphor-rich language, which is imbued with the Old Testament. This understanding of the way by which Revelation came to be written, however, does not exclude the presence of allusions.

At the end of the book there are two appendices (a classification of bipartite covenant formulas in the Old Testament and the listing of all allusions to Ezekiel in Revelation), a list of tables and charts, and a twenty-page bibliography. There is no index of subjects, authors, or references (a standard policy with SBB), which is somewhat unfortunate in a monograph abounding with all three. There are also a few signs suggesting that the editing process was not quite as careful as it could have been. For example, when there is a line break within the Hebrew text, often the beginning of the sentence appears below the rest of the sentence; in tables there are inconsistencies in the paragraph justification within columns and unfortunate page breaks within rows; there are frequent spelling mistakes in English quotations; and the allusions to Ezekiel not given in NA<sup>27</sup> are not in bold in the table at the end of part 1, despite the claim to the contrary in the paragraph introducing the table. Yet all these are but minor inconveniences in light of the overall quality of the work.

Kowalski's analysis of the reception of Ezekiel in Revelation leaves no stone unturned. Even where readers may differ with her reading of the data, they will be impressed by her careful approach, her many insights, and the wealth of information found in the book. *Die Rezeption des Propheten Ezechiel in der Offenbarung des Johannes* is an important contribution to scholarship on Revelation and should be consulted by all serious students of John's use of the Old Testament.