

BOOK REVIEW AND NOTE

***Commentary on Isaiah*. By Andrew of St. Victor. Translation, introduction, and notes by Frans van Liere with the assistance of Nancy Van Baak. Turnhout: Brepols, 2023. 492 pp. €70.00.**

Recent years have seen a burgeoning interest in the work of the Victorines, a twelfth-century school perhaps best known for their more literal handling of scripture. Frans von Liere, the translator of this volume based upon his edition of the critical text, has been at the forefront of making the authors of the school accessible to English readers. This text by Andrew of St. Victor, one of the latter scholars in the tradition, provides an interesting window into the exegetical method of the school, as well as the tensions created by their resulting interpretations. The book of Isaiah is a text in which Christian exegetes have generally seen prophecies about Jesus throughout the text. The Suffering Servant passage in chapter 53 is particularly fertile ground for such readings. Yet, Jesus is hardly to be seen anywhere in Andrew's interpretation of this passage or anywhere else in the commentary. This made the commentary somewhat controversial even among other Victorines, as van Liere notes (9). Andrew strives to make his commentary literal for a Christian audience, but not Jewish, though utilizing Jewish sources. He presents Jewish interpretations at various points in the commentary to contrast their views from his own. Andrew effectively tries to navigate tension between a literal interpretation that is sufficiently Christian, but would have also been understood by the original audience. It becomes a truly fascinating study of the difficulties of medieval Christian biblical exegesis, as well as a reflection of how Christians interacted with Judaism.

There is only one minor quibble. For a translated text, it seems an odd editorial choice that the bibliography contains Latin editions of texts that have been translated into English. It is not impossible to find translations, but it does seem counterproductive. That should not detract from the gratitude to van Liere and his assistant, Nancy Van Baak, for making this captivating text available to a wider audience.

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