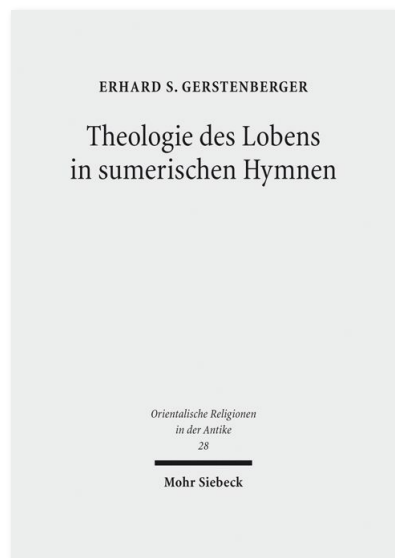


Erhard S. Gerstenberger

Theologie des Lobens in sumerischen Hymnen

Zur Ideengeschichte der Eulogie



Sumerian literature of the third and second millennia BC presents, among other genres, a large number of hymnic texts. They mostly originated in cultic worship, celebrating power, prestige, benevolence of deities, kings, temples etc. Erhard S. Gerstenberger starts out with that archaic formulaic shout: "[name] be praised!" = "[dDN] zà-mí (cf. biblical allelujah). Thereafter he analyzes various laudatory expressions containing the keyword zà-mí. He shows that Sumerian praise is not simply a dutiful expression of awe in the face of supreme authorities. Rather, it signifies an effective transfer of power towards the recipients of eulogy. Enhancing and enlivening laudations thus cannot only be emitted from high to low, they can also proceed from the depths empowering the mighty. The human creature thus partakes in the formation and preservation of earthly affairs assuming his and her full responsibilities in all the mysterious interactions of personal and impersonal forces constantly taking place in nature and history.

Erhard S. Gerstenberger Geboren 1932; Studium der Ev. Theologie in Marburg, Tübingen, Bonn, Wuppertal; 1961 Promotion (Bonn); 1970 Habilitation (Heidelberg); 1965-75 Pfarrer in Essen-Frohnhausen; 1975-81 Professor für Altes Testament an der EST in Sao Leopoldo, Brasilien; 1981-85 Professor für Altes Testament in Gießen, 1985-97 in Marburg; 1997 Pensionierung; seitdem Lehraufträge, Vorträge, Seminare, Publikationen (Bücher, Aufsätze, Rezensionen usw.) und Promotion im Fach Altorientalistik (Marburg).

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