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"Review of *Sacrifice and Symbol: Biblical Šělāmîm in a Ritual Perspective*"

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could have been more clearly argued. For example, his argument for the date of P comes late in the chapter. M. accepts “common” positions regarding the date of Ezekiel 40–48 and presumes that the texts give a direct window into the temple politics of Judah before the fall of Jerusalem. He concludes that Ezekiel, P, and Chronicles “provide a picture of the Levites from the period immediately before the exile to approximately the fourth century BCE” (p. 70). Although Ezekiel and P are “easily ascribed to priests” (p. 71), Chronicles has both a priestly and a Levitical layer. M.’s criterion for distinguishing priestly from Levitical texts in Chronicles is that those texts penned by priests depict Levites as subordinate, whereas those written by Levites view the group as “co-workers” equal to the priests. Again, those who agree with the dating of these texts will agree with his conclusions, even though his criterion for priestly/Levitical authorship remains circular.

Min uses this literary criterion in his examination of the authorship of E-N. He concludes that the sixty-five references to Levites in E-N never relegate the Levites to a lower status. Furthermore, the emphasis on Jeremiah, the reference to Benjamin, and the phrase “the Levites and the priests” provide M. with further evidence of a Levitical perspective.

Although M. examines authorship on literary grounds in part 2, he does not discuss how the text addressed the historical issues of its day. He takes this final question up in part 3. He argues that E-N nowhere blames the Persians for the setbacks Yehud experienced during the period of restoration, suggesting a pro-Persian author. M. concludes that the redaction of Nehemiah 8–10 asserts an ideology of decentralized power, cooperation among social classes, and dissatisfaction with the status quo. Ezra 4–6 shows that the priests were not universally supported by the Persians, while Neh 13:4–31 supports the Levites and seeks to control the priests. Finally, the interests of the priesthood would have been undermined by an ideology of decentralized power, an egalitarian view of competing priestly groups, and a critique of the religious status quo. These elements argue for a Levitical, rather than a priestly authorship.

The writing of the book is very clear, and the summaries throughout the monograph make the presentation easy to follow. M. ends the book with a brief discussion of further implications for this study. He provides a clear argument in favor of Levitical authorship of an independent and unified text of Ezra-Nehemiah. Whether it is successful beyond those who already agree with some of his conclusions on composition and dating is debatable. Nevertheless, it is a work that must be taken seriously in any future considerations of this topic. I recommend it for scholars and graduate libraries.

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MARTIN MODÉUS, *Sacrifice and Symbol: Biblical Šēlāmîm in a Ritual Perspective* (ConBOT 52; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2005). Pp. 459. Paper SEK 190.

In this dissertation (University of Lund, 2005; Trygve N. D. Mettinger and Sten Hidal, co-advisors), Modéus argues that the occurrences of *šēlāmîm* (pl. in form but frequently used as sing.) in the OT are insertions by a glossator working in the late Persian period in the window of time between the completion of 1–2 Chronicles and the composition of the Samaritan Pentateuch. This daring thesis is carefully framed in terms of method

and model of interpretation so that he might make his case for a hypothesis that in the end will elude definitive proof. One might characterize his approach as heuristic. M. states that he has “ventured a ‘maximalist’ position concerning the influence of a single glossator in order to test the hypothesis as critically as possible” (p. 266). He wrestles with passages that seem to disprove his hypothesis (e.g., Exod 32:1-6; 2 Kgs 16:10-16). Since his hypothesis makes a claim about the entire OT, his explanations of the place of the *šēlāmîm*-texts in the various corpora (Pentateuch, Former Prophets, Ezekiel, 1–2 Chronicles) and in relation to one another are thought-provoking and shed new light on these texts. M. offers the reader a bigger picture within which the *šēlāmîm*-texts function as a basis for further investigation, even if M.’s reconstruction remains tentative after his careful examination of the texts.

After an introductory statement of the problem, M. maps out a model for understanding the *šēlāmîm* as ritual rather than as sacrifice. He argues that the categories of ritual capture the dynamic and contextual character of these cultic acts more accurately than definitions of sacrifice that try to articulate the essential meaning of these cultic acts. Terms used in ritual can define or focus the situation such that the participants proceed with understanding, even though they have not been given an essential definition for the action of which they are a part. M. draws on the language of symbol to differentiate three functions of sacrificial ritual: defining, legitimizing, and marking. M. argues that the *šēlāmîm* functions distinctively as a marking symbol: that is, it signals an important event to participants so that they might be aware of it and communicate it. M. claims that under the umbrella of this ritual category (i.e., the marking symbol), the various competing interpretations of the *šēlāmîm* can be maintained and interrelated. For example, the definition of the *šēlāmîm* as the giving of a gift or as the effecting of a communion are kept as important dimensions of a ritual action that is more inclusive than either of these definitions allows. M. argues that a ritual category like the marking symbol provides focus or definition without reducing the richness of the ritual action as the various proposed essentialist definitions of the *šēlāmîm* would do. M.’s model makes an important point about respecting the dynamism and polyvalence of ritual action. Since this model describes the practice of ritual, however, terms such as “marking symbol” run the risk of becoming reified into essential definitions when they are placed in the tool kit of a glossator, as M. does in parts 2 through 4 of his study.

Modéus contends that “the function of ritual is not primarily to transmit meaning, but to be excentric [*sic*], to create alertness and to put stress and focus on the *situation*, the *causa*” (p. 40). When the ritual pointing to this situation is described in a text, it appears to me that the interaction between the ritual and the situation tends to take the form of a static snapshot rather than of an unfolding sequence in a narrative. But M. argues that the *šēlāmîm* takes on its particular coloring when placed in texts that describe the inauguration of the cult. Moses, David, Solomon, and Hezekiah offer *šēlāmîm* as they inaugurate the altars at Sinai and Jerusalem. M. contends that the glossator inserted the *šēlāmîm* into these inaugural texts from his context in the late Persian period and makes the claim that the *šēlāmîm* as a solemn temple ritual belonged in these texts, even if not stated there originally. M. argues that for the glossator the term *zēbah* did not carry the solemnity of the *šēlāmîm* and had lost its significance in the postexilic cult. Therefore, the insertion of the *šēlāmîm* in the form of an expansion on the *zēbah* already in the text, or simply as an addition, was justified in

terms of the place of the *šēlāmîm* and *zebah* in the ritual system mapped out in Israelite cultic history. M. notes that the *šēlāmîm* was probably a term used in priestly circles for speaking about remuneration, since the Ugaritic *šlmm* served this function in the second millennium, but he contends that *šēlāmîm* would not have made its way into the OT texts until the glossator inserted it. Here M. admits that he does not have the data to back up this claim.

Modéus offers a translation of *šēlāmîm* as a “remunerative sacrifice,” an interpretation that would have fit the priestly concern regarding compensation. But he argues that the solemnity of the *šēlāmîm* as a marking symbol is the point that the glossator tried to make by this editorial work. This solemnity would have been bestowed on the term *šēlāmîm* by the textual situation (*causa*) in which the glossator inserted it. One wonders in the end if M.’s picture of the *šēlāmîm* has not taken on an essentialist character at the hands of the glossator.

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MARIA CARMELA PALMISANO, “*Salvaci, Dio dell’Universo!*” *Studio dell’eucologia di Sir 36H, 1-17* (AnBib 163; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2006). Pp. 468. Paper €33.

Palmisano wrote this dissertation under the direction of Maurice Gilbert and defended it at the Biblical Institute in March 2006. The work consists of three parts: (1) a summary of the discussion surrounding the authenticity and literary genre of the prayer as well as an extensive treatment of its literary context, (2) a detailed analysis of the text, and (3) a proposal for the historical reference points of the author. P. adds two illuminating appendixes: the first presents the texts that precede the prayer in the Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, and VL versions with translations that are foundational to P.’s discussions; the second is a helpful listing of the roots ככך and שךך and their cognates in the Hebrew manuscripts, and in the Greek, Peshitta, and VL versions of Sirach. Furthermore, P. offers an insightful excursus on the various texts in Ben Sira that express either a prayerful outcry or God’s response to prayer. In a final excursus, she provides another list of Hebrew terms, this time for “the poor” in Sirach with the translations in the ancient versions. P. begins her study with a discussion of the discrepancies in the versification in the Hebrew recensions and the ancient versions. She follows the numbering of Pancratius C. Beentjes’s edition for the Hebrew, and Joseph Ziegler’s for the Greek. In this review, I present the versification according to the conventions of English translators in the *NAB* and *NRSV*.

On the basis of vocabulary and theological perspective, P. argues for Ben Sira’s authorship of Sir 36:1-22. Furthermore, she asserts that this prayer fits well within the setting provided by the preceding texts, 34:21-31 and 35:1-26 (which are fully extant in only the Greek, Syriac, and VL, with Hebrew fragments for 35:11-13, 14-26). She proposes that this whole complex exhibits the form of a juridical appeal, which consists of three parts: (1) the charge of violence, threatened or actual, on behalf of the innocent victims, made to God as judge (34:21-31); (2) God’s judgment upon hearing of the charge (35:1-13); and (3) God’s intervention to reestablish justice (35:14-26). P. perceives that Ben Sira imitates the prophetic lit-

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