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"Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls", Joseph L. Angel, Leiden 2010 : [recenzja]

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Joseph L. Angel, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 86; Leiden: Brill, 2010). Pp. xiii, 380. € 133. ISBN 978-90-04-18145-8

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In the first part (pp. 23-167) of his doctoral dissertation, Angel (henceforth A.) extends the inquiry about the otherworldly and eschatological priesthood in the Dead Sea scrolls to some pre-Qumran compositions, and then concentrates on the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, 1QSb, 4Q510-511, 4Q491, and 11QMelchizedek. After the survey of the pertinent material, A. concludes that “the Qumranites applied the otherworldly priest traditions especially to themselves (or to their selected intermediary) as an expression of their attainment of the pinnacle of human experience – divine service with the angels and participation in the mysteries of divine knowledge” (p. 165). The second part of the monograph (pp. 171-310) is dedicated to the discussion of the eschatological priesthood in the Qumran scrolls, messianic texts included. After the presentation of the general picture contained in the texts themselves, A. discusses the historical background of the concepts of messianic and eschatological priesthood. He points to the expanded role of the priesthood in the Second Temple period, sectarian criticism of the Jerusalem temple and priestly establishment, moral and ritual purity and the physical separation of the Qumran community from Jerusalem. Of special interest is chapter seven (pp. 257-295) in which A. muses on the tradition roots of the eschatological priesthood. He points to non-sectarian documents (Ben Sira, the *Aramaic Levi Document*, *Jubilees*) that with their presentation of ideal priestly figures are brought to bear on the sectarian images of the eschatological priesthood. Additionally, the Qumran texts contain traditions that ascribe to the Levites an elevated status of power, which can be explained by the identification of the Qumranites with the Levites. „The most plausible explanation of the data is indeed that the Qumranites at some point became attracted to the Levi and Levite traditions because, within their own polemical context, they identified with the second-class status of the Levites vis-à-vis the priests” (p. 292).

A. has written a very informative monograph concerning an important part of Qumran theological import for the understanding of the Second Temple historical and theological presentation of the Jewish priesthood. Without downgrading the overall positive evaluation of this work, one has, however, to note some shortcomings in the interpretation of especially pre-Qumranic texts. A.'s treatment of the *Aramaic Levi Document* is sometimes quite surprising (pp. 46-53). It is widely known that this priestly composition from the third century BC has served as a source text for the Christian *Testament of Levi* whose Greek text is dated to the second century AD. These two compositions are related textually, but their literary form and many sections differ. It is therefore quite surprising to see A. discuss the content of the *ALD* while speaking about the Greek *Testament of Levi*. The subsection "The Celestial Temple and Its Liturgy" (pp. 48-50) that makes part of the section dedicated to the *ALD* is exclusively based on the text of the Greek *Testament of Levi*. Since the *ALD* is fragmentary and does not preserve most of Levi's visionary experience, A. probably intended to supplement his analysis of the *ALD* by basing his remarks about the celestial temple in the *ALD* on the *Testament of Levi*. From the methodological point of view, however, it is inappropriate to discuss the content of the *ALD* while in fact presenting the content of the *Testament of Levi*. A. should have stressed that the image of the celestial temple in the *Testament of Levi* is much later than the *ALD*, and that what he claims about the celestial temple of the basis of the Greek Christian text must not apply to the Jewish priestly composition from the third century BC. What he says, however, is the contrary: "it is no stretch to imagine that the lost parts of *ALD* included a section portraying angelic sacrifice and liturgy" (p. 50).

The next subsection "Angelic and Human priests in *ALD*" (pp. 50-53) proceeds in a similar way: the *ALD* manuscripts, much older, although quite fragmentary, are interpreted in light of the *Testament of Levi*. For example, first *T. Levi* 2:10 is cited and then A. states that *ALD* 18 preserves a similar phrase (p. 52) – because of the chronological grounds, the order of citation and of dependence must here be reversed. In the same way, when A. compares the *ALD* with the *Book of the Watchers* (p. 51), he does not cite the *ALD*, but the *Testament of Levi*, where, differently from the *Book of the Watchers*, "the heavenly temple and its service are perfect and seemingly unprofanable" (p. 51). The latter statement simply does not apply to the *ALD* because the Aramaic text has nothing about the heavenly temple. In the context of his analysis of the *Testament of Levi*, A. mentions one important characteristic of Levi's priesthood in the *ALD*, that is "*ALD*'s explicit concern for the human priesthood of Levi and his descendants" (p. 51). That's a pity that A. did

not develop this statement that points to the most important character of the whole Levitical composition – preservation and continuation of the hereditary priesthood together with scribal and priestly education. Unfortunately, the rest of the subsection is completely dedicated to the comparison of the relationship between humans and angels in the *Book of the Watchers* and the Greek *Testament of Levi* (pp. 52-53).

When discussing otherworldly priesthood in non-sectarian writings (ch. 2), A. classifies the description of the high priest Simon in chapter 50 of Ben Sira (pp. 56-61) together with the Book of Watchers, *Jubilees*, *Aramaic Levi Document*, *Visions of Amram*, 4Q418 and 4Q541. It is highly doubtful whether such a classification is correct. The high priest Simon is described as serving God in the earthly sanctuary, not heavenly, and in this sense he certainly does not belong to the group of “elevated human priests likened to angels and, at times, beckoned to serve God in the heavenly temple as do the angels (p. 23).” The comparison of Simon with the heavenly body and terms describing the glory of his service and vestments does not make of him an “otherworldly” priest.

A. rightly encompasses into his review of otherworldly priesthood in non-sectarian writings the *Book of the Watchers* (pp. 26-35). However, not the whole Enochic book (chapters 1–36) is dedicated to this problematic and, in fact, A.’s discussion is limited to chapters 12–16 where some priestly characteristics of the fallen angels come to the fore. It is, however, quite inappropriate to transfer the conclusions concerning the priestly role of the angels from chapters 12–16 to chapters 6–11 that constitute a separate literary unit. In 15:2 the Enochic narrator tells the fallen Watchers that they should petition in behalf of men, and not men in behalf of the Watchers. Noting that intercession in 15:2 should be understood as a priestly role, A. claims that Michael’s cleansing of the earth from all impurity in 10:20-21 expresses Michael’s intercessory function that “is closely linked to his leading role in the binding of the watchers and their demonic leader” (p. 29). In these verses, however, Michael fulfils God’s command concerning the purification of the earth, and the fact that “all the sons of men will become righteous” (10:21) does not prove that the purification of the earth by Michael constitutes his intercessory function. In other words, the intercessory function of the Watchers detected in *1 En.* 15:2 has been imposed by A. on *1 En.* 10:11–11:2 where it does not exist. The angels are asked by suffering humanity to present its legal case to God in *1 En.* 9:2-3, 10, but not in *1 Enoch* 10.

The section 10:11–11:2 also cannot be interpreted, contrary to A.’s claim, as “an etiological allegory for the scapegoat ritual of Leviticus 16, according to which the people’s transgressions are hurled into the wilderness

with the goat of Azazel” (p. 29). Such an opinion has often been linked by authors cited in note 22 with *1 En.* 10:4-8 where some distant parallelism with Leviticus 16 has been established. A. pushes his comments concerning *1 Enoch* 10 to the extremes when he claims, following other authors, that this Enochic chapter may have served as the myth to accompany the priestly ritual of Yom Kippur (p. 29). Thus, A. concludes, it is possible that Michael is portrayed in *1 Enoch* 10 “as a sort of celestial high priest interceding in behalf of all humankind, a conception that resonates in later Jewish literature” (p. 29). Unfortunately for A., such a conclusion is not warranted by his interpretation of *1 En.* 10:11–11:2, but it rather appears as an attempt to transfer the image of Michael as a “sort of” celestial high priest from later Jewish literature to *1 En.* 10:11–11:2. In the latter text Michael is not a high priest and his binding of the Watchers and purification of the earth does not constitute his supposed intercession in behalf of men.