

Keeping Heaven on Earth. By MICHAEL B. HUNDLEY. Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe, vol. 50. Tübingen: MOHR SIEBECK, 2011. Pp. xvi + 250. €99 (paper).

This study, a revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation, seeks to explain the Priestly mechanism for ensuring "the divine presence at the heart of the Israelite community" (p. 1). Hundley examines the tabernacle legislation from Exodus 25–Leviticus 16, along with other relevant texts. He includes H material, treating it as secondary and often supplementary to P. However, he also focuses on the final form and setting of the text, choosing not to enter into the argument over Priestly dating or make an argument about the authors' own context (p. 6).

Hundley is particularly interested in the application of ritual theory to the texts and follows James Watts in noting that ritual texts, unlike ritual practice, serve particular rhetorical purposes (p. 5). In the case of P, the setting of the tabernacle legislation in the distant past is meant to highlight the priests' authority and to show Israelite religion's superiority over other ancient Near Eastern systems. Hundley relates this to his choice to analyze the final form of the text, noting that ancient practitioners of these rituals would have been concerned only with the rituals' authority and efficacy, not with their development or history of composition (p. 7).

Much of the study is devoted to specific language and terminology, because as Hundley notes, "Priestly language . . . is by turns more precise and more elusive than its biblical and ANE counterparts" (p. 12). His overall purpose and contribution is to comprehensively examine the whole Priestly system in light of other ancient Near Eastern systems and to use ritual theory to uncover the rhetorical purposes of the Priestly material (p. 14).

Chapter 1, "Ritual Theory," explores the purpose of ritual, which "serves as a bridge between two worlds" (p. 21). Hundley covers several major theories of ritual (Bell, Klawans, Gilders, Modéus, Gane), opting to use a cumulative approach that draws on any and all of them. He adopts Modéus's method of analyzing ritual function on three levels: structure, use, and ideology (p. 35). Different theoretical approaches will work on different levels, yielding what Hundley calls different interpretations (p. 37), though it would seem better to think of them as different *angles* of interpretation, as a single ritual (or ritual text) may simultaneously have multiple meanings on multiple levels.

Chapter 2, "The Divine Presence," argues that "the Priestly writers seek to ensure that YHWH is comprehensible, yet not so comprehensible that he is misunderstood" (p. 39). Hundley argues that P uses "analogical language" to describe YHWH; thus, for example, YHWH's glory (*kavod*) is not the same thing as his presence. It is a metonym, "the visible aspect of that presence" (p. 43). Aspects of YHWH's presence such as divine glory, fire, and cloud emphasize YHWH's transcendence and his superiority over other ancient Near Eastern gods.

Chapter 3 covers the dedication and inauguration of the tabernacle and cult. The Israelite system differs from other ancient Near Eastern cults in that placing the ark in the tabernacle is not synonymous with YHWH's presence entering, whereas the cultic statue is synonymous with a god's entering its temple elsewhere. Here Hundley discusses both the Deuteronomistic History (1 Kings 8) and P, with a lengthy treatment of the tabernacle dedication in P (Exodus 29, 40 and Leviticus 8–9). He provides a detailed discussion of terminology and concepts like purity and holiness and notes that in P "multiple and often repeated actions work together and are necessary to bring about the desired results" (p. 70). This provides a solution for the apparent overlaps and redundancies in the text and for the fact that the purpose and meaning of many acts are not explained.

Chapter 4 covers regular service in the temple. This service ensures YHWH's presence and therefore his blessing. Hundley analyzes the various elements of the service: bread of presence, light, incense, and offerings. He also discusses the relationship of YHWH to food, which is primarily a type of service and is somewhat divorced from the idea of feeding the deity. Again Hundley notes the ambiguity of the function of some parts of the service. The chapter also contains a rather short section on who has access to the temple and to YHWH.

Chapters 5–7 all cover damage control (in the ancient Near East, in P, and an evaluation, respectively). Chapter 6, on Leviticus 4–5, 12–15, and 16, provides a detailed discussion of technical vocabulary and of the "Clearing Day" rite (Lev. 16), which Hundley determines is a kind of rededication of

the sanctuary (p. 169). Chapter 7 synthesizes the information presented in the preceding two chapters. Hundley often concludes that the rites described in these chapters are “preexisting” (e.g., p. 156), but he does not make clear on what basis he draws such conclusions. He sees Leviticus 16 as the pinnacle of the rhetorical trajectory of Leviticus 1–15, providing what he calls a “Priestly masterstroke” (p. 182) to ensure that YHWH’s presence continues. Ultimately, Hundley sees P’s rhetoric as geared toward ensuring the priests’ own place in it, only thereby making YHWH more transcendent and also more efficacious than his ancient Near Eastern rivals (p. 207). Its efficacy in turn draws people into the system, further cementing the priests’ place in it.

The main strength of this volume is its synthesis of a considerable amount of information, both primary texts and secondary material. Hundley covers a lot of ground, often in depth, and he draws frequently on the work of other scholars, including those at the forefront of research on the Priestly material. In addition to his discussion of technical vocabulary, which should be useful to anyone interested in the Priestly system, his conclusion that the Priestly system ensures that priests are necessary for YHWH’s continuing presence is especially compelling. He connects this to his points about the frequent use of imprecise or ambiguous terminology in P: “even if suitable language existed, the Priests would not offer it. Precise interpretations leave the system open to critique and competition. If people understand the system too well, they may become convinced that they no longer need it, thereby questioning its authority” (p. 190).

Similarly, Hundley claims that “the sanctuary admits pollution because and so that it can be conclusively eliminated” (p. 199)—an interesting argument about the nature of Priestly religion and one that works at the rhetorical level in P, but one that also needs to be placed within a larger discussion of the development of ancient Israelite religion (not just that of other ancient Near Eastern religions) and the place of P within it. In particular, this study would have benefited from some analysis of P in comparison to other biblical cultic models, as surely P was also invested in showing how its system outstripped competing Israelite conceptions of deity and the ideal cult.

The volume is also open to some additional criticisms, primary of which is the apparent assumption that anyone other than priests would actually have read the Priestly text at some point. Hundley’s claim that the rhetoric of the text was meant to convince someone of the system’s authority assumes that it reflects reality and also that it was a system, and even a text, that non-priests had ready access to—or if that is not the case, that the text represents usual cultic practice. He does not adequately address the possibility that the P system is entirely hypothetical or that it was only accessible to other priests or literary elites, not the Israelite population at large.

Finally, Hundley hangs much of his argument on comparison with other ancient Near Eastern cults. Though he notes that the treatment of this material has to be selective (p. 10), he nevertheless includes far less of it than he at first suggests he will. It is also not clear why he devotes an entire chapter to the ancient Near East only on the topic of damage control.

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Biblical History and Israel's Past: The Changing Study of the Bible and History. By MEGAN BISHOP MOORE and BRAD E. KELLE. Grand Rapids, Mich.: WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO., 2011. Pp. xvii + 518. \$46 (paper).

This book is an intelligent overview and assessment of modern critical scholarship with regard to “biblical history” and ancient Israel, and is meant for scholars as well as students. The express aim “is to describe the changing study of Israelite and Judean history and the relationship of the biblical literature to that history since the 1970s, when the idea began to be widespread that the story of Israel’s past might at times be quite different from the Bible’s description of ancient Israel” (pp. 39–40). As such, it follows the trend of other books that discuss and critique the methodologies used to understand