

Scripturae

COLLANA DIRETTA DA ANGELO PASSARO

TOO MANY PRIESTS?

MELCHIZEDEK AND THE OTHERS IN HEBREWS

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il pozzo di giacobbe

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To my former pupils 1969-2000

PREFACE

The Epistle to the Hebrews and, in particular, its treatment of priesthood is something that has been part of my life for some time now. My interest was first aroused when doing the MA in Biblical Studies at the University of Manchester in 2000-1. As part of the course on «Jewish Ways of Reading the Bible», I undertook an extended essay for Professor Philip Alexander on «The Use of Scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews». That involved, of course, making the acquaintance of the enigmatic Melchizedek. My relationship with the priest-king of Salem developed further when it came to my choosing a thesis topic for the Licentiate in Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome in 2004. At the time, I was studying Hebrews with Fr Johannes Beutler. It seemed only natural, therefore, to tackle «Why Melchizedek? An Examination of his Contribution to the Christology of Hebrews?» The research involved led me to realise that Melchizedek's significance for Hebrews, though important, is limited and plays no part in the presentation of Jesus the High Priest as expiator, covenant-maker and faithful witness to say nothing of his roles as revealer and compassionate interceder. The publication of my doctoral thesis on *Jesus the Divine Bridegroom in Mark 2:18-22* in 2009 left me with more time to devote to the study of Hebrews in the course of which I have learned that Melchizedek is only one, and probably not the most important, among a multitude of models of priesthood to which the priesthood of Jesus is related. It is the object of this study to examine all these models and to investigate their relationship to one another and to the presentation of Jesus as High Priest. Over the last decade, it has been interesting and fruitful to enter deeply into two important Christological images, that of Jesus as Bridegroom and that of him as High Priest, the one who both «loved us and gave himself for us» (Gal 2,20). Whether such a combination has anything to say about the conditions of the Christian ministry is for others to decide!

My thanks are due to Professors Philip Alexander and Johannes Beutler who presided over early stages of the research involved in this work; to Dr Philip McCosker for tracking down inaccessible articles; to Professor Leslie Houlden for some interesting suggestions; to Fr Anthony Forte S.J. and Mr Robert West for help with linguistic matters.

This book is dedicated to all those pupils whom I had the privilege of teaching between 1969 and 2000: at Lyndhurst House School, Colet Court, Northbridge House, St. Benedict's, Ealing, and Westville House, Ilkley. Though, perhaps fortunately, theology was not one of the subjects with which I was ever entrusted, that long experience was a constant sharpening of the wits and honing of the skills. Most of us from those years are still «strangers and exiles», «not having received what was promised», but we are blessed in being able to look to «Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith».

ABBREVIATIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Scripture are from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 4th corrected edition, the *Septuaginta* edited by Alfred Rahlfs, the *Novum Testamentum Graece* in the Nestle-Aland 27th edition revised, and the *Revised Standard Version*; all quotations from the Pseudepigrapha are from J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (OTP)*; and all quotations from the Dead Sea Scrolls are from F. García Martínez and E.J.C. Tigchelaar (edd. and transl.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition*.

1. Abbreviations of the Names of Biblical Books including the Apocrypha

Either obvious or common or both, I hope!

For convenient recognition, references to the Psalms are made with the Hebrew numeration even if the reference is to the text of the LXX.

2. Abbreviations of the Names of Pseudepigraphical Books

<i>Apoc Ab</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Abraham</i>
<i>Apos Con</i>	<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i>
<i>Asc Is</i>	<i>Ascension of Isaiah</i>
<i>Ass Mos</i>	<i>Assumption of Moses</i>
<i>1 En</i>	<i>Ethiopic Enoch</i>
<i>2 En</i>	<i>Slavonic Enoch</i>
<i>Jos As</i>	<i>Joseph and Aseneth</i>
<i>Jub</i>	<i>Jubilees</i>
<i>Ps(s) Sol</i>	<i>Psalms of Solomon</i>
<i>Sims</i>	<i>Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71)</i>
<i>SO</i>	<i>Sibylline Oracles</i>
<i>Test Abr</i>	<i>Testament of Abraham</i>

<i>Test XII</i>	<i>Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs</i>
<i>T Dan</i>	<i>Testimony of Dan</i>
<i>T Gad</i>	<i>Testimony of Gad</i>
<i>T Jos</i>	<i>Testimony of Joseph</i>
<i>T Jud</i>	<i>Testimony of Judah</i>
<i>T Lev</i>	<i>Testament of Levi</i>
<i>T Sim</i>	<i>Testament of Simeon</i>

3. Abbreviations of Names of Dead Sea Scrolls

CD	<i>Damascus Document</i>
1 QApGen	<i>Genesis Apocryphon</i>
1QHab	<i>Pesher to Habakkuk</i>
1QM	<i>War Scroll</i>
1QS	<i>Rule of the Community</i>
1QSa	<i>Rule of the Congregation</i>
4QFlor	<i>Florilegium (4Q174)</i>
4QpNah	<i>Nahum Pesher</i>
11QMelch	<i>Melchizedek Document (11Q13)</i>

4. Philo and Josephus

<i>Abr</i>	<i>De Abrahamo</i>
<i>Ant</i>	<i>Josephus, Jewish Antiquities</i>
<i>BJ</i>	<i>Josephus, Jewish War</i>
<i>Cher</i>	<i>De Cherubim</i>
<i>Det pot ins</i>	<i>Quod Deterius Potiori Insidiari Solet</i>
<i>Ebr</i>	<i>De Ebrietate</i>
<i>Gig</i>	<i>De Gigantibus</i>
<i>Leg All</i>	<i>Legum Allegoriae</i>

<i>Mut nom</i>	<i>De Mutatione Nominum</i>
<i>Op mund</i>	<i>De Opificio Mundi</i>
<i>Praem poen</i>	<i>De Praemiis et Poenis</i>
<i>Quaest in Gen.</i>	<i>Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin</i>
<i>Rer div her</i>	<i>Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres</i>
<i>Sacr</i>	<i>De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>
<i>Somn</i>	<i>De somniis</i>
<i>Spec Leg</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus</i>
<i>Virt</i>	<i>De Virtutibus</i>
<i>Vit Mos</i>	<i>De vita Mosis</i>

5. Later Jewish Literature

<i>Lev. R</i>	<i>Leviticus Rabba</i>
<i>m. yoma</i>	<i>Mishnah tractate yoma</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i> [for fragments of Artapanus]
<i>PRE</i>	<i>Pirke de Rabbi Eli'ezer</i>
<i>Tg Jon</i>	<i>Targum Jonathan</i>
<i>Tg Neof</i>	<i>Targum Neofiti</i>
<i>Tg Onk</i>	<i>Targum Onkelos</i>
<i>Tg Ps-J</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathan</i>
<i>Tg Pss</i>	<i>Targum on the Psalms</i>
<i>y. San</i>	<i>Jerusalem Talmud tractate Sanhedrin</i>

6. Abbreviations of Commonly Used Periodicals, Reference Works and Serials

AncB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums

AnBib	Analecta Biblica
Ang	<i>Angelicum</i>
Ar Bib	Aramaic Bible
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BAGD	W. Bauer – W.F. Arndt – F.W. Gingrich – W.F. Danker, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	F. Brown – S.R. Driver – C.A. Briggs, <i>Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BDF	F. Blass – A. Debrunner – R.W. Funk, <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
Bijdr	<i>Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie</i>
BiRe	<i>Bible Review</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
BiTr	<i>Bible Translator</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BZAW	Beihefte zur ZAW
CBQ.MS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CGTC	Cambridge Greek Testament Commentaries
CJT	<i>Canadian Journal of Theology</i>
ConJ	<i>Concordia Journal</i>
CRBS	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
CRI	Compendia Rerum Iudicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert

<i>DR</i>	<i>Downside Review</i>
<i>DSD</i>	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
<i>DSSSE</i>	Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition
<i>DunR</i>	<i>Dunwoodie Review</i>
<i>EH</i>	Europäische Hochschulschriften
<i>EKK</i>	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>ER</i>	<i>Ecumenical Review</i>
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Études théologiques et religieuses</i>
<i>EvQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>Exp</i>	<i>Expositor</i>
<i>ET</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>GAP</i>	Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha
<i>GKC</i>	W. Gesenius – E. Kautzch – A. Cowley, <i>Gesenius Hebrew Grammar</i>
<i>GTJ</i>	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HSS</i>	Harvard Semitic Series
<i>HThR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HThS</i>	Harvard Theological Studies
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IBSt</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
<i>ICC</i>	International Critical Commentary
<i>IDB.S</i>	Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible Supplement
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>Interp</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JNWSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNT.S</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series

JSOT.S	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lectio Divina
LNPNF	A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	H.G. Liddell – R. Scott – H.S. Jones, <i>A Greek- English Lexicon</i>
M & T	F. García Martínez – E.J.C. Tigchelaar (edd. and transl.), <i>The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition</i> .
<i>MCM</i>	<i>Modern Churchman</i>
<i>MelT</i>	<i>Melita theologica</i>
N-A	Nestle-Aland, <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , 27 th ed ^{rev}
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEB	Neue Echter Bibel
<i>Neotest</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NIC	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NT.S	Novum Testamentum Supplement Series
<i>NRTh</i>	<i>La nouvelle revue théologique</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
<i>OTP</i>	J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), <i>Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>OTS</i>	<i>Oudtestamentische studien</i>
PD	Parole de Dieu
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>

<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista Biblica</i>
RivB Suppl.	Supplementi di Rivista Biblica
<i>RHPhR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse</i>
<i>RdQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>RRT</i>	<i>Reviews in Religion and Theology</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RStB</i>	<i>Recherche Historico-Bibliche</i>
<i>RThPh</i>	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
<i>RTR</i>	<i>Reformed Theological Review</i>
<i>SBFLA</i>	<i>Studii Biblici Franciscani liber annuus</i>
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBL.DS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>SBL.MS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
<i>SBL.SP</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
<i>SCM</i>	Student Christian Movement
<i>Scr</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
<i>ScrB</i>	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
<i>ScrHie</i>	<i>Scripta Hierosolymitana</i>
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
<i>SICOTP</i>	<i>A Scripture Index to the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>SJTh</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SNTS</i>	Society for New Testament Studies
<i>SNTS.MS</i>	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>SPCK</i>	Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge
<i>SPS</i>	Sacra Pagina Series
<i>ST</i>	<i>Summa Theologica</i>
<i>STDJ</i>	Studies on the Texts of the Deserts of Judah
<i>StPatr</i>	<i>Studia Patristica</i>

<i>StPhA</i>	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
<i>StTh</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
Str-B	H.L. Strack – P. Billerbeck, <i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i>
SubBib	Subsidia Biblica
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>ThD</i>	<i>Theology Digest</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
Thayer	J.T. Thayer, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
<i>Theol</i>	<i>Theology</i>
<i>ThR</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
<i>ThRev</i>	<i>Theological Review</i>
TPINTC	Trinity Press International New Testament Commentaries
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>ThStKr</i>	<i>Theologische Studien und Kritiken</i>
TU	<i>Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur</i>
TWAT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
TWNT	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>VigChr</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
VD	<i>Verbum Domini</i>
<i>VoxEv</i>	<i>Vox Evangelica</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VT.S	Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series
UBS	United Bible Societies, The Greek New Testament
UP	University Press
<i>WThJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen

	zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

7. Miscellaneous Abbreviations

AV	Authorised Version
BCP	<i>Book of Common Prayer</i>
cf.	confer, used in the sense of consult as a synonym for <i>vide</i>
cp.	compare/contrast
ed(d).	editor(s)
<i>EH</i>	<i>English Hymnal</i>
Eus	Eusebius
frag(s).	fragment(s)
<i>FS</i>	<i>Festschrift</i>
Ger.	German
<i>JB</i>	<i>Jerusalem Bible</i>
<i>LH</i>	<i>Liturgia Horarum</i>
lit.	literally
LXX	Septuagint
ms/mss.	Manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
n(n).	note(s)
NT	New Testament
OL	Old Latin
orig.	original
OT	Old Testament
par(s).	parallel(s) in the Gospels
<i>PE</i>	<i>Praeparatio Evangelica</i>
p(p).	page(s)

rev.	revised
RSV	<i>Revised Standard Version</i>
SSL	Sacrae Scripturae Licentiatus
s.v.	<i>sub verb(o)is</i>
Tg	Targum
TR	Teacher of Righteousness or Righteous Teacher
transl.	translated
UBS	United Bible Societies, <i>The Greek New Testament</i>
Vg	Vulgate
vol(s).	volume(s)
v(v).	verse(s)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Anyone approaching the priesthood of Jesus Christ as presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews will be struck by the apparent prominence given to Melchizedek, an obscure, non-Jewish figure who appears but twice, and that briefly, in the Old Testament and, other than in Hebrews, never in the New. The casual reader may even be left with the impression that Jesus' priesthood is modelled on the figure of Melchizedek *tout court*. We shall be probing this impression thoroughly in the course of this study, not least by examining other models of priesthood which the author seems to be putting forward. First, however, what was it about this ancient priest-king that attracted the attention of our author?

Melchizedek

In the second half of the twentieth century, Qumran sources elaborating a Melchizedek «tradition» were often seen as a solution to at least part of this enigma. In Chapter 2 of this study, therefore, we concentrate on various documents found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and, in particular, on 11QMelchizedek. Is it possible that there was a Qumran expectation of a heavenly/angelic/divine priestly deliverer on which Hebrews was able to draw? Does *their* Melchizedek lie behind *his* Melchizedek? If so, this would be a considerable aid to the interpretation of Hebrews' argument, and many have gone down this road. In trying to answer this question in Chapter 2, we first examine the evidence for the existence of a Melchizedek tradition at Qumran, and then look more closely at 11QMelchizedek itself to see just what kind of a figure it describes. At that point, we are able to see more clearly what, if any, connection there is with Hebrews

It is clear that the Qumran picture of Melchizedek is very much the result of the *peshet* method of exegesis adopted by the author of 11QMelchizedek. I originally intended to include at this point in the study a full exploration of Melchizedek in the Philonic corpus and also in 2 *Enoch* in the belief that their different methods of biblical exegesis, Alexandrian allegory and midrashic *relecture* respectively, would shed further significant light on the *religionsgeschichtliche* issue. However,

although the author of Hebrews was clearly a product of Jewish Hellenistic culture and possibly from Alexandria, the case for his direct dependence on Philo is not generally accepted¹. Moreover, although Philo associates Melchizedek with the Logos, this is simply part of his general assumption that all priests in Scripture, like other mediating figures, symbolise the Logos² seen not only as the divine reason itself but also as the divine spark in the human soul³. Hebrews, on the other hand, with one possible exception⁴, is not interested in the Logos, and certainly not in connection with Melchizedek. There is, therefore, not a close enough association *prima facie* to warrant detailed study of this topic here. Similarly, while *2 Enoch* contains a substantial haggadic account of Melchizedek's birth, it is too far from the thought world of Hebrews to be of much assistance, not least because this Melchizedek *has* a genealogy. The nephew of Noah, his mother is Sofonima and his (legal) father, the priest Nir⁵. If our author was aware of this myth, he would almost certainly have had to discount it in some way. The fact that he does not is highly suggestive that this too is a blind alley.

Having set the Qumran Melchizedek to one side, we look closely in Chapter 3 at Hebrews' use of Melchizedek as a model for the priesthood of Christ. By subjecting Heb 6,10-7,28 and especially 7,1-3 to a detailed exegesis, we attempt to discover the kind of Melchizedek Hebrews

1 Cf. E. Mason, 'You are a Priest Forever'. *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (STDJ 74), Leiden 2008, 62.

2 It is important to note that, consistent with Philo's allegorical exegesis, these Scriptural characters *symbolise* the Logos. They are not identified with it. Cf. *Leg All* 3.82 where Melchizedek symbolises the Logos. Indeed, it is doubtful that Philo thinks of the Logos in a personal way, and certainly not in a simple way! Cf. H.A. Wolfson, *Philo. Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Harvard 1947, 226-347; C. Termini, «Philo's Thought within the Context of Middle Judaism», in A. Kamesar (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*, Cambridge 2009, 97-101; R. Radice, «Philo's Theology and Theory of Creation», *ibid.*, 136-8; F. Siegert, «Philo and the New Testament», *ibid.*, 199-201.

3 *Op Mund* 5.20 (divine reason); *Spec Leg* 4.92 (human soul); *Rer Div Her* 230-1 (both).

4 4,16. Although there are similar passages in *Leg All* 3.171, *Cher* 28 and *Rer Div Her* 130-1, 225, 234-6, exegetes are divided as to whether *Hebrews* is referring here to the Logos in a Philonic sense, still more as to whether there is a Logos = Jesus equation. Cf. W.L. Lane, *Hebrews* (Word Bible Commentary), Dallas 1991, 102-3 and C.R. Koester, *Hebrews. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AncB), New York 2001, 273.

5 *2 En* 23.

seems to be drawing on and the implications this has for the priesthood of Christ which is explicitly said to be «after the order of Melchizedek».

The fresh and detailed study of Melchizedek in Chapters 2 and 3 is justified because two of the most recent large-scale works are in Italian, and they do not cover the same ground in the same way. Claudio Gianotto's *Melchisedek e la sua Tipologia*⁶ is a much more general account of the whole Melchizedek «theme» going right through to later Patristic, rabbinic and Gnostic sources. Inevitably, there is less space for detailed discussion of Hebrews and its ancestors or contemporaries. Moreover, Gianotto's work is now nearly thirty years old and therefore cannot take account of subsequent Dead Sea publications such as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*⁷ or recent work on 11QMelchizedek⁸. Franco Manzi's *Melchisedek e l'Angelologia nell'Epistola agli Ebrei e a Qumran*⁹ is much more up-to-date and very detailed, but it is also very focused on one particular aspect of Melchizedek – the Qumran connection. In English, the situation is not dissimilar. The last really comprehensive work is that of F.L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: Through the First Five Centuries of the Christian Era and in the Epistle to the Hebrews*¹⁰. Like Gianotto, as well as covering a great deal of ground relatively thinly, it is also now considerably out-of-date especially with regard to Qumran. Much of the more recent work is in articles covering fairly narrow topics¹¹. However, since 2000, new monographs have begun to appear. James Kurian's *Jesus our*

6 C. Gianotto, *Melchisedek e la sua tipologia. Tradizioni guidaiche, cristiane e gnostiche* (RivBib.Suppl.), Brescia 1984.

7 Cf. C.A. Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice. A Critical Edition* (HSS 27), Atlanta 1985, and the *editiones principes*: E. Eshel – H. Eshel et al. (edd.), *Qumran Cave 4. VI. Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1* (DJD XI), Oxford 1998 and F. García Martínez – F. Tigchelaar et al. (edd.), *Qumran Cave 11. II. 11Q2-18, 11Q20-31* (DJD XXIII), Oxford 1998.

8 E.g. É. Puech, «Notes sur le manuscrit de XIMelchisedeq», in *RdQ* 12 (1987), 483-518, and the *editio princeps* (DJD XXIII).

9 F. Manzi, *Melchisedek e l'angelologia nell'Epistola agli Ebrei e a Qumran* (AnBib 136), Rome 1997.

10 F.L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition* (SNTS.MS 30), Cambridge 1976.

11 Among the best recent works we may note C.A. Gieschen, «The Different Functions of a Similar Melchizedek Tradition in 2 Enoch and the Epistle to the Hebrews», in C.A. Evans - J.A. Sanders (edd.), *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel. Investigations and Proposals* (JSNT.S 148), Sheffield 1997, 364-79; P. Rainbow, «Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran», in *Bulletin of Biblical Research* 7 (1997), 179-94; J. H. Neyrey «“Without Beginning of Days or End of Life” (Heb 7:3). Topos for a True Deity», in *CBQ* 53 (1991), 439-50; D. Rooke,

High Priest: Psalm 110:4 as the Substructure of Hebrews 5:1-7:28, though wordy and at times incoherent, is full of valuable information, but, as the title suggests, it is restricted in purpose¹². Similarly limited is David Anderson's *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews*¹³. Some readers will find its attention to questions of dispensationalism distracting, but it does make forcefully an otherwise often forgotten point: the priest after the order of Melchizedek is a king-priest. Eric Mason's 'You are a Priest forever': *Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*¹⁴ is both concise and lucid and more comprehensive in purpose than either Kurianal or Anderson. It appeared two years ago when I was already fully involved with this study. However, I make no apology for keeping up the good work for, although broader in scope than Kurianal, Mason focuses very sharply on Melchizedek and Qumran, and this is an area, where I would seriously dispute some of his conclusions¹⁵. Thus there is room for a new synthesis of the major texts considered as possible sources of Melchizedek in Hebrews, together with a fresh assessment of the contribution Melchizedek makes to the argument of the Epistle.

Aaron

Even those authors who focus on Melchizedek realise that his significance for Hebrews, though important, is limited¹⁶. While fundamental to the demonstration of Jesus' non-Levitical priesthood and its (superior) eternity in Heb 6,20-7,28, it plays no part in the elaborate argu-

«Jesus as Royal Priest. Reflections on the Interpretation of the Melchizedek Tradition in Heb 7», in *Bib* 81 (2000), 81-94.

12 J. Kurianal, *Jesus our High Priest. Psalm 110:4 as the Substructure of Hebrews 5:1-7:28* (EH 23), Frankfurt am Main 2000.

13 D.R. Anderson, *The King-Priest of Psalm 110 in Hebrews* (Studies in Biblical Literature 21), New York 2001.

14 Mason, *Priest*.

15 Another area where this work differs from that of Mason is that, while devoting much attention to Second Temple traditions of priestly Messianism, something in which the author of Hebrews displays little or no interest, Mason passes over briefly the contributions made by Aaron, Moses and others to his priestly Christology whereas these are a major focus here, reflecting the emphasis of the text.

16 *Contra* J. Lierman, *The New Testament Moses. Christian Perceptions of Moses and Israel in the Setting of Jewish Religion* (WUNT 2/173), Tübingen 2004, 272, who holds that «the major type in Hebrews for the priesthood of Jesus is Melchizedek».

ment concerning the atonement in chapters 8-9. In fact, Melchizedek disappears after 7,17¹⁷ and seems to be replaced as a type or model by Aaron who has only recently been so relativised!¹⁸ A study of the author's extensive use of the sacrificial traditions of the Old Testament and their connection with the Aaronic priesthood will occupy us in Chapter 4. Thus despite the author's Platonic/Philonic fondness for the one as opposed to the many¹⁹, we already have three priests in our text: Jesus, Melchizedek and Aaron. Yet if Melchizedek accounts for Jesus' priesthood and its eternity, and Aaron for its atoning value, what about that other characteristic of his priesthood that is so important to our author: that of the gentle, compassionate intercessor? Where on earth could that have come from? It was certainly not the mark of the Jewish priesthood in recent history. Annas and Caiaphas and the high priests nominated by the Romans?²⁰ Or to go back further, Jason and Menelaus and the Hasmoneans? None of these priests was remotely gentle and compassionate, let alone sinless²¹, and we can doubt that they spent much time on their knees! In the apt expression of Professor Bruce: «No man in Israel was less disposed to deal considerately with the ignorant and erring – or with anyone else [than Alexander Jannaeus]». And it would surely be straining credulity to describe these prime examples of corruption and ambition as «called by God» (5,4)! Moreover, even in the Old Testament, in the Torah itself, the priesthood seems to refuse to conform to Hebrews' model in this respect. Phineas had hardly any time for the weaknesses of his parishioners²²; Aaron was an idolater who tried to transfer the blame for his conduct on to his flock²³; and indeed the Levitical priesthood as such was founded on an act of frat-

17 Not 7,15 as in Mason, *Priest*, 25. He first appears in 5,6.

18 Aaron has, of course, already been mentioned in more positive terms in Chapter 5. Cf., *infra*, 116, 119.

19 Cf. J.W. Thompson, «EPHAPAX. The One and the Many in Hebrews», in *NTS* 53 (2007), 566-81.

20 We could add Ananus who was responsible for the death of James the Just. Cf. Jos, *Ant* 20.200-201.

21 In the OT, it is the victim that is without blemish, not the priest. In fact, it is assumed that the priest is a sinner who has to offer for his own sins as well as for those of the people. Cf. Lev 4,3-12; 16,6, 11.

22 Num 25,7-13.

23 Ex 32, especially vv. 22-4.

ricidal violence²⁴. And even, especially, when the priests are good, they have to be separate²⁵. At one time, I used to think, with Vanhoye, that the author of Hebrews was simply projecting the characteristics of the Jesus of his tradition on to his concept of the priesthood, likening it, as it were, to the Son of God²⁶. But given his penchant for basing his arguments entirely on the Old Testament²⁷, I increasingly came to feel that this was hardly an adequate explanation²⁸. It gradually dawned on me that it was in fact another Old Testament «priest» who was being

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- 24 Ex 32,25-29; Deut 33,9. Later Jewish traditions which saw Levi himself as the first priest or the recipient of a promise of the priesthood have a similar background in violence with the incident at Shechem recorded in Gen 34. Cf. *Jub* 30,18-20; *TestXII. Lev* 5,3-6.
- 25 A. Vanhoye, *Prêtres anciens, nouveau prêtre selon le Nouveau Testament* (Parole de Dieu), Paris 1980, 90. Cf. P. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NIGTC), Grand Rapids 1993, 181. Philo (*Spec Leg* 1.115f; *Vit Mos* 2.66-70) emphasises the need for them to separate themselves from natural human affections, and, though Simon is clearly a good thing in Sir 50,1-21, it is the hieratic rather than the compassionate side of his priesthood which is emphasised. We should note that the purity rules demanded the highest separation for the high priest on the Day of Atonement for which he had to prepare for seven days according to *m.yoma* 1.1. Cf. also 3.3 for his purifications on the day itself. Moreover, if earthly priests had the aura of separation, this must have been even more the case, and deliberately so, with the heavenly priests of Second Temple literature such as those in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*.
- 26 Cf. Vanhoye, *Prêtres*, 135. Also W. Manson, *The Epistle to the Hebrews. An Historical and Theological Reconsideration*, London 1951, 108; D. Peterson, *Patterns of Perfection* (SNTS.MS), Cambridge 1982, 83. Just as Moses is likened to Jesus according to M.R. D'Angelo, *Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews* (SBL.DS 42), Atlanta 1979, 3, 11, etc.
- 27 Cf. S. Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in Hebrews*, Amsterdam 1961, 13. D.A. Hagner, *The Use of the Old and New Testaments in Clement of Rome* (NT.S 34), Leiden 1973, 120, observes that the same is true of the (later) *1 Clement*.
- 28 W. Horbury, «The Aaronic Priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews», in *JSNT* 19 (1983), 43-71, 65, claims that «the compassion of the high priest and his solidarity with mankind ... are Pentateuchal themes which received comparable development in the post-Biblical sources». However, most of the references he gives are much later than Hebrews. While it is possible that these represent earlier traditions, the onus is on him to give some evidence for this rather than simply to assume it. Another possibility, mooted by Lindars, is that the emphasis on compassion is a reflection of the author's own pastoral ministry. Cf. B. Lindars, «Hebrews and the Second Temple», in W. Horbury (ed.), *Templum Amicitiae. Essays on the Second Temple presented to E. Bammel* (JSNTS 48), Sheffield 1991, 416. On p. 425, he makes the further suggestion that it could be a *captatio benevolentiae* to a priestly audience.

brought into play here – Moses – with whom, as with the others, Jesus is compared.

Moses

In his 1991 Word Bible Commentary, Lane showed that he was aware of «the centrality of Moses» in the development of Hebrews²⁹. However, the limitations of the commentary form prevented him from taking this idea much further, and especially its connection with the, also central, theme of priesthood. My aim in Chapter 5 will be to examine this relationship in depth, noting its implications for the portrayal of Jesus as the merciful intercessor but much more besides.

The Faithful Priests of Chapter 11

As if four priests were not enough, some of the figures listed as heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 jump out from the page as distinctly priestly in their actions. Abraham and Moses are the obvious examples. Each of them has a substantial passage devoted to his faith³⁰, and both these sections conclude with the protagonist offering a covenant sacrifice³¹. The first hero, Abel too, stands out, not least for being priest and victim (though not simultaneously). In view of the uncertainty attaching to the criteria for selection in this list, further analysis is necessary to see if priesthood plays its part. This will take up a good deal of Chapter 6. The rest of it will look at the possibility that the angels and the Christian faithful are also being painted in priestly colours.

29 Cf. W.L. Lane, *Hebrews* (Word Biblical Commentary), Dallas 1991, liv. He goes on to note that «it is difficult to exaggerate the significance of Moses in Hellenistic Judaism»; and, on p. cxxviii, further observes that «Moses is not simply one figure among several who is [*sic*] compared to Jesus. Instead, Moses and Jesus are yoked throughout the homily». Here Lane was building on previous brief contributions like C. Hauret, «Moïse était-il prêtre?», in *Bib* 40 (1959), 509-21, and P.R. Jones, «The Figure of Moses as a Heuristic Device for Understanding the Pastoral Intent of Hebrews», in *RExp* 76 (1979), 95-107. Cf. also D'Angelo, *Moses*, though her treatment concentrates on Heb 3,1-6 and 11,22-27 rather than giving an overview of *Moses* in the text.

30 11,8-12, 17-19 (Abraham); 11,23-28 (Moses).

31 11,17 (the *Aqedah*); 11,22 (the *Passover*). Both were regarded as of covenantal significance in Second Temple Judaism. Cf. *infra*, 195, 201.

The Origins of the High Priestly Christology

An interesting question remains. Given that outside influences such as Qumran and Philo were probably not the key to his thought, what was it that led our author to such an innovative and distinct Christology of Jesus as the eternal High Priest? Given his reliance on biblical exegesis for his arguments in favour of his great theme, was it meditation on Ps 110 that led him there in the first place? Or did something else lead him to the psalm? This is something we shall be investigating in Chapter 7.

Conclusion

After reviewing the many and various models of priesthood in Hebrews, we may well ask: is this a case of too many priests spoiling the sacrifice? I don't think so – first of all, because on account of the text's clear rhetorical structure, the focus is on only one priest at a time; and secondly, because each has his own contribution to bring to the key topic of Jesus' priesthood. Within that overall scheme, it is possible that Moses also performs a unifying function³², something we shall have to consider as we bring our study to its conclusion.

32 Pace D. Farrow, «Melchizedek and Modernity», in R. Bauckham et al., *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids 2009, 287, this cannot be the role of Melchizedek on account of his limited appearances.

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La Collana *Scripturae* si prefigge di raggiungere i competenti e gli appassionati del vasto mondo della Bibbia. Studi sul testo, domande sui suoi destinatari e il loro mondo, sulla loro maniera di comprendere Dio, sulla ricezione e gli effetti che in seguito gli scritti sacri per ebrei e cristiani suscitarono, troveranno spazio in questa nuova pubblicazione.

L'intento è di offrire al più vasto pubblico uno strumento di studio e di ricerca che sappia suscitare interrogativi pertinenti e fornire risposte adeguate.

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