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**Wyman, David: *Benefaction in Galatians*.** Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2025. 350 S. (WUNT II 627), geb.€ 109,00 ISBN: 978-3-16-162763-7

*David Michael Wyman* is currently an Independent Researcher who has published a revised version of his December 2022 dissertation. The diss. is entitled “Paul’s Endangered Benefactor: Galatians in Its Benefaction Context” and was completed as a part of his PhD from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary under the supervision of Daniel M. Gurtner and Jarvis J. Williams.

The front matter of the book includes 21 p.s involving the Preface, list of abbreviations and special editorial sigla pertaining to papyri and inscriptions. This is followed by ten chap.s. The initial chap. is an introduction that covers the thesis, the status quaestionis, and a brief history of research, while the final chap. is a conclusion. Chap.s two through six cover major concepts related to “Benefaction” and “Motif”, followed by three chap.s applying the concepts to the Galatian letter. The final section of the book includes a bibliography and three indices (i. e., “References”, “Modern Authors”, and “Subjects”).

The thesis of the work is found in chap. one and repeated in the conclusion: “Paul’s use of benefaction social scripts, words, and phrases, concepts, and motifs in Galatians largely operated in continuity with the wider corpus of benefaction-events but varies with his specific configuration and combination of those various elements.” (9, 256). Stated differently, the vol. provides a framework for understanding the social script and language of “benefaction” within the “‘long Hellenistic Age’ from Alexander III to Marcus Aurelius” (8)—and in particular the motif of the “endangered” benefactor—in chap.s one through six, and then applies this framework to Paul’s letter to the Galatians (chap.s 7–9). In both the establishing of the social framework of benefaction and the application of the framework to Galatians, Wyman is able to not only utilize the examples brought to light by Frederick Danker, but also “expand the suite of examples of endangered benefaction” (256). Wyman has researched extensively within the documentary evidence (262–63).

In addition to stating the thesis, chap. one also accomplishes several things. Notably, the chap. provides a broad brush overview of benefaction in the Greco-Roman world, and how such concepts have been used to understand the concept of χάρις (“favor”, “grace”, or “benefaction”) as addressed in the New Testament, and especially in Galatians (1:3, 6, 15; 2:9, 21; 3:18; 5:4; 6:18). By providing a history of research from 1980 to the present, Wyman is able to demonstrate how such discussions have been able to variegate the conversation of grace, and further deal with the ideas in greater detail by paying attention to the intricate social scripts related to it. Lastly, a succinct, helpful overview of the book is presented here (27–29).

Chap.s two through four outline the specific dynamics of benefaction with a particular eye toward the motifs and dynamics that are relevant toward Paul's letter to the Galatians. Thus, in chap. two, the discussion begins by outlining the general character of a benefaction-gratitude exchange. Special attention is devoted toward understanding the deeper cultural norms pertaining to giving, receiving, and offering thanks, while offering numerous examples of the custom and noting the numerous political factors that are involved in adjudicating the exchange (e. g., one to make a gift, accept a gift, reject a gift, etc.). This trajectory is continued in the longest chap. of the vol. (Chap. 3) where "select motifs" of benefaction (e. g., "Benefits and Patterns of Benefaction" motifs related to civic freedom, promises, starting and completing benefaction projects, word-deed congruence, etc.) are considered that will have specific relevance for Wyman's later chap.s explicitly dealing with Galatians. As a way of narrowing the focus, the next two chap.s focus on a specific form of benefaction, and all of the ways that it can be manifest, namely "Endangered Benefaction." (105–137) Specifically, these examples draw attention to how benefactors place themselves in harm's way for the benefit of their communities, whether it be cities, homelands or otherwise. While chap. four provides an extensive number of general examples of benefactors facing dangers (e. g., through dangerous travels, diplomacy, military endeavors, defensive actions against invading tyrants, famine, disease, etc.), chap. five provides a particularly short, but narrowly focused analysis of the sons of Mattathias in *1 Maccabees* and Josephus himself in his *Life*, both serving as exemplars of endangered benefaction. In the conclusion to chap. five, Wyman makes a point of argumentation that transcends and applies to the previous chap.s when he states: "Individual self-endangerment during a crisis for the benefit of others constitutes a cross-cultural, cross-temporal, widely geographically distributed, phenomenon in the Mediterranean world." (148) This naturally "provides a context for understanding how Paul uses similar terminology, cultural scripts, and themes in his letters." (148) Beyond these two special text cases, Wyman provides one additional, brief chap. to demonstrate the principles of endangered benefaction stemming from the First Mithridatic War.

In chap.s seven through nine, Wyman applies the general framework to Galatians. Chap. seven highlights the theme of the "endangered benefactor". In this case, the Galatians could be seen as exemplars of the endangered recipients (e. g., Gal 1:4; 4:3, 9; 5:1, etc.), while Christ serves as the endangered benefactor (Gal 1:4; 2:20; 3:13). Wyman argues his case in each instance. Chap. eight provides a convincing interpretation of the "Law of Christ" as a concept to be understood within the framework of ideas related to civic freedom. One of the more intriguing concepts that Wyman presents pertains to comparing and contrasting the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ. He states, "the law of Christ is a sort of living law, an unwritten, internalized divine constitution for the people of God that is written 'on their hearts' (ἐπι καρδίας αὐτῶν; Jer 31:33), empowering them to embody the spirit of their endangered benefactor Christ among and for one another." (228) In chap. nine, additional sub-themes pertaining to benefaction found within the literature are applied to Galatians. As an example, the way in which kinship groups and benefits are communicated by inter-city kinship diplomacy is addressed. In this case, Wyman argues that Paul's language regarding Abraham is a way to expand the kinship relations by going back to earlier time periods (i. e., Abraham's time) to offer an inclusivity to the non-Jewish recipients of Christ's divine pneuma in the eschatological post-covenantal-curse deliverance.

In a general sense, the overall thesis is convincing. Nevertheless in chap. seven through nine, when Wyman is working through the various specific examples of benefaction in Galatians, he relies

too heavily on texts that are already “hotly debated” in Galatian studies (e. g., discussions pertaining to the ethnicity of the addressees, cf. Gal 4:8–10). Therefore, his overall argument is weakened. An example of this could be found in his arguing that the fruits of the spirit and works of the flesh in chap. five should be correlated to specific civic freedoms found in the literature and documentary evidence (211–225). On a number of occasions, Wyman does acknowledge the limitations of the evidence to support his case. As an example, “the term ἀγαπήσαι (Gal 2:20) is largely absent from the epigraphical benefaction corpus” (177, 254). Yet, while some arguments aren’t as strong, others find solid footing. An example of this is found in 9.4 where the language of God “supplying” the Galatians has strong parallels in the epigraphical evidence (241). Another convincing example pertains to Kephais serving as a negative case of three forms of benefaction (239–41). Overall, Wyman has succeeded in illuminating Galatians by his extensive usage of epigraphical evidence (262).

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