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*Zauber und Magie im antiken Palästina und in seiner Umwelt*. Edited by JENS KAMLAH, ROLF SCHÄFER, and MARKUS WITTE. *Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, vol. 46. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2017. Pp. x + 565, 17 pls., CD-ROM. €78.

This collection of eighteen articles derives from a colloquium convened by the Deutscher Palästina-Verein on November 14–16, 2014 in Mainz. In addition to the individual contributions, the volume contains indices for god and demon names, places, personal names, subjects, texts, and foreign words, as well as a compact disc featuring color images for the figures described in some of the articles. I offer below a brief description of the book’s contents.

Daniel Schwemer, “Quellen des Bösen, Abwehrrituale und Erfolgsrezepte: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Systematik der babylonisch-assyrischen Magie” (pp. 13–40), offers a classification of Mesopotamian magic as reflected in texts, as well as amulets, figures, and seals from the third–second millennium BCE. He examines the materials from seven different angles: chronological, linguistic, text-typological, diplomatic, emic, etiological, and ritual-dynamic. This results in categorizing magic rituals into four groups: liminal magic, defensive rituals (“white magic”), aggressive rituals (“gray magic”), and harmful (“black and illegal”) magic. Aggressive rituals aim to obtain success in love, court, or business, or to have slaves returned. His preliminary definition deliberately leaves unaddressed what special (ritual) techniques are used, which languages are employed, whether the activity is socially accepted or outlawed, whether deities are summoned, ignored, or avoided during the ritual, to which

social class the ritual experts belong, what kind of training they possess, and whether remedies or drugs were involved.

Doris Prechel, “Hethitische Rituale” (pp. 41–58), turns our attention to Hittite ritual texts from the sixteenth to the twelfth century BCE. She shows that magic rituals represent both official and private interests and, as such, have three primary contexts: temple building, birthing, and epidemics that occur in the military. As she notes, regardless of social status, almost anyone was able to perform a magical ritual. Prechel observes that magical techniques found in the texts include a diverse array of analogies, transfers, and substitutions, and that some of them have their origins outside the Hittite worldview, such as scapegoat rituals, which are based on traditions from northern Syria and Arzawa in western Asia Minor. Burnt offering rites also appear in texts produced in Hurrian cultures. Unique to the Hittite context is the disproportionate number of ritual texts among the written sources from Ḫattuša, and the use of magic rituals by the royal family for defense and to prevent harm caused by magic.

In “Zauberschalen und ihre Umwelt: Das Schreibmedium Zauberschale” (pp. 59–94), Christa Müller-Kessler provides an up-to-date survey of known magic bowls and metal amulets from Iraq and southern Iran, ca. fourth to seventh century CE. In addition to providing a useful fold-out map of find sites and a number of photographic plates, she discusses the scripts employed, the Jewish character of many of the texts, the relationship between the author and client, the languages and names used, and the texts’ many literary aspects (e.g., parallelism, word pairs, rhythmic structures, and use of *magicae voces* and *historiolae*). Five sample texts, which she translates, provide the backdrop for her study.

Markham J. Geller, “Magic Bowls Belong in Babylonia” (pp. 95–106), examines why magic bowls appear and disappear so suddenly in the historical record. He also asks why they have little in common with the Greek magical papyri and the magic in the Talmud Bavli, and yet also reflect little of the earlier Sumero-Akkadian magic traditions, despite being found at Mesopotamian sites. Geller observes:

The predominantly Jewish character of the magic bowls tells us little about the clients and their religious affiliations, but the conspicuous lack of similarity with Jewish magic from ancient Palestine is perhaps the most troubling feature of magic bowls. Talmud scholars and historians of late antiquity usually assume a constant traffic of scholars, intellectuals, and even tourists between Persian and Greco-Roman Palestine, but the magic bowls represent a substantial counter-argument against this point of view. The two worlds were far apart, both physically and culturally. The magic bowls belong to Mesopotamia, and we need to examine why this is the case. (pp. 95–96)

In addition to offering a number of insightful readings of Aramaic texts based on Akkadian parallels, he concludes that “magic bowls were a response to the demise of cuneiform script, which represented a serious cultural calamity in late antiquity, probably occurring sometime in the late 3rd cent. CE” (pp. 96–97). In essence, the practitioners were no longer able to consult the comprehensive literature on various magical and therapeutic arts. Geller attributes the disappearance of the bowls to the appearance of the Syriac *Book of Medicines*, which made its way to Mesopotamia after the sixth century CE.

Hans-Werner Fischer-Elfert, “Gattungen in der altägyptischen Magie: Sammelhandschriften als Textfelder” (pp. 107–23), examines genres in ancient Egyptian magic. Of special interest to his classification are the labels: *r3* “spell,” (*s*)*ḥsy.w-mw* “water-spell,” *šn.t* “incantation,” *phr.t* “prescription,” *ḥz* “spell, knot,” *mk.t* “protective spell,” *ind-ḥr=k* “hail to you” (hymnic language), and *dw3.w* “praise,” which one finds in various magical texts. (Oddly the study makes no mention of the important monograph by Robert K. Ritner, *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice* [1993].) Fischer-Elfert finds that the priests and healers enjoyed great license in the application or use of religious texts and their labels. Thus, one text, e.g., a hymn, might be assigned a completely new function by integrating it into a different literary or “magical” context. Genres remained relatively flexible in terms of form and contents, with some signs toward standardization in later periods.

In “Made in Egypt: Zur Verbreitung ägyptischer Amulett-Typen in Palästina/Israel und zur Frage ihrer Herkunft” (pp. 125–40), Christian Hermann studies the distribution of Egyptian amulet types in Palestine/Israel and their origins. He observes that exceptionally large quantities of Egyptian amulets have been found in three broad geographical areas, i.e., the north, coast, and south. He concludes

that in the context of the Egyptian amulets there was hardly any religious-cultural exchange between the cities of the Mediterranean coast of Palestine/Israel and the cities of the interior. By contrast, the religious-cultural exchange of these cities with Egypt and the remaining Mediterranean regions by sea was very active.

Joachim Friedrich Quack, “Alttestamentliche Motive in der gräko-ägyptischen Magie der Römerzeit” (pp. 142–82), investigates the appearance of biblical figures, like Moses, Peter, and Gibeon (as Gabaon), in Demotic and Greek divinatory and magic texts. He finds that there were at least some individuals in late Egypt who had no qualms incorporating figures and episodes from the Hebrew Bible into their magical practices as long as their effectiveness appeared to be guaranteed. He posits that the knowledge of such texts could have fallen into foreign hands after the massacre of Jews during the uprising, or that, more likely, there was much greater interaction between Jews and non-Jewish Egyptians in Alexandria and its environs than usually assumed. (Those interested in this topic should also consult Susan Stevens, *Seeing Double: Intercultural Politics in Ptolemaic Alexandria* [2003].)

In “Magie und rituelles Heilen im Alten Testament” (pp. 183–97), Rüdiger Schmitt studies biblical narratives involving therapeutic rituals, in particular, the accounts of Elijah healing the widow’s son (1 Kings 17:17–27), his raising of the dead boy (2 Kings 4:18–37), and Isaiah’s healing of Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1–7). He sees them as representing a discourse on ritual authority and the interpretive sovereignty of ritual action by social elites. Essentially, magic was an integral part of Israelite religion, but whether it was deemed licit or illicit depended upon whether it was practiced by “legitimate” men of God. Schmitt concludes that the miracle stories are literary transformations of healing rituals that fulfill an existential function by creating a sense of hope for cases of individual failing and collective emergency. The narratives are polemical and seek to legitimate the Israelite ritualist.

The apotropaic use of carved lions and other creatures is the focus of Helga Weippert, “Die von Löwen und anderen Wesen getragene und beschützte Welt: Ein Erbe der bronzezeitlichen Stadtkultur Palästinas an ihre eisenzeitliche Nachfolgerin,” a contribution that also contains a lengthy excursus by Henrike Michelauon (pp. 199–251). Though in the main, the article’s focus is on lion iconography, it also examines human-hand iconography (e.g., hand impressions at Khirbet el-Qom), cherubim in the temple and on thrones found in images from Megiddo, the cult stand from Taanach, the Hittite image of the layered cosmos from Megiddo, and other winged figures. She concludes that lion images, while in some cases reflecting Egyptian influence, at least in details (e.g., on lion and sphinx-throne depictions), have their origins in the southeastern mountain regions of Asia Minor, in the areas on the upper reaches of the Euphrates and Tigris, and in northern Syria.

Brian Schmidt, “‘May Yahweh Bless You ... and Keep You’: More Musings on ‘Cult,’ *Favissae* and Apotropaism at Kuntillet ‘Ajrūd” (pp. 253–84), argues that the texts and images inscribed at the eighth-century BCE cultic site of Kuntillet ‘Ajrūd in the northeast part of the Sinai peninsula were of state-sponsored design and that those pilgrims who visited the site perceived them to transmit numinous, apotropaic powers.

A new amulet found at Ashdod Yam is the subject of Angelika Berlejung and Alexander Fantalkin, “Ein magischer Moment: Zu einem neuen Amulettfund aus *ʾAšdōd Yām*” (pp. 285–308). Discovered in 2015, the object can be safely dated to the second century BCE. The most striking aspect of the amulet is its internal contents: tightly packed spun cords, knotted and interlaced with beads (the compact disc contains a wonderful color reproduction). After surveying the use of knots in ancient Near Eastern magic and the symbolic meaning of bead colors, the authors suggest that the amulet was believed to store apotropaic power by hiding its internal contents from view.

Simone Paganini, “Ein Gesetz zum Schutz der korrekten Kulthandlungen: Zauberei, Magie und andere verbotene Praktiken in Dtn 18,9–14” (pp. 309–42), is largely based on earlier work by Rüdiger Schmitt, but with some attention to materials from Qumran. Paganini finds that Deut. 18:9–14 stigmatizes outdated practices that were no longer clearly identifiable and puts into question their significance as representations of all practices not connected to the Yahweh cult. Since the text mentions no punishment or judicial authority, it did not afford a legal provision, but rather served to legitimate the priestly cult of ancient Judah over others.

In “Der Prophet als Magier: Magie und Ritual in den Elischaerzählungen” (pp. 343–80), Michael Pietsch argues that the portrayal of mantic wonders performed by Elisha reflect the reality and adaptation of ancient Near Eastern magical practices. Of particular interest is his comparison of the account of Elisha’s use of arrows to predict the outcome of a war (2 Kings 13:14–19) to pharaoh’s shooting of arrows, one in each of the four directions, during the Egyptian *heb-sed* festival. The tension between prophecy and magic that appears in other biblical texts (see the article by Paganini above) is the result of a process of differentiation that took place within the cult, one that distinguished and stigmatized the functionally analogous manifestations of religious practice found in other cults. In essence, Elisha is a “legitimate” magician.

Beate Ego, “Die Vertreibung des Dämons Asmodäus: ‘Magie’ in der Tobiterzählung” (pp. 381–408), turns to the story of the demon Asmodaeus in the apocryphal Book of Tobit. Ego examines the topic in the light of four different textual traditions: two differing Greek versions and Aramaic and Hebrew fragments from Qumran. Of specific interest to Ego are the different ways these recensions understand the banishment of demons—ways that reflect a historical development and adaptation to a new, i.e., Hellenistic, cultural environment. Thus, in the earlier traditions the demon is divorced and his binding prevents him from returning. In the later Greek recensions this notion is altered. One of them removes Asmodaeus’s love for Sarah altogether, and in general the demon’s divorce is replaced by his binding. While both the divorce and binding of demons appear in Near Eastern texts, demon binding is far more prominent in Greek literature. Thus, Ego concludes that the later Greek recensions of Tobit represent the enculturation of Near Eastern conceptions of demons.

The collection continues with Stefan Beyerle, “Zauberei und Magie in der Apokalyptik” (pp. 409–53), which adopts R. Schmitt’s conception of magic as “ritual-symbolic action” and advocates the application of discourse analysis to the relevant texts. Of specific interest to Beyerle is the Ethiopian Book of Enoch, which includes the so-called Book of the Watchers and the Astronomical Book, and the apocalyptic traditions found in the biblical book of Daniel 2. He observes that though magic occurs in these texts in different configurations, it constitutes a discourse of power concerning legitimate and illegitimate sources of revelation informed by ethnic, cultural, and religious differences. Beyerle concludes that, if one can avoid the polemical pitfalls of distinguishing “religion” from “magic,” one finds that magic or mantic views occupy a prominent place in apocalypticism.

Annette Steudel, “Magie in den Texten von Qumran” (pp. 455–67), surveys a number of texts from Qumran that relate to magic and divination, including the Temple Scroll (11 Q19 = 11QT<sup>a</sup>, 60, 16–21), Genesis Apocrypha XX, 12–29, Prayer of Nabonidus (4Q242), a fragment that makes reference to four songs for charming demons (11Q5 XXVII, ll. 9–10), the Apocryphal Psalm (11Q11), and the Songs of the Maskil (4Q510 and 511). She also discusses several objects and texts whose relationship to magic is uncertain, such as the tefillin and IQMV and VII. The latter texts contain magical elements that relate to engagement in holy wars. Steudel concludes that members of the Qumran community did not view a belief in spirits and demons, or means of dealing with them, as a theological contradiction to strict piety based on the observance of Torah.

In “‘Vom Rückfall’ (Lk 11,24–26 par): Der Umgang mit Rekadenz-Phänomenen im Spannungsfeld von Wundertätigkeit, Magie und Medizin” (pp. 469–506), Reinhard von Bendemann uses conceptions of magic and medicine as a lens through which to understand Jesus’s remark that seven evil spirits return to possess a man after he has been cleansed of an unclean spirit. He likens the statement to a doctor whose responsibility ends when he recognizes the inevitable unfavorable course in his diagnosis and prognosis. Bendemann finds that Christian interpretations of the passage (like other miracle narratives) over time become increasingly allegorical in a way that correlates with a gradual increase in influence of more “scientific” healing practices in the Greco-Roman world.

The final contribution to the volume is Marco Frenschkowski, “Magie und Mission: Konkurrenz-szenarien in altkirchlicher Erzählliteratur” (pp. 507–41). Frenschkowski investigates stories about ritual competition in the Book of Acts 8:9–13, 13:6–12, 19:13–17, the Acts of Peter, and the Acts of Paul and Thekla. Typically, these narratives cast Christians as victims of witchcraft or portray them as victors in competitions of ritual power. He concludes that magic and magicians constitute an important theme in the ancient Christian literary imagination.

There is some unevenness in the quality and importance of the articles in the volume, as one often finds in conference proceedings. A few are general surveys while others focus on more detailed subjects. However, if I may be permitted one quibble, the study of ancient magic (however defined) has advanced in the last couple of decades beyond the point where authors should feel compelled to discuss the hackneyed methodological problems posed by definitions of “magic” and the inherent polemic in distinguishing magic from religion. More than a few of the articles travel this well-worn path in their introductions. Notwithstanding this minor criticism, the volume contains many useful contributions and belongs in the libraries of students of ancient magic.

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*Wandering Arameans: Arameans outside Syria: Textual and Archaeological Perspectives.* Edited by ANGELIKA BERLEJUNG, AREN M. MAEIR, and ANDREAS SCHÜLE. Leipzig: Altorientalistische Studien, vol. 5. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ VERLAG, 2017. Pp. x + 298, illus. €58 (paper).

This volume contains updated versions of the papers presented at a workshop held in October 2014 at Leipzig. In recent years, many volumes have been published on ancient Arameans, but the scope of this volume is somewhat different from that of the previous publications. Instead of focusing on the specific characteristics of the Arameans, this collection directs its research to the cultural and linguistic interactions between the Arameans and neighboring cultures during the first millennium BCE.

The volume includes twelve contributions divided into two parts: “Syria and Palestine” and “Mesopotamia and Egypt.” The distribution of the contributions in the second part of the volume is rather inconsistent, since only one article deals with the Arameans in Egypt. Furthermore, the impression of a certain fragmentation of the general theme cannot be avoided, as some papers, although very interesting, are highly specialized.

Jonathan Greer’s “The Cult at Tel Dan: Aramean or Israelite?” opens the volume by dealing with the question of the ethnic determination of the Iron Age temple complex in Area T at Tel Dan. Due to the site’s location in northern Israel, Tel Dan presents a multiethnic picture. Some scholars suggest that this temple complex was an Aramean sanctuary, but Greer claims that the temple structure and its cultic practices are archaeologically congruent with other Israelite religious practice, so that the affiliation of the Area T sanctuary to a Yahwistic cult cannot be excluded.

In the next paper, “New Light on Linguistic Diversity in Pre-Achaemenid Aramaic,” H. Gzella offers some remarks on the linguistic diversity in the Aramaic textual sources of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE. Having already dealt with this subject in his recent book, *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 104–56, he claims once more that the Aramaic texts from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian periods lack high linguistic standardization. The Aramaic texts of this era have some linguistic features that contrast with those of Syrian Aramaic of earlier times as well as the standard Aramaic of the Achaemenid period. All these variations demand a more nuanced understanding of the complex social and political processes that led to the origin of official Achaemenid Aramaic.

In a highly speculative contribution entitled “‘My Father Was a Wandering Aramean’: Biblical Views of the Ancestral Relationship between Israel and Aram,” Y. Levin tries to understand the expression *’rmy ’bd ’by*—usually translated as “A wandering Aramean was my father”—in the light of some traditions about Aram in Genesis. Attributing historical value to these, in my opinion, recent literary traditions, Levin suggests that the “fathers” of Israel and Aram shared a long part of their ancient history.

A. M. Maier’s “Can Material Evidence of Aramean Influences and Presence in Iron Age Judah and Israel Be Found?” deals with the possible cultural influences of the Arameans on the regions of Israel, Judah, and Philistia during Iron Age II. While he suggests caution in identifying an Aramaic phase at