

in any serious study of the texts. The extensive bibliography (pp. 273–301) constitutes a welcome update, but is obviously not meant to be comprehensive (see the remarks *infra*).

In sum, Fales and Grassi have provided us with a valuable compilation of editions of the Old Aramaic texts, with commentaries that incorporate the results of recent research. The accompanying grammatical sketch and paleographic appendix, however, are somewhat patched-up, and it seems that they have not been directed to the same audience. Nonetheless, Fales and Grassi have succeeded in making the exciting Old Aramaic inscriptions more easily accessible. Anyone interested in this important corpus will keep their book close by on the shelf, for easy reference.

CHRISTIAN STADEL  
BEN-GURION UNIVERSITY OF THE NEGEV

---

*Patterns of Sin in the Hebrew Bible: Metaphor, Culture, and the Making of a Religious Concept.* By JOSEPH LAM. New York: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2016. Pp. xix + 308. \$74.

After all that has been written on the concept of sin in the Hebrew Bible, it is hard to come up with an approach that might yield truly new insights. Joseph Lam has chosen the angle of metaphors. He analyzes four root metaphors of sin in the Hebrew Bible: sin as burden, sin as an account, sin as path or direction, and sin as stain or impurity. The purpose of this language investigation is to illuminate the history of the emergence of sin as a religious and theological concept. The assumption, then, is that sin is not a timeless category but a historical notion that has been subject to change. There is one author in particular whose work has been a source of inspiration for Lam's own study. Throughout the book Lam recognizes his debt to Gary Anderson, whose *Sin: A History* (2009) has served as a model for the kind of contribution Lam was hoping to make. Anderson's study describes the shift from the concept of sin as burden or weight (as in the Hebrew Bible) to the idea of sin as debt (Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity). Unlike Anderson, Joseph Lam focuses almost entirely on the Hebrew Bible. Also, he aims for greater theoretical finesse. But ultimately, though, the goal of his study is to lay bare a crucial phase in the emergence of the concept of sin.

Gary Anderson's study of sin is compelling because it makes a simple point: sin used to be a burden, and developed into a debt. The shift reflects a transformation in the societies that gave rise to the metaphors. In rural societies where the exchange of goods follows the mode of barter, sin is a burden; in more developed societies where trade is based on monetary value, sin becomes

a debt. Anderson may have simplified matters—this is one of Lam's criticisms—but his thesis has the advantage of clarity. It tells a story in a nutshell. For Anderson to make his point, it is essential to have a clear time frame: the Hebrew Bible and after. By largely limiting his inquiry to the Hebrew Bible, Lam finds himself without a timeline. While earlier generations of scholars would confidently distinguish between pre- and postexilic books of the Bible, such historical assessments have become increasingly problematic. It is almost impossible to set a date for individual books of the Bible or parts thereof. As a result, Lam's study ends up looking at the phenomenon of metaphors for sin rather than their history. The four root metaphors he puts under scrutiny do not represent a chronological series but reflect complementary and contemporaneous aspects of the idea of sin encountered in the Hebrew Bible.

The strength of Lam's book comes to the fore in the finely attuned and meticulous manner in which he analyzes the semantic fields connected with the four root metaphors. This leads to insights and observations that go beyond linguistics. With respect to sin as a burden, Lam notes how the metaphor highlights the idea of sin as an object that bears people down and from which they cannot free themselves. The burden can only be lifted or carried away by another party—either human or divine. The metaphor of sin as an account is a “rhetorical strategy”—Lam borrows the term from Mark Smith—to throw into relief God's supremacy as well as the moral importance of memory. The metaphor of path or direction highlights the notion of habit in evil conduct. Finally, the metaphor of sin as stain or impurity represents “a direct and potent way of expressing disapproval of sin” (p. 205). The rhetorical power of the impurity metaphor takes the reality of sin beyond ethical reasoning; bloodstained hands provoke an immediate response of aversion. Metaphors, so Lam concludes, are good to think, adapting a famous phrase of Claude Lévi-Strauss. They flesh out an otherwise abstract notion and fill it with feeling.

Does Lam succeed in what he initially set out to do? It would be interesting to know his own thoughts on the matter. It seems that he drew inspiration from Anderson's diachronic study of sin metaphors and eventually found the material he was dealing with to be unsuited to a diachronic approach. So he had to switch strategies. The subtitle of the book promises a study of “the making of a religious concept,” but what Lam actually offers is a synchronic reading of four root metaphors of sin. The downside of putting those four “patterns of sin” side by side is the absence of progression in the book. Lam does not take his readers on a journey, from a point of departure to a destination, but on a sightseeing tour. He is an excellent guide, and there is much to learn from his observations. But the book is, in a way, without a real conclusion. The insight that “sin is not as simple as it might seem”—the quote is from the dustjacket—is

hardly a breakthrough. Careful textual analysis, eye for detail and nuance—all that is present in profusion. But the book does not tell the story of the genesis of an idea.

An intriguing point Joseph Lam discusses in several places is the porous boundary between metaphor and what he calls the “lexicalization” of the metaphor. A case in point is the verb *nāsāʾ*, literally “to carry, to carry away.” The notion is at home in the burden metaphor. However, Lam argues that the verb at some point developed the lexical meaning “to forgive.” In other words, the use of *nāsāʾ* does not automatically require us to think in terms of a burden to be lifted (pp. 21–65). This argument is similar to the one made by James Barr against the etymology and the “root fallacy.” Lam mentions Barr in the opening chapter but does not discuss his views in any great detail (mainly p. 222 n. 18). But the significance of etymology might have merited a more extensive discussion. Etymologically, *nāsāʾ* means “to carry, to carry away.” The etymology reads like an embedded metaphor. When people use the term with the meaning “to forgive,” they are no longer alive to the metaphor. Does this mean it has become irrelevant? I am not certain. Metaphorical phrases, too, can lose their metaphorical meaning to users of the language, as many traditional sayings demonstrate. How can we be certain that “walking in the ways of sin” continued to have the power of a metaphor rather than being a conventional phrase? Still Lam is right to take the metaphor seriously. But perhaps he has made too sharp a contrast between studies of biblical terms for sin (ʿāwôn, ḥēʾ, and the like) on the one hand, and biblical metaphors for sin on the other.

KAREL VAN DER TOORN  
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

*Das Balsamierungsritual: Eine (Neu-)Edition der Textkomposition Balsamierungsritual (pBoulaq 3, pLouvre 5158, pDurham 1983.11 + pSt. Petersburg 18128).* By SUSANNE TÖPFER. Studien zur spätägyptischen Religion, vol. 13. Wiesbaden: HARRASSOWITZ, 2015. Pp. xii + 440, 53 pls. €89.

This book deals with the so-called embalming ritual, which dates to the Roman Period (end of the 1st century AD; for this, see also the sign list in chap. 6.1). Until now, the three sources of this particular text—pap. Boulaq 3, pap. Louvre E 5158, pap. Durham 1983.11 + pap. St. Petersburg DB 18128—have never been examined in one proper edition, so that working with the *Balsamierungsritual* was not easily done (for former publications on these papyri, see pp. 1–2 and chap. 1).

In chapter 1 the author gives a brief introduction to the papyri and their owner, then discusses in two elaborate excurses on the one hand the owner of pap. Boulaq

3 and the history of his family (excursus I) and on the other the relationship of the rather fragmentary papyri pap. Louvre E 51518 and pap. Durham 1983.11 + pap. St. Petersburg DB 18128 (excursus II). On pp. 12–13, she discusses the variations of the Hieratic spelling in pap. Boulaq 3, stating correctly that in the word *ḥty(.t)* (x + 7.21) the determinatives Y1-U22 (numbering after Gardiner, reading from right to left) were mistaken for X1-F10, but on pl. 15, it appears in the Hieroglyphic transliteration as in her expected writing (X1-F10). The same can be said on commentary x + 9.7 where erroneously D3 is used as determinative in *wʿ.tj* instead of G37 (pl. 19), probably by mistake.

This is followed by a description of the text’s structure, a translation with an enclosed transcription, and a very detailed and well-thought-out commentary on grammatical and textual aspects of the *Balsamierungsritual* (chap. 2). Sometimes, recurring phrases in the *Rezital* are too freely interpreted (e.g., *jr n=k mr=k ...; jy n=k sp-2*, passim), which is in contrast to the otherwise accurate translations. On p. 132 au and 145 dg, the terms *ʿnh-jmj* and *snw-p.t* are discussed. (For further information on this, see most recently Th. Bardinet, *Médecins et magiciens à la cour du pharaon: Une étude du papyrus médical Louvre E 32847* [Paris: Éditions Khéops and Louvre Éditions, 2018], 100–102.) A slight correction has to be made concerning the reading of pap. Leiden I 347 R:XII9 (p. 181 l): the reading is not *ssd n p3k.t* but *stp n p3k.t*. This has no consequences for the content of this commentary. Furthermore, the author gives a very profound analysis of the different language styles used in the *Manual* and the *Rezital* (as she calls it). She points out that the *Manual* is related to medical texts and the *Rezital* to hymns and liturgies. The use of the negation *tm* for the future *sdm=f* is hardly surprising since it is used as negation in an object clause (p. 210).

In the following section, the author discusses the significance of the text (chap. 3). Töpfer starts with the *Manual*, analyzing these instructions and showing, for example, the relationship to the *Gefäßbuch* in Eb 854/856 and Bl 163. At the end of this paragraph, a comparison is made with archaeological finds (mummies and their embalming procedure; chap. 3.1.2). Graphics illustrate this part and provide a better understanding (e.g., pp. 230, 234).

Afterwards, the *Rezital* is discussed in detail, taking into account the extent to which the *Rezital* refers to the *Manual* (chap. 3.2). The author is also able to demonstrate a relationship to other funerary texts, especially the liturgy CT.2 and BD spell 172 (chap. 3.2.2). The synoptic tables given at the end of every sub-chapter of the *Rezital*, which summarize the main structure and topics of the verses, are a very nice feature. Furthermore, she analyzes the priests’ titles which appear in the text, the different places where the embalming ritual takes place, as well as the materials used in the process. Here once more the author considers the archaeologi-