

# BN *Biblische Notizen* *Biblical Notes*

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*Neue Folge. Herausgegeben von Kristin De Troyer und  
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**Kristin De Troyer and Peter Arzt-Grabner (eds.)**

## *Amulets and Inscribed Religious Objects*

Why did Baltimore Raven's Middle Linebacker wear golden cleats with "Psalm 91" printed on them? Is having a reference to Ps 91 on one's shoes already enough to guarantee magical support and in this case victory in an American Football game? In the ancient world, Ps 91 was often used on medallions, pendants, tomb chambers, door lintels, etc. Not just Ps 91 was used, a plethora of Biblical texts was used in amulets. These amulets, with these Biblical texts on it, seem to have functioned in a magical way. Amulets may have functioned in a cultural context in which macro- and micro-cosmos were intertwined and gods, astrology, stone and body were interacting with each other. Even the Name of God, "iao" became a mystical name, albeit much later than commonly accepted. With amulets and magic continuing in Christian times, as demons needed to be exorcised then as well, the question arose as to which texts Jesus and his followers, e.g. Paul, used – there is even a collection of "Pauline Amulets". All these issues are studied and questions are raised in this thematic issue.

**HERDER FREIBURG · BASEL · WIEN**

Friedrich-Emanuel Focken / Michael R. Ott (Hg.), *Metatexte. Erzählungen von schrifttragenden Artefakten in der alttestamentlichen und mittelalterlichen Literatur* (Materiale Textkulturen 15), 378 S., € 89,95, Berlin: De Gruyter 2016, ISBN 978-3-11-041794-4.

This volume contains papers read at a conference in 2014 in Heidelberg as part of the overall project “Materiale Textkulturen. Materialität und Präsenz des Geschriebenen in non-typographischen Gesellschaften” and its sub-projects “Erzählungen von Geschriebenem als Grundlage einer ‘Text-Anthropologie’ des Alten Testaments” (supervised by Jan Christian Gerz) and “Inscriptlichkeit. Reflexionen materialer Textkultur in der Literatur des 12. bis 17. Jahrhunderts” (supervised by Ludger Lieb). The main focus of these projects is on examining script-bearing artefacts: on the specific materiality, the evoked presence of the inscribed artefacts and the written texts themselves. The volumes in the series *Materiale Textkulturen* are published in open access and can be found on <http://www.materiale-textkulturen.org/publications.php>.

The previous fourteen volumes in the series *Materiale Textkulturen* show how fruitful it is to study the material aspects of the scribal culture we are so familiar with. Of course, when it comes to the study of the biblical texts there is the problem that the original material remains are very scarce. In the present volume only three contributions are devoted to them. Erhard Blum discusses the texts from Tell Deir ‘Alla, about the seer Bileam and – very interesting in this connection – about the art of writing. In fact he offers a detailed commentary on his recent translation of these texts in the series *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments*. David Carr (in the only English contribution in this volume) discusses the relation between orality and inscribed amulet practice with special emphasis on Proverbs 1-9 and Deuteronomy 6:6-9. In this framework the Ketef Hinnom amulets containing a text close to the Aaronide blessing in Numbers 6:24-26 are of special interest. The third contribution that could be based on the study of material remains from the biblical period comes from Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, who writes about the use of holy books in Qumran.

Other contributions about the Old Testament discuss metatexts: texts about texts. Reinhard Müller offers a reconstruction of the process turning prophetic oracles into a prophetic book. He focusses on Isaiah 8:1, 16 and 30:8. Konrad Schmid pays attention to the prominent place of writing and the related metaphors in the book of Jeremiah. Friedrich-Emanuel Focken discusses the first three chapters of the book Ezekiel, the prophet who had to eat a scroll. Jan Christian Gerz pays attention to the story about the most famous inscribed artifact: the stone tablets received and broken by Moses on mount Sinai. Joachim Schaper presents a very interesting “medianarchäologischer Gang durch das Buch Exodus” about the relation between hearing and seeing / reading. It is an appetizer for his forthcoming monograph on the role of speaking, writing and picturing in the breakthrough of monotheism in ancient Israel.

The rest of the volume contains contributions about script-bearing artefacts from the middle ages, including a study of Hanna Liss on the Regensburger Pentateuch (ca. 1300 AD). In one of the introducing chapters an attempt is made to show the coherence of the different contributions and the way the different fields of research are related and mutually influence each other. This is not the most convincing part of the book, which does certainly not make the individual contributions less worthwhile.

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