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BOEKBESPREKINGEN

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## ALGEMEEN

DURAND, J.-M., GUICHARD, M. et T. RÖMER (éds.) — Tabou et transgressions. Actes du colloque organisé par le Collège de France, Paris, les 11-12 avril 2012 (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 274). Academic Press Fribourg, Fribourg, 2015. (23,5 cm, XI, 314). ISBN 978-3-7278-1771-7. ISSN 1015-1850. € 88,-.

The twenty-one contributions to this volume discuss the question of taboo and its transgression on the bases of literary and archaeological evidences from Mesopotamia and ancient Israel, and to a smaller extent from ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, and Islam. Apparently, the title of the colloquium was chosen because of the nice alliteration. In the first contribution one of the editors, Jean-Marie Durand, notes the absence in Akkadian of an equivalent of the word 'taboo', originally borrowed by anthropologists from the Polynesian languages. This is repeated in other contributions concerning other languages of the ancient Near East. The common element is that it concerns prohibitions as identity markers.

Nineteen articles are in French, two in English. Most of the French articles have a short summary in English, and the English articles a summary in French as well. There is also a global text index.

Durand ('Tabou et transgression: le sentiment de la honte', pp. 1-18) discusses Akkadian *ikkibum*, *anzillum*, and *asak-kum*, as words related to the concept of taboo. He also pays attention to the way a taboo was handled and to the related feeling of pride and shame.

Sophie Démare-Lafont ("Manger un tabou" – sacrilège ou parjure? Une relecture des procès de Lugal-Giškim-zi', pp. 19-30) discusses a death penalty case on eating something forbidden in the third dynasty of Ur (21<sup>st</sup> century BCE) with a new interpretation of the relevant texts.

Dominique Charpin ('Les "barbares amorrites": clichés littéraires et réalités', pp. 31-46) discusses Sumerian texts describing the Amorites as a barbaric people in their diet and religious practices. He shows that this judgement is based on the difference in life style between sedentary farmers and nomads.

Lionel Marti ('Tabous et hémérolgies en Assyrie', pp. 47-67) distinguishes two types of prohibitions concerning the right times for certain actions: those which are linked to specific deities and those linked to 'bad days' on which by their very nature it was dangerous to make contact with the divine.

Rosel Pientka-Hinz ('Making contact in Mesopotamia: powerful kisses – forbidden kisses', pp. 69-81) shows how 'the power of touch' as part of the Mesopotamian conception of the world led to a strict regulation of the act of kissing, both in profane and sacral contexts. An extreme example of this 'power of touch' is found in the Gilgamesh epic. Enkidu is warned not to exchange kisses with residents of the Netherworld. This way of touching would cause an exchange of energy, resulting in becoming one of the dead himself.

André Lemaire ('Le *hérem* guerrier et sa transgression des deux côtés du Jourdain', pp. 83-98) discusses the concept of

the *hérem* mentioned in the Moabite Mesha stele and a number of Biblical texts, especially Joshua 7, 1 Samuel 15:1, and 1 Kings 20:23-43, prohibiting the plunder of an enemy city or people because it was consecrated to a divinity. According to Lemaire this prohibition fits within the framework of nationalist prophecy.

Omer Sergi ('Queenship in Judah revisited: Athaliah and the Davidic dynasty in historical perspective', pp. 99-112) describes Athaliah's reign over Judah in the way it is presented in the Hebrew bible 'as a taboo being transgressed', because she is a woman taking the throne of a man and because she takes the throne belonging to the house of David. The reason behind this would have been to legitimize the revolt against Athaliah by Jehoash.

On the basis of a new historical-critical analysis, Jürg Hutzli ('Transgression et initiation: tendances idéologiques et développement littéraire du récit de Genèse 2-3', pp. 113-133) makes a case for a positive interpretation of the original story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden: the transgression was not a sin, but an important step in human evolution towards an autonomous being.

Thomas Römer ('Lot, l'hospitalité et l'inceste', pp. 135-144) points to the fact that the transgression of the taboo on incest by Lot's daughters as described in Genesis 19 is not accompanied by a moral evaluation, and neither is the fact that they plied their father with wine. At the center of the story is the destruction of Sodom as the divine sanction on the lack of hospitality. The two transgressions following it are accepted as necessary measures to guarantee descendants for Lot.

Danile Garrone ('Des choses que ne se font pas en Israël: l'histoire de Dina (Gn 34) et ses enjeux idéologiques', pp. 145-168) points out that the story in Genesis 34 is not about rape, but about illicit sexual intercourse and intermarriage. This intermarriage could have been accepted under strict conditions, but like the brothers of Dinah one could also see it as a first step to the loss of ethnic integrity.

Corinne Lamar ('De Tamar à Tamar', pp. 169-180) compares the story of Tamar, daughter-in-law of Jacob (Genesis 38) with the story of the rape of Tamar by her brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13). Both concern a form of incest. Whereas the story in 2 Samuel 13 describes this transgression as madness, in Genesis 38 it functions as a means to obtain justice.

Dorothea Erbele-Küster ('Comment dire l'interdit? Le tabou linguistique et social de la menstruation en Lévitique 11-20', pp. 181-190) studies the term *niddâ* about the ritual state of a woman under taboo because of her periods. It partly summarizes her monograph on Leviticus 12 and 15, published in German in 2008, which is now also translated in English: *Body and Gender. Studies of Leviticus 12 and 15* (LHBOTS, London/New York 2014).

Christophe Nihan ('De la composition au talion: Lévitique 24 et les transformations du droit dans l'Israël ancien', pp. 191-212) discusses the texts Exodus 21:22-25; Deuteronomy 19:16-21; and Leviticus 24:17-21, concluding that only the latter represents a fully developed law based on the principle of retaliation. He sees the law in this form as a late development, stemming from the Persian period.

Alfred Marx ('Le sabbat et le sang: A propos de deux tabous majeurs de judaïsme de l'époque perse', pp. 213-228) describes the laws prohibiting activities on Sabbath and prohibiting the consumption of blood as the two main taboos in Judaism in the Persian period.

Jean-Daniel Macchi ('Pratiques et tabous alimentaires selon le livre d'Esther', pp. 229-241) points to the differences between the Jewish meal of Purim and the banquet practices of the Persian kings. Participating to the non-Jewish banquets by Esther and Mordechai was not considered taboo, because it served the purpose of saving the Jews.

Markus Saur ('L'adultère et la prostitution dans la littérature prophétique de l'Ancient Israël', pp. 243-251) notes a double transgression of a taboo in the prophetic texts (especially in the books of Hosea and Ezekiel) describing the relation between YHWH and his people as one of a prostitute and her lovers. In pointing out the transgression of the people the prophets also transgressed the borders of acceptable language.

Saul M. Olyan ('Pollution, profanation et l'étranger dans les textes bibliques du sixième siècle avant notre ère', pp. 253-258) interprets texts about the profanation of the temple in Isaiah 52:1 and Ezekiel 44:6-7 as a new way to impose social limitation on foreigners in Israel in the sixth century BCE.

David Hamidović ('Le catalogue des transgressions dans l'écrit de Damas comme définition d'une éthique dans le judaïsme ancien', pp. 259-272) shows how in the Damascus document ancient priestly taboos were developed into rules binding for the entire Jewish society.

Youri Volkhine ('La question de l'interdit du porc en Égypte ancienne', pp. 273-286) discusses the prohibition of the eating of pork in the ancient Near East, especially ancient Egypt. Whether or not it was a taboo and how this was motivated, appears to be complex.

Dominique Jaillard ('Réflexions sur le statut et les effets du sang versé dans les représentations et les pratiques des cités grecques', pp. 287-302) shows that in ancient Greece blood was not regarded as in ancient Israel as the source of life, but still was treated with due respect.

Barnadette Martel-Thoumian ('Le suicide: tabou et transgression ultime dans les sources arabes médiévales', pp. 303-311) discusses the reports about suicide by Mamluk chroniclers between 872-922 AD. The reluctance in their reports clearly shows the taboo on voluntary death in Islam.

Together these contributions offer a detailed and nuanced picture of the way specific prohibitions functioned as identity markers in the ancient Near East. Some interesting comparisons between different cultures can be made on the basis of the well documented presentation of many texts from many periods and places. Although a full treatment of all relevant material could not be given, it is safe to conclude that as a rule this subject is treated in the discussed religions and cultures in mostly the same way.

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