



Recent Books

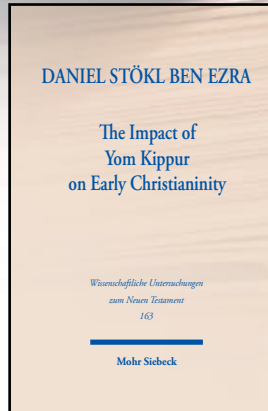


**Ritual Dynamic Structure**

Roy Gane  
Gorgias Press, New Jersey,  
2004  
398 pp., \$98.00

The present volume is an edited version of Roy Gane's dissertation which takes up the quest for a theory of ritual and methodology of analysis

that recognize and trace the contours of ritual dynamic structure. The resulting fresh approach provides a controlled framework for interpreting rituals belonging to various cultures and for identifying bases of comparison between them. Two important innovations are: First, application of General Systems Theory concepts to study of human rituals as hierarchically structured human activity systems; Second, application of F. Staal's "ritual syntax" (developed in context to Vedic studies) to ancient Near Eastern rituals. The first part of *Ritual Dynamic Structure* builds a theory and definition of ritual and a corresponding methodology for analyzing specific rituals in terms of their activities and the meanings attached to those activities. The second part illustrates this methodology and its usefulness for comparative studies by applying it to ceremonies belonging to three ancient Near Eastern festival days of cult purification: the Israelite Day of Atonement, the fifth day of the Babylonian New Year Festival of Spring, and the fourth day of the Hittite Ninth Year Festival of Telipinu.



**The Impact of Yom Kippur on Early Christianity**

Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra  
Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2003  
445 pp., 94.00€

The Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) was the most important festival of late-antique Judaism, but its influence on Christianity was not generally

recognized. Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra here not only reveals the profound influence of *Yom Kippur* on early Christianity up to the fifth century but also offers the first detailed analysis of the festival itself. He examines the rituals of and the concepts underlying *Yom Kippur* in various types of Second Temple and rabbinic Judaism. In detailed analyses of many New Testament and extracanonical writings, as well as Gnostic and early mystical texts, the author portrays the sweeping influence of the high priest, Holy of Holies, blood sacrifice and scapegoat ritual on early Christian thought and practice. In the final part he examines Christian exegesis of Leviticus 16, Christian-Jewish polemics and the impact of *Yom Kippur* on Christian liturgy.

Translation of the back page:

*Kol Nidre*—All Vows

The first phrase of *Kol Nidre* – the main prayer of *Yom Kippur* – is promising the remission of all our debts.