In this volume, Kenneth Way explores the role of donkeys in the symbolism and ceremonies of the biblical world. His study stands alone in providing a comprehensive examination of donkeys in ancient Near Eastern texts, the archaeological record, and the Hebrew Bible. Way demonstrates that donkeys held a distinct status in the beliefs and rituals of the ancient Near East and especially Canaan-Israel. The focus on ceremony and symbol encompasses social and religious thoughts and practices that are reflected in ancient texts and material culture relating to the donkey. Ceremonial considerations include matters of sacrifice, treaty ratification, consumption, death, burial, "scapegoat" rituals, and foundation deposits; symbolic considerations include matters of characterization, association, function, behavior, and iconographic depiction. However, the distinction between ceremony and symbol is not strict. In many cases, these two categories are symbiotic. The need for this study on donkeys is very apparent in the disciplines that study the biblical world. There is not a single monograph or article that treats this subject comprehensively. Philologists have discussed the meaning of the Amorite phrase "to kill a jackass," and archaeologists have discussed the phenomenon of equid burials. But until now, neither philologists nor archaeologists have attempted to pull together all the ceremonial and symbolic data on donkeys from burials, ancient Near Eastern texts, and the Hebrew Bible. Way's study fills this void.

ISBN
978-1575062136

Publication Date
8-29-2012

Document Type
Book

Publisher
Eisenbrauns

City
Winona Lake

Keywords
Semites, Donkeys

Disciplines
Christianity | Social and Cultural Anthropology | Sociology of Religion

Comments
The donkey in ancient Near Eastern texts – The donkey in ancient Near Eastern archaeology – The donkey in biblical literature

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.biola.edu/faculty-books/30
Chapter 4 discusses the donkey in biblical literature, which in Way's case involves predominantly the Hebrew Bible. After an introduction about issues of terminology, the author revisits ten of the categories already described in the summary of chapter 2. He discusses in more detail the Shechem tradition (Gen 33:19–34:31; Josh 24:32; Judg 8:33–9:57) involving an individual named רומח. I would resonate with this "less-assured" interpretation. Other biblical passages dealt with in some detail include the redemption of the firstborn male donkey (Exod 13:13; 34:20), Balaam's donkey episode (Num 22:22–35), the anonymous man of God from Judah (1 Kgs 13), and the reference to donkey burials in Jer 22:19. Biblical Archaeology. Children's Resources. Church History. Manners & Customs: Donkeys Donkeys in the Ancient World. Donkey A Symbol of Peace. The donkey used as a symbol of peace times. The horse has usually symbolized times of war, but the donkey, times of peace. In Old Testament times this was especially true from the days of King Solomon. Donkeys and Burdens. The donkey as the Oriental pack animal. He has been the beast of burden from time immemorial. The pack saddle used with this animal differed somewhat according to the load being carried. When firewood was carried, a crosstree was used as a saddle.