



ÉTUDES OUGARITIQUES

I. Travaux 1985-1995

Ras Shamra-Ougarit XIV

édité par
Marguerite YON et Daniel ARNAUD

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In the last two decades, dozens of Ugaritic texts and some four hundred Akkadian texts have been discovered at Ras Shamra (e.g., during the 1986–1992, 1994, and 1996 campaigns). Though many of these texts and fragments are still being studied and await publication, the volume under review makes available roughly sixty of them. It also reanalyzes older materials based on these newer finds. It thus represents a most welcome contribution to Ugaritology.

The editors have divided the material in this volume into two major sections. In the first, they have placed a variety of articles that both detail newer discoveries and revisit older texts and topics in the light of more recent finds. In this section, labeled “Fouilles anciennes et récentes: Travaux de terrain et études de mobilier,” one finds the following articles: Sophie Marchegay, “Un plan des fouilles 1929–1935 à Minet el-Beida, le port d’Ougarit”; Corinne Castel, “Naissance et développement d’une maison dans la ‘Ville Basse’ orientale d’Ougarit (fouille 1936)”; and Joël Mallet and Valérie Matoïan, “Une maison au sud du ‘Temple aux Rhytons’ (fouilles 1979–1990).” The latter work contains an exhaustive inventory as well. Also appearing in this section is Jacqueline Gachet and Dennis Pardee, “Les ivoires inscrits du palais royal (fouille 1955),” a piece that includes a catalog and bibliography; and Stanislav Segert, “Une inscription phénicienne trouvée à Ras Shamra (fouille 1963).” The latter inscription was published already in *Ugaritica V* but without the detailed commentary found here. Appended also to this work is an

appendix by M. Yon outlining the physical details and archaeological context of the Phoenician jar (RS 27.317).

Each of the articles in the first section constitutes invaluable reviews and updates on the specific archaeological data in question. The catalogs, inventories, and bibliographic information alone provide an enormous resource for future research, and this research is only enhanced by the fine diagrams, drawings, typologies, schematics, and photographs that complement the articles.

In the second major unit, the editors have placed pieces that focus on a number of different texts discovered in the family archive of Urtenu in 1986, 1988, and 1992. Thus, this section constitutes a useful follow-up to P. Bordreuil, et al., eds., *Une bibliothèque au sud de la ville: Les textes de la 34e campagne (1973)* (Ras Shamra-Ugarit 6, 1991). The more than four hundred tablets discovered in 1994, and again in 1996, 1999, and 2000, will eventually appear in a third installment.

The second major section is subdivided further according to (1) Ugarit's syllabic texts; and (2) its alphabetic texts. In the first section on syllabic texts appear Béatrice André-Salvini, "Textes lexicographique"; Sylvie Lackenbacher, "Une lettre Égypte (no 1)"; Florence Malbran-Labat, "Lettres (Nos 2–4)"; Daniel Arnaud, "Lettres (nos 5–21)" and "Annexe: Le jargon épistolaire de Sidon (nos 22–28)"; Textes administratifs religieux et profanes"; "Textes de bibliothèque"; and Mirjo Salvini, "Textes hittites."

In the second section on alphabetic texts one finds Pierre Bordreuil and Dennis Pardee, "Abécédaire" (no. 32); "Bordereaux et listes (Nos 33–48)"; Lettres (Nos 49–51)"; "Une incantation (No 52)"; and Andre Caquot and Anne-Sophie Dalix, "Texte mythico-magique (No 53)." A number of useful indices (Akkadian and Ugaritic personal and divine names, toponyms, vocabulary items), a concordance, and full bibliography conclude the work.

The contributions to this volume offer a number of exciting archaeological observations and linguistic discoveries, but I shall content myself with mentioning only a few random examples of the latter. There are, of course, many fascinating texts in this volume (e.g., a fable between a hyena and a fox [unfortunately very fragmentary]; a divinatory text with a *namburbû* ritual resembling the Mesopotamian omen series *Shumma alu*; and a number of important letters and administrative and ritual lists). Yet, as with any newly published texts, we also learn a number of new vocabulary items (e.g., MRMR, QNN, ʾDN, GHR, PRT) as well as hitherto unattested toponyms and personal names.

We also obtain insights into the mythico-religious and political traditions present in Ugaritic culture. One text, for example, a ritual incantation for protecting Urtenu, offers us the first mention in Ugaritic of a “sacred tree” (387), which is interestingly connected to a serpent—an observation that has obvious implications for the study of the Hebrew Bible specifically and ancient Near Eastern religious traditions generally. The same text gives us the first appearance of the Ugaritic word for scorpion (‘QRB)—Ugaritic hippiatric texts reference only a “scorpion plant” (e.g., ‘QRBN). We also learn that at least some of the ivory objects discovered in the royal palace at Ugarit and inscribed with cuneiform comprised liver models used by the haruspex (191). These objects, therefore, are the only ivory objects known to be inscribed in cuneiform, and also the only liver models made of this material.

Another text, a letter from Urhi-Teshup (RS 88.2009), addresses the “nobles and elders” as a political body of considerable influence at Ugarit, thus offering us a unique glimpse into the sociopolitical structure of power at Ugarit. In this tome, we also learn that the letters from Sidon are homogenous enough in style and language to provide a thumbnail sketch of their orthographic and dialectic peculiarities (D. Arnaud [291–322]). We therefore, have new invaluable linguistic data for those interested in Northwest Semitic dialectology. With discoveries such as these, (and many more are to be found in this volume), one can only look forward to the next installment in this series with excitement.