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**Book note:**  

First Published in:  
ns on Ugaritic and numerous examples from Comparative Semitics. A useful addition to the literature on Ugaritic.

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The first comprehensive discussion of the mechanics of Egyptian magic to date and a verifiable mine of information for the specialist and interested comparativist. Collects the numerous primary and secondary sources and synthesizes them into a cogent and interesting analysis. Addresses the "actual practice of the magicians," but also "the wider question of the interpenetration of magic, religion, and medicine." Examines the meaning of the numerous and diverse magical vocabulary before approaching the more mechanical aspects—spitting, licking, swallowing, burying, and burning. Also analyzes the "bound prisoner motif," execution practices, letters to the dead, the Mirgissa deposit, private versus state magic, the roles of priests and practitioners, and evidence for the affiliation of Demotic magic with more ancient execution procedures. Recognizes the "imagistic" nature of ritual acts which render concrete their intangible aspirations: "The effectiveness of 'magical' words and names must be understood within the same continuum, the pictorial character of the Egyptian script...adding a further bond between the written word and object which it embodies." The exhaustive bibliography and indexes alone make this a worthy purchase. It fascinates and informs and will not be superseded for some time to come.

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The ancient town of Nuzi in northeastern Iraq has yielded well over 5,000 texts evidencing its economic and social life around 1400 BC. These documents were often sealed; an engraved, stone cylinder would be rolled over the wet clay of the tablet leaving in its wake an impression containing artistic depictions and sometimes accompanied by an inscription. In 1947, the late Edith Porada published a masterful study of hundreds of these images in her *Seal Impressions of Nuzi* (AASOR 24). Stein’s two-volume study of another group of these seal impressions is a superb successor. The seal impressions come from documents belonging to an important local bureaucracy whose large suburban villa was both a residence and production center (e.g., textile manufacture). Study includes, in the first volume, a general introduction to Nuzi, a description of the archive, an essay on how and why these documents were sealed, a taxonomy of seal designs, assorted indices, and drawings and photographs of the seal impressions themselves. The second, larger, volume is a three-part catalogue: brief descriptions of all relevant tablets; for each seal impression studied, a drawing, technical data, and discussion; and genealogical and other chronological tables pertaining to those who used these seals. A must for libraries dealing with the economic history of the Late Bronze Age in the Near East and for art historians of this time and region.

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Studies by various specialists on early writing, seals and sealings, and archival history. The chronological scope ranges from neolithic Meso- potamia and the use of tokens (Schmidt-Besserer) to the late Bronze Age Agean (Palaima) and even to modern Lybia (Hallaq). Geographically, the articles span the region—Iran (Amiet), Anatolia (Esin, Frangipane, Weingarten), Crete (Palaima, Poursat, Weingarten), Aegean (Araz, Lybia) and the Sudan (Liverani). Contributions on archival studies by Fiandra, Pittman, Rothman, Lodolini, and Tambelli round out the volume. Transcripts of responses and discussions make the text particularly lively. A significant contribution and should be read widely by those interested in the history of writing in the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.

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After the reunification of Germany and the reorganization of the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, the series *Vorderasiatische Schriftenkataloge* was closed and its planned volumes were included in the WVDOK series. This volume is the third of a series (previous two appeared as volumes 19 [1976] and 21 [1982] in VS) of legal and administrative texts from Assur prepared by H. Freydkang. Opens with a description of the publication history by E. Klengel and J. Renger, which is followed by a brief forward by Freydkang. A descriptive catalogue of the 89 texts copied for the volume, a concordance of museum and publication numbers, and fifty pages of very carefully prepared copies complete this important contribution. After many decades Assur continues to yield its written sources which add significant new data on institutions, prosopography, law, society, and economy for mid-second-millennia Mesoopotamia.