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**Book note:**

**Ritner, Robert Kriech. *The Mechanics of Ancient Egyptian Magical Practice.* Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, No. 54. Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993.**

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*Religious Studies Review* 22/1 (1996), 55.

ns on Ugaritic and numerous examples from comparative Semitics. A useful addition to the literature on Ugaritic.

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**DIE ÄGYPTISCH-HETHITISCHE KORRESPONDENZ AUS BOGHAZKÖI IN BABYLONISCHER UND HETHITISCHE SPRACHE I: UMSCHRIFTEN UND ÜBERSETZUNGEN.** By Elmar Edel. Abhandlungender Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 77. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994. Pp. 240; plates, illustrations. DM 98, ISBN 3-531-05111-3.

**DIE ÄGYPTISCH-HETHITISCHE KORRESPONDENZ AUS BOGHAZKÖI IN BABYLONISCHER UND HETHITISCHE SPRACHE II: KOMMENTAR.** By Elmar Edel. Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 77. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994. Pp. 382; foldouts. DM 128, ISBN 3-531-05112-1.

For many years Elmar Edel has been the primary interpreter of the Hittite-Egyptian correspondence. In this magisterial, definitive two-volume publication are complete editions of 113 texts and fragments excavated by H. Winkler between 1906-1912 and by K. Bittel and others after the Second World War. After a brief introduction on the nature of the archives is a summary of the Amarna period correspondence written in Babylonian between the Hittites and Egyptians. The bulk of the study consists of an intricate analysis of the letters from the reigns of Ramses II and Hattusili III continuing through the period of the latter's successors, Tudhaliya IV and Suppiluliuma. In particular, the correspondence with Urhitešub and the planned marriage between Hatusili's daughter and Ramses II are discussed in great detail. Chronological and historical problems are taken up, linguistic issues are analyzed, and many other topics are elaborated upon. All related texts in Hittite and Hurro-Akkadian are included as are comprehensive indexes of personal and divine names and words discussed. Meticulous transliterations, translations, collations and copies make up volume II. Scholarship at its very best and beautifully published. Belongs in every library dealing with the history and culture of the Near East.

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**THE MECHANICS OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MAGICAL PRACTICE.** By Robert Kriech Ritner. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, 54. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1993. Pp. xviii + 322.

The first comprehensive discussion of the mechanics of Egyptian magic to date and a veritable 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," execration 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 execration 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 SEAL IMPRESSIONS (TEXT).** By Diana Stein. Das Archiv des Šilwa-teššup, Heft 8. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993. Pp. x + 282; plates. N.p., ISBN 3-447-03200-6.

**THE SEAL IMPRESSIONS (CATALOGUE).** By Diana Stein. Das Archiv des Šilwa-teššup, Heft 9. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1993. Pp. vii + 588; illustrations, tables. N.p., ISBN 3-447-03317-7.

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 bureaucrat 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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**ARCHIVES BEFORE WRITING: PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ORIOLO ROMANA, OCTOBER 23-25, 1991.** Edited by Piera Ferioli, Enrica Fiandra, Gian Giacomo Fissore, and Marcella Frangipane. Pubblicazioni degli archivi di stato. Pubblicazioni del Centro Internazionale di Recherche Archeologiche Antropologiche e Storiche, Roma. Torino: Scriptorium and Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali Ufficio Centrale per i Beni Archivistici, 1994. Pp. 416; illustrations. Lira 100.000, ISBN 88-86231-11-32.

Studies by various specialists on early writing, seals and sealings, and archival history. The chronological scope ranges from neolithic Mesopotamia and the use of tokens (Schmandt-Besserat) to the late Bronze Age Aegean (Palaima) and even to modern Lybia (Hallaq). Geographically, the articles span the region—Iran (Amiet), Anatolia (Esin, Frangipane, Weingarten), Crete (Palaima, Poursat, Weingarten), Aegean (Aruz), Lybia (Hallaq) and the Sudan (Liverani). Contributions on archival studies by Fiandra, Pittman, Rothman, Lodolini, and Tamblé 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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**MITTELASSYRISCHE RECHTSURKUNDEN UND VERWALTUNGSTEXTE III.** By Helmut Freydank. 92. Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft [=WVDOG]. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1994. Pp. 32; plates. N.p., ISBN 3-7861-1746-2.

After the reunification of Germany and the reorganization of the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, the series *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler* was closed and its planned volumes were included in the WVDOG 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. Freydank. Opens with a description of the publication history by E. Klengel and J. Renger, which is followed by a brief forward by Freydank. 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 millennium Mesopotamia.