

Thus the ultimate answer to the problem of evil is to be found in God's creation of a new world, new heavens and earth, with redeemed, renewed human beings ruling over it and bringing to it God's wise, healing order. "Deliver us from evil" means that we learn to forgive ourselves both for our own sake and for the sake of those around us.

God's forgiveness of us, and our forgiveness of others, is the knife that cuts the rope by which anger, fear, recrimination, and death are still attached to us. Evil will have nothing to say at the last, because the victory of the cross will be fully implemented. We do not have to wait for the future to start experiencing our deliverance from evil. We are summoned to start living this way in the present.

One main theme flows throughout the book—finding a solution to the problem of evil. Although the origin of evil remains a mystery, Wright's solution to the problem is within human reach. The solution is not in vain political discourse or in aggressive behavior toward those we disagree with. There are no references (no footnotes or direct quotations) in the early sections of the book until the final chapter, where Wright borrows heavily from Miroslav Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace* and Desmond Tutu's *No Future Without Forgiveness*. His arguments that forgiveness is the key to the life between the "already and the not yet" are significant for the practical Christian life.

Evil is real and Wright offers a practical solution for it. This book may serve as a good introduction to the subject. How easy it is to promote theoretical solutions rather than to offer a practical one! The problem of evil is indeed a challenging one and, consequently, scholars have often provided fragmented and even unrealistic solutions to it. It is, therefore, refreshing to read a book offering practical solutions to a difficult problem such as evil.

*Evil and the Justice of God* is an excellent source of practical solutions within every son's and daughter's reach. Wright has been successful in showing the ineffectiveness of the contemporary popular approach to the problem. But one of the weaknesses of the book lies in what one may call "over-anthropomorphism," e.g., when he writes: "God has to get his boots muddy and, it seems, to get his hands bloody, to put the world back to rights" (59).

The book is well written and easy to read. Wright's purpose is outlined from the beginning and is consistent throughout, providing a practical solution to the problem of evil. We are indebted to Wright for his contribution to this difficult subject of theodicy. Any student interested in the subject will certainly find in this book a good tool to consult. It is an excellent tool for theologians and religion teachers as the book comes to grips with the reality of evil.

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Yon, Marguerite. *The City of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006. xvii + 172 pp. Hardcover, \$35.00.

Marguerite Yon is a well-known French archaeologist from Maison de l'Orient, Méditerranéen Université, Lumière-Lyon 2 in Lyon, France. She directed the

Mission de Ras Shamra for the ancient city of Ugarit from 1978 to 1998 and is the author of numerous French articles and books on Ras Shamra. As the director of the French Mission in Syria, Yon supervised a team of specialists in a multidisciplinary archaeometric approach. Her focus included studying the texts, architecture, city planning, and artistic techniques found in the excavations of the city of Ugarit. Currently, Yon is the director of the Franco-Cypriot excavations at Kition in Cyprus.

*The City of Ugarit* is an English translation of Yon's French volume, *Cité d'Ougarit sur le tell de Ras Shamra*, published in 1997 (Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations: Paris). It consists of an introduction and three chapters covering the geography and history of Ugarit (chap. 1), a description of the tell (chap. 2), and 66 important artifacts found at Ras Shamra (chap. 3). Most of the volume is a word-for-word translation from the original book. In the foreword, Yon has included a brief update from 2005, describing the administrative changes that have taken place since 1997. At the end of some of the chapter sections following the original bibliography, she has also included short updates from 2005 with additional bibliographic data.

The purpose of this book is to present a general synopsis of the excavations and discoveries that have taken place at Ras Shamra over the last 60 years. Before this present work, no such volume had been published in the English language. Most information related to the city of Ugarit is published in French scholarly journals, and few nonspecialists have become acquainted with it. In this volume, Yon attempts to combine the needs of specialists for general academic summary of the excavations and the needs of a general audience for a nonspecialist's guide to the site. She has included many color photographs and illustrations for the uninitiated, as well as new maps and diagrams from recent excavations for the specialist audience. Unfortunately, the quality of many of the photographs and diagrams suffered in the scanning process, and some of the drawings have not been translated into English (e.g., Figs. 13, 44, 46, 54-55, 58-59, 62, 65, 69, 71).

Ugarit was an ancient city-state on the northern coast of modern-day Syria. It was occupied from the Neolithic period through the end of the Late Bronze Age and at its zenith ruled a 2,000-square-kilometer area from its fifty-acre mound. It was destroyed by the "Sea Peoples" around 1180 B.C. and was never completely reoccupied. The site was originally excavated by Claude Schaeffer from 1929-1970 and recently passed from Marguerite Yon to Yves Calvet (1997-present). In the more-than-sixty years of excavation, Ras Shamra has yielded a wealth of archaeological, historical, and epigraphical information regarding the history of the upper Levant and western Asia. Indeed, a new language was discovered that combined cuneiform signs with an alphabetic structure and many have noted similarities between Ugaritic literature and passages from the Bible (see Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 1:1-50*, AB 16 [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966]). In recent excavations, Yon has sought to clarify building methods, urban planning and organization, and a general study of building architecture.

The first chapter discusses the historical and geographical background needed to understand the site. According to Yon, the earliest occupation of Tell Ras Shamra dates to the eighth millennium B.C. Early farmers settled on the site during a period of sedentarization in Syria and Palestine. As agriculture and animal husbandry improved, the population grew and improvements in tool manufacturing and ceramic production followed. Evidence for these innovations was found in the deep soundings (excavation pit) on the western slope of the acropolis. The city was well known in ancient times and its name is attested in contemporary city-states such as Ebla, Mari, and Alalakh. The Late Bronze Age (ca. fifteenth century B.C.) is the best-documented period in the history of Ugarit. Tablet archives demonstrate that Ugarit was a prosperous city ruled by a succession of kings who tried to balance the political demands of Egypt, Mitanni, and Hatti with those of other kingdoms such as Mukish, Amurro, and Kadesh. Unfortunately, Ugarit's prosperity led to its demise when the "Sea Peoples" began to disrupt trade networks. As neighboring city-states and major kingdoms began to fall to the invaders, Ugarit found itself isolated and unable to defend its territory. By the end of the tenth century B.C., it was sacked and abandoned (see 24 for a helpful summary table).

Chapter 2 outlines the various precincts or zones on the tell as they appeared in the city's final phase (ca. 1200 B.C.). Although only one-sixth of the surface has been excavated, several important areas can be identified by their characteristics. These include the royal zone comprising the royal palace and other related buildings, the acropolis with its temples, the library of the high priest, the urban residential quarters, and the central urban zone and city center.

Two areas in the city contrast the daily lives of the people of Ugarit. The royal zone encompassed an area of more than 10,000 square meters set apart from the rest of the city and reserved for royal activities. The palace was protected by a large fortress with city ramparts that were built during the Middle Bronze Age and maintained throughout the Late Bronze Age. A glacis, tower, and postern gate guarded the entrance. Inside the multistory palace, there were a royal plaza, six courtyards, and ninety main-floor rooms, including a throne room and one with a pool that resembles a later Roman bath. In contrast, the residential quarter and the center of the city are a densely populated urban zone with multistoried houses, industries, and other businesses. The area has been divided into blocks separated by streets. Larger houses are entered from the main streets, while smaller dwellings are entered from the narrow streets. The houses are somewhat haphazard in construction, and there is no prevailing style that can be identified as an "Ugarit house." In larger homes, such as the House of Rapanu, tablets were found containing information about daily life, personal business transactions, and diplomatic correspondence. In addition, some houses had rooms set aside as burial chambers with vaulted tombs. Houses in the city center show signs of house-splitting. In order to keep up with the growing population at the end of the thirteenth century B.C., the initial house plans were divided in order to compress family living space.

Chapter 3 provides a representative sample of the artifacts that were found at Ras Shamra. These objects are organized into 24 groups with between three and ten pieces included for each. Yon provides the designation, accession number, place the artifact was discovered, current museum location, a brief description, and an abbreviated bibliography with each object. Notable objects include the Ugaritic abecedaries that helped in the decipherment of the Ugaritic language (124-125), the Egyptian scarab commemorating the marriage of Pharaoh Amenophis III to Queen Tye (128-129), the ivory head of a young man/god made of an elephant tusk (137), and a rather peculiar jug that pours out from the bottom when the top is unsealed (140-141). The archaeological context for each of the artifacts is described in chapter 2, but the page numbers are not referenced with their entry in chapter 3.

A remarkable number of the artifacts show an Egyptian influence. The god figurines wear crowns similar to the white crown of upper Egypt and *Atef* crown of Osiris. The pose of the Baal figurine and the Baal stele resemble the classic pharaonic-sitting pose (130-135). Other examples include the Egyptian-style stele with hieroglyphs (134), the bed panel ivory (136), the miniature musician and duck-shaped cosmetic box (138), the Hathor hair-style of the Astarte figurines (154, 166), the duck ladle and fish bowl with lotus design, the alabaster fragment (158), the chariot-hunt motif on the gold cup (165), the bronze weapons (169), and the bronze bowl with lotus-petal relief (172). Whether these examples demonstrate a strong Egyptian cultural and artistic influence or a preference by the author is uncertain without a greater representative sample; however, Late Bronze Age Egypt had a major impact on the region.

Although *The City of Ugarit* attempts to present a summary of the excavations of Ras Shamra for a specialist audience and a guide to the city of Ugarit for the nonspecialist audience, it does not do either very well. On one hand, specialists looking for a site report or even a recent update on the excavations at Ras Shamra will be frustrated by how little information is presented in this volume. Indeed, little new information has been presented that has not already been published elsewhere, and the brief 2005 update paragraphs at the end of some sections are little more than footnotes (cf. M. Yon, "Ugarit," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 5 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997], 255-262). Archaeologists would benefit from more detailed site plans and explanations, a detailed discussion on stratigraphy and ceramic typology, an overview of recent tablet discoveries and translations, as well as a complete bibliography and artifact index.

On the other hand, nonspecialists will be discouraged by many of the academic descriptions and references. Indeed, the general public would probably benefit most from a portable version of this volume as a field guide to Ras Shamra and its discoveries. Similar volumes exist for other ancient sites such as *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (Amanda Claridge [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998]), as well as important museum collections such as *An Illustrated Guide to the Egyptian Museum* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2001).

Nevertheless, this volume is essential for archaeologists, specialists and interested nonspecialists alike. It provides a good general overview of the archaeological site, its history and geography, the various precincts within the city, and some interesting artifacts found at Ugarit now housed in various museums. Yon is to be commended for attempting to reach the widest possible audience with this update of recent discoveries from the city of Ugarit and excavations of Ras Shamra.

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