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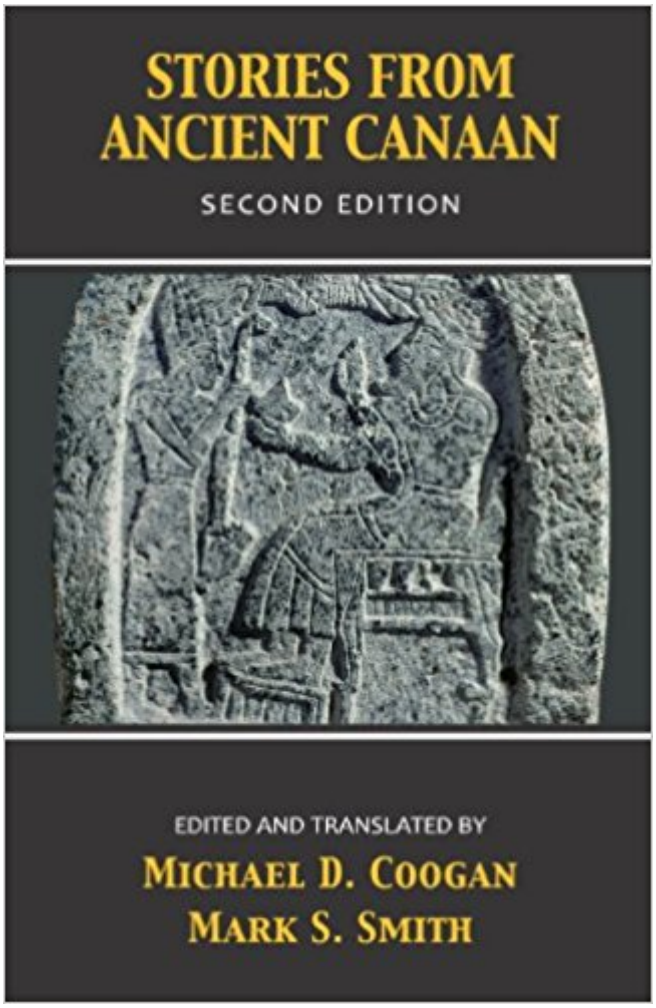
Stories From Ancient Canaan, Second Edition



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Synopsis

The texts from ancient Ugarit are among the most important modern discoveries for understanding the Bible. For more than thirty years, Stories from Ancient Canaan has been recognized as a highly authoritative and readable presentation of the principal Canaanite myths and epics discovered at Ugarit. This fully revised edition takes into account advances in the reading, understanding, and interpretation of these stories since 1978. It also includes two additional texts, expanded introductions, and illustrations. Coogan and Smith have collaborated to bring this classic up to date in order to provide accessible and accurate translations of these texts for a new generation of students.

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Customer Reviews

"Two highly regarded scholars of Ugaritic literature provide here a marvelous introduction to the classics of Ugaritic poetry. The translations are careful and authoritative, yet lively and accessible. The introductions orient the reader both to the context of this literature and to the nature of the individual compositions. Hands down, this is the best translation for teaching these texts in humanities and religious studies contexts." Carol A. Newsom, Charles Howard Candler Professor of Old Testament, Emory University"The authors have provided us with a resource that will deepen readersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ appreciation of the literary creativity and cultural contributions of the people who lived in the centuries before the biblical traditions emerged. Highly recommended for all readers interested in cultural and religious history." Douglas A. Knight, Drucilla Moore Buffington Professor

of Hebrew Bible and Professor of Jewish Studies, Vanderbilt University"In its new, second edition, Stories from Ancient Canaan should become a textbook of choice for all students interested in the cultures of the biblical world. Everything in the book has been reconsidered, revised, and updated to reflect the latest scholarship. It is a pleasure to welcome back an old friend, and that in a sparkling new dress which will ensure its continued long life and value." Peter Machinist, Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Other Oriental Languages, Harvard University"Stories from Ancient Canaan has remained one of the best presentations of Ugaritic texts since its first appearance. In this welcome new edition, the translations have been updated to reflect the great progress in Ugaritic studies over the past three decades, but they retain their wonderful freshness and accessibility." John Huehnergard, Professor Emeritus of Semitic Philology, Harvard University; Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin

Michael D. Coogan is Lecturer on Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at Harvard Divinity School and Director of Publications for the Harvard Semitic Museum. Among other works, he is editor of The New Oxford Annotated Bible and Oxford Biblical Studies Online.Mark S. Smith is Skirball Professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University and author of many books. He was the 2010Ã¢â ¬â œ11 President of the Catholic Biblical Association of America.

I’ve been having a blast this summer really digging into the Bible and reading complementary works on comparative religion, so it was only natural that I got STORIES FROM ANCIENT CANAAN. It is a translation of key Ugaritic texts dealing with Canaanite myths, including Aqhat, Kirta, and Baal. The crown jewel is, at least in my estimation, the Baal cycle, which tells of the Canaanite storm god’s efforts to build himself a palace, his conquering and subsequent consumption by Death, and his resurrection. In general the stories, aside from being innately fascinating, provide a great frame of reference/comparison with Biblical poetry, as they share essentially the same literary qualities of poetic parallelism and copious use of divine epithets. In hindsight, it makes the Bible seem a bit less original, but a lot more interesting now that I’ll be looking for these things in my subsequent Bible reading. As for the book itself, there is plenty of background information and explanatory sections that talk more generally about the sources/tablets, Ugaritic poetry, etc. Given the wealth of descriptions, it was as if I was reading the tablets themselves while reading this book. It also comes with a suggested additional reading list and glossary of names. I hadn’t previously read the first edition, but I’m pretty sure that this second edition would be the one to get: an indispensable resource to deepen one’s understanding of/appreciation for ancient Semitic religion.

If you are, like me, interested in the mythic core of religions, you will like this book. I bought it to explore similarities and differences between Hebrew myths and Canaanite myths, particularly to help me understand the differences between Yahweh and Elohim before they were conflated into Hebrew monotheism and how they are related to other Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern gods. This book will probably confirm your appreciation of the Canaanite myths as interesting and worthwhile in their own right. The editors also make some of the comparisons I was looking for, filling in the basic Ugaritic background and occasionally alluding to Egyptian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Greek, and Arabian myths and languages. It’s hard, for me at least, to come away from the Ugarit material and not see Yahweh as a close counterpart to Baal, the storm god who dwells on the mountain. I’m still thinking about the Canaanite El’s relationship to the Hebrew El/Elohim: the Canaanite myths of El and Baal suggest a generational distinction similar to Cronos and Zeus, that might apply to Elohim and Yahweh as separate gods. In any case, I recommend the book for readers seeking as direct an experience of these long-lost myths as the non-specialist can have. The only criticism I have of the book is that it doesn’t define a term here and there that is unknown to the lay reader and yet important to the discussion, like "stela," which seems to be an upright slab of inscribed stone. We can only hope that, as more of the cuneiform tablets are discovered and transcribed, we will be able to read much more of the people of Ugarit and its milieu.

Pleasant collection of stories with a skilled translation

The introduction is engaging and very helpful in understanding the stories. I will keep an eye out for other titles by this author. I was looking for additional information about the "gods who are not gods" described in the Bible. I haven’t finished the book yet, but have learned much already. Thank you!

Great

These nice stories manifest the roots of Hebrew Bible.If you want to learn about Hebrew Bible you have to read these stories which were written at the least 500 years before Hebrew Bible was written.Also the stories are poetic and enjoyable. Must read

awesome

It met my expectations, and more. I'll probably refer back to some sections time and again as enrichment for understanding other tribes and time frames for the area.

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