

Między tradycją a nowoczesnością, Bednarczyk, A., Kubarek, M., Szatkowski, M. (Eds.), Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, Toruń 2015.

An undeniable asset of the reviewed publication is the reliability in analyzing the extremely rich, diverse and frequently inaccessible source material in Arabic. I would like to recommend the monograph by Magdalena Lewicka to the scholars as well as all readers interested in the Arabic and Islamic studies, by means of quoting the opinion of Katarzyna Pachniak on the book's cover: "It is a major contribution to the sometimes marginalized studies on the culture of the Arab Ottoman provinces. Thus it complements a significant gap in the Polish publishing market".

Magdalena Kubarek

Svetlana Chervonnaya, *Современная мечеть. Отечественный и мировой опыт новейшего времени* (The Modern Mosque. Domestic and International Experience of Contemporary Times), Polish Institute of World Art Studies, Tako Publishing House, Warszawa–Toruń 2016, 478 pp.

The market launch of the monograph *Современная мечеть. Отечественный и мировой опыт новейшего времени* (The Modern Mosque. Domestic and International Experience of Contemporary Times) should be regarded as an important event both in Polish humanities and in the academic life of Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. The author presents a broad spectrum of contemporary Muslim religious architecture that can be found on almost all continents. In accordance with the title of her book, she devotes the greatest attention to "domestic" experiences. The author uses this term to describe the Muslim community inhabiting the vast territories of the former colonial world of the Russian Empire, i.e. the mosques of "the modern and most recent times" (from the end of the 18th to the turn of the 21st century) in the Volga and Ural region, in the Crimea, North Caucasus, Transcaucasia, Central Asia, Russia's European territory, Siberia, countries that became the homeland of the so-called Polish-Lithuanian Tatars (in Belarus, Lithuania and Poland), and Finland. This "domestic" experience is compared with the development processes of contemporary Muslim architecture in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and Latin America. Thus, Chervonnaya examines the formation of the "domestic style", regional peculiarities of contemporary Muslim religious architecture that develops based on local traditions while being under a strong influence of external trends and closely linked with the general globalisation trends in artistic culture as well as modern and post-modern architectural concepts. Perceiving and analysing the mosque as the "mirror of Islam" – she uses this term after R. Garaudy (*Mosquee, miroir de l'islam*, Paris 1985) – the author focuses particularly on the forms of architectural decor and basics of the spatial layout of the furnishings and its key elements that, besides their obvious significance, have a hidden internal (*bāṭin*) meaning, so important in Muslim

dogmatics and aesthetics, as well as an alluded, symbolic and metaphorical meaning besides their practical purposes.

The places of worship, created in “modern and contemporary” times, and chosen to represent the great wealth of mosques in various geographic and cultural zones, are primarily analysed from the perspective of the history of art. Hence they are regarded by the author as an artistic phenomenon of the great contemporary professional “grand art”, the rich and living national art or “anti-art” that encompasses primitivists, substitutes, eclectic combinations, poor *Hinterhofmoscheen*, artefacts far from perfection. At the same time, Chervonnaya examines the development of creative thought, the nature of the intentions of authors designing mosques. She indicates specific architects and artists-designers participating in the furnishing of contemporary mosques (she lists nearly 300 persons and provides short biographies for 247 of them in the dictionary at the end of the book).

Thanks to that, the monograph *Современная мечеть. Отечественный и мировой опыт новейшего времени* can be regarded primarily as an analysis in the field of history of art. Beyond doubt, it fills a gap in the knowledge of art related to Islamic studies both in Russia and around the world. So far, Islamic studies have focused, to a large extent, if not entirely, on the classical Muslim architectural heritage described extensively in Western literature and literature on the subject in the world of Islam. This book makes it possible to supplement the global history of art with chapters that seem crucial in this respect because they refer to the furnishings and ornaments in mosques in the last two hundred years, including mosques built very recently or yet unfinished, still in the design stage and under construction. What is significant in this analysis is that history of art is closely linked with political and social problems of the world of Islam, migration processes, prospects of the so-called Arabic Renaissance (*An-Nahda*), the tasks of national liberation movements in the former colonies, the organisation of the religious life of Muslims, the policies of national governments favouring or, on the contrary, impeding the establishment or functioning of contemporary mosques. The social and political context, particularly visible in the extended sketches devoted to the situation of Muslims in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Western Europe, the Balkans, the island of Cyprus, as well as in chapters analysing the state programmes for furnishing mosques in Muslim regions and countries, places this book in the broad sphere of the humanistic studies of contemporary Muslim society.

As Chervonnaya indicates, a considerable part of materials included in the monograph, directly referring to mosques and events related to their construction, was collected by her through fieldwork conducted in Tatarstan, Bashkiria (Bashkortostan), the Crimea, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Germany and other countries. Thus, not only are these original materials but they are also published for the first time. One third of the illustrations (91 out of 272) used in the book are the fruit of the author’s photography session conducted in places where contemporary mosques function and are being furnished.

When analysing and reviewing the monograph *Современная мечеть. Отечественный и мировой опыт новейшего времени*, one should stress the interdisciplinary character

of the study, encompassing various academic fields and disciplines, which is reflected in the richness of the materials related to Oriental and Islamic studies, cultural and religious studies, the history and present day of Muslim civilisation and nations in the world of Islam, political science, international relations and, obviously, the history of art and architecture. The interdisciplinary context of the monograph is defined by the biography of the author, a professor of the history of art, and factors that led to the creation and publication of the book.

Svetlana Chervonnaya, lived in Russia and worked for many years at the Scientific Research Institute of the Theory and History of Visual Arts at today's Russian Academy of Arts. Under the auspices of this Institute, in accordance with its core scientific research activity and in close relation to the author's previous publications (*Искусство Татарии. История изобразительного искусства и архитектуры с древнейших времен до 1917 года* / The Art of Tatarstan. The History of Visual Arts and Architecture from the Earliest Times until 1917, 1987; *Академия художеств и регионы России* / Academy of Arts and Regions in Russia, 2004; *Современное исламское искусство народов России* / Contemporary Muslim Art of the Nations of Russia, 2008) the idea of a comprehensive study of contemporary Muslim religious architecture was born and the first chapters devoted to the mosques of "Russian" Muslims were written. Further in-depth studies of the subject matter, including the contemporary manifestations of the cultural identity of nations, were made possible by the scholarly research activity of the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology where, in 2004, Chervonnaya started working as professor and giving lectures on the history and culture of Islam, history and culture of the nations of the former Russian Empire, national, ethnic and religious minorities in Poland and contemporary Europe. The monograph *Современная мечеть. Отечественный и мировой опыт новейшего времени*, largely edited during the author's work at the Department mentioned above, is perfectly consistent with the developing tradition of this young academic and research unit and the versatile scholarly activity of the Faculty of History of Nicolaus Copernicus University. The completion of the work coincided with the current stage in Chervonnaya's academic career (from 2013 to date) as lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts where she delivers lectures on the history, culture and art of Islam to students – future restorers of monuments of architecture, art historians and art critics. This book is both the basis and continuation of these lectures, and its innovative, interdisciplinary and comprehensive character makes it a unique and important teaching aid in the field of Islamic studies. It is not a coincidence that the monograph was published by the Polish Institute of World Art Studies in a series of extremely valuable publications devoted to problems of contemporary artistic culture, with Prof Jerzy Malinowski as the scientific editor of the series.

The above-mentioned fieldwork, thanks to which the extensive and largely yet unpublished material was collected, was conducted during scientific expeditions led by or attended by the author of the book – in Tatarstan, Siberia, North Caucasus, Azerbaijan, the Crimea, areas inhabited by Polish-Lithuanian Tatars in Poland, Lithuania and Belarus as well as the Balkans, Germany, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Tunisia). The fieldwork was carried out with the support of various international institutions and

organisations, including the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Fund, Soros Fund, MacArthur Foundation, Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and the Federal Union of European Nationalities as a consultative body of the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

Some issues touched upon in this monograph were discussed during the First Asian Congress in Toruń in 2014 (its programme included Chervonnaya's lectures in an extensive thematic block entitled "Mosques of the Asian Continent"), conferences organised by the Polish Ethnological Society ("The Mosque as the Sacred and a Work of Art in Contemporary Muslim Culture", "The Sacred in Traditional and Contemporary Culture", Lublin 2014) and scholarly meetings as part of kitab studies at the Faculty of Philology of Nicolaus Copernicus University where S. Chervonnaya presented papers on the architecture and epigraphy of Crimean, Kazan and Lithuanian Tatars and discussed the subject of *shamails* (*muhirs*) as an important part of the interior decoration of Tatar mosques. These conferences and meetings yielded the following publications: *Современная мечеть азиатского континента / Contemporary Mosque in the Asian Continent* ([in:] *Cywilizacje współczesnej Azji: prawo, wartości, kultura*, eds. J. Marszałek-Kawa, J. Piechowiak-Lamparska, Toruń 2015), *Современная мечеть африканского континента / Contemporary Mosque in the Asian Continent* ([in:] *Dziedzictwo materialne i niematerialne Afryki i jego znaczenie dla zrównoważonego rozwoju kontynentu*, eds. B. NDiaye, I. Anna NDiaye, Olsztyn 2015), *The Mosque as the Sacred and a Work of Art in Contemporary Muslim Culture* ([in:] *Sacrum w kulturze tradycyjnej i współczesnej*, eds. J. Adamowski, M. Tymochowicz, Lublin 2016), *Мухиры литовских татар – шамалии казанских татар. Дискуссионные проблемы современных исследований / The Muhirs of Lithuanian Tatars – The Shamails of Kazan Tatars. The Debated Issues in Contemporary Research* ([in:] *Święte księgi judaizmu, chrześcijaństwa i islamu w słowiańskim kręgu kulturowym*, vol. 2 *Księgi wyznawców judaizmu i islamu: historia, socjologia, sztuka*, eds. M. Krajewska, J. Kulwicka-Kamińska, A. Szulc, Toruń 2016).

The analysis presented in the successive chapters of the book certainly stands out thanks to the innovative character of the contemporary material on which it is based as well as the deep insight and keen awareness of the need to understand the social and political environment in which Muslim religious architecture came into being and continues to develop in various countries: countries that are Muslim according to their constitutions, where the Muslim community is an absolute majority; countries where Muslims are a minority, as representatives of "indigenous" peoples in specific territories as well as foreign communities, newcomers who arrived as a result of contemporary migration flows, whose rights are guaranteed to a smaller or greater extent or, on the contrary, are blatantly violated, depending on the regime, political system and political culture of the countries they are citizens of, and degree of tolerance shown to them by the "majority". It is thanks to the inclusion of the social and political context of artistic processes that the reviewed monograph can be regarded as not only, or not a "purely" culture-forming study of contemporary architecture and the artists' craft inextricably linked with it, but rather as a historical study of the fate of Muslim nations and societies in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. The historical nature of the monograph entails a changing, sometimes

discontinuous scholarly narrative. If the history of a particular Muslim region, including huge empires and states (such as the Ottoman Empire, Iran, Asian and North African countries established in the territory of the former Arab Muslim caliphate), is well known, the author does not devote a lot of attention to it. Other chapters of the book, particularly those devoted to the dramatic history of Crimean Tatars, Muslim culture and Turkish presence on Cyprus, Islamist organisations controlled (and not controlled) by Turkey in Germany, international initiatives of Indo-Pakistani Ahmadiyya in the European area of their activity, ideological conflicts over Muslim religious architecture in Europe, the establishment of the muftiates (muftiyats) and their role in the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and post-Soviet territories after the dissolution of the USSR, are at the core of Chervonnaya's interest and take the form of separate, autonomous historical, social and political essays closely linked with the history of art in the areas discussed.

The analysis of the works of contemporary Muslim architecture, the presentation of its artistic value, style and innovative developments, particularly manifested in the great talent and creative originality of architects such as Walter Gropius (Germany), Frank Lloyd Wright (USA), Louis Kahn (USA), Robert Venturi (USA), Nader Ardalan (Iran), Zaha Hadid (Iraq-United Kingdom), Abdel Wahid al-Wakil (Egypt), Hassan Fathy (Egypt), Wedat Dalokai (Turkey), Behruz Çinici (Turkey), Sami Moussawi (Iraq), Rasem Badran (Jordan), Rashem Bukhkara (Morocco), Tadaō Ando (Japan), Kenzō Tange (Japan), Paolo Portoghesi (Italy), Vittorio Gigliotti (Italy), Bjarke Ingels (Denmark), Oscar Niemeyer (Brazil), Koen Olthuis (Netherlands), Michael Pinson (France), Iskander Saifullin (Tatarstan), Nijaz Chalit (Tatarstan), Ilia Tazijew (Russian Federation), Idris Junusow (Crimea, Ukraine) and the critical assessment of artefacts devoid of aesthetic value are complemented in the book by the theoretical analysis of the symbolic and metaphorical meaning and purpose of the key architectural components, the exterior and interior design of the mosque (i.e. minaret, mihrab, minbar, maafil, olem) as well as a general reflection upon the foundations and prospects of contemporary Arabic Renaissance, regional and state schools, typology of contemporary mosques and their role in the urban layout and system of the human environment. In this context, it is worth noting a very interesting phenomenon of “aqua-architecture”, mosques built “on the water”, surrounded by water features, fountain complexes, in conjunction with “green architecture”, closely linked with the Muslim symbolism of paradise.

The monograph was written based on a rich “literature of questions”, a large part of which is included in the bibliographic notes containing dozens of terms. This literature is thoroughly analysed in the introductory essay *Историографический контекст: нынешнее состояние исследований современных мечетей* (Historiographic context: the current state of research on contemporary mosques). The novelty of the reviewed book and its great significance against the background of literature dealing with various problems of Muslim religious architecture lies in this historiographic context meticulously presented by the author who refers to and quotes numerous works of her predecessors (she devotes a lot of attention to Sharif Shukurov's theoretical studies that she elaborates on while presenting a constructive critique of them). As it can be easily observed, the

great bulk of such publications, whether issued in Russia, Poland or other countries (in various languages that Chervonnaya knows, another strength of hers), is devoted to monuments of architecture, classical Muslim artistic and cultural heritage, and their chronological scope rarely goes beyond the year 1800. The mosques of “modern and contemporary times”, on the other hand, as the author rightly observes, are in the “blind spot” of science: they do not attract the interest of historians of Muslim art whose attention is focused on the glorious past of this art; they are also overlooked by scholars studying contemporary Islam (historians, social scientists, political scientists, ethnologists, specialists in religious studies) who are not interested in the mosque as a phenomenon of the artistic culture and social system of the Muslim *umma*. The sublimation of this phenomenon in the broader political, social and cultural context of contemporary times, decolonisation processes, self-determination of the nations of the Muslim East, national liberation struggles, nation-building, extensive cultural modernisation and globalisation in conjunction with post-modernist tendencies and the most recent trends in contemporary architecture and urban planning, is a distinctive, defining feature of the reviewed book.

Among the very few works that have been published in recent years and that do not focus on monuments of the past but are actually devoted to contemporary mosques, including, above all, studies by Renata Cholod, Hasan-Uddin Khan, Ismail Serageldin, James Steel, Nader Ardalan and other authors participating in projects of the well-known Aga-Khan Foundation for scientific research as well as the above-mentioned publications by Sharif Shukurov, Moscow-based scholar of the East, closely followed and referenced by Chervonnaya in her work, stands out by virtue of the extent of the area studied by the author. The monograph does not offer just a few examples of the best known contemporary mosques or a map documenting their appearance in one particular country or region. Instead, it presents a global panoramic view of the development of contemporary Muslim religious architecture on four continents. This book is not only about Asian (from the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean), European, African (including the northern, Arab Sahara region, Central Africa and the special cultural zone of South Africa) and American mosques (built in the United States, Canada and Latin America). It is about mosques of the entire contemporary world. The book is divided into four chapters corresponding to the four continents (only Australia is missing in this giant, four-sided figure), and each chapter contains sections devoted to mosques constituting the most interesting examples of Muslim religious architecture in individual countries or a group of several countries forming ethnic and cultural regions such as Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, South-East Asia.

The successful creation of this panoramic view owes a lot to the author’s efforts and ability to include zones with a special character, peculiar “islands” (sometimes mere “islets”) of Muslim culture that the Polish reader may find quite interesting. This applies primarily to mosques of the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars, monuments of the distant and not so distant past built in the territories of modern-day Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. This material is not unfamiliar; quite the contrary, it is quite well known to specialists and various groups of Polish society and its closest neighbours as it has been described

in numerous scholarly and popular-science publications (see A. Drozd, M.M. Dziekan, T. Majda, *Meczet i cmentarze Tatarów polsko-litewskich. Katalog zabytków tatarskich / The Mosques and Cemeteries of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars. Catalogue of Tatar Monuments*, vol. II, Warszawa 1999), including articles and monographs by Svetlana Chervonnaya who frequently took up the subject of the culture of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars and brought it to the attention of Russian and European readers, e.g. *Польско-литовские татары – западный форпост ислама в Европе*, „Вестник Московского Исламского Университета”, 2010, № 2, ss. 93–117; „Пример весьма получительный...”. *Страницы истории литовских татар*, „Эхо Литвы”, Вильнюс 1991, № 129, с. 3; *Architecture of the Wooden Mosques of Lithuanian Tatars*, „Tatarica”, Kazan 2014, no. 1, pp. 179–194; *Stone Sacral Architecture of the Lithuanian Tatars as an Organic Constituent of the World Islamic Civilization and Tatar Culture*, „Tatarica”, Kazan 2014, no. 2, pp. 204–216. The presentation of this material, generally well known in Poland, in a book about mosques throughout the Muslim world creates a totally new perspective, making this material part of the global artistic spectrum, bringing it out of the “provincial shade” and showing the most interesting directions and points of convergence between the national architecture of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars and Muslim architecture in Tatarstan, Siberia, the Crimea or Finland. The Poles and Lithuanians who designed and built mosques in areas inhabited by the religious and ethnic minority concerned (such as Stefan Kryczyński, Waclaw Michniewicz, Tadeusz Miazek, Stanisław Kolendo, Marian Wszelaki, Marian Murman and others) hold a prominent place in the broad international milieu of architects dedicating their creative work to the furnishing of contemporary mosques.

The mosques of Polish-Lithuanian Tatars as well as Tatar mosques in general, are just one link in the chain of the most interesting phenomena of contemporary Muslim religious architecture formed within specific regional frameworks based on original national cultures and traditions. The broad spectrum of these phenomena is complemented by the meticulous and insightful description of the character of contemporary mosques in Turkey, Iran and Central Africa. The author draws a particularly clear image of religious sites in the Arab Muslim cultural milieu. The masterpieces of contemporary Arab architecture that the author chose to describe (e.g. in Saudi Arabia where the huge religious complex Al-Haram in Mecca is under permanent renovation and several “stations” of key importance to Muslims are being created, starting from Jeddah, the coast, main airport and other places where millions of pilgrims arrive to comply with their religious obligation, to Riyadh and Medina) as well as the materials, collected during her fieldwork and showing the new mosques in the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia, made it possible to identify the common features of a single artistic block – the contemporary Arab mosque. At the same time, the selected examples and the collected materials enabled the highlighting of contrasts existing in this area, through the juxtaposition of the poorest regions of the Arab world, old cities doomed to stagnation and degradation, poor villages where time seems to stand still, slums in industrial areas, primitive caravanserais of the last nomads of Arab deserts, poverty of DP camps and Palestinian refugee camps, where contemporary architecture cannot function normally, with the dizzying and awe-inspiring

grandeur characteristic of architectural complexes commissioned by “petroleum kings”, particularly the high-rise structures of Dubai and Sheikh Zayed Mosque, glistening with pure gold, in Abu Dhabi.

The image of contemporary Arab mosques, the block of designs and structures that this phenomenon consists of, is enriched with the works of international masters, including, in particular, world-famous architects participating in architectural design competitions in the mid-20th century and determining the contemporary image of Baghdad. At the same time, the ethnic Arab milieu, the intelligentsia of Arab countries in Asia and Africa produces renowned designers working all over the world and making a unique contribution to contemporary architecture worldwide, particularly in France, Spain, the United States and Canada. Designers of Arab origin and identity, representing an Arab worldview, cultural orientation and mentality, such as the Zaha Hadid, Iraqi-born and acclaimed in Europe, or the Egyptian Hassan Fathy, author of the one-of-a-kind and awe-inspiring Dar al-Islam complex in New Mexico, are the brightest stars in contemporary architecture.

The artistic phenomenon of the Arab mosque, presented in its various aspects and dimensions in Chervonnaya’s monograph, is developing in close connection with the general processes of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation of the former “Arab desert”. The author examines this connection, relying on the most interesting research conducted in contemporary Arab history studies, particularly the collective monograph edited by Günter Meyer, professor of the University of Mainz, entitled *The Arab World in the Mirror of in Cultural Geography (Die arabische Welt im Spiegel der Kulturgeographie*, Mainz 2004). This book has unjustly ceased to interest the academic community, including Polish Arabic studies scholars. Therefore, its reappearance in Chervonnaya’s book, where it is referenced, quoted and commented, enriches Polish scholarship.

In the concluding remarks it is worth highlighting another fact of special significance in the contemporary political context. The entire character, structure and scholarly arguments presented by the author are consistent with her efforts to indicate and emphasise the humanistic values of Islam and Muslim culture that have little in common with the destructive ideas of extreme radicalism and terrorism which invoke religion while being a medium and manifestation of trends hostile to the Muslim world and at variance with the foundations of religion. Therefore, this review can be concluded with Chervonnaya’s own words with which she ends her work: “Contemporary mosque architecture becomes part of today’s most important discourse on the mutual relations of civilisations, showing a prospect for avoiding the disastrous clash of civilisations and entering the perfect space of concord and mutual enrichment” (p. 413).

Thanks to the factors indicated above, including, above all, studies initiated by the author in Russia and continued in Poland, supported by various centres, institutions and organisations, both local and international, studies seeking to examine, describe and understand the neighbouring cultures and civilisations, the monograph *Современная мечеть. Отечественный и мировой опыт новейшего времени* is at the intersection of many scholarly domains and disciplines and will certainly be interesting to theoreticians, primarily art historians studying the Muslim world and its contemporary art, architecture

and spatial layout, and to practitioners directly participating in the development of this art, architecture, urban development. In addition, the book provides a space for multi-faceted cultural and political dialogue between nations, states and civilisations.

Magdalena Lewicka

Sylvie Lackenbacher and Florence Malbran-Labat, *Lettres akkadiennes de la «Maison d'Urtēnu»*. *Fouilles de 1994* (Ras Shamra – Ugarit XXIII), Peeters, Leuven-Paris-Bristol Ct 2016, 464 pp.

The book under review contains the publication of cuneiform tablets found at Ras Shamra – Ugarit in 1994. The present volume presents 130 letters written in Akkadian and discovered in the so-called “House of Urtēnu”. Most of them are addressed to the king of Ugarit, to the queen or to the prefect of the palace and were sent from various foreign countries of the Near East. They date from the final period of the Late Bronze Age, from the time of the last two kings of Ugarit, Niqmaddu III and ‘Ammurapi, and thus immediately precede the events that changed the political aspect of the Near East in the twelfth century B.C.

This *editio princeps* is divided in six sections offering the transliteration and the translation of each tablet with short comments. The copies are reproduced in the third part of the volume (pl. I–XCIV) and they are followed by carefully made photographs, showing also the sides of the tablets (pl. XCV–CCXI).

The second part of the book contains two concordances of the RS numbers, of the numbers given to the tablets in the *editio princeps* in general and in each section in particular (pp. 203–208). They are followed by an index of words and expressions commented in the text (pp. 209–220), of anthroponyms (pp. 220–225), theonyms (p. 225), toponyms (pp. 225–228), of titles and functions (pp. 228–230), and of objects (pp. 230–234). References are given each time to the serial numbers of the tablets in each section and to the RS numbers, but not to the serial number of each tablet in the entire publication or to the pages of the printed volume. This would have considerably eased the consultation of the work. A list of abbreviations and a bibliography are given on pp. 235–241, followed by a map and by plans of the “House of Urtēnu” (pp. 243–245). A French and an Arabic summaries are provided at the end of the volume (pp. 461–464).

The first section of Part I with the transliteration and translation of the texts contains thirty-nine letters sent from the Hittite world. Nine letters were sent by the Hittite Great King (nos. 1–9) and three letters are related to the king of Karkemiš (nos. 10–12). The third one seems to have been written by ‘Ammurapi, the last king of Ugarit, who is asking for urgent help. However, the letter has apparently not been sent because of the pressure of the enemy, which is not named. One letter comes from Tarḫuntašša (no. 13), another one from Kizzuwatna (no. 14), and four letters were sent from Alašiya, i.e. a kingdom on Cyprus (nos. 15–18). The king is called ^mKu-uš-me-šu-ša and the high