### Gods in Dwellings







Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series

Amélie Kuhrt, Editor



Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East

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# Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East

Michael B. Hundley



#### **GODS IN DWELLINGS**

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#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hundley, Michael B., 1978-

Gods in dwellings: temples and divine presence in the ancient Near

East / Michael B. Hundley.

pages cm. — (Writings from the ancient world supplements /

Society of Biblical Literature; no. 3)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-58983-920-5 (hardcover binding: alk. paper) — ISBN

978-1-58983-918-2 (paper binding : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58983-919-9 (electronic format)

1. Temples—Middle East—History—To 1500. 2. Middle East—Religion. I. Title.

BL1060.H86 2013 203'.509394—dc23

2013035222

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free, recycled paper conforming to ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R1997) and ISO 9706:1994 standards for paper permanence.



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#### **PREFACE**

Temples and cult images were seemingly ubiquitous in the ancient Near Eastern world, and are scarcely less so in modern scholarly writing. Temples and the cultic care within them served as the primary and official way of interacting with and influencing the otherwise distant deities who controlled the cosmos, thereby affording humans some security in an otherwise insecure world. In the temple, heaven met earth, allowing regular and regulated interaction with the deity to the benefit of all parties involved.

The following study is an attempt to understand how the people from the various ancient Near Eastern regions (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Hittite Anatolia, and Syria-Palestine) built, used, and understood their temples, and how they installed, served, and understood the divine presence within them. Given the vast amount of ground covered, it makes no attempt to be encyclopedic in its presentation of data. Likewise, given the proliferation of literature available on temples and divine presence in and across cultures and the advances in complementary fields like architectural and spatial theory, ritual theory, theories of language, art history, archaeology, and comparative studies, this book makes no attempt to master every discipline and sub-discipline. In fact, the book's primary aim is not to amass data, methodologies, or interpretations. Rather, it attempts to identify the common ancient Near Eastern temple systems, more particularly, the temple structures and practices and the thought worlds that informed them. In other words, it is a study in religious norms, exploring normative ways of conceptualizing and constructing temples and envisioning, enabling, and maintaining divine presence within them. In turn, rather than attempt to be exhaustive, it presents a wide range of data that help to illumine the common religious systems, giving the reader some access to the normative worlds of the temple, at least as far as the data will allow.

This book also recognizes the importance of understanding systems of thought and practice in their own rights and for comparative purposes. It attempts to situate the individual data in the larger systems of thought and practice, contending that such integration allows for a more robust analysis of the systems and their parts. The individual data are best interpreted in light of the larger system, its cultural context, to see how and if they fit and, if they diverge, why and in what ways. As the context informs the individual data, the analysis of their parts likewise illumines the system as a whole. A better understanding of the system and its parts consequently allows for richer comparisons of the systems themselves and their various constituent parts.

This project began during my Ph.D. at the University of Cambridge, where I sought to understand the biblical Priestly system designed to safeguard the divine

presence in the Priestly tabernacle. Rather than comparing select elements in the Priestly system with isolated ancient Near Eastern rites, I attempted to compare the various systems of thought and practice. Since most existing comparative work was either too general or too specific, I attempted to gather and synthesize the vast ancient Near Eastern material and construct an interpretive lens through which to view it. This book, since significantly expanded and updated, is the result of that endeavor.

In short, *Gods in Dwellings* examines temples and the gods who inhabit them in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Hittite Anatolia, and Syria-Palestine. It is thus concerned with official religion, with exploring the interface between human and divine in the major temples of the ancient Near Eastern. As far as possible, each region's system(s) is allowed to emerge in their own terms, contexts, and complexities. While the focus is on identifying commonalities, various differences are also noted. Where data are lacking, I fill in the blanks tentatively with comparative data. In the course of investigating each region, comparisons are also made across regions. At the end of each major section, syntheses are offered with a view toward finding common ground, despite the different ways temples and divine presence are presented in the different contexts.

Given that the data are remarkably diverse and only partially preserved, the generalizations posited do not hold for every place and every time, either within or across regions. This study paints in broad strokes and invites specialists in each field and subfield to test the validity of the portrait painted and to add the detailed time- and place-specific brushstrokes.

This study has been written with several audiences in mind. Its fundamental aim is to familiarize the reader with the various ancient Near Eastern systems of thought and practice regarding temples and divine presence, thereby granting greater access to those cultures and even to the Hebrew Bible that emerged from them. Since the present work analyzes each region in its own right before offering a synthesis, it also may be used as a reference for each particular region as well as for comparative analysis (both with biblical and other ancient and modern religions). The principal audience is biblical scholars, who generally do not have sufficient access to all of the ancient Near Eastern discussions or to the systems of thought that inform them. This study attempts to provide access and ample material for comparison with various biblical texts relating to temples, divine presence, and, more broadly, conceptions of the divine. However, it explicitly does not make the comparisons itself, contending that each cultural system must be understood in its own right before such comparisons are undertaken, so as not to compromise

<sup>1.</sup> While I recognize that the generalizations posited by necessity do not do full justice to all of the data, the search for common elements remains helpful in granting greater access to the common ancient Near Eastern systems of thought and practice. For an assessment of the limited data and the limitations of making generalizations, see the individual chapters.

the integrity of the primary investigation or the secondary comparison with biblical texts. I also hope to engage ancient Near Eastern specialists by contributing a macroanalysis of the most common systems of thought and practice in addition to the multiple excellent microanalyses already in print. I invite the specialists to test my methodology and interpretations and continue to extend the investigation to specific times and specific places. By minimizing technical language and writing as accessibly as possible without unnecessarily sacrificing the complexity of the subject matter, I also hope that nonspecialists can benefit from it.

I realize that in attempting to address specialists and nonspecialists alike I am in some way working at crosspurposes. In turn, I hope that specialists will forgive me for excluding some of the data and some of its diversity and that nonspecialists will forgive me for including too much data and diversity. Nonetheless, I believe that nonspecialists can benefit from the added detail and complexity and hope that specialists can benefit from a broader and more synthetic analysis that seeks to identify commonalities despite the diversity.

At this point, a few clarifications are in order. First, given the sheer volume of material, many worthy contributions have been omitted from direct consideration. Instead of collecting every relevant piece of primary and secondary literature, the references mentioned serve as a representative sample, representing the works used and some of the best resources available for further inquiry both in general and with regard to specific issues. Again, my goal was not to be encyclopedic but to use the data to paint a picture of the common ancient Near Eastern temples and temple cults. I have also showed a preference for English books since my primary audience is English. The reference list represents my selective presentation as it lists only the works cited.

Second, I have generally attempted to present the various primary languages in a way accessible to the general readership. Person and place names as well as the names of various (especially mythological) texts have been written in transcribed form without diacritic markers (except in citations). In other words, I write non-English words with English letters and vocalizations. For example, instead of identifying the Hittite capital as Ḥattuša, I have written it Hattusa. The goddess Ištar instead appears as Ishtar, while Nabû appears as Nabu. In addition, the myth describing the exaltation of Marduk, transliterated as the <code>Enūma eliš,³</code> has been written <code>Enuma Elish.</code> I have also generally rendered "§" as "s," except where "sh" is more common in English (e.g., Ishtar and Enuma Elish). However, foreign words that do not fall into these categories (i.e., words that are not proper nouns) are written in full transliterated form, with diacritics and in italics (e.g., the Hittite standing

<sup>2.</sup> If readers are interested in how I make such comparisons, they may refer to my previous (and upcoming) publications.

<sup>3.</sup> Transliteration refers to the conversion of a text from one writing system to another.

stone has been written <code>huwaši</code>). My rendering of Egyptian words requires further clarification. Although I follow the above rules for the most part, certain major concepts, such as <code>ba</code> (instead of <code>b3</code>), <code>ka</code>, <code>maat</code>, <code>sekhem</code>, and <code>ankh</code>, have been transcribed instead of transliterated for the convenience of nonspecialists. In addition, some words that would otherwise appear in transliterated form are transcribed because they appear in a citation or are transcribed in accord with a nearby citation. When referring to a deity, the neuter pronoun "it" will be used to avoid the cumbersone "she or he" or the incomplete "he" or "she."

Third, regarding references to specific texts and verses, I have tried to be as consistent as possible across cultures. I insert a period (.) between the numbers identifying a text, and spaces between the text numbers and the numbers (and letters) identifying a line. For example, in *KUB* 7.5 iv 11–16, *KUB* indicates the publication, "7" the volume, and "5" the text number within that specific volume, while "iv" indicates column 4 and "11–16" lines 11–16.<sup>5</sup> I use lowercase roman numerals to indicate columns (as in the previous example) and upper case roman numerals to identify the tablet numbers of the large Akkadian texts with individuals titles (e.g., for *Enuma Elish* tablet 5 verse 1, I write *Enuma Elish* V 1 instead of *Enuma Elish*.V 1, *Enuma Elish* 5 1, or *Enuma Elish*.5 1). <sup>6</sup> A single quotation mark (e.g., 1') after a line number indicates the line number as preserved on the tablet when the tablet is broken.

Finally, I must pause to express my thanks to those who have made this book possible. Graham Davies once again deserves pride of place. I am grateful for the patience he showed in allowing me to fumble my way around the ancient Near East as an early Ph.D. student and for encouraging me to turn my fumblings into a second book. Without his support, this book would not have been written. So, it is only fitting that I dedicate *Gods in Dwellings* to the one who shares its initials, Graham I. Davies.

<sup>4.</sup> Sumerian texts form the primary exception. Logograms are written in small caps, while Sumerian texts are written without italics and with extended spaces between the letters.

<sup>5.</sup> This is but one example. Different publications follow different rules in identifying their texts. For example, the RIMA series uses a different combination of letters and numbers. In A.0.77.1.13, e.g., "A" stands for Assyrian period, "0" indicates that the dynasty is inapplicable, "77" refers to the ruler number (in this case Shalmaneser I), "1" to the text, and "13" to the specific exemplar of that text. For an explanation, see A. Kirk Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114–859 BC)* (RIMA 2; Toronoto: University of Toronto, 1991), *xiii–xiv*.

<sup>6.</sup> To be consistent, I notate columns in Ugaritic texts with a lower case roman numeral instead of the normal practice (see, e.g., Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, Vol. 1: *Introduction with Text, Translation & Commentary of KTU I.I–I.2* [VTSupp 53; Leiden: Brill, 1994]) of writing the column in upper case (*KTU* 1.3 vi 17–19 instead of *KTU* 1.3 VI 17–19).

I would like to thank Baruch Schwartz who read an early version of Part 2, which little resembles the one presented here, and offered his encouragement. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation deserves high praise for allowing me the time and resources to finish this book (and the ability to do it in such a great location as Munich). I thank Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München for giving me access to their facilities and scholarly discussions during my time as a Humboldt scholar. I am also in Christoph Levin's debt for giving me some leeway to diverge from my primary Humboldt project and for his genuine concern for my wellbeing. Thanks are also due to Princeton Theological Seminary for letting me use their extensive library during my time there.

I am grateful to Jared Miller for his interest and insights into all things Hittite, and Friedhelm Hoffmann for his invaluable guidance in matters Egyptian. They each offered helpful feedback, prevented several missteps, and are in no way responsible for any of my errors. Billie Jean Collins also deserves significant credit, for initially accepting the manuscript for publication, for supporting the project as it neared completion, and for offering her expert advice on the Hittite elements. I would also like to thank Amélie Kuhrt for taking on editorship of the series.

As always, I am indebted to my family, to my parents, Timothy and Virginia Hundley, for their unfailing support and to my wife's parents (Charles David and Virginia Susann Jones) for their loyalty and invaluable financial support. I would like to thank my three young children, Kaya Elana, Evangeline Grace, and Matthew Johannes, for making my life richer and more exciting, if not always easier. Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful wife, Susan, who has always supported me through thick and thin, believed in the project from the beginning, and enabled me to finish it in various ways, including by acting as its primary editor. Once again, she has been my inspiration and encouragement. In lieu of the expensive jewelry she deserves, I can only offer her my love and gratitude.

> Michael B. Hundley Munich, December 13, 2012



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### ABBREVIATIONS

A tablets in the collections of the Oriental Institute, Univ.

of Chicago

ÄA Ägyptologische Abhandlungen ÄAT Ägypten und Altes Testament

AB The Anchor Bible

ADFU Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemein-

schaft in Uruk-Warka

AEL Miriam Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature. 3 vols.

Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973-1980

AfO Archiv für Orientforschung

AHw W. von Soden, Akkadisches Handwörterbuch. 3 vols.

Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1959 - 1981

ANEP J. Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East in Pictures Re-

lated to the Old Testament. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princ-

eton University Press, 1969.

ANET J. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to

the Old Testament. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton Uni-

versity Press, 1969

AO museum siglum Louvre (Antiquités orientales)

AOAT Alter Orient und Altes Testament

AoF Altorientalische Forschungen

ArOr Archiv Orientalni ASJ Acta Sumerologica

ASOR American Schools of Oriental Research

AT The Alalakh Tablets

AuOr Aula Orientalis

AuOrS Aula Orientalis Supplement
BA Biblical Archaeologist
BaF Baghdader Forschungen
BAM Baghdader Mitteilungen
BAR Biblical Archaeology Review

BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research

BBB Bonner Biblische Beiträge

BBVO Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderer Orient

Bib Biblica

BibB Biblische Beiträge

BICS Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies

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BiOr Bibliotheca Orientalis
BJS Brown Judaic Studies

BM museum siglum of the British Museum, London, or

Baal miniature art

BMCR Bryn Mawr Classical Review

BMECCJ Bulletin of the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan BMSAES British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan Boreas Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and

Near Eastern Civilizations

BR Babylonian recension of the mouth-washing ritual

BS Baal statue

BzÄ Beiträge zur Ägyptologie

BZAW Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissen-

schaft

CAD Ignace Gelb et al., eds., The Assyrian Dictionary of the

Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. 21 vols.

Chicago: University of Chicago, 1956-2010

*CANE* J. M. Sasson, ed., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East.* 

2 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000

CAT W. Dietrich, O. Loretz and J. Sanmartín, eds., The Cu-

neiform Alphabetic Texts: from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and other places (KTU). 2nd. ed. Münster: Ugarit-Ver-

lag, 1995.

CBET Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology

CBOT Coniectanea biblica. Old Testament series

CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly

CDOG Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft

CEPOA Centre d'Étude du Proche-Orient Ancien, Université

de Genève

CG Catalogue General du Musee du Caire
ChS Corpus der Hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler

CHD H. G. Güterbock and H. A. Hoffner, Jr., eds., *The Hittite* 

Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of

Chicago. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991-

CLL H. C. Melchert. Cuneiform Luvian Lexicon. Chapel

Hill, NC, 1993

CM Cuneiform Monographs

COS W. W. Hallo and K. L. Younger, eds., The Context of

Scripture. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002

CRB Cahiers de la Revue biblique

CTH E. Laroche, Catalogue des textes hittites. Paris: Klinck-

sieck, 1971.

CUSAS Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and

Sumerology

DBH Dresdner Beiträge zur Hethitologie

DDD K. van der Toorn et al., eds., Dictionary of Deities and

Demons in the Bible, 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 1999

EA El Amarna Tablets

Ee Enuma Elish

Emar texts

FAT Forschungen zum Alten Testament

GGIG O. Keel and C. Uehlinger. Gods, Goddesses, and Images

of God in Ancient Israel. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998

HÄB Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge HAT Handbuch zum Alten Testament HdO Handbuch der Orientalistik

HED J. Puhvel. Hittite Etymological Dictionary. Berlin: de

Gruyter. 1984-

HEG J. Tischler. Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar. Inns-

bruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität

Innsbruck, 1977-

HEO Hautes études orientales

HrwG H. Cancik et al. Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher

Grundbegriffe. 5 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1988-

2001

HS Tablet siglum of the Hilprecht Collection in Jena (Hil-

precht-Sammlung)

HSS Harvard Semitic Studies

HW<sup>2</sup> J. Friedrich et al., eds. Hethitisches Wörterbuch. 2nd ed.

Heidelberg: Winter, 1975-

HUCA Hebrew Union College Annual

HUCASup Hebrew Union College Annual Supplements

IEI Israel Exploration Journal

IT Incantation Tablet(s) in Walker and Dick 2001

JANER Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions

JAOS Journal of the American Oriental Society

JBThJahrbuch für biblische TheologieJCSJournal of Cuneiform StudiesJEAJournal of Egyptian Archaeology

JEOL Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Ge-

nootschap (Gezelschap) "Ex Oriente Lux"

JESHO Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient

JNES Journal of Near Eastern Studies

JNSL Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages

K	museum	siglum	of	the	British	Museum	in	London	
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(Kuyunjik)

KAI H. Donner and W. Röllig, Kanaanäische und aramä-

ische Inschriften. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz,

1962-1964

KBo H. Otten and C. Rüster, eds., Keilschrifttexte aus Bog-

hazköi. Leipzig-Berlin: Hinrichs-Gebr. Mann, 1916-

KlF Kleinasiatische Forschungen

KTU M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, eds., Die keil-

alphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit. Neukirchen: Neukir-

chen-Vluyn, 1976

KUB Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi. Berlin: Akademie,

1921-

LÄ W. Helck et al., eds., Lexikon der Ägyptologie. 7 vols.

Harrasowitz: Wiesbaden: 1975-1992

LACMA Los Angeles County Museum of Art

LKU A. Falkenstein, Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Uruk,

Berlin: Staatlichen Museen, 1931

MARG Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte

MARI Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires

MÄS Münchner Ägyptologische Studien

MDOG Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft
MIO Mitteilungen des Instituts für Orientforschung

MKNAW Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akade-

mie van Wetenschappen

NEAEHL E. Stern, ed. The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological

Excavation in the Holy Land. New York: Simon &

Schuster, 1993.

NEA Near Eastern Archaeology

NR Nineveh recension of the mouth-washing ritual

OBO Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis

OEAE D. Redford, ed., The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient

Egypt, 3 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

OEANE The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near

East. 5 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997

OIC Oriental Institute Communications
OLA Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta
OIP Oriental Institute Publications
OIS Oriental Institute Seminars

ORA Orientalische Religionen in der Antike

Or Orientalia Nova Series
OrAnt Oriens Antiquus

RAI Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale

H. Bonnet, Reallexikon der Ägyptische Religions- $R\ddot{A}RG$ 

geschichte. 3rd. ed. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2000

RBRevue biblique RDERevue d'égyptologie Revue hittite et asianique RHARevue de l'histoire de religions RHR

RIMA The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Peri-

ods

RIMA 2 A. Kirk Grayson, Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Mil-

lennium BC I (1114-859 BC). Toronto: University of

Toronto, 1991

RlAE. Ebeling et al. eds., Reallexikon der Assyriologie und

vorderasiatischen Archäologie. Berlin: de Gruyter,

1928-

RS Ras Shamra

SAAState Archives of Assyria 2, 3, 12

S. Parpola and K. Watanabe. Neo-Assyrian Treaties SAA 2

and Loyalty Oaths. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press,

1988.

SAA 12 L. Kataja and R. Whiting, Grants, Decrees, and Gifts of

the Neo-Assyrian Period. Helsinki: Helsinki University

Press, 1995

SAABState Archives of Assyria Bulletin SAALT State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts

SAGA Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens

Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur SAK

SANER Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records

Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde SANTAG

SAOC Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization SBL Writings from the Ancient World **SBLWAW** 

**SBLWAWSup** SBL Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Se-

Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the **SCCNH** 

Hurrians

Studi epigrafici e linguistici SEL

Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni **SMSR** Studien zu den Boğazköy-Texten StBoT

STT The Sultantepe Tablets

Studia Pohl Studia Pohl: Dissertationes scientificae de rebus orien-

tis antiqui

T. Tello

TDOTG. J. Botterweck et al., eds. Theological Dictionary of

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the Old T	Testament.	15	vols.	Grand	Rapids,	MI:	Eerd-
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mans, 1974-2006

TUF. Thureau-Dangin. Tablettes d'Uruk. Paris: Musée du

Louvre, 1922

TUATO. Kaiser et al., eds. Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Tes-

taments. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 1982-

TuLE. Ebeling, Tod und Leben nach den Vorstellungen der

Babylonier. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1931

UBL*Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur* 

UF Ugarit Forschungen

Urk. Urkunden des Ägyptischen Altertums

Urk. IV K. Sethe and W. Helck, Urkunden der 18. Dynastie. 22

fascicles. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1906-1958

Utt. Utterance from the Egyptian Pyramid Texts. Transla-

tions after R. O. Faulkner, The Ancient Egyptian Pyra-

mid Texts. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1969

VAT museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum,

Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung Tontafel)

VTSup Supplements to Vetus Testamentum

Wh A. Erman and W. Grapow, eds., Wörterbuch der ägypti-

sche Sprache. 7 vols. Berlin: Akademie, 1926–1931

WdO Die Welt des Orients. Wissenschaftl. Beiträge zur Kun-

de des Morgenlandes

WMANT Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und

Neuen Testament

WVDOG Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen

Orientgesellschaft

**WZKM** Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes ZA

Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Ar-

chäologie

ZABRZeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsge-

schichte

Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft ZAW