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

Michael B. Hundley
GODS IN DWELLINGS

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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

1. 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.\(^2\) 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 Ḫattuša, 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 *Enūma eliš,\(^3\) has been written *Enuma Elish*. I have also generally rendered “š” as “s,” except where “š” 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

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

3. Transliteration refers to the conversion of a text from one writing system to another.
stone has been written ḫuwaši). My rendering of Egyptian words requires further clarification. Although I follow the above rules for the most part, certain major concepts, such as ba (instead of bâ), ka, maat, sekhem, and ankh, 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 cumbersome “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. I use lowercase roman numerals to indicate columns (as in the previous example) and uppercase 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). 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.

4. 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.

5. 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; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991), xiii–xiv.

6. 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 1.1–1.2 [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 well-being. 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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Fig. 10.6. A standing stone (ḫuwaši) from Karahöyük with a Luwian inscription. From Özgüç and Özgüç, Karahöyük, pl. X.2.

Chapter 11

Fig. 11.1. Cult statues, presumably Syrian, carried away by Assyrian soldiers (wall relief, palace of Tiglath-Pileser III, Nimrud, eighth century). From Layard, Monuments of Nineveh, pl. 65.

Fig. 11.2. The capture of cult statues, presumably from Ashkelon (Sennacherib's Southwest Palace, Room X, slab 11). From Layard, The Monuments of Nineveh II, pl. 50.

Fig. 11.3. A statue of Idrimi King of Alalakh from the fifteenth century BCE. Courtesy of the British Museum.

Fig. 11.4. A bronze statue with gold foil depicting the god El. Drill holes above
the ears suggest that the statue originally had horns. Courtesy Mission to Ras Shamra-Ougarit and Ebla to Damascus Exhibit, Smithsonian Institute. Photo by Ingrid Strüben.

Fig. 11.5. A limestone stela of the anthropomorphic Baal with horned crown wielding a mace and carrying a staff sprouting vegetation (fifteenth–thirteenth centuries BCE; Ugarit). Courtesy of the Louvre. Photo by the author.

Fig. 11.6. A bull statue found near Samaria (ca. 1200 BCE; 13 x 18 cm [5” x 7”]). Courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Fig. 11.7. An anthropomorphic deity astride a bull (with legs reconstructed to connect figure to bull; Hazor, fourteenth century BCE; figure 26 cm [10.4”], pedestal 17 cm [6.8”]. Courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Fig. 11.8. An ivory of a hybrid being from Samaria (ca. 900–850 BCE). Courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Fig. 11.9. An ivory from Meggido depicting a hybrid being beside or as the support for a throne (thirteenth–twelfth centuries BCE). Courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Fig. 11.10. Standing stones from Gezer. Photo by the author.
ABBREVIATIONS

tables 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 Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka
AfO Archiv für Orientforschung
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
Gods in Dwellings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BiOr</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Orientalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJS</td>
<td>Brown Judaic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM</td>
<td>museum siglum of the British Museum, London, or Baal miniature art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMCR</td>
<td>Bryn Mawr Classical Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMECCJ</td>
<td>Bulletin of the Middle Eastern Culture Center in Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMASAES</td>
<td>British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boreas</td>
<td>Boreas: Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>BR</td>
<td>Babylonian recension of the mouth-washing ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Baal statue</td>
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<tr>
<td>BeÄ</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Ägyptologie</td>
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<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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<td>CAD</td>
<td>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</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBET</td>
<td>Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBOT</td>
<td>Coniectanea biblica. Old Testament series</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDLOG</td>
<td>Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEPOA</td>
<td>Centre d’Étude du Proche-Orient Ancien, Université de Genève</td>
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<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Catalogue General du Musee du Caire</td>
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<tr>
<td>ChS</td>
<td>Corpus der Hurritischen Sprachdenkmäler</td>
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<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Cuneiform Monographs</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRB</td>
<td>Cahiers de la Revue biblique</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUSAS</td>
<td>Cornell University Studies in Assyriology and Sumerology</td>
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<td>DBH</td>
<td>Dresdner Beiträge zur Hethitologie</td>
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<td>Ee</td>
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<td>Emar</td>
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<td>FAT</td>
<td>Forschungen zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>HÄB</td>
<td>Hildesheimer Ägyptologische Beiträge</td>
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<td>HAT</td>
<td>Handbuch zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>HdO</td>
<td>Handbuch der Orientalistik</td>
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<td>HEG</td>
<td>J. Tischler. Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar. Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1977-</td>
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<td>HEO</td>
<td>Hautes études orientales</td>
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<td>HSS</td>
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<td>HUCA</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual</td>
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<td>HUCASup</td>
<td>Hebrew Union College Annual Supplements</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEJ</td>
<td>Israel Exploration Journal</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Incantation Tablet(s) in Walker and Dick 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANER</td>
<td>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</td>
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<td>JAOS</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JBTh</td>
<td>Jahrbuch für bibliische Theologie</td>
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<td>JCS</td>
<td>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</td>
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<td>JEA</td>
<td>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</td>
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<td>JEOL</td>
<td>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziaat-Egyptisch Genootschap (Gezelschap) „Ex Oriente Lux”</td>
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<td>JESHO</td>
<td>Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient</td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<td>JNSL</td>
<td>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</td>
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K museum siglum of the British Museum in London (Kuyunjik)


KIF *Kleinasiatische Forschungen*


KUB *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi*. Berlin: Akademie, 1921–


LACMA Los Angeles County Museum of Art

LKU A. Falkenstein, *Literarische Keilschrifttexte aus Uruk*, Berlin: Staatlichen Museen, 1931

MARG *Mitteilungen für Anthropolgie 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 Akademie van Wetenschappen*


NEA *Near Eastern Archaeology*

NR Nineveh recension of the mouth-washing ritual

OBO *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis*


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*
<table>
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<tr>
<td>RAI</td>
<td>Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale</td>
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<td>RB</td>
<td>Revue biblique</td>
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<tr>
<td>RDE</td>
<td>Revue d'égyptologie</td>
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<td>RHA</td>
<td>Revue hittite et asianique</td>
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<td>RHR</td>
<td>Revue de l'histoire de religions</td>
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<td>RIMA</td>
<td>The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods</td>
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<td>SAALT</td>
<td>State Archives of Assyria Literary Texts</td>
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<td>SAGA</td>
<td>Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens</td>
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<td>SAK</td>
<td>Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANER</td>
<td>Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records</td>
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<tr>
<td>SANTAG</td>
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<td>SAOC</td>
<td>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</td>
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<td>SBLWAW</td>
<td>SBL Writings from the Ancient World</td>
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<td>SBLWAWSup</td>
<td>SBL Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCCNH</td>
<td>Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEL</td>
<td><em>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</em></td>
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<td>SMSR</td>
<td><em>Studi e materiali di storia delle religioni</em></td>
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<td>StBoT</td>
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<td>The Sultantepe Tablets</td>
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<td>Studia Pohl</td>
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<td>G. J. Botterweck et al., eds. <em>Theological Dictionary of</em></td>
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TU

TUAT
O. Kaiser et al., eds. Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1982–

TuL
E. 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

Utt.

VAT
museum siglum of the Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (Vorderasiatische Abteilung Tontafel)

VTSup
Supplements to Vetus Testamentum

Wb

WdO
Die Welt des Orients. Wissenschaftl. Beiträge zur Kunde 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 Archäologie

ZABR
Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte

ZAW
Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft