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978-1-107-06521-5 - Ritual, Performance, and Politics in the Ancient Near East

Lauren Ristvet

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## RITUAL, PERFORMANCE, AND POLITICS IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

In this book, Lauren Ristvet rethinks narratives of state formation by investigating the interconnections among ritual, performance, and politics in the ancient Near East. She draws on a wide range of archaeological, iconographic, and cuneiform sources to show how ritual performance was not set apart from the real practice of politics; it *was* politics. Rituals provided an opportunity for elites and ordinary people to negotiate political authority. Descriptions of rituals from three periods explore the networks of signification that informed different societies. From circa 2600 to 2200 BC, pilgrimages made kingdoms out of previously isolated villages. Similarly, from circa 1900 to 1700 BC, commemorative ceremonies legitimated new political dynasties by connecting them to a shared past. Finally, in the Hellenistic period, the traditional Babylonian Akitu festival was an occasion for Greek-speaking kings to show that they were Babylonian and for Babylonian priests to gain significant power.

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**LAUREN RISTVET**

University of Pennsylvania



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## Abbreviations

AKL	Assyrian King List
ARET	Archive Reali di Ebla, testi
ARM	Archives royales de Mari
CAD	Chicago Assyriological Dictionary
CANE	Civilizations of the Ancient Near East
FM	Florilegium Marianum
FGRH	Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker
GHD	Genealogy of the Hammurabi Dynasty
MDOG	Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
NABU	Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires
OECT	Oxford Editions of Cuneiform Texts
RIMA	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Period
RIME	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Early Periods
SKL	Sumerian King List
UET	Ur excavations, texts
YOS	Yale Oriental Series