

**Program of the Second Workshop on  
Gender, Methodology and the Ancient Near East**

**Universitat de Barcelona, February 1-3, 2017**

**Hosts:** IPOA, Universitat de Barcelona: [http://www.ub.edu/ipoa/Index\\_eng.html](http://www.ub.edu/ipoa/Index_eng.html) /  
Centre of Excellence "Sacred Texts in Change" in the University of  
Helsinki: <http://blogs.helsinki.fi/sacredtexts/>

**Conference venue:** Universitat de Barcelona – Edifici Josep Carner (access through  
Aribau street, number 2), room 0.1 (ground floor). Nearest metro station: Universitat  
(lines 1 and 2).

**Organizers:** Agnès Garcia-Ventura (IPOA, Universitat de Barcelona) / Saana Svärd  
(University of Helsinki)

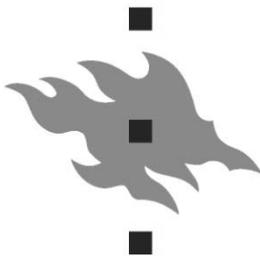
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## Wednesday February 1<sup>st</sup> 2017

### 8.45-9.00: registration

### 9.00-9.45: welcome and introduction

9.00-9.15: Welcome: Adelina Millet Albà, director of the IPOA

9.15-9.45: Presentation and introduction to the workshop: Agnès Garcia-Ventura & Saana Svärd, "Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East: An Introduction"

### 9.45-11.15: panel 1 (Chair: Adelina Millet Albà)

9.45-10.15: Ann Guinan, "Dressing the Whore of Babylon for the 21st Century: Sex, Gender and Theory in Mesopotamian Studies"

10.15-10.45: Gioele Zisa, "Queering šà-zi.ga Therapy. Considerations on the Relations between Masculinity, Sickness and Anatomy"

10.45-11.15: M. Erica Couto-Ferreira: "Domesticating the Female Body: Ancient Mesopotamian Discourses on Fertility and (Re)production"

### 11.15-11.45: coffee break

### 11.45-13.45: panel 2 (Chair: Katrien De Graef)

11.45-12.15: Helga Vogel: "Is 'Harem' a Useful Category for Describing and Analysing the Living Conditions of ancient Near Eastern Women?"

12.15-12.45: Leire Olabarria: "Kinship and Gender in Dialogue: Approaching Relatedness in ancient Egypt"

12.45-13.15: Jacquelyn Williamson: "Nefertiti and the 'Docile Agent'"

13.15-13.45: Thais Rocha da Silva: "Gender Studies and Daily Life in ancient Egypt: Theoretical Problems and new Perspectives"

### 13.45-15.00: lunch break (catered lunch for speakers and poster presentors)

### 15.00-16.30: panel 3: poster session (Chair: Agnès Garcia-Ventura)

15.00-15.30: presentation of posters (plenary, room 0.1)

15.30-16.30: discussion of posters (individually, with each presenter, room 0.3; the poster room will be also open during breaks on Thursday and Friday).

Confirmed poster presenters (by alphabetical order): Mina Dabbagh, Sara G. Moratinos, HESTIA research group (Ana Delgado, Meritxell Ferrer and Mireia López-Bertran), Elena Martínez Rodríguez, Michèle Meijer, Omar N'Shea, TÀCITA MUTA research group (Cristina Yúfera, Georgina Rabassó and David Muñoz).

### 16.30-17.00: fruit break (room 0.3)

### 17.00-19.00: panel 4 (Chair: Jacquelyn Williamson)

17.00-17.30: Katrien De Graef: "A Room of Her Own? On the Origin, Meaning, and Functioning of the *Gagûm* in Old Babylonian Sippar"

17.30-18.00: Josué J. Justel: "Remarkable Women from Tikunani: The Role of Women in Palatial Administration"

18.00-18.30: Anne-Isabelle Langlois: "The Princess Iltani's Archives uncovered at Tell al-Rimah (18 th century BC)"

18.30-19.00: Laura Cousin / Yoko Watai: "Onomastics of Women in the Neo-Babylonian Period: An Approach from Gender Studies"

## Thursday February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017

### 9.30-11.30: panel 5 (Chair: Ann Guinan)

9.30-10.00: Sophus Helle: "The Dynamics of a Three-sex Model"

10.00-10.30: Ilan Peled: "Identifying Gender Ambiguity in Texts and Artifacts"

10.30-11.00: Megan Cifarelli: "Problematizing Masculinity and Militarization at Hasanlu, Iran"

11.00-11.30: Laura B. Mazow: "Of War and Weaving: 'Swords' and the Complexities of Archaeological Reconstructions of Gender"

### 11.30-12.00: coffee break

### 12.00-13.30: panel 6 (Chair: Josué J. Justel)

12.00-12.30: Jana Matuszak: "Assessing Misogyny in Sumerian Advice Literature, Dialogues, and Diatribes"

12.30-13.00: Frauke Weiershäuser: "Narrating about women, narrating about men"

13.00-13.30: Vanessa Juloux: "Philosophy of action and pragmatic approach: a concrete example with 'Anatu of Ugarit'"

### 13.30-13.45: group photo

### 13.45-15.30: lunch break

### 15.30-17.00: panel 7 (Chair: Frances Pinnock)

15.30-16.00: Stephanie Lynn Budin, "Potent Images: The Nude Female Icon as Locus of Power"

16.00-16.30: Elisa Roßberger: "The gendered body as symbolic artefact. Changes in terracotta production in early second millennium Mesopotamia"

16.30-17.00: Erin Darby: "Sex Symbols: Ritual Production and Performativity in Female Near Eastern Terracottas"

### 17.00-17.30: fruit break (room 0.3)

### 17.30-19.00: panel 8 – projects panel (Chair: Saana Svärd)

In this panel some current ongoing (or just launched projects) will be presented. In addition,

participants will be encouraged to discuss networking possibilities and development of future projects to promote the study of gender in the ancient Near East. The following projects (provisional list) will be presented:

- Beth Alpert Nakhai: "Field Safety: Middle East, North Africa, and the Mediterranean Basin"
- Katrien De Graef: "GAND = Gender and Assyriology: New Developments"
- Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme: "Food and Identity in Biblical Literature"
- Amy Gansell: "Introducing a Queen to the Virtual Reality Simulation of Nimrud's Northwest Palace"
- Josué J. Justel & Agnès Garcia-Ventura: "Editing a handbook on women in the ancient Near East in Spanish"
- Ilan Peled: "LaOCOST - Law and Order: Cuneiform Online Sustainable Tool"
- Stephanie Budin: "Women in Antiquity. Real Women across the Ancient World"

### 20.00 Conference dinner (for speakers and poster presentors, by invitation)

**Friday February 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017**

**9.30-11.30: panel 9 (Chair: Beth Alpert Nakhai)**

9.30-10.00: Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme: "Death at the Hand of a Woman: Hospitality and Gender in the Hebrew Bible"

10.00-10.30: Sandra Jacobs: "'The Disposable Wife' and Her Status in the Hebrew Bible"

10.30-11.00: Federico Dal Bo: "Women are like cattle". Some Remarks on early Jewish Juridical Vocabulary on Women and Nature

11.00-11.30: Adelina Millet Albà: "Women in the Hebrew Bible, Real Characters or Literary Characters? The Case of Some Matriarchs in Genesis"

**11.30-12.00: coffee break**

**12.00-14.00: panel 10 (Chair: Saana Svärd)**

12.00-12.30: Natalie N. May: "Female Scholarship in Mesopotamia?"

12.30-13.00: Sanae Ito: "Female and Male Scribes related to the Queen's Household in the Assyrian Empire"

13.00-13.30: Frances Pinnock: "Amorite ladies at the Neo-Assyrian Court: building up an image, deconstructing an image, transmitting an image"

13.30-14.00: Amy Gansell: "Introducing a Queen to the Virtual Reality Simulation of Nimrud's Northwest Palace"

**14.00-15.30: lunch break**

**15.30-16.30: panel 11 (Chair: Stephanie Lynn Budin)**

15.30-16.00: Anne-Caroline Rendu Loisel: "Gender, Sense and Sensitivity in Ancient Mesopotamian Rituals"

16.00-16.30: Mónica Palmero Fernández: "Inanna/Ishtar: religion, gender and power in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium B.C., or how to weave interdisciplinarity into the socio-political and socioeconomic analysis of belief"

**16.30-17.00: fruit break (room 0.3)**

**17.00-18.30: panel 12 (Chair: Megan Cifarelli)**

17.00-17.30: Beth Alpert Nakhai: "The Women of Jerusalem: Capital City Life in Israel's Iron Age"

17.30-18.00: Helen Dixon: "Locating Phoenician Women: Space, Gender, and Social Roles in the Iron Age Central Levant"

18.00-18.30: Mireia López-Bertran: "Shrines for women?: Phoenician-Punic sanctuaries as feminine arenas"

**18.30-19.00: concluding remarks and farewell**

## **ABSTRACTS FOR PRESENTATIONS (in alphabetical order)**

### **The Women of Jerusalem: Capital City Life in Israel's Iron Age**

**Beth Alpert Nakhai**

While men's contributions to ancient Israelite and Judaeen society are increasingly well understood, less is known about the ways in which women engaged in that world. It has long been clear that gender-based differentiation was a societal norm throughout the monarchic Iron Age (1000-587 BCE), but the ramifications of this norm have yet to be fully explicated. Fortunately, recent scholarship that considers women, non-elites, and daily life responsibilities and tasks, now serves as a platform for further research. So, too, does growing familiarity with the range, location, and scale of Israelite settlements, and knowledge about housing size, layout, and functionality.

With these myriad tools, the reconstruction of Israelite society is within reach, as is the reconstruction of individual communities within society at-large. To date, studies of women in Iron Age Israel and Judah have focused on a few aspects of life: the subsistence economy; the domestic unit; and, ritual and religious roles. This presentation approaches the study of women from a different vantage point, that is, from Israel's capital city, Jerusalem. While women's responsibilities in the Jerusalem Temple have been examined, Jerusalem's female population has never been studied in toto. That some women served as religious functionaries seems clear, but of course few women would have been thus engaged. What else did women do in Jerusalem, a city that, more than anyplace else in Iron Age Israel and Judah, incorporated people from a wide range of social classes and professions?

This examination takes a stance that differs from most recent scholarship. Rather than looking into the relatively homogeneous lives of women in the rural hinterland, it examines the range of women in Jerusalem, women among the elite as well as among the workers, women among the privileged as well as among those who facilitated those privileged lives. Although the archaeological record from Iron Age Jerusalem lacks the broad expanse of residential quarters that typify rural sites, still much has been revealed. In addition, the Hebrew Bible places Jerusalemite women in a variety of life settings. In tandem, these resources should facilitate a robust discussion of women in Israel's ancient capital city.

### **Potent Images: The Nude Female Icon as Locus of Power**

**Stephanie Lynn Budin**

The Nude Female is one of the most prolific images in the ancient world, starting in 3rd-millennium Mesopotamia and extending out to the Aegean, Iberia, Egypt, and the Persian Empire. Although experiencing multiple evolutions and adaptations over the eons, most examples emphasize the female sexual attributes of breasts and vulva, while many also draw attention to jewelry. In this presentation I argue that the female nudity, sexual attributes, and even adornment all relate to aspects of female power, including eroticism and the promise of good fortune. Rather than being for the benefit of males, or the subject of the male Gaze, the Nude Female in her many guises is a sign of female empowerment.

## **Problematizing Masculinity and Militarization at Hasanlu, Iran**

**Megan Cifarelli**

The site of Hasanlu, Iran, is best known for its destruction around 800 B.C.E., likely at the hands of the Urartian army. The period leading up to the destruction, Hasanlu IVb, was one of rapid change at the site, located where the burgeoning of the Urartian state to the north conflicted with the expansion of the Assyrian Empire from the west. Changes—which have been loosely attributed to “militarization”—are evident throughout Hasanlu, including in the approximately 100 Period IVb burials on the site’s lower mound. The IVb burials introduce weapons and armor into mortuary assemblages that appear to be sex specific.

This paper explores the relationship between the osteologically determined biological sex of the human remains and the gendering of mortuary assemblages and artifacts, arguing that masculinity and militarization are not expressed monolithically but are materially differentiated, nuanced social phenomena at Hasanlu. In the Period IVb burials, the newly introduced military items that distinguish the assemblages of men from those of women also differentiate wealthier men from poorer ones. Moreover, within the category of “militarized” masculine burial assemblages, there are subtle variations which, when mapped onto to the material culture of the destroyed citadel, appear to link certain buried individuals and their assemblages to particular citadel buildings. Rather than simply ascribing the changes to men’s burials in the Period IVb to “militarization” or “masculinity,” we can detect more subtle patterns of regulatory schema by which differentiated masculine identities were performed at this site.

## **Onomastics of Women in the Neo-Babylonian Period: An Approach from Gender Studies**

**Laura Cousin / Yoko Watai**

After a preliminary onomastic study on feminine names in the first millennium BC (Cousin and Watai, *Oriens* 51, 2016), conducted under the auspices of the REFEMA-Project (“Le Rôle Économique des Femmes En Mésopotamie Antique”), we continue our examination of this theme.

The names of women and men can be distinguished to an extent using some indicators. For example, the feminine form is used for elements (such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives) in female names, and if the female name is to include the name of a divinity, then a goddess, rather than a god, is chosen. However, is it possible to distinguish between female and male names in all cases and to identify the gender of a person based on his/her name?

This presentation examines the following questions based on our work-in-progress database on female names in the Neo-Babylonian period:

- (1) Apart from the simple indicators mentioned above, can we identify differences in the characteristics of feminine and masculine names? If we can, which system of naming do these names follow?
- (2) Are there names from which it is difficult to identify the gender of the person?

- (3) Are there names that are common to both women and men?  
(4) Do females with masculine names and males with feminine names exist?

## **Domesticating the Female Body: Ancient Mesopotamian Discourses on Fertility and (Re)production**

**M. Erica Couto-Ferreira**

The present paper aims at dissecting the role agricultural and “domesticated vegetation” figurative language played in the construction of the female reproductive body in ancient Mesopotamia. Through the analysis of literary and medical sources primarily, I explore those images that present the female genitals as a landscape subjected to anthropization that constantly needs to be managed and cared for so as to ensure productivity. These analogies culturally inscribe themselves in a context of a fragile and unstable ecosystem that demands constant human intervention. It is water management, artificial irrigation, and land exploitation what guarantees life and social reproduction. In this socioeconomic context, we may argue that female genitals and bodies, when described in contexts of courtship and marriage, are often perceived as and understood in terms of landscapes that need to be governed and be made fruitful.

What’s more, the analogy between female genitals, fields and watercourses also reveals the social roles attributed to men. Their roles as cultivators, managers, and possessors of land and/or canals, are revealing with regard to the functions the male plays in sexual intercourse, reproduction, and social life. Although focusing primarily on female bodies, thus, this paper also deals with the conceptualization of the male body as tamer, cultivator, and seed provider.

## **“Women are like cattle”. Some Remarks on early Jewish Juridical Vocabulary on Women and Nature**

**Federico Dal Bo**

In my paper I will address some statements by which women are compared to cattle on the basis of specific presuppositions from early Jewish juridical literature (mostly the Mishnah and the Tosefta).

Statements of this kind are often used in early Jewish literature with a specific juridical purpose: establishing a hierarchical classification among potential juridical subjects on the basis of some natural presuppositions. My main assumption is that such statements have a specific epistemological genesis: nature is not considered to be a separate realm with respect to the human one—rather to be in continuity with it. As a consequence of this, human juridical categories can trespass into the natural ones and vice versa—creating a tight conceptual complexión.

My paper divides in three paragraphs.

In the first paragraph, I intend to provide a possible genesis for this statement. My assumption is that “cattle” serves as a real juridical category especially when put into continuity with other four fundamental classes in early Jewish juridical vocabulary: Jewish

male, Jewish woman, Jewish children, Gentiles, and then cattle. This human-animal mixed classification shall at first be accounted as a way of describing decreasing obligation with respect to the Jewish Law—rather than as a derogatory system. Accordingly, the Jewish Law manifests its strongest mandatory force with respect to Jewish male individuals (who are obliged to fulfill every commandment in Scripture), to Jewish female individuals (who are exempted from some specific time-bound commandments in Scripture), to Jewish children (who are virtually exempted from most of the commandments in Scripture), to Gentiles (who are exempted from most of the ethnically specific commandments in Scripture) and finally to cattle (which is not a legal subject as such). As it is evident, “cattle” here represents a sort of circumlocution for “nature” and exactly designates the natural realm that is fundamentally exempted from obeying the Jewish Law.

In the second paragraph, I intend to show how the statement “Women are like cattle” is used both in a juridical and a ritual context with a specific juridical purpose: exempting Women from some Jewish-specific commandments. This kind of exclusion is eminently of juridical nature and isn’t necessarily derogatory. The assimilation of “Women” to “cattle”—that is to “nature”—shall rather be accounted for a search for “neutrality.” In other terms, “Women” should occasionally be considered as a neutral category, in this very sense: they enter neither the category of those Jewish individuals who are commended a specific mitzvah nor the category of those Jewish individual who are exempted from a specific mitzvah; since they are somehow temporary “non-Jewish,” women might occasionally be considered “neutral” (“neither / nor”) with respect to the aforementioned Jewish categories. Therefore, they are designated as “cattle”—or strictly belonging to “nature.”

In the third paragraph, I intend to show some practical application of this statement in a Talmudic juridical context. I will address a specific—theoretical—discussion on the case of a woman nursing her child while she is menstruating. Menstruations represent for Jewish jurisprudence an important issue due to the blood taboo—therefore a strict legislation usually disqualifies as impure a number of objects that are in contact with a menstruating woman under the presupposition that impurity spreads through contact. The case of a woman who is nursing her child is then examined on account of two simultaneous issues: her liability to the Jewish Law as a valid legal subject (“a Jewish female individual”) and her exemption from specific legal issues due to her “natural” obligation towards her child. Therefore, the Talmudic discussion interprets the condition of this Jewish woman simultaneously as a valid and exempted legal subject—that is both as a human being and a cattle.

In conclusion I will draw some conclusions on the basis of these Gender issues.

## **Sex Symbols: Ritual Production and Performativity in Female Near Eastern Terracottas**

**Erin Darby**

When discussing Near Eastern figurines, scholars frequently approach figurine iconography as symbol(s) and, thus, focus on decoding the meaning that lies behind visual attributes. This approach to symbols has a long history in the study of religion but has also been widely criticized for privileging interiority, rational thought, and even drawing a false

distinction between thought and action. In the realm of figurines and gender, here again, much energy is devoted to identifying sex or gender attributes and then interpreting their significance for the original audience, despite the fact that this implies a knowledge of the moods and motivations of an ancient population that might simply remain outside the scope of historical inquiry. Attention may be paid to reading the symbols as representations of particular deities or to divulging information about social norms or gender hierarchy. An alternate approach might be to investigate figurines as the end result of the production processes that brought them into existence. Specifically, what are the ritual logics in the production of cultic images, like figurines? How are the rituals of their production described in extant texts? Do these descriptions provide some indication of the way artisans incorporated ritual into the production of such objects? Furthermore, might this allow modern interpreters to investigate these ritual objects in light of what ritual “does” rather than just what it “means”? Finally, what might these insights indicate about the way sex and gender symbols functioned in the ritual space of the ancient world? As instruments that manipulated the environment, what did the creation of these gendered elements perform? This paper will attempt to address some of these important issues by unpacking the approach to sex/gender symbols in figurine studies, collecting information from ancient Near Eastern textual sources about the ritual production of cultic images, including figurines, and using that data to postulate an approach to the study of figurines and gender that takes into consideration sex and gender symbols as performative, instrumental, and strategic elements of ritualized action.

## ***A Room of Her Own? On the Origin, Meaning, and Functioning of the Gagûm in Old Babylonian Sippar***

**Katrien De Graef**

Generally, the gagûm is considered to have been a compound within the temple district reserved for the nadîtu priestesses of Šamaš in Sippar-Jahrûrum. Usually translated ‘cloister’ after Harris (1963 and 1975: 188-199), it is believed to have housed the nadîtu priestesses, who entered it on reaching nubility and lived there a sequestered life until death. Some go even further, implying it was prohibited for the priestesses to exit this area, as the economic transactions in which these priestesses participated were effected at the Gate of the gagûm (Barberon 2009: 276-277 fn. 13).

This paper investigates whether and to what extent the gagûm can be interpreted as a gendered institution that emerged from the ideology of separate spheres. The Old Babylonian society was certainly characterized by a so-called ‘domestic-public dichotomy’: in general, women were confined to the private realm (oikos), participating in domestic life (child-rearing, housekeeping, domestic economic activities), while men occupied the public sphere (polis) by participating in outside work (trade, politics, non-domestic economic activities).

Recent studies, however, showed that these priestesses were quite active in non-domestic economic transactions, such as the management of property, real estate as well as liquidities (De Graef 2016a/b). As such, these women encroached the public sphere, usually reserved for men. Moreover, most, if not all, information on the gagûm, both on its infrastructure – wall, gates, houses (owned primarily by women but also by men) – as on

its functioning, including various, mostly male, officials, comes from the economic and legal texts in which these priestesses are active participants.

In this light, a re-examination of the origin, meaning, and functioning of the gagûm is much needed. How did it evolve from a no doubt in origin religious compound to a well organized economic institution reserved for a particular kind of economic transactors in society, in casu the priestesses of Šamaš? Did these wealthy women really live in this compound, the houses of which are on average very small, and if so, were they allowed to leave this compound in order to effect the economic transactions in which they participated? Or did these women merely performed their tasks, both religious and economic, in the gagûm and can we assume that in this context, it was a kind of extension of (or even replacement for) the private (female) sphere for these women, who acted within the public (male) sphere?

## **Locating Phoenician Women: Space, Gender, and Social Roles in the Iron Age Central Levant**

**Helen Dixon**

The women of Levantine Phoenicia have long been studied through indirect means: through extrapolation based on evidence from Israelite sites and familial models, speculation surrounding the role of goddesses in the Phoenician pantheon(s), or via discussion of that most famous of Phoenician women, the biblical Jezebel. Recent scholarship on several fronts has made these approaches untenable; for example, it is now clear that some of the roles or offices held by Phoenician elite women differed significantly from those of their southern neighbors, and that the presence of female figurines at Iron Age sites does not directly inform us about women's religious behavior. This paper explores the physical and conceptual spaces where it is now possible to 'locate' women in Iron Age (ca. 1200-ca. 300 BCE) Phoenician Levantine sites, as well as the limits of the available evidence. A particular emphasis on excavated domestic spaces (newly collected and studied), neighborhood shrines, and tombs (chosen from the author's database of Levantine burials) informs this survey of the social roles played by Phoenician women in life and in death.

## **Introducing a Queen to the Virtual Reality Simulation of Nimrud's Northwest Palace**

**Amy Gansell**

Virtual Reality (VR) is based, by definition, on reality, or what we know to be true. For this reason, the backbone of simulations of the ancient world is architectural. Developers can work with standing monuments and archaeological remains to model physical environments. Representations of excavated art, artifacts, and installations, from hearths to thrones, fill the virtual spaces. But the human presence is more speculative. And for lack of evidence, women may be excluded from these computer-generated worlds. For example, only men presently populate Learning Sites's painstakingly rendered VR re-creation of Nimrud's Northwest Palace. However, pending funding, this is about to change.

I am now working with the Learning Sites team to develop a 3D model of a Neo-Assyrian queen to be integrated into the virtual palace context. Artifacts and skeletal remains from the queens' tombs at Nimrud, along with images of royal women in art, provide evidence for her appearance. But where in the palace would the queen have circulated, and in what activities did she engage? The current palace model focuses on the king's presence in the throne room. I propose that we experiment with the option of bringing the queen into "his" space, while also expanding the palace to include a suite that has been identified as the queen's apartment. Ultimately, I aim to represent the vital role of the Neo-Assyrian queen in the palace community. By cautiously leaving women out of the picture due to lack of information, we have only fed the fallacy of their insignificance. If we use VR as a means of exploration and experimentation, rather than an embodiment of incomplete data, we will have a better chance of actually glimpsing antiquity through modern pixels.

## **Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East: An Introduction**

### **Agnès Garcia-Ventura & Saana Svärd**

The organizers of the workshop will present some introductory remarks and general observations about methodology of studying women and gender in the context of the ancient Near East.

## **Dressing the Whore of Babylon for the 21st Century: Sex, Gender and Theory in Mesopotamian Studies**

### **Ann K. Guinan**

Writing about gender and sexuality in premodern cultures serves as a lesson in humility, as few fields of study so completely expose the biases of the investigator or the dominant concerns of the times. The way commentators and scholars approach histories of sexuality, or the subjects of sex and gender, unwittingly and inevitably reflects the shifts and volatilities of modern sexual culture itself. As with the clothes we wear, our readings and interpretations only emerge as markers of a temporal moment once that moment has passed. The biases, assumptions, predilections and prejudices—not only characteristic of the period but specific to the investigator—become visible as the moment recedes into history.

The subject of sex and gender in the cultures of ancient Mesopotamia poses a more specialized problem. From the time of Herodotus and the Biblical authors commentators have been drawn to the image of Babylon. Fixed in scholarly and cultural imagination and as old as history itself, more or less, is the association of Babylon with unbridled sexuality. Babylon is our erotic other— always outside the norm, it provides an imaginary space on which to project the issues of the moment.

The fields of sexology and Assyriology each trace their beginnings to the late 19th century. At the time Richard von Krafft-Ebing, a founding father of the field of sexology, made the claim in the introduction to his famous forensic study of sexual perversions, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, that "it is known by the history of Babylon, Nineveh, Rome, and also by the 'mysteries' of life in modern capitals that large cities are the breeding place of nervousness

and degenerate sensuality,” early Assyriologists were in the process of cataloguing and publishing the British Museum’s Kuyunjik Collection, the cuneiform tablets from Aššurbanipal’s library at Nineveh. When Iwan Bloch, a colleague of Magnus Hirschfeld and first to propose a field of Sexualwissenschaft expressed the opinion that “the Orient—especially Phoenicia, Babylon, Persia—was the home and distribution center of unnatural vice of every sort,” the first editions of the sex omen tablets from the omen compendium *šumma ālu* had already been published.

These texts together with the sexual passages from the epic of Gilgamesh were among the first cuneiform tablets to be published. They provide a written record of human sexual activity—among the earliest, and certainly the most varied and detailed—that scholars and commentators have returned to again and again. As a result it is possible to trace the way the same sources have been edited and published, translated, described, interpreted and theorized, from the initial decipherment of cuneiform to the present moment.

A review of 140 years of discussion and commentary that includes the writing of sexologists, cultural commentators, historians, and Assyriologists reveals as much or more about the arc of modern Western sexual culture than it does about the erotic life of Mesopotamia. It does not matter if the writer is an early Sexologist or modern Assyriologist, whether the agenda is moralistic or scientific, whether the work is based on spurious stereotypes or careful philology, not one of these authors has escaped the sexual culture of their historical present.

Today art historians, archeologists, and Assyriologists—scholars who study sex and gender in ancient Mesopotamia—stand at a crossroads. On the one hand, we need to demonstrate the value of gender theory to a scholarly community that is largely resistant to theoretical approaches, often regarding them as faddish; on the other hand, the seismic reconfigurations of sex and gender that are rippling through our culture will inevitably impact any theoretical perspective we bring to our sources. How can theories of sex and gender be formulated in a way that does not just reflect but that responds to the sexual culture of the early twenty-first century? This paper will argue that theory, when employed with full consciousness of its potential limitations and inevitable historicity, can offer scholarship a field of vision that is broader than any individual interpreter or any single set of sources can attain. A theoretical perspective provides categories and vocabulary that can be used by other interpreters and future scholars in ways that are both surprising and productive.

## **The Dynamics of a Three-sex Model**

### **Sophus Helle**

In this paper, I would like to discuss the discursive structures that shaped how gender was conceptualized in cuneiform cultures. In particular, I will argue that the historiographical concepts of Thomas Laqueur can be applied to Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian evidence in ways that are both theoretically informed and historically sensitive. As an example, I will examine a series of Sumerian and Akkadian terms that are generally understood as denoting identities which are in some way ‘non-binary’, such as the *assinnu*’s, *kurgarrû*’s, *kulu’u*’s and more ambiguously the *kalû*’s. By tracing the wide range

of discursive contexts in which these gendered identities appear, I will attempt to show that they are repeatedly associated with various sorts of liminal positions. For example, the story of Inana's Descent, known in both a Sumerian and Akkadian version, is an interesting example of how such associations can both change and persist over time. In the 3rd millennium Sumerian original, a kur-ĝara and gala-tura are created to slip past the thresholds and pivots of the Netherworld's gates, clearly associating them with liminal zones. In the 2nd millennium Akkadian translation, an assinnu is created to do the same, but is further cursed to sleep on door slabs and stand under walls. The association with thresholds thus persists but is cast in a more derogative mode, perhaps due to a fall in social status for the assinnu's in the intervening centuries. On the basis of this evidence I will suggest that in cuneiform cultures gender was conceptualized according to a three-fold structure where the threshold between the female and male gender became a sphere of being in its own right.

## **Death at the Hand of a Woman: Hospitality and Gender in the Hebrew Bible**

**Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme**

Hospitality is a central social institution in Ancient Near Eastern societies, because it enables the transformation of a stranger and potential threat into a friend an ally. Hospitality also entails a great risk in case this transformation fails to take place. Women also seem to be central to hospitality in several texts, if for no other reason than to marry the guest and complete his transition from stranger to friend.

This paper explores, gender hierarchies and privileges in relation to hospitality in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near Eastern world. Its particular focus is to investigate the right to offer hospitality as a possibly exclusively male prerogative and to trace the part that women are ideally supposed to play in this crucial social transaction.

## **Female and Male Scribes related to the Queen's Household in the Assyrian Empire**

**Sanae Ito**

In the Assyrian Empire (934-612 BCE), female scribes and male scribes/scholars related to the queen's household are known from ca. 50 cuneiform texts in Akkadian. This paper aims to reveal their identity, scribal duties, other tasks and activities, and specifically relationships. For this purpose, my research has extracted their biographical data from The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire (Radner and Baker, 1998-2011). In order to describe the middle range of their social structure, I would like to experimentally apply social network analysis to the prosopographical data set. The data set will be converted into matrixes by entering it into dl files (e.g., text-by-text, actor-by-actor), and then the matrixes will be visualized into dots (actors) connected by lines (ties) to detect and display ties between persons by using an existing software. After visualizing the data set, I will measure relational data in term of network properties (density, centralization) and tie properties (multiplexity, direction, symmetry).

## **"The Disposable Wife" and Her Status in the Hebrew Bible**

**Sandra Jacobs**

The status of women in the Hebrew Bible, often as "chattel," or more specifically as property in the sense of an "acquisition," (Heb. "קנין" ("), is frequently resisted by scholars who consider that the later rabbinic designation should not be retrojected back onto earlier ancient sources. This paper will consider whether this resistance justified, in light of the recent demands to replace the conventional use of "patriarchy" with alternative, and more nuanced, designations (such as masculine hegemonies, heterarchies, etc.), but also in relation to the specific language employed by the biblical scribes in both their legal and narrative accounts.

## **Philosophy of action and pragmatic approach: a concrete example with 'Anatu of Ugarit**

**Vanessa Juloux**

How to understand the implication of 'Anatu in the Ba'lu Cycle from the scribe 'Ilimilku of Ugarit? The philosophy of action allows one to investigate the motivations and the intentionality of an animated entity. Pragmatic distinguishes the sentence from the utterance which, to be understood, has to be contextualized — unlike the sentence which has a grammatical function. Utterance could not be examined without looking at the motivations of the author. Starting from these two approaches (philosophy of action and pragmatics), I will proposed an interpretation of the implication of 'Anatu, and what could be the motivations of the presumed author 'Ilimilku for pushing 'Anatu, a female animated entity, forward. But above all, these approaches allow me to introduce a new hermeneutics: the hermeneutics of action.

## **Remarkable Women from Tikunani: The Role of Women in the Palatial Administration**

**Josué Justel**

Studies on women in the Ancient Near East usually focus either on their position within the royalty, i.e. as queens and princesses; or on their role in the family as mothers, wives and daughters. However, in some cuneiform archives the textual documentation provides enough examples of women that not belong—in principle—to the royalty, but their presence within the administration and in the running of the palace or the city is very relevant. This paper aims at highlighting the role of one of these women, Ennana by name, present in the unpublished sources of Tikunani (North of Mesopotamia, ca. 1600 BC). In addition, the role of this woman is placed in the context of other similar cases, coming from the sources of Tikunani, as well as from others Mesopotamian and Syrian archives. Finally, it is assessed whether the presence of these women should be understood within the private or the public sector, and the specific reasons to do that.

## **The Princess Iltani's Archives uncovered at Tell al-Rimah (18th century BC)**

### **Anne-Isabelle Langlois**

An archive uncovered at Tell al-Rimah, consisting of a 150 letters and 50 economic texts, belongs to a woman, princess Iltani. This is worthy of interest and quite unparalleled in the cuneiform documentation available so far. Dated to some years after the destruction of the Mari palace, this archive is the major epigraphic source for the period and the region. It especially gives important details about the lifestyle of a high rank woman living in an 18th century BC ancient capital. In this patriarchal society, in which women were thought to exist only in reference to a man, father, uncle, brother or husband, Iltani occupied a privileged place, that of a princess, daughter of Samu-Addu, and sister of the king of Karana, Asqur-Addu, whose father was an ally of Samsi-Addu, the great king of the kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia. She married Haqba-Hammu, a diviner, and lived in the old palace of Hadnu-rabi, king of Qaṭṭara. Iltani's archive gives us a better knowledge of Iltani and her entourage. It clarifies many aspects of economic life and of the political history of the kingdom they were living in.

## **Shrines for women?: Phoenician-Punic sanctuaries as feminine arenas**

### **Mireia López-Bertran**

This paper focuses on the study of Phoenician-Punic shrines located in Western Mediterranean, concretely Sardinia, Iberia and Balearic Islands between the 6th and the 2nd centuries BCE. The aim is twofold: first, it is my intention to explain how these shrines has been studied connecting them with issues related to navigation or agricultural exploitation. Second, I would interpret them as feminine arenas. I will base my line of argument on three points

1. the material culture of the shrines, mostly terracotta female figurines.
2. the example of other shrines from the Levant.
3. the application of some approaches of the so-called gender studies.

## **Assessing Misogyny in Sumerian Advice Literature, Dialogues, and Diatribes**

### **Jana Matuszak**

Within the corpus of Sumerian didactic literature, there is a small group of texts that are explicitly dedicated to defining the ideal woman. Similar notions are also scattered throughout the so-called wisdom texts, such as the Instructions of Šuruppak to His Son, and certain proverb collections, which can be adduced to complete the picture. While the origins of the rather heterogeneous entries in the proverb collections are notoriously difficult to determine, male authors can be assumed for the dialogues and diatribes that specifically address the question of what constituted an ideal woman, thus exhibiting an inherently male view on the topic. Also the immediate audience was probably mainly male, as the striking parallels with scribal debate literature strongly suggest that these texts had their 'Sitz im Leben' in the advanced stage of the school curriculum. Considering that the definition of the ideal woman is achieved *ex negativo*, i.e. by portraying her exact opposite,

listing all the shortcomings and crimes a woman could possibly be responsible for, we are faced with the situation that male teachers compose texts for male students that abound in gross insults against women. The paper hence addresses the question if the insults found in these texts are (also) a manifestation of misogyny.

## **Female Scholarship in Mesopotamia?**

**Natalie N. May**

It seems almost impossible to investigate the gender dimension of Mesopotamian scholarship, since according to colophons all authors of the scholarly texts were male. Nonetheless, in the present talk I will try to find traces of and hints to female scholars in Mesopotamia. All together there are only three instances that can be with various degrees of certainty referred to as female scholarship. Notably, all these instances come from the Ur III, Old Babylonian and Middle Assyrian periods – one instance for each period. All of them are related to healing. Taking into consideration anthropological parallels, their relation to medicine seems not to be occasional. But even this scarce evidence ceases in the first millennium BCE. Judging from the overall view on the female visibility in Mesopotamia total absence of any trace of female scholarship in the 1st millennium is not a coincidence.

## **Of War and Weaving: “Swords” and the Complexities of Archaeological Reconstructions of Gender**

**Laura B. Mazow**

In archaeological reconstructions, weapons and weaving tools typically reside in separate domains. In reflections of gender, weapons are seen as ‘male’ and textile tools ‘female’. Yet iconography, myths, and language suggest that this distinction was not as binary as it is now seen. Athena is the Greek goddess of, among other things, both war and weaving. The Egyptian goddess Neith is similarly contextualized, and Semitic mythology surrounding the goddess Asherah includes references to roles in both warfare and weaving. Although these similarities may result from syncretism within a common, pan-Mediterranean cultural context, it also seems clear that the comingled functions of war and weaving within a single persona fit comfortably within local regional contexts. Language also points to a conceptual pairing of combat culture and weaving. The Greek *spáthē*, Latin *spathe* and Arabic *sef*, all meaning “blade,” appear in use-contexts that include both combat and weaving activities. That the linguistic terminology described both a combat sword and a weaving tool is strong evidence for a sword-shaped object that functioned in, or could move between, multiple contexts. While the use of a sword in combat is generally well known, the function of a sword in weaving is less commonly recognized. In this paper I will argue that the shape of the “blade” as both a combat and a weaving sword was used as a symbol in the ancient world that tied these activities together in a way that, today, seems foreign to us. However, archaeologists whose methods are tied to the way objects reflect past behaviours—including gender identity—need to be very cautious in accepting any assumptions that our means of signposting gender were the same as in the past.

## **Women in the Hebrew Bible, Real Characters or Literary Characters? The Case of Some Matriarchs in Genesis**

### **Adelina Millet Albà**

Some of the so-called matriarchs of the Bible, such as Sara, Rebecca, Leah or Rachel, may represent real characters but they are, at the same time, literary characters. Taking this as a starting point, in this presentation I aim to analyze what is real in the description of their histories and behavior, and what can be attributed to the imagination of the exilic author, not necessarily aware of the cultural context of their ancestors. To do so, I will analyze certain aspects of these matriarchs as portrayed in the Bible taking into account their cultural context and considering different sources, i.e. the biblical text itself and a selection of cuneiform texts, mainly found at Mari and at other sites west of Mesopotamia. With this comparison, I will show that the authors, presumably Judean priests in Babylon, used and managed the information they had for a theological-historical purpose, to justify the presence of the elite of Judah in Babylon, using some literary and some “real” elements to build up their narrative. In fact, the possibility of comparing both types of documentations is what enables us to distinguish between potential real features and literary ones.

With this goal in mind, in this communication I will concentrate on three characters. First I consider Sara’s behavior with Abraham and Hagar. Second, I deal with Rebecca, aiming to analyze how her choice of an heir for her husband, Isaac, is portrayed. Third I focus on Rachel, to see how she faced a situation similar to that of Rebecca. By analyzing these case studies I aim to confirm my hypotheses. On the one hand that Sara’s actions seem to be better grounded in social reality than Rebecca’s actions, which are more literaturized, but on the other hand, Rachel’s narrative shares traits with the stories of Sara and Rebecca, presenting a balance between “real” and literary features.

## **Kinship and Gender in Dialogue: Approaching Relatedness in ancient Egypt**

### **Leire Olabarria**

Kinship was traditionally considered one of the pillars of anthropological research since its inception, especially due to its importance as an organizational principle in stateless societies. Functionalist and structuralist concerns shaped the way kinship was studied in the mid-20th century, when most scholars showed a keen interest in classification and abstraction. The rise of gender studies in the 1970s resulted in kinship theory being pushed into the background, as it was regarded as essentially obsolete and unable to reflect the flexibility of lived experience. From this point onwards, gender and kinship seem to have evolved in parallel, seldom converging, lines, although they are compatible ways of analyzing similar issues.

In recent years kinship theory has opened up new avenues of research and proposed innovative interpretative frameworks. A prime example of these is the field of so-called new kinship studies, which advocates against the reification of kinship and leans towards the more inclusive and fluid notion of relatedness as something that is made rather than given.

This paper addresses how kinship theory can complement and enhance approaches derived from gender studies in order to attain a more nuanced understanding of past societies. The pervasiveness of extended family models for social organization in ancient Egypt is used as a case study to illustrate the possibilities of a methodology that perceives kinship and gender as performative processes.

## **Inanna/Ishtar: religion, gender and power in the 3rd millennium B.C., or how to weave interdisciplinarity into the socio-political and socioeconomic analysis of belief**

**Mónica Palmero Fernández**

This contribution provides an overview of the methodology I have developed over the past two years as part of my doctoral research, which focuses on re-evaluating the social and material setting of the figure and cult of Inanna/Ishtar – what I call the realm of the goddess – from the earliest evidence in the Late Uruk period to the normalization of the “sacred marriage” ritual towards the end of the 3rd millennium and beginning of the 2nd millennium. B.C.

It is an interdisciplinary project bridging the theoretical and methodological barriers between archaeological, art-historical and textual interpretations in order to produce an integrated approach. It redresses the existing imbalance and aims to move beyond descriptions of her role in politics (including the “sacred marriage”) and her sexuality towards a historical narrative that is framed in a reality comprising the coexistence of humans and things and realised through the performative and constative dynamics of the production and reproduction of beliefs. As Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset (whose ideas have significantly contributed to my theoretical framework) puts it in *The Revolt of the Masses*: “[S]ocial power’ [has not] a meaning exclusively or primarily political.

Public life is not solely political, but equally, and even primarily intellectual, moral, economic, religious; it comprises all of our collective habits [or uses], including our fashions both of dress and of amusement.”

The approach is framed in the feminist tradition of Situated Knowledge and follows current standards in qualitative research methods, adhering most closely to the Constructivist Grounded Method Theory, which I have adapted to the idiosyncrasies of archaeological and cuneiform sources. I will focus on the concepts of grab, fit, work, and modifiability in the development of new theories, and discuss the usefulness of my own theoretical advances so far.

## **Identifying Gender Ambiguity in Texts and Artifacts**

**Ilan Peled**

The *assinnu* and the *kurgarrû* were two of the most intriguing male cult attendants of ancient Mesopotamia. Their gender image has been the source of much debate in scholarly discourse in recent years. The traditional view regarded both to be effeminate, or somehow not entirely masculine. Recently, however, an entirely different view emerged,

according to which these cult attendants actually possessed a masculine gender identity. My own assumption, as was recently published, combines the two previous hypotheses. I assume that while the assinnu's gender identity was effeminate, or probably better said, not customarily masculine, the kurgarrû's gender identity was as masculine as that of the standard male in Mesopotamia. I have suggested that these two men represented the complete gender identity spectrum of their patron goddess, Ištar: masculine and feminine.

One of the most common features of the kurgarrû was his use of two weapons as part of his cultic performance. This led many scholars to assume that he was a "cultic warrior", a view with which I indeed concur. One of the key reasons for viewing the assinnu as a "cultic warrior" akin to the kurgarrû were several first-millennium textual descriptions of cultic ceremonies in which groups of assinnus and kurgarrûs performed mock battles, shouting "my play is battle!" (mēlulī qablu). In a text from the famous "Love Lyrics" group, a kurgarrû is described as shouting this phrase, following which an assinnu "goes down to battle" (ana qablu urrad). We should bear in mind, however, that in all battles there are winners as well as losers. The mock-battles performed by the assinnus and the kurgarrûs may well have represented the two opposing aspects of Ištar, exemplified by the masculine kurgarrû subduing in these mock-battles the non-masculine assinnu.

Though this hypothesis is attractive in that it can potentially sort out a long-standing crux, up until now it remained conjectural. Now, however, I would like to offer a new piece of information that strengthens the theory. Since this suggested evidence belongs to the realm of archaeological artifacts, it is still inconclusive; one small tentative step forward on the road to clarification of a highly complex topic.

### **Amorite ladies at the Neo-Assyrian Court: building up an image, deconstructing an image, transmitting an image**

**Frances Pinnock**

The paper focuses on female image in the Neo-Assyrian period and on the presence of persons of Aramaean origin in the Assyrian court. The hypothesis is that the increase in the representation of women in public monuments might be a consequence of the influence of Aramaean ladies in Assyria. The main issues taken into account regard the fact that in Assyrian reliefs the women of conquered towns are represented, but only the Egyptian and Syrian ones are identified by peculiarities in their physiognomies or attires, and that a few court ladies are represented in relief or other official monuments, after a long period of absence. I will try to analyse the evidence also in terms of social identity building and/or affirmation and of the dialectic between social group and individual.

### **Gender, Sense and Sensitivity in Ancient Mesopotamian Rituals**

**Anne-Caroline Rendu Loisel**

The ritual scene is full of various sensory phenomena: musical instruments, songs, aromatic smokes, lights burning in a brazier, shiny precious stones, etc. All of them participate in the creation of a specific atmosphere, where humans meet divine entities. They also contribute to shape the identity of all the participants, whether they are women,

men, gods or goddesses. In this paper, my aim is to investigate the gender dimension at stake in the sensory phenomena at stake in ritual contexts. Are there specific sensory effects created for women? Is a special atmosphere needed when the community wants to interact with a goddess? When women and men share the same ritual scene, are there different sensory phenomena that would participate in the distinction between them or that would help to erase this distinction?

To answer these questions, I will study various ritual procedures, described in tablets from the 1st millennium BCE, taking into account not only ceremonial and public festivals, but also individual and private procedures.

## **Gender Studies and Daily Life in ancient Egypt: theoretical problems and new perspectives**

**Thais Rocha da Silva**

Gender became an important framework to daily life studies and domestic space in Archaeology and Ancient History. However, in Egyptology, Gender Studies are still largely understood as a synonym for women's history in a very essentialist perspective. Although many scholars included gender and women in their research topics, the theoretical debate from Feminism(s) had little impact in Egyptology so far. The contemporary assumption women were confined in the domestic space reinforced a bias in which daily life is investigated and how some aspects of social life are perceived as essentially female, especially those related to the house and household. If studies on domestic space and daily life are engendered, transforming men and women in separate and autonomous categories, it is necessary to include new theoretical frameworks from Gender Studies in Egyptology. Gender must be seen as a relational category. Also, it is necessary to reexamine archaeological evidence in order to understand how gender relations emerge within the domestic space. In this initial stage of my doctoral research I intend to discuss how studies on daily life can allow a more complex understanding of gender relations in ancient Egypt.

## **The gendered body as symbolic artefact. Changes in terracotta production in early second millennium Mesopotamia**

**Elisa Roßberger**

Late third and early second millennium Mesopotamia sees a shift from hand-modelled terracotta figurines to mould-made plaques. The latter depict nude women (and dressed men) in a different, more conventionalized and 'ideal' manner. What causes these transformations in regard to visualizing the female (and male) body in clay? Changes in pictorial practice, image semantics, body perception or a new conceptualization of the body as a symbolic artefact? This paper argues for a combination of the above. The observed phenomenon becomes equally evident in other contemporary artistic media.

## **Is "Harem" a Useful Category for Describing and Analysing the Living Conditions of ancient Near Eastern Women?**

**Helga Vogel**

Mid-1950s the assyriologist Ernst Weidner introduced a still powerful interpretative frame in ancient Near Eastern studies: the 'old-oriental harem'. Since then research on the living conditions of ancient Near Eastern, and especially Assyrian women tends to be carried out within this framework. In this talk I aim to determine whether the concept 'harem' is in any way useful to describe and analyse the living situations of ancient Near Eastern women. Three different aspects will be discussed: (1) the 'imaginary harem' of Western minds, focusing on European 'harem-paintings', (2) the harem-institutions located in Islamic societies, focusing on the 'Imperial harem' of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th and 17th century, (3) Ernst Weidner's introduction to his translation of the 'Middle Assyrian harem- and palace decrees' plus his explanatory notes, focusing on his remarks about the 'harem' and the 'harem women'. I will argue that there is absolutely no objective justification for Weidner's 'old-oriental harem'. This is good news! The idea of the 'old-oriental harem' can be safely disregarded! Studies on the lifestyles and living conditions of ancient Near Eastern women must no longer be written as an addendum to 'Thousand and One Nights'! Instead we can start respectively continue to study the history of ancient Near Eastern women (and other genders) as a highly differentiated system and with path-breaking approaches. I want to mention that some of the points we will touch in this talk show strong references to certain present day discussions on 'the Muslima' in Western societies suggesting that 'the colonial eye' is still intact; probably ancient Near Eastern studies don't make an exception. Let's see.

## **Narrating about women, narrating about men**

**Frauke Weiershäuser**

Mesopotamian narrative texts talk about men more often than about women, nevertheless there is a good deal of females appearing in stories about gods and humans. But how do the literary texts narrate about women and men, is there a difference in the way of introducing and representing females compared to males? Did the Mesopotamian scribes use different means of narrative presentation in their description of men and women, i.e. can we observe gender-related differences in the narrative treatment of the characters? Mortal females are less often subject of literary texts than men because the main subject of a large amount of literary texts is the praise of heroes and kings, that is of men, but even in those stories about male heroes we find women, like Siduri and Šamḫat in the epic of Gilgameš.

In this paper I want to investigate how male and female characters are constructed and how far this narrative construction and presentation of literary characters in Mesopotamian texts is gender-related.

## **Nefertiti and the “Docile Agent”**

**Jacquelyn Williamson**

Often application of western feminist theories to ancient evidence leads to inaccurate conclusions. This paper seeks to highlight this issue by means of an analysis of two architectural elements from Akhenaten’s early buildings at Karnak temple. These architectural elements are decorated with scenes of Nefertiti worshipping the Aten alone, without her husband King Akhenaten. Assumed to be examples of Nefertiti acting independently in the cult, scholars have commonly used them as the primary sources of evidence in the theory that Nefertiti had independent power and significance in her lifetime.

This paper will demonstrate that the Enlightenment concept of the Sovereign Individual and its influence on modern western feminist theories of agency has predetermined the interpretation of these monuments. This construct will be challenged using Saba Mahmood’s theories on the “Docile Agent” in non-western societies. I will argue that images of Nefertiti acting alone are an indication of her lower status in the early part of Akhenaten’s reign, and cannot be understood as images of her with independent power, as previously proposed. This paper seeks to call attention to unconscious western-centric gender bias in the application of agency theories to the ancient world.

## **Queering šà-zì.ga Therapy. Considerations on the Relations between Masculinity, Sickness and Anatomy**

**Gioele Zisa**

šà-zì.ga indicates a group of Standard-Babylonian spells and rituals, whose aim is to make man get the lost sexual desire. The expression, in Sumerian šà-zì.ga, in Akkadian nīš libbi, literally means the “raising of the libbu”. The word libbu embodies at the same time the organic dimension of the body and the emotional and psychological one of the person. The queer studies have provided us with countless interpretative ideas aimed at overcoming the Cartesian dichotomy “mind vs. body”, which we inevitably apply to ancient societies, our object of study. Through a critical reading of queer studies, in particular the works of Witting, De Lauretis, Butler and Preciado, together with the theoretical and methodological tools of the medical anthropology and the ethnopsychiatry, the relations between the masculine and feminine agencies in these ritual practices and the cultural categorizations of body and sicknesses will be investigated in the šà-zì.ga therapy. Special attention will be given to some aspects of Mesopotamian masculinity, particularly regarding sexuality, analyzing the ritual of the bow and the animal metaphors in spells of this text group.

## **ABSTRACTS FOR POSTERS (in alphabetical order)**

### **Be a Priestess in Elam, a Discussion about their Gender Identity**

**Mina Dabbagh**

The juridical and some administrative texts, including accounting documents, describe details about the maintenance staff and also the juridical issues. These sources are also relevant to ration distribution to workers. These inscriptions are engraved on tablets, seals, votive offerings and bricks.

This paper will discuss the determinants of priestess in a cultural, religious and socioeconomic context of Elamite society; focusing specifically on textual data. The main sources of this study, were discovered at Susa, Kabnak (current Haft-tape), Mâlamir. In this series of documents, the priestesses appear performing the specific religious acts who receive remuneration. The juridical texts document also that the priestesses can own property and participate in commercial activities for example the real estate transactions. On the other hand, from the earliest periods of Elamite history the impressive female figurines have been discovered. I will argue by gender-specific analysis whether a group of these female figurines represents the priestess?

The Elamite archives provide us the information regarding the social and cultural statue of priestess in this society. This research can assess the impact of gender identity on priestess supply. It will illustrate details concerning their religious duty and their function in cultural and social construction of this society.

### **The Representation of the Mother and the Father in the Collection of Sumerian Proverbs**

**Sara González**

One of the most fascinating kinds of literature is the sapiencial one. Its reflection of the life is often far from the ideal which can be found in other kinds of literature, where the wife is a sweet girl who is waiting for his hero, full of joyful innocence. The sapiencial literature, specially the Collection of Sumerian Proverbs (mainly Old Babylonian, ca. 2000-1600 B.C.), show adultery, wish of divorce or the destiny of a bad marriage. But it is, in fact, in the dyad mother-father where the differences are stronger. First, by their unequal distribution. The figure of the mother represents more than one third of the total, while the father is less than a tenth. Second, the treatment of both figures shows notable differences. The father appears in relation to the parental estate in more than a half, while the mother is shown like a complex character, who can be sweet, devout, dominant, contemptuous or adulteress, her voice can be the destiny of a man, like a proverb explains. The figure of the mother doesn't seem to reflect a literary mother, but a real one. Just like the rest of the figures that are described by the Sumerian proverbs, it is a matter of perceptions, lights and shadows that emerge from the very humanity of people, and that makes them both totally different but totally equal at the same time.

## **Project HESTIA: Foods, Cuisines and Consumption Practices in Mediterranean Colonial Spaces (8th-5th centuries BC)**

**Ana Delgado, Meritxell Ferrer and Mireia López-Bertran**

This project funded by MINECO (Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness) analyzes changes in food, in the ways of cooking and food preparation and food and drink consumption experimented by several Mediterranean communities between 8th and 5th centuries BC. It deals with the analysis of continuities, innovations, changes and hybridations that happen in food environments, in culinary technologies and recipes, in the consumption ways and in food and body representations in different colonial, empirical or pluriethnic settings from western Mediterranean, such as lower Guadalquivir, Empordà and western Sicily. Doing this analysis this project stresses on social, gender, relational and political role of eat and cook and deals with the local and global dynamics that shape it.

## **Anatolian kinship lexicon and its relationship with Proto-Indo-European family structure**

**Elena Martínez Rodríguez**

The reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European lexicon has a special significance in characterizing the Culture of the Indo-Europeans. In relation to the Gender field, it is a general assumption, posited by the comparative linguistics data, that the early Indo-European social structure was of patrilocal nature. This idea is based on the fact that the reconstructed terms for the kinship semantic field show a major presence of the husband's relatives. For this reason, it has been deduced that the wife moved to the husband's home (Gamkrelidze – Ivanov 1995: 664). Furthermore, patrilocal marriage is supported by the fact that the naming systems in the early Indo-European languages are patrilineal.

However, the oldest attested Indo-European group of languages, the Anatolian branch, shows a different situation. According to our knowledge, the most common Proto-Indo-European family terms are not transmitted in Anatolian, which has its own system based on “babytalk” words. Moreover, if we consider how the cultural historical studies have fed the topic of a supposed Hittite matrilinearity in the royal power, we are left with a very complex sketch (Klock-Fontanille 2014).

It is not the intention of this short research to produce a review on the Hittite matrilinearity discussion but rather to concentrate on those aspects related to the particular Anatolian kinship terminology. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to seek how the absence of the PIE kinship terms in Anatolian is to be interpreted and how this fact can affect the conceptions about social-familial structures.

## **Gender 'ambiguity' in the cults of Ishtar and Cybele: Some methodological questions concerning ancient gender identity and religion**

**Michèle L. Meijer**

My PhD project is concerned with the question in what ways cultic parallels between Mesopotamia and the Graeco-Roman world came into being. My aim is to develop tools which help to identify which elements were borrowed and which have developed independently due to similar beliefs. A promising case study has been selected: a comparison between the Mesopotamian cult of Inanna/Ishtar and the Graeco-Roman cult of Cybele. In the cults of these goddesses we encounter striking parallels such as ecstatic rituals featuring drums and weapons.

My poster presentation will focus on another parallel between these cults: the gender 'ambiguity' of their cultic personnel. In his recently published book on masculinities and third gender in the ancient Near East, Ilan Peled has convincingly argued that cultic personnel of Ishtar (e.g. the kalû and assinnu) "can be classified as belonging to a third gender" (17) and were institutionalized in order to mark "hegemonic masculinity by way of forming its opposite" (292). With the aim to start a discussion, my poster will elaborate on Peled's (and others') terminologies and social concepts relating to gender 'ambiguous' behaviour by formulating some methodological questions which have risen from my comparative case study including the cultic personnel of Cybele.

## **Assurbanipal's Garden Party Relief: Assyrian Royal Masculinity 'After the War is Over'**

**Omar N'Shea**

BM124920, otherwise better known as Assurbanipal's garden party relief, remains an enigmatic piece of Neo-Assyrian visual communication until today. Many attempts have been made to 1) reconstruct the narrative cycle to which this relief belonged in the context of palace-state art (notably by Albenda) and 2) unpack its socio-political message (Alvarez Mon). Both scholars agree, however, that the relief cycle must have been located in the women's quarters of the royal palace, suggesting, therefore, a female audience. This conclusion fosters the idea that parts (?) of the relief programme contain gendered elements of style – and therefore, constructed gendered space within the palace. In this poster presentation, I will take a brief look at the scholarly reasoning behind this conclusion and then go on to employ the theory of relative masculinities (Connell, Burrus) in order to reconsider what has been termed the king's 'passivity' in the scene. It is hoped that this reconsideration of the scene in light of current theories of gender will help further the discussion on the relief cycle in particular, and on the state arts of ancient Assyria in general.

## **Project TÀCITA MUTA: Childhood in feminine: young girls**

**Cristina Yúfera, Georgina Rabassó and David Muñoz**

Throughout history, childhood in broad terms has been systematically forgotten and more specifically, young girls have been forgotten even more. Young girls have been discriminated doubly: because of their youth and because they live in a feminine body.

Iconography and written sources from ancient Greece and Rome reveal that young girls were not considered as social agents. In fact, patriarchal ideology expected them to be raised as future women in order to fulfill their suitable position as mothers and home angels in society.

Among the classical studies the subject of young girls has been underdeveloped. However, some important research projects relating to the topic have been launched recently. That was also the main goal of the international colloquium «La infància en femení: les nenes. Imatges i figures de la filiació», in English “Childhood in feminine: images and figures of filiation”. Based on the contributions of the colloquium we developed a temporary exhibition that shows young girls as historical main characters instead of passive people.

The colloquium and the exhibition are part of a multidisciplinary research project about young girls initiated in 2014 carried on jointly by six research groups from the University of Barcelona. Here we present a summary of this research project and its main characters.