

Sex And Eroticism In Mesopotamian Literature

The Greek name Mesopotamia means 'land between the rivers.' The Romans used this term for an area that they controlled only briefly (between 115 and 117 A.D.): the land between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, from the south Anatolian mountains ranges to the Persian Gulf. It comprises the civilizations of Sumer and Akkad (third millennium B.C.) as well as the later Babylonian and Assyrian empires of the second and first millennium. Although the 'history' of Mesopotamia in the strict sense of the term only begins with the inscriptions of Sumerian rulers around the 27th century B.C., the foundations for Mesopotamian civilization, especially the beginnings of irrigation and the emergence of large permanent settlements, were laid much earlier, in the fifth and fourth millennium. The second edition of the Historical Dictionary of Mesopotamia defines concepts, customs, and notions peculiar to the civilization of ancient Mesopotamia, from adult adoption to ziggurats. This is accomplished through a chronology, an introductory essay, a bibliography, appendixes, and hundreds of cross-reference dictionary entries on religion, economy, society, geography, and important kings and rulers.

This volume is dedicated to Miguel Civil in celebration of his 90th birthday. Civil has been one of the most influential scholars in the field of Sumerian studies over the course of his long career. This anniversary presents a welcome occasion to reflect on some aspects of the field in which he has been such a driving force.

Metaphor is one of the most powerful, potentially subversive, tools of persuasion. This monograph is concerned with the sexual and marital metaphorical language of the prophetic texts of the Hebrew Bible. Its aims are twofold: first, to call attention to the remarkable diversity of prophetic sexual and marital metaphors and similes, so often reduced to allusions to 'the marriage metaphor' or 'cultic prostitution'; and, second, to highlight the considerable ability of this language when set free of such restraints - to recognize our thoughts.

Nissinen's award-winning book surveys attitudes in the ancient world toward homoeroticism, that is, erotic same-sex relations. Focusing on the Bible and its cultural environment-Mesopotamia, Greece, Rome, Israel-Nissinen concisely and readably introduces the relevant sources and their historical contexts in a readable way. Homoeroticism is examined as a part of gender identity, i.e., the interplay of sexual orientation, gender identification, gender roles, and sexual practice. In the patriarchal cultures of the biblical world, Nissinen shows, homoerotic practices were regarded as a role construction between the active and passive partners rather than as expressions of an orientation moderns call "homosexuality." Nissinen shows how this applies to the limited acceptance of homoerotic relationships in Greek and Roman culture, as well as to Israel's and the early church's condemnation of any same-sex erotic activity. For readers interested in the

ancient world or contemporary debates, Nissinen's fascinating study shows why the ancient texts - both biblical and nonbiblical - are not appropriate for use as sources of direct analogy or argument in today's discussion.

Ishtar is the first book dedicated to providing an accessible analysis of the mythology and image of this complex goddess. The polarity of her nature is reflected in her role as goddess of sexual love and war, and has made her difficult to characterise in modern scholarship. By exploring this complexity, Ishtar offers insight into Mesopotamian culture and thought, and elucidates a goddess who transcended the limits of gender, divinity and nature. It gives an accessible introduction to the Near Eastern pantheon, while also opening a pathway for comparison with the later Near Eastern and Mediterranean deities who followed her.

Using the visual and tactile experience of small-scale figurines, Greeks and Babylonians negotiated a hybrid, cross-cultural society in Hellenistic Mesopotamia.

Lyombe Eko carries out an historical and cultural survey of the regulation of visual depictions of explicit human sexual conduct from their earliest appearance on the clay tablets of the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in ancient Mesopotamia, to the tablet computers of Silicon Valley. *The Regulation of Sex-Themed Visual Imagery* analyzes the contemporary problem of the applicability of the human right of freedom of expression to explicit imagery in the face of societal interests in the regulation of representations of human sexuality. This book will be of interest to scholars, students, and broad audiences interested in comparative studies in pornography regulation, the history of pornography, the law of pornography and obscenity, and visual culture and history alike.

Annotation After a general discussion of methods and approaches, Walls explores the construction of desire in the *Gilgamesh Epic*; a Freudian analysis of Horus and Seth; and sex, power, and violence in Nergal and Ereshkigal.

Annotation c. Book News, Inc., Portland, OR (booknews.com).

This work looks at the West's fascination with, and misunderstanding of, castrated males, focusing on three key periods: the Early Church, the Early Modern, and the 20th century, where, Taylor argues, Freud got it wrong.

Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature is a new contribution to current debates about sex and eroticism. It gives an insight into Mesopotamian attitudes to sexuality by examining the oldest preserved written evidence on the subject - the Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform sources - which were written between the 21st and the 5th centuries B.C. Using these long-neglected and often astonishing data, Gwendolyn Leick is able to analyse Mesopotamian views of prostitution, love magic and deviant sexual behaviour as well as more general issues of sexuality and gender. This fascinating book sheds light on the sexual culture of one of the earliest literate civilisations.

Covering the whole medieval period but identifying the decades around 1200 as decisive, this study shows how marriage

symbolism emerged from the world of texts to become a social force affecting ordinary people.

Looking at sex and sexuality from a variety of historical, sociological and theoretical perspectives, as represented in a variety of media, *Sex in Antiquity* represents a vibrant picture of the discipline of ancient gender and sexuality studies, showcasing the work of leading international scholars as well as that of emerging talents and new voices. Sexuality and gender in the ancient world is an area of research that has grown quickly with often sudden shifts in focus and theoretical standpoints. This volume contextualises these shifts while putting in place new ideas and avenues of exploration that further develop this lively field or set of disciplines. This broad study also includes studies of gender and sexuality in the Ancient Near East which not only provide rich consideration of those areas but also provide a comparative perspective not often found in such collections. *Sex in Antiquity* is a major contribution to the field of ancient gender and sexuality studies.

The ancient world of Mesopotamia (from Sumer to the subsequent division into Babylonia and Assyria) vividly comes alive in this portrayal of the time period from 3100 bce to the fall of Assyria (612 bce) and Babylon (539 bce). Students, teachers, and interested readers will discover fascinating details about the lives of these people taken from the ancients' own quotations and descriptions. These detailed anecdotes from the people themselves easily convey factual material. A wealth of information is provided on such varied topics as: education; literature; mathematics and science; city vs. country life; family life; and religion, as well as many other subjects.

This volume brings together Jewish and Christian scholars with perspectives on Creation in the Bible (Tanakh, Old Testament, New Testament), in ancient Egypt and Israel, and at Qumran, as well as contemporary theological, philosophical and political issues raised by the biblical, Jewish and Christian concepts of creation.

In this masterful new study of the ancient poetry of the Song of Songs, Elaine T. James explores the Song's underlying interest in the natural world. Engaging with the fields of geography, landscape architecture, and literature, James critiques the tendency of scholars to reify a perceived dichotomy between "nature" and "culture" and instead argues that the poetic attention to landscape indicates an awareness of a viewer. Nature is here a poetic device that informs James's close-readings of agrarianism, gardens, cities, social control, and feminism and the gaze in the Song. With this two-fold emphasis on landscape and lyric, *Landscape of the Song of Songs* shows how the Song persistently envisions a world in which human lovers are embedded in the natural world, complexly enfolded in relationships of fragility and care.

Explores the life of Hypatia, one of the first women mathematicians.

This Dictionary gives a comprehensive survey of the whole range of ancient Near Eastern architecture from the Neolithic round huts in Palestine to the giant temples of Ptolemaic Egypt. Gwendolyn Leick examines the development of the principal styles of ancient architecture within their geographical and historical context, and describes features of major sites such as Ur, Nineveh and Babylon, as well as many of the lesser-known sites. She also covers the variations of typical ancient architectural structures such as pyramids, tombs and houses, details the building material and techniques

employed, and clarifies specialist terminology.

Situated in an area roughly corresponding to present-day Iraq, Mesopotamia is one of the great, ancient civilizations, though it is still relatively unknown. Yet, over 7,000 years ago in Mesopotamia, the very first cities were created. This is the first book to reveal how life was lived in ten Mesopotamian cities: from Eridu, the Mesopotamian Eden, to that potent symbol of decadence, Babylon - the first true metropolis: multicultural, multi-ethnic, the last centre of a dying civilization. From cave art to penis sheaths, from the personal tragedies of death in childbirth to the grand symbols of Stonehenge, this is a collection and analysis of a wide range of artefacts and written records relevant to the sexual history of mankind. Examining the data of 4,000,000 years, the book encompasses transvestite priests, Amazon warrior-women, familial and societal power relations, genes and hormones.

The current conventional Mesopotamian timeline of dynastic Mesopotamia is impossible. Believing in it means endorsing the idea the Egyptians lagged thousand years behind the Sumerians technologically during the Middle Kingdom. This timeline forces the bronze age Harappan civilization to have existed as recently as 1200 BC, even as an iron age civilization had existed on the Ganges since at least 1800 BC. It is also not what the ancient Sumerians actually recorded, so believing it means believing that modern Assyriologists know more about ancient Sumer than the ancient Sumerians themselves. Given that the ancient Sumerians lived through it, and all Assyriologists have to go on is random bits of clay-tablets and mostly ruined city-mounds, this seems like an incredible stretch of the imagination. The fact is Assyriologists can't and don't need to explain the anachronisms, because the Mesopotamian timeline is synchronized with the Egyptian timeline, which Egyptologists insist on keeping as short as possible. The idea that the ancient Sumerians built their earliest cities in the marshlands of Southern Iraq using stone imported from other countries is entirely illogical, they would have simply built them using mud-bricks as they did in the later periods. As the stone had to have been locally quarried, the region could not have been a marshland when the earliest cities built, meaning that the oldest levels of Uruk and Eridu must date back to before the region began turning into a marshland circa 9,000 years ago. The fact that they switched to using mud-bricks simply proves that the water-levels rose during the course of Sumerian history, flooding their farmlands, and ultimately forcing the Mesopotamian cultures to migrate northward to Akkadia, Babylonia, and Assyria. The fact that Assyriologists ignore the ancient Sumerian records of the antediluvian era is probably for the best, as they cannot even accept that the 1st Kish Dynasty went back to 25,000 BC, even though it has been proven that grains was being farmed in the region at that time. Unfortunately, the timeline of Egypt and Sumer are the two pillars that ancient history is built around. As the early Sumerians were trading with the early Egyptians, Assyriologists have been forced to synchronize the Mesopotamian timeline with the preposterous timeline used by

Egyptologists. While this means that most of Sumerian history is has to be ignored, is also effects the timelines of all other Eurasian cultures in contact with the Mesopotamian. The Harappan civilization of ancient India was trading with the Sumerians throughout its history and went into decline around the end of the Sumero-Akkadian dynastic period, which means the entire Harappan civilization is forced to correlate with the short Conventional Mesopotamian Timeline. This forced the entire Harappan timeline into a period of 2000 years, even though some of the archaeological sites in Pakistan and India have been carbon-dated back to over 8000 BC. These broken timelines then fan out further pulling the Minoans and Greeks, Iranians, and Chinese into this confusing mess.

The second half of the proceedings, *City Administration in the Ancient Near East*, is available here. A workshop volume is available here. In July 2007, the 53rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (the annual meeting of the International Association of Assyriologists) was held in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia. In Moscow, several hundred Assyriologists enjoyed the hospitality of the Russian State University for the Humanities. Dozens of papers on the topic "Language in the Ancient Near East," were delivered at the University. More than 50 of those papers are published in this 2-volume set.

Modern-day archaeological discoveries in the Near East continue to illuminate man's understanding of the ancient world. This illustrated handbook describes the culture, history, and people of Mesopotamia, as well as their struggle for survival and happiness.

Offers analysis of selected works of ancient art through a critical use of cutting-edge theory from gender studies, body studies, and art history.

This book initiates the reader into the study of Akkadian literature from ancient Babylonia and Assyria. With this one relatively short volume, the novice reader will develop the literary competence necessary to read and interpret Akkadian texts in translation and will gain a broad familiarity with the major genres and compositions in the language. The first part of the book presents introductory discussions of major critical issues, organized under four key rubrics: tablets, scribes, compositions, and audiences. Here, the reader will find descriptions of the tablets used as writing material; the training scribes received and the institutional contexts in which they worked; the general characteristics of Akkadian compositions, with an emphasis on poetic and literary features; and the various audiences or users of Akkadian texts. The second part surveys the corpus of Akkadian literature defined inclusively, canvassing a wide spectrum of compositions. Legal codes, historical inscriptions, divinatory compendia, and religious texts have a place in the survey alongside narrative poems, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, Enuma elish, and Babylonian Theodicy. Extensive footnotes and a generous bibliography guide readers who wish to continue their study. Essential for students of Assyriology, An

Introduction to Akkadian Literature will also prove useful to biblical scholars, classicists, Egyptologists, ancient historians, and literary comparativists.

Dress, Adornment, and the Body in the Hebrew Bible is the first monograph to treat dress and adornment in biblical literature in the English language. It moves beyond a description of these aspects of ancient life to encompass notions of interpersonal relationships and personhood that underpin practices of dress and adornment. Laura Quick explores the ramifications of body adornment in the biblical world, informed by a methodologically plural approach incorporating material culture alongside philology, textual exegesis, comparative evidence, and sociological models. Drawing upon and synthesizing insights from material culture and texts from across the eastern Mediterranean, the volume reconstructs the social meanings attached to the dressed body in biblical texts. It shows how body adornment can deepen understanding of attitudes towards the self in the ancient world. In Quick's reconstruction of ancient performances of the self, the body serves as the observed centre in which complex ideologies of identity, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and social status are articulated. The adornment of the body is thus an effective means of non-verbal communication, but one which at the same time is controlled by and dictated through normative social values. Exploring dress, adornment, and the body can therefore open up hitherto unexplored perspectives on these social values in the ancient world, an essential missing piece in understanding the social and cultural world which shaped the Hebrew Bible.

In this fascinating and revealing A-to-Z, John G. Younger examines the sexual practices, expressions and attitudes of the Greeks and Romans, from Catullus and Caligula, to orgies and obscenity, and from abstinence and incest, to pederasty and prostitution. The book opens with an overview of current thinking on ancient sex and sexuality, and goes on to provide an extraordinarily wide coverage of a sexual culture so very different from our own, approaching the subject from the perspectives of literature, history, archaeology and art. Comprehensive, reliable and eye-opening, this A-to-Z illuminates an important aspect of the classical world. For those who want to take their reading further, there are numerous references to ancient sources and modern scholarship, as well as a separate section of works of art. This is an ideal introduction to and exploration of sex in the ancient world for readers at every level.

The Greek name Mesopotamia means "land between the rivers." The Romans used this term for an area that they controlled only briefly (between 115 and 117 A.D.): the land between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, from the south Anatolian mountains ranges to the Persian Gulf. It comprises the civilizations of Sumer and Akkad (third millennium B.C.) as well as the later Babylonian and Assyrian empires of the second and first millennium. Although the "history" of Mesopotamia in the strict sense of the term only begins with the inscriptions of Sumerian rulers around the 27th century B.C., the foundations for Mesopotamian civilization, especially the beginnings of irrigation and the emergence of large permanent settlements, were laid much earlier, in the fifth and fourth millennium. The A to Z of Mesopotamia defines concepts, customs, and notions peculiar to the civilization of ancient Mesopotamia, from adult adoption to ziggurats. This is accomplished through a chronology, an introductory essay, a bibliography, appendixes, and hundreds of cross-reference dictionary entries on religion, economy, society, geography, and important kings and rulers.

Forty-five scholars here combine their skills in tribute to their colleague, teacher, and friend. This collection includes 27 English and 18 Hebrew essays on literary criticism, rabbinic literature, Hebrew word studies, Septuagint, Qumran, textual criticism, and many other topics. Moshe Greenberg is perhaps best known for his commentary on Ezekiel in the Anchor Bible series.

This book analyzes the history of Mesopotamian imagery from the mid-second to mid-first millennium BCE. It demonstrates that in spite of

rich textual evidence, which grants the Mesopotamian gods and goddesses an anthropomorphic form, there was a clear abstention in various media from visualizing the gods in such a form. True, divine human-shaped cultic images existed in Mesopotamian temples. But as a rule, non-anthropomorphic visual agents such as inanimate objects, animals or fantastic hybrids replaced these figures when they were portrayed outside of their sacred enclosures. This tendency reached its peak in first-millennium Babylonia and Assyria. The removal of the Mesopotamian human-shaped deity from pictorial renderings resembles the Biblical agenda not only in its avoidance of displaying a divine image but also in the implied dual perception of the divine: according to the Bible and the Assyro-Babylonian concept the divine was conceived as having a human form; yet in both cases anthropomorphism was also concealed or rejected, though to a different degree. In the present book, this dual approach toward the divine image is considered as a reflection of two associated rather than contradictory religious worldviews. The plausible consolidation of the relevant Biblical accounts just before the Babylonian Exile, or more probably within the Exile - in both cases during a period of strong Assyrian and Babylonian hegemony - points to a direct correspondence between comparable religious phenomena. It is suggested that far from their homeland and in the absence of a temple for their god, the Judahite deportees adopted and intensified the Mesopotamian avoidance of anthropomorphic pictorial portrayals of deities. While the Babylonian representations remained confined to temples, the exiles would have turned a cultic reality - i.e., the nonwritten Babylonian custom - into a written, articulated law that explicitly forbade the pictorial representation of God.

Rivkah Harris's cross-cultural and multidisciplinary approach breaks new ground in assessing Mesopotamian attitudes toward youth and mature adulthood, aging and the elderly, generational conflict, gender differences in aging, relationships between men and women, women's contributions to cultural activities, and the "ideal woman." To uncover Mesopotamian perspectives, Harris combed through primary sources - including literature and myth, letters, economic and legal texts, and visual materials. Even such pivotal cultural influences as the Gilgamesh Epic and Enuma Elish are reinterpreted in an original manner.

Representations of sexual difference (whether visual or textual) have become an area of much theoretical concern and investigation in recent feminist scholarship. Yet although a wide range of relevant evidence survives from the ancient Near East, it has been exceptional for those studying women in the ancient world to stray outside the traditional bounds of Greece and Rome. *Women of Babylon* is a much-needed historical/art historical study that investigates the concepts of femininity which prevailed in Assyro-Babylonian society. Zainab Bahrani's detailed analysis of how the culture of ancient Mesopotamia defined sexuality and gender roles both in, and through, representation is enhanced by a rich selection of visual material extending from 6500 BC - 1891 AD. Professor Bahrani also investigates the ways in which women of the ancient Near East have been perceived in classical scholarship up to the nineteenth century.

In *Orality and Literacy in the Demotic Tales*, Jacqueline E. Jay extrapolates from the surviving ancient Egyptian written record hints of a parallel oral tradition, focusing in particular on the corpus of Demotic narrative literature surviving from the Greco-Roman Period.

Has a repressive morality been the primary contribution of Christianity to the history of sexuality? The ascetic concerns that pervade ancient Christian texts would seem to support such a common assumption. Focusing on hagiographical literature, Virginia Burrus pursues a fresh path of interpretation, arguing that the early accounts of the lives of saints are not antierotic but rather convey a sublimely transgressive "countereroticism" that resists the marital, procreative ethic of sexuality found in other strands of Christian tradition. Without reducing the erotics of ancient hagiography to a single formula, *The Sex Lives of Saints* frames the

broad historical, theological, and theoretical issues at stake in such a revisionist interpretation of ascetic eroticism, with particular reference to the work of Michel Foucault and Georges Bataille, David Halperin and Geoffrey Harpham, Leo Bersani and Jean Baudrillard. Burrus subsequently proceeds through close, performative readings of the earliest Lives of Saints, mostly dating to the late fourth and early fifth centuries—Jerome's Lives of Paul, Malchus, Hilarion, and Paula; Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina; Augustine's portrait of Monica; Sulpicius Severus's Life of Martin; and the slightly later Lives of so-called harlot saints. Queer, s/m, and postcolonial theories are among the contemporary discourses that prove intriguingly resonant with an ancient art of "saintly" loving that remains, in Burrus's reading, promisingly mobile, diverse, and open-ended.

This book does not intend to demonstrate that Greeks and other ancient Mediterranean peoples, men and women, married and unmarried, sought and participated in sex for its own sake. That is, it is taken as obvious, a given, that they were able to separate sex for pleasure from sex for reproduction. There never were human beings who concerned themselves only with "fertility".

Neither, does this study seek to demonstrate that some ancient Greeks were willing to provide sexual services to partners in return for the receipt of nonsexual benefits. Again, this is self-evident. Nor does this study intend to show that the ancient Mediterranean world was familiar with individuals and enterprises that regularly earned incomes by selling sexual services. Clearly, the ancient world knew prostitution as an occupation and as a form of enterprise. In an article published by Ugarit-Forschungen in 2008, Silver (2006a) challenged the view that temple/sacred prostitution did not exist in the ancient Near East. Contrary to such scholars as Julia Assante (1998, 2003), Martha T. Roth (2006) and Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge (2010), ample evidence indicates that it did. For the convenience of readers this article is included as a Supplement to the present volume. The original article has been reformatted to correct some typographical errors and to make it blend seamlessly into the present volume but otherwise it is unchanged. More recent materials from the ancient Near East are considered mostly in footnotes, however. The present study seeks to leap beyond this finding by showing that temple prostitution also flourished in the ancient Mediterranean. That it did is of course an "old" view, but the old supporting arguments often lack rigor and even clarity and the supporting evidence is fragmentary, contradictory and often facially absurd (e.g. Herodotus 1.199.1–5). Work of this kind has been discredited by scholars such as Fay Glinister (2000) and Stephanie Lynn Budin (2008).

This volume gathers brand new essays from some of the most respected scholars of ancient history, archaeology, and physical anthropology to create an engaging overview of the lives of women in antiquity. The book is divided into ten sections, nine focusing on a particular area, and also includes almost 200 images, maps, and charts. The sections cover Mesopotamia, Egypt, Anatolia, Cyprus, the Levant, the Aegean, Italy, and Western Europe, and include many lesser-known cultures such as the Celts, Iberia, Carthage, the Black Sea region, and Scandinavia. Women's experiences are explored, from ordinary daily life to religious ritual and practice, to motherhood, childbirth, sex, and building a career. Forensic evidence is also treated for the actual bodies of ancient women. *Women in Antiquity* is edited by two experts in the field, and is an invaluable resource to students of the ancient world, gender studies, and women's roles throughout history.

This collection of 23 essays, presented in three sections, aims to discuss women's studies as well as methodological and theoretical approaches to gender within the broad framework of ancient Near Eastern studies. The first section, comprising most of the contributions, is devoted to Assyriology and ancient Near Eastern archaeology. The second and third sections are devoted to Egyptology and to ancient Israel and biblical studies respectively, neighbouring fields of research included in the volume to enrich the debate and facilitate academic exchange. Altogether these essays offer a variety of sources and perspectives, from the textual to the archaeological, from bodies and sexuality to onomastics, to name just a few, making this a useful resource for all those interested in the study of women and gender in the past.

Historically, the Bible has been used to drive a wedge between the spirit and the body. In this provocative book, David Carr argues that the Bible affirms erotic passion. Sexuality and spirituality, he contends, are intricately interwoven; the journey toward God and the life-long engagement with our own sexual embodiment are inseparable.

A body of theory has developed about the role and function of memory in creating and maintaining cultural identity. Yet there has been no consideration of the rich Mediterranean and Near Eastern traditions of laments for fallen cities in commemorating or resolving communal trauma. This volume offers new insights into the trope of the fallen city in folk-song and a variety of literary genres. These commemorations reveal memories modified by diverse agendas, and contains narrative structures and motifs that show the meaning of memory-making about fallen cities. Opening a new avenue of research into the Mediterranean genre of city lament, this book examines references to, or re-workings of, otherwise lost texts or ways of commemorating fallen cities in the extant texts, and with greater emphasis than usual on the point of view of the victors.

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