

Religion and magic in ancient Mesopotamia

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The Mesopotamian religion is one of the oldest religious systems in the Ancient Near East and it flourished from the fourth millennium B.C. at least until the Hellenistic period. The abundance of the cuneiform sources allows us to examine various components of this system. The course aims to give an overview of the Mesopotamian religion including the various forms of divination and magical rites. The seminar will focus on the main elements of the Mesopotamian religion namely the mythology, the temple cult, the divination and the prophylactic and apotropaic rituals. The students are required to read the weekly background literature and ancient sources (from a textbook in English) and take part in class discussions.

Topics of the course

1. Introduction to the Mesopotamian religion: the sources and the elements of the religious system.

Literature

A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization*. Chicago 1977, 171-83.

J. Bottéro, *Mesopotamia. Writing, Reasoning and the Gods*. Chicago 1992, 201-231.

2. Mythology: cosmologies and philosophy in the ancient Mesopotamia; the creation of the world and the man.

Literature

S. Dalley, *S. Myths from Mesopotamia*. Oxford 1989, 228-277.

S. Andrea, "The fifty names of Marduk in *Enuma eliš*." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 126 (2006): 507-20.

3. The gods and goddesses

Literature

R. L. Litke, *A Reconstruction of the Assyro-Babylonian God-Lists, An :^da-nu-um and An : anu šá amēli*. New Haven 1998.

W. G. Lambert, "Götterlisten." In *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 3 (1971): 473-479.

4. Temple cult 1.

Literature

C. Amboss, *Mesopotamische Baurituale*. Dresden, 2004, 47-52.

A. Berlejung, "Washing the Mouth: The Consecration of Divine Images in Mesopotamia." In K. van der Toorn (ed.): *The Image and the Book*. Leuven 1997, 45-72.

M. B. Dick – Ch. Walker, "The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia." In M. B. Dick (ed.): *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Creation of the Cult Image*. Winona Lake 1999, 55-121.

5. Temple cult 2.

Literature

W. Sallaberger – F. H. Vulliet, "Priester A." In *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 10 (2005): 617-640.

F. A. M. Wiggerman, "Theologies, Priests, and Worship in Ancient Mesopotamia." In J. M. Sasson (ed.): *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*. Volume III. New York 1995, 1857-1870.
C. Waerzeggers– M. Jursa, "On the initiation of Babylonian priests." *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 14 (2008): 1–38.

6. Divination 1.

Literature

A. L. Oppenheim: "A Babylonian Diviner's Manual." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33 (1974) 197-220.

S. M. Maul, "Omina and Orakel A." In *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 10 (2003): 45-88.

E. Leichty: "Ritual, 'Sacrifice' and Divination in Mesopotamia" In J. Quaegebeur (ed.): *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East*. Leuven 1993, 237-242.

7. Divination 2.

Literature

F. Rochberg, "'If P, then Q': Form and Reasoning in Babylonian Divination." In A. Annus (ed.): *Divination and Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World*. Chicago 2010, 19-27.

U. S. Koch, "Sheep and Sky: Systems of Divinatory Interpretation." In K. Radner – E. Robson: *The Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*. Oxford-New York 2011, 447-469.

8. Magic and healing rites 1.

C. Jean, *Le magie néo-assyrienne en contexte. Recherches sur le métier d'exorciste et la concept d'āšipūtu*. Helsinki 2006, 62-82.

W. Farber: "Witchcraft, Magic, and Divination in Ancient Mesopotamia" In J. M. Sasson (ed.): *Civilisation of the Ancient Near East III*. New York 1995, 1895-1909.

9. Magic and healing rites 2.

T. Abusch, "Some Reflections on Mesopotamian Witchcraft." In A. Berlin (ed.): *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East*. Bethesda, MD 1996, 21-33.

T. Abusch, *Mesopotamian Witchcraft*. Leiden-Boston-Köln 2002, 3-27.

S. M. Maul, "Namburbi." In *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 9 (1998): 92-94.

F. A. M. Wiggermann: *Mesopotamian Prospective Spirits: the Ritual Texts*. Groningen 1992, 1-25

10. Magic and healing rites 3.

A. Green, "Mischwesen B." In *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 8 (1994): 246-64.

N. Heeßel, *Pazuzu*. Leiden-Boston-Köln 2002, 2-6.

F. A. M. Wiggermann, *Mesopotamian Prospective Spirits: the Ritual Texts*. Groningen 1992, 143-64.

M. J. Geller, "The Faceless Udug-Demon." *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* 77/2 (2011): 333-341.