Inanna-Ishtar: Recognizing the Personality and Purpose of a Goddess

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The mythology of ancient Mesopotamia is far less familiar to the average American than that of many other ancient religions. To scholars, though, it is a subject of utmost importance in understanding the culture of many early Mesopotamian societies: the Sumerians, Akkadians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc. By studying the ancient cults and myths surrounding their deities, it is possible to uncover some of the beliefs and values held in this region's fount of civilization. From why the Tigris and Euphrates flood erratically, to examples of how heirs should behave toward their fathers, the stories about the gods provide explanations about the world. Among the frequently named gods stands a powerful and dynamic goddess whose name is invoked by priests, kings, and commoners throughout the region and over the course of time: Inanna-Ishtar.

Inanna-Ishtar was the goddess of both love and war. Her two names represent differences in place and time, with Inanna being the name the Sumerians and Akkadians assigned to her, and Ishtar being the name she was known by to the Assyrians. Despite the vast number of sources referring to her, and the numerous sources that include or describe her in detail, it can be difficult to comprehend her personality and characteristics; as Rivkah Harris labels her, she is a paradox.[1] The available sources about her reveal a deity who is both orderly and chaotic, a goddess capable of bringing both great prosperity and destruction. By being such an anomaly, Inanna-Ishtar was unlike many goddesses of the ancient world and broke with the gender norms of the time. Consequently, she is unrepresentative of how Mesopotamian women were expected to behave.

The Archaeological History

Before critiquing the goddess's character, and trying to sort through *what* is known about her, it is important to consider *how* scholars have uncovered this knowledge. Archaeological research is the source of these discoveries. By working to uncover ancient artifacts, both artistic and textual, modern scholars are provided with the evidence necessary to learn about the ancient world. For the study of Inanna-Ishtar the textual sources found on clay tablets, cylinder seals and other inscriptions are especially vital; by transliterating and translating these sources, cuneiform scholars have vastly expanded the available knowledge about her. To understand the historiography about Inanna-Ishtar, then, it is necessary to discuss the scholarly debate about her and the main sources used: literary documents, artifacts, and images.

One particularly significant scholar was Samuel Noah Kramer, who spent his career in the careful study of Sumer and cuneiform texts and was highly respected by his colleagues in the field.[2] Not only was he asked to be a guest professor at many universities, but he was also invited to help catalogue and decipher literary tablets in different collections.[3] In addition to his many popular books, though, it was perhaps his building of a sense of cooperation among the Sumerologist community that made the greatest impact and progress for this field of study.[4] Rather than attempting to retain sources for his own private study and success, he made them available to many other scholars around the world; not only could more sources be deciphered this way, but it also made scholarly discussion and debate about the documents possible.

One area of difference in this discussion is between Near Eastern specialists and more general scholars. To some groups, such as classicists, there is a desire to compare Mesopotamian cultural aspects — like Inanna-Ishtar — to other regions and time periods. An example of this is Miroslav Marcovich's work, which argues that the Greek deity Aphrodite was descended from and extremely similar to Ishtar.[5] Historically, part of the drive for this has been to prove that ancient Mesopotamia served as a birthplace for Western cultures and values. Unfortunately, while comparisons can be made

between the two cultures and their goddesses, they frequently depict too broad an image of Inanna-Ishtar and lose sight of many of her detailed characteristics. As Rivkah Harris puts it, "much has been written about Inanna-Ishtar by people outside of the field of ancient Near Eastern studies. The tendency in these writings is to flatten and level the distinctively Mesopotamian features of the goddess."[6] Notably, scholars focus on her role as the goddess of love and queen of heaven while deemphasizing her values as the goddess of war. This tunnel vision can partly be attributed to modern ideas of patriarchy and a hesitancy to associate a female deity with what are perceived as masculine virtues.[7] The study of Inanna-Ishtar therefore requires consciousness of these subjective perceptions of her and a comfort with acknowledging her distinctiveness. Furthermore, like all historical discourse this study requires a careful analysis of the primary sources relevant to the topic.

In order to gain access to many literary sources, it is necessary to decipher what is written in cuneiform — a script that was used for many languages, some unrelated, in Mesopotamia. The expansion of this field of study further enables archaeologists to make sense of many of the artifacts they find at excavation sites. The excavations at Nippur provide one excellent example of this. At this site, a temple to Inanna was uncovered toward the southwest of a ziggurat dedicated to Enlil.[8] The documents and building inscriptions found there allowed scholars to learn more about the daily life and functions within the temple. G. van Driel found that economically the temple was independent but had many economic links to the other temples in the city.[9] Another scholar, Albrecht Goetze, also studied the Nippur temple by looking at "the astonishing numbers [of] treasures that, as is the custom in Mesopotamia, had carefully been buried in parts of the building and underneath its very floors."[10] Analysis of the numerous vases, bowls, statuettes, and other objects of value found showed that they had inscriptions dedicating them to Inanna. Not only were these objects very valuable, showing how sincerely individuals desired her favor, but most were also given by women, suggesting who her main worshippers were.

Sources about Inanna were not limited to this excavation, however. One of the most important classifications of documents that have been uncovered are the myths and hymns to Inanna and Ishtar. Kramer's 1963 history about the Sumerians states that — to that point — five myths that featured Inanna as the major actor had been recovered and translated; in addition, two more myths focusing on Dumuzi, her husband, were also available to analyze her relationship to him.[11] Kramer's list is not all inclusive, however. It does not account for the numerous post-Sumerian documents, or more recently discovered sources. Examples of more recent sources that will be discussed are the poems and hymns from Enheduanna, *en*-priestess to Nanna under Sargon, king of Akkad. Translated by Betty De Shong Meador, the source is useful to an analysis of Inanna-Ishtar not only because of its discussion of the goddess, but also because it provides insight to the author, a human woman.[12]

In order to compare Inanna-Ishtar to the gender norms of the time, sources must be used that establish what they were, specifically what the female gender role was. One of the most useful in this aspect are the law codes of ancient civilizations. Analyzing the laws about women — how they were penalized or protected — provides one account of how they were expected to behave. It also provides insight into the different social castes women could fall into, and provides the understanding that not all women were expected to behave in the same way. Therefore, it is important to consider Inanna-Ishtar in comparison to multiple societal roles and see if there are some that she reflects more than others. Other textual sources that can be used are marriage contracts, which according to M. Stol, "reflect the social positions of both parties,"[13] and letters, both of which can be found in family archives across Mesopotamia.

A somewhat more challenging source scholars have available to them is the visual depiction of women and Inanna-Ishtar. Unlike many textual sources, visual depictions do not always state specifically what is being represented. An example of this can be found in Dominique Collon's *The Queen of the Night*; Collon describes in detail the ambiguity around the identity of the women in the relief sculpture and suggests that it could be one of three different females, Ishtar being among her list.[14] Despite this dilemma, there are common features to Inanna-Ishtar's visual portrayals: the lion and her weapons.[15] It is therefore possible to identify her in images recovered from ancient Mesopotamia, but oftentimes controversially.

The problem in identifying Inanna-Ishtar stems from several reasons. One is that, as shown above, it is not always clearly stated that she is the subject being depicted. In his analysis of the findings at Nippur, Goetze discusses disagreement about the goddess's identity. The scholar I. J. Gelb (1960) contests the excavation's identification of the temple as being dedicated to Inanna; rather he suggests the name on the artifact inscriptions was the goddess Ninni. Goetze defends his identification of the goddess as Inanna with the support of scholars E. Sollberger (1962), Th. Jacobsen (1963) and A. Sjoberg (1966). They argue that "*Inanna* also appears with other goddesses and must be explained as an honorific epthet. Jacobsen suggest[ed] cautiously it might mean something like 'conqueress.'" These ambiguities in translations are one source of the uncertainty in studying Inanna-Ishtar. Like the artistic depictions of the goddess, scholars must carefully analyze all the details available to uncover the most probable truth.[16]

This uncertainty has been present at sites other than Nippur as well. In her article "The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh," Nadav Na'aman works to clarify the identity of a series of temples found during Woolley's excavations at Alalakh. While Woolley vaguely stated they were "presumably dedicated to the city goddess invoked by Idri-mi," Na'aman seeks to demonstrate from level VII archives that this goddess was in fact Ishtar. She supports her argument using textual sources from the city: Ishtar and Hadad were the two main deities mentioned, the kings records invoked Ishtar as one of the deities giving him military might, and they refer to the *assinnum*, cultic devotees of Ishtar.[17]

The nature of Inanna-Ishtar's cultic worshippers is another issue faced by scholars in the field. It is not only their job within the cult that is hard to understand, but also their very sexuality. Most scholars find their gender so ambiguous they believe but cannot agree on whether groups like the *kurgarru, assinnu,* and *kulu'u* were eunuchs, homosexuals, hermaphrodites, or transsexuals.[18] Na'aman suggests that there might have been "some popular legend or belief where Ishtar played the role of a castrating goddess."[19] Whether this was true in the literal sense cannot be proven; however, it is clear she and her cult provided confusion about the traditional concepts of gender in the Mesopotamian world. "She [Inanna-Ishtar] breaks the boundaries between the sexes by embodying both femaleness and maleness,"[20] and her cultic participants appear to have done the same.

According to Julia Assante, they may have done so in a way very different from what most scholars believe. Traditionally, many of Inanna-Ishtar's male cultic worshippers were believed to be demasculinized in some way. As already mentioned, this manifested itself in scholarship by describing them as eunuchs, homosexuals, transsexuals, and so on. In her essay "Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?: The Modern Prostituting of Ishtar, Her Clergy, and Her Cults," Assante argues that there is no tangible evidence to support this. She even suggests that some of the positions traditionally thought to be held by males could have also been held by women. It is her belief that these views of the past were subjective and became normalized in scholarship as a result of Victorian-era norms.[21]

Assante also warns that scholars need to be aware of a pre-conceived notion about the idea of sacred marriage and sacred prostitution being related to Inanna-Ishtar. These concepts date back to Herodotus — who is a notoriously questionable source among scholars — and were expanded upon by later scholars such as James Frazer. Despite how commonly accepted and referenced these ideas have become, there is a notable lack of primary evidence to support the existence of this practice. Indeed, Assante claims that in the thousands of literary texts recovered from various Inanna-Ishtar temples, none even suggest such a practice existed. Furthermore, she believes the patriarchal norms of the era discredit the idea that fathers and husbands would allow women to engage in this type of behavior.[22]

The other great difficulty in identifying Inanna-Ishtar is that some sources indicate that there were multiple "Ishtars" simultaneously. Not only do her characteristics change over time, as she transitioned from the Sumerian Inanna to the Akkadian Ishtar, but she was also distinct to each individual city. This is demonstrated by Barbara Nevling Porter in her explanation of a hymn written for Assurbanipal. The hymn discusses the existence of both Ishtar of Ninevah and Ishtar of Arbela as the king's patrons, and it claims that they collaborated to help him during his reign.[23] It makes clear that they are two very distinct individuals, who had separate roles in his upbringing and provided him with different gifts. What adds to this confusion is that in other texts the same king invokes Ishtar as a single goddess, without differentiating between individuals. Porter sites one source which utilizes a single "Ishtar" in one line, just a few lines before distinguishing between the Ishtars of Nineveh and Arbela: "In the introduction to Prism A, for example, Assurbanipal announces that Shamash, Adad, and Ishtar — just Ishtar — have ordered him to exercise kingship, a comment that appears just twelve lines after a carefully specified Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela."[24] This type of situation makes evident the existence of distinct Ishtars, but also clarifies that there was one prevailing deity. Having discussed the various ways scholars have uncovered knowledge — and confusion — about Inanna-Ishtar, I will move to the next step. An analysis of how she broke with female gender norms of the time period and supported the kings of Mesopotamia is necessary to establish her characteristics.

Identifying Inanna-Ishtar's Personality

As can be surmised from that already discussed, Inanna-Ishtar demonstrated a great variety of behaviors both as she changed over time and within time periods as a result of her

personality. She was vital to the growth and prosperity of cities and their kingdoms and equally capable of destroying entire empires on a whim. Her cult and worship was one of the most widespread in ancient Mesopotamia, and she is one of the deities whom archaeologists have recovered the most sources about. Ultimately her strength and mood swings served as a mechanism for the ancient societies to explain both natural and human calamities and occurrences. To understand her personality, it is important to look at multiple aspects of her powers as a goddess: bringing fertility to agricultural fields and animal raising; acting as a lover and spouse, and strength as the goddess of war. It is also important to analyze how her cult worshipped her in her temples, myths, and hymns.

A Goddess of Fertility

The power to bring fertility to the land was normally associated with Inanna rather than Ishtar. It was one of her earlier abilities, before becoming more militarized by the Assyrian era. Figure 1 shows her symbolized by the read bundle as a fecundity goddess and being held by a priestess next to "two large containers (baskets?) probably holding grain."[25] As well as the imagery, this role was reinforced by several literary documents that have been discovered and translated.

Her power as a goddess capable of bringing fertility to the land is attested in a Sumerian fertility song that describes her relationship with the Sumerian king Sulgi. Acting as an incarnation of her husband Dumuzi, Sulgi is one of many kings to claim marriage to the deity. It was believed that if the king could satisfy Inanna's great lust, she would grant him all the necessary powers of kingship. In Sulgi's case, Inanna rewarded him "with victory in battle and acclaimed him as the king eligible for all the rights, prerogatives, and insignia of kingship."[26] More relevant to the tablet, however, was her power to bring fertility to the land. After Inanna complains of the lack of food, Sulgi asks her to accompany him one at a time into the fields, garden, and orchard.[27] The surviving part of this tablet does not specify how, but by some means it appears Inanna returns the areas to fruitfulness and prosperity to the earth.

Her power to bring prosperity to the land is again testified in "The Curse of Agade." In this explanation of the fall of Akkad and its great empire, the initial success is attributed to Inanna: "Inanna allowed herself no sleep" and therefore the city was filled with gold and wisdom, and "their people witnessed (nothing but) happiness."[28] After she — seemingly for no reason — refuses to accept further gifts from the people

Figure 1: Impression of a limestone cylinder-seal of the Uruk period (ca. 4,000-3350 BCE) depicting a priestess holding a reed bundle (symbolic of Inanna) and a priest-king holding an ear of wheat; from Charles Keith Maisels, *The Near East: Archaeology in the "Cradle of Civilization"* (London: Routledge, 1993).

and "forsook the shrine Agade," the other powerful gods leave and take their blessings of wisdom and eloquence with them.[29] This results in the cities' fearfulness as they begin to lose battles and doubt the future of kingship in the city. Agade's final destruction does not come until later, after enraging Enlil, but it begins with the loss of Inanna's favor.

In comparison to these documents, it is interesting that — despite being the goddess of love — Inanna-Ishtar is not equally associated with the fertility of humans. At least, that is the case according to Assante. She notes the significance that "Ishtar's celebrated sexual exploits never once led to impregnation … but to an irresistible power and agency."[30] This viewpoint is important because it changes the focus many scholars have placed on Inanna-Ishtar's feminine role in Mesopotamian culture, and instead emphasizes her "masculine" powers. She was indeed an active pursuer of love in many myths, as well as a goddess sought after by many kings, and the many lovers who served Inanna-Ishtar over the course of Mesopotamian history is one of her most clearly defined traits.

The Goddess of Love

Perhaps the most well-known testimony to the goddess's many lovers is the "Epic of Gilgamesh." When Ishtar "raised an eye at the beauty of Gilgamesh [and said] 'Come, Gilgamesh, be thou (my) lover,'"[31] he scorns her foolishly. He cites multiple instances where she has taken lovers, grown bored with them, and condemned them to some horrible punishment: "Which lover didst thou love forever?/Which of thy shepherds pleased [thee for all time]?"[32] Though a rash thing to say to a goddess — and a speech for which Gilgamesh and his city received severe punishment — it does reflect a true aspect of her character. It is not surprising that an immortal deity like Inanna-Ishtar would take multiple lovers over her long life, but the way in which she left them could be very shocking.

Of the many lovers which Gilgamesh lists, Tammuz is the best known. Known to the Mesopotamians as the shepherd Dumuzi, he was Inanna-Ishtar's first lover and husband. There were four different myths known about how these two became lovers and of these only one suggests that Dumuzi was not Inanna-Ishtar's first choice.[33] In the other myths, she quickly submits to his seduction with varying levels of approval from her parents. One of these myths, translated by Kramer, states

> As I [Inanna] was shining bright, was dancing about,
> As I was singing away while the bright light overcame
> (?) the night,
> He met me, he met me,
> The lord Kuli-Anna (Dumuzi) met me,
> The lord put his hand into my hand,
> Ushumgal-Anna (Dumuzi) embraced me.[34]

After this affair they agree to marry, but their relationship does not stay so romantic.

A well-preserved myth known as "Inanna's Descent to the Nether World" tells scholars about Dumuzi's demise at the hands of Inanna-Ishtar. Scholars recovered this document in several different pieces, with the earlier parts of the myth being translated first. Because of this and the combined knowledge that Dumuzi had died at some point in Mesopotamian mythology, it was frequently assumed that Inanna-Ishtar went to the Nether World in order to save him;[35] the similarity between such a story and the Greek legend of Orpheus is a reflection of how subjective historians can be. As more of the text was translated however, the extended story demonstrated that this could not be the case. Inanna-Ishtar is killed by her sister Ereshkigal during the journey and only resurrected with the help of Enki, but in order to return to the living world she must find a replacement for herself. Of the several gods she meets while on this quest, it is her husband Dumuzi whom she condemns. Angered to find him living prosperously without her,

> She fastened the eye upon him, the eye of death,
> Spoke the word against him, the word of wrath,
> Uttered the cry against him, the cry of guilt:
> "*As for him*, carry him off."[36]

Her actions in this myth display two of her most noticeable behavioral traits: severe irascibility and changeability. Her influence on other deities is also noticeable, however, and proves that despite being female, she is one of the most powerful of the pantheon.

The Goddess of War

Her power as the goddess of war contributes to the portrayal of her as an irascible individual prone to random, wanton destruction. Fumi Karahashi, in her comparative work "Fighting the Mountain: Some Observations on the Sumerian Myths of Inanna and Ninurta," looks at this aspect of Inanna-Ishtar in greater detail. In contrast to Ninurta — who fights his opponent Asag in response to a rebellion — Inanna challenges Mount Ebih I: its "disrespectful behavior as well as its beauty … apparently enrages Inanna and invites its total destruction."[37] The fact that she is angered because the mountain does not bow to her is reflective of other stories that show she becomes petulant whenever she feels slighted or disrespected. Her condemnation of Dumuzi in the Nether World myth and her anger toward Gilgamesh in his epic both show this.

However, she is not only aggravated by her lovers. In "Enki and the World Order," Inanna becomes bitter toward Enki, one of the oldest and most powerful gods, because she believes he slighted her by giving all the special powers to other deities.[38] He pacifies her, but is put on the defensive in doing so. It is important in these sorts of myths to quickly satisfy the goddess since when people fail to do so, they risk the same fate as the unfortunate Mount Ebih: "she [Inanna] leaves the sad destruction behind her: the stones forming the body of Ebih clatter down its flanks."[39] In the comparison, Karahashi points out that, unlike Ninurta, Inanna "destroys for the sake of destruction" and builds nothing out of the wreckage.[40] To the ancient Mesopotamians, her personality would therefore be one way of explaining the chaos of the world and natural disasters.

Her art also demonstrated her strength as a warrior. As one oracle described her in a dream, they imagined her equipped for battle: "The goddess Ishtar who dwells in Arbela came in. Right and left quivers were suspended from her. She was holding a bow in her hand, and a sharp sword was drawn to do battle…. Her face shone like fire. Then [she went out in a frightening way] to defeat your enemies."[41] This type of description gives scholars an idea of what she looked like in Mesopotamian art. One famous piece often believed to represent her is "The Queen of the Night" relief at the British Museum (Figure 2). The horned helmet makes

it clear the image depicts a Mesopotamian deity, but other icons like the lions, jewels and rod-and-ring — held in her hands — also suggest it may have been her. All of these were icons associated with her image. The lion was a symbol of power frequently associated with Inanna-Ishtar in art and literature. The rod-and-ring symbols held in her hands were a symbol of divinity, and items she carried in her descent to the Nether World.[42] Where the Queen of the Night falls short of being Inanna-Ishtar is the lack of her weapons; normally, she carries a scimitar in one hand. It also contains two lions, even though Ishtar is typically only depicted with one.[43] Figure 3 provides a comparison to study this. While the second image also has two lions, which Ishtar sits above, like in Figure 2, it differs by displaying multiple weapons — scimitars and maces — rising from her shoulders.[44] This type of iconography was more common with Ishtar and displayed her skill as the goddess of war.

The Gilgamesh epic also provides support for the recognition of Inanna-Ishtar's powers as the goddess of war. When she goes to Anu in order to receive the Bull of Heaven and take her vengeance on Gilgamesh, the god is at first unwilling. Consequently, she proceeds to threaten him:

> If thou [dost not make] me [the Bull of Heaven],
> I will smash [the doors of the Nether World],
> I will […],
> I will [raise up the dead eating (and) alive],
> So that the dead shall outnumber the living![45]

After additionally assuring him that she can provide food for people and animals in the resulting famine, Anu concedes the Bull to her. As the goddess of war, her power is so impressive that even one of the greatest of the gods does not desire to provoke her wrath. Her power and aggression in this tale is fitting for the goddess who would later be invoked by many kings to support their reign as king.

Inanna-Ishtar was beneficial to kings both as overseer against treaty-breakers and a patron to the king's military strength while conquering new territory or suppressing rebellion. The treaties written by ancient Mesopotamians contained severe consequences for any cities that broke with the agreements. Inanna-Ishtar was frequently invoked "as a war goddess who will break the bows of any treaty breakers and make them crouch defeated."[46] This was a fitting action for her as the goddess of war, but not the only consequence. In another curse, the king Idrimi states, "Whoever shall change the settlement … may Ishtar deliver him into the hands of those who pursue him; may Ishtar … impress

Figure 2: Burney Relief (image of unidentified Mesopotamian goddess, known as the Queen of the Night), ca. 1750 BCE, British Museum, London.

Figure 3: Akkadian cylinder seal depicting Inanna-Ishtar on her throne receiving libations from worshippers, with another goddess (right) attending her; from Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983).

feminine parts into his male parts."[47] This action would not only defeat the king's enemies, but also shame and humiliate them. The conquered enemy should not challenge the king's rule, since the goddess had already demonstrated who she favored.

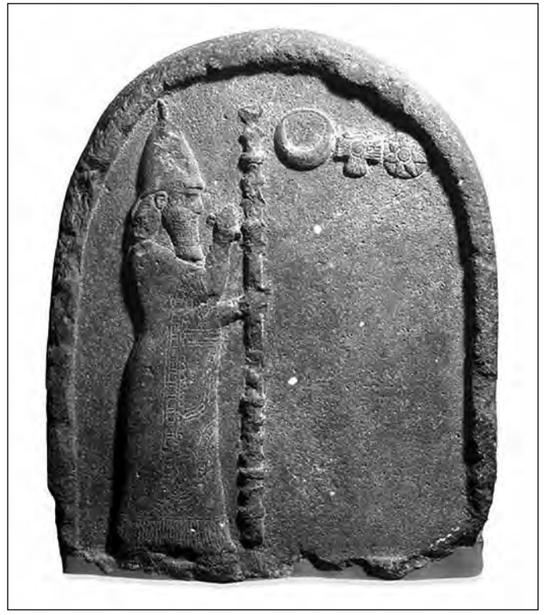

Figure 4: "Stela of Nabonidus" depicting Nabonidus beneath the symbols of Sin (left), Ishtar (middle) and Shamash (right), ca. 555 BCE, British Museum, London.

The acknowledgement of Inanna-Ishtar as a leader and guide in battle was a common theme in Mesopotamian texts. By gaining her favor, opponents were forced to submit. A stela about Nabonidus acknowledges this. Normally, this Babylonian king offered all his praise to Sin — the moon god — but in this artifact he also acknowledged the deities Ishtar and Shamash, who can be seen above him in their common symbolic forms (Figure 4). The text also contributes that "upon the command of Sin <<and>> Ishtar, the Lady-of-Battle, without whom neither hostilities nor reconciliation can occur in the country and no battle can be fought … all the hostile kings, were sending me messages of reconciliation and friendship."[48] Ishtar's power was so great that the other kings' expectations of Nabonidus were unquestionably increased by his relation to her. An oracle's earlier statement to the Assyrian king Esarhaddon also displayed Ishtar's support for the ruling king:

> I am the goddess Ishtar of Arbela,[49] she who (15) has destroyed your enemies at your mere approach…I shall lie in wait for your enemies, I shall give them to you. I, Ishtar of Arbela, will go before you and behind you…O king of Assyria, fear not! The enemy of the king of Assyria I will deliver to slaughter.[50]

Without the support of the goddess of war, Esarhaddon could not have hoped to succeed in his campaigns against neighboring kingdoms. With her guidance and favoritism however, he — like Nabonidus and many of those before and after them — was confident in his power to challenge the world around him.

Kings were not the only individuals to trust in Inanna-Ishtar's strength, however. As previously alluded to, three hymns written by the Sumerian High Priestess Enheduanna were discovered and later translated by Betty De Shong Meador. All three exalt Inanna and even argue that she is the greatest and most powerful of the gods: "queen of rare deeds/ she gathers the me/from heaven and earth/surpassing great An."[51] In these poems, Inanna's strength as the goddess of war is attested to both in literal descriptions and metaphorically. The first of these can be shown in the hymn of her battle against Mount Ebih: "Inanna/holding a pure lance/terror folds in her robes/flood-storm-hurricane adorned/she bolts out in battle/plants a standing shield on the ground/ Great Lady Inanna/battle planner/foe smasher."[52] Here, it is clear that Inanna is physically strong, but "battle planner" also recognizes her intelligence and talent in planning military strategies. When the goddess was being less rational during warfare however, she could be very animal-like in her actions: "mountain wildcat/prowling the roads/shows wet fangs/gnashes her teeth."[53] This sort of imagery evokes the primal, instinctual aspects of the goddess described by Harris as "wild and savage, excessive in her sexuality and love of war."[54] Inanna-Ishtar is capable of being the rational, methodical warrior, but also of frequently being aggressive and instinctual.

A Collector of the *Mes*

A final feature of Inanna-Ishtar's role in ancient Mesopotamian society was as a collector of *me*. "The MEs are the social and cultural elements, both abstract and concrete, of which Sumerians thought their world was made up."[55] The main evidence archaeologists have uncovered about this so far is the tale of "Inanna and the God of Wisdom," also known as "Inanna and Enki." Inanna, desiring to gain the power and respect conveyed by the *me*, decides to go to the Abzu and meet the god of wisdom, Enki. By praising, sitting and drinking with Enki, he quickly becomes compliant and gives her what she desires:

> They toasted each other; they challenged each other.
> Enki, swaying with drink, toasted Inanna:

"In the name of my power! In the name of my holy shrine!
To my daughter Inanna I shall give
The high priesthood! Godship!
The noble, enduring crown! The throne of kingship!"
Inanna replied:
"I take them!"[56]

Their conversation does not end there, though. Enki continues to toast Inanna, and in total she receives 80 *mes*.[57] When Enki becomes sober again, he realizes what has happened and sends his servant to retrieve the *mes* from Inanna. She refuses however and — despite Enki sending sea monsters to stop her — returns home safely to her city of Uruk. Intriguingly, despite being the goddess of war, Inanna does not defeat the monsters herself, but instead relies upon her servant Ninshubur — the same servant who aided her in the "Descent to the Nether World" myth — to do so. She is far more interested in watching the *mes* and returning them to her temple to increase her renown. This myth therefore reinforces Inanna-Ishtar's intelligence and cleverness as tools she could use against others.

Inanna-Ishtar's Cult

Inanna-Ishtar's temples had both similarities to and differences from the temples of other deities. As was the custom and belief, temples maintained statues of the goddess who was believed to reside within it. A. R. George discusses this in his analysis of "Inanna's Descent," arguing that the lines of Ninsubur's lament are not metaphorical, but a literal description of the desecration of her statue and dismantling of the lapis lazuli, silver and other precious objects used to construct it.[58] While caring for Inanna-Ishtar in the form of this statue was a temple's (and its members') primary purpose, there is also evidence that they had to function as an economically independent organization. This can be seen from the numerous tablets accounting for ration lists and trade. G. van Driel's study of tablets found at the Nippur temple indicate the employment or cultic involvement of agricultural workers, house personnel, musicians, gardeners, etc.[59] The temple's records also provide evidence for her main festival, when "payment of personnel belongings to the Inanna temple by other institutions … in month XI exceeds the whole amount of the rations paid in the following month."[60] According to Harris, learning about the nature of these festivals and how the cult prepared them is important, because they are reflective of Inanna-Ishtar's character: "the festivals of the goddess were the time for disorder and antistructure, when reversals in categories of age, species, status and sex all came into play";[61] "the goddess, involves the arena of war, for her playground was the battleground";[62] and her main cultic actors — like the *kurgarru* — performed a ritual sword dance that some scholars argue involved self-mutilation.[63] These festival traditions were a way the cities could embrace Inanna-Ishtar's multi-faceted personality and gender ambiguity. The fact that her worship involved such gender confusion suggests that ancient Mesopotamians recognized that their most powerful goddess broke with the expectations for both male and female.

The scholarly debate about Inanna-Ishtar's main cultic practitioners has already been discussed, but while her cult may be an enigma, there are primary sources that clearly indicate Inanna-Ishtar did have the power to reverse human gender. In the New Year's Festival discussed, there is a procession of individuals who enter "dressed as men on their right sides but as women on their left"[64] and are followed by

> young men with hoops and young women with swords and double axes…priestesses carrying the gir (sword or dagger) and a ba-da-ra (a battle club, prod or knife). The festival climaxes with the kugarra who take a weapon and do something that creates blood. Despite the utter obscurity of the lines, the interpretation has been self-mutilation.[65]

Taken by itself, this festival practice proves only that Inanna-Ishtar's cult involved gender reversal. Comparing it to other sources, however, shows that it was a power of Inanna-Ishtar to change human genders. Na'aman cites multiple instances — such as in the Assyrian royal inscriptions and Hittite military oaths — where Ishtar was shown changing men into women.[66] Other sources also show where she changes women into men. Indeed, Enheduanna's hymns to Inanna suggest that festivals may have involved these gender-mixing ritual behaviors to pay homage to the goddess' power to reverse human gender as a protection for her followers and form of divine justice.

In "Lady of Largest Heart," Enheduanna describes how Inanna came across a maiden "evilly spurned" and aided her. The goddess decides to make her a "manly/woman," and so "in sacred rite/she takes the broach/which pins a woman's robe/breaks the needle, silver thin/consecrates the maiden's heart as male/gives to her a mace … splits the door/where cleverness resides/and there reveals/what lives inside."[67] After assisting the young woman, she goes to the man who scorned her and "breaks his mace/gives to him the broach/which pins a woman's robe."[68] Through these actions, Inanna gives the woman masculine traits of strength and intelligence, and she shames the man by demasculinizing him. Enheduanna exalts the goddess for such action — "these two SHE changed/renamed" — and it is possible that the religious festivals did the same.[69] If cultic members like the *assinnu* really did include manly woman, as Assante suggests, then it would make sense that they would celebrate their goddess's power to reverse genders and protect her faithful worshippers.

Understanding Inanna-Ishtar's powers and personality is therefore difficult and confusing at times, but results in some clear lessons. The goddess embraced both feminine and masculine components of her personality. As the goddess of fertility and love, she embraced her nature as a woman, but her military prowess and aggressiveness in the pursuit of knowledge or sexual desires were both more masculine behaviors. Furthermore, her cultic worship demonstrates that not only was she gender ambiguous, but also possessed the power to change the gender of humans. To prove that Inanna-Ishtar was unrepresentative of how Mesopotamian women were expected and allowed to behave, it is next necessary to identify what these women were allowed to do, and what their gender role in society was.

Identifying the Gender Norm for Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

In order to study how Inanna-Ishtar broke with the female gender norms of ancient Mesopotamia, it is important to also conclude what the female gender norm was. In this regard, most scholars concur that a woman's life revolved around and was predominated by marriage and childbearing. This remains true across the socio-economic divisions of the time: elite women, free women, and slaves. Laws and marriage texts focus the most attention on the marriage process and whether or not a woman was able to bear children. They also show that one of the most important transitions in their lives was moving from being the dependent of a father or brother to being the dependent of their husbands' households. Once married, adultery was not permissible under any circumstances due to the obsession with patrilineal familial lines and divorce was seriously discouraged. Some women did not fall into this typical gender mold, however, and groups like the *harimtu* and *naditu* require separate discussion.

Scholars' long accepted interpretation of ancient Mesopotamian marriages is that they are "basically a sale" — "payment first, at the betrothal, and *traditio* later, at the wedding."[70] M. Stol summarizes the fundamental norms of marriage as

> (a) The fathers of the bride and groom come to an agreement and the couple is to live in the husband's home; (b) The husband can take another wife if no children are born; (c) A man has the right to take a concubine; (d) A man can degradate his wife and promote his concubine; (e) The eldest son receives a double share in the inheritance.

This summary covers the basic ideas behind the marriage, but it does not analyze the numerous variances in a women's life once she was married, or before that. One thing to consider is unfaithfulness or divorce in marriage, both of which occurred. Because the Mesopotamians were so concerned with being able to identify a child's paternal ancestry, adultery was a serious crime that received substantial attention in Mesopotamian laws. Law 7 in "Laws of Ur-Namma" demonstrates the common punishment for this crime. If the woman is found guilty she was killed, but in order to be proven innocent she had to endure the "River Ordeal."[71] It was not easy for a woman to leave her husband, either. The "Laws of Hammurabi" did permit a woman to leave her husband if he could be proven wayward and cruel — law 142 — but if she is found to have falsely accused him, or is the one committing faults, she risks being sent away with nothing, made a slave woman, or even killed.[72] Ultimately, she belonged to her husband and since her primary task was to bear children, she could not engage in extramarital relationships.

With elite and wealthy women, the analogy of a marriage to a sale becomes even more appropriate, yet these women also exercised rights and influence poorer women and slaves could not. "Rulers regularly gave and received ranking women in diplomatic unions."[73] There is evidence that kings would arrange marriages for princesses that could secure ties to other nations and ensure the success of the kingdom. The women were not just objects however; Amy R. Gansell proposes that "in addition to their domestic and reproductive functions … elite women contributed to the male-dominated spheres of the arts, economy, religion, and government."[74] The truth in this statement can be seen from works like Enheduanna's hymns or the stelae records of Adad-guppi, mother of Babylon's King Nabonidus, who exercised considerable influence over her son's religious and political beliefs.[75] Perhaps elite women and their dowries

were traded through marriage agreements, but the women were still able to influence their husbands and lives.

To gain influence and a permanent position in the household, women were expected to bear children after marriage. According to Stol after marriage "she is now 'the bride' (*kallatum*) and she seems to keep this title until her first child is born." If a woman failed to produce children she risked her position as the only wife: "in theory monogamy was the rule, but in practice what might be called 'secondary wives,' drawn from among the slaves, were also tolerated."[76] The "Laws of Lipit-Ishtar" indicate this in laws 24-31: in order to produce more children a man may take a second wife. He may also adopt children he had by a slave or *karkid*.[77] Childbearing so that one's husband would have an heir was so important Mesopotamians were willing to alter the normal family structure.

Some ancient Mesopotamian women were also involved in work aside from that associated with their marriage. One form of labor was slavery. One could become a slave in numerous ways, such as by birth, but one of the most notable is that "a father of a family might be driven by destitution to sell as slaves his wife or children"[78] While most scholars might focus on the economic implications of this fact, the power the husband exercises over his wife and her children is so extreme it can only reinforce the image of a woman being owned and traded by her father or husband. This may have been only a last resort, but pledging wives, children and other slaves to a creditor as security on a debt "was not an unusual step and having them released appears to be one of the main problems."[79] Even though individuals given as security were not supposed to be kept in slavery for more than four years, this did not guarantee that their owners would willingly give them up at the end of that term.[80]

There were types of work available to free women as well. In addition to common domestic chores, some "wives of Old Assyrian merchants … were actively involved in their husband's business in the colonies"[81] A small number of women were even able to manage their own landed estates.[82] While these jobs were associated with the more well-to-do, there were also occupations available to poorer classes. Some women became employed by temples as agricultural workers,[83] weavers, flour-grinders, and other kinds of laborers.[84] The various types of jobs they completed can be found by the ration lists and laws written to protect them. On these it can be seen that a women's labor was worth only half of what a man would receive for similar leveled work; women received only half the rations men did.[85] There were also laws that protected them and mandated what kind of treatment female workers should receive.

One of the most recorded female vocations was that of the bar-wife or innkeeper. In ancient Mesopotamia it was traditional that single women owned all the taverns. According to Stol, these women not only provided beer to their customers, but also small loans.[86] This is supported by law l of the "Laws of X": "If a woman innkeeper gives one of her vats (of beer on credit) to a man, [she shall receive] 50 silas of grain at the harvest."[87] Despite having these extra rights, however, the bar-wives also had additional responsibilities. If one was caught conducting illegal trades and convicted then the authorities "shall cast her into the water."[88] Law 109 of Hammurabi's laws also states "if there should be a woman innkeeper in whose house criminals congregate, and she does not seize those criminals and lead them off to the palace authorities, that woman innkeeper shall be killed."[89] These were strict consequences for crimes that may have only resulted in a man being fined. Despite being independent, bar-wives were still low on the social scale and had their own rules to be aware of.

Discussing the role of bar-wives and taverns leads to Assante's analysis of the *karkid* and *harimtu*, who were frequently associated with these institutions.[90] Early scholars of ancient Mesopotamia consistently translated these two words as "prostitute," but Assante reliably argues that these words have nothing to do with prostitution.[91] Instead, the words roughly translate as "a woman who is neither 'the daughter of a man' nor 'the wife of a man.' She was thus a woman separated from the patriarchal household, as the stem verb *haramu*, 'to separate,' indicates."[92] Understanding this correction allows a more accurate study of primary sources in order to uncover their role in society. One matter of significance is that because they were separate from the patriarchal ties that regulated most women, *karkid/harimtu* had sexual liberty unknown to other females. Consider law 27 of the "Laws of Lipit-Ishtar:"

> If a man's wife does not bear him a child but a prostitute from the street does bear him a child, he shall provide grain, oil, and clothing rations for the prostitute, and the child whom the prostitute bore him shall be his heir; as long as his wife is alive, the prostitute will not reside in the house with his first-ranking wife.[93]

To understand the relevance of this law, it is first important to recognize that Martha T. Roth has translated *karkid* as prostitute; the transliteration from cuneiform uses "*kar-kid-da*," "*kar-kid-ba*," "*kar-kid-dè*," and "*kar-kid*" in each respective clause of the law. If one reconsiders the law then using Assante's definition of *karkid*, they can see how it demonstrates that the *karkid/harimtu* were free from the sexual limitations of women within the normal patriarchal status. Rather than being punished or left to a male relative's judgment for having a child outside of normal family relations, the *karkum* is provided for after producing the childless man an heir. She is not considered an equal to the wife, a woman living respectfully within the traditional female gender role, but she is also not mistreated. This could perhaps be a result of the *karkid/harimtu*'s relation to Ishtar, who was the patron goddess of these unmarried women. This relationship is reinforced "in the Akkadian *Erra Epic* (4,52-53)…where Uruk is said to be 'the city of *kezertu*'s, *samhatu*'s and *harimtu*'s, whom Ishtar deprived of husbands and reckoned as her own."[94] By claiming them, Ishtar allowed these women to live a life very distinct from the average female, and it is telling that she patronized women who failed to conform to normal female gender roles of Mesopotamia.

The final distinct group of women who should be discussed individually is the *naditu*. As was mentioned previously, *naditu* stood out from the average women because they were not permitted to bear children and had many privileges similar to men. Normally, *naditu* lived with a group of women in the *gagum*,[95] but they could also marry, manage private estates, and tend to other private interests.[96] Concerning marriage, a *naditu* was not allowed to have children, so she was expected to provide another means for her husband to do so. The source explanations for this differ. In the "Laws of Hammurabi," law 144 states that "if a man marries a *naditu*, and that *naditu* gives a slave woman to her husband, and thus she provides children, but that man then decides to marry a *sugitu*, they will not permit that man to do so, he will not marry the *sugitu*."[97]

In this situation, by providing a slave woman as a second "wife," the *naditu* fulfills both her obligation to provide children to her husband and her obligation to refrain from bearing children herself. Stol suggests, however, that a *naditu* would bring "her sister with her as second wife (the *sugetum*); this woman was expected to give birth to the children. She was the physical sister and marrying two sisters may have been an ancient tradition."[98] These two sources provide very different explanations for how a *naditu* provided children in marriage, but it is possible the tradition varied across time periods and in different cities. What is evident is that even though they differed from the gender norm somewhat, they were also expected to fulfill it in alternative ways.

While not all women fell under the same strict gender norm, most lived within the structure where marriage dominated a women's life and childbearing was her ultimate purpose. Within this patriarchal family structure, she was the subject and effectively property of her husband and his family. Some individuals did step outside strict family ties though; elite women were able to use their influence and knowledge to become involved in politics, religion and other aspects of culture and lower class women had different types of work available to them as a means to earn extra income. The most distinct class of women though was the *kakid/harimtu*, who were not associated with a father or a husband. This gave them the ability to pursue careers and sexual lives free from the control of traditional patriarchal ties.

A Comparison of Inanna-Ishtar and Ancient Mesopotamian Women

Having familiarized oneself with the historiography around Inanna-Ishtar, the personality and characteristics of the goddess, and the normal female gender roles of the time period, it becomes possible to examine how Inanna-Ishtar compared to women of the time. Because the primary role of women in ancient Mesopotamia was as a wife and a mother, this forms the primary comparison between the two. However Inanna-Ishtar's traits as the goddess of war and a collector of *me* are a vital part of her identity, and must also be discussed because of the fact that they severely break the goddess apart from purely feminine behavior.

Like most women in Mesopotamia, Inanna-Ishtar was married, but her role as a wife was remarkably different from what women were normally expected to have. Whereas human women's main purpose as a wife was to bear children for their husbands, Inanna-Ishtar never provides a child for her husband Dumuzi. Instead, her behavior was much more primal as she sought and gave sexual love and pleasure. The "Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi" makes this relationship explicit in a way human love is not described:

Inanna spoke:

"…He laid his hands on my holy vulva,
He smoothed my black boat with cream,
He quickened my narrow boat with milk,
He caressed me on the bed.

Now I will caress my high priest on the bed,
I will caress the faithful shepherd Dumuzi,

I will caress his loins, the shepherdship of the land,
I will decree a sweet fate for him."[99]

The available sources neither prove nor deny whether human women were expected to take the same pleasure in carnal relations with their husbands, but having a well-known and popular goddess who did so suggests they might have.

On the other hand, not everything Inanna-Ishtar did as a lover would be allowed for human women. While of these concepts it is easiest to say that Inanna-Ishtar was much freer with her love, this is not exactly true. She did take multiple lovers over the thousands of years she was worshipped, but she was generally faithful to them during the time she was in love with them. Her "marriages" to Mesopotamian kings were even described in terms of those kings being incarnations of her husband Dumuzi.[100] Mesopotamian women were also allowed to remarry after the death of their husbands, though they were legally less valued as widows than as first-time brides.[101] In these ways the women are at least similar to Inanna-Ishtar, but where the goddess completely breaks with any plausible norm of the female gender role is in her murder of her husband. Whereas Mesopotamian women were never even allowed to serve as witness in a court case,[102] Inanna-Ishtar serves as both judge and jury for Dumuzi when she says "As for *him*, carry him off."[103] This is a drastic reversal from the human women who were so under their husbands' control, they could give them away as slaves. By condemning her husband to death, as well as never producing an heir for her husband, Inanna-Ishtar breaks with the women's most important gender roles of obedience and reproductive usefulness.

Despite never having any children in her mythology, Inanna-Ishtar was as time described as a mother or protective figure. Gertrud Farber translates one Old Babylonian incantation that invoked Inanna to help a woman go through labor: "The woman who was about to give birth steered the *Gi*-baot through the water,/pure Inanna steered the *Gi*-boat through the water."[104] Even though Inanna was a protective deity in these circumstances, she still was only rarely described as actually being a mother. The Assyrian king Assurbanipal was one individual who did fancy her this way. According to Porter, Ishtar of Nineveh was described as his mother, and Ishtar of Arbela was his nanny.[105] Additionally, in an oracular dream, a priest described her relation to him as motherly: "You [Assurbanipal] were standing in front of her and she spoke to you like a real mother…. She wrapped you in her lovely babysling, protecting your entire body."[106] These examples could have demonstrated either sincere belief, or propaganda to legitimize Assurbanipal's kingship in a way similar to when other kings described themselves as the husband of Inanna-Ishtar. Despite the example of this one king, however, Inanna-Ishtar was still more frequently depicted as a lover and warrior than as a mother. Her life did not revolve around the features of bearing children and raising them for her husband, unlike the women of Mesopotamia.

It is in her role as the goddess of war where Inanna-Ishtar truly broke with feminine behavior and embraced a masculine side not acceptable to human women. Unlike women, her iconography frequently displays her carrying weapons and other implements of war. The literature about her also places great influence on her military might. In contrast, the only discovered evidence that Mesopotamian women might have engaged in any form of military show is Assante's suggestion that *assinnu* may have been women. Even then, the possibility is confined to a small sub-sect of individuals who are non-representative of the general female population. For most women, they were expected to work in the home of a male relation or engage in domestic work with low compensation values. It was only those women specifically "claimed" by Inanna-Ishtar or other deities who were allowed to break with the Mesopotamia's gender norm.

What then was Inanna-Ishtar's purpose if not to provide a divine representation of how women should behave? Why would such a dedicated lover, fertile benefactress, and clever collector of *me* also commit matricide, be a violent warrior, and destroy so arbitrarily? Scholars suggest that Inanna-Ishtar originated and developed as a way to explain the natural disasters and unpredictability of the dangerous world they lived in. Through her affectionate and/or orderly traits they could explain why the world would become benign and safe or why a kingdom had success militarily. In contrast, through her violent destruction and chaos priests could explain the floods, famine, and other catastrophes that struck Mesopotamian cities. As Enheduanna describes Inanna in the battle against Ebih, when

FURY OVERTURNS HER HEART!
…
bedlam unleashed
She sends down a raging battle
Hurls a storm from her wide arms
To the ground below
…
And hurricane winds
Swift piercing, stinging
Fly with Inanna's fury
Suck loosened earth into sweet air.[107]

Perhaps this was why so many ancient Mesopotamian cities had temples to Inanna-Ishtar. As such a powerful goddess, it was important to at least attempt to appease her and retain her favor at all times. She did not represent to them how a socially acceptable women should act and behave, but was instead an intricate mix of both the feminine and masculine. Through her multiple complex roles as a goddess of fertility, love, war and collector of the *me*, Inanna-Ishtar could bring both prosperity and calamity to this ancient society.

Conclusion

Inanna-Ishtar was an enigma in her behaviors, and this has caused scholars considerable discord and confusion while studying her. To this day, new ideas, translations, and interpretations of the goddess and her cult are being argued in an academic setting. While her iconography is somewhat recognizable, the lack of definite labels on many images leads to the question of whether it was really her. Literature also leaves scholars with important questions such as how could there be multiple Ishtars at once, and what sex and gender did her cult worshippers actually possess? What has become clear is that her main functions as a deity were as the goddess of love and the goddess of war. In addition, early renditions of Inanna described her as a goddess of fertility, and throughout history Mesopotamians lauded her success in collecting *me* from Enki and the underworld. But her personality and character stand out because of how much they contrast with the women of ancient Mesopotamia, whose lives for most revolved around marriage, producing children, and in effect being the property of their husbands or other male relatives. Some may find it easy to dismiss this as a simple result of Inanna-Ishtar being a goddess and above insignificant, human rules, but the explanation is not that simple. There were many other Mesopotamian goddesses who did conform to the female gender roles of the era. Inanna-Ishtar specifically embraces both female and male characteristics; she was an anomaly who broke gender norms more drastically than any other figure in ancient Mesopotamian mythology or history.

Endnotes

[1] Rivkah Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites," *History of Religions* 30, no. 3 (February 1991), 263.

[2] Samuel Noah Kramer was an Assyriologist who received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania's Oriental Studies Department in 1930; see Ake W. Sjoberg, "Samuel Noah Kramer (28 September 1897-26 November 1990)," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 138, no. 1 (March 1994): 171.

[3] Samuel Noah Kramer, "'Inanna's Descent to the Nether World' Continued," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 94, no. 4 (August 25, 1950): 361; Gertrud Farber, "'Inanna and Enki' in Geneva: A Sumerian Myth Revisited," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 54, no. 4 (October 1995): 287.

[4] Sjoberg, "Samuel Noah Kramer," 172.

[5] Miroslav Marcovich, "From Ishtar to Aphrodite," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 30, no. 2 (1996): 46.

[6] Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox," 263.

[7] Julia Assante, "Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?: The Modern Prostituting of Ishtar, Her Clergy, and Her Cults," in *Tempelprostitution im Altertum: Fakten und Fiktionen,* ed. T. S. Scheer (Berlin: Oikumene, 2009), 24.

[8] Albrecht Goetze, "Early Dynastic Dedication Inscriptions from Nippur," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 23, no. 2 (1970): 39.

[9] G. Van Driel, "Nippur and the Inanna Temple during the Ur III Period," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 3 (1995): 395.

[10] Goetze, "Early Dynastic Dedication Inscriptions from Nippur," 39.

[11] Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 171.

[12] Betty De Shong Meador, *Inanna lady of Largest Heart: Poems of the Sumerian High Priestess Enheduanna* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), xi.

[13] M. Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 2 (1995): 140.

[14] Dominique Collon, *The Queen of the Night* (London: British Museum Press, 2005), 39-41.

[15] Ibid., 43.

[16] Goetze, "Early Dynastic Dedication Inscriptions from Nippur," 40.

[17] Nadav Na'aman, "The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 39, no. 3 (July 1980): 209-11.

[18] Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox," 276.

[19] Na'aman, "The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh," 211.

[20] Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox," 268.

[21] Assante, "Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?," 23-54.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Barbara Nevling Porter, "Ishtar of Ninevah and Her Collaborator, Ishtar of Arbela, in the Reign of Assurbanipal," *Iraq* 66 (2004): 41.

[24] Ibid., 43.

[25] Charles Keith Maisels, *The Near East: Archaeology in the "Cradle of Civilization"* (London: Routledge, 1993), 188.

[26] Samuel Noah Kramer, "Inanna and Sulgi: A Sumerian Fertility Song," *Iraq* 31, no. 1 (1969): 18.

[27] Ibid., 20, 22.

[28] James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 416-17.
[29] Ibid., 417.
[30] Assante, "Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?," 29.
[31] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 50.
[32] Ibid., 51.
[33] Kramer, *The Sumerians,* 252-53.
[34] Ibid., 251.
[35] Kramer, "'Inanna's Descent to the Nether World' Continued," 363.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Karahashi Fumi, "Fighting the Mountain: Some Observations on the Sumerian Myths of Inanna and Ninurta," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 63, no. 2 (April 2004): 114.
[38] Kramer, *The Sumerians,* 171, 173.
[39] Fumi, "Fighting the Mountain," 118.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 400.
[42] Collon, *The Queen of the Night,* 30.
[43] Ibid., 43.
[44] Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 189.
[45] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 52.
[46] Porter, "Ishtar of Ninevah and Her Collaborator," 43.
[47] Na'aman, "The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh," 210.
[48] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East,* 279.
[49] This Ishtar of Arbela is the same one discussed in Porter's analysis of the multiple Ishtars during the Neo-Assyrian period. Porter states that "Ishtar of Arbela only appears in the accounts of military activity," which would explain why she is the one specifically mentioned in this separate text; see Porter, "Ishtar of Ninevah and Her Collaborator," 43.
[50] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East,* 398.
[51] Meador, *Inanna Lady of Largest Heart*, 117.
[52] Ibid., 91.
[53] Ibid., 119.
[54] Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox," 264.
[55] Fumi, "Fighting the Mountain," 113.
[56] Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth*, 14.
[57] Ibid., 16-18.
[58] A. R. George, "Observations on a Passage of 'Inanna's Descent,'" *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 37, no. 1 (1985): 112.
[59] G. van Driel, *Nippur and the Inanna Temple*, 399-400.
[60] Ibid., 402.
[61] Harris, "Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox," 273.
[62] Ibid., 274.
[63] Ibid., 276.
[64] Assante, "Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?," 35.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Na'aman, "The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh," 211.
[67] Meador, *Inanna lady of Largest Heart*, 123-124.
[68] Ibid., 124.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," 126.
[71] Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor,* 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 17-18.
[72] Ibid., 109.
[73] Amy R. Gansell, "Women in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World,* eds. Sharon L. James and Sheila Dillon (West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), 20.
[74] Ibid., 11.
[75] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 275.
[76] Georges Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria,* trans. K. R. and A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1954), 15.
[77] Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 30-31.
[78] Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria*, 19.
[79] M. Stol, *Women in Mesopotamia*, 136.
[80] Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria,* 23.
[81] Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia 136.
[82] Ibid.
[83] van Driel, "Nippur and the Inanna Temple," 402.
[84] Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," 137.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 38.
[88] Ibid., 101.
[89] Ibid.
[90] These transliterations represent the Sumerian and Akkadian languages respectively.
[91] This is an English term that has no word in the ancient languages since it was not considered a profession.
[92] Assante, "Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?," 32.
[93] Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 31.
[94] Assante, "Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?," 32.
[95] Gwendolyn Leick, *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 178.
[96] Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 88.
[97] Ibid., 108.
[98] Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," 129.
[99] Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth*, 44.
[100] Kramer, "Inanna and Sulgi," 18.
[101] Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 114-15.
[102] Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia," 140.
[103] Kramer, "'Inanna's Descent to the Nether World' Continued," 363.
[104] Gertrud Farber, "Old Babylonian Childbirth Incantation," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43, no. 4 (October 1984): 314.
[105] Porter, "Ishtar of Ninevah and Her Collaborator," 42.
[106] Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 400.
[107] Meador, *Inanna Lady of Largest Heart*, 99.

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