



Women in The Epic of Gilgamesh

Women in Antiquity | Meeting #2

1



Upcoming Dates

- Monday, October 12
Images Essay
- Monday, October 26
Proposal due
- Sunday, September 13
Responses for Week 2 Due

2

Five things today

- Syllabus and assignments (cont'd)
- Mesopotamia and Sumer
- The Epic of Gilgamesh
- Enkidu and Shamhat
- Gilgamesh and the goddess

3



4

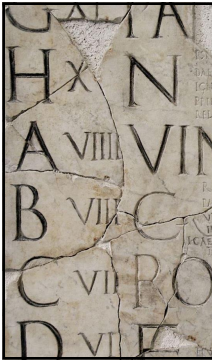


Grading

Your grade for the course will be determined from the following:

● Attendance, Responses, and Quizzes	20%
Each week there will be:	
– attendance taken at class meetings,	5%
– a required online post in response to a source, and	5%
– a short, 5-minute in-class quiz.	10%
● Presentations	15%
– one on one of the assigned primary sources, and	7½%
– one on one of the assigned secondary sources.	7½%
A written version is due a week after your presentation.	
● Written Assignments	20%
– a 3-to-4 page essay on gender images, and	10%
– a 6-to-8 page term paper using evidence to take a position on a research topic of your choice relating to gender in the ancient world.	10%
● Final Exam	30%

5



Meetings and Reading Assignments



1. Introduction and Overview
Tuesday, February 10

2. The Greek World
Wednesday, February 11

3. The Greek World
Thursday, February 12

4. The Greek World
Friday, February 13

GENDER AND THE GREEKS



3. Ancient Goddesses and Gods
Tuesday, February 10

● Before the meeting, read all of the following:

- ch. 1, "Goddesses and Gods"
- "Theophrastus"

● Before the meeting, read one of the following:

- "The Cult of Demeter and Kore" / Olson
- "The Greek Family in History and Myth" / Slater
- "Signifying Difference: The Myth of Pandora" / Griffin

6

The Images Essay

The Museum Option

The Film Option

7

The Proposal

- One paragraph
- Contains:
 - Problem (your topic in the form of a question)
 - Possible answers ("Some say... others say...")
 - Your provisional thesis ("I believe...")
- Essentially the intro to your final paper

Jane Student-Smith
 3 October 2022
 History of All Ancient Things
 Prof. Wilson

Proposal: Hannibal and the Elephants

Hannibal Barca, the great Carthaginian general, brought 37 war elephants with him over the Alps into Italy, and at the climactic Battle of Zama they had a front line that included 80 elephants. Did Hannibal's elephants really make a difference? Some say that Hannibal's elephants were crucial in establishing the morale of his troops against the legendary Roman legions and in intimidating other armies along the way into alliances; but others say that Hannibal's elephants did the Carthaginian side more harm than good in their fight with Rome. I believe that Hannibal's use of elephants was a mistake, not because war elephants were a dumb idea in general, but because Roman adaptability meant that the Romans would inevitably find a way around them.

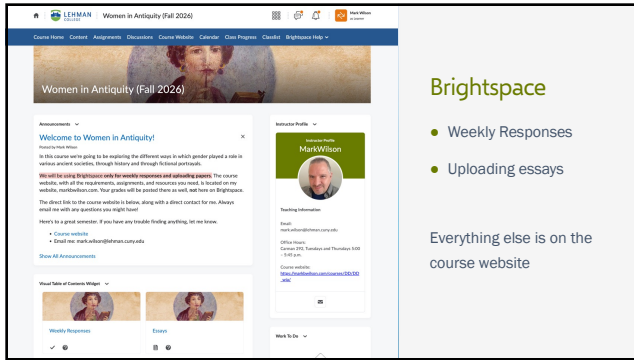
Note that the thesis is
 (a) a statement of opinion you can back up with evidence, and
 (b) specific as to the reasons why the thesis will be supported.

8

Approaching the course

- Come to class prepared
- Read critically
- Ask questions
- Take notes
- Discuss with each other
- Manage your time
- Use me as a resource

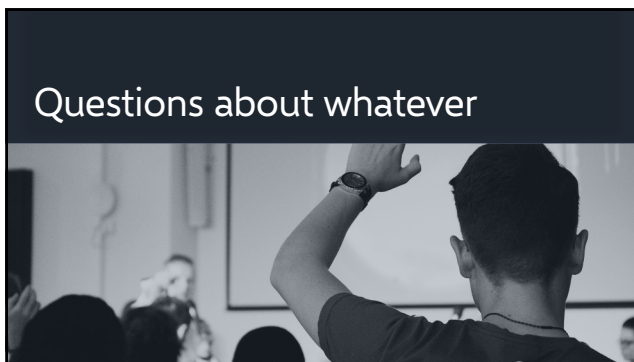
9



10



11

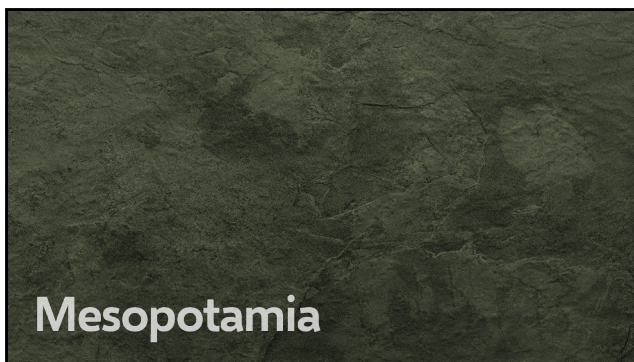


12

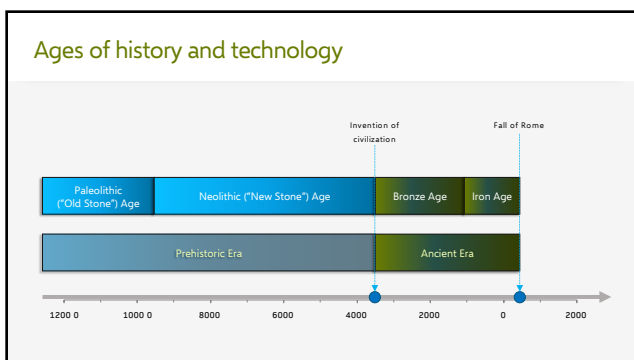
website:
markbwilson.com

email:
mark.wilson@lehman.cuny.edu

13



14



15



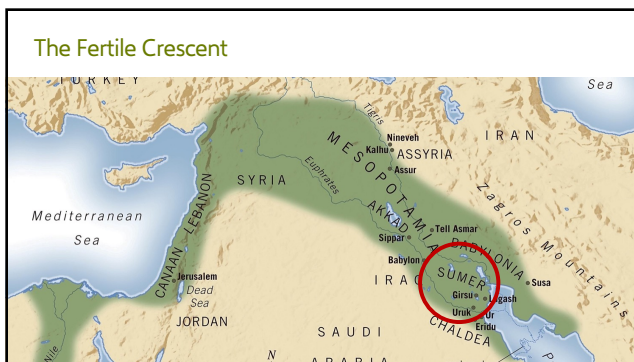
A map of Mesopotamia, the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Tigris River flows from the north-northwest to the south-southeast, and the Euphrates River flows from the north to the south-southeast. Major cities marked with red dots include Nineveh, Assur, Akkad, Babylon, Sumer, Lagash, and Uruk. The region is divided into Assyria to the north, Mesopotamia in the center, and Elam to the east. The Persian Gulf is visible at the bottom right.



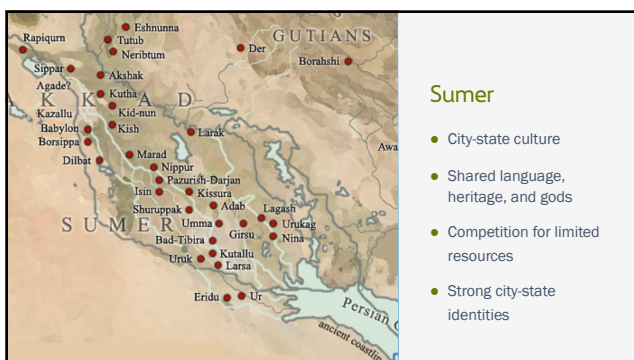
18



19



20



21

Rivalry for resources leads to warfare



22



Ziggurat

- Massive temple at the heart of a Sumerian city-state
- Sacred home of the patron god
- Visible focus of city-state identity

23

The Deluge

- Massive flood destroys cities of Sumer
- Lone survivor separated from humanity
- Sumerian gods are sometimes nurturing, sometimes destructive
- Death is universal



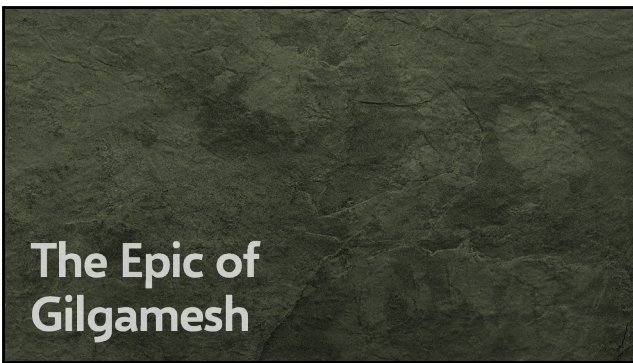
24



Life and afterlife

- Sumerian afterlife is a place of impotence
- Gods cannot be trusted
- The living must act
- Build to create a strong and enduring future

25



The Epic of Gilgamesh

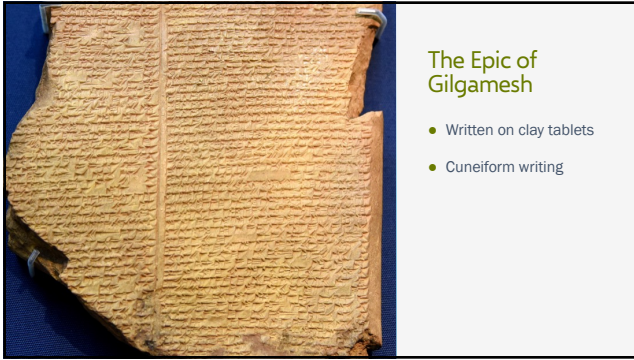
26



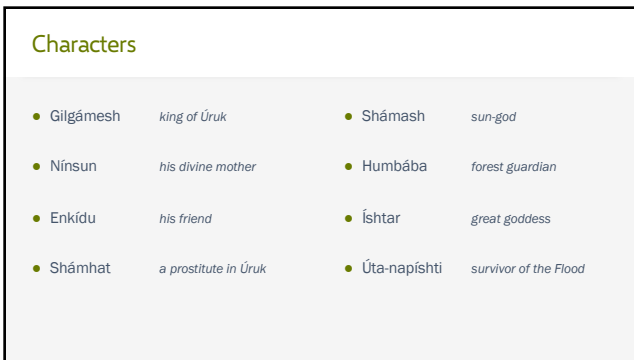
King Gilgamesh

- Named in the Sumerian list of kings
- Used as a legendary figure
- Story explores Sumerian ideas of humanity and community

27



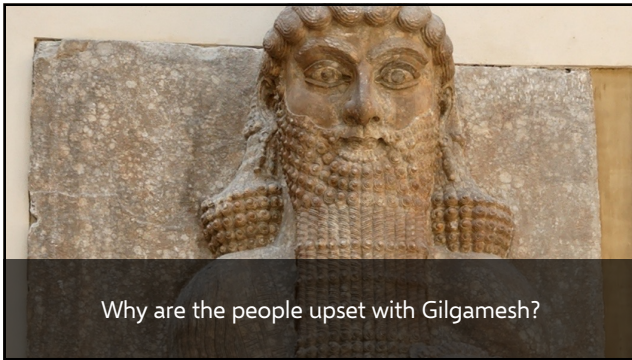
28



29



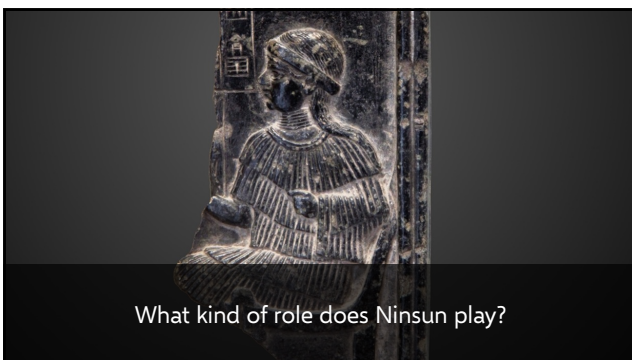
30



31



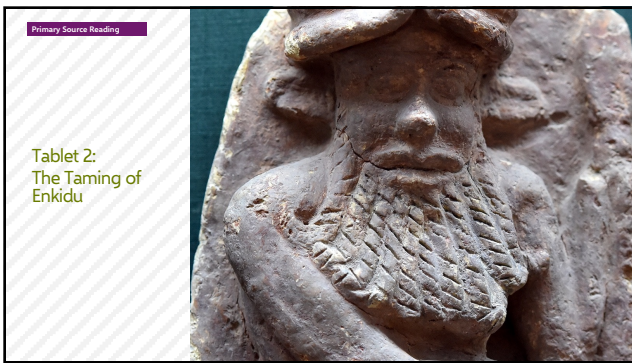
32



33



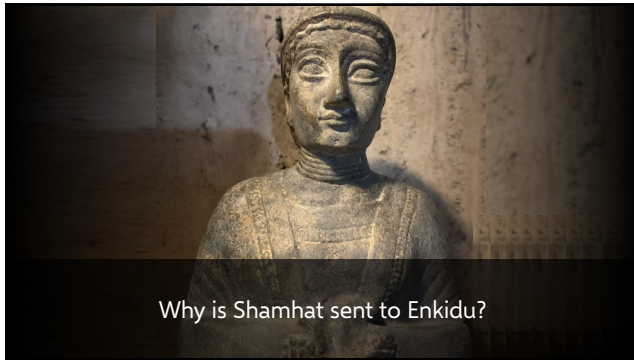
34



35



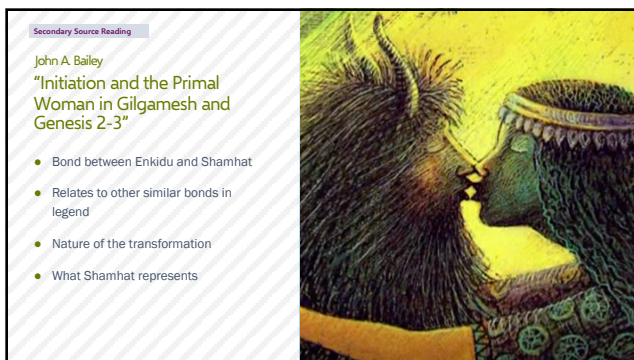
36



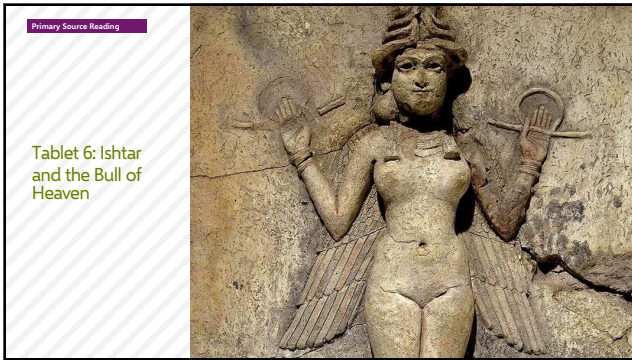
37



38



39



40



41



42

Secondary Source Reading

Tzvi Abusch
"Ishtar's Proposal and Gilgamesh's Refusal"

- Ishtar's proposal has obvious and not-so-obvious consequences
 - Ishtar's treatment of past lovers
 - Refusal to pass from mortal life into being consort if goddess



43

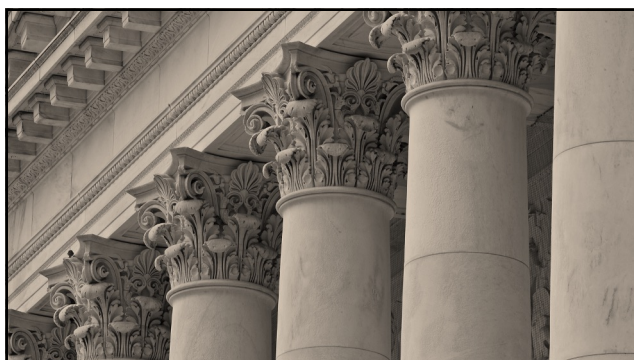
Secondary Source Reading

Rivkah Harris
"Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites"

- Complex and multifaceted, as a god and as a female god
- Reflects the Sumerians' understanding of divinity
- Ishtar as a unique kind of goddess



44



45
