

ABSTRACTS

**Maria-Giovanna Biga** (Università di Roma – Sapienza, Italy)

**Women at work at the Ebla court (a Syrian court of third millennium BC.)**

All Eblaite women, including the most important ladies of the court, span and wove and made their own clothes and those for the family. To do this they received wool from the central administration. The ladies of the court, the queen mother, the queen, the women of the king's harem, the princesses received, also on important occasions, textiles from central administration. Some important ladies of the court were responsible for workshops in which hundreds of anonymous women and their children worked to produce textiles which were the most precious products of Ebla. Many other female workers, all anonymous, are attested at the Ebla court: women milling flour, baking bread, cooking, working in the kitchens of the palace, preparing vegetables, carrying water etc. Female dancers and singers are attested too, quoted by their personal names. Wet-nurses, some referred to by the personal name, some anonymous are quoted too. Many anonymous women prepared lotions and perfumed oils for the most important ladies of the court. Also some women physicians are attested. All these workers received rations of food and wool as payment and frequency of these rations will be examined.

**Catherine Breniquet** (Université Blaise-Pascal – Clermont II, France)

**Weaving, potting and churning: women at work during the Uruk period. Evidences from the cylinder seals**

Some cylinder seals from the late Uruk period depict women involved in different activities. Most of them are referred to as “pig-tailed ladies” because of their specific hairdressing. The aim of this contribution is to precise several points: the general organization of the scenes, the activities they performed – and we can at least isolate three tasks: weaving (and spinning), potting and churning –, and their identity. Are they ordinary citizens involved in daily life activities? Are they high rank ladies working for their kin within the frame of the political economy? Could they be religious people such as nuns for instance, working for the temple? The possible meanings of the working scenes will be discussed too within the frame of the Uruk period analyze.

**Philippe Clancier** (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)

**Temple Female Staff and Power during the Neo-Assyrian Period: the Role of Prophetesses**

The Neo-Assyrian sources, numerous for the study of palaces and court management, are limited when looking at female activities in temples. However, cuneiform texts document a specific sector: the role of female prophetess. In this lecture, we will analyze their status and we will try to understand their influence on the Neo-Assyrian kings politics.

**Jerrold Cooper** (John Hopkins University, USA)

**The Job of Sex: The Social and Economic Role of Prostitutes in Ancient Mesopotamia**

Prostitution was at the least a very old profession in ancient Mesopotamia, but direct evidence for women's sex work is less abundant than the evidence for, say, their work as millers, weavers or musicians. This paper will contextualize sex work (outside the home) socially and economically in ancient Mesopotamia, and then look at Mesopotamian prostitution within the broader context of traditional complex societies in general. Do social systems in which men strictly control the sexuality of "their" women (wives, sisters, daughters) inevitably create a market for sex work?

**Laura Cousin** (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)

**Beauty experts in the documentation of the first millennium B.C.: the female perfume-makers**

There are not many female perfume-makers in the documentation of the first millennium, but they appear in a very precise context, and this paper will focus on their origins. A female perfume-maker is attested in *SAA* 7 24, an imperial record, which presents a very detailed list of women officiating in the palace of Nineveh. There are no details about her, but in the list, only eleven women are Assyrians, the others are Arameans, Kushites, Tyrians, Kassites, people from Arpad, Ashdod, and Hittites. The second document is Bab 28122, part of the lot N1 from the archives of the Southern Palace of Babylon, in which several persons are mentioned: the king Joiakin and his family, other people from Judah, and also six female perfume-makers. It is of course interesting to note that the origin of the

female perfume-makers for the palace of Babylon remains unknown. But, once more, these appear in a list which places them in contact with people of a foreign origin, for example coming from the West. Thus, this study will focus on the two following questions: in the same way as certain products destined for perfume-making come from the West, could we also reasonably suggest that these women also come from this area? Further, did they come to Babylon or Assyria because they are experts in their trade?

**Sophie Démare-Lafont** (Université Paris 2 – Panthéon-Assas, France)

**Women at work in Mesopotamia: the legal point of view**

This overview is intended to make an assessment of how law collections and legal documents deal with economic activities of women. The legislative data on the subject are rather meager; only several types of feminine occupations are mentioned (innkeeper, wet nurses, prostitutes) and it is usually difficult to figure out the legal framework in which they operated, except for the wet nurse, who was hired by contract.

If we turn to the legal deeds and documents, the material is more abundant but not always relevant or illuminating. Most of the tablets are administrative because unskilled female labor force was often of servile status. Contracts were sometimes drafted for female slaves when they took on responsibilities as head of a business. But the purpose of these agreements was less to secure their rights than to hold them accountable for their management.

A significant part of the economic production took place in the domestic setting, leaving therefore no legal remnants but only sporadic allusions in the epistolary sources. Female employers were mostly queens, nuns and housewives, running large houses or estates with no specific difference with men, as far as we can see.

All in all, the legal side of the economic activities of women raises more questions than it provides answers.

**Agnès Garcia-Ventura** (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain)

**Weaving textiles, weaving lives: engendering Ur III textile work force**

Applying the perspectives of gender studies to the analysis of cuneiform texts is a matter of choice. Proposals identified as “gender studies” are diverse and, despite most of them share some common points, they present clear differences too. In this communication I aim to show how applying 2 of these possible gender studies perspectives lead us to different interpretations of the sources, and then different pictures of women at work. I will discuss mainly the relevance of gender-based division of work and of intersectionality. I will try to defend that intersectionality offers a more complex and complete picture if compared to the gender-based division of work when scrutinizing Ur III textile production.

To do it, I will concentrate on some Sumerian terms related to work force. The use of terms that we translate today as “female worker”, “weaver”, “overseer” or “offspring” involves a particular worldview. Here I aim to identify which elements are highlighted when using each word, paying particular attention to how gender, status and specialization are combined in all these different words.

**Katrien De Graef** (Ghent University, Belgium)

**Cherchez la femme!**

**The Economic Role of Nadītu Priestesses in Old Babylonian Sippar**

It is well known, since the studies of Rivkah Harris that, although Old Babylonian women in general were not very economically active, there is one class of them, the *nadiātu* of Šamaš, who were particularly present in this domain. So much even that they seem to predominate, according to some, as an anomaly in a patriarchal society. Stone (1982) explained away this predominance by the invocation of the unevenness of our documentation: if we have so many *nadītu* contracts this is because the illegal excavators of Sippar chanced upon a number of *nadītu* archives. At present, having many more texts at our disposal as well as a better understanding of how archives were composed, we can safely assume Stone’s arguments make no sense: the preponderance of *nadītu* texts from Sippar is by no means a result of selective sampling but is a true reflection of Old Babylonian economic activity in Sippar.

The question thus arises why the *nadiātu* played such an important economic role in Old

Babylonian Sippar. In this paper I will try to answer that question by arguing that this importance lies, at least partly, in their role in transferring property within the family. As the *nadiātu* priestesses of Šamaš were not allowed to bear children, the property these women accumulated during their lives — which were in most cases rather long because they did not give birth and consequently did not risk to die in childbirth — would in nearly all cases revert to the family, as texts stipulate that one of their brothers would be their heir or that they adopted a niece — who became *nadītu* priestess of Šamaš in her turn — to whom they transmitted their possessions. The obvious advantage of this was that, instead of being divided by inheritance, the part of the family property of the *nadītu* priestess remained undivided and was sometimes even substantially extended when handed over to the next generation.

In this sense, the originally purely religious character of the *nadītu* institution, no doubt adopted from the older but similar Sumerian LUKUR institution, gradually evolved into a lucrative economic construction for the well-to-do of the Old Babylonian society.

The importance of the role of the *nadītu* priestesses in the transmission of family property will be illustrated by a case study.

**F. Joannès** (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)

### **Historiography on studies dedicated to women and economy in the REFEMA context**

**Josué Justel** (Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain)

### **The Involvement of Women in the Economic Agreements: The Case of the Syrian Late Bronze Age Archives**

Numerous cuneiform sale, exchange, and loan contracts have been found in five Late Bronze Age archives in Syria. Each type of deed has specific characteristics, which depending on the archive present slight or important differences. As a general rule, women acted in some of these deeds, more or less the 5-10% of the total, and therefore their active involvement has been traditionally underestimated. In fact, the historiography has assumed that women always used their dowries in these economic transactions. Though it might be the case for some women, in the contribution I will demonstrate that it is not certain for all of them. Moreover, at least some of these women were totally independent in undertaking economic arrangements, so our understanding of their legal role should be reconsidered accordingly.

**Fumi Karahashi** (Chûo University – Tokyo, Japan)

### **Women and Land in the Presargonic Lagash E<sub>2</sub>-MI<sub>2</sub> Corpus**

In the Presargonic Lagash E<sub>2</sub>-MI<sub>2</sub> corpus, the women who were allotted land by the crown were few but interesting. Among them were female household personnel called ar<sub>3</sub>-du<sub>2</sub>-munus, a woman designated as kar-kid<sub>2</sub>, female members of the royal family, and wives of high officials. This paper focuses on these women, examining who received which kind of land and how much, and attempting to understand the relationship between women and landholding from the viewpoints of kinship and labor.

**Bertrand Lafont** (CNRS – ArScAn, Nanterre, France)

### **Women at work and women in the economy during the Neo-Sumerian period**

This communication will resume synthetically some main data and results set forth and discussed during the four workshops of the REFEMA program (*Rôle Economique des Femmes en Mésopotamie Ancienne*, 2012-2014). Focused on the Neo-Sumerian period (end of the 3rd millennium BC), it addresses the following topics: women economic activities at home and outside home, state employment of women, or the question of the constitution, conservation and inheritance of the assets of women belonging to the elite.

**Camille Lecompte** (CNRS – ArScAn, Nanterre, France)

### **The Representation of Women in Lexical Texts**

The Mesopotamian lexical lists are a series of school texts which were used as glossaries and training exercises by pupils for their education. These lists, which existed from the time of the invention of writing until the end of the use of cuneiform script, refer to several aspects of Mesopotamia's material culture and, to a lesser extent, to its society. In this respect, the lists of professions and personal names

offer valuable evidence of Mesopotamia's social organization, although women are generally not very well represented in these texts, which did not intend to give an exhaustive description of society, even for professions assigned to men. As will be demonstrated here, the representation of women changed, however, noticeably through the evolution of lexical tradition.

During the Uruk and Early Dynastic periods, the lists of professions, so far not fully understood, refer to many officials who do not appear in the administrative records. Therefore, professions assigned to women cannot be easily found despite the presence of religious titles such as DAM, SAL.ZI and LAGAR GEME<sub>2</sub>. By contrast, the tradition dating from the Old Babylonian period gives more consideration to women: in the *Proto-Lu<sub>2</sub>* list, in which most professions and persons are designated by the sign lu<sub>2</sub>, "person", (actually men), some sections gather Sumerian terms referring to priestesses, such as lukur, nin and egi. Feminine words can also refer to their roles as wives, for instance dam-ġuruš (worker's wife), nitadam (spouse), or to the female counterparts of some official positions, munus agrig (female steward), munus ensi (woman interpreting dreams), etc. These professions assigned to women generally appear in graphically coherent sections of the lists, and are determined by a common sign, rather than by a semantic criterion.

In the so-called "canonical" tradition, well documented during the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium, female professions take a much more significant part, since the LU<sub>2</sub> = ša list, which is a deeply modified version of the *Proto-lu<sub>2</sub>* list, has more items devoted to women. The relevant designations and professions of a same section happen, on the other hand, to be unrelated with one another, such as LU<sub>2</sub> I, 15-20, which consists of the following terms: lady's attendant (*mušappirtum*), twiner (*tāmītum*), witch (*kaššaptum*), necromanceress (*mušēlītum*), midwife (*šabsūtum*). Although designations for priestesses are still the majority, other professions may appear, as demonstrated before, and refer either to a representative position of women in society or to functions which do not seem well attested in other documents and may have been rare or artificially recorded by scribes.

The present paper will focus on two aspects of the representation of women in the lexical lists. Sections gathering female professions are mainly determined by criteria which are inherent to the lexical lists and consist of graphical features for the terms chosen by the scribes. Furthermore, professions selected in the lists generally apply to religious officials, or relate, to a lesser extent, to the textile industry, although the canonical version of LU<sub>2</sub> = ša includes several other designations.

**Brigitte Lion** (Université Charles-de-Gaulle Lille 3 – UMR 8164 HALMA-IPEL)  
**Work, gender and society at Nuzi**

In 1978, W. Mayer studied the professions attested in the Nuzi tablets, and devoted a short and useful chapter to "Frauenberufe". The present paper will reexamine the professions and occupations of women and, when possible, compare them to those of men. For example, some professions, like musicians, seem to have been performed by both men and women. Others, like textile workers, are in Nuzi mainly attested for males. But the contexts of these occurrences should also be taken into account: did these persons work for the palace, in large houses, or in the family sphere?

**Massimo Maiocchi** (The Oriental Institute – Chicago University, USA)  
**Women and Production in Sargonic Adab**

The corpus of Sargonic texts has enormously increased in recent years. On the basis of the new available data, it is possible to have a fresh look at the topic of women and production in the Sargonic period, bridging the gap between Early Dynastic evidence (especially Ebla and Lagash) and Ur III archives (Garshana, Lagash, Puzrish-Dagan, Umma, Ur, etc.). Presently, the Adab text corpus stands out as the best case study for this kind of research, since the tablets stemming from this site are not only abundant, but also cover the whole span of the Sargonic period, which is conventionally subdivided into Early, Middle, Classical, and "Late" Sargonic. In particular, the Adab archives allow us to take an in-depth view on key aspects of the productive process, with special reference to women, and the role they played in traditional indoor and outdoor activities. More in detail, the weavers' archive provides valuable information on the internal organization of local workshop units, devoted to the production of textiles. In addition, legal documents offer some insights on the social status of female supervisors, who appear as witnesses in loan documents. Also, thanks to the recent re-evaluation of the original archaeological reports and notes provided by E. J. Banks and V.S Persons, dating back to 1903-1905 (i.e. when no stratigraphical method was applied), it is possible to correlate

the content of the tablets with their probable archaeological setting. When combined, the evidence allows us to better appreciate the emergence of the first large extra-regional organization in Mesopotamian history, and its impact in terms of local labor management. As it is argued in this paper, women are embedded in a productive system that builds on the Early Dynastic experience, adding further elements of complexity to the administrative schemes – a practice that in turn reminds, albeit in a much smaller scale, of large Ur III institutions.

**Eiko Matsushima** (Hôsei University, Tokyo, Japan)

### **Women in Elamite Royal Inscriptions**

Since a while, I have an occasion to study a series of royal inscriptions housed in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran. They were found by French excavations at Susa and Choga-Zanbil, as well as by American excavations at Tall-I Malyan. A part of them are clay steles, and a big part of them are clay bricks used as a part of big buildings such as temples. Many monuments found at Susa and Choga Zanbil are transported to the Louvre Museum, and after some primary publication in MAD series, they are revised in new publications, or re-edited as a catalogue, especially by Fl. Malbran-Labat, *Inscriptions royales de Suse*, Paris, 1995. I myself have been examining the materials still remained in Tehran, and have published a part of them with pictures of all bricks in *Brick Inscriptions of the National Museum of Iran*, Kyoto 2012. My colleagues and I continue to work on written materials in Tehran, including Tall-i Malyan texts.

In the course of my study on these Elamite royal inscriptions, I have been especially interested in the fact that personal names of royal ladies with epithets such as “beloved wife”, “beloved sister” are often mentioned, especially at Shuturkid Dynasty, i.e. around 12-11 centuries BCE. Even before that period, a couple of texts speak of a lineage of “son of sister of PN (= former king’s name)”. As far as I know, personal female names are rarely mentioned in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions. It makes me suppose that in Elamite royal families, ladies were respected and played a certain important role.

Thus in my presentation at REFEMA in November, I will collect references of women in Elamite Royal Inscriptions with their epithets. Expressions as “beloved wife”, “beloved sister” are impressive. Already some scholars discussed about a possibility of brother-sister marriages. In some old societies, this type of marriage might exist, but I have not yet treated such a problem. Anyway, an examination of references of royal ladies may enable us to find some characteristic features of ancient Elamite societies on Iranian plateau.

**Cécile Michel** (CNRS – ArScAn, Nanterre, France)

### **Gender and Work in the Old Assyrian Private Archives**

The Old Assyrian sources are mainly focused on the international exchanges between Aššur and Anatolia and thus document all the professions linked to trade activities. These are all men’s jobs. However, women contributed to the international trade by their textile production even so they were not referred to as professional weavers. They were paid for their production, and it is possible to estimate the revenues they earned each year with their work.

Leaving the world of trade, merchant archives also give some hints at the Assyrian and Anatolian societies of Aššur and Kaneš. The various professions mentioned, linked to material culture, social, legal or religious matters, were performed either by men or women, sometimes by both. An overview of these jobs will highlight the domains in which women were more visible.

**Julien Monerie** (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)

### **Prebend-owning Women and Temple Economy in Hellenistic Uruk**

The appearance of women as active traders of prebend shares is a late evolution of the Mesopotamian temple economy. Ritual restrictions, however, forbade these women to perform the religious service corresponding to the prebends they had acquired. Drawing on the well documented case of Hellenistic Uruk, this paper aims to explore the implications of this phenomenon in the context of the evolution of the Mesopotamian prebendary system in the First Millennium B.C.E.

**Virginie Muller** (Université Lyon 2 – Louis-Lumière, France)

### **Women and their activities according to cuneiform divinatory corpus**

Among the thousands of lines provided by first millennium omen series (*šumma ālu*, *šumma izbu*, *barūtu* etc.), very few relate to women. They generally describe them by their relationship to men (wife, daughter etc.) or refer to their procreative role. But, a detailed investigation of this expansive documentation allows us to discover mentions of women as independent persons.

This presentation will explore such elements, in protasis as well as in apodosis. Firstly, I will introduce the available data relating to women in divinatory texts, focusing on references to their professions (priestess, weaver etc.), activities (witchcraft etc.) or role in society (queen, head of house, etc.). Then, I will make some observations about the kinds of predictions (negative or positive) concerning women.

**Ichiro Nakata** (Chûo University – Tokyo, Japan)

**Economic activities of *naditum*-women of Shamash as reflected in the field sales contracts published in MHET II/1-6**

The field sales documents are the second most numerous among the Old Babylonian (OB) real estate documents from Sippar published in MHET II/1-6 following the field lease contracts. I have studied the OB field lease contracts from Sippar in which women, most of whom are quite likely to have been *naditum*'s of Shamash, are lessors. Some of these women had large fields in more than two irrigations districts. For example, Ruttum (*naditum*), daughter of Isi-Qatar, leased a field of 19 iku in the irrigation district of Pahasum and a field of 5 iku in Sha-Amkanim in Hammurabi's 38<sup>th</sup> year. Four years later in Hammurabi's 42<sup>nd</sup> year, she leased a field of 12 iku in the irrigation district of Lugal.sag.ila and another field of 18 iku in Pahasum. It would not surprise us if she had one or more fields elsewhere. Another *naditum* -woman, Amat-Shamash, daughter of Sin-iddinam, also leased two fields of 9 iku each in the irrigation district of Iplahum. Her fields cannot be limited, in the alternate fallow system, to these two fields that happened to be in the same irrigation district.

Some of the fields *naditum* -women leased out might have been bequeathed to them when they entered the cloister, but others must have been acquired later by purchasing.

The purpose of this paper is to survey the field sales documents published in MHET II/1-6 in which women appear as purchaser and to find out to find out how they built up their holdings of fields for leasing and managed their fields.

**Adelheid Otto** (München Universität, Germany)

**Women at work during the 3rd and 2nd millennium according to depictions in the minor arts of Mesopotamia.**

Mortal women are rarely depicted in Mesopotamia during the 3rd and 2nd mill. BC. Nevertheless, some seals and other objects of the so-called minor arts inform us about professional activities of women, such as brewing, nursing, making music and dancing, being in duty as a servant at court, and others. The rareness of women's depictions is in sharp contrast to the frequency of female deities' images and seeks for explanations. It will be argued that seal images indeed offer much more insight into typical and not so typical female activities and professions if they are understood as a mirror of society on a higher level.

**Violaine Sébillotte Cuchet** (Université Paris 1 – Panthéon-Sorbonne, France)

**Women, Gender and the Economic History of the Ancient Greek World**

In this presentation I will first offer a picture of the Economy of the Ancient Greek world (VIIe-IIIe century BCE). I will then proceed to present the aims of Women and Gender history and the difficulty in achieving its objectives. The question of the sources (their nature, origin, representativeness and their authors' intentions) is the main point scholars have to deal with. In order to enhance this point, a few examples will be given, all of which will be chosen in the Ancient Greek world (VIIe-IIIe century BCE).

**Saana Svärd** (University of Helsinki, Finland)

**Women's work and female administrators in the Neo-Assyrian palaces**

This paper will discuss the female professionals of Neo-Assyrian palaces. At the beginning, a general outline is given regarding the evidence on all female workers in the Neo-Assyrian palace. Three groups of female administrative personnel will be discussed in detail. Much of our evidence, 54 texts,

relates to the female administrative official, the *šakintu*, who managed the queen's households all around the Empire. Working with her were the female financial officers (Akk. *lahhennutu*) mentioned in 24 texts and the female scribes (Akk. *tupšarrutu*) mentioned in four texts. Based on the evidence, it seems clear that the female staff of the palaces had duties similar to the male officials in palaces and fulfilled an important function in the administration of the Neo-Assyrian realm.

**Matteo Vigo** (Copenhagen University, Denmark)

### **Sources For The Study Of The Role Of Women In The Hittite Administration**

Written evidence on the role of women in Hittite society is very limited.

Looking at the ancient Near Eastern studies on women, Hittite scholarship does not represent an isolated incident in this respect. Indeed, no systematic study has yet been done on gender issues in the Hittite world. Over the last fifty years, many studies have demonstrated, however, an ability to go beyond classical (esp. *Herodotus*) and "Victorian" preconceptions on women in the ancient Near East and misleading assumptions or methodological approaches on gender studies (for these important works, among others, Asher-Greve 1985, Durand 1987, Barhani 2001). The result is a coherent, even if incipient, investigation on gender roles in Mesopotamia within its own cultural context. The keystone of this research is the use of primary sources. The pivotal material that encompasses literary sources of different genres, is now available in translation to those who wish to obtain "materials for the study of women in the ancient Near East" (Chavalas 2014: 4). This brief investigation moves from the same starting point and aims.

The majority of the Hittite sources deal indeed with the role of women in institutionalized religious activities, such as festival scenarios or in ritual scenarios. In the first case, women acted as high priestesses, attendants or consecrated girls (often mislabeled *hierodulai*). In the latter, women were responsible for overseeing, committing or actively conducting specific rituals (for an overview see recently Collins 2014).

But, what about their role in central administration? How they did interact with male activities?

Sifting through the primary sources (primarily palace inventories), the present research focuses on the definition of the operative role of women in the Hittite administration. A methodological interdisciplinary investigation highlights the pertinent activities of "women of power" in light of the attestations of seal impressions (specifically sealed clay lumps) stored in the Nişantepe storehouse, in the Hittite capital, Hattusa (see Mora 2007, Mora & Vigo 2012). The combined examination of these texts and archaeological finds in a synchronic perspective enables us to outline the central role of women in the administration of the land of Hatti and, at the same time, to strengthen the recent achievements on gender studies in ancient Near Eastern history.

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**Masamichi Yamada** (Chûo University – Tokyo, Japan)

### **On the *kubuddā'u* in the Emar Texts**

In the Emar texts, we find occasional cases where a husband assigns a part of his property to his wife as a dowry, though the main part is to be inherited by the sons after his death. In eight texts, both of Syrian and of Syro-Hittite types, this type of property is called *kubuddā'u*. Generally speaking, the

*kubuddā'u* consists only of movable properties, such as furniture, utensils, slaves and livestock, though in a few cases a vineyard is included. In general, it is prescribed that in order to inherit it after the wife's death, her sons must take care of her, although in two texts no such obligation is specified. This study looks at the basic pattern and variations and considers the features of the *kubuddā'u* as property of women in comparison with that of men, and discusses its function in the widow's life.

**Yoko Watai** (Chûo University – Tokyo, Japan)

**A prosopographic data-base of women in the Neo-Babylonian sources**

Although scholars have agreed on the fact that women had limited legal rights in the Mesopotamian society, many Neo-Babylonian documents show that they participated in economic activities in familial context or within major institutions. The objective of this study is to draw a complete picture of women economic activities in the various social strata during the Neo-Babylonian period. This research project contains two phases:

- 1) Construction of the database of names and activities of Neo-Babylonian women in private and public spheres, in the published texts;
- 2) I will then investigate women's activities integrated in my database and classify them into two groups: "passive" activities and "active activities," in order to show a range of activities in which women participate as agent and the degree of their economic autonomy.

**Nele Ziegler** (CNRS – UMR 7192, Paris, France)

**The data from Mari on the economic activities of women (18th century BC)**

The archives from Mari are an outstanding source pertaining to the life of women in the old Babylonian period. Women in relation with the royal palace, be they members of the royal family or palace personnel are especially well attested, and informations on their belongings and economic activities can be analyzed. Besides them, the wives of high officials and their households as well as female slaves and workers are also attested. This contribution wants to shed some light on the general economic situation of women belonging to different layers of the society, their responsibilities and obligations and draw some conclusions of what we may know and which aspects of their lives are not attested by the palace archives.