

**Placating God(s) and Mighty Men.  
Case Studies on the Rhetorics of Persuasion and Assuaging Anger in the Ancient Near  
East and the Hebrew Bible.**

**Joint Seminar Hebrew University Jerusalem and University of Vienna**

February, 1st, 2023, 13.30-18.00 and February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9.00-13.00

A-1010 Vienna, Schenkenstraße 8-10, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Hörsaal 1

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Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023:

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13.30–14.00 Welcome and Introduction

14.00–14.45 **Prof. Dr. Nathan Wasserman** (Assyriology, Jerusalem):  
**“Und oft will man mit der Liebe nur den Neid überspringen.”**  
**Anger, Love and Envy in Old Babylonian Incantations**

This Nietzschean dictum forms the backdrop of my paper which tackles *uzzum* “anger” in Old Babylonian magical texts, in particular in love-related incantations, and *qinû* “envy” in Late Babylonian ritual texts. The thin line between passion and envy, sexual excitement and fury is discussed, and the means to control, subdue and most importantly, to manipulate, these emotions, are elaborated.

14.45–15.30 **Dr. Yuval Levavi** (Assyriology, Vienna and Jerusalem):  
**Sweet-Talking the Lord I. Placating a Superior in Late Babylonian Letters**

Interaction with superiors, be it a direct boss or the king, could be stressful. It is shaped by both the individual as well as society’s norms, as one’s approach to a problem is dictated by personal interpretation of the codes of etiquette. This paper discusses such interactions in the correspondences of first millennium Babylonian officials with their superiors. This will be brought out by an examination of the rhetorical devices and persuasion strategy.

15.30–16.00 Coffee Break

16.00–16.45 **Dr. Shana Zaia** (Assyriology, Vienna):  
**Sweet-Talking the Lord II. Assyrians Write to their King**

16.45–17.30 **Prof. Dr. Michael Jursa** (Assyriology, Vienna):  
**Sweet-Talking the Lord III.**  
**Amorites and Babylonians Write to their Foreign Kings**

These are two takes to Mesopotamian epistolography and rhetorics that approach similar questions – essentially, how does one talk truth to power, and how does one get power to lend it’s ear to one’s concerns? - through the lens of similar letter corpora that are however distinct from each other in that Zaia deals with letters sent to a ‘native’ king, while Jursa addresses missives addressed to rulers who ‘others’ in one way or another.

18.00 Dinner

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Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023:

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09.00–09.45 **Yael Leokumovich, MA** (Assyriology, Jerusalem):

**Placating Eclipsed Emotions**

The lunar eclipse was a grave event in ancient times. In the first millennium BCE, two main narratives explain the cosmology of eclipse. The first is the divine decision of the moon god, Sîn. The second is demonic aggression. My talk examines the different rhetorics used to deal with the lunar eclipse, and the projection of human emotions on the divine realm, as a study case of emotions and natural phenomena.

09.45–10.30 **Dipl.-Theol. Arnim Janssen** (Hebrew Bible, Vienna):

**Lamentations 1. Emotion as a Medium of Cultural Memory**

Drawing on different definitions of the term "medium" the paper will conceptualize emotions as an "instrument", a "space in between", and a "reservoir". Taking Lamentations 1 as a case study the paper will show how all three dimensions are crucial for the processes of cultural memory.

10.30–11.00 Coffee Break

11.00–11.45 **Prof. Dr. Uri Gabbay** (Assyriology, Jerusalem):

**Dealing with the Divine Emotions of Rage, Sorrow and Pacification in Emesal Prayers**

In this paper I will deal with the divine emotions addressed in Emesal prayers, how they are treated and manipulated by humans, and how these emotions and their treatment also reflect the treatment of human emotions.

11.45–12.30 **Prof. Dr. Marianne Grohmann** (Hebrew Bible, Vienna):

**Coping with YHWH's Wrath as Strategy of Resilience in the Book of Lamentations**

The biblical book of Lamentations conceptualizes YHWH's wrath as cause of crisis. At the same time, YHWH is addressee of the laments. The paper will read coping with YHWH's anger as a strategy of resilience in exemplary texts, mainly from Lam 3.

12.30-13.00 Final Discussion

13.00-15.00 Lunch

15.00-17.00 Walking tour: Jewish Vienna (in Ivrit)