The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC) cordially invites you to a lecture by

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Gender studies related to ancient manuscript cultures: The case of cuneiform studies

Wednesday, June 9 2021, 02:00pm -03:30pm CEST
Zoom-Meeting

The development of the feminist and post-feminist movement in social sciences and humanities is usually perceived as three overlapping waves. During the 1960s and 1970s, trying to establish women’s studies in the academy, scholars looked for women in written artefacts in order to make invisible women visible and to integrate them into history. The term gender was applied to manuscript studies by historians only during the 1980s, and by Assyriologists to cuneiform manuscripts only in the 1990s in the United States and in the 2000s in Europe. The idea was to understand how a society attributes roles to each sex. The post-feminist movement questions this binary male/female structure as well as the motivations and presuppositions of the scientific process itself. The approach is no longer androcentric, but focuses on differences, whatever they may be: social, ethnical, political, cultural, etc. The historian investigates in written sources the way in which differences have been culturally implemented by societies. In Assyriology, early studies on women were influenced by historical preconceptions based on the place of women in the classical world or in Islam, visible in the choice of the words ‘harem’ or ‘veil’ in the translations of cuneiform manuscripts. Since 2000 and the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, which was held in Helsinki in 2001 on Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East, the number of gender studies have grown exponentially. This lecture presents, after a general introduction on gender studies related to manuscript cultures, the diversity of approaches in women and gender studies applied to cuneiform texts.