

Structures of Power: Law and Gender across the Ancient Near East and Beyond

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Ilan arrived at the Oriental Institute in September 2014 as a Postdoctoral Fellow, with the main goal to organize the eleventh annual Oriental Institute postdoctoral seminar. Titled “Structures of Power: Law and Gender across the Ancient Near East and Beyond,” the seminar was held in March 6–7, 2015. It was meant to contribute new dimensions to the study of gender relations and law in the ancient world as a whole, and particularly in the ancient Near East. It thus hosted a varied group of experts who discussed the ancient Near Eastern cultures of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Hatti, the classical world of Greece and Rome, ancient China, Zoroastrianism, and the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Islam. Four main themes were addressed by the conference participants: “Formal Law and Informal Custom,” “Law, Religion and Cult,” “Law, Administration and Economy,” and “Family, Kin Relations and Marriage.” In the broader sense, the issue of cross-cultural parallels and particularities stood at the center of the discussion. What was common to all cultures examined? What was unique to each of them? These questions, as well as many others, were addressed by the conference participants, in establishing a broad conversation of law and gender in the ancient world. All this will be reflected in the published conference volume, as, since March 2015, Ilan has been editing the conference proceedings, to appear as Oriental Institute Seminars 12 in 2016. About half the papers have been submitted thus far, and the rest are due July 2015.
