

**Working women in Ur III and Mari:
theoretical-methodological tools for their study**

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For decades, Assyriological studies “looked for” and “found” working women in the sources. Consequently, in contrast to other disciplines, these women were always visible for Assyriologists. However, in some cases, this visibility had embedded inside it an androcentric bias which has only been questioned relatively recently, with the application of gender studies perspectives to the study of these written sources.

In this poster, we discuss some of the proposals launched from gender studies perspectives, paying special attention to what is known as “postcolonial feminism”. As our starting point we take our own research with administrative texts and correspondence from the end of the third/beginning of the second millennium BCE, in Sumerian and in Akkadian respectively – more specifically, from the Ur III period and from the time of the reign of Zimri-Lim in Mari. In doing so we claim that, first, it is necessary to assume the existence of these working women in certain contexts, in order to be able to find the sometimes scarce but valuable indications of their actions. Second, we understand that research of this kind should be carried out inside the framework of Social History, as it seeks to recover the social sectors that are outside or subordinate to the State. Third, we defend the need for a gender perspective that allows us to perceive and portray diversity. Our task is to look beyond the traces we have of these working women in order to challenge certain preconceived ideas.