Workshop: Researching Metaphor in the Ancient Near East: Perspectives from Texts and Images (65ᵗʰ RAI, Paris, July 2019)

Since Antiquity, metaphor has been an object of study for philosophers, rhetoricians and scholars in general. The study of metaphor proper begins with Aristotle, according to whom metaphor consists "in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, on the grounds of analogy" (*Poetics,* 1457b, 6-7). This model, together with Cicero's identification of the functions of metaphor in making the speech more fashionable and more persuasive (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, IV.34; *De Oratore* III, 158-162), led to consider metaphor as primarily stylistic, poetic, or ornamental, with the consequence that metaphor has been considered a trope, namely a change that occurs when attributes ordinarily designating one entity are transferred to another entity.

This perspective became the dominant theory for understanding the way metaphors work for the next two millennia. However, metaphor has been the focus of the work of several scholars and other theorists have made significant contributions to this discussion (Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* 1936; Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* 1962; Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* 1977, to name but a few). The perspective changed when George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their book *Metaphor We Live By* argued that metaphor is not solely a language-structure, it is also a way of thinking and acting. In other words, metaphors are "pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action" (Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* 1980, 3). As a consequence, metaphors are always present, and our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. This implies that ancient cultures, consciously or unconsciously, also made large use of metaphors and these can be investigated especially in textual and visual sources.

In this perspective, the workshop proposes to tackle this issue through the different and complementary perspectives of texts and images. It aims to bring into focus the metaphor in its several functions and aspects: decorative, rhetoric, conceptual, ideological, propagandistic. By considering different methodological approaches and by looking at different textual (literary and non-literary texts) and visual sources (e.g. bas-reliefs, sculptures, wall paintings), we aim to gain new insight into the presence and dissemination of the metaphor in the Ancient Near East, an investigation that is still at its very beginning. Additionally, this workshop fosters analyses on the image-text interaction, that is the role of texts in identifying visual metaphor. In fact, although the image may stand out as a separate unit, the verbal element often helps to determine the metaphoricity of the image.

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Abstracts

Stéphanie ANTHONIOZ (Université catholique de Lille)

The Lion, the Shepherd, and the Master of Animals: Metaphorical Interactions and Governance Representations in Mesopotamian and Levantine Sources

Metaphor can be briefly summarized in the following way: it is a literary figure that speaks of one thing (A) by means of another (B). The relationship between A and B creates a complex interaction with the transfer of B's qualities or some of them to A and the consequence that B may be likened to A. This interaction between elements could in theory be extended to different metaphors that

have at least one element in common. For example, if the king (A) is associated with the image of the lion (B) in different sources but also to that of the shepherd (C), what sense does it make to consider these metaphors no longer in a separate way (A/B and A/C) but in interaction (A/B/C). The shepherd and the lion are images as well as vivid metaphors that have each individually received much attention. And one should add here closely connected to the lion and the shepherd the image of the master of animals. It seems obvious that these images are those that represent power in the Ancient Near East and particularly royal and divine power. As far as I am aware, the images of the lion, the shepherd, along with the master of animals, though closely associated in the realm of sovereignty, have not been the object of what could be called an associative or interactive analysis. This contribution aims at revisiting these images, analyzing the sources in interaction, without excluding them and confronting them even to their contradiction. My analysis is based mainly on textual sources and should be further enriched by the study of iconographic sources. In the first part, I will review Assyrian royal inscriptions and their treatment of the figures of the lion and the shepherd. In the second part, Levantine sources will be checked and allow me to focus on the book of Amos in which a detailed analysis of the interactive metaphors of the lion and the shepherd will be proposed. A comparative conclusion will be drawn and the fruits of this interactive analysis highlighted.

Esther BROWNSMITH (Brandeis University)

To Serve Woman: Jezebel, Anat, and the Metaphor of Women as Food

Metaphor studies have established several cross-cultural conceptual metaphors that manifest both linguistically and non-linguistically. One well-known metaphor is SEX IS EATING, alongside the more specific metaphors, SEXUAL DESIRE IS HUNGER and WOMAN IS FOOD. This set of metaphors is highly gendered and unidirectional: women are meant to be eaten, not eaters. Yet two prominent women of Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern narratives challenge this metaphorical association: Anat and Jezebel. Both characters act independently of men and assert their autonomy with bloody force. Both also presided over feasting, identifying them as transgressors of the metaphor WOMAN IS FOOD. While both attempted to consume, rather than be consumed, only one succeeded. Anat decorated herself with the skulls and appendages of her victims, while Jezebel was literally consumed, reduced to that same skull and appendages. Their intertwined yet divergent paths illustrate the power of a conceptual metaphor to shape stories, while still reflecting the ideologies of its authors. By examining both characters' narratives through conceptual metaphor theory, while using the tools of philological and source-critical analysis for a close reading of the Ugaritic and Hebrew source texts, this paper will draw these stories into sharper focus and explain the gendered elements of the feasting, both metaphorical and non-metaphorical, that preoccupies both.

Joseph LAM (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

Visualizing "Death" (Môtu) in the Ugaritic Texts

The Ugaritic deity Môtu ("Death") is the focus of some of the most vivid descriptions in all of Ugaritic literature: from the description of this deity as grain that is harvested, ground up, and scattered (KTU 1.6 II 30–35); to his depiction as creatures whose thirst and appetite are insatiable (KTU 1.5 I 14–17); to his portrayal as one of a pair of fierce animals locked in a duel (KTU 1.6 VI 16–20). Yet, the variety of these images raises the question of how—if at all—they are to be integrated into our "conception" or "visualization" of the deity itself. In other words, where does metaphor end and (literal) representation begin, and are these even the right questions to ask? This

paper will consider these issues in light of recent theoretical discussions of metaphor within the field of philosophy of language, particularly relating to the concepts of "seeing-as" (Camp 2003; Stern 2000; Moran 1989) and metaphorical construal (White 1996), while also attending to the relevant ancient Near Eastern iconographic evidence as well as the general representation of deities in Ugaritic literature. I will argue that any full understanding of these literary depictions requires recognizing that they operate at multiple symbolic levels, and that the representation of ancient deities presents unique challenges that are most adequately addressed through theoretical distinctions offered by recent philosophical investigations of metaphor.

Davide NADALI (Università di Roma, La Sapienza)

Aššur is King! The Metaphorical Implications of Embodiment, Personification and Transference in Ancient Assyria

The use of metaphor deeply and intrinsically characterizes the human mind, specifically in the creation of language: often simply intended as a rhetoric figure of speech, metaphor has many different and consequent implications in the description and representation of the world, in particular for what concerns the expression of emotions and feelings. Metaphors are a cognitive instrument that allows humans to see and represent the world around them and to perceive their body within a system of other bodies that have the same possibilities and capabilities of perceiving and interacting.

The present paper intends to analyse the use of metaphor in the creation of images in ancient Assyria: starting from the ritual of the designation of the king – his enthronement and conferment of his legitimate power – the concept of metaphor will applied accordingly, as to investigate the different modalities of representation via embodiment – to perceive the world via the body – and via conveyance – to perceive the world and the bodies outside via the process of transferring meanings, emotions and feelings to the things. In this respect, the formula "Aššur is King!" can be intended as a metaphor for the reciprocal materialization of the divine power via the body of the king and the legitimization of the Assyrian king via the body of the god.

Marta PALLAVIDINI (FU Berlin)

The Lion, the Stone and the Sun: Metaphorical Expressions Describing the Hittite King and His Functions in the Hittite Diplomatic and Historiographic Texts.

In his role as king, the Hittite sovereign had several different functions: he was commander in chief of the Hittite military, he directed the diplomatic activity, he was chief judge of the land, he was the head of the administration (at least officially) and he had an important role in the religious duties.

In several cases, in the exercise of these military, diplomatic, juridical, administrative and religious duties, in the written sources, the Hittite king is often referred to by metaphorical expressions that conceptualize his function(s) in the specific context.

Metaphor is here intended not traditionally as a figure of speech but, according to the so-called *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson with the publication of the book *Metaphors we live by* in 1980, as the result of a cognitive process. Metaphor is defined as the mapping between a source domain, in general more concrete, and a target domain, in general more abstract.

Metaphor is therefore, to use the words of Lakoff and Johnson "pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action".

The aim of this paper is to identify and to analyze the metaphors that conceptualize the characteristics of the Hittite king related to his functions. In particular, diplomatic and

historiographic texts will be considered, since it is in these textual genres that the Hittite king is described in all of his functions.

The analysis addresses in particular the following questions:

- what metaphorical expression are used to conceptualize the Hittite king and his functions?
- are different metaphors used in different textual genres and/or in different contexts?
- do the metaphors differ according to the language (Hittite or Akkadian)?
- do the metaphors change through time?
- what metaphors can be defined as conventional and what metaphors as deliberate (G. Steen, "From three dimensions to five steps: The value of deliberate metaphor", *metaphoric.de* 21, 2011, 83-110)?

The answers to these questions aim to reflect upon the association between metaphorical expression and functions of the Hittite king as well as to understand and explain the conceptualization of the Hittite king in different texts and contexts.

Furthermore, the investigation aims to shed some light on the system of thinking of the Hittites.

<u>Judith PFITZNER</u> **(University of Vienna)**

Cows of battle, urinating lions, and frightened falcons: Unexpected metaphor in Sumerian literary compositions

The present paper stems from my PhD thesis "Zur Bildersprache in der sumerischen Literatur" (University of Vienna, 2019) and from research undertaken in the context of the project "Bestiarium Mesopotamicum: animal omens in Ancient Mesopotamia."

In my PhD thesis, I investigated nominal metaphors (I use the term "metaphor" as an abbreviation for "metaphorical expression") and similes in Sumerian literary compositions. My main goals were to collect and properly translate the metaphors used in my sources, to identify vehicles and tenors thereby working out the "picture" expressed by the metaphors, as well as to compare all the occurrences in which (apparently) the same metaphor is used in different compositions.

The methodological and terminological points of reference for this paper are the contributions by Richards (1936) and Black (1962) and the "interaction theory of metaphor" coined by them. This theoretical approach, which describes metaphors primarily as the resolution of a semantic tension between the metaphoric expression and its context at the one hand and between tenor and vehicle on the other, proved useful for the investigation of metaphors in Sumerian literary compositions. Through a number of case studies I will demonstrate how this approach can be applied to the study of Sumerian metaphors, how the "set of associated commonplaces" (= these are stereotypes usually connected with the vehicle which in a metaphorical expression are partially transferred to the tenor, vague as this expression may be), can help to understand metaphors in Sumerian, and which pitfalls must be carefully avoided.

My paper will then focus on a number of metaphors which can be described as "unexpected" or "unusual:" for instance, because a vehicle known also from other instances appears in a context where it seems pointless or at least difficult to transfer the set of associated commonplaces connected with it to the tenor; in other cases tenor and vehicle and/or the context leave it unclear which of the associated commonplaces connected with the vehicle shall be transferred to the tenor.

I will demonstrate that such "unexpected" metaphors are products of wrong or misleading translations (ancient and modern), plays on the graphic level of the signs, word plays, and, in some cases, the creativity of ancient scribes.

<u>Ludovico PORTUESE</u> **(FU Berlin)**

The Wordless Metaphor in Neo-Assyrian Art: Context and Perception

Lakoff and Johnson's work has mostly concentrated on *Conceptual Metaphors* that map complex conceptual structures in a source domain onto conceptual structures in a target domain. This approach to metaphor is in a certain sense revolutionary in that it conceived metaphor not only as a question of language but of thinking and consequently of behaving. In addition to this theory, there is another major type of metaphor that maps conventional mental images onto other conventional mental images by virtue of their internal structure and general shape. This metaphor is referred to by Lakoff as *Image Metaphor*, which only occurs when there is both a source image and a target image that the source image maps onto.

This paper juxtaposes these possible approaches to understanding the metaphor both in its linguistic and artistic manifestation by analysing Neo-Assyrian *textual* and *visual* evidence coming from the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC), Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BC), Sargon II (721-705 BC), and Assurbanipal (668-631 BC). These two tracks are referred to here as "text and image", "image and image", "image in context". The "text and image" approach draws first on the royal inscriptions, with an emphasis on the king's epithets and the descriptions of his military and hunt activities. I then propose a connection between the royal inscriptions and the palace reliefs. The "image and image" track revolves around a sample of palace reliefs to seek an understanding of visual metaphor in the formal, compositional and stylistic aspects of visual art. The "image in context" approach considers visual metaphors as contextually conditioned, that is to say conditioned by their semantic, iconographic, and architectural contexts, with the consequence that conditioning impacts the construction, perception, reception, and interpretation of metaphor.

In the conclusion, I contend that Assyrian scribes and artists unconsciously rejected the popular model of metaphor's decorative function, and adopted the model of metaphor's influential function, that is to say that metaphor was conceived not solely as an embellishment or decoration to thought, but also as an instrument to actively influence the thought it helped to articulate, giving it a form and shape that can define or alter it in fundamental ways.

Claudia POSANI (Università di Torino)

In the sign of embracing

The topic of the paper is the analysis of the metaphorical valence of embracing; this metaphor will be investigated from both a textual and an iconographic perspective. Specifically, the paper will be focused on metaphor's occurrences in Luwian hieroglyphic sources: since this peculiar writing system has a visual power in itself, it is interesting to investigate how textual metaphors and hieroglyphic signs cooperate in conveying the same symbolic message.

The object of the analysis will be KARKAMIŠ A 21 (son of Sasturas/Astiru's) inscription; this text provides some interesting embracing images (§§ 1 and 5). Verbal participle AMPLECTI-*mi* at (§ 1) has been always translated as "loved" so far: for stylistic and textual consistency reasons, I propose the translation "embraced" for it; moreover, considerations regarding symbolic value of embracing image will be carried out (the *umarmungsszene* being widely diffused in the Hittite iconography of the II and I millennium BC). The inscription provides also metaphoric patterns related to childhood (§ 11), growth (§ 12) and parents-children relationship (§ 10, §§ 11-12): their analysis, connected to those concerning embracing images, reveal some interesting aspects of kingship. As a result, the analysis highlights specular aspects in the goddess' disposition towards the king and in the king's disposition towards his citizens. As the goddess guards the king all during his life, in the same way the king protects his citizens, perhaps also his opponents, in the sign of embracing.

~~Silvia SALIN (Università di Verona)~~

~~Metaphors, Conceptual Metaphors and "Non-Metaphors" in the Mesopotamian Medical Texts.~~

In general, it might be said that medical metaphors are meant to express pain – both physical and emotional – by relating concepts, objects or social experiences either with the sick body (or some of its parts) or with the illness in general. In other words, they have the purpose of render understandable to the 'others' the pain felt by the patient, basing their words on 'bodily experience'. Defined by the Italian anthropologist G. Pizza as a 'social action', metaphor "uses everyday language – inadequate to express the suffering body – in order to place the sick person in his (or her) social context".

The use of metaphors in medicine is well attested for many cultures, past and present. As far as ancient Mesopotamia is concerned, it might be said that, in contrast to what happens in literary texts, in the medical ones we can find just a few metaphors *per se*. If anything, the cuneiform tablets relating to medicine offer what have been called by linguists G. Lakoff and M. Johnson as 'conceptual metaphors'. In their opinion, they are part of everybody's daily life, and belong to our language, thoughts and actions. Indeed, these scholars explain mind and meaning as embodied, and metaphors as representing the linguistic expression of "pre-conceptual image schemata" of our society. Although Mesopotamian medical texts – both therapeutic and diagnostic – should be considered as sort of 'handbooks' written by and for professionals – whose purpose was to make available to the healers (*asû* e *āšipu*) a large series of signs and symptoms, recipes and rituals useful for curing the patient, and not to express the suffering and pain of the victim – they offer a copious amount of conceptual metaphors, which should be considered as the mirror of many aspects of the Assyro-Babylonian culture.

The purpose of this paper – part of a wider study concerning terms and expressions describing individual suffering in ancient Mesopotamia – is to offer an overview of the most interesting metaphors and conceptual metaphors by examining in particular the Assyro-Babylonian medical texts, dating back to the end of the II and the first half of the I millennium BCE. Moreover, it will draw attention to some particular expressions, which should be seen as actual descriptions of signs and symptoms, and not as a conceptual metaphor (i.e. what might be called 'non-metaphors'), showing how the application of the conceptual metaphor's theory could – in some specific cases – be misleading.

Shiyanthi THAVAPALAN (Brown University)

Metaphors of Transformation in Mesopotamian Glassmaking

As George Lakoff showed, metaphors are basic tools of the mind that human beings use to construct ideas. Crafts and technologies shape the way people interact with the natural world and with each other; thus, the behaviors, language and material culture relating to these domains offer a rich basis for the study of metaphors in ancient Mesopotamia. On the one hand, such data can be cognitively informative. By looking at how technological experiences were re-cast as biological or social processes, for instance, we can learn much about ancient conceptual systems. On the other hand, the application of metaphor theory can enrich literary analysis. We can trace how images and ideas from artisanal practices in Mesopotamia has shaped the Akkadian language and see how metaphor mediates between physical and semantic codes.

This paper will discuss metaphors concerning kinship and bodily experience that explain the relationship between the glassmaker in Mesopotamia, his tools and his creative process. The ritual instructions included in the compilation of glass texts from Ashurbanipal's libraries (K.2520+, K.203+, K.6964+) will form the primary empirical basis for this investigation. A close reading of the glass ritual together with relevant ethnological parallels suggest that practices surrounding transformative pyrotechnologies like metallurgy, pottery and glassmaking, tended to be highly ritualized in ancient times. Thus, it is only by embracing the entire context of the craft process—this includes the behaviors chosen during manufacture as well as the allusions made to primary social

relationships through language, performance and materials—can we begin to appreciate how knowledge about technologies were transmitted.

Elisabeth WAGNER-DURAND (Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)

Metaphors of Fear and Anxiety in Assyria – Texts and Images Revisited

Textual and visual expressions often illustrate emotional states by adopting highly metaphorical symbolizations. On the assumption that Assyrian society once used the communicative and illustrative tool of metaphors in its own culturally grown and constructed way in order to express emotions and feeling states of any kind, the paper will provide insights into the metaphorical approximations to the emotion fear in the Assyrian society of the first Millennium. Thus, the contribution is occupied both with the specific metaphoric figurations used in texts and images to denote fear and with the equivalences as well discrepancies in their use in both media. Methodically, the analytical transfer of conventionalized metaphors of fear and fear related behavioral responses (like flight or freeze) as employed in the written sources to correspondent metaphorical images in visual media will more easily lead to their identification as vice versa. Despite the difficulties that arise from a deductive approach to images, the paper will also touch upon issues of meta-metaphors in the visual display, as there are: the use of colors, landscape, and of overall composition. Furthermore, a comparative look will be taken at the opposition to the feeling states of fear by crossing the matters of boldness, courage and bravery. Their juxtaposition will give insight into the metaphorical rendering of both conceptions, bravery and anxiety, in written as well as visual sources, into their cultural construction and the use of their metaphoric permuations in both sources.

Lisa WILHELMI (FU Berlin)

„Squeezing" like oil from a sesame seed - Metaphors of political interaction in the Akkadian texts originating from Ḫatti

The diplomatic correspondence of the Hittite kingdom with its Eastern neighbours in Northern Syria and further afield is for the most part written in Akkadian language. While the scribes generally exhibit a good command of the target language, a number of idiosyncrasies mark the composers of the majority of the texts out as Hittite native speakers who were part of the wider circle of the scribal community in the Hittite capital: particular syntactic arrangements are prevalent throughout the texts and the choice of words and phrases encountered can often appear alien to the standard Akkadian lexicon.

The proposed paper seeks to explore the friction that arises at the intersection between metaphors inherent within a cultural context and the use of a foreign written language. Drawing on examples from the extant text sources, which often present Akkadian idiomatic phrases used as expected from comparative material from Mesopotamia as well as calques on Hittite concepts and expressions whose origins remain unclear, it will address the following questions: To which extent were the metaphoric descriptions of political interaction rooted within the native language of the scribes, and what strategies for translations can be observed? Were idiomatic phases connected to political interaction conveyed in the process of education in the Akkadian language, and how could the successful implementation of concepts alien to the individual's own cultural reference point be achieved in the composition of new texts? Does one have to assume a wider 'peripheral Akkadian' koine of written communication through which metaphors of political correspondence were circulated and established?