

Maternità e politeismi – Motherhood(s) and Polytheisms

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Published by Pàtron, Bologna, September 2017

http://www.patroneditore.com/volumi/1845/maternit_e_politeismi.html

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Motherhood(s) and Polytheisms: Book Presentation

1. Diventare madre: verginità, *paideia*, fertilità, madri e figlie

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M. Cultraro, Maternità asimmetriche: meccanismi di riproduzione-produzione sociale e dinamiche simboliche nella Grecia micenea

Asymmetrical Motherhoods: Mechanisms of Social Reproduction-Production and Symbolic Dynamics in Mycenaean Greece

In the last decades new approaches of cognitive archaeology, together with the contribution of Gender Archaeology mostly related to the third wave of feminist research in archaeology among U.S. academy, have promoted a general reassessment of the documentation on motherhood in Aegean prehistory. The rarely investigated iconography of women and children is the starting point of the present research.

The critical assessment of methodologies used in the study of Minoan figurines, interpreted as images of a Great Mother Goddess, and those coming from Mainland Greece in Mycenaean contexts, contribute to clarify and to reconstruct the complex "stratigraphy" of female gender in Late Bronze Age Greece.

This chapter aims at exploring the main iconographical categories well-documented in the Mycenaean world, where the multifaceted roles of women can be reconstructed through comparing the Linear B written sources and some recently discovered wall-paintings, such as *The Pomegranate Bearer Fresco* from Tiryns. The conclusions suggest that Mycenaean women operated under a central palace system, whereby women's statuses, task-assignments and social and economic autonomy differed widely.

Massimo **Cultraro** is an archaeologist and senior researcher at the "Istituto per i Beni Archeologici e Monumentali del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)" Catania. PhD at University of Pisa and specialized in the Italian Archaeological School at Athens, he is also professor of Aegean Archaeology and European Prehistory at University of Palermo. His main topics are in the field of archaeology of Greece and Eastern Mediterranean, focusing on archaeology of cult and religion. Author of many scientific papers in international conferences and peer-reviewed periodicals, the last books include *L'Anello di Minosse. Archeologia della regalità nell'Egeo minoico*, Longanesi Editore Milano (2001), and *I Micenei. Archeologia, storia, società dei Greci prima di Omero*, Carocci Roma (2006). The book *Troy and its Wars* is scheduled to publish in 2018.

A. Cosentino, Il culto persefonico in Italia meridionale: modello rituale di maternità? Persefone (e Demetra) a Locri Epizefiri e nelle sue subcolonie *Persephone's Cult in Southern Italy: Ritual Model of Motherhood? Persephone (and Demeter) at Locri Epizephyrii and its Subcolonies.*

Many tablets were found in the famous Persephoneion at Locri Epizephyrii. Known by the name of *pinakes*, they represent scenes of the myth of Persephone. Some of these *pinakes* represent a woman opening a chest, inside which there is a child (lying down or standing). This article aims at understanding the meaning of this representation and the identity of the characters: the goddess can be interpreted as Persephone, Aphrodite, or Demeter. The child could be Adonis, or one of the many identities of the god Dionysus (Iakkhos, Brimos, Zagreus). The meaning of the scene is also complex as it includes many dimensions: it may refer to a ritual context, or be a mystical representation of the god's revelation.

Augusto Cosentino graduated with honors from the University of Messina; he received his PhD in History of Religions at the University "La Sapienza" of Rome, and a second PhD at the University of Messina, where he also received his Post-Doctorate. He is licensed in Christian archeology at the Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology. He deals with studies on Greek and Roman Religion, Gnosticism, Judaism and Early Christianity. He has participated in various international conferences, and is author of several publications. He collaborates with the "Collana di testi patristici" (Editrice Città Nuova), for which he published the "Against Heresies" of Irenaeus of Lyon and the "Testament of Solomon." He is contributor to several journals and member of scholarly societies, and Editorial Manager of the Journal "Open Theology" (De Gruyter Editor) and "Historia Religionum". He taught History of religions at the University of Messina and at the University of Calabria. He teaches Latin and Greek at the Liceo Classico.

C. Giuffrè Scibona, «Mimoumenoi archaion ton bion»: fondamenti culturali e valori femminili nei culti demetriaci della Sicilia greca

“Mimoumenoi archaion ton bion”: *Culture and Female Values in Demeter's Greek Sicilian Cults*

By reviewing the historiographical tradition and comparing it with archaeological data, this chapter attempts to highlight some of the feminine types existing and operating in different Demeter cults in Greek Sicily. Against the backdrop of an extensive textual tradition, we find examples of rites addressed to the goddess, her daughter Persephone, or related deities, both in archaeological materials and in various coroplastic types, found at various worship sites associated with various Demeter cults in Sicily. These almost seem to be photographed in the “re-enactment of the myth” that is also a ritual act: bearers of *kalathos* and *lekythos*, of poppy, torch, and pig, *aleuthridoi*, priestesses, *peplophoroi* portrayed in the act of *anakalypsis*, as well as women *scoptousai*, or captured in the act of *anasyrma*, dressed as numphai or with children in a gesture of *kourotrophoi* or *kourophoroi*.

Concetta Giuffrè **Scibona** has been Professor of religions of the classical world at the University of Messina. Her research interests include religion from primitive societies to the classical world, gnosticism, manicheism and Islam. She is currently dealing with the Demetriac cults of Magna Graecia and Sicily, Saint Augustine's thought and the ancient mystic cults and eschatology. Her most recent publications include C. Giuffrè Scibona - A. Mastrocinque (eds.), *Demeter, Isis, Vesta, and Cybele: Studies in Greek and Roman Religion in Honour of Giulia Sfameni Gasparro*, Stuttgart 2012.

N. Petrillo, Le Matres di Capua tra kourotrophia e maturazione. Una proposta di lettura

The Matres of Capua between Kourotrophia and Maturation. A New Interpretation

This chapter deals with the tuff *Matres* iconography from Fondo Patturelli, a sanctuary situated in Capua. The iconographic *parterre* is not so diversified: some mothers breastfeed, but most of them hold one or more infants (until a maximum of twelve) in their arms. This pattern is unique in the world of female and maternal ancient iconography, and it's not a coincidence. We will try to explain this “*iperkourotrophia*” from an anthropological point of view, locating the reference model and delineating the relationship between these images and the cults and rites, still partially unknown, practiced in the Fondo Patturelli sanctuary towards that feminine divinity whose identity still remains unclear. Through the course of this research, new possible interpretations will arise: from birth to care of infants, through rites of passage, until the threshold of adulthood. All of this is placed under the protection of goddesses about which this chapter suggests a new interpretation.

Nicoletta **Petrillo** is a PhD student in Methods and Methodology of Art Historical and Archaeological Research at the University of Salerno. She is currently working on a research on the tuff sculptures known as *Matres Matutae* found in the “Fondo Patturelli” Sanctuary at Capua. She graduated in Archaeology at Seconda Università degli Studi di Napoli. During the years of post-graduation she has worked on many research activities in Magno-Greek area: excavation and study on products from Capua, Cuma, Calatia, Pompeii, Metaponto.

F. Pitzalis, Madri di uomini, dei ed eroi. La maternità nel sistema religioso etrusco *Mothers of Men, Gods and Heroes. Motherhood in Etruscan Religious System*

The available sources for analyzing the relationship between motherhood and religious elements in the Etruscan civilization are basically archaeological. There is only limited iconographic documentation for earlier phases, at least until the mid-seventh century BCE. Most of the information can be deduced from funerary contexts. As far as the Archaic period is concerned, divine personalities related to maternity and birth can be recognized with more accuracy. These belong to different categories of materials. The diffusion of anatomical votives during the Hellenistic period gives us an important evidence of popular devotion, otherwise often invisible. On the basis of an examination of such different categories of artifacts, this chapter offers a diachronic reflection on motherhood in the Etruscan religious system.

Federica **Pitzalis** is teaching assistant in Etruscology and Italic Archaeology at the University of Rome La Sapienza, where she holds a Bachelor's degree, master's degree and a doctorate. In addition, she has been research fellow at Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità of the same University. In recent years she has participated in several conferences and publications about the topics of gender archaeology, and she won the prize of *L'Erma di Bretschneider* with the book *La volontà meno apparente. Donne e società nell'Italia centrale tirrenica tra VIII e VII secolo a.C.*, published in 2011.

2. Potere materno: creazione e distruzione *Constructing and Destroying Maternal Power*

2.1. Potere politico: regni, terre e nazioni *Political Power: Kingdoms, Lands, and Nations*

M. G. Biga, Dee madri nella Siria del III e II millennio a.C. *Mother Goddesses in 3rd and 2nd Millenium BC Syria*

This chapter examines several Syrian goddesses mentioned in the texts of the archives of Ebla (24 century BCE) and much venerated by women to protect their pregnancy are studied. These goddesses are Nintu, Ishkhara and Barama. All these three goddesses are mentioned as recipients of gifts in the most important ritual attested in the Ebla texts, a ritual of initiation of royalty of the royal couple and of renewal of the royalty performed by the royal couple.

The goddess Nintu is well known from Sumerian myths. The deity Ishkhara at Ebla is venerated also by the king, but especially by the women of the royal family. The queen mother Dusigu and the last queen of Ebla Taburdamu venerated this goddess and visited her sanctuaries several times, bringing her many gifts. Hurrians people of Syria in the second millennium also venerated the goddess Ishkhara. Mari texts of the second millennium mention her as well. Later Syrian texts do not mention the goddess Barama and it is thus more difficult to understand her role.

Maria Giovanna **Biga** is associate professor of History of the ancient Near East at the department of Scienze dell'antichità of Sapienza Università di Roma. She is since 1976 epigraphist of the Italian archaeological mission at Ebla, Syria. She was the director (for three years) of the PhD school in Philology and History of the ancient world of Sapienza. She reconstructed the chronology of the Ebla texts, fundamental to write the

history of the city of Ebla during the third millennium BC. She studied different aspects of the Ebla culture. In addition to several articles, she also has published two volumes of Ebla texts, a book on the history of Babylon and a book of history of religions of the ancient Near East.

M. Baldi, *Divine Motherhood in Nubia. A Political Instrument of the Kushite Kings*

Under the long-lived indigenous Napatan-Meroitic kingdom (eighth century BC – fourth century AD), Nubian society was strongly influenced by Egyptian culture, giving life to a heterogeneous religious system that accepted the Pharaonic speculations on divine motherhood. Although other goddesses sometimes symbolized the maternal figure, Isis always kept a pre-eminent role. Divine motherhood was mainly a crucial political instrument of the local rulers: the association of Isis and her son Horus with the Queen Mother and the king was a cornerstone of the royal texts as divine grant of the ruling right of the sovereign. Moreover, their identification with the goddess conferred a very high status to the royal women, who participate actively in rituals and were often entrusted with ritual duties that were reserved to men in Pharaonic Egypt. Divine motherhood was very commonly reported in Kushite art and epigraphy. Its principal and highly symbolic visual expression is that of Isis giving her breast to Horus and in some occasions to the king: by being suckled by the goddess, the ruler acquired the essence of royalty and was introduced into the divine sphere.

Marco **Baldi** is PhD in Archaeology, co-director of Centro Studi Petrie and Italian deputy head of the Italian-Russian mission at Abu Erteila (Sudan) from 2009. He attended international conferences in Italy, France, UK, Switzerland, Croatia, Greece and Czech Republic. Moreover, he was co-organizer of the “Fourth Day for Nubian Studies” and co-editor of the proceedings. He is member of international scientific institutions as ISMEO, ISNS, SARS. His works on different aspects of the Nubian civilizations were published in international journals and miscellanies as *Africa*, *Beiträge zur Sudanforschung*, *Origini*, *Rivista degli Studi orientali*, *Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections*, *Journal of intercultural and interdisciplinary archaeology*. He won the sixth Forma Urbis prize in 2012.

M.E. Muñoz Fernández, *Iconografías de las diosas lactantes en el antiguo Egipto. Tipologías y evolución* ***Iconography of the Breastfeeding Goddesses in Ancient Egypt. Typology and Evolution***

This chapter is based on a broader study claiming a new approach to the iconography and meaning of lactating goddesses, divine nursemaids and mothers in Ancient Egypt. Its main objective is to understand the iconography of lactating goddesses in Ancient Egypt. We will therefore define the typology of kurotrophic goddesses and the evolution of the iconography from its appearance in the Ancient Kingdom till its spread in the Late Period. Starting from a small inventory which shows a general overview of the problem, we first suggest potential typologies and then pay attention to their evolution.

María Eugenia **Muñoz Fernández**, BA in Geography and History. Ancient History (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) specialized and BA in Ancient Egypt and Orient Philology (Language and Literature Studies) (Université Catholique de Louvain). Master of Research in Ancient History (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) and Egyptology (EPHE, Sorbonne, Paris).

Ms. Muñoz Fernandez currently coordinates her teaching activities (UPSA, ISCCR in Santiago de Compostela and Oriental and Biblical Institute) with research work (Thesis registered at Vigo’s University and member of GEAAT, H2Ou at Vigo’s University History Faculty) and cultural management (Roteiros. Xestión Cultural).

F. Dugast, « Déesses mères » et « Venus » chez les Celtes aux premiers siècles de notre ère

“Mother Goddesses” and “Venus” among the Celts at the Crossroads of two Eras

Feminine images are quite varied within the Celtic world, and most of them date to Roman times. Their identification therefore tends to reflect the Roman world, also because written material of that era is scarce, and archaeological data are unreliable. A large number of inscriptions give these figures the name of “Mothers” with many and various epithets. A few monuments depict a triad of female figures, with a cornucopia on their knees or a child in their arms. Thus, they are identified with female deities associated with nurture and fertility, for the most part “Mother Goddesses.” Celtic traditions – including through the Irish tales – seem to give a prominent place to feminine figures, playing both the physiological role of “Mother” and a more political one of “Queen” – with the name of *Rigani*. In this perspective, these feminine figures may refer to a more symbolic concept, i. e. both motherhood and autochthony.

Fabienne **Dugast** is currently archaeologist within the research unit “Orient et Méditerranée. Texte, archéologie, histoire” (UMR 8167), CNRS / Université Paris-Sorbonne. Her PhD thesis versed on to-day’s archaeological study of antique civic monuments concerning entertainment in southern Gaul, taking into consideration both the conversions made in the Middle Ages and the restorations carried out from the 19th century, so as to highlight the main tendencies of modern understanding of this type of building. Her current work focuses on the permanent nature and pace of change of religious and funeral domain in ancient Gaul (4th c. BC-AD). She has published a collective book entitled *Jeux et spectacles dans l’Antiquité tardive* (Brepols 2008), in collaboration with J.-M. Carrié and Chr. Landes, and a few articles, with a focus on funerary equipment in *Semitica et Classica 2* (2009), especially on terracotta figurines in F. Wateau (dir.), *Profils d’objets : approches d’anthropologues et d’archéologues*, De Boccard (Colloque de la Maison Renée Ginouvès 7), Paris 2011.

G. Sciortino, “Performing Motherhood”: the Pregnant Female Figurines within the Phoenician Colonial Society

Even though knowledge gathered from the few available literary sources about Phoenician civilization is scarce, epigraphic and iconographic data constitute rich sources for archaeological and anthropological studies.

By focusing on the available sources on the ancient Phoenician goddesses connected to different aspects of motherhood, it is possible to analyse “representations” of motherhood. In particular, the iconography of the so called type of the *pregnant woman* or *Dea Gravida*, considered by some scholars a divine embodiment of pregnancy within the Phoenician pantheon, could represent a starting point in our understanding of this specifically female condition.

Gabriella **Sciortino** is an independent researcher in Phoenician and Punic Archaeology. During her PhD at Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelone – Spain) she investigated cultural interactions between Phoenicians and Greeks in the Mediterranean basin with a specific interest about Proto- Archaic and Archaic Sicily. She is a research team member of the Laboratory of Archaeology of the Pompeu Fabra University (necropolis of Tyre – Lebanon and Cerro del Villar - Andalucía). She took part in international archaeological excavations in Portugal, Spain, Lebanon and in Sicily, where she is a collaborator of Soprintendenza ai Beni Culturali e Ambientali – Palermo. She has recently co-edited with R. Graells, M. Krueger , S. Sardà the volume *El problema de las imitaciones en el Mediterráneo centro-occidental durante la protohistoria*, Iberia Archaeologica 18 (Tübingen 2014).

G. Cursaru, *La maternité des Grandes Déesses-mères de l'abîme marin* Motherhood of the Great Goddesses of the Abyss

Despite their titles of nobility, the Great Mothers Goddesses of the depths of the sea are neither part of the Olympian community nor are included in the civic pantheons: they are not subject to any public worship in the Greek cities, or at least, they remain elusive to the worship plan. They are polyvalent cosmic entities and divine realities endowed with sacredness, but fail to emerge concretely from the polysemic images of the sea. Furthermore, representing mythical figures whose images are formed mainly on a literary basis and on etymological and philosophical speculations, the Great Mothers Goddesses of the depths of the sea and the triad of religious values with which they are constantly invested – fecundity/fertility/maternity, but without any of them being ever culturally recognized either as μήτηρ or as (κουρο)τρόφος - hardly manage to exceed the theo-cosmological dimension. Moreover, they fail to overcome the *clichés* implied by the "theological" constructions, essentially speculative and based on misleading or at least inadequate generalizations, forged by the proponents of the so-called *Mutterreligion* around the too stereotypical figure of Great Mother Goddess.

Gabriela **Cursaru** is Research Associate at the University of Montréal. Her doctoral dissertation (*Structures spatiales dans la pensée religieuse grecque de l'époque archaïque*), under contract with Peeters (Louvain), investigates the ways in which archaic Greek thought symbolically came to grips with three elements of physical reality which can never be thoroughly accessed by humans: the ether, the air, and the marine abyss. As postdoctoral fellow at the University of Ottawa, she worked on a project dedicated to a close analysis of the cosmological logic of the cosmogonic myths in Greek literary and religious tradition. She is equally interested by the mortals' descent to the Underworld and their fascination with the far-away/beyond and has published numerous articles on this topic. Co-editor (with P. Bonnechère) of *Katábasis in Ancient Greek Tradition and Religious Thought*, proceedings of an international conference held in Montréal & Québec, May 2014 (2 vol., published in 2015-2016: *Les Études classiques* 83, 2015 and *Cahiers des Études anciennes* 53, 2016).

S. Sarkar, *Mother/s India: How Hindu Mother Goddesses Shaped the Nation and its Women*

Maternity in India intersects with representations of feminine divinity in fluid and unique ways. Feminists have been divided: some critique the contradictory simultaneity of the cult of mother-goddess worship in a patriarchal society which subjugates mothers, while some re-envision the mother-goddess as a source of indigenous female empowerment. The re-visioning of the mother-goddess as Mother India during the anti-colonial struggle and the growth of post-Independence Hindutva ideology both reify and complicate the connections between nation and motherhood. In the introductory section of this paper, I briefly trace the scriptural and popular development of Hindu mother-goddesses in order to explore how the cult of mother-goddess worship is inextricably linked with the questions of subordination and agency of mothers in India. Thereafter, in the following sections, I look into the debates surrounding the role of mothers and mother-goddesses in the making of Hindu nationhood, both before and after Independence. Over all, this paper attempts to explicate how the construction of, and meanings associated with, mother goddesses shape both the patriarchal institution of motherhood and the practices of mothering in India.

Sucharita **Sarkar** is an Associate Professor in English at D.T.S.S College of Commerce, University of Mumbai. She is also currently pursuing her doctoral studies—on mothering narratives in contemporary India—at the University of Mumbai. Her research focuses on issues and intersections of gender, family, media, diaspora,

identity and culture studies. Her recent published works include book-chapters on post-humanism and Indian mothers in *Critical Posthumanism and Planetary Futures* (Springer India, 2016); neoliberalism negotiated through memoirs by Indian mothers in *We Need to Talk about Family: Essays on Neoliberalism, the Family and Popular Culture* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016); contemporary Indian folklore for children in *De-territorializing Diversities: Literatures of the Indigenous and the Marginalised* (Authorspress, 2014); and storytelling through food-blogs in *Storytelling: Exploring the Art and Science of Narrative* (Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2013).

2.2. Potere magico: maledizione e vendetta

Magic Power: Curse and Revenge

M. Šmiejová Kellová, Magical Use of Mother's Name. Humans, Goddesses and Curse Tablets

This chapter focuses on the use of mother's name as a determinant in the Roman and Greek curse tablets and it also considers curse tablets bearing the name of goddesses. A few of them bear the name of Mater Magna. This chapter highlights how surprising this is: indeed, usually, such kind of help in casting a curse is requested from chthonic gods such as Persephone, Hades or Hermes (as the only god between Olympus and underworld) and especially Demeter. Some explanations to this phenomenon are suggested in this chapter.

Michaela **Šmiejová Kellová** is a PhD student in Classical archaeology at Charles University in Prague. Her research focuses on so called curse tablets from Greece and the Roman Empire. In her previous work (*diploma*) on British curse tablets (2016), her photos and her own archaeological drawings of several of the West Hill curse tablets from the British museum were published for the first time.

J.L. Hackett, Of Goddesses and Mothers in Rural Maharashtra (India): Sharing Motherhood with the Goddess Satuvai

This contribution explores the relationship between women and mother goddesses in Hinduism, taking as a particular example, the Goddess Satuvai. Intimately connected to childbirth, child survival, clan fertility, but also to infant mortality, Satuvai, who comes to write the destiny upon a newborn's forehead on the fifth night after its birth, can either ensure long life to the infant or bring upon its death. While her capacity to grant children and ensure their long life evokes a symbolism of motherhood, thus justifying the title of "mother", the fact that she may steal or afflict pain or death could merit the title of "destroyer". The ambivalence of this goddess – mother yet unmarried and childless; protecting care-giver yet dealer of death – is not uncommon among Hindu gods and goddesses. Studying Satuvai's cult, we shall not only see how women are ritual agents, but also how these practices ascribe power and agency to the women who are involved, thus providing them with a creative framework to develop their communal sense of what is mothering that they share with the goddess.

Jessica L. **Hackett** is currently completing her doctoral dissertation in anthropology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (France) under the guidance of Marine Carrin (CNRS). After conducting a study on traditional birth attendants in rural Maharashtra, India, her doctoral research, examines the relationship between Hindu women and mother goddesses in western Maharashtra, and how women's devotional practices can be considered as care-giving practices. In addition to her research in anthropology, Ms. Hackett is an active freelance translator and teacher.

3. Pensiero materno e lavoro materno *Maternal Thinking and Maternal Work*

3.1. Accudire e proteggere: la curotrofia

Protection through Preservative Love: Kourotrophic Figures

G. Pedrucci e M. Scapini, *Il ruolo della balia e di altre figure vicarie legate all'infanzia nella religione greca e romana: Arreforie e Matralia a confronto* *Nurses and other Roles related to Childhood: Arrephoria and Matralia in Comparison*

In the Greek and Roman society child-care involved several people besides the biological mother: nurses, wet-nurses, and, at least in the Roman world, aunts (in particular the mother's sisters). Their role – especially in the case of wet-nurses – must have been particularly important, due to the quite high rate of maternal mortality, or when mothers' milk production was lacking. This phenomenon and the belief that genetic characters – but also the evil eye – could be transmitted via milk, was bound to have important consequences. People looked at wet-nurses with suspicion. Moreover, some mothers might have felt a sense of jealousy, due to the closeness of wet-nurses to their children. In this chapter, we ask if all these aspects had an impact on the religious sphere. Were such women involved in rituals linked to child-protection? In the first part, Giulia Pedrucci hypothesizes that the Greek Arrephorae, while performing a rite which evoked Erichthonios' story, were supported by elder women – an old aunt, a grandmother? – provided with a kourotrophic attitude. In the second part of this chapter, Marianna Scapini examines the impact of nurses and maternal aunts on religion within the Roman context. The focus is on the Matralia ceremony and on the goddess celebrated therein, Mater Matuta.

Giulia **Pedrucci** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow (“Cultore della materia”) in Classics at the University of Bologna. She received her PhD in Cultural Anthropology (2010) and holds Masters degrees in Classics and in Fine Arts. She was also post-doctoral fellow at the *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma*. Her main research interests are: Greek and Roman Mythology and Archaeology, Cultural Anthropology, Gender Studies, Rituals. Her publications include *Cibele Frigia e la Sicilia. I santuari rupestri nel culto della dea (L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2009)*, *L’isola delle “madri”: una rilettura della documentazione archeologica di donne con bambini in Sicilia* (Scienze e Lettere, 2013) and *L’allattamento nella Grecia di epoca arcaica e classica* (Scienze e Lettere, 2013, with an introduction by Véronique Dasen).

Marianna **Scapini** completed her PhD in Roman History at the University of Verona in 2012. With a scholarship of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) she was a postdoctoral researcher at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität of Heidelberg. She was also a visiting scholar at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra of Barcelona. After obtaining a scholarship, she became a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Verona, where she is a teaching assistant at present. She currently lives between Verona and Oxford. Greek and Roman history, civilization and art are part of her main domains of inquiry. In particular, she has focused on the connection between power and religion in the Graeco-Roman world. She has published many contributions, articles and book chapters and is the author of two books: *Temî greci e citazioni da Erodoto nelle storie di Roma arcaica (Greek Themes and Quotes from Herodotus in the History of Archaic Rome)*, Traugott Bautz, 2011, and *Le stanze di Dioniso. Contenuti rituali e committenti delle scene dionisiache domestiche tra Roma e Pompei (Dionysus's Rooms: Ritual Contents and Patrons of the Dionysiac Domestic Frescoes between Rome and Pompeii)*, Anejos VI, Revista ARYS, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, 2016.

3.2. Far crescere: il nutrimento

Growth through Nurturance

L. Totelin, *Motherhood in Flux: Greek Nymphs, Breastfeeding, and Ancient Gynaecology*

In this chapter, we examine the links between Nymphs and motherhood in the Greek world, with a particular focus on lactation. No single god or goddess presided over lactation in the Greek world, but we suggest that Greek women may have turned to the kourotrophic Nymphs for help in nourishing their children.

We start with myths, focusing most particularly on one of the earliest expression of these myths: the Homeric *Hymns*. We study the myths of Maia, the mother of Hermes, and the Nymphs to whom Zeus, Dionysus, and Aeneus were entrusted. We note that these myths never depict children breastfed by Nymphs, but allude to that part of their anatomy, and insist on their fluid, wet character. We then turn to rituals to the Nymphs, and more specifically the rituals that accompany the Greek marriage and the transition to motherhood. We observe the significance of water in those rituals: a water that symbolised the fluidity of the female body and its fertility.

We conclude that the Nymphs, like midwives and nurses, assisted the human “nymph” in her fluid transition towards motherhood. That transition culminated not with birth itself, but with the onset of lactation. Indeed, that most important fluid had the power to nourish and shape the next generation.

Laurence **Totelin** is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at Cardiff University, United Kingdom. Her research focuses on Greek and Roman botany, pharmacology and gynaecology. Her publications include *Hippocratic Recipes: Oral and Written Transmission of Knowledge in Fifth- and Fourth Century Greece* (Brill, 2009) and, with Gavin Hardy, *Ancient Botany* (Routledge, 2016). Her chapter on Nymphs and breastfeeding is part of a project on the symbolism of milk in the ancient world.

D. Nadal, *Kāmadhenu. L’aspetto più materno della Devi nell’induismo contemporaneo*

Kāmadhenu. The most maternal aspect of Devī within contemporary Hinduism

This contribution analyses from the iconographic and literary point of view the poorly-known figure of Kāmadhenu and the concept of maternity embodied in her. In Hinduism, śakti is the primeval, cosmic, creative energy that allows life to reveal itself. Within Shaktism, a major tradition of Hinduism that considers the metaphysical reality to be feminine, Devī (lit. the Goddess) is regarded as the Supreme Being responsible for the entire creation. All other deities, whether males or females, are considered to be merely her manifestations and, among goddesses, some are just females, some are mothers, and some are better mothers than others. Kāmadhenu is the mother per excellence. As a zoo-anthropomorphic (half-woman half-cow), almost-divine figure, she is known and worshipped as the Cow who fulfils every desire and tirelessly feeds her children with milk, care, and self-denial. Kāmadhenu is not only thought to be the mother and protector of all cows, who in turn are worshipped as mothers by Hindus, but also the mother of all deities (often iconographically contained in her body) and all mankind. Her children, indeed, are both human and animal and her milk is thought to nourish them all. Like many other goddesses Kāmadhenu is married, but in literary and iconographical sources she appears first and foremost

as a mother. This essay investigates the peculiarities of this somehow unique figure within Hindu religion and mythology.

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F. Pasche Guignard, Faire naître et faire croître. Les figures maternelles de Devakī et Yaśodā dans la poésie dévotionnelle hindoue de Sūrdās

To Give Birth to and to Nurture. Devakī and Yaśodā as Maternal Figures in Hindu Devotional Poetry by Sūrdās

Within the devotional traditions of Hinduism known as *bhakti*, one particular mode of relating to the divine consists in the devotee adopting the position of a loving and caring parent towards her or his child. This way of feeling towards the divine like a mother feels towards her child is known as *vātsalya bhāva* in the specific traditions relating to Kṛṣṇa. Building upon the rich and detailed mythological narratives about this god's birth, infancy and childhood, or memories thereof, *bhakti* poetic expressions capture a range of both positive and negative maternal feelings and harness their spiritual potential into a particular model of devotion. This chapter examines such expressions of parental love in a selection of poems attributed to Sūrdās. This major composer of Hindu devotional poetry in early-modern Northern India gives voice to several maternal figures in relation to Kṛṣṇa. Maternal theory provides a useful interdisciplinary framework for the analysis of several maternal figures and expressions of mothering as women's experience in this poetry. More specifically, Sara Ruddick's articulation of the three demands of maternal thinking (preserving life, fostering growth and ensuring social acceptability) and their corresponding aspects of maternal work (preservative love, nurturance, and training) is used in examining the maternal positions of Devakī, the mother who gives birth to Kṛṣṇa, and Yaśodā, the mother who nurtures the god as her own son. A brief comparison with case studies from other traditions highlights the specificity of *vātsalya bhāva*, in contrast with other forms of relating to the divine through a parent-child love metaphor, but in which the divinity rather than the devotee is in the position of father or mother.

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3.3. Accompagnare in società: l'educazione

Shaping Social Acceptability (of the Child) through 'Training'

A. Maiuri, Il divino e il femminile: brevi note sul ruolo della mater nella religione domestica romana

The Divine and the Feminine: Methodological Notes on the Role of Women in Roman Domestic Religion

This chapter starts from the premise that, in ancient Rome, women's religion was no less important than men's religion because it represented a sort of world apart, completely different but essential for the safety and the balance of the sacred city (*pax deorum*).

The main virtue of a *honesta matrona* was the *castitas*, that implied marrying only one husband for her whole life. The Latin authors described this condition with the word '*univira*': it helped to avoid the harmful contamination of the religious familiar traditions (*confusio sacrorum*). It was respect for religion, even beyond moral laws, that mattered in Rome. The natural complement of *castitas* was the condition of *lanifica*, according to which the matron had to spend her time weaving and spinning wool, with the intent to avoid becoming involved in anything more compromising. A conservative system such as the Roman society surely explains this for archaic and late republican periods, but also when the expansion in the Mediterranean, during the last part of the Republic and the Imperial period, involved a general change of mentality, such premises were always full of meaning and extremely conditioning in the development of Roman civilization.

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4. Madri buone e cattive, maternità maschile, madri evanescenti: negoziazioni e negazioni della maternità biologica

Good and Bad Mothers, Male Mothers, Evanescent Mothers: Negotiations and Negations of Biological Motherhood

M. Di Fazio, Politeismi ristretti e maternità "politiche": uno sguardo sull'Italia preromana

Narrow Polytheisms and "Political" Motherhoods: a Glance into Pre-Roman Italy

This chapter explores the issue of polytheism and maternity in the religions of non-Roman Italy, focusing the attention particularly on Central Italy.

The first part of the chapter focuses on specific methodological problems that arise when attempting to reconstruct the religious aspects of Italic cultures. According to this theoretical approach, I take into consideration several goddesses of ancient Italic peoples that can provide

useful information on such issues: Feronia, Marica, Mefitis. In all these cases, a primary concern with maternity and childbirth does not seem to be clearly recognisable. These divinities seem rather to have played an important role in various aspects of ancient life. The final (although far from being definitive) result of this inquiry is that Italic religions seem to be far from a polytheistic situation in which every aspect of life has its own god: rather, it seems basically structured around a couple of gods, a male one and a female one, who share the various aspects and concerns of life in ancient communities.

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His main publications concern the Social and Economic history of *Fundi* in ancient Latium (B.A.R., Oxford 2006); the ancient goddess Feronia (Quasar, Rome 2013). «The Volscians, A “liquid people” of ancient Latium» is forthcoming. He is co-editor of the set of three volumes, published by Peter Lang, that stems from the project *E pluribus unum? Italy from the preRoman fragmentation to the Roman Unity*, and published several papers in International journals and contributions in miscellaneous books and conference proceedings.

T. Thykier Makeeff, Man Born of Man Alone. Male Motherhood in the History and Reception of Daoist Alchemy

This chapter deals with the male appropriation of motherhood as a metaphor for transformation in religious texts and practices. Particular attention is given to its historical uses and modern reception in the Daoist alchemical traditions. Through a textual study of the central Daoist text the *Daodejing*, gendered metaphors, particularly relating to motherhood and infancy are identified and analysed as key components of the texts cosmology, ethics and soteriology. Shifting focus from textual to practical examples of the appropriation of feminine procreativity, an introduction to key concepts of the so-called alchemical traditions of Daoism is provided. Reversing or inverting the cosmic decaying process was a central idea of Daoist alchemy, which, through varying means, sought to compound an ‘elixir’ of longevity through meditational practices which rested upon the widespread idea of the generation of an ‘immortal infant’ or embryo in the imaginary womb of the adept. Finally, the chapter outlines the contemporary reception of the Daoist male womb metaphor, in two international religious communities and describes the case of a Christian-Daoist synthesis of alchemical meditation prevalent in the mystical practices of The Soul Power Institute.

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C. Del Zotto, Generazione di mostri, dei ed eroi nei miti nordici ***Procreation of Monsters, Gods and Heroes in Norse Mythology***

This chapter presents the different Norse myths related to the origin of monsters, gods and heroes according to the anonymous Eddic lays and the *Edda in prose* written by the Icelander Snorri Sturluson at the beginning of the thirteenth century. In the Norse primeval chaos, the giants are the most ancient race, originated by poison drops of the waters of Elivagar. The gods Odin, Tyr, and Heimdall also descend from the giants. Nevertheless, the two families of gods in the Norse pantheon, the Aesir and the Vanir, partly arise from a hermaphrodite deity, which may be compared to Nerthus, described by Tacitus as the *Terra Mater*. Similarly, the name of Hymir, the earliest giant, shares with the name of the proto-being, Tuisto, quoted by Tacitus, the root of the word “two”. Then, from the wicked god Loki and his mate, the giantess Angrboda, are born the monsters who will fight against the gods at the Ragnarök, when the universe will collapse. By contrast, three compassionate and loving gods create the first pair of human beings, by infusing life into two pieces of wood, which they found (inert) on the ground. Eventually, three different classes of society seem to originate from the visit that the god Heimdall pays to men.

Carla **Del Zotto** is associate professor of Germanic Philology at Sapienza University of Rome. Among her books: *Edda poetica. Il carme di Sigdrifa*, Milano, Scheiwiller, 2003; *Heinrich der Glichesaere, La volpe Reinhart*, Roma, Carocci, 2007; *Rosvita, la poetessa degli imperatori sassoni*, Milano, Jaca Book, 2009, *La letteratura cristiana in Islanda*, Roma, Carocci, 2010. She is the author of many articles concerning medieval German literature, Runes and magic in Eddic lays and Sagas, Celtic influence on Old Norse literature and Celtic analogues in Norse Mythology. She is a member of the editorial board of the Journal «Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni», and editor of the series “Intersezioni. Testi, culture, religioni”.

F. Gradi, La maternità nel mito giapponese. Un’analisi delle figure di Amaterasu e Izanami ***Motherhood in Japanese Myth. An Analysis of Amaterasu and Izanami***

Tracing the construction of maternal figures in early Japanese mythology, this paper intends to compare the two most important female *kami*, as they appear in the *Kojiki* (VIIIth century), fundamental text of Japanese myth that justifies the imperial lineage. After a brief critic introduction about shintō and its myths, the stories of the two goddesses are presented, showing how Amaterasu, supreme Sun goddess, is a figure opposed to that of Izanami, ancestral representation of a woman in her worldly reality. Through the analysis of the importance of ritual and purity, of the meaning of motherhood and death, and of the logic of patriarchal power, the patterns that are at the basis of the construction of maternal female images in ancient Japan are revealed.

Filippo **Gradi** got his MA in Languages and Civilizations of Asia (Japan) from Ca’Foscari University of Venice; he has also studied at the University of Tsukuba. His researches are in the field of Japanese religions, with a focus on Esoteric Buddhism, ancient and medieval mythologies, sexuality and religion.

M.T. Rondinella, L'insolito caso dei gemelli nelle religioni politeistiche ***The Unusual Case of Twins in the Polytheistic Religions***

Twin-births have always aroused interest and wonder in ancient and contemporary societies. The role taken by the twin's mother is also worth considering. A woman who gives birth to twins, whether she has divine or human nature, suffer a dualism. She is glorified in very few areas of the world as a symbol of fertility and deprecated everywhere else. This last reaction can be explained by the fact that twin-birth cases are more exposed to complication for the mother during pregnancy and delivery and the newborns are more frequently subjected to health issues. These facts were usually ascribed to the woman giving birth and, in order to reinstate the natural balance, a human sacrifice was often required, either that of the mother or of the children.

Maria Teresa **Rondinella** is graduated cum laude at the University of Palermo in Classic studies, archaeology, with a dissertation about Ancient numismatics of Sicily, which has been published. She attended cum laude the School of Classical Archaeology in Matera, discussing the White Surface Ware of Pantelleria, the ancient Cossyra, which has been published. From November 2005 until November 2006 she spent a year with a bursary as researcher at the *Institut für Klassische Archäologie* in Tübingen, Germany. From 1998 she has been worked as an archaeologist, as the scientific-technical manager for archaeological digs as well as in rescue digs, surveillance, writing technical reports, sorting out finds in the storage rooms, cataloguing, drawing and surveys.

5. Dare la vita, affrontare la morte: madri e amore, orgoglio e pericoli ***Giving Life, Facing Death: Maternal Love, Maternal Pride, and Maternal Dangers***

P. Engelmajer, *Mahāmāyā, a Buddhist Mother or a Patriarchal Ideal?*

It is said that the Buddha-to-be, as a deva in Tusita heaven, surveyed the world in order to choose the mother of his last incarnation. He chose Mahāmāyā, a “woman entirely unlike any ordinary human woman”, for her qualities of virtue and purity. Her extraordinary qualities, together with her supernatural pregnancy and birth-giving, put her far above any other human woman, and her death, seven days after the Buddha's birth, frees her of any mistake she might have committed while raising her son. This chapter asks whether it is possible to offer a reading of Mahāmāyā that embraces her as the perfect mother in the ancient Indian Buddhist context, and therefore providing, if not a usable role model, an aspiration and an ideal for women that allows her to transcend the patriarchal framework within which she seems to be confined. According to the tradition, Māyā expressly made the wish to become the Buddha's mother, and she had to be pure for “one thousand eons of lifetimes” for that wish to be fulfilled. The renunciation of her enlightenment that this entails within Buddhist soteriology has never been examined, either by the tradition or by scholars. I argue that it provides a meaningful reading of Mahāmāyā that recognizes her desire to be a mother both as a truly Buddhist aspiration – as she sacrifices her own nirvana in order to provide a fitting vessel for the future Buddha – and as a feminist appropriation that claims motherhood as a valid choice for women, and not merely the internalization of the patriarchal framework.

Pascale **Engelmajer** is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Carroll University in Wisconsin, USA. She obtained her Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Bristol, United Kingdom, in 2011. A revised version of her doctoral thesis was published in 2014, in Routledge's Critical Studies in Buddhism Series, under the title *Women in Pāli Buddhism: Walking the Spiritual Path in Mutual Dependence*. She has also published a short introduction to Buddhism in Hodder and Stoughton's All That Matters Series in 2013. She has lived and taught in the United Kingdom, Thailand, Hong Kong and the United States.

C. Whittaker, Suckling the Snake: Motherly Goddess Worship and Serpent Symbolism among Contemporary Nahua in Milpa Alta, Mexico

The ambivalent snake symbolism surrounding mothers and motherly goddesses provides an ideal entry point to understanding the shimmering complexity of contemporary polytheism and pantheism in Milpa Alta, a rural community in the south of Mexico City. This contribution focusses on three examples: the Aztec goddess Tlaltecuhli and her Christian manifestation as Saint Anne, a myth connecting snakes and motherhood to the Milpa Alta landscape, and a local myth of European origin about a breast-milk stealing snake. In Christian iconography, snakes appear as the "dangerous other", so that the folkloric representation of mothers, children, as well as internal and external threats to the family as snakes lays fundamental anxieties about kin relations bare: fear of illness, hunger, abandonment, betrayal, even incest. Conversely, in Aztec tradition, snakes may be both auspicious and bad omens, as they represent the changeable, ambivalent nature of feminine power: mothers and goddesses who give or take life, protect or kill, and curse or heal. Accordingly, snakes and mothers are strongly associated with fertility, growth, wealth, and creativity, as well as death, transformation, regeneration, and renewal. Thus, the snake, as a polyvalent symbol, is key to understanding women's moral positioning and hybridized religious practice in Milpa Alta.

Catherine **Whittaker** is a social anthropologist who specializes on religion, gender, and violence in Central Mexico. Having previously studied at the University of Bonn (Germany), the University of Oxford (UK), the London School of Economics (UK), and the National University of Mexico, she is due to complete her PhD at the University of Edinburgh (UK) in 2018. Her work has been recognized with several scholarships and awards, including the 2016 Emerging Leader in Anthropology Programme award of the American Anthropological Association.

E. Groff, If Life is Facing the Wrong Way: Maternal and Newborn Health in Varro's *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum* and Celsus' *De Medicina*

This contribution aims to discuss briefly which scenarios Roman religion and medicine constructed and represented as potentially risky when responding to motherhood at the turn of the first century AD. In order to explore what it was known about complications related to pregnancy and childbirth in the polytheistic Rome of the Julio-Claudian dynasty I will here chiefly focus on Varro's *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum* and Celsus' *De Medicina*.

When looking at birth and mothering in antiquity we are faced with the following questions: Which divinities did Roman women address when pregnant? Which gods did they invoke when facing difficult deliveries? Which remedies did ancient medicine offer for pain in labour and dangers of childbirth? What if giving birth meant bringing death?

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A. Crispino e M. Cultraro, Ambivalenze materne: rappresentazioni e costruzione dell'identità della figura femminile nella Sicilia protostorica
Maternal Ambivalences: Representations and Identity Constructions of the Female in Protohistoric Sicily

Research on major cemeteries on the Syracuse *chora*, such as Monte Finocchito, Pantalica and Cozzo della Tignusa, dated to the first two generations of Greek colonies, contributes to definitions of new relevant images of women in mixed communities, as well as of indigenous women. This chapter focuses on the roles played by those women, examining the importance of their activities and social status as they are reflected in funerary ideology and artistic representations at the end of the 8th century BCE. The aim of this chapter is thus to retrace women in the archaeological record of the early iron Age in southeast Sicily. It focuses on activities of the daily life, mainly domestic work and its resulting relationships, examining how these then affect women's identities as mothers. The reassessment of the archaeological record coming from the main necropolises in the area around Syracuse leads to conclude that some indigenous women were identified among the other members of the community in a double role: they were specialized artisans in the textile economy in addition to their biological function as mothers.

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Massimo **Cultraro** is an archaeologist and senior researcher at the "Istituto per i Beni Archeologici e Monumentali del Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)" Catania. PhD at University of Pisa and specialized in the Italian Archaeological School at Athens, he is also professor of Aegean Archaeology and European Prehistory at University of Palermo. His main topics are in the field of archaeology of Greece and Eastern Mediterranean, focusing on archaeology of cult and religion. Author of many scientific papers in international conferences and peer-reviewed periodicals, the last books include *L'Anello di Minosse. Archeologia della regalità nell'Egeo minoico*, Longanesi Editore Milano (2001), and *I Micenei. Archeologia, storia, società dei Greci prima di Omero*, Carocci Roma (2006). The book *Troy and its Wars* is scheduled to publish in 2018.

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