

CFP for the 21<sup>st</sup> Melammu Workshop:

## The Art of Love

*Si quis in hoc artem populo non novit amandi,  
Hoc legat, et lecto carmine doctus amet.*

Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*

24/25 May 2024

Gdansk (Poland)

Organizers: Krzysztof Ulanowski (University of Gdansk), Zozan Tarhan (Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski), Sebastian Fink (Innsbruck University)

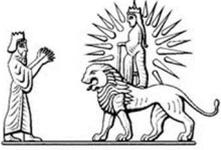
Seduction, love, and the founding of a family are elemental phenomena of all human cultures. While social reality and ideas changed over time, wise men and women of all times seem to have been eager to give advice to the young how they should move in this dangerous field. In myths, epics, songs, law codes, legal documents, proverbs, and even formal handbooks like Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* role models were presented and advice was given. We want to have a detailed look into this and study how the relationship between lovers was conceptualized. How was the whole complex of seduction and love interpreted? How did ancient people perceive the matter of adultery? Which deities were responsible for all questions of love and seduction? Which stories were told to explain love? While most ancient sources focus on how to seduce women and how to create a strong bond with them, the female seducer also appears in ancient sources, as for example Inanna/Ištar or Aphrodite.

Desire and love challenge human beings to use a huge array of tools to reach their goals. In order to strengthen certain ideological persuasions, people of power even created the concept of sacred marriage. Love can inspire poets to write fantastic pieces of literature, it can motivate people to accomplish something extraordinary. The proverb "All is fair in love and war" reminds us that war and love are not unrelated and that ruses and stratagems are used in both fields alike. Sometimes shortcuts are taken with magic – love potions, the use of magical tools and the bewitching of other lovers is frequently found in literature. While Plato conceptualizes love as something metaphysical, Ovid's approach is more focused on practical advice and like in a battle he advises to use stratagems and deception in order to reach one's aim.

We would like to approach the art of love with a comparative perspective and therefore invite scholars studying the ancient world (the Ancient Near East, China, Egypt, India, Greece, Rome, Thrace, ...) to contribute to the topic. The conference will be organized in the following sessions:

- Role models: Divine and human seducers
- Conceptualizing love and seduction
  - In myths and other literature
  - In philosophy
- Love and seduction in advice literature
- Marriage and adultery in law codes and legal documents
- The art of love and the art of war
- Love and magic

Please submit your abstract (200-300 word) to [krzysztof.ulanowski@ug.edu.pl](mailto:krzysztof.ulanowski@ug.edu.pl), [zozan.tarhan@uni-sofia.bg](mailto:zozan.tarhan@uni-sofia.bg) and [sebastian.fink@uibk.ac.at](mailto:sebastian.fink@uibk.ac.at). The deadline for submission is January 31, 2024, and we will notify you about the acceptance of your paper by February 15.



SOFIA UNIVERSITY  
ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI

