



State Formation in Sumer and the Subjugation of Women

Author(s): Ruby Rohrlich

Source: *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Spring, 1980), pp. 76-102

Published by: Feminist Studies, Inc.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3177651>

Accessed: 12-09-2018 13:05 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Feminist Studies, Inc. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Feminist Studies*

STATE FORMATION IN SUMER AND THE SUBJUGATION OF WOMEN

RUBY ROHRLICH

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary theories on the origin of the state present extensive demographic and ecological data to prove that population pressures underlay the pivotal processes of economic and political stratification. Increasingly, however, population and ecological models are being dismissed "as mechanistic formulae that have no explanatory value."¹ Because they exclude political and social factors, these models discourage the search for "the internal sequences of cause and effect leading to statehood in widely differing areas and epochs."² Thus, as Robert Carneiro points out, none of these theories holds up:

Although it is by all odds the most far-reaching political development in human history, the origin of the state is still very imperfectly understood. Indeed, not one of the current theories of the rise of the state is entirely satisfactory. At one point or another, all of them fail.³

It is the thesis of this paper that a critical factor in state formation is the emergence of patriarchy. Even the theories that include political and social factors fail to account for state origins because, for the most part (and except for the new feminist scholarship), they ignore the emergence of patriarchy as a critical institution during specific historical periods. Asserting the universal dominance of men over women as a biological and/or cultural given, mainstream paradigms, particularly in anthropology, ignore the interrelationships among the several hierarchies of male supremacy, economic stratification, and political centralization that characterize particular state formations.

Since the inception of anthropology as a formal discipline, the emotionality of male debates concerning the existence of societies in which men were not dominant reveals the personal and professional investment of the majority of anthropologists in the theory

of universal male supremacy. On this issue, the continuity between armchair anthropologists of the nineteenth century and contemporary mainstream anthropologists is direct and linear. In 1887, during the earlier women's movement, John Ferguson McLennan, in a representative view of the period, ridiculed the evidence for the existence of matriarchal societies: "That the children of a man and a woman living together as husband and wife should be subject to the mother's authority and not the father's, be named after her and not after the father, be her heirs and not the father's, is simply incredible."⁴ Ninety years later, a contemporary anthropologist who disarmingly acknowledges that "sexism is still pervasive in anthropological theory and practice," nevertheless urges women to accept the core of this theory, the notion of universal male supremacy:

There is no evidence that matriarchal societies have ever existed. The apparent universality of male dominance—at least in public and political realms—must be a starting point for an anthropology of women. The point is urgent. If women are to achieve full liberation, it will be through means that have never before been open.⁵

In asserting the "universality of male dominance," Roger Keesing not only rejects any evidence of matriarchal societies, but also disregards evidence concerning egalitarian relationships between women and men.

The rejection of evidence of female-male egalitarian relationships and of the preeminence of women in various societies results in distorted or incomplete ethnographies and ethnohistories. A critical case in point is Sumer, the earliest state society so far discovered. "Sumerologists have only recently begun to turn their attention to social and economic questions"; thus, "there are important unanswered questions" about the "representativeness and about the proper methodology for the interpretation" of the ancient documents.⁶ The data in this paper indicate that perhaps the most important of these "unanswered questions" concern the decline in women's high status, and the link between the subordination of women and the destruction of clan egalitarianism, the backbone of the opposition to state formation in Sumer. Piecing together evidence drawn from archeological artifacts, economic documents, and religious symbolism, I hope to demonstrate that the subjugation of women and the subversion of kinship relationships were integrally related to the institutionalization of militarism and of political consolidation in a society in which economic stratification became rigidified.

Like all the pristine civilizations, Sumer evolved out of a Neo-

lithic agricultural society, which formed part of “a single connected region, a Nuclear Zone [of agriculture], of Anatolia, Iran and Syria before 7000 B.C.”⁷ In the Neolithic Near East, women’s high status is now explicitly established by James Mellaart’s findings at Çatal Hüyük, a site on the Anatolian plateau of south-central Turkey. Çatal Hüyük was not a small Neolithic village where, it is sometimes conceded, women played central roles. Already in the seventh millennium B.C., it was “a town or even a city of a remarkable and developed kind,”⁸ sheltering five or six thousand people. The fourteen successive building levels that were excavated, covering the period from around 6250 B.C. to 5400 B.C., reveal an economy based on irrigation agriculture and cattle breeding, supplemented by gathering, hunting, and fishing. Technological specialization was remarkably advanced, and trade in raw and finished goods was extensive. The art of Çatal Hüyük reached even higher levels than its crafts. Deriving from “an advanced religion, complete with symbolism and mythology,”⁹ it focused on women who, from all indications, predominated in the economic, social, and religious spheres.

The economic activities of women seem to have been crucial. The many female figurines found in the grainbins point to their central role in agriculture. They also apparently participated in hunting: “The frequency with which the goddess is shown associated with wild animals probably reflects her ancient role as the provider of food for a hunting population, and as patroness of the hunt.”¹⁰

The women wove the earliest textiles so far found; the wall paintings show strikingly patterned garments and rugs, dyed with a full range of pigments. Baskets and pottery, the earliest known in the Middle East, were probably made by the women, who also molded the figurines, principally of women and animals. Those found at Hacilar, a later Neolithic settlement in Anatolia, were modeled by artists who had intimate knowledge of female anatomy and the ability to reproduce it in clay.¹¹ In all likelihood, the women also participated in the long-distance trading exchanges, as did women in Sumer, Crete, Africa, and other parts of the world.

The social preeminence of women at Çatal Hüyük is clear. Among the house platforms used for working and sleeping, the small corner platform belonging to the men was often moved about; the much larger main platform of the women never changed its place. Women were buried with their hoes and adzes, as well as jewelry, and children were buried either with the women under the large platforms or under smaller platforms, but never with the men—suggesting that the society was matrilineal and matrilocal.

Representations of adults and children “in order of importance” were: “mother, daughter, son and father.”¹²

The religious artifacts particularly revealed the high status of the women. Well-made statues, wall paintings, and reliefs show women of all shapes and sizes, in secular and sacred activities. They are shown in association with plants and animals, and they are surrounded by the symbols of their roles as farmers, weavers, mothers, ritual leaders, and deities. “The principal deity was a goddess,” writes Mellaart.¹³ While a male deity is also frequently depicted, “it is evident that statues of a female deity far outnumber those of the male.”¹⁴

Out of a total of 480 burials found in the various levels, only 21—“most, if not all, . . . of the female sex”¹⁵—were painted with red ochre or cinnabar, of great symbolic significance since the Middle Paleolithic. Seventeen of these skeletons were found in the shrines, the burial places of those who enjoyed special prestige and authority. “It seems extremely likely that the cult of the goddess was administered mainly by women.”¹⁶ The female deity is depicted in human form, while the bulls and rams are believed to represent the male. Because these animals symbolized male sexual potency in many cultures, the men of Çatal Hüyük may have been valued as sex objects, in addition to their other attributes.

The disappearance of hunting scenes from the wall paintings after level III is linked to the decline in hunting. “Sometime during the 58th century B.C. agriculture finally triumphed over the age-old occupation, and with it the power of women increased.”¹⁷ After this time the male god disappears: “He is not represented among the nine statues from the shrine in level II. . . . His role has evidently been greatly diminished and his prestige has irreparably suffered.”¹⁸

But because hunting had persisted for so long, the people of Çatal Hüyük retained the respect for animal life typical of gathering-hunting societies. Thus the site contained no provisions for animal sacrifice, such as those found in later Bronze Age shrines, or of human sacrifice, as in the Royal Tombs of Ur in Sumer. Nor is there evidence of warfare throughout the millennium-long existence of Çatal Hüyük; in this society, the focus was on the conservation of life. Despite the advanced level of occupational specialization, there is no evidence for social stratification beyond the special burials of women who were presumably ritual leaders.

Çatal Hüyük is one of “the three known centres where early civilizations developed” in Western Asia.¹⁹ It is “of the greatest significance . . . for the pre-history . . . of the whole of the Near

and Middle East,”²⁰ and it has “transformed our conceptions of the nature of Neolithic society. The excavations at Çatal Hüyük easily represent one of the most important archeological projects of the last forty years.”²¹ Yet this site, providing conclusive evidence for women’s preeminence in the Middle Eastern Neolithic, is either ignored in anthropology textbooks, or, where it is mentioned, Mellaart’s evidence for women’s high status is omitted,²² and the female figurines are described simply as fertile mother goddesses, or as fat or pregnant.²³ Similarly, Anne Barstow points out that the Çatal Hüyük material “has been scarcely noted by scholars in the history of religions.”²⁴

The omission or distortion of data dissonant with the ideology of universal female subordination is consistent with the assertions by mainstream scholars that women have always been restricted to childbearing and childrearing, and that consequently they were socially inferior to men, who functioned in the “public domain.” But the data show that the high status of Sumerian women in the advanced Neolithic or Mesopotamia and in the early phases of Sumerian civilization gradually declined with the emergence of a militaristic, male-dominated, politically centralized, class society. The evidence indicates that the subordination of women in Sumer was integral to the destruction of the egalitarian clan structures that had constituted the essential stronghold against the formation of socioeconomic hierarchy and the state.

SUMER: FROM CITY-STATE TO EMPIRE

Çatal Hüyük is the earliest prototype so far discovered of a highly developed Neolithic society from which the Sumerian state developed. Preceding in time, and geographically at some distance from similar settlements in Sumer, it is nevertheless linked to them, temporally and spatially, as a westerly variant of the Halafian culture in the upper Tigris-Euphrates region.²⁵ Çatal Hüyük appears to have been abandoned when the cultural center of the Near East shifted eastward and then to southern Mesopotamia, where the Ubaid culture flourished and spread throughout Mesopotamia, overlapping with the Halafian in the north. As at Çatal Hüyük, “in the late Ubaid period significant differentiation in grave wealth was almost entirely absent,”²⁶ and female figurines were found in most of the sites. From the Ubaid culture sprang the cities of ancient Sumer.

The impetus to urbanization seems to have occurred when the Neolithic villages and towns drew together into larger territorial and political units in defense against periodic raids by nomadic

pastoralists. From the outset, urbanization gave rise to a managerial class not only out of need for defensive measures, but also because contingencies such as droughts, floods, and famine required the accumulation of reserves of foodstuffs, seed, and herds. For example, “the problem of sparse summer forage was a particularly critical one, necessitating centralized management, particularly in the case of the larger bovids and equids.”²⁷

Given the heritage of Neolithic religion as the integrating institution, the ritual leaders became the managers, and the temple, evolving out of the Neolithic shrine, became the hub of the expanding city as a complex of sanctuary, warehouses, and workrooms. Functioning as the center for the reception and redistribution of the surplus wealth of the community, it was in the temple that writing was invented to keep records of community contributions that became compulsory, and to take a census of the population. But the priesthood retained a considerable proportion of this surplus wealth for its personal use, and the building and maintenance of the temple complex drained off the surplus labor of the farmers, artisans, and artists. The earliest writing reveals that by Protoliterate times (around 3500 B.C.), about five hundred years after the first cities were built in Sumer, the farmers had lost their autonomy as they were forced to cultivate the private land of the elites.²⁸ The theocracy became increasingly detached from the everyday concerns of the community.

Situated on the alluvial plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Sumer lacked a number of resources, principally timber, metals, and stone, primarily for the building of the ziggurats—the elaborate temples—and later, for the palaces and tombs of the kings. The farmers continued to use date palms and reeds to build their dwellings and made their tools out of clay and stone long after bronze came into use for weapons. But by Protoliterate times, the demand of the priesthood for copper, precious metals, lapis lazuli, stone, and cedarwood, led to the expansion of commodity production and to a great increase in long-distance trading.

A class of merchants arose that also acquired wealth, power, and land under the aegis of the ruling class. In the latter part of the Early Dynastic period, “much of the intercity trade and procurement was either subject to royal demand or under direct royal control.”²⁹ The heads of the merchants’ organizations maintained an especially close relationship to the ruling families, and merchants were included among those who received rations and allotments of land from the rulers.

Early on, the cities began to compete for the vital resources of

land and water; warfare became chronic and walled cities were a feature of the Sumerian landscape. Defensive considerations required the cultivation of land close to the city walls, with irrigation systems to maximize agricultural output. Irrigation works disrupted the communal systems of land tenure by restricting access to often-scarce water, and promoted the “concentration of heritable, alienable wealth in productive resources, and hence also the emergence of a class society.”³⁰ From Protoliterate times on, numerous records attest to the great differences in land ownership, the priesthood in the early period owning and controlling the largest tracts.

As military matters became paramount in economic and political decision making, the successful generals eventually became the rulers, usually after a power struggle with the priesthood. But the priests maintained a secure place in the hierarchy as they carried out their principal function of validating the status of the elites. By this time, Sumerian religion was disseminating the ideology that humans had been created solely to toil for the gods and their earthly representatives.

In contrast to the Neolithic societies, which did not practice even animal sacrifice, in Sumer the earliest dynastic rulers practiced human sacrifice, perhaps as a gross display of their power before they began to codify the laws, a crucial means of political control. In the Royal Tombs of Ur, C. Leonard Woolley found, in addition to objects that revealed the enormous wealth of even the early rulers, skeletons of about seventy members of the royal retinue: “The burial of the king was accompanied by human sacrifice on a lavish scale, the bottom of the grave pit being crowded with the bodies of men and women who seemed to have been brought down here and butchered where they stood.”³¹

The secular rulers, who also had sacred functions to validate their power, began to establish dynasties and soon were deified in their own lifetimes. They built temples, palaces, and tombs on the land they acquired by expropriation from their own people, and by conquest. A major consequence of militaristic conquest was the emergence of another new class, slaves, taken as war prisoners.

With respect to slavery, foreign and domestic oppression were indistinguishable in the early stages of militarism. Not only were local peoples in neighboring cities incorporated as lower-class subjects or slaves, but those who could not pay their debts, or who committed various offenses against the state, could also be reduced to slavery. The fact that the number of debt-slaves was much greater than the number of captive slaves indicates that, increasingly,

human beings, as well as land and commodities, were regarded as property. In fact, the slave's status as property was backed by the state. "A runaway slave was an object of pursuit not only by his owner but also by the public authorities."³² At a later date, the immense wealth and power of the ancient Middle Eastern rulers largely depended on the institution of slavery. Slaves were put to work on public projects and manufactories, and they took the place of field workers who had to serve in the armies.

Inevitably, militaristic rulers became imperialistic. The primary factor in the development of imperialism in Sumer was the inter-city competition for control of the trade routes and the distant sources of supply. Garrisons protected the roads used by the merchants, and at the same time standing armies were used to quell domestic disorders. Around 2500 B.C., all the city-states in Sumer were joined by military conquest under a single ruler; about a century later, Sargon the Great "unified" Sumer with Akkad in the north and became ruler of all Mesopotamia. Thenceforward, deities who had been patrons of agriculture became celestial warriors. Enlil, the "lord of the plow," became "lord of all lands," or "he who breaks the enemy land as a single reed." Sargon's conquests marked the beginning of an imperialism that culminated in the far-flung empire of Hammurabi, who established his dynasty at Babylon around 1790 B.C. when the history of Sumer came to an end.

When Babylon inherited Sumerian art, it had long since become stereotyped and static, in contrast to its florescence in the Ubaid and Protoliterate periods. The decline in artistic imagination, as artists were compelled to glorify the military exploits and power of the rulers, is particularly marked when Sumerian art is compared with the creative exuberance of the artists in the peaceable matriarchy of Minoan Crete.³³

The alienation of artists in Sumer was only one symptom of the erosion of the egalitarian clan structures. Even before the Protoliterate period, the foundations of the clan system were shaken as farming and pastoralism came under the control of the emergent state. While corporate kin groups continued to own large tracts of land, their autonomy and cohesiveness were sapped as land, formerly inalienable, was bought and sold; as communal resources and labor were expropriated by the rulers and commodity production expanded; as the clan leaders became part of the hierarchy when the clan structures were used to organize craft guilds, *corvée* squads, and militias.

But it is the thesis of this paper that the basic subversion of the clans occurred when the egalitarian relations between women and

men, which were central to the democratic process, were destroyed. This occurred in the context of chronic warfare, which became a male occupation and a significant factor in the emergence of male supremacy, and in the development of private property and its generational transmission, secured in the male line by law. The changeover to a patrilineal, patrilocal system led to the creation of the patriarchal family, probably the most important element in the creation of male supremacy. This type of family reflected and confirmed the divisions throughout the society. "The incorporation of numbers in servile and dependent relations, before that time unknown, . . . stamped the patriarchal family."³⁴

WOMEN IN SUMER

With the institutionalization of the patriarchal family, economic stratification, militarism, and the consolidation of the state in the hands of a male elite, male supremacy pervaded every social stratum. As the clans became vertically organized and the kinship system patrilineal, women were wrested from their own clans and from the socioeconomic and religious solidarity of the clanswomen, gradually ousted from prestigious economic roles, deprived of a voice in political decision making, and made dependent on men. Analysis of the archeological data and of the religious, literary, and economic documents shows that the subordination of women was integral to the emergence of a rigidly stratified, militaristic society. The data that follow are ordered in terms of the roles women played, both actual and symbolic, as rulers, goddesses, priestesses, scribes, warriors, entrepreneurs, prostitutes, and slaves. The approach is diachronic wherever the data provide time spans, in order to show the high status of women in the early phases of Sumerian civilization and its subsequent decline.

Rulers. In the initial stages of Sumerian civilization, women appear to have been in the highest ranks; "matriarchy seems to have left something more than a trace in the early Sumerian city-states."³⁵ The title *nin*, "queen," was "only applied to goddesses and those women . . . who served as rulers,"³⁶ and in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, around 2900 B.C., the very beginning of the First Dynasty, the names of two queens were inscribed: one Nin-Banda; and the other, Nin-Shubad, whose tomb was far more richly furnished than that of her "supposed husband," whose name was not inscribed.³⁷ In northern Mesopotamia the woman Ku-Bau, previously an innkeeper, founded the Third Dynasty of Kish, around 2500 B.C., ruled for a very long time, and became a legendary figure.³⁸

In Early Dynastic Lagash, around 2450 B.C., Baranamtarra ruled jointly with her husband, Lugalanda, the *patesi*, or high priest. Referred to as “The Woman,” at that time an honorific title, she kept her own court, “The House of the Woman,” distinct from her husband’s court, “The House of the Man,” and carried on long-distance trade in her own name.³⁹ She continued to hold a very important position even after her husband was ousted as high priest.

Following Baranamtarra, Shagshag ruled jointly with Urukagina, the *patesi* who ousted Lugalanda. Shagshag was also referred to as “The Goddess Bau,” perhaps indicating that she was deified in her own lifetime. The chief minister of state in both reigns belonged to the retinues of the women; under Baranamtarra she or he was styled “Scribe of the House of the Woman,” and under Shagshag, “Scribe of the Goddess Bau.” “All this suggests that the *patesis* were merely consorts, the real authority being vested in their wives.”⁴⁰

The administrative documents of the estate ruled by Shagshag record her great wealth, and these documents, together with those from the estate of Baranamtarra, provide the only data for the study of the economic structures of the period. The turning point in the position of women rulers may have occurred when Urukagina brought Shagshag’s property under his control, at the same time as he elevated himself to the kingship and reduced her status to that of consort.⁴¹ This event probably took place after Urukagina issued a series of edicts (the earliest law code so far discovered, discussed more fully below) that contained a regulation imposing monogamy on women only, which made the practice of polyandry illegal and institutionalized patrilineality.

Deities. The transformation of the Neolithic religious structures both symbolized and helped to institutionalize the social changes that occurred in Bronze Age Sumer. The worship of natural forces through the intermediacy of female symbols was followed by the propitiation of these forces by both female and male representations, which were then supplanted by male-headed, hierarchical pantheons in which male deities were more numerous and played more important roles than female deities and even attempted to take over their procreative functions.

Among the Ubaid people, who laid the groundwork for the Sumerian civilization, “the ‘Mother-Goddess’ type of clay figurine—a slim, standing woman with a snake-like head crowned with a coil of hair made of bitumen—was very popular.”⁴² And in the early Sumerian myths, the female deities are the creators of all life. “The creator of all life is the goddess Nammu, personification of the primeval sea, who gave birth to heaven and earth”,⁴³ “the ancestress who gave birth to all the gods.”⁴⁴

Gods appear in the later pre-dynastic period. Humanity became “the product of the combined efforts of Nammu; of the goddess Ninmah . . . ; and of the water-god Enki.”⁴⁵ But the female deities are still more popular and more numerous than the male gods “in the proportion of sixty to forty in favor of goddesses.”⁴⁶

Near the end of the fourth millennium B.C., the figure of the deity “tends . . . to divide into different aspects, each with the power in a particular basic economy.”⁴⁷ Initially, “An was the sky seen as female.”⁴⁸ Then the power in the sky was seen “as both male and female”; the god An was distinguished “from the goddess An . . . to whom he was married.”⁴⁹ In later myths, the female An seems to disappear and the male An becomes the sky god, “a major source of fertility,” which “led naturally to the attribution of paternal power to him.”⁵⁰ At this point, the great Nammu, the original progenitor, is described merely as the consort of An.

The female deity Ninhursaga, “as the rocky ground and the power in birth,” was on a par with An and Enlil “as a decisive power in the universe.”⁵¹ The myth “Enki and Ninhursaga” tells how Ninhursaga brings into being eight plants which had been fertilized in her body by Enki’s semen, the male role in procreation now being fully recognized. Enki eats the plants, and the enraged Ninhursaga puts the curse of death upon him. He becomes very ill, “since as a male he was not built to be pregnant,”⁵² and Enlil, the king of the gods, persuades Ninhursaga to heal Enki. She places him in her vagina and gives birth to eight healing female deities, who are named for the various parts of Enki’s body where they had developed. This seems to be the first mythic attempt in human history to wrest from the female deity the principal role in procreation. Although Enki was unsuccessful, Ninhursaga continues to lose rank throughout the second millennium, “until she seems to have been completely supplanted by Enki.”⁵³

Inanna (Ishtar in Akkadian, the language of northern Mesopotamia) was too deeply entrenched in Sumerian religion to be suppressed, although her roles changed drastically with the emergence of patriarchy and militarism. Initially, Inanna was associated with one of the earliest domesticated plants in Mesopotamia, the date, from which her name is derived. She was also the “goddess of the communal storehouse . . . which can take care of the life of all lands.”⁵⁴ At this time, Inanna symbolizes the authority of women as producers and distributors of staple foods and clothing.

“She seems to have a hand in almost everything and is rightly termed . . . ‘Lady of a myriad offices.’”⁵⁵ Inanna is the deity

of thunderstorms and rain, “the great dread storm of heaven,”⁵⁶ and in this capacity controls the lion-headed thunderbird and the lion, emblem of thunder deities, her chariot being drawn by seven lions. She is the deity of the evening star and “the mighty goddess of the morning star standing in the Heavens at sunrise.”⁵⁷ She is in charge of the lighting and putting out of fires; of tears and rejoicing; of enmity and of fair dealings.

Thorkild Jacobsen, however, deplores the fact that Inanna’s multiple roles, all in the public domain, do not include those of wife and mother: “We see her, in fact, in all the roles a woman may fill except the two which call for maturity and a sense of responsibility. She is never depicted as a wife and helpmate or as a mother.”⁵⁸ As the city-states became dominated by militaristic male rulers, Inanna’s principal roles were those of deity of war and of prostitution.

The Priesthood. The word *en* appears in the earliest Protoliterate writing, at a time when female deities outnumbered male deities as temple patrons and the *ens* were mainly women. *En* “denotes both political leadership and a religious responsibility for control over the generative force in nature and for management of the temple estate as a god’s demesne.”⁵⁹

Even as late as the Ur III period, women were performing extremely important religious and economic functions, for which they were trained in a wide variety of skills, according to the Drehem archives. Drehem, a large complex established near the sacred city of Nippur around 2095-2048 B.C., served as a center for the reception and redistribution of all kinds of game animals, fowl, and cattle, which were collected as taxes and booty. They were brought to Drehem to be distributed as gifts and supplies for the royal families, offerings for the temples, and salaries for officials and soldiers. High-ranking women, the *lukur lugals*, were in charge of the entire operation. They hired women to conduct the complicated transactions, as well as to collect and bring the animals to Drehem.⁶⁰

Women priests were not only administrators and officials in the temples, they were also very active in the arts, especially in music and literature. Not only did they compose music, but they also organized large choirs and orchestras, in which trained, gifted women of all classes performed.⁶¹ In Inanna’s temple at Uruk, troops of dancing priestesses chanted their laments in a dialect used when a female deity was impersonated.

Nevertheless, the female priests also played sexual roles which were defined primarily in relation to the male hierarchy. The *Sal-Me* priests were high-ranking women, sometimes the daughters

of kings, wealthy in their own right, and with considerable independence. But they were “the women of the god’s harem,”⁶² even though they were probably unique in practicing matrilineal descent at a time when patrilineality was already institutionalized: “The head woman, the Nin-An, was the god’s true wife, these others were his concubines; they might bear children, but the fathers of such would never be known; they might marry, but to their human husband they must not bear a child. . . . The child of a *Sal-Me* is called after his mother only.”⁶³

The activities of the female priests, even those of high rank, were later severely restricted by the Code of Hammurabi: “A *Sal-Me* priestess, or Nin-An priestess, not living in a cloister, opening a wineshop, or even entering one” was “to be burnt.”⁶⁴ However, even when women were deprived of most of their public roles, they retained some of their religious prestige and power: “The continuance of the priestess role in patriarchal Sumer in the face of the deterioration of other women’s roles can be attributed in part to the continuing power of the goddess the women served.”⁶⁵

Scribes and Education. In Sumer “writing appears for the first time in the form of pictographic tablets” in the main temple of Uruk, the E-Anna (House of Heaven), whose patron deity was Inanna, Queen of Heaven. From the earliest Protoliterate period the patron of the scribes, of accounts, science, education, and inventor of the alphabet, was Nisaba, female deity of the reeds, which were used both as a building material and writing instrument. The Sumerian Academy, the Edubba, over which Nisaba presided, was the center of literary creation, particularly the “wisdom” literature, which included essays written in *Eme-sal*, the language used by female gods and priests. To the latter are attributed some of the most famous and important religious, poetic, didactic, and epic literature produced in Sumer.⁶⁶

Scribes and scribal schools attached to the palaces and especially the temples developed many specialized bodies of knowledge, including medicine. Medical texts record the change from the earlier beliefs in an empirical, rational system that relied on plants and other natural products as curative agents to a system in which magical mystification predominated.

The oldest medical tablet found so far dates back to the last quarter of the third millennium B.C., when Gula was goddess of healing and medicine, and doctors were probably still mainly women. This document “is entirely free from the magic spells and incantations which are a regular feature of the cuneiform medical texts of later days; not a single deity or demon is men-

tioned in the text.”⁶⁷ On the other hand, a document of the time of Hammurabi, around 1750 B.C., “attributes the diseases to demons, and the cures consist primarily of incantations.”⁶⁸ As medicine became a male profession, serving mainly the elites, these “old husbands’ tales” seem to have become incorporated into medical lore, although the women healers ministering to the lower classes probably continued to use herbal medicines.

In early Sumer, both girls and boys were trained to be scribes in the schools attached to the temples.⁶⁹ At this time street scribes were available to all, and their services were freely used by women carrying out a variety of business activities. But as the society became more specialized and stratified, the street scribes disappeared, along with the women scribes. By the time of the Ur III dynasty the scribes were mainly men, and in Hammurabi’s reign, around 1792 to 1750 B.C., the patron deity of the scribes was Nabu, son of the war god Marduk. Also by this time mainly upper-class students, all male, attended the schools.⁷⁰

The exclusion of women from education in Sumer marks the beginning of a five thousand-year period of male-dominated and male-centered educational institutions which still prevail throughout the world. Because “knowledge is a form of power and power a means of creating and controlling knowledge,”

It is obvious that this long history of excluding women from the citadels of learning and from prominent positions in religious and political institutions . . . has perpetuated their subordinate status, sustained an ideology of male superiority and female inferiority, and nourished the deeply-rooted cultural assumption that male cultural hegemony and political dominance are universal.⁷¹

The pedagogical techniques used to turn a boy into a learned scholar and successful scribe are familiar. They include the use of “the whip and the cane” by both parents and teachers to force students to attend school for many years in order “to master the complicated but far from exciting curriculum.”⁷²

Writing was used mainly by the elites, for whom it became an “ideological instrument of incalculable power”: “An official, fixed and permanent version of events can be made. . . . Those people who *could* write, the scribes and priests . . . were rarely disposed to record the attitudes of those they taxed, subordinated and mystified.”⁷³

Land Owners and Entrepreneurs. Although the position of Sumerian women near the end of the Early Dynastic period was in decline, it “yet remained relatively high in that rights to inherit land and to exercise certain professions were still retained.”⁷⁴

While descent was by this time reckoned in the male line, in some cases genealogies “include individual women among those through whom descent is traced,”⁷⁵ as in the case of the high-ranking temple priestesses. Women’s names sometimes appeared on land deeds and ration lists as heads of households. Documents recording purchases of land in which multiple sellers were in a corporate relation to one another include “references to ‘sons of the field’ (this category sometimes including women!).”⁷⁶ Both married and unmarried women carried on long-distance trade “as freely as did men and contracts are frequently in their own names.”⁷⁷

Women ran their own businesses, particularly inns and taverns, but by the time of Hammurabi these businesswomen were, like the high priestesses, far more severely restricted than their male counterparts. The Hammurabi Code decreed the death penalty for an “ale-wife” who insisted on payment in silver rather than in grain, as well as for an “alewife” who permitted felons to remain in her house without reporting them to the palace. The Edict of Ammisaduqa, the tenth ruler of the Hammurabi Dynasty, 1646- to 1626 B.C., restricted such businesswomen even more severely: “A taverness who has given beer or barley as a loan may not collect any of what she had given as a loan. A taverness or a merchant who [. . .] dishonest weight shall die.”⁷⁸

Warriors. As warfare became the predominating factor in Mesopotamia, the mythological data seem to indicate that women initially favored peaceful means to resolve conflicts, were then drawn into the wars, but were gradually ousted from military activities and decision making and thereby excluded from important public roles. In the course of these processes Inanna was, curiously, assigned the role of goddess of war.

The myth “Inanna Prefers the Farmer” may symbolize the tensions that arose between the peaceable, settled agriculturists and the nomadic herders whose raiding probably initiated warfare in the Middle East. The myth describes the quarrel between the conciliatory farmer Enkimdu and Dumuzi, the bellicose shepherd, over the hand of Inanna. Despite the urging of her brother, the sun god Utu, that she marry Dumuzi, Inanna chooses the peace-loving farmer.⁷⁹

Again, in the Epic of Gilgamesh, Inanna proposes marriage to Gilgamesh, offering him “love . . . and peace.”⁸⁰ But Gilgamesh rejects Inanna and peace; by this time the kings of Sumer were waging incessant war against each other.

Once warfare began in earnest, women seem to have become involved as warriors and generals, as reflected in the myth of Inanna’s slaying the dragon Kur. Although later myths describe

males as the killers of Kur, depicted as a negative cosmic force, an earlier version celebrates “Inanna’s warlike character and skill with weapons,”⁸¹ as she slays the dragon, here symbolizing “the mountain Ebih,” a land hostile to Sumer: “The long spear I shall hurl upon it, The throw-stick, the weapon, I shall direct against it, At its neighboring forests I shall strike up fire, . . . All its waters . . . I shall dry up.”⁸²

War deities became female after women were no longer involved in military activities. The ancient empires often transformed one of their female deities into a war god,⁸³ and in their analysis of the myths of the fourth and third millennia B.C., Alice and Polly Perlman point out the significance of women as the agents of symbolic reality-construction in four major human activities: agriculture, war, peace (justice and order), and the invention of alphabets.⁸⁴ “The use of the goddess as a legitimating authority for human enterprises as late as Greek and Roman times might be considered one kind of lingering evidence of an earlier, more public role for women.”⁸⁵ However, the feminization of war deities may also be an example of making the victim the criminal, attributing to women the causes of intercity discord long after they have had no voice in military decision making. Samuel Kramer continuously characterizes Inanna as “ambitious, aggressive, demanding,” as if the attribution of these qualities to Inanna would make her responsible, as goddess of war, for the chronic warfare that plagued the Sumerian city-states.

Prostitution. Contrary to the widespread cliché, prostitution is not the oldest profession in the world.⁸⁶ In Mesopotamia it emerged after the professions of priest, scribe, merchant, and warrior had become predominantly male, when women had been made legally and economically dependent on men.

Although in the militaristic period Inanna is cast in the role of goddess of love and of prostitution, in protohistorical Sumer there were no goddesses of love.⁸⁷ The early female deities were patrons of the various aspects of agriculture, as well as of the arts and crafts. However, in a myth inscribed on a tablet dated around 2000 B.C., but probably referring to a much earlier time, prostitution is listed as one of the elements that are basic to civilization. In this myth Enki the water god, now lord of wisdom, transfers from his city of Eridu to Inanna as patron deity of Uruk more than a hundred divine decrees “fundamental to civilization.” These include—in addition to godship, priestly offices, heroship, power, the rebel land—“sexual intercourse and prostitution.”⁸⁸ It is significant that prostitution, linked with sexual intercourse, is associated with priestly offices, heroship, power, and warfare as “fundamental to civilization.”

Gilgamesh, who ruled over Uruk around 2700 B.C., in the Epic of Gilgamesh visits prostitutes in a brothel euphemistically called “the Family House,” located in the marketplace where women were bought and sold, along with other commodities.⁸⁹ The prostitutes may well have been women captured in the wars that Gilgamesh fought against other city-states, or divorced wives who had no other means of subsistence.

Prostitution was an important temple activity. At the bottom of the hierarchy of temple women were the numerous “temple harlots pure and simple,” as Woolley puts it. “It is certain,” he adds, “that the temples of Sumer housed a great number of prostitutes and that religion managed to throw over the profession a cloak of honour.” Woolley does not mention the profits that must have accrued to the temples from prostitution; instead, he sentimentalizes “the profession”: “The underlying idea must have been that of real devotion, of sacrifice; the devotee gave to the service of the god the virginity which, as plenty of clauses in the law prove, was no less precious to the Sumerian woman than to others.”⁹⁰ But why were women being called upon to sacrifice? And why their virginity? Virginity appears to be of no greater value to women than to men in egalitarian societies; if Woolley is right to label it “precious,” it must have become so to Sumerian women when it became a commodity.

Slavery. The institution of slavery, like that of prostitution, made all women vulnerable, and was also associated with the development of militarism. As warfare became endemic in the third millennium B.C., slavery loomed as a dire threat to women in all classes:

No one was safe. The quickness with which an enemy could strike . . . made life, even for the wealthy and powerful, uncertain and insecure; queens and great ladies, like their humble sisters, faced the constant possibility that the next day might find them widowed, torn from home and children, and enslaved in some barbarous household.⁹¹

Women were most adversely affected by slavery. A female slave was used as a concubine, for breeding purposes, for her labor, and for the profits her master acquired by prostituting her. In Sumer, one of the earliest words in the Protoliterate texts was the word for “slave-girl.” Male slaves appear not only later, “but also in far smaller numbers than do female ones.”⁹²

The selling of wives and children to pay off debts was a common practice in Sumer: “In payment of debt a man might hand over his wife, his son, or daughter, to his creditor to be his slave for the space of three years.”⁹³ Business correspondence during the Ur

III Dynasty indicates that marriage, far from protecting women from the vicissitudes of life, actually placed them in great jeopardy, for it was mainly wives who were sold into bondage as security for debt.⁹⁴

Women slaves were especially numerous in the textile industry owned by the royal family during the Ur III Dynasty. Large numbers of slave women spun and wove cloth, a particularly important trade item. Slave women also did hard manual labor in the fields, judging from the archives of the city of Umma. They worked in irrigation, harvested and winnowed barley, carried barley sacks into the granaries, and loaded goods onto boats. The custom of paying women much less than men for the same work already prevailed in the Sumer of four thousand years ago. Most of the women workers in Umma "received exactly half of the male wages even if they did the same type of work that men did, as in the case of irrigation and in the fields."⁹⁵

The relationships between those who were legally free, and slaves and their children, were regulated by law. A slave concubine who bore children to a free man could not be sold, and on his death both she and the children became free. The children of a free woman and a slave inherited half the father's property on his death, and the mother's freedom. Urukagina's Code, the earliest law code so far discovered, mentions for the first time the Sumerian word for "freedom," *amargi*, which literally means "return to the mother." This word seems to refer to the period of the matrilineal, matrilocal clans when all were free, and freedom was so taken for granted that there was no word for it, the word *amargi* coming into use when the contrasting condition of slavery emerged. Yet Kramer comments: "We still do not know why this figure of speech ["return to the mother"] came to be used for 'freedom.'"⁹⁶

POLITICAL CENTRALIZATION AND THE CODIFICATION OF THE LAWS

As warfare became the central concern in Mesopotamia, new political and ideological structures came into being. The fourth millennium B.C., and the ages before it "had been moderately peaceful," as indicated by the networks of open villages in the central regions of Sumer.⁹⁷ By the Early Dynastic period, the villages had for the most part disappeared, and the cities increased in size as villagers sought protection behind their walls. The new concepts centering around a powerful ruler, a hierarchical society, and constant warfare had unprecedented consequences. Whereas

human sacrifice was nowhere in evidence in Çatal Hüyük or in Minoan Crete,⁹⁸ sacrificial victims were found in the Royal Tombs of Ur, dating from the very beginning of the First Dynasty of Ur. While human sacrifice was used as a gross instrument of terror to centralize power in the hands of the rulers, the new forms of art and literature that appeared were ideological means to achieve the same ends:

In art the old ritual motifs receded before representations of war and victory; in literature a new form, the epic tale, took its place beside the myth. In the epic, man, represented by the ruler, is the hero, and the tale celebrates his prowess and his cleverness, even to the point of challenging the authority of the gods.⁹⁹

A central element in the Sumerian epic is not only the challenge to the male deities, but also the challenge to, and eventual triumph over, the female deities, which appeared to reflect the increasing subordination of women in the secular life.

The Sumerian myths and epics show the transitions from the early democratic assembly in which both women and men participated; to a male assembly which has lost the right to elect its leaders as kingship becomes institutionalized; to a male assembly that is only a token body under a despot. At each stage in the consolidation of the state, the egalitarian kinship structures were further eroded as men who were themselves losing their autonomy and freedom were tied into the power structure through their hegemony over women.

Sumerian mythology is based in history, according to Jacobsen. "In the domain of the gods we have a reflection of older forms, of the terrestrial Mesopotamian state as it was in prehistoric times," and "the highest authority in the Mesopotamian universe was the assembly of the gods."¹⁰⁰ In the early democratic assembly of the gods, which reflected the human assembly, both women and men participated: "The assembly which we find in the world of the gods rested on a broad democratic basis. It was, according to the Adad myth . . . an 'assembly of all the gods.' Nor was participation limited by sex; goddesses, as well as gods, play an active part in its deliberations."¹⁰¹ In this assembly Inanna has as much authority as the king of the gods, and is "highly esteemed" for her "intelligence, profundity and knowledge,"¹⁰² unlike the later representations of her as greedy, ambitious, and cruel.

At the next stage the assembly elects an ad hoc king to deal with an emergency, a war of limited duration. However, the end of the emergency marks the termination of the office; after the fall of Ur, the god Enlil denied the permanence of kingship, reflect-

ing the human resistance to the institutionalization of a ruling class:

Ur was verily granted kingship—
 a lasting term it was not granted.
 From days of yore when the country was first settled
 to where it has now progressed,
 Who ever saw a term of royal office completed?¹⁰³

At this stage, when women had relative autonomy, rape was considered a heinous crime, punishable by exile even for the king. When Enlil rapes the goddess Ninlil, the assembly of fifty male and female deities is “dismayed by this immoral deed,” and despite the fact that Enlil heads the pantheon, he is seized and arrested as a sex criminal and banished from his own city of Nippur to the nether world. In deciding on the penalty, the assembly has apparently taken into account that the crime was all the more reprehensible because Ninlil was prepubescent:

The lord speaks to her of intercourse, she is unwilling:
 My vagina is too little, it knows not to copulate,
 My lips are too small, they know not to kiss.¹⁰⁴

Although the assembly still functioned during the reign of the human king Gilgamesh in Uruk, around 2700 B.C., it excluded women, the basic step in the breakdown of the democratic kinship group, which paved the way for the next step, the “divine” appointment, instead of the election, of the king. Thus when the male assembly in Uruk votes against the decision of Gilgamesh to make war against the city of Kish, it is overruled by Gilgamesh, who is supported by the younger men. By this time Gilgamesh has the power to marshal corvée labor: “Sometimes he pushed his people half to death/With work rebuilding Uruk’s walls.”¹⁰⁵

Even before the time of Gilgamesh the ruler had established the right of first sexual access to all the women in his realm, thereby demonstrating his power over the men, as well:

As king, Gilgamesh was a tyrant to his people.
 He demanded, from an old birthright,
 The privilege of sleeping with their brides
 Before the husbands were permitted.¹⁰⁶

Not only is this epic hero Gilgamesh a tyrant and a rapist but he challenges Inanna, now derogated as the goddess of the prostitutes, by his gross insults; and, with his warrior friend Enkidu, he triumphs over the Queen of Heaven, by killing the Bull of Heaven.

By the end of the third millennium B.C., “the king had become

the sole and absolute ruler of the land,”¹⁰⁷ for the assembly had yielded up even its token powers, as reflected in the epic of creation, the *Enuma Elish*. Composed during the latter half of the second millennium B.C., it was performed during the New Year festival by the priests of Babylon every year for nearly two thousand years, so significant was it deemed as religious ideology. The epic shows that before the king could assume absolute power, women had to be totally subjugated, and the price men paid for the power they acquired over women was complete servitude to their earthly rulers. This epic, depicting an armed battle between female and male gods, recalls the accounts of the armed resistance of Amazons to the establishment of the patriarchy in so many parts of the world.

In the epic, the assembly of the gods beg the god Marduk to destroy Tiamat, the original progenitor, equated with the primeval sea, but now associated with the elements of inertia, chaos, and anarchy, as opposed to the new forces of activity and order.¹⁰⁸ This is undoubtedly the first historical use of the equation “woman is to man as nature is to culture,” the ideology which rationalizes the subordination of women in patriarchal societies by presenting it as a universal necessity.

In contrast to Inanna’s leadership in the early assembly of the gods, in this epic the female deities play an entirely minor role as consorts to the male deities, reflecting “the masculine, cosmic, political nature of the occasion.”¹⁰⁹ Marduk demands as his reward for defeating Tiamat unequivocal supremacy over the assembly and all the gods, as well as total power as lawmaker.¹¹⁰

With military technology in male hands, Marduk defeats Tiamat “not because he is stronger, but because he is better armed.”¹¹¹ The gods then acknowledge his absolute power and decree that men shall live forever in patriarchal servitude:

All glory to the son, our avenger!
His empire has no end, shepherd of men,
He made them his creatures to the last of time.
.....
He created man
.....
To labour for ever, and gods to be free.
.....
Remember the titles of Marduk!
Rulers will recite them . . .
Fathers to sons repeat them.¹¹²

Marduk's demand for total power as lawmaker was central to the formation of despotism. The codification of the laws was a crucial factor in the centralization of the state, and laws were codified when a state had the police power to enforce them. Thus the earliest law code so far discovered was passed by Urukagina, around 2415 B.C., after he had defeated the high priest of Lagash, installed himself as king, and reduced the status of Queen Shagshag to that of his consort. Urukagina's laws and subsequent codes protected the property of the ruling elites and regulated status and behavior in the class and gender hierarchies. Urukagina's Code contained a regulation imposing monogamy on women only, converting polyandry, formerly customary, into the crime of adultery, punishable by death: "The women of former days used to take two husbands (but) the women of today (if they attempt this) are stoned with stones (upon which is inscribed their evil) intent."¹¹³

A second regulation in Urukagina's Code, prescribing the physical mutilation of women who resisted the destruction of their autonomy, legalized womanbeating: "The woman who has sinned by saying something to a man which she should not have said . . . must have her teeth crushed with burnt bricks upon which . . . her guilty deed has been inscribed."¹¹⁴

It is a startling fact that Sumerologists and students of ancient laws and archaic civilizations fail to deal with the implications of these regulations in their discussions of Urukagina's Code. Instead, they accept at face value Urukagina's self-stylization, in the prologue to his Code (which became standard practice in subsequent codes), as the upholder of justice and defender of the poor, widows, and orphans. Kramer, for example, praises Urukagina's Code as "one of the most precious revealing documents in the history of man and his perennial and unrelenting struggle for freedom from tyranny,"¹¹⁵ and ignores the draconian penalties levied on women who struggled "for freedom from tyranny."

The fact that women "used to take two husbands" indicates that until the enactment of this decree, property was still owned communally by clans in which inheritance and descent were matrilineal, or that the accumulation and transmission of private property had not yet proceeded to the point where the identity of the biological father was considered necessary. The imposition of monogamy on women alone would seem to have institutionalized patrilineal inheritance and descent and could be enforced only through patrilocal residence. This type of residence isolated women from their paramount source of strength, their association with other women in the solidarity of their own kinship groups. In this isolation, as Lewis Henry Morgan notes, women's bonds with their children were weakened, and their social status declined precipitously:

Before the change, the members of her own gens . . . predominated in the household, which gave full force to the maternal bond, and made the woman rather more than the man the center of the family. After the change she stood alone in the household of her husband, isolated from her gentile kindred. It must have weakened the influence of the maternal bond, and have operated powerfully to lower her position and arrest her progress in the social scale.¹¹⁶

Compared with the Sumerian laws, Hammurabi's Code, enacted 1750 B.C. in the name of Marduk, the war god, tended "to exact severer penalties for certain offences, especially for offences against the sacredness of the family tie" [sic].¹¹⁷ And the later Assyrian law "makes no mention of a number of legal rights the mother of a family possessed in the much earlier epoch of Hammurabi."¹¹⁸

CONCLUSIONS

In this paper I have tried to show that the formation of the state in Mesopotamia was a complex interaction among the processes of class stratification, militarism, patriarchy, and political consolidation. In the Middle Eastern Neolithic, from which the state society of Sumer developed, egalitarian, peaceable peoples were probably organized in matrilineal, matrilineal clans, in which women played crucial roles, symbolized by the prevalence of female figurines. Their high status persisted into the early phases of Sumerian civilization; women served as rulers, priests, scribes, warriors, landowners, and merchants; and female deities symbolized their preeminence.

In Sumer, civilization was initially characterized by the emergence of a theocratic managerial class, in which women continued to play important roles. However, a class society would seem to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for the kind of state that evolved in Mesopotamia. The class society of Minoan Crete, for example, in which women were preeminent, evolved peaceably, and power was widely dispersed.¹¹⁹ Conversely, the class society of Mesopotamia, in which male dominance became institutionalized, is associated with warfare, culminating in imperialism and the centralization of political power.

The factor of patriarchy as a crucial social relation is omitted in the theories of state formation. Scholars have dealt with the existence of male dominance in human society in a number of ways: by positing a matriarchal period against which men successfully rebelled when they discovered biological paternity; by asserting that patriarchy was the consequence of private property and the generational transmission of wealth; by claiming that male suprem-

acy always existed, that women were never even equal to men, let alone their social superiors. The last approach brings together strange bedfellows: structural anthropologists; mainstream anthropologists, including Marxists; and some feminist women anthropologists. It is this approach, which implicitly or explicitly assumes male dominance over women as a biological and/or cultural given, that underlies the omission of patriarchy as a crucial factor in the theories on state formation, even those that reject Neo-Malthusian and ecological reductionalism.

What seems to have occurred in Mesopotamia is that as the class society became increasingly competitive over the acquisition of commodities, primarily luxury goods for the elites, and for control over the trade routes, warfare became endemic, and eventually led to the centralization of political power in the hands of a male ruling class. With the legal establishment of the patriarchal family, children were socialized to accept gender and class hierarchy. These processes brought about the destruction of the democratic kin-based clans, which had ensured, and been perpetuated by, the egalitarian relationships between women and men.

NOTES

¹ Philip L. Kohl and Rita P. Wright, "Stateless Cities: The Differentiation of Societies in the Near Eastern Neolithic," *Dialectical Anthropology* 4, no. 2 (December 1977): 273.

² Robert McC. Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1966), p. 3.

³ Robert L. Carneiro, "A Theory of the Origin of the State," *Science* 21 August 1970, p. 733.

⁴ John Ferguson McLennan, *Studies in Ancient History* (London: Macmillan, 1886), p. 324.

⁵ Roger M. Keesing, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1976), pp. 517-18. Even some feminist anthropologists, for example Sherry Ortner and Michelle Rosaldo, accept this theory of universal male supremacy.

⁶ Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, p. 81.

⁷ C. D. Darlington, "The Silent Millennia in the Origin of Agriculture," in *The Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals*, eds. P. J. Ucko and G. W. Dimbleby (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1969), p. 68.

⁸ James Mellaart, *Çatal Hüyük: A Neolithic Town in Anatolia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 15.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹¹ James Mellaart, "By Neolithic Artists of 7500 Years Ago—Statuettes from Hacilar, Unique for Quantity, Variety, Beauty and Preservation," *Illustrated London News*, 1961, p. 231.

¹² Mellaart, *Çatal Hüyük*, p. 201.

- ¹³ Ibid., p. 92.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., p. 180.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 207.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., p. 201.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., p. 176.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 100.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 17.
- ²⁰ Ian A. Todd, *Çatal Hüyük in Perspective* (Menlo Park, Calif.: Cummings Publishing Co., 1976), p. 3.
- ²¹ Kohl and Wright, "Stateless Cities," p. 276.
- ²² For example, Keesing, *Cultural Anthropology*, p. 99; and Gretl H. Pelto and P. J. Pelto, *The Human Adventure* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 466.
- ²³ E. Adamson Hoebel and Everett L. Frost, *Cultural and Social Anthropology* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), p. 96; Victor Barnouw, *Physical Anthropology and Archaeology* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1975), p. 233; Carol R. Ember and Melvin Ember, *Anthropology* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p. 152.
- ²⁴ Anne Barstow, "The Uses of Archeology for Women's History: James Mellaart's Work on the Neolithic Goddess at Çatal Hüyük," *Feminist Studies* 4, no. 3 (October 1978): p. 15.
- ²⁵ R. J. Braidwood, *Prehistoric Men* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1975), p. 137.
- ²⁶ Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, p. 95.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 49.
- ²⁸ Ibid., pp. 48-49.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p. 155.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 54.
- ³¹ C. Leonard Woolley, *The Sumerians* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1965), p. 39.
- ³² Georges Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1954), p. 20.
- ³³ Ruby Rohrllich-Leavitt, "Women in Transition: Crete and Sumer," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1977), p. 46.
- ³⁴ Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society*, ed. Eleanor B. Leacock (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1974), p. 474.
- ³⁵ George Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean* (New York: Citadel Press, 1965), p. 160.
- ³⁶ A. Leo Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 104.
- ³⁷ C. Leonard Woolley, *Ur Excavations*, vol. 2 (London and Philadelphia: British Museum and Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, 1934), p. 265.
- ³⁸ Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 66.
- ³⁹ Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, p. 82.
- ⁴⁰ Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean*, p. 161.
- ⁴¹ A. I. Tyumenev, "The Working Personnel on the Estate of the Temple of Bau in Lagash during the Period of Lugalanda and Urukagina," *Ancient Mesopotamia* (Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1969), p. 95.
- ⁴² Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 69.
- ⁴³ Samuel N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), p. 39.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 114.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 75.
- ⁴⁶ T. Fish, "Food of the Gods in Ancient Sumer," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, England) 27 (1942-1943): 318.

- ⁴⁷Thorkild Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 26.
- ⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 137.
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 96.
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 109.
- ⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 113.
- ⁵³*Ibid.*, p. 109.
- ⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 39.
- ⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 141.
- ⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 136.
- ⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 56.
- ⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 141.
- ⁵⁹Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, p. 137.
- ⁶⁰Shin T. Kang, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Dreheim Archives* vol. 1 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), p. 263.
- ⁶¹Sophie Drinker, *Music and Women* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1948), p. 81.
- ⁶²Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 146.
- ⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 146, 107.
- ⁶⁴G. R. Driver and John C. Miles, *The Babylonian Laws* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 98.
- ⁶⁵Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1976), p. 185.
- ⁶⁶J. J. A. Van Dijk, *La Sagesse Suméro-Accadienne* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1953), p. 89.
- ⁶⁷Samuel N[oah] Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), p. 693.
- ⁶⁸C. Leonard Woolley and Jaquetta Hawkes, *Prehistory and the Beginnings of Civilization* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 693.
- ⁶⁹Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 108.
- ⁷⁰Woolley and Hawkes, *Prehistory and the Beginnings of Civilization*, p. 662.
- ⁷¹Constance Sutton, Susan Makiesky, Daisy Dwyer, and Laura Klein, "Women, Knowledge and Power," in *Women Cross-Culturally: Change and Challenge*, ed. Ruby Rohrlich-Leavitt (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1975), p. 563.
- ⁷²Kramer, *The Sumerians*, p. 266.
- ⁷³Stanley Diamond, *In Search of the Primitive* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1974), p. 304.
- ⁷⁴Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, p. 87.
- ⁷⁵*Ibid.*, p. 82.
- ⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 83.
- ⁷⁷Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 118.
- ⁷⁸James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East*, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 40. Inside the brackets: a word on the cuneiform tablet that cannot be deciphered.
- ⁷⁹Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, p. 1001.
- ⁸⁰Herbert Mason, *Gilgamesh* (New York: New American Library, 1970), p. 43.
- ⁸¹Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 137.
- ⁸²Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, pp. 82-83.
- ⁸³Mary Beard, *Women as a Force in History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1946), p. 287.
- ⁸⁴Alice and Polly Perlman, "Women's Power in the Ancient World," *Women's Caucus, Religious Studies* 3 (Summer 1975): 4-6.
- ⁸⁵Boulding, *The Underside of History*, pp. 194-195.
- ⁸⁶Ruby R. Leavitt, "Prostitution and the Patriarchy," in *Humanness: An Exploration*

into the Mythologies about Women and Men, ed. Ella Lasky (New York: MSS Information Corp., 1975), p. 336.

⁸⁷ Charles-F. Jean, *La Religion Sumérienne* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geutner, 1931), p. 15.

⁸⁸ Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, p. 66.

⁸⁹ Mason, *Gilgamesh*, pp. 16-17.

⁹⁰ Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 107.

⁹¹ Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 77.

⁹² Adams, *The Evolution of Urban Society*, p. 97.

⁹³ Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 99.

⁹⁴ Edmond Sollberger, *Business and Administrative Correspondence Under the Kings of Ur* (Locust Valley, N.J.: J. J. Augustin, 1966), pp. 21, 27, 29, 45, 66.

⁹⁵ Shin T. Kang, *Sumerian Economic Texts from the Umma Archive*, vol. 2 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p. 10.

⁹⁶ Kramer, *The Sumerians*, p. 79.

⁹⁷ Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 77.

⁹⁸ Rohrich-Leavitt, "Women in Transition: Crete and Sumer," p. 44.

⁹⁹ Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ Thorkild Jacobsen, "Primitive Democracy in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Toward the Image of Tammuz*, ed. William L. Moran (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 86.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 401.

¹⁰³ Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 189.

¹⁰⁴ Kramer, *The Sumerians*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵ Mason, *Gilgamesh*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sacred Marriage Rite* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1969), p. 12.

¹⁰⁸ Jacobsen, *Treasures of Darkness*, p. 170.

¹⁰⁹ N. K. Sanders, *Poems of Heaven and Hell from Ancient Mesopotamia* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1971), p. 30.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

¹¹³ Kramer, *The Sumerians*, p. 322.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹¹⁶ Morgan, *Ancient Society*, p. 481.

¹¹⁷ Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 92.

¹¹⁸ Contenau, *Everyday Life*, p. 18.