



FACULTY OF ARTS
Comenius University
Bratislava

Beyond Mother Goddesses: Toward an Archaeology of Motherhood and Religion

Bratislava, 19–20 May 2026

Venue: G 239, Department of Archaeology
and Cultural Anthropology (KAKA),
Gondova 2, 811 02 Bratislava

Open to all Remote access link will be provided

Info: giulia.pedrucci@uniba.sk



Terracotta statuette of a woman with child,
Cypriot, ca. 1900–1600 BCE,
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
(Public Domain)

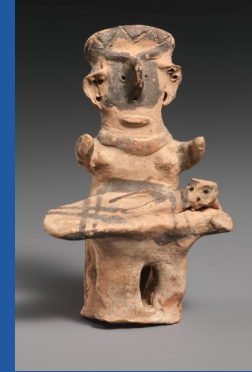


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Day 1 – Tuesday, 19 May 2026

10:00–10:15 Welcome and Opening Remarks

10:15–12:15 Session 1: Prehistoric and Protohistoric Perspectives

Chair: Martina Seifert

Katharina Rebay-Salisbury (University of Vienna; Austrian Academy of Sciences), *Motherhood and Identity in Prehistoric Europe*

Tim Taylor (Comenius University in Bratislava), *Hariti to Rhiannon: Mother-Myths and Foster-Mothers*

Roderick B. Salisbury (Comenius University in Bratislava; Austrian Academy of Sciences), *Identifying Mothers in Prehistory: Natural Sciences Methods in Motherhood Studies*

Giovanni Mastronuzzi (University of Salento), Simona Marchesini (Alteritas – Interazione tra popoli), Valeria Melissano (University of Salento), *Mother Goddesses in Ancient Apulia: Archaeological, Epigraphic, and Linguistic Evidence (6th–3rd Centuries BCE)*

12:15–14:00 Lunch

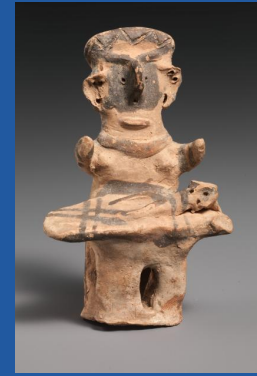


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14:00–16:00 Session 2: Votive, Protective, and Funerary Materialities

Chair: Katharina Rebay-Salisbury

Lorenzo Verderame (Sapienza University of Rome), *Barren Motherhood and Baby-Snatching Demon: The Lamaštu Amulets*

Francesca Fulminante (University of Oxford), *Mothers in Funerary Representations in Central and Southern Italy in the First Millennium BC: Advantages and Biases*

Emma de Koning (University of Erfurt), *Woman, Mother, Goddess? Depicting Motherhood in Cypriot Sanctuaries*

Giulia Pedrucci (Comenius University in Bratislava), *Mothering and Other Mothering Figures in Greek Votive and Funerary Coroplastic Art*

16:00–16:30 Coffee break

16:30–18:00 Session 3: Milk, Ritual, and Protection

Chair: Marios Kamenou (University of Graz)

April Pudsey (Manchester Metropolitan University), *Cults and Cultures of Infant Nursing and Weaning in the Ancient Mediterranean*

Laura Battini (CNRS-PSL, Paris), *From Human and Divine Breastfeeding to Breast Milk: Crossed Archaeological and Textual Perspectives from Mesopotamia*

Cannon Fairbairn (University of Birmingham), *Mothers and Menat: Breastfeeding and Breastfeeders in Ancient Egypt*

19:00

Informal Dinner

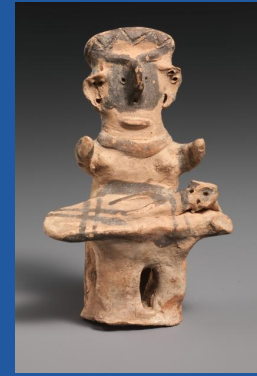


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Day 2 – Wednesday, 20 May 2026

10:00–13:00 Session 4. From Sacred to the Everyday

Chair: Florence Pasche Guignard

Marianna Castiglione (Independent researcher), *Motherhood and Women's Experiences in the Ancient Levant: Insights from Material Culture*

Meritxell Ferrer Martín (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona) & Mireia López-Bertran (Universitat de València), *Experiencing Mothering and Motherhood in the Phoenician-Punic World through the Lens of Archaeology*

Mercedes Oria Segura (University of Seville) & Carmen Ramírez Cañas (University of Seville), *Between Sacred and Daily Life: Depictions of Motherhood in Late Punic Votive Deposits from Cadiz*

11:30–12:00 Coffee break

Sarah Mady (Harvard Divinity School), *Capturing Echoes: Ethnoarchaeology of Ancient Mothers*

Sucharita Sarkar (D.T.S.S College of Commerce, Mumbai) *Reading Representations of the Maternal in Pre-modern Indian Archaeology*

13:00–14:30 Lunch

14:30–16:00 Session 5: Religious Spaces, Images, and Texts

Chair: Roderick B. Salisbury

Stavroula Constantinou (University of Cyprus), *Mothering in Byzantine Shrines*

Claudia Tavolieri (University Roma Tor Vergata), *The Archaeological Spaces of Female Asceticism: The Unpredictable Places of Hagiography*

Ljuben Tevdovski (Goce Delčev University of Štip), *Archaeologies of Power and Care: Tracing the Mother-Goddess Prototype in Hellenistic Queenship*

16:00–16:30 Coffee break



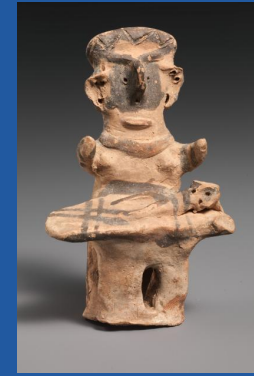
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16:30–18:00 Roundtable Discussion: Motherhood, Religion, and Archaeology: Reflections from the Editors (Together with Selected Contributors Attending the Conference)

Moderator: Martina Seifert (University of Hamburg)

Roundtable Contributors:

Pascale Engelmajer (Carroll University)

Marios Kamenou (University of Graz)

Florence Pasche Guignard (Université Laval)

Giulia Pedrucci (Comenius University in Bratislava)

Sucharita Sarkar (D.T.S.S College of Commerce, Mumbai)

Discussion of the outcomes and perspectives emerging from the editorial work on three forthcoming volumes:

Beyond Mother Goddesses: Mothers, Motherhood and Mothering at the Intersection with Religions, eds.

Florence Pasche Guignard, Pascale Engelmajer, Sucharita Sarkar, and Giulia Pedrucci (Routledge 2026)

Mothering in Antiquity (series *Rewriting Antiquity*), ed. Giulia Pedrucci (Routledge 2026)

Inside out: Gender and Ageing Agency in Urban and non-Urban Religious Spaces in Antiquity, eds. Giulia Pedrucci, Francesca Fulminante, and Martina Seifert (Brepols 2026)

The Bloomsbury Handbook of Motherhood and Religions, eds. Florence Pasche Guignard, Joanna Krotofil, and Giulia Pedrucci (Bloomsbury 2027)

18:00 Closing Remarks



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