

## **Headscarf and Veiling**

Glimpses from Sumer to Islam

edited by Roswitha Del Fabbro, Frederick Mario Fales, Hannes D. Galter

# **Preface**

Roswitha Del Fabbro

President of A.C.CulturArti, Udine, Italia

Nowadays, the use of the female veil in the Islamic religious and cultural tradition is discussed in many different ways and perspectives, sometimes even going as far as studies of comparison with biblical Judaism and Pauline Christianity. Hardly at all debated, however, is the question of the possible antecedents of female veiling, for social or religious use, in the Near East (Assyria, Babylonia and the Levant) of the millennia preceding these three monotheistic traditions. Is it from the ancient Near East that the use of the *burqa* was born? Or did feminine veiling have different connotations, which were then modified with the progressive crisis of the polytheistic horizon? On 2 March 2020, a multilingual conference held at the Karl-Franzens-Universität in Graz (Austria) was devoted to the theme of the female veil from the ancient Orient to Islam, with a series of aimed interventions by historians, experts in law and religion, art historians, and other specialists on the ancient, medieval and modern Near East. The conference was organised by the Cultural Association CulturArti (A.C.CulturArti) of Udine (Italy) in collaboration with the Karl-Franzens-Universität of Graz, as part of the comprehensive cultural project *2nd Alpe-Adria Festival of Public Archaeology. No Borders*, for which the A.C.CulturArti was financed by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (as outcome of the 2019-20 *Public Notice of Manifestations of Dissemination of Humanistic Culture*).

I am personally very grateful to Prof. Wolfgang Spickermann, of the University of Graz, who introduced the proceedings on the morning of 2 March; and to Prof. F. Mario Fales (University of Udine) and Prof. Hannes D. Galter (University of Graz), who not only planned

and organised the entire scientific event at length beforehand, but then also concretely led the interesting and constructive multidisciplinary discussions which followed each paper, thus guaranteeing the success of the Conference to the general satisfaction of participants and audience.

The dire and long-lasting events in worldwide health, which immediately followed upon this felicitous Italo-Austrian academic gathering, can only cast a veil of longing for all international opportunities of this type, lost from that time onwards, but which hopefully we will return to enjoy as soon as possible.

I transcribe the full programme of the conference:

### **Il velo femminile dall'Antico Oriente all'Islam | Kopftuch und Schleier von alten Orient bis zum Islam**

2 March 2020 | h. 9:00-17:00 Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz Sitzungszimmer 15.21, Universitätsstraße 15, A2, 8010 Graz/Austria

#### **PROGRAMME**

Monday, 02.03.2020

Chair: Johannes Gießauf

09.00 Opening: Roswitha Del Fabbro (A.C.CulturArti, Udine) / Wolfgang Spickermann (University of Graz); 09.15 Introduction: Mario Fales (University of Udine) / Hannes D. Galter (University of Graz); 09.30 Hannes D. Galter (University of Graz): *Kopftuch und Schleier - Eine Kulturgeschichte*; 10.00 Coffee break.

10.30 Giovanna Biga (Sapienza University of Rome): *The Veil in Ancient Near Eastern Religion and Culture*; 11.00 Mario Fales (University of Udine): *Veiling in Ancient Near Eastern Legal Contexts*; 11.30 Peter Mauritsch (University of Graz): *Verhüllungen? Schleierhaftes in antiken Texten und Bildern*; 12.00 Lunch break.

Chair: Hannes D. Galter

14.00 Karl Prenner (University of Graz): *Verhüllung als Ausdruck des sittlichen Verhaltens der Frau und ihrer sozialen Stellung im Koran*; 14.30 Carla Amina Baghajati (Schulamtsleiterin der IGGÖ, Vienna): *Zur gegenwärtigen Kopftuchdebatte in Österreich*; 15.00 Gabriel Malli (University of Graz/Erfurt): *Der Schleier als diskursives Kampffeld. Bedeutungszuschreibungen an den Hijab im „Westen“*; 15.30 Coffee break.

16.00 Davide Nadali (Sapienza University of Rome): *To See, or Not To See. The Issue of Visuality in Ancient Near Eastern Art*; 16.30 Margit Stadlober (University of Graz): *Haube und Barett in den Bildern des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*.

This volume presents the proceedings of this conference. The organisers from A.C.CulturArti of Udine and Karl-Franzens-Universität of Graz are very grateful to Ca' Foscari University Press, in the person of the General Editor, Dr Massimiliano Vianello, and in particular to Prof. Lucio Milano (Chair of History of the Ancient Near East, Ca' Foscari University of Venice), for accepting the papers as an edited book in Edizioni Ca' Foscari's catalogue, which is marked by an agile and professional print edition and an open access digital edition in many areas of academic research.

