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TITLE**The Divine Feminine in Mesopotamia: glyptic symbology from the Dyala region (4th – 3rd millennia BC)****KEYWORDS**

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ABSTRACT

The importance of the rivers on the birth of Mesopotamian civilization is well known. One of these fluvial courses, the Dyala, an affluent of the Tigris, brought fertility to its region, which had a substantial geo-strategic importance given that it linked the alluvial Mesopotamian area with the Iranian plateau. During the transition from the 4th to the 3rd millennia BC, the Dyala region saw the rise of urbanism, and in centuries to come Ešnunna (Tell Asmar) would rise as one of the key powers in Mesopotamia.

The archaeological excavations in this region, during the 1930's and 1940's, led by the Oriental Institute of Chicago, brought to light several sites dating back to the 4th millennium BC. Some of them display data that confirms a continuous occupation until the First Babylonian dynasty (19th century BC). Hence, the analysis of its material culture affirms itself as an excellent case-study to identify the multiple layers and traits of this civilization. In what concerns the religious sphere, the material found in the cultic structures, namely the cylinder seals and its symbolic content, can help to shed light on the religious thought and practices in Early times. Following the work we have been developing together in the last couple of years, focused on the Mesopotamian Divine Feminine representations, with this paper we propose to analyse the feminine symbols present in the cylinder seals found in three archaeological sites of Dyala (Tell Agrab, Khafajah, and Tell Asmar).