

Maddalena Rumor

Department of Classics, Case Western Reserve University

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MAIN INTERESTS

Cultural and Intellectual History of Medicine, Science, and Technology – History of the Ancient Near East within its broader context – Transfers of Medical and Scientific Knowledge/Information between the Ancient Near East and the Graeco-Roman World.

RESEARCH VISIBILITY:

- Academia.edu: <https://case.academia.edu/MaddalenaRumor>
- ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1342-0015>

IN THE MEDIA:

The Daily	https://thedaily.case.edu/with-yearlong-grant-in-hand-classics-maddalena-rumor-explores-how-ancient-cultures-shared-medical-knowledge/
CAS News	Classics and chemistry teams come together to “turn silver to gold”: https://artsci.case.edu/news/classics-and-chemistry-teams-come-together-to-turn-silver-to-gold/
Fools are Everywhere Tumblr	https://www.foolsareeverywhere.com/bibliography-rumor-maddalena-2017/ https://www.tumblr.com/meganwhalenturner/774475403064672256/alchem
CAS Communications	https://artsci.case.edu/news/classics-and-chemistry-teams-come-together-to-turn-silver-to-gold/
Think Magazine	https://case.edu/think/spring2025/turning-silver-to-gold.html

EMPLOYMENT

2021-Present	Assistant Professor, Classics, Case Western Reserve University.
2020-2021	ACLS Fellow, Classics, Case Western Reserve University.
2019-2020	Visiting Assistant Professor, Classics, Case Western Reserve University.
2016-2019	Visiting Assistant Professor, History, Case Western Reserve University.

EDUCATION AND DEGREES

PhD	Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany (Approved <i>summa cum laude</i> . Conferred June 2016). Specialization in Assyriology/History of Knowledge. PhD thesis: “Babylonian Pharmacology in Graeco-Roman <i>Dreckapotheke</i> . With an Edition of Uruanna III, 1-143 (138).”
MSI	School of Information, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI (April 2007). Masters of Science in Information. Specialization in “Library and Information Services.”
MA	Venice International University, Venice, Italy (December 1999). European Socrates Masters Program in “Archaeology and Dynamics of Writing.” Thesis title: “Nascita e decline della scrittura cuneiforme: alcune riflessioni.”
BA	Università Ca’ Foscari, Venice, Italy (March 2003). Laurea 110 e lode (<i>summa cum laude</i>) in “Preservation of Cultural Goods.” Specialization in “History and Archaeology of the Ancient Near East.” Thesis title: “La figura del medico e le pratiche terapeutiche nell’antica Mesopotamia.”

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs:

- 2024 Perplexing Remedies in Ancient Medicine: ‘Dreckapotheke’ in Mesopotamia, and the Graeco-Roman World. Science, Medicine and Technology in Ancient Cultures (Berlin: DeGruyter/Brill). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111332505>.
- 2016 *Babylonian Pharmacology in Graeco-Roman Dreckapotheke. With an Edition of Uruanna III, 1-143 (138)*. PhD Dissertation, Freie Universität Berlin (<https://d-nb.info/1112957472>).

Peer-reviewed Journal Articles and Book Chapters:

- In Preparation “Mesopotamian ‘Alchemy’ in the Lab.”
- Forthcoming “Astronomy and Medicine.” In Steele, J., ed., *Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Astronomy*.
- In press “Madness in 7th c. BCE Nineveh.” In J. Sadowsky and C. Thumiger, eds., *A Cultural History of Madness* (Bloomsbury).
- 2025 “The Study of Plants in Mesopotamian Scholarship.” In *Aldovrandiana: Historical Studies in Natural History*, pp. 87—98.
- 2024 “Comparative Guts - Mesopotamia.” In C. Thumiger (ed.), *Comparative Guts: Exploring The Inside of The Body Through Time and Space*, pp. 126–131. Kiel: Christian-Albrechts-Universität. DOI: 10.38071/2024-00345-3.
- 2021 “Medicinal Plants, Foods, and Spices in Ancient Mesopotamia.” In H. Perdicoyianni-Paléologou (ed.), *Health, Disease and Healing from Antiquity to Byzantium: Medicinal Foods, Herbs and Spices*. Byzantinische Forschungen 33 (Amsterdam: Verlag Adolf M. Hakkert), pp. 21–37.
- 2021 Babylonian Astro-medicine, Quadruplicities and Pliny the Elder.” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 111/1, pp. 47–76. <https://doi.org/10.1515/za-2021-0007>
- 2020 “Dreck-, Deck-, or What the Heck?” *Le Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes* 36, pp. 37–53.
- 2020 “Akkadian *Sikillu* and Greek Σκίλλα in their Medical and Magico-Ritual Contexts.” In J. C. Johnson (ed.) *Patients and Performative Identities: At the Intersection of the Mesopotamian Technical Disciplines and Their Clients* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns), pp. 169–192.
- 2018 “At the Dawn of Plant Taxonomy: Shared Structural Design of Herbal Descriptions in *Šammu šikinšu* and Theophrastus’ *Historia plantarum* IX.” In S. V. Panayotov and L. Vacin (eds.), *Magic and Medicine in Mesopotamia. Studies in Honor of Markham J. Geller*. Ancient Magic and Divination 14 (Leiden-Boston: Brill), pp. 446–461.
- 2017 “There’s No Fool Like an Old Fool: The Mesopotamian *aluzinnu* and its Relationship to the Greek *alazôn*.” *Kaskal* 14, pp. 187–210.
- 2017 “The ‘AŠ section’ of Uruanna III in *Partitur*.” *Le Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes* 29, pp. 1–34.
- 2016 “Aluzinnu Versus ἀλαζών: On the Use of Medical Terminology in the Babylonian and Greek Comic Traditions.” In E. Devecchi, P. Corò, M. Maiocchi and N. de Zorzi (eds.), *Libiamo ne’ lieti calici: Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Lucio Milano on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday by Pupils, Colleagues and Friends*, AOAT 436 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag), pp. 587–603.

2014 “Near Eastern Origins of Graeco-Egyptian Alchemy.” In K. Geus and M. J. Geller (eds.), *Esoteric Knowledge in Ancient Sciences*. Berlin: Max Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, pp. 37–62. (With Matteo Martelli).

2013 “A New Join Between Fragments of Uruanna III.” *N.A.B.U.* 4/88, pp. 149–150.

Book Reviews:

2025 Review of: B. Böck, S. A. Ghazanfar, and M. Nesbitt, *An Ancient Mesopotamian Herbal*. Richmond, Surrey: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2023. In *History of Pharmacy and Pharmaceuticals* 66/2, pp. 312—314.

Public-facing Publications:

2023 “Mesopotamia.” Contribution to Virtual Exhibition *Comparative Guts. Exzellenzcluster Roots* at the CAU Kiel. <https://comparative-guts.net/babylonian-materials/>

2022 “The Medico-Magical Squill.” *Ancient Near East Today* X/1 (ASOR). <https://www.asor.org/anetoday/2022/01/medico-magical-squill>.

2022 BBC: <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20220822-the-ziggurat-of-ur-iraqs-answer-to-the-pyramids> (Collaborated with journalist Geena Truman - 8/23/22)

2018 “Alchemy Between the Two Rivers?” *Ancient Near East Today* VI/5 (ASOR). <http://www.asor.org/anetoday/2018/05/Alchemy-Between-Two-Rivers>.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

07.9.2025 “*That Silver cannot be detected.* (And it still cannot today!)” 70th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI), Prague, Czech Republic.

04.09.2021 “The Identification of the Square Aspect in Babylonian Astro-medicine: Some Clues from Greco-Roman Sources.” Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS), 117th Annual Meeting. Cleveland, OH, USA.

07.12.2019 “*Dreck-, Deck-, or What the Heck?*” 65th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI), Paris, France.

07.17.2018 “At the Origins of Plant Taxonomy: Evidence for a Shared Method in Theophrastus and Babylonian Scholarship.” 64th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI) and 12th Melammu Symposium, Innsbruck, Austria.

07.31.2018 “A Methodological Precursor to Theophrastus’ Herbal Descriptions.” Conference: *De Materia Medica: Herbs and Botanical Classification from Ancient and Early Modern Times in Cross-cultural Perspective*. Organized by Ägyptologie, Topoi Excellence Cluster, Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany.

01.08.2017 “A New Explanation, Based on Near Eastern Sources, for the Greek Use of Squill in Purification Rituals.” Society for Classical Studies (SCS), 2017 Annual Meeting. Toronto, Canada.

18.10.2016 “Characters and Language in the *Aluzinnu*-text and in Greek Comedy: Some Comparative Reflections.” Advanced Seminar in the Humanities, *Literature and Culture in the Ancient Mediterranean: Greece, Rome and the Near East*. Venice International University. Venice, Italy.

- 19.11.2015 “Lost in (Literal) Translation: Babylonian Pharmacology in Graeco-Roman Therapy.” Max Planck-Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, *Narratives on Translations*. Berlin, Germany.
- 25.06.2015 “Towards an Identification of *sikillu* through its Descriptions and Uses (in Mesopotamian and Graeco-Roman Sources.” 61st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI), Bern, Switzerland.
- 16.03.2014 “Nasty ingredients in Babylonian and Graeco-Roman Medicine.” The American Oriental Society, 224th Meeting. Phoenix, AZ, USA.
- 16.07.2013 “From Iqīšā to Pliny the Elder: *Dreckapotheke* and the Law & Order of a *Kalendertext*.” 59th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (RAI), Ghent, Belgium.

INVITED TALKS AND OTHER PRESENTATIONS

- 5.1.2025 “Mesopotamian Chemistry.” Invited presentation to the College Visiting Committee (CWRU).
- 2.28.2025 “Mesopotamian ‘Alchemy’ in the Lab.” Invited guest lecture in the context of the workshop *Cultural encounters in the Hellenistic era: Babylon, Greece, Egypt, and the Biblical World*. University of Miami.
- 10.10.2024 “Ancient Alchemy in the Lab.” Invited guest lecture for HSTY 201: *Science in Western Thought I*.
- 7.8.2024 “Attempting to Understand K 7942 Through Chemistry.” Presentation in the context of the workshop *Babylonian Metallurgy: A Textual and Chemical Laboratory*. University of Bologna (Italy).
- 5.1.2024 “Experiential Learning with Akkadian ‘STEM’ Texts.” UCITE Teaching and Learning Colloquium 2024.
- 07.8.2023 “Assyro-Babylonian Medicine and the Graeco-Roman World.” Invited guest lecture at public study day organized by the British Museum, London (UK).
- 03.31.2023 “Babylonian Astral Medicine in Rome!” Invited guest lecture for the Atlantis Classics Club (CWRU).
- 02.14.2023 “The Study of Plants in Mesopotamian Scholarship.” Invited guest lecture in the context of the workshop *Studies in Ancient Plants: Multidisciplinary Approaches and New Perspectives*, organized by AlchemEast ERC Project, University of Bologna, Italy.
- 09.1.2022 “Scribes, Scholars & Libraries in the Ancient Near East.” Invited guest lecture in CLSC 320: *Alexander the Great: Materials and Methods*.
- 04.14.2022 “Origins of Ancient (Medical) Botany: Some New Clues.” Invited guest lecture for the “Life the Universe and Hot Dog Series” (LUH). Cleveland.
- 03.02.2022 “The Cuneiform Universe.” Invited guest lecture in PHYS/ARTH 150: *An Introduction to the Universe* (CWRU).
- 04.15.2021 “Introduction to the Cuneiform Universe, and its Shaping the Meaning of Everything.” Invited guest lecture in PHYS/ARTH 150: *An Introduction to the Universe and to the Meaning of Everything* (CWRU).
- 07.17.2019 “Perspectives on the Transfer of Babylonian Technology to the Graeco-Roman World.” Invited by the *Reading Seminar on Babylonian Proto-Chemistry*, organized within the contexts of the AlchemEast ERC Project, University of Bologna, Italy.

- 03.27.2019 “A Babylonian Text in Latin Dress: a Case of Astrological Medicine.” Invited by the “Institute for the History of Ancient Civilizations” (IHAC), Northeast Normal University, Changchun, China.
- 11.20.2018 “The Earliest Case of ‘Globalization’ and its Collapse in the Late Bronze Age.” Invited guest lecture in HSTY 100: *Introduction to History* (CWRU).
- 09.28.2018 “Herbal Knowledge East and West in the Ancient World” Invited by *When East Meets West: Heath and Healing across Global Cultures* Symposium. Longaberger Alumni House, The Ohio State University, OH, USA.
- 10.26.2017 “A Case of Babylonian Astro-Medicine and Pliny the Elder.” Invited by Hiram College, Hiram, OH, USA.
- 04.12.2017 “Lost in translation: Babylonian Pharmacology in Roman Therapy.” Invited by the Cleveland Archaeological Society (CAS). Cleveland, OH, USA.
- 12.01.2016 “Pharmacology in the Ancient World,” hosted by the BabMed Seminar *Griechisch-Babylonische Heilkunde*, Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany.
- 21.01.2015 “*Aluzinnu*” versus ἀλαζών: on the use of medical terminology in the Babylonian and Greek comic traditions.” Invited guest lecture for the “Keilschrift Medizin Seminar,” TOPOI – FU, Berlin, Germany.
- 19.02.2014 “From the Tigris to the Tiber: a case of Babylonian Astro-medicine in Pliny the Elder.” Invited by CWRU’s Classics and History departments, World Lit. program, and by the Dittrick Center for Medical History. Cleveland, OH, USA.
- 16.04.2012 “Babylonian *Dreckapotheke*.” Invited by the Humboldt Universität’s research program *Medicine of the Mind, Philosophy of the Body*. Berlin, Germany.
- 06.12.2011 “Origins of Alchemy” hosted by the Dahlem Seminar on the History of Science in Antiquity, *Esoteric Knowledge in Ancient Sciences* (with Matteo Martelli). Berlin, Germany.

RESEARCH GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS AND AWARDS

- EHI-Int (L) *Expanding Horizons Initiative* Interdisciplinary Grant (Large). Project title: “*Ina išāti tuṣād*: An Exploration of Ancient Babylonian Chemical Techniques.” Awarded March 29, 2024 – Principal Investigator (in collaboration with Rekha Srinivasan; equal efforts).
- CWRU 2023 Innovation Week Pedagogical Innovation Award for the new ANEE education program (approved during Fiscal Year 2023).
- UCITE UCITE Glennan Award. May 2023. Granted for my project “Experiential Learning with Akkadian ‘STEM’ Texts.”
- WPJones *W. P. Jones Presidential Faculty Development Fund*. January 2022. Awarded for the development of my project “An *Aluzinnu* in Toronto.”
- NEH *National Endowment for the Humanities* Summer Stipend. June-July 2021.
- ACLS *American Council of Learned Societies* Fellowship awarded for the academic year 2020-2021 for the book project: “*Dreckapotheke* in Ancient Mesopotamia and the Graeco-Roman World”.
- BNC *Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities* Travel Grant. May 2019.
- BNC *Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities* Travel Grant. May 2018.
- MPIHS Offered a “Postdoctoral Research Fellowship” on the History of Knowledge. *Max Planck Institute for the History of Science*. 2016. Declined.

VIU	Full scholarship and funding to present at the “Advanced Seminar on the Humanities 2015-2016” by the <i>Venice International University</i> . Venice Nov.-Dec. 2015. Presentation of research results in October 2016.
BabMed	<i>BabMed</i> Conference Travel Grant. June 2015.
AOS	<i>American Oriental Society</i> . Conference Travel Grant. March 2014.
TOPOI	Fellow of the “Excellence Cluster Topoi,” <i>The Formation and Transformation of Space and Knowledge in Ancient Civilizations</i> . Full-ride scholarship and stipend. Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany. 2010–2013.
U-M	Recipient of the <i>Marylouise Meder Award</i> , and <i>Sharon Hogan Award</i> . Full-ride scholarship and stipend, University of Michigan. 2005–2007.
Onaosi	<i>Premio Nazionale di Cultura Casati</i> (Italian “Casati National Culture Award”), Humanities Section. Given annually by the Onaosi association for the best undergraduate thesis in a humanistic discipline in Italy. 2003.

TEACHING

ANEE/CLSC/HSTY 337-437	Ancient Medicine	Fall 2016, Spring 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2025
AKKD 101	Beginning Akkadian I	Spring 2018, 2020, 2022, 2025
AKKD 102	Beginning Akkadian II	Fall 2018, 2021, 2022, 2025
ANEE/HSTY 107	Introduction to the History of the Ancient Near East and Egypt	Fall 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025
ANEE/CLSC 381	Senior Capstone	Fall 2024
AKKD 205	Readings from the <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i>	Spring 2019, 2023
AKKD 395-495	Experiential Learning with Akkadian ‘STEM’ Texts	Fall 2023
CLSC 295	Medical Terminology	Spring 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020
AKKD 395-495	Advanced Readings in Akkadian	Fall 2019
CLSC 381	Independent Study	Fall 2019
HSTY 201	Science in Western Thought I	Spring 2017, 2018
USSO 291C/HSTY 107	Introduction to the History of the Ancient Near East	Fall 2016

SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTION

Fall 2022–present	Committee Member, Faculty Development Committee, of CWRU. Case Western Reserve University.
April 8, 2025	Presented at “Careers in Classics and ANEE” event.

2021–present	Director of “Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian Studies” Program (ANEE), Classics Department, Case Western Reserve University.
2018-present	Advising of ANEE and AKKD students (CWRU); writing LORs for them.
April 2024	Reviewed applications for the CAS Dissertation Seminar
2019-present	Representative of the Department of Classics at: Choices Fairs; Admission Open Houses; Explore events (CWRU).
Summer 2023	Supervision of ANEE Research Assistant (CWRU).
Summer 2023	Search Committee Member for full-time Latinist Position.
May 16, 2023	"Rubric Training" for Job Search.
May 10, 2023	"Interrupting Unconscious Bias in the Hiring Process" (Full Session Training).
AY 2022-2023	Development of a Library Subject Guide for ANEE (with Olivia Hobbs)
Nov. 18, 2022	Attended Virtual Workshop by the National Center for Faculty Diversity on "Mentoring 101: How to get what you need to thrive in the Academy"
2021–2022	Steering Committee Member, Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities, Case Western Reserve University (Reviewed: Travel Grants, Fall 2021; Faculty Research Grants, Spring 2022).
Fall 2019	Supervision of Senior Capstone Project “Seneca’s Approach to Emotionality and Madness in the ‘Euripidean’ Plays.” (CWRU).
2017-2022	Proposed, developed and oversaw individualized Minors and Majors in “Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian Studies” (ANEE), creating ANEE and AKKD rubrics and courses at CWRU.
2016-2020	Worked with KSL to develop the Ancient Near East and Egypt collection.

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

2016-Present	Occasional referee for the <i>Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections</i> (JAEI); the <i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> (JNES); <i>Aestimatio</i> ; <i>Kaskal</i> .
April 9, 2025	Participation in workshop for CMA on Teaching at the Museum.
07.28.2024	Reviewed “ <i>Humor as Pedagogy - Cases from Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BCE</i> ” for JNES.
04.08.2021	Session Presider: “Medicine.” Classical Association of the Middle West and South (CAMWS), 117th Annual Meeting. Cleveland, OH, USA.
Fall 2019	Assisted staff at the Cleveland Museum of Art with translation of the text on Assyrian relief.
07.12.2018	Workshop Presider: “Traces of Ink: Experiences of Philology and Replication.” European ERC Project <i>AlchemEast</i> : Alchemy in the Making: From ancient Babylonia via Graeco-Roman Egypt into the Byzantine, Syriac and Arabic traditions (1500 BCE -1000 AD). University of Bologna, Italy.
01.23.2017	Organizer of invited presentation by Matteo Martelli “Chromatic Transformations Between Alchemy and Medicine: Ps.-Democritus and Miriam the Prophetess.” CWRU, Allen Memorial Medical Library.

OTHER RESEARCH, FIELDWORK, TRAVELING, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

2024	Research stay at the British Museum, London (10-12 July 2024)
2024	Participation in the workshop “Babylonian Metallurgy: A Textual and Chemical Laboratory.” University of Bologna (Italy, July 8-9, 2024).
2023	"Writing Retreat and Workshop" sponsored by the Baker-Nord Center for the Humanities (May 23-24, 2023)
2023	Participation in the “Studies in Ancient Plants: Multidisciplinary Approaches and New Perspectives,” organized by AlchemEast ERC project at the University of Bologna (Feb. 2023).
2022	Women In Network (WIN) workshop (11/18/22).
2022	Research stay at the British Museum, London (9-16 August 2022)
2019	Participation in the “Reading Seminar on Babylonian Proto-Chemistry,” organized by <i>AlchemEast</i> ERC project at the University of Bologna, 16-17-18 July 2019.
2015-2016	Venice International University. “Advanced Seminar on the Humanities 2015-2016,” Venice (23.11.2015 – 4.12.2015, and presentation of research results on October 18, 2016).
2013	Stays at the British Museum, London (Feb-March 2013) and Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin (different dates in 2012 and 2013).
2009-2010	Isparta Archaeological Survey, Isparta Turkey.
2004	Cleveland Museum of Art, Greek and Roman Department, Cleveland, OH (Spring-Summer 2004). <i>Intern.</i> Helped the curator prepare material for the Department’s catalog.
1999	Tel Aviv University; Center for Mediterranean Civilizations, Tel Aviv, Israel (July 1999). Summer Workshop on <i>The Origins of the Alphabet</i> . Scholarship to attend the workshop.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

IAA	International Association of Assyriologists (since 2013).
AOS	American Oriental Society (since 2013).
AAHM	American Association for the History of Medicine (since 2015).
SCS	Society for Classical Studies (since 2016).
ASOR	American Society of Overseas Research (since 2018)
CAMWS	The Classical Association of the Middle West and South (since 2020)

LANGUAGES

Modern: Native Italian; Fluent English; Good German; Good reading knowledge of French and Spanish.

Ancient: Akkadian; Latin. Knowledge of Ancient Greek, Sumerian, and Beginning Syriac.