

Fall 2018 Lecture (co-sponsored by Women's Studies)

Monday, September 24, 7:00 pm in the Curtis Performance Hall in the Tsotsis Family Academic Building at Assumption College (with a reception in the Tsotsis Atrium at 6:30 pm)

Dr. Stephanie Lynn Budin, Ph.D., will lecture on "War, Love, Victory: From Inanna/Ištar to Venus Victrix"

Lecture summary: This presentation follows the evolution of the Near Eastern goddess of love and war Inanna/Ištar into the Greek goddess of sex Aphrodite and finally into the Roman Venus Victrix, the mother goddess who embodied victory. We consider the textual and iconographic data that show how these deities emerged from one another, starting with the mingling of passionate Inanna and her male, Semitic cognate Athar to form Ištar and, later, western Astarte. From here the lecture goes to Cyprus to watch Aphrodite Kypris emerge from the foam, and finally we travel to Rome to watch the Roman mother goddess become a goddess of battles. Special focus is on the aspects of eroticism and militarism. Contrary to much current understanding, the martial aspect of these goddesses was not maintained over the course of the evolution — Aphrodite herself was a miserable failure in battle (*Iliad*, book 5), and Venus only emerged as a military deity under the auspices of Sulla and, later, Augustus Caesar. This talk will discuss the chronology of such changes, and how the Near Eastern deities continued to influence the Classical pantheons.

Biography: Dr. Budin is the author of seven books and dozens of articles and book chapters spanning the ancient Mediterranean and Near East. Her research addresses ancient societies and families broadly, and in particular women's roles from the commonplace to the divine. With MA and Ph.D. degrees in Ancient History from the Univ. of Pennsylvania, she has taught at Temple, Rutgers, and the University of Oregon.