

# Dance of Dumuzi: The Choreography of Mesopotamian Space and Ritual



11<sup>th</sup> Mary E.V. McClanahan Essay Prize Lecture  
presented by Hannah Slough

January 20, 2022 | 7:00 pm | Webinar

Ancient dancers in Mesopotamia used the movement of their bodies to create spaces of healing and protection and to connect with their gods. I argue that dance was a means to alter or access the religious potency in spaces that lay outside their usual discernible landscape. Indeed, evidence from the period ca. 3400-1600 B.C. provides us with three dances that were performed in ritual contexts: chain dances, the bow-legged dance, and the foot-clutching dance. I present a new interpretation of the latter, as a staging of the Sumerian myth "The Death of Dumuzi," which facilitated ritual negotiation with unseen forces of good and ill.



For more information and to register for this event,  
go to [classics.colorado.edu](https://classics.colorado.edu) or email [classics@colorado.edu](mailto:classics@colorado.edu)