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When Women Wrote History

Between Mesopotamia and Anatolia 4,000 Years Ago

Author: Cécile Michel

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Assyriologist Cécile Michel paints stunning portraits of 24 women who managed businesses, assets, and family life.

Lamassi, Taram-Kubi, and Nuhshatum were the wives, widows, or sisters of Assyrian merchants who traveled from trading post to trading post in the 19th century BCE. They were the heads of household in the absence of men, taking care of business and earning enough to buy property on their own. They also had the right to divorce, just like their husbands. By deciphering cuneiform characters on clay tablets unearthed at Kültepe in central Anatolia, Cécile Michel was able to identify the central role women played in this civilization.
