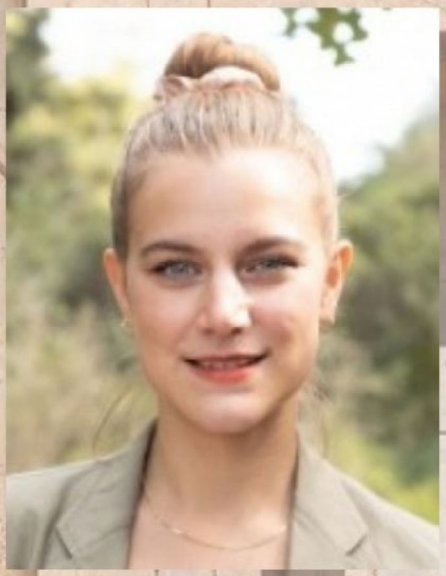
The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

Presents

Making Priest and Temple in Late Achaemenid and Hellenistic Babylon (484–60 BCE)

A Lecture with Dr. Céline Debourse



Dr. Céline Debourse studies history and cult in the city of Babylon during the Persian, Seleucid, and Parthian periods. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Vienna in 2020. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Mandel Scholion Research Center in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is also an active member of the Center of Excellence in Ancient Near Eastern Empires at the University of Helsinki.

In 484 BCE, Xerxes crushed several Babylonian revolts against his rule. One of the results was an almost complete disruption of Babylonian temple life as it had existed up until that point. While in most places the cult never resumed, in the city of Babylon the worship of the gods was eventually reinstated and even flourished again. In this talk, I ask how Babylon's community undertook this process of rebuilding the temple, both in terms of how the worship of the gods was actually organized and how the rebuilding process was ideally envisioned and legitimized. After all, these people's undertaking was not so straightforward, as the foreign kings who ruled over them no longer cared for the gods of Babylon.

Thursday, February 23, 2023, 4:00pm

William James Hall Room 105, 33 Kirkland Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

Lecture will be recorded.

If you or an event participant requires disability-related accommodations, please contact nelc@fas.harvard.edu