



Dealing with Antiquity - Past, Present & Future

63rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
Philipps-Universität Marburg, July 24-28, 2017

First Circular

July 2016

Dear Colleagues,

The University of Marburg has the honor to invite to the *63rd Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* to be held on July 24th through 28th, 2017. This will be the tenth time that the Rencontre meets in Germany (after Heidelberg 1959, 1992, Munich 1970, Göttingen 1975, Berlin 1978, 1994, Münster 1985, 2006, and Würzburg 2008).

The theme of this meeting is

Dealing with Antiquity – Past, Present, and Future.

Past

The past always played a crucial role for the cultures of the Ancient Near East. This holds true for the material as well as for the non-material areas:

Preserving places that are rich in tradition was a primary duty of the rulers, and historic monuments were publicly displayed, artefacts were collected and traditional motifs were established in the repertoire of Art History.

Explaining the world often requires going back to the start of history. The ideal models and central cultural ideas imparted by the seven sages originated there. The memory of famous ancestors was kept alive, and they served as role models.

Oral tradition and written heritage (copying) concurred in preserving the *collective memory*. Narratives spread across vast regions, and the history of texts may stretch centuries or even millennia. The linguistic ideal in literature conserved an old language version and archaic writing gained in prestige.

The *cultural memory* assumed a key function with regard to the formation of a collective identity. The construction of the past was one means to legitimize institutions and give meaning to the present. The Ancient Near East showed remarkable creativity in terms of the successful integration of conventions and innovation.

This broad range of topics can be approached from textual, historical, archaeological and art historical perspectives, dealing with the late prehistoric period to the end of the Ancient Near Eastern period.

Present

The *present* is to be understood in a very broad sense. It encompasses the heritage of the Ancient Near East and its contribution to global heritage, as well as reception history from Late Antiquity up to the present. The shaping of subsequent cultures in Asia, North Africa and Europe are of as much interest as the inspirations originating from the Ancient Near East since its rediscovery and which affect modern culture, notably in literature, fine arts and music.

In the modern states of the Near East the cultural heritage played a central role in the nation-building process and in the formation of a national identity. Often, the past is exploited to promote current interests. “Dealing with Antiquity” has very specific characteristics in this regional context.

Future

The discipline of Ancient Near Eastern Studies is facing immense tasks and has to rise to new challenges. The wider public, e.g. the media, educational institutions and cultural organizations, is increasingly becoming aware of the significance of Mesopotamia’s past. Protecting cultural goods has become part of the political agenda. These rich and unique bodies of knowledge are becoming an ever-greater research interest for neighboring disciplines. Conveying this stock of knowledge is the domain of Ancient Near Eastern Studies. The Rencontre can be a forum to reflect upon the tasks, to exchange experience and give an impetus for forward-looking activities.

Thanks to new information technologies, Ancient Near Eastern Studies is experiencing a crucial transition phase. For the first time ever it is possible to extrapolate large data stocks, which could not be comprehensively processed using conventional manual procedures, and numerous projects are involved in this endeavor. The possibilities offered by *digital humanities* have opened up many new avenues and triggered a boost of innovative research topics, methods and findings. The Rencontre serves as a platform to present projects and to exchange ideas and concepts.

The overall schedule will be adjusted to the following structure:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning		Panels on "past"	Panels on "present"	Panels on "future"	Workshops
Afternoon	Opening Sessions	Workshops & Poster Presentations	Workshops & Excavation Reports	Workshops	
				IAA General Meeting	
Evening	Reception		Reception		

The organizing committee intends to invite high-ranking representatives from various institutions in the Middle East as well as distinguished personalities from Western Europe as keynote speakers for the central topic of the Rencontre on Monday.

There will be several parallel panels for each section of the main theme, and the arrangement will depend on the respective numbers and subjects of the announced papers.

In addition to contributions to the main theme, we welcome workshops and posters on current research in philology, history, archaeology and art history as well as reports on recent excavations.

Workshops are intended for existing workgroups, special fields or new initiatives, where people sharing a common interest can meet in parallel sessions. A workshop must include a minimum of four related presentations. Well documented proposals for topics, including a provisional list of contributions or participants, must be submitted to the organizing committee by January 1, 2017.

Posters are intended for the presentation of any kind of research related to the conference theme and the Ancient Near East in general. They will be exhibited during the Rencontre, and in addition, in a special poster session contact partners should be present to explain their research projects and answer questions.

The papers of all sessions will last no more than 20 minutes, with a further 10 minutes for discussion. We kindly ask the participants to deliver their papers in English, French or German. There will be no more than three to four parallel sessions. The organizing committee reserves the right to make a selection if papers do not seem appropriate for the theme of the conference or do not match the expected standards. In order to make such decisions, we ask for informative abstracts of 300-400 words to be submitted by February 1, 2017. Since the abstracts will later be distributed in printed form, we recommend that non-native speakers have their text proofread. Participants of a workshop will submit their abstract directly to the organizers of their workshop, who will pass on the information to the organizing committee once the program of their workshop is final, and no later than March 1, 2017.

The proceedings of the congress will be published by Ugarit-Verlag in the series *Alter Orient und Altes Testament* (AOAT), exclusively dedicated to papers dealing with the main theme. Ugarit-Verlag may be interested in publishing workshop proceedings as distinct volumes; the responsibility for publication will lie with the organizers of the workshop.

Registration fees

The fees remain the same as those for the previous Rencontres held in Europe.

	Registrations	
	<i>before March 31, 2017</i>	<i>April 1, 2017 on</i>
IAA member	€ 100	€ 110
non-IAA member	€ 130	€ 140
student IAA member	€ 50	€ 55
student non-IAA member	€ 65	€ 70
accompanying person of IAA member	€ 50	€ 55
accompanying person of non-IAA member	€ 65	€ 70
publisher	€ 75	€ 100

For conference registration, the submission of paper proposals, proposed workshops and abstracts, see the section [Registration](#) at the conference website, which will open in October 2016.

Information on the venues, travel and accommodation is provided under the section [About the Conference](#).

The second circular will be distributed in October 2016. Should you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are looking forward to welcoming you in Marburg.

Members of the Organizing Committee

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