

If a city is situated on seven heights...

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Date

23.09.2020 H15:00
24.09.2020 H9:00

Location

Roma

Istituto Svizzero

Information

**International conference on the
current insights into Ancient Near
Eastern divination**

Category

Conference, Science, Talk

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“If a city is situated on seven heights...”
Current insights into Ancient Near Eastern divination

Divination always played an important role in Ancient Near Eastern politics, daily life, and even economy. Far beyond being a mere means to foretell the future, divination sets the standards for the interpretation of the known world. The interpretation of the *omina*, including every sort of natural or man-provoked phenomena, constitutes one of the main channels of communication between man and the supernatural forces which shaped the world, i.e. the gods. Hepatoscopy (liver inspection of offered animals), libanomancy (observation of incense smoke), lecanomancy (observation of the ripples of the water), physiognomics (interpretation of the outer appearance of a human body), celestial *omina*, and dream interpretation are only a few of the multifarious branches of divination thoroughly explored in the Ancient Near Eastern traditions.

Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in ancient divinatory practices, which led to the development of several research projects in universities and research centers in Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, France, and other countries. The aim of this international conference is to bring together a representative group of specialists in the field of Ancient Near Eastern divination and to start a constructive multi-disciplinary dialogue. The conference covers a large geographic area including Mesopotamia, Syria, South Arabia, Anatolia and Egypt from the third millennium BCE to the Late Antiquity.

A project organised by **Armando Bramanti**, CSIC Madrid / IS; **Ignacio Márquez Rowe** CSIC Madrid, in collaboration with: **IS** (Istituto Svizzero di Roma)

AMA I'ISR (Associazione Membri e Amici dell'Istituto Svizzero di Roma)

CEPO (Centro de Estudios del Próximo Oriente Antiguo)

Sapienza – Università di Roma

The event will be held in English and will be taking place via web. The online registration link can be found on the website of Istituto Svizzero: www.istitutosvizzero.it.

Programme and speakers

Wednesday September 23

H15:00
Institutional greetings and introduction

H15:15
Franco D'Agostino (Sapienza – Università di Roma) & Armando Bramanti (CSIC Madrid / ISR): *Divination in Third Millennium BCE (?)*

H15:45
Maria Giovanna Biga (Sapienza – Università di Roma): *Divination at Ebla*

H16:15
Ann Guinan (University of Pennsylvania) – via web: *The Human Behavioral Omens of Shumma Alu: Paradox or Paradigm-Shift?*

H16:45
Rachel Lerculeur (Université de Genève): *Sleep Omens in Šumma ālu*

H17:15
Coffee break

H17:45
Barbara Böck (CSIC Madrid) – via web: *Thoughts on the Relationship between Babylonian Physiognomic and Medical Omens*

H18:15
Francesca Minen (Università di Udine): *Signs of Sickness on Earth. Reading Šumma ālu from a Medico-Historical Perspective*

H18:45
Nicla de Zorzi (Universität Wien) – via web: *Written on the Lungs: On the Reconstruction and Interpretation of Šumma hašū*

H19:15
Nadia Ait Saïd-Ghanem (SOAS London) – via web: *A Marriage and a Curse in Two New Oil Omen Fragments in the British Museum, BM 87655 and BM 87642*

Thursday September 24

H9:00
Ignacio Márquez Rowe (CSIC Madrid) – via web: *Anatomical Clay Representations of the Sheep Intestines for Divination in Ancient Mesopotamia: A Typology*

H9:30
Lorenzo Verderame (Sapienza – Università di Roma): *Animal Agency in Ancient Mesopotamian Divination*

H10:00
Anne-Caroline Rendu Loisel (Université de Strasbourg) – via web: *Do the Senses Make Sense? Sensory Phenomena and Mesopotamian Divination*

H10:30
Enrique Jiménez (LMU München): *Hidden Perfection. The Sign and the Prediction in Babylonian Commentaries*

H11:00
Coffee break

H11:30
Patrick Maxime Michel (Université de Lausanne / AMA ISR) – via web: *Divination in Hittite Anatolia*

H12:00
Alessio Agostini (Sapienza – Università di Roma): *Oracular Consultations in Pre-Islamic South Arabia: Terminology, Practices and Settings*

H12:30
Paola Buzi (Sapienza – Università di Roma): *Divination in Egypt from Sobek to Saint Colluthus. Aspects of continuity of some the oracular practices*

H13:00
Final discussion