

25th Melammu Workshop

Divination Techniques in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean World

Organiser: Zozan Tarhan

29–30 May 2025

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski,
Rectorate, New Conference Hall



Clay model of a sheep's liver (BM 92668)
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29 May, Thursday

08:15–08:30 Registration

08:30–08:45 Opening

Keynote lectures

08:45–09:30 **Martti Nissinen** (University of Helsinki): *Prophetic Bodies and Bodily Prophecies in the Ancient Near East*

09:30–10:15 **Nicolay Sharankov** (University of Sofia): *Divination Practices in Ancient Thrace*

10:15–10:45 Coffee Break

Session 1: Prophecy and Divination in the Neo-Assyrian Empire (1)

Chair: Bernhard Schneider

10:45–11:10 **Sebastian Fink** (University of Innsbruck): *Not Listening to the Gods: “What lion ever performed extispicy?”*

11:10–11:35 **Zozan Tarhan** (University of Sofia): *Unfavourable Celestial Omens in the Neo-Assyrian Empire: The Death of the King and Rebellion*

11:35–12:00 **Alexander Edmonds & Saki Kikuchi** (University of Münster / LMU Munich): *“in a favourable month, on an auspicious day”. The Shifting Logic of Divination within the Neo-Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*

12:00–13:30 Lunch Break

Session 2: Prophecy and Divination in the Neo-Assyrian Empire (2)

Chair: Sebastian Fink

13:30–13:55 **Luke McDermott** (University of Galway): *A Hitherto Overlooked Bilingual Palindrome from Esarhaddon’s Prophetic Sammeltafeln. Iconicity and Internal Exegesis*

13:55–14:20 **Strahil Panayotov** (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences): *From an Astrological Report to Medical Theory*

14:20–14:45 **Bernhard Schneider** (University of Wrocław): *Excavating Divination Rituals at Neo-Assyrian Nippur?*

14:45–15:00 Coffee Break

Session 3: Prophecy and Magic in the Hebrew Bible

Chair: Martti Nissinen

15:00–15:25 **Stéphanie Anthonioz** (CNRS UMR 8167): *Prophecy and Vision in the Hebrew Bible*

15:25–15:50 **Hagai Dagan** (Sapir College): *Magic and Prophecy: Elijah and Elisha*

15:50–16:15 **Alinda Damsma** (University College London): *‘Spirits of the Dead’ or ‘Necromancers’? The eṭemū in an Old Assyrian Letter Reinterpreted in Light of Hebrew ’ōbôt and yidde ’ōnîm*

16:15–16:30 Coffee Break

Session 4: Extispicy in Ancient Mesopotamia

Chair: Zozan Tarhan

- 16:30–16:55 **Selena Wisnom** (University of Leicester): *Practical Extispicy: Notes from the Field*
16:55–17:20 **Nicholas Gill** (Ca' Foscari University of Venice): *Ritual and Recitation at Larsa: The Diviner's Prayers YOS 11, 22 and YOS 11, 23 in Their Incantatory Context*
17:20–17:45 **Netanel Anor** (University of Hamburg): *Secrecy and the Oracle Lore: On the Transmission of Knowledge of Extispicy over the Ages*

18:00 Reception

30 May, Friday

Session 4: Divination Practices in the Ancient World

Chair: Nicolay Sharankov

- 08:30–08:55 **Dilyana Boteva** (University of Sofia): *New Data, Old Assessments and Further Expectations Concerning the Dionysos' Oracle in Thrace*
08:55–09:20 **Orestis Karavas** (University of the Peloponnese): *Pseudo-Mantic Techniques and Necromantic Rituals in Lucian of Samosata*
09:20–09:45 **Pamina Fernández Camacho** (University of Cádiz): *Dreams and Dream Interpretation at the Heracleion of Gades: Organized Practice or Literary Tradition?*
09:45–10:10 **Stamenka Antonova** (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences): *The Sibylline Oracles and the Decline of the Roman Empire in Zosimus' New History*

10:10–10:45 Coffee Break

Session 5: Divination Techniques from Anatolia to Inner Asia

Chair: Alexander Edmonds

- 10:45–11:10 **Velizar Sadovski** (Austrian Academy of Sciences): *Divination Techniques in the Most Ancient Iranian and Indic Religious Texts – the Avesta and Veda*
11:10–11:35 **Paolo Ognibene** (University of Bologna): *The Scythian Diviners and the Art of Interpreting the Causes of Illness Practice or Literary Tradition?*
11:35–12:00 **Michal Schwarz** (Masaryk University): *Diversity of Practices and Unified Divination in Inner Asia*

12:00–13:30 Lunch Break

Session 6: Celestial Omens in Ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolia

Chair: Saki Kikuchi

- 13:30–13:55 **Rumen Kolev** (Independent Researcher): *Interpretation of Solar Eclipses in Babylon*
13:55–14:20 **Şafak Beldan** (University of Ankara): *Perception, Interpretation and Decision Making Mechanisms Based on the Celestial World in the Land of Hatti*
14:20–14:45 **Julij Emilov** (University of Sofia): *“When the Moon is Ominous”: A Lunar Eclipse (1st of September, 218 BC) in the story of the Celtic Aegosaes in Asia*

14:45–15:15 Coffee Break

Session 7: (Re)considering Terms and New Perspectives

Chair: Dilyana Boteva

- 15:15–15:40 **Asoss Qader** (University of Würzburg): *Āpilu “Prophet” within the Resource Redistribution of the Royal Administration in the Kingdom of Arrapha*
15:40–16:05 **Elisabeth Monamy** (University of Bern / Archeomuse): *Food of the Gods, Signs of the Future: Culinary Rituals and the Art of Divination in the Ancient Orient and the Mediterranean World*

16:05 Closing