



CALL FOR PAPERS

25th Melammu Workshop

Divination Techniques in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean World

29–30 May 2025, Sofia

Organiser: Zozan Tarhan

Divination and prophecy played an important role in decision-making in the ancient world. Royal courts, political elites, military commanders, and ordinary people relied on divination and prophecy to make the right decisions. The 25th Melammu Workshop is dedicated to divination techniques, provoked and unprovoked omens and prophecy in the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean World. The workshop aims to analyse divination techniques, their development and the context they have been used in, the experts behind them, their conceptual setting, and their diffusion in the ancient world.

The workshop is aimed to be organised in three sessions: provoked omens, unprovoked omens, and prophecy.

A typical divination technique based on provoked omens is *nēpešti bārûti* – the inspection of the internal organs of a sacrificial animal, first documented in ancient Mesopotamia. This type of divination is better known to modern scholars as *haruspicy*, *extispicy*, or *hepatoscopy*. A good example of unprovoked omens are the celestial omens, especially collected in cuneiform astronomical and astrological series, as well as in the reports of scholars. The flight of birds is also included in the *Šumma ālu* series and is well documented in other cultures. In the classical world it is known as *augury* or *ornithomancy*. Although not a proper divination technique, prophecy will also be studied during the conference due to its importance in political decision-making.

To study the development of the divination techniques and prophecy, it is important to conduct a structural and comparative analysis of idiomatic phrases used in different cultures, as well as to trace variations in the different sources.

Papers dealing with divination techniques, omens, prophecy, their representation in different textual genres and the archaeological evidence, the characteristics of the available sources that are part of (but not limited to) the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean world are welcome. Papers dedicated to the role of divination and prophecy in the decision-making process and the diffusion of divinatory techniques across the ancient world are strongly encouraged.

Abstracts (200–500 words) should be submitted to Zozan.Tarhan@uni-sofia.bg. The **deadline for submission** is 30 November 2024. Notification of acceptance/rejection will be sent by 15 December 2024.