

# V ICAANE

Madrid. 3-8 April 2006

In the closing section of the **III International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East**, held in Paris in 2002, the candidacy of the **Universidad Autónoma de Madrid** and its home city, the Spanish capital, were approved as the venue for our **Fifth International Congress**. Now that the magnificent congress in Berlin has finished (29 March – 3 April. 2004), the **Organising Committee of the 5th ICAANE** warmly invites all colleagues involved in studies of the Ancient Near East to take part in the forthcoming event. At the same time, the organising committee would like to present the provisional plans and the various parallel and complementary activities we are preparing.

## PRESENTATION

Between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2006, the Fifth International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East will be held in the Spanish capital, organised by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. The choice of venue for the Congress and the backdrop of current events against which it is being prepared are both chance occurrences which we would like to take advantage of.

As scientists we are accustomed to reflecting on the example set by the past. As professionals who conduct much of their work and spend much of their lives in countries of the East, we are necessarily affected by the cruelty of our times and we are conscious enough of cases of violence and destruction. That is the reason why as citizens of a country in whose past European and Eastern traditions are mixed, we Spaniards offer our scholarship and research as a reason for a meeting, our university as a place for a friendly dialogue and our city as a cultural environment and a location for a break.

In line with the main features of the previous congresses, we have prepared a programme consisting of four main subjects, discussion workshops, meetings, and beyond the duties of the Congress, a major exhibition of national relevance. The photographs and the background that illustrate our information evoke the spirit and subjects of this Congress.

The four proposed subjects are: history and method of archaeological research in the Near East; archaeology and environment of ancient cities and villages, arts and crafts in the Ancient Near East, and finally, an approach to present-day archaeology.

The **first subject** –History and Method of archaeological research- seems an absolute "must". Not so long ago we celebrated the centenaries of Jacques de Morgan and his excavation at Susa, Robert Koldewey and Babylon, and Walter Andrae and Assur. These three names are undoubtedly linked to the history of archaeology and to the birth of a new science, and also make us reflect on how and why our science has been constructed.

The **second subject** aims to consider how modern archaeology, with the support of the natural and physical sciences, is better able to reconstruct the real culture of ancient peoples, their cities and villages, their communication routes and lifestyle. In addition, to illustrate this fact, we have taken into account hundreds of projects that are revolutionising our understanding of the peoples of the Ancient Near Eastern in the past.

The **third subject** –Arts and Crafts in the Ancient Near East- presents the results obtained from the archaeological work in the sites, the workshops, and the different kinds of manufacture; and other results

obtained from the analysis of the natural materials used, their features and their origins. It aims to show the environment and the resources that the craftsmen drew upon to accomplish their work.

Lastly, the **fourth subject** is, as is customary, the latest results and conclusions from excavations and archaeological studies developed in recent years. Innovations, reports and the latest discoveries will be gladly accepted with a view to gaining a comprehensive and lively overview of field archaeology from Anatolia, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine to Arabia, Central Asia and the furthest regions of Eastern Iran.

Obviously, **to complement this overview of the current state of archaeology**, we also invite the authorities of the different Antiquities Services from Near Eastern countries to present a report on the current state of archaeology and historical heritage in their own countries. This presentation will be a good epilogue to our congress.

**Beyond the central programme**, and apart from the usual sections for **Posters**, the Committee provides an opportunity to organise several **“Workshops”**, and promises to organise one of special interest: “The state of Iraqi Archaeological Heritage (1990-2006). Looting, restoration projects, current situation”. Other possible topics will be welcomed and included on the programme depending on suggestions received.

Independently from the programme, Spain's special relationship with classical Islamic culture has encouraged us to plan some kind of activity connected with Islamic archaeology.

Although a little removed from our initial chronological and geographical parameters, we will organise a **parallel conference** entitled **The century after Qadisiya**, which at the same time will encourage the presentation of papers related **solely** to the period of transition and definition of the Islamic culture that spread from the roman-byzantine and parthian-sassanian periods to the configuration of the Caliphate-period archaeology. Our target is to reveal the common and shared roots of the Eastern peoples in the formation of the Early Islamic Period.

**Beyond the activities directly related to the Fifth Congress**, we would like to take advantage of the attendance of as many colleagues as possible from all over the world to present to the academic field the unknown reality of a Spanish tradition of travel, antiques collecting and science in the Near East.

As we share methods and goals with our international colleagues, Spanish scholars are following a tradition which goes back to illustrious travellers such as Ruy González de Clavijo, García de Silva or Adolfo Rivadeneyra; individuals, works and a tradition which deserve wider recognition. The images chosen as the emblem for this congress with the ruins of Persepolis in the background recall the contribution of our travellers to the rediscovery of the Near East.

Consequently, the **Museo Arqueológico Nacional** will hold a major national exhibition whose contents and catalogue will acquaint a wider audience with the life of our travellers and the origins of Spanish scientific collections. This exhibition will also allow us to evaluate modern Spanish archaeological activity in the Near East: we invite all our colleagues to visit it.

This is the provisional programme for the ICAANE International Congress to be held in Madrid. We warmly encourage colleagues to attend this, the Fifth Congress of its kind. We, our university and our city take great pleasure in extending an invitation to all of you.

Organising Committee