

RENCONTRES ÉGÉENNES INTERNATIONALES/ INTERNATIONAL AEGEAN CONFERENCES

4 March 2013

Dear Colleague,

We take great pleasure in personally inviting you to take part in the

15th INTERNATIONAL AEGEAN CONFERENCE

to be held at the **Institute for Mediterranean and Prehistoric Archaeology,
Department for Aegean and Mycenaean Research, Austrian Academy of Sciences**

and at the

Institute of Classical Archaeology, University of Vienna

on **22-25 April 2014**

on the topic

METAPHYSIS

Ritual, Myth and Symbolism in the Aegean Bronze Age

and to deliver a paper on that occasion.

In Aegean prehistory, questions of ritual behaviour and underlying beliefs have become a widespread and multifaceted field of research based on a large variety of methodological approaches. Recent surveys and excavations in palaces, elite houses, sanctuaries and tombs as well as new finds have contributed to our understanding of ritual contexts. These and further archaeological sources require a deeper investigation of the roles played by ritual ideas and cosmology in Aegean prehistory. During the last years, an increasing interest in rituals as an ideological and political tool in the palatial as well as in non-palatial societies of the Aegean Bronze Age can also be observed. Origin and meaning of ceremonial insignia and symbols such as ‘horns of consecration’, double axe and ‘incurved altar’ as well as the ceremonial significance of paraphernalia yet remain to be investigated. In recent iconographical studies, e.g., distinct gestures have been interpreted as resulting from ‘altered states of consciousness’ or as reflecting mantic rituals. Furthermore, a comparative study of ritual symbols led to the thought-provoking model of a ‘solar goddess’ in the Aegean. What about the existence of mythology and heroes in the so-called ‘Heroic Age’? These and further phenomena, their development over the period of the Aegean Bronze Age as well as their Neolithic precursors and post-palatial successors will be put to the test. Attention will be focused on the entire Aegean area as well as related regions. Thus, this conference aims at the complex relationship between humans and ‘the other’ – the broad scholarly interface between a popular ritual belief and the cult of deities, i.e. religion in its proper sense.

The Rencontre with the stimulating title METAPHYSIS intends to bring together colleagues addressing these and related questions, to present their work and ideas in order to summarize the present state of knowledge of these ‘metaphysical’ topics, to throw new light on them. This conference will especially concentrate on the following themes:

- Ritual: ritual places and ritual landscapes, sacral and sepulchral rituals, social and political ceremonies, ritual acts and performances
- Myth: the supernatural realm, liminality, irrationality, magic, hybrid creatures, heroes/heroines, mythology, divinities
- Symbolism: symbols, emblems, narrativity, iconography and poetics, images of power, cosmology

In order to save sufficient time for discussion the number of papers will be limited to 55. Proposals are to be submitted before 30 April 2013 including a substantial abstract. The organizing committee will then make its selection. Proposals to be insufficiently close to the theme may be accepted as poster presentations and incorporated in the publication of the proceedings in the series *Aegaeum, Annales liégeoises d'archéologie égéenne*. We kindly ask for your understanding as to the necessary limitation of papers: the temporal frame of the four day conference cannot be exceeded.

We would like to ask you to fill in and return the attached form to the secretariat of the Rencontre before 30 April 2013 at the address aegaeum15.metaphysis@gmx.at. The second circular will be transmitted in July/August including a provisional program and further information on the conference in Vienna.

Eva ALRAM-STERN
Austrian Academy of Sciences

Fritz BLAKOLMER
University of Vienna

Sigrid DEGER-JALKOTZY
Austrian Academy of Sciences

Robert LAFFINEUR
Université de Liège

Jörg WEILHARTNER
Austrian Academy of Sciences