



**Friday 1 December 2023, 17.00 hrs**

## **Veenhof Lecture**

# **Living in a precarious world: Magical rituals from ancient Mesopotamia**

*Prof. Dr Daniel Schwemer | hybrid event: RMO (Leiden) or livestream*

Labeled magical texts by modern research, cuneiform tablets preserving instructions for the performance of apotropaic (and, sometimes, aggressive) rituals form one of the most extensive and varied learned traditions known from the libraries of Babylonian and Assyrian scholars. Reconstructed from numerous fragments, these texts afford a unique insight into ritual strategies for coping with the fundamental uncertainties of life in pre-modern societies.

Daniel Schwemer will give a brief overview of Mesopotamian magic and discuss in more detail an elaborate ritual for the protection of a house and its inhabitants. His talk will explore how the ritual expert of the *Bīt mēseri* ritual was able to assuage his patients' fears and overcome their isolation by introducing them to an invisible mythical-ritual world full of powerful allies.

*Daniel Schwemer is Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Würzburg.*

### Practical information

The Veenhof Lecture 2023 will be held as a hybrid event. Join us at the National Museum of Antiquities (Taffeh Hall) for the lecture and drinks afterwards, or online via livestream.

- time: doors open at 17.00; lecture 17.30-18.30 hrs, drinks afterwards
- admission: free – registration required
- main language: English

Register to attend in-person:

<https://www.rmo.nl/uw-bezoek/activiteiten/veenhoflezing-2023/>

Register for the livestream:

[https://universiteitleiden.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_uTbSLMYITNuASkHi7guDsw](https://universiteitleiden.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uTbSLMYITNuASkHi7guDsw)



### Annual Veenhof Lecture

The Veenhof Lecture is organized every November by the Netherlands Institute for the Near East in cooperation with the National Museum of Antiquities.

Named after Prof. K.R. Veenhof (1935-2023) and honouring his contributions to Assyriology, the annual lecture is aimed at colleagues and students, as well as a broader public. The speaker is an internationally renowned scholar. All are welcome to attend the lecture.