



Presentation

The first verse of a well-known poem by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857), “*Im Osten grauts, der Nebel fällt,*”-, bringing forth memories of the East and the sunlight that breaks through at dawn there, seems to us an evocative and adequate title for this volume of *Isimu*, our magazine, as a tribute to Dr. Karlheinz Kessler, recently retired Professor of Assyriology at Erlangen-Nürnberg and Würzburg universities.

As coordinators of this volume, we are delighted to finally see it in print. Colleagues, friends, former disciples and even young people preparing their first abstracts, we have all gathered in this volume, summoned by something we share: respect for the arduous, enormous, varied and solid scientific labor of one of the great masters of Assyriology in Germany, Europe, the East and the world.

But another reason also brings us together. The fondness, the sincere affection we all profess for a dear colleague and teacher. Scientific literature is full of thick volumes dedicated to distinguished professors and researchers that, confined in their faraway ivory towers, distant and proud of their knowledge, appear aloof and reserved with

those who surround them, be they students or colleagues. When it is time for their retirement, they are no doubt honored, but with neither enthusiasm nor cordiality. Many young people, and not so young, take advantage of this only to engross their *curriculum*, while others must make an appearance out of obligation, and with obvious apathy. They are neither loved nor will they be missed. But we, those of us who here byline, and many others who, due to diverse circumstances, have not been able to collaborate, we will miss the one we are honoring because we love him, we admire him and because we have learnt and even laughed with him, since Karlheinz Kessler has the simplicity and goodness of the real sage. And even if we still run into him in museums and congresses, we will miss his classes, his patient teaching, and the generous sowing of his endless knowledge. And his smile.

Eichendorff’s poem, in its second verse, says that, even though the world is still sleeping when dawn is barely breaking in the East, an early lark rises, because it has dreamt with that same light that is starting to frame the hills. Karlheinz Kessler’s work has

been clear and extensive, like that light that each morning breaks in the East, and he has been like the bird that announced it, happy, wise, glad and tireless. So, it is that, better than the well-known *ex Oriente lux*, the verse and stanzas of the poet from Lubowitz seem to us a better title for this volume.

Karlheinz Kessler will still write and provide revealing facts, as he has always

done, and for that, we rejoice. But at this point of his retirement from academics – and only that, from his classes – we want to offer this small token of admiration and fondness. As coordinators, also, we want to thank our colleagues and friends for their effort and collaboration in this homage. Thank you very much to all.

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