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## Federico Lara Peinado

### *Biographical semblance and recognition of a life dedicated to the diffusion of the Orient*



*Federico Lara Peinado at Madrid Book Fair, 2007*

Federico Lara Peinado was born in Hornos de Segura (Jaén) on December 9th, 1940. In 1942 his family moved to Lerida, where he began his primary education studies at the Colegio Sagrado Corazón of the Marist Brothers. Afterwards, he completed his high school education at the *Instituto Nacional de Enseñanza Media* between 1952 and 1959. He accomplished his BA in Philosophy and Letters at the *Universidad de Barcelona* (1959-1965) in the specialty of History. In 1972 he became Doctor in Ancient History with a dissertation on *Roman Epigraphy of Lerida*. After being appointed Archivist of the *Diputación Provincial* of Lerida and Associate Professor at the *Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona*, he moved to Madrid and taught at the *Universidad Complutense de Madrid* since 1976. Apart from his numerous studies dedicated to Epigraphy, Historical Methodology, Religion and Art, which were published in several scientific journals, his teaching and research work focused on Ancient Near East and Egypt. In the first area we can highlight three editions of the *Poema de Gilgameš* [*Poem of Gilgameš*] (1980, 1988, 1997), three editions of *Enūma eliš. Poema babilónico de la Creación* [*Enūma eliš, Babylonian Poem of Creation*] (1981, 1994, 2017), *Mitos sumerios y acadios* [*Sumerian and Akkadian Myths*] (1984), two editions of the *Código de Hammurabi* [*Code of Hammurabi*] (1982, 1986), *Las primeras civilizaciones* [*The First Civilizations*] (1988), *La Civilización Sumeria* [*The Sumerian Civilization*] (1989), *Himnos babilónicos* [*Babylonian Hymns*] (1990), *Así vivían los fenicios* [*Thus lived the Phoenicians*] (1990), *Himno al Templo Eninnu. Cilindros A y B de Gudea* [*Hymn to the Eninnu Temple. Gudea Cylinders A and B*] (1996), *Diccionario Biográfico del Mundo Antiguo. Egipto y Próximo Oriente* [*Biographical Dictionary of the Ancient World. Egypt and the Near East*] (1988), *Ebla. Una nueva historia, una nueva cultura* [*Ebla. A new history, a new culture*] (2000), *Leyendas de la Antigua Mesopotamia. Dioses, héroes y seres fantásticos* [*Legends of Ancient Mesopotamia. Gods, heroes and fantastic beings*] (2002),

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*Textos para la historia del Próximo Oriente Antiguo [Texts for the history of the Ancient Near East]* (2011), *Mitos de la antigua Mesopotamia. Héroes, dioses y seres fantásticos [Myths of ancient Mesopotamia. Heroes, gods and fantastic beings]* (2017) and the most recent *Historia de los sumerios [Sumerian History]*. Also, in the field of Egyptology he has published *El Egipto Faraónico [Pharaonic Egypt]* (1991), *Lo mejor del Arte egipcio [The Best of Egyptian Art]* (1997) and three editions of *El Libro de los Muertos [The Book of the Dead]* (1984, 1989, 2006). In collaboration, he has published *Historia del Arte: El Mediterráneo Oriental [Art History: The Eastern Mediterranean]* (1990), *Comentario de textos históricos [Commentary on Historical Texts]* (1997), *Los Primeros Códigos de la Humanidad [The First Codes of Humanity]* (2009) and *Diccionario de las Instituciones de la Antigüedad [Dictionary of the Institutions in Antiquity]* (2009).

Everything we have detailed in relation to the teaching and work of Prof. Dr. Lara Peinado is really worth mentioning, but from *Isimu* and from the *Centro Superior de Estudios de Próximo Oriente y Egipto* of the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (UAM), we want to emphasize one facet of Prof. Lara which is fundamental for us and which could be forgotten: the work of dissemination at the highest level of the Culture, History and Literature of Near East in the environment of the university. We do not pay a global tribute to him, which was already awarded by the *Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia* in 2011 in the journal *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma Serie II, Historia Antigua*. Instead, we thank him, convinced that it must be so, that the Ancient Near East, especially its literature, will remain accessible for university students since the eighties. Complex translations from Akkadian or Sumerian (among other languages) into German, English or French, with critical editions more cryptic -if possible- than the ancient Mesopotamian languages, discouraged students of Ancient History from approaching the *Gilgameš Poem*, the *Enūma Eliš* or the *Hymn to the Eninnu Temple*. But this was not the only obstacle: difficulties could also come from high-ranking specialists who rejected those of us who threw ourselves into the waters of the Ancient Near East and only knew the English of the high school and the Italian of a language academy. Among this world of scholars, who seemed not to want to approach to overwhelmed students, Prof. Lara Peinado shone. He shone for us as undergraduate students and he was necessary for doctoral students (own and others) and for his colleagues.

Whenever the UAM's Department of Ancient History, whenever the *Centro de Estudios del Próximo Oriente y Egipto antiguos* of the UAM called him, he always came. Whenever the divine messenger *Isimu* called him, he listened to him. That is why he participated in the Third Session of the First International Congress on the Ancient Near East of the UAM, which took place on December 2, 1996, and whose proceedings nurtured the first volume of *Isimu* edited in 1998. In it Federico Lara Peinado published the paper "He knows nothing about eating bread. The non-urban background in the Gilgamesh poem" ["Nada sabe de comer el pan. El trasfondo no urbano en el poema de Gilgamesh"], as a tribute to H. Klengel. Thus, our journey began with his support. Again in 2006, our teacher collaborated with us, in the volume 8 of this journal with the contribution "Hammurabi of Babylon: pious prince" ["Hammurabi de Babilonia: príncipe piadoso"] as his tribute to P. Matthiae. In December 2018, again on the occasion of the Second International Congress on the Ancient Near East, celebrated at UAM, we expected to count on Federico Lara Peinado; unfortunately, his health did not allow him and, somehow, all those who recognize his figure as essential among Spanish historians, we felt orphans those days.

Nevertheless, the didactic vocation of our Centre of Studies, initiated by its previous director, Prof. Dr. Joaquín M<sup>a</sup> Córdoba Zoilo, led us to work incessantly also in the teaching and dissemination of the Near East among our students of the *Facultad de Filosofía y Letras*