

The Institute of Near Eastern Archaeology at LMU Munich is pleased to announce the conference “Old and New Research in the Mesopotamian City Fāra/Šuruppak”, taking place from November 19–20, 2026 in Munich.

The conference is made possible by the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation, which is providing its premises, and by the financial support of the Calmeyer-Seidl Foundation. We are deeply grateful to both foundations.

The conference is meant as the kick-off meeting of the DFG-funded project „Stadt, Mensch, Fluss in Sumer: Die Erforschung urbanen Lebens in Fāra / Šuruppak in der Frühdynastisch II – IIIa-Periode (ca. 2700-2475 v. Chr.)“ launched this year. It brings together international scholars who have been intensively studying Fāra for many years with the current research team. The new findings will be discussed and contextualized with experts on the Early Dynastic Period in southern Mesopotamia.

About the project:

The ruined mound of Fāra (Sumerian Šuruppak), now located in a remote area of the southern Iraqi steppe, was one of the major Mesopotamian cities in the 3rd millennium BC. It is also recounted in epics as the site of the great flood, but it became desolate and was abandoned forever in the early 2nd millennium BC. The approximately 200-hectare city was the subject of early scientific investigation, initially through excavations by the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (1902–1903), then by the University of Pennsylvania (1931). The results were analyzed by Ernst Heinrich (1931), Harriet Martin (1988), and numerous philologists. The findings and discoveries from these investigations, including approximately 900 cuneiform tablets, which constitute one of the earliest understandable corpora of Mesopotamian texts, as well as hundreds of seal impressions, were of such crucial importance for the history of research on 3rd millennium Mesopotamia that the Early Dynastic period from around 2600 to 2500 BC is known as the "Fāra period."

Despite the earlier explorations and the wealth of finds, which scholars have been studying for over 100 years now, Fāra as a living urban body throughout the third millennium has not been understood at all and offers great potential for the new research project, launched in 2016 by the Institute of Near Eastern Archaeology at LMU Munich under the direction of Adelheid Otto. Using a combined approach of various prospection techniques, targeted excavations, and scientific methods, it aims to answer open questions about the city's structure, architecture, and the lives of its inhabitants.

The conference is being organized by Moritz Kellerer and Adelheid Otto on behalf of the entire Fāra team.

Please register until 01.11.2026 by m.kellerer@lmu.de for personal participation.

An online broadcast is not currently planned.

When?

November 19, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

November 20, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Where?

Premises of the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Foundation, Südliches Schlossrondell 23,
80638 München

Program

Thursday, 19.11.

Panel 1: Chronology, Theories and pioneering work on Fāra

10:00 Adelheid Otto: Fāra 1901–1931, 2016–2026 – und immer noch mehr Fragen als Antworten

10:30 Harriet Martin: Fāra. Out of a Box in the Basement

11:30 Jane Moon: A Century of Early Dynastic Ceramics: are we any wiser?

Panel 2: New Fieldwork in Fara

12:00 Berthold Einwag: Fāra aus der Luft 2016–2026

12:30 Christoph Fink: Die Survey-Ergebnisse der Unterstadt von Fara der Kampagnen 2016–2018

14:00 Karlotta Herbst: Tracing Fāra: New insights into urban space

14:30 Moritz Kellerer: Hidden in plain sight: The temples of Fāra

15:00 Walther Sallaberger/Cyrril Dankwardt: Cuneiform tablet fragments from the 2026 campaign at Fāra

Panel 3: Survey and Prospection

16:00 Max Engel: Climate variability in West Asia - possible impacts on cultural history

16:30 Felix Reize/Patrick Weis: Fāra/Šuruppak – from a geoarchaeological perspective

17:00 Jörg Fassbinder/Marco Wolf: Fāra/Šuruppak – from a geoarchaeological perspective

Friday, 20.11.

Panel 4: The textual evidence of the Fāra Period

9:30 Joachim Marzahn: Fāra und Öffentlichkeit – Aus museal-dokumentarischer Sicht

10:00 Manfred Krebernik: Aus der Arbeit an den Grabungsunterlagen und Texten aus Fāra im VAM, Berlin

10:30 Piotr Steinkeller: Fāra-Period Texts from Umm al-Aqarib

11:30 Ingo Schrakamp: Fara-zeitliche Textquellen zur Bewässerungskultur Südmesopotamiens

Panel 5: Early dynastic craft and production

12:00 Nicholas Postgate: Hearths, ovens and kilns at Abu Salabikh

12:30 Annika Wilkening: A potter's wheel from Fāra?

Panel 6: Natural Sciences

14:00 Melina Seabrook: The Fāra Fauna

14:30 Katleen Deckers: Anthracological research at Fāra/Šuruppak': Preliminary results and prospects

Panel 7: Life and death in an early dynastic living quarter

15:00 Fabian Bleiziffer/Louis Happel/Valentina Matt/Vincent Pfeil/Alissa Walz:
Excavations in Area 7: Different aspects of everyday life from the 2025-2026 seasons in Fāra