

## Introduction

It may sound like a fairy tale, but one day in 2008 I met Prof. Andrzej Kowalski in order to talk about the spirituality of ancient civilizations; after this meeting I had the idea behind the lecture “Profiles of Spirituality in Mesopotamia” and we decided, along with Prof. Nicholas Sekunda, to organize a number of lecture series. The first one was entitled “Humanity in Ancient Civilizations” (2008–2009), and it was followed by “The Idea of God and Divinity” (2009–2010), “Myth and Mythologies in Antiquity” (2010–2011) and “The Concept of Art in Antiquity” (2011–2012).

The idea of these meetings was to invite people representing different disciplines (including classicists, orientalist, philologists, archaeologists, historians, historians of art, Assyriologists, Egyptologists, Hittitologists, anthropologists, and philosophers) and research areas (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, even the Middle Ages). We have been honoured with the presence of many prominent researchers as well as young, promising scholars.

We are sure that our initiative was both fruitful and inspiring, opening up a new semantic area for discourse and study surrounding the relationship between material and spiritual studies. The interdisciplinary dimension of our lectures consistently drew large audiences and inspired passionate debate.

The success of our initiative has inspired me to publish an issue of “Miscellanea Anthropologica et Sociologica” taking up the same topic, entitled *The Idea of Man and Divinity in Antiquity*. Unexpectedly, a large response to the idea of this publication has resulted in publishing two subsequent issues related to this topic. The first one is hereby presented to our readers.

Krzysztof Ulanowski