

## Fellows



**Marc Van De Mieroop**  
IFK\_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship  
01. March 2011 bis 30. June 2011

## Marc Van De Mieroop

### PROJECT TITLE

Three Thousand Years of Ancient Thought: The Case of Babylonia

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project aims to develop an intellectual history of ancient Babylonia inspired by Michel Foucault's seminal work on European thought in "The Order of Things". Babylonia's 3000-year long history from the late 4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC to the start of the Common Era is richly documented in a mass of written

documentation. I will focus on three facets of intellectual endeavor -- language, law, and divination -- in order to identify paradigm shifts and ruptures. Although these areas may seem to represent three very different interests, they share approaches in their written elaboration. Babylonia offers an intellectual history that is distinct from other cultures: it must focus on the text rather than the author and it is based on a philosophy of writing that sees script form as an integral part of meaning rather than as accidental to it. Its long survival provides a unique opportunity to investigate interactions with the world that differ fundamentally from the western traditions that are the usual focus of intellectual histories.

## **CV**

Marc Van De Mieroop has taught ancient Near Eastern studies at Yale University, the University of Oxford, and Columbia University, where he chaired the History department until last summer. In his writings he explores different approaches to the histories of ancient Near Eastern cultures, including economic, social, diplomatic, and the various intellectual histories. He also has a special interest in the historiographic practices of modern scholarship.

## **Publications**

Selected publications: *A History of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford 2010; *The Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Ramesses II*, Oxford 2007; *A History of the Ancient Near East*, Oxford 2007; *King Hammurabi of Babylon*, Oxford 2005.