

Workshop on Urban Religion

Veranstalter: Max-Weber-Kolleg für kultur- und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien, Universität Erfurt; Projekt „Lived Ancient Religion: Questioning ‘Cults’ and ‘Polis Religion’“ in Kooperation mit dem Classics Department der Princeton University

Datum, Ort: 02.06.2016–03.06.2016, Erfurt

Bericht von: Maik Patzelt, Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt

Once again the Lived Ancient Religion project and the Classics Department of Princeton came together in order to discuss new approaches on ancient religions. After fruitful discussions of lived ancient religion at Princeton University in January 2015, Erfurt now hosted a group of six guests from Princeton University. One further participant, DAN-EL PADILLA PERALTA (Princeton), presented his paper via Skype.

For two intensive days, this workshop examined and developed the idea of urban religion in Antiquity. Urban religion was seen as a specific constellation of materiality and communication that finds its expression most of all in the emergence of public spaces. From this starting point, the workshop explored religious interactions, degrees of institutionalization, innovation, imitation and mutual influence of practices as well as identities. Whereas the first day was dedicated to Roman material, the second day concentrated on Greek and Egyptian evidence.

Concerning the Roman material, three contributions – MAIK PATZELT (Erfurt), CAROLYN TOBIN (Princeton) and CAROLINE MANN (Princeton) – explored the problems of ritual transgression and how these transgressions could be regarded as expressions of ritual innovation, of religious and political interactions and of new identities. RICHARD NEUDECKER (Rom) and HARRIET FLOWER (Princeton) dedicated their efforts to aspect of architectural strategies and the individual use of religious spaces, while Dan-el Padilla Peralta offered an insight into the broader problem of the human resources needed in the construction processes of religious architecture.

The second day started with MICHAEL

FLOWER (Princeton) challenging anew the concept of religion as used in Greek sources to draw attention to key aspects of urban religion on a broader scale. This attempt was followed by archeological approaches of VALENTINO GASPARINI (Erfurt) and MARGARET KURKOSKI (Princeton), who both concentrated on aspects of architectural and representational innovation within and beyond certain communities. After MYRTHE BARTELS (Erfurt) considered pseudo-Aristotelian reflections on religious epithets, JONATHAN HENRY (Princeton) pointed out the degrees of institutionalization and innovation in the field of late ancient exorcism.

Common dinners helped to further discuss and develop our idea of urban religion.

The workshop brought up many aspects, methodological issues, and perspectives, which provide a fruitful basis for further investigations of urban religion. The workshop thus served as a good basis on which to continue and increase our corporation with Princeton to further new and fruitful approaches to the religions of the ancient world beyond common dichotomies, such as private and public religion.

Conference Overview:

Maik Patzelt (Max-Weber-Center, Erfurt): Prayer in Rome – Clodius Reconsidered

Harriet Flower (Department of Classics, Princeton): Local Religion in Ancient Rome

Dan-el Padilla Peralta (Department of Classics, Princeton): Divining Data: Quantitative Approaches to the Urban Religion of Mid-Republican Rome

Carolyn Tobin (Department of Classics, Princeton): The Sullan Proscriptions and the Memory of Religious Pollution

Caroline Mann (Department of Classics, Princeton): The Suicide of P. Cornelius Merula, flamen Dialis

Richard Neudecker (formerly DAI Rome): Remembering trees: Sacred groves in Rome's cityscape

Benjamin Sippel (Max-Weber-Center, Erfurt): Moving to the Countryside: On Investigat-

ing the Consequences of Spatial Differences
for Religious Functionaries in Rural and Ur-
ban Spaces of Roman Egypt

Michael Flower (Department of Classics,
Princeton): Greek Religion, Greek Religion(s),
or No Religion?

Valentino Gasparini (Max-Weber-Center, Er-
furt): From Private Villas to Urban Isiac Sanc-
tuaries: Water Facilities and Graeco-Egyptian
Imagery

Margaret Kurkoski (Art and Archaeology,
Princeton): Constructing Fortune: Tyche on
Roman Imperial Buildings

Myrthe Bartels (Department of History, Er-
furt): Traditional religious epithets for theos
in the pseudo-Aristotelian *De Mundo*

Jonathan Henry (Department of Religion,
Princeton): Devils and Bureaucracy: Or-
dained Exorcists in the 4th Century CE

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