

UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT
Max-Weber-Kolleg

MONDAY LECTURES | WISE 2026/27
IN RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

RESEARCH BUILDING "WELTBEZIEHUNGEN" | C19.00.03 | 16:15 - 17:45

23.11.2026 | ELENA MUÑIZ-GRIJALVO

THE EMPEROR IN PROCESSION. EXPERIENCING POWER IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE (III): PROCESSIONAL MOVEMENT AND THE CREATION OF MEANING

By definition, everything in a procession moved: the actors participating in the parade (musicians, priests, political officials, representatives of different citizen groups), the sacrificial victims, and also the images of gods or emperors. Moving is the essential characteristic of processions, what best defines them, and perhaps the most easily perceived element—especially in contrast to the stillness of the spectators watching the parade pass by. This talk will try to show that movement decisively influences the overall perception of the procession and plays a major role in attributing meaning to the objects and persons in motion. I will begin with a brief overview of the most recent studies on movement in religious contexts, followed by an explanation of how I believe the kinesthetic sense may contribute to religious experience. Then I will focus on how moving images and kinesthesia could help experience the emperor as both superhuman and simply human, thus producing a cognitive conflict or dissonance that was one of the defining features and one of the strengths of imperial ideology.



Campana plaque: circus scene. © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Hervé Lewandowski

ALL GUESTS WELCOME.
NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY.