



## Organisation:

**Prof. Dr. Rubina Raja** | Aarhus University  
**Prof. Dr. Jörg Rüpke** | Max Weber Center  
**Dr. des. Lara Weiss** | Max Weber Center

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**UNIVERSITY OF ERFURT**  
Max Weber Center for Advanced  
Cultural and Social Studies  
Postfach 900221  
99105 Erfurt, Germany  
Phone: +49(0)361/737-2855  
Fax: +49(0)361/737-2829  
E-mail: [lara.weiss@uni-erfurt.de](mailto:lara.weiss@uni-erfurt.de)



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## The role of objects - creating meaning in situations

Conference of the ERC research project „Lived Ancient Religion: Questioning ‚cults‘ and ‚polis religion‘

9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013 in Eisenach, Haus Hainstein/Wartburg



Objects were the primary material, which created a physical and visual framework around which religious life unfolded in antiquity. They were made, handled and experienced by a range of individuals and groups and therefore also had a variety of meanings depending on the person(s) handling them and/or according to the situations and/or spaces in which they played a part. One key issue in this respect is the question of how the meaning of objects was appropriated by individual and collective agents in different situations not only in public ritual, but also in more or less exclusive associations and at home. This is important to avoid the tendency that the importance of objects is usually taken for granted serving as a starting point for analysis. Within the framework of LAR, it is crucial to acknowledge that as well as being objects handled by people, objects were also active agents that spoke and moved. Therefore the way in which objects were perceived could also change depending on the specific situations. The meaning of objects could also change at their transfer from one space into the other which opens questions concerning the discourse connecting individual and/or collective religious action in the primary and secondary spaces. Meaning is thus situational and not constant. It can change and changes create new meanings that may even differ in the same context for various agents. In this conference we will explore how objects created 'meaning' in situational constructs and examine the effectiveness of religious instruments as employed in order to create, change and enhance meanings. The main focus are methodologies developed in order to provide a lens through which aspects of lived ancient religion can be examined drawing on a variety of sources ranging from textual to archaeological material.

## Programme

### Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> October

**14:00 | Opening Address:** Rubina Raja, Lara Weiss and Jörg Rüpke

#### 1<sup>st</sup> session: Identifying Objects in Contemporary Discourse

**14:15 | Patricia McAnany (Chapel Hill):** Death Becomes Her ... Heterodox Approaches to Human Remains as a Conduit of Social Memory and Receptacle for the Soul in Ancient Maya Societies

**15:00 | Ioanna Patera (Paris/Erfurt):** Objects as Substitutes in Ancient Greek Rituals

**15:45 | Coffee Break**

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> session: Transferable Meanings in Space and Time

**16:30 | Frank Daubner (Stuttgart):** Augustus as Religious Object Between Private and Civic Use. The Macedonian Small Town Perspective

**17:00 | Anna-Katharina Rieger (Erfurt):** Ceramics in Use and Disuse in Sacred Context

**18:30 | Common Dinner**

### Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> October

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> session: Objects, Spaces and Time

**8:30 | Richard Gordon (Erfurt):** Showing the Gods the Way: Curse-tablets as Deictic Persuasion

**9:15 | Anja Klöckner (Gießen):** Perpetuated Performance. Ritual Objects – Ritual Agents – Ritual Actions

**10:00 | Drew Wilburn (Oberlin):** An Inscribed Ostrich Eggshell from Berenike, Egypt, and the Intersection of Magic and Religious Space

**10:45 | Coffee Break**

#### 4<sup>th</sup> session: Multiple Meanings

**11:15 | Alison Cooley (Warwick):** Multiple Meanings in the Sanctuary of the Magna Mater at Ostia

**12:00 | Stephanie Hoss (Sheffield):** The Roman Military Belt – an Object Conveying Cumulative Meanings

**12:45 | Lunch Break**

**14:15 | Volker Menze (Budapest):** The Magic of the Eucharist

**15:00 | Karen Johnson (Ann Arbor):** Affordances, Intentionality, and the Essence of Objects: Cognitive Approaches to Interpreting Artifacts

**15:45 | Coffee Break**

**16:15 | Achim Lichtenberger (Bochum):** Terracottas from Beit Nattif

**17:00 | Rubina Raja (Aarhus):** In and Out of Context(s). The Tesserae from Palmyra and Their Multiple Meanings

**17:45 | Gideon Bohak (Tel Aviv):** Materiality, Spirituality and Magic: The High Priestly Vestments and the Golden Plate

**19:00 | Common Dinner**

**20:15 | Festive Evening Lecture**

### Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> October

#### 5<sup>th</sup> session: Mobility and Immobility as Change Factors

**8:30 | Hallie Meredith (Dartmouth):** Transforming Gold-Glass Medallions through Contexts of Use: Individual vs. Collective Meaning in the Late Roman Period

**9:15 | Andreas Kropp (Nottingham):** The Tyche of Berytus: a Phoenician Goddess on Civic Coinage

**10:00 | Coffee Break**

**10:15 | Angelika Malinar (Zurich):** The Banner of Indra and the Demarcation of Ritual and Aesthetic Practices in Ancient India

**11:00 | Lara Weiss (Erfurt):** Moving the Sacred—Negotiating Space Roman Houses

**11:45 | Final Discussion**

**12:30 | Lunch**

#### Further information:

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