



## Organisation:

**Prof. Dr. Jörg Rüpke** | Max Weber Center  
**Christopher Degelmann** | Max Weber Center

**Photo:** Amiternum relief of a pompa funebris; 50-20 BC Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo, Aquila; photo: DAI Rome (detail)

[www.uni-erfurt.de/maxwe](http://www.uni-erfurt.de/maxwe)

### UNIVERSITY OF ERFURT

Max Weber Center for Advanced  
Cultural and Social Studies  
Postfach 900221  
99105 Erfurt, Germany  
Phone: +49(0)361/737-2860  
Fax: +49(0)361/737-2829  
E-mail: [christopher.degelmann@uni-erfurt.de](mailto:christopher.degelmann@uni-erfurt.de)



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## Stories told – Memories uttered

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

29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014 on the „Schloss Ettersburg“  
in Ettersburg/Weimar

The conference is interested in a fresh look at known material, new sources, and comparative exchange among and beyond Mediterranean traditions, bringing together scholars working in different fields and types of sources to propose and discuss methodological approaches that have proven or might prove helpful for elucidating the dimensions of “lived ancient religions”. The re-evaluation of “narrative” in historiography, much furthered by the reflections of Paul Ricoeur, has also led social sciences to turn to narratives and narrative constructions of selves and collective identity. Narratives, the ‘emplotment’ of events, embedding them in time and space and personal relationships, are a major source of orientation and are crucial in the dialogical, the interpersonal constitution of ‘agency’ and ‘collective identities’. The same holds true for religious agency and religious identities in particular. “Religious” as used in this statement is understood as a spectrum of experiences, actions, beliefs, and communications hinging on human communication with superhuman or even transcendent agent(s), for the ancient Mediterranean usually (but not necessarily) conceptualised as “gods”. The conference will focus on the role of narratives in the wider fields opened up by the aforementioned new directions in historical, social, and even psychological research. The concepts and methodologies developed here might be of heuristic value for the field of religion, too. Accordingly, such narratives help the individual actors to develop skills and competences in developing routines in schematizing situations or hypotheses in projecting courses of actions into the future and evaluations and contextualizing social experiences, respectively, thus furthering agency. In a dialogue of one’s own and others’ narratives they help to constitute narrative identities of individuals, of groups and sub-groups. For these individuals, public narratives are mediated by practices and institutions, thus helping to locate oneself and others within always precarious ‘traditions’ and ‘society’.

These general hypothesis offer a set of questions for religion and religious communication. Throughout these fields, the wider concept of “narrative” opens up a broad range of generical realisation, of writing and orality, of solipsistic, dialogical, face-to-face, and public primary as well as secondary, media-based, communication.

## Programme

### Wednesday, 29<sup>th</sup> January

14:00 | Welcome

#### 1<sup>st</sup> session: Narrating religious change

14:30 | **Greg Woolf**: Narrating Diaspora in the Roman world

15:15 | **Eve-Marie Becker**: Constructing a history and the development of religious identity in early Christianity

16:00 | Coffee Break

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> session: Ritual and narrative

16:30 | **Valeria Piano**: Explaining the world with words: Possible relations between narrative and ritual in the Derveni Papyrus

17:15 | **Eva Cancik-Kirschbaum**: Godforsaken in Mesopotamia

18:30 | Dinner

### Thursday, 30<sup>th</sup> January

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> session: Religious experiences as narratives

09:00 | **Harriet I. Flower**: Sulla’s Memoirs as an account of personal religious experiences

09:45 | **Ingvild Gilhus**: Epiphanius’ Panarion

10:30 | Coffee Break

11:00 | **Teresa Morgan**: Relationship development in popular narratives of divine-human relationships

11:45 | **Darja Šterbenc Erker**: Narrations on epiphany and deifications

12:30 | Lunch / 13:30 (optional) Visit of the castle

### 4<sup>th</sup> session: Single and multiple lives as group members

14:30 | **Jonas Grethlein**: From Life to life: the dialectic of narrative and conversion in Augustine’s Confessiones

15:15 | **Malcolm Choat**: Narratives of monastic genealogy in coptic funerary inscriptions

16:00 | Coffee Break

16:30 | **John Healey**: Piecing together the narratives in Aramean tradition

### 5<sup>th</sup> session: Lives as formulas

17:15 | **Elizabeth Froid**: Is there another way of telling? Subjectivity and experience in Egyptian biographical narratives of religious life

18:00 | **Richard Gordon**: Negotiating with the temple-script: Women’s narratives among the Mysian-Lyidian „confession-texts“

19:15 | Dinner

### Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> January

#### 6<sup>th</sup> session: Religious identities through narratives

08:30 | **Christopher Degelmann**: Pietas and Appietas

09:15 | **Simon Goldhill**: Narrative and Lived Experience

10:00 | Coffee Break

10:15 | **Jörg Rüpke**: Novelty and tradition

11:00 | Final Discussion

12:30 | Lunch