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**Bild:** wall painting, Pompeii IX 7,1 (Th. Fröhlich, Fassaden- und Lararienbilder in den Vesuvstädten, 1991, Pl. 59,2).

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This project is funded by the European Union

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## Grouping together in Lived Ancient Religion

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

2nd to 4th June, 2014, Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters, Copenhagen, Denmark

The concept of ‘culture in interaction’ as well as ‘group style’ (N. Eliasoph/P. Lichterman, 2003; Lichterman 2006) can enrich the lived ancient religion approach. The latter concept has been developed in the ethnographic analysis of contemporary societies as a complement to the sociology of emotion. Focusing on situational communication in groups, it aims to identify specific ‘group styles’, which modify the use of linguistic as well as behavioural registers within cultural contexts. Groups are not regarded as pre-defined, fossilised ‘cults’ or ‘religions’, but as precarious, unstable, temporary ‘groupings together’. For the most thoroughly defined and stable social contexts of ritual interaction – namely the nuclear and wider family (including slaves), clans, neighbourhoods and voluntary associations (limited to one per person by later law) – the concept helps theorise *situational differences* in creating and reproducing cultural religious representations as well as in evoking less widely shared knowledge and practices. Here modes of speech (e.g. in formulaic texts of votives or tomb inscriptions), the specific or ad hoc selection of everyday objects (e.g. lamps or pottery), dress, and gestures, the selection of places and times, might be significant in order to establish groups or classify people at least on a temporary basis. Ancient ethnographic evidence and the provisions and exceptions foreseen by public norms (laws) could form important evidence here, as can archaeological remains that attest to practices that vary micro-topographically without there being any corresponding evidence for variation in explicit norms.

The conference will analyse the production both of unity and of diversity, even micro-diversity, in different situations, for example feasting, social gatherings, or initiation, by examining language, gestures, clothing and eating. Another important topic will be the consolidation, and inversely the dissolution, of organisations, texts and textual canons. We shall also pay specific attention to processes of specialisation, professionalisation, and the construction of authority, and inversely again on individual renunciation, self-effacement or withdrawal. Finally, gender will provide an important perspective for analysis and description.

## Programme

### Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June

15:00 | Welcome

**1<sup>st</sup> session: Sociological perspective on groups in religious contexts**

**Chair: Rubina Raja**

**15:15 | Paul Lichterman (University of Southern California):** Understanding styles of collective religious practice: A sociologist’s invitation to dialogue

**16:00 | Emiliano Urciuoli (Fondazione Collegio San Carlo di Modena):** *Ego imperium huius saeculi (non) cognosco*: Capitalizing on Bourdieu for a genealogy of Christian political life (50-313 CE)

16:45 | Coffee Break

**2<sup>nd</sup> session: Encounters in travelling**

**Chair: Ted Kaizer**

**17:15 | Philip Bornet (University of Lausanne):** Building group identity through travels, hospitality and the domestic space: Examples from the Rabbinic World

**18:00 | Anna-Katharina Rieger (University of Erfurt):** „All inclusive“ – mobile groups and their religious strategies: Examples from the Arabian Desert

19:00 | Dinner

### Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**2<sup>nd</sup> session ctd.**

**Chair: Michael L. Satlow**

**9:00 | Tim Whitmarsh (University of Oxford):** Grouping together as atheists

**3<sup>rd</sup> session: Encounters in public and private spaces**

**Chair: Michael L. Satlow**

**9:45 | Eric Rebillard (Cornell University, Ithaca):** Expressing Christian membership in second-century Carthage

10:30 | Coffee Break

**11:00 | Arja Karivieri (University of Stockholm):** Encounters in Greek caves – from light to darkness, and vice versa

11:45 | Lunch Break

### 4<sup>th</sup> session: Gender-specific strategies and situations

**Chair: Georgia Petridou**

**13:45 | Kate Cooper (University of Manchester):** Religion, gender, and the power of protection in Late Antiquity: An ethnographic approach

**14:30 | Darja Šterbenc Erker (Humboldt University Berlin):** Grouping together: Women’s festivals in ancient Rome

15:15 | Coffee Break

**5<sup>th</sup> session: Textual communities**

**Chair: Richard Gordon**

**15:45 | Karen L. King (Harvard University):** Real and putative literature in the formation of textual communities

**16:30 | Françoise Van Haepere (Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve):** Strengthening group identity by making offerings and producing texts: some case studies from Ostia’s guilds

**17:15 | Jörg Rüpke (University of Erfurt):** Textual communities: writing, reading, copying

18:15 | Dinner

### Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June

**6<sup>th</sup> session: Short-term ritual communities**

**Chair: Anna-Katharina Rieger**

**9:00 | Maura Heyn (University of North Carolina, Greensboro):** Ritual and status in a funerary context: priests in Palmyra

**9:45 | Michael L. Satlow (Brown University):** A Temporary Ritual Community: Jewish Women and New Moon Celebrations in Late Antiquity

10:30 | Coffee Break

**Chair: Jörg Rüpke**

**10:45 | Clemens Leonhard (University of Münster):** The performance of rituals and the degrees of adherence to Christianity in Antiquity

**11:30 | Rubina Raja (Aarhus University):** „Should I stay or should I go now?“ Banquets and processions as means of establishing short-term ritual communities

12:15 | Final Discussion

13:00 | Lunch