



Organisation:

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Picture: Sard sealstone engraved with a medical examination: a doctor rests one hand on the swollen stomach of a standing youth. On the far right stands Asclepius holding a staff with a serpent twisted around it. Dated to the 1st-2nd cent. AD. © Trustees of the British Museum

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UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT

Lived Ancient Religion and Medicine

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

28th May, 2015, Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt

The LAR (Lived Ancient Religion) project: LAR (“Lived Ancient Religion” – or lar, the god of the Roman household) is audacious in the sense that it intends to develop a new and integrative perspective on religion in the Ancient Mediterranean and an adequate methodology. This approach sets out to replace the concepts of “cults” and “polis religion(s)” as integrative frameworks in the description of a field that could usefully be conceptualized as “religion”. By refocusing on the individual and the situational, i.e., on the intrinsic determinants of “lived religion”, it aims to bring the study of ancient Euro-Mediterranean religion into discussion with global History of Religion. We hope to stimulate the development of an approach that can comprise the local and global trajectories of the multi-dimensional pluralistic religions of antiquity.

The Workshop (LAR and Med): Back in 1988, Arthur Kleinmann (*The Illness Narratives. Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition*) defined illness as “the lived experience of monitoring bodily processes”, and thus bridged the gap between externally defined medical category of illness and the more personal experience that illness is for the individual patient. Within the methodological framework of the LAR, illness is thought of as a personal crisis that reveals hidden cracks in the socio-political nexus and offers a unique opportunity for the individual to make adjustments to pre-established political, healing and religious schemata and to create new ones. Thus, illness and its counter part (healing religious and secular) offer a unique insight into the ‘Lived Religion’ in the Graeco-Roman world.

This workshop brings together experts with a diverse background in classical studies, material culture, history of medicine, theology, ancient history and history of religions to look afresh at the individual as a sufferer/patient in conjunction with his personal religious/magical/alchemical (modern distinctions not ancient) beliefs/practices. To what extent (if at all) do the patient’s religious ideas and practises impact on the course of their treatment and recovery? How did famous ancient physicians utilise these widespread religious ideas and attitudes in the process of negotiation with their patients? How fruitfully were religious ideas and practises embedded in the physicians and healers’ personal religious beliefs and attitudes? What are the material traces of this continuous and at times turbulent interaction between religion and medicine? What are the media that can best throw light in the intersections of medicine and religion in the Graeco-Roman antiquity? The spaces and the professionals that ancient religion and medicine shared are also of great interest here. In terms of the chronological focus of the workshop, we are primarily interested in the imperial era, but earlier and later comparanda are also discussed here.

Programme

Thursday, 28th May

Welcome and Introduction

09:00 | Georgia Petridou (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt): Introducing the Intersections between the Sacred and the Medical

Where Lived Ancient Religion and Medicine Meet

Chair: Manfred Horstmanshoff

09:15 | Patricia Baker (University of Kent): Conceptions of Salubrious Environments: Asclepia in their Natural Environments

10:00 | Jane Draycott (University of Wales, Trinity Saint David): When Lived Ancient Religion and Lived Ancient Medicine Meet: Roman Domestic Medical Practice and its Practitioners

10:45 | Coffee Break

Material Evidence of the LAR and MED Meeting

Chair: Rubina Raja

11:00 | Richard Gordon (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt): Knowing the signs: Pliny’s herbarii, Lydian confession texts and somatic curses

11:45 | Jessica Hughes (Open University, UK): ‘Found’ Objects and Lived Ancient Religion

12:30 | Lunch

Individual Perspectives I

Chair: Anna-Katharina Rieger

14:00 | Matteo Martelli (Humboldt University): Religion, Alchemy and Medicine in Zosimus of Panopolis’ writings

14:45 | Antoine Pietrobelli (University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne): Galen’s Religious Itinerary

15:30 | Coffee Break

Individual Perspectives II

Chair: Valentino Gasparini

16:00 | Annette Weissenrieder (Berkeley University): Disease and Healing in a Changing World. ‘Medical’ Vocabulary and the ‘Female Patient’ in the Vetus Latina Mark and Luke

16:45 | Georgia Petridou (Max-Weber Kolleg Erfurt): What is Divine about Medicine? Mystic Imagery and Bodily Knowledge in the Second Sophistic

17:30 | General Discussion

Chair: Jörg Rüpke

18:30 | Dinner