



Organization:

Dr. Georgia Petridou | Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt

Dr. Anna-Katharina Rieger | Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt

Picture: Leda and the Swan, with Eros. Roman relief. Marble. 1st-2nd century CE from the Archaeological Museum of Heraklion in Crete (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leda_and_the_Swan_archmus_Heraklion.jpg)

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UNIVERSITY OF ERFURT

Max Weber Center for Advanced

Cultural and Social Studies

Postfach 900221

99105 Erfurt, Germany

Phone: +49(0)361/737-2870

Fax: +49(0)361/737-2809

E-mail: ursula.birtel-koltes@uni-erfurt.de



UNIVERSITÄT ERFURT

The Materiality of Divine Agency in the Graeco-Roman World

2016, August 29th - September 2nd | Postgraduate Workshop at the Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt

The Postgraduate Workshop aims to investigate archaeological evidence and textual sources in a comparative way to unearth the multiplicity and richness with which divine agency is depicted in narratives, religious practices and ideas, as well as in iconographical evidence.

How well grounded in ritual action and cultural production was anthropomorphism and what were its cognitive advantages and disadvantages? How liberating was it to imagine the gods and goddesses in an aniconic or hybridic form? Why was there ever the need to communicate in writing with the gods? Why did the gods need food, clothing, gifts, and material objects?

The Postgraduate Workshop engages closely with an extensive methodological and thematic agenda that focuses on all aspects of the materiality of divine agency in Classical antiquity. More specifically, it sets out to explore processes of embodying, objectifying, portraying physically and, more generally, grounding the divine and its agency in our rather limited sensual perception. Following in the steps of recent scholarly studies on the iconicity, aniconicity and hybridity of the divine in the classical world, the Workshop aims at casting its net wider so as to include religious action taking place in the so-called margins of urban religious activities, such as magic and healing by unsolicited health-care providers. Moreover, ritual action focused on statues and material objects (votives, amulets, defixiones) and other processes that

ensure a successful communication with the divine will receive extra attention in our discussions.

Target audience:

Postgraduate students and researchers from Classics, Archaeology, Religious Studies, Ancient Judaism, Ancient History, History of Art, and Theology are invited to participate. We would be able to accommodate up to 25 participants. Knowledge of ancient languages (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, etc.) is desirable, but not essential. Participants are also encouraged to present their own research projects related to the general topic.

Applications

The Workshop would be conducted in English. All materials will be precirculated. Participants are encouraged to present their own work at the Workshop, provided that it is related to the general theme. If you decide to do so, please include in your application a brief research statement. There will be a participation fee of 100 Euro covering the costs of the reader, coffee breaks etc. Inexpensive accommodation on campus (ca. 30 Euros per night) is available and can be booked by the organisers.

Applications should reach Ms Ursula Birtel-Koltes (ursula.birtel-koltes@uni-erfurt.de) by the 31st of May 2016. Please include a brief CV and a list of publications, if applicable.

Speakers

Dr. Emma Aston (Reading)
 Prof. Dr. Nicola Denzey Lewis (Brown)
 Dr. Esther Eidinow (Nottingham)
 Dr. Georgia Petridou (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt)
 Dr. Anna-Katharina Rieger (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt)
 Prof. Dr. Jörg Rüpke (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt)
 Prof. Dr. Ian Rutherford (Reading)
 Prof. Dr. Amy Smith (Reading)
 Prof. Dr. Greg Woolf (ICS, London)

Organizers

Dr. Georgia Petridou (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt)
 Dr. Anna-Katharina Rieger (Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt)

Venue

Max Weber Center of Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, University of Erfurt