Narrating Witchcraft: Agency, Discourse and Power

30th June – 1st July 2016
Venue: Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt, room 121

Organisation:

Dr. Esther Eidinow | Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt
Prof. Dr. Richard Gordon | Max-Weber-Kolleg Erfurt

Conference of the ERC Research Project "Lived Ancient Religion: Questioning ‘Cults’ and ‘Polis Religion’"

Taking up the challenge of the Lived Ancient Religion project, with its focus on the individual and the situational, and its concern to comprise both local and global trajectories of the multi-dimensional pluralistic religions of antiquity, this conference focuses on witchcraft. While we acknowledge the difficulties of cross-cultural translation, the conference assumes the diachronic and cross-cultural conceptual power of witchcraft beliefs and practices, which encompass both local and global meanings and whose historical trajectory extends back to Ancient Mediterranean cultures.

A major aim is to bring other disciplinary perspectives and experience to bear on witchcraft-narratives, Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian, in the Roman imperial period. The multi-disciplinary nature of the conference is intended to offer a fruitful comparison of different theoretical frameworks, as well as drawing out both similarities and differences in multiple aspects of the construction and transmission of witchcraft narratives over time, place and culture. To that end, the conference invites scholars from different disciplines, including ancient, early modern and modern history, anthropology, and gender studies, bringing together their diverse methodologies, and varieties of evidence.

Programme

Thursday, 30th June 2016

09:00 | A brief introduction by the organisers
09:05 | Peter Geschiere (Amsterdam):
The Historicity of Witchcraft Narratives—Examples from the Forest Region of South Cameroon
10:15 | Esther Eidinow (Nottingham):
Social Knowledge and Spiritual Insecurity: Identifying ‘Witchcraft’ in Classical Greek Communities
11:00 | Coffee Break
11:20 | Alison Rowlands (Essex):
Contested Narratives, Contesting Identities: Witchcraft Narratives in Legal and Social Context in Early Modern Germany
12:05 | Richard Gordon (Erfurt):
Knowing the Ropes: Malign Magic in Latin Literary Narratives
12:50 | Lunch
14:30 | Marion Gibson (Exeter):
Narrating Witchcraft in Early Modern English News Pamphlets
15:15 | Almuth Lotz (Potsdam):
Libanius and Theodoret of Cyrrhus on Accusations of Magic: Between Legal Norm and Legal Practice in Late Antiquity
16:00 | Coffee Break
16:30 | Olivier Dufault (LMU, Munich):
Witchcraft Accusations Directed at Client-Scholars under the Roman Empire
17:15 | Wolfgang Behringer (Saarbrücken):
Witchcraft Narratives in Early Modern Demonologies from the Malleus Maleficarum (1486) to Francesco Guazzo’s Compendium Maleficarum (1626)
19:00 | Dinner

Friday, 1st July 2016

09:00 | Greta Van Buylaere (Würzburg):
Foreign Witches
10:15 | Svenja Nagel (Heidelberg):
All is Fair in Love and War: Egyptian Witchcraft and Sexual Dynamics in Graeco-Roman Egypt
11:00 | Coffee Break
11:20 | Jan Bremmer (Groningen):
Simon Magus: a Pagan Magician in a Christian Context
12:05 | Yuval Harari (Ben Gurion):
Three Charms for Killing Adolf Hitler: Practical Kabbalah in WW2
12:50 | Final Discussion
13:15 | Lunch