

11th International Spring School on Ancient Religions

14th-18th March 2010

Construction and Control of Divine Others

(in cooperation with FIGURA)

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The existence of a class of immortal, mighty agents was a truism for ancient societies. Being a truism, however, depended on the permanent presence of these mostly invisible “deities” in stories and hymns, in images and statues, and, occasionally, in epiphanies. Sanctuaries, architecture and marked space, formed other permanently visible signs. The seminar will analyze these representations as forms of communication, construction and control: How did ancient rituals and theologies find a balance between construing the otherness of their deities and the possibility of effective communication with these beings, and even with the need to control them? How did these polytheistic religions navigate between the whole – ‘the divine’ (i.e. the drive to homogenize the divine sphere) – and its constituent parts (the plurality of major and minor deities, spirits, powers ...)?

The seminar will offer a general introduction to images and representations. It will analyze archaeological as well as textual sources and their functioning as media. Lectures and seminars will offer insights into different rituals, narratives, attributes and epithets, philosophical discourses and *hieroi logoi* of mystery religions. The work will include the discussion of papers and texts (distributed in advance). We will also be analyzing sources in small groups.

M.A., Ph.D. and post-doctoral students from the disciplines of Classics (including its various sub-disciplines), Religious Studies, and Theology are invited to participate. The maximum number of participants is 30. The course will be conducted in English; the knowledge of Latin and Greek is desirable. Participants can present their own research projects, if related to the general topic.

Please apply via email by 30th November, 2009, supplying also a brief CV with your application. Confirmation will be sent by mid-December, to be followed by a reader including primary texts and some secondary literature by the end of January. There will be a participation fee of 50 EURO covering the costs of the reader, coffee breaks etc. Inexpensive accommodation is available, and can be booked by the organizers, if required.

For queries and further information please contact:

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