

Museo delle Religioni “Raffaele Pettazzoni”

Monstra II

Symbologies e Functionalities of Monstrous Entities

July 10-11-12-13-14, 2018

Velletri (Rome)

Call for Papers

The conference is meant as a follow-up to the study meeting called “Monstra. Costruzione e percezione delle entità ibride e mostruose nel Mediterraneo antico”, which took place in Velletri in 2011 by initiative of the “Raffaele Pettazzoni” Museum of Religions. In that occasion scholars belonging to various fields of scholarship and specialists of different historical and cultural areas exchanged opinions specially about the possibility of historicizing the manifold meanings of the modern category of “monster”, verifying its suitability as a heuristic instrument for defining and qualifying the hybrid or more generically “monstrous” entities that are present in the beliefs and traditions of the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean basin. In this new meeting the focus will be shifted on the study of the symbolic potential connected to the hybrid or monstrous appearance typical of these entities and to the functionalities that their characteristics could assume in the surviving literary and iconographic evidence.

A starting point for a shared reflection will be the data acquired in the course of the debate that took place during the 2011 conference, which were reported on in the following publications:

- 1) I. Baglioni (edited by), *Monstra. Costruzione e percezione delle entità ibride e mostruose nel Mediterraneo antico*, vol. 1 (Egitto, Vicino Oriente Antico, Area Storico-Comparativa), Religio. Collana di Studi del Museo delle Religioni

“Raffaele Pettazzoni”, Edizioni Quasar, Roma 2013.

- 2) I. Baglioni (edited by), *Monstra. Costruzione e percezione delle entità ibride e mostruose nel Mediterraneo antico*, vol. 2 (l'Antichità Classica), Religio. Collana di Studi del Museo delle Religioni “Raffaele Pettazzoni”, Edizioni Quasar, Roma 2013.
- 3) I. Baglioni, *Echidna e suoi discendenti. Studio sulle entità mostruose della Teogonia esiodea*, collana “Le Religioni e la Storia”, Edizioni Quasar, Roma 2017.

In particular, speakers may develop in their papers the following points:

1. How is the body structure of these entities characterized? Which elements are they composed of, if hybrid, or which anomalies do they show? Are their monstrous physical traits a chance element, with the only aim of creating something horrid, or are they a significant element that fixes and determines their general features?
2. How do these entities' monstrous characteristics influence their functionalities in the traditions they refer to? Which is their role? How are these functionalities implemented from a general point of view, in the ample frame of a single population's cultural tradition, and in the specific case of a single document, as for example a literary work or an iconographic source?
3. The hybrid or more generically monstrous appearance of these entities may vary in the available sources. Which motivations determine this change? Does this change of body structure correspond to a change in functionality of the entity and/or of the symbolic potential connected to the main features of its body?

Nota bene: we will also accept proposals that analyze the symbolic potential in a Western context of extra-human entities of Oriental, African or Amerindian origin, which are perceived as “monsters” in the West.

The conference is articulated into five research areas:

1. Egypt and Ancient Near East (coordinator: Lorenzo Verderame - Sapienza Università di Roma)
2. Classical Antiquity (coordinator: Tommaso Braccini - Università degli Studi di Torino)
3. Middle Ages (coordinator: Carla Del Zotto - Sapienza Università di Roma)
4. Modern Era (coordinator: Nicola Cusumano - Università degli Studi di Palermo)
5. Contemporary Age (coordinator: Enrico Comba - Università degli Studi di Torino)

Administration: Igor Baglioni (Museum of Religions “Raffaele Pettazzoni”)

The scholars who would like to contribute may send a one-page abstract (max 2.000 characters) to Igor Baglioni, the director of the museum, (igorbaglioni79@gmail.com) by April 20, 2018.

Attached to the abstract should be: the title of the paper; the chosen area; a short biography of the authors; email address and phone number.

Papers may be written and presented in English, French, Italian and Spanish.

The acceptance of papers will be communicated (by email) only to the selected contributors by 2018, May 1st.

Please send by email the complete paper, with notes and bibliography, not later than June 25. The delivery of the paper is required to participate in the conference.

Important deadlines:

Closing of *call for papers*: April 20th, 2018.

Notification about acceptance: May 20th, 2018.

Delivery of paper: June 25th, 2018.

Conference: July 10-11-12-13-14th, 2018

There is no attendance fee. The participants who don't live in Rome or surroundings

will be accommodated in hotels and bed-and-breakfasts which have an agreement with the Museum of Religions Raffaele Pettazzoni to offer discounted prices.

Papers may be published on *Religio. Collana di Studi del Museo delle Religioni "Raffaele Pettazzoni"* (Edizioni Quasar), and in specialized journals. All the papers will be peer-reviewed.

The conference will be associated with the cultural event "Vento d'Estate ai Castelli Romani" organized by *Consorzio SBCCR - Sistema Biblioteche dei Castelli Romani* and by *Fondazione Cultura Castelli Romani*.

The conference participants will be invited each evening by a different town in the Castelli Romani area and will be offered the opportunity to visit the town, taste local food, see shows, and participate for free in guided tours to local museums and monuments. The excursion programme will be presented at the same time as the conference programme.

For information:

email: igorbaglioni79@gmail.com