

Call for Papers

SENSORIUM:

SENSORY PERCEPTIONS IN ROMAN POLYTHEISM

Madrid, 16-18 November de 2017

The Institute of Historiography “Julio Caro Baroja”, at the University of Carlos III of Madrid is organizing an international conference titled, “**SENSORIUM: Sensory Perceptions in Roman Polytheism.**” Researchers of ancient history, religious history, archeology, anthropology, classical literature, and other related disciplines, are invited to present their research relating to the poly-sensorial practice of religion in the Roman world.

Since M. Mauss and Merleau-Ponty’s publications about the role of the body in social interactions during the first half of the twentieth century (Mauss 1934; Merleau-Ponty 1945), studies about embodiment have benefited from a considerable amount of success since the 1990s in anthropology (Çsordas 1994, 2008), philosophy (Haraway 1991), semiotics (Landowski 2005, Fusaroli, Demuru et al. 2009) and cognitive linguistics (Geeraerts&Cuyckens 2007). The paradigm of embodiment considers that the body is no longer a mere object that reproduces culture, but an ontological condition for the existence of culture itself.

The “SENSORIUM: Sensory Perceptions in Roman Polytheism” conference will direct special attention to the physiological receptors that allow for the exchange of information between the individual and the external world within a specific historical-cultural context: Roman polytheism. For a time, studies about *embodiment* and religion provoked a methodological excision in between the materiality of the body and ritual action, on one hand, and the concept of “belief” on the other. It was a problem that, while it resulted relatively new in anthropology and the history of religions (Godlove



2002, Bell 2002), was an old intellectual conflict about Roman religion that has now been vigorously renewed thanks to the paradigm of *Lived Ancient Religion*. Even so, the anthropological debate can allow for new approaches of analysis of the body in Roman religion. An ideal point of departure are "sensory studies" (Hamilakis 2013; Toner 2016), which have shown that senses and sensory perception are not exclusively biological or psychological issues, but have other social, political, and modal dimensions. That is, socially, the sensory experiences are culturally learned, identified, and recognized. Politically, these sensory experiences are shared collectively and, therefore, can be an object of ideological instrumentalization. Or, in modal terms, the senses cannot be a Cartesian object of analysis, but attention must be paid to flows of continuities and discontinuities within the sensory experience.

Therefore, the issues to be addressed in the SENSORIUM conference are not limited to a formal description of the senses in Roman polytheism, but should investigate the processes and manifestations through which the senses articulate the individual experience of religious phenomena. For example: How do sensory perceptions stimulate the formation of beliefs? How and with what intention are some senses stimulated more than others in certain situations? In what manner are senses exploited in the collective processes of constructing differentiated religious identities? The senses play a primordial role in the socialization of individuals, in cognitive processes, and in the recognition of cultural spaces. Consequently, the senses are identity and cultural markers of integration or segregation that allow a huge variety of analysis, which is the objective of this academic meeting.

Paper presentations should be approximately 20 minutes in length and can be delivered in Spanish, English, German, French, or Italian. We encourage the use of English to make easier the communication. All the papers will be published in English. The contributions must be original works not previously published. Interested speakers should send an abstract of their proposal (200-300 words), a short curriculum vitae, and contact information before April 30th 2017, to the following address: sensorium@uc3m.es



Accepted participants will pay a registration fee of 50 euros. The papers presented in the colloquium will be published in a monographic volume that summarizes the conclusions of the meeting and authors will receive a copy of the volume, as well as certification that they presented their paper at the colloquium.

Speakers and Scientific Committee:

Greg Woolf (University of London, Institute of Classical Studies)

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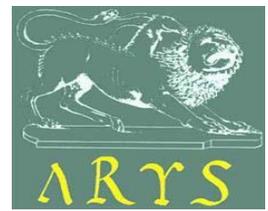


Sponsors

- The Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness Research Project *Oriental Religions in Spain* (HAR2014-5231-P). Responsible: Jaime Alvar Ezquerra.
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- Instituto de Historiografía “Julio Caro Baroja”, research group: Historiography and History of Religions.
- School of Humanities, Communication and Library Science. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.
- Department of Humanities, History, Geography and Art. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.
- Humanities Doctorate Program. Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

Introductory bibliography:

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