



MONDAY LECTURES | WISE 2024/25

IN RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

RESEARCH BUILDING "WELTBEZIEHUNGEN" | C19.00.02/03 | 16:15 - 17:45

LECTURE SERIES BY FRANCESCO MASSA

BEYOND LAST PAGANS: ROMAN POLYTHEISM RESHAPING IN LATE ANTIQUITY

The lecture series aims to work on the discourses and practices of late polytheism to understand whether and how these cults evolved between the second half of the fourth century and the end of the fifth century. Historiography often considers the post-Constantinian period as a time of crisis and decadence in traditional religions. Polytheistic cults, however, did not disappear at once, and their practice adapted to the legal and institutional changes of the empire. The four lectures will examine how late polytheistic cults evolved in their spatial, ritual, and social dimensions. Following a chronological itinerary, we will first ask whether polytheism in the second half of the fourth century was influenced by the spread of Christianity and the ensuing reversal of power in favor of Christians over pagans. Second, we will attempt to clarify how traditional rites, especially sacrifices, were reorganized at the end of the 4th century and whether it is appropriate, as several recent studies claim, to speak of privatization or crypto-paganism. Finally, we will examine the social status of polytheistic actors to test the oft-held idea that, particularly in the 5th century, traditional religion gradually moved from urban to rural spaces.

18.11.2024 | 25.11.2024
02.12.2024 | 09.12.2024

ALL GUESTS WELCOME.
NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY.