



XVIII International ARYS Conference "Ancient Religion in Rural Settlements"

*V Centenario Residence (UNEX)
Jarandilla de la Vera (Cáceres), 1-3 June 2020*

As lived spaces, ancient cities conditioned and were conditioned by very specific social relationships. As suggested by Emiliano Urciuoli, ‘citification’ of religion represented a phenomenon pressing religious actors to “adopt and adapt city features”, to “engage with the socio-spatial conditions of city life”, including appropriating city-spaces, localising or de-localising religious practices, providing specific infrastructures in order to attract, collect and host crowds of people (theatres, for example), facilitating processes of ‘intellectualisation’ of religion, authorship, and, more generally, competition.

The concept of ‘citification’ prompts to explore the rural areas too as lived spaces, to investigate the peculiarities of non-urban religious practices and related social configurations. Firstly, if we accept a definition of the city as “a spatial form that organises and regulates phenomena of density on a larger scale” (J. Rüpke & E. Urciuoli), it is likely to infer that rural areas, on the contrary, are characterised by a much less dense concentration of people and buildings, unevenly distributed in the territory under the different forms of villages, fortified hamlets, *villae*, small farms, way stations, extra-urban sanctuaries, etc. Secondly, if “city is a place inhabited by a substantial population of non-food-producing individuals pursuing different trades (including intellectual occupations) on the basis of an agricultural surplus”, rural areas, on the contrary, are mainly occupied by a population whose occupation primarily consists in the production of food and livelihood resources (mostly agriculture and livestock). Thirdly, while “city is a place engendering diversity and endemic conflict”, extra-urban, ex-centric areas are probably much more socially homogenic, and cannot compete with urban centres as for cultural diversity and plurality, adaptability, and social mobility.

All these reflections lead us to ask, among further questions: Were the group-styles of religious grouping in ancient cities different from those taking place in non-urban contexts? Were the hierarchies of and the rituals performed by the religious specialists in the cities the same of the countryside? Did being far from the cities leave more space for religious deviance and diversity? How the architectural record did affect and was affected by these differences? In one word, is there something that we may call ‘rurification’? This conference aims to deconstruct the ideas of rural religion as mechanically reproducing urban rituals and religious hierarchies and of the rural world as a space of cultural and religious resilience against urbanity. Rural areas represented an arena for very situational processes of negotiation between, on the one hand, administrative patterns and related social configurations, and, on the other hand, processes of social conformance to the very characteristics of a local specific rural environment, of adaptation to its peculiar habitus and religious customs, possibly involving gods whose competences directly mirrored a geophysical environment made of mountains, rivers, woods, etc.



Paper presentations can be delivered in **Spanish, Portuguese, English, German, French, or Italian**. They must be original works that have neither been published nor presented before.

Interested speakers should send an **abstract of their proposal (200-300 words)**, a short *curriculum vitae*, and **contact information** before **October 30, 2019**, to the following address: spaneda@hum.uc3m.es

The acceptance of the contributions will be communicated by January 15, 2020. Due to strict budget availability, the payment of a registration fee is required (deadline: January 31, 2020).

The organizers aim to publish the conference proceedings in the monographic number of the journal ARYS (n° 19, 2021). **The contributors should send their manuscripts before September 1, 2020.**

Registration fees

* € 100: including full-board accommodation for 2 nights + certificates of attendance / communication + digital excerpt of the publication (subject to peer evaluation).

* € 120: including full-board accommodation for 2 nights + certificates of attendance / communication + n° 1 copy of ARYS Journal (n° 19, 2021) with the acts of the congress + digital excerpt of the publication (subject to peer evaluation).

*In order to cover the costs of accommodation and maintenance, the organization will offer **three scholarships** for unemployed or in precarious labor conditions researchers.*

Organization

Association ARYS (Antiquity, Religions and Societies): <http://www.asociacion-arys.com>

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