

WORKSHOP (RE-)NEGOTIATING SOCIAL COHESION: SYSTEMATIC ASPECTS



**30 Sept –
2 Oct 2026**

LISE-MEITNER-SAAL
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin / Akademiefilg
Unter den Linden 8

Detail from a photograph of the Ara Pacis relief by Miguel Herrero, commons.wikimedia.org, CC-BY-SA 3.0

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CHARITETUBRAMFUBBWW
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UPBAMTUBCHARITE
**BERLINER
ANTIKE-
KOLLEG**



Einstein Stiftung Berlin
Einstein Foundation Berlin

WORKSHOP (RE-)NEGOTIATING SOCIAL COHESION: SYSTEMATIC ASPECTS

The Einstein Visiting Fellow project "(Re-)Negotiating Social Cohesion – Religion and Community in Antiquity (800 BCE–400 CE)", generously funded by the Einstein Stiftung/Einstein Foundation Berlin, explores the ambivalent role of religion in social cohesion in Graeco-Roman antiquity: On the one hand, religion can promote social integration by offering shared values and beliefs that influence individual lifestyles and facilitate group-based integration. On the other hand, religion also carries risks of division and conflicts across various domains. The project employs discursive approaches to conduct a detailed examination of interactions between structural conditions and actors.

This workshop is dedicated to the significance of religion for social cohesion in ancient communities by means of a systematic and comparative analysis in three steps. For the comparative analysis of the systematic dimensions of social cohesion, it is important to identify different levels of religious influence. Which layers of social relationships display religious connotations, for example familial relations, associations, or an entire body of citizens? In what communicative contexts or media do we find these religious connotations through discourses or practices? Second, the aim is to identify and analyse the multifaceted connections between religious and 'secular' structures, such as institutions, laws, and economic practices. What religious strategies did individuals, groups and institutions develop to overcome personal conflicts or social unrest, and to sustain harmonious relations with the divine? As a third layer, the workshop aims to analyse how communities received access to religious knowledge or protection and how religious and social integration between various societal groups, such as soldiers and associations, were tied to their integration in larger societal structures.

30 September

16:30 *Registration and coffee*

17:00 Claudia Tiersch (Berlin) and Beate Dignas (Oxford)
Welcome and introduction

17:15 Keynote lecture
Clifford Ando (Chicago)
Religion, citizenship, and the failure to cohere

18:45 *Reception*

20:00 *Dinner*

1 October

9:15 Coffee

9:30 Sitta von Reden (Freiburg):
Negotiating social cohesion through coinage: local and imperial cult communities in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt

10:15 Rogier van der Heijden (Berlin)
Between ὑπὲρ τῆς βασιλείας and οὐχ ὁσίην: Societal structures of debate and religious interaction in Ptolemaic Alexandria

11:00 *Coffee*

11:30 Angela Ganter (Regensburg)
Appropriation, alienation and religious group identities: The cult of Magna Mater in Rome

12:15 Jonas Ortel (Berlin)
Stability in Chaos? Pax in late Republican debates on the ideal cohesive society

13:00 *Lunch*

14:30 Barbara Kowalzig (New York)
Wealth, health, and soteria: Hellenistic Religion between polytheism and populism

15:15 Beate Dignas (Oxford)
Exploring community and religion in the Hellenistic polis: The lens of synoikismos

16:00 *Coffee*

16:30 Mischa Meier (Tübingen)
Jerusalem unter Herakleios (610–641): Juden, Christen, Sasaniden, Moslems und das Ende der Welt

17:15 Claudia Tiersch (Berlin)
Cives christiani – cives politici? Religion and social cohesion in Late Roman cities

18:00 *End of Day 2*

19:30 *Conference dinner*

2 October

9:15 *Coffee*

9:30 Collective discussion I

11:00 *Coffee*

11:15 Collective discussion II

12:45 *Lunch*

Part of the Einstein Visiting Fellow project (Re-)Negotiating Social Cohesion: Religion and Community in Antiquity (800 BCE–400 CE)

Venue

Lise-Meitner-Saal
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
Akademieflügel

Unter den Linden 8
10117 Berlin



Organisers

Claudia Tiersch (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
Beate Dignas (University of Oxford)
Rogier van der Heijden (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)
Jonas Ortel (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

Registration

For attendance (both in-person and via Zoom)
please contact: rogier.van.der.heijden@hu-berlin.de



For more information on the Einstein Visiting Fellow Project
please visit the project website

<https://www.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/de/bereiche-und-lehrstuehle/alte-geschichte/forschungsprojekte/re-negotiating-social-cohesion>