

Book of Abstracts

Representations of **Women and Children** in Roman period Palmyra:

The Religious Life of Women, Children and the Family

6 February 2017

Organised by
Signe Krag, Aarhus University
Sara Ringsborg, Aarhus University

Hosted by Aarhus University

CARLSBERG FOUNDATION





TABLE OF CONTENTS

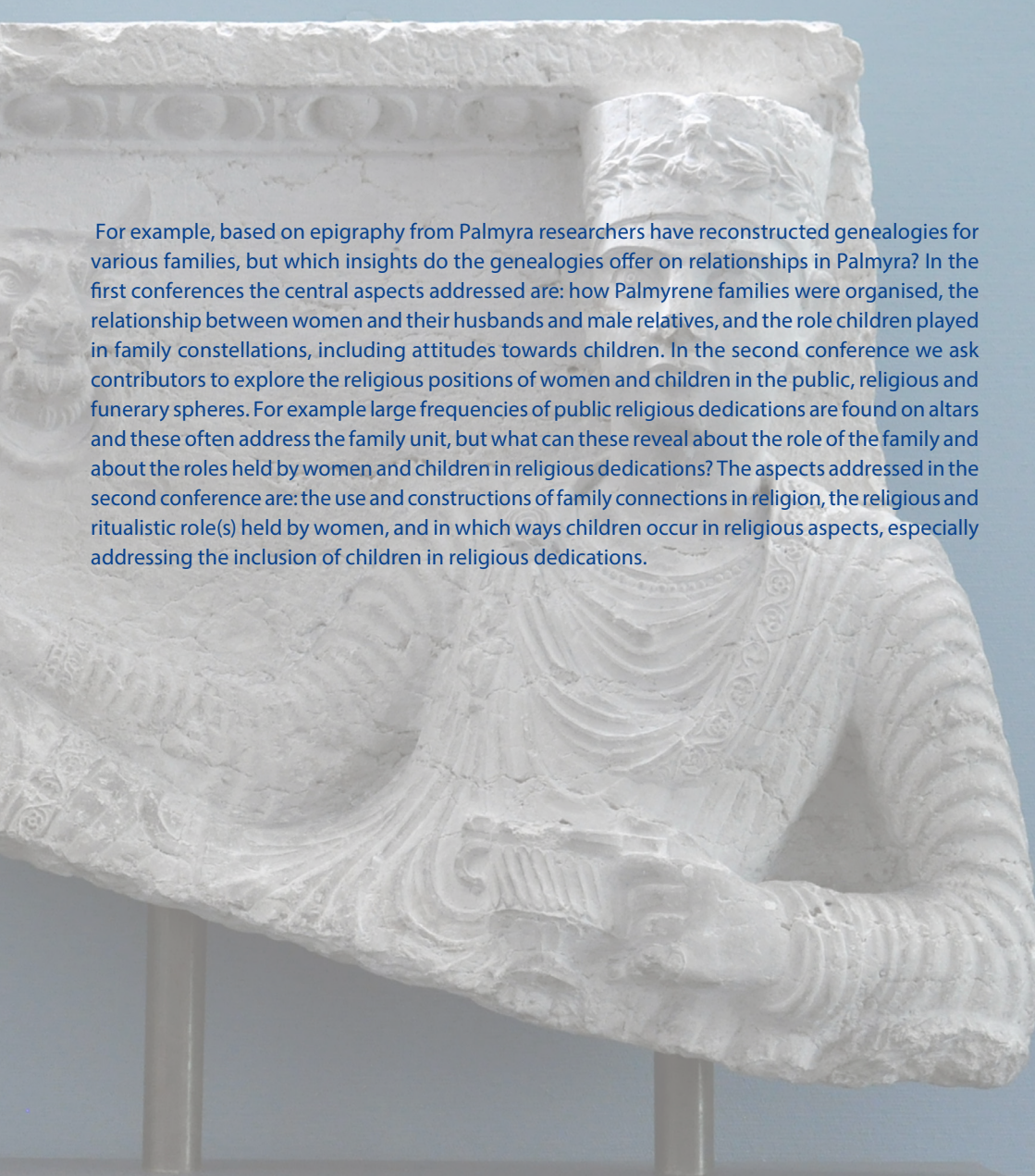
Outline	4
Programme	6
Abstracts	
Ted Kaizer	7
Rubina Raja	8
Nathanael J. Andrade	9
Sanne Klaver	10
Ville Vuolanto	11
Conference venue and Speakers' dinner	12
Organisers	14

OUTLINE

Within the framework of the Palmyra Portrait Project (initiated and headed by Professor Rubina Raja, Aarhus University, and funded by the Carlsberg Foundation), two one-day conferences are organised, one in October 2016 and one in February 2017. These will address aspects of representations of women and children in Roman Palmyra. Although research on Palmyra has been undertaken for a century and has covered aspects such as the religious life, urban and funerary architecture, portraits, textiles and epigraphy, representations of women and children in Palmyra have received little attention. Therefore, much remains to be investigated in order to reach a deeper understanding of the social structure of Palmyrene society. In Palmyra sculptures as well as epigraphy indicate that the family held a pivotal role, which did not seem to become less central over the centuries. Displays of family affiliations were used in different spheres in the city to claim group membership and status and it is especially in this aspect that women and children held a prominent role. Therefore, we set out to explore different aspects of representations of women and children and what meaning this might have carried in relation to the Palmyrene family structure and wider Palmyrene society.

Women and children are often represented in the archaeological material stemming from the Palmyrene funerary buildings in which various family constellations were displayed. In the funerary sphere men, women and children often occur in family constellations. Group portraits compose around 40 percent of the funerary sculpture from the 1st to the 3rd century AD. Moreover, representations of women compose around 40 percent of the sculpture and children 8 percent. However, frequently adult children were portrayed together with their parents in the banquet reliefs and sarcophagi as well. Therefore, representations of women and children played a significant role in the funerary sphere. In the archaeological and epigraphic material from the Palmyrene public and religious spheres women and children also occur. However, the picture is more complicated since the evidence from the public and religious spheres is much more fragmented than in the funerary sphere. Based on the evidence from the public and religious spheres women are often treated as having played lesser roles than men. Certainly there was a focus on the role of the man, both in the public and private spheres, however, until now, apart from exceptions such as Queen Zenobia, the role of women and children in Palmyrene society has only rarely been discussed.

In the first conference we ask contributors to shed light on the role the family held in the public, religious and funerary spheres. Papers should explore what the family meant in the Palmyrene society exemplified through ways in which family constellations were constructed in visual representations, epigraphy and written sources.



For example, based on epigraphy from Palmyra researchers have reconstructed genealogies for various families, but which insights do the genealogies offer on relationships in Palmyra? In the first conferences the central aspects addressed are: how Palmyrene families were organised, the relationship between women and their husbands and male relatives, and the role children played in family constellations, including attitudes towards children. In the second conference we ask contributors to explore the religious positions of women and children in the public, religious and funerary spheres. For example large frequencies of public religious dedications are found on altars and these often address the family unit, but what can these reveal about the role of the family and about the roles held by women and children in religious dedications? The aspects addressed in the second conference are: the use and constructions of family connections in religion, the religious and ritualistic role(s) held by women, and in which ways children occur in religious aspects, especially addressing the inclusion of children in religious dedications.

PROGRAMME

9:00-9:30	Registration and tea/coffee
9:30-9:45	Introduction Signe Krag and Sara Ringsborg
Part 1: Families in Religion (Chair: Sara Ringsborg)	
9:45-10:15	Family Connections and Religious Life at Palmyra Ted Kaizer
10:15-10:40	Discussion
10:40-11:10	It Stays in the Family: Palmyrene Priests and their Iconography Rubina Raja
11:10-11:35	Discussion
11:35-13:00	Lunch
Part 2: Women in Religion (Chair: Signe Krag)	
13:00-13:30	Burying Odainath: Zenobia and Women in the Funerary Life of Palmyra Nathanael J. Andrade
13:30-13:55	Discussion
13:55-14:25	The Limits of Participation: Palmyrene Women in the Religious Life of the City Sanne Klaver
14:25-14:50	Discussion
14:50-15:20	Coffee and cake
Part 3: Comparative Aspects (Chair: Sara Ringsborg)	
15:20-15:50	Religious Participation and the Socialization of Children in the Roman Empire – and in Palmyra Ville Vuolanto
15:50-16:15	Discussion
16:15-16:45	Final discussion
16:45	End of conference and drinks
18:00	Speakers' dinner at Can Blau Tapas Bar, Klostertorvet 9, 8000 Aarhus C

ABSTRACTS

Family Connections and Religious Life at Palmyra

Ted Kaizer, Durham University
ted.kaizer@durham.ac.uk

My paper aims to pose questions about the way in which familial relations play a role in Palmyrene patterns of worship. It will analyse links of specific families to individual temples and cults, but it will also investigate how family members of a dedicant, especially his sons and brothers, commonly appear as beneficiaries of religious dedications through the much-attested formula 'for the life of' (ἐὺν ζωῆς) in votive inscriptions. In contrast to depictions of the whole family on funerary banqueting reliefs, family connections are not commonly given visual expression in non-funerary religious contexts, but there are a few intriguing cases that must be commented upon. Finally, at Palmyra the popular divine epithet πατρίος, 'ancestral', seems to have lost its original meaning of a deity being literally inherited from one's father.

It Stays in the Family: Palmyrene Priests and their Iconography

Rubina Raja, Aarhus University
rubina.raja@cas.au.dk

Representations of Palmyrene priests make up almost 20 percent of male representations in the funerary sphere in Palmyra. This high proportion of priestly representations deserves closer attention in order to explore what significance images of Palmyrene priests hold for our understanding of priesthoods and their organisation in Palmyra. In this paper an overview of the corpus will be given forming a basis for an analysis and discussion of the meaning of priestly representations in the funerary sphere and their importance for our overall understanding of priesthoods in Palmyra. It will be discussed in which ways representations of priests were on the one hand single representations or were combined with representations of other family members and what such depictions meant. Priestly representations on loculus reliefs and sarcophagi will be discussed in order to show the variety of combinations of priestly representations. Were the multiple depictions on in particular sarcophagi expressions of a certain relationship between family members? Or should we rather see depictions of priests as an underlining of the social importance of priesthoods and therefore an underlining of the status of the family as a whole. On other hand why are most Palmyrene priests depicted alone on the loculus reliefs? What do these images tell us about social and religious structures in Palmyra?

Burying Odainath: Zenobia and Women in the Funerary Life of Palmyra

Nathanael J. Andrade, Binghamton University
nandrade@binghamton.edu

In recent years, excavations and research initiatives have amplified what we can know about the activity of women and children at Roman Palmyra. The Palmyra Portrait Project and scholarship that it has inspired deserve special mention in this regard. But the inscriptions, religious dedications, funerary portraits, and other material remains from Palmyra are limited in a key respect. They often reflect traces of past individuals whose lives, personalities, and subjectivities are otherwise lost. Even the dynast Zenobia is only attested through a few such textual and material traces, and despite her immense fame, we only know marginally more about her than most other Palmyrene women. Is it possible to reconstruct any of her lived experiences based on the fragmented or dispersed nature of the evidence?

To explore the possibilities, this presentation focuses on a social and religious event in which Zenobia most probably played a vital role: the funeral and burial of her husband Odainath. No source provides any information on Odainath's funeral or any contribution that Zenobia made to it. But this presentation suggests that recent work on inscriptions, funerary portraiture, and burial at Palmyra and their implications for the activity of women enable us to reconstruct how Zenobia experienced her husband's death in various aspects. It thus reflects on what Zenobia's social and religious obligations to her husband were, and how she would have proceeded to fulfill them.

The Limits of Participation: Palmyrene Women in the Religious Life of the City

Sanne Klaver, University of Amsterdam
s.f.klaver@uva.nl

In this paper I will address the participation of women in the religious life of Palmyra. The dedicatory inscriptions on small altars erected by women and the handful images of women engaging in religious ceremonies provide us with insight in the roles Palmyrene women played in the religious sphere. By analysing these sources I opt for a better understanding of their participation in the religious life of the city. I shall argue that Palmyrene women primarily represented their families in the religious realm, and that they participated mainly when male family members were unable to do so.

Religious Participation and the Socialization of Children in the Roman Empire – and in Palmyra

Ville Vuolanto, University of Tampere
ville.vuolanto@uta.fi

My paper will give an overview of the different roles children had in the context of religion in the Roman Empire of the first four centuries CE. I will especially study the significance of children's religious participation both for the children's own life and for the religious life of the society more generally. My focus will be on the polytheistic religious activity, gendered practices, and on the importance of age. Against this background I will scrutinize what we know about the interconnection of children and religious practices in Palmyra, such as what the inclusion of children in the religious dedications might imply. The formulation of the title refers to the fact that I have not been able so far to do research with the Palmyrene material, and thus I cannot be sure of how far I will actually be able to combine Palmyra and its young inhabitants to what we know of children elsewhere in the Roman Empire.

Fredrik Nielsens Vej 20

Nordre Rings

Trøjborgvej

inebjerg

12

Aarhus Universitetspark
Aarhus Universitet

Naturhistorisk Museum Aarhus

Conference venue

AU Conference Centre
Frederik Nielsens Vej 2-4
8000 Aarhus C
Room: Richard Mortensen Stuen

20 min
1,7 km



6 min

Speakers' dinner

Restaurant Can Blau Tapas Bar
Klostergade 9
8000 Aarhus C

24 min
2,0 km

Scan the QR code for a Google map.

sthusene i
nisk Have

VESTERBRO

Den Gamle By





13

TRØJBORG

Nordre Kirkegård

AARHUS FISKERIHAVN

Aarhus Lystbådehavn

Klostergade 9

ORGANISERS



Assistant professor Signe Krag
Aarhus University

Phone: +45 8716 22346 / +45 6011 8573

Email: skrag@cas.au.dk



PhD student Sara Ringsborg
Aarhus University

Phone: +45 4277 6046

Email: ringsborg@cas.au.dk

Conference website:

<http://projects.au.dk/palmyraportrait/events/womenandchildren/>

The Palmyra Portrait Project is initiated and headed by Professor Rubina Raja, Aarhus University, and funded by the Carlsberg Foundation until the end of 2019. For more information on the project, visit the website: <http://projects.au.dk/palmyraportrait/>.

Representations of Women and Children in Roman period Palmyra:
The Religious Life of Women, Children and the Family

Organised within the Palmyra Portrait Project (funded by the Carlsberg Foundation)

Organisers: Signe Krag (Aarhus University) and Sara Ringsborg (Aarhus University)

Book of Abstracts, published February 2017

Editors: S. Krag, C. Levisen and S. Ringsborg

Template: AU Communication

Cover photo: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek

Printed in Aarhus, Denmark (SUN-Tryk, AU)