

# Call for papers

## Constructing religious identities:

**Space and texts in the pagan, Jewish and early Christian Near East, AD 100 – 400**

**University of Aarhus, Denmark**

**14 – 16 May 2009**

We would like to invite papers from scholars and graduate students in related areas. Please email an abstract, of no more than 500 words, to Anders Lund Jacobsen ([alj@teo.au.dk](mailto:alj@teo.au.dk)) and Rubina Raja ([klarr@hum.au.dk](mailto:klarr@hum.au.dk))

The deadline for the submission of abstracts is March 15, 2009. The conference programme will be announced in April 2009.

The aim of this interdisciplinary conference is to examine religious identity construction, through the study of texts and archaeology, hereunder differences and similarities in the many religious groups' identities in the Near East in the period AD 100 – 400. These groups belonged to pagan religions, Judaism and early Christianity. The period AD 100 – 400 is central to the understanding of the beginnings of Christianity in its geographic and cultural context. Furthermore the period offers the opportunity of exploring the religious plurality, which marked the period. The presentations will focus on examinations of the various forms of interaction between pagan, Jewish and early Christian culture and religion in the region, where Christianity developed. Space and texts will be primary sources for examining these phenomena.

Some central questions to be explored include: How did changes in the religious identity manifest themselves in texts and the material culture? To what extent are conflicts and conflict management visible in the literary sources and the material culture? How did the respective societies relate to religious minorities and majorities? Do the changes in the religious landscape correspond to the changes visible in the literary sources? How did the dynamic relationship between the pagan religions, Judaism and early Christianity reflect itself in the material and written culture?

The conference is a joint project between associate professor Anders-Christian Lund Jacobsen from the Faculty of Theology and Dr. Rubina Raja, head of the project 'Religious identity, ritual practice and sacred architecture in the late Hellenistic and Roman Near East', from the Department of classical archaeology. The conference is sponsored by the Danish Research Council and Aarhus University' Research Fund.

Keynote speakers include:

B. Ashkelony (Jerusalem, Israel)

M. Goodman (Oxford, England)

J. Hahn (Münster, Germany)

T. Kaizer (Durham, England)

J. North (London, England)

S. Westphalen (Germany)

A participation fee for attendees will be required.

More information can be obtained from the organisers.