

Christian Responses to Ancient (Pagan) Mythography

Call for Papers for the
European Association for the Study of Religion 2017 Conference
(Leuven, September 18-21)

How to talk about pagan myths as a Christian author? Both in the East and the West, cultural knowledge of ancient myths kept on being communicated long after the religious practices and the socio-cultural circumstances in which they had developed and thrived, died out.

Christian authors who wished to discuss Greek and Roman myth in their own literary creations (e.g. commentaries, education-oriented writings, mythistory, etc.) could find an aid and example in ancient mythographic texts. In the first place, these predecessors transmitted a wealth of material and had developed a way of communicating myth by stripping away the social, historical, literary, and ritual contexts which were neither relevant nor wanted in the age of Christianity.

Secondly, ancient mythography also included criticism of myths. By rationalizing supernatural events and historicizing mythical figures, mythographers such as Palaephatus and Euhemerus offered a tool to render them more suitable for consumption.

It is the aim of this panel to open a discussion on mythographic practices in a Christian context. We invite scholars to present a case-study of Christian-period writings that incorporate mythographic material, are inspired by Greek or Latin mythographic writings, and/or adopt a mythographic approach to myth. Each contribution will be allotted 20 minutes (plus 10 minutes discussion) in two sessions of three papers each.

Is mythography in a Christian era merely a stagnant continuation of an ancient practice? Or do these authors introduce innovation by assimilating the genre to their own background? Do they develop new tools to adapt them to a Christian worldview or do they adopt the rationalizing methods of their predecessors? How do they position themselves towards the ancient mythical and mythographic tradition? This panel seeks to shed light on the new place of pagan myths and the genre of mythography in Christian societies.

Chairs: Johanna Michels (KU Leuven) & Katrien Levrie (FWO Vlaanderen / KU Leuven)

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Deadline for submission of abstracts (300 words maximum) is January 31, 2017. Submission via the website and more information about the EASR conference [here](#).