

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY OF LATE ANTIQUITY
LECTURE



The Ritual Economy at Consecratory Festivals in Late Antiquity

Festivals for the consecration of churches were major events in late antiquity that gathered individuals together in large numbers from wide geographic regions and various stations in life. At these festivals, the church building itself and votive gifts would be offered up to God and saints, while on the ground commerce would take place in tents set up surrounding the newly-built or renovated ritual space. This paper examines such festivals as sites of exchange. It identifies the rules of the ritual economy by analyzing speeches and hymns performed on these occasions. It will be shown that the ritual economy differed from other types of economies in the matter of re-gifting as a valued practice. This difference accounts for problems that arose in late antiquity regarding the disposal of ecclesial wealth for charitable purposes.

Mary K. Farag earned her Ph.D. in Ancient Christianity at Yale University and currently serves as Assistant Professor of Early Christian Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. She has published articles on late antique liturgical and monastic practices of Egypt.

Mary K. Farag

Princeton Theological Seminary

Wednesday, February 6, 2019

4:30 p.m.

Scheide Caldwell House
Room 103



Plaque, 10th century, ivory, 51/8 x 101/4 in. (13.1 x 26.1 cm). Treasury of Trier Cathedral, Trier, Germany (artwork in the public domain; photograph by Ann Münchow, provided by Hohe Domkirche, Trier)