**International Graduate School "Resonant Self-World-Relations in Ancient and Modern Socio-Religious Practices”**   
  
Fall Conference 2020, 7th and 8th September 2020, Graz

**Rituals and World-Relations – Types, Qualities, and Relationships**

Rituals structure human action and offer orientation to human actors in a world full of contingencies in a long-term perspective. Individuals and groups invent and use rituals and persistent socio-religious practices to contact and position themselves in relation to their environment, their fellow humans, other groups, or transcendent beings and ideas. Rituals are - to a certain extent - fixed courses of action that enable such communication and positioning. However, rituals whose unchangeability in order to be effective is often postulated are only enduring and persisting because humans transform, re-create, and adapt them to new situations and changing environments.

The conference will focus on rituals, their types and qualities to then examine how and with which components they determine the relationship of an individual or a collective to its environment. It inquires into the kind of relationships that are established or made possible by ritual actions between people, things and the (environment) world. These relationships can, for example, establish and stabilize hierarchies, avoid conflicts, stabilize or renegotiate roles, or structure time. To this aim, the following questions arise:

- Which qualities of a ritual (symbolism, performativity, resonance, redundancy) must be present or remain so that people can experience them as helpful for their self-image and self-positioning?

- How is the effectiveness of a ritual measured? Are gradations of effectiveness, variants of rituals conceivable and who determines whether they are valid?

- At which points in the course of action of rituals are changes and adaptations possible. How can the performers implement them? What social power relations reflect such changes?

- What kind of medial thematization do rituals experience in narratives and image objects? How do they mediate, promote and prevent acceptance and certainty of the (still valid) effect? How do rituals themselves and their representations relate to processes of sacralization of persons, things and places?

- How and through which qualities of rituals practiced in families, social groups, societies or by individuals can temporal boundaries (over generations), material boundaries (through symbols) or spatial boundaries (through transfer) be crossed?

The discussion of these questions is intended to open up new perspectives on the relationship of rituals and socio-religious practices to (changing) world relations of individuals or groups - not only from an anthropological or religious-scientific point of view, but above all from a historical and sociological perspective.

**Guest speakers:  
Christoph Auffarth**, Religious Studies, University of Bremen – tba

**Claudia Horst**, Classical Philology, University of Munich – tba (on function of rituals in Classical Greek tragedy)

**Gerald Klingbeil**, Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Andrews University, MI – tba

**Hans-Georg Soeffner**, Sociology, University of Constance – „Die (versuchte) Zähmung des Unverfügbaren. Rituelle Weltbewältigung“

**Workshop Georgia Petridou and Katharina Waldner (Faculty of the IGS)** – tba (on Processional performances in ancient Mediterranean religions– between ritual, symbolic action and strategy)

**Workshops of the doctoral researchers of the IGS  
  
Winfried Kumpitsch and Armin Unfricht** – „Change and consistency: Male virtues and ancient rituals“ / „Wandel und Konstanz männlicher Tugenden am Beispiel antiker Rituale“  
  
**Luca Pellarin and João Tziminadis** – „World-Relations/Weltbeziehungen in borderline situations“

**Presentations of the first cohort of doctoral researchers of the IGS**