

Divine Anthropomorphism in Ancient Cultures
University of Edinburgh, 3-5 June 2026

Programme

Wednesday 3 June

Meadows Lecture Theatre, Old Medical School

9.30 – Welcome and introduction

9.45 – Keynote: Armin W. Geertz (Aarhus)

10.45 – Break

11.30 – Pål Steiner (Bergen): Anthropomorphism as Ritual Technology: Divine Roles and Ritual Agency in the Pyramid Texts

12.10 – Yike Xu (Pisa): The Unreachable Divine Light: A Case Study of the God Aten During the Amarna Period

12.50 – Lunch

14.15 – Elena Limongelli (Oxford): The Psychological Life of Deities in Babylonian Literature

14.55 – Anastasia Tchaplyghine (British Museum): “I give health to humankind... [my husband] makes humankind live in abundance”: Gula and Ninurta’s Exceptional Anthropomorphism in an Era of Emblems

15.35 – Joseph Barber (Würzburg): Understanding and Managing Divine Emotion in Hittite Oracles

16.15 – Break

Teviot Lecture Theatre, Old Medical School

17.00 – Keynote: Bernardo Ballesteros Petrella (Vienna)

McMillan Room, Old Medical School

18.00 – Wine reception

Thursday 4 June

Maclaren Stuart Room, Old College

9.30 – Momoko Howell (Oxford): “Bound in Distressful Bonds”: Wounding and Binding the Gods in Early Greek Hexameter Poetry

10.10 – Alex MacFarlane (Birmingham): “But I know your language as well as ours”: Gods’ Voices and Language in Ancient Greece

10.50 – Peter Olive (Oxford): *Sunt superis sua iura*: Problematizing Divine Endogamy

11.30 – Break

12.00 – Anthony Ellis (Bern): Divine Spouses, Tyrants, and Rivals: Perspectives from Ancient Hebrew, Greek, Jewish and Christian Literature

12.40 – Max Leventhal (Edinburgh): God the Photon? Divine Corporeality and Luminosity in Jewish Greek Texts

13.20 – Lunch

14.20 – Dobrinka Chiekova (The College of New Jersey): Cultural Encounters: The Greek Forms of Local Goddesses on the Western Coast of the Ancient Black Sea

15.00 – Szilvia Lakatos (Pécs): The Limits of Anthropomorphism: Etruscan Underworld Demons and Iconographic Variability

15.40 – Pietro Scudieri (Málaga): Divine Anthropomorphism and Political Memory in Republican Rome

16.20 – Coffee

Friday 5 June

Meadows Lecture Theatre, Old Medical School

9.30 – Keynote: Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge (Collège de France)

10.30 – Break

11.00 – Henry Spelman (Cambridge): The Comic Theology of Sacrifice

11.40 – John Wilkins (Exeter): Drinking with the Gods

12.20 – Felix Budelmann (Groningen): Divine Anthropomorphism and Its Limits at the Greek Theoxeny

13.00 – Lunch

14.00 – Ginevra Benedetti (Siena): Non-Human Forms: Divine Presence in Roman Religious Practice

14.40 – Adrien Coignoux (AnHiMA, Paris): Birthdays for Immortals? The Roman Temple as a
Primary Locus of Divine Anthropomorphism

15.20 – Break

15.50 – Round table

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& Archaeology