Proposal for France-Stanford funded collaborative research: non-technical description.

Religion, literature, society: Greek and Roman hymnic traditions and the performance of community.

In the ancient Greek and Roman world, entire cities participated in the performance of hymns during religious festivals. These “cultural” and civic events were commissioned by the city-state, and the hymns, including song, music and dance, were performed by a chorus of citizens. The genre of hymns (songs written for the gods) was at the crossroads of literature, religion, history and politics.

Our seminar, “Greek and Roman hymnic traditions and the performance of community,” will discuss the interaction of these different fields through the optic of various literary texts. Hymnic production proliferated in the Greek world, especially in the archaic (VIII-VI c. BCE) and classical period (V-VI c. BCE), and in Rome the poetry of Horace pioneered the literary expansion of archaic Greek hymn within Latin literature.

This project is a joint collaboration between the University of Lyon and Stanford University, with meetings to be held in December 2013 in Lyon, and again in April 2014 in Stanford.

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