**‘Celebrating the Divine — Roman Festivals in Art, Religion, and Literature’**

**University of Virginia, 30–31 August 2019**

**Call for Papers**

Festivals are ubiquitous in the life of the Roman world, and so are their depictions in ancient art and texts. Reliefs, mosaics and paintings, but also coins all show scenes of festivity. Very often, these images reflect on the relationship of humans and gods and the special encounter between both spheres that takes place in a festive context. In literary texts, feast days often occupy a prominent position: they are crucial for the preservation of memory and identity, but they also mark fateful beginnings or momentous endings in a narrative and act as privileged sites of self-definition for individuals or the community.

This interdisciplinary conference aims to bring together scholars of literature, art, and religion to examine how Roman festivals are represented in different media and to explore the functions of such representations.

Possible questions include, but are by no means limited to the following:

How does one depict the particular type of event that is the festival? Is there a typical ‘festive scenery,’ and what are its elements? What are the techniques used for depicting the festive encounter of mortals and gods? How can the secret rites of the Mysteries be represented?

How do representations of festivals interact with their context: their architectural surroundings, their use as objects or literary works and their context?

Which festivals come up particularly frequently in the ancient evidence, and why are some festivals more popular than others?

How is the meaning of a religious feast, for an individual, group, or the state, illuminated by a compelling literary or artistic representation?

What are the implications of non-Roman coloration in the presentation of Roman feast days, and vice versa?

We invite proposals from scholars working on art, archaeology, religion, and literature from any period through late antiquity. Papers will be 25 minutes in length, with 15 minutes for discussion.

Please send an abstract of no longer than one page to one or both of the organizers: John Miller, University of Virginia ([jfm4j@virginia.edu](mailto:jfm4j@virginia.edu)) and Anke Walter, Newcastle University ([Anke.Walter@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:Anke.Walter@newcastle.ac.uk)). **Deadline March 31.**

No conference fee. Meals and accommodation for the speakers will be covered.