

# VERENIGING 'VRIENDEN VAN HET INSTITUUT KERN'

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Leiden, May 4, 2016

Dear friends,

It is our great pleasure to invite you to our next VVIK/ Friends of the Kern Institute **lecture** on

**Thursday 2 June 2016, 16:00 - 17:30 hours**

We hope you will join us for drinks afterwards.

Our guest speaker

**Dr. Elizabeth A. Cecil**

will give a lecture on:

**'Kāman, Kāmyaka & Kāmyakeśvara:  
Material Religion in Early Medieval Rajasthan (8th-10th century CE)'**

**Time:** 16:00-17:30 hours (starting at 16:00 sharp)

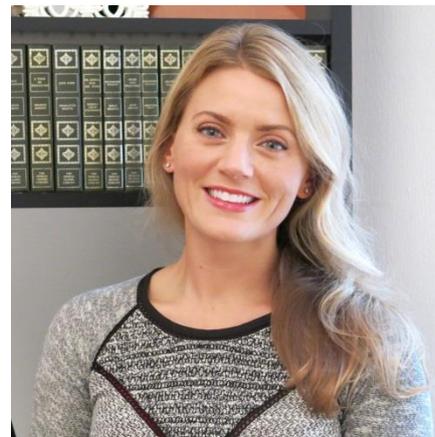
**Venue:** Leiden University, Matthias de Vrieshof 3, room 104 (the Verbarium)

The lecture will be followed by **drinks** in the common room of Matthias de Vrieshof 3, 17:30 - 18:30 hours.

We are looking forward to welcoming you all on this occasion.

*The board of the VVIK*

[Elizabeth A. Cecil](#) received her PhD in South Asian Religions and Sanskrit from Brown University in 2016. Her dissertation was entitled 'Mapping the Pāśupata Landscape: The *Skandapurāṇa*, Lakulīśa and the Śaiva Imaginary in Early Medieval North India (6th-10th century CE).' Elizabeth is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow with the ERC project *Asia Beyond Boundaries: Religion, Region, Language and the State* and a Visiting Researcher at the Leiden Institute of Area Studies (LIAS). Her current project maps the political and religious topographies of northwest India in the Gupta Period using epigraphic records of landed estates and temple endowments. Broadly conceived, her research interests include purāṇic literature, Indian epigraphy, the material and visual cultures of South Asia, and pilgrimage practices in South Asia.



## Dr. Elizabeth A. Cecil

### **Kāman, Kāmyaka & Kāmyakeśvara: Material Religion in Early Medieval Rajasthan (8th-10th century CE)**

Located 130 kilometers south of Delhi, the small village of Kāman preserves a rich, yet understudied, material archive for the study of religious life in early medieval India. Visiting Kāman today one feels out on the margins of a rapidly modernizing nation, but the town's significant artistic legacy—evident in the remains of monumental architecture, stone inscriptions, and finely crafted sculpture—suggests that this was not always the case. Medieval Kāman (then known as Kāmyaka) was a boomtown, a vital center of commerce and exchange populated by merchant collectives, artisans, religious specialists, and others who gave liberally to religious institutions. The temple to Śiva as Kāmyakeśvara, the tutelary deity of the eponymous town, was the primary recipient of the residents' pious gifts. In addition to marking a clear geographic center within the settled area, my research presents the Kāmyakeśvara temple as an ideological center that succeeded in catalyzing remarkable social synergies between individuals and collectives from a wide variety of social strata. This presentation offers a synthesis of new evidence gathered during recent fieldwork to shed a valuable light on Kāman's artistic legacy and, in doing so, explores broader questions concerning the use of material culture to constitute religious community.

