



SAMR NEWSLETTER



Vol. 5, Oct. 2012

Eric Orlin, editor

President's Column

Greetings, Society Members!

This has been a dynamic year for SAMR, marked by exciting events and achievements, and by a change in leadership. Barbette Stanley Spaeth, a co-founder and the first President of SAMR, finished her term in January, 2012. During her four years at the helm, Barbette managed to guide SAMR to accomplishments far beyond initial objectives, including firmly establishing our presence in the SBL through co-sponsorship by the Greco-Roman Religions Section, reaching out to ASOR, and seeing to fruition our two standalone conferences, in Rome in 2009 and this past April at Brown University. I'm sure I speak for all SAMR members when I say thank you to Barbette for her outstanding work in launching the Society and speeding it on its way to these early successes.

Several of our members contributed to the volume *Rome and Religion: A Cross-disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult*, which was published in November by the Society of Biblical Literature as part of the Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series. The volume presents papers originally read at three SBL sessions co-sponsored by SAMR, in Boston (2008), Rome (2009 International Meeting), and New Orleans (2009), including Karl Galinsky's keynote address, "The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider?"

SAMR co-sponsored with the SBL's Greco-Roman Religions Section two successful sessions at the SBL annual meeting this past November in San Francisco. *The Book and the Rock: Textual and Material Evidence in the Study of Ancient Religion* included two papers on Corinth and two papers on aspects of Pauline Christianity; they were followed by a response by Jodi Magness (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill). *The Journey in Ancient Mediterranean Religions* featured four papers on subjects spanning the ancient Mediterranean world, from Samothrace to Carthage and points in between. At the annual meeting of the APA in Philadelphia this past January, SAMR sponsored *The Book and the Rock: Textual and Material Evidence in the Study of Ancient Religion*. Paper topics included funeral pyres, Athenian cemeteries and shrines, the "E" at Delphi, and the iconography of Greek divination.

In late April, SAMR co-sponsored *Religion in Pieces*
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SAMR at the APA/AIA Seattle, Jan. 3-6 2013

Our panel on *Religion, Economy, and the Investigation of Ancient Mediterranean Ritual* will take place on Saturday, Jan. 5, at 11:15 p.m. We have a better slot than last year, and we hope many of you will be able to attend. The session includes an introduction by Sandy Blakely (Emory University), who will also offer a response to the following papers:

- Financial Systems in Fourth Century Greek Temples (Amy Skillicorn)
- Cost and Value in Athenian Sacrificial Calendars (William S. Bubelis)
- Coinage and the Transformation of Greek Religion (Matthew Trundle)

Don't forget to join us at the business meeting, at which we will discuss the theme for the 2015 meeting; the business will occur on Saturday at a time still to be determined by the APA organizers. And of course, consult the program book for other panels of interest.

And for the Call for Papers for the 2014 meeting, see page 4!

President's Message (continued from page 1)

with the Joukowski Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, Brown University, an interdisciplinary conference that featured eighteen papers on a wide range of topics, along with a keynote address by Christopher Faraone (University of Chicago), "Connecting the Dots: Making Sense of the Fragmentary Evidence for Ancient Greek Magic." The conference was well attended and all of the papers were very well received. Many people, presenters and audience members alike, commented that they were grateful to SAMR for having come to be and for organizing the conference. Special thanks to Professor Faraone, to Susan Alcock and her staff at the Joukowski Institute, and to Nicola Denzey Lewis for their contributions to this very special event.

Inspired by the success of that event, Sandy Blakely has offered to host the 3rd conference sponsored by SAMR, which will be held March 22–24, 2013 at Emory University. The conference will focus on *Gods, Objects, and Ritual Practice in Ancient Mediterranean Religion*, and a Call for Papers can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

As always, we are excited about the panels at the upcoming annual meeting of the SBL/AAR and APA/AIA. At the SBL in Chicago, SAMR will co-sponsor with the Greco-Roman Religions Section *Divination in Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, with papers on Cicero and Philo, Paul, and Judean diviners; Sarah Johnston (The Ohio State University) will respond. The session is on November 19 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. At the APA annual meeting in Seattle, along with holding our annual business meeting, SAMR will sponsor *From Temple Banks to Patron Gods: Religion, Economy, and the Investigation of Ancient Mediterranean Ritual*. This session will take place on Saturday, January 5, 11:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.

On behalf of the Society, I thank Eric Orlin, Secretary-Treasurer, Nicola Denzey Lewis, Chair, Program Committee, and Milette Gaifman and Zsuzsanna Varhelyi, members of the Program Committee, for their extraordinary efforts. Thanks also to the many other members who have contributed in various ways, in the past and in the present. It is an honor to serve as President, and a pleasure to work with such good and capable colleagues.

All the best,



Jeffrey Brodd, President
Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions

SAMR at the SBL Chicago, Nov. 16–20 2012

SAMR and its members are involved with a number of sessions at the upcoming SBL meeting in Chicago:

- Our primary involvement is with the panel that we are co-sponsoring with the Greco-Roman Religions section on Monday, Nov. 19 at 9:00 a.m.: *Divination in Ancient Mediterranean Religions*. Papers will focus on Cicero, Paul, and Judean diviners in the early Roman empire. Sarah Iles Johnston of The Ohio State University will deliver a response to the papers.
- SAMR members are involved with a number of other sessions, including those sponsored by the Greco-Roman Religions section (several sessions, including one on *polis* religion), Archaeology of Religion in the Roman World Section, the Religious World of Late Antiquity, Nag Hammadi and Gnosticism, and more.
- There are a number of panels on space and religion in antiquity involving SAMR members: Greco-Roman Religions is sponsoring a panel on *Theorizing "Spatializing" Practices: Towards a Redescriptive Companion to Greco-Roman Antiquity*, while other SAMR members (full disclosure: including your humble editor) are participating in a panel entitled Space, Place, and Lived Experience in Antiquity.

As always, we thank our collaborators, especially the Greco-Roman Religions Section, which allows us to offer our sessions under their aegis. And we also invite you to join us at our business meeting, which will be held at the conclusion of our panel on Tuesday morning, commencing at approximately 11:00 a.m. The business meeting is primarily concerned with identifying topics for future meetings, so if you have an idea for a panel session, that is the place to be.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

Gods, Objects, and Ritual Practice in Ancient Mediterranean Religion

An Interdisciplinary Conference Sponsored by the
Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions
Emory University, March 22-24th, 2013

Ritual implements, votive gifts, cult statues, magical gems, and the like, have frequently been the object of ancient textual reflection as well as modern archaeological and art historical investigation. But these items have not always been sufficiently investigated in their context, for what they can tell us about ancient religious practice. This conference invites papers which engage with this question in one of two ways:

- 1) historically, how did the ancient people we study use objects to mediate between the human and the divine?
- 2) methodologically, how are scholars to use these objects – either as represented in texts or recovered from sites – as means to investigating the cultural and historical realities of ancient religion?



The historical framework of the investigation is the ancient Mediterranean, open to periods from prehistoric through early Byzantine. Papers are invited from a broad range of disciplines, including ancient Jewish and Christian studies, Classics, art history, anthropology, philosophy, and history.

We especially encourage papers which contribute to the theoretical and methodological questions, and offer interdisciplinary or cross-cultural perspectives. All scholars, including recent PhDs and graduate students, are welcome to submit proposals.

Abstracts of 600 words for a paper to last between 15 to 20 minutes should be submitted by email attachment as .doc or .rtf files to socamr@gmail.com. Abstracts should contain a title and a word count, but no identifying information. All abstracts will be judged by our Program Committee. The deadline for submission of abstracts is **November 26, 2012**.

For further information, contact Eric Orlin at eorlin@pugetsound.edu.

CALL for NOMINATIONS

Many thanks to Jeff Brodd, who heard the call to become President following Barbette's successful tenure. And similar thanks to Nicola Denzey Lewis, who shepherded the Program Committee through abstracts for three separate conferences within a five week period, and who will also be involved with the reviewing of abstracts for the conference at Emory. No other program chair has had four conferences under her watch, truly outstanding service for which the Society is grateful.

Nicola is, however, no doubt grateful that her term will come to an end in December, and so **we seek a person to serve on the Program Committee for a three-year term**, beginning at the APA/AIA Meetings in January, 2013. Milette Gaifman (Yale, classical Greece) will assume the chair in January, and Zsuzsa Varhelyi (Boston University, Rome) will continue on the Program committee. Since we aim to maintain a balance of interests on the program committee, please consider how to complement their fields of expertise in making nominations; it would be especially good to have someone representing the monotheistic religions join this year.

Self nominations are most assuredly welcomed; simply have two other SAMR members from separate institutions support your nomination. If you choose to nominate someone other than yourself, it is a great help to yours truly if you can check with the nominee first to assess their willingness to serve. Nominations for both positions will be accepted until **Wednesday November 21, 2012**.

Nominations should be sent to Eric Orlin (eorlin@pugetsound.edu). Voting for the Program Committee will occur at the Business Meeting to be held in conjunction with the APA/AIA meeting in Seattle next January. According to our bylaws, proxy votes are not allowed.

SAMR CALL for PAPERS

- **APA/AIA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL January 2-5, 2014**

THE POLITICS AND PERFORMANCE OF "DWELLING WITH THE GODS"

Many studies of ancient religion have recently turned to household and private cult in order to redress a long-standing preference for the study of state-level religiosity. At the same time, these studies make clear that neither household nor state cult can be adequately understood without reference to the other. This panel explores one facet of this relationship, asking how the boundaries between private or household religion and ethnic or state cult might have been manipulated for various reasons in the ancient Mediterranean world, including the Near East and Egypt in addition to Greece and Rome. We invite papers that draw upon events, texts, and/or material evidence to discuss how the concept of "dwelling with the gods" was employed in the ancient world, whether as a norm or a form of transgression. Specific instantiations might include household shrines for family and community deities; houses attached to sanctuaries; parts of houses consecrated as state shrines; images of private individuals set up in sanctuaries of the gods; or even individuals allowed to take up residence in a god's temple. Panelists might focus upon these or similar practices that may have been used strategically to draw together the fortunes of one individual/household and an ethnic group or the state, to promote an individual or family to a position of state leadership, or even negatively to identify an individual as a threat to the community. By examining particular examples or shifts in practice, wherein the boundaries between household or private cult and ethnic or state cult may have been redefined, the papers in this session should help us better understand developments in the religious practice of both the household and the state and the role that manipulating the boundaries between them played in constructing and representing personal power and charisma within the community.

Abstracts of 500-600 words for a paper to last between 15 to 20 minutes should be submitted by email attachment as .doc or .rtf files to socamr@gmail.com. Abstracts should contain a title and a word count, but no identifying information so that abstracts can be judged anonymously by our Program Committee. For further information about abstract format and requirements, please see [the instructions on the APA's web site](#). The deadline for submission of abstracts is **February 15, 2013**.

For further information, contact Eric Orlin at eorlin@pugetsound.edu.

Upcoming Conferences of Interest

“Religious Pluralism In Europe and Asia: Conditions, Modes, and Consequences”

Part I: From Antiquity to the Times of Colonialism

Part II: From the Age of Colonialism to Present Times

A joint venture by the Department of Religious Studies, University of Texas at Austin,
and the Käte Hamburger Kolleg at Ruhr-Universität Bochum

Scheduled date:	Venue:	Organizers:
Part I: Sept. 28-30, 2012	Part I: University of Texas at Austin, USA	Karl Galinsky, Austin
Part II: Fall 2013	Part II: Center for Religious Studies at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany	Volkhard Krech, Bochum

The history of religions across Asia and Europe always developed and still proceeds under plural conditions. They constitute a challenge for many religious traditions and their interrelations range over a wide spectrum of conditions, modes, and consequences. They include contact, coexistence, assimilation, and conflict and they are influenced by many factors.

The two conferences will address themselves to both synchronic and diachronic aspects of this phenomenon, which reaches from the first millennium BCE into our present times. Some of the issues are modes of encounter (both symmetric and asymmetric), internal pluralisation, the role of social class, attempts to conceal diachronic transformations, and, of course, the political and legal regulation of religious plurality.

Religious pluralism and the varying reactions engendered by it have always been a dynamic process. The conferences will provide a stimulating opportunity for informed perspectives on this vital topic and for future directions in research and dialogue.

The list of scholars and papers for **Conference Part I: “From Antiquity to the Times of Colonialism”** can be found at: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/memoria/RelPluralismProgram.html>. Further information about Conference Part II: “From the Age of Colonialism to Present Times” will be forthcoming. For further information, contact the organizers.

Symposium on Pilgrimage Studies, October 12-14, 2012

William & Mary's [Institute for Pilgrimage Studies](#) will host an international symposium on "Traveling Traditions: Pilgrimage across Time and Cultures" with scholars from the US, Canada, Germany, Turkey, Spain and India (Saturday & Sunday, October 13-14, Cohen Career Center, College of William & Mary). The Institute gratefully acknowledges the financial support of American Pilgrims on the Camino for this conference. In addition to the one and a half day scholarly conference, there are two free public events with receptions in association with the symposium: a rough-cut screening of the new film [The Camino Documentary](#) (Friday, October 12, 7:00 pm, Muscarelle Museum) and a dance performance based on universal pilgrimage movement with troupes from Washington & Lee University and William & Mary (Saturday, October 13, 7:00 pm, Williamsburg Regional Library).

For more information see www.wm.edu/sites/pilgrimage/ or contact Prof. Brennan Harris (mbharr@wm.edu).

Tracking Hermes/Mercury

An interdisciplinary conference at the University of Virginia, March 27–29, 2014

Keynote speakers:

Henk Versnel (Leiden), H. Alan Shapiro (Johns Hopkins),
Joseph Farrell (Penn), and Deborah Boedeker (Brown).

Of all the divinities of classical antiquity, the Greek Hermes (= Roman Mercury) is the most versatile, complex, and ambiguous. His functions embrace both the marking of boundaries and their transgression, commerce and theft, rhetoric and practical jokes; he also plays the role of mediator between all realms of human and divine activity, embracing heaven, earth and the netherworld. This conference at the University of Virginia aims to bring together scholars of Greek and Roman religion, art, literature, and history to assess this wide-ranging figure. We hope also to include attention to early reception of the god and his myths outside of Greece and Rome proper—for instance, Hermes as the Egyptian Thoth, the worship of Mercury in syncretistic forms in Rome's imperial provinces, and allegorical interpretations of the god in late ancient and early medieval times.

If you are interested in presenting a paper (20 minutes), please send an abstract of approximately 500 words by February 1, 2013 at the latest. Abstracts or requests for information may be sent to one of the organizers:

John F. Miller (jfm4j@virginia.edu)
Jenny Strauss Clay (jsc2t@virginia.edu)

It is our hope to furnish lodging and meals for all presenters at the conference.

Research Group: Redescribing Graeco-Roman Antiquity 3rd Colloquium
Spatialising Practices: Landscapes - Mindscapes - Socioscapes
Towards a Redescriptive Companion to Graeco-Roman Antiquity
23–27 June, 2013 - Loutraki, Greece

Organised by the Department of Biblical & Ancient Studies, Unisa
(with the affiliation of the *Greek Society for the Study of Religion & Culture*)

Keynote Speakers:

- Prof Veikko Anttonen, University of Turku, Finland
- Prof Robert A. Segal, University of Aberdeen, UK
- Prof Jeanne H. Kilde, University of Minnesota, USA
- Prof Gerhard van den Heever, University of South Africa, RSA

Keynote lecture and chaired by Prof Panayotis Pachis, Aristotle University, Greece

There will be a special session on Religion & Space in Antiquity. For the call and relevant documents (conference brochure, registration form), please visit the conference website:

www.unisa.ac.za/spatialising_practices_2013.

The Center for the Study of Ancient Religions
of the University of Chicago
presents

Ancient Amulets: Words, Images and Social Contexts

a conference at the Franke Institute of Humanities and the Oriental Institute
Friday, February 15th – Sunday, February 17th, 2013

An amulet is quintessentially an object hung about the neck, suspended over a house door or hidden in the heart of a city that is especially empowered by its medium, history, text or image to protect people and real estate or to heal sick bodies. In the ancient world, at least, it seems to be a universal constant, which lends itself nicely to comparative inquiry. Ancient amulets have, however, been underappreciated in academia, perhaps because of their small size, often rough workmanship or even their gross ubiquity. They also sit uncomfortably at the intersection of many traditional disciplines – archaeology, philology and the histories of art and religion – and are thus a central focus to none of them. There is also a lasting misperception that amulets are typical of “eastern” cultures, both ancient and modern, but not “western” ones. The goals of the conference are to bring together scholars of the ancient and early medieval worlds, both east and west, from different disciplines and ask them to interrogate amulets from three interlocked perspectives: words, images and social contexts.

Words: Because of their often durable media, amulets preserve a variety of texts – prayers, blessings, incantations – which raise some basic questions: does the written and portable text serve as an aide-memoire for daily recital or perusal? As a memorial of some past performance, for example, the successful cure of a dangerous disease or the completion of a rite of passage? Or does it simply replace the spoken word with a more durable written version of a powerful speech act? Under the rubric “Images” we will inquire in similar fashion into the amulet’s relationship with other images in the wider political, social and supernatural world of its owner. When amulets appear, for instance, to be miniature versions of a cult statue, an imperial portrait or a powerful religious or political symbol, what relationship are we to assume between the copy and the original? What is lost or gained in the process of miniaturization? The third rubric, “Social Contexts”, seeks to return an artifact to its quotidian context, primarily by asking participants to examine an archaeologically closed system of amulets, for example, those discovered in a single house in upper Egypt or an infant burial ground in Carthage. Especially interesting will be the question of cultural identity – to what degree do amulets – in addition to healing and protecting – announce to the world the special ethnic, political or religious orientation of the owner?

For a list of scholars who have agreed to give papers, or for further information, please contact Professor Chris Faraone at cf12@uchicago.edu.

Call for Papers: 2013 Ancient Historians Meeting

The Association of Ancient Historians will hold its Annual Meeting at The Ohio State University in Columbus, OH from May 16-18, 2013. Two panels at the conference will deal specifically with religion. Proposals are invited for papers (typically 20 minutes) on the following topics. For further information, contact the colleague listed in parentheses:

Religion and Empire from Augustus to Justinian (David Brakke & J. Albert Harrill)

Religion and Epigraphy (Fritz Graf & Sarah Johnston)

An abstract of no more than 500 words should be sent by November 1, 2012 to aah2012annualmeeting@gmail.com. Concise in-text references only; no footnotes or bibliography.

Janet Tulloch passes along word of an article she authored in *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*: "Visual Representations of Children and Ritual in the Early Roman Empire." The online version of this article can be found at: DOI: 10.1177/0008429812441343

Institute of Classical Studies, Ancient History Seminar
Autumn 2012

Approaches to Greek Religion. Current Debates and Where to Next?

Convenors: Irene Polinskaya (irene.polinskaya@kcl.ac.uk) and Hugh Bowden (hugh.bowden@kcl.ac.uk)

Thursdays 16.30 in the Senate House

Oct 11 Hugh Bowden (KCL) "Belief, Piety and the Cognitive Turn in the Study of Greek Religion"

Oct 18 TBA

Oct 25 Ralph Anderson (St. Andrews) "Recursive Reasoning, Experience and Belief in Greek Religion"

Nov 1 Robert Parker (Oxford) "Un ballo in maschera? Greek Gods in Anatolia"

Nov 8 NO SEMINAR

Nov 15 Irene Polinskaya (KCL) "TBA"

Nov 22 Sarah Hitch (Oxford) "'Eat, Pray, Love'? Interactions with Greek Gods"

Nov 29 TBA

Dec 6 Shaul Tor (KCL) "'Rational' and 'Irrational' in Early Greek Religion and Philosophy"

Dec 13 Esther Eidinow (Nottingham) "'Embedded' Religion: Conceptual Networks and Narratives of Risk"

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