



SAMR NEWSLETTER



Vol. 6, Oct. 2013

Eric Orlin, editor

President's Column

Dear SAMR Members,

2013 has been another good year for our society, highlighted by the *Gods, Objects & Ritual Practices* conference in March and by planning for a journal series devoted to publication of society proceedings. The year got off to a great start in Seattle with the AIA/APA annual meeting and our SAMR session, "From Temple Banks to Patron Gods: Religion, Economy, and the Investigation of Ancient Mediterranean Ritual." Now we look forward to Baltimore in November and the AAR/SBL annual meeting where SAMR will co-sponsor two sessions with the SBL's Greco-Roman Religions section (see the box in the next column).

Gods, Objects & Ritual Practices, SAMR's third conference, was exquisitely hosted by Emory University and the Michael C. Carlos Museum on March 22–23. The conference featured seventeen papers and a keynote address by Annawies van den Hoek (Harvard University), *Divine Twins or Sainly Twins: The Dioscuri in an Early Christian Context*. SAMR member Sandra Blakely (Classics, Emory University) organized and orchestrated the conference, undoubtedly by devoting a horrific number of hours and amount of energy, although she made it all look effortless. The Society thanks Sandra, all of the presenters, and all of those responsible for their support, in particular John Black (Classics, Emory University), Oded Borowski (Program in Mediterranean Archaeology, Emory University), Jasper Gaunt from the Michael C. Carlos Museum, and Donald McManus of Theater Emory.

In the previous Newsletter I asked for ideas with regard to publication possibilities. In light of all opinions expressed, we have opted to work with Lockwood Press (<http://www.lockwoodpress.com/>) on a series devoted to our Society, tentatively to be named *Journal for Ancient Mediterranean Religions*. The first volume will be based on the *Gods, Objects & Ritual Practices* conference and will be edited by Sandra Blakely. In addition to Lockwood Press, other very impressive publishers approached us to express interest in developing a series of journal devoted to SAMR. On behalf of the Society I wish to thank them and to express our appreciation for their interest and confidence.

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SAMR at the SBL

Baltimore, MD, Nov. 23–26 2013

SAMR is sponsoring two sessions at the upcoming SBL meeting in Baltimore:

- *Healing and Funerary Ritual in Text and Practice* (Nov. 23, 9:00–11:15 a.m.)
Papers will be delivered by Megan Nutzman (University of Chicago), Wendy Closterman (Bryn Athyn College), and H. Gregory Snyder (Davidson College), with the response offered by Nicola Denzey Lewis (Brown University).
- *Shared Lives, Different Religions? The Roman Empire in the First Two Centuries* (Nov. 23, 1:00–3:00 p.m.)
We are excited to welcome to this latter session an invited panel of presenters: Jörg Rüpke (Universität Erfurt), Nicola Denzey Lewis (Brown University), and Zsuzsanna Varghese (Boston University), and there will be plenty of time for discussion following the papers.

We hope to see many of you at these sessions, and at the business meeting that will follow the morning session. If you have an idea for a panel or a topic for the coming year, the business meeting is the place to be.

As always, we are grateful to Jim Hanges and the Greco-Roman religions section for allowing us to present panels under their aegis. Members are encouraged to attend the other panels of interest sponsored by this section as well as our other frequent collaborator, the Archaeology of Religion in the Roman World section.

SAMR CALL for PAPERS

APA/AIA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, January 8-11, 2015

Practice and Personal Experience in Ancient Religion

In recent years, the religious experience of individuals in the ancient world, which for many years had taken a back seat to studies emphasizing state religion, has come to the fore. Instead of either despairing or entirely disregarding questions on issues such as subjective experience or personal religiosity, scholars have begun to explore the world of individuals' lived experiences and practices.

The Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions invites scholars and students of the religions of the ancient Mediterranean world, including Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Near Eastern religions, as well as early Christianity and Judaism, to submit abstracts that address one aspect of personal experience and/or practice in ancient religion. Such aspects might include (but are not limited to):

- pilgrimage
- healing practices
- rites accompanying birth and death
- household practices
- methodological challenges to studying personal experience
- the possibility of studying belief through such practices

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, 2014**. For further information, contact Eric Orlin at eorlin@pugetsound.edu.

CALL for NOMINATIONS

The Society is in need of a **new Secretary-Treasurer**; my term expires at the APA meetings in January and I am term-limited from running again. The tasks are not onerous; I am happy to discuss them in more detail, but they consist mostly of sending out these newsletters and preparing the annual financial report, and one of the fringe benefits is that you get to know so many of the wonderful people in our field. Please talk to me if you are interested.

We also seek a person to serve on the **Program Committee** for a three-year term, beginning at the APA/AIA Meetings in January, 2014. Milette Gaifman (Yale, classical Greece) will be rotating off the committee, and we thank her for her service. Zsuzsa Varhelyi (Boston University, Roman religion) will become chair and David Eastman (Ohio Wesleyan, Christianity) 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.

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, you should check with the nominee first to assess their willingness to serve. Nominations for both positions will be accepted until **Sunday, December 1, 2013**.

Nominations should be sent to Eric Orlin (eorlin@pugetsound.edu). Voting for Secretary-Treasurer will be conducted by email in December; voting for the Program Committee will occur at the Business Meeting to be held in conjunction with the APA/AIA meeting in Chicago next January. According to our bylaws, proxy votes are not allowed.

Announcements

The Institute for Pilgrimage Studies at the College of William & Mary announces the 2013 Annual Symposium for Pilgrimage Studies “Pilgrims’ Progress: Pilgrimage across Time and Cultures”

October 4–6th, 2013
Williamsburg, VA USA

Further information, including the program and how to register for the conference is available on the conference website:
<http://www.wm.edu/sites/pilgrimage/annualsymposium/index.php>

COMCAR 2014 Urban Spaces of Early Christianity: Ephesos, Pergamon, Aphrodisias, and Cities of Southwest Asia Minor

This year's Colloquium on Material Culture and Ancient Religion (COMCAR) will focus on urban centers in southwestern Turkey. The colloquium begins on July 11 in İzmir and concludes on July 24 in Denizli (near Laodicea and Hierapolis). Other sites on the itinerary include Sardis, Priene, Miletos-Didyma, Halikarnassos, Stratonikeia, Myra-Andriake, Perge, Side, and Aspendos.

Participants and organizers will visit sites with archaeological specialists and will discuss their own research projects. The colloquium is open to faculty with continuing appointments and to advanced doctoral students with teaching appointments.

Please note that we would like to have applications (or expressions of serious interest) by 13 January 2014.

For itinerary and application information, visit the
COMCAR website: <https://webspace.utexas.edu/sjf365/COMCAR/Welcome.html>

Call for Manuscripts and Book Proposals

Equinox Publishing has launched a new book series for its line of books in the study of religion and invites manuscripts and book proposals. Both single author and multi-author works are welcome.

[“Studies in Ancient Religion and Culture” \(SARC\)](#), edited by Philip L. Tite (University of Washington), is concerned with religious and cultural aspects of the ancient world, with a special emphasis on studies that utilize social scientific methods of analysis. By “ancient world”, the series is not limited to Greco-Roman and ancient Near Eastern cultures, though that is the primary regional focus. The underlying presupposition is that the study of religion in antiquity needs to be located within cultural and social analysis, situating religious traditions within the broader cultural and geopolitical dynamics within which those traditions are located.

Given the focus on the social and cultural context within which religion functions, the series also invites projects that explore the various social locations in which real people in antiquity practiced or interacted with their religious traditions. For instance, the domestic cult, food production and consumption, temple worship, funerary practices/monuments, development of social networks, military cult, ancient medicine, etc.

Finally, the series encourages a broader application of theoretical and methodological tools to the study of the ancient world. While the main perspective is social scientific (understood broadly), specific analyses from the reservoir of critical theory, narrative theories, economic theory, bio-archaeology, gender analysis, anthropology of religion and cognitive theory are welcome.

Those interested in submitting a book proposal for the series should contact the series editor at philip.tite@mail.mcgill.ca or titep@uw.edu.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

SAMR will hold its annual business meeting at the annual meeting of the AIA/APA in Chicago January 2–5. Our agenda will include election of a new Secretary/Treasurer, as Eric Orlin's six-year term comes to an end (per SAMR's by-laws, or I'd be doing everything in my power to try to convince him to stay on!). I urge members to consider serving in this vital capacity, and to contact Eric for firsthand information regarding the responsibilities. On behalf of the Society I extend ongoing thanks to Eric and to the members of the Program Committee—Milette Gaifman (chair), Zsuzsa Varhelyi, and David Eastman—for their excellent work.

I hope to see you at the AAR/SBL meeting in Baltimore or the AIA/APA meeting in Chicago. Thank you for your continued support of the Society.

All the best,



Jeffrey Brodd, President
Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions

News from Members

Brian Doak (George Fox Univ.) writes in about the publication of a paper that was first presented as part of a SAMR panel in 2010: "**The Fate and Power of Heroic Bones and the Politics of Bone Transfer in Ancient Israel and Greece.**" *Harvard Theological Review* 106.2 (2013): 201–16. The paper is an ancient Greek-Israelite comparative work, attempting to read the narratives recounting the fate of Saul's body in the books of Samuel in light of what is known about heroic relics and the politics of hero cults in the western Iron Age Mediterranean.

Brian is also the proud author of *The Last of the Rephaim: Conquest and Cataclysm in the Heroic Ages of Ancient Israel* (Ilex Series 7; Harvard University Press, 2012). Brian argues that the giants of the Hebrew Bible are a politically, theologically, and historiographically generative group. Giants thus represent chaos-fear, and their eradication is a form of chaos maintenance by both human and divine agents. Brian argues that these biblical traditions participate in a broader Mediterranean conversation regarding giants and the end of the heroic age—a conversation that inevitably draws the biblical corpus into a discussion of the function of myth and epic in the ancient world.

Janet Tulloch announces the publication of *A Cultural History of Women in Antiquity: 500BCE–1000CE* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). This collection is part of a six volume series on the cultural history of women from antiquity to the present, and each volume discusses the same themes in its chapters so that readers can either have a broad overview of a period by reading a volume or follow a theme through history by reading the relevant chapter in each volume. Not only did Janet edit the volume, but she also wrote the chapter on "Religion and Popular Beliefs" inside.

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