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SAMR NEWSLETTER



Eric Orlin, editor

President's Column

Dear SAMR Members,

I hope that everyone is off to a very good 2013! It was great seeing many of you in Chicago or Seattle at the annual meetings of the AAR/SBL and AIA/APA. We enjoyed two stimulating and well-attended sessions and helpful meetings. Thank you to everyone who participated. On behalf of the Society, I extend a special thank you to Nicola Denzey Lewis, who has served so diligently and effectively as chair of the Program Committee. Welcome to the newest member of the Committee, David Eastman, who joins Milette Gaifman (chair) and Zsuzsa Varhelyi. I thank them, and Secretary/Treasurer Eric Orlin. It is amazing and inspiring, even a little exhausting, to behold all of the work they do behind the scenes on behalf of SAMR.

At our annual business meeting in Seattle we discussed a variety of pertinent matters, including future session topics and upcoming events (you can find the complete minutes elsewhere in this newsletter). It was announced that our website has a new design and a new URL: www.samreligions.org; have a look! On one item in particular—publication options—Eric and I would appreciate knowing any ideas you might want to share. Those attending the business meeting expressed general consensus on some important issues: ; we want to ensure electronic accessibility, for example, via JSTOR; we shall begin with publishing individual volumes in a series, with the possibility of eventually establishing a journal; the first volume will be based primarily on the Brown University “Religion in Pieces” conference. I am happy report that Nicola Denzey Lewis, who did such good work in organizing that conference, has expressed a willingness to edit that volume. In light of these considerations and of the communications that we have had with potential publishers, we are leaning toward working with Lockwood Press (<http://www.lockwoodpress.com/>), a relatively new company that specializes in publication of scholarship pertaining to the Near East and Mediterranean regions. Studies in ancient Mediterranean religions would seem to fit perfectly

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SAMR Conference at Emory

*Gods, Objects, and Ritual Practice
in Ancient Mediterranean Religion*

March 22-24th, 2013

We are delighted to announce the program and registration details for the 3rd SAMR conference, hosted by Sandy Blakely at Emory University. The conference will begin on Friday afternoon with a paper session, followed by the keynote address by Annawies Van den Hook of Harvard University and a reception at the Carlos Museum. The paper sessions on Saturday will be followed by a banquet and a performance of Dario Fo's “Comic Mysteries” by Theater Emory.

Registration is available on the SAMR website:
www.samreligions.org.

Tentative Schedule

Friday March 21 (Afternoon):

FROM OBJECTS TO ACTION: CONTACTING THE GODS

Lela Urquhart (Georgia State University): Gods, Graves and Extratextual Rituals in Colonial Sicily
Alicia Dissinger (University of Virginia): The Horned God of Cyprus: Greek, Hybridic, Or Cultic Creation?
Sheramy Bundrick (University of South Florida): Altars, *Astragaloi*, Achilles: Picturing Divination on Athenian Vases

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Annawies van den Hoek (Harvard University): Divine Twins or Saintly Twins: The Dioscuri in an Early Christian Context

Saturday March 22:

ROMAN OBJECTS AND RITUAL MEMORY

John Bert Lott (Vassar College): No More than One Candle, Torch, or Wreath: Private Citizens and the Commemoration of L. Caesar at Pisa
Isabel Köster (Washington and Lee University): Interacting with Sacred Objects in Cicero *Verrines* II.4
Eric Moore (Emory University): Fountains, Wells, and Pools: Mediators of Interaction and Identity

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CALLS FOR PAPERS FOR SAMR PANELS

- **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 **March 15, 2013**.

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

- **SBL/AAR Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD November 23-26, 2013**

The Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions seeks to explore rituals and customs practiced by a wide variety of individuals and communities, including Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian among others. Our focus ranges chronologically from the Bronze Age through Late Antiquity and geographically from the Fertile Crescent to the Straits of Gibraltar. In 2013, we plan to hold two sessions. One is an open session that seeks papers that focus on one of the following areas: (1) healing and associated practices (2) death and funerary practices (3) household and domestic cult. The other session will be an invited panel emphasizing Roman religion in the first half of the second century: "From Trajan to Marcion."

Proposals for papers to last 15-20 minutes must be submitted by **March 1, 2013**.

SBL Members must use the online system to submit a proposal. You can access it by clicking on this link (http://sbl-site.org/meetings/Congresses_CallForPaperDetails.aspx?MeetingId=23&VolunteerUnitId=433) or going to the SBL website.

SBL Non-Members interested in submitting a proposal should contact Eric Orlin at the address above.

President's Message (continued from page 1)

with the lists of categories (e.g. Classical Studies, Religion) and series. Lockwood Press is open to the possibility of launching a journal later on, after first having established a series, and will see to it that published materials are accessible electronically. Other publishers who have expressed interest and who offer positive attributes of their own are Palgrave Macmillan (<http://www.palgrave.com/>), a relatively large company with an impressive array of categories and titles, and Equinox (<https://www.equinoxpub.com/equinox/homemain.asp>), based in the United Kingdom and featuring a list of subject categories that would seem to accommodate our area of focus well. Please let Eric or me know if you have ideas with regard to this decision. If you don't have our contact information handy, you can find them on page 6 of the newsletter, or just click the links on our website.

I hope to see you at Emory University in March, or sometime soon. Thank you for your continued support of the Society.

All best wishes,



Jeffrey Brodd, President
Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions

Emory Conference (continued from page 1)

IRON AGE ISRAEL

Erin Darby (Univ. of Tennessee): Judaeon Pillar Figurines and the Making of Female Piety in Ancient Israelite Religion

Brian Schmidt (Univ. of Michigan): "I have Blessed you to Yahweh and to his Asherah": Re-examination of the Pithoi Drawings and Inscriptions from Kuntillet Arjrud

Megan S. Nutzman (University of Chicago): Writing and Lighting: Votives of Jewish Incubation at Hammat Gader

Oded Borowski (Emory University): Incense and Internationalism: Rectangular Limestone Altars from Tell Halif and Their Implications.

CULT IMPLEMENTS AND ROMAN VISION

Meghan DiLuzio (Baylor University): Vestals and *Simpulatricae*: Women's Use of Priestly Implements in Ancient Rome

Susan Blevins (Emory University): Sacred Implements and Public Memory: Architectural Reliefs on the Temple of Divus Vespasian and Titus

GODLY PRESENCE IN RITUAL SPACES

Ken Lapatin (Getty Museum): The Divine Presence in Chryselephantine Statues

Eric Varner (Emory University): Theomorphic Portraits of Nero

Isha Gamlath (University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka): Kupris in *De Abstinencia* 2.21: A Conceptual Cultic Object for the Recovery of a Lost Abstract Identity

MAGIC

Chris Faraone (Univ. of Chicago): Magical Papers: From Song and Leaf to Text and Stone: The Evolution of Ancient Greek Amulets as Permanent Objects
Jill Marshall (Emory University): Communicating with Gods: *Anathema Jesus* (1 Cor. 12:3) in Conversation with Ancient Mediterranean Curse Tablets

Saturday evening:

Banquet and theater performance,
Emory Conference Center Hotel

Comic Mysteries / Mistero Buffo, by Dario Fo,
directed by Donald McManus, discussion to follow
(presented by Theater Emory)

MORE CALLS FOR PAPERS

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 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.

Across the Corrupting Sea: Post-Braudelian Approaches to the Ancient Mediterranean

A colloquium proposed for the 2014 AIA Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL

Co-Organizers: Cavan Concannon (Duke University) and Lindsey Mazurek (Duke University)

Recent scholarship on the ancient Mediterranean has increasingly focused on questions of connectivity and landscape. The works of Braudel, Horden and Purcell, Abulafia, and Pirenne have been particularly influential to these discussions, suggesting innovative methods for rethinking cultural contact and exchange in antiquity. In each of these works, the author views the Mediterranean as a cohesive entity unified by trade and cultural networks. Long-term patterns, rather than individual events, drive cultural change. Events, ideas, and conceptual shifts are contextualized within micro-ecology and the *longue durée* of human history. These works have met with mixed reception among scholars of the ancient world. For some, Braudelian scholarship provides a crucial foundation for questions of cultural transmission, imperialism, economy, and environment. Among others, these works have largely been ignored for their de-emphasis of traditional historical subjects, such as wars and politics, and their lack of a grand metanarrative. Our goal is to consider critically the applications of Braudelian and post-Braudelian methodologies that we hope will influence and nuance future research on connectivity and cross-cultural interactions in the ancient Mediterranean.

For this panel, we seek new scholarly inquiries that employ Braudelian and post-Braudelian approaches, extend these methods, or critique this mode of scholarship. We are interested in papers that consider these methodologies through archaeological, historical, art historical, economic, political, social, and/or religious issues relevant to the ancient Mediterranean. We define the Mediterranean broadly, including not only the sea's shores but also the sea's impact on inland terrain. We ask: who is crossing the Mediterranean and why? How do ideas translate across borders and boundaries? What is the role of nature and landscape in cultural mediation? Should we consider the Mediterranean a unified concept through time and space?

Abstracts of no longer than 250 words should be sent to acrossthecorruptingsea@gmail.com by **March 5th, 2013**. Please include your contact information, presentation title, and length of time requested (15 or 20 minutes). The abstract should conform to the AIA Style Guidelines (<http://aia.archaeological.org/webinfo.php?page=10453>). Please note that abstracts accepted will then be submitted to the AIA Program Committee for acceptance into the AIA program.

Special Issue of *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*

Myth

The 2015 issue of *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* (ARG #17) will include a set of papers with a special focus on myth. The editor in charge of this issue, Sarah Iles Johnston, is now interested in seeing brief abstracts (no more than a single page) of potential submissions. Although papers on any aspect of the study of myth will be considered, particularly welcome are papers that present new methodologies for the study of myth.

Papers that are submitted in full for consideration (whether or not they have first been submitted as abstracts) will be due by **December 31, 2013**, after which they will be refereed. Authors whose papers are accepted will have the opportunity to revise; final versions will be due in late 2014. Contact Sarah Iles Johnston at johnston.2@osu.edu for more information.

Upcoming Conferences of Interest

Cultural Memories in the Roman Empire

A Conference organized by
the [Max-Planck Award Project Memoria Romana](#) and the J. Paul Getty Museum
Getty Villa, Malibu — April 18-20, 2013

Ancient Rome was a memory culture par excellence. Memory pervades all aspects of Roman culture: literature (incl. historiography), art, architecture, religion, and social and political history. Memory, therefore, is a concrete entity in Roman civilization and modern memory approaches do not need to be imposed artificially or extraneously on this organic presence. This conference will focus on memory *outside* the city of Rome, with scholars discussing ruler cult and early Christianity as well as the role of sanctuaries and other religious sites in shaping memory. The full program can be viewed at: <http://www.utexas.edu/research/memoria/gettyconference2013.html>.

There is no charge to attend. Registration will open in early March; check the website for details.

The Agents of Isiac Cults Identities, Functions and Modes of Representation University of Erfurt, 6-8 May 2013

While the cultic networks established in the Egyptian, Greek and Roman worlds are familiar, as research-topics, to the historians of ancient religions, those relating to the Isiac deities have only recently aroused, somewhat limited, interest. Despite the works of experts such as Françoise Dunand, Sharon Kelly Heyob, Michel Malaise or Fabio Mora, the identities, functions and ways of representing the participants in those cults, whether priests, initiates, pilgrims or simple devotees, irrespective of their gender or status, are still largely unclear.

Our conference aims to fill this gap by identifying the distinctive features of the actors of Isiac cults, both individually and as groups, without removing them from their context, one in which they interact with the actors of the other Graeco-Roman cults. For this purpose, a theoretical approach, specific to the history of religions of the ancient world, will be combined with a more empirical perspective, based on literary, epigraphic, archaeological and iconographic material. For more information, contact Joerg Rupke at joerg.rupke@uni-erfurt.de.

Public and private in ancient Mediterranean law and religion: an historical and comparative conference

Max Weber Kolleg, Erfurt

3-5 July 2013

The distinction between public and private plays an essential role in modern understandings of nearly all aspects of social conduct. It might even be said to be foundational in modern conceptions of the individual. The terms themselves derive from Latin roots, *publicus* and *privatus*. As with all such *faux amis*, the genealogical relation between lexemes works to efface the historical specificity of the distinctions mapped by this essential polarity, as well as the very meaning of the terms themselves. For example, whereas Anglo-American liberals and most Protestants conceive of religion as an essentially private matter--albeit for different reasons, within different frameworks--Cicero's clauses on religion in *On the Laws* assign to all individuals both public and private religious lives, the one entailed by citizenship, the other normatively familial (Cicero *De Legibus* 2.19).

The aim of the conference is to explore the public-private distinction starting from Roman life, with a particular focus on comparative study and historical change. When does the concept of private religion emerge, and why? What work does the concept perform, and how does it change? Is it related to concepts of private reflection in the philosophical tradition? Does private reflection occur in private spaces, and how are these related to changing understandings of the domestic? Are the distinctions drawn differently in the grand metropolitan centers, where individuals exist in more atomized relation to one another, than they are in mid-size municipalities? Do changes occur in relation to mere population growth or are they better indexed to some increase in heterogeneity? How does the Roman notion of the *privatus* stand in relation to the modern individual or the subject?

The conference is co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Ancient Religions, University of Chicago. For more information, contact Clifford Ando at the University of Chicago (clifford.ando@uchicago.edu).

Sharpening the knife: Making religion effective in everyday life

Opening conference for the ERC research project

Lived Ancient Religion: Questioning "cults" and "polis religion"

11th June to 14th June, 2013

Erfurt, Max Weber Centre of the University of Erfurt

The scope of this conference is to bring together scholars working in different fields and types of sources to propose and discuss methodological approaches that have proven or might prove helpful for elucidating the dimensions of "lived ancient religions". Short contributions of about 20 minutes, leaving enough time of discussion for each contribution as for cross-reference, starting from different types of evidence (but concentrating on methodology within the oral presentation) should create a panorama of innovative approaches and inspire further elaboration and new ideas. For the time being we suggest grouping contributions and discussions into five groups, each bringing together expertise of various disciplines: (1) The role of objects (2) Group styles (3) Meaning in situations (4) Appropriation (5) Learning and memory. For more information, contact Joerg Rupke at joerg.ruepke@uni-erfurt.de.

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Minutes of the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions
2013 Meeting of the APA/AIA, Seattle
January 5, 2013

President Brodd called the meeting to order at 1:25 p.m.

President Brodd began by acknowledging and thanking Secretary/Treasurer Eric Orlin and the continuing members of the Program Committee, Milette Gaifman (chair) and Zsuzsa Varhelyi, and announcing the election of David Eastman (Ohio Wesleyan University) to the program committee. He also thanked outgoing member and chair Nicola Denzey Lewis for her extraordinary contributions.

Minutes of the Jan 6, 2012 meeting in Philadelphia were approved. President Brodd proceeded to report on activities in 2012 and plans for 2013/14. The session at this year's meeting of the APA, "From Temple Banks to Patron Gods: Religion, Economy, and the Investigation of Ancient Mediterranean Ritual", was attended by about 40 people and featured a response by SAMR member Sandra Blakely (Emory University). The SBL session at the 2012 meeting in Chicago, "Divination in Ancient Mediterranean Religions", co-sponsored with the SBL's Greco-Roman Religions Section, featured a response by Sarah Iles Johnston (Ohio State University) and was also well attended. For the 2013 meeting in Baltimore, we plan two sessions. The calls for papers for SBL 2013 and APA 2014 have been issued and are available online.

SAMR held its second conference, this one co-sponsored with the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, Brown University, in late April. Religion in Pieces featured eighteen papers and a keynote address by Christopher Faraone (University of Chicago). Program Committee chair Nicola Denzey Brown led our Society's efforts in organizing the conference, which was well attended and her efforts are greatly appreciated. SAMR will host its third standalone conference at Emory University, March 22-23, Gods, Objects, and Ritual Practice in Ancient Mediterranean Religion. Sandra Blakely, who has generously taken charge of organizing the conference, reported that planning is on course, with a strong set of abstracts. The opening lecture, by Annewies van den Hoek (Harvard Divinity School), and reception and the Saturday paper session to be held at the Carlos Museum. The banquet on Saturday evening will be followed by a performance of "Comic Mysteries" by Dario Fo.

A positive review by John S. Kloppenborg of *Rome and Religion*, the SBL publication of papers from several SAMR-sponsored panels on the imperial cult, appeared in the Journal of Biblical Religion. SAMR will sponsor a panel at the SBL New England regional meeting to be held May 3 at Andover Theological Seminary: Non-Biblical Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean. This meeting will feature Ross Kraemer as the keynote speaker; our SAMR session will therefore have a special emphasis on religion and gender; see their website for the call for papers.

President Brodd reported on behalf of Secretary-Treasurer Eric Orlin, who was absent because he was presenting a paper at a simultaneous AIA session, that the Society's financial status is sound, with total assets less than last year because of the Brown University conference. The 2012 year-end balance was \$2,167.25, down from \$3,439.90 a year ago. Total conference expenditures were \$3,483.77, the vast majority on the Brown University conference, which also generated income of \$672 from conference registration. Income from membership dues was \$1,544.62. Plans for the Emory University conference tentatively call for \$1,000 in funds from SAMR, pending the outcome of aforementioned attempts to secure funding at the University. Some of this money would be spent on compensating travel costs for the keynote speaker. Regarding membership dues, a request was made that the Society strive to provide clearer information regarding payment status. Secretary-Treasurer Orlin was also pleased to report that the Society has a new website and domain name. The new URL is: www.samreligions.org. Please visit the site and tell us what you think and what else you'd like to see on the site.

We then turned to continue the discussion of our interest in the publication of conference papers and possibly more. Discussion regarding the basic decision between establishing a journal and instead publishing individual book volumes revealed a strong preference among members present to start with a series of individual volumes. We hope to begin with the Brown Conference papers (revised for publication), but not necessarily to limit the volume's content to these papers only. A major argument against establishing a journal at this time is the potential problem of needing to seek out enough material to meet quantity and deadline limits. Two possible series titles are Studies in Ancient Mediterranean Religions or Series in Ancient Mediterranean Religions. Strong preference was expressed regarding the desirability of electronic accessibility. We want the series to be available via JSTOR, which makes available, for example, the Hesperia Supplement series. President Brodd has been in

contact with publishers who have expressed interest in a SAMR series. He will share the preferences and concerns expressed at today's meeting with them, and, welcoming input from all SAMR members, the SAMR officers will decide on move forward.

The Call for Papers for the session at the 2015 APA meeting is due in September. We reviewed two topic ideas that had been discussed at the SAMR meeting following the 2012 SBL session: "monotheism", which we expanded at today's meeting to "categories of classifying religions"; and "ethnographic methods applied to ancient religions", which we also expanded to considerations of methodology in general. Given the interest in the 2013 SBL session topic, on lived experience (healing, death and funerals, and domestic cult), we decided tentatively to make this the topic also of the 2015 APA session; we can re-evaluate this idea once the Program Committee reports on the number and type of abstracts received in response to the SBL session call for papers. We designated categories of classifying religions as a backup plan, noting that this topic is itself germane to considerations of methodology. Regarding ethnographic approach, it was noted that World Archaeology sometimes features topics pertaining to ancient Mediterranean religions, but that it's generally hard to find scholars who do comparative work with "living" and "dead" religions.

With no New Business items, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeffrey Brodd, President