



# SAMR NEWSLETTER



Vol. 8.1, July 2015

Nancy Evans, editor

## SAMR at the SBL

Atlanta, GA, Nov. 21-24 2015

SAMR is again working alongside the SBL Greco-Roman Religions Section to co-sponsor three sessions at this year's annual SBL meeting in Atlanta. Here is a first glimpse of what we are looking forward to:

*Healing Cults in the Mediterranean World from the Late Hellenistic to Early Imperial Period* (S 21-124: 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM, 11/21/2015) will feature papers to be given by Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Barbette S. Spaeth, College of William and Mary, and Pieter Botha, University of South Africa.

Our second session, *New Approaches in Social Sciences and the Study of Ancient Religion* (22-219: 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM 11/22/2015) includes work by Megan Daniels, Stanford University, Sung Soo Hong, University of Texas at Austin, Carmen Palmer, University of Toronto, and David W. Jorgensen, Colby College.

Finally, our third session (S 22-121: 9:00 AM to 11:30 AM, 11/22/2015) is a book review panel on a new volume edited by SAMR member and former SAMR president Barbette Spaeth, *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Mediterranean Religions*. The panel will include reviews by Heidi Wendt, Wright State University Main Campus, Jeffrey Brodd, California State University - Sacramento, Daniel Ullucci, Rhodes College, and Eric Orlin, University of Puget Sound. Responses will be given by Kimberly Stratton, Carleton University, and Barbette Spaeth, College of William and Mary.

We hope to see many of you at these sessions, and at the business meeting that will follow the afternoon session on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. 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 Gerhard van den Heever and the SBL 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.

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## President's Column

*Greetings to all SAMR Members!*

It's been an exciting spring and summer, planning for the Society's two events in Erfurt, Germany: the "Religion on the Ground" Colloquium (see the complete program page 4) and a session at the World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religion. The SAMR session at the IAHR was a panel review of Jörg Rüpke's *From Jupiter to Christ: On the History of Religions in the Roman Imperial Period* (Oxford University Press, 2014), with a panel composed of SAMR members Frederick Brenk and Celia Schultz, along with invited guest speaker Darja Šterbenc Erker; Jörg Rüpke gave a response. SAMR officially became an affiliated member of the IAHR during the meeting of the General Assembly. Both the colloquium and the panel review were richly stimulating and well attended. Participating in the IAHR World Congress in these ways has been a great privilege for SAMR, and we now look forward to future opportunities as one of four IAHR affiliated associations and societies. On behalf of SAMR, I wish to thank all of those who participated in our events, along with Tim Jensen, who as IAHR General Secretary helped to facilitate our affiliation. Special thanks to Jörg Rüpke and Elisabeth Begemann, and our hosts at Erfurt University.

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## CALL for PAPERS

### RELIGIOUS CONVERGENCE IN THE ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN

Sponsored by the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions and the Whitaker Foundation,  
June 23–26, 2016 at the Villa Whitaker, Palermo, Sicily

Historical and cultural studies over the last two decades have embraced a range of models and foci for exploring distinct communities at points of cultural and geographic convergence, including network models, complexity studies, colonial encounters, middle ground, frontiers, ethnicity studies, center–periphery, empire theory, and the articulation of “alien” identity within a complex urban setting. Geographic and cultural points of convergence offer exceptional insight not only into ritual studies and the exploration of ritual as mediating and adaptive space, but also for identity construction and the connectivity that enables economic and political advantage. This international conference brings together scholars in religion, archaeology, philology, and history to explore case studies and theoretical models of converging religions.

Convergence may be explored along any of five broad trajectories:

1. Geographic: How do rituals and religious narratives respond to and impact geospatial boundaries such as shorelines, mountains, and rivers? Is there a difference between geographic and political/cultural boundaries or other forms of human-constructed space (the urban and the rural, the monumental and the mundane)?
2. Social structures: How do rituals negotiate the differentiation between state-sponsored and private expression, between elite and nonelite, or between the professional—artisan, scribe, warrior, athlete—and the lay? Are such boundaries modern figments or ancient realities; what are their archaeological, epigraphic, and ideological signatures?
3. Assymetricality: How does religion respond to pressures from above and below? How are different forms of assymetricality articulated in written and material expressions of ritual and belief? Examples may include ritual in colonial contexts—imposition versus emulation—and urban cults accessible to both elites and commoners alike.
4. Imaginary boundaries: How do powerful cultural tropes such as mythic genealogies, divine interventions, heroic legends, or numinous landscapes inform ritual action as it responds to the “other” both within and at the edge of the “realm”?
5. Socioeconomic: How are engagements between those at the top and at the bottom of socioeconomic power informed by ritual practice: does ritualized empowerment of the lower class reinforce or mitigate social boundaries? How might the religion of merchants and travelers facilitate or problematize their interactions in the wider Mediterranean world?

Other, related, topics will also be considered. We welcome submissions by those working on new methodologies.

Deadline for paper submission: **September 15, 2015**. Send paper title and brief abstract to: [submissions@palermo2016.net](mailto:submissions@palermo2016.net).

Organizers: Sandra Blakely, Emory University, Billie Jean Collins, Emory University, Lela Urquhart, Georgia State University, Sebastiano Tusa, Soprintendenza del Mare, Regione Siciliana. More information is available online at <http://www.palermo2016.net>

## CALL for PAPERS

### Engendering Time in the Ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean

Bates College, Lewiston, Maine

April 29 – May 1, 2016

As Penelope weaves and unweaves a garment she intends as a shroud for Laertes, she delays a marriage promised to take place at its completion. More than this, Penelope seems to stall or reverse time. The object she creates is not preserved, but, like the proverbial witches of antiquity who call rivers back to their source, and seduce the moon from its home in the sky, Penelope's weaving instead constructs time—as cyclical and recursive. For his part, Odysseus moves through time and space in an apparently linear fashion; one event or action leads inexorably to the next, even if themes and experiences repeat themselves. His adventures are recorded in epic verse: within the time/space of the poem, we hear his own account of them, and, with the advent of writing, they will become the material of history. Homer's *Odyssey* offers a meditation on how time is gendered and its consequences for social, literary, and historical enterprises outside of the epic.

This conference seeks papers that examine how the experience of time becomes gendered in the ancient Greco-Roman Mediterranean. Papers may address the diverse ways in which men and women themselves articulated these ideas, or how gender was employed in their communication about time. A range of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, and themes for consideration that pertain to the gendering of time may include, but are not limited to, evidence for daily domestic activities; ritual and rites of passage; interpretations of myth and cult; conceptions of cosmology and processes of nature; material and visual culture; the role and purpose of repetition; bodily practices.

*Engendering Time in the Ancient Mediterranean* will take place at Bates College on April 29 – May 1 2016, organized by Matthew P. Dillon, Esther Eidinow, and Lisa Maurizio. A generous grant from the Costas and Mary Maliotis Charitable Fund Foundation will support this conference.

Send abstracts of no more than 750 words with select bibliography to Lisa Maurizio, at <mailto:lmaurizi@bates.edu> by November 30, 2015.

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### SAMR Contact Information

(<http://samreligions.org/>)

Jeffrey Brodd, President  
California State University, Sacramento  
6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6083  
[jbroad@saclink.csus.edu](mailto:jbroad@saclink.csus.edu)

Nancy Evans, Secretary-Treasurer  
Department of Classics  
Box 189 Wheaton College  
Norton, MA, 02766  
[nevans@wheatoncollege.edu](mailto:nevans@wheatoncollege.edu)

Come check us out on Facebook as well!

## Final Program

### Religion on the Ground

A Colloquium sponsored by the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions  
In affiliation with the International Association for the History of Religions  
Hosted by Erfurt University

August 22 and 23, 2015  
Max Weber Center, Erfurt University

#### Saturday, August 22, 1:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Introduction: Jeffrey Brodd, President, Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions

Amy Yandek, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
*Domestic Religion and Elite Identity in the Terrace Houses of Roman Ephesos*

Sissel Undheim, University of Bergen  
*Securing Theusebius' Salvation: The Motif of the 'Virgin Crown' in a Late Antique Latin Epitaph*

Coffee Break

Mattias Brand, Leiden University  
*Beyond Religious Boundaries? The Everyday Interactions of Manichaeans*

Respondent: Jörg Rüpke, Erfurt University

#### Sunday, August 23, 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Amelia Robertson Brown, University of Queensland  
*Like Frogs Around a Pond: Maritime Religion in Ancient Greek Culture*

András Patay-Horváth, Eötvös Loránd University  
*The Cult of Artemis at Olympia and the Earliest History of the Sanctuary*

Coffee Break

Georgia Petridou, Erfurt University  
*Healing Visions: Eye-shaped Votives and the Mysteries*

Respondent: Esther Eidinow, The University of Nottingham

## President's Message (continued from page 1)

In the previous Newsletter we asked for nominations for the office of SAMR President, as my term was set to expire in January. Having received none, I agreed at the annual meeting to commence a second term. I am very happy to announce that we now have a nominee, and so I plan to step down at the end of the year to vacate the office. Sandra Blakely (Emory University), who has been such a great contributor to SAMR since its inception, is willing to serve as our next president. Per our Bylaws, we now undergo a period in which nominations will be accepted; the deadline for receipt of a nomination is six weeks prior to the annual meeting, i.e. by Thanksgiving. Please notify Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Evans or myself if you care to submit a nomination (see the [Bylaws](#) for details).

Speaking of Sandra, the volume *Gods, Objects & Ritual Practices*, which she is editing, is coming together nicely. Thank you very much to the many Society members who are contributors or who have generously helped by providing reviews. As part of this process, we need to conduct an electronic vote to approve the contract with Lockwood Press. The contract has been carefully vetted by the executive committee, and was reviewed at the annual meeting in January 2015. We will provide a summary of its contents in a separate email, and then instructions on how to vote.

Plans are well underway for *Religious Convergence in the Ancient Mediterranean*, a conference co-sponsored by SAMR and the Whitaker Foundation to take place in Palermo, Italy June 23-26, 2016. The conference is being organized by Sandra Blakely, Billie Jean Collins (Emory University), Lela Urquhart (Georgia State University), and Sebastiano Tusa (Soprintendenza del Mare, Regione Siciliana). Please note that the deadline for submission of abstracts is September 15, 2015. The Call For Papers and further details are posted on our website: <http://samreligions.org/2015/07/06/religious-convergence-in-the-ancient-mediterranean/>

As always, thank you to Nancy and to the members of our Program Committee, Paul Dilley, David Eastman, and James Rives, for all of their great work.

best wishes

Jeffrey Brodd, President  
Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions

## Announcements

The Swedish Institute at Athens and the British School at Athens together co-sponsored an international symposium this past July 7-9, 2015. For information on the program for *The Stuff on the Gods: The Material Aspects of Religion in Ancient Greece*, please see the website for the [Swedish Institute](#).

Another symposium of possible interest to SAMR members that took place in July in Athens was entitled HYDRΩMED Symposium I: *Water Cult & Culture in the Mediterranean World of the 1st Millennium BCE // Cultes et cultures de l'eau en Méditerranée au 1er millénaire avant notre ère*, co-sponsored by A\*MIDEX (Fondation Aix-Marseille Université), Aix-Marseille Université, together with l'École française d'Athènes, the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and the Department of History of Art, Vanderbilt University. Please refer to these links for information on the July 2015 [program](#), and on the ongoing Hydromed [project](#).

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## News from Members

**Cesar Carbullanca Nuñez** reports that he is finishing a four-year project on "Death and exaltation of the Son of man". This project, funded by the Chilean government, aims to study the theology of Jewish and Christian martyrdom (II BC to I AD) as it developed at Qumran and later influenced the Gospel accounts. It argues that Jewish apocalyptic developed in response to injustice and persecution. Jewish martyrdom and exaltation to heaven would be the literary and theological basis for claims about the resurrection (exaltation) of the Son of man in Christian writings.