



SAMR NEWSLETTER



Vol. 4, Oct. 2011

Eric Orlin, editor

President's Column

Greetings to all SAMR Members!

This year has been a very productive one for SAMR. In January of this year, we had a session at the APA meeting in San Antonio on *Civil Strife and Ancient Mediterranean Religions*. Last November, we co-sponsored three sessions at the SBL meeting in Atlanta: *What's Mediterranean about Ancient Mediterranean Religions* (with the Greco-Roman Religions Section), *Memory in Greco-Roman and Christian Religion* (with the Consultation on Memory Perspectives on Early Christianity and its Greco-Roman Context), and again *Civil Strife and Ancient Mediterranean Religions* (with the Greco-Roman Religions Section). These sessions were all well-attended; indeed the one on *What's Mediterranean about Ancient Mediterranean Religions* drew one of the largest crowds we have had at our sessions. Thanks to SAMR members Gil Renberg, Nicola Denzey Lewis, Eric Orlin, and Karl Galinsky for organizing these sessions and arranging for SAMR co-sponsorship.

During this year, various SAMR members also finalized on their contributions to a volume arising from our co-sponsored sessions on "Rome and Religion: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue" at the SBL meetings in 2008 (Boston) and 2009 (New Orleans), as well as the International SBL meeting in Rome in 2009. This volume, edited by SAMR members Jonathan Reed and Jeffrey Brodd, is titled *Rome and Religion: A Cross-disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult* and will be published in the SBL *Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series* in November of this year. Thanks to Jonathan and Jeff for spearheading this effort to produce the first publication associated with our Society, as well as to the "godfather" of our Society, Karl Galinsky, for inspiring us all to do work on this topic through his keynote address at the Boston meeting on "The Cult of the Roman Emperor: Uniter or Divider."

At our business meetings at the SBL and the APA we will be discussing topics for future paper sessions, as well how to formalize our relationship with the SBL. Our three-year partnership with the SBL Greco-Roman Religions Section will end next year, and we need to decide how to proceed. We will also explore further the possibilities of expanding our reach to the

(continued on page 2)

In this Issue

- **SAMR Conference at Brown University: "Religion in Pieces"**
- **SAMR at the APA/AIA**
- **SAMR at the SBL**
- **CALLS for PAPERS**
- **ELECTIONS!**
- **NEWS from Members**

SAMR at the APA/AIA Philadelphia, PA Jan. 5-8 2012

Our panel on *The Book and the Rock: Textual and Material Evidence in the Study of Ancient Religion* will take place on Sunday, Jan. 8, at 1:45 p.m. We know this is the last slot of the conference, but we hope many of you will arrange your travel plans so that you can attend this session, which includes an introduction from Lora Holland and the following papers:

- Funerary Pyres in Ancient Greece: Archaeology, Anthropology, and Text (Cicek Beeby)
- *Tainiai* of the Divine and the Dead: Material Culture Common to Cemeteries and Shrines in Fifth-Century Athens (Katie Rask)
- The E at Delphi: The Problem with Privileging Plutarch (Annette Teffetteller)
- Lizards and Eagles: Iconographic Corrections and New Meanings in Ancient Greek Divination (Matthew Dillon)

Following the papers, Ian Rutherford of the University of Reading will deliver a response.

Don't forget to join us at the (still to be scheduled) business meeting, at which we will discuss the theme for the 2014 meeting, and consult the program book for other panels of interest, including one organized by Gil Renberg. For the 2013 meeting, see the Call for Papers on page 4!

President's Message (continued from page 1)

Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) and the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR). Finally, we will hold elections this January at the APA meeting for SAMR officers, including President and Program Committee Member. Please see information elsewhere in this newsletter for how to apply or nominate someone else for these positions.

In this, my last year as President of SAMR, I would like to say that it has been a privilege to serve this intellectually vibrant and rapidly expanding enterprise. From an idea initially hatched at the SBL meeting in San Diego in 2007, we have grown in just four years to an international organization of almost 200 members. This expansion would not have been possible without the invaluable contributions of a few highly committed individuals. In addition to the members I have already mentioned above, I would like to thank Eric Orlin, Greg Snyder, Celia Schultz, Lora Holland, Nicola Denzey Lewis, and Millette Gaifman for their service as officers of SAMR. Without their willingness to put in long hours on SAMR business with no recompense, this organization could not have thrived as fully as it has. I have greatly enjoyed working with them and serving you all as President.

All the best,



Barbette Stanley Spaeth
President, Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions

SAMR at the SBL

San Francisco, CA Nov. 19-22 2010

SAMR is involved with a number of sessions at the upcoming SBL meeting in San Francisco:

- On Saturday, Nov. 19 at 4:00 p.m., we are co-sponsoring with Greco-Roman Religions a panel on *Redescribing Greco-Roman Antiquity: Theorizing Cult Foundations* through a discussion of Jim Hanges's book *Paul, Founder of Churches*.
- On Sunday, Nov. 20, at 4:00 p.m. we will hold our panel on *The Book and the Rock: Textual and Material Evidence in the Study of Ancient Mediterranean Religions*, with two papers revolving around the city of Corinth and two papers revolving around the figure of Paul. Jodi Magness of UNC Chapel Hill will deliver a response to the papers.
- On Monday, Nov. 21 at 9:00 a.m. the Consultation on Memory Perspectives on Early Christianity and its Greco-Roman Context is offering a panel that we are co-sponsoring on the *Conversion of Religious Landscapes*.
- On Tuesday, Nov. 22 at 9:00 a.m. our panel on *The Journey in Ancient Mediterranean Religions* features four papers ranging from Samothrace to Carthage and from archaic Greece to the late Roman empire.

As always, we thank our collaborators, especially the Greco-Roman Religions Section, which allows us to offer our sessions under their aegis, and the Archaeology of Religion in the Roman World Section, which, along with Greco-Roman Religions, is co-sponsoring *The Book and The Rock* session. 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.

CALL for NOMINATIONS

Barbette has completed her term and indicated a desire to step down as President, and Lora Holland will be stepping down as chair of the Program committee. We thank both of them for dedicated service.

We thus have two positions open this year: nominations are sought for a three-year term as President and a three-year term on the Program Committee, both beginning at the APA/AIA Meetings in January, 2012. Nicola Denzey Lewis (Brown, early Christianity) will assume the chair in January, and Millette Gaifman (Yale, classical Greece) 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.

A candidate becomes eligible when three members in good standing from separate institutions support a nomination, and the nominee indicates a willingness to serve. A nominee *may* support his or her own nomination. Nominations for both positions will be accepted until **Wednesday November 23, 2011**.

Nominations should be sent to Eric Orlin (eorlin@pugetsound.edu). Voting for President will take place by mail during the month of December, while voting for the Program Committee will occur at the Business Meeting to be held in conjunction with the APA/AIA meeting in Philadelphia next January. According to our bylaws, proxy votes are not allowed.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

“Religion in Pieces”

**An Interdisciplinary Conference Sponsored by the
Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions
Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World
Brown University, April 27-29th, 2012**

The quest to determine the contours and contents of ancient religion has always been a largely constructivist endeavor, subject to the exigencies of preservation. How do we, in our respective fields, approach the problem of fragmentary evidence? How do we construct such elusive categories as “belief” or “ritual” or “praxis” from an insufficient, scattered, or occasionally inscrutable base of primary source materials?



gold lamella, 1st-3rd c. CE

The Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions seeks papers for a conference to be held at Brown University, April 27-29th 2012, on the topic, “Religion in Pieces.” In keeping with the society’s broad interests in religions of the Mediterranean basin over the great chronological expanse from prehistory to late antiquity, we seek contributions from scholars in the fields of Classics, Ancient History, Religious Studies, Archaeology, Near Eastern Studies, Egyptology, and Art History. We are particularly interested in papers that present case studies in reconstructing religious practice from fragmentary evidence, or which problematize or lay out the methodological challenges inherent in constructing religion from a paucity of sources. Relevant subfields include (but are not limited to) papyrology, codicology, archaeology, and textual studies of fragmentary or poorly attested sources; especially welcome are transdisciplinary papers which synthesize a variety of textual, archaeological, and art historical and/or material culture sources.

We invite abstracts from 250-500 words, accompanied by a curriculum vitae, to socamr@gmail.com. Deadline for submission is midnight of **January 28th, 2012**. Participants will be contacted with an invitation to participate by the beginning of March, 2012.

CALLS for PAPERS

- **“Ancient Religion, Modern Technology”, Brown University, February 13-14, 2012**

The Program in Judaic Studies in collaboration with the Brown University Library's Center for Digital Scholarship is pleased to announce plans for a two-day workshop devoted to investigating the ways in which the digital humanities has or can change the study of religion in antiquity. The workshop will take place on February 13-14, 2012, at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

We invite proposals for papers and presentations that explore the intersection of ancient religion and the digital humanities. We are particularly interested in presentations of projects that have the potential to open up new questions and avenues of research. Can digital tools not only allow us to do our work faster and more thoroughly but also enable entirely new kinds of research? How might different digital data (e.g., textual, geographic, and material culture) be used together most productively? The workshop will concentrate primarily on research rather than directly on pedagogy or scholarly communication. One session will be devoted to “nuts and bolts” issues of funding and starting a digital project.

The focus of the workshop will be on the religions of West Asia and the Mediterranean basin through the early Islamic period. Proposals relating to other regions, however, will also be considered. Please submit proposals of up to 300 words by October 31, 2011, to Michael Satlow (Michael.Satlow@Brown.edu).

- **APA/AIA Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, January 3-6, 2013**

FROM TEMPLE BANKS TO PATRON GODS:
RELIGION, ECONOMY, AND THE INVESTIGATION OF ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN RITUAL

This section seeks to build on the rich scholarly tradition which investigates the intersection between ritual practice and economic realities in the ancient Mediterranean world. We are particularly interested in papers suggesting new theoretical and methodological pathways forward, or which bring an economic perspective to rituals not yet been explored in this light.

Possible foci include but are not limited to:

- sanctuaries as economic nodes
- the social and economic dynamics of priesthoods
- evidence for rituals devoted to ensuring economic success
- the function of koine operating under divine protection

Abstracts should be submitted by email as .doc or .rtf files to socamr@gmail.com and should be from 500-600 words in length for a paper to last between 15 to 20 minutes. Abstracts should contain a title and a word count, but should not have any information regarding the identity of the submitter. For further information about abstract format and requirements, please see the APA Program Guide, at <http://www.apaclassics.org>. The deadline for submission of abstracts is February 15, 2012.

- **Association of Ancient Historians, Durham and Chapel Hill, NC, May 3-6, 2012**

Two sessions of the next annual meeting of the Association of Ancient Historians will likely be of interest to members of SAMR.

James Rives is organizing a panel on “Religious Change in the Roman Empire: New Questions, New Models,” and Joshua Sosin is organizing “Sacred Intersections: Religion, Law, and the Economy in the Ancient World.”

Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be sent by November 1, 2011 to aah2012conference@gmail.com. Concise in-text references only, please; no footnotes or bibliography.

Call for Articles: Religion Compass

The section editors for Blackwell's *Religion Compass* invite proposals for articles addressing current topics in Greek and Roman religion. *Religion Compass* is a peer-reviewed, on-line journal dedicated to contemporary, topical research within religious studies. Articles may take the form of an overview of recent research and debates; a comparative look across sections or boundaries; or a contextualization of your specific subdiscipline or topic within the larger field of religious studies. Readers include specialists in Religion, not necessarily Greek or Roman; Classical scholars; interested scholars in other disciplines; and graduate students. New arguments, or closely specialized sub-topics, are not the focus; up-to-date, bibliographically solid, clearly written overviews are. These articles provide key research tools for those beginning interdisciplinary projects in a new corner of the field, catching up on current debates, or designing sections of graduate or advanced undergraduate courses.

More information on Religion Compass is available at www.blackwell-compass.com/subject/religion/about. Proposals should be 250-500 words in length; finished articles will be 5000 words in length, excluding bibliography but including endnotes. Please submit inquiries or proposals to Nicola Denzey Lewis (ndenzey@brown.edu) or Sandra Blakely (sblakel@emory.edu).

Call for Articles: Archiv für Religionsgeschichte

Archiv für Religionsgeschichte (ARG), a refereed journal devoted to studies in ancient religions of the Mediterranean, Near East, Europe, and beyond, has a new editorial board that includes many SAMR members, and is attempting to broaden its reach to include more Anglophone scholars.

Submissions for volume 14 (2002), edited by David Frankfurter and Zsuzsa Varhelyi, are invited individually or in groups in the following two areas:

“Demons, *daimones*, and demonology” – encompassing beliefs and negotiations with particular local spirits, apotropaic and exorcistic rites against malevolent forces, and the various systems developed by ancient *literati* to make sense of the spirits “in-between.” Comparative and thematic approaches and new types of sources especially encouraged.

“Experiencing the divine” – How did established spaces and contexts, rituals and doctrines shape individuals’ experiences of gods and other divine beings? How were expectations and confirmations for successful encounters marked and by whom? Finally, what can we know of changes to these patterns and about any strategies for innovation? In addition to textual analyses, material and theoretical studies are also welcome.

Inquiries or submissions can be sent to varhelyi@bu.edu.

Call For News of Publications

Andreas Bendlin is in the process of compiling the next Forschungsbericht on Roman Religion in the above-mentioned *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte*. He would appreciate hearing about your recent and new monographs in the field. Send emails to: andreas.bendlin@utoronto.ca.

NEWS from MEMBERS

The International Plutarch Society published a *festschrift* in honor of **Fred Brenk**: *Gods, Daimones, Rituals, Myths and History of Religions in Plutarch's Works*. Fred is the Brenninkmeijer-Wehahn Visiting Professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem this November and will be giving lectures for the Center for Comparative Religions, the Center for the Study of Christianity, and the Classics Department.

Franziska Naether and Gil Renberg are co-organizing a panel on *Greco-Egyptian Religion in Light of the Demotic Sources* at the APA/AIA meetings in January. Gil writes: "It should be one heck of a good panel, since we got five of the biggest names in Demotic studies to participate."

David L. Eastman has published *Paul the Martyr: The Cult of the Apostle in the Latin West* in the Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series from the Society of Biblical Literature (Brill, 2011).

Hans-Friedrich Mueller translated a survey of Roman historiography that pays special attention to the role of religion (classical, Jewish, and Christian) in ancient historical thinking about Rome. See Andreas Mehl, *Roman Historiography: An Introduction to its Basic Aspects and Development*, translated by Hans-Friedrich Mueller (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011). Hans also published "Spectral Rome from Female Perspective: An Experiment in Recouping Women's Religious Experience," in *Classical World* 104 (2011): 227-243.

Andreas Bendlin sends word of a conference to be held October 7-8 at Max-Weber-Kolleg in Erfurt: "Orakel in der Alten Welt: Religiöse Optionen und das Individuum." Andreas' paper is entitled "*Ex oriente princeps*: Vespasian and the oracular traditions of the East." For further information, contact Prof. Dr. Veit Rosenberger (veit.rosenberger@uni-erfurt.de).

Stephanie Budin (Rutgers University) attended the *International Conference on Ishtar/Astarte/Aphrodite: Transformation of a Goddess* hosted in August by the Keio University of Tokyo and submitted the following report:

The lectures began with two distinct approaches to Mesopotamian Ishtar. E. Matsushima discussed the goddess in relation to the so-called "Sacred Marriage" rite, while A. Tsukimoto considered the use of wings in Ishtar's iconography. The conference then turned to Astarte, beginning with M. S. Smith's swift and stunning survey of Astarte in LBA Syria. I. Cornelius (not present at the conference), sent in a talk on the interplays between Astarte's Levantine and Egyptian iconographies with special focus on the goddess Qadesh, followed up by K. Tazawa's presentation on the roles of Astarte and Anat in LBA Egypt, with special focus on syncretisms with Hathor. Focus on the Levant culminated with the papers of A. Anthonioz and D. Sugimoto (the conference's organizer). Anthonioz compared the roles of the Astartes and the Asherahs in the Biblical texts to determine how they were understood in Israelite religion. Returning to iconography, Sugimoto looked at hermaphroditism in the Judean Pillar Figurines and how this might relate to Ishtar and Astarte as Queen of Heaven.

Departing from the Levantine coast, E. Bloch-Smith presented an excellent archaeological survey of the cults of Astarte throughout the Mediterranean, followed upon by I. Sato, who focused on inscriptional evidence for the goddess(es) of Carthage and the origins of Tanit.

The conference turned to Aphrodite for the last two presentations. S. Budin considered the evolution of Aphrodite on Cyprus and her eventual merging with her Hellenized counterpart. S. Tsujimura looked at the syncretisms between Egyptian Hathor and other goddess, including Aphrodite, in the Classical period. The remarkably successful conference ended with a summary of themes presented by M.S. Smith and a general discussion. The conference proceedings will be published next year as part of the OBO series.

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