



Vol. 7, July 2014

# SAMR NEWSLETTER



Nancy Evans, editor

## President's Column

*Greetings to all SAMR Members!*

This is the first newsletter prepared by our new Secretary-Treasurer, Nancy Evans. Our society is very fortunate that Nancy was willing to take on this role. Thank you, Nancy! She has the proverbial big shoes to fill stepping in for Eric Orlin, who was instrumental in founding SAMR and who served so diligently for its first six years. Thank you, Eric!

I wish also to say thank you to Milette Gaifman, who for the past year served as chair of the Program Committee. Welcome to the newest member of the Committee, James Rives, who joins (chair) Zsuzsa Varhelyi and David Eastman. The Program Committee for several years running has provided excellent oversight of topics and selection of presenters. It is of great benefit to our society that the Program Committee consists of such stellar scholars who are so generous with their time and energy.

SAMR sponsored two sessions at the 2013 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Baltimore. *Healing and Funerary Ritual in Text and Practice* featured papers by Megan Nutzman, Wendy Closterman, and H. Gregory Snyder, and a response by Nicola Denzey Lewis. *Shared Lives, Different Religions? The Roman Empire in the First Two Centuries* featured papers by Jörg Rüpke, Nicola Denzey Lewis, and Zsuzsa Varhelyi. Both sessions were well attended, and the excellent papers were followed by engaging and fruitful discussion. Thank you to all of the presenters and to everyone who attended.

At the annual meeting of the American Philological Association in Chicago, warm inside the Hyatt Regency while the "polar vortex" kept things cool outside, SAMR held its business meeting. Thirteen were in attendance. Along with reports on previous and future sessions, and on SAMR finances, the meeting included consideration of the topic for SAMR's session at the 2016 annual meeting of the APA. A final determination will be made at the 2014 annual meeting of the SBL.

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## SAMR at the SBL

**San Diego, CA, Nov. 22-25 2014**

SAMR is sponsoring two sessions at this year's annual SBL meeting in San Diego. Here is a first glimpse of what we are looking forward to:

*Religious Violence in the Ancient World* (9:00 AM to 11:30 AM, 11/24/2014) will feature papers to be given by Jill E. Marshall (Emory University), Carl R. Rice (North Carolina State), and N. Clayton Croy (Trinity Lutheran Seminary). We are pleased to announce that John Pollini from the University of Southern California has agreed to give a response in this session.

Our other session *Rethinking Conversions in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (9:00 AM to 11:00 AM 11/23/2014) will be a panel that continues the discussion we started last year in Baltimore, led by Zeba Crook (Carleton University) and Nicola Denzey (Brown University).

We hope to see many of you at these sessions, and at the business meeting that will follow the November 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **CALLS for PAPERS**

### **Shared Journeys: The Confluence of Pilgrimage Traditions**

**An Interdisciplinary Conference Sponsored by the Institute for Pilgrimage Studies  
and the International Consortium for Pilgrimage Studies**

**Third Annual Symposium at the College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, September 26-28, 2014**

The conference will embrace thematic sessions including:

- Artistic and Literary Responses to Pilgrimage
- Health and Pilgrimage
- Material Culture of Pilgrimage
- Pilgrimage in the Mediterranean World
- Pilgrimage in the Ancient World
- Pilgrimage in Non-Christian Traditions
- Space, Place and Lived Experience of Pilgrimage

We encourage submission of papers involving research and creative activity on journeys to a sacred center or travel for transformation from a broad range of disciplines and perspectives including religious studies, anthropology, literature, art history, kinesiology, classical studies, history, sociology, theater and dance. Individual presentations will last no more than 20 minutes, with time for discussion between papers.

Abstracts of 500 words from faculty, independent researchers, graduate and undergraduate students may be submitted on the symposium website (<http://www.wm.edu/sites/pilgrimage/annualsymposium>) until August 1st, 2014. Faculty and independent researchers should submit a short CV with their abstract; students should provide a recommendation from a faculty mentor. Students may propose to either present papers or participate in a poster session. Notification of acceptance will be sent by August 15th, 2014.

### **Dynamics of Religions: Past and Present**

**XXI World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions  
Erfurt, Germany, 23-29 August, 2015**

Religion is a human, historical, social and cultural phenomenon. As such, religious ideas, practices, discourses, institutions, and social expressions are constantly in processes of change. This international Congress will address the processes of change, the dynamics of religions past, present, and future, on several interconnected levels of analysis and theory, namely that of the individual, community and society, practices and discourses, beliefs, and narrations. These will be addressed within four areas:

- Religious communities in society
- Adaptation and transformation
- Practices and discourses: Innovation and tradition
- The individual: Religiosity, spiritualities and individualization.

Propose a Panel: Each panel lasts two hours. Panel papers should be limited to 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the number of panel participants (three to four). Panel conveners are asked to approach possible participants from different nations to reflect the scope and internationality of the IAHR Congress. The deadline for submission of proposals is Sunday, September 14, 2014.

Propose a Paper: Papers should be limited to 20 minutes. Individual papers on related topics will be joint into a panel of 120 minutes. The deadline for submission of proposals is Monday, December 15, 2014.

All proposals will be reviewed by an IAHR program committee to ensure a high academic standard of the Congress program. Proposals should not exceed 150 words, as indicated on the proposal form. For further information see the International Association for the History of Religions website:

<http://www.iahr2015.org/iahr-registration/paper-registration.php>

# Announcements

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## The Classical Association, the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies and the Augustus Collection “Commemorating Augustus: A Bimillennial Re-evaluation”

August 18-20, 2014  
University of Leeds

The bimillennium of Augustus' death on 19th August 2014 commemorates the end of his life and the beginning of a rich posthumous reception history. Running over the date of the bimillennium itself, the Commemorating Augustus conference will undertake a focused, comparative exploration of this history of responses, from AD 14 to 2014.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Karl Galinsky (Austin, Texas).

OTHER INVITED SPEAKERS: Mary Harlow (Leicester), Ray Laurence (Kent), Valerie Hope (Open University), Alison Cooley (Warwick), Steven Green (UCL), Shaun Tougher (Cardiff), Martin Lindner (Göttingen).

FURTHER DETAILS: A full programme, abstracts and details of how to register are available at: <http://augustus2014.com/conference/>. Registration closes on 1st August 2014, and a late fee will apply to bookings made after 17th July 2014.

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SAMR has recently learned about the **Ancient Egyptian Demonology Project: Second Millennium BC**, hosted by Swansea University, directed by Kasia Szpakowska, and funded by the Leverhulme Trust (2013-2016). While much attention is traditionally paid to major gods and their temples, the goal of this project is to illuminate the darker side of religion: those beings that embodied both the fears and the hopes of individuals coping with afflictions and stresses of life. The term “demon” here is a blanket term for those ghosts, guardians, monsters, and other supernatural entities (both hostile and beneficial) that hovered between the categories of god, man, and king. This project is creating a database that initially focuses on the surviving rituals and paraphernalia from the 2nd Millennium BC. The data-base can later be augmented and expanded by other scholars, and is also an interactive portal for the public to learn about these entities.

Follow their blog at [www.demonthings.com/demonology2k/](http://www.demonthings.com/demonology2k/)

Twitter: @DemonThings

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/Ancient-Egyptian-Demonology-Project/335896399849659](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ancient-Egyptian-Demonology-Project/335896399849659)

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Come check us out on Facebook as well!

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

We can all look forward to the annual meetings of the SBL and APA, and not only because they are to be held in San Diego and New Orleans. There will again be two SAMR sessions at the SBL: a regular paper session titled "*Religious Violence in the Ancient World*," and an invited panel titled *Rethinking Conversion in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*. The SAMR session at the APA will be *Practice and Personal Experience in Ancient Religion*. These promise to be interesting sessions. Look for more details in our autumn Newsletter.

SAMR member Sandra Blakely, who organized the *Gods, Objects and Ritual Practices* conference held at Emory University in March, 2013, is carrying through as editor of a volume to be published by Lockwood Press, the first in our society's series. Several SAMR members have responded generously to requests to review manuscripts, for which we are very grateful. This promises to be a strong volume, drawing on the interdisciplinary and cross-cultural interests and expertise of SAMR and its members.

Plans are proceeding to become affiliated with the International Association for the History of Religions. We hope to hold a one-day SAMR conference prior to the XXI World Congress of the IAHR, to take place in Erfurt, Germany, in August, 2015. We anticipate posting a Call for Papers by late summer; the autumn Newsletter will provide more information. Please see also the announcement from the IAHR included in this issue, and see the World Congress Call for Papers on our SAMR website.

In sum, we are in the midst of exciting times for SAMR, with the new book series, the affiliation with the IAHR and the upcoming conference in conjunction with the World Congress, and carrying on our tradition of strong sessions at the SBL and AAR. Thank you for your continued support.

All the best,



Jeffrey Brodd, President  
Society of Ancient Mediterranean Religions

## News from Members

**Amelia Brown** has recently won a 3-year research fellowship from the Australian Research Council to support a project on ancient Greek maritime religion. She will be based in Australia, at the University of Queensland, for the term of the fellowship, and will be taking on new graduate students and traveling to the Mediterranean in the summer to pursue research on her project, entitled "Like frogs around a pond: Maritime Religion and Seafaring Gods of Ancient Greek Culture."

**Steven Muir** announces the publication of two articles that may be of interest to members: "Vivid imagery in Galatians 3:1 – Roman rhetoric, Street Announcing, Graffiti and Crucifixions," in *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 2014 (44) 40-53, and "Medicine and Disease," (Chapter 4), with Laurence Totelin, in *A Cultural History of Women Volume 1: 500 BCE-1000 CE*. Janet Tulloch, ed. Bloomsbury Academic, 2013, 81-104.

**Jörg Rüpke** is pleased to share the news that his book *Religion – Antiquity and its Legacy* has been recently published by I.B.Tauris.