

# ROME AND RELIGION

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ROME AND RELIGION:  
A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE ON THE IMPERIAL CULT

# ROME AND RELIGION

A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE ON THE IMPERIAL CULT

Edited by

Jeffrey Brodd and Jonathan L. Reed

Society of Biblical Literature

Atlanta

## ROME AND RELIGION

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## FOREWORD

Formally speaking, this *Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on the Imperial Cult* is the print version of an actual dialogue that took place over the course of one year, during sessions at three meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature—the 2008 Annual Meeting in Boston, the 2009 International Meeting in Rome, and the 2009 Annual Meeting in New Orleans. These sessions were jointly sponsored by the Society for Ancient Mediterranean Religions and three SBL program units: Archaeology of Religion in the Roman World, Art and Religions of Antiquity, and Greco-Roman Religions. Beyond these formal settings, in a very real sense and in keeping with the vision of the various presenters, the dialogue continues and the number of participants increases.

The catalyst for the dialogue was Karl Galinsky, Floyd Cailloux Centennial Professor of Classics at the University of Texas and recipient of the Max Planck Research Award for studies of history and memory. He initiated the cross-disciplinary conversation in Boston with a paper titled *The Roman Cult of the Emperor: Uniter or Divider?* Respondents at that session and subsequently in Rome focused on theory, method, archaeology, epigraphy, and art as they relate to the study of the imperial cult. Finally, at New Orleans, most of the papers focused specifically on the relationship of early Christianity and Judaism to the imperial cult. Professor Galinsky's second paper, *In the Shadow (or not) of the Imperial Cult: A Cooperative Agenda*, together with responses, served to conclude the series.

Along with being both catalyst and closer, Karl Galinsky brought to the dialogue an extraordinary depth and breadth of learning with regard to the imperial cult. A leading authority on imperial Rome, he is author of Princeton University Press's *Augustan Culture*, a landmark synthesis and interpretation of Augustus's rule based on literary, artistic, and archaeological evidence; he edited *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (2005); and his biography of Augustus is about to be published by Cambridge University Press. A University Distinguished Teaching Professor, Professor Galinsky has directed several National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars at the American Academy in Rome on the topic of Roman religion and culture, which have also included and profoundly influenced several SBL members over the years.

The goal of this project was to bring together classicists, biblical and religious scholars, historians, and archaeologists to discuss the study of religions in

a Roman context, using as a focal point the imperial cult. This topic has been especially prominent of late in New Testament studies, fueled in large measure by the prolific writings of Richard Horsley and under the influence of John Dominic Crossan. Behind this intense interest in the Roman imperial cult are trends in both academia and realities in geopolitics. Among them are the impact of postcolonial studies, debates over the “new Paul,” the recognition of the interconnectedness of religion and politics, and the serious treatment of archaeological and art historical evidence. Yet even as interest in the imperial cult is resurrected after Adolf Deissmann’s *Licht vom Osten* from over a century ago, we wonder about excesses or mischaracterizations of the phenomenon among New Testament scholars, and more specifically about what happens when the imperial cult is examined not exclusively and over against the Pauline Christ cult, but within the broader context of Roman religion, the study of ancient Mediterranean culture and society generally, and the rise of Christianity in its Roman context over the long haul.

One of the main themes emerging from this dialogue involves the diversity of the imperial cult (prompting some participants to prefer the plural “imperial cults”). As Karl Galinsky points out in his opening paper, this diversity is easily—and too oftentimes—missed: “It is inevitable that in this nascent atmosphere of contextualizing the New Testament with the Roman Empire the latter in particular often comes across as more monolithic and undifferentiated than it was in actuality. This in part due to one impetus behind the new interpretive direction, that is to mark out the Gospels and Paul’s letters as anti-imperial, if not anticolonial, because today ‘empire’ has the predominant connotations of oppression, injustice, and colonialism. Empire, *ipso facto*, is evil empire...” (p. 2).

This theme of diversity sets the stage for the volume’s wide-ranging treatment of issues and interrelated themes. Attending to a variety of spatial locales (e.g. Corinth, Athens, Pergamum, Galilee), to a rich array of Jewish and Christian phenomena, and to pertinent theoretical and methodological concerns, the authors explore a spectrum of aspects radiating outward from the central connecting phenomenon of imperial cult, while looking across disciplines. Most of the papers in this volume interact with one another, and retain aspects of their presentation in oral form. In other words, this print rendition remains essentially a dialogue, a dialogue that the reader is invited to join.

## ABBREVIATIONS

### ANCIENT AUTHORS AND TEXTS

Appian, <i>Mith.</i>	<i>Mithridates</i>
Apuleius, <i>Metam.</i>	<i>Metamorphoses</i>
Arrian, <i>Anab.</i>	<i>Anabasis</i>
Athenaeus, <i>Deipn.</i>	<i>Deipnosophistae</i>
Athenagoras, <i>Leg. Cod. theod.</i>	<i>Legatio pro Christianis Codex Theodosianus</i>
Cyprian, <i>Laps. Dig.</i>	<i>De lapsis Digesta</i>
Eusebius, <i>Vit. Const.</i>	<i>Vita Constantini</i>
Herodotus, <i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historiae</i>
Horace, <i>Carm.</i>	<i>Carmena</i>
Jerome, <i>Epist.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Josephus, A.J.	<i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
Josephus, B.J.	<i>Bellum judaicum</i>
Josephus, <i>Vita</i>	<i>Vita</i>
Justin, <i>1 Apol.</i>	<i>Apologia 1</i>
Lactantius, <i>Mort.</i>	<i>De morte persecutorum</i>
Pausanias, <i>Descr.</i>	<i>Graeciae description</i>
Philo, <i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Philo, <i>Mos. 1, 2</i>	<i>De vita Mosis I, II</i>
Plato, <i>Resp.</i>	<i>Respublica</i>
Pliny the Elder, <i>Nat.</i>	<i>Naturalis historia</i>
Pliny the Younger, <i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Plutarch, <i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antonius</i>
Plutarch, <i>Demetr.</i>	<i>Demetrius</i>
Plutarch, <i>Sull.</i>	<i>Sulla</i>
Prudentius, <i>Cath.</i>	<i>Cathemerinon</i>
<i>Res gest. divi Aug.</i>	<i>(Augustus) Res Gestae divi Augusti</i>
Strabo, <i>Geog.</i>	<i>Geographica</i>
Suetonius, <i>Aug.</i>	<i>Divus Augustus</i>
Tacitus, <i>Ann.</i>	<i>Annales</i>

Tertullian, <i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologeticus</i>
Tertullian, <i>Cor.</i>	<i>De corona militis</i>

## PERIODICALS, SERIES, AND COLLECTIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABull	<i>The Art Bulletin</i>
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AE	<i>L'année épigraphique</i>
Aeg	<i>Aegyptus</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AJA	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
ANSMN	<i>American Numismatic Society Museum Notes</i>
ARIDSup	Analecta Romana Instituti Danici Supplementum
BCHSup	Bulletin de correspondance hellénique. Supplement
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BMC	<i>British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins</i>
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
CAH	Cambridge Ancient History
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum: Series latina
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
CH	<i>Church History</i>
CIG	<i>Corpus inscriptionum graecarum</i>
CIJ	<i>Corpus inscriptionum judaicarum</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
CSJH	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
GNS	Good News Studies
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
Hermeneia	Hermeneia: a critical and historical commentary on the Bible
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
IBerenike	Joyce Reynolds, "Inscriptions," in <i>Excavations at Sidi Khrebish Benghazi (Berenice)</i> . Vol. 1: <i>Buildings, Coins, Inscriptions, Architectural Decoration</i> (ed. J. A. Lloyd)

<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae</i>
<i>IGR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes</i>
<i>INJ</i>	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IvE</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i>
<i>IvP</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Pergamon</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JAF</i>	<i>Journal of American Folklore</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JMS</i>	<i>Journal of Mithraic Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRASup</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JRSM</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies Monographs</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
<i>JSNTSup</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LHBOTS</i>	<i>Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies</i>
<i>LSTS</i>	<i>Library of Second Temple Studies</i>
<i>MAMA</i>	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua</i>
<i>MH</i>	<i>Museum helveticum</i>
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NovTSup</i>	<i>Supplements to Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientis graeci inscriptiones selectae</i>
<i>PCPhS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>REL</i>	<i>Revue des études latines</i>
<i>SBLRBS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study</i>
<i>SBLSymS</i>	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series</i>
<i>ScAnt</i>	<i>Scienze dell'Antichità</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i>
<i>SemeiaSt</i>	<i>Semeia Studies</i>
<i>SIG</i>	<i>W. Dittenberger, ed., Sylloge inscriptionum graecarum. 4 vols. Chicago: Ares, 1999.</i>
<i>SJLA</i>	<i>Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity</i>
<i>SNTSMS</i>	<i>Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series</i>
<i>Spec</i>	<i>Speculum</i>

TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
USQR	<i>Union Seminary Quarterly Review</i>
VCSup	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WGRWSup	Writings from the Greco-Roman World Supplement Series
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>