

SYMPOSIUM PEREGRINUM 2017

Egyptian and Eastern Cults in the Roman Empire

Szombathely/ Savaria, Hungary

Thursday June 15 through Sunday June 18, 2017

Directors: Patricia A. Johnston, Attilio Mastrocinque, and László Takács

Research on Mithras, Cybele, Isis, Serapis and other foreign gods within the Roman world is still ongoing and necessary. In 2016 we met in Tarquinia, Italy, at the site of newly discovered monuments of Mithras there. In June 2017 we will meet in Szombathely (Savaria), Hungary, where there is one of the four major temples of Isis outside of Egypt. Isis has long been a center of worship in Savaria, Hungary, and in 2008 a Mithraeum was also discovered there. Szombathely (Savaria), the oldest recorded city in Hungary, was founded by the Romans in 45 AD under the name of *Colonia Claudia Savariensum* (Claudius' Colony of Savarians). It was the capital of the *Pannonia Superior* province of the Roman Empire. The city had an imperial residence, a public bath and an amphitheatre.

The Savaria Isis shrine's earliest inscribed monuments was an altar set by a duumvir, Tiberius Barbius Valens, which refers to a significant Isis community and to the presence of a wooden shrine at the end of the 1st century AD. At the time of the Emperor Hadrian the shrine was built in stone and expanded with a lobby. The sanctuary was renovated at the turn of the 2nd-3rd century, during the Severan dynasty. The most famous relief shows Isis riding on the back of Sothis the dog. This same relief adorned the facade of the main temple of Isis in Rome.

This conference will continue the topic of our previous symposium, which focused on the newly discovered monuments of Mithras in Tarquinia, Veii, Rome and Ostia, and with many more papers on other eastern cults, which will be welcomed here, but now the focus will be more on Egyptian cults. Foreign cults cannot be dealt with as a compound, as opposed to Roman religion, but each one of them had its story, its features, and its specific relationship with Rome. The level of integration will therefore be the first theme of discussion, which depends on several major factors:

- 1) The acceptance by Romans of a different cult, appreciated for its exotic flavor, and
- 2) The adaptation of foreign cults to Roman taste and Roman tradition.
- 3) Another theme will be the relationship between center and periphery: to which degree did the acceptance of foreign cults depend on central decisions? How much was the imperial court influenced by religious choices of provincial peoples and, above all, of the army?

- 4) A further discussion could be devoted to the animal features of Egyptian gods, which encountered the opposition of Augustus and subsequent thinkers, and especially of the Christians.
- 5) Another theme could be that of sacred books, which the Roman did not use (apart from the *Libri Sibyllini*) in the past, and knew first during the late Republican Age, thanks to foreign cults. Prophecies, revelations, handbooks for rituals and other holy books accompanied the triumphal march of foreign cults in the Roman Empire until the final victory of Christianity with its old and new Testament.

Hotel accommodations will cost, for a double room, about € 100 for two people (breakfast and dinner included); a single room will cost somewhat more. Registration will be 50 € per person, which will cover buffets and coffee breaks, with excursions and a visit to selected sites (more information will follow). The conference organizers are: Attilio Mastrocinque (Università di Verona) (attilio.mastrocinque@univr.it), László Tákács (Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Budapest) (takacs.laszlo@btk.ppke.hu), and Patricia A. Johnston (Brandeis University, Waltham, MA) (johnston@brandeis.edu).

We hereby invite proposals for panels and individual papers on these and related topics. They should be submitted to Patricia A. Johnston (johnston@brandeis.edu) no later than March 1, 2016. All paper proposals will be peer-reviewed, and the decisions will be communicated by March 15, 2016. Panel session proposals will be reviewed as soon as they are received, and these proposers will receive notification within 30 days.

Abstracts (written in English) for individual papers should not exceed 400 words; abstracts for panels should not exceed 600 words. Presentations should be in English. If that is not possible, ample materials should be distributed to all attendees to facilitate discussion after each talk.

Registration Form: SYMPOSIUM PEREGRINUM 2017
Egyptian and Eastern Cults in the Roman Empire
Szombathely/ Savaria, Hungary
Thursday June 15 – Sunday June 18, 2017

Name _____

Address: Street _____

Town _____ Country _____ Zip-Code _____

Telephone/Fax _____

E-mail _____

Institution _____

Lecture Title _____

Mode of Travel: _____

Arrival: Day: _____ Time: _____

Registration Fee: 50-Euros (to be paid on arrival at symposium)

Abstracts must be in English and should not exceed 400 words or one-half page).

Please send this form by 1 March 2017 to Prof. Patricia A. Johnston, johnston@brandeis.edu.
(Department of Classical Studies MS 092, Mandel Humanities Center, Brandeis University,
Waltham MA 02454-9110).