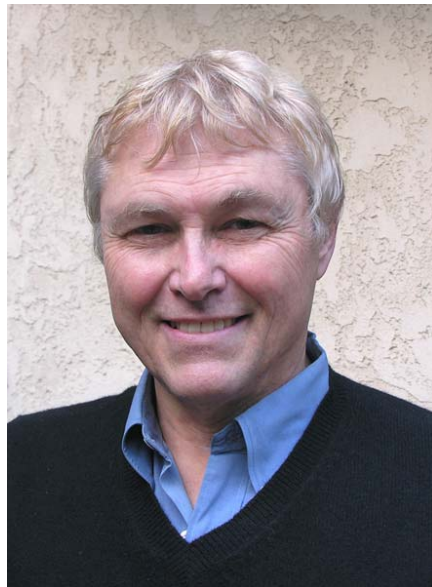




Star Power in Imperial Rome: Astral Theology, Castorian Imagery, and Dual Heirs in the Transmission of Power

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AIA Metcalf Lecturer



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5 PM

Farrand Hall

Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

by the Archaeological Institute of America and the UCSB Classics Department

Today we speak of movie stars, rock stars, all-star athletes, and even academic stars. The role of “stars” in the cult of personality has a long tradition in Western history. From the time of early Near Eastern and Egyptian civilizations, man -- or more precisely royalty -- aspired to dwell among the stars in heaven for all eternity as the ultimate reward after death. In the transmission of ideas of astral divinity to the Western world, Greece played a key role, especially in the Hellenistic period following the conquests of Alexander the Great. As Rome expanded eastward and took over the Hellenistic kingdoms of Alexander’s former empire, it absorbed many aspects of Hellenistic royal ideology and astral theology that helped define the nature of leadership. In this lecture Prof. Pollini discusses the visual evidence in art and numismatics for the ways that astral theology and the imagery of the Greek twin gods, the Dioscuri/Castores, were adopted and adapted in promoting a system of “dual heir” created by Augustus to ensure the orderly transmission of power after his death. The focus of this lecture will be the imperial period from the time of Augustus (27 B.C.) to the time of Septimius Severus (A.D. 211).

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