



IMAGINING THE DIVINE

TALKS AND VISIT TO THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

Event organised by Kate Adcock and Grahame Soffe

Saturday 3 February

Following the success of ARA's last visit to the Ashmolean Museum to view the Sicily exhibition in July 2016, we are delighted to invite members to a special event centred on the Ashmolean's latest exhibition *Imagining the Divine*, the culmination of a three-year project examining the development and relationship of the iconography of five major religions during the first millennium. According to Mary Beard, this 'fascinating journey through the art of religions from India to Ireland' will be 'unmissable'.

The event will start with Dominic Dalglish of the British Museum and Oxford University, one of the curators, providing an overview of the exhibition (see his and Stefanie Lenk's article in the current issue of *ARA News*, pp57–60).

The Roman perspective will then be explored by Revd Professor Martin Henig, world authority on Roman religion and iconography and research adviser to ARA, who will respond to the exhibition in a specially written, one-off talk on *Spirituality in the Non-Judaic Religions of the Roman Empire*. He will consider our perceptions of Roman religions, which are often regarded as though they were mainly a matter of performance; Christianity and perhaps the Egyptian religions and the cult of Mithras are perceived as exceptions, with only Judeo-Christian-Islamic faiths having the moral truth to survive. He will argue that thoughtful women and men throughout Antiquity often had a profoundly spiritual view and sought a deeply personal relationship with the divine, and that the ultimate 'triumph' of Christianity probably had as much to do with superior organisation and the coercive power of the oppressive Roman state as it did with any intrinsic superiority. The most eloquent epitaph on the diverse and liberal culture in which Roman religion flourished was spoken by the great fourth-century 'Pagan' senator, Quintus Aurelius Symmachus: '*Not by one path alone can one comprehend so great a mystery.*'

Members will meet at the main entrance to the Ashmolean Museum at 1:00pm with the lectures starting at 1:15pm, after which members will be free to visit the exhibition.

Entry to the lectures and to the exhibition is included in the price.

Refreshments (not included in the price) are available from the Ashmolean café. Some might want to have lunch beforehand (also available at the Ashmolean), and to see the rest of the Museum with its notable collection of Roman sculpture.

BOOKING FORM

IMAGINING THE DIVINE, ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM, OXFORD

Saturday 3 February 2018

I/we would like to reserve place(s) for the above event at **£20 each**. My cheque for is enclosed.

Please make cheques payable to: **The Association for Roman Archaeology**

Name(s): Tel. no:

Address: Postcode:

Please return your form and cheque to: **The Director, The Association for Roman Archaeology, 75 York Road, SWINDON, Wiltshire, SN1 2JU, to arrive NO LATER THAN MONDAY, 1 January 2018.**