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Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers

EDITED BY

Tessa Rajak, Sarah Pearce,
James Aitken, and Jennifer Dines



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PREFACE

The genesis of this book explains its content, and it is therefore worth saying something about it here. The volume's editors are members of a research project entitled "The Greek Bible in the Graeco-Roman World" (funded for five years from 2001 by the British Arts and Humanities Research Board, as it was then called). Based at Reading University, this project is one of five fostered by the AHRC Parkes Centre for the Study of Jewish/Non-Jewish Relations, whose home is in the University of Southampton. In spring 2003, the project organized an international colloquium titled "Representations of Hellenistic Kingship." In announcing it, we explained that "the AHRC Greek Bible Project aims to provide a major new appraisal of the place of the Greek Bible as a source for understanding how Greek-speaking Jews were influenced by and interpreted the political, social, and intellectual cultures of their Hellenistic worlds." And we stated that our international colloquium was to be "devoted to studying the self-representations and images of the Hellenistic monarchies and their courts, with a particular interest in shedding light on their reflection in the Greek Bible and in related Jewish writings in Greek." We wished to bring together papers from the various relevant disciplines. We declared a special interest in the *language* of monarchy, explaining that "central to the AHRC Greek Bible Project is a major investigation into the language of the Septuagint translators, involving a comparative examination of the political, legal, and administrative terminology of the books. To this end, the colloquium will examine language (both of the Bible translators and other Hellenistic literature), focusing on such topics as court titles, bureaucratic terminology, and attributes of Hellenistic monarchy." But we also defined a range of general questions concerned with what seemed to us to need answering and to be appropriate for this forum. In the event, a remarkable interweaving of themes raised in the different papers emerged,