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David Frankfurter, Professor of History and Religious Studies travels to Paris

David Frankfurter

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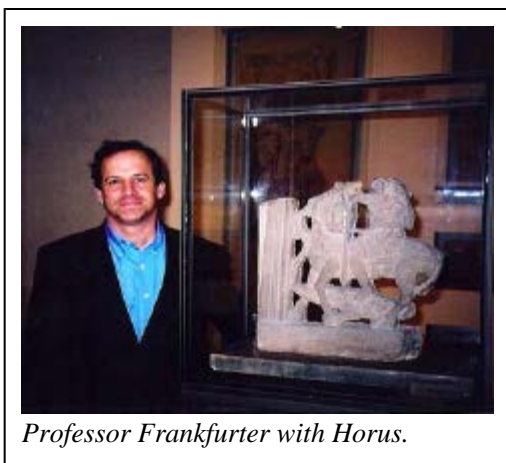
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Center for International Education

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DAVID FRANKFURTER, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

In March, Professor David Frankfurter presented a paper in Paris at a seminar on "The protection of the child, from antiquity to the byzantine world."



Professor Frankfurter with Horus.

I was able to participate in a seminar at Paris's Collège de France on March 14th on "La protection de l'enfant, de l'antiquité au monde byzantin." Anxiety for children's birth, health, and safety in antiquity emerges in innumerable areas of religious life. Saints' protection and the promotion of shrines, "magic" and the iconography of amulets, even the conceptualization of the supernatural world (such as the general fear of a child-stealing witch) all drew upon and addressed the realities of bringing the child safely to adulthood.

The conference included archaeologists, historians, and religion scholars; and papers covered children's amulets, the significance of children's burial objects, the devotion children were supposed to show to the saints that healed them, and the varying attitudes toward children in the writings of St. Augustine. My own paper, "Bons à penser mais mals à manger: Constructing the Victim-Child in Roman Antiquity," examined the novel fascination in early Christianity with the infant allegedly victimized by parents (abortion, exposure), evil cults (such as the Christians themselves), and later such groups as heretics and heathens.

As part of this trip I also had the chance to visit the exceptional galleries of Greco-Roman Egyptian materials at the Louvre (where the Horus figure on the cover of my second book is displayed) and, by special permission, the disorganized and dusty cupboards of Egyptian materials in the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale. ***For the full report, visit http://www.unh.edu/cie/faculty/faculty_travelrpts_index.html.***

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