

## A New Perspective on the Imperial Cult: A Survey of Native Interaction with the Cult in the Province of Britain

The Imperial cult took on a very different form in the province of Britain than it did in the Empire's eastern provinces (Price 1986). When the Romans set out to develop the imperial cult in the Eastern Empire they were met with an already well established leader-worship structure. This was not the case for Britain, however, since there is no evidence of any form of leader-worship prior to Roman conquest. Therefore, when the Romans introduced the cult of the emperor to the province of Britain, it was a completely new concept (Fishwick 1987). In facing this new institution, the resident population of Britain reacted in a variety of ways.

This paper aims to look at the introduction of the Imperial cult in Britain and analyze its material culture. Although the evidence is scarce, by focusing on the temple, altars, and epigraphic dedications of the province, it is possible to flip the traditional perspective of the Imperial cult (Collingwood 1965, Mattingly 2008). Instead of only looking at the cult as a tool of Romanization wielded by the Roman ruling class, I intend to separate the cult from this framework and analyze the material evidence in order to reveal a whole range of interactions, which includes rejection, exploitation, and negotiation (Bogaers 1979, Bulst 1961, Millet 1990, Webster 2001)

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