A Tale of Many Cities: The Serapeion at Ephesus and Politics in the Roman Empire

The so-called Serapeion is one of the best-preserved and most distinguished temples at Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Travelers of the 18th century discovered its remains and misleadingly identified it with a temple of the Roman Emperor Claudius. Ever since, the building has been given many names, but its actual purpose has never been convincingly explained. Recently, a multidisciplinary team re-studied the temple area, offering a promising new possibility of interpretation, which will be discussed in the light of Egyptian religion, economy, and global politics in the Roman Empire.