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Jörg Rüpke

Preface: Georg Wissowa's View of Religious Change in the Imperial Period

The following issue is a very special edition of Religion in the Roman Empire in that it treats historiography rather than history. Years ago, I discovered an unpublished manuscript in the papers of Georg Wissowa kept at the University Library of Halle/Saale. It is an important document of his view of religious changes in the Roman Empire. Not new in substance, but important in the selection of data and accents made, it could also serve as an introduction for a non-German speaking audience to his work, the translation into English of which was planned but stopped short by World War I and subsequent developments. Wissowa laid the manuscript down after making a fair copy, though he remained highly interested in the overall project in which his text was to be published. It was, upon his death, included in his estate that was made over to the University library in Halle, where it can be read.

Upon the rediscovery of the manuscript, I asked for a typed copy to be made. After Bärbel Geyer at the Institute for Classical Philology of the University of Potsdam had produced a first transcription, the project was taken up and laid down dozens of times. Due to the renewed research interest in Wissowa by Elisabeth Begemann, we are now able to present this work and a translation in a context of a historiography of late imperial Roman religion at the beginning of the twentieth century and in the institutional context of that research at German universities. The editors of *Religion in the Roman Empire* have welcomed this extraordinary issue and I hope that it will further stimulate disciplinary crossings in the framework of this journal. I am grateful for the meticulous care of Bärbel Geyer as well as Elisabeth Begemann and the continuous support of research on Georg Wissowa provided by the library at Halle.