

Local heroes and emperor worship in Augustan Macedonia: the example of Kalindoia

What makes Kalindoia unique is the copious evidence for veneration of Augustus as early as 27 BCE. We not only have inscriptions, but also archaeological evidence in the form of a building complex next to the agora: the so-called Sebasteion. The cults in the Kalindoia complex were dedicated to Zeus, Roma and Augustus. Three cult rooms, with many bases and statue fragments, led on to a larger banquet room and probably the *bouleuterion* of Kalindoia. The functions of the other four rooms are not yet known. The building inscription from 27 BCE relates that under Arrhidaios – son of Sopatros, priest of Zeus, Roma and Augustus – the *exedra*, the *bouleuterion* and the *stoa* were dedicated to the *polis* by Arrhidaios himself, his brother Kotys and his nephew(?) Sopatros. I will show that the family introducing and promoting the worship of Augustus in Kalindoia used this opportunity to heroize their ancestors as well and worshipped them together with Augustus, a situation which we know from Imperial Miletus. The facts that the cult for Augustus was introduced on the private initiative of members of the local elite and that it remained in the hands of one family over at least three generations show that it was able to unite private and public needs – the private need of a leading family to seize control of a unique source of prestige and the public need for a stabilising and unifying focal point which was acceptable to all of the manifold identity groups which constituted the society of Augustan Macedonia. The priestly family understood this situation very well. This is also supported by the uncommon naming practice, with its mixture of names typical of every one of the population groups which formed the community of the *polis* Kalindoia, and by the fact that they realised very quickly the opportunities with which the new situation under the new ruler provided them.