

2011 Sunoikisis Research Symposium Abstracts

Victoria Belarde (Agnes Scott College)

“Rationale of Epithets and the Irrational of Patronymics” [Full Paper](#)

Many Parryists believe that the function of epithets and patronymics within Homeric epic is to fulfill a formulaic requirement. Although this may be true, it does not address the significance that these phrases have on the story itself.

This paper explores heroic identity in Homer’s *Iliad*. This identity is formed through the character’s epithets which show a character’s abilities, and patronymics which reveal lineage. The narrator employs both epithets and patronymics to uplift or undercut a character during significant confrontational scenes such as the argument between Achilles and Agamemnon, the battle between Achilles and Hector, and the conversation between Achilles and Priam. This technique reveals how a character must ‘earn their own namesake’ through rational decisions. The lack of rationality is evident when a character is referred to by their father’s name instead of their own (e.g. ‘son of Peleus’ instead of Achilles). Descriptions of characters during these scenes show that epithets and patronymics are important to the story and to the development of a character.

Brandi M. Buckler (Millsaps College)

“Appropriating the Homeric Ethos: Looking Beyond Gendered Obligations in Euripides’ *Medea*” [Full Paper](#)

Within his characterization of Medea, Euripides provides a window into the conflicting cultural constructs of a fading epic ethos and the pervading democratic ideals of Athenian society in 431 BCE. Though Foley and Knox have suggested that Medea’s psychological divisions and motivations were gender-based, I argue for more complex internal divisions within Medea’s φρήν which

exist along two planes: gender and historical period. Medea is torn between a Homeric masculine code and a feminine fifth-century Athenian code and is thus unable to resolve the two halves of her divided φρήν as she negotiates two incongruent societal constructs.

Through the course of the play, Medea moves beyond the bounds of the feminine sphere by adopting a masculine Homeric code within the framework of a Sophoclean heroic tragedy. I will show how Medea's concerns of τιμή, κλέος, and an aversion to mockery, γελᾶω, mark her as both masculine and distinctly Homeric. The adoption of this anachronistic heroic code illuminates the heightened contrast between an implicit cultural ideal of an archaic past and the reality of fifth-century Athens: the heroic paradigm and its practice are no longer harmonious. Medea represented the inevitable destruction of taking up an ethos incongruent with contemporary societal paradigms, an alarming thought in light of the impending Peloponnesian War. Medea's vengeance and motivation functioned as a tragic mechanism for reassessing the changing face of gender and an outdated cultural system of heroic hierarchy, a system which no longer corresponded with the prevailing implicit and explicit cultural norms.

Katherine Crawford (St. Olaf College)

"The Foundation of the Roman Imperial Cult" [Full Paper](#)

By the end of the Roman Empire the Roman Imperial Cult was firmly implemented into all aspects of Roman sociopolitical society. The progression of scholarship considers the Cult as either an extension of the Hellenistic ruler cult developed under Alexander the Great or as a new Roman institution. Yet, no scholar has adequately considered the reason why Augustus decided to utilize the concept of the Hellenistic ruler cult for the foundation of the Imperial Cult. This paper asserts that Augustus successfully developed a ruler cult by making it appear as a unique Roman institution by slowly integrating it into all aspects of Roman society. The initial appearance of the cult is traced from the initial worship of the emperor's genius (living spirit) to Augustus' use of propaganda to align himself with a godlike image. Using primary literary source evidence, friezes, statues, temples, and inscriptions found throughout the Roman Empire, this

paper illustrates the many ways Augustus' divine image was spread. Finally, an analysis of the methods Augustus utilized to successfully interweave the Imperial Cult into the social, religious, and political culture of Rome demonstrates how the Imperial Cult became such a vital part of Augustus' reign as emperor.

Martha Crockett (University of Richmond)

“Lucretius, Ovid, and Pythagoras in the Renaissance: Ronsard Evaluates the *Metamorphoses*, Book XV, 62-272” [Full Paper](#)

In my paper, I evaluate the manner in which Pierre de Ronsard, a 16th century poet, explores the same questions about change Ovid and Lucretius had in Rome, 600 years earlier. As I analyze Ronsard's “Élégie 24,” in conjunction with the Pythagoras episode from lines 62-272, Book XV of the *Metamorphoses*, I see how Ronsard imitates the manner by which Ovid suggested his poetry would be immortal, despite eternal cycles of change. Ronsard's profound interpretation of the Pythagoras episode and application of it to his own poem confirms the timeless nature of classical ideas.

Ronsard's elegy can be used as a tool to understand Ovid's message about poetry's power to withstand shifting environments. I recognize references to Lucretian philosophy in “Élégie 24,” very similar to those in Book XV. After I understand Ovid's purpose, I infer that Ronsard does not settle for Lucretian dissolution, but ends with a message of hope. It is amazing that this French Renaissance poet came to conclusions similar to those modern scholars have made in the last 50 years or so. Through my background in both Latin and French, I am able to analyze the Pythagoras episode and “Élégie 24” side by side, and see how Ronsard confirmed Ovid's belief that poetry, despite changes in form and languages, has an immortal ability to relay universal ideas to those who read it.

Trey Frye (Southwestern University)

“Demosthenes and the Great Man in ‘Against Conon’” [Full Paper](#)

Within the forensic speeches of fourth-century Athens, logographers relied upon multiple different methods in order to sway juries. One of the most common strategies they employed was to attack the honor of an opponent while also portraying the client as an honorable and trustworthy man, so that the jury would side with the client because of his trustworthiness. In this paper, Demosthenes' speech *Against Conon* is analyzed for how he portrays his client's honor and his opponent's dishonor. For example, Demosthenes ends the speech discussing Ariston's liturgical service as a sign of his good character, while also at one point in the speech calling Conon all sorts of names, including "one who digs through walls" (54.44 and 54.37). These descriptions are then given a broader application in order to determine what were the cultural understandings of honor and dishonor in fourth-century Athens.

Rachel Hogue (Union College)

"Statistical Analysis and Comparison of Texts in Ancient Greek" [Full Paper](#)

The task of a classicist is similar to that of a detective: as classicists study ancient literature, they search for patterns or echoes in historical writings that provide clues to help place the text being studied into a broader historical context and allow them to draw conclusions about the time period, the people who lived then, or about the artifacts that have endured to present day. Inevitably, a person studying Greek and Roman authors becomes absorbed in and very concentrated on whichever body of work they are studying. To step back and place the work or author into the whole of Greek literature is a difficult undertaking.

I will present the results of a research project that addresses these kinds of questions and provides a new kind of analytical access to ancient Greek texts. Using computational techniques, such as computing normalized frequencies and tf-idf scores for words and phrases of a particular document, we are developing a tool capable of solving two preliminary questions: (1) What words or phrases make an author unique in comparison to his/her peer group? and (2) What words or phrases make two authors similar in comparison to their peers? The first question attempts to find literary tendencies common to a single author, which distinguish that author from his/her peer group, while the second focuses on

literary tendencies that are common to two authors, but are uncommon in the literature of their peer group.

Vergil Parson (Washington and Lee University)

“Personified Poetry: Horace’s Idea of Immortality and Ode 3.30” [Full Paper](#)

Horace’s boast of immortality is not unique amongst Roman poets, but in his Ode 3.30 Horace gives just as much importance to poems as to the individual poet. The story and rhetorical effects of the ode tell the audience of a gradual consumption of the poet by the poem. Horace displays his complex literary theory on the relationships between author and work very strongly in this poem. This paper examines the structure and devices Horace employs both to create the effect of the audience’s gradual distancing from the poet and to give the poem a character in and of itself. This paper will also discuss how the progression, as well as the content of the poem is emblematic of a capstone work. Horace uses many of these same devices in the *Ars Poetica* and Ode 1.1. I’ll briefly touch on how Ode 3.30 stands in relation to these. In this poem, Horace claims to have built “a monument more lasting than bronze.” Now, the majority of our knowledge of Horace is gleaned from his collected monuments. In Ode 3.30 he shows that he foresaw this and built his monuments with that in mind.

Rachel Starry (University of Richmond)

“The Vengeance of Achilles: The Impact of Viewing Context and Reception on Visual Narrative” [Full Paper](#)

While modes of narration utilized in images of the vengeance of Achilles directed the evolution of that motif’s iconography, the visual function of an image – its viewing context and reception – influenced the use of certain modes of narration in instances of the scene in Graeco-Roman art. This paper attempts to prove the significance of the viewing context and reception of an image for the developments in the modes of narration used to depict a scene and subsequently that scene’s iconography. In particular, it examines the iconographic and narrative evolution of images depicting the vengeance of Achilles in Late Archaic black-figure vase-painting as well as in a series of Roman artworks. It additionally

considers the viewing context and visual reception of those images and discusses the cultural significance for the use of certain modes of narration. Finally, it compares the modes of narration commonly utilized and the evolution of the iconography of the scene in the Greek and Roman case-studies.

David van den Berg (Rollins College)

“Oppression through Reform: Masters, Slaves, and Roman Society” [Full Paper](#)

This paper examines the nature of changing opinions about the limits of acceptable treatment of slaves within Roman society, as documented through Roman laws, edicts, and letters. It is easy to extend an altruistic motive to the protective innovations against the egregious abuse of slaves that arose in the Late Republic and Early Empire, but a different purpose hid behind the veil of civility and altruism. Two other trends were the actual driving force behind these developments: the moral dictates of restraint embodied in Stoic philosophy, and the desire to curtail the nearly limitless power of the paterfamilias to consolidate and build the authority of the Roman state over the household. This paper will present evidence detailing the lack of easy and practical access to the legal avenues of redress available to abused slaves and highlight inconsistencies that rendered the laws enacted to protect slaves as little more than mere moral guidelines, thus undermining their practical effect. The legal enactments will be considered in light of the Stoic moral standard that they advocated, as well as within the context of the ever-increasing limits on personal freedom enacted throughout the Late Republican and Early Imperial Periods.

Andrew Waller (Southwestern University)

“Aristotle and Thomistic Metaphysics: Cause or Creator?” [Full Paper](#)

Thomas Aquinas’ masterwork *Summa Theologiae* draws heavily on the work of Aristotle, specifically in relation to Aquinas’ arguments concerning the existence of the Judeo-Christian God. However, although Aquinas makes use of the concept of Aristotle’s Prime Mover, an uncaused First Cause of all things (as described in book 12 of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*), Aquinas takes Aristotle’s conceptions of the Prime Mover to a different level. Aquinas’ God functions not

only as the Aristotelian First Cause, but also serves as the Creator, as Aquinas lays out in Part I, Quaestio 44 and 45 of *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas postulates in Part I, Quaestio 46 that as the Creator, God existed before the universe was created and continues to provide the cosmos and its contents with their “esse,” or being. This stands in contrast to Aristotle’s view of the universe as eternal and his conception of the Prime Mover as an impersonal being who caused, but does not sustain, the created order as Aristotle defines it (i.e., “the sensible universe and the world of nature”). This paper seeks to more fully investigate how these specific variances distinguish the Aristotelian Prime Mover from Aquinas’ conception of the Judeo-Christian God.