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Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient Literature 2008-Late
Open University: 24-25 January 2009



Report by Amanda Potter, Sue Day and Pauline Rochelle
organisers of AMPAL 2008-Late
Open University

The 2008 Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient Literature (AMPAL) was hosted by the Open University in Milton Keynes for the first time in January 2009 (hence '2008-Late'). The theme was 'Sex and the Ancient City: Love and Friendship in Greece and Rome' and 27 papers were delivered, running in parallel sessions over the course of the conference, by Masters and PhD students from universities across the UK. To fit in with the topic of friendship, the organisers' objectives included making the atmosphere at the conference as friendly and supportive as possible, with plenty of time built in for networking, including during the conference dinner, which was catered for by the Open University. Funding was received from the AHRC, the CA, the CSC and the ICS, which allowed the conference to be offered without a registration fee and all meals, including the conference dinner, were provided free of charge, with delegates having to fund accommodation and travel only. Some bursaries were available for speakers' accommodation thanks to these being funded by the Hellenic Society and the Open University.

The quality of the papers from postgraduate students was extremely high, with many papers on Greek tragedy and Roman poetry as might be expected from a conference on ancient literature, but reception across many periods was also strongly represented.

There were many thematic links between papers, which led to the organisers successfully arranging some panels thematically to include both Greek and Roman literature, with papers on the reception of the Amazons from Linda Grant and Amanda Potter, and papers on magic from Zara Chadha, Deborah Kerr and Sue Day. Particularly worthy of note was a well researched and presented paper entitled 'Greek Love and Loving the Greeks: Philhellenism and Gay Emancipation in Fin de Siècle Germany' from Sebastian Matzner of Kings College London in the 'Greek Love' panel. Catherine Jackson, an Open University PhD student, made great use of visuals in her paper 'Looking at Lechery: Picturing Degenerate Sexuality in some versions of Troilus and Cressida'. Delegates enjoyed Catherine's paper immensely, particularly the photograph of Patrick Stewart's bare behind, even if we could not recognise which behind actually belonged to Mr Stewart! The informative keynote speech was delivered by Professor Lorna Hardwick of the Open University, on 'Ambivalence and the City', which focused on the *polis* and translation and reception, citing examples from modern productions of Greek drama.

For the first time at AMPAL, peer review was offered to speakers and chairs, and one panel was recorded in its entirety by the CSC and produced on DVD as an aid to help students in preparing to speak or chair at future conferences. This innovation was welcomed by speakers and chairs, and peer review is likely to be a feature of future AMPALs. The organisers also intend to publish some of the papers on the Open University website in order to provide a flavour of the conference for those who were unable to attend.

Sixty-five delegates attended in total, from fourteen universities. Feedback from delegates was extremely positive, commenting on the excellent organisation, friendly atmosphere and the quality of the papers. The two day format of AMPAL with the overnight stay providing opportunity for networking was particularly valued, and the quality of the catering and facilities at the Open University was highly commended, especially as building work was taking place on campus and so an alternative on campus venue had to be found at short notice for the conference dinner. Special thanks go to

Carol Gillespie and Bronwen Sharp from the Open University Classics department for their help with arranging this! All in all an extremely successful and enjoyable conference for delegates, speakers and organisers, and we are now looking forward to the next AMPAL at Birmingham in November 2009!

Appendix: Papers Presented

Panel 1: Apollo and the Amazons

- Amanda Potter: 'Girls, Girls, Girls: (Re) Imagining the Amazons for a modern audience'
- Linda Grant: 'The male "Amazon" and the crisis of the lover – Catullus' Attis and Sir Philip Sidney's Pyrocles'
- Jacqueline Peake: 'Apollo and Cassandra: divine/human liaisons and the 5th century city'

Panel 2: Family Tragedy

- Laura Proffitt: 'Mother-Love in Slavery: Andromache and her son in Euripides'
- Pauline Rochelle: 'Euripides: The Erotic, the Violent and the Family'
- Christina Poulos: 'Blood, Betrayal, Sex, Magik: Euripides' *Medea* and the motivations for murdering children'

Panel 3: Love and Sex

- Philippa Bather: 'Exclusive Amor: Generic and Poetic Identification within Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*'
- Chrysanthi Demetriou: 'Chaerea in Terence's *Eunuchus*: sexual status and transformation'
- Daisy Thurbottle: 'Bittersweet Eros: A Study of the Representations of Eros and his Spectrum of Influence'

Panel 4: Praktical Magick

- Zara Chadha: 'Practical Magic and the Puella in Propertius 3.6 and 4.5'
- Deborah Kerr: 'Sex Magic and The City'
- Sue Day: 'Love Potion Number 9: A recipe for disaster?'

Panel 5: Sex in the City

- Lorie Anderson: 'The Importance of the City in Homeric Poetry: Homer's Reception of Troy'
- Anna Uhlig: 'Portrait of the Island as a Young Girl: Pindar's O.7'
- John McBride: 'Good Cop/Bad Cop? A Reappraisal of Clytemnestra and Penelope'

Panel 6: Literature in Action

- Catherine Jackson: 'Looking at Lechery: Picturing Degenerate Sexuality in some versions of *Troilus and Cressida*'
- Rowan Fraser: 'Returning home to the good wife?: Nostos in Greek Tragedy'
- Anna Foka: 'Sexy Beasts: Sexuality, Animals and Humour in Middle Comedy'

Panel 7: Love and Friendship

- Clem Wood: '*Horatius de Amicitia*: Maecenas and the Discourse of Friendship in the Poetry of Horace'
- Michele Lucchesi: 'Private Investigations: Love and Friendship in Plutarch's *Demetrius and Antony, Agesilaus and Pompey, Dion and Brutus*'
- George Paraskeviotis: 'Country versus town. Love barriers in Vergil's *Eclogue 2*'

Panel 8: Greek Love

- Joshua Billings: 'Hyperion's symposium: an erotics of reception'
- Sebastian Matzner: 'Greek Love and Loving the Greeks: Philhellenism and Gay Emancipation in Fin de Siècle Germany (1835-1915)'
- Thomas Vasilakis: 'Love and Friendship in the Argonautic Dynamics of Apollonios of Rhodes'

Panel 9: Latin Lovers and Others

- Greta Hawes: 'Rumor in ambiguo est: Ovid's Actaeon and the implications of metamorphic identity'
- Sharon Marshall: 'Rewriting Romance: Héli-senne de Crenne and Virgil's cave scene'
- Eva Mussio: 'From Love Story to Intercultural Relations: Some Issues in *Joseph and Aseneth*'