

Filozofska fakulteta Univerze v Ljubljani, Oddelek za zgodovino
Programska skupina Slovenska Zgodovina
and
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Institut für Klassische Philologie

Questioning Norms: Ambivalence, Distance and Conflict in Ancient Biography and Historiography

Workshop

organised by Darja Šterbenc Erker and Alenka Cedilnik

WHEN: Thursday, 28 September 2023

WHERE: Filozofska fakulteta (Univerza v Ljubljani), Modra soba (5th floor)

Social, political and religious norms are inherent to the way people speak, think and act. Violation of these norms was severely punished in antiquity by exile of those found guilty of a misdeed or of violating the imagined good relationship with the gods, e.g. a pharmakos was expelled from Athens, while in Rome a person who deliberately violated a religious norm was proclaimed an impious and thus ceased to belong to human society. However, ancient authors often present positive or negative examples of acceptable or unacceptable actions in order to illustrate the underlying norms of behaviour in society. The workshop will focus on literary strategies of distancing from social, political and religious actions, opinions and values in order to analyse the inherent norms. Ancient biographers and historiographers depict actions of famous personalities or describe past events, thereby presenting examples of generally accepted norms of social, political or religious behaviour. Sometimes authors describe the actions of individuals or groups as deviant in order to question the character of the actors or to challenge their behaviour.

The workshop will explore the ways in which historians and biographers present their own views on social, political and religious norms that are contrary to those of earlier authors or contemporary (oral) authorities or specific publics (a city, an ethnos). In addition, the workshop aims to discuss literary representations of the author's ambiguous views on social, political and religious attitudes, distancing or debating the related opinions or activities. The focus will be on ambiguity and subtle means of distancing from social, political and religious actions that deviate from the norms of upper-class men and women. Furthermore, ambivalent, distancing and conflicting views of gods also reveal the norms associated with the divine sphere and human society, which draw boundaries between accepted and rejected concepts of gods. Ambivalent views of norms are also contrasted with invective, which specifies which aspects of social, political or religious behaviour are contrary to the norms and how they transgress the boundaries of what is acceptable.

PROGRAMME

9.00-9.10

Darja Šterbenc Erker, Alenka Cedilnik: Introduction

9.10-9.55

Cynthia Bruhn: Aspects of ambivalence in Herodotus' and Thucydides' supplication narratives

9.55-10.40

Aleš Maver: Jiftach und Titus Manlius: Zwei Beschreibungen des Unaussprechlichen

10.40-11.10

Coffee break

11.10-11.55:

Darja Šterbenc Erker: Suetonius' Ambivalent Bodily Eckphrasie of Julius Caesar

11.55-12.40

David Movrin: Conflict with Demons: Distance and the Ambivalence of Foretelling in *Vita Antonii*

12.40-14.15

Lunch break

14.15-15.00

Matej Petrič: People in error: Depictions of pagans in Rufinus' *Ecclesiastical History*.

15.00-15.45

Alenka Cedilnik: Eunomios und die Kraft seines Wortes

15.45

Farewell

SPEAKERS

Cynthia Bruhn (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Oddelek za klasično filologijo)

Alenka Cedilnik (Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za zgodovino)

Aleš Maver (Univerza v Mariboru, Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za zgodovino)

David Movrin (Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za klasično filologijo)

Darja Šterbenc Erker (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Oddelek za klasično filologijo)

Matej Petrič (Univerza v Ljubljani, Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za zgodovino)