

Call for Papers: Symposium Campanum 2018

Women on the Bay of Naples: Recent Research
October 4-7, 2018

Director: Brenda Longfellow, University of Iowa

The Vergilian Society invites proposals for papers for the 2018 Symposium Campanum at the Villa Vergiliana in Cuma, Italy.

For almost any woman in the Roman world, our knowledge is inherently colored by the viewpoint of ancient authors, who primarily focused on how elite women – and particularly those of the senatorial and imperial classes – lived up to contemporary expectations about the female experience. The feminine virtues of beauty, modesty, faithfulness, piety, and familial devotion emphasized by historical sources were internalized by women across the social spectrum, as evidenced by the domestic walls in Pompeii, where modestly dressed women with elaborately coiffed hair and rouged cheeks affectedly display their wedding rings or pose next to their husbands. What these historical sources and Pompeian portraits fail to capture are the myriad public moments in a woman’s life that go beyond projecting an image of a beautiful, modest, and fertile matron. This symposium gathers together scholars who are using epigraphic, archaeological, art historical, and architectural evidence from sites throughout the Bay of Naples to recover some of those moments when women operated in ways that could complement or complicate their primary social roles as mothers, daughters, and wives. The goal of the symposium is to better understand the lives of women outside the domestic sphere, and in particular to examine how women from a range of social backgrounds and geographic origins engaged with the local community through families, businesses, philanthropy, religion, and the funerary realm.

Papers might focus on the traces of female lives and activities in any number of situations or circumstances, including but not limited to issues of self-identity, ethnic identity, monument patronage, funerary activities, legal commitments, priesthoods and ritual involvement, land ownership, workshop participation, prostitution, slavery, literacy, and health.

The symposium will include three days of papers, discussion, and visits to Vesuvian sites. Papers will be 30 minutes long with ample time for discussion. Interested scholars should send an abstract of no more than 300 words to brenda-longfellow@uiowa.edu by January 15th, 2018.