

Guidelines for a successful Symposium Cumanum (updated 7/21/14)

As soon as you assume the directorship of the symposium

Write to Mina Sgariglia (minasgariglia@gmail.com), the Vergilian Society's legal representative in Italy and the person who will supervise all the onsite work, and introduce yourself to her as the director(s) of the upcoming symposium. If you have not introduced yourself yet to the president, please do so—he or she will answer questions that come up in planning the symposium.

Please approach your university for some support of the symposium. Most directors have asked for, and gotten, somewhere in the area of \$1,500 to help with expenses. If you are unsuccessful, the fees for the symposium can be raised to offset at least part of this, but there is a limit to how much of a registration fee we can get away with charging.

Approach at least two or three well known people and get from them a commitment to attend. This does wonders in making the symposium attractive to potential participants. If you choose to have a keynote speaker, you can offer free room and board at the villa, but there won't be funds for anything else unless you get a lot of money from your university.

May / June of the year before

Work with the secretary on initial publicity. This will probably take the form of a paragraph (200-300 words) that can be put on the Vergilian Society website and eblasted to all the Vergilian Society members. Include the names of your prominent attendees and a deadline (December 1 is recommended). Try also to get the same call eblasted to members of the British Vergilian Society, the APA/SCS, and the Dipartimento di filologia classica at the University of Naples – Federico II.

August / September of the year before

Start working with the Dipartimento di filologia classica at the University of Naples – Federico II on their contribution for the symposium. They have hosted us in Naples for a day, and individual faculty members have drawn on their research accounts to offer us lunch and coffee as well. For the foreseeable future, Giancarlo Abbamonte (giancarlo.abbamonte@gmail.com) is our informal contact, but eventually what he arranges will probably have to be cleared formally with the department head. For 2015 we expect Professor Marisa Squillante (marisa.squillante@unina.it) will be securing the 'Patrocinio Morale' (a formal declaration of support) from Federico II, and organizers should be in touch with Richard Thomas (rthomas@fas.harvard.edu) on this score. Please remind the secretary, Keely Lake (vergsoc@yahoo.com) to send another eblast calling for proposals.

Begin working with Mina to renew the 'Patrocinio morale' from the entities that have worked with us on the symposium. Mina will deal with the local political authorities. Currently we also get support from the US Consulate General in Naples, the American Academy in Rome, the Academia Vergiliana in Mantua, the Dipartimento di filologia classica at the University of

Naples – Federico II, the Second University of Naples, and the Virgil Society of the UK, along with the parliament of the European Union. It is important that we have these declarations of support, which are printed on all our publicity, but in Italy one must have a formal letter each year before the name of the group can be listed. Mina will help with this.

While planning the symposium

Consider having one special talk near the ‘sibyl’s cave’, a nice archaeological site 8 minutes away by foot. This gets people out of the building on one of the long days. Alessandro Barchiesi did this at the 2013 symposium and it was seen as one of the highlights, both by him and the audience. The same applied for the 2014 symposium, when Alicia Stallings talked in front of the cave about how she as a poet goes about the art of translation

Work with Mina to plan one excursion during the symposium. A bus tour to Lake Avernus and Pozzuoli is one possibility; or a trip to Ischia; a combined trip to Baiae and the beach beyond; another is to add a visit to underground Naples to the afternoon of the day there.

Plan on having the last full day in Naples, unless the situation with the department there changes. Don’t forget to calculate in lost time in transportation as you schedule papers there. If the department is contributing a session, it is best to have it when they are hosting.

When selecting proposals

All proposals from the Dipartimento di filologia classica at the University of Naples – Federico II have to be put aside and (ideally) accepted—they are our co-sponsors for the symposium, and we can’t expect them to invite us to Naples for the day if we reject their proposals. If problems emerge here, contact the president for diplomatic advice.

Avoid the temptation to overcrowd the schedule. This is particularly hard if you have lots of good proposals, but the reality is that there is only so much time and people get irritated at the conference if they are always rushed.

When proposals are accepted

Inform the participants that the fee for registration (80 euros) should be paid via Paypal from the Society website. You may need to work with Mina, or with the treasurer, to be sure this is ready. Have the participants contact Mina directly for room and board—you don’t want them asking you a series of questions to which you don’t have the answers.

Explain that rooms at the villa are shared, with bathrooms down the hall.

Make it clear to the participants that there are no single rooms at the villa. Single rooms are available at the hotel, but it is a 45-minute walk away, or a short taxi ride. (Shared taxis are arranged to transport people to and from the villa during the days of the symposium.)

Work with Mina to devise a paragraph on how participants can get to the villa from the main train station and the airport in Naples. Cuma is a bit isolated, and people should be confident that they know how to get there.

Impose a clear time limit for papers and make it clear that speakers are expected not to exceed it. This is especially important, given the tendency for papers at Italian congresses to be longer than we want. 20 minutes is probably good. If you have made this clear from the beginning, you can retain control of the schedule.

Organizers should decide whether or not they want to deposit papers into Dropbox. In 2014 some found it useful to have read papers in advance

Encourage people to arrive early enough on the day before the symposium starts that they have time to walk up to the Cuma archaeological site, which closes at 7 pm. Otherwise you will hear irritated comments about being close to things but not having time to see them.

14 days in advance

Send Mina the final program. I would recommend a mass email to all the participants, asking them to confirm that they are indeed coming. Give them, say, four days to respond and then send the program to Mina so that she has time to get it printed.

At this point you should also inform all participants that they are expected to attend all sessions of the Symposium. We have had one or two instances of participants being largely absent from sessions other than their own, clearly not an acceptable situation.

3 weeks in advance

Abstracts for all talks should be sent to Mina, for the preparation of an abstract book. This could be done by email, or by a Dropbox shared with Mina.

Handouts should be sent electronically to Mina before the conference. (Realistically, you will have people who won't have the handouts ready at this point because they haven't written their papers yet. They can give their handouts to Mina when they check in, but that is the last possible minute: the copy machine at the villa is not set up for mass duplication, and we can't have Mina running into town two or three times a day for copies.)

At the symposium

Work with Mina the morning of the first day on the opening ceremony. There will be a number of dignitaries present, but she won't know until the last minute who is actually there.

Introduce yourself formally in the opening session as the director, and encourage people who have practical issues concerning the program to talk to you. Refer people with lodging issues directly to Mina.

Meet quickly after the first session, for five minutes, with all the session chairs. Ask them to have a paper with '5 minutes remaining' written on it, and to show this paper to speakers as they near the end of their assigned time. The chairs should also indicate to speakers when their time is up. It will be up to you whether you feel comfortable asking chairs actually to cut speakers off; this is an extreme measure, especially in Italy, but the schedule will get out of control quickly unless some consistent pressure is applied.

If you don't speak fairly fluent Italian, be sure that you have by your side a participant who does when you leave the villa for tours, and especially for the day in Naples.

After the symposium

Submit a report on the symposium to the editor of *Vergilius*. This should go in by, say, September 1. You can use any recent issue as a model.

Read over this set of guidelines, correcting anything that needs updating and adding anything you want your successors to know.

Think about plans for publishing the papers. The editor of *Vergilius* might be interested in two or three of the best ones, and you could work with him or her to steer good things in that direction. We do not have any expectation that all the papers, or a selection, will be published in a conference volume, but if you want to try to do this, you are welcome to do so—several volumes have come out of these symposia. We do not have funds to support any publications except for *Vergilius*.