

Identity in Vergil: Ancient Representations, Global Receptions

Symposium Cumanum 2021

June 23-26, Villa Vergiliana, Cuma

Co-Directors: Tedd A. Wimperis (Elon University) and David J. Wright (Fordham University)

Vergil's poetry has long offered fertile ground for scholars engaging questions of race, ethnicity, and national identity, owing especially to the momentous social changes to which his works respond (Syed 2005; Reed 2007; Fletcher 2014; Giusti 2018; Barchiesi forthcoming). The complexities of identity reflected in his corpus have afforded rich insights into the poems themselves and the era's political milieu; beyond their Roman context, across the centuries his poetry has been co-opted in both racist and nationalist rhetoric, and, at the same time, inspired dynamic multicultural receptions among its many audiences, from Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech to Gwendolyn Brooks' *The Anniad* (e.g. Thomas 2001; Laird 2010; Ronnick 2010; Torlone 2014; Pogorzelski 2016).

This year's theme invites diverse approaches to the ways in which Vergil's poetry represents, constructs, critiques, or sustains collective identities, in the ancient Mediterranean and well beyond. It also aims to stimulate new connections between Vergilian study and wider interest in identity and multicultural exchange among classicists, as well as contemporary discourse on racism, colonialism, immigration, and nationalism. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- representations and expressions of identity among the poems' characters or audiences
- global receptions of Vergil from the perspective of ethnic, regional, or national identity
- multiculturalism, cultural negotiation, and inclusivity inside and outside the poems
- identity in Roman ideology and imperialism
- paradigms of gender, sexuality, and geography in constructing identity
- forms of prejudice, stereotyping, or hate speech within the poems or inspired by them
- the loss or reinvention of identity through migration or exile
- areas of reception, contextualization, and contrast between Vergil and other authors or media, including material culture
- political appropriations of Vergil, including by identitarian and fascist ideologies
- inclusive approaches to Vergilian scholarship and pedagogy
- comparative studies of Vergil's poetry to explore modern identities and racial justice movements

Confirmed Speakers:

Samuel Agbamu (Royal Holloway), Maurizio Bettini (University of Siena), Filippo Carlà-Uhink (Potsdam University), Anna Maria Cimino (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa), Hardeep Dhindsa (King's College London), K.F.B. Fletcher (Louisiana State University), Valentina Follo (American Academy in Rome), Elena Giusti (University of Warwick), Andrew Laird (Brown University), Jackie Murray (University of Kentucky), Nandini Pandey (University of Wisconsin), Michele Ronnick (Wayne State University), Caroline Stark (Howard University), Richard Thomas (Harvard University), Zara Torlone (Miami University), Adriana Vazquez (UCLA)

Please send abstracts of roughly 300 words to identityinvergil@gmail.com by December 1, 2020. Papers will be 20 minutes long, with time for discussion after each. We hope to gather an inclusive group of speakers from multiple backgrounds and academic ranks, and especially encourage submissions from scholars belonging to communities underrepresented in the field.

Participants arrive on June 22; we are planning to hold the conference at the Villa Vergiliana, and enjoy visits to Vergilian sites alongside presentations and discussion. That said, in light of the uncertainties COVID-19 continues to present, including financial pressures in the academy that might make travel abroad (for a typically self-funded conference with a registration fee) less accessible for some participants, we are leaving open the option for a hybrid or virtual symposium, to be determined as events proceed; we are also pursuing sources of financial assistance for qualifying speakers. Whatever form it will ultimately take, we look forward to a vibrant and engaging symposium in June 2021.

You are welcome to contact the organizers with any questions about the symposium, including the status of remote participation options or possible funding aid:
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Works Cited

- Barchiesi, A. Forthcoming. *The War for Italia: Conflict and Collective Memory in Vergil's Aeneid*. Berkeley.
- Fletcher 2014. *Finding Italy: Travel, Nation and Colonization in Vergil's Aeneid*. Ann Arbor.
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- Laird, A. 2010. "The *Aeneid* from the Aztecs to the Dark Virgin: *Vergil, Native Tradition, and Latin Poetry in Colonial Mexico from Sahagún's Memoriales (1563) to Villerías' Guadalupe (1724)*." In *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and Its Tradition*, ed. Farrell and Putnam. Malden: 217-33.
- Pogorzelski, R. J. 2016. *Virgil and Joyce: Nationalism and Imperialism in the Aeneid and Ulysses*. Madison.
- Reed, J. D. 2007. *Virgil's Gaze: Nation and Poetry in the Aeneid*. Princeton.
- Ronnick, M. V. 2010. "Vergil in the Black American Experience." In *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and Its Tradition*, ed. Farrell and Putnam. Malden: 376-90.
- Syed, Y. 2005. *Vergil's Aeneid and the Roman Self*. Ann Arbor.
- Thomas, R. F. 2001. *Virgil and the Augustan Reception*. Cambridge.
- Torlone, Z. M. 2014. *Vergil in Russia: National Identity and Classical Reception*. Oxford.