

CLASSICAMENTE

Dialoghi senesi sul mondo antico: ricerche e nuove prospettive nello studio dei greci e dei romani (II edition)

The graduate students and junior researchers of the Centre for the Anthropology of the Ancient World at University of Siena announce the second edition of the seminar project *Classicamente. Dialoghi senesi sul mondo antico* (*Classicamente. Sieneese Dialogues on the Ancient World*), focused on the different topics which have characterized our research centre since its foundation in 1986.

The purpose of this project is to engage young researchers (up to 35 years of age) in a dialogue aimed at sharing and discussing their different approaches to the classical world (anthropological, philological, historical, archaeological, semiotic, etc.) and their research results.

Candidates are requested to send an abstract of 300 words max. in pdf format by July 1st at the following address: dialoghisenesi@gmail.com. The pdf file should not include any reference (in the title or in the text itself) to the candidate's identity, in order to ensure anonymity and fairness at the time of selection. All details (i.e.: name, surname, title, chosen thematic area, academic status and affiliation) should be mentioned in the text of the email. Each proposal should also include a brief CV of the candidate. For pre-doctoral students a reference letter is expected.

Three or four papers will be selected by the scientific committee for each thematic area. Each session will be opened by a keynote speaker. Thereafter, the selected young researchers will deliver 30-40 min. papers, followed by a thorough discussion.

Proposals for panels of two-three speakers are welcome. A general abstract presenting the panel is also necessary.

The seminars will take place in Siena. Notice of acceptance will be given by the 30th of September.

The proceedings of the seminars will be published after an anonymous peer review.

Languages accepted: Italian; English; French. Accommodation and travel expenses will be partially covered. For further information contact: dialoghisenesi@gmail.com.

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE:

Alessandro BARCHIESI (Siena/New York-NYU), Marco BETTALLI (Siena), Maurizio BETTINI (Siena), Simone BETA (Siena), Corinne BONNET (Toulouse), Tommaso BRACCINI (Turin), Carlo BRILLANTE (Siena), Michele FARAGUNA (Milan), Daniela FAUSTI (Siena), Stefano FERRUCCI (Siena), Alessandro FO (Siena), Cristiana FRANCO (Siena-Unistrasi), Mario LENTANO (Siena), Rosa Rita MARCHESE (Palermo), Aglaia McCLINTOCK (Benevento), Francesca MENCACCI (Siena), Giusto PICONE (Palermo), Carmine PISANO (Napoli), Francesca PRESCENDI (Geneva), William Short (Exeter), Antonio STRAMAGLIA (Bari), Caterina TRISTANO (Siena), Cristiano VIGLIETTI (Siena).

TOPICS:

Proposals should address one of the following topics:

Religion

The constructedness of divine representations in ancient cultures is a familiar topic in anthropological and historical-religious studies. The monumental work of J. P. Vernant, who showed how ancient divinity corresponds not to a 'person', but to a supernatural 'power' capable of interacting and indeed modifying reality, remains fundamental to the multitude of studies on the theme. At the same time, in order to be able to interact with mortals, a series of explanation had to be attributed to this 'force' which, together or in partial combinations, contributed to conferring on it an identity and a certain recognizability to human knowledge: in particular, name and iconography, mythological tales and epiphanies. All this finds full meaning in the inseparable relationship between the civic community and the multitude of religious experiences that it lived and that shaped different important cultural elements (the law, temporal and spatial scanning, etc.). It is therefore understandable how the contribution of the Jewish and Christian experiences could be so disruptive, in the sense that this represented a new configuration of the theoretical paradigms and of the interpretation of the role of individuals, communities, of reality as a whole. Faced with such a broad problematic of perspectives and reflections offered by this theme, it becomes necessary to highlight some questions: What representations of divine society have ancient authors elaborated? In what ways did they imagine the plurality of their gods? What are the results achieved so far in the study of the divine figures in Greece and Rome and how can the various interpretive systems be compared? And again, what is the relationship between mythological tales and cult practices? Or what link can be established between ritual configurations, legislation and law? What is the role of iconographic representations, of archaeological and epigraphic sources in the construction of the divine? Moreover, facing the particular link between Greek and Roman culture, what relations exist between the divine figures belonging to the two pantheons? And how do these relationships differ from those that the two cultures establish, share or reject with the deities of other populations (Egypt, Near East, Celtic and Germanic world)? Furthermore, what problems are configured in comparison with the religious experience of the Jewish world and, subsequently, with the progressive advance of Christianity? In the field of ritual forms, of iconographic apparatus and of prayers, what are the processes of differentiation on the one hand, of resemantization (redefinition) on the other? Finally, what new perspectives can be posed and what new interpretative light can be thrown on the study of Late Antiquity and the encounter between polytheism and monotheism, in terms of the 'Mosaic distinction' as affirmed by Jan Assman?

The Uncanny

There are numerous contributions dealing with the uncanny in the ancient world, and the so called *literature of the irrational* (Guidorizzi 1995) – whose forefather is Eric Dodds' famous book (1951) – has looked into many aspects of the topic. Jean-Pierre Vernant (1965) established a relationship between some supernatural beings (namely *eidōla*, *phasmata*, *psychai*, *kolossoi*, *oneirata*) and the cultural category of the double; other studies have focused on paradoxography and on ghost stories, or on the connection between the supernatural and the divine sphere. Conversely, other works have tackled the issue with the instruments of modern science and psychology. Regardless of the different approaches, however, the topic of the uncanny deserves a more thorough analysis starting from - but not limited to - the following suggestions: How did the ancient Greeks and Romans classify the supernatural, and which are the possible relations between the various categories belonging to it (considered from both a semantic or a pragmatic point of view)? How did supernatural events appear, act and interact with their recipients, and with what functions? How were such phenomena perceived, imagined and represented in literature, in art, on stage...? Are there any significant analogies or differences between ancient paradoxographic texts and modern

ghost stories? What about documents testifying a relationship between mortals and the supernatural?

Law in the Ancient world

As in the Ancient world law plays a remarkable role in social and cultural history, its study needs to incorporate an interdisciplinary approach combining both anthropology and history – as well as, indispensably, semantic research – in order to show how juridical practices are shaped by mental imagery and how the legal concepts are processed. Our understanding of the uniqueness either in Greek and Roman law – also confirmed by the differences in procedural, institutional and linguistic issues emerging from a comparison between them and with modern law – needs to be improved by raising some fundamental questions. From a linguistic and etymological point of view, what meaning do words like *dikē*, *themis*, *ius*, *fas* have in relation to the variety of the literary production? How can the network of social relations (marriage, kinship, slavery) be analyzed and what role does law play in defining them? What were the forms of citizenship in Greece and in Rome? Which sources are relevant in a discussion on ancient juridical experience and how can scholars deal with its problems of interpretation? Where was justice administered? How does the relationship between orality and writing affects the applications of the rules and the practice of legal institutions? How did archaic legislation and the resulting social tension address the subsequent development of the law in the *poleis*? What was the role played by religion in law enforcement, particularly as to the choice of the procedures to settle a legal dispute? And what was the relationship between law and religion from a diachronic point of view? How relevant is the use of performative discourse, both in Greece and in Rome, as a means of constructing reality and of affecting ritual and procedural aspects of law? How can the authority of a normative source be considered lawful? What is the role of rhetoric in the democratic *polis* and in the roman *res publica*? Does the modern legal system entail Greek legal concepts previously reworked by the Roman law?

Ancient economy

The primitivist-modernist debate - in all its various forms from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and, and in many respects rooted in an evolutionary paradigm - has left little room for other hermeneutic perspectives which seek to identify the cultural idiosyncracies of different economies. In this latter perspective, it may be fruitful to analyse the intrinsic characteristics of the processes of production, exchange, circulation of wealth in the ancient world (Greek, Roman, Mediterranean), and to highlight their connections with the cultural background they take place in (law, myth, philosophy, literature, etc.) – not ruling out the possibility, however, of constantly making reference to quantitative data. Papers addressing – but not limited to - the following issues (tackled from various perspectives-literary, anthropological, historical, philosophical, archaeological, etc...) are welcome: Are there any new theoretical approaches, also on the basis of the history of recent and past studies? What is the role of wealth, its circulation, and its hoarding in the social definition of individuals? What was the balance of power, within ancient communities, especially in relation to the forms of workforce (i.e. slaves vs freemen)? Between the city and its hinterland? How was the economy related to the different cultural phenomena? Can new approaches drawing on economic anthropology, sociology, environmental studies, microhistory contribute to understanding the ancient economy in a new, less ethnocentric, perspective?

The body

The easiest and most direct way of recognizing our own identity is through the body. After all, Marcell Mauss already showed that socio-cultural and psycho-physiological factors are connected together and therefore that the body, at the same time, presents itself as a privileged means of expressing individual identity and social belonging. The definition of ‘status’ and ‘role’, ‘rules’ and ‘social appearance’ does not arise as an alternative to anatomy, as if it was possible to separate the

symbolic from the natural. On the contrary, the body itself offers reference and causality standards and thus the body, because of its distinctive traits, becomes a source of metaphoric proliferation in the ancient world. The theme of the body encompasses problems and cross-cutting concepts through every human science and needs to be studied from several methodological perspectives (e.g. philological, literary, anthropological, sociological, historical, juridical, psychological and pedagogical). Accordingly, what was the real meaning of the body for the ancient Greeks and Romans, and what was its relationship to e.g., the social body, the political body, the personal body? How much did Mediterranean cultures, especially Greek and the Roman ones, require acknowledging the potentials and weaknesses of the body in the various aspects of life? How did the body express itself, its behaviour and its interactions, and were its symptoms real apparent or apparent real? How did the biological conformation of the body affect the social environment especially in ancient medical literature? Can we talk about ‘medicine of the body’ and ‘medicine of the soul’? In literature, myths and on stage, how important was the body, especially the feminine one, for the well-being of all and for the social balance?

Violence

The idea of violence corresponds to a vast semantic spectrum and is rooted in various historical and cultural realities. War certainly plays a central role, as a preponderant means of resolution of conflicts both between and within communities. On the other hand, ancient states had no monopoly on violence: hence, members had greater freedom in the resolution of conflicts and in the establishment of hierarchies, often legitimized by the use of violence. Violence, as a consequence, had a preponderant role in many ancient cultural phenomena (e.g. law, myth, literature, philosophy). Papers addressing, but not limited to, the following matters are welcome: What were the forms and functions of war in the ancient world? Up to which point – especially during wartime – were the levels of allowed violence rise? How was of violence against non-combatants (i.e. women, elderly and children), especially in case of siege, considered? And against prisoners, both at war and in peace? And the role of these reflections in relation to civil wars? Regarding the balance of power inside the communities, what is the degree of violence, especially towards the most defenceless subjects (poor, women, slaves, foreigners, etc...) both in Athenian and Roman society? In what forms and with what consequences is violence related to other cultural areas (myth, law, literary production, etc...)?

Gender studies

Even if we begin from the unavoidable conclusion that the Anglo-Saxon concept of ‘gender’ – and contemporary studies that depend on it – are not entirely represented in any indigenous category of the Greek or Roman world, we can use notions of ‘gender’ and in particular that of ‘gender identity’ as useful operational tools. Starting from the reflections of Judith Butler on the relationship between gender identity and performativity and Donna Haraway’s on the invention of the ‘natural’ as a social and analytical category, Classical Studies has in fact questioned gender issues and the cultural construction of the categories of ‘masculine’, ‘feminine’, ‘human’ or ‘animal’. Still, some points of interest may arise in the case of particular evidence: What kind of relationship can we detect between the forms of language and literature and those of gender construction? For example, what does it mean, in an anthropological perspective, to translate the terminology of emotions and passions (*erōs*, *philotēs*, *pothos*, *thumos*, etc.) evoked in ancient literary production, which is strongly associated with gendered rhetoric? How, then, is it possible to make progress in the study of archaic Greek melic starting from a pragmatic analysis that takes into account enunciations and statements of poetry in relation to the construction of their gender identities? How are the models normative and able to react, and eventually change, based on the variable represented by the social condition of the individual in relation to the group (free, slave, matron or *parthenos*)? In what way are these facts historically determined by legislative production and by the construction of relationships, referring, though not only, to relations within the *oikos* and the *familia*? Finally, what

are the rhetorical and narrative strategies (choice of words, rhetorical figures, reference to mythical models) that in public and scientific discourse attempt to ‘naturalize’, and thus legitimize a certain behaviour as authentically masculine or feminine?

Translation

When we want to approach a culture different from our own, translating is a necessary - in the sense of ‘inevitable’, corresponding to Latin *necessarium* - act. However, translating is an action that is not at all univocal nor objective. Whenever we try to transpose a text into another language, this process results in its inevitable eradication from the cultural context that generated it. The task, then, of those who translate is to interpret, even if it means losing some lexical accuracy. This is an ancient theme, crossing every culture. Ancient Greeks and Romans, particularly, had multiple ways of conceiving the act of translation: for the Greeks it was about *hermeneuein*, for the Romans it conveyed *vertere* or *interpretari*. It is therefore important to reflect and question ourselves today on what it means ‘to translate’ classical texts. And this can be done by trying to answer such questions as: Has every society, ancient and modern, developed its own proper reflection on the way of translating? Does the modality of translating a text allow us to better understand the culture that has developed it? What role has translation played, in particular, in Greek and Roman literary production? What are the minimum characteristics for which a translation can be considered acceptable? What does it mean today to translate from Greek and Latin in school and university contexts? And, more generally, in our society what value and space are recognized for the translation of the Classics?

Memory

The relationship of the Greeks and Romans with their past and the reworking of the past in various forms and genres is one of the core issues in the understanding of these cultures. To reflect upon what has been also goes hand in hand with the inevitable elaboration of the concept of memory and tradition. These two notions are culturally determined and open to a further problem, that of the transmission of the past. Starting from these preliminary reflections we will ask ourselves: what are the terms used by Greeks and Romans to define the field of memory and transmission? What psychosomatic elements are involved in the activation of the mnemonic process? Can we speak of a dichotomy between collective and private memory? In relation to the latter, what forms does it take, in literature, art and in the more general field of material culture? Which types of the relationship can we find between memory and power? Who decides what is worthy of remembrance and transmission and what is worthy of oblivion? How, then, do communities, as a whole and under the work of their ruling classes, elaborate the memory of the past? What are the most important mechanisms of Mnemohistory in the resumption of mnemonic traces previously removed and in the elaboration of a cultural memory? Is it possible to intervene and alter what is considered ‘traditional’? If so, by what means and for what purposes? Finally, can the recollection of dreams, prophecies and visions constitute a ‘memory of the future’? If so, how does this memory articulate itself and what are its coordinates with regard to the memory of the past?

Book and Writing

The revolutionary importance of writing emerges from historical changes in sociocultural processes; many people claim that the development of writing can in fact be considered a dividing line between history and prehistory. Moreover, the crucial role of writing – and its limitation too – in defining literary models must be taken into account. A topic like this - which has raised interest among anthropologists, historians, philosophers as well as palaeographers, linguists and philologists - involves a comparative and interdisciplinary study. According to this perspective, it is indispensable to keep asking questions like: What are the differences between an oral, or aural or writing culture? What is the role of ancient philosophy both in the absence of writing and in its development? What is the role of the gradual appearance of a written culture in the Greek and

Roman world and in the relationship between it and the realities that have followed it (Roman-barbarian kingdoms, Arab culture, etc.)? Is there a relationship between the materials, shapes, and practices of writing and literacy, and the culture of images? From an historical point of view, how does the relationship between power and writing manifest itself? What are the episodes in which this relationship seems to have had a specific determined role (burning of books, writing of laws, written legal interpretation)? How much has writing guaranteed the prestige of a text, particularly in the legal field (wills, contracts) and in relation to the transition from a customary normative system to written legislation? What is the role and importance of archives, as depositaries of written memory, for a recreation of the administrative practices and the inter and intra-state social relations?