

This summer the UCL Department of Greek and Latin received funding from the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies towards postgraduate bursaries for our conference 'From Song to Book: Performance and Entextualisation in Ancient Greek Literature and Beyond'. The conference, which was held over three days at UCL, was, we feel, a resounding success (the SPHS money was spent to allow two PhD student speakers from Cambridge, Max Leventhal and Valeria Pace, and other postgraduate students to attend), and the organisers, Naomi Scott and Peter Agócs, would like to present a brief report on what happened over the three days. Our papers focused on the role and conceptualisation of text as a cultural object in epic, drama and lyric from Homer to the Hellenistic age, on modes of allusion in an oral performance culture, and on the questions of authenticity, voice and the history of genres. The conference was organised by Naomi Scott, who two weeks later defended her PhD, supervised by Chris Carey, on the genre-poetics of Aristophanic comedy (*Defining the Comic Plot: Genre and Storytelling in Aristophanes*), and its success was a tribute to her hard work and ambition. It was well attended, attracting speakers from the United States and the United Kingdom on a wide range of genres and authors that extended beyond Classical Greece to include a paper on mediaeval French vernacular poetry and song. On the first day, Prof Richard Janko (University of Michigan) gave a moving, rich and exciting paper on the legacy of Milman Parry and Albert Lord, and their comparative study of Homer and South Slavic epic, as it was being redefined in the neglected work of the Bosnian scholar Zlatan Colakovic (1955-2008), a man who, from the standpoint of extensive fieldwork experience, critiqued deeply-entrenched notions about the traditionality of Homer as an oral poet, and has rejected the main approaches in contemporary scholarship to explaining the genesis of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, defining these poems as 'post-traditional texts'. Lawrence Kowerski (Hunter College) spoke on elegy ('The Theognidea as Performance and Text'), arguing for a much later date for the collection of Theognis' elegies on the basis of stylistic comparison with other poetry-collections. On the second day, Prof Niall Slater (Emory University) gave a stimulating reconstruction ('Modified Rapture! Entextualising Comic Performances') of why and how the texts of Athenian Old Comedy were entextualised as part of theatrical practice, and of the relation of text to performance and reperformance. UCL PhD student Naomi Scott spoke on 'Text, Intertext and Performance in Aristophanes', arguing that the plays contain allusions not only to comic texts, but to the stagings and theatrical techniques of other Aristophanic plays, and to Aristophanes' Athenian rivals. David Fearn (Warwick) gave a very interesting comparison of the encomiastic language and tropes of Gorgias' 'Encomium of Helen', one of the earliest surviving influential texts of Greek rhetoric, in comparison to those used by lyric praise-poets, especially Pindar. Iwona Wiezel (KUL-John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin) spoke ('Clash of Worlds: Orality and Textualization in Herodotus' Narrative') on the application of 'natural narratology' to the performed historiographical prose of Herodotus. On the third morning, Max Leventhal ('Wine, Wit, and Wisdom: Hellenistic Sympotic Contexts for Performing the Entextualised') and Valeria Pace ('Performing gender in epic character-voices: which difference a text? A case study on Homer and Apollonius of Rhodes') both Cambridge PhD students, spoke on different aspects of voice and entextualisation in Hellenistic epigram and epic, respectively. In the afternoon, Thomas Hinton (Exeter), gave his talk ('Loving, Singing, Writing: Present and Absent Voices in Medieval French and Occitan Narratives About Lyric') on mediaeval French vernacular poetry, which was very exciting, particular for those Classicists in the room who knew nothing about the possibilities for comparison between early Greek and mediaeval

literature. In general, the conference was particularly notable for the high quality of the discussion and dialogue, both after the individual papers and in the closing session, where we tried to draw the threads of discussion together. Naomi and I wish to thank our generous sponsors (including of course the SPHS), our speakers, and also those who attended and who agreed (often at the last minute) to chair sessions: particularly Phiroze Vasunia, Nick Lowe (RHUL) and Ahuvia Kahane (RHUL). We learned much from our discussions with them and from their contributions, and we hope that the dialogue begun in London will continue in the future.