

HELIODORUS IN NEW CONTEXTS CONFERENCE REPORT

The conference 'Heliodoros in New Contexts' took place in the University of Cambridge (Faculty of Classics and St John's College) on 12th-13th December 2018. It was organised by Claire Rachel Jackson (Sidney Sussex, Cambridge) and Benedek Kruchió (St John's, Cambridge) with funding from the Faculty of Classics, Cambridge, St John's College, and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies.

Despite the increasing interest in the ancient novel over the last twenty years, there has been no English-language symposium, edited volume, or monograph dedicated to Heliodoros' *Aethiopica*, the latest, largest, and most influential novel from antiquity since the publication of *Studies in Heliodoros* (edited by Richard Hunter) in 1998. This conference, coming exactly twenty years after this volume, aimed to bring together a mixture of experienced scholars in the field with new voices to explore new directions for Heliodorean scholarship and to open up new possibilities for ways of reading and contextualising this complex text.

The conference was very well-attended (over 60 participants), beyond what the organisers had originally hoped for, demonstrating the continued appeal of the *Aethiopica*. The audience included both some of the most senior figures in the field of the ancient novel and newer voices, as the attached programme shows, with participants coming from all over the UK, Europe, and the USA. The papers were pre-circulated, and all speakers and respondents were given a short slot to summarise their arguments and offer thoughts on the wider implications of the paper. This approach proved to be very successful, allowing for a diversity of voices from the floor and provoking stimulating discussion throughout. Topics covered included Heliodoros' novelistic and epic intertextualities, the *Aethiopica* in the context of ancient art, ekphrasis, and materiality, Byzantine and early modern receptions of Heliodoros, and the *Aethiopica*'s place within classical and late antique theories of fiction. The discussion was often provocative and thoughtful, leading to requests from attendees for contact details of speakers and respondents so as to continue the conversation after the official end of the conference. One key aim of the conference was to demystify the complex and often enigmatic novel and open up new ways of reading and engaging with a text which, due to its lack of accessible edition or commentary, has often been discussed only in partial terms. The presence and contribution of early-career scholars and those new to Heliodoros in this conference was therefore most welcome and a promising sign for the future of the field.

Plans to publish the papers are in progress, and we hope that the majority of papers will appear in the near future.

The organisers are very grateful to the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies for their grant of £200, which allowed them to offer bursaries for travel expenses to postgraduate students travelling from Austria and Germany respectively (Ondřej Cikán, Vienna, and Benjamin Wilck, Humboldt University of Berlin) who would not have been able to attend the conference otherwise.



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

12.ii.2019 (G.19, Faculty of Classics)

10.45am coffee and welcome

11am Georg Danek (Vienna): 'Heliodoros and Longus', response: Ewen Bowie (Oxford)

11.45am Benedek Kruchió (Cambridge): 'Heliodoros' Postsophistica: Homeric intertextuality and its cultural implications', response: Emma Greensmith (Cambridge)

12.30pm buffet lunch (G.22, Faculty of Classics)

2pm Ian Repath (Swansea): 'Heliodoros and Achilles Tatius', response: Simon Goldhill (Cambridge)

2.45pm Ondřej Cikán (Vienna): 'The superior heroine: sexual symmetry in the Comnenian novels', response: Ingela Nilsson (Uppsala)

3.30pm coffee break (G.22, Faculty of Classics)

4pm Carrie Vout (Cambridge): 'Beyond ecphrasis: Heliodoros' visual culture', response: Bill Owens (Ohio University)

4.45pm Emilio Capettini (Santa Barbara, CA): 'A vibrant text(ile): the tainia in Heliodoros' *Aethiopica*', response: Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge)

5.30pm wine reception (Cast Gallery, Faculty of Classics)

7.30pm conference dinner (Wordsworth Room, St John's College, with post-dinner drinks in the Samuel Butler Room)

13.ii.2019 (Old Divinity School, Lecture Theatre, St John's College)

8.30am coffee

9am Ingela Nilsson (Uppsala) & Nikolaos Zagklas (Vienna): 'Narrative, rhetoric and 'drama' reconsidered: another look at Heliodoros in Byzantium', response: Richard Hunter (Cambridge)

9.45am Laurence Plazenet (Clermont-Auvergne): 'Heliodoros' novel: a forgery? reception and generic identification of the *Aethiopica*', response: Nina Braginskaya (Moscow)

10.30am coffee

11am Claire Rachel Jackson (Cambridge): 'Heliodoros and late antique concepts of fiction', response: Anna Athanasopoulou (Cambridge)

11.45am Jonas Grethlein (Heidelberg): 'Deception and aesthetic illusion in the *Aethiopica*: Heliodorus' reconfiguration of Plato's take on poetry', response: John Morgan (Swansea)

12.30pm closing discussion