

Workshop: *Questioning Norms: Ambivalence, Distance and Conflict in Ancient Biography and Historiography*  
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Aškerčeva 2

## *Abstracts / Povzetki referatov*

**CYNTHIA BRUHN**

### **Aspects of ambivalence in Herodotus' and Thucydides' supplication narratives**

The ancient Greek ritual of supplication, *hiketeia*, was applied by individuals seeking asylum or other forms of help. According to John Gould, *hiketeia* is ambivalent (Gould 1973: 97): Although the suppliant is characterized as inferior towards the implored person, certain gestures of the ritual reveal a symbolical aggressiveness. For by clasping the addressee's knees or sitting down at the hearth of his house, he touches "what must be kept inviolate" (Gould 1973: 100). Moreover, this aggressiveness can become physical: Thucydides reports how political suppliants turn their weak position into a powerful one by taking advantage of the fact that no one expects them to attack (3.70.5-6).

However, ambivalence does not only concern the person seeking help: Not seldom the supplicated individuals, too, have mixed feelings about how to respond. On the one hand, suppliants are considered protégés of Zeus Hikesios and can demand respect from their addressees (Gould 1973: 85ff.). On the other hand, accepting their plea can pose a safety issue for the rescuer: Protecting someone in flight involves the risk of a confrontation with his pursuers. In his *Histories*, Herodotus discusses this dilemma (1.157ff.) and, furthermore, shows how persons who have violated the norms of supplication, later try to "correct" their deed (1.160; 3.149).

Finally, sanctuaries can appear ambivalent, since in some cases their power to protect is not as unequivocal as expected. In Hdt. 6.79.2, a sacred grove provides only a deceptive safety as it prevents suppliants from seeing what is of vital importance to them. In Thucydides, it is the group deciding about the request that has conflicting views on sanctuaries: Although they do recognize their protective function, they also perceive the threat of suppliants instrumentalizing the sacred place as a military base (3.75.5).

This paper aims to show how ambivalence characterizes supplication scenes in Herodotus and Thucydides and how both historians use it for their own literary purposes.

**ALEŠ MAVER**

### **Jephthah and Titus Manlius: Describing the Unspeakable**

Although the story of Jephthah and his daughter from the *Judges* and Livy's episode of Titus Manlius condemning his own son to death belong to two different literary genres, they both used to be read as historical accounts in the past. This, in my view, can justify a comparison between them.

The main aim of my paper is to analyse elements of critical attitudes of respective writers to both fathers' deeds which are otherwise placed in a clearly heroic context. Regarding the Old

Testament Jephthah, the crucial problem is that of the time when the story was written down. Many different possibilities were proposed, with some of them even drawing parallels to the Greek myth of Iphigenia. On the other hand, elements which point to the Biblical author's uneasiness are particularly a (deliberate?) ambiguity about the form which Jephthah's fulfilment of his vow was going to take, and his abrupt ending of the story when it came to the fulfilment itself.

Livy, at first glance, doesn't seem particularly disturbed by the Manlius' decision to execute his own son, probably seeing in his action just another *exemplum* of Roman virtue. But again, his comments at the end of the episode can be read as at least an implicit disapproval of the elder Manlius' rigidity.

## **DARJA ŠTERBENC ERKER**

### **Suetonius' Ambivalent Bodily Eckphrasis of Julius Caesar**

Ancient biographers and historiographers depict actions of famous personalities or describe past events, thereby presenting examples of generally accepted norms of social, political or religious behaviour. The perspective of ambiguity is particularly interesting in Suetonius' descriptions of the bodies of the emperors. The vivid depictions (*eckphraseis*) of the corporeality of the emperors are meant to be read as a series throughout the *Lives of the Caesars*. For instance, scholars have argued for growing aspects of animality in Suetonius' depiction of the corporeality of the Roman emperors. The focus of this paper will be different for it will explore how Suetonius depicts the body of Julius Caesar to contest his associations with the divine sphere. The biographer presents Caesar's body in an ambivalent way which reveals the norms associated with the divine sphere and human society. Moreover, Suetonius suggests that Divus Caesar transgressed divine and human norms by his outward appearance and behaviour. Throughout his *Lives of the Caesars*, the biographer contests the messages of the imperial statuary, reliefs and coins subtly by questioning the divine aspects of the emperors.

## **DAVID MOVRIN**

### **Conflict with Demons: Distance and the Ambivalence of Foretelling in *Vita Antonii***

In a noteworthy passage in Athanasius' *Life of Antony*, the monk warns his followers that they should remain skeptical towards demons even when they appear to prophesy – all that the evil spirits are doing is utilizing their power to beat the distance faster than humans can: “Why is it so remarkable if they, having bodies more subtle than humans possess, see travelers setting out on a journey and arrive ahead of them and report the event? Someone riding a horse can ‘predict’ this ahead of someone traveling on foot! So we need not be amazed at them because of this; they do not know in advance about events that have not yet happened.” (VA 31.2-3, translation by Tim Vivian.) He further elucidates the phenomenon by a set of examples involving distance and its demonic manipulation: a horse rider, a traveler from the Thebaid, even flooding of the Nile (which demons can deduce from “abundant rainfall occurring in Ethiopia”), and so “before the water enters Egypt they run ahead and tell about it” (VA 32.1). However, later in the text, a different type of foretelling is presented – Antony himself knows who is coming to visit him; “Oftentimes he predicted days in advance that

people were about to come visit him, and there were times when he made his predictions months beforehand, and he would give the reason why they were coming.” (VA 62.1.) The paper will analyze the *differentia specifica* and the inherent conflict in the cases described, building upon the research by David Brakke, Dayna S. Kalleres, James M. Nelson, Jonah Koetke, Martha Rampton, and others.

## **MATEJ PETRIČ**

### **People in error: Depictions of pagans in Rufinus' *Ecclesiastical History*.**

Rufinus of Aquileia was one of the most pre-eminent Christian authors of the late 4th/early 5th century, who wrote in Latin. Among his numerous writings, which chiefly consist of adapted translations of Greek Christian works, the *Ecclesiastical History* (written circa 402) holds a special place. It is partly a translation (with certain additions) of Eusebius' homonymous work to which Rufinus added two books, ostensibly of his own design, covering notable events from the years 325–395. A not insignificant portion of these two books deals with pagans (whose religion Rufinus in juxtaposition to Christianity characterizes as an *error*) and their interactions with the more and the less notable Christians of that time. Rufinus was himself a Christian and, as such, his outlook as an historian is a product of the immense shift in social norms and the acceptable that began with the spread of Christianity but gained great momentum following the early years of the 4th century after Constantine started favouring that particular religious group. In my presentation, I hope to show the attitude that Rufinus displays toward the pagans in his *Ecclesiastical history* and how his own religious sentiment colours his discourse about late Roman paganism.

## **ALENKA CEDILNIK**

### **Eunomios und die Kraft seines Wortes**

Wenn wir von Ambivalenz und Distanz in der Darstellung der Vergangenheit sprechen, spielt die Sprache bei der Formulierung des Dargestellten eine sehr wichtige Rolle. Schon in der Antike war man sich der Bedeutung der Macht des Wortes wohl bewusst. In dem Beitrag konzentriere ich mich auf Berichte der Kirchenhistoriker aus dem 4. und aus der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts (Sokrates Scholastikos, Sozomenos, Philostorgios, Rufinus), die über die sprachlichen und dialektischen Fähigkeiten eines wichtigen Akteurs des arianischen Streites, Eunomios, Aufschluss geben. Trotz des formellen Abschlusses des arianischen Streits auf dem Konzil von Konstantinopel 381, sind die Kirchenhistoriker in der ersten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts immer noch gespalten zwischen denen, die pro-nicäisch waren, und jenen, die eine pro-arianische Orientierung befürworteten. Daher ist ihre Einschätzung von Eunomios notwendigerweise durch ihre theologische Ausrichtung bestimmt. Unabhängig davon, für welche Seite sich die ausgewählten Autoren in der theologischen Auseinandersetzung erklärten, erkennen sie alle jedoch an, dass Eunomios ein großer Meister des Wortes war, doch in den Details ihrer Einschätzungen weichen sie in vielerlei Hinsicht voneinander ab.