



Helen Todd, Eleanor Reeve, Simone Finkmann, Jane Burkowski and Lucy Van Essen-Fishman (2013) 'Introduction'

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**The Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient
Literature (AMPAL)
'Bodily Functions: The Corpus and Corpora in Ancient Literature'
Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies,
University of Oxford, 8-9 September 2012**

The Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient Literature 2012, a two-day residential conference held in Oxford, brought together postgraduate students in Classics to present their work, to meet other researchers from across the field, and to engage in lively and stimulating discussion of a significant critical theme. In particular, the conference offered an ideal opportunity for postgraduate students to give their first paper and to receive feedback, discussion and peer review. It is a great pleasure to present some of the outcomes of the conference in this special issue of *Rosetta*.

Seventy-five speakers and delegates attended the conference from all over the UK and Europe, as well as Australia and the USA, making this the largest event in the history of the conference. Those who attended included postgraduate students at every level of their research, as well as young and/or postdoctoral researchers.

We met to discuss the significance of the physical body in classical texts, under the title 'Bodily functions: the corpus and corpora in ancient literature'. The theme was deemed to be of particular relevance as classical scholarship has in recent years rediscovered the importance of human (and non-human) bodies, physicality, and physical (dys)functions to the ancient world. Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in ancient medicine and the role of medical literature in the ancient canon, that has been matched not only by investigations of the 'bodily' in genres as diverse as drama, epic, the novel, and oratory, but also by interest in the idea of the 'body' as a literary metaphor.

During the two days of the conference, the interdisciplinary nature of the theme provoked some fascinating discussions and promoted a broad exchange of ideas. The papers discussed at the conference were rich in interest and diverse in focus; they encompassed the classical world from Homer to Galen, and from Plautus to Seneca. We were delighted to welcome Professor Matthew Leigh from St Anne's College, Oxford as our keynote speaker; Professor Leigh's wittily illuminating discussion of Catullus 68 was warmly received, and the conveners would like to note their thanks to Professor Leigh.

The conveners of AMPAL 2013 are very grateful for the generous financial support of the Classical Association, the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the Wellcome Trust, and the Craven Committee of the Faculty of Classics, Oxford. This assistance enabled us to award bursaries to students towards the costs of conference fees and accommodation, which allowed speakers and delegates to attend from all over the country and beyond, and contributed greatly to the success of the conference.

Since its inception in 2005 at the University of Cambridge, the Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient Literature has enjoyed a growing interest, and the conveners of AMPAL 2012 are very pleased that last year's incarnation of the conference continued the trend, in an event marked by great enthusiasm, collegiality and intellectual exchange. It is excellent news that, even as I write, AMPAL 2013 is being held at the University of St Andrew's, on the theme 'Discovering the unreal in ancient literature'.

Helen Todd, Eleanor Reeve, Simone Finkmann, Jane Burkowski, Lucy Van Essen-Fishman

Conveners, AMPAL 2012