

Panel: Based on a true story? Fictionalizing imperial and late antique biographies

Organizers: Anna Lefteratou (Heidelberg) and Fotini Hadjitoffi (Lisbon)

Keynote Speaker: Koen de Temmerman (Ghent)

The number of biographical narratives that are analyzed as fiction has been steadily increasing and expanding to ever wider generic and geographic areas. From Perry's (1971) early discussions of the novels and Bowersock's (1994) important contribution on fiction and historiography to more recent analyses of the 'formalities of fiction' in biography (de Temmerman, 2016) and epistolary narrative (Hodkinson et al., 2013), we have come to explore fictional elements in a variety of texts and genres, including Jewish and Christian narratives (Futre Pinheiro et al., 2012; Brant et al., 2005; MacDonald, 1994).

This panel aims to examine the characteristics that bind biographical narratives to fiction, ranging from the 1st to the 7th centuries CE and including secular, Jewish, and Christian narratives. We would firstly like to explore fiction-related allusions and their self-referential character (Hodkinson, 2016; Ni-Mheallaigh, 2008). In this context, intertextuality will be examined through the prism of fiction and metafiction, i.e. how do / which allusions help to create a fictional world and how do they comment on the process of world-creating? Secondly, the panel will attempt a diachronic overview of fictional touches to biographical narratives, mainly in Greek and Latin, although discussions of Jewish, Syriac, and Coptic material will be equally welcome. The following questions are of particular interest:

1. How do themes and motifs structure a biographical narrative along the formal requirements of fiction? (e.g., wedding and death; wonders and miracles; travel as metaphor and a marker of world-creating). To what extent does the presence of such themes model the lives of Apostles, Saints, and philosophers (*theioi andres*) as fiction?
2. Do these texts draw attention to their own status as mediated (oral) accounts or as written texts (e.g., commenting on witnesses and means of transmission; addressing the reader; emphasizing 'as if'-expressions, or even alluding to their material form, i.e. the scroll)? Do they comment on make-belief as well as belief/ faith? How do they employ *gnomae* and moralizing and how do these cross the boundary between text/fiction and real life? Is didacticism diachronically present in ancient biographical narratives?
3. How are prose biographical narratives different from poetic ones? Does Fortunatus' *Life of St. Martin* turn the Saint more into a classical epic hero because of the genre in which it is written? Is the poetic rendition of *St. Cyprian's Life*, written by the empress Eudocia, more fictionalized than the several prose recensions?

4. Does intertextuality underscore fiction and metafiction? Do biographical narratives that allude to, e.g., epic, tragedy, or comedy prompt any particular scenarios that are evocative of those genres?

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent by 31.01.2019 to both:

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Participants will need to cover their own lodging and travel expenses.

Depending on the quality and consistency of the presentations, a publication of (some of) the contributions is envisaged.

Works Cited

- Bowersock, G. W. (1994), *Fiction as history: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley).
- Brant, J.-A., Hedrick, C. W., Shea, C. (eds.) (2005), *Ancient fiction: the matrix of early Christian and Jewish narrative* (Society of Biblical Literature Symposium series) (Leiden: Brill).
- Futre Pinheiro, M., Perkins, J., Pervo, R. (eds.) (2012), *The ancient novel and early Christian and Jewish narrative. Fictional intersections* (Ancient Narrative Supplementum 16) (Groningen: Barkhuis).
- Hodkinson, O., Rosenmeyer, P. A., and Bracke, E. (eds.) (2013), *Epistolary narrative in ancient Greek literature* (Leiden: Brill).
- Hodkinson, O. (2016), *Metafiction in Classical Literature: The Invention of Self-Conscious Fiction* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies)
- MacDonald, L. M. (1994), *Christianizing Homer: the Odyssey, Plato, and The Acts of Andrew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Ni-Mheallaigh, K. (2008), 'Pseudo-documentarism and the limits of ancient fiction', *American Journal of Philology*, 129 (3), 403-31.
- Perry, B.E. (1967), *The ancient romances* (Berkley: University of Berkeley Press).
- de Temmerman, K. (2016), 'Ancient biography and formalities of fiction', in K. de Temmerman and K. Demoen (eds.), *Writing biography in Greece and Rome: narrative techniques and fictionalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 3-24.