



Piracy, Pillaging and Plunder in the Ancient Mediterranean World

18TH UNISA CLASSICS COLLOQUIUM

PRETORIA 28-29 OCTOBER 2017

Pillaging and plunder are perennial problems that still face the modern world – also in the world’s cyberspace extensions - and piracy, once thought a problem of the past, has in the last decade been recognised by humanitarian and maritime agencies as a pressing global problem, causing a renewed awareness of the problem.

This conference seeks to explore the many facets of pillaging and piracy in ancient times, and how we can better understand the ancient world by an exploration of these violent interactions, which in antiquity were not always seen in as negative a light as in modern times. The colloquium thus aims to explore ancient views on, and utilisations of, the ethics and practice of piracy and plunder, and what was understood by these terms in various ancient Mediterranean contexts from Homer to Augustine. These types of short-term violence were easily taken up by the ancient writers since such harsh realities lent spice to adventurous tales of playwrights, poets, novelists, and even ancient historians, and in some cases piracy even attained a certain swashbuckling romanticised aura. For politicians considerable capital could be gained for those who undertook to suppress this universally feared phenomenon, whether real or threatened. Thus the question here is always whether such beneficial suppressions were for the common good, or whether they were really motivated by self-interest, and even, in some cases, used to justify imperialistic acts.

In modern parlance the unauthorized use or reproduction of another's work is also termed ‘piracy’, and the conference would also like to explore literary and artistic plundering, the mining of material from earlier authors, and the ethics and practical applications surrounding these practices. This could even be extended to plunder as cross-generic literary appropriation (of the type *Cat.11.21f/Verg. Aen. 9.435-37*) or instances of tactical incorporation (e.g. Horace and Vergil in the *Laus Pisonis*), and there are even examples of authors ‘plundering’ their own work (e.g. Verg. *Geo. 4.420, Aen.1.161, or Geo.4. 377-8 and Aen.1.702, 705-6*).

The conference theme thus hopes to offer plenty of areas for fruitful exploration, of which the following topics are a sample:

- Distinctions between piracy and warfare.
- When are piracy and plunder synonymous with migration, colonization, mercenary adventurism or imperialism, e.g. to what extent was Greek colonization piracy?

- Social views of pirates and piracy in literature, for example the *Odyssey*.
- The role of piracy in the slave trade, and in the ancient economy generally.
- Methods of dealing with the pirate problem.
- The political dimensions of piracy and brigandage.
- Rhetorical instrumentalisation of pirates as dramatic foils as used in Cicero's *Verrines* and *Pro Lege Manilia*, and the usefulness of the appellation 'pirate' as a pejorative term in politics.
- Lexical aspects of 'pirates', and 'plunder' in the vocabulary of abuse (e.g. Roman comedy).
- Piracy and brigandage as a literary force or mechanism in the ancient epic, comedy or novel.
- How the fear of piracy and pillaging influenced political policies.
- Piracy as a form of political resistance.
- The purpose and effect of using material from preceding works.
- Acknowledgement and lack of acknowledgement by ancient authors.

Paper proposals (approximately 300 words) are invited for papers of 20 minutes debating current issues and problems on any aspect of the above theme, as well as its reception in modern times.

Abstracts and titles should be submitted to either:

Prof Martine De Marre at dmarrmea@unisa.ac.za or dmarrmea@gmail.com

Ms Liliana Tappeiner at ctappls@unisa.ac.za

Final deadline for abstracts: **30 June 2017**

Venue and Conference fees

Unisa will be hosting the conference at the Leriba Hotel and Conference Centre in Centurion, Gauteng. http://leriba.co.za/leriba_hotel/leriba-hotel

Conference fee (including lunch, dinner and conference facilities): ZAR 2010.

Accommodation per night at Leriba Lodge: ZAR 1565.50.

The Colloquium will form part of the broader Biennial Conference of the Classical Association of South Africa (which takes place from 26 to 29 October), details of which can be found at <http://www.casa-kvsa.org.za/Conference.htm>.