

Honey and Wormwood: Poetry and Philosophy
28th Annual Graduate Student Colloquium
University of Virginia Dept. of Classics
March 23, 2024

Call for Papers

Lucretius uses the metaphor of a cup of bitter wormwood ringed with honey to symbolize philosophy made palatable by poetry, a dose of medicine presented sweetly.¹ Is this fair to philosophy, or to poetry? Can poetry also be medicine for the soul – can philosophy be aesthetically pleasing? These genres have been represented in opposition for almost as long as they have existed, yet they have been intertwined longer than they have been defined as separate genres. Plato asserts, in the *Republic*, that there is an ancient disagreement between philosophy and poetry,² and poetry is famously banished from the ideal state in that philosophical work. However, it is only a partial exile, as he also says that hymns and encomia must be admitted into such a city.³ Thus, even in the midst of animosity, each genre acknowledges a need for the other.

The UVA Dept. of Classics' Graduate Student Colloquium is the longest running annual graduate student colloquium in the US. In our 28th year, we seek papers that explore the complicated interactions between ancient philosophy and poetry, as well as papers that incorporate modern perspectives and audiences overlooked by ancient authors. We welcome submissions from Classical and Ancient Mediterranean Studies, as well as from Philosophy, Religious Studies, Political Science, History, Art History, Archaeology, Women's and Gender Studies, and Environmental Humanities. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- The philosopher as poet; the poet as philosopher
- Role of art and artists in a political body
- Philosophy vs. poetry in ancient visual arts and culture
- Natural philosophy and the environment in literature, art, and material culture
- Reception of ancient philosophy and poetry in global literature, from antiquity to today
- Relationship of philosophy with literary genres and aesthetic theory
- Poetry and art as scientific, therapeutic, didactic, philosophical
- Godlikeness and the philosopher or poet; euhemerism; the mysteries; hero cults
- Meeting places of poetry and philosophy: libraries and book culture, nature and the *locus amoenus*, architecture and public space, the stoics' *stoa* and the garden of the epicureans

Papers should be 20 minutes in length. Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words, excluding bibliography, to Eugenia Andreeva (y kz6ur@virginia.edu) by December 8th, 2023. Any questions may be addressed to the colloquium organizers, Will Nichols (wn3rp@virginia.edu) and Carl Hamilton (cdh5cu@virginia.edu).

¹ Lucr. 1.935-50 and 4.10-25.

² Pl. *Resp.* 607b5-6.

³ Pl. *Resp.* 607a.