

CONTEXTS FOR CLASSICS PRESENTS:
ROMAN ERROR:

THE RECEPTION OF ANCIENT ROME AS A FLAWED MODEL

University of Michigan, Angell Hall 3222
September 20th—21st | 2013



The idea of large-scale Roman missteps—whether imperial domination, sexual immorality, political corruption, greed, religious intolerance, cultural insensitivity, or the like—has been a notion “good to think with” since antiquity, and persists in familiar comparisons between the Roman Empire and the present-day United States. This conference seeks to go beyond a merely thematic discussion to re-examine the connections between “Roman error,” broadly conceived, and basic features of the reception of antiquity including: misunderstanding and misprision, repetition and difference, the subject’s relation to a (remembered or unconscious) past, performance and illusion, and links between text and image. If the Romans “erred,” what are the consequences for Rome’s inheritors as they attempt to construct a stable relation to Rome as a flawed “source” or model? We ask not simply, “Are Rome’s errors ours?” but, “How does Roman error figure in the reception of Rome itself?”

Conference Program

FRIDAY, September 20th

2:00 Welcome

Basil Dufallo

Error and Empire

Moderator: Nick Geller

2:15 Phiroze Vasunia (University of Reading), “The Roman Empire and the Error of Civilization”

3:00 Margaret Malamud (New Mexico State University), “Worse than Cato? How to Think about Slavery”

Break

Error and the Body Politic

Moderator: Harriet Fertik

4:00 Michèle Lowrie (University of Chicago), “Civil War and the Republic to Come in Victor Hugo's *Quatrevingt-treize*”

4:45 Joy Connolly (New York University), “Past Sovereignty: Roman Freedom in Modernity”

SATURDAY, September 21st

Error and Affect

Moderator: Ellen Cole

9:00 Marc Bizer (University of Texas at Austin), “Romans into (Elite) Frenchmen: Michel de Montaigne’s Revision of Cicero on the Politics of Friendship”

9:45 Craig Williams (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign), “False Friends: Moments in the Reception of *amicitia*”

Break

Error and Assessment

Moderator: Evelyn Adkins

10:45 Caroline Vout (University of Cambridge), “The Error of Roman Aesthetics”

11:30 Serafina Cuomo (Birkbeck, University of London), “Measurement, Error, and Accuracy in the Roman World”

Break for Lunch

Error, Religion, and Philosophy

Moderator: Cassie Miura

2:00 Marco Formisano (Ghent University), “Roman Errors and Religion: Symmachus and Lorenzo Valla”

2:45 Richard Fletcher (The Ohio State University), “The Kristevan Slip: Narcissus, Eros, and Other Errors in Roman Philosophy”

Break

Error, Narrative, and Film

Moderator: Olga Greco

3:45 Catherine Edwards (Birkbeck, University of London), “The Romance of Roman Error: Encounters with Antiquity in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*”

4:30 Maria Wyke (University College, London), “The Pleasures and Punishments of Roman Excess: Elagabalus at the Court of Early Cinema”

This event is co-sponsored by: the Contexts for Classics research consortium, the Department of Classical Studies, and the Department of Comparative Literature; the Departments of Afroamerican and African Studies, American Culture, Asian Languages and Cultures, English, History, History of Art, Philosophy, and Romance Languages and Literatures; the Program in Medieval and Early Modern Studies, the Institute for the Humanities, the International Institute, the LSA Organize an Event Fund, and the Rackham Dean’s Strategic Fund.