

## Pollution and Propriety in Rome (Rome 21-22 Jun 07)

Jennings Elizabeth

A conference entitled:

'Pollution and Propriety: Dirt, Disease and Hygiene in Rome from Antiquity to Modernity';

organised by the

Department of Art History and Department of Classics will be held at the British School at Rome, on 21-22 June 2007.

Further details can be found at:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nirv/pollutionandpropriety/information.htm>

This interdisciplinary conference will examine the significance of pollution and cleanliness in the art, literature, philosophy, and material culture of the city of Rome from antiquity through to the twentieth century. Dirt, disease and pollution and the ways they are represented and policed have long been recognised by historians and anthropologists to occupy a central position in the formulation of cultural identity, and Rome holds a special status in the West as a city intimately associated with issues of purity, decay, ruin and renewal. In recent years, scholarship in a variety of disciplines has begun to scrutinise the less palatable features of the archaeology, history and society of Rome. This research has drawn attention to the city's distinctive historical interest in the recognition, isolation and treatment of pollution, and the ways in which politicians, architects, writers and artists have exploited this as a vehicle for devising visions of purity and propriety.

It is hoped that this conference will be of interest to scholars working in archaeology, cultural history, literature, art history, and the history of medicine. The conference will aim to develop themes in the history of the city of Rome, as well as providing a context for examining general issues of pollution and purity. Papers will be original and not previously published or delivered at a major conference.

Organisers:

Dr Mark Bradley (Classics, Nottingham)

Prof Richard Wrigley (Art History, Nottingham)

## Programme

Thursday 21 June

### PANEL 1: Concepts of Pollution in Ancient Rome

Elaine Fantham (Classics, Princeton):

Passive and active pollution in Roman pagan tradition

Carlin Barton (History, Massachusetts):

Compassion and Purity: an Antithetical Pair?

Respondent: Val Curtis (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)

### PANEL 2: Pollution and Propriety in Ancient Urban Development

Penelope Davies (Art History, Austin):

Pollution, propriety and urbanism in Republican Rome

John Bodel (Classics, Brown):

Pollution at the Periphery: Living with the Dead in the Roman Suburbs

Respondent: Mark Bradley (Classics, Nottingham)

### PANEL 3. Purity and Symbolism in Ancient Roman Waste Disposal

John Hopkins (Art History, Austin):

Marking Pollution: Material Evidence for Roman Conceptions of the Cloaca Maxima

Gemma Jansen (Archaeology, Maastricht):

Divine help on a Roman toilet

Respondent: Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow (Classical Studies, Brandeis)

### PANEL 4: Scapegoats and Heresy from Pagan Ritual to Early Christendom

Celia Schultz (Classics, Yale):

The Proper Disposal of a Polluting Presence

Katy Cubitt (Centre for Medieval Studies, York):

The jet-black spiderwebs of heresy: pollution and the language of heresy in seventh- and eighth-century Rome

Friday 22 June

### PANEL 5: Treatments of Plague.

Robert Arnott (Centre for the History of Medicine, Birmingham):

The Antonine Plague: fact and fiction

David Gentilcore (History, Leicester):  
Negotiating medical remedies in time of plague: Rome, 1656

Respondent: François Quiviger (Warburg Institute, SAS)

#### PANEL 6: Pollution, the Body, and the Church

Conrad Leyser (History, Manchester):

'Pornocracy' and Professionalization:  
The Roman Church in the Tenth Century

Alessio Assonitis (The Medici Archive Project, Florence):  
The Miasma of Rome: Fra Girolamo Savonarola on the City of Popes and the  
Urbs Antiqua

#### PANEL 7: Sanitation and Renovation from Early Modern Rome to Roma capitale

##### Part 1:

Kenneth Stow (Jewish History, Haifa):  
Was the Ghetto Cleaner?

Katherine Rinne (Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities,  
Virginia):  
Cleansing Counter Reformation Rome

Respondent: Pamela O. Long (Independent Scholar, Washington, D.C.)

##### Part 2:

Renato Sansa (Università G. D'Annunzio Chieti Pescara):  
Playing Dirty: the social impact of legislation on dirt and cleanliness in  
18th-century Rome

Taina Syrjämaa (School of History, University of Turku, Finland):  
The clash of picturesque dirtiness and modern cleanliness in late  
nineteenth-century Rome

Respondent: Richard Wrigley (Art History, Nottingham)

#### PANEL 8: Immorality and Deviancy

Dominic Janes (History of Art, Birkbeck):  
'I hope the ladies present will forgive me': Victorian clergy and the  
erotics of Christian antiquities in Rome

Martina Salvante (European University Institute, Fiesole):  
Delinquency and pederasty: 'deviant' youngsters in Rome's working class  
suburbs in the late 1920s

## Plenary Lecture: Mary Douglas.

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### Reference:

CONF: Pollution and Propriety in Rome (Rome 21-22 Jun 07). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 25, 2007 (accessed Sep 15, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/29213>>.