

The Douglas Kelly Australian Essay Competition 2021

Winner:

Sophie Barnes (University of Sydney): 'The Truth, the whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth: Did the Romans Believe in the Verdicts?'

Commendation:

Jacinta Lin (University of Sydney): 'Repetition in and of *Aeneid* Book IV'

Seven universities submitted 23 entries to this competition in 2021, including some from universities which have not participated in recent years.

As in the past, the best essays had an assured voice and offered well-founded interpretations based on judicious close readings of ancient texts. In many cases they demonstrated an ability to weigh evidence from multiple sources. There were a wide range of approaches: gender studies, performativity, material culture, psychoanalysis, narratology. The literary and material culture essays were often stronger than many of the ancient history essays in their productive deployment of theoretical approaches, whereas the ancient history ones at times tended towards description or synthesis of modern narratives of ancient events, without sufficient direct discussion of the primary sources.

The judges and I would like to thank all who entered and to wish them the best for their future studies. In the Covid context, it was wonderful to see so many fine essays. This is a real tribute to the dedication, creativity, and endurance of teachers and students. To be able to say 'education happened!' is a marvel at the best of times; in the current difficult circumstances, it is really extraordinary. This year's selection of essays included very high quality work across Greek literature, Latin literature, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman history (especially cultural and political), Roman law, history of scholarship, Early Christianity, Architecture, and Archaeology. This is evidence for thriving ancient world studies across Australia.

As competition co-ordinator I would like to commend all the entrants on the quality of their work and encourage all those still eligible to consider submitting an essay again in 2022. I also extend my warm thanks to the judges, Dr Michael Champion and Dr Graeme Miles, for generously giving of their time and effort and for supporting this competition.

Peter Davis

28 January 2022