

The Douglas Kelly Australian Essay Competition 2019

Winner:

Emily Kerrison (University of Sydney): Panhellenic preoccupations - the art of poetic scope in Pindar's *Paeans*

Commendations:

Jennifer Oliveri (Macquarie University): Discuss the argument on Platonic Love in Plato's *Symposium*

Clare Pryor (University of Sydney): "My sons are spent. My line has ended": The Characterisation of Mezentius in Virgil's *Aeneid*

With thirty-three entries from six universities, the state of this competition might seem very healthy. There are, however, significant problems.

First, Classics, Ancient History and cognate disciplines are taught in twelve or more Australian universities. Entries, however, tend to come only from larger departments on the eastern seaboard. In my view, ASCS needs to encourage entries from the smaller discipline groups across the country.

Second, there is an imbalance in the number of entries submitted by larger universities, with the number of entries ranging from six to sixteen. To ensure that only the best work is submitted and that the judges are not overwhelmed by the volume of essays, I suggest that a limit be imposed of, say, eight to ten entries per university.

The examiners thought that there were very good essays across all sub-disciplines, and especially in Roman history, Greek and Roman literature, and reception studies. The top essays showed excellent engagement with the ancient sources, independent evaluation of relevant secondary literature, and sustained complex arguments. The more successful essays tended to arise from the more complex prompts. They also noted that careful proofreading of ancient languages and strong engagement with original languages, where relevant, would improve the quality of essays.

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

2020. I also extend my warm thanks to the two judges for generously giving of their time and for supporting this competition.

Peter Davis

18 January 2020