

Polarization and Politicalization: *o tempora, o mores*

Established by CAMWS in 2019, the Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) directs attention to the opportunities and complexities of bringing students of historically marginalized backgrounds to materials enriched by perspectives and materials which are themselves increasingly diverse and inclusive. We have worked to honor students and faculty whose achievements bring credit to themselves and their institutions. Their accomplishments provide broad testimony to the continued vitality of our profession.

We do so at a time that presents multiple challenges for our field. There are politicians who seek to impose particular perspectives on texts, on grammar and language, and even on the historical facts associated with documents and monuments. We hear about school boards, administrators, and social media influencers who seek to control the texts we read, how they are interpreted, and the objects displayed in museums. Uncomfortable facts are refused rather than taken as the basis for continued reflection in light of new discoveries and methodologies. Partisan rancor can make it especially difficult to balance academic freedom with the expectations of accountability—some reasonable, but some inflated—that characterize our times.

Our field gives us an invaluable perspective on this atmosphere of politicized polarization. Authors like Virgil and Aristophanes, Plato and Cicero, lived in eras of profound uncertainty and civil upheaval that in many ways mirror our own. Their explorations of moral and political complexity, along with the ever-evolving tradition that seeks to recover less prominent voices, can offer guidance and hope as we navigate these troubled waters.

Our session will begin with opening remarks from a classicist who during the course of a distinguished career has dealt creatively and forcefully with these and other matters. After

describing the lay of the land, she will invite a range of classicists to offer their own thoughts, based on their own experiences. These individuals (associated with a range of institutions) will discuss constructive steps they have witnessed and/or helped inaugurate.

Following the responses from the panelists, the first speaker will invite audience members to participate in our conversation.