

Ovid and Virgil

Two decades ago, eschewing metaphors that would imply rivalry or anxiety, Alden Smith characterized Ovid's relationship to his towering poetic predecessor as a "poetic embrace." His book marked a turning point in our understanding of Ovid, and especially of his relationship to Virgil. Rather than seeing Ovid as a degenerate "Silver Age" poet too much in love with his own cleverness, modern readers are increasingly coming to appreciate his sophisticated allusions to Virgil and others as a crucial part of his insightful political and literary commentary.

This panel seeks both to assess and to further our understanding of the fascinating intertextual conversation between these two great poets. Paper #1, "Hail wedded love!": Embracing the Conjugal in Ovid," explores Ovid's handling of the themes of marriage and married love in relation to his Virgilian models, shedding light on the relationships—both conjugal and intertextual—of such famous couples as Orpheus and Eurydice, Dido and Aeneas, and Augustus and Livia. Paper #2, "Festive Allusions: Ovid on the Ides of March," discusses how, in Ovid's inventive and irreverent engagement with Virgil and others, issues of political and literary authority are intertwined: the *Fasti* mischievously downplays the assassination of Julius Caesar by emphasizing the deification of a different mortal, Anna Perenna, whose licentious festival contrasted with more serious imperial commemorations and morals. Paper #3, "Vergil and Ovid: Poets of Their Times, and of Ours," offers an overview of how critical receptions of Virgil, Ovid, and Virgil-in-Ovid have responded to historical events in recent years, as well as a prophecy of what interpretive trends may be in our future.