

Ancient Historian's Panel January 4, 2008 APA Annual Meeting

Introductory Remarks by the Organizer: Michele Renee Salzman

University of California at Riverside.

For the APA Committee on Ancient History¹

Graduate Training for the Ancient Historian: Or how best to study ancient history in the 21st century?

As an historian, I think it only fair that I begin this panel by mentioning the origins and causes for its appearance at the APA – rather than at the AHA. I have recently implemented a Ph.D. Program in Ancient History for the University of California at Riverside where I teach in the History Department. I am also serving as Chair of the Tri-Campus Classics Program which involves the campuses of the University of California at Riverside, Irvine and San Diego. So housed in a History Department, but intimately engaged with Classics I have been forced to confront the issues this panel will address: How best to study Ancient History in the 21st century?

In many ways David Potter's *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (Routledge, 1999), raises some of the fundamental concerns. His book "examines the different kinds of text from which Roman history is reconstructed by modern students, and explores how ancient participants in the literary culture of the Roman empire constructed their own history" (Introduction). Potter highlights and explains the uses of ancient literary texts for the historian. But his book raises the fundamental question, too, of how to balance the traditional emphasis in Classics on literary texts with the expectation that ancient historians will also be trained in modern historical methods and theories? If, as is increasingly the case, ancient historians are asked to teach world

history courses and to construct thematic class offerings, should the training of ancient historians not also include courses on comparative history, as well as world history? And if historical methods courses are usually taught with a modern focus, how could they be better taught to advance the training of an ancient historian? Should the traditional ancillary disciplines – epigraphy, numismatics and papyrology – be part of every ancient historian’s graduate school training?² If we do all these, will graduate education in history suffer from an unrealistic expansion of expectations? If so, would it be better for the ancient historian to train in a classics department? What are the significant differences in training between one or the other department? Finally, can Americans learn from the training provided in other countries?

These questions will be addressed by this outstanding panel of ancient historians, from a variety of graduate programs in the United States and Canada.

Participants: (10 minutes per person to precede a more general discussion).
Introduction: Michele Renee Salzman. University of California at Riverside

Charles Hedrick, University of California at Santa Cruz.
Richard Talbert, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
Elizabeth Pollard, San Diego State University.
David Potter, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.
Jonathan Edmondson, York University.
Walter Scheidel, Stanford University.

Commentator: Kurt Raaflob, Brown University.

¹ This panel follows logically upon two previous panels launched by the Committee on Ancient History; this past year, a panel was devoted to “Ancient Mediterranean and World History,” (2007); and two years ago, the state of the field and its undergraduate curriculum was the focus of a panel on “The Future of Ancient Mediterranean History in the Modern University,” (2005; for papers on undergraduate and departmental issues, see *The Occasional Papers of the APA’s Committee on Ancient History*, Volumes 2 and 3, ed. C. M. Fauber, 2005-2006.). However, this proposed panel is the first to focus exclusively on graduate training in ancient history. The panelists will discuss not only the present realities of graduate training, but they will be asked to offer suggestions for the “ideal” program of study, and to address the kinds of knowledge and the theoretical emphases that will be most relevant to the study of ancient Mediterranean history, Greek and Roman, in the 21st century.

² K. Raaflaub, “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Reflections on the Role of Ancient History in a Modern University,” *The Classical Journal* 98.4 (2004)415-431.