

## Conference Report

The Hercules Project conference Hercules: A Hero for All Ages took place 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> June 2013, with 55 delegates in attendance. A further 16 delegates took part through the virtual conference package, with audio recordings of papers, handouts and PowerPoint slides being made available online.

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## Delegate Breakdown

Two thirds of delegates were speakers (including three virtual delegates), accounting for 37/55 delegate places (67%). Other than from the host institution, few delegates came from the same institution.

University	Non-speaker Full	Non-speaker Day	Virtual Delegates	Speakers Full	Speakers Day
Leeds	2	8		6	
Lisbon				1	
KCL					2
RCSSD				1	
Cambridge			1		
Naples			1		
Texas				2	
Algarve/Coimbra				1	
Open University		1	1	1	
Coimbra				1	
Monmouth, US				1	
Bar-Ilan, Israel				1	
Athens	1	1			1
Otago				1	
Arizona, US			1		
New England, US				1	
Westminster					1
Bristol				1	
Munich				1	
St Andrews				1	
Illinois, US				1	
Salento				1	
Heidelberg	1				
Paris				1	1
Haifa, Israel					1
Ben Gurion, Israel		1			
Vermont					1
Glasgow				1	1
TSD, Wales				1	
Sydney				1	
American University of Rome				1	
CUNY					1
Roehampton				1	
Monash, US					1
Durham, UK					2
Liverpool		1			
Manchester		1			
Reading				1	
Warsaw					1
Independent				5	1
Museum	1				1
School				2	
Totals	5	13	18	32	5

## Feedback from Delegates

36/55 physical delegates returned feedback forms, a return rate of 65%.

The questionnaire covered a number of areas, ranging from general experience to quality of papers, and effects on behaviour, from organisation to catering and accommodation.

- 1) Gathering opinions of the conference experience as a whole by delegates selecting, or adding words/phrases. Delegates thought the conference was:



Words	Number of responses
Exciting	18
Just right	9
Boring	
Up-to-date	15
Too long	
Heroic	9
Confusing	
Mediocre	
Flat	
Identity-affirming	4
Dreadful	1
Intriguing	11
Friendly	27
Inspiring	21
Value for money	2
Too short	3
Disappointing	
Marvellous	7
Community-building	13
Controversial	1
Behind the times	
About right	3
<b>Delegate-added Words</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
Heartening	1
Stimulating	2
Enlightening	1
Engaging	1
Illuminating	1
Well-organised	3
Interdisciplinary	2

Further comments:

Highlighted area	Comment
Overall excellence	<i>"A model of good practice. Very useful and inspiring."</i>
	<i>"Exactly what a conference should be – bringing together different ideas and people."</i>
Interdisciplinarity	<i>"Eminently interdisciplinary!"</i>
	<i>"The interdisciplinary nature of the event was challenging and worked well."</i>
Range of papers	<i>"Range and variety were excellent"</i>
	<i>"Wonderful range of papers and an engagement with all kinds of modern media – really illuminating about the place of the classical hero, his cultural trajectory into the modern world."</i>
	<i>"I loved the 'Hercules in Popular Culture' panel!!!"</i>
Atmosphere	<i>"Heartening (in the circumstances)"</i>
Organisation	<i>"Extremely well organised!"</i>
	<i>"Extremely well organized."</i>
	<i>"Good organized."</i>
Gratitude	<i>"Thank you!"</i>

2) Delegates were asked to assess the quality of the papers and were very positive about this.

Excellent (6)	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Disappointing (2)	Awful (1)
12	23	3		1	
31%	59%	7.5%		2.5%	

39 responses were counted because several delegates circled both Excellent and Very Good.

$$\text{Overall rating: } ((12 \times 6) + (23 \times 5) + (3 \times 4) + (1 \times 2))/39 = 5.1$$

Highlighted Area	Comment
Scope of Conference	<i>"Real synergies clear both within panels and across the conference as a whole. Papers excellent, but conference also much more than the sum of its parts."</i>
	<i>"The contributions were well thought through and the programme planning was extremely good and coherent. The plenary lecture struck one false note in the programme and in its scholarly remit."</i>
	<i>"I was very impressed by the breadth of different subjects – also, always interesting to meet people from other disciplines. Was most "International" conference I've ever been to."</i>
	<i>"Some things I know too little about to be able to properly evaluate."</i>
Timing of papers	<i>"Amazing how many people, even senior figures, can't organise themselves to speak for just 20 minutes!"</i>
	<i>"Keep speakers to time!"</i>
	<i>"Speakers should be kept to time frames."</i>
Technology	<i>"The range of media was fabulous but slightly let down by the technology."</i>
Content of papers	<i>"No. Perhaps that some papers had a very similar theme and content."</i>
	<i>"I sometimes found that the papers on a scholar's primary research field were stronger than the ones by classicists working on later reception (&amp; I am one of the latter)."</i>
Quality of papers	<i>"Some highly thought-provoking."</i>
	<i>"Quality at such conferences always varies"</i>
	<i>"A few papers were rather superficial and lacking in rigour."</i>
	<i>"[Very good] - mostly..."</i>

- 3) This question sought suggestions for further areas which might be explored by the project. 39% of delegates responded to this question, with suggestions that tended to cover more than one area.

Suggestion area	Comment
Further conferences	Do a conference every year! 😊
Publication	You have the basis for a great conference volume here and perhaps more ambitiously a database (expanding the website) as a resource for researchers and teachers globally. I hope you are going to publish a collection of the papers.
Database	You have the basis for a great conference volume here and perhaps more ambitiously a database (expanding the website) as a resource for researchers and teachers globally.
Methodological matters	1) Explorations as to how the separate perspectives, disciplines, periods can coalesce – whilst also remaining distinctive. 2) The ‘masculinities’ of Hercules <u>over</u> time and in different locations deserve further work.
Salutati	“More Salutati, please!”
Masculinity	1) Explorations as to how the separate perspectives, disciplines, periods can coalesce – whilst also remaining distinctive. 2) The ‘masculinities’ of Hercules <u>over</u> time and in different locations deserve further work.
Non-heroic aspect	More <u>non</u> -heroic aspects?
Video games	Video games of course! And the “material culture” (not sure if I’m writing correctly) – I mean Hercules in everyday life: in Poland we found e.g. a bike named Hercules, several companies etc. But <u>video games</u> definitely YES!
Advertising	Video games of course! And the “material culture” (not sure if I’m writing correctly) – I mean Hercules in everyday life: in Poland we found e.g. a bike named Hercules, several companies etc. But <u>video games</u> definitely YES!
Material culture	Material culture – arts, architecture. Hercules’ image on medals (ancient and modern).
Late antique	I am hoping for more late antique Hercules/Hercules and the Christians. Hercules 1) in late antiquity/Byzantium; 2) in the post-colonial world; 3) is he a hero for theatre or a hero for cinema from C20 <sup>th</sup> onwards?
Christian	I am hoping for more late antique Hercules/Hercules and the Christians.
Theatre/cinema	Hercules 1) in late antiquity/Byzantium; 2) in the post-colonial world; 3) is he a hero for theatre or a hero for cinema from C20 <sup>th</sup> onwards?
Post-colonial	Hercules 1) in late antiquity/Byzantium; 2) in the post-colonial world; 3) is he a hero for theatre or a hero for cinema from C20 <sup>th</sup> onwards?

- 4) 61% of respondents (40% of delegates) delegates replied to the question asking what they would do as a result of the conference. The conference was always envisaged as being the first step in a longer-term project, and had the aim of establishing an international network of scholars interested in post-classical receptions of Herakles-Hercules. For this reason the 27% of responses which referred to the networking potential of the event are presented before the more typical responses concerning research and publication (41% of responses, respectively).

Plan area	Comments
Use Contacts	To keep in touch with some people from the conference.
6/22 = 27%	Keep in contact with a couple of other delegates.
	Use new informations + meeting “Heraklean” colleagues.
	I am hoping to write an article on my topic <b>and</b> send some emails to some interesting people I met.

	1) Finish writing up the long version of my paper; <b>2)</b> Follow up some really interesting new conversations.
	1) Write more; <b>2)</b> Contact people.
<b>Do Research</b> <b>9/22 = 41%</b>	1) Finish writing up the long version of my paper; <b>2)</b> Follow up some really interesting new conversations.
	<b>Use new informations</b> + meeting “Heraklean” colleagues.
	1) Use the insights I got here while revising my PhD thesis for publication; <b>2)</b> continue to work on the late antique Hercules; <b>3)</b> do more “reception”
	Further research of course: there were many people who inspired me to do so! And of course I am going to pass the results of the conference to my supervising professor (Kataryna Marciniak, PhD).
	Keep up again with work on Hercules.
	Do more research!
	Read more on some of the areas!
	Read more Dante.
	<b>1)</b> Think more about my paper; <b>2)</b> Explore the reception of Hercules in other periods; <b>3)</b> attempt to publish an improved version of my paper.
<b>Write/Publish</b> <b>9/22 = 41%</b>	<b>1)</b> Write more; <b>2)</b> Contact people.
	<b>1)</b> Finish writing up the long version of my paper; <b>2)</b> Follow up some really interesting new conversations.
	I am hoping to write an article on my topic and send some emails to some interesting people I met.
	I will reformulate my paper in order to incorporate the suggestions with other points of view and comparative perspectives.
	<b>1)</b> Use the insights I got here while revising my PhD thesis for publication; <b>2)</b> continue to work on the late antique Hercules; <b>3)</b> do more “reception”
	Rethinking my chapter on Hercules as Labour Movement icon (for Edith Hall’s Classics and Class volume).
	1) Think more about my paper; <b>2)</b> Explore the reception of Hercules in other periods; <b>3)</b> attempt to publish an improved version of my paper.
	1) I feel more confident about possibly teaching a Classics & Film course in the future. <b>2)</b> Discussion after my paper may cause me to revise my argument.
	1) Use material in classes. <b>2)</b> Perhaps write a paper for publication.
<b>Event-related</b> <b>4/22 = 18%</b>	Hold a spookily similar conference of my own.
	Organise another conference!
	Organise exhibition of Maguire’s works.
	Visit Marian Maguire’s exhibition when it happens.
<b>Further Participation in the project</b> <b>2/22 = 9%</b>	Hopefully to continue to contribute to this project.
	Organise exhibition of Maguire’s works.
<b>Teaching</b> <b>2/22 = 9%</b>	<b>1)</b> I feel more confident about possibly teaching a Classics & Film course in the future. <b>2)</b> Discussion after my paper may cause me to revise my argument.
	<b>1)</b> Use material in classes. <b>2)</b> Perhaps write a paper for publication.
<b>Other</b> <b>1/22 = 4.5%</b>	Go home and sleep.

5) The organisation of the conference was acknowledged to be excellent with scores for the organisation \*before\* and \*at\* the conference both scoring highly.

**Before Arrival: 5.76**

Excellent (6)	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Disappointing (2)	Awful (1)
26	6	1			
79%	18%	3%			

Overall rating:  $((26 \times 6) + (6 \times 5) + (1 \times 4))/33 = 5.76$

At the conference: 5.85

Excellent (6)	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Disappointing (2)	Awful (1)
30	3	1			
88%	9%	3%			

Overall rating:  $((30 \times 6) + (3 \times 5) + (1 \times 4))/34 = 5.85$

Further comments:

Compliments
Very good work!
Super conference.
So well organised!
The organisation was <u>superlative</u> – the most well-organised conference I have ever attended.
Brilliant team led by Eleanor who was particularly wonderful. Whenever gremlins struck she always had multiple back-up plans. All unfailingly cheerful and helpful.
Eleanor OKell was incredibly helpful, answering all sorts of questions beforehand.
Eleanor is a hero!
There are no words to describe the excellence of organisation. Emma Stafford and Eleanor Okell are my Hercules and they achieved all the Herculean labours. THANK YOU.
Heartiest congratulations to Eleanor OKell for running such a smooth and congenial conference.
Thank you for your hard work and the friendly atmosphere.
Suggestions for Improvement
Allow more time for delegates to take cases and book into accommodation – not possible to do in a 20-minute turn around.

6) The catering and accommodation were also ranked highly.

a) Catering:

Excellent (6)	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Disappointing (2)	Awful (1)
19	11		1	1	
59%	34%		3%	3%	

Further comments: "Perfect", "Mixed (see further comments)".

Overall rating:  $((19 \times 6) + (11 \times 5) + (1 \times 3) + (1 \times 2))/32 = 5.44$

b) Accommodation (8 responses were N/A as filled in by Day delegates)

Excellent (6)	Very Good (5)	Good (4)	Satisfactory (3)	Disappointing (2)	Awful (1)
18	5		1		

Overall rating:  $((18 \times 6) + (5 \times 5) + (1 \times 3))/24 = 5.67$

## Further comments regarding the accommodation or catering: 33%

<b>General</b>	😊
	Very well done! It has been a pleasure to be here!
	Both much higher than my expectations!
	Really good – no need to be picky.
<b>Food (General)</b>	Catering – pleasantly surprised to find that the University can produce such good food!
	I LOVED the food!
	I need to revise my prejudices regarding English food... it was marvellous.
	Food was delicious! Storm Jameson was very convenient.
	Mixed: lunches & dinners very good; <i>breakfast experience disappointing – no designated area for attendees of this conference; indifferent food.</i>
<b>Food (Breakfast)</b>	<i>Make sure refectory is open a bit before student rush so conference delegates are not rushed when presenting at first session.</i>
	Mixed: lunches & dinners very good; <i>breakfast experience disappointing – no designated area for attendees of this conference; indifferent food.</i>
<b>Accommodation (Business School)</b>	Venue poor – 109 too far away and audio quality was awful.
	The 2 locations were too far away from each other and too disparate.
<b>Accommodation (Storm Jameson)</b>	Food was delicious! Storm Jameson was very convenient.

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