



Seminar

PIA CAMPEGGIANI

EURIAS Fellow, SCAS.
Research Fellow, University of Bologna

*Ethics and Poetics:
Aristotle on Friendship and Imagination*

Tuesday, 7 November, 11:15 a.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
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S W E D I S H
C O L L E G I U M
for ADVANCED STUDY

ABOUT PIA CAMPEGGIANI

Pia Campeggiani holds a BA and an MA in Philosophy from the University of Bologna and a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Law from the University of Pisa. Since 2013, she has been working at the University of Bologna as a postdoctoral fellow and as an adjunct professor of moral philosophy. In 2015 and 2016, she also worked at the University of Edinburgh, first as a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, then as a visiting scholar at the School of History, Classics and Archaeology.

She is the author of the monograph *Le ragioni dell'ira Potere e riconoscimento nell'antica Grecia* [The Reasons for Anger: Power and Recognition in Ancient Greece] (2013). Her most recent publications include the article 'Other Selves in Fiction: Philia, Eleos, and the Ethics of Narrative' (*Maia*, 2017, 1) and the entry 'Emotions' for the *Oxford Bibliographies in Classics* (2017, with David Konstan).

Her work is on the philosophy of emotions, with a special focus on the role of emotions in ancient Greek ethics and poetics. She is particularly interested in exploring the relevance of ancient views for contemporary accounts. At SCAS, she will be working on pity, fellow-feeling and emotional understanding in Aristotle's ethics and aesthetics.

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I will offer a parallel reading of Aristotle's works on ethics and poetics by bringing his account of friendship to bear on some of his most important assumptions regarding artistic representation and the emotions. I will start by exploring the emotional features of Aristotelian friendship (φιλία), as it is discussed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, in terms of familiarity (συνήθεια), reciprocal concern (βούλεσθαι τὰγαθὰ ἐκείνου ἕνεκα), and similarity (ὁμοιότης). I will then shed light on the analogies between the ethical notion of friendship and the emotion of pity (ἔλεος) experienced by audiences (and readers) of tragedy. By doing so, I aim at showing that, from an Aristotelian viewpoint, real-life relationships that are grounded on friendship share a common pattern with the sympathetic connections that art invites us to establish with fictional characters through imagination. The two realms – what is actual and what is fictional – are closely intertwined and the educational potential that Aristotle attributes to *mimēsis* is rooted in their intersections. This approach, I argue, paves the way for an interpretation of aesthetic emotions that is embedded in what may be defined as the "ethics of narrative": not only is it a narrative attitude that we need to cultivate when we engage in egalitarian interactions inspired by friendly and loving emotions, but narrative itself enhances our faculty for finding common sets of meaning and emotional consonance with other individuals in real-life experiences.