K & Q 2018 proposal – Carey Fleiner

Reading Between the Lines: Evidence of the writing and public speaking of Agrippina the Younger (A. D. 15-59)

This paper considers the writing and diplomacy of Agrippina the Younger (A. D. 15-59) including evidence of her memoir, her letters, and references to her public speaking and political advice. Her literacy and ease with public communication are sat in the context of growing up in a family where literacy was prevalent amongst both sexes and a key tool in public administration – especially as Augustus, her great-grandfather, deliberately blurred the distinction between his private household and the public ‘first family’ of Rome. Agrippina exemplifies the practical use of a woman’s education publicly, given her unique position as wife and mother to two politically inexperienced emperors who not only relied on but sanctioned (to a point) her political acumen to help to stabilise and support their rule.

First, this paper discusses the context of Agrippina’s education in the royal family, and how a woman of her status expressed herself via written and oral communication. Then it will examine Agrippina’s literacy and public speaking (as well as that of other Augustan and Julio-Claudian women) in context with references to practical literacy, composition, and public expression attributed to various family members. Finally, it will consider the ideological conflict between Agrippina’s literate capabilities and the contemporary notion that a woman who was too educated was in danger of becoming masculine – ‘masculinity’ defined by the Romans as having a dominant personality and participating actively in public if not political life. Tacitus (especially), Suetonius, and Dio Cassius used their own literary skills to depict Agrippina as an aggressive women whose behaviour undermined her husband (Claudius) and son (Nero)’s authority and demonstrated the men’s political inefficiency and weakness. At the same time, these authors note Agrippina’s writing, letters, and speeches not as extraordinary activities themselves but rather as embedded evidence that Agrippina’s literacy and capabilities were readily folded into imperial activities.

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**Education:**

Ph. D., History, May 1996, University of Virginia.

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**HE Employment:**

Senior Lecturer, Classical and Early Medieval History, University of Winchester, 2012-

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**Select Publications:**

‘‘She is my Eleanor:’ The Character of Isabella of Angouleme in Novels and Film: A Medieval Queen in Modern Media,’ *Pre-modern Rulers and (Post)modern Viewers: Gender, Sex and Power in Popular Culture*. Janice North, Ellie Woodacre, and Karl Alvestad, eds., Palgrave, 2018. REF 2020 (8000 words).

‘‘Rosy, Won’t You Please Come Home:’ Family, Home, and Cultural Identity in the Music of Ray Davies and the Kinks'’in Mark Donnelly, Lee Brooks and Richard Mills, eds., *Mad Dogs and Englishness: Popular Music and English Identity*. Bloomsbury Press. 2017. REF 2020 (8500 words)

*Doctor Who and History: Critical Essays on Imagining the Past.* Coeditor with Dene October. Co-author of introduction, and of the chapter ‘Doctor, Go Roman: Emperor Nero and Historical Comedy in *Doctor Who,’* McFarland, 2017. REF 2020 (Intro, 2000 words; chapter 8500 words).

*The Kinks: A Thoroughly English Phenomenon*, Rowman, Littlefield as part of their series on Rock, Pop, and Culture. March 2017. REF 2020. (c. 80,000 words).

*Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era*. Carey Fleiner and Elena Woodacre, eds., Palgrave, October 2016. REF 2020. (Introduction, c. 2500 words)

*Optima Mater*: Power, Influence, and the Maternal Bonds between Agrippina the Younger ( AD 15-59) and Nero, Emperor of Rome (AD 54-68)” in *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children: Wielding Political Authority from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era, Vol. 1* Elena Woodacre & Carey Fleiner, eds. New York: Palgrave, 2015, 149-170 . REF 2020 (c.8500 words).

‘Heroes and Villains: The Medieval Guitarist and Modern Parallels,’ in James Robinson, K. Buehler-Williams, and Naomi Speakman, *The British Museum Citole: New Perspectives (British Museum Research Publication).* London: The British Museum, September 2015, 51-60.

**Areas of Research Interest:** Roman History (especially imperial Roman society and material culture and Julio-Claudian women; popular culture in Classical Rome; Roman culture in modern film and television); Carolingian (intellectual and cultural) history. Popular Music in 20th century culture and society (specifically the Kinks and Eldridge R. Johnson).