

Proposal for the 2009 FIEC meeting at Berlin (24-29 August)

a) Contributor's name and complete mailing address, including email:

Dr Sandra DUCIC
Department of Classics and Ancient History
38 North Bailey
Durham DH1 3EU
UK
Email: sandra.ducic@durham.ac.uk

b) Preferred panel: #6 (Turning Points in the Reception of Classical Antiquity)

c) Title of the paper: "Turning point in the reception of Plato's *Symposium*: Hölderlin's Diotima in *Hyperion*"

d) Length of the paper: 20 minutes

e) Outline of the content:

"Turning point in the reception of Plato's *Symposium*:
Hölderlin's Diotima in *Hyperion*"

Sandra DUCIC
Honorary Research Fellow
(Durham University, UK)

The vital lead I intend to follow in my paper is the importance of the ancient figure of Eros (Love) in Hölderlin's *Hyperion*, where it takes the form of the beloved Diotima, whose name is an explicit reference to Diotima of Mantinea in Plato's *Symposium*.

In the *Symposium*, Diotima is presented as a seer who initiated Socrates into the knowledge of Eros, son of the immortal god Poros and mortal Penia. By his birth, Eros is neither a god, nor a human being, but something in between: a 'Great Daemon' or Mediator. In Hölderlin's works, the figure of Eros appears to represent human love par excellence ('So zu lieben', he says, 'ist menschlich'), that which enables us to reconcile two antagonistic forces (*Triebe*) active in us: one that drives us 'to free and ennoble ourselves, and to improve endlessly' (our divine side); the other which enjoins us 'to accept a determination and receive a limit' (our mortal side).

In my paper, I intend to show that if Hölderlin's Diotima indeed personifies the renaissance of Platonic Eros, it actually does so through the prism of Christian love. Though the figure of Christ is never explicitly named in *Hyperion*, it is clearly present throughout the book. I will argue that we find many distinct traits proper to the Christian *agapè* in the way the beloved Diotima is presented and depicted. I will also unearth important passages where Diotima is called "die Lieblingin der Zeit" and directly linked to the idea of "die neue Kirche" (i.e. the Christian Church). Those indications tend to make Diotima, so to say, a "catalyst" of two streams of love, Eros and *Agapè*. This unification, in my view, testifies to Hölderlin's new approach to classical antiquity and constitutes a real turning point in the history of its reception.