



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
IMAGININGS OF GREEK ANTIQUITY
AND THE PERFORMING ARTS,
VISUAL ARTS AND CINEMA —
AESTHETICS, IDENTITIES, IDEOLOGIES
27 — 28 SEPTEMBER 2025

School of Drama
Faculty of Fine Arts, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
European Network of Research and Documentation of Performances of Ancient Drama

**Imaginings of Greek Antiquity and the Performing Arts,
Visual Arts and Cinema:
Aesthetics, Identities, Ideologies**
(Thessaloniki, 27-28/9/2025)



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**Imaginings of Greek Antiquity and the Performing Arts,
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PROGRAMME

**27–28 September 2025
AUn Research Dissemination Centre
Amphitheatre III**

SATURDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

9:00-9:30 REGISTRATION

9:30-9:45 Introductory addresses

9:45-10:00 ELENI PAPAZOGLU

Communal hellenism(s) and modern Greek culture: The paradigm of ancient drama performances

10:00-10:45 SESSION 1 THE RUINS AND US

CHAIR: CATHERINE GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS

GRAHAM SHACKELL/NICOLAS ZORZIN

Toumba Serron: An experimental performance archaeology project in Northern-Greece

DIMITRIS KARGIOTIS

Representing the authentic: Archaeology, photography, ideology

MARKIA LIAPI

From personal to political antiquity: The ruined self in H.D.'s Scrapbooks

10:45-11:00 Discussion

11:00-12:00 SESSION 2 ANTIQUITY ON STAGE 1

CHAIR: ELENI PAPAZOGLU

AVRA SIDIROPOULOU

Community, chorality, and the global experience. Conceptualizing the collective 'We' on stage

ROMAIN PIANA

'Aristophanic theatre' as a generic category in XIXth century France: Between political satire and intermediality

PAVLÍNA ŠÍPOVÁ

From folk song to the Delphic idea: The first dramatic encounters of 'bohemian' Central Europe with Modern Greece

ANTONIS GLYTZOYRIS

'Inside the Marble Niche of Classical Memories'. Loie Fuller in Athens (1914)

12:00-12:30 Discussion

12:30-13:30 LUNCH BREAK

13:30-14:15 SESSION 3 GENDERED ANTIQUITY

CHAIR: YAIR LIPSHITZ

GIORGOS SAMPATAKAKIS

Queering Greek tragedy adaptation as agonistic act (or the modality of agonistic adaptation)

JÉRÉMIE CYR-COOK/RAPHÄEL ADAMS

Olympus has but snow: Greek myths, gym culture, and the performance of contemporary masculinities

ALEXANDROS EFKLIDIS

A trans *Kassandra* between Buenos Aires and Athens: Gender, immigration, and sexuality in the creation of a chamber opera

14:15-14:30 Discussion

14:30-15:00 SESSION 4 CONTEMPORARY ANTIQUITIES

CHAIR: ALEXANDROS TENEKETZIS

YAIR LIPSHITZ

Gaming Greece: Role-playing the epic and the tragic in *Agon*

ELENA STAMATOPOULOU/DIMITRIS VARKAS

Polarity 01: Re-imagining Clytemnestra through embodied polyphony, AI assemblage, and digital fractures

15:00-15:15 Discussion

15:15-16:15 SESSION 5 MODERN GREEK CLASSICAL RECEPTIONS

CHAIR: ALEXANDROS EFKLIDIS

KATIA PAPANDREOPOULOU

The manifold and insidious uses of the classical element: Greece's participation in the World's Columbian Exposition of Chicago, 1893

EMMANUEL GEORGOUDAKIS/ANASTASIA KOUTSOUDAKI

Visualizing authority: Mythological imagery and state propaganda in the Greek dictatorship

ELENA KAMILARI

Greek Tragedy on the National Radio Foundation during the military junta (1967-1974)

KALLIOPE KOUNDOURI/ANASTASSIOS KOUNDOURIS

Receptions, perceptions, representations and significations of 'classical Greek' themes on public murals in Athens

16:15-16:45 Discussion

16:45-17:15 COFFEE BREAK

17:15-18:15 KEYNOTE SPEAKER

WAJDI MOUAWAD

Author, Stage Director

Artistic Director Théâtre National de La Colline

La tragédie du verbe finir

Introduced by PLATON MAVROMOUSTAKOS

19:00 CONFERENCE BANQUET

SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

9:30-10:30	SESSION 6	ANTIQUITY ON STAGE 2
	CHAIR: ANNA STAVRAKOPOULOU CHRISTOS ARGYROPOULOS A return to 'Greek' roots: Cherubini's <i>Médée</i> at Epidauros (1961) ATHANASIOS BLESSIOS The Greek performances of the <i>Bacchae</i> of Euripides during the recent years of the 21st century OLYMPIA GLYKIOTI Antiquity and beyond. The Dionysiac in Theodoros Terzopoulos' theatre: Spatiality and temporality in the production of <i>The Trojan Women</i> (2017/2018) FILIPPOS KARAHERIAS/CHARITINI TSIKOURA Aesthetics of disruption: Violence as a divergence in Ivo Van Hove's <i>Age of Rage</i>	
10:30-11:00	Discussion	
11:00-12:00	SESSION 7	ANTIQUITY ON FILM AND THE VISUAL ARTS
	CHAIR: LYDIA PAPADIMITRIOU STAVROS ALIFRAGKIS Past forward: Modern cinematic views of the ancient past in post-WWII Greece MARIA CHALKOU/PANAGIOTA KONSTANTINAKOU National heritage under threat: Debates on cinema and Greek antiquity in 1950s and 1960s Greece ERIC DRISCOLL The archaeological imagination in the work of Kostas Vrettakos and Socratis Mavrommatis EIRINI GEROGIANI Pantelis Xagoraris and Ancient Greece: Intersections of Mathematics, Art, and Philosophy	
12:00-12:30	Discussion	
12:30-13:30	LUNCH BREAK	
13:30-14:15	SESSION 8	POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF CLASSICAL RECEPTIONS 1
	CHAIR: ROMAIN PIANA CATHERINE GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS Staging Jason and the conquest of the golden fleece: Visual arts and ephemeral spectacles in France, 1450–1560 NATALIA MINIOTI Contradictory readings of antiquity at the Syracuse Festival in its early years (1914–1939) ELEFThERIA IOANNIDOU I wanna feel for common people: Reimagining tragedy in the era of global neoliberalism	
14:15-14:30	Discussion	

14:30-15:15	SESSION 9	POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF CLASSICAL RECEPTIONS 2
	CHAIR: PLATON MAVROMOUSTAKOS KYRIAKI DEMIRI Refugee crisis and the politics of exclusion in Aeschylus' <i>Suppliants</i> and Elfriede Jelinek's <i>Die Schutzbefohlenen</i> : An intertextual approach DÁŠA ČIRIPOVÁ Tear and start over EFIMIA KARAKANTZA Palestinian Antigone(s): 'We are not princesses' by B. Auger and I. Azzam (documentary film, 2018)	
15:15-15:30	Discussion	
15:30-16:00	COFFEE BREAK	
16:00-17:00	SESSION 10	ANTIQUITY ON STAGE 3
	CHAIR: PANTELIS MICHELAKIS GAIA BENAMATI Second to None? Menelaus as a tragic hero on the contemporary stage NATHAN BOWMAN Spectacles of horror: Approaching the supernatural in Greek tragedy IOANNA LIOUTSIA/LEONIDAS PAPADOPOULOS Inventing barbarians: Foreign directors of ancient drama on the Greek soil EVDOKIA DELIPETROU/ARGYRIS ZAFIRIS When Aristophanes 'becomes us': Ancient Greek comedy on the contemporary Greek stage	
17:00-17:30	Discussion	
17:30-17:45	CONCLUSION	ANNA STAVRAKOPOULOU

**Imaginings of Greek Antiquity and the Performing Arts,
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ABSTRACTS

Stavros Alifragkis, Dr., Architect Engineer

Past Forward: Modern Cinematic Views of the Ancient Past in Post-WWII Greece

As modern Greece entered the competitive realm of the mass tourism industry and began to shape its international image as an attractive destination, narrative cinema played a supporting role in the top-down process of formulating an appropriate national narrative for both export and domestic consumption. International film productions shot on location in Greece during the 1960s affirmed the country's idealized position as a threshold space between an imagined past and a promising future, where good-natured people lead uncomplicated lives amidst the antiquities. Naturally, what is now referred to as heritage management, as well as the issue of antiquities smuggling, became prominent topics, thematized as early as 1956 in Negulesco's *Boy on a Dolphin*.

Early in the narrative universe of the film, a revealing sequence serves as a key to understanding the communal imaginings of Greek antiquity: it showcases the recent work of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, notably the excavations at the Ancient Agora following the demolition of the Vrysaki neighbourhood, culminating in the restoration of the Stoa of Attalos. The sumptuous widescreen cinematography of Sophia Loren and Alan Ladd with the Parthenon and the Erechtheion in the background evokes a patronizing West—embodied by the figure of the American archaeologist—that instructs the locals on the appropriate way to engage with their glorious past. Similarly, the recently renovated (Old) Acropolis Museum, meticulously reconstructed in a Cinecittà studio, reintroduces Greece to international audiences of potential visitors, while positioning the ancient past as the country's principal exportable commodity—already anticipated under the provisions of the Marshall Plan.

Based on formal and contextual interdisciplinary analyses—drawing from cinema, architecture, and tourism—this paper undertakes a rigorous investigation into the constituent elements shaping communal imaginings of Greek antiquity. It explores international productions such as Dassin's *Never on Sunday* (1960) and Stevens' *In the Cool of the Day* (1963), in counterpoint with domestic films such as Koundouros' *The Ogre of Athens* (1956), treating them as a rich cultural sediment from which valuable insights may be gained regarding the repackaging of Greece's ancient past and the prevailing ideological currents of the period.

Christos Argyropoulos, Ph.D. Candidate in Classical Philology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and Saint Joseph's University; Research Fellow at the University of Cincinnati

A Return to "Greek" Roots: Cherubini's Médée at Epidaurus (1961)

The paper examines the reception of classical Greek aesthetics in the 1958 staging of Luigi Cherubini's opera *Médée* (1797), and explores how its 1961 revival served as a tool of cultural diplomacy by the Greek government. Acquiring legendary status, this production offers an intriguing case study in layered reception. Opera, a genre that emerged from Renaissance efforts to revive Greek tragedy within contemporary artistic frameworks (Zieg 2021: 47), has often drawn upon ancient literary sources for its themes and narratives. In this instance, the libretto of *Médée* is based on Euripides' *Medea* (Fleischer 1995: 29). The creative team—composed predominantly of Greek artists, including director Alexis Minotis and designer Yannis Tsarouchis (Bastias 2015)—sought to emphasize the classical dimensions of the work, thereby reinforcing the link between European lyric drama and its ancient Greek antecedents. Compared to La Scala's *Médée* in 1953, this 1958 Dallas Opera production appears surprisingly "ancient": both sets and costumes underscore the "Greek" character of Cherubini's work, effectively framing it as a return to its origins.

This is further highlighted by the fact that this production was presented to the Greek public in August 1961, at the ancient theatre of Epidaurus—which had normally been hosting plays of the Greco-Roman canon. The event was perceived as a characteristically "Greek" occasion, where Callas—

having pursued an international career (Spence 2021)– returned to her roots through *Medea*. The enthusiastic audience reception, along with the presence of prominent political figures such as Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis, illustrates the resonance of this classicizing revival in post–World War II Greece. In my opinion, *Médée* functioned as a vehicle for projecting the relevance of Greek identity and heritage within modern Europe. Having just signed an Association Agreement with the European Economic Community that same year (Clogg 1979: 192-3), the Greek state sought to underscore its rightful place within the Western European collective. By tracing the production of *Médée* –with emphasis on the artistic perspectives of its Greek creators– and examining its 1961 reception in Greece, I aim to highlight the enduring relevance of antiquity in the modern world.

References

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Gaia Benamati, Dr., Research Fellow in Greek Language and Literature, University of Trento

Second to None? Menelaus as a Tragic Hero on the Contemporary Stage

In a well-known essay on the figure of Helen, Norman Austin wrote: "To be as gallant as possible, one might call Menelaus the perennial second best" (1994, 59). Menelaus, then, is a hero who never quite reaches the stature of figures like Achilles or Agamemnon. Looking at ancient drama, it is telling that Menelaus, as far as we know, never takes on the role of protagonist. And when he does appear, he is often portrayed as vain, cowardly, arrogant, and selfish. A particularly striking example comes from Euripides' *Andromache*, where Menelaus ultimately abandons his own daughter, Hermione; similarly, in *Orestes*, he refuses to defend Orestes and Electra. In today's cultural imagination, Menelaus tends to be seen as a second-tier hero despite (or perhaps precisely because) he is the one among the Trojan War champions who ultimately fares the best. While many others suffer tragic fates after the war, Menelaus manages to reclaim Helen and return to rule Sparta. He lives in a palace so dazzling that its splendour –"like that of the sun or the moon" (Hom. *Od.* 4.45)– astonishes young Telemachus in Book IV of the *Odyssey*. Starting from this ancient archetype, contemporary playwright Davide Carnevali has written a tragedy titled *Menelao (una tragedia contemporanea)*, which premiered under the direction of Teatrino Giullare at the Teatro Arena del Sole in Bologna in February 2019. This paper sets out to examine the ways in which Carnevali, in ongoing dialogue with antiquity, turns Menelaus into an *eidolon* of himself – a man grappling with the image of who he wishes to be. In this process –and, in particular, through his confrontation with key figures from his own mythological past, such as Agamemnon and Proteus– Menelaus ultimately becomes a symbol of the tragic condition of contemporary man.

Athanasios Blessios, Professor and Chair, Department of Theatre Studies, University of the Peloponnese

The Greek Performances of the Bacchae of Euripides during the recent years of the 21st century

The Bacchae is a tragedy of Euripides widely performed in the 20th and 21st century in Greece. In addition, it is a drama of high quality, as its anthropological and religious content gave the chance to the directors to develop their own point of view on it. The subject of this tragedy is the arrival of the new religion of Dionysus and of the relevant rituals, which are proper for religious syncretism. The

presentation of the bacchantes and the meaning they carry is central for the performances, as also the notion of the Greek identity and tradition. The emphasis on this tradition or on other traditions or civilizations is also central and subject of thought. The different approaches of *Bacchae* reveal the personal sensibilities of the directors, as either the anthropological element or the religious one and even other attract their attention.

Many performances took place the last years in Greece, showing the popularity and the current value of this tragedy. These performances come mainly in comparison with the known Greek performances of the past, as these of Karolos Koun (1977) and of Thodoros Terzopoulos (1986). The paper analyzes the recent performances directed by Helen Mavridou and Niketi Kontouri, with references to performances of Th. Papakonstantinou and Aris Biniaris. The perspective of the paper is comparative, so as to make clear their common points and differentiations.

Nathan Bowman, Director, Actor, Professor and Chair, Department of Theatre and Dance, Benedictine College, Atchison, Kansas

Spectacles of Horror: Approaching the Supernatural in Greek Tragedy

Belief in the power of the supernatural world to affect the world of the living permeates Greek tragedy. Contrary to traditional accounts of ancient Greece as a forebearer to modern Western culture, an exploration into Greek supernatural beliefs shows that tragedy is radically non-rational, and non-modern. Its values are incongruous with the values of an empirically and globally based modern world that takes as orthodoxy the inherent realism of all things tangible. It is the radical difference between ancient Greek culture and the modern world that presents such a challenge to modern theatre directors who approach the production of Greek tragedy. This presentation argues that while the secularized modern West dispatched with supernatural curiosities in the public sphere, tragedy finds its modern kindred in that realm to which those curiosities were banished but given new life: horror fiction. By employing the aesthetic elements of that genre to which the modern world has consigned its fascination with the macabre, Greek tragedy, through a spectacle of horror centered on the existence and power of supernatural forces has the potential to challenge the social, ethical, and scientific assumptions of modern audiences. This presentation will explore the relationship between Greek tragedy and modern horror by considering three objects of horror that guide the violent outcomes of the tragic plot: the Dead, the Divine, and the Other. An analysis of these objects of horror will first consider the role of these forces in ancient Greek culture as evidenced by the extant literary tradition of antiquity. Secondly, this presentation will analyze exemplary modern productions of tragedy, including the work of Tadashi Suzuki and Andreas Flourakis, to consider how the aesthetic theories of horror provide a lens by which the modern theatre maker might approach the supernatural characteristics of tragedy. We will see that the parallels between tragedy and horror allow for the aesthetics of horror to provide a model in which the supernatural powers present in Greek tragedy may be affectively presented to a modern audience.

Maria Chalkou, Dr. Assistant Professor in Film History, Theory and Practice, Department of Audio & Visual Arts, Ionian University, Corfu

Panayiota Konstantinakou, Dr., Special Teaching Staff, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

National Heritage Under Threat: Debates on Cinema and Greek Antiquity in 1950s and 1960s Greece

Greek films that drew on antiquity –particularly adaptations of Greek drama such as *Antigone* (Tzavellas, 1961), *Phaedra* (Dassin, 1961), *Electra* (Cacoyannis, 1962), and *Electra* (Zarpas, 1963), among others– gained prominence in the early 1960s. This emerging trend can be seen as a response by the Greek film industry to broader public debates concerning national cinema, which reflected widespread anxieties surrounding identity and cultural representation. At the time, mainstream

Greek cinema was widely criticized for its perceived aesthetic poverty and weak screenwriting. In response, there was a growing demand for high-quality productions that would reflect national specificity and promote Greek cultural heritage both domestically and abroad. Greek films inspired by antiquity can be also seen as a direct answer to foreign film adaptations of ancient Greek myths and history, which were commonly regarded as distortions –if not outright insults– of Greece's historical and cultural legacy. Such portrayals provoked intense public debates, including interventions by prominent scholars and governmental efforts to regulate cinematic content. Moreover, this cinematic turn towards antiquity can be viewed in the context of contemporary developments in the staging and aesthetics of Greek tragedy, whether by the state theatre or private companies. Of particular significance was the inauguration of the Epidaurus Festival in 1955, which played a major role in positioning Greece within the global landscape of the high art market of performing arts festivals.

The paper focuses on the public discourse of the 1950s and 1960s surrounding both foreign and Greek films based on Greek drama and mythology. It will examine two key case studies: *Helen of Troy* (Wise, 1956), which ignited intense public criticism for its treatment of Greek antiquity, and Cacoyannis' *Electra*, which, during its pre-production phase, faced significant challenges in obtaining filming permits from the State Censorship Committee and, later, getting approval to represent Greece at the Cannes Film Festival due to officially expressed fears of adulterating the literary genre. Drawing on archival material as well as contemporary daily and periodical press, this paper will discuss issues of national identity (Greekness), representation, adaptation, ideology and aesthetics in order to explore the ways in which contemporary communal imaginings of antiquity are reflected, contested or introduced within both public discourse and artistic output.

Dáša Čiripová, Dr., Lecturer in Hellenistic Drama, Academy for Performing Arts, Bratislava

Tear and start over

The will to live, the determination to fight for important human principles and values is destroyed. People, women, find themselves in a hopeless situation, in a country that has fallen into ashes. What can they do? Survive or not survive?

Ancient women find themselves in captivity after the end of the Trojan War, and they see no way out for a free life, or for the hope that belongs to a happy life. They are desperate, resigned, but also bitterness, anger and insurmountable sadness are tearing at them. Who hears their desperate cries, laments full of pain? It seems that no one. Only they are left in the country. Their voice and life experience are getting stronger and stronger. Trojan, Palestinian, Ukrainian, Syrian, Myanmar women are screaming and their voice, even if some wanted to, can already be ignored today.

The Italian theatre and dance group 'Motus', through ancient myths, but with a contemporary interdisciplinary focus, tries to find an answer to the difficult situation of today. They have been on the European map for more than 30 years, but they constantly surprise with their experimental approach to formal stage form, as well as innovative and visionary grasp of selected themes. The distinctive elements of their work also include original re-interpretations of classical texts, in recent years also focusing on the reception of ancient myths.

Jérémie Cyr-Cooke, Dr., Physical Theatremaker, Performer, Lecturer and Researcher, Metropolitan University, Manchester

Raphaël Adams, Multidisciplinary Artist

Olympus Has But Snow: Greek Myths, Gym Culture, and the Performance of Contemporary Masculinities

This paper investigates how contemporary gyms can be transformed into spaces for the performance of Western masculinities rooted in a mythic-historic and communal imagining of Ancient Greek ideals,

traditions, and culture. Practices such as *gymnós*, the warrior-hero archetype, and the aestheticization of the athletic (Greek) male body have long influenced contemporary cultural fantasies of strength, discipline, competition, and male dominance – characteristics that continue to shape a hegemonic understanding of masculinity today.

Yet, as Connell and Messerschmidt remind us, hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed identity but a context-specific ideal (2005, 849), often maintained through exclusionary, hierarchical structures that uphold homosocial competition, repression, and heteronormative dominance which marginalizes alternative masculinities. Arguably, these are diluted understandings of the historical roots of their practice. As such, how might we reframe contemporary gym spaces –often governed by this dominant model– as sites for reimagined masculinities altogether? Might a return to alternative Ancient Greek imaginings through theatrical performance offer more inclusive forms of male identity and practice?

Introducing a Practice-as-Research theatre project, *Olympus Has But Snow* (2024 —), this paper explores how the gym serves as both a performative and ritualistic space in which these masculine/Greek imaginings are embodied and policed, and how the adaptation of a different subset of (imagined) Greek culture –specifically classical myths like that of Ganymede, Apollo and Hyacinthus, Achilles and Patroclus, and Heracles and Iolaus– can propose alternative frameworks of masculinity rooted in care, emotional vulnerability, and male-to-male intimacy within the athletic, aesthetic, and masculine ideal of the gym space.

Combining physical theatre, mythopoetic dramaturgy, and theatrical adaptation, *Olympus Has But Snow* stages a collision between the dominant figure of the Greek heroic male body and the marginalized, fluid, and intimate masculinities found in Greek Myths. We argue that performance, as both research and a ritualization of Ancient Greek imaginings, can offer new visions of how men relate to themselves, their bodies, and each other.

The creation of *Olympus Has But Snow* has been partly supported by the Arts Council of Ireland (2023-24) and Neimënster (Luxembourg, 2025).

Reference

Connell, RW, and James W. Messerschmidt. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society*, vol. 19, no. 6, Sage Publications, Inc., 2005, pp. 829–59

Evdokia Delipetrou, Dr., Theatre Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Argyris Zafeiris, PhD Candidate, Theatre Studies, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
When Aristophanes "becomes us": reception of ancient comedy on the contemporary Greek stage

Between 2006 and 2019, intense artistic activity, innovations in theatrical practice and the emergence of new audiences and new critical trends unfolded alongside the political and social tensions of the economic crisis. The period was artistically marked by the profound changes brought about by the decisive reorientation of the Athens Epidaurus Festival and came to an abrupt pause in 2020 with the outbreak of the pandemic. The socio-political context of those years was characterized by the sudden transition from a period of illusory prosperity following the 2004 Olympics, to a period of economic austerity that destabilized prevailing perceptions of fundamental concepts such as the nation, the people, solidarity, public action and politics.

Comedy was slower than tragedy to respond to those developments in aesthetic terms. "Our own Aristophanes" (*Αριστοφάνης στα καθ' ημάς*, Γεωργουσόπουλος 2007) had been a representative of "*Romiosyne* [...]" in the popular Greek imagination" (Van Steen 2000, 230) and was rooted to the rather ethnocentric perceptions of folk and popular culture of the Metapolitefsi era on the one hand and intertwined with the local spectacle industry on the other. Although alternative intentions were voiced and some notable attempts at innovation were made, it was not until 2016 that new trends in the staging of Aristophanic plays suggested the emergence of a paradigm shift. A key feature of this trend was the post-dramatic artistic treatment of the ancient texts, coupled with

a deliberate detachment from the aesthetics of the "folk festival" or the "revue," which had long dominated the genre and by that time had clearly reached both its artistic and ideological limits.

An application of the theoretical framework of "Communal Hellenism" (Papazoglou et al 2021) on productions of comedy suggests that Aristophanes had first to transcend a popular quest – that is, imaginings of antiquity determined by post-dictatorship notions of the people, popular and populism– to "become us" (Ioannidis 2016) again, on the contemporary Greek stage.

References

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Kyriaki Demiri, Dr., Theatre Studies, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Refugee crisis and the politics of exclusion in Aeschylus' The Suppliants and Elfriede Jelinek's Die Schutzbefohlenen: An intertextual approach

Elfriede Jelinek's 80-page multi-voice "performance text" *Die Schutzbefohlenen* [*Charges (The Suppliants)*], published in 2013 on her website, engages in a thought-provoking dialogue with its major intertext, Aeschylus' *Ἰκέτιδες (The Suppliants)*. Addressing the lament of plight of migrants and refugees (in Aeschylus' text Danaids flee Egypt to escape forced marriage and ask protection and asylum, while Jelinek's play is triggered by the occupation of Vienna's Votiv Church by a group of 70 uprooted people escaping war), both plays offer a crucial lens for approaching issues of xenophobia, human rights and solidarity. My paper, focusing on the interrelation between the two plays, discusses why tragedy persists as Jelinek's chosen mode of political critique and how the playwright challenges and subverts the ancient notion of sacred supplication (*ἱκεσία*) within the European Union's context and its refugee policy of exclusion. Building on this, the paper then explores how Jelinek's use of postdramatic strategies (such as the lack of a clear ending, chorus' disembodied voices, the non-individualized characters, play's cyclical form, collaging and the use of jargon etc.) unmasks Europe's failure to uphold the foundational principles of ancient democracy.

Eric Driscoll, Dr., Hellenist, Ancient Historian, Classical Archaeologist, Lecturer in Ancient and Medieval Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The archaeological imagination in the Work of Kostas Vrettakos and Socratis Mavrommatis

This paper considers the representation of antiquity and the task of archaeological labor in two artistic oeuvres. Kostas Vrettakos's documentary short, *The Layer of Destruction*, was first screened in 1980 at the Thessaloniki Film Festival, where it won several awards. The film depicts rescue excavations at the village of Velouchovo, the site of ancient Kallipolis, as it is about to be covered by the Mornos reservoir created to supply Athens with drinking water. Vrettakos lyrically memorializes the site's archaeological remains – discovered only to be submerged– alongside the traditional lifeways of the village and its natural beauty, all sacrificed in pursuit of modernization. As a brief review in *Σύγχρονος Κινηματογράφος* put it at the time, "the urbanites of the capital exchange their material past for the guarantee of a well-watered future." Vrettakos's film also enacts, I argue, a mode of archaeological publication in which the written field report is translated into cinematographic form. In doing so, the film highlights a discontinuity between vernacular and academic understandings of cultural heritage. As what Yannis Hamilakis calls the "secular religion of the [Greek] nation," archaeology is conceived as an additive process that recovers "fragments of national memory" and thereby restitutes missing fragments of a collective history. In Vrettakos's film excavation instead emerges as an uncanny ally of destruction. Here, the recovery of artefacts does not fully recuperate

memory or revivify lost time. What does it mean to see national archaeology as destructive, self-contradictory, and even apocalyptic?

As a mode of archaeological imagination, *The Layer of Destruction* is, in short, tragic. This “tragic archaeology” is far from the only genre of the archaeological imagination in late twentieth-century Greece, however. The paper concludes with a comparison to the work of Socratis Mavrommatis, chief photographer of the Acropolis Restoration Project from 1979 to 2010. For Mavrommatis, the epistemic function of documentary photography is contingent on the work of the archaeological restoration project itself. Mavrommatis’ perspective on archaeological practice is profoundly committed to care and to materiality’s endurance – rather than gripped by a sense of its loss.

Alexandros Efklidis, Assistant Professor in Stage Directing, Acting and Performance, Department of Performing and Digital Arts, University of the Peloponnese

A trans Cassandra between Buenos Aires and Athens: Gender, immigration, and sexuality in the creation of a chamber opera

This paper focuses on the genesis of a new chamber opera, that premiered in August 2024, based on the 2008 theatrical monologue *Kassandra* by the Franco-Uruguayan playwright Sergio Blanco. The commission for the composition of the new work was given to the Argentine composer Pablo Ortiz by two institutions with similar missions: the Alternative Stage of the Greek National Opera and the Teatro Colón Experimentation Center (CETC).

The main aim of this paper is to examine the processes of the work’s creation, in which I was a key participant. I will seek to highlight how questions of gender and identity (both sexual and ethnic), which lie at the very core of the work, informed the decisions of the creative team – decisions made in dialogue with the institutions within which the work was developed, but also in relation to the wider debate on the intersections of gendered identities and artistic production, particularly in the context of state institutions. I will focus especially on issues pertaining to trans identity within the disciplinary framework of operatic voice, as well as on the challenges that arose from working with a singer who was, quite literally, one of a kind.

Prior to these concerns stands the figure of Cassandra, and the enduring capacity of the personae of the Greek mythology to offer music-theatre creators a platform for bringing on stage characters with deviant behaviors, gender nonconformity, and emotional excess. In *Kassandra*, the resignification of the mythological framework through the story of a trans, migrant, sex worker enables a subject excluded from History to claim a voice – and indeed the transcendent voice of opera.

Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas, Professor in French Literature, Medieval French Language and Literature, University of Caen, Normandie

Staging Jason and the Conquest of the Golden Fleece: Visual arts and ephemeral spectacles in France, 1450-1560.

This paper examines the reception of the figure of Jason and his conquest of the Golden Fleece in the visual arts and ephemeral dramatic performances produced at the court of Burgundy and the court of France from the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries. I will analyse the metamorphoses of this ancient heritage, recomposed to serve the political ambitions of the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France, and to help shape the political identities of their duchy and kingdom. The study will begin with the accounts of the pheasant banquet organized by the Duke of Burgundy to declare his vow to crusade in 1554, a year after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks: he had already chosen Jason as the patron saint of his order of chivalry, the Order of the Golden Fleece, and included the conquest of the Golden Fleece in the performances of the banquet. We will then study the illustrations in the manuscripts of two works written at his court shortly afterwards, the *Histoire de Jason* by Raoul

Lefèvre and the *Traité de la Toison d'or* by Guillaume Fillastre. Both were printed in the 16th century, the former rewritten by Jacques Gohory in *La conquête de la Toison d'or* and accompanied by 26 engravings from drawings by Léonard Thiry. Our studies will conclude with a second ephemeral dramatic spectacle, the *Masquarade des Argonautes*, organised by the playwright Etienne Jodelle, who is credited with being the first to revive the ancient genres of tragedy and comedy in French, to commemorate the victory of King Henri II of France over the English at Calais: the spectacle was a fiasco, and Jodelle himself recounts this failure and describes the festival he had planned, based on the story of Jason. I will examine how, in each of these works, the myth is updated to suit new political ambitions, celebrating the duke and then the king as a new Jason. The evocation of the conquest of the Golden Fleece is recomposed and reinterpreted each time as an allegory of the dreamed-of victories of a Christian ruler – the success of crusading expeditions against the Ottomans, then the access of the King of France to the imperial throne.

Emmanuel Georgoudakis, Philologist – Art Historian, Head of the Department for Exhibitions and Publications, Philatelic & Postal Museum, Athens

Anastasia Koutsoudaki, Archaeologist – Museologist, Department of Exhibitions and Publications, Philatelic & Postal Museum, Athens

Visualizing authority: Mythological imagery and state propaganda in the Greek dictatorship

During the period of the Greek military dictatorship (1967–1974), two notable attempts were made to overthrow the regime: the Generals' Conspiracy and the Navy Democratic Coup. The first, orchestrated by high-ranking army officers, took place on 13th December 1967, while the second – and more serious – attempt occurred on 23rd May 1973. Despite their failure, both events revealed the regime's growing isolation, even within the Armed Forces themselves.

This illusion of security maintained by the Greek Junta is reflected in the issue of the postage stamp series *Greek Mythology II*, released in June 1973, featuring themes drawn from ancient vase painting. Although mythological subjects were commonly used in Greek stamp design, this particular series conveys symbolic messages relating to authority and the punishment of rebellion. It reflects both the ideological aims of the regime and its propagandistic manipulation of current events.

The presentation will demonstrate how ancient iconographic motifs were politically appropriated, serving as a visual language of power within the framework of dictatorial propaganda.

Prof. **Irene Gerogianni**, Assistant Professor in History of Contemporary Art, Department of Theory and History of Art, Athens School of Fine Arts.

Pantelis Xagoraris and Ancient Greece: Intersections of Mathematics, Art, and Philosophy

Among the prominent figures in Greek post-war art who effectively engaged with the technology of their era is mathematician and visual artist Pantelis Xagoraris (1929-2000). Despite his contemporary pursuits, Xagoraris's theoretical works consistently reflect influences from ancient Greece. His interests included integrating elements of geometric space and mathematical structures into the composition of artwork. The artist's thinking and practice were not solely influenced by the study of ancient Greek art and architecture but also by ancient Greek philosophy. His writings are replete with references to works by Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Parmenides, and Pythagoras. He posited that modern science represents a continuation of ancient Greek thought, which emphasized harmonious and proportional relationships as evidence of beauty in art. Xagoraris concluded that ancient Greek thought threads through contemporary movements such as neo-constructivism and computer art, characterized by the geometric spirit, numerical laws, Pythagoreanism, harmonic contrasts, measure, clarity, and simplicity of forms. Although he spent some time in the USA on a Ford scholarship, upon returning to Greece in 1975, the artist reaffirmed his dedication to ancient Greek influences. For instance, his theoretical proposal for the group "Processes/Systems", of which he was a member,

advocated for connecting contemporary visual research with ancient Greek philosophy and art. Until his death in 2000, he remained committed to the principles established in his early work, as articulated in his text “Contemporary Plastic Research and Greekness in Art”, where he emphasized the necessity of exploring ancient Greece's artistic tradition and aligning contemporary work with the values that shaped ancient Greek culture and philosophy. This paper aims to demonstrate how Xagoraris, despite his interest in emerging computer technology, rejected contemporary artistic frameworks like minimalism, conceptual art, and software art, while creating a distinctive context for his work, one that emerged from his –and others’– deep fascination with ancient Greece.

Olympia Glykioti, Ph.D. Candidate, Theatre Studies, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Antiquity and beyond. The Dionysiac in Theodoros Terzopoulos’ theatre: Spatiality and temporality in the production of The Trojan Women (2017/2018)

With the performance of *The Bacchae* (1986), the Greek director Theodoros Terzopoulos established a method and initiated a reception of ancient drama, which contrasts the dominant classicist paradigm and the associated narrative of national continuity, in order to focus on the “Dionysiac”, a concept drawn from ancient Greek mythology, inscribed notwithstanding from the outset in the perspective of crossing borders and territories. Constituting the core of Terzopoulos' theatre, the Dionysiac emerges as a universal category, which defines his staging and acting method, the aesthetics of his theatre, its philosophical, anthropological and political scope, as well as its ontological presuppositions.

The proposed paper takes as a starting point the hypothesis that in the case of Terzopoulos, the exploration of ancient tragedy through the Dionysiac, including the intersection with other cultures, is definitely intertwined with the search for paths to an exit from the logocentric paradigm of Western theatre and Western culture in general, leading towards the forgotten territory of a primordial order, which is defined both by nature and the actor's history presupposed to be physically inscribed. Hence, this paper intends to investigate: a. the role of antiquity in Terzopoulos' theatre, especially in relation to the influence of Heiner Müller, b. the specific characteristics and qualities of its reception emerging from the manifestation of corporeality and sensoriality as well as of spatiality and temporality.

The paper takes as a case study Euripides' *The Trojan Women* (Ancient Odeon of Paphos, Cyprus, 2017/Ancient Theatre of Delphi, Greece, 2018), a production which has been inscribed from the outset beyond the question of Greekness or even the challenges and interrogations associated with it, since it has been unequivocally oriented towards the perspective of universality. The performance bears some additional representative features of Terzopoulos' reception of ancient drama, such as multi-ethnic casting and multilingualism, combined with the use of an open-air ancient theatre. The dialogue engaged with the surrounding physical environment opens up a specific temporality through the dilation of dramatic time, which, thus, traverses vertiginously human history, the history more precisely of the defeated, leading beyond the limits of history, into the depths of time, into the territory of myth.

Thus, through the analysis of the semantic, sensory and affective flows taking place within an extended network which escapes the local, the national and the global opening up to the dimensions of the infinity of the world and of the universe, the ultimate goal of this paper, especially in the light of contemporary developments in techno-science, is a comprehensive approach shedding light on the ontological, political, ideological and anthropological aspects of Terzopoulos' reception of antiquity, including its ecological implications emanating from a thorough reconsideration of human existence.

Antonis Glytzouris, Professor in Theatre History, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
'*Inside the Marble Niche of Classical Memories.*' *Loie Fuller in Athens (1914)*

Following Isadora Duncan's first visit to Athens in 1903 –undoubtedly a milestone in the revival of ancient dance in modern Greece– the equally famous American dancer Loie Fuller toured in February 1914. This article discusses the dance performances Fuller presented in Athens, with a focus on the public debate surrounding the revival of antiquity. Specifically, it discusses the dance performance organized for the masses of the Greek capital in collaboration with King Constantine at the Panathenaic Stadium, which took an irrationalist approach to the venue. Finally, the author attempts to highlight the performance's historical significance considering the Modernist movement and the artistic, ideological, and political developments of the time.

Eleftheria Ioannidou, Professor in Theatre and Classics, Theatre and Performance Studies, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen

I Wanna Feel for Common People: Reimagining Tragedy in the Era of Global Neoliberalism

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Greek tragedy gained prominence on the global stage through numerous stagings and adaptations that radically reinterpret the ancient myths. This interest in Greek plays emerged alongside a broader re-examination of Western canonical traditions, shaped by feminism, postcolonialism, queer theory, and disability studies (Ioannidou 2017; Powers 2020). Central themes in Greek tragedy –such as familial bonds, violence, and justice– provide fertile ground for exploring the tensions surrounding subjectivity, authority, and power. However, amidst the proliferation of adaptations engaging with identity politics, works that foreground issues of class remain comparatively few.

More recently, stage adaptations of Greek plays have addressed the exigencies of social marginalisation and growing global inequalities, with a particular focus on class and class struggle. This paper examines Gary Owen's *Iphigenia in Splott* (2015) and Milo Rau's *Antigone in the Amazon* (2023), which explore the realities of the underprivileged in Western societies and the global South, respectively. Owen's monodrama *Iphigenia in Splott* presents Effie as a modern Iphigeneia, caught in the throes of austerity and social crisis in 21st cent. Britain (Gualberto 2021; Fragkou 2024). Rau's *Antigone in the Amazon* overlays the Sophoclean tragedy with documentary and multimedia theatre to depict the displacement of indigenous communities in Brazil, involving both activists and indigenous workers themselves.

While Owen's play redefines the theme of tragic sacrifice as the predicament of individuation inherent in neoliberal rationalities, its confrontational aesthetics reinforces a divide between the underprivileged protagonist and a middle-class audience. On the other hand, Rau's portrayal of indigenous communities and activists in *Antigone in the Amazon*, created for Western audiences, constructs a spectatorial dynamic that reproduces global inequalities between the global North and South. Drawing on the historical associations of the tragic genre and critiques of tragedy as an 'aristocratic' form (Miller 1949; Boal 1974; Williams 1966; Hall 2014), I will question the ethical and political dimensions of these representations of the underclass. I will argue that these recent reconfigurations speak to the complexities involved in attempting to democratize tragedy within the entrenched inequalities of institutionalized cultural production and reception.

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Greek Tragedy on the National Radio Foundation during the military junta (1967-1974)

The paper centers on the unexplored field of radio adaptations of Greek Tragedies for the Hellenic National Radio Foundation during the military dictatorship of 1967-1974. Greek radio's dramatic output was an integral part of its programming, reflecting the cultural policy of the state network within the restrictions of the military dictatorship. Most adaptations were signed by established playwrights and authors, while 'radio-directors' were equally well-known in the Greek theatrical domain. This paper aims to examine selected radio adaptations of Greek tragedies during the dictatorship vis-à-vis the synchronous stage repertoire, addressing the complex issue of remediating tragedy for the national radio under the dictatorship. Moving beyond the prevailing idea that radio programming during the junta served as vehicle of ideological manipulation and propaganda, with no artistic value, this paper will reassess the role of the radio's drama department in shaping national cultural politics and providing a link between stage and audio drama. In particular, the paper examines a) the dramaturgical principles involved in the adaptation of Greek tragedies for production as radio dramas; b) the extent to which the cutting-edge developments in radio technology and radio dramaturgy affected the production of Greek tragedies; and c) the aesthetic framework of the adaptation practices under discussion and the specific approaches 'radio-directors' employed. Combining rare archival material from the Greek National Theatre as well as the ERT Archive, this paper aims to bring to light the understudied linkages between stage and radio productions of Greek tragedies and investigate the ways in which the two channels interacted. An interdisciplinary theoretical framework will be developed in order to analyse and interpret case studies, using tools from theatre studies, radio semiotics, narratology and cultural studies.

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Charitini Tsikoura, Choreographer, Dr. Theatre Studies, University Paris Nanterre

Aesthetics of disruption: violence as divergence in Ivo Van Hove's Age of Rage

Commonly held knowledge of things ancient Greek has adjusted its imaginings to time, ideological needs, developments and narratives and by extension has affected Greek drama reception. The notion of 'Greekness' perdured as long as it served the socio-political and cultural necessity to assert a collective identity. In this globalized context, where the singularity of the individual within the group often prevails over communal or national belonging, it might be interesting to explore communal Hellenism's contemporary manifestations. This inquiry is particularly significant when considering that modern productions have grown out of the heroic Greek past to either illustrate anti-heroes or deviate from the notion of heroism while addressing more contemporary issues and the ways traditions are reflected in the reception of ancient Greek drama. Given that communal Hellenism is rooted in heroic myths –at least partly– we can only talk about omni-local and global imaginings of antiquity in the larger sense of the term.

This paper will argue that communal knowledge of antiquity has allowed artists to shift their perspective in order to follow, alter or stray from this knowledge. It will focus on the example of Ivo

Van Hove's *Age of rage* which diverges from the established or canonical model while inquiring the intentions and scopes of the modifications and evaluating the deviations in a larger sociopolitical and cultural scale. *Age of rage* exposes violence, unrest and the fissures of contemporary democracy as the Achilles' heel of modern society. Not merely a reflection of our present moment but of the civilization as a whole, it wonders if there is a way to break the cycle without a divine intervention. The creator opts to transpose the communal knowledge in a different context, as a means to raise sociopolitical and cultural issues. Does this work reflect a globalization, a citizen-of-the-world identity or a lack thereof? What are the gaps and/or the new challenges put forward?

Efimia D. Karakantza, Professor in Classics and Chair, Department of Philology, University of Patras
Palestinian Antigone(s): 'We are not princesses' by B. Auger and I. Azzam (documentary film, 2018)

It is hard –even impossible– to talk about contemporary Palestinian Antigone(s) because in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) there is war raging, as we speak, that does not allow for any artistic production connecting with the ancient heroine of the Theban Cycle. Instead, there are many Antigone-like situations, such as unburied bodies, mass graves and the willingness of the oppressed to perform even rudimentary rites for their dead, which produce difficult-to-document situations. The last Palestinian production of the Sophoclean *Antigone* (known to me) was staged back in 2011 by the National Theatre of Palestine. In this presentation, therefore, due to the lack of evidence, I will examine the wonderful documentary film that premiered in NY in 2018 and was directed and filmed by Bridgette Auger and Itab Azzam. The film is about a series of theatre workshops in Beirut with the clear purpose of empowering Syrian/Palestinian refugee women, restoring in them their lost sense of confidence and hope, and helping them heal the many traumas caused by the civil war. Participants were encouraged to tell their stories during rehearsals and produce their individual scripts where they literally 'rewrote' the Sophoclean *Antigone* using their personal lens, informed by their experiences, their traumas, as well as their aspirations and hopes. The workshops resulted in the production of *Antigone of Syria*, which premiered in Beirut in 2014 and attracted international attention.

In this presentation I will follow the steps and the stories of five women refugees who tell their Antigone-inspired stories on screen, beginning with Israa who concludes her thoughts about her connection with the heroine:

"Had she not been the daughter of a king, would she have had the same strength and self-confidence? We are not princesses. No one knows us nor would say anything if we died. Even in death there is inequality. We are simple people, common people, and our deaths will go unnoticed, just as our lives have".

The present paper is a study of refugeeeness, inequality, dispossession/occupation, and biopolitical/necropolitical violence informed by the story of ancient Antigone.

Dimitris Kargiotis, Professor in Comparative Literature, University of Ioannina
Representing the Authentic: Archeology, Photography, Ideology

My paper aims to explore the interconnection of archaeology and photography in the 19th century, focusing on how both disciplines contributed to the perception of Greek national identity. Archaeology's transformation from amateur antiquarian interest into a scientific discipline in the 19th century was concerned not only with interpreting material remains but also with shaping cultural meaning. The core question is how significance is derived from archaeological remains and how such significance is inherently relational, ideological, and constructed – not fixed.

Photography, emerging in parallel with archaeology's institutionalization, constituted a revolutionary tool that redefined visual representation and the notion of authenticity. No longer merely aiming to depict the "real" faithfully, photography enabled the conceptualization and

projection of the “authentic” itself, aligning closely with archaeological goals. This convergence shaped modern perceptions of heritage and the past.

A case study of post-independence Greece illustrates how archaeological and photographic practices supported a national narrative centered on classical antiquity. Figures like Leo von Klenze led efforts to “purify” the landscape by erasing non-classical architectural layers (especially Ottoman and Frankish) and visually emphasizing ancient Greek ruins. Photography reinforced this narrative by systematically excluding or diminishing later historical strata in visual documentation, thus idealizing classical antiquity as the sole foundation of national identity.

Furthermore, institutions such as museums, education, and tourism internalized this visual regime, with photographs functioning both as documentation and as ideological instruments. The authentic became less about historical continuity and more about visual and symbolic coherence with a preselected narrative. Despite its objective claims, archaeological and photographic representation played a critical role in producing, not merely recording, history. My paper aims to contribute to a critical reconsideration of how authenticity is constructed, displayed, and politicized through the visual culture and disciplinary practices of the nation.

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Anastassios Koundouris, Dr., History of Education, University of the Aegean, Rhodes

Receptions, perceptions, representations and significations of “classical Greek” themes on public murals in Athens

Athens is the proverbial historical city, a locus of memory, imagined and re-imagined, a lieu of projections and experimentations but also a living shifting entity, a contemporary multicultural and expanding metropolis, where tectonic plates of complex identities collide and merge.

The capital of Greece is home to actual unsurpassable antiquities and neoclassical statements manifesting a revisited “antiquity”, posited as a political and aesthetic claim to modernity by a newly-born state: from the world-renowned Athenian Trilogy to a popularized neoclassic style (“of neoclassical style”) found in private houses and even humble abodes.

Culminating in the years of the multifaceted “crisis” and in a “permacrisis” clamping jaw, a proliferation of graffiti and street art is dotting Athens. The “city of Athena” thus emerges as a vast, diversiform linguistic and visual landscape, one that is leaving its profound imprint on the ontological fabric of the Greek capital.

With actual, iconic classical antiquities and a plethora of neoclassical utterances at the very core of its psyche, no wonder many city walls, private and public, sport a wide spectrum of “classically-themed” street art. This imagery is profoundly diverse. Most of the hotly debated subversive works are not commissioned, whilst certain subsidized ones are also disputed yet concurrently eagerly propagated, well-appreciated and warmly embraced by the larger audiences. Nevertheless, this diverse topography is contributing to communal imaginings of Classical Greece and is earning (amongst other famous street art) Athens precarious titles such as “contemporary Mecca for street art in Europe.”

We will attempt to map out this contradicting, divergent urban landscape by assembling a comprehensive context around issues such as reception, perception, re-imagination and re-shaping of the classical past in contemporary Athens Street art works. Additionally, and through original analyses of selected murals by established “street artists”, we will concisely address intertwining controversial issues such as “Greekness”, “archaeolatry”, “archaeopolitics”, gentrification, tourist landscapes, identity crafting, city branding, and varied political agendas. Lastly, we will explore the potential impact and dynamics of such works and suggest ways for a more substantial engagement of the people of Athens in the shaping of their own cityscape.

Markia Liapi, Ph.D. Candidate in Modern Greek Literature, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

From personal to political antiquity: The ruined self in H.D.'s Scrapbooks

The following announcement studies the concept of *ruins*, as seen through the work of Jacques Derrida, in the collection of scrapbooks that the modernist poet Hilda Doolittle created during, and after, her trip to Greece in 1923. Following Derrida's idea of ruins as the constant ruined self in analyzing self-portraiture in Western Art (Derrida, 1993) this research tries to form the path that drove H.D. from her very personal concept of antiquity as a mirror image of her own self to the concept of ruins as a political tool of interpreting post-war western ideas, as seen in her latest works (*Tribute to the Angels*, 1945, *The flowering of the Rod*, 1946). In this process, notions of girlhood and femininity emerge, forming, again, a road from the personal to the political self.

Derrida sees ruins as a theoretical tool and process. Starting from the known idea of ruins as a memoir of antiquity, he elaborates on the romantic fascination with ruins, making a connection between the use of ruined antiquity as a mirror-image for the western word to self-portraiture as the perfect ruined depiction. In Derrida's thought self-portraits are a constant reminder, not of memento mori, but of our own constant escaping of depictions, a constant punctum of blindness and of absence of meaning.

Moving beyond painting, Derrida's notion of ruins can interpret craftsmanship, like scrapbooking. A form of art, diary and manual labor, scrapbooking invites users to form their own daily newspaper, using images, photos and writing to connect the individual word to the collective (Helfand, 2009). H.D.'s scrapbooks is an example of scrapbooking and travelling, following her own *Grand Tour* to Greece and Middle East in 1923. Photos of herself juxtaposed to ancient Greek statues and fragments, depict a personal imagery of her as a member of the ruined antiquity, but also of the early modernists and Imagists fascination with antiquity. This research concludes by connecting this very personal ruined self-portraiture to the concept of a more political, universally ruined world that Doolittle studied in her latest literary work.

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Inventing Barbarians: Foreign Directors of Ancient Drama on Greek Soil

This paper examines how Greek theatrical criticism has responded to foreign directors' productions in Greece, revealing an interplay of cultural identity and ownership of classical heritage. Drawing parallels with Edith Hall's analysis of how ancient Greeks constructed their identity through the invention of the "barbarian" as a cultural Other, we analyze how modern Greek criticism often employs similar mechanisms when evaluating foreign interpretations of ancient drama. The study focuses on the period from the 1980s to the 2010s, tracking the evolution of critical responses to non-Greek directors staging ancient drama in Greece. Our analysis brings out a pattern of acceptance and rejection, as claims of inherent Greek understanding of classical texts appear alongside expressions of anxiety about foreign theatrical innovations. This duality manifests through various critical strategies: assertions of cultural ownership, debates about spatial sanctity, language barriers, and the legitimacy of using new media. We position this phenomenon within the framework of post-colonial studies, arguing that Greek criticism's response to foreign directors represents an intriguing reversal of orientalist dynamics: here, the West becomes the "barbarian", supposedly incapable of truly understanding ancient drama's essence. This inversion is particularly noteworthy given Greece's

paradoxical position as both the “cradle of Western civilization” and a culture often placing itself in opposition to Western interpretations of its classical heritage. Through examination of critical reviews, interviews, and media coverage, we demonstrate how these responses go beyond purely artistic issues and rather serve as mechanisms for negotiating and reaffirming Greek cultural identity. Our study thus seeks to contribute to broader discussions about cultural ownership, artistic legitimacy, and the evolving relationship between national heritage and international artistic expression in contemporary theater practice.

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Gaming Greece: Role-Playing the Epic and the Tragic in Agon

The genre of fantasy tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs), such as *Dungeons & Dragons*, has been increasingly recognized as a contemporary arena of collaborative performance and storytelling (Mackay 2001; Grouling 2010; Hoover et al. 2018; Sell 2022). While its main source of inspiration has been medieval Europe, in the spirit of writers such as Tolkien, fantasy TTRPGs have borrowed freely from a variety of mythologies, folklores, and traditions – including, quite prominently, ancient Greece. However, a few TTRPGs made Greek Antiquity the cornerstone of their mechanisms of playing fantasy. The proposed paper will explore one such game, *Agon* (Harper and Nittner 2020). By examining its gaming mechanisms, structure, rhetoric and narrative, I will argue that *Agon* can be seen as a playful mode of performing the epic (Macintosh et al. 2018) – or rather, that it is in itself an interrogation of how the tradition of epic performance, stemming from Ancient Greece, can be gamified. At the same time, I maintain, *Agon* is also inspired by Greek Tragic performance, even if more subtly. As such, *Agon* can shed light on the ways in which reimagined Ancient Greek performance traditions permeate contemporary gaming culture.

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Contradictory readings of Antiquity at the Syracuse Festival in its Early Years (1914–1939)

In this paper, I will examine how many and which conflicting perceptions of Antiquity formed the basic yet fluid background of the Syracuse Festival, today the longest-running festival of ancient Greek drama in the world, during its first period of operation (1914-1939).

The Sicilian elite, who envisioned the establishment of the institution, promoted Sicilian Hellenicity, recognizing in Syracuse the only true heir of Ancient Greece in the West. They successfully attempted to convince the average Sicilian of the uniqueness of their identity and the superiority of their culture, involving them as volunteers in the organization of the institution and as conscious spectators in the performances of ancient Greek drama, which aesthetically moved within the framework of modernism. Indicative of this perception was the speech of the Sicilian politician Orlando delivered before the performance of *The Libation Bearers* in 1921.

However, already from the first year of the event, the official Italian state, which contributed to the financial support and promotion of the institution, saw the festival endeavor strengthening not exclusively Hellenicity, but Romanity in general, to the extent that it also encompassed Hellenicity. Indicative of the multiplicity of interpretations are the various accounts preserved at times by the

local, national, and international press of the era, either through articles about the contributors and the preparation of the events or through the theater reviews of the performances.

Romanity acquired even more distinct imperialistic and militaristic elements after 1924, when the Fascist regime consolidated its power, while from 1929, things became even more complicated when Catholicism, with its humanistic discourse, was integrated into the Fascist one, altering it. At that point, the ancient Greek performances in Syracuse, already exclusively subsidized by the state since 1925, displayed a moral, strongly Christian, dimension, effectively averting the possibility of acquiring the verbalism of Romanity and the characteristics of Fascist grand spectacles.

Ultimately, while the ancient drama performances of each festival cycle and their interpretative commentaries on Antiquity shaped the increasingly fluid ideological background of the institution, they simultaneously ensured its longevity through their polysemy and the dialectical style inherent in the structure of these specific theatrical works.

Katia Papandreopoulou, Professor in Art History, University of Patras

The manifold and insidious uses of the classical element: Greece's participation in the World's Columbian Exposition of Chicago, 1893

At the end of the 19th century, amidst significant political and economic instability within the Hellenic state, local authorities were under considerable pressure to assemble and export a distinguished collection of plaster casts of ancient sculptures to the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. This marked the first occasion on which 112 ancient Greek sculptures –sourced from the country's most prominent museums and archaeological sites– were displayed outside Greece, attracting international attention. In an era increasingly receptive to narratives centered on non-white or 'exotic' subjects, Greece's participation functioned as a symbolic assertion of the uninterrupted dominance of Western civilization. The presentation of idealized, pristine white statues served to reinforce a lineage of racial and cultural superiority, linking ancient Greece to modern Western identity.

The Exposition itself, organized to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas, was suffused with the aesthetics and ideology of whiteness – evident in its curatorial choices and spatial design. The architectural landscape of the fair heavily favored classical styles, particularly Greek ones, while numerous exhibits featured copies or reinterpretations of ancient Greek statuary, often contributed by international participants. Together, these elements underscored the exhibition's colonial undertones and its investment in a racialized civilizational hierarchy.

In this paper we investigate the understudied history of Greece's involvement in the *World's Columbian Exposition*, focusing on the curatorial framing of the Greek statues within the Department of Anthropology. Notably, the department juxtaposed the display of classical sculptures with anthropometric experiments, contributing to the legitimization and dissemination of scientific racism. In addition, our study traces the post-exhibition journey of these Greek casts, examining their integration into American museum collections and analyzing their function in the development of a white supremacist aesthetic and ideology within those institutions.

Romain Piana, Professor in Theatre Studies and Chair, Institut d'Etudes Théâtrales, Sorbonne Nouvelle University

"Aristophanic theatre" as a generic category in XIXth century France: Between political satire and intermediality

Reviewing a satirical vaudeville in 1834, a prominent French theatre critic, Jules Janin, warned against the "resurrection of the Aristophanic genre" and alerted authors and the public to the danger of "personnalités" (i.e. personal satire) in times of political uncertainty. Throughout the century, despite

a vigilant dramatic censorship, political and personal satire, mostly inspired by satirical journalism, regularly appeared on stage and was almost always compared to Ancient Greek comedy. Conversely, Aristophanes was often interpreted as a paradigmatic model for modern political press. Who were those modern Aristophanes? How did those “resurrections” fit with the general reception of the author of *Clouds* and *Knights*? What were the main features – not to say the *poetics* – of those “*pièces aristophanesques*” (aristophanic plays)? Such are the questions this paper deals with.

George Sampatakis, Associate Professor in Theatre Studies, Drama and Performance, Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras, Greece

Queering Greek Tragedy: Adaptation as agonistic act (or the modality of agonistic adaptation)

From the Renaissance onwards Greek tragedy was recited, reimagined and reclaimed, eager to give voice to new political conflicts and aspirations. Amid wars, liberation movements, revolutions, and times of democracy, the restored ancient plays took the part of a political other that was sometimes underrepresented or excluded, thereby questioning cultural and ideological canons.

The aim of this paper is to present a typology of queer adaptations (not only theatrical), giving emphasis on the early moments of radical interventions that reclaimed Greek tragedy as an open field for queer renderings, given also that:

[t]o adapt is to modify, to evolve, to transform, to repeat, imitate, parody, make new. To queer something is to make it strange or odd, but also to turn or transform it. To queer, then, may be to adapt; to adapt is to queer. [...] Similarly, to identify something as queer is to place it in relation to something that seems to have been already established as “normal” or “straight.” (Pamela Demory, “*Queer/Adaptation: An Introduction*”, Pamela Demory (ed.), *Queer/Adaptation: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 1.)

In like manner, proto-queer adaptations of Greek tragedy caused a crisis in the representations of the classics by critically reclaiming Greek drama as a site of non-conforming possibilities, thereby unsettling normative expectations and “legal” structures of feeling.

Graham Shackell, Performance Archaeologist and Researcher, Department of Archaeology, The University of Southampton, Performance Director for the Toumba Serron 2023 performance

Nicolas Zorzin, Dr., Associate Researcher at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, UMR 8215 Trajectoires, Co-Director for the Toumba Serron Research Project

Toumba Serron: An experimental performance archaeology project in Northern-Greece

Since the inception of the Toumba Serron Research Project in 2021, a significant emphasis has been placed on establishing a collaborative initiative addressing various audiences. The primary focus was an examination of contemporary and Neolithic environmental crises. This involved an ethnographic study, creating a dialogue with the present-day farming community, understanding the challenges they currently face and anticipate in the future. Simultaneously, an artistic performance was prepared – informed by the initial ethnographic study– and presented in 2023. The performance elucidated both details of archaeological data arising from the excavation and a tour d’horizon of the human experience and methodology deriving from participation in the project, whether as student, director, or worker. The performance also explored a thematic imagining of Late Neolithic ritual – in accordance with performance archaeology methodologies; employing theory and practice from performance studies, archaeology, and anthropology.

The performance took place within the grounds of the archaeology lab within the village of Toumba, to an audience of local villagers and archaeology professionals. The performance consisted of a multi-media site-specific exhibition, elucidating the contemporary excavation, followed by a promenade soundscape performance, and culminating with a ritual performance and mimetic storytelling. Due to a lack of sufficient evidence, it is impossible to accurately reproduce Late Greek

Neolithic performance. We therefore sought instead to enable an imagining of such within the audience. To realise this, we utilised an ‘alienation effect’ to divest the audience from their normative understandings of ritual performance informed by their contemporary cultural and cosmological context – their performative ethnocentricity. Our objective was not to present an interpretation of Late Greek Neolithic performance *per se*, but to open the doors of perception within the contemporary audience, to enable imaginings, beyond their previous parameters of ritual performative experience. This was achieved by a distillation of performance forms: physical theatre, Japanese *noh*, polyphonic voice, invented language (representing everyday Neolithic, and an older ritual language), mimesis, and storytelling. The ritual performance focused upon the importance of water for the Neolithic population, pertinent to the current inhabitants, and the project’s environmental ethnographic investigation. This performance is the subject of a forthcoming book chapter, authored by the presenters, in *Shadow Archaeologies*, published by Routledge.

Avra Sidiropoulou, Associate Professor of Theatre, Dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Open University of Cyprus

Community, Chorality, and the Global Experience. Conceptualizing the Collective ‘We’ on Stage.

This paper reflects on representations of the 21st century experience or crisis in contemporary interpretations of Greek tragedy. Applying a practice-as-research methodology, I will discuss two international productions that I recently directed, which revisit the classical canon from a cross-cultural, multi-lingual point-of-view, to comment on the universality of the post-tragic condition.

The presentation will first concentrate **on** American playwright Karen Malpede’s *Troy Too*, a reimagining of Euripides’ *Trojan Women* tackling the modern-day crises of the pandemic, climate change and racial justice. The production –jointly produced by Persona Theatre Company and Theatre Three Collaborative premiered at HERE Arts Center in New York in 2023, bringing together Greek performers and a multi-racial American cast. An original musical score amalgamating ancient Greek odes with choral parts inspired by American hip-hop, gospel and blues, reinforced cultural the production’s cultural plurality and global outlook. Bridging time frames, geographies and natural cadences, the show created a sense of perpetual flow and a constant parallelism between different zones of perception, where lived and imaginary experiences of exile, trauma and division coexisted as a performative manifestation and a persistent communal embracing a timeless, global audience. Following that, I will consider the production of Euripides’ *Medea*, a postdramatic multimedia staging at Teaterøen, Copenhagen, in May 2025, in which Medea’s story of abandonment and emotional violence becomes a polyphonic account of shared pain and a protracted scene of ecumenical suffering. In this performance, an international hybrid chorus (both live and in film) communicate their wisdom in Danish, English, Bulgarian, Finish and Lithuanian. Such linguistic encounters build a community of voices as a shield against the extremities of suffering that humans have been able to cause and to experience across time, space and myth. In both shows, the desire to interpret the past through a contemporary lens is framed by a raw, multicultural chorality, where the commonality of the human predicament interweaves with the dissonances and paradoxes of a globalized world.

Pavĺína Šípová, Dr., Ministry of Culture, Czech Republic

From folk song to the Delphic idea: The first dramatic encounters of modern Greece with ‘bohemian’ Central Europe

During the 19th century, philhellenism, sympathy for the struggle against the Turks, the long and strong classical tradition, but also commercial and political relations – mainly as they developed at the end of the century – turned the interest of Czech artists and intellectuals towards modern Greece and partial reassessment of the classical-philological tradition.

In the mid-19th Century at the end of the Czech national renaissance in the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy the grammar schools began to teach in Czech. Classical philologists during this ideological renewal of the nation translated classical drama into Czech, but still under the influence of German Universities and in the spirit of romantic literal translation.

Among them there was a sole exception of Václav Bolemír Nebeský according to the principles of adaptation and substitution theory. He was one of the few to realise that even the translation of classical drama cannot be out of touch with contemporary literature, thus superseding the famous German classical philologist Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

Also, later reports by Czech artists and scientists from their travels to Greece at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries played a significant role in perception of very different Modern Greece and the idealized Greek antiquity.

In 1930 Václav Krška a screenwriter and film director spent in Greece several weeks in Greece. During the celebrations of the centenary of the The Greek War of Independence he visited festive theatrical performances in Athens as well as the Delphi festival of Angelos and Eva Sikelianos. Then in 1936, inspired by the couple's vision, he transferred the Delphic idea and the idea of an open-air performance of ancient tragedy to a village in southern Bohemia...

My presentation offers a picture interpretation of ancient Greek world through the testimony of translations and theatrical performances as presented in the creative surge of Czech artists and intellectuals against the backdrop of the disintegration of Austria-Hungary and the newborn Czechoslovakia.

Elena Stamatopoulou, Dr., Special Teaching Staff, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Dimitris Varkas, Ph.D. Candidate in Physical and Music Theatre, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Polarity 01: Re-imagining Clytemnestra and Agamemnon through Embodied Polyphony, AI Assemblage, and Digital Fractures

This presentation explores *Polarity 01: Clytemnestra vs Agamemnon*, a hybrid performance project engaging ancient Greek tragedy through embodied practice, digital scenography and generative AI. Conceived as a two-part work-in-progress, the piece investigates the polarity between feminine and masculine, nature and simulation, physical body and data body, within a contemporary post-pandemic landscape of patriarchal violence and technological mediation. The first part, directed by Dimitris Varkas, draws from his doctoral research on musicality and rhetorical structure within heightened text, using ancient tragedy as a site of vocal and physical exploration. Grounded in post-Grotowskian, ensemble-based methodologies, his approach activates the actor's musical ear, aural sensitivity, and embodied ensemble presence through the use of alliteration, assonance, and repetition. The ensemble of acting students from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki engages in physical and vocal études, uncovering the latent musical structure of tragedy as a tool for embodied dramaturgy. The second part, directed by Elena Stamatopoulou, deconstructs the performative space through digital aesthetics and AI-generated elements. Using artificial intelligence as a dramaturgical tool, this section reconfigures classical text and visuality into an expanded scenographic environment, where Clytemnestra emerges as a fragmented, posthuman subject of resistance. The tragic dialogue is transformed into a multilayered polyphonic field, challenging the linearity of time and representation. Together, the two parts create a dialogue between different performance languages and feminist, posthuman readings of classical figures. Rather than reproducing antiquity, *Polarity 01* re-imagines it as a fluid archive of somatic, symbolic, and digital potentialities. The presentation aligns with the conference's themes of re-envisioning antiquity through gendered embodiment, AI and technological mediation, and experimental performance. It includes a video excerpt from the ensemble's studio work and invites reflection on how ancient tragedy may be re-heard and re-seen as a living, augmented text-body.



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