ATHENS INSTITUTE

Abstract Book

19th Annual International Conference on Literature
1-6 June 2026, Athens, Greece

Edited by
William Davis, Aleksandra Tryniecka
& Olga Gkounta

2026

Abstracts
19th Annual International Conference on Literature

1-6 June 2026, Athens, Greece

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& Olga Gkounta

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the *19th Annual International Conference on Literature* (1-6 June 2026), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with Athens Institute's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of the Athens Institute's many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of the Athens Institute and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. Athens Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this conference (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to the Athens Institute's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2010-2026*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2026	39	21	Davis et al. (2026)
2025	40	23	Tryniecka et al. (2025)
2024	23	11	Tryniecka and Gkounta (2024)
2023	43	24	Wick and Gkounta (2023)
2022	53	27	Pappas and Gkounta (2022)
2021	25	14	Papanikos (2021)
2020	23	20	Papanikos (2020)
2019	23	14	Papanikos (2019)
2018	30	16	Papanikos (2018)
2017	43	24	Papanikos (2017)
2016	30	18	Papanikos (2016)
2015	26	17	Papanikos (2015)
2014	40	18	Papanikos (2014)
2013	31	20	Papanikos (2013)
2012	93	37	Papanikos (2012)
2011	126	36	Papanikos (2011)
2010	111	41	Papanikos (2010)

It is our hope that through Athens Institute's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over 200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 7 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of the Athens Institute for putting this conference and its subsequent publications together.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Literature. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the conference.

Athens Institute's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The *19th Annual International Conference on Literature*, accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 21 different countries (Armenia, Austria, Canada, China, Colombia, Croatia, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kosovo, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Türkiye, UK, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this conference will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience.

William Davis, Aleksandra Tryniecka & Olga Gkounta
Editors

19th Annual International Conference on Literature, 1-6 June 2026, Athens, Greece

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All Athens Institute's conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of Athens Institute.

Dr. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

Dr. William Davis, Head, Literature Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, The Colorado College, USA.

Dr. Aleksandra Tryniecka, Deputy Head, Literature Unit, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland.

Dr. Stamos Metzidakis, Honorary Head, Literature Unit, Athens Institute & Professor Emeritus of French and Comparative Literature, Washington University in Saint Louis, USA & Adjunct Professor of French, Hunter College-CUNY, USA.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

19th Annual International Conference on Literature, 1-6 June 2026, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 1 June 2026

08:30-09:15
Registration
09:15-10:00 Opening Speech and Welcoming Remarks
Speaker: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute & Professor (Adjunct), University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA.

10:00-11:30 Session 1

Session 1a
Moderator: William Davis,
Head, Literature Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, The Colorado College, USA.

1. **Aleksandra Tryniecka**, Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland.
   ***Title**: From Text to Popular Culture: Re-writing Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" in Helen Fielding's "Bridget Jones's Diary".*
2. **Adam Miyashiro**, Professor, Stockton University, USA.
   ***Title**: The Global Alexander Romance: A Trans-Cultural Text Network.*
3. **Bernard Odendaal**, Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa.
   ***Title**: Manifestations of Sensory Perception in Some Poems included in two Digital Byderhand Installations at Worcester, South Africa.*
4. **Anush Sedrakyan**, Chair of Foreign Literature, Yerevan State University, Armenia.
   ***Title**: The Principles of Pagan and Christian Values.*
5. **Claudiu-Liviu Onisoara**, PhD Student, University of Craiova, Romania.
   ***Title**: The King's Sleep in the Book of Esther. Insomnia as a Turning Point in Ancient Texts.*

Session 1b
Moderator: David Philip Wick,
Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, Athens Institute & Professor of History (Retired), Gordon College, USA.

1. **William Batson**, Professor, Prarie View A&M University, USA.
   Julian Benjamin Degraft-Johnson, Student, Prairie View A&M University, USA.
   ***Title**: Reconstructing History: A 3D Visualization of a Roman Bath.*
2. **Debby Sneed**, Assistant Professor, California State University, Long Beach, USA.
   ***Title**: Disability Exemptions for Ancient Greek Military Service.*
3. **Andrew Erwin**, Senior Academic Director of Adelphi International & Adjunct Professor, Adelphi University, USA.
   ***Title**: Democracy and Higher Education in Classical Athens: Reflections on the Future of a Historical Antagonism.*
4. **Elanij Swart**, Lecturer, University of South Africa, South Africa.
   ***Title**: Water Manipulation as a Show of Power: The Case of Herod the Great.*

11:30-13:00 Session 2

Session 2a
Moderator: Aleksandra Tryniecka, Deputy Head, Literature Unit, Athens Institute & Assistant Professor, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland.

Session 2b
Moderator: Utku Özer, Research Fellow, Athens Institute.

1. **Magdalen Ki**, Associate Professor, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong.
   ***Title**: Poe and the Criminal Mind.*
2. **Paola Partenza**, Associate Professor, University of Chieti-Pescara "Gabriele d'Annunzio", Italy.
   ***Title**: Between Reason and Revolt. A Critical Comparison of Mary Wollstonecraft and Emmeline Pankhurst on Women's Moral and Political Agency.*
3. **Sanja Grakalic Plenkovic**, Assistant Professor & Head Librarian, Polytechnic of Rijeka, Croatia.
   ***Title**: Between Aestheticism and Fairy-Tale Poetics: A Comparative View of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and Oscar Wilde.*

1. **Nil Nadire Geliskan**, Research Fellow, İzmir Institute of Technology, Türkiye.
   ***Title**: Understanding the Built Environment in the İzmir Palimpsest: Architecture and Settlement In İzmir from the Perspective of Architecture Students.*
2. **Daniel Varga**, Archaeologist, Israel Antiquities Authority, Israel.
   ***Title**: A Villa and a Hiding Underground System from the Late Second Temple Period in the Judean Lowlands.*
3. **Ayman Hassouna**, Researcher, University College Dublin, Ireland.
   ***Title**: The Cultural and Civilizational Development of Gazan Society Through the Study of the Forms and Images Executed on Mosaics.*

13:00-14:30 Session 3
Moderator: Magdalen Ki, Associate Professor, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong.

1. **David Philip Wick**, Professor of History (Retired), Gordon College, USA.
   ***Title**: A Tale of Two Science Schools in the Ancient Aegean: How the Characters (and Focus) of the Epicurean Schools in Athens and on Rhodes Diverged in the Late Roman Republic.*
2. **Aaron Plattner**, Independent Researcher, University of Graz, Austria/Greece.
   ***Title**: To Be or Not to Be: The (Apparently) Lost Arcadian Cities in Strabo's Geography and Pausanias' Description of Greece.*
3. **Kathleen Ann O'Donnell**, Independent Researcher, British School at Athens, Greece.
   ***Title**: How Was Celtic Resistance Poetry in English Used in the Nineteenth Century in the Balkans and Anatolia to Save Europe from Future Wars?*
4. **Dov Tamarkin**, Researcher, Tel Aviv University, Israel.
   ***Title**: Echoes of Harmony: The Golden Ratio in the Design of Greek and Roman Theatres.*

14:30-15:30 Lunch

18:00-20:00 Session 4 – Visit Aristotle's Lyceum

It requires pre-booking

20:30-22:30 Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance)

Tuesday 2 June 2026

09:00-10:30 Session 5
Moderator: Anush Sedrakyan, Chair of Foreign Literature, Yerevan State University, Armenia.

1. **Eleni Kontogianni**, University of Strasbourg, France.
   ***Title**: Medea the Barbarian, the Stranger, the Foreigner, and the Friend. Euripides' Medea in the Light of the Peloponnesian War.*
2. **Alison Lee Naidoo**, Lecturer, University of South Africa, South Africa.
   ***Title**: Ancient Greece and Modern Africa: Homeric Marriage and Funerary Customs in an African Context.*
3. **Ori Z Soltes**, Teaching Professor, Georgetown University, USA.
   ***Title**: The Casting and Recasting of Reality: From Mythos to Historia to History and Myth.*

10:30-12:00 Session 6

Session 6a
Moderator: Eleni Kontogianni, University of Strasbourg, France.

1. **Nesrine Chahine**, Assistant Professor, Texas Tech University, USA.
   ***Title**: The Social Novel and Egyptian Literary Magazines.*
2. **Vjollca Dibra Ibrahimi**, Dean of the Faculty of Philology, University "Ukshin Hoti" Prizren, Kosovo.
   ***Title**: Avenging and Virtuous Women in Ancient Greek Literature.*
3. **Iyas Nasser**, Lecturer, Hebrew University, Israel.
   ***Title**: The Assertive Female Voice in Maysūn bint Baḥdal's (d. c. 700) Poetry.*
4. **Stephanie de Villiers**, Academic Programme Designer, Red & Yellow Creative School of Business, Stellenbosch University, South Africa.
   ***Title**: When the Power Shifts: Illegal Immigration, Gender Dynamics, and Mental Illness in Mira T. Lee's Everything Here Is Beautiful.*

Session 6b
Moderator: Ori Soltes, Head, Arts & Culture Unit, Athens Institute & Professor, Georgetown University, USA.

1. **Claudine Dauphin**, Research Fellow, Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS), Jordan.
   ***Title**: Wheat and Wine: Wadi Agriculture and Viticulture in the "Garden of the Lord" at Byzantine and Umayyad Kastron Mefa'a (Umm Ar-Rasas) and its "Satellites" on the Edge of the Jordanian Desert.*
2. **Ekaterina Tolmacheva**, PhD Student, Russian State Pedagogical University (Herzen University), Russia.
   ***Title**: Concept of the Supreme Power of Byzantium and Features of Its Reception by the Princes of Russia.*
3. **Seyed Salam Fathi**, PhD Candidate, University of Catania, Italy.
   ***Title**: The Transmutation of Kufic Script in the Mediterranean: Artistic Appropriation and Norman Legitimacy (10th–15th Centuries).*

12:00-14:00 Session 7

Session 7a – A Microsymposium on Romanticism
Moderator: Vjollca Dibra Ibrahimi, Dean of the Faculty of Philology, University "Ukshin Hoti" Prizren, Kosovo.

1. **William Davis**, Professor, Colorado College, USA.
   ***Title**: Lord Byron and the Greek War of Independence.*
2. **Michelle Faubert**, Professor, University of Manitoba, Canada.
   ***Title**: John Ferriar, Romantic Psychology, and Abolitionist Drama.*
3. **Christina Weiler**, Director in Residence, Junior Year in Munich, Germany.
   ***Title**: The Sea and the Mine as Metaphysical Environments in E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Die Bergwerke zu Falun" ("The Mines of Falun," 1819).*
4. **Matthew Scott**, Lecturer, University of Reading, UK.
   ***Title:** Byron among the Artists.*
5. **Joseph Rockelmann**, German Language & Literature Teacher, Bavarian International

Session 7b
Moderator: Claudine Dauphin, Research Fellow, Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS), Jordan.

1. **Kevin Glowacki, Associate Professor, Texas A&M University, USA.**
   ***Title:** Ritual Behavior and Votive Practice on the North Slope of the Acropolis.*
2. **Eliezer Tauber**, Full Professor, Bar-Ilan University, Israel.
   ***Title**: The Origins of Social Darwinism in the Arab East.*
3. **Xiaoli Qin**, Professor, Fudan University, China.
   ***Title**: Cultural Interaction and Influence during the Erligang Period: An Analysis Based on Decorative Ritual Artifacts.*
4. **Juan Pablo Quintero Guzman**, Curator-Archaeologist, Museo del Oro, Banco de la República,

School, Germany. ***Title**: Childhood Trauma in Ludwig Tieck's "Der blonde Eckbert" (1797).* 6. **Filip Bukowski**, PhD Student, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. ***Title**: Folk Songs as an Integral Element of Polish Traditional Culture.*	Colombia. ***Title**: Archaeological Style and Cultural Unity: Rethinking the Identity of Archaeological Regions in Colombia.*

14:00-15:00 Lunch

16:30-19:30 Session 8
Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes transportation costs and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by the Athens Institute exclusively for the conference participants.

20:30-22:30
Closing Remarks by Gregory T. Papanikos: "Wine, Words, and Wisdom: An Ancient Athenian Dinner Symposium" followed by an Ancient Athenian Dinner

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Wednesday 3 June 2026
An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit

Thursday 4 June 2026
Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 5 June 2026
Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Saturday 6 June 2026
10:00-11:00 – The Academic Discussion continues in the downtown open agora (close to the Aristotelian Lyceum)

William Batson
Professor, Prairie View A&M University, USA
&
Julian Degraft-Johnson
Student, Prairie View A&M University, USA

Reconstructing History: A 3D Visualization of a Roman Bath

The objective of this paper is to present a digital reconstruction of a Roman bath complex through the application of 3D modeling and visualization tools. The reconstruction process draws upon archaeological data, architectural plans from extant baths at Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Lepcis Magna, as well as historical and scholarly documentation, to develop a spatially and materially informed digital model. This model investigates how architectural and engineering systems operated cohesively to shape both the physical environment and the sensory experience of ancient Roman bathing culture. Key architectural components of the entry sequence, natatorium, tepidarium, caldarium, frigidarium, unctuarium, and the hypocaust system were analyzed and reconstructed to explore their spatial relationships, construction logic, and environmental performance.

This research frames 3D digital reconstruction as a methodology for architectural preservation, interpretation, and speculative restoration, particularly for sites with minimal surviving evidence. The selected case study retains only a minimal amount of structure and foundation stones in situ, offering limited physical data to analyze. Through the process of digital modeling, the study proposes a renewed understanding of the site's organization, circulation, and atmosphere, integrating empirical data with interpretive analysis. The resulting model functions as both an analytical and educational tool, enabling new methods for studying, teaching, and communicating the spatial and technological complexity of Roman architectural design.

By transforming fragmented archaeological evidence into an immersive and interactive digital environment, this project contributes to the expanding discourse of digital heritage and virtual reconstruction. It demonstrates how visualization technologies can act as interpretive instruments, bridging the divide between historical evidence and contemporary understanding. Ultimately, the study advances the examination of classical architecture through a framework that prioritizes accessibility, spatial experience, and

interdisciplinary engagement across architectural history, archaeology, and digital media.

Filip Bukowski
PhD Student, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland

Folk Songs as an Integral Element of Polish Traditional Culture

Folk songs, as an integral element of Polish traditional culture, are often perceived through the prism of an insignificant "product" of the rural community, the value of which focuses only on the ludic function. However, this is a very limited perspective. Songs, the lyrics of which most often show simplicity of expression, always carry a specific message. They are based on a symbolic linguistic code that helps to systematize them depending on the type of song. Folk song is extremely rich in plant symbolism, which is often intertwined with rituals and magical beliefs. In these works, plants become a kind of tool, an attribute whose task is to produce the expected effects. On the other hand, herbs, shrubs or trees also serve as archetypes, among other things, masculinity-femininity, earthliness-divinity. The analysis of the lyrical layer of the song allows us to get acquainted with the way of understanding the world by the rural people, with their view of nature, which is based both on the deep Christian faith and the practices rooted in pagan beliefs. The aim of the paper is to present and bring closer the plant symbolism appearing in the texts of traditional Kuyavian songs. Although variants of similar melodies and lyrics occur in different regions of Poland, limiting the field of interest to the Kuyavian region will allow us to bring out their specificity and familiarize them with the tradition of this region.

Nesrine Chahine
Assistant Professor, Texas Tech University, USA

The Social Novel and Egyptian Literary Magazines

"The Social Novel and Egyptian Literary Magazines" examines Tawfiq al-Hakim's novel, *Diary of a Country Prosecutor* (1937) alongside cultural debates during the 1930s and 1940s on the problem of poverty and its representations in Egyptian literature. Disillusioned with a *nahda* discourse that fused the need for bettering peasants with their glorification as the descendants of the Pharaohs, Hakim mounted an internal critique of liberalism. His novel deals with the failure of liberal elites to preside over the poverty-ridden *fellahin* in the hinterlands of Egypt. I contextualize Hakim's use of the social novel to mount such critiques within debates on poverty between Abbas Mahmud Al-Aqqad and Ramsis Younan (among others) in literary journals such as *Al-Risala* and *Al-Tatawwur,* noting an emphasis on managing the system of regulation (law) so as to insure the development of Egypt's production. For Hakim, as for the Egyptian Surrealists of *Al-Tatawwur*, modern alienation stems from incomplete modernization, from the failure to manage the productive powers of the *fellah*. Consequently, Egypt emerges as a marketplace for foreign commodities that frustrate the potential of national production latent in the countryside, a critique that informs the sensibility of the Egyptian social novel in the first half of the twentieth century.

Claudine Dauphin
Research Fellow, Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies (RIIFS), Jordan

Wheat and Wine: *Wadi* Agriculture and Viticulture in the "Garden of the Lord" at Byzantine and Umayyad Kastron Mefa'a (Umm Ar-Rasas) and its "Satellites" on the Edge of the Jordanian Desert

Umm ar-Rasas, a Unesco World Heritage site in the semi-arid steppe of Jordan, developed from the Late Roman cavalry military camp of Kastron Mefaa, into the civilian, double, walled town of Byzantine Mefaa with 16 churches and a stylite's tower which attracted pilgrimages.

What was its economic basis?

By comparing and combining data from old British RAF aerial photographs, with satellite imagery, and field-checks, the agricultural landscape of the lands of Mefa'a at its heyday in the 5th and 6th centuries was recaptured. The complex system of four major *wadi*s and their tributaries, walled-in lengthwise and bridged by a succession of dams, totalled 658 plots of varying sizes and shapes inside the *wadi*s, and another 68 plots edging some segments of *wadi*s. The data from the fields of the agricultural *wadi*s were put through a set of GIS statistical and spatial analyses in order to discover the significant variables in the original creation and subsequent organic development of the system. The depiction of Mother Earth *Gê*, ploughs, fruit trees, and vines on the mosaic pavements of the churches of Mefaa, and the discovery of wine and olive presses, provide the reasons for the spider-web system of paths leading to the fields of wheat and barley, and to the orchards, olive groves and vineyards of a most bountiful regional "Garden of the Lord", which encompassed, to the southwest, the satellite site of Jummeil with its late sixth-century Double Church complex, and extensive agricultural *wadi*s. The region continued to prosper in the Umayyad period: to the northeast of Mefa'a, the Qasr and mosque of of Umm al-Walid and the mosque of Khan az-Zabib inserted themselves peacefully into a predominantly Christian area: vineyards continued to be tended.

The lands of Umm ar-Rasas were declared in March 2018 "A Protected Ancient Landscape" by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan - a First for the archaeology of the Middle East.

William Davis
Professor, Colorado College, USA

Lord Byron and the Greek War of Independence

During the Greek War of Independence, philhellenists in Western Europe and North America deployed "Byron" as a signifier with a value that exceeded, or at times even diverged from, the embodied man—George Gordon, Lord Byron—to whom it ostensibly referred. This use of "Byron" as trope was intensified after his death in Messolonghi in April 1824. Leveraging the name of the poet was clearly part of an effort to encourage military and financial support for the Greek cause, as has been well-documented. It is likewise an intensification of Byronism more broadly, which tended to elide the man and his poems, in part encouraged by autobiographical elements of *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*.

Some philhellenist poems even fantasize that Byron died as a hero in battle, rather than lying in bed with fever. Wilhelm Müller (known now almost exclusively because Schubert set some of his poems to music), in a poem titled simply "Bryon" (1795), imagines the poet's death as a fall from the walls of "Byzantium":

> Welche Lieder, welche Kämpfe, welche
> Wunden, welchen Fall!
> Einen Fall im Siegestaumel auf den Mauern
> Von Byzanz
>
> [What songs, what battles, what wounds, what a fall! A fall amidst the victory-struggles atop the walls of Byzantium]

I will argue that this trope of Byron as Leonidas, rather than simply in the service of garnering support for the Greek cause in its struggles against the Ottoman Empire, functions culturally as a means to shore up Western European identity in a rapidly changing political, cultural, and economic landscape. In this context, "Byron" becomes a signifier that mediates between a glorious past and the present, between East and West—a trope that assists Western Europeans (and Americans) in their need to claim an idealized Greece as their own.

Stephanie de Villiers
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When the Power Shifts: Illegal Immigration, Gender Dynamics, and Mental Illness in Mira T. Lee's *Everything Here Is Beautiful*

Mira T. Lee's *Everything Here is Beautiful* (2018) chronicles the lives of two Chinese-American sisters, Lucia and Miranda, tracing Lucia's experiences with mental illness across different diasporic contexts. The novel resists easy categorisation of Lucia's madness, presenting it instead as fluid and contextual — shaped as much by her circumstances and relationships as by any internal psychological condition. This paper argues that the novel presents madness not as a purely individual or psychological condition, but as something produced at the intersection of immigration status, gender dynamics, and geography. Central to this argument is how the illegal status of Manny, an undocumented immigrant from Ecuador and one of Lucia's partners, fundamentally suppresses his sense of identity and masculinity — and how the reversal of this dynamic, when the couple relocates to Ecuador, has direct and damaging consequences for Lucia's mental health.

I examine how the couple's shifting geographies produce a series of inversions in gendered power. In the US, Lucia's citizenship affords her independence and agency, while Manny's undocumented status renders him economically constrained and perpetually vulnerable to deportation. This shapes the gender dynamics of their relationship in ways that are particular to the diasporic context: Manny's illegality effectively neutralises the patriarchal power he might otherwise exercise, producing an unusual, if fragile, form of equality between them. When the couple relocates to Ecuador with their daughter Essy, these dynamics shift dramatically. Freed from the threat of deportation, Manny reasserts his masculinity and reclaims a sense of authority, while Lucia simultaneously finds herself subject to the country's conservative gender expectations. Lucia, on the other hand, loses her independence and sense of self as a result of being judged by Manny's family for prioritising work over domestic duty, and legally being unable to leave the country with Essy without Manny's consent. I argue that it is this loss, as much as any clinical condition, that drives her mental deterioration in Ecuador. Through this analysis, the paper illustrates the triangular connection between madness, gender, and diaspora in Lee's novel, demonstrating how geography does not merely provide a backdrop for Lucia's illness

but actively produces the conditions for it. In doing so, the paper contributes to broader conversations about how women's mental health is shaped by displacement, legal status, and the gendered expectations that shift across national and cultural contexts.

Vjollca Dibra Ibrahimi
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Avenging and Virtuous Women in Ancient Greek Literature

The figure of the woman in ancient Greek literature embodies a complex duality, oscillating between the virtues of loyalty, wisdom, and moral integrity, and the ferocity of vengeance, retribution, and moral defiance. This paper explores two archetypal categories that emerge from the literary canon: the *avenging woman*, whose actions are often driven by personal loss, betrayal, or the demands of divine justice; and the *virtuous woman*, whose character reflects the ideals of fidelity, sacrifice, and social harmony. By examining selected works from Homer, the tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and other classical sources, the study seeks to illuminate how these contrasting portrayals both reflect and challenge the social, political, and moral norms of ancient Greek society.

In Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, we encounter figures like Helen, whose contested role blurs the lines between guilt and victimhood, and Penelope, who epitomizes conjugal fidelity and strategic intelligence. The tragedies further develop the image of the avenging woman through characters such as Clytemnestra in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, who avenges Agamemnon's betrayal with calculated resolve, and Medea in Euripides' eponymous play, whose vengeance transcends the personal to question the very foundations of patriarchal morality. Conversely, Sophocles' Antigone, though rebellious, embodies virtue through her unwavering adherence to divine law and familial duty, presenting a moral heroism that resists authoritarian decrees.

The study also considers lesser-known yet significant female figures from ancient Greek poetry and myth, whose actions—whether in the service of revenge or virtue—mirror societal tensions regarding gender roles, honor, and justice. These portrayals reveal that the avenging woman is not merely a figure of emotional excess but often a vehicle for articulating suppressed grievances and ethical dilemmas, while the virtuous woman is not simply passive but embodies resilience, moral agency, and intellectual depth.

By situating these characters within the broader cultural and philosophical frameworks of ancient Greece, the paper examines how the tension between vengeance and virtue informs the construction of female identity in literature. The analysis engages with modern feminist and comparative literary theory, highlighting how these archetypes persist,

evolve, and continue to resonate in later European and world literature. The avenging and virtuous women of Greek texts not only shaped the literary imagination of antiquity but also laid the groundwork for enduring debates on gender, morality, and power.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates that the binary of vengeance and virtue is neither fixed nor mutually exclusive; rather, it reflects a dynamic interplay between individual agency and societal expectation. In revealing the depth and nuance of these portrayals, the paper invites a reconsideration of the role of women in the literary and cultural heritage of ancient Greece, offering insights that remain strikingly relevant to contemporary discussions of justice, ethics, and gender representation.

Andrew Erwin
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Democracy and Higher Education in Classical Athens: Reflections on the Future of a Historical Antagonism

Advocates of liberal education commonly define a core purpose of higher education as preparation for democratic citizenship. But rarely do such defenses contend with two stubborn historical facts: one, the world's first democracy at Athens emerged and achieved its most radical form not only before the institutionalization of higher education in the fourth century BCE but even before the flourishing of Sophistic higher education in the latter half of the fifth century BCE. Two, the forerunners and founders of institutionalized higher education – Socrates, Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle – were either critics of radical democracy or outright hostile to democracy itself. What are we to make of this historical priority of democracy? And how should we contend with the fact that the founders of higher education were critics of democracy? Does the example of Athens dim or illuminate the prospects for a constructive relationship? In an era when higher education finds itself besieged by populist forms of democracy, it is crucial to inquire into the classical legacy of antagonism between democracy and higher education in order to discover how we might navigate this tension more productively in our own time.

This paper argues that higher education emerged in classical Athens in three chronologically distinct and competing forms., corresponding roughly to the fourth-century institutions of the Isocratean rhetorical school, the Platonic Academy, and the *Ephebia*. While the *Ephebia* was the last of the three institutions to emerge in the fourth century, its prehistory lies in an earlier tradition of civic higher education through democratic participation that traces its roots to the beginnings of the Cleisthenic democracy. Identifying this earlier tradition of *education through participation* challenges the traditional narrative of higher education and its relation to democracy. Traditional narratives leave out the Athenian tradition of participatory higher education because it does not fit neatly into modern categories of institutionalized higher education. Accordingly, scholars tend to divide the history of ancient higher education (and liberal education up to the modern era) into the well-known quarrel between orators and philosophers, represented by the Sophists and Socrates, and subsequently Isocrates and Plato. However, recovering what Athenians themselves understood as the educative

function of participation in core democratic institutions (e.g. the Assembly, the Council, the Jury Courts, dramatic and religious festivals) opens up a new perspective on the Sophists and Socrates, who laid the groundwork for the fifth-century institutionalization of higher education with Isocrates and Plato. From the new perspective, the Sophists and Socrates – traditionally understood as pure antagonists – now occupy a common middle ground between popular civic higher education and elite institutionalized higher education. This reframing yields new insights about how the Sophists, Socrates, Isocrates, and Plato established a productive dialogue with democracy, not simply a dismissive or reactionary stance. The paper concludes with thoughts on how this new perspective suggests alternatives to contemporary higher educational practice that promise a more constructive relationship between popular democracy and higher education.

Seyed Salam Fathi
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The Transmutation of Kufic Script in the Mediterranean: Artistic Appropriation and Norman Legitimacy (10th–15th Centuries)

This research examines the transformation of the Arabic Kufic script and its pseudo-Kufic derivatives in Byzantine and Italian art between the 10th and 15th centuries. It explores how and why a script originally imbued with Qur'anic and political significance was reimagined and recontextualized within Christian visual traditions. The study argues that the transformation of Kufic into pseudo-Kufic was not a merely decorative phenomenon but a conscious act of cultural translation and symbolic appropriation, reflecting a broader process of intercultural communication across the medieval Mediterranean. Based on the theoretical frameworks of cultural hybridity and aesthetic appropriation, this study employs a comparative and iconographic methodology that is complemented by epigraphic and stylistic analysis. In this study, several representative works originating in Norman-Sicilian, Byzantine, and Italian contexts are examined, including the Arabic epigraphic program of Palermo's Cappella Palatina and the mosaics of Monreale Cathedral, as well as later Italian paintings depicting pseudo-Kufic motifs on sacred garments and halos, including works by Giotto, Masaccio, and Mantegna. They demonstrate how Arabic inscriptions, originally conveying religious and political significance, gradually evolved into ornamental patterns deprived of semantic legibility but endowed with symbolic prestige and sacred resonance. The analysis identifies key vectors of transmission, particularly the circulation and adaptation of Islamic portable objects and textiles, which facilitated the migration of Kufic forms into Christian artistic media. Kufic script evolved into a visual idiom associated with sanctity, cultural sophistication, and legitimacy through processes of imitation, stylization, and aesthetic reconfiguration. By addressing a gap in scholarship concerning the semiotic and political dimensions of Arabic script in Christian Mediterranean art, it demonstrates that pseudo-Kufic ornamentation was a deliberate aesthetic and ideological strategy that asserted sacred antiquity and promoted the negotiation of power and identity. Lastly, the transmutation of Kufic script demonstrates the dynamic processes of appropriation, imitation, and hybridity that characterize artistic

dialogue among Islamic, Byzantine, and Latin traditions from the 10th to the 15th century.

Michelle Faubert
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John Ferriar, Romantic Psychology, and Abolitionist Drama

Although the literature of abolitionism has been afforded greater critical attention in recent years, thanks to renewed attention to the importance of race and slavery to the Romantic period, few critics have examined closely John Ferriar's *The Prince of Angola, a Tragedy, Altered From the Play of Oroonoko. And Adapted to the Circumstances of the Present Times* (1788). Moreover, no one, to the best of my knowledge, has considered this play as a reflection of Ferriar's profession as a physician, in particular as a moral manager working in the so-called "lunatic" hospital of the Manchester Infirmary. In this paper, I argue that Ferriar refers not only to abolitionism in his reference to "Circumstances of the Present Times," but also to recent developments in the understanding of the human mind that were the focus of his profession. With reference to the principles of moral management, I will demonstrate how Ferriar changes the source plays that form the basis of his version – those by John Hawkesworth and Thomas Southerne – and engages with Aphra Behn's original short story *Oroonoko* (1688) to shape a play that presents a new approach to abolitionism, one that employs early psychological theories of the mind to deliver an effective anti-slavery message.

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Understanding the Built Environment in the İzmir Palimpsest: Architecture and Settlement in İzmir from the Perspective of Architecture Students

In this article, it is envisaged to discuss outputs of the AR436 Architecture and Settlement in Izmir course, which was given by me as a technical elective course for the first time to 3rd and 4th year students in the fall semester of the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic years at Izmir Institute of Technology Faculty of Architecture which were the weekly, mid-semester and end-of-semester outputs produced by the candidates who re-read the city throughout the semester through the theorist Fernand Braudel's historical methodology.

In addition to the theoretical lecture, field trips, guest lecturers and participation in online seminars to reinforce this theoretical framework that they were introduced to for the first time, the students themselves had the opportunity to discuss this new relationship they established with the history and architecture of the city they lived in through the posters and presentations they produced in each class. Urban investments, the scope of which grows as we get closer to the present day, and how the major architectural projects accompanying these mega investments changed course with the fire, and the attempts to achieve a holistic approach after the fire were examined and discussed on the scales of master plans. These narratives and discussions have been embedded in the images of the students who are currently conducting their studio studies in İzmir and they got benefit from those information on their creation process.

Throughout 14 weeks, Izmir has been read as a Mediterranean port from antiquity to the present day. The aim of sharing this projection of Izmir through the eyes of a group of 25 students is to provoke discussions that will lead to a reconsideration and perhaps an increase in the 'historic built environment of İzmir' courses that have been included in the curriculum of architecture departments until today. Since it is thought that the productions of this course during and at the end of the semester will reinforce the relationship they will establish with the historical environment in their professional life, it is aimed to be discussed in this study.

Kevin Glowacki
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Ritual Behavior and Votive Practice on the North Slope of the Acropolis

The north slope of the Acropolis of Athens was home to numerous small shrines that offer important insights into everyday religious practices in the ancient city. Unlike the sanctuaries on the summit (Athena Polias, Athena Nike, Zeus Polieus, Artemis Brauronia), and the south slope of the Acropolis (Dionysos, Asklepios and Hygeia), which were embellished by large-scale architecture and state-sponsored festivals, most shrines on the north slope were either open-air (Aphrodite and Eros) or within shallow caves (Apollo, Pan) and lacking formal architectural definition. In many of these more "rustic" shrines, worshippers left behind modest offerings (figurines, plaques, vases, coins, organic remains) that reflect ritual behaviors related to prayer, sacrifice, and dedication on a more personal level. This paper examines votive practices within this prominent liminal zone between the major state sanctuary of Athena on the summit of the Acropolis and the civic, residential, and workshop areas of the city below. The study draws on published excavation reports, archival resources, and a new examination of the material remains in situ and in museum storerooms to highlight how the north slope of the Acropolis functioned as a dynamic ritual landscape characterized by repeated acts of offering, remembrance, and interaction with the divine. Particular attention is given to the open-air sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros and the typological and iconographic range of votive objects recovered from excavation. Following a framework developed by F.T. Van Straten ("Gifts for the Gods" 1981), these votives can be understood as representations of "participants and concomitants" (e.g., depictions of the divinities, their symbols, and their worshippers) and "occasions" and "desired effects" (e.g., objects representing marriage; anatomical votives of male and female genitalia related to health, fertility, and childbearing). A comparable range of votives were also found in the Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Daphne, on the Sacred Way to Eleusis, another religious precinct also characterized by numerous niches for the dedication and display of votive offerings prominently carved into the surrounding rocky terrain. By situating the Sanctuary of Aphrodite and Eros and other shrines on the north slope within the broader Athenian religious topography, the study proposes that votive activity in this area reflects a flexible and highly accessible sacred landscape linked by an encircling pathway known as the

Peripatos (IG II² 2639). Rather than being peripheral, the north slope emerges as an integral interface between civic religion and personal devotion, where individual piety was expressed by modest offerings within the sacred geography of the Acropolis.

Sanja Grakalic Plenkovic
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Between Aestheticism and Fairy-Tale Poetics: A Comparative View of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić and Oscar Wilde

The paper examines identifiable parallels in the work of two contemporary writers and authors of literary fairy tales who shared the European cultural and literary space: the most renowned Croatian writer for children, Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić (1874–1938), and the Irish writer Oscar Wilde (1854–1900). The presence of modernist poetic features in their works, as well as their shared affinity for fairy tales, mythology, and the fantastic, opens the possibility for meaningful comparisons between their oeuvres.

The corpus under consideration includes eight fairy tales by Brlić-Mažuranić from the collection Priče iz davnine (Croatian Tales of Long Ago, 1916; 1926) and five tales from the collection Bajke i basne (Fairy Tales and Fables, posthumously published in 1943), as well as five tales from Wilde's first collection The Happy Prince and Other Tales (1888). Through comparative analysis and interpretation of the literary fairy tales of these two authors, the paper highlights several particularly notable points of convergence.

These parallels become evident in several aspects. Most notably, both authors display an affinity for Art Nouveau aestheticization, visible in their creation of fairy-tale spaces and landscapes, as well as in their use of decorative, ornamental, and colouristic elements. Further similarities can be observed in their use of fantastic motifs, including the construction of characters and fantastic beings, as well as personified animals. Another important point of convergence lies in the authors' stylistic approach, characterized by refined linguistic awareness that results in a polished and carefully crafted expression.

The two writers are also connected by their avoidance of excessive emotionality and the absence of overt sentimentality, which in this respect recalls certain aspects of the work of Hans Christian Andersen. The affinity with modernist poetics and the Art Nouveau aestheticism present in Brlić-Mažuranić's fairy tales becomes particularly intriguing when interpreted in relation to her programmatic texts. In explaining her ethical and aesthetic views and her literary poetics, the author clearly distances herself—primarily in an ethical sense—from the prevailing currents of contemporary Croatian literature, emphasizing her anti-modernist stance in the essay Omladini o idealima (To the Youth on Ideals, 1923).

Finally, although the literary oeuvres of Brlić-Mažuranić and Wilde display a high degree of autonomy and can be interpreted independently and/or in relation to the literary period in which they emerged, it is also illuminating to consider them in connection with elements of their authors' biographies. In her Autobiografija (Autobiography, 1916, published in 1930), Brlić-Mažuranić highlights her children's desire for reading, which encouraged her to begin writing and gave her work a particular sense of purpose. Wilde, too, initially wrote his fairy tales to entertain his college friends and later for his young sons (Paljetak 2000). It is also possible that Brlić-Mažuranić read Wilde's fairy tales, either in the original or in translation: two of them were translated into Croatian in 1900, and the entire collection in 1911. Two of Wilde's books have been preserved to this day in the Brlić family library in Slavonski Brod, Croatia.

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The Cultural and Civilizational Development of Gazan Society through the Study of the Forms and Images Executed on Mosaics

It is known that the Gaza city and its surroundings witnessed economic prosperity and security stability during the Byzantine period, which was reflected in the culture in the fifth and sixth centuries AD. The reputation and fame of the various schools of Gaza, especially in rhetoric, was well-known and rivalled the schools of Athens. It is not unlikely that an architectural school would flourish in Gaza, especially in the art of mosaics. The reputation and fame of the various schools of Gaza, especially in rhetoric, was well-known and rivalled the schools of Athens. It is not unlikely that an architectural school would flourish in Gaza, especially in the art of mosaics. This is evidenced by the remains of many church mosaic pavments discovered in Gaza and its surrounded, so in this research we will try to highlight the most prominent artistic features.

This study search various cultural aspects that flourished in Gaza during the Byzantine period, which were implemented on mosaics and decorated the floors of churches in Gaza and its surroundings, such as wild and pets animal figures, geometric and plant decorations, and types of food and deferent pots that distinguished in the kitchen of Gazian society, which reflect the cultural advancement in Gaza during that period. The study is based on four mosaic pavements as examples: Al-Mukhaytem church in Jabalia, Monastery of St. Hilarion in Nuseirat, the Byzantine shrine in the village of Abasan al-Kabira, and the mosaics of Al-Berkah Church in Deir Al-Balah. The study has a main conclusion that there was an architectural school for the Art of mosaics flourished locally in Gaza during the Byzantine period.

Magdalen Ki
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Poe and the Criminal Mind

This paper examines how Poe's exploration of criminality is often correlated with attachment issues, revealing a complex interplay between nurture, nature, brain changes and behavioral disorder. I argue that Poe's narratives reflect a nuanced understanding of attachment styles—anxious, avoidant, and disorganized—that compel characters into cycles of deviant conduct. His characters, often driven by obsessive ambitions, passions, or retributive desires, illuminate the psychological contours of attachment trauma. This investigation unravels not merely the mechanics of crime but the underlying emotional turmoil that propel individuals to select destruction and self-destruction.

Eleni Kontogianni
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Medea the *Barbarian*, the *Stranger*, the *Foreigner*, and the *Friend*: Euripides' *Medea* in the Light of the Peloponnesian War

In this paper I examine Euripides' presentation of Medea in reference to the words "*barbaros*," "*xenos*," and "*philos*," that are alternatively employed to characterize Medea. Considering that the depicted events were situated before the Trojan War, it appears that Euripides employs the words "*barbaros*" and "*xenos*," in particular, with a sense that these words did not actually have at the time during which the depicted events were supposed to have happened. That is to say, Euripides employs the words "*barbaros*" and "*xenos*" in an anachronistic way. The word "*barbaros*" denotes the non-Greek as opposed to the Greek, and thus, it connotes the end of the process of formation of the Greek identity. However, in Homer there is no clear-cut distinction between Greek and non-Greek. Rather, we discern the beginnings of the formation of the Greek ethnic identity founded on a more or less homogeneous language. Also, in Homer the word "*xenos*" primarily denotes the stranger or the foreigner, that is, an unknown coming from a foreign land, while the connotation of a codified practice of hospitality is absent (Konstan, 2022). In *Medea*, the word "*xenos*" assumes the one function or the other in relation to the context. Medea compares herself to a "*xenos*" in the first sense (222), while Jason by "*xenos*" designates the foreigners who might receive her as guest and are considered as friends (613). If we take into account the progressive evolution of the sense of the words employed by Euripides, then a threefold question is posed: 1) does Euripides indeed aim at a symbolic interpretation of the actual events of his time by transposing the meaning which he wishes to highlight to a quasi-mythic period? 2) what is the relationship between the presentation of the tragedy and the historical events which surround it, namely, the beginning of the Peloponnesian War? 3) what is the symbolism that underlies Medea's infanticide and the mythical events which surround it, namely, Medea's abandonment, her exile sentence, and her glorious victory? If we consider the historical context in which the presentation of *Medea* takes place, that is, if we consider the tragedy in relation to the Peloponnesian War, we can conclude that with *Medea* Euripides addresses the Greek collective consciousness of the present, the collective memory, and the collective imagination. Medea's infanticide may be considered as symbol of an act of political autonomy correlated with political division which feeds vanity and undermines generosity and

trust. The idea of vanity and, by contrast, of happiness is expressed by the Messenger at the end of his description of the horrifying events. The present study is divided into three parts: 1) the sense of the words "*barbaros*," "*xenos*," and "*philos*," describing the relationship between Medea and the others, 2) the beginning of the Peloponnesian War according to Thucydides narrative in Book I, 24-88, on the political division within Greece, on the glory of Athens, and on the moderation of the Spartans, 3) the political symbolism which underlies *Medea*.

Adam Miyashiro
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The Global Alexander Romance: A Trans-Cultural Text Network

This paper, which is part of the introduction for my book project, *The Global Legend of Alexander the Great: A Transhistorical Cultural History*, for the Elements Series for Cambridge University Press, explores the wide literary circulation of the *Alexander Romance*, a loose collection of legendary stories about the historical figure of Alexander the Great, the Macedonian Greek military and political leader of the 4th century BCE, between antiquity and the early modern period (ca. 300 BCE – 1600 CE). Different from his biographies, the *Alexander Romance* contains many fantastic episodes of Alexander's journeys to Africa and Asia which were influenced by ancient legends and myths and would go on to influence countless medieval, early modern, and modern writers, including Geoffrey of Monmouth and Jules Verne, among many others. Traditionally, the romances of Alexander the Great were understood as primarily European literary phenomena, with versions in Greek, Latin, French, German, and English being the entire focus.

The *Alexander Romance* represents the widest-read single narrative in the pre-modern world and was recorded and disseminated in the significant literary capitals of the time. Alexandria (Egypt), Samarkand (modern Uzbekistan), and Córdoba (Spain) seem like an unlikely constellation of literary capitals, but this arc of cities connects Africa, Asia, and Europe in the multiple trajectories of the *Alexander Romance* during the period from 900 to 1500. Alexander the Great's literary depictions moved between Afro-Eurasian literary capitals – from al-Andalus (Iberia) in the West to Mongolia in the East – to establish a dispersed image of tributary empires of the Ilkhanate and Timurids (Mongol and Turkish), Umayyad/'Abbasids, and Byzantines and western Europeans during the 13th and 14th centuries.

My paper takes into consideration Alexander's literary representation in ancient Greco-Egyptian culture to Afro-Asian and European Christianity to the Quran and Golden Age of Islam, as well as in Central and East Asian contexts across multiple languages, cultures, religions, and time periods. The text's foundation in the Egyptian Afro-Asian context (as an African text) and its spread to Asia as well as Europe will be foregrounded.

Long considered in the western imagination as an avatar of the European conquest of Asia since the ancient Greco-Egyptian version of Pseudo-Callisthenes, Alexander the Great's image in western and central Asian literature, known primarily from his appearance in the 18th Surah of the *Quran* ("Al-Kahf," or The Cave) as "Dhul-Qarnayn" ("the two-horned one"), ranges from the Arabic *Qissat Dhul-Qarnayn* ("Tales of the Two-Horned One") to the Mongol-Turkic translation of "Sulqarnai," and offers a counter-literary history of Alexander's empire. The literary capitals listed above were cities that served simultaneously as both centers and peripheries of empires where the Alexander romance had been translated: Alexandria between Byzantine Greeks and 'Abbasid Arabs; Samarkand between Mongols and Turks; and Córdoba between Umayyads and Berbers, Castilians, and Catalans, among others.

Alison Lee Naidoo
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Ancient Greece and Modern Africa: Homeric Marriage and Funerary Customs in an African Context

The *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* is considered one of the most important literary texts to survive from antiquity, providing the basis for language and literary analysis for a plethora of other ancient sources. With its origins in Oral Tradition, the *Hymn* looks closely at the Fifth Century Attic coming-of-age, marriage, and funerary rites involving women and girls in Ancient Greece. In a similar nature, Traditional African customs are also steeped in rich Oral Tradition, and customs associated with girlhood and womanhood share many traits with Ancient Greek customs.

Taking into consideration that both cultures are Patriarchal Societies contingent on strong Matriarchal values, this paper will look at the similarities in the customs and cultures of Attic and African marriage and funerary rites, discussing their origins and examining any connections between the two cultures be it ancient or modern.

This paper will also examine the importance of oral based traditions in community-based cultures and how this has been influenced by western traditions in how these traditions are received in society today.

Iyas Nasser
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The Assertive Female Voice in Maysūn bint Baḥdal's (d. c. 700) Poetry

Maysūn bint Baḥdal (d. c. 700), from the influential Christian tribe of Kalb, was a famous Bedouin poet best known for the poem she composed following her marriage to Muʿāwiya ibn Abī Sufyān (d. 680), the first Umayyad caliph, and her move to Damascus. After Muʿāwiya heard his wife declaiming the poem, which describes him as "a strong and foddered ass" (*ʿilj ʿalīf*), they divorced. An initial reading of the poem conveys Maysūn's longing for her earlier Bedouin life, her preference for "a tent" (*bayt*) over "a palace" (*qaṣr*), "a woolly cloak" (*ʿabāʾa*) over "thin garments" (*shufūf*), and "a small piece of bread" (*kusayra*) over "a loaf" (*raghīf*). This talk will shed new light of Maysūn's poem, focusing on her assertive female voice as a woman who not only expresses a longing for her homeland, but also criticizes her husband's attempts to manipulate her as an object, confining her to a specific space that she despises and claiming possession of her through the material trappings of his palace. Moreover, a close reading and detailed textual analysis show that Maysūn composed her poem in reaction to the condescending attitude of urban society towards Bedouin society. Specific lines and phrases from the poem will be discussed, illuminating the poet's assertive standpoint and her firm opposition to the scornful stance urban society.

Kathleen Ann O'Donnell
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How Was Celtic Resistance Poetry in English Used in the Nineteenth Century in the Balkans and Anatolia to Save Europe from Future Wars?

This paper will demonstrate how translations of Celtic (Irish and Scottish) literature, written in English, were translated and disseminated to forge unity among different creeds living in the vast nineteenth-century Greek-speaking world.

The Ottomans ruled Mainland Greece from 1453. Ottoman tributaries were the Principalities of Wallachia (1476) and Moldovia (1578), where they did not reside. Greeks, known as Phanariots from Constantinople, became Princes. The Venetians had controlled the Seven Islands from 1353 until Napoleon liberated them in 1797. Egypt became semi-independent in 1801

Written Celtic literature dates from about the twelfth century when Ireland came under English rule. Its Gaelic chieftains, however, still enjoyed a certain amount of freedom until 1609. Up until then, their Bardic poets retained Irish culture and language, entertaining them, for example, with tales of ancient Irish heroes handed down orally, including those of the Fenians (Fiannia), a band of warriors including Fingal (Fin), Ossian (Oisin), Gaul (Gol) and Oscar. Suffering dispossession under subsequent English invasions, these poets wrote Irish resistance poetry in protest. Bardic poets, who became banned Hedge School teachers, taught the Irish peasantry. Their influence led to the revolution of 1798.

A hedge school pupil was the Irish scholar and lyricist, Thomas Moore, whose manifesto, 'Imitation of Ossian', published in English in 1797, propagated the Highlands Ossian, written by the Scottish antiquarian James Macpherson, whose secular work *The Poems of Ossian,* written in English poetic prose, was published as a political weapon against the English decimation of the Scottish Gaelic culture after the Battle of Culloden in 1745. This Celtic poetry also influenced the Anglo-Scot Noel Gordon Byron, a close friend of Moore.

Translated into many languages, such Celtic literature was used as a political tool to liberate people from despotism. It appealed to Polish radicals and Russian Decembrists seeking democracy, reaching the Greek-Speaking world in the early nineteenth century. Translations of Celtic literature encouraged unity through the planned founding of federalist states to unite the Anatolian people of all creeds, in their

opposition to both Western monarchical usurpation and the Phanariot policy of resurrecting a Byzantine Empire known as the Great Idea. Its founder was Panayiotis Panas, the Seven Islander poet and newspaper editor. He was influenced by the works of Thomas Moore and was the main translator of *The Poems of Ossian*.

Are the peaceful literary endeavours of these nineteenth-century Greek-speaking scholars who translated this Celtic poetry remembered with reverence today?

Bernard Odendaal
Extraordinary Professor, North-West University, South Africa

Manifestations of Sensory Perception in Some Poems included in two Digital Byderhand Installations at Worcester, South Africa

In the Western tradition, sight and hearing have come to enjoy cultural primacy as external sensory capabilities. The accelerated growth of a culture of science during the recent two centuries, has added to this privileged status of especially visual perception as a means of comprehending phenomena.

Imagery based on visual perception also tends to dominate in poetry (Longenbach 2008). Most of the poems included in the "Byderhand" ("At Hand") digital installations in both the garden of the Pioneer School for the Visually Impaired and the Karoo Desert National Botanical Gardens at Worcester in South Africa, attests to the primacy afforded to sight and hearing as external senses.

Cultural determinations of sensory perception are often expressed in the stereotyping and "thereotyping" of cognition (Rowland 1984), specifically concerning cognition by the visually impaired. Research has, however, revealed that the visually impaired often tend to develop remarkable dexterity in utilising the other external sensory abilities, while lending varying primacy to these in accordance with situational changes. Tactile perception plays an important role in such persons' exploration of objects and spaces; movement of the body and the limbs tend to characterise their perceptual engagement. "Analogies in sense perception" (Keller 1908), or synesthetic compounding of sensory experience, constitute another strategy employed in transcending the limitations they deal with.

More recently, scientific research has been the source of growing acknowledgement that additional capacities for perception, other than the so-called extero-receptors, are available to human beings. Attention is increasingly paid to interoreceptors, such as the vestibulary system (sense of balance), the interior kinaesthetic organs (in sensing movement) and proprioception (the sensing of position). These findings agree with views (cf. Müller 1994) that human perception and cognition are based on our sensorially integrated interaction with phenomena around us. Such perceptions, and the concepts based upon them, find expression in the language symbols we create and employ in naming them. The ways in which the highly symbolising character of modern-day language signification has caused us to experience the development of a gap and

accompanying tension between sign and signified, has been explored from various theoretical frameworks.

In particular, the post-Freudian psycho-analytical views of Jacques Lacan on the human transition from the Imaginary Order to the Symbolic Order prove to be relevant in analysing the sense perception manifestations in poems included in the said Byderhand installations.

In addition to sensory manifestations, and the implications thereof for meaningful interaction with phenomena and place, what transpires as a shared motif in the poems selected for discussion, is the varying expression of a longing for authentic sensory (re-)experience and renewed comprehension of natural phenomena. This desire is expressed in terms of an (imagined) bodily advance towards, the surrounding landscape and the objects present in it.

The interaction expressed in the poems, concerns the experiences of both the visually impaired and those without such an impairment. Apparently, a universal human need is voiced in this regard, constituting an effort at countering the effects of "intellectuality and materialistic abstraction" in modern society (Louw 1959).

Claudiu-Liviu Onisoara
PhD Student, University of Craiova, Romania

The King's Sleep in *the Book of Esther*: Insomnia as a Turning Point in Ancient Texts

The brief mention of the king's disturbed sleep in *Esther* 6:1 has sometimes been treated as a narrative device, one that simply sets the story's reversal in motion. This study revisits that moment by including it within the Near Eastern literary tradition. There, sleeplessness and troubled dreams often reveal a change from uncertainty to resolution. The sleep that "deserts" the king describes not necessarily an insomnia, but a state of unsettled consciousness, which is found between rest and awareness. That intermediate condition becomes the point of no return, where chance, memory and authority meet.

The article advances by comparing this scene with similar motifs from other ancient texts, in which the sleep of gods and monarchs is disturbed on the eve of major events. In the Mesopotamian literary corpus, the interruption of sleep often illustrates the moment when disorder demands a rapid response. *Esther* reinterprets this ancient pattern in a more secular way. In this sense, no deity intervenes, yet the idea of miraculous coincidence remains.

The Book of Esther reflects an ancient sense of the night, one in which darkness is seen as a time of transition and change. Ahasuerus' sleeplessness is not a simple narrative mechanism. More likely, it is a textual reminiscence of a Near Eastern view in which change arises from the stillness of the night.

Paola Partenza
Associate Professor, Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" Chieti - Pescara, Italy

Between Reason and Revolt: A Critical Comparison of Mary Wollstonecraft and Emmeline Pankhurst on Women's Moral and Political Agency

This presentation aims to offer a critical comparison of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and Emmeline Pankhurst's *My Own Story* (1914), examining how each constructs women's moral and political agency. While both challenge the exclusion of women from public life, they diverge profoundly in their philosophical assumptions and political strategies. Wollstonecraft advances a universalist model grounded in Enlightenment rationalism, arguing that women's emancipation depends on the cultivation of reason and access to equal education and civic participation. Pankhurst, by contrast, develops an account of agency rooted in lived experience, collective struggle, and the necessity of direct—and at times disruptive—political action.

The paper interprets this divergence through Ágnes Heller's ethics of responsibility, which conceptualises moral agency as an existential and relational practice enacted within specific historical contexts. This framework highlights a fundamental tension between reason and experience, reform and resistance, and individual and collective subjectivity. It also brings into focus the ethical question that most sharply divides the two thinkers: what forms of action are justified when established institutions fail to deliver justice?

By connecting these contrasting frameworks to contemporary feminist struggles shaped by democratic backsliding, contested rights, and new forms of activism, the paper argues that the opposition between rational persuasion and militant engagement remains both unresolved and productive. It concludes that a contemporary feminist ethics must move beyond this binary, integrating universal claims to justice with situated, collective forms of action, while remaining attentive to the unequal distribution of power and vulnerability within feminist movements.

Aaron Plattner
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To Be or Not to Be: The (Apparently) Lost Arcadian Cities in Strabo's *Geography* and Pausanias' *Description of Greece*

From the 1st cent. BC to the 2nd cent. AD, the image of Arcadia in literature is remarkably de-urbanised. Portrayed as the mythical-idyllic counterpart of the big city (Virgil), the inland region on the Peloponnese is labelled as scarcely populated and full of (partly) ruinous cities (Strabo and Pausanias). However, considering the archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic sources, there appears to be a significant discrepancy between this image and reality. This is surprising especially in Strabo and Pausanias because the former's Geography and the latter's Description of Greece are both non-fictional texts aiming at educating their intended audiences. Strabo's well-known assessment of Arcadia's contemporary urban situation reads as follows (from the decades around the turn of the eras): "[...] The Arcadian peoples, Azanians and Parrhasians and others like them, are considered to be the oldest of the Greeks, but because of the complete ill-treatment of the land it would not be proper to say much about them. For the cities that were once famous have disappeared due to the constant wars, and those that had cultivated the land have been gone since the time when most of them were merged into the so-called 'Great City' by synoecism […]" (Strab. geogr. 8,8,1–2; trans. A. Plattner). And Pausanias repeatedly refers to ruins situated in urban areas or outside, e.g. in the section on Megalopolis (during Antonine dynasty's rule): "I was not surprised that Megalopolis, which had been founded via synoecism by the Arcadians with all the willingness and with the greatest expectations of the Greeks, lost all its equipment and ancient wealth and is mostly in ruins in our time […]" (Paus. 8,33,1; trans. A. Plattner). Even though this practice is consistent with Pausanias' antiquarian interests, his remarks are surprising because Greece had actually seen a general economic boom under the famously philhellenic Roman emperor Hadrian (117–138 AD): Regarding Arcadia, Hadrian, among other things, gave Mantinea officially back its original name and had the temple of Poseidon Hippios, a monument of vital importance to the identity and history of its inhabitants, rebuilt as well as Epaminondas' tomb renovated and inscribed with an epigram allegedly composed by himself.

In my paper, I will identify possible reasons for Strabo and Pausanias to distort reality through the (un)intentional construction of "lost cities", creating a "free-floating Arcadia", so to speak (working definition: A city

is lost when it no longer functions as a polis centre, ceases maintenance of public buildings, loses its connectivity to other cities, and presumably faces an economic slowdown due to processing isolation and perhaps population decline). Methodologically, selected expressions of the de-urbanised Arcadia-image will be discussed in the context of Strabo's and Pausanias' agendas. The goal is to reassess the Geography's and Description of Greece's source value for the respective contemporary urban situation in Arcadia.

Xiaoli Qin
Professor, Fudan University, China

Cultural Interaction and Influence during the Erligang Period: An Analysis Based on Decorative Ritual Artifacts

This paper focuses on the early Shang dynasty, represented by the Erligang culture, which succeeded the Xia dynasty. It examines how the early Shang, while inheriting the decorative and ritual traditions of the Xia, assimilated and integrated diverse cultural elements from other regions to gradually develop a distinctive sacrificial ritual system characteristic of early Shang culture. Furthermore, the study explores how this decorative and ritual framework was manifested and functioned during the subsequent development of the Yinxu culture. Through this analysis, the paper investigates the dynamics of cultural interaction and the driving forces behind the influential social reach during the Erligang period.

Juan Pablo Quintero Guzman
Curator-Archaeologist, Museo del Oro, Banco de la República, Colombia

Archaeological Style and Cultural Unity: Rethinking the Identity of Archaeological Regions in Colombia

In Colombian archaeology, cultural labels such as *Tairona*, *Quimbaya*, or *Muisca* have long been used to classify artifacts according to geographic, chronological, and stylistic criteria. These categories are deeply embedded in museum narratives, where style often serves as a visual shorthand for cultural identity. However, this convention assumes that formal and stylistic features directly reflect the social or ethnic identity of past groups—an assumption that recent research increasingly calls into question.

This presentation examines how the notion of *archaeological style* has shaped the construction of cultural units in Colombian archaeology and how these definitions influence the way museums represent the past. Drawing on current renovation projects at the Museo del Oro's regional branches, the paper analyzes how traditional geographic and temporal boundaries are being reconsidered in light of new archaeological evidence, contemporary museological approaches, and global debates on representation and decolonization.

The discussion proposes alternative frameworks for linking archaeological objects with cultural identities—frameworks that acknowledge processes of mobility, interaction, and transformation rather than fixed boundaries. By reinterpreting style as a dynamic expression rather than a static cultural marker, this approach seeks to open new possibilities for how museums can narrate the diversity and interconnectedness of Colombia's pre-Hispanic societies.

Ultimately, this presentation invites an international dialogue on how style, identity, and heritage interpretation intersect in museum practice, and how rethinking these relationships can contribute to more inclusive and contextually grounded understandings of the archaeological record.

Joseph Rockelmann
German Language & Literature Teacher, Bavarian International School, Germany

Childhood Trauma in Ludwig Tieck's "Der blonde Eckbert" (1797)

Ludwig Tieck (1773–1853), often acclaimed as the "King of Romanticism," was an exceptionally prolific author whose literary output significantly shaped the German Romantic movement. He is best known today for his *Kunstmärchen* (art fairy tales), the most prominent of which is "*Der blonde Eckbert'*, edited by Peter Lebrecht and published in *Volksmärchen* (1797) in Berlin by Carl August Nicolai. This tale engages with multiple themes, most notably the repercussions of secrecy (*Geheimnisse*) on the individual and the complexities of human communication. Moreover, Tieck's interest in the emerging field of psychology is evident through his exploration of the intricacies of the human mind. This paper focuses on an aspect that has received limited scholarly attention: the influence of childhood experiences and parental actions on the psychological development of individuals in adulthood. In "*Der blonde Eckbert*", Tieck examines childhood trauma as a formative force shaping cognitive, emotional, social, and personality development. The protagonist, Bertha, is raised by a poor shepherd after being born from her father's extramarital affair and subsequently hidden from his wife. Her upbringing is marked by neglect and abuse, as her adoptive father perceives her as an economic burden due to her inability to fulfill household tasks. The escalating verbal and physical mistreatment compels her to flee her home. Bertha's early deprivation fosters an obsession with financial security, equating material wealth with personal worth. When she eventually acquires money—ironically through theft from an old woman who had offered her shelter and education—her past trauma continues to haunt her. The guilt of her transgression and the persistent fear of discovery prevent her from attaining peace. The father's infidelity thus serves as the catalyst for Bertha's suffering, culminating in her psychological collapse upon being confronted by the old woman, which results in her death. Her brother Eckbert's subsequent realization—that Bertha was his half-sister—drives him to a similar tragic end. Ultimately, Tieck illustrates how the father's moral failing precipitates the destruction of his children, emphasizing the intergenerational consequences of secrecy and betrayal.

Matthew Scott
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Byron among the Artists

This paper examines the role played by the visual arts in the life and work of Lord Byron (1788-1824), paying particular attention to the period immediately before he left Italy to participate in the struggle for Greek independence.

Unlike his near contemporaries, John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, for whom works of art feature prominently in some of their best-known poems, Byron has generally not been thought to be a writer with a special fondness for the visual arts. His most noted remarks on specific works are surely those to do with the Parthenon marbles and the Elgin controversy, when he was vocal in his objection to their removal; and it is in a similarly political light that he comments on other ancient objects during his travels. In contrast to this stance, which attends to art primarily for its political function, there are scattered observations about paintings that he encountered during his life in Italy that are marked by irreverence and flippancy. Yet we must always be careful about taking Byron merely at his word. It is obvious that he placed great weight how he was himself represented in portraiture, and his success in this regard suggests that we might profitably examine his own visual imagination more closely with a view to showing how his attention to the images around him shaped his writing.

In this paper, I shall be looking more closely at the visual world that Byron lived within during his Italian years, and particularly when he was in Venice and Ravenna, to suggest ways in which paintings of the earlier Italian tradition worked their way into his poetic consciousness to influence his work. In so doing, I hope to show that while he affected to be little interested in the visual culture of the past, or to be interested in it only as an instrument of his political conscience, he was in fact a deeply aestheticized writer who carried his rich experience of the artistic heritage that surrounded him closely into his own writing.

Anush Sedrakyan
Chair of Foreign Literature, Yerevan State University, Armenia

The Principles of Pagan and Christian Values

This study covers the diversification of the hierarchy of Pagan and Christian values in Shakespeare's tragedies. Heroes' deeds and actions pivot around their system of values and fall into basic categories that pinpoint different aspects of the soul and personal character. Philosophical theories and psychological analysis are interlaced into Shakespearean literary art, granting the opportunity to apply various methods of analysis (comparative, historical, psychological) in several examples that illustrate the wholeness of human nature. The research also covers the borderline between tyranny and a "reasonable kingship", assessing the trials and tribulations of marginalized attitudes towards power.

Debby Sneed
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Disability Exemptions for Ancient Greek Military Service

In the ancient Greek world, military service was an expected component of the citizen man's life, at least rhetorically. It was important enough that men risked a loss of citizenship rights (*atimia*)—including, for Athenians, entering the Agora—if they failed to muster or deserted their post. In this paper, I question this expectation as it applied to men who were unable to fulfill military service due to physical disability. I begin by (briefly) discussing the role that disabled men played in the ancient Greek military apparatus, demonstrating that not all disabled men requested or were granted exemption. I then present the evidence for disability exemptions from military service, which largely comes from Athens in the 4th century BCE. I discuss the function of such explicit exemptions in the context of a restructuring of military service, as well as in the larger context of citizenship in Athens in the classical period. I argue that disability exemptions were only necessary when Athens changed the ways that it mustered soldiers in the 4th century BCE and functioned primarily to establish a legal category for disabled men who could not serve that distinguished them from able-bodied men who simply refused. This distinction, I argue, was relevant in other *poleis*, as well, although evidence for this is indirect. In the end, I argue that this legal distinction enabled disabled men to retain their citizenship rights and continue participating as full-fledged members of their communities.

Ori Z Soltes
Teaching Professor, Georgetown University, USA

The Casting and Recasting of Reality: From *Mythos* to *Historia* to History and Myth

When Hesiod wrote his epic poem, *Theogony* ("*The Birth of the Gods*") in ca 650 BCE, he and presumably his audience understood that he was offering an absolutely true account of creation, both because he invoked the divine muses for assistance and because, as a practical matter, the knowledge of these events could only have been in-pirited within him by divine sources—and it would have been dangerous to make up false things about divinities. They therefore understood the *mythos* that he recounted—and its verbal sibling, *mythein*—to be a "gods' truth account."

By the time Socrates was discussing diverse issues—like immortality, justice, and love—ca 440-400 BCE, he distinguished *mythos*, as an account that was not factually verifiable, albeit offering important truths, from *logos*, a fully reasoned account. A generation later, Thukydides, in presenting his account of the Peloponnesian Wars (ca 385 BCE), argued that his incontrovertibly fact-based *historia* should be distinguished from prior accounts—he implies that he in particular means Hesiod, whom we call the "Father of History"—that failed to distinguish *historia* from fact-suspect *mythos*. But his presentation to the reader of his method (in Bk I:21) makes it clear that the line between fact-reliable *historia* and fanciful, fact-deficient *mythos* is a thin, blurry one.

On such foundations the edifice of western history-writing has been built for 25 centuries. The discipline should indeed be called "historiography"—the "writing of history"—since every historian so-called, (in a manner analogous to theologians who write about divinity), interprets the data that are presumed to be factual in offering accounts of events, their causes and consequences, that have been significant in the course of human experience. If we might easily and obviously ask what the historical versus mythological realities underlying the French epic poem *Chanson de Roland* might be, questions directed toward accounts regarding the Norman victory at Hastings in 1066 would be differently angled.

Long distances in time between events and the writing about them doesn't necessarily disappear with chronological proximity (it didn't with Thukydides!). Much closer to us and yet as or more pressing with respect to myth and history is the narrative of John F Kennedy's assassination in Dallas on November 22, 1963—with a substantial official

report that claims to offer the facts and the truth but that includes a large series of fact-and-truth deficiencies. One might extend this question of myth as history versus history as history forward to 2024, when an alleged assassination attempt against Presidential candidate, Donald Trump, with extraordinary irregularities in its reported narrative sequence, suggests emphatic further possibilities for the confusion between historical fact and mythological fantasy.

Elanij Swart
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Water Manipulation as a Show of Power: The Case of Herod the Great

The need for humanity to manipulate and maximize water for survival spans across geographical regions and to the very beginning of human settlement. With water being the most important resource for all life, it is not surprising that changes in water distribution and technology surrounding the storage and usage thereof reflect the social dynamics of civilizations across time. Archaeological evidence grants us detailed insight into these dynamics. With a focus on Herod the Great, the way in which the powerful tamed nature, sometimes to the detriment of the poor, becomes apparent. This paper looks at the sites of Herod's greatest feats of engineering, Caesarea Maritima, Masada, Jericho, and Herodium, and compares his lavish gardens, pools, and baths that used water in excess and shows how he thrived, to his subjects who made use of communal wells and household cisterns simply to survive. This research is interdisciplinary in nature and combines material evidence with human geography and environmental science to create a picture of life under Herod the Great. With challenges to provide water to all citizens to this day, this research is as relevant as it ever was and, perhaps, it will allow those in power today to consider their own legacies.

Dov Tamarkin
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Echoes of Harmony: The Golden Ratio in the Design of Greek and Roman Theatres

This paper aims to present a previously unrecognized architectural principle governing Greek and Roman theater design: the systematic incorporation of the Golden Ratio ($\varphi \approx 1.618$) in the proportional relationship between *cavea* and *orchestra* dimensions. Through comprehensive analysis of 210 Greek and Roman theaters spanning over seven centuries (fourth century B.C.–third century A.D.), our research demonstrates that ancient architects consistently employed this mathematical proportion across diverse geographic regions and cultural contexts.

The methodology employs a "Virtual Rectangular Envelope" (VRE) ratio, calculated by dividing the *cavea* diameter by the sum of the *cavea* radius and *orchestra* radius, enabling systematic quantification of proportional relationships.

Descriptive statistics reveal remarkable conformity to Golden Ratio proportions: 96% of surveyed theaters fall within 10% deviation from φ, with 77% within 5% deviation and 50% within 2.5% deviation. The mean VRE ratios for both Greek (1.598) and Roman (1.595) theaters demonstrate minimal deviation from the Golden Ratio, with tight standard deviations (0.058 and 0.076, respectively) indicating consistent application across architectural traditions.

Significantly, this proportional relationship persists throughout the Greek-to-Roman architectural evolution, despite substantial modifications, including *scaena frons* additions, elevated stages and structural adaptations for level-ground construction. Bayesian analysis yields 88% posterior probability favoring intentional design over coincidental occurrence.

These findings challenge conventional interpretations of Vitruvian architectural theory, as many theaters deviate from his prescribed schemes, while maintaining Golden Ratio proportions.

Beyond geometric analysis, the research explores potential connections between Golden Ratio proportions and the renowned acoustic properties of ancient theaters. The positioning of *orchestra* edges at Golden Section points along *cavea* diameters creates directly perceptible proportional relationships for spectators, potentially enhancing both visual and auditory experiences.

The systematic application of Golden Ratio proportions represents a previously unknown aspect of Classical architecture, with significant

implications for ongoing research into ancient building practices and ancient acoustic engineering.

Eliezer Tauber
Full Professor, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

The Origins of Social Darwinism in the Arab East

Shibli Shumayyil got his fame as a leading Arab intellectual when he was the first to introduce Darwin's theory of evolution to the Arab East. Since the mid-1880s, he published numerous articles on scientific topics. It was, however, his book about Darwin's theory of evolution, which earned him his fame. In 1884, he published *Büchner's Explanation of Darwin's School* in Arabic, which included six lectures delivered by Ludwig Büchner about his materialist interpretation of Darwin's theory. Shumayyil chose to translate Büchner's lectures into Arabic and not Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, because he adhered to Büchner's materialism more than to Darwin's original theory. For him, Büchner complemented Darwin's theory and made evolution universal. Matter was everything in the universe. Everything in the world, from the inorganic to human beings, was made of the same matter and followed the same laws of nature. There was nothing above nature. Shumayyil denied any spirituality, whether soul, life or afterlife. While Shumayyil adored science and scientism, due to the lack of labs and research facilities in the Arab East, he could not become a scientist himself and turned into a philosopher. Darwin, however, was a scientist without any philosophical pretensions, and Shumayyil's preaching of his theory was not to its benefit. Shumayyil's atheist concept of evolution did not allow neither a creation nor a creator. For Shumayyil, the very struggle for existence and natural selection proved the absence of a creator. Shumayyil carried evolution into areas beyond anything Darwin ever intended. While Shumayyil pretended to present Darwin's theory to the Arab East, in practice, he presented Büchner's materialist and atheist version of it, which did the original theory no good as far as its acceptance in the mostly religious society of the Arab East was concerned. Shumayyil, moreover, adopted Social Darwinism, which wanted to apply Darwin's theory of evolution to social and political processes. While Darwin confined himself to biology, the Social Darwinists said that the principles of evolution applied to all life forms, including societies. Shumayyil made Social Darwinism the focus of his thought. The struggle for existence, natural selection and the survival of the fittest, all applied to human societies. The struggle for existence had no mercy for the weak, and this was why the East was losing to the West. Only a unified society would succeed in the struggle for existence.

Cooperation and solidarity were a necessity for a society, if it wanted to survive.

Ekaterina Tolmacheva
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Concept of the Supreme Power of Byzantium and Features of its Reception by the Princes of Russia

Of all the incigencies of supreme authority applied in Byzantium and in Moscow Russia at first and in the Russian Empire later, the power and scepter deserve attention.

Sceptre was bestowed upon the supreme ruler as having the right to extend his influence over the lands. The Supreme Ruler, possessing a scepter, used the lands both personally and through his subjects.

Sceptre in the meaning of "staff" can be seen in the monks who, withdrawing to new and uninhabited lands for them, founded skites and monasteries around which sprawled villages and built cities. The staff as a symbol appears in the outline of the banner or flag that was waving to the lands conquered by the emperors of Byzantium, and subsequently to the lands opened by the Spanish, Portuguese, English and other representatives of the powers of Europe. The sceptre is also a representation of the male character.

The power matters: sovereignty, power, fortress, strength. The power is a static phenomenon of the state, the power - this state of statehood as the existence of a political and territorial organization. The power is also a personification of the female character. Literally the word "power" means to hold.

The word "keep the scepter" - means to own lands, have power and use them at will. Since the concept of a symphony of Basileus authorities (secular power) and the patriarchal Orthodox Church (spiritual power) was widespread in Byzantium by the middle of the 6th century, the will to own and use lands was considered as divine.

Thus, the unity of female (power) and male (sceptre) began to be manifested in the combination and unity of spiritual and secular authority that are the divine foundations of the state.

There are opinions that the rites of the Byzantine court gave birth to the Moscow autocracy (Sava V.I., 1901). Principality of Vladimir Monomach and marriage between Zoe (Sophia) Palaeologus and Ivan the Third.

In Russia, as the insignia of supreme authority, the golden ball power appears at the wedding ceremony for the kingdom of Fyodor Ivanovich in 1557.

In the following gold ball, also called a power apple, was used in wedding ceremonies for the kingdom of Russian kings and emperors.

However, the word "power" has been used since the time of the meeting of Rurik in the IX century, from which rule begins the formation of statehood of Russia. The power, as a space, can expand through active land development. The spread of the statehood of Byzantium and Russia was excellent from the spread of the statehood of Spain, Portugal, England and other countries of Europe in the form of colonization of continents and peoples living on them. Byzantium, as well as Russia acted as defenders of Orthodoxy.

Considering that the statehood of Byzantium is fading away with the blossoming of statehood and the acquisition of power of Russia, the use of the incisive power and scepter is a continuation of the tradition of protection of the Orthodox world on Earth.

Aleksandra Tryniecka
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From Text to Popular Culture: Re-writing Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" in Helen Fielding's "Bidget Jones's Diary"

According to Plate and Rose, re-writing is a "tool for the study of cultural memory" (612) which "(…) asks scholars to account for agency and intentionality. For if (…) to re-write is to re-collect and to re-call, then its analysis requires we consider rewriting both in its *technological* and in its *intentional* dimension" [emphasis added] (623). While discussing Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996) as the twentieth-century re-writing of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), I argue that postmodern re-writing engages in a self-aware play with the past and the present, creating a patchwork of connections between literary sources, visual media, and actual pieces of modern culture. Moreover, I note that literary characters at the heart of Austen's novel are re-created as archetypal figures in Fielding's work, including such personas as a young woman navigating her life (Bridget Jones), a noble hero (Mark Darcy), a villain (Daniel Cleaver), and a disconnected mother (Mrs Jones). In this light, re-writing is an attempt at assimilating archetypes into the current cultural discourse – thus reshaping narratives so that they remain meaningful in the present while preserving their core structure. Fielding's re-writing of Austen's novel emphasizes the connection between Elizabeth Bennett and Bridget Jones, but also focuses on Bridget's uniqueness and the celebration of her journey towards individuality and selfhood. Moreover, it celebrates cultural memory through the references to the twentieth-century visual media and popular culture, creating the feeling of togetherness and belonging shared by the modern readers.

Daniel Varga
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A Villa and a Hiding Underground System from the Late Second Temple Period in the Judean Lowlands

This study presents the results of salvage excavations conducted between 2010 and 2014 north of the village of Amatzia, in the southern Judean Shephelah, prior to the establishment of the community of Karmei Katif. The site is located on a moderate limestone hill overlooking the southern bank of Nahal Lachish, approximately 7 km southeast of Tel Lachish. The excavations revealed remains spanning multiple periods, from the Early Bronze Age through the British Mandate period. This presentation focuses specifically on a villa dated to the late Second Temple period uncovered in Area D and the hiding caves carved on the limestone rock connected to it.

The villa, situated at the summit of the hill, measures approximately 35 × 43 meters and is dated to the late first century BCE through the early second century CE. Its elevated location provided extensive visibility and strategic control over routes leading from Beit Guvrin and Jerusalem. The structure was organized into four main wings: a central wing featuring a rectangular courtyard with a pool at its center; a western residential wing; an eastern wing containing a bathhouse; and a northern wing, poorly preserved, likely serving as the entrance. It is estimated that approximately three-quarters of the original villa—whose total area likely reached about 1,400 square meters—was uncovered. However, the structure suffered extensive damage during the construction of the later Ottoman-period village of al-Dawayima. Most walls survive to a height of one or two courses, and in some cases, later installations such as water cisterns were cut into the original walls. Evidence also indicates that Ottoman inhabitants reused Roman-period floors. A drainage channel uncovered north of the villa provides important evidence for the original layout. Carved into the bedrock and lined with stone slabs, the channel slopes from west to east and was covered with carefully dressed chalk stones. It appears to have directed water toward nearby cisterns, including one located east of the excavation area, and another associated with a hiding complex north of the villa.

Overall, the villa represents a well-planned rural estate from the late Second Temple period, combining residential, agricultural, and bathing functions. Its architectural features, strategic location, and associated

water management system reflect a high-status dwelling integrated into the regional landscape of the Judean Shephelah during this period.

Beneath the villa was a system of hiding tunnels and caves that were used by guerrilla fighters in the Bar Kokhba uprising against the Romans. The caves yielded important findings for understanding the lives of the area's residents and the history of the site.

Christina Weiler
Director in Residence, Junior Year in Munich, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany

The Sea and the Mine as Metaphysical Environments in E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Die Bergwerke zu Falun" ("The Mines of Falun," 1819)

The upcoming year 2026 marks the 250th birthday of E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776–1822), one of the central figures of German Romanticism. This paper examines the sea and the mine as metaphysical environments in Hoffmann's tale "Die Bergwerke zu Falun" ("The Mines of Falun"), first published in 1819. Drawing on Hans Blumenberg's *Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie* (*Paradigms for a Metaphorology*, 1960) and ecocritical approaches, I discuss how the tale explores the Romantic quest for self-actualization and ontological transcendence through nautical and subterranean environments.

The protagonist, Elis Fröbom, a young sailor bereft of his mother, is portrayed as existentially adrift. The maritime imagery of the tale translates his trauma, grief, and disorientation into spatial and metaphysical terms. The ghost of an old miner—evoking the association of the miner in Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802)—appears to Elis and directs him to the mines of Falun, claiming that the mines offer otherwise inaccessible metaphysical insights.

Elis first enters the subterranean sphere of the mine in a dream vision blending nautical and subterranean imagery: In this vision, he believes himself to be sailing through the sea on a ship, until his vessel dissolves and he finds himself standing on a crystal floor beneath shimmering stone, which he mistook for the sky. This vision, reflecting the miner's comments on the metaphysical insights of mining, suggests a glimpse of the numinous through the reflections of matter. It further fuses the organic and inorganic into an uncanny vision through siren-like female figures with metal flowers growing out of their hearts. Supernatural powers associated with the sea and the mine also appear in embedded stories of sea monsters and in Elis's visions of a frightening mountain queen. Through the intersecting imagery of sea and mine, the tale presents these environments as metaphysical, transcending the material and blurring the boundaries between human consciousness and the natural world.

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A Tale of Two Science Schools in the Ancient Aegean: How the Characters (and Focus) of the Epicurean Schools in Athens and on Rhodes Diverged in the Late Roman Republic

Though both are famous in the history of ancient education, the school of Epikouros in Athens is better known than the one in Rhodes. Both developed famous students and both impacted Mediterranean culture as they matured in the late Hellenistic and "late Roman Republican" eras, but the direction of each school, and its legacy, began to diverge very clearly, and toward interesting, contrasted outcomes.

Epikouros (Epicurus) collected a smattering of the scientific thinkers in post-Peloponnesian War Athens (those who survived) and built the Epicurean "Garden" around the idea that a holistic and balanced (but 'atomic' and harmoniously mechanical, not god-driven) universe was something a holistic and balanced researcher could not only understand but achieve a resilient harmony with. While the most famous effect of the school and its researches on the town became the yearly (and soon monthly) 'birthday memorial' parties the school continued research in a variety of scientific fields, including the growing Hippokratic approach to medicine and so natural sciences like environmental rhythms and weather - the latter tied to a growing market in the Mediterranean shipping-trade world, and one that eventually creating the 'Tower of the Winds' and similar nearby research facilities close to the old Agora center as the heart of Athens changed from marketplace to 'campus quad.' The 'boom' scholastic subjects for Athenian schools, however - a story I have followed in the Athens Journal of History - evolved into various arts of real-time political and legal 'influencing' (with obvious applications as well to business negotiation).

A second Epicurean school, though, developed as a rival to Athens' "scientific garden" southeastward across the Aegean on the island of Rhodes, fueled in part by the same high profile of medicine after the Peloponnesian War years, but also by shipping-trade technologies (Rhodes as an even more ideal shipping-hub center than Athens) and eventually by a colony of engineers left behind after Alexanders' death when the siege of the city by "Successors" Antigonus Monopthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes abandoned their attempt make Rhodes their base to take part in the Battle of Ipsus. Rhodes built an engineers' school around the orphaned experts (their 'mascot image' the "colossal' statue recycled from siege engine metals), and developed shipping-navigation

technologies further, very likely by eventually applying geographical research from Alexandria.

What made Rhodes different, though, was a 'scientific,' atomist-mechanical application of engineering ideas to the world of law and politics, an embryonic angle on political management as a social form of engineering (reflecting Athens other schools, then, versus the home 'take' on Epicureanism) which produced a unique cadre of foreign students and their outcomes on the Mediterranean world, including the Roman renegade and dictator Sulla, the nephew of his rival (and also soon a dictator) Julius Caesar, and Cassius, who killed Caesar, perhaps with the same outcome in mind.

Epicurus (Epikouros) had been famed as a gentle and holistic teacher - the 'memorial' parties in Athens commemorated that.

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