

**Annual Research Workshop**  
**of Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies in Greece**



**September 6 – 8, 2024**

Organized by: Center for Hellenic Studies in Greece, Harvard University  
Workshop Coordination: Evangelos Katsarelis, Efimia Karakantza



Center for Hellenic Studies in Greece  
Harvard University



CENTER FOR  
HELLENIC STUDIES  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

**Friday, September 6, 2024**

**WORKSHOP OPENING, 19:00**

Opening remarks on behalf of Harvard University's Center for Hellenic Studies (CHS) and the workshop coordinators

**OPENING PRESENTATION BY THE GUEST SPEAKER**

**Georgia Gotsi** (Department of Philology, University of Patras)  
CHS Fellow in Comparative Cultural Studies 2010–11

***Alternative Narratives of the Greek Past: The Columns of Olympian Zeus in Greek Poetry (1830–1930)***

Three millennia of the religious, civic and cultural life of Athens have been entwined with the magnificent temple of Olympian Zeus (also known as the Olympieion) completed and dedicated by Hadrian in the second century AD. Recent research on the social history of the Olympieion precinct has highlighted the coexistence of accumulated layers of memory in the ancient sanctuary and its “liminal topography” between city and countryside. Complementing the discussion of its “deep history”, I propose to discuss three poetic renderings of the temple’s life from a period extending between the 1870s and the 1930s. By showcasing three competing treatises of material antiquity, I undertake to highlight the alternative archaeological narratives of the Greek past that emerge from them. In Aristotle Valaoritis’s incomplete composition “To the column of (sc. the Temple of) Olympian Zeus, felled by a fierce storm” (written in 1876; published posthumously in 1891), the Temple’s life–history is interpreted as an ongoing act of resistance to external enemies, which nonetheless concludes ingloriously in the bitter acceptance of its present downfall. Unlike the Lefkadian poet, who views the Olympieion as a symbol of the past greatness and the current decline of Hellenism conceived as a homogeneous whole, the popular poet Achilleas Paraschos in his little–known “Exhumation (The Dervish of Athens)” narrates an episode of Muslim benefaction toward the ancient “Greek” heritage of Athens: the preservation of the Columns thanks to the intervention of a Sufi Dervish, who, placing his cell at the Temple’s architrave, was able to save it by re–sanctifying it. Contrarily, in the “Columns of Olympian Zeus” (1933), the surrealist poet Nikolaos Calas reframes the “silent” ancient materials as a sign of the lost meanings of national history and archaeology in a de–sacralized present.

**DINNER FOR THE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS, 20:30**

**Saturday, September 7, 2024**

FIRST SESSION, 09:00 – 09:40

“Migration and Slavery in the Ancient Mediterranean”

**Kostas Vlasopoulos** (Department of History and Archaeology, University of Crete)  
CHS Visiting Scholar in Comparative Cultural Studies 2023–24

***Migration, Diaspora, and the Role of Enslaved Persons in the Intercultural Exchanges of the Ancient Mediterranean***

The study of ancient slavery has until recently focused on its economic dimension, while other aspects, such as the political and cultural, have been little studied. At the same time, while earlier approaches focused on the oppression and exploitation of slaves, more recent studies have begun to explore the role of slaves as active historical agents. The subject of this paper is the role of slave agency in the processes of intercultural exchange in the ancient Mediterranean during the first millennium BCE. We will examine how changes in the cultural processes during the first millennium BCE, and particularly the phenomena of migration and the creation of diasporic communities, determined the increasing importance of the role of slaves within these processes. At the same time, we will analyze how the multiple alternative identities of ancient slaves based on kinship, religion, ethnicity, and occupation, shaped their role as agents of cultural exchange and transformation.

SECOND SESSION, 09:00 – 09:40

“Cooking Practices and Social Organization in the Late Bronze Age”

**Chara Theotokatou** (Department of History and Archaeology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)  
CHS Pre-doctoral Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2023–24

***Reassessing the Cooking Practices Identified within the Framework of the Late Cypriot Households: New Approaches through the Use of Digital Tools***

Food processing and preparation comprises a fundamental practice of the societies diachronically, which reflects various implications of the society itself. One of these implications, that was also set at the epicenter of past research, is the economic one. However, cooking traditions are also bounded to the social identity and interaction of the members of a social group. In what regards the prehistoric Cypriot communities, research placed the focus on the tracing of possible differences in the culinary practices, between different periods. Moreover, especially for the Late Bronze Age, consumption practices and subsequently their social connotations, have almost monopolized the interest of researchers. Therefore, the way with which Late Cypriot households managed and executed food preparation process, remains largely unexplored. In order to shed some light on the aforementioned question, this presentation first reassesses the material expression of cooking practices, i.e., cooking pots and cooking installations. Moreover, the use of digital tools, such as space syntax analysis, may offer significant information regarding the spatial configuration of the practice under question, and may consequently provide a deeper understanding of the Late Cypriot social organization.

## COFFEE BREAK

### THIRD SESSION, 10:20 – 12:00

#### “Art, History, Archeology and Worship in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras”

**Elisavet Sioumpara** (Acropolis Restoration Service, Greek Ministry of Culture)  
Early Career Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2023–24

#### ***Sculpting for Kings and Citizens. Leochares at Olympia for Philipp II and on Acropolis for Athenian Families***

The new restoration of the pedestal of the largest family dedication on the Athenian Acropolis, that of Pandaites and Pasikles from the demos of Potamos, allowed us to understand much better such dedications of the 4th century BCE. This particular dedication brought sculptures by the famous Athenian sculptor Leochares, who, when working outside Athens and Attica, worked almost exclusively for royal houses. He works in the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, for the house of the Hectomnids and in the Philippeion at Olympia for the royal house of the Macedonians. The talk explores how all these assignments, with Leocharis as a common link between them, interact with each other and how the new order, following the victory of Philip II at the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE, affected democratic Athens.

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**Ioannis Nakas** (Independent Scholar)  
Early Career Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2023–24

#### ***The Maritime Cultural Landscape of Roman Epirus: Harbours, Anchorages, Settlements, and Networks from the Delta to Thyamis to the Ambracian Gulf***

The unique natural configuration of ancient Epirus and its location at the verges of classical Greece had made it a somehow underdeveloped and, until much recently, archaeologically unexplored region. One of the least known areas has been the coastal zone, despite its importance as a gateway towards the hinterland and as part of commercial networks of the Ionian and Adriatic seas, especially during the Roman period. The investigations of the last decades on the coasts of north–western modern Greece have provided plentiful new data on the maritime cultural landscape of the region, with a great number of sites discovered and excavated, along with new evidence concerning the ancient coastal geomorphology. These datasets have not been viewed within a maritime context, a gap that my research covers. I meaningfully combine material from the archaeological record, written evidence, as well as geophysical data concerning the configuration of the coast during the period studied, in order to reach a holistic understanding of the maritime cultural landscape, focusing on coastal settlements, harbours, and anchorages between the 2nd century BCE and the 4th century CE and the role they played both at a regional as well as a Mediterranean–wide level.

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**Eleni Fassa** (Department of History and Ethnology, Democritus University of Thrace)  
CHS Visiting Scholar in Comparative Cultural Studies 2023–24

**...ἐπειδὴ δι' αὐτὴν ζῶ καὶ τὰς ἀρετὰς αὐτῆς: *The Cult of the Syrian Goddess in Hellenistic and Roman Macedonia***

In this lecture I will present the relocation story of the Syrian goddess, a major nomad deity of the Graeco–Roman world who migrated in Macedonia, retaining even in her name the element of alterity, as a persistent reminder of her foreign identity. First, I will analyze the contexts of the deity's arrival in the Macedonian cultural landscape. The crossing of cultural boundaries demanded various degrees of assimilations and adaptations. These complex re–interpretations had to allow for territorial ritual peculiarities, without casting aside the exotic touch of the imported divinity. Secondly, I will delve into the interactions of the Syrian goddess with indigenous divinities. In specific, I will explore the challenges of cross–cultural divine encounters: the open–minded attitudes, the tensions arising by strong inward orientations of agents who express the dominant culture and the perceived or imposed boundaries and limitations of the new religious experiences which were put on the market.

VISIT TO A WINERY IN NEMEA, 12:10 – 16:10

FREE TIME, 16:10 – 18:50

FOURTH SESSION, 18:50 – 19:50

“Aphrodite and Eros”

**Ioannis Karakirisidis** (Department of Philology, University of Crete)  
Pre–doctoral Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2023–24

**“Praying to Aphrodite”: Sappho's Incantatory Odes**

In Sappho's poetic corpus, the poetess prays to Aphrodite not only in her famous *Ode* to the goddess (1 V), but also in a plethora of fragments (1 V, 2 V, 5 V, 15 V, 22 V, 33 V, 86 V, 133 V, 134 V, 140a V, *Cypris Song*), where the context and the aim of each discourse vary and differentiate. Aphrodite, as the primary deity of erotic magic, captivates both mortals and gods, as already evident in *Iliad* book 14 and her magical girdle. Within the framework of establishing reciprocity between herself and Aphrodite, and through a process of assimilation, Sappho employs various incantatory and enchanting traits in the odes addressed to the goddess, by making her poetic discourse enticing (*thelktikos*). In other words, Sappho counterperforms Aphrodite's magic through the enchantment of her verses.

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**Evangelos Katsarelis** (Department of Classics, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)  
CHS Greece Programs & Events Manager

***Gender Dynamics in Eros: Exploring Euripides' and Plato's Models***

Within the realms of Greek tragedy and philosophy, Euripides and Plato probe the intricacies of human existence against the backdrop of a male–dominated society, often blending elements

associated with gender roles and occasionally blurring the lines between them. This presentation delves into the gendered nuances of eros as depicted in some of their works. Euripides' *Medea* portrays a woman affected by various erotic implications while within a male-centric paradigm, blending feminine and masculine traits in her pursuit of agency. On the other hand, Plato's dialogues, *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, unveil how men assimilate elements of the feminine into their philosophical discourse on eros. Despite the apparent exclusion of women from philosophical discourse on eros, feminine imagery permeates these dialogues, with Plato incorporating elements like procreativity and fluidity into the "male" philosophical erotic model. Through these lenses, this presentation illuminates the intricate interchange of gender elements within eros underscored by Euripides and Plato, challenging societal norms and offering a fresh perspective on the dynamics of gender and eros in fifth and fourth-century Greece.

## COFFEE BREAK

### FIFTH SESSION, 20:00 – 21:00 "Questions of Language and Linguistics"

**Giorgos Bourogiannis** (Swedish Institute at Athens)  
Early Career Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2023–24,

#### *Shifting between Writing Systems. The Paradoxical (?) Advent of the Greek Alphabet on Cyprus*

Although the history of Cypriot writing systems has been examined on several occasions, there is no extensive study of the paradoxically belated advent of the Greek alphabet on the island, its origin, setting of transmission, and special Aegean associations. Given that ancient Cyprus was an exceptional linguistic laboratory, where multiple scripts and languages coexisted, the examination of when and how Greek-speaking Cypriots first started to write in the Greek alphabet is a necessary stage for understanding the island's complex cultural and socio-linguistic background.

The paper will explore some of the earliest Greek alphabetic testimonies of Cyprus, dated to the 6th and 5th centuries BCE, in relation to their archaeological context, historical setting, and linguistic background. Research questions will revolve around the Cypriot adaptation process and function of the Greek alphabet, while also exploring changing epigraphic habits, possible cultic influence from the Aegean, and written definition of Cypriot identity. The close relations between Cyprus and the eastern Aegean during the archaic period will be a focal aspect of the analysis.

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**Maria Chriti** (School of Philology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)  
CHS–Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2017–18

#### *Cognitive Approaches to Aristotle's Linguistics*

Cognitive approaches to classical texts constitute a field of study still in the process of development, as an enterprise rather than a theory with strictly prescribed methods and principles. It is closely allied with the psychology of language and has in part focused on the

mental activities which underpin the production and reception of language. Only recently have such approaches been applied to ancient texts and very few studies have emphasized philosophical writings.

More specifically, contemporary cognitive theories can be a hermeneutic tool for investigating several aspects of Aristotle's reflection, such as his semantic theory, as well as the role of embodied mental/psychological capacities as regards the perception of experiential data, the formation of mental entities, and linguistic enactment. As Aristotle explains in many treatises, human cognition, undergirded by a sort of "image schemas" which are formed in the mind after sensory perception, emerges from human experience and human language is a combination of biological and mental processes, as practiced exclusively by mankind.

[DINNER FOR THE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS, 21:00](#)

[MOVIE NIGHT, 22:45](#)

**Sunday, September 8, 2024**

SIXTH SESSION, 09:00 – 10:50  
“Re-visiting Classical Antiquity”

**Dimitrios Kanellakis** (Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras)  
Early Career Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2022–23

***Anthologizing the Flowers of Youth: Mimnermus’ Elegies in Stobaeus***

Focusing on the Stobaeian transmission of Mimnermus, i.e. our single richest source for the elegist, my presentation will explore the generational aspect and metapoetic dynamics of the anthologized fragments. Those fragments, I shall argue, are intentionally short and antiepic (insofar as, from a post–Callimachean perspective, as was Stobaeus’, Mimnermus’ effort to deviate from the Homeric tradition seemed intentionally metapoetic). While no firm conclusions about the anthologist’s method are possible, a comparison between the Stobaeian and the non–Stobaeian sub–corpora of the elegist suggests that Stobaeus distorted Mimnermus’ reputation, in that he established the image of a poet obsessed with the theme of youth– vs–old age. Such an appropriation was implicitly anticipated, I believe, in the now–lost preface to the *Anthology*, a summary of which survives in Photius’ *Library*.

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**Despina Vertzagia** (Department of Sociology, Panteion University)  
CHS Pre–doctoral Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2023–24

***Leo Strauss: The Theor–praxis Problem and the Esoteric Reading of Xenophon***

In this presentation I aim to expound upon the way Leo Strauss re–reads Xenophon’s work with regard to the distinction between theoretical and practical life, and the revival of philosophical esotericism. I will focus on the ways in which Xenophon’s literary choices are reinterpreted in the light of Strauss’ esoteric reading. First, I will briefly discuss the fundamental tenets of Strauss’ interpretative approach, one diametrically opposed to historicism, and also theoretically grounded in a distinct comprehension of the interplay between theory and praxis. Subsequently, I will examine selected motifs from Xenophon’s work that highlight the distinction between the two ways of life, the theoretical and the practical/political, and I will also consider relevant examples from the Platonic corpus.

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**Efimia Karakantza** (Department of Philology University of Patras)  
CHS Fellow in Comparative Cultural Studies 2008–9  
CHS Fellow in Hellenic Studies 2010–11  
CHS Associate in Hellenic Studies 2012–23

***Antigone and Refugeeeness***

The refugee is a vulnerable creature even if he/she takes refuge in a new “safe” country because he/she is in a “state of exception” as their social, political, and legal statuses are completely confused. The “bareness” of the existence of refugees (or other minorities and categories such as people in colonies, concentration and/or extermination camps, dispossessed lands,

authoritarian regimes, normative institutions, neo-colonial realities, etc.) leads us to the famous Agambenian “*homo sacer*” (the “sacred man” under Roman law), that is the human being who, unprotected by any law, can be killed with impunity. In contemporary societies, the situation of a refugee is always a “temporary”, an “in-between”, situation in which he/she finds himself/herself devoid of civic rights, as in the legal system of the nation-state a permanent status of a simple “human being” is unthinkable. And thus, a permanent rupture between a human being and a citizen arises. Antigone’s story has been used in contemporary reception cases as a story to exemplify this precariousness of refugeeness.

For the purpose of my presentation today, I will discuss excerpts from the documentary “We are not Princesses”, by Bridgette Auger and Itab Azzam (2018), that documents a series of theatre workshops in Beirut involving Syrian and Palestinian women refugees and resulting in the production of *Antigone of Syria*, which premiered in Beirut in 2014 at Madina Theatre and attracted international attention. Participants were encouraged to tell their stories during rehearsals and produce their individual scripts where they “rewrote” *Antigone* through their personal lens informed by their war experiences, their traumas, as well as their aspirations and hopes. I will also discuss a Palestinian Antigone in the 2011 production of *Antigone* by the National Theatre of Palestine, based in West Jerusalem, directed by Adel Hakim, that toured Arabic and European countries, and won the 2012 Critics Award for best foreign production in France. This production brings to the fore the unique issue related to the dispossessed people of Palestine: the right to return in one’s homeland.

VISIT TO THE ANNEX OF THE NATIONAL GALLERY IN NAFPLION AND TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION, 11:10 – 12:00

SEVENTH SESSION, 12:15 – 12:50  
“Philhellenism”

**Theodoros Koutsogiannis** (Art Collection of the Hellenic Parliament)  
Early Career Fellow in Philhellenism 2023–24

***Philhellenic Art for the Philhellenes and the “Greek Revival” Architecture***

This paper aims to explore the different “uses” and reuses (even abuses and distortions) of Philhellenic art, in relation to its host countries and audiences outside of Greece. Specifically, different ideological uses of Philhellenic art and iconography are examined in France, Italy, Great Britain, Bavaria and the United States of America. The purpose is to highlight, beyond the (self-evident) positive propaganda of the Greeks’ request for freedom, through the “image” of the Greek War for Independence from Philhellenic art, the different use of it in the major countries of Philhellenism in relation to the local public. How does French liberalism utilize the Greek heroes, of 1821 but also of Antiquity, in the context of French political developments? How does the Italian national movement of the so-called “Risorgimento” recognize Markos Botsaris and Lord Byron as emblematic figures of its own march to freedom? Even more, interest is focused on “Greek Revival” style architecture in Great Britain, Bavaria and the newly founded United States of America, as a self-promotion to their democratic ideals, with reference to the cradle of ancient Greek (Athenian) democracy.

WORKSHOP COMPLETION, 12:50 – 13:30