Current Debates in Classical Reception Studies

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Abstracts

From Athens to Baghdad via Cairo: Lenin El-Ramly's A Peace of Women *and Competing Cultural Narratives in Contemporary Egypt*

Hazem Azmy, School of Theatre Studies, University of Warwick & Beni Suef University, Egypt.

German theatre theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte has once argued that translating or adapting a theatrical text from a different culture is an essentially self-seeking practice, since it is rarely motivated by an interest in the foreign itself, but rather derives from 'a wholly specific situation within the own culture, or a wholly specific problem originating in the own theatre.' This paper will examine the validity of Fischer-Lichte's argument by applying it to the case of a recent Egyptian adaptation of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* . The play, titled *Salam El-Nisaa* (*A Peace of Women*), mounted the stage in Cairo in December 2004 in a low-key production directed by the author himself, veteran Egyptian playwright Lenin El-Ramly (b. 1945). The adaptation originally evolved as the outcome of El-Ramly's participation in an international editorial project in which prominent Arab theatre artists and critics were invited to express their own take on Aristophanes' celebrated 'anti-war' text. Far more than a mere adaptation, however, El-Ramly's work uses the ancient Greek text primarily to dare its audience into re-examining their own stances vis-à-vis their current politico-existential and national crisis. With its action set in Saddam's Baghdad only a few days before the US-led invasion, Salam adopts a position that is not only anti-war but also self-critical and anti-totalitarian. Such a nuanced position, however, seems have run into reception communities already mystified by a number of polarising views of the world. Two years after its premiere, Salam 's career seems as uncertain as ever – thanks to its ever-shifting contextualising narratives: The Iraq War and its controversial relation to Middle East democratisation.

Electra on Film – Selfish protagonist or self-sacrificing sister?

Anastasia Bakogianni, Institute of Classical Studies

The reception of ancient Greek tragedy on film is a very interesting field of enquiry because of the range of approaches filmmakers have taken when attempting to translate Greek tragedy into the medium of film. Greek tragedy has attracted many independent filmmakers: some chose to film theatrical performances, others experimented radically with the format and content of their versions while yet others created films in the ‘realistic' mode. One such film is Michael Cacoyannis' Electra (1961-2). Cacoyannis uses many of Hollywood 's cinematic techniques to give us his

version of the play. His film follows the plot of the play with some important additions and changes. Cacoyannis' view of Electra is radically different to that of Euripides. He changed the emphasis of the play by using techniques unique to the art of film.

In his Electra Euripides created a very different Electra from the heroine of Aeschylus' Choephori and Sophocles' Electra . Euripides' Electra is a rather ambiguous heroine. She expresses not only grief for her father and longing for her brother's return but also more selfish concerns about her loss of status and the hardships she has to endure. In a radical departure from her other portrayals in Greek tragedy this Electra has been forced to marry a peasant to live in a hut. The whole tone of the play is thus altered and is much less elevated than the versions by the other two playwrights.

Cacoyannis' Electra is more heroic than her Euripidean counterpart. As a Greek-Cypriot filmmaker Cacoyannis' avowed aim was to stress the importance and grandeur of Greek tragedy. In his prologue to the action of the play Cacoyannis added a scene that takes place amongst the ruins of Mycenae . Thus he changes the emphasis of Euripides' play from the start. His Electra is very much a tragic heroine. Throughout the play her main concerns are her brother and avenging her father's death. She is portrayed as a loving and protective older sister guiding her younger and hesitant brother. Cacoyannis achieves this by his choice of actors Irene Papa as Electra and Giannis Fertis as Orestes (a younger actor). He also influences the audience's perception of the two protagonists by using close-up shots of the actors' faces at key moments of the action. One such instance is during the anagnorisis scene when close-ups of Papas' eyes are used to reveal her love for her brother and her happiness that he has returned. This technique is a favourite tool that Cacoyannis employs again and again in his films.

This paper will examine how Cacoyannis employed such cinematic techniques to alter the emphasis and tone of Euripides' play upon which his filmic version is based and to debate the very different characterisation of Electra audiences are presented with in these two versions of the Electra story. It will also raise the perennial question of the value of cinematic receptions of antiquity and why Cacoyannis' film is important in the history of the reception of Euripides' Electra.

Classical Objects, Authenticity and Imperial Authority: Renaissance Naples and Cosenza

Dominique Bouchard, Oxford University, England.

In this paper I argue that through consideration of the uses of classical antiquity in Naples and Calabria for a cultural-memory based identity, a new and heretofore unrecognised difference in consideration of classical objects and their historicity emerges. Further, this paper considers the question whether the extraction of a classical object from its context dissolves its historical value or, indeed, its historical integrity. In Naples, classical antiquity, and particularly classical objects, became symbolic of 'Empire' and, over the course of three centuries, classical objects were infused with political authority despite having been removed from their original historical context – ancient authoritative iconography was reinterpreted to suit a contemporary, but no less authoritative role. In this new context, the historical authenticity and integrity of the object contrasts with its historicity, but retained its

original purpose. In Calabria, an object's value was defined by and limited to its historical context – its authenticity and historicity were uncompromised.

The bridges between past and present constructed by and relied upon by legitimacy-seeking groups in Naples (the Spanish Monarchy) and Calabria (the Cosentine patriziato cittadino) are based on opposing interpretations of objects and historicity. In the first case, that objects are timeless, and retain their historicity even after extraction from the original context and placement in the present, bridging the classical past and contemporary time. This approach as been studied and documented in works onspolia. The second case has not yet been explored in scholarship. It relies on a linear concept of time and history that is best defined by texts and deals with objects only within an historical text-based frame. I support the Calabrian case with unpublished archival evidence from the Archivio di Stato di Cosenza.

Tacitus' Agricola *on Britain and Britain on Tacitus'* Agricola. *Classical scholarship and imperial ideology in British history.*

Mark Bradley, University of Nottingham

It is an axiom of Reception Studies that British history since the eighteenth century has been influenced, if not directly shaped, by its protagonists' engagement with the art, literature and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. Recent years have seen some excellent studies of the reception of particular texts or objects; scholars have applied their expertise in classical literature and art to expose the diversity of possible responses to the classical past, as well as the influence that a particular cultural, historical or geographical context can exert on the interpretation and evaluation of classical material. Such focussed studies, however, have tended to be quite ahistorical and have privileged the specific context of that reception over its contribution to broader developments in British cultural history. This paper will argue that the relationship between British identity and classical antiquity was being constantly reformulated and renegotiated alongside the development of the British Empire, and that this developing relationship was eloquently expressed within the history of classical scholarship, as well as within evolving institutions such as the British Museum. The diversity of representations of and responses to antiquity, therefore, can be understood as a process of renegotiation that accompanied the rhythms and patterns of British imperial history.

This paper will use editions, translations, commentaries and interpretations of Tacitus' *Agricola* as a case-study for exploring the shifting influences that imperialism and approaches to the classical past exerted on each other in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By drawing on the approaches and methodologies of the cross-disciplinary conference 'Hegemony and Cornucopia: classical scholarship and the ideology of imperialism' (Nottingham, December 2005) and the conference volume which is currently in preparation, this paper will argue that both empire and classical scholarship can be better understood by examining them in tandem, and by developing a nuanced historical understanding of how the two evolved together. This approach allows us to incorporate a major aspect of classical reception into the social, cultural and political narratives of modern British history, and to create a more constructive and dynamic dialogue between classicists and modern historians.

From Secret Peepshow to Popular Display: The Warren Cup at the British Museum and the Cabinet at the Museum of Archaeology in Naples

Debbie Challis, National Portrait Gallery, London, England.

This paper examines the recent display of the Warren Cup at the British Museum and the re-opening of the 'secret museum' at Naples as a public display. Recent scholarly discussions have dated the first appearance of the modern definition of pornography and its use, or rather its use in the policing of material, to the early to mid-nineteenth century when there was an emerging popular culture. In the first half of the nineteenth century a wider public were becoming increasingly visually literate while definitions of what material was deemed obscene increased. It has taken over 150 years for the 'secret cabinet' at Naples to be displayed to the general public and almost 50 years for the British Museum to acquire and display the Warren Cup. What does this tell us about changes in attitudes to sexuality and the display of sexually explicit material from the ancient world? Are we really more tolerant and capable of 'objective' scholarship when looking at formerly 'problematic' objects from the classical world? Or are we, as Foucault might have argued, 'other Victorians' who are happy to look at and discuss sex to the extent that talking about sex is the primary mode of discourse in contemporary society? This paper poses these questions, but more importantly considers what these contemporary displays mean for the wider reception of classical antiquities in museums today. It also looks at what problems and opportunities these displays pose for the museum profession in ethics and practice.

The Chorus of Electra *(Maria Lampadaridou-Pothou, 1971): a political 'anti-tragedy' under the Colonels' nose?*

Elina Dagonaki, Oxford University.

In the early seventies Maria Lampadaridou-Pothou presented the Greek stage with a new theatrical adaptation of the Orestes' myth: *The Chorus of Electra*, which was first staged in November 1971, is one of the multiple re-readings of the Atreids' vengeance that saw the light during the junta of the Colonels (1967-1974). The characters' ethical struggles versus a predetermined fate that ordained the necessity of homicide - even worse, of matricide- as the only viable solution to murder, their reluctance to comply with the fierce demands of a blood chain that enticed them both, or, alas, the remorseful impotence with which they face the consequences of their murderous scheming once the matricide is in the open – Euripides' innovative addendum to the myth - had somehow proved a rather popular theatrical theme under the regime of the Colonels. This is rather surprising, especially if one takes into account that as much as the Modern Greek stage never really gave up its classical influences, Euripides' versions of the Orestes' myth had not -until then- enjoyed a great performance history nor inspired notable literary adaptations.

This paper aims to address the following issues: How representative is Lampadaridou's *The Chorus of Electra* of the Euripidean trend that seems to mark the sudden re-appreciation of the Orestes' myth in Greece of the late sixties and the early seventies? How political can this otherwise 'anti-tragic' literary appropriation of Agamemnon's revenge be?[1] Was Lampadaridou's adaptation meant as a confession of moral blackness attesting the tragic fate of an era 'more than ever tragic',[2] as is overtly stated in the programme of the performance, or can it be seen as a confident – yet tacit- assertion of political autonomy that can outpower any form of suppression?

[1] In the programme that accompanied the actual performance (1971), the playwright herself admits that she tried to create an 'anti-tragedy'. She thus comments on the novelties of the plot: 'Orestes and Electra will not kill their mother not because they are accidentally late, as appears in the play, but because they choose to follow their own course towards the inner light that guides their steps'.

[2] This is an excerpt from a lecture by Albert Camus in Athens that Maria Lampadaridou-Pothou chose to include in the programme of the performance.

Medea: Wicked witch or a wronged woman ?

Sue Day, The Open University

In the Medea of Euripides, the wife of Jason, and the mother of his children, is portrayed as a sorceress, a murderess and a devotee of the chthonic goddess Hekate.

I will consider a number of versions of the myth on film that use either contemporary settings or set the story of Medea in an historical context, although not necessarily a context that Euripides would immediately identify.

I will argue, however, that it is not the chronological setting of the film that dictates how the modern audience "receives" Medea. These cinematic re-workings of her story strip away the layers of myth that portray Medea as "witch/wife" and "mother from hell", instead revealing a woman undergoing the traumatic breakdown of her marriage. Her actions are the consequences of the psychological stress dictated by the circumstances in which she finds herself. The medium of film serves to reduce the distance between fifth-century Athens and the modern world by emphasizing the universal nature of human suffering.

Greece in Ghana: Efua Sutherland's **Edufa**

Barbara Goff, Reading University, England.

In recent studies of the reception of Greek tragedy, a body of texts from Africa has become increasingly important. Adaptations of Greek tragedy by African writers are regularly taught in a range of universities, and provide a focus for the research of several scholars. On the occasion of their first production, such dramas were often the targets of a criticism that chided them for not being exactly the same as the Greek plays that they were modelled on. Now, they are more likely to be seen as notable attempts to wrest the classical tradition from its often elite, usually white patrons, and to make it work for the historically disadvantaged and marginalized.

The corpus of African adaptations is very small, about a dozen plays. In general they take on the high canonical dramas of violent resistance and revenge, especially *Medea, Antigone* and the *Oresteia*. In view of their antecedents and their postcolonial location, the African adaptations are very readily understood as canonical counter-discourse, aimed at destabilising the assumptions of and about the colonial activities of the west. More recently, scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which these adaptations may also be understood as critical of African postcolonial or neocolonial regimes.

Within this tiny canon the play by Efua Sutherland, *Edufa*, stands out for a couple of reasons. It is written by a woman, and it is modelled on Euripides' *Alkestis*, which is precisely not a drama of violent resistance or revenge. The play is notable too because the dramatist otherwise eschewed western influences and devoted her long career to building a theatre that would be worthy of the first African nation to gain independence from the colonisers, namely Ghana. She was the founder of the Ghana Drama Studio, which later became the national theatre, and in her other published plays she developed forms and discourses that drew largely on the oral tradition of the Ghanaian peoples.

Euripides' *Alkestis* is generically experimental, and ideologically challenging; the wife's choice to die in her husband's place is not longer a simple matter for praise, but threatens to undo all the certainties of the household. *Edufa* changes some of the markers of genre and suggests an even wider-ranging crisis of legitimacy. In this paper I shall consider some of the modifications that *Edufa* works on the *Alkestis*, and proceed to examine in what ways the new play may be understood as critical of the Nkrumah regime as well as of the legacy of colonialism. In particular I shall suggest that the dichotomy of tradition and modernity, repeatedly cited in the criticism of the play, is not as clear as it might initially seem, especially since both Edufa's father and his wife modify tradition to suit themselves, and since the Heracles-figure, Edufa's friend Senchi, mocks both concepts. The ending of the play rejects the ending of *Alkestis* and returns to a more traditional notion of tragedy, thus confusing the categories still further.

Fragmentary Plays on Stage

Ioanna Hadjicosti, University College London, England.

In recent years there have been efforts in Greece to put on stage a number of fragmentary plays. This effort, which has taken many different forms, involves even plays surviving only in a few words. There are several issues raised concerning these performances that have caused a lot of passionate debates among critics and classicists. W hat benefit is there in staging the fragmentary plays? How does the audience respond to such performances? Should one present only the attested fragments or should one fill in the gaps, no matter how many and how extensive they might be? And whose is the text that is finally put on stage? Is it the text of Aeschylus, for example, or is it the play of a modern writer simply and, sometimes, vaguely inspired by Aeschylus? How are these performances advertised? Are t hey advertised as a modern play or as a lost tragedy ‘miraculously' recovered? Are they a sort of pseudepigrapha ? Do the audiences realize the extent to which the performance they watch is a new and not a ‘ classic ' text? The se issues will be discussed with reference s to specific performances of fragmentary plays in Greece such as, for example:

- The 1985 performance of Menander's *Dyskolos* at the ancient theatre of Epidaurus by the Theatrical Organization of Cyprus, directed by E. Gavrielides

- The 2004 performance of Aeschylus' *Achilleis* at the ancient theatre of Epidaurus by the Theatrical Organization of Cypru s, directed by N. Charalambous

The author will consult reviews for the performances, will examine the texts used in comparison to the surviving fragments, the advertisement of the performances in press, and will interview the directors on the benefit of presenting these plays, the

difficulties related to their fragmentary nature, the objective of the ir performance, the response of actors and audiences, the choice of the text used. The author will also show photos from these performances.

Aestheticism and contextualism in nineteenth-century classical scholarship

Katherine Harloe, St Anne's College, Oxford University, England.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is not uncommon to find classical scholars subscribing to the view that an adequately contextualizing approach to the study of the ancient world is opposed to an aesthetic appreciation of ancient works of art and literature. To focus on the value or otherwise of ancient remains as 'works of art' leads, it is claimed, to an ahistorical and romanticizing projection of modern expectations and assumptions onto antiquity. The recommended antidote to this form of anachronism is a careful, historicizing approach, which seeks to reconstruct the original meanings and functions of objects by locating them in their original contexts of production and reception. Such a mode of study eschews all attention to the attractiveness or otherwise of the objects which form the data of its reconstruction, as such judgements are viewed as inherently likely to be misleading.

In this paper I seek to interrogate this viewpoint by means of an examination of the constellation of attitudes and opinions which surrounded classical scholarship in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Germany. The classical scholars of the nineteenth century are often held to be the intellectual forebears of the kind of interdisciplinary, contextualizing and historical approach to the study of the ancient world described above. Yet, for many of those 'founding fathers' of nineteenth-century contextualism, recognition of the need to locate antiquities in their original contexts came side by side with an emphatically expressed appreciation of them as beautiful works of art. Moreover, at least some of those who were concerned with studying the ancient past felt that aesthetic appreciation of objects could not merely accompany a historical or contextual understanding of them. Rather they held in various ways that evaluation of the beauty or attractiveness of the ancient remains played a crucial role in arriving at that understanding.

The paper examines a series of influential thinkers of that period, both classical scholars and those involved more broadly in promoting the study of the ancient world (Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Christian Gottlob Heyne, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Friedrich August Wolf, August Boeckh and Johann Gottfried Herder), in order to explore the complex range of ways in which emphases on the aesthetic and the historical/contextual might be combined and to assess both the pitfalls and the potential of this kind of position. Overall, the paper aims to use reception to provide a perspective from which to inspect and question current practices in classical scholarship and to explore possible alternatives.

Consuming the Abject: some instances of omophagia in late twentieth-century drama

Ruth Hazel, The Open University

Throughout the centuries, *omophagia* and *anthropophagia* have been used as signifiers of barbarism or ‘otherness’. In Greek tragedy, as in Homer, reference to such activity is used as an intensifier rather than as indicating that it actually has

happened, or is likely to. Such behaviour is designated either as animal, or as the action of a deranged human being.

In twentieth-century Western theatre, sited in cultures which are Christian in origin if not in actuality, *omophagia* and *anthropophagia* have been used to signify an otherness in both mental and political states. Three case studies (Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*, Edward Bond's *Early Morning*, and Sarah Kane's *Blasted*) are used here to show how an activity which is abhorrent and taboo is offered for consumption by theatre audiences.

Classical Scholarship and the Ideology of Reason

Dirk T. D. Held, Connecticut College, CT, USA

In Provincializing Europe: Post-Colonial Thought and Historical Difference, Deepesh Chakrabarty claims that the universalist discourse of Western scholarship since the Enlightenment not only established a narrative for European modernity but also created a universal and secular conceptual language that has become, in effect, indispensable for all discussions of political or social modernity irrespective of locale or culture. It has been pointed out that, if true, this makes virtually everyone Eurocentric. The origination of this ideology of reason has been assigned to the ancient Greeks who, it is claimed, distinguished themselves by breaking away from the obfuscatory religious views of the orient.

The history of classical scholarship fuelled and sustained this phenomenon. The professionalization of classical studies in Germany in the 19th century favoured certain perspectives over others. The search for professional autonomy put a premium on rationalization and clarification of the discipline's principles and procedures, nowhere better exemplified than in F. A. Wolf's vision of a total science of antiquity (Altertumswissenschaft).

Despite the continuing reputation classical studies holds in many quarters as a positivistic discipline there are and were counter pulses which the paper will examine. C. G. Heyne submitted Winckelmann's Platonizing vision of Greek beauty to analytical scrutiny of archaeology. Concurrent with the development of classical studies in the nineteenth century significant figures such as Hölderlin and Schelling promoted a view of Greek tragedy which acknowledged its foundation in an oriental confrontation with a monstrous divine. The rational priorities of the professional discipline rejected such views, a rejection repeated in Wilamowitz' famous condemnation of Nietzsche's 'philology of the future' (*Zukunftphilologie*). Fifty years after E.R. Dodds' The Greeks and the Irrational, the ideological elevation of reason marginalizes or isolates views which discern the focus of the Greek world in non-rational or supra-rational dimensions. Peter Kingsley's exceptional work on myth and philosophy in Plato, Empedocles and Parmenides offers a contemporary example of marginalization from scholarly orthodoxy.

Eurocentrism, Chakrabarty claims, owes its dominance to what Benjamin called the 'secular…homogeneous time of history.' The paper will examine how this version of temporality mediated the relationship between the ancient Greek world and its modern interpreters.

Red State/Blue State Classics

Thomas E. Jenkins, Trinity University and Centre for Hellenic Studies, Washington, USA.

This talk examines the refraction of the ancient world through a range of contemporary American responses, particularly responses that are explicitly informed by ideology. Drawing on recent trends in reception theory, the talk briefly surveys some striking examples of such appropriation, including gay/lesbian and neo-conservative re-envisionings of the ancient world; it also places such appropriations within a larger cultural inquiry of what makes the classical world so 'classical'. The media of reception include graphic novels and American popular film.

Troubling Boundaries: 'Ancient' and 'Modern' as a Field of Critique

Alexandra Lianeri, Cambridge University, England.

My starting point in addressing the relationship between the ancient and the modern is Paul Ricoeur's definition of the opposition between a hermeneutical and a critical consciousness, that is, between the assumption that all understanding is subsumed under the reign of finitude and the contention that it is possible to transcend this finitude (1981: 63), in the sense that the verb 'transcend' has acquired from its Latin root, meaning to 'overcome' or 'go beyond' a certain historical frame. The opposition evokes simultaneously a historiographical and a political problematic. Is it possible to overcome the limits of a given conceptual and social horizon in order to understand others or is the idea of beyond a mere product of this horizon and the divisions it formulates between the self and the other? If the study of the past is assumed to take place under the sign of the present, how can this study perform a critical gesture that would turn against 'distortions' of understanding and the way they operate to sustain oppression and violence?

The question is particularly relevant to the study of the reception of the classics of which it has been pertinently said it has consistently fashioned a counter-culture and a refuge from the dominant world view (Murray 2001: 18). There is no denying that, in addition to the role of Greek and Roman antiquity in sustaining an elitist, authoritarian and largely Eurocentric tradition, classical texts have played a key part in the formation of counter-cultures seeking to challenge established practices and beliefs of their time. This afterlife has been, however, constantly encountered by the accusation of misinterpretation and misreading of antiquity through its enlistment to support modern causes.

This issue has taken a peculiar form in historiographical comparisons between antiquity and modernity, in which the ancient tradition has become a source of (self)critique through the opposition between the ancient and the modern, that is, the contention that antiquity can maintain its critical function once it is disengaged from modern categories and understood in its own terms. Such has been, for example, the frame for Moses Finley's comparison between ancient democracy and modern democracy (1985) as well as the objective of comparative studies centred on contextualising antiquity and accounting for its difference from the present. Thus, unlike most fields in the reception of the classics, wherein critical consciousness seems to entertain closer affiliations with strong 'misreadings' rather than 'faithful' readings, comparative historiography suggests that the abandonment of the opposition between the ancient and the modern, and the reduction of antiquity to the frames of its reception would imply the dispersal of the possibility of critical deployment of the

classics. In my paper I shall discuss this contention by drawing on a number of comparisons between ancient democracy and modern democracy, most of which follow Finley's contextualising approach. My reading of these projects will be guided by the assumption that the opposition between hermeneutical and critical consciousness cannot be adequately resolved by opting for one of its alternatives, and that this failure posits the need for interrogating the opposition itself (Ricoeur 1981: 63-100). This contention will sustain a reflection on the limitations of both the reduction of antiquity to a self-posited reception process and the contextualising division between antiquity and modernity utilised by comparative studies. Finally, it will lead to the question of how to approach ancient democracy in a way that troubles the boundaries of modern democratic thought, while accounting, simultaneously, for the hermeneutic presuppositions of critique and its links with the present.

Oedipus at the Crossroads.

Nick Lowe, Royal Holloway, London University.

Early Film Adaptations of Greek Tragedy: Cinema, Theatre, Photography

Pantelis Michelakis, Bristol University, England.

More than twenty-five film adaptations of Greek tragedy were made during the three decades of silent cinema, ranging from documentaries of stage performances to ambitious reworkings of the original plays for the new medium. Many of these films are now lost but those that have survived, together with production stills, posters, reviews and other ephemera, testify to a fascinating chapter in the history of early cinema which has been largely neglected by classicists as well as by film and theatre historians. In this paper I will focus my attention on the best-documented and arguably most important among the now lost silent films on Oedipus, La Légende d'Oedipe (1912), which starred the famous French stage actor Jean Mounet-Sully near the end of his long career. Today it may be conceptually difficult to imagine a silent and melodramatic adaptation of Sophocles' play thought to pose a threat to the morality of cinema audiences around the Western world. However in the early twentieth century it was such a version of Oedipus the King that rivalled stage productions of the play and was seen by thousands not only in France but also across Europe and the USA. Revisiting such a film prompts reflection on the early cinema's flirting with respected fields of cultural production, especially theatre, but also on the nature of the aesthetics of Greek tragedy. Tragedy appeals to the imagination of the audience to create images in the mind whereas silent cinema realises these images on screen for the spectator. Converting words into images is a complex process of interpretation which, as I will try to show, demands its own careful reading. My discussion will centre around a production still which displays with shocking realism the hanging body of Jocasta: showing what should not be seen, what prompts Oedipus to blind himself and what is never enacted on stage in Sophocles' play, the still was central to the publicity campaign of the film. However, the scene in the film that the still prepares for was censored and could not be shown. Photography provides an alternative way of seeing and a different 'take' at the regulatory mechanisms of early cinema and the aesthetic possibilities of Greek theatre. If, as Cocteau puts it, the silent-film camera 'filmed death at work', photography is the medium that cheats

death, both as a commodity during the promotion of the film and as an archival trace long after its 'origin' has ceased to exist.

'For a shilling one could have a Grand Tour worthy of a Gentleman' - a new audience for the classical world in the Crystal Palace, Sydenham.

Kate Nichols, Birkbeck, London University, England.

In 1854, the Crystal Palace that had housed the Great Exhibition was reopened in South London, with an array of new displays, including 11 architectural courts ranging from ancient Egypt to contemporary Germany and England, stocked with plaster casts of famous sculpture and architecture. The Greek, Roman and Pompeian courts represented the classical world, offering a reconstructed villa, a painted Parthenon frieze and scale models of the Coliseum and Forum, as well as assembling casts of sculpture from the major European museums. Known as 'the Palace of the People', it was inaugurated “to educate as well as to amuse”, and has been described as both a walk through encyclopaedia and Britain 's first amusement park. It provided an entirely new audience with access to ancient art. This paper will examine the way in which this new audience was catered for, looking at ideas about discipline in the museum, and hoping to offer a more nuanced account that takes on board the complex historical relationship between Greek art, morality and beauty.

Pompeii: Towards an Alternative Model of Classical Receptions

Joanna Paul, Bristol University, England.

The centrality of reception studies to the discipline of classics and ancient history is now more certain than ever, and its ability to provide uniquely powerful insights into the ways in which the modern world encounters the ancient is self-evident. Leading scholars in the field, though, recognise that this apparent acceptance should not be taken for granted: new studies are turning their attentions to rigorous discussion, theorisation, and conceptualisation of 'reception' (for example, Hardwick and Stray (eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Classical Receptions* (2007); Martindale and Thomas (eds.), *Classics and the Uses of Reception* (2006).

This paper aims to contribute to these lively debates by suggesting that the reception history of Pompeii can offer a new way of conceptualising classical reception. The cultural imagination has long been fascinated with the destroyed ancient city, but scholars have tended to focus on her archaeological significance, at the expense of exploring her value as a site which prompts reflection on such varied themes as ancient and modern morality, decadence, domesticity, spectacle, transience, and permanence. Not only should this be rectified for its own sake, we should also take the opportunity to reconsider the different ways in which the reception process might play out. Firstly, we must clarify what some existing studies have already demonstrated: the comprehensive model of popular receptions of antiquity occasioned by Pompeii. This has long been central to classical receptions, certainly, as 'classics and cinema' studies demonstrate – but Pompeii acts as a site of contestation for elite, popular, and academic claims to the ancient past in a more far-reaching way. Secondly, it is evident that most reception study has tended to focus on responses to the great art of Greece and Rome, say, or the influence of poets like Homer or Ovid – thus producing a model of reception characterised (predominantly, if not entirely) by

a concern with cultural and intellectual elites, but most importantly, by a notion of antiquity's persistence and ongoing presence. Though its meaning and appearance change drastically, the Colosseum, to take one example, has always been there. Pompeii is different: its significance now is shaped as much by its destruction and subsequent disappearance (and indeed, fears of a future second disappearance) as it is by its current tangibility. Therefore, it offers the chance to pursue a different kind of understanding of reception, one which brings issues of the past's fragility and absence versus its presence and persistence, to the fore. The imagery of ruin and fragmentation, so important to ancient culture in the modern world, has long been used as embodiment of the past's inaccessibility, but the more drastic rupture in Pompeii's material history, and the unique character of its existence now, allows us to recast that model. In so doing, we will hopefully arrive at an alternative way of understanding our reception of the classical past, with repercussions not only for our responses to Pompeii, but also for other aspects of reception studies.

The Arabic Homer: An Untold Story.

Peter Pormann, Wellcome Research Fellow, University of Warwick.

Unpacking Pandora's Box: Some Twentieth and Twenty First Century Receptions of an Anti-Heroine

Amanda Potter, The Open University, England.

In his 2004 book *Love, Sex and Tragedy: How the Ancient World Shapes Our Lives*, Simon Goldhill accuses the modern age of being ‘intent on forgetting the classical past' and dumbing down through marginalising the classics to the ‘trivial and irrelevant'. Many classicists find television to be a trivialising medium, where complex arguments are simplified and historical fact is adapted or ignored in favour of sensationalism. The study of film and television within the classics discipline is often seen as taking the easy option over such projects as painstaking reconstruction of ancient texts. Yet, as television students know, with the advent of DVD and home recording technology, television programmes once available only as broadcast can now be studied with the same attention to detail as written texts. And television and film has the potential to reach a much larger sector of the public than a play performed in even a large theatre on a long run.

I will argue that classics and television, as separate branch of reception studies, is worthy of scholarly attention. I will do this through a case study comparing four modern receptions of Pandora and her box. Two of these receptions are taken from texts that belong to genres often privileged by scholars; an essay by Laura Mulvey drawing on psychoanalytical theory, and the critically acclaimed 1928 silent film *Pandora's Box*. The other two receptions are popular; the *Xena Warrior Princess* first season episode ‘Cradle of Hope', first broadcast in the US in 1995, and the *Charmed* season seven episode ‘Little Box of Horrors, first broadcast in the US in 2005.

Classicism and tropicality: 'Malaria' Jones, the fourth century crisis, and the defence of empire.

Emma Reisz, Queen's University, Belfast, Ireland.

British classicists in the early twentieth century generally emphasised the breadth of the gulf between ancient and modern empires, preoccupied with the importance of race to contemporary imperial Britain. However as Britain's empire grew, so did the concerns of some imperial commentators that over-expansion would lead to crisis and decline. Science and technology increasingly seemed to offer solutions to the problems posed by the governance of equatorial countries, fuelled by an ambivalent attitude to the dangers and opportunities of equatorial environments which David Arnold has called 'tropicality'. For some classicists and particularly non-specialists, similar environmental analyses seemed to offer new insights into the 'fourth century crisis', the supposed decline of the poleis that perplexed scholars captivated by the achievements of classical Greek societies.

The Cambridge classicist WHS Jones, best known for his Loeb *Hippocrates*, was particularly influenced by the early twentieth century perspectives on environment and decline. Jones became increasingly preoccupied with malaria as an influence on ancient Greek civilisation, and developed a close friendship with Ronald Ross, who had won the Nobel Prize in 1902 for proving the mosquito parasite theory of malarial transmission. Ross and Jones worked together from 1907 to create a racialised theory of the fourth century crisis, arguing that the exacerbation of endemic malaria in Greece had affected the 'European' Greeks more than non-European races. The supposed malarial immunity of non-Europeans had, they argued, allowed this inferior racial stock to overrun fourth-century Greece, leading to moral degeneration and political decline.

In this paper I examine the history of the 'fourth century crisis' idea, and its relationship to imperial anxieties at the beginning of the twentieth century. I argue that Jones' arguments, while never attaining wide scholarly acceptance, held great appeal for Britain's elite, as empire faced increasing challenge from inside and without. Jones' racial determinism encapsulated European fears about overexpansion into a hostile 'tropical' world, but also held out the hope that European 'races' could use technology to transcend environmental limitations, and so avoid the decline and degeneration into which classical empires had eventually fallen.

Earth's Nursery Tales: Myth and Childhood in the Reception of Antiquity.

Deborah Roberts, Haverford College, and Sheila Murnaghan, University of Pennsylvania, PA, USA.

This paper (which forms part of a larger project on classical reception in relation to childhood) concerns modern treatments of Greek mythology as the province of childhood. Children form one of the main audiences for contemporary retellings of myth, and many adults look back at childhood encounters with mythology as memorable, formative experiences. Myths are often seen as peculiarly suited to children because of their narrative form and because they spring from a primitive, 'childlike' stage of culture. We will examine the roles of child audiences, shifting conceptions of childhood, and primitivist views of antiquity in four influential British and American myth collections of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales* (1853), Charles Kingsley's *The Greek Heroes, or, Greek Fairy Tales for my Children* (1855), Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* (1941), and Robert Graves' *The Greek Myths* (1951).

Song Sung New: Translating Aristophanes' Lyrics

James Robson, The Open University, UK.

Aristophanes' lyric passages have attracted a good deal of attention over the last 25 years, with different views being expressed as to the quality and function of various lyric passages (Silk 1980 and 2000; Parker 1997; Matthews 1998). If these passages are problematic for the Aristophanic scholar, however, they are even more complex for the would-be translator of Aristophanes for whom they provide a variety of challenges. In this paper I shall investigate the nature of these challenges – from the difficulties presented by the lyrics' complex rhythms, diverse vocabulary and tonal inconsistencies to problems thrown up by qualities such as conventionality, playfulness and humour – and to consider the range of tactics translators have adopted to overcome them (whether successfully or otherwise). This paper will also comprise a diachronic investigation of how translating conventions have changed as far as Aristophanes lyrics are concerned and consideration of the extent to which scholarship has impinged on translation practices. Since translations so often provide new perspectives on ancient works, I hope also to see what light can be shed on the debates surrounding the Aristophanic text by the works of translators themselves.

Developments in Reception Studies - Music

Cressida Ryan, Nottingham University, England.

Music, particularly musical accompaniments to or versions of Greek tragedy, is becoming an increasingly popular area for Reception Studies to research. In this paper I intend to explore some of the benefits and hurdles involved in studying such musical adaptations of Greek tragedies, with a focus on *Oedipus at Colonus*. The *OC* seems to have inspired more musical adaptations than other Sophoclean plays. The most famous musical production, Lee Breuer and Bob Telson's *Gospel at Colonus* follows in the wake of many other musical reworkings, including particular interest in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, from those by the otherwise little known composers P. Torri and Antonio Sacchini, to lesser known works by the better known composers Rossini and Mendelssohn.

Operas, musicals and incidental music all help retell the ancient stories, often in an attempt to recreate the fifth century genre. The way in which this is done changes through the generations, producing a history of poetics, often demonstrating how aesthetic theory and performance practise are linked, see for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings on opera alongside his own opera (*Le Devin du Village*).

In addition, the fusion of genres in a musical adaptation creates complex works of art that shed light on the original texts, the culture into which they are received, and the progression of aesthetic theory. In particular, music adds a second text to any production, whose sentiments can harmonise or jar with those of the verbal text, which multi-sided approach helps develop more nuanced and subtle interpretations of the tragedy.

However, the more genres and texts involved, the more individuals involved, including composer, librettists, director and producer, each imposing their own interpretation on the text. Tracing the influence of each contributor through their work and history becomes more complicated the more people involved. The relative influence of each party can be hard to ascertain. Any one scholar must approach a

work from a variety of angles, as both literary critic and musicologist for example. This allows for a variety of interpretations, but also requires a variety of skills and background knowledge, which few people will possess to an equal, sufficiently high level. There is also the possibility of producing a diffuse and unfocused reading of any work, dealing with an unfeasibly large amount of data, losing depth of interpretation for the sake of breadth. Negotiating these obstacles in order to appreciate the exciting potential of interpreting musical adaptations of Greek tragedy is a challenging but thoroughly worthwhile task.

Tradition and the Elder Statesman: Oedipus, Suez and Hungary

Michael Simpson, Goldsmiths' College, University of London, England.

Notwithstanding its mighty pedigree in Sophocles' tragedies, T.S. Eliot's *The Elder Statesman* turns on the related figures of the minimal and the bathetic, as virtually every item in the play is massively scaled down in any comparison with its Sophoclean counterpart: Lord Claverton is a superannuated invalid rather than commensurate with the fearsome itinerant protagonist of *Oedipus at Colonus*. There is, from the outset, an implication that the diminutive elements are produced by considerable compression, originating in much larger forces. When Charles complains petulantly to Monica in the opening scene, he is objecting to a highly pressurised triangulation of himself, Monica and Claverton whereby he and Claverton compete for Monica's affection. The play thus opens with an opposition between familial love and sexual love. Whereas psychoanalysis postulates familial love as a rehearsal for sexual love, but emphasises that the former must give place to the latter and to its exogamous attachments, The Elder Statesman dramatises the claustrophobic convergence of these loves. This constellation is compounded by the perverted affinities of Gomez, Mrs. Carghill, and Claverton's son Michael, as they emerge from his past. Caught in and among several such triangles, Claverton begins to collapse in on himself.

Yet the pressures that break him also re-make him. From the perspective of his own Colonus, he recognises and repudiates the regressive versions of self entailed in these quasi-oedipal triangles. The familial love, the sexual love and the lingering attachments to Carghill and Gomez are summarily reconciled under the higher love of Christian forgiveness. But this higher love is dramatised as even more capacious in the closing moments of the play, as it extends retroactively to embrace the roles of Oedipus and Antigone. Thus expanding, this higher love reconciles pagan and Christian cultures, asserting a direct continuity between Platonic and Christian love. This decorous, understated, very English play, confined largely to the drawing room and the nursing home, explodes into a cosmically inclusive vision.

There is a crucial metadramatic implication of this cultural 'big bang'. The Elder Statesman at the centre of this combustion is not merely Lord Claverton but also the play of which he is the eponym. By including itself within this higher love, along with Sophocles' *Theban Cycle*, the play potentially includes within the interval the whole of the European canon as it is postulated in Eliot's earlier essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919). But does the play really absorb anything and everything under the sign of its infinite cultural love? The answer is that it embraces everything except that which its compulsive unity is designed to exclude. Begun in 1955 and completed in 1958, the play straddles a historical moment in 1956 constituted by the

Suez Crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary. As it affirms the integrity of the Western tradition, in the aftermath of American dissent from European ambitions in Suez, *The Elder Statesman* asserts the First World of a Europe beginning in Greece against Soviet imperialism in the Second World, and against Arab nationalism in the Third World. While Eliot's re-writing of *Oedipus* has prevailed historically over its Soviet adversary, Arab nationalism has diversified to perplex our younger statesmen in Downing Street and the White House, and the stories of civilisation that they tell us. Is Reception Studies the antidote to such modern myth-making?

Constitutionalism Ancient and Modern: Some thoughts on the reception of Roman political thought.

Christopher Smith, University of St. Andrews.

It is over fifty years since Charles McIlwain wrote his classic account *Constitutionalism: Ancient and Modern*.

That work, which gives an overview of the key aspects of constitutionalism, the legal limits to arbitrary power and the political responsibility of government to the governed, is notable for the importance given to the example of Roman Republicanism. Much modern political thought remains bound to the example of direct democracy at Athens, but the Roman example was powerful and influential before the 19th century and Grote's rewriting of Greek history.

The renewed interest in Republicanism led by scholars such as van Gelderen and Skinner, and the persistent concern with what McIlwain calls the delicate balance of will and law, makes it timely to look again at the legacy of Roman Republicanism, and its potential contribution to modern debates.

Post-Modern and Post-Traumatic: A South African **Electra**

Elke Steinmeyer, The University of KwaZulu-Natal, SA.

The Durban based producer Mervyn McMurtry elaborated in 2000 his version of the ancient Electra myth together with his multi-racial cast. The underlying theme of his adaptation, which is strongly based on the four Greek "Electra" tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, is the question of truth. This is not only an important question for Postmodernism, but also one of the central issues for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa. Established in 1995, the TRC tried to deal with the legacy of the former Apartheid regime. Its attempts to establish the truth about the past were a hot and controversial topic at the time of McMurtry's production. The play starts with a prologue six days after the matricide. All the characters suffer form various symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Electra also displays some form of Cross Dressing. After the prologue the play is performed as a sort of flashback. The chorus consists of women only who all have been victims (or survivors) of male violence. Their choral odes are mingled with media reports about the TRC and about the war atrocities in Bosnia-Herzogovina.

In my paperI want to investigate how McMurtry uses the ancient Electra myth and various modern theories to reflect the situation of the society (and particularly

women) in South Africa at the turn of the millennium, struggling to come to terms with a traumatic past.

Centre and periphery: the reception of classical material culture in Madrid and the provinces, 1701-1808

Alessandra Sulzer, Corpus Christi, Oxford University, England.

The Spanish monarchy's relationship with the past changed profoundly in the eighteenth century. While historical texts and monuments were as essential for validating the new Bourbon dynasty as they had been for the Habsburg, now they were vital for constructing a fledgling national identity. Beginning with Philip V, the Bourbons took care to associate this identity with classical antiquity.

The establishment of the Royal Academy of History and, later, the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid was crucial to support and legitimise numerous research expeditions across the Iberian Peninsula in search of historical documents. Founded in imitation of the French and Italian royal academies, these two Spanish academies provided the monarchy with an official administrative framework and a source of intellectual manpower from which they could draw upon for their projects. Part of the new dynasty's plan to consolidate its authority, the academies' efforts were initially channelled into collecting archival documents that would conclude the centuries-old power dispute with the Vatican. However, the academics soon envisioned many other projects, employing antiquities from archaeological excavation as both historical documents and artistic models. By the second half of the century, the academies and the monarchy had developed a reputation in the provinces for their interest in the excavation and collection of classical antiquities.

This paper will explore the nature of the archaeological contact between Madrid and the Spanish towns of Sepúlveda (in Segovia) and Murviedro (in Valencia) in the second half of the eighteenth century, in particular drawing attention to the relationships developed between locals and the royal academies in Madrid. Correspondence between these parties will be analysed, with emphasis placed on developments in the excavation of classical sites and the protection of antiquities. I hope to show that, following the surge in the academies' activity in the middle of the century, certain members of the provincial upper middle class quickly discerned the value placed on classical antiquities and used this knowledge to enhance their social and intellectual prestige by involving themselves, sometimes forcibly, in the archaeological activity of the academies. Material from the *Archivo Histórico Nacional* and the *Archivo de la Real Academia de San Fernando* in Madrid will be presented in support of this argument.

Stages of Imagination: Greek Plays on BBC Radio from the 1920s

Amanda Wrigley, Archive forPerformances of Greek and Roman Drama, University of Oxford

From its birth in the 1920s, BBC Radio broadcast a large number of programmes which drew substantially on English-language translations of a wide range of ancient Greek and Roman texts, especially those by the Greek tragedians. This relatively unexplored but incredibly rich area for research offers fresh insights for those working on the reception of classical plays in 20th-century Britain. Since radio dramatic productions came without the financial, geographical, and cultural barriers which

might be perceived to surround the theatre, and did not require the relatively high level of literacy for tackling the play on the page, the medium provided a wide public with a new and also creatively distinctive access route to Greek plays in performance. As a medium quite different from either the printed page or the theatrical stage, radio poses new challenges in terms of performance reception, and this paper seeks to outline my methodological and theoretical approach to Greek plays as performed in the 'theatre of the mind' (to use Martin Esslin's idea).

Aristophanes in Jerusalem.

Nurit Yaari, University of Tel Aviv, Israel.

In September 2002 the Khan Theatre of Jerusalem performed *The War Over Home*, a satirical comedy based on three Aristophanic comedies – *The Acharneans*, *Knights* and *Lysistrata*. Using Aristophanes dramatic strategies, the director Miki Gurevitch and the playwright Ilan Hatzor defined their socio-political goal as stimulating a change in their spectators' mentality. This strategy was meant to open audiences to a deeper reading of the political situation and to greater comprehension of the leadership's political impotence.
In this paper I will analyze *The War Over Home* as an adaptation and production that follows Aristophanes' dramatic strategy – combining fantastic intrigue with contemporary analysis of society and politics – in reaction to the 2002 situation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As appropriate to any discussion of current treatments of Aristophanes' comedies, the paper will combine theatre with politics.