

**GLOBAL PERCEPTIONS
AND RECEPTIONS
OF ANCIENT HISTORY**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

IMPRESSUM

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GLOBAL PERCEPTIONS AND RECEPTIONS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN ZAGREB

03 – 06-11-2026



Zagreb, 2026



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ABOUT THE CONFERENCE



The international conference *Global Perceptions and Receptions of Ancient History* brings together scholars from a wide range of disciplines to examine how antiquity is interpreted, reimagined and mobilised across different cultural, social and media contexts. Its central aim is to explore the diverse ways in which ancient worlds continue to shape contemporary identities, artistic practices, academic narratives and public imagination. By analysing the circulation of ancient motifs in popular culture, digital media, education, heritage interpretation, literature, music, film and museum practice, the conference highlights the extraordinary adaptability of antiquity as a global cultural resource.

This is the first conference of its kind in the world, conceived as a platform that systematically connects reception studies with global perspectives on antiquity. Rather than focusing on a single region, medium or historical period, the conference brings these strands into dialogue, demonstrating how ancient history is continuously reshaped through processes of translation, reinterpretation and creative transformation. The contributions presented here reveal how antiquity functions not as a static inheritance, but as a dynamic field of meaning negotiated across continents, disciplines and communities.

By fostering interdisciplinary exchange and encouraging comparative approaches, the conference aims to establish a new framework for studying the global reception of antiquity. It invites participants to rethink established narratives, challenge traditional boundaries and consider how ancient history operates within today's interconnected world. In doing so, it lays the foundations for future research that recognises antiquity as a shared, evolving and globally resonant cultural phenomenon.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME***Global Perceptions and Receptions of Ancient History***

Zagreb, 3–6 November 2026

DAY 1**Tuesday, 3 November 2026****09:00–09:30 – Registration****09:30–10:00 – Opening Ceremony****10:00–10:40 – Keynote Lecture I****Bärbel Auffermann***From Fossil to Icon: Misconceptions and the Popularisation of Neanderthals in Museum Practice***10:40–12:20 SESSION 1 – PREHISTORY****Chair: Bärbel Auffermann****10:40–11:00 Ema Kosnica***Prehistory in a Straight Line: Popular Iconography and Public Perceptions of Human Evolution***11:00–11:20 Antonija Lapaš***A Changing Stone Age: The Paleo Diet Movement and the Reimagining of the Paleolithic Way of Life***11:20–11:40 Marta Rakvin, Ana Đukić & Jacqueline Balen***Tastes of the Iron Age: Bioarchaeology and the Sensory Reception of Ancient Landscapes***11:40–12:00 Maria Nilsson***Rock Art Encountering: Ancient Reception of Prehistoric Imagery at Gebel el-Silsila***12:00–12:20 Ana Pavlović & Tomislav Kiš***Dismantling Pseudoscientific Narratives – Case Study of the Alleged Pyramids in Visoko (Bosnia and Herzegovina)***12:20–14:00 Lunch Break****14:00–14:40 – Keynote Lecture II****Joyce Tyldesley***Seeing Nefertiti: The Exploration of a Cultural icon***14:40–16:20 SESSION 2 – EGYPT I****Chair: Joyce Tyldesley****14:40–15:00 Hrvoje Gračanin***Queen Cleopatra VII and Her Image in Medieval Latin Chronicles*

15:00–15:20 Tomislav Kiš & Smiljana Smolčić

Egyptomania in 21st-century Croatia: Contemporary Reception of Ancient Egypt

15:20–15:40 José das Candeias Sales & Susana Mota

Egyptomania in Portugal: The Egyptian Hall of Braga

15:40–16:00 Katalin Kóthay

Egyptian or Greek? A Particular Aspect of the Use of Egyptianizing Elements in Hungarian Architecture

16:00–16:20 Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska, Maria da Assunção Gil Correia de Melo & Sylvie Alves Castro

The Egyptian Boat as an Intercultural Symbol and Artistic Inspiration in Modern Art

16:20–18:00 – Guided Tour: Archaeological Museum in Zagreb

18:00–20:00 – Welcome Reception

DAY 2

Wednesday, 4 November 2026

09:00–10:20 SESSION 3 – EGYPT II

Chair: Eva Katarina Glazer

09:00–09:20 Patrizia Piacentini

Translating Egypt: The Formation of Giuseppe Parvis's Style

09:20–09:40 Łukasz Byrski

In the Land of Lost Horizon: The Influence and Reception of Ancient Egypt in Popular and Heavy Metal Music

09:40–10:00 Susanna Moser

From Napoleon to Tutankhamun: The Influence of Ancient Egypt on European Fashion 1800–1920

10:00–10:20 Joachim Östlund

Subterranean Egypt: The Shifting Grounds of Ancient History in Early Modern Sweden

10:20–10:40 – Coffee Break

10:40–12:00 SESSION 4 – EGYPT III

Chair: Ernst Czerny

10:40–11:00 Mladen Tomorad

Reception of Ancient Egypt in Martin Mystère Comics

11:00–11:20 Vesna Kamin Kajfež & Tomislav Kajfež

Egyptian Topics for Young Readers: Two Case Studies of Children's Literature

11:20–11:40 Daniel Rafaelić

Ancient Egyptian Books of the Underworld on Film

11:40–12:00 Christina Antoniadou

Egyptian Teachings: Brotherhoods in the Film Industry

12:00–13:30 – Lunch break

13:30–15:10 SESSION 5 – EGYPT IV

Chair: Porin Šćukanec Reznicek

13:30–13:50 Jan Ciglencečki

Bernarda Perc's Newly Discovered Personal Archive as a Source for the History of Egyptology in Yugoslavia

13:50–14:10 Mateja Ravnik

Developing the Slovene Egyptology Database: A Case Study of Architect Milan Kovač

14:10–14:30 Eman Khalifa

The Perception and Reception of Ancient Egypt in the Works of Naguib Mahfouz

14:30–14:50 – Coffee Break

14:50–16:10 SESSION 6 – GREECE I

Chair: Susanna Moser

14:50–15:10 - Filip Budić

From Ancient Narrative to Digital Map: Greek Myth on the Eastern Adriatic

15:10–15:30 Ante Franić

"The Strong Do What They Can" – Timeless Laws and Contemporary Misunderstandings

15:30–15:50 Viktoria Franić Tomić

Metamorphoses of the Myth of Helen in Croatian Literature and Art

15:50–16:10 Milana Vuković Runjić

Vladimir Nazor and Pallas Athena in Brač

16:10–16:30 Coffee Break

16:30–18:30 Guided Tour: Zagreb Historical Centre

DAY 3

Thursday, 5 November 2026

09:00–10:20 SESSION 7 – GREECE II

Chair: Patrizia Piacentini

09:00–09:20 Mladen Tomorad & Lucija Grgić

Reception of Ancient Greece in Computer/Video Games

09:20–09:40 Ichiro Taida

The Battle of Thermopylae in Modern Japanese Children's Literature

09:40–10:00 Petra Matović & Ana Pavlović

The Reception of Greek Mythology in Croatian Comics

10:00–10:20 Coffee Break

10:20–12:20 SESSION 8 – ROME**Chair: José das Candeias Sales****10:20–10:40 João Paulo Simões Valério***The Fall of the Roman Republic in Late Nineteenth–Century Portuguese Historiography***10:40–11:00 Ernst Czerny***Austrian Painter Heinrich von Angeli and “The Death of Marc Anthony”***11:00–11:20 Ivana Ožanić Roguljić***From Garum to Instagram: Perceptions of Roman Feasting Between Historical Reality and Popular Prejudices***11:20–11:40 Deniver Vukelić***Legio VI Herculia – Late Antiquity Project of the Popularization of History and Archaeology Through Methods of Historical Reenactment and Living History***11:40–12:00 Filip Varaždinec***Representation of the Collapse of the Roman Empire in Croatian High School Textbooks (2010–2020)***12:00–13:30 – Lunch break****13:30–15:30 SESSION 9 – GENERAL ANTIQUITY I****Chair: Katalin Kóthay****13:30–13:50 Marko Marina***From Tyrant to Archetype: The Afterlife of Herod the Great in Late Antique and Medieval Christian Memory***13:50–14:10 Dubravka Botica***Mediating Antiquity in 1818: Imperial Travels, Festivities, and the Reception of Croatian Antiquity***14:10–14:30 Cristina Ruggero***The Visual Mediation of Antiquity as Historical Knowledge***14:30–14:50 Barbara Pavlek Löbl***Ancient History and Modern Identity: Public Uses of the Past in the Wachau***14:50–15:10 Massimo De Grassi***Classical Tradition Put to the Test of Modernity: Episodes in Italian Sculpture After World War II***15:10–15:30 Camilla Persi & Alessia Pilloni***“This is My Roman Empire”: Ancient History Memes Under the Spotlight***15:30–16:00 Coffee break****16:00–18:00 Book Presentations****DAY 4****Friday, 6 November 2026****09:00–10:40 SESSION 10 – GENERAL ANTIQUITY II****Chair: Jacqueline Balen****09:00–09:20 Ljubica Perinić***Star Trek and The Archaeology of the Final Frontier: Public Engagement of the Star Trek Universe and the Politics of Ancient History***09:20–09:40 Iva Kaić & Ana Pavlović***References to Classical Antiquity in the Inspector Morse TV Series***09:40–10:00 Eva Katarina Glazer***From Artefact to Accessory: Replica and Inspired Jewellery in Croatian Museums and the Reception of Antiquity***10:00–10:20 Porin Šćukanec Režniček***From Indiana Jones to Pub Quizzes: Archaeology, Popular Culture, and Public Engagement in a Museum Context***10:20–10:40 Mila Erceg & Vinko Udiljak***Reflections of Antiquity in Croatian Musical Art***10:40–11:00 – Coffee Break****11:00–12:40 SESSION 11 – BEYOND THE MEDITERRANEAN: GLOBAL ANTIQUITY****Chair: Ana Pavlović****11:00–11:20 Maria MacLennan & John Lawson***Edinburgh’s First Burghers: Revealing the Lives and Hidden Faces of Edinburgh’s Medieval Citizens through Creative Technologies and Multidisciplinary Approaches***11:20–11:40 Katarina Šukelj***Debates on the Paleolithic and Jōmon Periods in Contemporary Japan***11:40–12:00 Eva Katarina Glazer & Ivana Gubić***From Sacred Pilgrimage to Space Opera: Reception and Reinvention of “Journey to the West”***12:00–12:20 Mark Hudson & Claudia Zancan***Kofun Japan and Global Antiquity: Ecology, Pop Culture, and Historiography***12:20–12:40 Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska***Linguistic Experiments and Visual Elaboration of Ancient Symbols in the Art of Jim Cogswell – a Living Reception of Ancient Art and Perception of Modern Art***12:40–14:00 Lunch break**

14:00–15:15 SESSION 12 – POSTER SESSION

Iva Adžaga
Women Gladiators: A Step Toward Gender Equality or a Critique of Women’s Roles in the Roman Empire

Ognjen Babić
Roman Themes in the Discography of Symphonic Death Metal Band Ex Deo

Laura Gazdek
Rome as Croatian Heritage: Between Local Identity and Global Tourism

Adela Kavur
Guiding the Dead: The Reception of Psychopomp Figures in Ancient Greek Tradition and Assassin’s Creed Odyssey

Klaudia Kelemen
Modern Depictions of “The Odyssey” on the Big Screen

Igor Krnjeta
Historiographical Discourse on the Topic of “Black Egyptians”

Filip Kuščević
Playing with the Gods: The Reception of Ancient Mythology in Global Culture

15:15–15:45 SESSION 13 – FINAL DISCUSSION

15:45–16:00 Closing of the Conference



KEYNOTE LECTURE 1

From Fossil to Icon: Misconceptions and the Popularisation of Neanderthals in Museum Practice

Bärbel Auffermann

(Neanderthal Museum, Mettmann)

Abstract: Neanderthals have undergone a remarkable transformation in scientific perception—from primitive brutes to complex and culturally sophisticated humans. As key mediators between academia and the public, museums play a crucial role in constructing and disseminating narratives about human origins. This responsibility is particularly significant for the Neanderthal Museum in Germany, located at the original discovery site. This keynote explores how the Neanderthal Museum contributes to the popularisation of Neanderthals through exhibitions, educational programmes, and outreach activities. It presents examples of strategies used to translate complex scientific findings into accessible and engaging narratives, while also addressing persistent stereotypes and misconceptions. By situating museum practice within a broader cultural and social context, the keynote considers how media, public discourse, and contemporary values shape the reception of Neanderthals across different audiences. It argues that the popularisation of Neanderthals is not merely a process of knowledge transfer but an active negotiation between science, storytelling, and public perception. In doing so, the talk highlights the evolving role of museums as spaces of dialogue that connect past human diversity with present-day perspectives.

Key words: Neanderthals; museum practice; public archaeology; scientific communication; stereotypes; popularisation of science; human evolution

SESSION 1 – PREHISTORY

Prehistory in a Straight Line: Popular Iconography and Public Perceptions of Human Evolution

Ema Kosnica

(Archaeological Museum in Zagreb)

Abstract: Linear visual representations of human evolution, commonly known as the “March of Progress”, are among the most recognisable images associated with prehistory. Despite being scientifically outdated, this visual formula remains deeply embedded in global popular culture and continues to shape public perceptions of human origins. Originally created as simplified didactic illustrations, such sequences gradually detached from their scientific context and evolved into autonomous visual symbols. Today they are widely reproduced, parodied, and adapted—often culminating not in a biologically modern human but in culturally coded figures such as athletes, musicians, or technology users. This paper examines the persistence of this motif as a visual myth that frames evolution as a linear narrative of improvement rather than a complex process of adaptation and branching. From an archaeological perspective, these representations obscure key aspects of current scientific

knowledge, including evolutionary diversity, the coexistence of multiple human species, and the absence of predetermined direction in evolution. By replacing complexity with a clear and goal-oriented sequence, the image satisfies cognitive expectations for narrative closure while simultaneously promoting a simplified perception of prehistory and evolutionary processes. Through selected examples from popular media and visual culture, the paper argues that the enduring success of this inaccurate representation demonstrates the power of images to construct historical understanding. Ultimately, the “March of Progress” reveals more about modern cultural concepts of progress than about the realities of human evolution.

Key words: human evolution; March of Progress; visual myths; public perception; popular representations

A Changing Stone Age: The Paleo Diet Movement and the Reimagining of the Paleolithic Way of Life

Antonija Lapaš

(Independent Researcher)

Abstract: The Paleo diet is widely understood not only as an ancestral nutritional programme emphasising higher protein intake, reduced total fat, and increased essential fatty acids, but also as a broader lifestyle rooted in a constructed vision of prehistoric society between roughly 40,000 BCE and the advent of agriculture. Based on this imagined prehistoric world, the Paleo movement offers a lifestyle manual that promises a healthier body, greater harmony with human genetic nature, and potential solutions to contemporary problems such as chronic disease and climate change. This reconstructed past is shaped by scientific data – particularly from archaeology and evolutionary biology – while simultaneously reflecting modern cultural anxieties about industrialisation, health, and modernity. However, the ways in which Paleo myths have changed over time in response to new archaeological evidence and shifting cultural concerns since the movement’s emergence in the 1970s have not been adequately examined. This paper addresses this gap through a diachronic analysis of popular diet literature, scientific publications, and archaeological scholarship from the 1970s–80s, early 2000s, 2010s, and late 2010s–2020s. It argues that although the Paleo movement consistently relies on a constructed prehistoric past, the nature of that past has evolved over the last fifty years in response to scientific debates, archaeological discoveries, and contemporary anxieties. This analysis sheds new light on how the Paleolithic way of life has been continuously reimagined within the Paleo community from its rise in popularity to the present day.

Key words: paleo diet; perception of prehistory; Paleolithic; historical imagination; evolution; paleo myth; hunter-gatherer

Tastes of the Iron Age: Bioarchaeology and the Sensory Reception of Ancient Landscapes

Marta Rakvin, Ana Đukić, Jacqueline Balen

(Archaeological Museum in Zagreb)

Abstract: This paper presents an interdisciplinary model developed by the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb to revitalise the public reception of Iron Age heritage through the lens of sensory experience. While traditional archaeological presentation often relies primarily on visual observation, this study positions sensory reception as a central tool for engaging audiences with Iron Age heritage.

Moving beyond static displays of artefacts and drawing on bioarchaeological analyses used to reconstruct the daily menus of past populations in Croatia’s Požega Valley, the paper explores how “tastable” history can transform a distant chronological period into a tangible and relatable modern narrative.

The methodology, developed through the Iron Age Danube and Danube’s Archaeological eLandscapes projects, centres on translating technical scientific data into accessible cultural experiences. A key component of this approach is the use of bioarchaeological research to identify organic remains that served as the basis for recreating authentic Iron Age menus. Through collaboration with culinary experts and local stakeholders, the team bridged the gap between scientific research and popular culture, offering the public a unique form of “living history” that resonates with contemporary interests in heritage tourism and sustainable gastronomy.

This approach ensures that the Iron Age is not merely perceived through glass cases but actively experienced, allowing modern audiences to connect with the heritage of the Požega Valley through a direct, sensory, and personal engagement with the past.

Key words: Iron Age heritage; Požega Valley (Croatia); living history; cultural tourism; multidisciplinary

Rock Art Encountering: Ancient Reception of Prehistoric Imagery at Gebel el-Silsila

Maria Nilsson

(Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University)

Abstract: This paper examines how ancient societies perceived and engaged with their own past by focusing on rock art and graffiti from Gebel el-Silsila, Egypt. While discussions on the perception and reception of antiquity are often framed through medieval to modern perspectives, this research turns to antiquity itself, exploring how ancient actors encountered and responded to earlier visual traditions embedded in the landscape. The study draws on the extensive rock art corpus documented by the Swedish Mission at Gebel el-Silsila since 2012. Using examples from pharaonic and Graeco-Roman contexts, the paper investigates how rupestrian surfaces functioned as cultural memory spaces in which imagery accumulated through superimposition, spatial appropriation, and visual dialogue across time. Attention is given to engagements with prehistoric motifs and canvases, suggesting forms of continuous narration to which later visitors added their own visual statements. These interventions raise questions about which scenes and themes inspired subsequent viewers to extend, reinterpret, or appropriate earlier visual narratives. Despite the growing documentation of Egyptian rock art, its long-term social life and reception within antiquity remain understudied, with scholarship traditionally favouring monumental and elite contexts. This paper presents preliminary results from an ongoing research project that addresses this gap by examining the diachronic significance of rock art at Gebel el-Silsila – from prehistoric production to later encounters and engagements with the site. By analysing responses, appropriations, renegotiations, and the circulation of meanings, the study seeks to disentangle the multiple agencies attached to rock art, illuminating evolving communicative practices, memory-making strategies, and cultural engagements with the past.

Key words: rock art; memory-making space; Gebel el-Silsila; ancient reception; visual dialogue; ancient Egypt

Dismantling Pseudoscientific Narratives: Case Study of the Alleged Pyramids in Visoko (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Ana Pavlović

(Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Tomislav Kiš

(Independent Researcher, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: In recent decades, pseudoscience and pseudoarchaeology have gained remarkable visibility through mass media, and this trend shows no sign of slowing. This is particularly evident in the wide range of speculative theories surrounding monumental ancient structures – most notably the Pyramids of Giza—which have captured human imagination for more than four and a half millennia. However, pyramidology is not confined to ancient Egypt. Within its broader framework, the claim that five pyramids exist in Visoko, a town in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, has become especially prominent over the past two decades and has emerged as the most influential theory among alternative interpretations of the ancient history of Southeast Europe. This paper examines how core argumentative patterns characteristic of pseudo-archaeological interpretations of the ancient Egyptian pyramids are appropriated, reformulated, and adapted to a local context in ways that seemingly corroborate the existence of the so-called Bosnian pyramids. The analysis further demonstrates that these claims lack any scientific credibility and situates them within broader sociological and ideological frameworks of pseudoarchaeology, highlighting their adaptability and connection to global trends. In recent years, an entire accompanying industry—focused on alternative medicine, pseudotherapies, and pseudoenergy phenomena—has developed around the alleged pyramids, demonstrating the feasibility and versatility of such narratives. In conclusion, the paper highlights the multifaceted influence of this alternative narrative on the local economy, tourism, and the formation of collective identities.

Key words: alternative theories; popular culture; pseudoarchaeology; pseudoscience; pyramidologists; pyramids; Visoko

KEYNOTE LECTURE 2

Seeing Nefertiti: The Exploration of a Cultural icon

Joyce Tyldesley

(Department of Classics, Ancient History, Archaeology and Egyptology (CAHAE), School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, University of Manchester)

More than three thousand years ago a sculptor working in the royal city of Amarna carved a limestone bust of an Egyptian queen. The queen was unnamed, but her unique flat-topped crown identified her as Nefertiti, consort to the “heretic pharaoh” Akhenaten. Plastered and painted in bright colours, Nefertiti’s bust depicted an extraordinarily beautiful woman.

It seems likely that the bust was intended to serve as a model for the other stone Nefertitis being manufactured in the Amarna workshop. However, Akhenaten’s reign was drawing to an end, and the royal family was soon to be written out of Egypt’s official history. There would no longer be a demand for their statues. Soon after her creation the stone Nefertiti was locked in a storeroom and forgotten.

In 1912 the bust was re-discovered and transported to Germany. Initially hidden from the public view, the beautiful queen went on display in Berlin Museum in 1924, just two years after the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb had sparked a world-wide interest in Amarna Period Egypt. At the same time copies of the bust were sold to, and displayed in, many western museums. Almost instantly, Nefertiti – the Nefertiti depicted in the bust – became an instantly recognised ancient world celebrity. A status which she has retained to the present day.

Egypt has yielded more than its fair share of artistic masterpieces, but it is difficult to think of another piece of sculpture that has so successfully bridged the gap between the ancient and modern worlds. The timeless beauty of the Nefertiti bust has attracted many thousands of modern visitors. It has influenced artists, writers, poets, jewellery designers and many others, and has been copied over and over again. But in so doing it has obscured our view of the past, shifting attention not only from the other members of the Amarna royal family, but also from other, equally valid, representations of Nefertiti herself.

In this keynote lecture Joyce Tyldesley will explore the Nefertiti bust as a cultural icon, from its ancient origins to its modern context: its discovery, its display, and its role as an artistic inspiration.

Key words: Nefertiti; Nefertiti’s bust; Amarna Period Egypt; cultural icon

SESSION 2 – EGYPT I

Queen Cleopatra VII and Her Image in Medieval Latin Chronicles

Hrvoje Gračanin

(Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyse and discuss the information contained in medieval Latin chronicles concerning Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt. The examination is twofold: first, to scrutinise the types of information about Cleopatra found in selected texts in order to determine what aspects of her personality most interested the chroniclers and how they depicted her historical role; and second, to assess whether it is possible to detect their attitudes toward her, particularly through the material they chose to include in their narratives.

The purpose is not to evaluate the historical accuracy of these accounts or to distinguish fact from fiction, but rather to establish whether a coherent image of Cleopatra emerges from the chronicles and whether this image varies among different authors. The paper also considers the chroniclers’ narrative strategies in relation to Cleopatra, seeking to determine the place and function they assigned to her within their portrayals of the past.

Key words: Queen Cleopatra; Middle Ages; Latin chroniclers; image; narrative strategies

Egyptomania in 21st-century Croatia: Contemporary Reception of Ancient Egypt

Tomislav Kiš

(Independent Researcher, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Smiljana Smolčić

(Independent researcher)

Abstract: This paper examines the contemporary reception of ancient Egypt in Croatia and explores how Egyptian visual culture continues to shape selected interiors and public spaces in the 21st cen-

tury, albeit on a markedly smaller scale than in earlier historical periods. Focusing on examples from public sculpture, commercial interior and exterior design, and mural painting, the study identifies which elements of the ancient Egyptian visual vocabulary are most employed in Croatia today. Attention is devoted to the motivations behind these appropriations and to the reasons why ancient Egyptian motifs continue to capture the imagination of artists, designers, and the public. The analysis demonstrates that contemporary Croatian Egyptomania largely follows global trends, particularly those that frame Egypt through long-standing narratives of exoticism, luxury, and mysticism. The selected examples show that such motifs rarely function as expressions of high artistic production with layered meanings. Instead, they predominantly occupy the realm of popular aesthetics and commercial design, often bordering on—or fully entering the domain of kitsch. Their function is primarily symbolic and atmospheric, aimed at evoking distinction, escapism, or a stylised sense of the exotic for targeted audiences. While the phenomenon of Egyptomania in Croatia in the 21st century remains limited in scope and lacks broader cultural integration, its persistence nonetheless reflects the enduring appeal of ancient Egyptian art and architecture, which continue to resonate within contemporary visual culture.

Key words: Croatia; Egyptomania; exterior design; interior design; public sculpture; reception of ancient Egypt; visual culture

Egyptomania in Portugal: The Egyptian Hall of Braga

José das Candeias Sales

Susana Mota

(Centro de Estudos Globais da Universidade Aberta, Portugal)

Abstract: This paper stems from the research project *Egiptomania em Portugal – Caminhos da recepção do antigo Egito em contexto português*, which aims to identify, catalogue, analyse, and disseminate the various expressions of the reception of ancient Egypt originating in, or present within, Portugal. The presentation focuses on the unique case of the Egyptian Hall in Braga, located on one of the oldest streets in the city in northern Portugal. Conceived by José Faria Barbosa and painted in 1937 by the Braga artist Lúcio Fânzeres (1909–1984), the Egyptian Hall occupies a room within a building constructed in 1693, which from 1915 onward served as the headquarters of the Cashiers' Association, the predecessor of the Minho Trade and Services Workers' Union. The room contains five distinct wall paintings featuring a rich palette of colours and employing Egyptian-inspired pictorial and decorative language. These compositions recreate pharaonic scenes and motifs based on 19th-century Egyptological publications. The recreated imagery includes political-military and religious scenes, as well as depictions of family and private life. These are accompanied by columns of hieroglyphs, lintels with winged suns, floral friezes at the upper and lower edges, and surfaces framed by geometric patterns. The ceiling is painted light blue and adorned with numerous stars, further enhancing the Egyptianising aesthetic. Through a detailed analysis of the hall's components, this paper highlights how the appropriation of the pharaonic visual canon—filtered through monumental 19th-century Egyptological works—transcends mere decorative eclecticism. Instead, it reveals a deliberate and informed engagement with Egyptological imagery within a Portuguese cultural context.

Key words: reception of ancient Egypt; Egyptomania; Egyptology; parietal decorations; Braga (Portugal)

Egyptian or Greek? A Particular Aspect of the Use of Egyptianizing Elements in Hungarian Architecture

Katalin Kóthay

(Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest)

Abstract: As in other parts of Europe and the wider world, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Hungary witnessed a fascination with Egyptian forms and motifs in architecture. Yet the number of examples is limited, and, with only a few exceptions, Egyptianizing elements appeared alongside motifs borrowed from other ancient cultures. The most common combination was the simultaneous use of Egyptian and Greek patterns. Rather than mere eclecticism, this practice represented the material expression of a contemporary understanding of the role of Egyptian civilization within the universal history of humankind. This paper provides an overview of these examples and discusses this particular interpretation of the cultural inheritance of ancient Egypt.

Key words: Egyptianizing architecture; Hungary; nineteenth century; reception of Egypt; architectural eclecticism

The Egyptian Boat as an Intercultural Symbol and Artistic Inspiration in Modern Art

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Maria da Assunção Gil Correia de Melo

(CHAM FCSH/NOVA – Universidade dos Açores, Portugal)

Sylvie Alves Castro

(CHAM FCSH/NOVA – Universidade dos Açores, Portugal)

Abstract: Culture, both spiritual and material, represents humanity's oldest response to the enduring fear of death. In seeking to transcend mortality, people created objects and artworks with their hands and minds, striving for forms of immortality through language (oral transmission, literature) and images (rock art, drawings, paintings, ornaments). The authors' collaboration began with a set of central concepts, including Egyptian identity expressed through notions preserved in hieroglyphic writing, the visual form of language, as well as in Egyptian iconography and boat construction. These elements reveal striking parallels with symbolic uses found in Portuguese artistic traditions. In the Pyramid Texts, the boat appears as a vehicle for the aquatic journey to the afterlife. On the one hand, this voyage was undertaken by gods and/or the sun in the company of the pharaoh; on the other, the idea of the coffin as a vessel transporting the deceased toward a "good death" developed within Christian iconography (e.g., the Jesuit College on Terceira Island, Azores). The authors present the concept of a "good death" and its cultural significance, demonstrating how both Egyptian and Christian spheres of religious thought inspired the work of a contemporary artist. In this context, the paper analyses mediation between life and death—a notion closely related to what Jan Assmann identified as symbolic technologies of continuation within Egyptian funerary traditions. Consequently, the research shifts from archaeological analysis to contemporary artistic creation, understanding jewellery as an object that shapes, transforms, and rewrites meanings.

Key words: Egyptian boat; intercultural symbolism; Egyptian identity; Pyramid Texts; good death; symbolic technologies of continuation; modern art; jewellery as cultural mediation

SESSION 3 – EGYPT II

Translating Egypt: The Formation of Giuseppe Parvis's Style

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Abstract: Giuseppe Parvis (1831–1909) was one of the leading figures of the Neo-Egyptian style between the 19th and 20th centuries, capable of blending pharaonic and Moorish influences with modern functionality in a distinctive and recognisable manner. Trained in Turin and Paris, Parvis arrived in Cairo in 1859, where he worked on prestigious commissions, first establishing his workshop in the Citadel and later relocating it to the Muski district. He encountered key figures of Khedivial Egypt, including Ismail Pasha and Auguste Mariette. His collaboration with Mariette proved decisive, since Parvis restored objects damaged after the 1867 Universal Exhibition in Paris and created furnishings and accessories for Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Aida*, performed in Cairo in 1871. His international reputation grew through participation in world exhibitions and through illustrated catalogues that promoted his furniture and objects. These works were characterised by Hathoric capitals, winged solar discs, uraei, sphinxes, hieroglyphic cartouches, sometimes bearing his own name, and sled-type bases inspired by pharaonic statue transport. Parvis also produced replicas of well-known artefacts, including the Dahshur jewellery and the chairs from the tomb of Yuya and Thuya. He collaborated with the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, providing tools for the laying of its foundation stone in 1897 and furnishing its library. Awarded numerous honours, he received a Fourth Dynasty sarcophagus as a gift, under which he was later buried in the Monumental Cemetery of Turin. Celebrated as the “king of cabinetmakers, the cabinetmaker of kings”, Parvis left a lasting mark on the dialogue between European craftsmanship and ancient Egyptian artistic traditions.

Key words: Neo-Egyptian style; Giuseppe Parvis; Egyptomania; 19th century; Cairo; furniture design; replicas; artistic reception of ancient Egypt

In the Land of Lost Horizon: The Influence and Reception of Ancient Egypt in Popular and Heavy Metal Music

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Abstract: Both heavy metal bands and mainstream pop artists have frequently drawn on ancient Egyptian motifs, a trend particularly prominent during the 1980s and 1990s. Early examples include Kate Bush's *Egypt* (1980) and The Bangles' *Walk Like an Egyptian* (1986). This fascination extended beyond lyrics and video aesthetics to album artwork and stage design, as seen in Iron Maiden's *Powerslave* and Dio's *The Last in Line* tours (1984–1985), or more recently, Rihanna's 2012 concert performances. In some cases, such as Slayer's *Season in the Abyss* (1990), Egyptian elements appear more strongly in visual presentation than in the lyrical content. Other notable examples from the same period include Michael Jackson's *Remember the Time* (1992), Shazza's *Egipskie noce* (1995), and Lepa Brena's *Ti si moj greh* (1996), demonstrating that this trend extends well beyond the English-speaking world. More recently, Katy Perry's *Dark Horse* (2014) has continued the use of similar imagery. These representations often rely on romanticized and anachronistic visions shaped by long-standing literary and cinematic tropes: lost paradises, forbidden love stories, slavery, ancient curses, and religious mystique. Yet some musicians pursue a more historically grounded approach. The death metal

band Nile bases its lyrics on primary sources, including ancient inscriptions and spells from the *Book of the Dead*. The genre's thematic preoccupation with death and the afterlife naturally aligns with Egyptian funerary culture and Osirian mythology, whereas mainstream pop artists tend to favour stylized, exoticized, and visually spectacular interpretations. This paper analyses representative examples across genres, highlighting the diversity of approaches to ancient Egyptian themes in contemporary music.

Keywords: Ancient Egypt, music, heavy metal, pop, lyrics, artwork, video clips, stage design

From Napoleon to Tutankhamun: The Influence of Ancient Egypt on European Fashion 1800–1920

Susanna Moser

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Abstract: Studies on the reception and perception of ancient Egypt in European culture have so far focused on a wide range of fields, including literature, visual arts, and the performing arts. Considerably less attention has been devoted to everyday objects, although Egyptianizing productions by major porcelain manufacturers are now well known. Ironically, very little has been written about Egyptian influences on clothing and related accessories, except in discussions of theatre or opera costumes. This paper aims to shed light on this overlooked topic, demonstrating that fashion designers, even before the profession was formally defined, consistently drew inspiration from the most sensational events of their time. From the Napoleonic campaigns in southern Europe and Egypt, which sparked a renewed fascination with the aesthetics of Antiquity, to the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, decorative patterns, colour schemes, and idealised visions of ancient Egypt entered the vocabulary of European fashion. These influences contributed to the creation of striking gowns and jewellery that are still preserved in museum collections today.

Key words: Napoleon; Tutankhamun; Empire style; fashion history; Egyptomania; reception of ancient Egypt; decorative arts

Subterranean Egypt: The Shifting Grounds of Ancient History in Early Modern Sweden

Joachim Östlund

(Department of History, Lund University)

Abstract: This paper examines an epistemological renegotiation in early modern Sweden's reception of Ancient Egypt, focusing on the enduring idea of a “subterranean Egypt”. Long before Swedish antiquarians set foot in the Nile Valley, Egypt was imagined as a land of hidden chambers and concealed archives of primordial wisdom. Classical authors associated it with monumental underground structures, hermetic traditions recast its inner sanctuaries as repositories of sacred knowledge, and medieval Islamic historiography described the pyramids as vaults preserving learning from the Flood. Such subterranean imaginaries have repeatedly resurfaced, including in recent claims about hidden structures beneath the Pyramid of Cheops. In seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Sweden, these inherited traditions became entangled in competing frameworks of biblical chronology and ancient historiography. Antiquarian expeditions were dispatched not merely to observe monuments but to test textual claims about secret chambers and underground passages. When travellers struggled to confirm what learned authorities had anticipated, the result was not simple disappointment. Instead, the criteria for historical credibility began to shift. Egypt was gradually transformed from a hermetic archive awaiting revelation into an empirical field of measurement and documentation.

This development reflects a broader transformation in early modern knowledge infrastructures, in which ancient history was reconfigured through travel, material observation, and cross-cultural exchange. By foregrounding Sweden's understudied role in this globally connected process of reception, the paper demonstrates how antiquarian practice reshaped both historical authority and Europe's understanding of Egypt. The study forms part of the research project *Scripture and Scholarship: The Swedish Search for Ancient Egypt, 1600–1730*.

Key words: ancient Egypt; antiquarianism; knowledge infrastructures; biblical chronology; early modern Sweden; reception history; subterranean imaginaries; historiography

SESSION 4 – EGYPT III

Reception in Ancient Egypt in Martin Mystère Comics

Mladen Tomorad

(Department of History, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: Numerous comics published over the past century have explored ancient Egyptian history, its archaeological investigation, and the enduring allure of its mysticism. Within this broad corpus, a particularly prominent place belongs to the *Martin Mystère* series, published by the Italian publishing house *Bonelli Editore*, whose protagonist, an archaeologist, anthropologist, and investigator of global enigmas, has become one of the most recognisable figures of Italian popular culture. Since its debut in 1982, the series has consistently incorporated elements of ancient Egyptian civilisation, making them a recurring and significant thematic thread. This presentation examines the ways in which ancient Egyptian history and archaeology are represented in *Martin Mystère*, identifying the dominant motifs, narrative strategies, and interpretative frameworks through which the series engages with Egypt's past. Special attention is devoted to the interplay between historical fact, archaeological speculation, and the comic's characteristic fascination with mystery.

Key words: ancient Egyptian history; archaeology; mysticism; Martin Mystère; comic studies; popular culture; representation of antiquity; narrative motifs

Egyptian Topics for Young Readers: Two Case Studies of Children's Literature

Vesna Kamin Kajfež

(Independent Researcher)

Tomislav Kajfež

(National Museum of Slovenia, Ljubljana)

Abstract: This paper examines how ancient Egyptian history and culture are adapted for young readers through two contemporary case studies of youth literature: *Jure and the Mummy: The Story of the Ljubljana Mummy* from 2022 and *A Knight Among the Pyramids: Anton Lavrin – Our First Explorer of Ancient Egypt* from 2022, both published by the National Museum of Slovenia. By analysing narrative strategies, visual elements, and pedagogical aims, the study highlights how authors transform complex archaeological and historical material into engaging, age-appropriate stories. Special attention is devoted to the balance between factual accuracy and imaginative storytelling, the role of protagonists as mediators of knowledge, and the ways in which Egyptian motifs are used to spark curiosity, cultural awareness, and critical thinking. The comparison of the two works reveals differing approaches to integrating archaeological facts, constructing adventure-driven plots, and presenting Egypt as both

a real historical civilisation and a space of literary imagination. The paper demonstrates that children's literature can serve as an effective medium for introducing ancient cultures, promoting intercultural understanding, and stimulating early interest in the humanities, particularly Egyptology.

Key words: children's literature; ancient Egypt; literary imagination; archaeology for young readers; pyramids; mummy; narrative strategies; museum education

Ancient Egyptian Books of the Underworld on Film

Daniel Rafaelić

(Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs)

Abstract: Ancient Egyptian funerary texts have fascinated both experts and the public ever since their first translations and publication. Although they vary in material, content, and intended owner, their primary purpose was to guide the deceased through the darkness of the underworld. From the *Book of the Dead* to the *Amduat*, their variations, motifs, and rich visual imagery profoundly influenced later literary production. Beginning in Roman times, a long tradition developed around the so-called Book of Thoth, later equated with the book or books of Hermes Trismegistos, which was believed to contain all the secret knowledge of ancient Egyptian civilisation. Its earliest artistic reflection appears in the famous demotic tale of Setne Khaemwaset, where such a book is described in detail. This narrative, combined with the alchemical tradition and the growing popularity of esoteric movements in the late nineteenth century, strongly shaped the emerging art form of cinema. From its inception, film has used a wide range of props to depict imagined ancient Egyptian books of the underworld. Filled with secrets and unknown powers, they were typically portrayed as potent weapons wielded by evil or undead forces. From silent cinema to contemporary blockbusters, their shifting shapes, functions, and meanings offer a rich field for scholarly exploration.

Key words: books of the underworld; ancient Egypt; cinema; esoteric traditions; Setne Khaemwaset; Book of Thoth; film history; reception studies

Egyptian Teachings: Brotherhoods in the Film Industry

Christina Antoniadou

(University of the Aegean, Mytilene)

Abstract: Mysticism related to ancient Egyptian civilisation, as understood today, began in the Greco-Roman Period from 332 BCE to 395 CE with the rise of Hermeticism. Hermeticism reached its peak during the first centuries of Late Antiquity from the 1st to the 4th century, was revived during the Renaissance from the 15th to the 17th century, and continued into the modern era, although reinterpreted within occult and esoteric contexts. Various occult and esoteric groups from the 18th century onward, including the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Freemasonry, and the Theosophical Society, claimed to unlock hidden truths, divine wisdom, and transformative magical knowledge, drawing inspiration from Egyptian iconography and mythology. This presentation examines the evolution of mysticism with particular emphasis on modern occult and neo-pagan movements that frequently assert an ancient Egyptian lineage. It focuses on the integration of these ideas into the film industry, analysing their presence in television series such as *Relic Hunter* and *The Librarians*, and in films such as *National Treasure* and *Fountain of Youth*. These productions continually misrepresent and reimagine ancient Egyptian culture, blending historical motifs with fictionalised esoteric narratives. The presentation forms part of the author's PhD thesis, *Re-imagining the Archaeological Past:*

The Representation of the Ancient Egyptian Civilisation in the Film Industry, A Comparative Study of Archaeological Evidence and Modern Perception.

Key words: ancient Egypt; Hermeticism; occult movements; neo-paganism; film industry; esotericism; popular culture; representation of antiquity

SESSION 5 – EGYPT IV

Bernarda Perc's Newly Discovered Personal Archive as a Source for the History of Egyptology in Yugoslavia

Jan Ciglenečki

(Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana)

Abstract: Bernarda Perc was the first Slovenian woman to pursue Egyptology and to actively promote the development of this previously neglected discipline in Slovenia and, more broadly, in Yugoslavia. Following extensive study visits to Egypt, she earned her doctorate in 1968 at the University of Munich with a dissertation on the spread of Egyptian cults in the Balkan and Danubian provinces during the Roman period. She later initiated and organised the exhibition *Spomeniki Starega Egipta* (*Monuments of Ancient Egypt*), presented in Ljubljana in 1974, which showcased ancient Egyptian objects from across the former Yugoslavia. In 2026, the Database of Slovenian Egyptology acquired her extensive and previously unknown personal archive, which includes research notes, photographs, official documents, and private correspondence. This paper presents and contextualises Bernarda Perc's archive, demonstrating how it offers valuable insight into the development of Egyptology in Yugoslavia from the 1960s to the early 1980s and illuminates the scholarly networks, institutional challenges, and intellectual ambitions that shaped the field during this formative period.

Key words: Bernarda Perc; history of Egyptology; Yugoslavia; archival sources; Slovenian Egyptology; scholarly networks; ancient Egyptian cults

Developing the Slovene Egyptology Database: A Case Study of Architect Milan Kovač

Mateja Ravnik

(Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia, Ljubljana)

Abstract: The Slovene Egyptology Database is a collaborative project of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia. It is dedicated to the systematic collection, archiving, cataloguing, and digitisation of materials documenting Slovenian contributions to the study and preservation of ancient Egypt from the nineteenth century to the present. The first project year, 2025, focused on the investigation and digitisation of the private archive and collections of architect Milan Kovač. His extensive documentation, dating from 1979 to 1988, records a period during which he participated in numerous heritage-protection initiatives in Egypt. Over nearly a decade of professional activity, conducted through his architectural bureau based in Sweden, Kovač developed innovative approaches to the protection of major historic monuments. His projects included proposals for an underground museum to house the Khufu, or Cheops, boat beneath the Great Pyramid at Giza and, in collaboration with ICOM, a comprehensive renovation plan for the Egyptian Museum at Tahrir Square. In Luxor, Kovač carried out measurements of royal and noble tombs and proposed protective strategies addressing tourist-related erosion across Western Thebes. Kovač's most significant realised intervention was the restoration of the Tomb of

Nakht, TT 52, in Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. Although many of his visionary proposals remained unrealised due to political and financial constraints, his work received recognition and support from prominent scholars and public figures. The case study demonstrates how his archive enriches our understanding of Slovenian engagement with Egyptian heritage and contributes to the broader aims of the Slovene Egyptology Database.

Key words: Slovene Egyptology Database; Milan Kovač; heritage protection; architectural documentation; Egyptian Museum Cairo; Western Thebes; Tomb of Nakht TT 52; Slovenian Egyptology

The Perception and Reception of Ancient Egypt in the Works of Naguib Mahfouz

Eman Khalifa

(Egyptology Department, Cairo University)

Abstract: Naguib Mahfouz (1911–2006) remains the only Egyptian writer to have received the Nobel Prize in Literature, awarded in 1988. His literary career began in 1938 and continued into his final years, with translations of his works appearing even posthumously. Mahfouz authored 34 novels and more than 350 short stories. Only a small number of his novels are set in ancient Egypt, along with several pieces in his 1983 book *In Front of the Throne*. It is, however, often overlooked that his first publication was not a literary work but a 1932 translation of James Baikie's *Ancient Egypt*.

This presentation juxtaposes the reception of ancient Egypt in Mahfouz's writings among the general public and among specialists in Egyptology. It examines how the global acclaim for his works in popular culture and media created a legacy that resonated not only with a broad readership but also with scholars of ancient Egypt. The paper further explores the factors that shaped Mahfouz's own perception of ancient Egypt. These aspects are then compared with those influencing the representation of ancient Egypt in the popular cultural works of Shadi Abdel-Salam (1930–1986), who remains the only Egyptian to have received the George Sadoul Film Award.

Key words: Reception theory; Ancient Egypt; Naguib Mahfouz; Shadi Abdel-Salam; *Khufu's Wisdom; Struggle of Thebes; Dweller in Truth*

SESSION 6 – GREECE I

From Ancient Narrative to Digital Map: Greek Myth on the Eastern Adriatic

Filip Budić

(Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: Greek mythological narratives can often be linked to specific geographical locations. Such spatial associations are attested both in ancient traditions and in later scholarly interpretations. This geographical dimension makes it possible to situate mythological content on a modern map and present it visually within a digital environment. As part of the project “Greek Myth on the Adriatic: Its Reflections through History”, launched in 2025 and led by Dr. Jelena Marohnić, one of the key planned outcomes is the creation of a digital map designed as both a research and educational tool for studying Greek myths connected with the eastern Adriatic coast. The digital map is conceived as a multifunctional resource in which individual locations function as interactive nodes linking to diverse materials. These include concise narrative summaries, original ancient sources with Croatian and English translations, major historiographical interpretations, and a selected, up-to-date

bibliography supporting further research on mythology in the archaeological and historical context of the Adriatic. Whenever possible, locations will also be associated with relevant archaeological evidence, such as Diomedes' Cape, Rt Ploča, and Diomedes' Island, Palagruža. Entries will be complemented by illustrations and selected visual material from museum collections. The project also raises methodological and technical questions. These include how to represent myths without precise geographical settings, how to address myths appearing in multiple locations, how to integrate different chronological versions, and how to structure the database to ensure clarity and scholarly reliability. The paper proposes possible solutions and invites further discussion within the digital humanities framework.

Key words: Greek mythology; eastern Adriatic; digital humanities; mythological landscapes; ancient history; archaeology; digital mapping; reception of antiquity

“The Strong Do What They Can” – Timeless Laws and Contemporary Misunderstandings

Ante Franić

(Independent Researcher)

Abstract: Throughout 2025 and early 2026 the international stage experienced significant upheavals. Alongside the strategic realignment of the United States in relation to the European Union and Canada, this period also witnessed a marked shift in the tone of public statements issued by top US officials. The change involved abandoning the supposedly unnecessary veneer of diplomatic “niceties” in favour of direct, hard-power language and overt threats directed at countries perceived as too weak to resist decisions imposed by stronger actors. This development has been widely interpreted as a return to power politics, particularly in the sense articulated by Thucydides. The juxtaposition of a powerful America with a powerless Greenland and its somewhat less powerless European partners has invited frequent comparisons with the Melian Dialogue, often summarised through the well-known paraphrase of the Athenian argument that “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.” This supposed rediscovery of ancient wisdom has generated enthusiasm among some commentators and consternation among those who believe that international politics can be grounded in benevolence and respect for rules. These opposing views have dominated public discourse and have been echoed in statements by world leaders. This paper clarifies what the Melian Dialogue was about, which lessons appear to have been drawn from it, and how these lessons may be misleading for understanding both Thucydides' intentions and the role of diplomatic “niceties” in the competitive arena of inter-state politics.

Key words: Thucydides; Peloponnesian War; Melian Dialogue; Donald Trump; Stephen Miller; Greenland; realism; international relations; power politics

Metamorphoses of the Myth of Helen in Croatian Literature and Art

Viktorija Franić Tomić

(Department of Croatology, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: This interdisciplinary study analyses the transformations of the mythological narrative of Helen of Troy within Croatian literature, tracing its development from the medieval romance *Ru-manac Trojski*, through the dramatic and lyrical contributions of the Renaissance and Baroque (N. Nalješković, M. Držić, H. Lučić, I. Bunić Vučić, J. Palmotić, A. Krivonosić), to its modernist reinterpret-

tation in the poetry of A. G. Matoš and the visual arts of V. Bukovac and B. Čikoš Sesija. Croatian contributions are contextualised within the broader framework of European syncretism, following an intertextual trajectory from classical epics and dramas (Homer, Euripides, Isocrates, Theocritus, Ovid) through medieval and Renaissance models (Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Arnaut Daniel, François Villon, Pierre de Ronsard) and Classicist peaks (J. W. Goethe) to modern deconstructions of the myth (Leconte de Lisle, Henri Meilhac, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Jean Giraudoux).

The study demonstrates how the figure of Helen, as an archetype of destructive beauty, serves as a vehicle for articulating diverse poetic and ideological shifts, ranging from the medieval code of chivalry to the modern autonomy of art. By examining these diachronic reinterpretations, the paper highlights the dynamic interplay between myth, literary tradition, and cultural identity in the Croatian reception of antiquity.

Key words: Helen of Troy; Croatian literature; intertextuality; archetype; Marin Držić; Nikola Nalješković; Hanibal Lucić; Junije Palmotić; Antun Krivonosić; A. G. Matoš; Vlaho Bukovac; Bela Čikoš Sesija

Vladimir Nazor and Pallas Athena in Brač

Milana Vuković Runjić

(Independent Researcher)

Abstract: In the novel *Pastir Loda*, as well as in his diary entries, travelogues, and poetic dedications to his native island, Croatian writer Vladimir Nazor (1876 – 1949), persistently inscribes the mythical Brač into the wider Mediterranean and ancient cultural sphere. In the olive groves of Brač, the Pallas Athena appears to him, symbolically linking the island's landscape with the classical heritage of the Mediterranean world and revealing Nazor's enduring fascination with antiquity as a framework for shaping local identity.

Key words: Vladimir Nazor; Brač; antiquity; Mediterranean; Pallas Athena

SESSION 7 – GREECE II

Reception of Ancient Greece in Computer/Video Games

Mladen Tomorad

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Lucija Grgić

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Abstract: It is striking how the representation of Ancient Greece in contemporary video games reconstructs, reinterprets, and commodifies classical antiquity. While literature and cinema have long shaped popular perceptions of the ancient world, video games introduce a new dimension by rendering antiquity *playable*. Games such as *Hades* and *Hades II*, *Age of Mythology*, *Ancient Wars: Sparta*, *Total War Saga: Troy*, *Civilization VII*, and *o A.D.* demonstrate diverse modes of engagement with the Greek past. They encompass grand-strategic abstraction, real-time tactical simulation, mythological reenactment, aesthetic classicism inspired by vase painting, and creative reinterpretations of the Olympian pantheon. In titles like *Apotheon*, *God of War*, and *Assassin's Creed: Odyssey*, develop-

ers draw on myth, material culture, and historical imagination not with the aim of strict accuracy, but to construct meaningful, playable worlds that resonate with modern audiences. Taken together, these games reveal that the digital representation of Ancient Greece is not a monolithic endeavour but a spectrum of creative practices. Some prioritise aesthetic fidelity, others mythic storytelling, and still others the emotional intensity of struggle and spectacle. What unites them is their shared capacity to convey antiquity to contemporary players, shaping how millions imagine and interact with that ancient civilisation.

Key words: Ancient Greece; video games; representation; culture; mythology; war; digital antiquity; playable past

The Battle of Thermopylae in Modern Japanese Children's Literature

Ichiro Taida

(Toyo University, Tokyo)

Abstract: From the beginning of the seventeenth century, Japan enjoyed a long period of stability under the Tokugawa Shogunate, despite its isolation from the outside world. However, from the late eighteenth century onward, Western powers increasingly pressured Japan to open its borders. With the political transformation of 1868, Japan entered a new era of international engagement, competition, and conflict. During this period of rapid change, Japanese scholars published numerous works on Western history to disseminate knowledge about foreign cultures, and school textbooks on world history were produced. These texts included accounts of the Persian Wars between ancient Greece and Persia in the fifth century BCE. Publishers also issued children's books and magazines in which the Persian Wars frequently appeared. In children's literature in particular, the Battle of Thermopylae was often retold. These narratives described the Persian invasion and the heroic death of King Leonidas of Sparta and his 300 soldiers who defended Greece. The story of Leonidas, who sacrificed his life for his homeland, resonated strongly within the militaristic climate of modernising Japan. Numerous versions of the Thermopylae story were published for young readers, likely with the intention of encouraging them to emulate Leonidas' loyalty and devotion to their country. This paper examines why authors of Japanese children's literature selected the story of Thermopylae as a vehicle for promoting moral ideals and how they adapted it in ways accessible and meaningful to young Japanese audiences.

Key words: Persian Wars; Battle of Thermopylae; Japan; children's literature; classical receptions; Leonidas; Greek history

The Reception of Greek Mythology in Croatian Comics

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Ana Pavlović

(Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: Greek mythology is arguably the most widely recognised and popularly received aspect of ancient Greek culture. While Greek philosophy and science are rarely discussed outside specialist circles, Greek mythology has enjoyed a far broader cultural afterlife. Artists inspired by myth have produced countless works accessible to the public. Comics—often described as the ninth art—have developed into a serious artistic medium capable of addressing complex questions and integrating

diverse cultural influences. Greek mythology has shaped the work of many influential comic artists, from Neil Gaiman, Alan Moore, and Rachel Smythe to Hayao Miyazaki, Osamu Tezuka, and Masami Kurumada, and several of these reinterpretations have already attracted scholarly attention. Although Croatia has an active comics scene and a small but vibrant comics community, research on Croatian comics remains limited, and no study has yet examined the role of Greek mythology within it. This talk identifies and analyses comics by Croatian authors that incorporate elements from Greek mythology. These elements are classified into narrative and visual categories, with attention to their function: whether they are integral to the plot or merely decorative, and how faithfully they reflect the original Greek material. The discussion includes works by Irena Jukić Pranjić, Helena Klakočar, Darko Macan, Ivan Marušić, and others, highlighting the diversity of approaches within Croatian comics and their contribution to the broader field of classical reception.

Key words: Greek mythology; comics; Croatian comics; entertainment; popular culture; classical reception

SESSION 8 – ROME

The Fall of the Roman Republic in Late Nineteenth-Century Portuguese Historiography

João Paulo Simões Valério

(Centre for History of the University of Lisbon)

Abstract: The fall of the Roman Republic became a recurrent subject of historiographical debate in Europe during the final decades of the nineteenth century. In an era marked by the emergence of new forms of modern dictatorship and the rise of mass political movements, Roman history once again served as a mirror through which contemporary crises were interpreted. This paper examines representations of the fall of the Roman Republic in late nineteenth-century Portuguese historiography through two case studies. The first is Oliveira Martins (1845–1894), author of *History of the Roman Republic* (1885), whose interpretation was shaped by a pessimistic and organicist conception of history. The second is Consiglieri Pedroso (1854–1910), who addressed the Roman Republic in several universal-history textbooks and compendia published between 1881 and 1884, adopting a predominantly positivist framework that emphasised historical progress and social evolution. By analysing and comparing these two authors, the paper highlights how differing philosophies of history produced contrasting narratives of republican crisis and collapse. Beyond situating Portuguese historiography within broader European debates of the period, this study also contributes to contemporary discussions at a moment when the fall of the Roman Republic has once again gained prominence in both historical scholarship and analyses of the crises confronting modern democracies.

Key words: Roman Republic; Portuguese nineteenth-century historiography; Oliveira Martins; Consiglieri Pedroso; political crisis; classical reception

Austrian Painter Heinrich von Angeli and “The Death of Marc Anthony”

Ernst Czerny

(Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Abstract: The Viennese painter Heinrich von Angeli (1840–1925) enjoyed extraordinary renown as a portraitist during his lifetime. In addition to the Emperor and the nobility of the Habsburg Monarchy, he portrayed numerous prominent figures such as Sir Rudolph Slatin Pasha and Henry Morton Stan-

ley, as well as members of ruling houses across Europe and overseas, including the Russian imperial family, the Emperor of Brazil, and Queen Victoria, whose court he frequently visited. Before specialising in portraiture, Angeli pursued a career as a history painter, although only a small number of his early genre and historical works have survived. Among these is the original painting *Death of Mark Antony in the Arms of Cleopatra* (1863), a rare example of his engagement with antique painting and with themes centred on Egypt. This lecture presents this privately owned painting within the context of Angeli's early oeuvre and examines its place within nineteenth-century approaches to classical and Egyptian subjects. Attention is given to the visual strategies through which Angeli interpreted the dramatic death of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, situating the work within broader artistic currents of the period.

Key words: history painting; Mark Antony and Cleopatra; Heinrich von Angeli; nineteenth-century art; antique subjects

From Garum to Instagram: Perceptions of Roman Feasting Between Historical Reality and Popular Prejudices

Ivana Ožanić Roguljić

(Institute for Archaeology, Zagreb)

Abstract: Through historical films and popular culture, the Roman feast has become a symbol of exotic menus, excess, and extreme decadence. Such sensationalist portrayals have contributed to the creation of deeply rooted misconceptions that have gained additional momentum in the modern digital world, especially through the curated aesthetics of social networks. This lecture seeks to deconstruct the most common myths and to look behind the scenes of Hollywood spectacles. Instead of stereotypes about peacock tongues, it highlights the real complexity of Roman-era culinary customs, which directly reflected the social hierarchy and multiethnic structure of the Roman Empire. Special attention is devoted to Pannonia and Dalmatia, where Roman culinary traditions encountered local practices, producing a distinctive blend of Mediterranean influences and continental ingredients. The lecture also demonstrates that Apicius, the author of the most famous ancient cookbook, includes many simple dishes accessible to a broad segment of the population. At the same time, ancient descriptions of feasts are analysed to identify the origins of modern perceptions of Roman decadence. Ultimately, the lecture explores how food functioned as a medium of communication, identity formation, and survival in a world far more complex than the simplified images presented on contemporary screens.

Key words: Roman gastronomy; cultural reception; historical myths; digital aesthetics; pop-culture stereotypes; Pannonia and Dalmatia; Apicius; Roman food culture

Legio VI Herculia – Late Antiquity Project of the Popularization of History and Archaeology Through Methods of Historical Reenactment and Living History

Deniver Vukelić

(Department of History, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: This lecture and the accompanying paper examine contemporary strategies for the public popularisation of late antique history and archaeology through the methodologies of historical reenactment and living history, with particular attention to projects developed in Croatia. Drawing

on the long-term work of the association *Red Čuvara grada Zagreba* and its living-history unit *Legio VI Herculia*, as well as comparable initiatives across Central and South-Eastern Europe, the study explores how reenactment practices function as mediating tools between scholarly research, material culture, and diverse audiences. By integrating archaeological reconstruction, experimental archaeology, performative pedagogy, and embodied interpretation, these groups create multisensory, immersive narratives that render late antiquity accessible to the wider public while simultaneously engaging with ongoing academic debates on military, social, and everyday life in the fourth and fifth centuries. The paper situates these practices within broader theoretical discussions on public humanities, heritage interpretation, and participatory history. It evaluates how reenactment projects collaborate with academic institutions, museums, and local communities; how they navigate the tension between historical accuracy and performative creativity; and how they contribute to the formation of historical imagination in contemporary society. Through a combination of qualitative analysis, case studies, and reflexive observation drawn from within the reenactment milieu, the presentation demonstrates the potential of living-history methodologies to enhance public understanding of late antique cultural landscapes and to foster sustainable models of community-based heritage engagement.

Key words: late antiquity; historical reenactment; living history; experimental archaeology; festivals; *Legio VI Herculia*; limes; public humanities

Representation of the Collapse of the Roman Empire in Croatian High School Textbooks (2010–2020)

Filip Varaždinec

(Independent Researcher)

Abstract: The collapse of the Roman Empire remains one of the central narratives through which students first encounter Late Antiquity and the conventional boundary between two historical periods. This presentation examines how the collapse is represented in gymnasium-level history textbooks published between 2010 and 2020, and what kind of image of the event is constructed through their discourse. The research applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The aim is not to evaluate factual accuracy, but to analyse how meaning is produced within the text. The study focuses on sentence structure, vocabulary, the use of nominalisations, evaluative language, and the organisation and connection of causal explanations. Special attention is given to how certain interpretations are emphasised, how responsibility is framed, and whether the collapse is presented as a complex historical process or as an inevitable outcome. For analytical clarity, textbook explanations are grouped into three thematic clusters: economic factors, internal conflicts, and cross-border incursions by various groups. These categories are guided by Alexander Demandt's typology of 210 causes, which serves as a comparative framework for identifying patterns of selection, omission, and emphasis.

Key words: Critical Discourse Analysis; collapse of the Roman Empire; history textbooks; Late Antiquity; historical representation; reception of antiquity; educational discourse

SESSION 9 – GENERAL ANTIQUITY I

From Tyrant to Archetype: The Afterlife of Herod the Great in Late Antiquity and Medieval Christian Memory

Marko Marina

(Department of History, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: This paper examines the transformation of Herod the Great from a historical client king of Rome into a timeless symbol of tyranny and moral corruption within Christian collective memory. While the historical Herod ruled Judea in the final decades of the first century BCE, his afterlife, shaped above all through Matthew's narrative of the *Massacre of the Innocents*, extended far beyond the New Testament and profoundly marked the imagination of Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Drawing on textual and visual evidence, this study traces how Herod's image evolved from early Christian exegesis and apocryphal infancy gospels to monumental representations in late antique mosaics and medieval art, such as the Santa Maria Maggiore mosaic, the pulpit reliefs of Giovanni Pisano, and Giotto's frescoes. By analysing these sources through the lens of reception theory and collective memory studies, the paper explores how scriptural storytelling was reinterpreted to articulate broader theological and political concerns, including fear of illegitimate power, divine justice, and the persecution of innocence. Ultimately, this research argues that Herod's enduring legacy as the "wicked king" of Christian culture reflects not only the medieval moral imagination but also the mechanisms by which early communities transformed ancient history into a reservoir of ethical and symbolic meaning.

Key words: Herod the Great; reception history; Massacre of the Innocents; Middle Ages; collective memory

Mediating Antiquity in 1818: Imperial Travels, Festivities, and the Reception of Croatian Antiquity

Dubravka Botica

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Abstract: Ancient art and culture played a significant role in shaping the early decades of Emperor Francis I's reign as ruler of the newly established Austrian monarchy. While grounded in Habsburg tradition, this period introduced a renewed interpretation of antiquity across artistic and representational practices. This approach was particularly visible in the organisation of the *adventus* in Zagreb, the imperial entry into the city, and the accompanying ceremonial festivities. The extensive use of antique motifs in urban decorations produced a strong visual and symbolic impact, influencing the subsequent development of art in present-day Croatia. During the imperial journey undertaken between April and July 1818, the emperor's pronounced interest in ancient monuments became especially evident. In Dalmatia, particular attention was devoted to Salona, while the ancient city of Siscia likewise emerged as a site of imperial interest. Records and reports from this period document the condition of these provinces, frequently addressing questions of antiquity and monument preservation. Observations appear not only in diaries and official reports but also in newspaper articles circulating in Vienna and other parts of the Austrian Monarchy. Through these media, Croatian monuments were presented to a much broader audience, highlighting the empire-wide reception of local antiquity. Drawing on archival documents, the published diary of Emperor Francis I, and contemporary newspaper accounts, this paper examines the multi-medial reception of Croatian antiquity within the broader cultural and political context of the Austrian Monarchy in 1818.

Key words: antiquity; Francis I; adventus; Salona; Siscia; Austrian Monarchy; reception of antiquity; nineteenth century

The Visual Mediation of Antiquity as Historical Knowledge

Cristina Ruggero

(Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities)

Abstract: Understanding ancient history solely through major events, political developments, and prominent figures is inherently reductive. Its scope extends far beyond classical narratives, with artworks playing a fundamental role in shaping historical knowledge. The production, reception, and reinterpretation of images influence how the ancient world is understood and communicated, a dynamic particularly evident in early modern Europe, where antiquity served as a key reference point for interpreting the contemporary world. This paper examines the visual mediation of antiquity, focusing on how images became central to the transmission and transformation of knowledge about the ancient past. A pivotal example is the eighteenth-century Benedictine scholar Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741), who's monumental fifteen-volume publication (1719–1724), containing more than 5,000 illustrations, presented ancient history in its full breadth and established a foundational corpus for antiquarian scholarship. This historical context underpins the digital project *Antiquitatum Thesaurus*, a database collecting thousands of visual representations of the ancient world. Beyond linking images to the artefacts they depict, the project reconstructs long-term iconographic and cultural transmissions. Using advanced digital technologies, users can explore sources, contexts, and processes of transformation, opening new methodological perspectives on the reception and tradition of antiquity. In the final part of the paper, selected case studies illustrate these dynamics. Each example demonstrates how images convey, reinterpret, and reshape knowledge of antiquity. Visual material thus does not merely reflect antiquarian learning but actively contributes to its construction and reassessment, offering concrete evidence of the methodological framework outlined above and showing how early modern scholars engaged with—and transformed—the intellectual legacy of the ancient world.

Key words: antiquity as historical knowledge; visual reception and transmission of the ancient past; history of images; digital art history; Bernard de Montfaucon; iconographic tradition

Ancient History and Modern Identity: Public Uses of the Past in the Wachau

Barbara Pavlek Löbl

(Institute for Ancient History, Papyrology and Epigraphy, University of Vienna)

Abstract: The Wachau valley in Lower Austria is a picturesque landscape of terraced vineyards on steep hills and quaint villages along the meandering Danube. A popular tourist destination since the nineteenth century, the Wachau has been recognised as a UNESCO cultural landscape since 2000 for its natural beauty and rich heritage, ranging from medieval towns and castle ruins to Baroque sacral architecture. The region is also celebrated for its deep history, exemplified by the famous Palaeolithic Venus of Willendorf and the remains of Roman forts that once formed part of the Danube Limes, itself a UNESCO World Heritage property. But how important—and how visible—is this ancient history to contemporary inhabitants and visitors of the Wachau? Where, and in what forms, can it be encountered? Tourism, beyond its economic significance, can be understood as a form of public history in which narratives, images, and experiences linked to historical sites are produced, disseminated, and negotiated.

This study investigates both historical and contemporary public-history discourse in and about the Wachau by examining how the region's past is represented in travel guides published from the late nineteenth century to the present, and by comparing these representations with current on-site offerings such as museums, guided tours, and festivals. By analysing which histories are foregrounded, which are absent, and why, the presentation contributes to understanding the role of ancient history in cultural memory and in the formation of local, regional, national, and European identities in Austria.

Key words: public history; identity; travel guides; cultural landscapes; Wachau; Danube Limes; Willendorf; Austria

Classical Tradition Put to the Test of Modernity: Episodes in Italian Sculpture After World War II

Massimo De Grassi

(Department of Humanities, University of Trieste)

Abstract: In 1948, Marcello Mascherini created a large plaster ring for the ocean liner *Conte Biancamano*, narrating the myth of Jason through a sequence of bas-reliefs. This work represents a significant example of how a classical theme could interact with the modern environment of a passenger ship. For the Trieste-based sculptor, who two years later won first prize for sculpture at the Venice Biennale, it also marked a new way of interpreting classicism, one that invites comparison with the contemporary experiments of Marino Marini and Emilio Greco. This approach to antiquity differed markedly from the archaeological classicism that had dominated the previous two decades. Although still admired by artists such as Francesco Messina and Attilio Selva, this earlier mode was losing visibility in the exhibition circuit, forcing many of its adherents to focus primarily on portraiture or sacred sculpture, while others received the most prestigious commissions. Among the many possible examples, the monumental Minerva created by Mascherini in 1956 for the central building of the University of Trieste stands out: through its skilful fusion of classical and modern elements, it became the university's most recognisable iconographic symbol. The language of a renewed classicism thus found ample space in the international art market, and Italian sculptors enjoyed a long period of prominence. The paper presented here investigates these developments and examines additional case studies that illuminate the complex dialogue between classical heritage and modern artistic innovation in post-war Italian sculpture.

Key words: Italian sculpture; classical tradition; Marcello Mascherini; modernity; post-war art; Marino Marini; Emilio Greco

“This is My Roman Empire”: Ancient History Memes Under the Spotlight

Camilla Persi

(Humboldt Universität zu Berlin)

Alessia Pilloni

(Freie Universität Berlin)

Abstract: Memes, a term derived from the ancient Greek *mīmēma* meaning “that which is imitated”, have become a dominant form of digital communication, especially among generations born after 1980. They typically consist of a humorous image paired with a brief and evocative caption, creating shared humour within groups of peers or communities with common interests. Over the past decade, individuals engaged in ancient studies have begun producing historical and archaeological memes

based on highly specialised jokes. Some of these have reached wider audiences thanks to their entertaining yet educational appeal on platforms such as *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *TikTok* and *Reddit*. Major institutions, including museums and libraries, occasionally acknowledge these trends and use them as opportunities to encourage further scientific discussion. This paper examines the most popular examples related to ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Mediterranean cultures, including the well-known case of *Ea nāšir*, the Mesopotamian copper trader, as well as various social nostalgic interpretations of the Roman Empire. It analyses the mechanisms behind their creation and circulation, considering both expert intentions and the reception of non-expert audiences. Special attention is given to the ways in which historical reality is selectively modified, often through the addition of stereotypical elements, to enhance accessibility, humour and broad appeal. This phenomenon has both advantages and disadvantages, but more importantly, it raises the question of whether such content genuinely contributes to maintaining the relevance of ancient world disciplines at a time when the humanities appear to be losing ground.

Key words: pop culture; ancient history memes; archaeology humour; museum education; social media; digital reception

SESSION 10 – GENERAL ANTIQUITY II

Star Trek and The Archaeology of the Final Frontier: Public Engagement of the Star Trek Universe and the Politics of Ancient History

Ljubica Perinić

(Institute for Historical and Social Sciences in Zagreb – Archaeological Division, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts)

Abstract: A central debate among contemporary audiences concerns whether *Star Trek* has always contained a political subtext or has only recently become “woke”. This paper argues that the franchise has always been both. Throughout its history, *Star Trek* has consistently used the speculative framework of xenoarchaeology to explore ongoing debates about cultural heritage, colonial appropriation and the tension between universalising and particularising narratives of the ancient past. The perspective of the archaeologist is a recurring presence, culminating in the explicit xenoarchaeologists of *Star Trek: Discovery*. This paper proposes that *Star Trek* offers a productive critical lens for examining real world archaeology. By analysing episodes such as “The Chase” from *The Next Generation* and “Distant Origin” from *Voyager*, it becomes clear that the series dramatizes issues of cultural patrimony, origin myths and the politics of knowledge through a postcolonial perspective, in which the Federation's principle of non-interference is repeatedly challenged by practical realities. If we accept that the primary function of academia is the production and communication of knowledge, then the speculative framework of this franchise offers a powerful means of making academic debates accessible and compelling to a much wider audience. Ultimately, the xeno-archaeological setting of *Star Trek*, shaped by the ethical tensions surrounding the Prime Directive, provides a valuable model for imagining a more ethically grounded, methodologically reflexive and publicly engaged archaeology for the twenty first century.

Key words: postcolonial archaeology; ethics; public engagement; material culture; cultural contamination; *Star Trek*; xenoarchaeology; science fiction and archaeology

References to Classical Antiquity in the Inspector Morse TV Series

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Ana Pavlović

(Department of Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: The television series *Inspector Morse*, adapted from the detective novels by Colin Dexter, contains numerous references to the art, history, literature and languages of ancient Greece and Rome. By examining selected episodes, this paper explores how classical motifs are developed in relation to the original Morse books. It also considers the presence of classical antiquity in the spin off series *Lewis*, which follows the professional career of Sergeant Lewis, and in the prequel series *Endeavour*, which depicts the early years of Morse's work as a detective. The analysis shows that classical motifs are often integrated into the everyday world of *Inspector Morse* as subtle background elements, but that they also frequently form the central narrative structure of individual episodes. One example is "Greeks Bearing Gifts", in which Morse investigates the murder of a local Greek chef and consults a scholar specialising in ancient Greek ships. The episode mirror's themes of Greek tragedy and introduces the world of experimental archaeology while addressing the question of the repatriation of cultural objects. Another example is "The Wolvercote Tongue", which focuses on the theft of an Anglo Saxon artefact but is framed within broader discussions of classical history and archaeology, highlighting the position of modern classical archaeologists within academic life and classical education. Through these case studies, the paper demonstrates how classical antiquity functions as a narrative device, a cultural reference system and a marker of intellectual identity within the Morse universe, contributing to a distinctive form of classical reception in contemporary television storytelling.

Key words: *Inspector Morse*; Colin Dexter; antiquity; classical reception; classical archaeology; artefact; television studies

From Artefact to Accessory: Replica and Inspired Jewellery in Croatian Museums and the Reception of Antiquity

Eva Katarina Glazer

(Department of History, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: This paper presents preliminary findings from an ongoing national survey of jewellery offered in museum shops across Croatia, examining how antiquity is translated into wearable form. The research focuses on the distinction between two dominant categories: direct replicas of specific archaeological finds and contemporary jewellery inspired by ancient motifs. By mapping museum shop inventories and analysing product descriptions, the study develops a working typology that differentiates between explicitly identified replicas, loosely referenced reconstructions and modern designs drawing on generalised ancient aesthetics. Attention is devoted to the communication of provenance, that is, whether objects are linked to identifiable archaeological contexts or presented primarily as stylistic evocations of the past. Beyond the institutional offer, the project also explores reception. A pilot survey conducted among university students examines how contemporary audiences perceive and evaluate replica jewellery in comparison with inspired jewellery. Do buyers prefer authenticity or aesthetic reinterpretation? Does knowing that a piece is a faithful replica of an archaeological find increase its appeal, or does modern design resonate more strongly? By situating museum jewellery at the intersection of heritage interpretation, commodification and material

culture, this paper argues that museum shops function as subtle but influential mediators of historical knowledge. The transformation from artefact to accessory reveals not only how antiquity is marketed, but also how it is worn, appropriated and emotionally experienced in the present.

Key words: jewellery; museum shops; reception of antiquity; replica; material culture; cultural history; heritage interpretation

From Indiana Jones to Pub Quizzes: Archaeology, Popular Culture, and Public Engagement in a Museum Context

Porin Šćukanec Reznicek

(Archaeological Museum in Zagreb)

Abstract: Public perceptions of archaeology are often shaped less by academic discourse than by popular culture, including film, television, video games, literature and internet media. These representations strongly influence how ancient history is understood, imagined and valued by different audiences. This presentation examines a series of public archaeology pub quizzes organised by the Archaeological Museum in Zagreb, developed in connection with the exhibition *Archaeology and Popular Culture*, as an innovative method of engaging the public with heritage through informal and participatory formats. The quizzes draw on references ranging from blockbuster films and television series to comics, video games, music and pseudo archaeological narratives, juxtaposing popular representations with archaeological evidence and scholarly interpretation. In doing so, they encourage critical reflection on stereotypes, misconceptions and the enduring appeal of ancient worlds in modern media. The format attracts audiences who may not typically engage with museums or academic events, creating a social environment in which learning occurs through play, competition and discussion. Positioned within reception studies and museum education, this case study demonstrates how pub quizzes can function as tools for heritage communication, fostering dialogue between academic archaeology and contemporary society. The presentation argues that such events not only disseminate knowledge, but also actively shape the reception of ancient history by empowering audiences to question, reinterpret and contextualise the past within their own cultural experiences.

Key words: popular culture; pub quiz; television; video games; archaeology internet; museum education; reception of antiquity

Reflections of Antiquity in Croatian Musical Art

Mila Erceg

(Independent Researcher)

Vinko Udiljak

(Municipal Heritage Museum of Vis)

Abstract: This study examines the reception and interpretation of ancient themes in Croatian musical art, focusing on their presence in both classical and popular music as indicators of shifting attitudes toward ancient heritage across different historical and social contexts. It explores the ways in which motifs derived from ancient history, classical mythology and symbolic traditions appear in the titles of musical works, in their internal structures and through direct or fragmentary quotations and thematic allusions. Particular attention is devoted to the meanings that these ancient references acquire at the moment of a work's creation, as well as to their subsequent reinterpretation

within contemporary cultural settings. Through a comparative analysis of different musical genres, the study demonstrates how themes related to antiquity may function as aesthetic devices, symbolic frameworks or markers of cultural identity. At the same time, they serve as means of reconfiguring the past within contemporary musical expression, revealing the dynamic relationship between artistic creativity and the reception of antiquity.

Key words: popular culture; pub quiz; television; video games; archaeology internet; museum education; reception of antiquity

SESSION 11 – BEYOND THE MEDITERRANEAN: GLOBAL ANTIQUITY

Edinburgh's First Burghers: Revealing the Lives and Hidden Faces of Edinburgh's Medieval Citizens through Creative Technologies and Multidisciplinary Approaches

Maria MacLennan

(Edinburgh College of Art, The University of Edinburgh)

John Lawson

(City of Edinburgh Council Archaeological Service)

Abstract: Bridging longstanding disciplinary gaps between contemporary art and medieval archaeology, this presentation showcases the collaborative methodology and multidisciplinary findings of Edinburgh's First Burghers, a major public engagement initiative marking the nine hundredth anniversary of the City of Edinburgh and St Giles Cathedral. The project re-examined one hundred and fifteen medieval burials first excavated in 1981 by the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeological Service. Focused on individuals interred during the twelfth century, the research combined archaeological investigation with biomolecular approaches, including ancient DNA, isotopic analysis, radiocarbon dating and craniofacial reconstruction, in order to illuminate the lives of Edinburgh's earliest citizens, their diet, health, environment and appearance. The faces of five individuals were digitally reconstructed using emerging creative technologies such as three-dimensional scanning, digital sculpture and composite painting. These reconstructions culminated in a high profile six-month public exhibition in which animated portraits were projected across the walls, pillars and architectural spaces of St Giles Cathedral through dynamic visual projections and innovative lighting design. This immersive environment enabled visitors to encounter the city's medieval inhabitants in a vivid and immediate way, effectively walking in the footsteps of their predecessors. The presentation discusses how the project made archaeological knowledge accessible to new and diverse audiences, offering fresh perspectives on the origins of Edinburgh's city, cathedral and community. It highlights the stories of a unique group of women buried in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, two fifteenth century pilgrims and an individual whose remains contain the earliest known DNA evidence of the Black Death in Edinburgh. Through its integration of scientific analysis, artistic practice and public interpretation, the project demonstrates the potential of interdisciplinary collaboration to transform the communication of medieval heritage.

Key words: medieval archaeology; ancient history; cultural heritage; craniofacial reconstruction; art and design; interdisciplinary collaboration; public engagement

Debates on the Paleolithic and Jōmon Periods in Contemporary Japan

Katarina Šukelj

(Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: This paper analyses how Japanese newspapers frame the exclusion and partial reinstatement of the Paleolithic and Jōmon periods in elementary school history education. The analysis is based on eighteen newspaper articles published between 1999 and 2025. In these articles, the omission of prehistoric periods from elementary school textbooks is frequently described with the verb “to disappear”, often in the passive voice and accompanied by expressions of regret. This linguistic pattern backgrounds agency and presents the deletion as inevitable, while responsibility is indirectly attributed to the Ministry of Education through references to curriculum guidelines whose phrasing, such as “from the beginning of agriculture”, results in the exclusion of both periods. “History education” is temporarily fixed through signifiers such as “distorted” and “unnatural”, and the removal of prehistoric content is framed as harmful to children’s “sense of history”. Competing definitions of history emerge through the contrast between the archaeologist’s perspective, which emphasises learning about “things and nature”, and the government’s perspective, which centres on historical figures. In newspaper discourse, the “revival” of the Jōmon period is intertextually linked to educational reform and revisions of the curriculum guidelines aimed at fostering “respect for tradition and culture” and “self-awareness as Japanese”. By contrast, the continued omission of the Paleolithic period is framed within global, human and scientific progress narratives. The analysis demonstrates that the Paleolithic and Jōmon periods function as floating signifiers whose meanings are contested and temporarily stabilised through shifting articulations with educational policy, national identity and scientific progress.

Key words: discourse analysis; newspaper discourse; prehistory; Japan; history education; textbooks

From Sacred Pilgrimage to Space Opera: Reception and Reinvention of “Journey to the West”

Eva Katarina Glazer

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Ivana Gubić

(Department of Asian Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: With hundreds of textual, visual, screen and digital adaptations produced across East Asia and beyond, *Journey to the West* represents one of the most extensively reimagined narratives in global cultural history. Confronted with this vast corpus, this paper adopts a selective approach in order to illuminate three key stages in the story’s reception. The first stage traces the transformation of the historical pilgrimage of the Tang monk Xuanzang in the seventh century into the Ming dynasty novel *Journey to the West*, where history, religious imagination and literary creativity converged. The second stage focuses on the 1986 CCTV television series, a landmark adaptation that canonised the novel’s visual and narrative form for late twentieth century audiences and effectively transformed a late imperial text into a shared national visual myth. In contrast, the third stage examines radical transnational reinvention through the Japanese anime *Starzinger* from 1978, which reconfigures the pilgrimage as a science fiction space quest and recasts the monk Tang Sanzang as Princess Aurora. This genre shift and gender transformation demonstrate how reception may move from preservation and canon formation to creative mutation while retaining the structural logic of the quest narrative. By juxtaposing stabilisation and reinvention, the paper draws on adaptation theory, memory

studies and transnational media analysis to argue that *Journey to the West* functions as a flexible narrative matrix continuously reshaped across historical, ideological and cultural contexts.

Key words: Journey to the West; Starzinger; historical narrative; television adaptation; cultural memory; canon formation; historical reinterpretation

Kofun Japan and Global Antiquity: Ecology, Pop Culture, and Historiography

Mark Hudson

(Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology, Jena)

Claudia Zancan

(Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Abstract: Following recent debates on the concept of Global Antiquity, this paper examines how this framework may be applied to the Kofun period in the Japanese Islands, dated between the third and early eighth centuries AD. The discussion is divided into two main parts. The first part analyses the ways in which the Kofun period has been represented in popular media and in writings that seek to position Japan within global imaginaries of antiquity. Two examples are considered. The first concerns eco nationalist narratives that use archaeological evidence to present Japanese culture as a model for addressing global environmental challenges. The second examines forms of popular culture, including museum mascots, commercial merchandise, video games, anime and digital influencers such as Mari Kofun, which repackage material symbols of early state formation into consumable icons of “Japaneseness”, reflecting processes of cultural branding and self-orientalism. The second part of the paper offers a preliminary exploration of what a Global Antiquity perspective might contribute to Kofun studies. Although Japanese history is often framed as a product of isolation, previous research by the authors has challenged this view for both earlier Bronze Age contexts and later medieval periods. Historical periodisation in Japan has long been shaped by political considerations, and this remains evident in interpretations of the Kofun era. Drawing on Walter Scheidel’s recent book *What is Ancient History?*, the paper proposes a critical re-evaluation of how ancient Japan might be situated within the wider ancient world.

Key words: Japan; Kofun period; popular culture; eco nationalism; identity; historiography; Orientalism; global antiquity

Linguistic Experiments and Visual Elaboration of Ancient Symbols in the Art of Jim Cogswell – a Living Reception of Ancient Art and Perception of Modern Art

Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska

(Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw)

Abstract: James Cogswell is a modern American visual artist whose work is deeply rooted in Japanese and ancient cultures. He is an Arthur F. Thurnau Professor at the Stamps School of Art and Design at the University of Michigan. He uses painting and drawing as the knowledge base for his artistic practice, while exploring a wide range of media languages. Particularly drawn to interdisciplinary projects, he has collaborated on performances, videos, and installations with poets, dancers, musicians, composers, cosmologists, astronomers, a biostatistician, a computer science engineer, and a mechanical engineer. The intersection of art, archaeology, and architecture has become increasingly central to his creative work. As he notes, he is inspired by the mystery of human perception and by

the ways in which people use sensory information to explain the world to themselves. Many of his artistic projects involve collaboration with museums, including archaeological museums in the United States, Greece, and Portugal. These projects include photographing artefacts, producing drawings, and preparing graphic elements that are printed on vinyl sheets and precisely applied to the glass windows of the museums where the artefacts originate. What is particularly striking about Jim Cogswell and his artistic trajectory is the inseparable link between the visual language he has developed and the transformations of reality that this language enables. His work demonstrates how artistic interpretation can mediate between material culture, perception, and contemporary creativity. The author of the talk will present selected aspects of Professor Cogswell’s artistic world and outline the conceptual foundations of their joint project.

Key words: Jim Cogswell; contemporary art; interdisciplinary practice; archaeology and art; museum collaboration; visual language; artistic mediation

SESSION 12 – POSTER SESSION

Women Gladiators: A Step Toward Gender Equality or a Critique of Women’s Roles in the Roman Empire

Iva Adžaga

(M.A. student of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: Gladiatorial combat is traditionally understood as an intensely masculine practice, yet literary, epigraphic and archaeological evidence confirms the existence of women who participated in gladiatorial fights during the first and second centuries AD. Their presence represents a significant phenomenon that challenges entrenched assumptions about gender roles in antiquity. Female participation in the arena was associated with exotic novelty in the games. The ban on women fighting as gladiators, issued by Emperor Septimius Severus in the early third century AD, reflects attempts to restore the traditional social order and restrict practices perceived as transgressive. One of the most important archaeological finds is the relief from Halicarnassus, dated to the first or second century AD, depicting two female opponents equipped with typical gladiatorial armour, which served largely to shock the audience by deviating from everyday female dress. There is also an inscription from Ostia from the second century AD in which a local magistrate boasts of being the first to provide women “for the sword” in that city. Literary authors such as Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, Martial and Petronius mention women who took part in gladiatorial combat. This paper analyses the characteristics and narrative framing of female gladiators in the writings of these authors and evaluates their perspectives. The concluding section offers insight into the marginal presence of such women in historical sources, while also illuminating the complex intersections of power, gender and identity in the Roman Empire.

Key words: women; gladiators; Roman Empire; gladiatorial combat; gender roles

Roman Themes in the Discography of Symphonic Death Metal Band Ex Deo

Ognjen Babić

(M.A. student of History, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: Ex Deo is a Canadian symphonic death metal band whose entire discography is grounded in the history of Rome. Death metal, characterised by aggressive growled vocals, rapid drumming and complex guitarwork, acquires in Ex Deo’s music a more melodic yet still forceful sound through

the incorporation of symphonic metal elements. To date, the band has released four studio albums (*The Thirteen Years of Nero*, *The Immortal Wars*, *Caligvla* and *Romulus*) and one EP (*Year of the Four Emperors*). Although not widely known, with approximately thirty thousand monthly listeners on Spotify, Ex Deo represents one of the most prominent contemporary metal projects dedicated to Roman antiquity. This presentation offers a detailed examination of the band's discography by analysing the themes, motifs and lyrics of their songs through a historiographical lens. Such an approach enables a clearer understanding of how Ex Deo interprets Roman history and reveals the extent to which their musical narratives align with, adapt or diverge from historical scholarship. Album covers, as integral components of each album's identity, are also considered, since their visual strategies significantly shape the listener's perception of the historical material. The final section presents the author's assessment of the band's overall representation of Roman history and the interpretative choices that define their artistic vision. While many modern metal bands draw inspiration from Roman culture, Ex Deo stands out as one of the most influential and widely recognised, making it a compelling case study for exploring the intersection of metal music, historical imagination and the contemporary reception of antiquity.

Key words: Ex Deo; Rome; history; symphonic death metal; album; EP; perception; discography

Rome as Croatian Heritage: Between Local Identity and Global Tourism

Laura Gazdek

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Abstract: This article explores how Roman heritage has shaped Croatian identity and contributed to the development of contemporary tourism. The Romans left a lasting imprint on the territory of present-day Croatia from the period of Roman rule onward. Their presence in Liburnia and the wider region of Illyricum, later incorporated into the Roman Republic and organised within the provincial system of Dalmatia and Pannonia, established urban, administrative and cultural structures that continue to influence the modern landscape. The legacy remains visible in cities such as Split, Pula and the archaeological site of Salona. Diocletian's Palace in Split functions not only as a preserved monument but also as a living urban space whose residents still inhabit the original Roman walls. The Pula Arena continues to host public events, echoing its ancient role as a venue for gladiatorial spectacles. The remains of Salona testify to the historical importance of Roman Dalmatia and to ongoing archaeological research. The impact of Roman heritage is also evident in festivals and public historical events. In Vinkovci, known in Roman times as Cibalae, the annual festival *Roman Days* demonstrates how local communities actively engage with the past through educational and participatory programmes. The Roman military camp at Burnum further illustrates the strategic presence of Rome in the region. Roman heritage has significantly contributed to Croatia's global tourism profile, particularly through the promotion of ancient towns and archaeological sites. By linking local identity, cultural memory and economic development, Roman antiquity continues to play a central role in shaping how Croatia presents itself to both domestic and international audiences.

Key words: Roman heritage; Croatia; Roman towns; local history; tourism

Guiding the Dead: The Reception of Psychopomp Figures in Ancient Greek Tradition and Assassin's Creed Odyssey

Adela Kavur

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Abstract: This poster examines the reception of ancient Greek psychopomp figures—divine and liminal guides of the dead—in contemporary digital media, with a particular focus on *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*. In ancient Greek thought, the transition between life and death was mediated not by a single deity but by a network of figures occupying distinct yet overlapping roles. These beings structured the journey of the soul, from escort and boundary-crossing to passage into the underworld. Drawing on literary sources from Homer to later antiquity, as well as funerary iconography and archaeological contexts from Kerameikos, this paper explores how psychopompic functions were conceptualised, visualised, and ritualised in ancient Greek culture. Attention is given to the liminal and transitional qualities of these figures—Hecate's association with thresholds and marginal spaces, Hermes as messenger and guide, Charon as transporter across death, and Hades as sovereign of the soul's final domain. The study then analyses how *Assassin's Creed Odyssey*, particularly in its mythological expansions, reinterprets psychopomp figures within its interactive narrative. While drawing on familiar ancient elements, the game reshapes these figures to resonate with modern storytelling, agency, and player experience. Psychopomps evolve from ritual mediators into narrative actors, guiding both the dead and players through landscapes of the afterlife. Applying frameworks from reception theory and game studies, this paper argues that *Assassin's Creed Odyssey* transforms ancient psychopompic roles into immersive, participatory experiences. It preserves and reinterprets Greek ideas about death, demonstrating how modern media reshape cultural memory of antiquity through interaction.

Key words: psychopomps; funerary iconography; digital media; underworld; afterlife; death; soul; Kerameikos cemetery; mythology

Modern Depictions of "The Odyssey" on the Big Screen

Klaudia Kelemen

(M.A. student of History, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: This paper examines modern screen adaptations of *The Odyssey* by analysing two works: the 2024 film *The Return*, directed by Uberto Pasolini, and the 1997 miniseries *The Odyssey*. As the title suggests, the study focuses on how these productions depict Homer's epic by evaluating key cinematic elements, including location choices, cinematography, costume and prop design, creature effects, and the use or avoidance of CGI. The 1997 miniseries employ extensive on location filming across Malta, Turkey, parts of England and other Mediterranean settings, using natural landscapes as a scenic backdrop for its narrative. It also relies heavily on practical creature effects integrated into physical props, which shape its distinctive visual identity. In contrast, *The Return* adopts a more atmospheric and restrained aesthetic, prompting questions about how ambience and minimalism influence the viewer's experience of the epic. From a storytelling perspective, the paper analyses how plot structure, themes, dialogue and character representation are adapted for the screen. Attention is given to the directors' interpretative choices regarding Odysseus and the broader narrative logic of Homer's text. The study evaluates what each adaptation preserves, alters or omits, and to what extent these decisions align with the source material or historical plausibility. By comparing

these two productions, the paper highlights how contemporary filmmakers reinterpret classical literature through different aesthetic, technological and narrative strategies, revealing the ongoing cultural relevance and adaptability of Homer's epic.

Key words: The Odyssey; history; film; cinematography

Historiographical Discourse on the Topic of “Black Egyptians”

Igor Krnjeta

(The “Miroslav Krleža” Institute of Lexicography, Zagreb)

Abstract: This poster analyses and evaluates how the issue of “Black Egyptians” was addressed in ancient sources and in modern historiography of the ancient world. It presents the viewpoints that have shaped the scholarly consensus on the presence of “Black Egyptians” in the ancient Egyptian state, as well as the Afrocentric perspective advanced by Cheikh Anta Diop. This perspective sparked extensive debate concerning the ethnic affiliation and composition of ancient Egyptian society. The paper also examines major critiques of the Afrocentric approach. Finally, each perspective is evaluated and contextualised within its original socio-cultural and historical framework.

Key words: Afrocentrism; Pan-Africanism; politicisation of the ancient world; discourse analysis; “Black Egyptians”

Playing with the Gods: The Reception of Ancient Mythology in Global Culture

Filip Kušćević

(Independent Researcher, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb)

Abstract: Ancient mythology exerts a strong influence on contemporary culture, extending far beyond literature, video games, films, and television into the realms of gambling and entertainment. This paper examines how classical Greco-Roman and Egyptian mythologies are received and reinterpreted within the global casino industry, including online slot games and mobile gaming platforms. The focus is placed on some of the most popular mythological figures—such as Zeus, Poseidon, and Ra—and their role in shaping player engagement, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of games, and evoking themes of fortune, fate, and divine power.

The study demonstrates how adaptations of ancient mythology within gambling culture represent a distinctive form of classical reception, revealing the continuing relevance and transformation of ancient symbols in global entertainment. It also highlights how antiquity is interpreted and experienced outside traditional literary and cinematic contexts, showing the flexibility and enduring appeal of mythological imagery in modern digital environments.

Key words: ancient mythology; classical reception; casino games; slot machines; popular culture; Greco-Roman mythology; digital entertainment

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NOTES

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NOTES

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ZAGREB CENTRE MAP

 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN ZAGREB

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GLOBAL PERCEPTIONS AND RECEPTIONS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS