

**23rd Annual Oxford and Royal Holloway Joint Postgraduate Symposium on Ancient Drama:
'Precarity, Vulnerability and Power in the Theory and Practice of Greek and Roman Drama'
29th and 30th June 2023**

This annual symposium for Masters and Doctoral students on ancient Greek and Roman drama and its reception ran between the 29th and 30th of June 2023. It was co-organised by Leo Kershaw, Daniel Whittle, Claire Barnes, Zoë Jennings, Alex Silverman (PhD students in Classical Languages and Literature at the University of Oxford) and David Bullen (Drama and Theatre lecturer at Royal Holloway), Lucy Ruddiman (MA student in Classical Reception at UCL) and Despoina Christianoudi (PhD student in Drama, Theatre and Dance at Royal Holloway), supervised by Professor Fiona Macintosh (APGRD). The symposium was fortunate to receive funding from The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the British Comparative Literature Association, and the Craven Committee of the University of Oxford's Faculty of Classics.

The Symposium focused on the reception of Greek and Roman tragedy and comedy in performance, exploring their afterlives through re-workings by both writers and practitioners across all genres and periods. This year's theme sought to explore the relationship between precarity/vulnerability and power, asking what the interaction between them might mean in the context of the reception of the ancient past. We invited participants to consider questions such as: What constitutes 'precarity' in the context of ancient drama and its reception, and where in this precarity may power lie? Is the often-fragmentary survival of ancient drama itself a precarious phenomenon? Is there ever any power in precarity, and power in vulnerability? How does ancient drama explore the precarity of power, and in what ways has this theme been explored in modern receptions of Greek and Roman theatre? How integral a role does vulnerability play in ancient drama and its adaptations? Does vulnerability add power to a performance? How might generic transgressions, counter readings, and other means of reception exploit the power, precarity, and vulnerability of classical drama?

During the course of the two-day symposium, we enjoyed a rich array of thought-provoking student presentations; a practice-as-research workshop; a keynote lecture from Dr Estel Baudou (University of Lincoln); and guest responses from Dr Giovanna Di Martino (UCL) and Dr Nick Lowe (Royal Holloway).

The funding received from The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, the British Comparative Literature Association, and the Craven Committee enabled participants from across Europe, Asia, and Africa to attend the symposium at the University of Oxford and Royal Holloway. Most of our speakers travelled from abroad, and we are grateful to have received funding in order to offer bursaries towards the cost of their travel. The opportunity to hold this symposium as a hybrid event, with the vast majority attending in person, enriched the experience of the attendees, who provided extremely positive feedback.

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

Day 1: University of Oxford, Thursday 29th June 2023

Location: Faculty of Classics, Ioannou Centre, 66 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LU.

10.00–10.30: **Arrival and coffee**

10.30–11.00: **Welcome** (Professor Fiona Macintosh, APGRD/University of Oxford)

11.00–11.45: **Panel 1: Comic vulnerability and power**

- Maria Waszkiewicz (University of Warsaw). ‘From servant to stage director, from passive woman to protagonist, and finally from master to pushover - Plautus’ play with conventions in *Miles gloriosus* and Lope de Vega’s answer in *La dama boba*.’
- Letizia Rivera (Universität Leipzig). ‘We are all just humans. Translating Vulnerability and Laughter in the Aristophanic *Ekklesiazousae*.’

11.45–12.15: **Break**

12.15–13.15: **Panel 2: The empowered vulnerability of tragic heroines**

- Alexia Dedieu (Université Grenoble Alpes). ‘Macaria’s sacrifice: vulnerability and power in the Early-Modern interpretation of a tragic heroine.’
- Mariam Kaladze (Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University). ‘Vulnerable yet Powerful: *Medea* on the 19th Century Georgian Stage.’
- Marta Cuevas Caballero (Universidad Pablo de Olavide). ‘Tragic Instances of Vulnerability: Antigone’s Suicide in Two Contemporary Spanish Productions.’

13.15–14.45: **Lunch**

14.45–15.30: **Panel 3: Power of vulnerability in African receptions**

- Clare Chang (King’s College London). ‘Power to the People: the Choruses of Post-Apartheid South African adaptations of *Electra*.’
- Gifty Etornam Katahena (University of Ghana). ‘The Power of Vulnerability: Sophocles’ *Antigone* and Its African Reception.’

15.30–16.00: **Break**

16.00–16.30: **Guest response:** Dr Giovanna Di Martino (University College London)

16.30–17.00: **Break**

17.00–18.00: **Guest lecture:** Dr Estel Baudou (University of Lincoln): ‘Creative precarities: Performing ruins in the 21st century.’

18.00: **Reception and dinner**

Day 2: Royal Holloway, University of London, Friday 30th June 2023

Location: Department of Drama, Theatre, and Dance, RHUL, Egham, TW20 0EX.

10.00–10.20: **Arrival**

10.20–10.30: **Welcome** (Dr Emma Cox, Royal Holloway University of London)

10.30–11.30: **Panel 1: Rethinking power and precarity in modern adaptations**

- Andrea Monico (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa). ‘Lee Breuer’s *The Gospel at Colonus*: Oedipus between vulnerability and redemption power.’
- Millie Wan Marriott (Universities of Bristol and Exeter). ‘Performing the *Metamorphoses*: Dethroning Epic and the Power of Affect.’
- Amalia Costa, Eva Nacci, and Martina Valderrama-Boix (King’s College London). ‘Towards the Question of Agency and Power Systems in the KCL Greek Play: *Iphigeneia 2023*.’

11.30–12.00: **Break**

12.00–12.30: **Panel 2: Queer power and precarity**

- Selina Bick and Jip Kok (Radboud University). ‘Achilles in Drag: Vulnerability and Power in *Trojan Wars* (2021).’

12.30–14.15: **Lunch**

14.15–15.15: **Panel 3: Political power in Greek and Cypriot performances**

- Philippos Karafierias (Université Grenoble Alpes). ‘The voices of Cassandra: the vulnerable life and the embodiment of grief in the *Trojan Women* of Theodoros Terzopoulos.’
- Olympia Glykioti-Karampekou (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens). ‘On power, powerlessness and potentiality: Theodoros Terzopoulos’ scenic approach of Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* (2010).’
- Marina Paschalidou (University of Oxford). ‘Lament as Political Power: Examining adaptations of *The Suppliants*, *Trojan Women*, and *Antigone*.’

15.15–15.45: **Break**

15.45–16.15: **Workshop: Cassandra’s costuming and performing power**

- Milly Cox and Am Wyckoff (University of Oxford)

16.15–16.30: **Break**

16.30–17.00: **Guest response:** Dr Nick Lowe (Royal Holloway)

17.00–17.30: **Plenary**