Workshop Report: The Afterlife of the Greco-Persian Wars

The workshop “The Afterlife of the Greco-Persian Wars” took place at Kyoto University on the 13th of December 2023. It was organised by Kyohei Sakeshima (PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh) and Richard Kendall (PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh) and co-organised by Prof Moroo Akiko (Chiba University of Commerce, Faculty of Commerce and Economics / “Diachronic Studies on the Legacies of the Persian Wars” JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number 20K01060) and the Department of European History, Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University. It had a hybrid format, taking place both online (Zoom) and in Conference Room 1, 1F, Rakuyu-Kaikan, Kyoto University. We benefitted from the generous funding from the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh and the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies.

This workshop focused on the variety of narratives and representations of the Greco-Persian Wars, interrogated their social significance from the ancient world to the present day, and explored how the knowledge and memory of the Wars were transmitted and which elements were highlighted, fabricated, or forgotten in the successive retellings of the conflict over time. We gathered international scholars at different stages of their careers (PhD candidates, early career researchers, established scholars) and with different areas of expertise (classics, history, reception studies). We paid particular attention to creating diverse but thematically unified panels, creating, for instance, interesting dialogues between textual and archaeological interpretations of the Spartan context across our second panel. We also took care of creating opportunities for informal discussion, including organising lunch and coffee breaks, as well as a formal dinner.

This workshop was attended both in person (10 participants) and online (15 participants) with speakers from universities across the UK, Japan, Australia, China, Italy, Israel, and the United States. The quality of the papers was reflected in the invitation the conference organisers received to publish several of them in the journal *Orient*, with the special issue devoted to this conference expected in 2026.

The workshop programme can be found at the bottom of this report.

The organisers are most grateful to the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies for their grant of £250, which allowed us to cover a workshop travel bursary.

Kyohei Sakeshima, PhD candidate, University of Edinburgh

k.sakeshima@sms.ed.ac.uk

Richard Kendall, PhD candidate, University of Edinburgh

r.g.l.kendall@sms.ed.ac.uk

The Afterlife of the Greco-Persian Wars: Programme

9:00-9:30 Registration and Opening Remarks

9:30-10:45 ROUND ONE: Athens

Marion Meyer (University of Vienna): Changing Memories and Places: Athenian Monuments for the Victory at Salamis

Kyohei Sakeshima (University of Edinburgh): Athens and Demetrius: Communication with a King through the Memory of the Greco-Persian Wars in the Early Hellenistic Period

Akiko Moroo (Chiba University of Commerce): Reimagining the Past: Athenian Ephebeia’s Role in Shaping the Perception of the Persian Wars

10:45-11:05 Coffee Break

11:05-12:45 ROUND TWO: Sparta

William T. Farris (University of Texas at Austin): Augustus and the Iamidae in Pausanias’ Spartan Agora: A Reception of the Greco-Persian Wars from the Second Sophistic

Matt Thompson (University of Nottingham): Competing Narratives and Sparta’s Monumental Commemoration of the Persian Wars

Shanshan Bai (Sichuan University): A New Pausanias, Reshaping Collective Memory of the Persian War in Roman Spartan Leonidean Festival

Eran Almagor (Independent Scholar): Between the Greek Past and the Roman Present: The Afterlife of the Greco-Persian Wars in Plutarch's Parallel Lives

12:45-14:20 Lunch

14:20-15:10 ROUND THREE: Other Lands

Richard Kendall (University of Edinburgh): Did the Scythians Remember the Persian Wars?

Yanxiao He (Tsinghua University): Writing the Greco-Persian War in Wartime China: Reading Luo Niansheng’s Tales of Greece

15:10-15:30 Coffee Break

15:30-16:45 ROUND FOUR: In Performance

Holly Hunt (University of Oxford): Misusing Marathon in Old Comedy

Darel Engen (California State University San Marcos): Frank Miller’s 300 (1998): Batman at the Battle of Thermopylae

Mattia Boscarino (University of Palermo): The Reception of the Greco-Persian Wars in Contemporary Theatre: A Case Study from the Modern Performances of Aeschylus’s Persians in the Greek Theatre of Siracusa

16:45 End