

# Time Present and Time Past: Representations of the Past in Ancient Greece

## Abstracts

**Aluja, Roger:** *Traditional referentiality and construction of the past in the Homeric poems*

Traditional referentiality was first proposed as a theoretical and methodological approach to oral poetry —and more specifically Homeric poetry— in the mid 90s by John M. Foley. Since then it has brought new light on the understanding of oral aesthetics, and has helped to improve our reading of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, as it can be seen in the works of John M. Foley or Adrian Kelly.

My conference seeks to offer a reflection on how this theoretical and methodological approach can help us enlighten some aspects of the construction of the past in the Homeric poems. For this purpose, it is divided in three parts. First of all, the theoretical basis of Traditional referentiality and its methodology are exposed. Secondly, different applications of this approach are explained and exemplified with a sample of the traditional elements I studied in my doctoral thesis. Finally, some examples of traditional elements related to the construction of the past (and of the future) are enumerated in order to reflect on some of them. This is only the first step to a complete study on this aspect, so that commentaries and discussion will be appreciated.

**Andújar, Rosa:** *The fragmented choral present of Pseudo-Euripides' Rhesus.*

My paper investigates the representations of the past – both mythic and generic – in Pseudo-Euripides' *Rhesus*, a play which interacts with Homer's epic in suggestive and self-conscious ways. I examine in particular the 'fragmented' choral present of the play that is portrayed at the heart of the play, specifically in the third *stasimon* (527-64), *epiparodos* (675-91), and fourth *stasimon* (692-727). My paper explores the manner in which this tragic collective re-enacts the Homeric past in these scenes, paying particular attention to the manner in which the fourth-century playwright stages and elaborates in a tragic choral form what were previously a few verses of the *Iliad* and even *Odyssey*.

Despite the fact that these scenes literally re-perform the epic mythic past in dramatic form, the author of *Rhesus* resists a typical tragic choral performance in which the chorus sings *ensemble*: throughout these odes, the playwright inserts mini-conversations amongst the choreuts, a series of questions and answers which ground the song firmly in the present time. As I argue, the insertion of these brief dialogic interludes not only fragments the choral song, but it also creates a deliberate and jarring juxtaposition between the mythic past and the tragic present. This juxtaposition, I contend, allows a unique opportunity to reflect on the temporalities of 're-performance' in the Ancient Greek world.

**Berruecos, Bernardo:** *Forms of poetic dislocation in Parmenides' Poem: Enjambment, tmesis and hypallage*

In ancient times, authors such as Plutarch and Proclus,<sup>1</sup> questioned Parmenides' abilities as a poet considering that the *Poem* was actually "prose in disguise". Harsh judgments concerning Parmenides' poetic use of language are pervasive even in modern scholarship<sup>2</sup>. Only recently —and very gradually—, the poetic facet of Parmenides has been reconsidered and reassessed, as well as his inheritance of a previous poetic tradition, and the ways in which he transformed it.<sup>3</sup>

This paper focuses on three specific poetic devices used consistently in the composition of the *Poem*, that I will refer to, collectively, as "poetic dislocation". This generic term refers to: enjambment, the reiterative use of tmesis, and the semantics of transferred epithets (hypallage). I will try to prove that these procedures and poetic phenomena (very scarcely studied in Parmenides' verses) judged in light of their uses in the previous epic models, are an integral part of Parmenides' poetic style and are important to define the place he occupies within the history of epic poetry.

**Carruesco, Jesús:** *Chronological past and choral performance in Pindar's Olympian 10 and the Cyrenaean odes*

Olympian 10 begins with the famous image of the performance of the victory song as the reading of an inscription containing the name of the winner. This has been related to actual inscriptions (the so-called 'inscribed epinikia'), but another, more important connection appears if this passage is linked to the central myth of the ode, the foundation of the Olympian Games by Herakles, in which a complete list of the winners at the I Olympiad is given in epigraphical detail. The connection between the two passages virtually defines another kind of inscription, the chronological list (be it of Olympian winners, magistrates of the city, or priests of certain divinities), bridging the past with the present through a regular and quantifiable succession of register entries.

The articulation of these images with the subjects of Time and Truth central to this ode points to the appropriation of a new chronological/historical concept of time by traditional choral lyric, with its characteristic handling of time through forward and

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<sup>1</sup> Plut. *Quom. adul. poet.* 16c = DK28 A15; *De audiendo* 45a = DK28 A16; Procl., *In Parm.* I, p. 665, 17 = DK28 A18.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the scholars who share this opinion are Diels (1897, p. 7) Wilamowitz (1912, p. 62), and Tarán (1977, p. 173.: "Parmenides must be considered a mediocre poet"), among others.

<sup>3</sup> See the pioneering study by Mourelatos (1970, pp. 34 and ff.) and, more recently, D'Alessio's study (1995) about the Pindaric reception of Parmenides. For a valuable historical and linguistic consideration of Parmenides' epic diction, see E. Passa 2009, who has contributed to a better understanding of the *Poem*, its transmission and intersections with other literary genres and text types. Concerning the innovations and the structural changes of Parmenides' hexameter, see G. Cerri (1999, pp. 85-86). There are other important and innovative studies emphasizing the meaning of the phonetic texture of Parmenides' diction and the sonorous dimension of his poetic expression (M. L. Gemelli Marciano 2013; M. Année 2012). More recently, A. Bernabé (2018 forthcoming) dedicated one of his *Eleatic Lessons* to "Parmenides Poet: Tradition and Innovation in the Proem".

backwards jumps both between past and present and between different points in the past (which relates to the temporal and spatial configuration of choral performance itself), as exemplified in the closing section of Pythian 9. In another, later Cyrenaean ode, Pythian 4, an attempt is made at the combination of both temporalities. This can be seen as an attempt of the traditional milieu of choral lyric to come to terms with and eventually integrate contemporary changes in the concept of time and the relationship between past and present, apparent in the epigraphical practices and in the historiographic discourse.

**D'Alessio, Giambattista:** *Tradition and Experiment in the Carmen saeculare. The Power of Performance and the Performance of Power: Hellenistic Civic Choruses and the Carmen Saeculare*

Horace's *Carmen saeculare* is the only text meant for choral performance for which we have both epigraphic evidence and a manuscript tradition, and the only one composed by an author belonging to the literary canon. It purports to be (and under many respects was perceived) as belonging to a secular Roman tradition of song-performance, but its referential models are, unavoidably, in the very first place, Greek ones. According to current scholarly consensus, in composing the CS Horace looked back at the archaic and classical Greek tradition of choral performances. While this is undoubtedly an important aspect in the poem's literary and cultural heritage, this perspective has by and large failed to locate the poem within the important and lively 'synchronic' tradition of Hellenistic public cultic poetry.

In my study I will analyse the complexity of the poem's Greek background, focusing not only on its diachronic dimension, but also explaining the poem as part of a continuing and changing tradition in the contemporary Greek world, as well as showing its fundamental relationship to Callimachean poetry, and to Callimachean ideology of the role of choral performance.

**Gómez, Pilar:** *Evocations of Marathon in Greek literature of the Imperial era*

The battle of Marathon (490 BC) gave the Greeks a heroic victory over the Persians. Beyond its political meaning and the historical reality at the 5th century, this battle and its protagonists became a symbol of the collective memory of the Hellenic people, especially the Athenians, and a sign of Greek identity that transcends the Classical period, but it also became a literary topic.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the use that some Greek authors of the Roman imperial era made of the name 'Marathon' and of what that name entailed. The works of Plutarch, Lucian, Aelius Aristides, Pausanias, Athenaeus or Polemon belong to different literary genres and are also diverse in their purpose, but all these authors share a common rhetorical and literary formation that emanates from the Classical *paideia*, in which the public receiving these works has also been formed.

We will analyse some passages in which these authors refer to the battle of Marathon, taking into account that, being Greek by origin or by cultural adoption, all of

them represent, through their works, certain aspects of Greek identity, or what remained of it, when Rome already held political power over the Greek world.

The interest of our analysis, when reviewing some of these texts, lies in finding out with what meaning, objectives, or intentions the authors of the Imperial era used in their present time, the 2nd century AD, the past of the Classic era that Marathon represents.

**Grau, Sergi:** *Biographical reworkings of the past: the uses of the biographies of philosophers in the Life of Alexander by Pseudo-Callisthenes*

The construction of the image of Alexander the Great in the many biographies, more or less fictional, that we have is a good example of the mechanisms for creating a significant present in the terms and grounds of recognition of traditional narrative elements by the community. However, it is particularly illustrative to analyse the concrete materials that the redactors took from the repertoire of anecdotes and exemplary stories of the past in generating some episodes, as well as the transformations that must be exercised to adapt them to the new biography of the sovereign. We will look, then, on the uses of materials from the biographies of philosophers in the *Life of Alexander* attributed to Pseudo-Callisthenes, to try to elucidate how the representation of the past is articulated through this element in a work in the middle path between novel and biography.

**Magadán, Teresa:** *The literary construction of the past and the archaeological evidence: Strabo on Ilion*

Past and present interaction in the ancient Greek world is most highly exemplified in the works of historians and geographers that touch upon places and people attached to the mythical/heroic past which, through the literary recreation, are projected into the present and thus incorporated into it. One of such cases is Strabo's detailed explanation of Ilion, the Aeolian city that since classical times promoted its identification with the Homeric Troy. Strabo argues against this identification, but due to the author's authority in modern Europe his text became the clue to locate ancient Troy until Heinrich Schliemann's excavations at the end of the 19th century proved otherwise.

In this paper we analyse Strabo's history of Ilion through the lens of the literary construction of the past in order to highlight the elements that belong to the long Homeric tradition and, on the other hand, those that innovate, either because they refute the acquired Greek tradition or contest the new recreation of the Trojan past formulated in Augustan Rome. We also aim to compare Strabo's arguments with the results of the excavations that have been executed on the hill of Hissarlik since Schliemann's times, mainly those conducted by the Universities of Tübingen and Cincinnati in the period 1986-2012. In this way we hope to clarify the dynamics of the Trojan past constructed by Strabo and to explain the inconsistencies that arise from the comparison with the archaeological evidence as the logic outcome of his vision of the past.

**Milanezi, Silvia:** *Playing with the Past, or the Shreds of Time*

Comedy feeds on the everyday life of the Athenians, without being their history. In this literary genre the past of the city, near or distant, is integrated in the dramatic construction. In the polis, official documents published in the most prominent places allow citizens to live in harmony, since they represent the voice of the city, which becomes law, blame, praise. In this paper I propose to study how the representation of the past has an impact on the present. Starting from one of the aspects of the construction of the comic memory of the competitions, i.e. the *didascalía* that Aristophanes creates in *Acharnians*, 418-434, I will focus on the official documents relating to the Dionysia and Lenaea festivals (*Fasti, Didaskaliai*), engraved on stone from the middle of the fourth century BC. Exploring these two tracks I will highlight the importance of the representation of the past in the present not only as a literary but also as a political stake.

**Mussarra, Joan Josep:** *The neutralization of the mythical past in Euripides' Heracles*

Greek tragic plays are characterized by the construction of a temporality which usually implies the adoption of extradramatic points of reference that are not conceived as a part of a precise chronological framework. They are rather to be understood as preceding "events" that ground the tragic conflict, *mythoi* that precede the theatrical action with causal force. At least in some plays the characters discuss their relevance in a non naturalistic manner. An extreme example of this is to be found in the Euripidean *Heracles*, where several characters discuss the "past" of the theatrical action and apparently do away with it in a way that is key for understanding the whole play.

**Pòrtulas, Jaume:** *Divine time and human time: the catalogue of Zeus' lovers in the Διὸς ἀπάτη (Iliad XIV 317-328)*

It is usually accepted without much discussion that the catalogue of Zeus' lovers in the *Dios apate* is organized in a reverse time sequence – that is, it starts with the latest episodes, and then goes backwards in time to reach the most remote ones. But the notions of *before* and *after* are only relatively applicable to mythical time. In this catalogue the chronological sequence is mediated by a taxonomic disposition. Moreover, the scholia contain certain variants of the stories that Zeus' speech evokes rapidly and allusively, variants of which Homeric audiences were probably aware. My hypothesis is that these variants can help us to understand why Zeus enumerates his past loves in this particular order.

**Reig, Montserrat:** *Distant pasts, recent pasts in Greek epic: the narratives external to the plot in the Homeric poems*

Analyses of the Hesiodic myth of races by Carles Miralles and Bruno Currie, emphasizing in different ways the different temporalities present in the story, are applied in this paper to the representation of the past underlying the Homeric narratives external to the Trojan story. Through the analysis of some study cases, such as Nestor or Peirithoos, four ways of inserting the stories in the main narrative are singled out. Notwithstanding the specificity of each narrative digression to its immediate context in the poem, an overall conception of time linking all of them is shown to be fundamentally coherent with Hesiod's image of a continuum of time between the heroic past and the present of the audience. The main function of those narratives is to challenge the fundamental pattern of decay underlying that conception through the representation of a paradigmatic past that can be emulated in the present.

**Santos, Marta / Nicolás, Marta:** *(Re)constructing the past: the Frickenhaus pelike, from Attic drama to modern archaeology*

The so-called Frickenhaus *pelike* (from August Frickenhaus, the first publisher), was discovered at Empúries at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c, even before the first systematic excavations, in 1908. An Attic vase of c. 400-390 BC, it is an especially interesting source for the iconography of choral and dramatic competitions in Classical Athens, despite its fragmentary state. The recent restoration at the Museu Arqueològic de Catalunya in Barcelona, the first in more than a century, offers a good occasion for a new presentation and a reappraisal of this extraordinary vase.

**Riu, Xavier:** *Eikós in the construction of the past: from uncertainty to fact*

In previous work on the notion of εἰκός, particularly in Aristotle, and of verisimilitude, the author has shown that *eikos* will at some point become the notion of verisimilitude, but that this is initially not the case, and on the other hand that this notion will be applied to literature, but certainly not at least in archaic and classical times. This contribution attempts a survey of the uses of this word focusing mainly on historical discourse, though not only in historians.

The word *eikos* is supposed to refer to a discourse based on probabilities or verisimilitude, developed in this sense by people such as Tisias, Gorgias and Protagoras. Thus it would be a powerful tool in historical discourse for the reconstruction of the past through a 'likely' story. However, the history of this notion is far more complicated. In Plato for instance, a *muthos eikos* has little to do with verisimilitude or likelihood; it is rather an appropriate, seemingly tale in agreement with reason, and for this very reason it may even be necessary rather than likely; besides, it does not refer to things easily known but to things of which we cannot have direct experience. At the other end, to Plutarch at the beginning of his *Life of Theseus* a *logos* is *eikos* when it refers to factual history. In between, the history of the uses of this word and of related notions is quite complex, as this paper will attempt to show.