

Institution: University College London
Unit of Assessment: 31 – Classics
Title of case study: Contextualising Greek poetry and its performance
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research at UCL has underpinned two significant activities which bring our work to students, non-traditional learners and the wider world: the UCL Greek play and the programme of events surrounding the London Olympics. These exemplify the profound public impact of our research in Greek performed poetry in its social context. Each year, almost 2,000 people attend the Greek play, along with workshops and lectures about staging, interpretation, and the play's relationship to its social and historical context. The research also informed the development of a collaborative programme of cultural events celebrating the 2012 Olympics, with emphasis on the festival's ancient roots. Open lectures, workshops, debates, interviews and exhibitions were supplemented by websites, which increased the range of our educational and public information impacts by sharing research-led activities with thousands more people.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>UCL Greek & Latin has a long-established research expertise in Greek performance culture, with particular emphasis on performed text as a response to social-historical contexts and as medium for articulating, exploring or challenging the collective value system, as well as in the subsequent receptions and continuities of that performance culture. Our research interests coalesce around theatre and athletic success/celebration. Staff (past and present) who have published key items in this area include: Peter Agócs (at UCL 2012–2013), Rosa Andújar (2012–2013), Emmanuela Bakola (2007–2012), Chris Carey (2003–2013), Pat Easterling (1987–1994), Simon Hornblower (1997–2010), Stephen Instone (1993–2009), Miriam Leonard (2007–2013), Herwig Maehler (1993–2013), Malcolm Willcock (1993–2006).</p> <p>As well as providing vital infrastructure for teaching at secondary and tertiary levels nationally and internationally through texts and commentaries (Willcock, Maehler, Instone, Easterling, Carey), our research has explored the genesis, evolution and demise of genres, their socio-political context and its impact, the emergence, transmission and analysis of written texts, and the political and cultural drivers which shape the processes, nature, pragmatics and dramatics of (re)performance. This research has particularly illuminated: the dynamics shaping texts and genre; the ways in which performed poetry (especially lyric and drama) engages both with the past and with contemporary politics, religion and values, whether to explore, affirm or contest them; and the ways in which new cultural contexts and technologies create space for new readings and effects. The underpinning research base has been strengthened over the last seven years by the powerful presence in the department of colleagues researching the processes and theories of classical reception (Andújar, Leonard, Wyke). Their work has helped cement the diachronic sense of impact on and in social, political and intellectual context(s) across time and cultures.</p> <p>Bakola's research at UCL has expanded our knowledge of fifth century Athenian comedy as competition, politics, intertext and performance and has been part of a major development (in which this department has played a significant role) which uses lost texts and authors to reconstitute the world of ancient theatre. She has shown the ways in which ideas of wealth are linked in comedy and tragedy to the dynamics of social and political change and to larger/deeper (still live) issues of environment and man's place in it [see b in section 3]. Carey has explored the complex fictive world (especially in its political dimension) created by tragedy in the imaginative and performative space between early Greek heroic epic and the theatre of fifth century Athens [c], and the new use to which the athletic victory song, originally destined for the elite of the Greek world, was put in the performative context of the dramatic festivals of democratic Athens [d]. The latter was included in a volume edited at UCL by Agócs and Carey with Richard Rawles, which traced the re-use of the victory ode in contexts from fifth century Greece through Augustan Rome to Greek independence and twentieth century Europe and America. Agócs [a] examines how the Pindaric victory ode fictionalises its own performance as convivial procession (<i>komos</i>) within the fluid semantics of the term and the larger cultural dynamics of performance modes. Hornblower's collection explores poetry and the games from a multi-disciplinary angle [g], including in a chapter</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

by Carey on the logistics of performance. Leonard's research has mapped the formative impact of Athens in modern Europe from the enlightenment to the late twentieth century and forms the background for her exploration [e, f] of the complex continuing relation between Greek tragedy and ideas of the tragic and philosophy and psychoanalysis, which formed the basis of her inaugural lecture [3, section 5].

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[a] Peter Agócs, 'Performance and Genre: Reading Pindar's *Komoi*', in P. Agócs/ C. Carey /R. Rawles (eds.), *Reading the Victory Ode*, Cambridge 2012, 191–223. Submitted to REF2.

[b] Emmanuela Bakola, 'Crime and Punishment: Cratinus on Aeschylus, on the Metaphysics and on the Politics of Wealth', in E. Bakola/ L. Prauscello/ M. Telò (eds.), *Greek Comedy and the Discourse of Genres*, Cambridge 2013, 226–255. Available on request.

[c] Chris Carey, 'The political world of Homer and tragedy', *Aevum Antiquum* N.S. 3 (2003, published 2007), 463–484. Available on request.

[d] Chris Carey, 'The victory ode in the theatre' in P. Agócs/ C. Carey /R. Rawles (eds.), *Receiving the komos*, London 2013, 17–36. Submitted to REF2.

[e] Miriam Leonard, 'Tragedy and the Seductions of Philosophy', *Cambridge Classical Journal* 58 (2012), 145–164. DOI [10.1017/S1750270512000048](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1750270512000048).

[f] Miriam Leonard, 'Freud and Tragedy: Oedipus and the Gender of the Universal', *Classical Receptions Journal* 5 (2012), 63–83. Submitted to REF2.

[g] Simon Hornblower (with C. Morgan), ed. *Pindar's Poetry: Patrons, and Festivals*, Oxford 2007. Available on request.

The books and essays listed above underwent rigorous peer review before publication.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The department's collective and collaborative research in Greek performance culture and its continuity into the modern era feeds directly into its design and delivery of a wide-ranging programme of community activities. These are intended to **engage the public** with socio-political issues arising from our research, **enrich the cultural life** of London, and enhance tourist and visitor experience of the Capital. They are exemplified by the longstanding annual production of a Greek play at the UCL Bloomsbury Theatre and one-off events such as those surrounding the London Olympics in 2012. We have energetically seized the opportunities presented by **new technologies** to extend the reach of the impacts on public awareness of and engagement with such issues. Digitising and sharing the outcomes of these events has allowed the department to extend the range of its impacts to include the development and provision of reusable information and learning resources for independent study and for use in secondary schools and in courses at HEIs in the UK and beyond and to enhance the accessibility of its research to a wider public audience.

The Greek Play

The UCL Greek play has run for over 25 years. It functions as an important medium for increasing public understanding of research on Greek poetry and performance and its applications to contemporary performance. Since 2008 we have staged: Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* 2008; Aristophanes' *Frogs* 2009; Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* and *Eumenides* 2010; Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 2011; Euripides' *Hippolytus* 2012; Euripides' *Trojan Women* February 2013 (see [2] in section 5). Although the play is produced by students, staff researching Greek drama oversee its choice of play and translation and advise on interpretation and stagecraft, ensuring that current research is embedded into the performance and in programme notes contributed by them. The innovative and engaging results of their contributions can be seen, for instance, in the (2013) location of *Trojan Women* (overseen by Rosa Andújar) in a modern war zone, whose setting paralleled the fluid relation between Euripides' production, heroic myth and events of the Peloponnesian War (see Carey [c]), and in the acclaimed *Oresteia* productions. Emmanuela Bakola used her groundbreaking UCL research in Greek literature and the environment [b] to

Impact case study (REF3b)

underpin a production combining themes uncovered by her work (the house, the earth, the economics of peace and war, material waste). These were reflected in the play's publicity poster (the perverted circle of nature and the chthonic associations of the snake, a recurrent image in the trilogy), acting (contact with the soil in *Agamemnon* and *Libation Bearers*), costume (the Erinyes as vampires), props and space [2]. The end result was a holistic sense of a play rooted in its political, religious, theatrical-spatial and literary milieu. All of this was underpinned and supplemented by research-based programme notes.

The plays are accompanied by talks for **general audiences** by (especially UCL) academics, and workshops with theatre practitioners, with generous funding initially from the Hellenic Society and the Classical Association, and now supported by an earmarked award from the Leventis Foundation. The talks and workshops explore issues of performance and the relevance and meaning of ancient drama in the modern world. The **reach** is demonstrated by the large audiences that the performances themselves (1935 for *Trojan Women* 2013, 1879 for *Hippolytus* 2012) and the accompanying lectures and workshops attract (308 at 2013 lectures, 60 at workshops – see [2] below). Participants in these events include members of the public and school groups (students of English, modern languages, theatre studies or drama as well as Greek or Classical Civilisation) from many parts of the UK. The **significance** of this impact is demonstrated by the positive critical reviews [1] which the productions have received ('the UCL Classical Drama Society's production [of *Hippolytus* was] explosive' – Matthew Parris, *Times* 16/02/12, 'superior to quite a few more lauded professional productions' – Tony Keen on our 2008 *Agamemnon*). Extensive audience feedback attests to the ways in which research-led performance and outreach both (re)shapes perception and enriches education. Sample comments from the public have included:

'showed that however much times have changed over the last couple of thousand years, the suffering and cruelty of war continues';

'made sense of the conventions of Greek tragedy';

'excellent lecture; accessible and thought provoking; good experience for my daughter of being in a "uni lecture"';

'provided such a detailed insight into the major themes and characters, and the impact this would have had on the society the play was first performed to';

(and from teachers specifically):

'challenged them [visiting students] to revisit the play and their existing interpretations';

'very pleased that the lecture did not just deal with the text, but extended the students' knowledge by looking at the role of women and mourning'. ([2] below)

The play website [2] supplements these educational benefits by providing research-driven interviews, images and clips, a blog, programme notes, essays on the plays, suggestions for further reading and study questions. Through these media, we extend the impact of the event beyond those watching the performance itself via an educational resource available to everyone, allowing wider audiences (inter)nationally to engage with Greek plays as living theatre. This reach is extended further by related (digitised) events such as Miriam Leonard's inaugural (*Tragedy and Modernity* [3]), broadcast in Australia.

London Olympics 2012

A rare opportunity to improve public understanding of Greek poetry and performance arose thanks to the London Olympics 2012. On the basis of our longstanding research on athletics and celebration (current: Agócs, Carey, past: Instone, Hornblower, Maehler) we took the lead in creating a consortium of London cultural and educational bodies (also including the British Museum, Institute of Classical Studies, Sir John Soane's Museum, Egypt Exploration Society, British Academy, Petrie Museum, Hellenic and Roman societies, Open University, Kings College London) to create a major programme of activities and exhibitions around the London Olympics 2012 on the theme of sport and competition in the ancient world and in its modern receptions and renewals. As well as co-ordinating events in the capital, we used the Roman Society website [4] as a portal for research-based Olympic themed activities throughout Britain to showcase Classics research nationally. The **reach** of this impact is demonstrated by the many and varied audiences around the country who benefited from engagement (either through live events or resultant video

Impact case study (REF3b)

uploads), from the research outputs generated, and from the new partnerships formed.

The programme, which ran from May to September 2012, featured three conferences, public lectures, panel discussions (with audiences of 100–350), exhibitions, guided tours and hands-on activities in museums. It offered a fuller understanding of the different ways in which competition (especially but not exclusively athletic) was perceived, enacted and memorialised in the ancient world and in the modern era, providing a foil against which to assess contemporary competitions and help them understand the relevance of the ancient traditions in all areas of culture.

As with the Greek plays, the reach and significance of the impacts of live events were increased through the creation of digital learning and information resources. Thus this impact was further enhanced by the Unit's Ancient Olympics website [6], which is now a permanent research-based educational resource offering summaries of key issues, related ancient texts and artefacts, recordings of talks, essays and images on the issues discussed, as well as suggestions for further reading and study questions. The **reach** of this resource is indicated by the fact that it has been viewed some 1200 times during the impact assessment period; its **significance** as an educational resource is suggested by user comments such as 'I plan to use it with my GCSE group', and 'a superb resource' [6]. It is now being further developed in collaboration with schoolteachers and pupils. The educational and public information impacts of the events were enhanced and extended still further by the publication of a full set of the public lectures on the website of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, where they were viewed c. 2200 times during the impact assessment period [5].

Chris Carey also gave invited public lectures on the sociology and ethnicity of athletics and the nature of ancient competition to audiences of 50–300 at associated events in Exeter, Nottingham, Dublin and London and at a follow-up seminar on law and sport in October 2013 for a legal and public audience at the Institute of Directors in London, organised by the Middle Temple. He was invited to provide a voiceover for an internet film (which included Olympic athletes) by the *Guardian* newspaper ([9]; blog comment: 'very professional; impressive...'). He was also invited to produce a blog post for Cambridge Press, which had 6,225 unique visits (11,050 total visits) by late October 2013, making it the 3rd most popular blog post on the Cambridge Journals blog, of 260 posts across all disciplines; the only posts with more visits were promotional posts [7]. Carey also took part in a public discussion on sport at UCL with celebrated neuroscientist Semir Zeki for an audience of 150. A video of that discussion is now available online [8] and had received 900 views by October 2013.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] Reviews of performances by Tony Keen (2010) <http://bit.ly/1cESPIg>, and Matthew Parris in the *Times* (2012), available online at <http://bit.ly/HWQK11>.

[2] See Greek Play website: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/classical-play/archive> and compilation of quantitative and qualitative evidence for the impact of the Greek play at: <http://goo.gl/wmcbNS>.

[3] Video and blog of Leonard inaugural: <http://bit.ly/1fRJ0mo> and a related radio broadcast on Australian radio (November 2012): <http://ab.co/1fRJ1GZ>.

[4] Roman Society website with list of events arranged to accompany the London Olympics: <http://bit.ly/1cESUFJ>.

[5] Hellenic Society website and YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/18M2qUS>.

[6] See Olympics website: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/engagement/the_ancient_olympics and qualitative evaluations from schoolteachers available online at: <http://goo.gl/BfA3w9>

[7] CUP Olympics blog (August 2012) <http://bit.ly/1jiWqYt>. Statement on visitors to this blog post provided by the Senior Marketing Executive, Cambridge University Press.

[8] Zeki-Carey conversation on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/1ircda8>.

[9] Guardian video on the Olympics with voiceover by Carey (July 2012): <http://bit.ly/1ddXPCv>.