

<b>Institution:</b> University of Oxford
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UOA31
<b>Title of case study:</b> Performance reception of Greek and Latin drama
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) project approaches the understanding of Greek and Roman tragedies and comedies through gathering evidence about their performance and traces their evolving significance through the way they have been received in performance practice. The APGRD has had significant impact on theatrical performance through its lively interaction with practitioners in the theatre and other performing arts, which has expanded the repertoire of classical drama, and through the commissioning of new work. This research has provided significant cultural and pedagogical benefits through being presented in various public forums (radio, lectures, exhibitions) and through the creation of a searchable open-access online database of more than 11,000 productions from the Renaissance to the present.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research undertaken by the APGRD since its inception in 1996 is threefold. First, it gathers and preserves physical materials relating to the history of ancient drama in modern performance, such as playbills, programmes, reviews, drawings, photographs and audio-visual recordings; these materials are stored in the Stelios Ioannou School for Research in Classical and Byzantine Studies in Oxford and are available for public consultation on request. Secondly, it compiles a comprehensive production history of ancient drama on the modern stage, published electronically as the APGRD database. Thirdly, it publishes interpretative research based on these findings, exploring the cultural and political contexts of performances (fifteen volumes have been published since 2000, including both monographs and collections of essays based on conferences organised by the APGRD). The research has focussed on the performance reception of particular plays (e.g. the Agamemnon and Medea), on ancient material evidence for performances (e.g. the Pronomos Vase); and on a number of relatively under-studied areas of ancient drama (music, dance, pantomime). This research has shed light on the cultural dynamics of the modern appropriation of ancient drama, with particular reference to political concerns such as gender and civic definition. It has pioneered a new area within Classics and Classical Reception Studies, 'Classical Performance Reception' and has uncovered forgotten theatrical scripts (notably the Greek tragic burlesques in the Lord Chamberlain's Play Collection that demonstrate unequivocally that ancient drama was not the exclusive preserve of the educated elite in the nineteenth century). The project is now being extended to cover the performance reception of epic and the history of translation of ancient plays.</p> <p>The key researchers are:        Dr Fiona Macintosh (2000-). Director, APGRD, Reader and University Lecturer in the Reception of Greek and Roman Literature.        Professor Oliver Taplin (1996-). Professor of Classical Languages and Literature, Oxford; 1999-2009, APGRD Principal Investigator; 2010-present, APGRD Consultant Director.        Professor Edith Hall (1996-). 1996-2001, Tutorial Fellow, Somerville College, Oxford; 1999-2009, APGRD Co-Investigator (O.2 FTE); 2010-present, APGRD Consultant Director.        Contributions to the project have also been made by Dr Amanda Wrigley, editor of the APGRD Database of Modern Performances of Ancient Drama (2001-2009), by postdoctoral researchers, and by other members of the Oxford Classics faculty (P. Brown, F. Budelmann, S. Harrison). The APGRD has attracted international researchers such as Professor M. Williamson (Dartmouth), Leverhulme Visiting Professor Autumn 2012; Dr H. Marshall, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, funded by the Government of Canada, 2011-2013.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>(i) Website with database (2001-; re-developed in 2010): <a href="http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/database">www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/database</a>        The database is cited as a world-leading resource by: H. Foley, <i>Theatre Survey</i> 47 (2006), 239-44; Mary-Kay Gamel, <i>American Journal of Philology</i> 128 (2007), 279; M. Bastin-Hammou, <i>Anabases</i> 4 (2006); H. Altena, in J. Gregory (ed.), <i>A Companion to Greek Tragedy</i> (Blackwell 2005), 489.</p> <p>(ii) Monographs include:        F. Macintosh and E. Hall, <i>Greek Tragedy and the British Stage 1660-1914</i> (Oxford University Press, 2005) [runner-up for the 2005 Theatre Book Prize:</p>

<http://www.str.org.uk/events/bookprize/archive/bookprize2005.shtml>] Can be supplied on request.

F. Macintosh, *Sophocles: Oedipus Tyrannus* (Cambridge University Press, 2009) [reviewed: F. Condello, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2010.01.54; P. Judet de La Combe, *JHS* 2011, 293-5; Z. Dunbar, *New Theatre Quarterly* 2012] Can be supplied on request.

A. Wrigley, *Performing Greek Drama in Oxford: and on Tour with the Balliol Players* (University of Exeter Press, 2010) Can be supplied on request.

(iii) Edited volumes include:

E. Hall and R. Wyles (eds), *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime* (Oxford University Press, 2008) [reviewed: D. Feeney, *Times Literary Supplement* 5557, 2 October 2009] DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199232536.001.0001

P. Brown and S. Ograjenšek (eds), *Ancient Drama in Music for the Modern Stage* (Oxford University Press, 2010) [reviewed: E. Wilson, *Times Literary Supplement* 5649, 8 July 2011] Can be supplied on request.

(iv) Articles in other volumes include:

F. Macintosh, 'From the Court to the National: the theatrical legacy of Murray's *Bacchae*' in C. Stray (ed.), *Gilbert Murray Reassessed* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 145-66. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199208791.003.0009

Key research grants: Taplin/Hall, 'The History of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama', Leverhulme Trust, 10/96-09/99: £67,444; Taplin/Hall, 'The History of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama', AHRC, 10/99-09/04: £425,862; Taplin, 'The performance reception of Greek and Roman plays', AHRC, 10/04-09/09: £540,241 - to expand research into opera, dance and performance in antiquity; Taplin, 'Onassis Programme for the Performance of Greek Drama', Onassis Foundation, 2005-8, 2008-10: £100,000 p.a.; Budelmann, 'The Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama', Mellon Foundation, 10/09-09/14: \$600,000; Macintosh, 'Performing epic from antiquity to the present', Leverhulme Trust, 09/11-08/14: £153,789; Budelmann/Macintosh, 'Translating Greek and Roman Drama into French', Mellon 80%/John Fell 20%, 09/11-08/12.

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

The impact of the APRGD (which has received wide public recognition globally) has taken the following forms:

1. Deepening the quality of contemporary productions of classical theatre through work with theatre practitioners from 1996 onwards, thereby helping to develop new skills, insights and ways of working for directors, poet-translators, composers, designers, choreographers and actors, and drawing in audiences for new cultural experiences and bringing acclaim to the UK theatre sector.
2. Commissioning new theatrical work from 2005-10 through the 'Onassis Programme for the Performance of Greek Drama'.
3. Helping to create an appetite for classical theatre through public engagement activities, and so contributing to knowledge and the quality of life.
4. Offering the pedagogical benefit of open-access information about the history of performances of Greek and Roman drama.

#### 1. Collaboration with theatre practitioners

The research team at the APGRD has provided academic expertise for contemporary theatre. Discussions on performance interpretation, the historical dimension of drama and input at rehearsals have led to continued relationships with practitioners, in the UK and worldwide.<sup>[4, 5, 1]</sup> According to Włodzimierz Staniewski, founder and artistic director of Gardzienice Centre for Theatre Practices, Poland, whose repertoire has included three Greek tragedies since 2008: 'Gardzienice's work is forged in the fires of antiquity. The APGRD keeps these fires burning and has been a constant source of illumination, inspiration, support, learning and excellence.'<sup>[1]</sup> The knowledge and expertise developed by the research team has helped to sustain the distinctive and dynamic nature of the UK theatre sector. The poet-playwright, Tony Harrison has commented: 'The

## Impact case study (REF3b)

life of drama is in performance and the APGRD opens up what has been locked in a more narrow academic discipline into a potentially much wider and more generally available field of interest and study'.<sup>[2]</sup> The research team has had significant input at rehearsals initiating discussions on the historical dimension of drama and performance interpretation. The APGRD's activities on opera and dance have also gathered a remarkably distinguished and varied collection of contributors to its conferences and publications, including the composer Christian Wolff and choreographers Suzy Willson (Artistic Director, Clod Ensemble) and Struan Leslie (Head of Movement, RSC). For Leslie, 'The APGRD has provided support and encouragement, as well as having been a touchstone for my continuing practice. It is a place that hears the modern and resonates the ancient in response to a creative contemporary context'.<sup>[3]</sup> Research using the APGRD's resources has also directly fostered professional careers in theatre: Avery Willis, whose Oxford doctoral thesis on Euripides' Troades was based on APGRD material, has established a career working with Peter Sellars in the USA; former BA Postdoctoral Fellow Kathleen Riley has worked with actors including Nigel Hawthorne, Edward Petherbridge and Kathryn Hunter and with the playwright Frank McGuinness on his forthcoming *Trojan Women*. Helen Eastman, APGRD's Onassis Producer 2005-2011, has received numerous playwriting commissions from UK theatre companies, including the acclaimed *Hercules* (Chester 2010).

Collaborations since 2008 include the following:

- Macintosh's work on Gilbert Murray and Bernard Shaw was discussed with Tony Harrison for his play FRAM and featured in the programme notes for Nick Hytner's production of *Major Barbara* (both Royal National Theatre 2008).
- Hall was consultant on *Die Perser* at Braunschweig State Theatre, directed by Claudia Bosse (May/June 2008).
- Macintosh acted as dramaturge for a devised chorus piece choreographed by Struan Leslie (Head of Movement, RSC) and Simon Deacon (Composer) at RNT Studios (August 2008).
- Taplin conceived and provided translations for the show *Powerful Voices: Women in Ancient Greek Drama*, presented by the Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation (USA) at Florence Gould Hall, New York, in December 2008.
- 19 performances of Taplin's adaptation *The Wanderings of Odysseus* were put on at the Stanford University Summer Theater programme, July-August 2010; and at the Cacoyannis Centre, Athens, September 2012.

## 2. Commissioning new work

The research undertaken by the APGRD led to the establishment of the Onassis Programme for the Performance of Greek Drama at Oxford ([www.onassis.ox.ac.uk](http://www.onassis.ox.ac.uk)), whose audiences numbered over 30,000 in over 30 UK cities from 2005-2011. This programme commissions and produces work<sup>[ii]</sup> by international theatre artists inspired by classical Greek drama, notably the opera version of Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes*, directed by Derek Walcott, with music by Dominique le Gendre (2008), and Glyn Maxwell's *After Troy* (2011), which resulted from dialogues with Taplin. Rehearsed public readings by professional actors of new versions of ancient plays have brought writers, audiences and academics together at the APGRD to develop new plays (including *Goddess from a Machine* by Peter Morris, *Ismene* by Stacey Gregg, and *The Angry Wounds* by Julian Armitstead). One of the commissioned audio plays for the 'Pots and Plays' event at the Ashmolean in May 2011, Vanessa Badham's *Bull*, went on to become *The Bull, the Moon and the Coronet of Stars*, which enjoyed a successful Australian tour in 2013.

## 3. Public engagement and access to research

The open-access APGRD website and online database have had approximately 50,000 visits since 2008 (25,000 of whom have used the database) and is being used as a model for similar projects at Northwestern University and NYU.

The APGRD research team has put on several public exhibitions and lectures. For example, the Onassis production of Tom Paulin's *Medea* (2010) was accompanied by an exhibition of APGRD materials relating to *Medea's* performance history; Derek Walcott's script and drawings were exhibited for the opera *The Burial at Thebes* (2008); and in November 2011 the APGRD organised an exhibition, in conjunction with the National Theatre Archive and the Jocelyn Herbert Archive to mark the 30th Anniversary of the *Oresteia* (Royal National Theatre 1981), and an event for 200 guests with a discussion with the translator Tony Harrison, a performance by the actor

## Impact case study (REF3b)

Greg Hicks (Orestes in 1981), and a talk about Harrison Birtwistle's score.

The APGRD series of public lectures has regularly featured prominent international playwrights and theatre directors, including Frank McGuinness, Martin Crimp and Poland's Włodzimierz Staniewski (together with the UK premiere of his film, 'Iphigenia at Aulis', 2009). Frank McGuinness' discussion with Macintosh is available online ([podcasts.ox.ac.uk](http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk)).

APGRD researchers have also given public talks on aspects of classical theatre and have been featured on BBC Radios 3 and 4.<sup>[iv]</sup> Taplin and Hall joined Tony Harrison for a Platform Talk at the National Theatre in relation to Harrison's play FRAM (2008). Macintosh has been a speaker at a number of Oxford Festival of Dance events. Taplin has been a regular contributor to Radio 4's Front Row and Radio 3's Night Waves. Hall has appeared on Start the Week, In Our Time, Women's Hour and in a number of TV documentaries. Macintosh has appeared on Night Waves; presented the programme 'Euripides' in the Radio 3 series The Essay: Greek and Latin Voices (broadcast 6/3/2008); and contributed to the Radio 4 programme 'Freudian Slippage: Part 1' (broadcast 13/12/2010), which was inspired by her chapter in the APGRD 2004 volume Dionysus since 69.

The APGRD is cited by the AHRC on its website as an outstanding example of a Humanities project that has made a considerable impression on the world outside academia. The APGRD was also successfully nominated by the AHRC for inclusion in the 'cultural and community' section of the RCUK 'Impacts: Achieving investment in the UK - Research through Partnership' publication.<sup>[iii]</sup>

#### 4. Pedagogical benefits

The research done by the APGRD has had varied pedagogical benefits.<sup>[v]</sup> In particular, all Onassis productions have been accompanied by workshops for schools and downloadable packs for teachers which make extensive use of APGRD materials; the APGRD website includes a 'Learning' section with short essays by young scholars aimed at school and undergraduate students of Classics, English, Film and Theatre Studies. Macintosh's Radio 3 programme on Euripides is also course material for Open University course A275 'Reading Classical Greek: language and literature'. Professor Robin Osborne (Cambridge) has described the APGRD as one of the 'great research projects', which enables 'patterns to be discerned that could not previously have been seen' (*Bulletin of the Council of University Classical Departments* 40 (2011), p.5). Building on its contacts in the creative and heritage industries, the APGRD has run two AHRC-funded public engagement/collaborative skills training courses from 2010-2013 for 20 doctoral/early career researchers from 15 different HEIs.

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

##### Testimony

- [1] Written statement from Founder and Artistic Director, Gardzienice Centre for Theatre Practices
- [2] Written statement from Poet-Playwright
- [3] Written statement from Head of Movement, Royal Shakespeare Company
- [4] Corroboration of Collaboration with theatre practitioners can be provided by Founder and Artistic Director, Northern Broadsides can be contacted
- [5] Corroboration of Collaboration with theatre practitioners can be provided by an actor involved in the 30th Anniversary of the *Oresteia*.

##### Other evidence sources

- [i] Collaboration with theatre practitioners: Citations: M. Beard, 'Live Classics: Or "What's the Use of Aeschylus in Darfur?"' in J. Bate (ed.), *The Public Value of the Humanities* (Bloomsbury 2010), 20; she also makes use of the Archive's materials (27 n. 2).
- [ii] Commissioning new work: 'Onassis Collection' housed within the APGRD archives.
- [iii] Public engagement and access to research:  
<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundedResearch/impact/Pages/ResearchonGreekandRomandrama.aspx>;  
<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/publications/impactsfull.pdf>.
- [iv] For details of radio appearances, see <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/about-us/people>
- [v] Pedagogical benefits: <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/learning>; <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/about-us/cagr-phase-2/communicating-ancient-greece-and-rome-cagr>