

Institution: University of Wales, Trinity Saint David
Unit of Assessment: 31
Title of case study: IMAGINES: Antiquity in the Visual & Performing Arts
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>IMAGINES is an interdisciplinary project and research group exploring the influence and impact of antiquity on modern cultures. The project addresses the reception of antiquity in film, theatre, dance, opera, sculpture, architecture, painting, graphic novels, design and photography and other forms of visual culture. The project has sought to make its work accessible to the public through a series of exhibitions and talks, while it has also sought to engage members of the creative and cultural industries such as art professionals in the fields of architecture, music, graphic novels, and the theatre.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>IMAGINES (www.imagines-project.org) is an international and interdisciplinary project and research group exploring the influence and impact of antiquity on modern cultures. A key objective of the project is to enhance the understanding of different forms of interpretation, appropriation or neglect of classical inheritance across epochs and nations. Subject areas under investigation are theatre, dance, cinema, opera, sculpture, architecture, painting, comics, design, and photography. IMAGINES goes beyond the treatment of reception in individual genres and periods, instead taking specific genres as starting points and going on to explore their connections with other genres. The project has been established as an international network coordinated by members of the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David, University of Bristol, University of La Rioja and Barcelona, University of Mainz and the Libera Università di Lingue e Comunicazione (IULM) of Milan. Dr Marta García Morcillo (Lecturer in Ancient History, School of Classics, UWTSU 2010-2013) was coordinator and one of the founding members of IMAGINES during the census period. She is also co-editor of the two of the volumes produced by the group.</p> <p>IMAGINES' collective initiatives to date include three conferences in different countries (2007 Logroño, Spain; 2010 Bristol, UK; 2012 Mainz, Germany) and two academic volumes (a third is in preparation). The project intends to offer a basis not only for interdisciplinary debate on the impact of antiquity in the arts, but also for open discussion of the diversity of reception(s) in different cultural traditions. Accordingly, it searches for fluent dialogues and effective forms of collaboration between academia, further education, and the arts and their public audiences. A trademark of the project is collaboration with non-academic specialists, leaders in their fields who draw on antiquity for inspiration for their work, representing the impact of the ancient world in our time and age. IMAGINES has so far collaborated with professionals in the fields of architecture, music, graphic novels, and theatre (see details below).</p> <p>García Morcillo's research outputs have addressed issues such as the reception of antiquity in the performing and visual arts from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century, with particular reference to the tensions and relations of gender, sexuality, eroticism and power in reception. Such universal themes dictated plots and characters of myth and drama, but also serve to portray historical figures, events and places from Classical history. She has explored the ways that their changing reception and reinterpretation across time has created stereotypes, models of virtue or immoral conduct, that blend the original features from the ancient world with a diverse range of visual and performing arts of the modern era. This includes work on the construction of Roman Greeks disseminated by Hollywood and European film, an image largely influenced by the emergence of Christian figures both as protagonists and as favourite victims of cinematic "authoritarian" Romans.</p>

3. References to the research

- La Antigüedad en el cartel político contemporáneo. De la Europa decimonónica a la Guerra Civil española, in: M.-J. Castillo, S. Knippschild, M. García Morcillo, C. Herreros (eds.), *Imagines. Antiquity in the Performing and Visual Arts / La Antigüedad en las Artes Escénicas y Visuales*, Universidad de La Rioja 2008, 591-614. Available for download at: <http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=2663518>
- Does Greece – and the Cinema – Need a New Alexander?, with I. Berti, in: I. Berti – M. García Morcillo (eds), *Hellas on Screen. Cinematic Receptions of Ancient History, Literature and Myth* (series HABES 45, Univ. Heidelberg), Steiner-Verlag 2008, 9-20.
- Graecia capta? Depictions of Greeks and Hellas in ‘Roman Films’, in: I. Berti – M. García Morcillo (eds), *Hellas on Screen. Cinematic Receptions of Ancient History, Literature and Myth* (series HABES 45, Univ. Heidelberg), Steiner-Verlag 2008, 217-233.
- Co-editor of the volume: S. Knippschild – M. García Morcillo (eds), *Seduction and Power. Antiquity in the visual and Performing Arts*. (Continuum Books, London-NY 2013).
- *Seduced, Defeated and Forever Damned: Mark Antony in Post-Classical Imagination*, in: S. Knippschild – M. García Morcillo (eds), *Seduction and Power. Antiquity in the visual and Performing Arts*. (Continuum Books, London-NY 2013) 197-210.

Angelos Chaniotis, Professor of Ancient History and Classics, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. *Seduction and Power* challenges conventional relations of power, thus undermining tradition and leading to unexpected turns and dramas. This explains the fascination with this subject throughout the centuries. Some of the ancient seduction stories and their reception studied in this volume are familiar, others are not, but all of them are interesting. By focusing on the relation between seduction and power this volume makes an original contribution not only to reception studies but also to the diachronic study of gender and emotion.

Monica S. Cyrino, Professor of Classics, University of New Mexico, USA. Silke Knippschild and Marta García Morcillo have brought together a remarkable company of leading scholars and inspiring new voices who explore how the persistent liaison between seduction and power is richly exposed in modern receptions of the myths, histories, and images emanating from the ancient world. In case studies extending from the Renaissance to the present day, in a variety of media from the performing and visual arts, the contributors to this volume reveal with compelling clarity and scholarly insight how the power of seduction continues to be wielded by ancient cultures, as their essays unpack the enduring fascination exerted by the charismatic men and alluring women of antiquity upon later artists and performers. This impressive collection represents an important contribution to the field of reception studies, since it offers an unfettered glimpse into our own fantasies and projections about the power and eroticism so often and so intimately linked with the ancient world.

4. Details of the impact

The IMAGINES network’s main aim is the organization of a series of conferences devoted to universal themes that intend to offer a basis not only for interdisciplinary debates on the impact of antiquity in the arts, but also for open discussion on the diversity of reception(s) in different cultural traditions. While the first conference (La Rioja in 2007, published in 2008) gave an overview of the wide range and specific forms of ongoing projects, the second meeting (Bristol, September 22nd-25th, 2010) focussed on a particular topic: *Seduction and Power*. The conference explored the tensions and relations of gender, sexuality, and power in reception, associated with concepts such as domination, magnetism and attraction. Such themes dominated the plots and characters of myth and drama, but also served to portray historical personages. A third conference in Mainz (Germany) on the topic *Magic and the Supernatural* was held in September 2012. The project’s

impact strategy has been to open up the key research themes to the public and to engage with artists and members of the creative and cultural industries. The Bristol conference, co-funded by UWTSD and co-organised by García Morcillo included an open and public screening of silent movies with original music composed and performed live by two students of the University of Bristol. The event was followed by a discussion with the musicians about their work. As a result of the success of this event, a second such event was organised at the Faculty of Music of the University of Barcelona and moderated by García Morcillo, with the presence of the musicians.

The Imagines II, Seduction and Power conference's public engagement strategy also included a collaborative public exhibition run with the independent Bristol Galley (Eric Shanower: The Age of Bronze, Tuesday 21st September to Sunday 26th September 2010). Jointly organised by García Morcillo and Knippschild (University of Bristol), the public exhibition featured original artwork of the comic Age of Bronze, a graphic novel series about the Trojan Wars, by the renowned and Eisner Prize awarded American graphic novelist Eric Shanower. The exhibition sought to demonstrate the influence of the reception of antiquity on a specific manifestation of culture and showed how this shapes culture as such, ranging from post-classical traditional art disciplines to contemporary popular cultural expressions. Expanding on these themes, Shanower delivered a free public lecture about his work at the gallery on Saturday 25 September entitled Trojan Lovers and Warriors: The Power of Seduction in Age of Bronze. In this talk he drew on the work of the network to explore how sex and power underpin the entire story of the Trojan War, and how these themes weave together to create the stories we know today. Age of Bronze presents the complete story of the world-famous War at Troy, freshly retold for the 21st century. Its primary sources begin with Homer's Iliad, and include the three major tragedians Aeschylus, Euripides and Sophocles, as well as other Greek and Roman works such as Virgil's Aeneid, and Medieval and Renaissance European sources, such as Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida. From Schliemann to current research, the art of Age of Bronze further incorporates archaeological excavations of the places where the story took place: Mycenae, Knossos, and Pylos and especially Troy itself. In September 2012, IMAGINES furthered its commitment to bringing together scholars, students, the general public and professionals working on or inspired by ancient topics.

Imagines III: Magic and the Supernatural hosted a public event at which the renowned playwright and director Stephan Seidel (Staatstheater Mainz) introduced to the public his work and his sources of inspiration in ancient myth. He spoke about the connections between his work and ancient myth and how this aspect is reflected in the staging of his plays. Particular attention was paid during the talk to Seidel's reworking of the Phaedra myth in his play "Deine Liebe ist vielleicht tragischer als meine, aber nicht dein Tod" ("Your love is perhaps more tragic than my love, yet your death is not") after Jean Racine. He explained to the audience how he reads the characters of the play and the world they live in and how these aspects are transferred into the physis of the actors on stage, into their relationships, and how they are recreated within a given space and music.

The film maker Oliver Stone has also shared García Morcillo's and Berti's volume Hellas on Screen on his website and Facebook page, soliciting discussions from his viewing community. He also visited (30th Jan 2012) IMAGINES contributor, Angelos Chaniotis, Professor of Ancient History at Princeton Institute of Advanced Study to speak about research on Alexander in relation to his film Alexander: Revisited.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- The Bristol Gallery, Millennium Promenade, Harbourside, Bristol.
- Eric Shanower eric@hungrytigerpress.com
- Stephan Seidel Staatstheater Mainz, Gutenberg Platz 7. 55116 Mainz
- Oliver Stone.
<http://www.oliverstone.com/hellas-on-screen1/> and
<https://www.facebook.com/TheOliverStone?rf=108729429151075> and

<http://www.ias.edu/about/publications/ias-letter/articles/2013-spring/chaniotis-oliver-stone>

- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 19.09.2012, No. 219, p N3
<http://www.seiten.faz-archiv.de/faz/20120919/fnuwd1201209193630699.html>
- Radio Rioja (Cadena SER), 04/08/2012
<http://www.radorioja.es/2012/08/04/mainz-alemania-acoge-el-congreso-imagines-iii-la-magia-y-lo-sobrenatural- en-el-mundo-antiguo-organizado-por-la-ur/>