

Antiquity in Simulation: Global Receptions of the Classical World in Video Games

Date: 13th June 2026

Location: Classics Faculty, Ioannou Centre (OX1 3LU)

Keynote Speakers: Dr Dunstan Lowe (University of Kent), Dr Jennifer Cromwell (Manchester Metropolitan University)

The reception of the classical world in video games is by no means a new phenomenon, and the past decade has seen a rapid transformation and expansion of the digital landscape, with release of massively successful titles – *Assassin's Creed Origins* and *Odyssey*, *God of War II* and *III*, *Rome: Total War*, and *Hades*, to name only a few – introducing a global player base in the millions to the Greco-Roman world – in many cases, for the first time. Scholarly interest in the reception of the classical world in video games has given rise to a foundation of limited but fruitful scholarship, including several edited volumes (e.g., Thorsen 2012, Rollinger 2020, Draycott and Cook 2022, Sanz 2025) and monographs (André 2016, Clare 2021, Vandewalle 2026), and the recent conference *New Directions in Classics, Gaming, and Extended Reality* (Bristol, June 2024). Likewise, the panel 'Game On! Teaching and Reinterpreting Classical Antiquity through Video Games' at the 2026 SCS Conference made promising inroads into the pedagogical use of such games.

While these are exciting developments, the current discussion has largely focused on titles produced by major Western developers, with little attention paid to studios beyond Europe and North America, such as those within the hugely successful East Asian sector. As a representative example of the massive reach and profitability of these games, *Honkai: Star Rail* (HSR), a mobile game from Chinese developer Hoyoverse, released a massive update ('Version 3.0 Paeon of Era Nova') in January 2025, introducing its 5-million global player base to the Greco-Roman fantasy world of Amphoreus. Following this update, the game would achieve a monthly revenue estimated at \$100 million USD in April of that same year.

In view of this research gap, this conference aims to serve as a platform for dialogue on Eastern and Western approaches to the reception of the classical world in video games. We are particularly interested in the duality of 'Reception': both the reception of the classical world in video games produced by non-Western studios (e.g. *Elden Ring*, *Final Fantasy*), including those hosted on mobile platforms (e.g., *Fate/Grand Order*, *Reverse:1999*), and the reception of these classically-inspired games in the non-Western world. We therefore invite papers that touch on any aspect of the global reception of the classical world in video games, particularly those which respond to the following:

- How do Eastern and Western receptions of Classics in video games differ? What version/vision of the classical world (broadly defined) is presented in non-Western video games?
- How are elements of classical antiquity monetised within video games? How is the ancient world adapted for mass entertainment?
- How do social, cultural, and linguistic contexts affect the reception of classically-inspired video games?
- Immersive world building: How are sounds/images of classical antiquity created in non-Western video games?

- How does the unique interactivity of video games, compared with other visual media, influence the player's experience of the ancient world? How is the experience 'embodied'?

This conference is organised by Clare Chang (Lincoln College, DPhil Classical Language & Literature) and Sarah Marshall (St Hugh's College, DPhil Classical Language & Literature), and in collaboration with the Bristol Digital Game Lab and the APGRD.

We are also honoured to have Dr Dunstan Lowe from the University of Kent, speaking on 'Journeys to the West: Mediterranean Antiquity in Japanese Video Games', and Dr Jennifer Cromwell from Manchester Metropolitan University, who will speak on '(Re)constructing Ancient Egypt in non-Western Video Games', as our keynote speakers.

Instruction for Abstract Submission:

Please submit an abstract (300 words or less) for a 20-minute paper. In-person presentations are strongly preferred, but virtual presentation is possible in extraordinary circumstances.

If you are interested in presenting at the conference, please send us an abstract in the following format:

Presenter Name:

Academic/Formal Association (if applicable):

Presentation Title:

Abstract (300 words or less):

The deadline for submission is the **20th of March**, and responses will be communicated by the end of March.

Please direct all abstracts and queries to the following email: antiquityinsimulation@outlook.com