



26th ANNUAL JOINT POSTGRADUATE SYMPOSIUM ON ANCIENT PERFORMANCE, 25–26 JUNE 2026:

‘Technologies in the Theory and Practice of Greek and Roman Performance and its Reception’

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 26th Annual Joint Postgraduate Symposium on Ancient Performance and Reception, hosted by the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama, University of Oxford and Royal Holloway, University of London, will take place on Thursday 25 and Friday 26 June 2026. This year’s theme will be: ‘Technologies in the Theory and Practice of Greek and Roman Performance and its Reception.’

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

This Symposium focuses on the reception of Greek and Roman tragedy, comedy, satyr play, epic, lyric, and other texts in performance, exploring their afterlives through re-workings by writers and practitioners across all genres and periods. This year’s theme seeks to explore how technology, broadly conceived, has shaped ancient drama and the modern reception and performance of Greek and Roman drama. The relationship between technological innovation and ancient drama is discernible in both the ancient and modern worlds. Its implications range from questions surrounding ancient stage technologies such as the *mēkhanē* (μηχανή); to the relationship between ancient performance and the development of literary and material cultures; and to the role that digital technologies play in and around modern performances of Greek and Roman drama, for example the 2021 Oxford Greek Play, *Orestes*. The word ‘technology’ itself derives etymologically from the ancient Greek word *téchnē* (τέχνη), defined variously as ‘art’, ‘skill’, ‘craft’ and ‘cunning’. The link between this concept and the performance of ancient drama is visible in the name given to the performers of Greek drama during the Hellenistic period and the Roman Empire: ‘*hoi peri ton Dionuson technitai*’ (οἱ περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον τεχνῖται) or ‘Artists of Dionysus’. We invite responses which consider such expanded understandings of ‘technology’ in relation to the study and performance of Greek and Roman drama in antiquity and modernity.

Participants are invited to consider any of the following prompts:

- Modern performance technologies (lighting, sound, video and digital scenography)
- Ancient technologies and the performance of Greek and Roman drama
- Transmission technologies, including archiving and documentation
- The impacts of digital technologies/humanities
- The implications of Artificial Intelligence for the study and performance of Greek and Roman drama

- The history, politics and ethics of technology
- Broader explorations of technologies from perspectives of ecocriticism, postcolonialism, critical AI theory, disability studies, queer theory, feminism and posthumanism

The guest respondent on Day 1 in Oxford will be Dr Francesca Beretta, and Dr Aneta Mancewicz will be our guest respondent on Day 2 at Royal Holloway. Day 1 will include a keynote lecture by Professor George Rodosthenous and Day 2 will include a panel discussion featuring Professor Jen Parker-Starbuck.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auslander, P. (2022) *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. Third edition. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Bakogianni, A. et al. (2024) *Classical Reception: New Challenges in a Changing World*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Dixon, S. (2007) *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT.

Escobar Varela, M. (2021) *Theater as Data: Computational Journeys into Theater Research*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press

Lavender, A. (2016) *Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement*. London: Routledge.

Mancewicz, A. (2014) *Intermedial Shakespeares on European stages*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan

Parker-Starbuck, J. (2014) *Cyborg Theatre: Corporeal/Technological Intersections in Multimedia Performance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rodosthenous, G. and Poulou, A. (eds.) (2024) *Greek Tragedy and The Digital*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Slocombe, W. and Liveley, G. (eds.) (2025) *The Routledge Handbook of AI and Literature*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Worthington, I. (1996) *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.

PARTICIPANTS

Masters and PhD students from around the world are welcome to participate, as are those who have completed a doctorate but have not yet taken up a post. The symposium is open to speakers from different disciplines, including researchers in the fields of classics, classical reception, modern languages and literature, and theatre and performance studies. Practitioners are welcome to contribute their personal experience of working on ancient drama. Papers may include demonstrations or recorded material. Undergraduates are very welcome to attend. This year's symposium will be in person and online, although we encourage participants to attend in person where possible. We hope to be able to offer a small bursary for travel from

afar. Those who wish to offer a short paper (15 mins) or performance presentation are invited to send an abstract of up to 200 words outlining the proposed subject of their discussion to postgradsymp@classics.ox.ac.uk by the 20th of March 2026. If applicable, please include details of your current course of study, supervisor, and academic institution. There will be no registration fee. Please indicate in your application whether you would like to be considered for a travel bursary.

CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES: postgradsymp@classics.ox.ac.uk