

Abstracts

Lucia Athanassaki

The fabric of civic life in Alexandria in Plutarch, Dio of Prusa and others

In his Alexandrian oration (32) Dio launches an all-out attack against the Alexandrians' predilection for music and horse-races citing Homer, Euripides, and other venerable authorities to drive his point home. Looking closely at Dio's scathing account of Alexandrian lifestyle in light of earlier accounts of Hellenic enthusiasm for song, dance, and athletic contests, chiefly by Pindar and Xenophon, this paper argues that in this strange oration Dio attacks the traditional civic fabric of Hellenism, and it explores the possible reasons for this idiosyncratic approach, taking into account Plutarch's presentation of the lifestyle of Antony and Cleopatra.

Janet Downie

The Hellenic Topography of Imperial Cyzicus

This paper will examine the role played by the landscape of Cyzicus – its geographical position and its unusual topography – in its profile as a Hellenic city.

Anne Gangloff

The pride of being Greek in Rhodes and Prusa *ad Olympum*

I would like to use the rules for praising a city according to Menander Rhetor as a starting point to identify the constituent elements of a Hellenic identity (at the end of the third century), and to look at Dio's praise of the Hellenism of Rhodes and of Prusa (Bursa): on the one hand, a great city presented as the jewel of Hellenism, and on the other hand, Dio's homeland, whose origin is recent and whose Hellenic identity is far less prestigious. Inscriptions and coins will be used for comparison. The aim is to examine whether Dio's discourse on Hellenism varies according to the city he addresses (or the date on which he speaks), and whether his oration reflects the civic discourse of coins and inscriptions on a Hellenic identity.

Lina Girdvainyte

Malleable civic identity as a strategy of survival in the Greek cities of the early imperial period

In the Greek world under Rome, some performative aspects of local citizenships, including a limited degree of public decision-making, could be extended to non-citizens on the basis of prolonged territorial presence—as observed, most glaringly, in the case of resident Romans. By associating themselves with Roman settlers in their midst, Greek cities could express their loyalty to Rome in the hope of some tangible benefits in return. Through a series of case studies, this paper explores strategic choices of a

number of imperial Greek cities to emphasise the presence and agency of their non-citizen populations and considers the extent to which this can be seen as a deliberate construction of a more malleable civic identity.

Lucy Grig

The fabric of Hellenism and popular culture in the imperial Greek city: materiality and resistance

It is often taken as a given that Hellenism in the Roman Empire was first and foremost the property of the *paideia*-possessing upper classes, although extended to the wider citizen body at key times, top down, through the institutions of the city and its cults, through visibility, performance and spectacle. This elite Hellenism has itself been influentially explored as a means for constructing its own resistance to Roman power. What difference might it make to look at the fabric of Hellenism through a popular culture approach – to look at how local Hellenic identity was communicated, reproduced but also at times resisted? In this paper I shall look firstly at how a far wider and more diverse range of individuals could experience, construct and replicate Hellenic identity through material and visual culture. Secondly I shall focus on forms of opposition or resistance to Hellenism – itself woven into the fabric of Roman power – as demonstrated most clearly in the Christian narrative texts of the imperial period. Two cities will form the case-studies for this investigation: Antioch and Ephesus, cities were known for their famous cult images that attained superstar status, as well as being rich in literary and epigraphic testimonies.

Owen Hodkinson

Hellenic culture and identity in the *Epistles* and other ‘minor’ works of the Philostratean corpus

Philostratus’ concern with civic identity and the polis is evidently a very important part of his idea of Hellenic culture in the ‘major’ works of the corpus, *VS* and *VA*, and this aspect has accordingly been much discussed. The letter-writer persona of the *Epistles* on the other hand seems entirely unconcerned with these aspects of identity, while other works in the Philostratean corpus fall at various points between these extremes, so that scholarship on Philostratus’ Hellenism and cultural identities tend to overlook what can be found in the *Epistles* and elsewhere on these themes. This paper will start with these hints from less obvious sources in order to supplement the well-known wider picture of Philostratean Hellenic culture across the corpus. It will also ask what is behind the relative silences in the *Epistles* and elsewhere about some dominant aspects of identity in *VS* and *VA*: is this simply a matter of other genres not providing a suitable medium to convey ideas of Hellenism and identity, or do they convey a different aspect of recognisably Philostratean ideas?

Dan Jolowicz

The Latinity of the Greek Novels: A Threat to Hellenism?

The ancient Greek novels have long been regarded as complex articulations of Greek identity and even as ‘expression[s] of cultural hegemony’ (Swain, 1996, 106). With their emphasis on the classical past, apparent absence of Rome, urban elite protagonists, the *polis*, and marriage, the novels are held by some scholars to reflect a culturally regenerative force, symbolically advancing the perpetuation of the Greek elite and their interests, or as providing them with a cultural script in response to Roman domination. But there is more Rome – and indeed Latin – in this genre than meets the eye. In this paper, I shall review the various strands of *Romana* in the novels and how it affects their Hellenism, touching also on issues of readership and patronage, especially in connection with the city of Aphrodisias, a city closely connected with the genesis of the Greek novel. I shall also use this opportunity to make the case that the authors of two fragmentary Greek novels, the so-called *Ninus* and *Chione*, are engaging with Virgil’s *Aeneid*. They are thus embroiled in the discourses of Roman imperialism, with implications for the Hellenism of this apparently Greek genre.

Athena Kavoulaki

Religious visibility according to ancestral custom: Greek festive traditions, poetic, ritual and other

The rich complex of civic traditions, constitutive of civic identity in the Hellenic world, involved aspects of religious visibility that carried particular cultural weight. It is an important issue that cannot be dissociated from the basic fact that in Antiquity people did not perceive or experience their cities horizontally, with the help of maps or plans. Greeks, in particular, tended to experience their *poleis* mainly vertically by moving about their streets, their monuments, their walls and other landmarks. In this context important transitions and movements (individual or other) proved a key factor that made monuments and topographies a dynamic aspect of the lives of the Greek inhabitants. This dynamic interaction was particularly explored by major Greek *poleis* such as Athens that laid emphasis on organizing collective ritual movements (participatory processions in particular) that managed to turn the city visible and endow it with a distinct cultural identity. This vertically formed cultural visibility of major urban centres such as Athens deserves to be examined more closely both for its lasting influence that seems to have been acknowledged and variously advanced in Imperial times and for its potential to (inter)weave and to highlight the fabric of Hellenism.

Jason Koenig

Hellenism and landscape in the city praise tradition: Aelius Aristides and Alciphron

This paper opens with a discussion of the importance of positive relationships between cities and their landscapes in the imperial Greek city praise tradition, with a special focus on the portrayal of mountains. It then examines a number of ways in which assumptions about the importance of landscape for Hellenic identity could be challenged

or subverted. I look first at a series of passages from Dio Chrysostom where he expresses scepticism about that link; also at the Euboicus, which I read as a comically dysfunctional portrayal of idealised images of city-mountain relations. Secondly, and at most length, I turn to Alciphron's Letters, especially Book 1 (from fishermen) and Book 2 (from farmers). My argument is that one of the key sources of comedy in his text is its subversion of images of city-landscape relations from the city praise tradition, and especially from works in praise of Attica, exemplified here by Aelius Aristides' Panathenaicus.

Anna Kouremenos

Reviving Attic Besa: Placing a Forgotten Deme on the Map of Roman Imperial Greece

This paper offers an inaugural examination of the Attic deme of Besa and its significance in the Roman imperial period. The epigraphic record indicates that three Roman emperors—Hadrian, Commodus, and Alexander Severus—were enrolled as citizens in this deme. Additionally, the influential eastern magnate G. Julius Antiochus Epiphanes Philopappos and several men who dominated Athenian politics during the High Imperial period were also citizens. I argue that Hadrian's enrollment and repeated sojourns in Athens encouraged various individuals—including two of his successors—to join this deme. However, a question arises: why did the emperor choose Besa over a larger, more important deme in Athens' civic center? Consequently, where did he reside while serving as eponymous archon of Athens in 111/112 and during his subsequent visits to the city as emperor? This paper presents the first multidisciplinary study of Besa and its recorded Roman citizens, utilizing available epigraphic, literary, archaeological, environmental, and artistic evidence. Furthermore, it proposes some points to ponder for further interdisciplinary research in this area of south Attica.

Sophie Lalanne

The elite and the demos: status, functions and the balance of power in the Greek cities of the ancient novels (1st-3rd c. AD)

A particular balance between mass and elite has been proposed as one of the major features in the social, economic and political organization that the Greeks called *polis*. The five complete Greek novels, which give primary roles to young people from the highest elite of their city, provide a rich material to anyone who wants to understand how this balance evolved in the Roman period. For instance, civic honours still reward the functions of magistrates, *leitourgoi* and *euergetai* even if, as some scholars demonstrated for the late Hellenistic period, the family lives of the elite have a greater part in the life of the city and impact the politics of honour. But other phenomena could be mentioned: the predominance of *strategoï*, the leading role of *bouleutai*, the significant number of spontaneous meetings of the *demos*, the inclusion of women in some sessions of the *Ecclesia*... All this underlines a very careful attention to the prerogatives of each political force, not only because the political regime is said to be a "democracy" (at least formally), but also because the balance between mass and elite has to do with the definition of the *polis* as a whole and because it supports and

disseminates Greek civic values like *eleutheria*, *andreia*, *xenia*, *sophrosune* and *megalopsuchia*.

Paraskevi Martzavou

Akraiphia and its material past in the Ptoia of the Late Hellenistic and Early Imperial Periods

In this paper, I will explore how the small city of Akraiphia in Boiotia navigated as a civic community through the challenges of the Late Hellenistic and Imperial times by focusing on the celebration of Ptoia as a key action in common, bringing in its material past in various imaginative ways into its present. In this way, it enhanced its local and regional distinctiveness and integrated itself into wider panhellenic networks.

Stephen Mitchell

Christian Greek literature and the tradition of Hellenic *paideia* in the mid-third century.

This presentation deals with two points around 250 when Christian writings intersected with the high literary culture of Hellenism. The first is the lengthy speech of thanks delivered by Theodorus/Gregorius, from an east Anatolian land-owning family, to Origen, the Alexandrian Christian intellectual, who had been his inspirational teacher for eight years in Palestine between c. 235 and 243, before the pupil returned to become bishop in his home city, Pontic Neocaesareia. The speech provides the only systematic account of Origen as a teacher, whose methods required comprehensive study of Greek philosophy as a protreptic for understanding the Bible. It is best known for portraying the cultural and educational setting occupied by the high-achieving Gregory, an ambitious although immature practitioner of Greek rhetoric, an advanced student of Latin and Roman Law, and a fledgling exponent of Christian texts. Rhetoric prevails over Christian knowledge in his exposition, but the balance is redressed in Origen's much shorter reply.

The second is provided by the short but brilliant description of the martyrdom of Smyrna's bishop Polycarp, narrated in a letter sent by the Christians of Smyrna to the Christians of Philomelium in Phrygia, the most famous early model of this genre, and the less familiar account of the martyrdom of the priest Pionius, set in Smyrna in 250, which resembles that of Polycarp in scope and style. Both, excluding of course the final details of Pionius's death ordeal, are declared to be the work of Pionius himself, and this plain information, largely denied or ignored by most modern commentators, provides direct access to the place and time of these compositions. They refer both directly and by contextual allusion to the high cultural traditions of Smyrna, more than a century after the death of its most famous sophist Polemo.

Judith Mossman

Eternal City? Delphi, Hellenism and the civic in Plutarch

This paper examines the themes of Hellenism and the civic in Plutarch's Delphic Dialogues (*On the E at Delphi*, *Why are Oracles No Longer Given in Verse?*, and *On*

the Obsolescence of Oracles). There are many examples of civic pride on view in Delphi and in Plutarch's discussion. These date from periods throughout Greek history, and contribute to the rich texture of the dialogues and their play with time in the *lieu de mémoire* of Delphi. However, many of these examples point to the selfishness of cities and the divisive aspect of civic pride. In contrast, where Plutarch foregrounds the idea of Hellenism, a more complete and lasting sense of identity emerges and complements, rather than being in dissonance with, the overarching sublime presence of 'our dear Apollo' (*On the E* 384e).

Zahra Newby

Hellenic culture and civic identity in the festivals of Roman Asia Minor

This paper will ask how important assertions of Hellenism were in the festival cultures of Roman Asia Minor, with a particular focus on festivals at Hierapolis, Perge and Nysa. Through an examination of visual, numismatic and epigraphic sources, it will explore whether these cities put particular emphasis on the Hellenic credentials of their festivals, and the extent to which local, regional and panhellenic traditions tied into their senses of civic identity.

The Apolloneia Pythia festival at Hierapolis was awarded sacred and ecumenical status around the start of the third century, at the same time that a relief celebrating the city's festival culture adorned the newly restored theatre. Festivals modelled after those of the older period (termed isopythian or isolympia) grew in popularity in the Hellenistic and roman periods, yet we can question the extent to which they were carbon copies of their illustrious models. Here I will look at the iconography of the theatre, and the specific ways in which it celebrated Hierapolis' festival and the city's place in the wider Hellenic world, while also stressing her regional importance and particularities. The festivals at Perge in Pamphylia and Nysa in Lydia will also be discussed, with consideration of the ways in which identity was performed and created through the interaction of ephemeral events (such as the Pamphylian hymn to Artemis mentioned in Philostratus, *VA* 1.30) with their monumental setting.

Katerina Oikonomopoulou

Questioning Greek civic identity at the imperial symposium: Plutarch and Athenaeus

What does it mean to be a citizen of a *polis* in the Roman imperial context? And what did it mean at other phases of the Hellenic past? Such questions underpin or emanate from the subjects of many sympotic conversations depicted in Plutarch's *Quaestiones Convivales* and in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. The two texts' disparate discussions of different Greek *poleis*' traditions, communal organisation, local histories, customs, cults, and linguistic usage may offer far from straightforward or coherent answers to these questions, but both works place cultural and intellectual value on the process and method of exploring them in a sympotic context. Posing and answering (the right kinds of) questions about Greek civic identity is key to this, and my paper will look closely at the way such questions emerge from the material reality of the symposium or the flow of sympotic conversation, and how they are approached and debated by Plutarch's and Athenaeus' symposiasts. As I will show, sympotic enquiry and debate is in both

authors a tool that enables the juxtaposition of different perspectives and styles of reflection (e.g. antiquarian, anthropological, philosophical-scientific, comparative) on the Greek civic past and its relationship to the imperial present.

Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis

Bodies, landscape and entanglement in imperial Attica

The paper opens with a close reading of an inscription (*IG II² 3606 / EM13047*) in elegiac couplets about a celebratory procession to welcome Herodes Atticus on his return to Attica c.175 AD. It explores three aspects: first, ways in which the text entwines human bodies in all their intimate details (references to hair, clothing colour and condition, singing) with the Attic landscape; second, the phenomenological experience of this procession, foregrounding the diversity of bodies involved (the enslaved, foreigners, citizens of different genders and ages, and also anthropomorphic divine effigies); and third, the materiality of the inscription and its putative viewers where it was found, in the area of Herodes' villa at Marathon. Using the theory of entanglement I show how carefully fashioned bodies intersected with the Attic landscape, and ways in which public and private associative meanings of landscape features were dynamically constructed through kinetic experience. The diversity of people mentioned in the inscription suggests that the entire community and not just the elite was involved in this iterative process. The analysis of this procession, then, enables me to probe the relationship between private embodied experience and civic identity, in terms of lived experience and discourses.

The ephemeral procession and its permanent commemoration in stone are then contextualised within the broader phenomenon of entanglement of bodies and landscape in Herodes' life. He drew to his Attic villas in Kephisia and Marathon bodies in the flesh (his relatives, *trophimoi*, students) and bodies in sculptural form, the latter again including gods. The discussion explores ways in which Herodes thus created nuclei of favoured bodies in the peripheries of Attica and even alternative imperial geographies through the display of Roman, Ethiopian and Egyptian sculpted bodies of Regilla, Memnon and Antinoos. Here again the paper asks questions about the intersection of individual bodies and public civic landscape in Attica and even further afield.

Thomas Schmidt

Defining Hellenism: the ideal Greek city according to Dio and Plutarch

As two contemporary *pepaideumenoi*, Dio of Prusa and Plutarch of Chaeronea were both ardent defenders of Hellenism, promoters of the Greek *polis* and advocates of civic harmony, yet they had very different personalities. Was there such a thing as an ideal Greek city for them? The starting point of my investigation will be Dio's *Or.* 36, the famous *Borystheniticus*, which precisely addresses this question of the ideal city and which, in its long introductory section, presents a vivid and largely idealised description of the city of Borysthenes (and its inhabitants) as a bastion of Hellenism on the edge of the barbarian world. This portrait, however, also leads to a general questioning of

Hellenism. This does not seem the case with Plutarch: his Hellenism appears rather as a set of timeless values of which the *polis* is one component. Nevertheless, for him, there does not seem to be an ideal city, but a plurality of cities which jointly participate in an ideal of Greekness. For if there is an ideal city, then it is, as for Dio, a heavenly one.

Bert Smith

Theoi Sebastoi Olympioi: Hellenising imperial images in the Greek East

The emperor's portrait was designed in authorised central models that were made available, in some form, for any kind of imperial image to be set up elsewhere. Busts and statues might follow the available models closely, or they might not. Scholarship in this area has tended to privilege a central perspective of imperial models and provincial 'replicas' which ill-suits the highly varied character of the evidence. In most cases, 'replica' is a serious misrepresentation of the evidence in local contexts outside Rome.

The paper discusses some of the more 'disobedient' versions and re-purposing of imperial images in their varied receptions in the Greek East. Examples are selected from Aphrodisias and Ephesos, as well as from some other eastern cities. Material, function, local technologies, and local ideas all played a part in their variety. Most striking are imperial images in which emperors became Hellenistic-style ruler-gods. Eastern cities forged their own vision of the emperor that converted what to modern eyes was the most Roman of subjects into *Theoi Sebastoi Olympioi*. Such statues were shaped by ideas that were alien to, often opposed to, the basic ideological premises of the 'central' images on which they were based.

Many eastern cities thus conjured Hellenistic rulers out of Roman emperors, not with any purpose of denying imperial reality, but to mould a style of ruler more in tune with local perception of these strange new all-powerful divinities.

Tony Spawforth

Claudius Atticus and the *mastigosis* at Sparta

This paper discusses a Greek inscription from Sparta published in 2022 by Georgios Steinhauer in his two-volume study of the Spartan dynast and protégé of Augustus, C. Iulius Eurycles. It argues that the text records ephebic acclamations of particular historical interest. Firstly, the occasion appears to be the whipping contest at the Spartan sanctuary of Artemis Orthia, well known in imperial times, with Lucian specifically mentioning the shouted exhortations of the spectators. Secondly, the first-named ephebe, 'Herodes son of Hipparchus', can only be Tib. Claudius Atticus Herodes, son of Tib. Claudius Hipparchus and father of the famous sophist. Both father and son are already attested as Spartan ephebes. This paper discusses the subjection to a public whipping of both father and (quite possibly) son, both future Roman consuls, in the larger context of the military culture of provincial Greek cities at this time (around AD 95), of the self-fashioning of an elite Athenian family ambitious for Roman honours, and of the gendered Roman stereotype of the provincial Greek which such ambitions had to surmount.

Estelle Strazdins

Greek cities thinking about the future

In a 2019 *JRS* article, Brent Shaw claimed that people in the Roman empire did not possess a notion of the future equivalent to our own – ‘time that is densely populated with things that are planned, known and solidly pictured’ (Shaw 2019, 6). His evidence was largely economic and lay in a perceived failure to organise for the future in concrete and practical ways nor borrow against its projected capital. As this paper will demonstrate, however, imperial Greek cities and their elite inhabitants did have a conception of their own, if to a large degree abstract, futurity. This sense of the future was grounded in a rich engagement with the Hellenic past, and buttressed by the notion of monumental permanence and the canon of great literature. For imperial Greeks, moreover, futurity was regularly embedded in concrete and commemorative space; it was tethered to cultural memory and a deep historical consciousness. Using material and literary evidence centred on several Greek cities, such as Athens, Corinth, Prusa, Ephesus and Palmyra, this paper will explore various modes of civic and personal engagement with the future (e.g., local constructions of time, the promotion of the goddess Tyche, material benefaction, the creation of literary cityscapes) and their impact on the fabric of Hellenic identity in the Roman world.

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Michael Trapp

Aelius Aristides on Smyrna and Rhodes

Aelius Aristides’ *Orationes* 17-21 and 24 turn largely, even if not exclusively, on ruptures and repairs to the physical and moral fabric of the two poleis on which they focus, Smyrna and Rhodes, each of which had its own cherished blend of shared Hellenic identity with local distinction. Speaking as adoptive citizen of the one, and concerned patron of the other, Aristides seeks both to represent them to themselves in the best light, and to mediate between their local and Hellenic pasts and the contemporary reality of their position as subordinate/dependent communities in the larger world of the Roman Empire. This paper will examine the stakes of the venture both for Smyrna and Rhodes, and for Aristides in his self-representation as specialist in and embodiment of the best of Hellenic tradition, both to immediate audiences and cumulatively to posterity in collections of his work. (Against the consensus of recent discussions, *Or.* 25 will largely be left out of account as non-Aristidean, and a brief justification for this offered.)

Tim Whitmarsh

Pros Hellēnas: Second-century Hellenism and the Christian problem

The second century is the earliest era for which we have clear signs of a shared literary culture between Christians and non-Christians, in the form of the so-called ‘apologetic’ literature (which often takes the form of a rhetorical address), educated Christians like Irenaeus experimenting with a variety of Greek literary forms, and sophisticated epistolary texts like the *Epistle to Diognetus*. Classicists, however, have struggled to accommodate this material into their accounts of the second sophistic. This paper seeks to raise and address some of the methodological issues involved in giving a more inclusive account of second century Greek literature in general, and more specifically of the civic environments in which literature was produced, circulated and consumed.