

An Olive Tree, a Vineyard, and a Ship: (Re)imagining the Greek World Across Time

‘If you take Greece apart, in the end you will see that what remains is an olive tree, a vineyard, and a ship. Which means that, with as much again, you can rebuild it.’

Odysseas Elytis, *The Little Mariner* (1985)

For the modern Greek poet Elytis, Greece could be distilled into three elements: the olive tree, evoking nature and memory; the vineyard, suggesting the cycles of life and community; and the ship, representing socio-cultural, maritime exchange. For millennia, the Greek world has been dismantled and reconstructed through literature, historiography, art, and political imagination, never remaining static. From ancient authors who interpreted the Greek past through myth and memory, to Byzantine engagements with classical heritage; from Renaissance humanism and nineteenth-century philhellenism to modernist, postcolonial, diasporic, and contemporary responses to literature and material remains, the Greek world has repeatedly been (re)imagined by writers and artists. These representations have shaped ideas of antiquity, modernity, and identity.

The A.G. Leventis Centre for Greek Studies invites postgraduate researchers to participate in a one-day workshop at the University of Edinburgh. The workshop invites interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to the ways in which the Greek world has been imagined, appropriated, and reconstructed across different historical periods, geographical contexts, and literary or artistic traditions. In particular, we welcome papers that move beyond conventional divisions between ancient, Byzantine, Ottoman, and modern Greece, or that examine dialogues between Greek and non-Greek perspectives, including interdisciplinary and comparative approaches.

Possible topics might include:

- **The Olive Tree: Land, Memory, and Belonging** (e.g. landscapes, environments, origins, ruins, material memory, and constructions of home and national identity);
- **The Vineyard: Transformation, and Community** (e.g. education, translation, cultural transmission, ritual, labour, adaptation, and the reshaping of Greek texts and traditions);
- **The Ship: Movement, Encounter, and Return** (e.g. travel writing, migration, networks, philhellenism, and encounters between Greek and non-Greek worlds).

We welcome proposals from postgraduate students, PhD candidates, and early career researchers and from disciplines including: Classics, Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Comparative Literature, History, Art History, Archaeology, Film and Media Studies, Translation Studies, and related fields.

Please submit an abstract of **300 words**, together with a short bio, to glacogn@ed.ac.uk by **15 September**, and speakers will be notified of acceptance by **30 September**. Papers should be in **English** and approximately **20 minutes** in length.

The workshop will take place in the week beginning **30 November 2026**, with further details to be confirmed. Travel and accommodation expenses for accepted speakers will be subsidised, with further logistical information communicated upon acceptance.