



College Year in Athens

5th ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

Challenging Athens: urban development and human interaction at a Mediterranean crossroads

Athens, 4 May 2022
Daphne & George Hatsopoulos Hall
CYA

Athens – ancient and modern – can be a challenging city in which to live. Its dense urban core has always seemed to battle against the natural landscape, and the population has struggled to move about and interact with the infrastructure of transport networks, streets, waterways and public spaces. And yet it is also a city of solutions, taking bold steps to solve long-term issues or to address emergency situations, sudden influxes of migrant populations, clearing up from and lessening the impact of natural disasters, adapting to the topography of its hills and rivers, and devising plans to get people from A to B. We have invited young CYA scholars to present their original research on these themes across a range of disciplines.

Robert Pitt

Conference Committee

Robert Pitt, CYA History & Epigraphy Professor (Chair)

Kate Donnelly, CYA Academic Writing Advisor

Theoni Scourta, CYA V.P. for Academic Affairs

Conference Program & Abstracts

WEDNESDAY 4 MAY

- 14:00 Welcoming remarks**
Theoni Scourta, CYA V.P. Academic Affairs
- 14:10 Opening Address**
Robert Pitt, CYA History & Epigraphy Professor
- 14:20 *Immigration, Identity, and Insularity:
Negotiating Phoenician Identity in Athens through Names***
Acacia Oyler, Trinity University
Claire Hylton, Bryn Mawr College
- 14:50 *Roman Athens: Identity and Transformation of Urban Space***
Luis Rodriguez-Perez, University of Southern California
- 15:20 *Ardittos Hill: its beauty and significance throughout the ages***
Alexander Krauzlis, Siena College
- 15:50 *Forced Migration and Conceptions of Belonging: A Case
Study of Greece and Turkey***
Riley Thompson, Brown University
- 16:20 *Behind the spray can: Graffiti as dissent in Exarchia and
the larger Athens area***
Kaitlin Birnbaum, Vassar College

ACACIA OYLER

CYA – Trinity University

CLAIRE HYLTON

CYA – Bryn Mawr College

Immigration, Identity, and Insularity: Negotiating Phoenician Identity in Athens through Names

As the center of Mediterranean trade, power, and economy, Classical Athens hosted many immigrant groups, including individuals from Asia Minor, Egypt, and the Cyclades. One of these groups was the Phoenicians, a seafaring people from the Levantine region. While the Phoenician's material and linguistic exchange with the Athenians has been the subject of much scholarly research, how exactly these Phoenicians incorporated themselves into the social fabric of Athens is largely unknown. Did they embrace their status as foreigners, or did they attempt to present themselves as Athenians and assimilate into the city's native population? This paper seeks to answer this question using epigraphic and archaeological evidence from bilingual Phoenician-Greek funerary stelai. By examining Phoenician gravestones in Athens, we will explore the Phoenicians' portrayal of themselves and their cultural identity. This exploration will allow us to investigate how Phoenician identity in Athens was both preserved and assimilated. Ultimately, we will argue that the existing evidence suggests the Phoenicians used bilingual funerary stelai in order to present themselves in a manner attainable and relatable to an Athenian audience but not as a way to incorporate themselves into Athenian culture and religion. Indeed, in death, the Phoenician identity remained distinct from that of the Greeks.

Acacia Oyler is a junior majoring in Classical Studies and History. After graduation, she hopes to pursue a PhD in History, with a focus on the ancient Mediterranean world.

Claire Hylton is a junior studying Classical Languages and Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology. She plans to pursue a PhD in Classics.

LUIS RODRIGUEZ-PEREZ

CYA – University of Southern California

Roman Athens: Identity and Transformation of Urban Space

Where once Athens dominated the political and cultural life of the 5th-century Aegean, its hegemonic standing would gradually decline. However, the image of a dominant Athens was a long-lasting one that still shapes the identity of the city today. It was during its hegemonic period that the topography of the city was transformed into an enduring example of Classical heritage, from its architecture and urban planning to the institutions that it endorsed. The image that Athens built was inherited by the subsequent powers that dominated Athens in the following centuries. The most exemplary and intrusive of these was the Roman occupation. In interesting ways, the Romans transformed much of ‘Old Athens’ into a museum. The imperial and autochthonous image that Athens had built over centuries was gradually eroded, but its philosophical, religious, and cultural life was revitalized. This paper discusses the transformation of Athens under Rome, it examines the internally constructed identity of the city – how Athens perceived itself and created its own culture – and how this identity was both preserved and altered during Roman occupation. Athens enjoyed one of its most important and enduring periods at this time, and the transformation of its urban landscape is one that persists even today in informing modern tourists about how they should perceive Athens, a direct correlation with how Roman tourists viewed Athens millennia earlier.

Luis Rodriguez-Pérez is a University of Southern California graduate in history and archaeology. He will be pursuing a graduate program in Archaeology in the fall.

ALEXANDER KRAUZLIS

CYA – Siena College

Ardittos Hill: its beauty and significance throughout the ages

Arditos Hill overlooks and incorporates the Panathenaic Stadium, but the hill itself is often overlooked by historians and archeologists. The hill was privately owned in ancient Athens until Lycurgus deemed the ravine was a perfect site for the construction of a stadium. This stadium was embellished with minimal adornments, but on its grand rebuild by the wealthy Athenian benefactor Herodes Atticus, it became one of the most extravagant in history. However, when the stadium fell into obscurity following the collapse of the Roman Empire, it took over 1,500 years before any plans to revive the site was made. Just a little over two hundred years ago an attempt was made to recreate the great Panathenaic Stadium and to re-inaugurate the ancient Olympic Games. The latter was a great success; however, this paper will show how the former fell short and that the stadium can still be given the splendor it possessed in the times of Herodes Atticus and Lycurgus.

Alexander Krauzlis is an Archaeology student and his primary interests and pursuits pertain to lost cities and their history up until their disappearance.

RILEY THOMPSON

CYA – Brown University

Forced Migration and Conceptions of Belonging: A Case Study of Greece and Turkey

This paper will discuss forced migration both to and from Greece and Turkey throughout history, especially during the 2014-2016 global refugee crisis. These historical attitudes towards migration and refugees will be contrasted with more modern ones, even those beginning to unfold today with the emerging Ukrainian refugee crisis. The Greco-Turkish War, from 1919-1922, ousted the Ottoman Empire and provided the foundation for much forced migration in this region. In 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne legalized the forced migration of millions of Greek Christians to Greece and hundreds of thousands of Muslims to Turkey. The treaty stipulated the independence of Turkey, the protection of the Greek Orthodox Christian minority in Turkey and the Muslim minority in Greece, but the forced migration of both sets of refugees left permanent marks on both societies that continue through today. It raises questions about belonging to a country – whether one is precluded from belonging based on religion, race or another identifier. Almost a century later, Greece and Turkey are yet again at the center of forced migration due to the global refugee crisis compounded with the ever-pervasive threat of climate change. Greece is one of the main countries through which refugees enter the greater EU, and Turkey is home to the largest number of refugees globally. Despite their reputations as immigration hotspots, however, migration to, residence in and movement between the two countries is notoriously difficult due to militarized borders, physical barriers, climate change, economic crises, political instability, occasional autocratic and corrupt leaders, deep-seated racism, patriarchal notions and the COVID-19 pandemic. I am interested in further researching and fleshing out this history in an attempt to humanize those that have gone through these experiences first-hand. By reflecting on how forced migrations are remembered, lived and experienced in the two countries and beyond, this paper will look into how this status has changed over the past century.

Riley Thompson is studying Latin and Political Theory. She is interested in going into public service in the future.

KAITLIN BIRNBAUM

CYA – Vassar College

Behind the spray can: Graffiti as dissent in Exarchia and the larger Athens area

Depending on where you go, graffiti art in Athens has had a long, complicated relationship with political turmoil over time. My paper will present an overview of political graffiti in Athens, then focus on the political (and henceforth social, economic, racial, gendered, etc.) statements that graffiti art displays in the area of Exarchia, in particular. I will look at what significance graffiti holds for the community, and how it acts as a way to foster solidarity and human interaction under systems of oppression. My goal is to shed light on the political implications of graffiti art, and how there is much more to it than meets the eye. I will focus on how a rapidly developing city (e.g. the new metro station planned for Exarchia square) can change the demographic of people viewing political graffiti as well as how they interact with it or deem it acceptable. Through an account of the anarchist history of Exarchia and the conflict the government and its police forces have inflicted on this leftist area, I will explore the ways that graffiti art expresses rage at the oppressive systems that perpetuate violence and deepen injustices in our contemporary world.

Kaitlin Birnbaum (she/her) is an Environmental Studies major and Sociology minor at Vassar College. Inside the classroom, her interests include social and environmental justice, feminist theory, and critical race theory, while outside the classroom she loves to cook, spend time outside hiking, and being with family.



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