



8th Annual Student Conference

Communal Belonging, Migration and Citizenship in the Ancient and Modern World



**Tuesday 06 May 2025
9.30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

Daphne & George Hatsopoulos Hall CYA

8th Annual Student Conference

**Communal Belonging, Migration and Citizenship
in the Ancient and Modern World**

Committee

Rosa Vasilaki, Sociology Professor, CYA

Angeliki Dimitriadi, Director of Studies, Political Science Professor, CYA

Kate Donnelly, Academic Writing Advisor, CYA

Colloquium Program Abstracts

9.30-10.45 1st session

Moderator: Professor Nina Papathanasopoulou

9.35 Samantha Decker

Postbaccalaureate

Barbaric, Man-like, and Other Ways to be "un-Greek": Portrayal of Intruders in Attic Drama and Beyond

In ancient Greece, Attic drama had always concerned itself with the development of Athenian identity and belonging, civic and otherwise, from the adoption of democracy onward. Almost all surviving dramatic plays incorporate, explore, and either condemn or praise certain members of a body politic. A "good" citizen must put the well-being of his city over that of himself, no matter the circumstances drawing him toward the latter. However, citizenship and the physical stage are intertwined—and reflective of each other—in ways that surpass a simple label. As much as the concept of citizenship promoted a sense of inclusivity, it also necessarily created a culture of exclusivity, defining not only what a "citizen" is, but what it is not.

Characterization of figures within a play, the classification of spaces on the stage, and the physical movement of bodies between boundaries created a microcosm of Athenian society that explored threats to its established order or, the trope of the "intruder". This paper will consider four plays—Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* and *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Bacchae*, and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*—in the context in which they were written and how each includes a different performance of both citizen and intruder on the stage, through physical movement, language, and overall perception, in order to understand how speech and movement of the body correlated to conceptions of identity in antiquity. This paper will also consider contemporary reception of Attic drama and its portrayal of intruders in the context of modern divides between geographical and political identities, including "Greek" (or "Athenian") versus "outsider" and "the West" versus "the East". In promoting a specific definition of belonging both then and now, intruders are thus seen everywhere, and in a world of continuously shifting geopolitical identities, such an idea constitutes its own threat to a community's established order.

9.55 Qinxian Ran

Hamilton College

The Gendered and Xenophobic Other: Analyzing Medea's Intersecting Struggles in Euripides' Medea and Ovid's Heroides

This research explores Medea's intersecting struggles as "the Other" in ancient Corinth through the lens of "intersectionality" in modern gender studies. To examine her marginalization from both societal and her own perspectives, I compare Medea's portrayal in Euripides' play *Medea* and Ovid's *Heroides* (the "Medea to Jason" letter). Her dual identity—as a Colchian foreigner and a woman—renders her an outsider in ancient Greek society. While modern interpretations often depict her as a rebellious, tragic heroine embodying wisdom, power, and defiance, ancient Greek characters frame her as a barbaric, irrational woman. In Corinth, male characters reproach Medea for being a Colchian outsider who should appreciate the civilization offered by Greek society. They also criticize her for defying societal norms of femininity, which emphasize moderation and loyalty to family. Female characters, while feeling sympathy for her, are constrained by feminine expectations, suggesting that she, too, should remain calm. Medea's exclusion highlights the unique intersectional struggles faced by foreign women in ancient Greek society; no single character advocates for her or acts on her behalf, ultimately leading to both her murder and her internal turmoil.

By applying an intersectional framework to her portrayal, I argue that in Euripides' *Medea* and Ovid's *Heroides* ("Medea to Jason"), gender and ethnicity intersect to shape exclusion and marginalization in ancient Greece.

10.20 Nicholas Barnes

Postbaccalaureate

Roman Delos: An Ancient Migratory Case Study

In the world of Late Antiquity, Roman Delos emerged as one of the most diverse commercial trade and migratory hubs in the Mediterranean. The island represented a mix of transhumanists in the form of merchants, traders, enslaved peoples, soldiers, and other Romans from all socioeconomic backgrounds. This paper will examine the demographic shifts in Delos due to migration during the Roman period through both an archaeological and literary lens.

Historians such as Pausanias, Strabo, Plutarch, and Cicero all make mention of Delos as a place of primary importance regarding either voluntary migration through its mercantile markets, or involuntary migration through the movement of enslaved peoples.

Archaeological evidence, including inscriptions from the Agora of the Competalists, demonstrate the presence of a significant Italian trading diaspora, while the House of the Dolphins suggests elite Roman habitation. Religious syncretism is evident in the Temple of the Foreign Gods, which contained dedications from Egyptian, Phoenician, and Syrian permanent settlers. Additionally, funerary inscriptions reveal a mosaic of identities, reflecting both voluntary and forced migration patterns.

This paper will synthesize the textual evidence and material culture of Delos to investigate the island as a cosmopolitan hub where migration was driven by economic networks, imperial policy, and forced displacement. This dynamic reshaped the island's cultural and ethnic landscape, making it a microcosm of broader Mediterranean migration trends. The study of Delos provides crucial insight into how mobility, commerce, and imperial power intersected in the Roman world.

10.45-11.15 Break for refreshments

11.15-13.15 2nd session
Moderator: Professor Rosa Vasilaki

11.15 Maeve Smith

Postbaccalaureate

Archaeology, Heritage, and Conflict in Contemporary Cyprus

For the past ten thousand years, Cyprus has been settled and ruled by various communities, repeatedly changing hands, on account of its resources and strategic location. In the modern day, the island is situated firmly in the middle of the conflict between Greece and Turkey. Given the long history of the island and the lucrative touristic potential of sites, ancient history and archaeology have had a significant role in the formation of economies, communities, and, most importantly for this paper, ideologies.

Most antiquity-focused archaeology on Cyprus occurs in the Greek southern half of the island, as projects are largely neither approved nor funded in the Turkish north. These projects ideologically emphasize the connection of Greek Cypriots to the Classical and Byzantine past and are thus nationalistic and partisan by nature. However, ancient sites are not the only subjects of excavation on the island. Some current projects—both excavation and preservation—undertaken by bicomunal organizations on the island serve to find and foster connection between Turkish and Greek Cypriots. The subjects of this bicomunal heritage work span vast periods, from the excavation of Cypriots killed in the 1974 struggle to the preservation of Venetian walls.

In this paper, I will examine how contemporary archaeology and heritage preservation in Cyprus can serve to divide or unite contested communities.

11.40 Natalie Buzzell

Vassar College

Constructing Western National Identity: Anti-communist Propaganda during the Civil War Period

Throughout history, humans have constructed feelings of communal belonging based on the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others. Since ancient times, the Greek people have found communal belonging and defined their identity in opposition to their Balkan and Turkish neighbors. Since before the Greek War of Independence, the Greek people have embraced Western ideologies, and the labels ascribed to them by Western nations—such as “the birthplace of democracy”—to affirm their carefully-constructed Western identity. After the Nazi occupation ended in October 1944, Greece only experienced a few months of peace before falling into a violent and traumatic civil war. The conflict erupted between the Greek state and Communist Party resistance forces, who fought against the Nazis during World War II. The United States and Western European powers supported the Greek state, leading scholars to consider the Greek Civil War to be the first proxy war of the Cold War. During this conflict, official anti-communist rhetoric divided the Greek population into *ethnikofron*—“nationally-minded” people—and enemies of the nation.

My paper will argue that the Greek state perpetuated the narrative that Greece was the final defense of western democracy against eastern totalitarianism in order to villainize the Communists. The Greek state and their allies compared the Communists to Muslims, Jews, Turks, Bulgarians, and Slavs, portraying them as threats to Greek national identity and unity. My paper will use publications by the Greek state and statements by American officials to demonstrate how both characterized the Communists as “barbarians.” By drawing attention to the Greek state’s vilification of Communists, non-Christians, and neighboring ethnic groups, I will demonstrate how Greek identity has been constructed through exclusion of specific others, primarily to assert their belonging in the West.

12.00 Penelope Marsh

Bates College

Engineering Nationalism and Ethnic Identity in Post-Civil War Greece

What does it mean to be Greek? What attributes constitute a Greek person? More importantly, what attributes do not constitute a Greek identity? I am fascinated by the deliberate ways in which the post-Civil War government and subsequent junta dictatorship engineered Greek identity and national values to align with their notions of a Greek. During the post-Civil War era, the victorious conservative government engaged in a vigorous nation-building campaign which explicitly designated between communities in the domestic population as Greek and unGreek. Εθνικόφρων (or “nationally-minded”) citizens were ideologically aligned with the nationalist regime; Communist Party members and supporters were exiled, imprisoned, and tortured. The new regime’s association of classical antiquity with εθνικόφρων citizens “Orientalized” and ‘othered’ the Communists, attaching racist perceptions to Muslims, Jews, Slavs, Serbs, and Macedonians.

My paper will examine the enforcement of Greek nationalism and coinciding or conflicting notions of individual Greek ethnic identity in postwar Greece (1949-1974). I will explore the intense social conditioning of postwar society (in propaganda, popular media, and controls placed on everyday life), state responses to dissent, and the experience of Greeks exiled or displaced during the Civil War. Further, within this context, I argue that Greek nationalism and ethnic identity in this period can be best defined by what (and who) it is not, notions which continue to hold significance in Greek national consciousness and identity to this day.

12.20 Elizabeth Muller

Providence College

The Unity in Global Community is Silent

Migration is a phenomenon that has existed throughout history despite state interference efforts, and today, it has become the focus of pressure and policy in many European countries. This paper will explore how European States have implemented information campaigns to deter migrants and curb arrivals on their soil in the period of the refugee crisis. These information campaigns are purposeful communication strategies aimed at informing potential migrants of the risks of taking on the migrant journey. Through reviewing scholarship about these information campaigns, and images/other media forms of the actual campaigns, I will discuss the techniques used to potentially deter migrants. Specific information campaigns such as *Aware Migrants* will be examined to ensure a clear understanding of how they are implemented. In conducting this research, I will posit the argument that information campaigns legitimize an “Us” vs. “Them” mindset that is ineffective at deterring migrants. To support this, I will utilize data about migrants arriving in Europe, and an interview with a supervisor at an organization working with migrants here in Athens. This supervisor will be able to speak to migrants’ experiences with information campaigns, and how they factor into the decision to migrate. It is vital that research like this exists to shed light on why European States continue to implement immigration policies that are not working. Sometimes, resolving the issue of moral panic in the political sphere trumps the cold hard facts about a policy’s ineffectiveness.

12.40-13.45 Lunch break

13.45-15.00 3rd session
Moderator: Professor Iason Xygkis

13.45 Manaal Buchh

University of Notre Dame

Enduring Peoples: Community and Individual Resilience in the Face of Forced Migration

This paper delves into the resilience mechanisms employed by communities undergoing forced migration, with a focused analysis on the Palestinian Nakba and the Syrian refugee crisis. It examines how these populations have developed resilience strategies to confront and adapt to the profound disruptions caused by displacement. In the Palestinian context, the concept of *Sumud*—a cultural ethos embodying steadfastness and resistance—serves as a fundamental resilience mechanism that supports both individual and collective endurance against long-standing adversities. For Syrian refugees, resilience is often manifested through the cultivation of strong familial and community networks, maintenance of cultural identity, and proactive coping strategies that include future orientation and opportunity seeking.

This research evaluates various resilience-enhancing interventions that have proven effective in these communities, such as community-based mental health programs, culturally adapted therapeutic practices, and positive psychology interventions. These approaches not only address immediate psychological distress but also promote long-term recovery by fostering social connections, cultural continuity, and personal empowerment. The findings suggest that integrating resilience-building strategies into existing humanitarian interventions can provide a more holistic approach to supporting displaced individuals and communities.

By emphasizing the integration of resilience-building alongside traditional trauma focused interventions, this paper highlights the potential for a more comprehensive model of humanitarian aid, one that not only alleviates suffering but also enhances the capacities of affected populations for sustainable recovery and empowerment.

14.10 Jade R. Vandel

Postbaccalaureate

Karya Concentration Camp: Mass Deportations in Greece

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Jewish community in Greece experienced an increasing antisemitic attitude contributing to multiple acts of violence against them. This rise in antisemitism, while not uncommon in Greece nor the wider European continent, was easily inflated by the Nazi takeover in WWII. Previous attacks on the Jewish community by Greek citizens, such as the Campbell Pogrom in 1931, or earlier, a blood libel accusation in 1891, were two of the events that aided the Nazis in their own agenda of ethnic cleansing in Greece.

On the flipside of this narrative, multiple sources also detail Greek citizens' attempts to protect the Jewish community. Among them, a Christian victim of the Campbell pogrom who mourned his Jewish neighbors killed during the vicious attack on the Jewish refugee camp in Thessaloniki. Another American source speaks of an Orthodox priest from Crete who warned that should the Nazis attempt to move their local Jewish community to ghettos, they would make an enemy of the Orthodox church.

This paper will discuss how the Jewish community in Greece was perceived by their Greek neighbors prior to the Nazi invasion. I will also explore how the antisemitic attitude in Greece was heightened by the Nazis to implement their own plans to deport Greek Jewish citizens to, among others, the Karya concentration camp. This concentration camp will be examined as well, as it is relatively unknown with a very high mortality rate due to mass deportations to Auschwitz. The goal of this paper is to bring attention to what had been previously a vibrant community in Greece, and to a generally neglected Nazi crime: the Karya concentration camp.

14.30 Nicholas Hernandez

Pitzer College

Queer Identity in a Late Modern and Non-Secular Greece

Religion has played a central role in the formation of identity and communal belonging in traditional and modern societies. Additionally, in recent decades, LGBTI and queer identities have become more present. This paper explores the multiplicity of identities in Athens, particularly as it relates to Greek Orthodoxy and sexual orientation. I hope to understand how Greek Orthodoxy has been integrated into modern Greek society and ways that it has interacted with queer identity, specifically in the country's capital, which is a progressive metropolis of Greece. Moreover, I will analyze ways in which religion persists in Athens, despite queer identities becoming more present in the Late Modern Era in Greece. With Greece as a politically unique country compared to the rest of the European Union, due to it being highly nonsecular and the Orthodox Church having a heavy hand in politics, the religious and national identity of Greece can seem antithetical to the popularization of queer identity. Given that 81.4% of Greeks self-identify as Orthodox Christian, and 20% of LGBTI Greek citizens are fairly open to the public about their sexual orientation, with 7% saying they are very open, I hope to uncover whether, and if so, how Greece has supported its religious identity while simultaneously socially and legally supporting the queer community.



8th Annual Student Conference

Communal Belonging, Migration and Citizenship in the Ancient and Modern World



5 Plateia Stadiou
116 35 Athens, Greece

#cyathens
cyathens.org