**Senses of Place**

**University of Roehampton, 22-23 February 2018**

**Abstracts** (in order of presentation)

**Day 1: 22 February**

**Sensing Water: A New Approach to Understanding Fountains in the Roman World**

*Dylan K. Rogers, American School of Classical Studies at Athens*

Until recently, scholarship on water-display during the High Roman Empire has focused on typologies, along with its political and social dimensions. Water as a basic element has an inherent nature as a sensorial *tour de force*, from the taste of water to the sound and cool air produced by moving water. And the Romans certainly recognized this, as Pliny the Younger described the water of one of the fountains in his Tuscan villa ‘a pleasure to hear and to see’ (*Ep*. 5.6.23). Using the interpretive lens associated with sensory studies, we can begin to understand better the reasons for water-display in the ancient Roman world and beyond. While water is an inherently ephemeral element, by replacing water in its ancient context, we can also reimagine ancient viewers in their original contexts. Thus, in exploring the sensorial nature of archaeological remains, we can further understand how an ancient Roman experienced a monument, creating memories, and interacted with space in general. This paper will primarily use the second-century CE example of the Hadrianic Fountain in the Forecourt of the Sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis (Greece) as a case-study for understanding sensorial responses to water-displays. Water-displays will also be placed in the empire-wide phenomenon of constructing fountains for their sensorial benefits, along with understanding their role in Roman landscapes, tapping into a common Roman sense of identity connected to water-displays.

**Fluid places and the sensory transposition of place in the production of Roman pilgrimage narratives**

*Emma-Jayne Graham, The Open University*

Places ‘happen’, they are constantly in the process of becoming, the ever-changing sensory product of discrete time-space events involving a confluence of minds, bodies, materials and actions. Yet studies of ‘senses of place’ remain focused on the sensory experience of largely fixed locales, overlooking the question of how (and why) attempts might be made to transpose a ‘sense of place’ from one location to another, and the resulting consequences. This paper seeks to explore the significance of the sensory transposition of fluid places with reference to the relocation of actual liquids, taken as souvenirs from the spa towns of Puteoli and Baiae on the Bay of Naples and transported in glass vessels traditionally evaluated only for their iconography. It combines an examination of the sensory properties of souvenir fluids – possibly collected from mineral springs – and the impact of their use in new contexts, with the material properties of the containers which held this liquid and their own power to contain the potential essence of place. Ultimately, it argues that recreated senses of place, however imperfect and always new, with their capacity to (re)produce distinctive sensory experiences, played a significant role in the construction of narratives concerning travel, mobility, and pilgrimage.

**Practical 1: *Walking Threads* led by Paola Esposito & Valeria Lembo**

**Cultural Exploration of the Cyclades: A Multisensory Exploration of the History, Archaeology, and Anthropology of the Greek Islands**

*Luigi Lafasciano, University of Salerno (Italy) and the École Pratique des Hautes Études de Paris (France) ,and Andrew Gipe-Lazarou, National Technical University of Athens*

What is the relevance of experiential learning to contemporary education? What are the pedagogical possibilities of multisensory experience? How can modern sensory experiences inform our understanding of Antiquity? This paper explores these questions by discussing the pedagogical and theoretical background behind The Diakron Institute’s Cultural Exploration of the Cyclades, and educational program which will explore the history, archaeology, and culture of the Greek islands in the summer of 2018. The first part of this paper presents the general organization of the program and its theoretical framework. Participants will learn about the significance of the ancient cult of Apollo by participating in the excavation of an Archaic sanctuary on the island of Despotiko, and will experience a modern re-interpretation of ritual activities carried out by Ancient Greek adolescents in preparation for the ceremony of ephebeia. These activities included learning how to hunt, to sing and dance, to recite poetry and to practice divination. The second part of this paper discusses the pedagogical re-construction of these ritual activities, with references to a wide range of literary and archaeological sources, and describes the significance of their modern re-interpretation in the spatial context of the Cyclades. The paper emphasizes elements of cognitive and experimental archaeology, used as both a didactic tool and a platform for original academic research.

**A Monumental Presence? (exercises in prehistoric place making)**

*Mark Gillings, University of Leicester*

Are places made or do they emerge? And if the former, is this ‘making’ by accident or design? Contrast, for example, the elegant didactic landscapes discussed by Basso (1996) to those described by Stewart, where accident, loss, despair and tragedy have gouged out a more visceral Geography (1996). Following landscape phenomenology is there an essential quality to certain locations that makes them stand out and have the power to affect, and is it safe to assume that perceptually striking (eye/ear/attention-catching) locales will always accrue significance? Attract stories? Anchor memories and/or serve as powerful reminders to forget?

In this paper I will explore these questions of emergence, making, affect and sensory engagement through the lens of two late Neolithic megalithic monuments. One is a thoroughly mundane and quotidian location that through a conscious process of elaboration and construction became the largest stone circle in Europe; a place that drew a host of other potent places into its here and now. The second is a place with ‘holding power’ and the ability to ‘charm’ (Lorimer 2006: 501). A strongly affective location where the prehistoric monument – a tiny scatter of small upright stones – was almost an afterthought.

Basso, K.H. 1996. Wisdom sits in places: notes on a Western Apache Landscape. In S. Feld & K.H. Basso (eds). *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: SARP: 53-90.

Lorimer, H. 2006. Herding Memories of humans and animals. *Environment and Planning D*: 497-518.

Stewart, K. 1996. An Occupied Place. In S. Feld & K.H. Basso (eds). *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: SARP: 137-166.

**Practical 2: Sensory mapping walk, introduced by Mark Gillings**

**Listen to the waves, look at the trees: sensorial descriptions in Leonidas of Tarentum**

*Davide Massimo, University of Oxford*

Leonidas of Tarentum is an epigrammatist (3rd century BC almost certainly) represented by a hundred epigrams in the *Greek Anthology*. He is mostly famous for his epigrams on simple people (shepherds, fishermen, workers) in various forms (dedications, epitaphs). Such poetic production is particularly suitable for a “sensorial analysis”, since it is constructed to convey the idea of people, places and realistic details through a series of poetic devices in the short form of the epigram. Firstly, the images Leonidas chooses to describe are very vivid, such as the drowned sailors and fishermen lost in the roaring sea, and the old, hard- working tailors, carpenters and shepherds who live in humble houses and dedicate the instruments of their work when retiring. Secondly, the short form of the epigrams requires concision and Leonidas manages to draw very detailed pictures not only through the selection of relevant details, but also thanks to effective words, many of which seem to be Leonidas’ own creation, e. g. δαιδαλόχειρ (*of swift hands*), σχοινῖτις (*made of rushes*, of a hut), περιπλάνιος (*wandering about*), ταχυχειλής (*over which the lips run rapidly*, of pipes). Through these devices, the poet is able to convey very vivid images which stimulate different senses.

**Sacred Ecologies: Pindar and the Animate Environment**

*Amy Lather, Wake Forest University*

This paper offers a new interpretation of Pindar’s allusions to local and panhellenic landscapes by illuminating the close relationship between spaces and sounds constructed therein. I argue that Pindar’s epinician language intertwines the natural with the man-made environment in order to situate his songs within a distinctive soundscape, one that is comprised not only of lyrics, music, and dance but also of phenomena like mountains, springs, and groves.

My interpretation focuses on Pindar’s references to the sonic reverberations of song (*Ol.* 10.76-84, *Nem.* 3.64-70, *Nem.* 4.79-88) as well as his personification of landscape elements with voices (*Pyth.* 10.1-9, *Nem.* 1.1-7). Together these features testify to a close conceptual link between the sounds of natural phenomena and the acoustics of Pindar’s praise: songs can animate and give voice to the environment while the latter enables the former to resound and spread. As these examples suggest, songs and spaces may work in harmony with one another to enhance the sonic qualities of each. In this way, Pindar locates his epinicia in an ecological relationship with the environment, where the sacrality of song as well as space is realized through the seamless blending of man-made and naturally-occurring sounds.

**Practical 3: *Eternal presents: Dancing in the archaeological museum*, led byMarie-Louise Crawley**

**Day 2: 23 February**

***haeret in uultu trucis / imago facti: nefas* and sensory perception in Senecan tragedy**

*Matthew Payne, University of St Andrews*

The prevalence of extended descriptions of *loca horrida* in Senecan tragedy is striking in comparison with Greek tragedy (Schiesaro 2006). These descriptions are replete with sensory information that is unconnected with the perceptions of the speaker. For instance, the messenger of Thyestes comments impersonally on the sights and sounds of the grove where Atreus murders his brother’s children, but the only reference to his own vision is his desire to ‘un-see’ Atreus’ crime when he begins speaking. Zanobi (2014) has linked this impersonality to the influence of pantomime, while Winter (2016) sees it as an element in accomplishing a certain aesthetic response in the audience.

However, I argue that despite their supposed depersonalisation, these descriptions of place bear the cognitive characteristics of their speakers, particularly in how speakers experience space. For example, the messenger’s description of Atreus’ palace suggests a TARDIS-like interior of infinite space, akin to the architectural fantasies of Fourth style wall-painting. Furthermore, the messenger’s perceptions seem affected by his viewing of Atreus’ crime, a nefas that continually grows and which changes Atreus’ own perceptions too (885-6). I will contrast Thyestes with Phaedra to show this cognitive sensing of space is individualised and shaped by each play’s *scelera*.

**The Texture of Love: Perceiving the Landscape in Euripides’ *Hippolytus***

*Maria Combatti, Columbia University*

In the *Hippolytus* Euripides represents the landscape as the place on which the characters’ suffering is projected. Both Hippolytus and Phaedra turn their desire for love on the surrounding space, with the result that landscape elements such as fields, mountains, and streams of water reveal what they experience inside (e.g., the “inviolate meadow” (74) describes Hippolytus’ devotion to Artemis and Phaedra’s longing for hunting on the mountains (215-21) represents her desire to liberate her love for Hippolytus).

Charles Segal has analyzed the role of landscape imagery in the *Hippolytus*, underlining its importance for understanding the dramatic structure and the meaning of the play. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty’s conception of art painting as that which “gives visible existence to the invisible,” I argue that in the *Hippolytus* the landscape imagery is deployed to exteriorize the affective experience of the characters. In this manner, the landscape becomes a “bloc of sensations,” as Deleuze and Guattari might have recognized it, and acquires a texture in which the world of nature and the affective states of the characters are deeply intertwined (e.g. the spring from which Phaedra longs to get fresh water stands for her desire to extinguish her suffering of love (208-9)). Therefore, the audience is drawn to perceive the characters’ feelings by visualizing landscape images.

**Sensing the undetectable: the worlds of Neolithic Puglia**

*Sue Hamilton and Ruth Whitehouse, Institute of Archaeology, UCL*

Most sensory work in field archaeology has focussed on tangible surviving buildings and monumental structures. In contrast, our work involves sites which are invisible or barely visible on the ground. Our work is also distinctive, at least in comparison with other sensory research on prehistoric sites, by its concentration on domestic contexts and everyday activity, rather than on ritual monuments. We will discuss a range of methods that we have developed to gain a sensory-rich understanding of these past communities. Our studies are also characterised by an emphasis on different scales of activity in the past, from the house to the village and to the taskscapes beyond.

**Embodied Remote Sensing - Finding the Divine with VR**

*Anna Collar, Aarhus University, and Stuart Eve, L-P Archaeology*

Abstract to follow

**Sensing festive places in Ancient Rome and beyond: a toolkit**

*Anna Trostnikova, Royal Holloway, University of London*

How do we determine what a sense of place is? What *stimuli* and senses can a place trigger? How we can study places and senses that are long gone? How does the language describing places and spaces help or hinder our study? What makes a ‘festive place’? What ways do we have to find similarities in different methodologies of sensory and spatial studies? Can contemporary practices help us understand historical places and senses?

My talk aims to address these questions and, using my PhD research in the festival of the Saecular games and Ancient Rome as a case study, provide a survey of approaches and a toolkit of practical methods for the study of sensory experiences of places.

My focus will be on finding common ground for contemporary practices and historical research, as well as on the examination of caveats and limitations of  available methods and approaches.

**Thucydides’ Construction of a Sense of Place in *The History of the Peloponnesian War***

*Liz Webb, The Open University*

Thucydides’ narrative of the Peloponnesian War is a vivid, multisensory work, containing highly performative elements, and challenging traditional views of text-based historiography. His sense of place ranges over multiple theatres of war on a micro- and macro- spatial plane. This paper considers the affectivity of a sense of place in Thucydides’ history, utilising the theory of flow developed in sensory archaeology (Hamilkais, 2013) in tandem with scrutiny of Thucydides’ vocabulary of place, and the impact of his dense descriptions of place on his narrative as a whole.

By mapping responses between Thucydides’ people, objects, environment and audience, this paper presents a new method which blends literary sensory analysis with Hamilakis’ archaeology-based idea of sensory flow, and draws on Merleau-Ponty’s concept of lived experience.

The paper will explore:

- the nature and relationship of place and the individual(s) in Thucydides, explored at a macro and micro level through the lens of aspects of material sensory theory.

- Thucydides’ vocabulary of place, including the literary heritage and narrative context of his adjectives to understand better their affectivity.

- the structural implications of Thucydides’ dense descriptions of place and their impact on his narrative as a whole.

**Embodied Architecture. Perception, Visualisation, and Representation of Real Architectural Settings in Roman Art: two examples from the first and second century A.D.**

*Riccardo Olivito, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa & New York*

The paper presents the first results of my research on perception, reproduction, and visualisation of actual architectural settings in the Roman world. It focuses on a particular group of images in which real architecture is depicted, and for which a comparison with the actual monuments is still possible.

Because these images can be compared with their real “models”, they allow us to examine two different issues in depth:

- the cognitive mechanisms in artists’ minds while perceiving and consequently reproducing external reality;

- ancient viewers’ responses to visual stimuli produced by images intended for the recognition of actual architecture.

Knowing that these images are not imitations or photographic reproductions, but rather allusive references to actual reality, it will be possible to understand them as products of artists’ ability to graphically summarise and show their perception of the world. In order to make this statement clear, the paper investigates two meaningful case studies: the “riot in the amphitheatre” fresco from Pompeii and the Trajan’s Anaglypha in Rome. By comparing these images with the real monuments, and looking at advances in perceptual psychology and neurophysiology, the paper pursues detection of all the key elements artists used to activate viewers’ memories and cognitive processes, allowing them to recognise the represented architecture. Finally, the paper points up the importance of human embodiment within the architectural space (both the real and the depicted one), stressing the true nature of Gadamer’s hermeneutic assumption that “recognition” is the final goal of mimetic activity.

**Ancient Greece on air**

*Amanda Wrigley, University of Reading*

Abstract to follow

**Reproducing the Stourhead eighteenth-century landscape garden experience for modern visitors**

*John Harrison, The Open University*

Grottos are intended to evoke fear and intrigue in the mind of the visitor. These emotional states are triggered by manipulating the senses, as occurs in the 18th-century Stourhead grotto. However, preservation of this experience often excludes the possibility of access by visitors with disabilities.  A resolution to this dilemma is offered by modern technology.  Recent work using game engine software has allowed for 3D digital representations of ancient buildings, including House of the Prince of Naples in Pompeii (Fredrick, 2013). I plan to use this technology to provide a grotto experience for those whose access to the building is challenged.  Virtual representations also allow visitors to experience the grotto as it would have been seen, and heard, in the eighteenth century. This technology can also facilitate virtual visits to the Stourhead Temple of Apollo, which is difficult to access due to its hilltop location, and no longer features the copies of Roman statues and other elements that were present in the eighteenth century.

In this presentation, I will provide accounts of both structures as they were described by late eighteenth-century visitors. I will also describe the current research program intended to yield virtual access to both structures.

**Layers & Echoes: sounding imagined pasts in the Strand Lane ‘Roman’ Bath**

*Gen Doy and Michael Trapp King’s College London*

The cold bath/cistern at No 5 Strand Lane, London WC2, is a space onto which imagined pasts have been projected for over two centuries, including the tenacious fantasy that it may be the remains of a Roman bath, still more or less functioning in its original capacity.  The current presentation of the site, as a whitewashed ‘ancient monument,’ dulls the sensory appeal that has been so central in the past to its fascination – dimly lit vaults, ice-cold water, hard red ‘Roman’ brickwork, distinctive musty smell.  How can this sensory experience, and the past impact of a once charismatic site be most effectively recovered and explored?

Gen Doy’s project, sponsored by King’s Cultural Programming, aims to explore how an artistic approach to the site using sound, live performance, installations and images could enable visitors to engage on a more sensual level with the physical presence of the Bath and its stories. Whatever she and collaborators may bring to the Bath is but another of the many layers of its resonances. Working with Pierre Nora’s concept of lieux de mémoire, she seeks to respond to the Bath as a space of dialogue between memory, fiction, and lived experience.