

Introduction

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The prominent position of classical studies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was, at least partly, due to widespread uses of classical antiquity. Yet, the use, abuse and appropriation of antiquity – in short, the classical legacy – has received limited attention in classical studies. Studies of classical receptions were typically focused on tracing influences of antiquity on later phenomena, and were often governed by the notion that originals are of higher quality than later copies. During the last few decades, however, the appropriation of classical antiquity has received more attention in classical studies. This is signaled not least by a growing number of academic journals and book series related to such issues; examples include *Classical receptions journal* and *International journal of the classical tradition*, and *Classical presences, New directions in classics* and *Transformationen der Antike*, respectively. The revitalized interest in the classical legacy is associated with an epistemological turn during the 1990s, when scholars in the humanities and the social sciences emphasized how conceptualizations of the past were affected by scholarly practices. Classical antiquity has been appropriated and mediated over and over again. These mediations are not only lenses distorting our views of classical antiquity, but they have also shaped the very notion of classical antiquity. It is therefore necessary to understand the forces behind earlier appropriations of classical antiquity.

The revitalized interest in the classical legacy incorporates a critical discourse. Studies with a critical perspective emphasize that our engagements with antiquity are shaped and conditioned by cultural and social discourses in which classical antiquity has been and is appropriated. In other words, classical studies are situated. Another strong tendency in this field is also to challenge the exemplary and foundational status of classical antiquity, and to highlight non-idealizing examples of appropriation. Classical reception studies have predominantly focused on the reception of antiquity in high culture. Scholars have focused, for instance, on tracing influences of ancient literature on modern literature and ancient art on modern art, but paid little attention to the cultural and social conditions which shaped the use of antiquity. In contrast, with the introduction of critical perspectives attention shifted towards issues such as the appropriation of classical antiquity by fascist regimes across Europe in the 1930s, and the impact of tourism on archaeological practices and cultural heritage management.

Critical perspectives have so far had a very limited impact on Swedish classical studies. This thematic section aims to expand further a nascent

interest in Swedish classical studies for critical perspectives on the appropriation of classical antiquity. The five contributions share a focus on historiographic aspects and/or on discursive entanglements between academic classical studies and other domains.

The first article, “Tidigare än, men ändå samtida. Om det förflutna i antik grekisk historieskrivning” (Anterior, but contemporary still. The past in ancient Greek historiography), is co-authored by Dimitrios Iordanoglou and Mats Persson, both affiliated with Uppsala University. Persson and Iordanoglou explore and challenge ancient Greek historiography as history in our modern understanding of the word. Proceeding from rhetorical and literary readings of Greek historiographical works, the article turns to the object of historiographical writings, rather than the subjective principles of their composition. Iordanoglou and Persson argue that the Greeks did not conceptualize the past as a distant discrete entity, and that the basic principles of Greek historiography must therefore be viewed as fundamentally different to those that guide modern history. Seeking to ground Greek historiography in ancient (world-)views of uniformity and typological thinking, the authors not only call for a reconsideration of our view of Thucydides and Herodotus as the fathers of western history, but also suggest a new approach to the question on how the past and the present were interrelated and negotiated in Greek historical texts.

In the second contribution, “Displays of classical sculpture and the demand for authenticity”, Michael Fotiadis from the University of Ioannina investigates the production of authenticity in displays of classical sculpture. He is concerned with the genealogy of our own modes of display. Fotiadis’s exploration of sculpture gardens during the period 1500-1800 serves to illuminate both continuities and transformations in displays of classical sculpture. In sculpture gardens sculptures, often over-restored, were juxtaposed with replicas and placed in the midst of flora and fountains. This taxonomy violates our understanding of authenticity. The peculiarities, however, were not due to a lack of concern with authenticity but due to the production of authenticity. Sculpture gardens were allegories to be deciphered. This sort of displays came to an end with the changing aesthetic appreciations in the late eighteenth century and with the emergence of public museums.

In the third article, “Unveiling the Goddess. Artemis of Ephesus as a symbol of nature at the turn of the nineteenth century”, Frederika Tevebring from Northwestern University, Chicago, elucidates the image of Artemis of Ephesus as it was used as a frontispiece by Alexander von Humboldt. Humboldt dedicated the travel account of his expedition to Latin America, *Ideen zu einer Geographie der Pflanzen nebst ein Naturgemälde der Tropenländer* (1807), to his friend Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The image on the frontispiece was made by Bertel Thorvaldsen.

Tevebring illustrates how this appropriation of Artemis of Ephesus was shaped by the concerns and relations of the neohumanist group in early nineteenth-century German culture. The rendering of Artemis of Ephesus owes more to contemporaneous Neohumanism and natural sciences than to the original historical setting of this infamous sculpture.

In the fourth contribution, “Philhellenism and Orientalism in Germany”, Suzanne Marchand from Louisiana State University investigates the complex relations between *Altertumswissenschaft* and *Orientalistik* in nineteenth-century Germany. During the nineteenth century scholars could move between these disciplinary fields, but there was also a gradual development of specialization in the period. As a consequence, the doors between classical studies and oriental studies closed. Marchand’s contribution illustrates the close and recent connections between classical studies, oriental studies and theology.

The theme issue comes to an end with “Classical Others. Anthropologies of Antiquity”, by Johannes Siapkas from Stockholm University. This paper explores the appropriation of anthropological insights and models in classical studies. Anthropological insights have always been important in classical studies, not least in order to contextualize various aspects of ancient societies. During the cultural turn, however, classicists also turned to anthropology for theoretical guidance. The interpretive hermeneutical framework introduced by Clifford Geertz was elevated as a heuristic ideal during the cultural turn. The ethnographic method was viewed as a template for classicists aiming to understand the world-views of the people living in antiquity.

