



CALL FOR PAPERS

Μορφὴ ἐπέων: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Ancient Metaphors



PANEL ORGANIZATION: Maria Arpaia, Laura Massetti

16th Celtic Conference in Classics

Coimbra 2025

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ORGANIZER 1:

name	Laura Massetti
e-mail	laura.massetti@unior.it
affiliation	University of Naples “L’Orientale”
country	Italy
biography	<p>Laura Massetti is researcher at University of Naples “L’Orientale”, where she teaches Greek Language and Literature. She was trained in Classics and Music in Milan. She earned her PhD in Historical and Comparative Linguistics from the University of Cologne and received several fellowships: Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies, Marie Curie at the University of Copenhagen, the Carlsberg Visiting Fellowship in Oxford. She is a specialist in the field of “Comparative Antiquities” (Greek, Vedic and Avestan). Her research mainly focuses on Greek language and literature (especially, Greek epics and lyric), Indo-European linguistics, Comparative Mythology and Religion. She is the author of <i>Pindar’s Pythian Twelve: A Linguistic Commentary and a Comparative Study</i> (Brill 2024). Her current project is a comparative investigation on metaphors, which are embedded in ring-compositions.</p>

ORGANIZER 2:

name	Maria Arpaia
e-mail	maria.arpaia@unior.it
affiliation	University of Naples “L’Orientale”
country	Italy
biography	<p>Maria Arpaia is a postdoc fellow at University of Naples “L’Orientale”. Her research areas include the performative aspects of Greek tragedy; the relationship between orality and staging in the ancient Greek theatre and the rewriting/reception of classics in modern culture. Her first Ph.D., in Comparative Literature, was focused on the influences of Euripides’ language on Hölderlin’s Dionysian poems. She was Visiting Researcher at the Hölderlin-Archiv in Stuttgart on a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the DAAD. She was the promoter of a series of postgraduate conferences (Napoli 2013; Messina 2014; Pavia 2016; L’Aquila 2018), designed to explore theoretical and critical reflections on theatrical languages, analysed from a comparative perspective. She co-authored a High School Greek Literature Handbook (Mondadori 2022). In her second Ph.D., in Greek Literature, she worked on the lexical, rhetorical and narratological catalogue of the emotion of joy on the tragic stage, addressing textual analysis from the perspective of the aesthetics of audience reception. In her book in progress, she has indexed the occurrences of the metaphors and the main semantic fields expressing joy in tragic texts.</p>



PANEL SYNOPSIS:

Abstract length: maximum 600 words without bibliography.

Deadline: February 20, 2025.

Language: English.

Submission: abstracts in Word and PDF should be sent as an attachment to Maria Arpaia (maria.arpaia@unior.it) and Laura Massetti (laura.massetti@unior.it). Abstracts will be reviewed anonymously by the panel scientific committee.

Information: please contact Maria Arpaia (maria.arpaia@unior.it) and Laura Massetti (laura.massetti@unior.it).

Topics:

From the development of “Metaphor Theory” we have learned that metaphors are a structural element of human linguistic creativity: they are constituents of both our speech and thought (Lakoff – Johnson 1980).

The panel “Μορφή ἐπέων: Interdisciplinary approaches to Ancient Metaphors” aims at bringing together scholars who have an interest in metaphors present in classical literature and study these tropes from different points of view, such as:

- (a) scholars who investigate purely cognitive and linguistic aspects of metaphorical expressions in Greek and Latin literature,
- (b) scholars who analyse metaphors from a comparative and/or diachronic perspective,
- (c) and scholars who take a cross-media approach.

More specifically,

(a) The cognitive perspective perfectly combines with the synchronic analysis on metaphors. Studying the function that metaphors fulfil in a given context, the level of internal complexity of domains involved, and specificity or generality in domain mappings (Lakoff – Johnson 1980, Kövecses 2010) yields fascinating insights into conceptual networks of ancient speakers. A metaphor emerges as a component within a system that reflects cognitive mappings shared by a culture. Emotions themselves are represented in cognitive metaphors that form part of a culture’s conceptual model of emotion (Cairns 2016). Therefore, “artists of the word” can innovate a given metaphor by remapping old elements or adding a new element to the metaphor (Kittay 1987). In doing so, they partially extend the metaphor’s meaning. Diachronic and synchronic analysis of metaphor variants enables us to make credible statements about changes concerning the entire metaphor system, to identify innovative mappings, and to speculate on possible causes for changes to these mappings.

(b) The cognitivist approach can fruitfully combine with the diachronic and/or comparative study of metaphors: it offers a heuristic tool for the study of semantics. Indeed, it can help us to assess modern etymological proposals and the reconstruction

of the 'semantic paths' of many words. Secondly, work on Indo-European poetic language and *Bildersprache* often focuses on

- the linguistic structures of compact metaphors (e.g. the kennings, Wærn 1951, Watkins 1995:40ff.);
- 'transferred epithets' (García Ramón 2010:94), which reflect metaphoric designations;
- the reconstruction of image systems through the combination of complementary expressions attested in the phraseology of sister languages (cf. Watkins 1977), that is, comparative phraseological analysis can clear up the background of what looks like an isolated metaphor within one linguistic setting. The combinatory reconstruction of mappable systems of associations restores lost connections between complementary traits, which are reflected in the phraseology of sister languages.

(c) Through the interaction of concrete and abstract, conceptual metaphors end up producing images in speech: metaphors can acquire an iconic value (Hiraga 2005) and 'presentificate' objects despite their *absentia* (Steiner 1986, 2001). Furthermore, the interaction between metaphors and images is continuous: metaphors travel across media and become embedded in figurative representations (see, e.g. Isler-Kérenyi 2007:171–187, 2015:229–233).

The panel features two keynote speakers:

- 1 Prof. Anton Bierl (University of Basel);
- 2 Prof. Douglas Cairns (University of Edinburgh);
- 2 Prof. Anna Novokhatko (University of Trento).

References

Bierl, Anton. 2012. Women on the Akropolis and Mental Mapping: Comic Body–Politics in a City in Crisis, or Ritual and Metaphor in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. In: A. Markantonatos, B. Zimmermann (eds.), *Crisis on Stage. Tragedy and Comedy in Late Fifth-Century Athens*. Berlin/Boston, 255–290

Cairns, Douglas. 2016. Mind, body, and metaphor in Ancient Greek concepts of emotion. *L'Atelier du centre de recherche historique 16. Histoire intellectuelle des émotions*. Online: https://www.pure.ed.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/26544307/Cairns_2016_Mind_body_and_metaphor_in_Ancient_Greek_concepts_of_emotion.pdf

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Isler-Kérenyi, Cornelia. 2007. *Dionysos in Archaic Greece. An Understanding through Images*. Leiden/Boston.

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Kittay, Eva Feder. 1987. *Metaphor: its Cognitive force and Linguistic Structure*. Oxford.

Kövecses, Zoltan. 2010. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford.

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago, IL.

Steiner, Deborah T. 1986. *Crown of Song: Metaphor in Pindar*. Oxford.

Steiner, Deborah T. 2001. *Images in Mind: Statues in Archaic and Classical Greek Literature and Thought*. Princeton/Oxford.

Wærn, Ingrid. 1951. *Γῆς ὄστεα. The Kenning in Pre-Christian Poetry*. Uppsala.

Watkins, Calvert. 1977. À propos de μῆνις. *Bulletin de la Société linguistique de Paris* 72/1.187–209.

Watkins, Calvert. 1995. *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetry*. New York/Oxford.

Observations:

Keynote speakers will be allotted 40 minutes for their papers + 10 minutes of discussion; other speakers will be given 20 minutes + 5 minutes for questions.

The organizers will offer the possibility to publish papers on the peer-reviewed journal *AION (filol.)*, *Annali dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" Sezione filologico-letteraria*.

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